

GREAT COMMANDERS

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no. Gordon
GENERAL MEADE ¹⁸¹⁵⁻⁷²

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BY

ISAAC R. PENNYPACKER



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

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1901

Great Commanders

EDITED BY JAMES GRANT WILSON

GENERAL MEADE

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Chas. B. Wall

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P R E F A C E .

THE basis of the following pages has been found in the official records of the Union and Confederate armies. The authentic narrative of the campaigns from the crossing of the Rapidan in the spring of 1864 to Appomattox is The Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865, by General Andrew A. Humphreys. Tested by that history, a comparison of which with the official records shows it to be almost flawless, all other accounts of the same events, whether in the form of biography, history, or memoirs, however entertaining these may be as narratives, or however great may be the military fame of the writers, must stand or fall.

In the preparation of these pages the writer's obligations have been incurred in a special manner to the Gettysburg National Park Commission and to Colonels John P. Nicholson and Emmor B. Cope for maps, measurements of distances, and other information relating to the Gettysburg battlefield; also to General H. S. Huidekoper for the use of his bird's-eye view of the battlefield of Gettysburg. It should be added, however, that for the use made of facts thus furnished, and for the interpretation put upon such facts, the author is alone responsible.

HADDONFIELD, N. J.,
February, 1901.

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GENERAL MEADE.

INTRODUCTORY.

GENERAL MEADE commanded the Army of the Potomac from June 28, 1863, until its disbandment two years later. No other general commanded that army as long as he did. At the beginning and at the close of the civil war it was the largest of the Union armies. It was also the best of the Union armies in equipment and in discipline. Opposed by the most efficient and most ably commanded of the Confederate armies, competition in its fiercest form had, in part, developed the superiority of the Army of the Potomac, while the duties assigned it were of such supreme importance that the destruction of that army, or its demoralization to a point where it would have been unable to oppose successfully the Army of Northern Virginia, would, as President Hayes said, "have been, according to human foresight, the loss of the Union cause." From June 28, 1863, until March 26, 1864, General Meade bore undivided responsibility for the safety and success of the Army of the Potomac. This responsibility was borne during a period when the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia were of practically equal strength, and, at times, when there is reason for believing that the effective force of Lee's army was the greater of the two. No other Union commander before or afterward was called on to oppose Lee on even terms. This unequalled responsibility was placed upon Meade when his foe was enheartened by repeated successes and his own troops were discouraged by defeats. During this period General Meade won the most important Union victory of the war,

and twice subsequently, but for the errors of a corps commander, would have struck Lee's army crushing blows, while during this whole period the Union army met with not a single reverse or disaster, although Lee tried against Meade's armor every spear that he knew how to wield. The assaults, which succeeded against Pope at second Bull Run, broke vainly against the supported points of attack at Gettysburg, and the flank movements that bewildered Hooker at Chancellorsville were tried to no purpose against Meade at Culpeper and Warrenton. There is no reason to suppose, if results of such great importance to the Union cause were brought about by the will of Providence, that a Supreme Being, in controlling human affairs, would here, any more than elsewhere, neglect to select a fit human instrument for the carrying out of its decrees.

Great as was the fame of Meade among the soldiers North and South and of the Old World,* it is probable that of his personality less is known popularly than of that of any of the three—Grant, Sherman, and Thomas—who, with Meade, comprise the four Union army commanders whose responsibilities and service in behalf of the Union were greatest.

At the time of the battle of Gettysburg General Meade was in his forty-eighth year. A correspondent of a London newspaper, writing from Hagerstown, Md., in the summer of 1863, said: "I was so fortunate as to be personally introduced to General Meade. He was sitting with General French at the United States Hotel. He is a very remarkable looking man—tall, spare, of a commanding figure and presence, his manner pleasant and easy but having much dignity. His head is partially bald and is small and compact, but the forehead is high. He has the late Duke of Wellington class of nose, and his eyes, which have a serious and almost sad expression, are rather sunken, or appear so from the prominence of the curved nasal development. He has a decidedly patrician and distinguished appearance. I had some conversation, and of his recent achievements he spoke in a modest and natural way. He

* General Pennypacker, U. S. A., tells me that he found General Meade was better known among the soldiers of Europe not long after the war than any other of the Union commanders.

said that he had been very fortunate, but was most especially anxious not to arrogate to himself any credit which he did not deserve. He said that the triumph of the Federal arms was due to the splendid courage of the Union troops, and also to the bad strategy and rash and mad attacks of the enemy. He said that his health was remarkably good, and that he could bear almost any amount of physical fatigue."

This casual acquaintance was at once struck by the patrician air and distinguished bearing of General Meade. "Meade," says another, who knew them all, "was different from our other great army commanders. He was a thoroughbred." Colonel Haskell describes Meade at Gettysburg as follows:

"Meade is a tall, spare man, with full beard, which, with his hair, originally brown, is quite thickly sprinkled with gray, has a Romanish face, a very large nose, and a white, large forehead, prominent and wide over the eyes, which are full and large and quick in their movements, and he wears spectacles. His fibers are all of the long and sinewy kind."

The Romanish face, the likeness of the profile to that of Cæsar, has been noticed by others. General Francis A. Walker, in his description of the grand review in Washington, May 23, 1865, says: "There at the head of two-score officers rides the gallant and accomplished soldier who has commanded the Army of the Potomac since the leading staff fell from Hooker's hand twenty-three months before. Tall and gaunt, scholarly, yet knightly in aspect, General Meade on this proudest day of his life bears himself like a true captain who has struggled and has conquered. . . . Only victory remains and a fame forever secure."

"The soul of honor, the soldier, scholar, and gentleman," he has been called by General A. S. Webb and many others. "One of the ablest officers in our service," were words applied by General W. B. Franklin to Meade when the latter was but a division commander. "He will be remembered," says Colonel James C. Biddle, of Meade's staff,* "with admiration not only for his military achievement,

* Address, May 30, 1888.

which, unsurpassed by those of any other man, will ever live in the grateful recollection of his countrymen, but also for the purity of his character, for his unselfishness, for his freedom from the jealousies and envies so common among distinguished soldiers, for his patient and uncomplaining endurance of injustice, for his courage which was of the high order that dared to do right at the risk of his own popularity, for his modesty that made him ever ready to praise others while during his whole career he never spoke or wrote one boastful word of himself, and for his supreme devotion to duty." "How valuable to his country his life has been!" said General Humphreys. In a letter to the author, dated July 20, 1886, Admiral David D. Porter said: "One night at City Point, just before the surrender of Richmond, while talking with General Grant in his tent, I asked him how he estimated General Meade as a military man. 'Why,' he answered, 'I esteem him highly, and second only to Sherman, and but for his quick temper he would have no superior; and yet,' he added, 'with that quick temper goes his quick perception of what is required on the field of battle, and makes his judgment so unexceptionable. He seldom makes mistakes.'

"I was with General Grant (then President) when a telegram was brought in announcing Meade's death. He handed it to me, and said, 'That is sad news, but what a calamity it would have been had it occurred during the war!'"

This opinion of General Grant, expressed after the war, does not vary materially from the views of Meade given in a dispatch written after the battles of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania Court House, wherein the lieutenant general said: "General Meade has more than met my most sanguine expectations. He and Sherman are the fittest officers for large commands that I have come in contact with."* The New York Independent of October 13, 1864, having laid upon Meade's shoulders the responsibility for a somewhat formidable list of abortive military movements subsequent to the opening of that year's campaign, and having asserted that Meade only continued to hold his place by reason of

* Grant to Stanton, May 13, 1864.

the weak complaisance of Abraham Lincoln, General Meade called the attention of General Grant to the publication, and the latter replied, October 24, 1864: "I have felt as much pained as you at the constant stabs made at you by a portion of the public press. I know nothing better to give you to use in answer to these charges than copies of every dispatch sent to Washington by me in which your name is used. These will show at least that I have never expressed dissatisfaction at any portion of your services." While the war continued, therefore, or as long as its memories were fresh, we find by these three recorded opinions—the first expressed just after he had first tested the powers of the Army of Northern Virginia, the second when the year's campaign was approaching a somewhat dubious close, and the third not long after the Union was fully restored—that General Grant firmly believed, and held fast to the belief, as may be seen also in his report of the closing operations of the war, that Meade was "the right man in the right place."

The view of the soldier in the ranks is expressed in an address at the reunion of Shaler's brigade, Sixth Corps, in 1888, by a private, who said: "General Meade was no hurrah soldier. . . . I repeat that to my mind—a soldier in the ranks—he was the greatest strategist, fighter, and soldier that ever commanded our army."

Nor was this profound impression which Meade made upon his contemporaries confined to his companions in arms and professional soldiers. In his address before the Society of the Army of the Potomac, June 12, 1889, Cortlandt Parker quotes from a letter written by General Lee after the war, as follows: "Meade, in my judgment, had the greatest ability. I feared him more than any man I ever met upon the field of battle." He also quotes Jefferson Davis as saying: "My idea is that Meade was the most skillful general in the Federal army. General Lee once said to me that he could understand the movements of all the generals in the Federal army easier than those of General Meade." In a letter to the present writer, dated January 31, 1887, Mr. Davis said: "I had a high opinion of and sincere regard for General Meade, both of which were manifested long before the war." Charles Devens, of Massachusetts, soldier, Attorney General of the United States, judge, says

that Meade seemed the "embodiment of the scholar, the soldier, and the gentleman." * Francis A. Walker, whose renown as an economist exceeds his repute as a soldier, styles Meade "a master of logistics," a characterization fully expressive of the mathematician's appreciation of the science of moving large armies. Justin McCarthy, member of the British Parliament and author of *A History of Our Own Times*, says in his *Reminiscences*: † "I shall never forget the sweet, genial manners, the courtly presence, the unaffected good humor and courtesy of General Meade, one of the foremost of the Federal heroes. . . . If there was ever an actual presentment in real life of Thackeray's Colonel Newcome, it stood before me, I thought, in the noble form of General Meade." Cortlandt Parker, who knew Meade intimately, says of him: "He was the type of the well-trained, thoroughly cultured gentleman, Christian, and soldier. To shirk duty was a thing which never occurred to him; to claim credit for its discharge was an act which he was too proud ever to perform." The poet Boker, two years after the battle, had the good fortune to visit the battlefield of Gettysburg in General Meade's company. Mr. Boker, in describing this visit, says:

"We were all too much under the spell of the scene to regard General Meade in any other light than as a hero of romance. He might have told us anything in Homeric numbers even, and we should have regarded it with that passionate faith which an ancient Greek gave to the *Iliad*. To my surprise then, and to my greater surprise when I came to ponder it, General Meade spoke of the battle of Gettysburg as though he were but the historian of that tremendous occasion. He made us as familiar with the whole three days' action as though we had been spectators of all parts of the field, or rather as though he himself had been such a spectator, and had at that time neither part nor lot in the awful tragedy which was enacted before him. He spoke of all his officers—of Reynolds, of Howard, of Hancock, of Gibbon, of Hunt, of Gregg, of Buford, of Geary, of Webb, of Sykes, of Sedgwick, of Crawford, of Stannard, of Humphreys, of

* Oration on General Meade before Society of Army of the Potomac, May 14, 1873.

† Vol. i, p. 247.

Newton, of Warren, and of many other leaders in that long roll of glory. He praised them all not grudgingly, but with the hearty enthusiasm of a man in love with his heroes, until our cheeks burned and tingled with responsive passion; but not one word had he to say of Meade, nor of his share in the contest. He did not once use the pronoun I. He did not mention that he was here, there, or anywhere during the fight."

Meade's admirers often speak of him as modest, but it is apparent that what they took for modesty was often the outcome of a lofty pride. Mr. Parker has come nearer to understanding the rare but—fortunately for human ideals—not altogether unknown type of character represented in Meade, when he says: "No man loved appreciation more; no man longed for it more ardently; no man, in his heart, more demanded it as a right; no man more carefully forbore to complain where he found himself comparatively forgotten. He was one of those who made the mistake of believing that fame, promotion, and fortune followed desert. Men of this stamp have their reward within the '*mens sibi conscia recti*.'"

The distinguished patrician bearing of General Meade, of which so many observers have spoken, does not appear to have been mere dignity, and there was nothing in it of pomp. On the contrary, at the proper time nothing could have been more gracious. It was part of the fine quality of the man, expressing itself in tone, in glance, in every movement of the body; and it entitled Meade, in distinction from the differently fibered Grant or Sheridan, to belong to the court as well as to the camp. In the city where a century and a half of assembly balls have not left opinion untrained in such matters, General Meade's manner in a ballroom is still said by competent judges to have been superior to that of the most celebrated locally of the assembly leaders. In battle, all eye-witnesses who served with him agree that he was quick, abrupt, impetuous. Obeying orders literally himself, he expected the same obedience from his subordinates, and the offender, the slow moving or the slow witted, whose blunders or carelessness imperilled the cause of the Union, were apt to be the shaking objects of a rage so magnificent that it seemed capable of moving mountains. But Meade's

wrath was never aroused without cause, or apparent cause, and if he erred he was quick to make amends. On occasions, this Christian gentleman, like Washington and many another famous soldier, is said to have shown himself master of a vocabulary of vigorous oaths. On the other hand, the late Colonel James C. Biddle, who was by his side in many a crisis when, if ever, an oath would seem to be justifiable, has assured the author that he never heard Meade swear; and Major J. Redman Coxe, also of his staff, says that nothing could have been kinder or more considerate than the treatment received by him from Meade during his whole period of service. Meade was the great soldier that he was largely because there was united in him a vehement, impetuous temperament and a logical reflecting mind that had been thoroughly trained in the highest walks of his profession. With the exception possibly of General Humphreys, he was the only officer connected with the Army of the Potomac who, awakened at any hour of the night, in the Wilderness or thereafter, could tell on the instant from the sound of the firing exactly what troops were engaged. He did this night after night. For long periods there did not pass a single night when he was not aroused repeatedly in this way, and, if occasion required, he made the disposition of his army without needing to consult a map. He had an extraordinary eye for topography. He saw a whole section of country clearly from an indication. He could tell, and did so, often to the wonder of the soldiers about him, by looking at a range of hills, what was the nature of the country on the other side, and where water could be found and which way the streams ran. His great natural ability in this line had been trained by his long experience as a topographical engineer. It was this faculty which, during the Wilderness campaign, enabled General Meade to carry the movements of the whole army as well as the location of each corps and its intended movement for the next day, and to have the detailed plans for the army of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow clearly defined in his mind without the use of a map.

General Meade was without political acquaintance or influence. Congressmen, and others who knew him as little as they knew of the art of war, attacked his reputation for

the sake of serving other soldiers and promoting their own interests at a time when he had no acquaintance with the United States Senators from his own State or with any member of Congress beyond a single representative from the Northwest. The earlier Secretary of War, who knew his abilities, was now at the head of the Southern Confederacy. Step by step, by services distinguished in every grade, first winning the confidence of his brigade, he had, as a division and corps commander, earned the respect and esteem of all the best and some of the worst generals of the army; and because of this confidence, and because, in the words of General Walker, "the army had learned to know and to trust him," was ordered to take command of the Army of the Potomac under circumstances which "might well cause anxiety to the most audacious." As to the thoroughness with which his work was done the country has never possessed so good an authority as General Andrew A. Humphreys, who says:

"After a careful examination of the subject, I am led to the conclusion that Meade at Gettysburg had a more difficult task than Wellington at Waterloo, and performed it equally well, although he had no Blücher to turn the scale in his favor. Wellington, for his services in Portugal and Spain, had been raised through every grade of the British peerage to its highest rank, and Parliament had voted him large sums of money to enable him to live in a manner corresponding to his position. In Waterloo, there was no additional rank in the peerage to give him, but Parliament voted two hundred thousand pounds sterling—about a million dollars. The whole sum thus bestowed amounted to nearly four million dollars. Meade, who was a major in the Corps of Engineers, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in the regular army, and was gratified at this mark of approval."*

Referring to the often unjust and inexact distribution of public praise for those who serve the United States of America, General Hunt said: "God Almighty abhors unequal weights and balances, but the American people seem

* Address of General A. A. Humphreys on the Military Services of the late General George Gordon Meade, Nov. 18, 1872.

to love them." But surely it would be an impugment of the intelligence of that people to assume that they will permanently cease to measure such extraordinary services as General Meade rendered in their behalf at anything less than their true value. Then, to borrow the words used by Boker in the conclusion of his charming address at the unveiling of the Meade equestrian statue in Philadelphia:

"Let us withdraw, as men hereafter will withdraw with the muse of history, from the lands over which we have toiled so perplexedly, and from the distance view the contour of the country out of which the details have vanished and of which the prominent characteristics alone remain. Then we shall see before us a region mountainous and bewildering indeed, but overlooked and dominated by a few lofty peaks, to which men shall give unforgotten names, and upon whose summits the sun of truth shall linger long after the subject lands lie in darkness and oblivion. Even so will it be with the few great names that, in the lapse of endless time, will survive and keep alive the memory of our civil war, and among them one of the highest, the purest, the most symmetrical, and the most illustrious will be that of George Gordon Meade."

CHAPTER I.

YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD.

GEORGE GORDON MEADE was born on the 31st of December, 1815. The place of his birth was Cadiz, Spain. Says John Sergeant Wise of his own birthplace in Brazil: "I was not born on the soil of the United States, but nevertheless in the United States; for the place where I was born was under the protection of the United States flag, and was in law as much the soil of the United States as any within its boundaries." The father of General Meade—Richard Worsam Meade—had received his business training in the Philadelphia counting house of his father, George Meade, and as a youth had been sent to Europe as supercargo on one of his father's vessels. Bache says that at the age of twenty-two, and within three years, Richard Worsam Meade had achieved a competence in the West Indies, whereupon he returned to Philadelphia, and in 1780 married Margaret Coates Butler, daughter of Anthony Butler, of Perth Amboy, N. J., who became the mother of General Meade.* Called to Spain by the demands of business, he established a home at Cadiz, where he was joined by his wife and two children in 1804. He lived in Spain for a period of seventeen years. In 1806 he was appointed naval agent for the United States. He furnished large quantities of supplies to Spain during the Peninsular war, which contest, in the Duke of Wellington's defiance within his fortifications at Torres Vedras of Massena, the most competent of Napoleon's lieutenants, furnished an interesting parallel to the positions of Lee and Meade in the vicinity of Hagerstown in the summer of 1863. Bache says that Mr. Meade lived luxuriously in the midst

* Life of General Meade, by R. M. Bache. Philadelphia, 1897.

of the best social advantages, his house becoming a celebrated rendezvous where the courtliness of the manners of the host and the charm of his wife attracted distinguished men and women of all countries.

It appears, however, that the friendship of the rulers of Spain was ultimately to prove the undoing of Mr. Meade and to cause his son to become a soldier. Detained in Spain by the hope of obtaining a settlement of his large claims against the Spanish Government, which claims Spain was unable to pay, he finally had the satisfaction of seeing his claim assumed by the United States Government in the treaty by which Florida was ceded to this country, and in 1820 he returned to Philadelphia, whither his family had preceded him. Although the rulers of Spain made special efforts to protect Mr. Meade in this matter, and although his interests might be supposed to be safe when his own Government, by solemn treaty, agreed with Spain to pay him the large sum of money due, this debt to the Meade family remains unpaid in spite of the fact that the justness of the obligation has never been disputed.

After eight years, a large part of which time was spent at Washington in vain efforts to recover his wealth, Mr. Meade died at the age of fifty, leaving a widow and a large family of children, accustomed to a generous scale of living, with a fortune so seriously diminished that the future soldier had to be taken away from a boarding school near Philadelphia, where he had been a pupil. He was sent to a school in Washington kept by Salmon P. Chase, subsequently Secretary of the Treasury, and within three years after his father's death, or in the summer of 1831, young Meade, after the failure of one application, was appointed to a cadetship at the West Point Military Academy. He had desired to go to college and to become a lawyer, and he did not especially desire to go to West Point, nor did he subsequently develop much fondness for the life at the Military Academy. Fortune, however, with her usual indifference to individual tastes, had decreed that this young man, whose family had been people of wealth, high social position, and importance to Church and State from the time of his great-grandfather's settlement in the country, should spend his days not in those walks of peace which

he would have graced and adorned, but in the rougher life of a soldier, and that he should be a chief instrument in saving that Government to establish which his grandfather, in 1780, had contributed the large sum of two thousand pounds sterling. He had narrowly escaped a life of luxury, although it is difficult to conceive of Meade, with his impetuous, energetic temperament and eager mind, being satisfied to follow a round of dances, dinners, and late hours at the club, even if his associates had been those chosen ones who have so long constituted Philadelphia society, to which the standing of Meade's family would have given him natural entrance.

The father died before the lad had reached his thirteenth year, and three years later began the arduous and often weary round of life at West Point, for some of the details of which Meade had little taste. He did not find within himself a consuming interest in the arrangement of his clothing, and he was not as careful as the regulations required in the keeping of his jacket tightly buttoned. He was admitted to the academy July 1, 1831. His general standing in his first year was number twenty-one in a class of seventy-three; in the second year, number eighteen in a class of sixty-two; in the third year, number seventeen in a class of sixty; and in the fourth year, number nineteen in a class of fifty-six. Colonel Mills, superintendent of the academy, furnishes me with Meade's standing in his several classes in his last year as a cadet as follows: In French, number seven; and in mathematics, number twenty-one in a class of sixty-two: in natural and experimental philosophy, number ten; in drawing, number forty-one; and in chemistry and mineralogy, number twenty-seven in a class of sixty: in civil and military engineering, number twenty-two; in rhetoric and moral philosophy, number thirteen; in infantry tactics, number thirty-eight; in artillery tactics, number twenty-nine; in conduct, number thirty-seven; and in general merit, number nineteen in a class of fifty-six. In his last year, on the conduct roll, of all the two hundred and forty cadets, he stood number two hundred and ten, with one hundred and sixty-eight demerits; and with thirty-three additional demerit marks for conduct he would have been recommended to the War Department for

discharge. But still lower than he on this roll stood Jubal A. Early and Edward Johnson. Robert S. Granger, Lewis A. Armistead, John C. Pemberton, and Montgomery C. Meigs are not far above him, and, it may be added, the young soldiers who led the conduct roll are unknown to fame.

Meade was graduated in June, 1835, with a class of which he was the only member to rise to great distinction. In truth the class roll is for the most part a list of unknown names. On July 1, 1835, he was made brevet second lieutenant in the Third Artillery. His three months' leave of absence was spent on the survey of the Long Island Railroad, a fact which would seem to indicate that he felt the necessity of not leaving unimproved any favorable opportunity to perfect himself for occupation outside of the army. Then he sailed to join his command on the flagship of his brother-in-law, Commodore Dallas, who had charge of the West India Squadron. At Havana the news of the Dade massacre reached Dallas, who started at once for the seat of the Seminole war, and Meade was landed at Tampa Bay, where his company was. Bache says that he speedily succumbed to malarial fever, and, being unfit for duty in that climate, was ordered to take a party of Seminole Indians to the North Fork of the Canadian River, Arkansas. In July, 1836, he was on duty at the Watertown Arsenal, Massachusetts, and in the same year he resigned from the army.

His brother-in-law, Major James D. Graham of the army, was chief engineer in the construction of the Alabama, Florida, and Georgia Railroad, and Meade at once went to work as assistant engineer in the building of the road. In 1837 the War Department selected him to make a survey at the mouth of the Sabine River, the boundary line between the United States and Texas, which duty performed, he served from November, 1837 to 1839, as the principal assistant engineer to Captain Andrew Talcott, United States Army, in a survey of the mouths of the Mississippi River, the ultimate object of the survey being the improvement of navigation.

General Humphreys throws interesting light upon the importance of Meade's work in the last survey, and from his statement it appears that the discovery of the law of

physical forces governing the formation of the bars and shoals at the mouth of the Mississippi, a discovery of such vast importance to the commerce of the great water way of the interior, can be traced directly to investigations and experiments original with Meade while engaged in this survey. General Humphreys's exact language is as follows:

"My second recollection of him [General Meade] is as an engineer engaged under Captain Talcott, of the Corps of Engineers, upon an elaborate survey and investigation at the mouths of the Mississippi River, in which the facts elicited by some original experiments of his led me, many years after, to a series of investigations which developed the law governing the formation of the bars and shoals at the mouth of that river, from which most important consequences have followed for the improvement of navigation and the increase of commerce."*

In 1840, Lieutenant Meade became an assistant to the joint commission on the establishment of the boundary line between the United States and Texas, and in August of the same year the Secretary of War appointed him civil assistant on the survey of the Northeastern boundary marking the line between British territory and the United States. At the end of the year he married Margaretta Sergeant. Her father, John Sergeant, was for half a century a leader of the Philadelphia bar, a leader of the Whig party in Pennsylvania, and in Congress he had been the leading representative of the Northern States in advocating the passage of the Missouri Compromise Act of 1820. In 1822 he had been the Whig candidate for the Vice Presidency on the ticket with Henry Clay. Not long before his daughter's marriage to young Meade he had served as the president of the Constitutional Convention of Pennsylvania, and the year before the marriage had declined the mission to England.

Of the greatest four Union army commanders—Grant, Meade, Sherman, and Thomas—the second named was the only one to acquire through family training the culture of the best circles of a large city, a possession accompanied by disadvantages as well as advantages for one who had his own way to fight through the world, and especially for one

* Address on the Military Services of General Meade, 1872.

who was to be a leader in the boisterous times of the civil war. Through generations of training it had become a deeply rooted instinct with General Meade to do whatever work he had to do as thoroughly as he knew how, but to let his labors speak for themselves and find their own reward. To have attempted to exploit his own fame directly or indirectly, to have surrounded himself with men who would see that nothing he did failed to reach the Northern newspapers, to have taken credit for another's work, to have tried in any way to make himself a central figure in the national drama by any other means than voluntary public appreciation of great deeds well done, was impossible to him. He would have regarded such processes not only as what has more lately been called "bad form," but as unworthy of a soldier and a gentleman. In the last months of the civil war, when among high officers in the Union army, worn out with years of physical fatigue and mental strain, when the nerves of nearly everybody were on edge, Meade was entirely aware of the eager scramble going on for public fame by soldiers who had not the advantages of his birth, his training, or his character. He was not blind to, or without warnings of, the quiet but persistent efforts that were being made to give his own hardly won laurels to another; but even after the war he wrote nothing but private letters, and while the war lasted almost the only signs of irritation which he gave were caused by the failure of subordinates to comprehend some order or in the performance of some duty. Had the standards of such soldiers and noble gentlemen as Meade, Thomas, Hancock, Reynolds, Humphreys, and Sedgwick prevailed in the army after the close of the civil war, instead of the clamor of swashbuckling captains and their camps, the world would not have been presented with the opera bouffe spectacle furnished by the Spanish-American war with its eager pursuit of fame by crowds of those who were more or less connected with it.

The marriage of young Meade with Miss Sergeant, and the uncertainty of occupation as an engineer in civil life, led him to seek reappointment in the army, and in 1842 he was made second lieutenant in the Corps of Topographical Engineers, and from the close of 1843 until August, 1845, was engaged in the designing and construction of lighthouses at

Philadelphia. General Dabney H. Maury, of Virginia, has said that Pennsylvania and Virginia, throughout the nation's history, have given birth to more great soldiers than any other States in the Union. The roll of conspicuous civil war soldiers from Philadelphia and her suburbs was a long one, including Charles F. Smith, whose death Sherman thought gave to Grant his opportunity, Humphreys, Hartmanft, Gibbon, Birney, Parke, Hancock, Reynolds, McClellan, and Meade; but none of them was to render to the city of his youth the services which Meade gave it by helping to direct her commerce to the wharves of the Delaware at the beginning of his career, and by planning her great Fairmount Park at the close of his life.

CHAPTER II.

THE MEXICAN WAR.

THE causes and campaigns of the Mexican war having been treated in detail in earlier volumes of this series,* the services of Lieutenant Meade, topographical engineer on the staff of General Zachary Taylor at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, and Monterey, and subsequently with General Scott at Vera Cruz, may be swiftly passed over. Ordered to Texas in August, 1845, he arrived at Corpus Christi, September 14th. Humphreys says he was distinguished for skill and intrepidity. His superior officers commended him. General Worth said in his report: "Annexed is an accurate sketch of the theater of operations, for which I am indebted, as in many other respects, to the intelligent zeal and gallantry of Lieutenant Meade, Engineers"; praise which shows that Meade's careful reconnoissances of the enemy's position in Worth's front were not unappreciated. Subsequently he made reconnoissances of the passes of the Agua Nueva and of the Tula, and at Vera Cruz he assisted in locating the trench and parapets of the besiegers and in designing the naval battery. When Vera Cruz was surrendered, Lieutenant Meade, after a service of two years and participation in three battles and a siege, was relieved from duty by General Scott in an order which said he was much distinguished in the field since 1845. For gallantry at Monterey he was brevetted a first lieutenant.

The young lieutenant found leisure to send to his appreciative wife at home long and detailed accounts of the movements and operations of the forces with which he was con-

* General Taylor, by General Oliver O. Howard, and General Scott, by General Marcus J. Wright.

nected, and to accompany these with drawings made as carefully as if they were to go to the War Department. Brilliant, difficult, and successful as were the campaigns of the forces of the United States in Mexico, it is possible that public interest may at some time be rearoused in them, in which event the letters and maps of Lieutenant Meade will prove to be of much historical importance.

Upon Meade's return to Philadelphia he was presented by the citizens with a sword. He soon resumed his former work upon river and harbor improvements, and next was sent to Florida under General Taylor, for a period of six months. The story is told that General Twiggs, being desirous of selecting an advantageous site for a fort on the western coast of that State, consulted Meade, but disregarded his advice. Being convinced afterward that the lieutenant was right, he erected the fort on Pease Creek, south of Tampa Bay, in accordance with Meade's suggestion, and ordered it to be called Fort Meade.* Meade again returned to the duty of erecting lighthouses in Delaware Bay and on the Florida coast. Part of his work was in the construction of the Delaware Breakwater, a piece of engineering, which at that time was regarded as a wonderful achievement of science and which was designed to protect commerce from the forces of nature. In August, 1851, he was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant, and on May 19, 1856, to that of captain of Topographical Engineers.

He was now about to enter upon a more important work than any he had previously engaged in, one of greater responsibility, and one which was to give him a firmly established reputation with the War Department, in the army, and among men of science throughout the country. Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War under President Pierce, had been a student at West Point, an officer of the army from 1828 to 1835, and had commanded a regiment in the Mexican War. His high opinion of Meade has already been quoted in these pages. As Secretary of War he promoted, in a thoroughgoing and scientific manner, the improve-

* The Life and Services of Major-General Meade, p. 24. T. B. Peterson & Brothers, Philadelphia, 1864.

ment of coast defenses, armaments, and means of transportation, and it was under his *régime* that Captain Meade was ordered to Detroit, Mich., upon the geodetic survey of the Great Lakes, of which important work this officer was shortly afterward directed to take charge. In the Philadelphia Library there is a copy of his report for 1860, printed at Detroit in 1861, and the title page still bears the inscription in pencil, "With Captain Meade's Compliments." The introductory report summarizing the year's work, by Meade, and accompanied by the reports of his assistants, among whom was Lieutenant Orlando M. Poe, a name to be distinguished in the civil war, is a clear and succinct record, generous, after Meade's fashion, to his subordinates and silent as to himself. Among the more readily understood results accomplished were the correction of the latitudes and longitudes of geographical positions from Detroit through Lake Huron and the Straits of Mackinac to the Beaver Islands in Lake Michigan; the ascertainment that the water of the lakes was depressed on the side from which the wind blew and raised on the opposite side; that there were a high and a low stage of water in the lakes every year, the former in summer, the latter in winter; that the annual changes were nearly simultaneous, and that the extreme range between the highest and lowest water amounted to five and a half feet, these phenomena, in Meade's words, being "those of a great river flowing through extensive reservoirs, which receive and absorb the freshets and thus modify, both in degree and time and occurrence, the ordinary fluctuations." Meade also instituted a system for reducing observations made on the force and direction of the wind, after finding that the meteorological authorities had arrived at no uniform system. His estimate for the appropriation required from Congress to carry on the work closed with the statement that with a coast equal in length to that of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, with a commerce equal to the whole foreign commerce of the country, amounting (in 1860) to nearly half a million tons of shipping, with the whole navigation one of danger, and throughout the greater part of the year embarrassed by reefs, shoals, and other obstructions, it would seem as if all classes of the community, the navigator, the merchant,

and the traveler, were directly benefited by the results of the survey.

There are family memories of the agreeable social relations established by Meade at Detroit, and the appreciation shown there of his character and abilities.

CHAPTER III.

A BRIGADIER GENERAL.

MEADE'S entrance into the great Union army of volunteers as a brigadier general was hastened by the energetic efforts of Pennsylvania's war governor, Andrew Gregg Curtin, to raise troops for the defense of the Union, and by the defeat of McDowell's army at Bull Run, July 21, 1861. On August 31, 1861, Meade was made a brigadier general of volunteers, and on the 16th of September the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps of fifteen regiments, including one regiment of cavalry and eight companies of artillery, the greater part of the force being then in the neighborhood of Tenallytown, six miles northwest of Washington, was organized into three brigades, with Meade in command of the Second Brigade, composed of the Third, Fourth, Seventh, Eleventh, and Thirteenth Regiments. The Thirteenth Regiment won great reputation under the name of "The Buck-tails," a designation taken from the deer's tails worn by both officers and privates upon their caps. The companies of this regiment had been enlisted in the mountain regions of the State, and the men were expert marksmen. At the time of Meade's assignment to the command of the Second Brigade of the Reserves this regiment was in Banks's army, but rejoined its proper command within a few days. The division general commanding the Reserves was George A. McCall, of Pennsylvania, a graduate, in 1822, of the West Point Military Academy, a veteran of the Mexican War, and former inspector general of the United States Army. The first permanent brigade commanders of the division were John F. Reynolds, Meade, and E. O. C. Ord. The last two were army commanders at the close of the war, and the first named would probably have been an army commander

had he not let it be known to the authorities that he did not desire such a command unless he could be allowed more authority in regard to army operations, for whose success he would be responsible, than at that time, and until the last year of the war, President, Cabinet, and Congress were willing to repose in the commander of the Army of the Potomac. Some of the regimental officers were also graduates of West Point, officers of the old army, and veterans of the Mexican War. Others had been connected with the militia. A number made reputations as excellent soldiers, and not a few died gloriously upon the field of battle. The relations of Meade and Reynolds were of the most intimate character. This was a friendship of kindred natures founded upon mutual respect. Each had complete confidence in the military judgment of the other. Meade was by five years the elder. The one was not unusually found in the tent of the other. Meade, engaged in staff duties and engineering work, had had little experience in the drilling of troops, and at the outbreak of the war it was doubtful if he could have drilled a regiment without studying his tactics. Reynolds, in the fall of 1860, had been appointed commandant of cadets at the West Point Military Academy, and in the spring of 1861 was already a lieutenant colonel of infantry. The younger soldier reached the rank of division commander first. Then Reynolds commanded the corps in which Meade commanded a division. Next both were corps commanders, with their friendship cemented rather than broken by the trials of the battlefield, until at last the unbounded responsibilities of army commander, which Reynolds did not wish to assume without possessing the degree of authority that he deemed necessary to military success, was to be forced upon Meade in spite of his protests that the order was unjust to Reynolds, his superior in rank; and Meade was to place Reynolds in command of the advance wing of the army and send him forward to death and undying fame at Gettysburg.

The division of troops in which Meade was now, in the fall of 1861, the commander of the Second Brigade, had been the creation of the patriotic ardor and zeal of the people of Pennsylvania and their governor. Five hundred of the State militia, armed with sabres, one hundred muskets,

and four hundred revolvers, had arrived in Washington at sunset on April 18, 1861, the first troops from the North to reach the National capital after the firing upon Fort Sumter. Mr. Lincoln's proclamation of the 15th, the day following the fall of Fort Sumter, calling out, for three months, seventy-five thousand militia from the States in the Union, had been followed by a requisition upon Pennsylvania for fourteen regiments. Twenty-five fully organized regiments were promptly supplied, and as many more were offered, but were refused by the War Department. Governor Curtin called an extraordinary session of the Legislature to meet on April 30th to provide for the better establishment of the State militia and to organize an army for the defense of the State, which, owing to its position on the border and to the mountain walls and valleys that extended from Pennsylvania across Maryland and into the heart of Virginia, was peculiarly liable to invasion. In his message to the Legislature, read on the first day of the session, Governor Curtin, appreciative of the situation and alive to the peculiar perils to which Pennsylvania was exposed, recommended the complete organization and equipment of at least fifteen regiments of cavalry and infantry, in addition to the regiments already called into the United States service. On May 15th the Legislature passed an act providing for the organization of the Reserve Corps of the Commonwealth, to consist of thirteen regiments of infantry, one regiment of cavalry, and one regiment of artillery. The Governor was at once overwhelmed with offers of companies whose services had been declined by the Government, and companies enough to form the fifteen regiments offered their services within a few days, and were accepted and ordered to the camps of instruction. The intention was to keep these troops in the camps during the autumn and winter until they had been thoroughly organized and drilled in company, regimental, brigade, and division movements. But by the 22d of June the terror of invasion, which would hang over the border counties of Pennsylvania during the next four summers, was already so great that two regiments of the Reserves were ordered to Cumberland, Md. The rout of McDowell's army at Bull Run, July 21st, caused a not unwarranted panic at Washington, and the General Govern-

ment on July 22d, by that time no doubt fully appreciative of Governor Curtin's forethought, made a requisition for the services of the Pennsylvania Reserves. As fast as transportation could be furnished eleven thousand of the division were sent to Washington, and within a few days the whole corps, stated by Sypher, its historian, to number at the time fifteen thousand eight hundred and fifty-six officers and men, were mustered into the service of the United States,* their first camp being at Tenallytown, where Meade assumed command of his brigade.

The troops organized by Pennsylvania for her own defense were thus called into other service, and it seemed probable that any other troops raised for the same purpose would have to be pressed into the same vast hopper. Of course, for the protection of Pennsylvania from invasion by an army, the Army of the Potomac should have been the most efficient instrument; but that army was so hampered by instructions for the protection of Washington, into which service the troops raised by Pennsylvania for her own defense had been called, that the State was left open to destructive raids, of which the Confederate operations before the battle of Gettysburg and the burning of Chambersburg in 1864 are familiar examples.

On October 9th, General McCall, the division commander, was ordered to march the Reserves from Tenallytown to Langley, in Fairfax County, Virginia, two miles west of the Chain Bridge over the Potomac, and here Camp Pierpont was established, with McCall's division on the right of the army. The division line of pickets ran across the Leesburg turnpike, in front of the village of Langley, to the Potomac, about two miles to the north. About eleven miles northwest, by the winding road, from the position of McCall's division, is the village Dranesville, and to this place McCall, on October 18th, received an order from General McClellan to move his division, reconnoitre the country, and map the roads and topography. With Reynolds's brigade in advance, preceded by a part of the cavalry regiment which was commanded by that fine cavalry soldier, George

* History of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps, by J. R. Sypher. Lancaster, 1865.

D. Bayard, Meade's brigade following, and the Third Brigade, under the temporary command of Colonel McCalmont, bringing up the rear, the command started northward early on Saturday morning, and on Sunday morning, from his position a mile or two westward of Dranesville, McCall sent word to General McClellan that the investigation of the roads could not be completed in the time allowed by his orders. General McClellan directed him to return to Langley on Monday, and this place was again reached at one o'clock of that day. There McCall received word from McClellan to remain at Dranesville, but unfortunately two brigades had already reached Langley, and the third was near at hand. These facts being reported to the army commander, by his orders the division was held under arms where it was, ready to move at a moment's notice, until additional orders were received to dismiss the men. The return was highly unfortunate, because a few hours after McCall's troops had reached Langley on their return march occurred the disaster to Colonel Baker's command at Ball's Bluff. Had McCall's orders permitted him to remain at the advanced point reached by him, his thirteen thousand troops would have been within a dozen miles of the flank and rear of the small force of Confederate troops at Ball's Bluff, who, elated by their victory, remained in an aggressive position along the Potomac as late as the 22d, and, indeed, until after the withdrawal across the Potomac by McClellan of all the troops who had participated in Stone's demonstration. There was supposed to have been a combination between Stone's advance at Ball's Bluff and the advance of the three right divisions of the Army of the Potomac, of which divisions McCall's was one; but the untimely retirement of the Pennsylvania Reserves by McClellan's orders, on misinformation sent by Banks to the effect that there was no enemy in the vicinity of Leesburg, was one of those errors caused by the assumption of a state of affairs on insufficient evidence that grew less frequent with practical experience in the art of war. Both sides were searching the country for forage. A foraging expedition on the part of the Confederates led to the subsequent battle of Dranesville, while, somewhat curiously, the loose relations between McCall's exploring expedition and that battle, as well as

the battle at Ball's Bluff, are established by the statement of the commander of the Confederate forces at Ball's Bluff, Brigadier-General N. G. Evans, that on Sunday, October 20th, a courier of General McCall was captured bearing orders to General Meade to examine the roads leading to Leesburg, and that from this prisoner was learned the position of the Union troops at Dranesville.* The same officer says that in the evening of the 21st, after the completion of his victory at Ball's Bluff, he ordered his brigade back to Leesburg to rest for the night—an order which would have brought him within easy reach of McCall's fresh troops had the latter been retained at Dranesville.

There still remained, however, a desire to feel cautiously the enemy in McCall's front. Colonel Bayard was sent with his regiment of cavalry to Dranesville on November 26th, the commander making a narrow escape with his life. On December 6th, Meade, with his brigade, Kern's battery, and a squadron of cavalry, was ordered to Gunnell's farm, two miles and a half northeast of Dranesville, with instructions to capture two nephews of Gunnell and bring in the forage from the farm. The nephews were charged with shooting two stragglers from the Union army and leaving the bodies for the hogs to devour, and with firing upon Union pickets. Meade had a train of fifty-seven wagons, which were brought back filled, together with seven captured horses, two oxen, one wagon, one fowling piece, two negroes, and five white prisoners. The march had begun at six in the morning, and the command was back in camp at six in the evening. McClellan praised the absence of straggling among Meade's troops and the good discipline manifested.

A great deal of fighting in war takes place not for the sake of battle, but to gain possession of something that both the opposing forces want, such as the control of a highway, a railroad, or a good position, the attainment of the lesser object here, as in so many other of life's fields, promoting the greater end. The desire of McCall to keep the forage of the neighboring country for his own use led to the battle

* Official War Records, vol. v, p. 349. Washington, 1881.

of Dranesville. Sypher says that a scout from Bayard's cavalry regiment returned to camp on December 19th, and reported to McCall that the enemy would be at Dranesville on the following day with a strong foraging party and a wagon train. The Comte de Paris says the approaching collision was in a measure accidental. McCall's report of the engagement declares that on the evening of the 19th, having learned that the enemy's pickets had advanced to within four or five miles of the Union lines and that their reserve was in the neighborhood of Dranesville, he ordered General Ord to move his brigade at six o'clock on the morning of the 20th, surround and capture "this party," and collect a supply of forage from the farms of secessionists. The Confederate general, J. E. B. Stuart, on the same morning at daylight, left the vicinity of Centreville with a brigade of twenty-five hundred men for Dranesville for the purpose of protecting an important Confederate foraging expedition operating to the westward of the village. Stuart, on his approach to the pike leading eastward from Dranesville, found that Ord was already there. In the resulting engagement, in which Ord's brigade of the Pennsylvania Reserves, with the Bucktails (of Meade's brigade), Easton's battery, and two squadrons of cavalry alone participated, neither Meade nor Reynolds had any part, but both were full of eager curiosity to learn from Ord how the volunteers had behaved under fire, and the subsequent conversation between the three was of the most animated character. All of them professional soldiers, no one of them had any faith that enthusiasm could take the place of discipline. The effective work done by Easton's battery upon Stuart's artillery had largely been the result of the personal supervision given by Ord to the planting and sighting of the guns. Ord's force was something less than that of Stuart. Reynolds had been left four miles back, at Difficult Creek, and Meade at Camp Pierpont. Both brigades were put in motion, but Ord's victory was so complete that there was nothing for them to do. Ord lost six killed and sixty-one wounded, while Stuart's losses amounted to forty-three killed, one hundred and forty-three wounded, and forty-three captured, besides a quantity of artillery ammunition, small arms, and clothing. Coming after

the disaster of Ball's Bluff, the victory at Dranesville gave heart to the people of the North, and the experience was of much practical value to the Pennsylvania Reserves, whose reputation as soldiers was now well established.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VIRGINIA PENINSULA.

WHEN, early in March, 1862, the army was divided into corps, the division of the Pennsylvania Reserves became one of the three divisions comprising the First Corps, commanded by General McDowell, the division commanders being Franklin, McCall, and King. Meade's brigade thus came to belong to that corps which, according to McClellan's earlier plans, was intended to be the first corps to be moved to the Peninsula, but which, owing to the scarcity of transports, was delegated to the rear in the transfer, and finally, by the President's direction, was detached from McClellan's army. The Reserves had had some experience in fighting, and they had made a hard forced march in the heavy rain and through the mud and swamps from Hunter's Mills to Alexandria when it was intended by McClellan that they should lead the advance to the Peninsula. McCall's division remained opposite Fredericksburg during the movements of the other portions of McDowell's command, called for by Jackson's operations in the latter part of May and early in June, 1862. Reynolds was made military governor of Fredericksburg, May 26th, and in the same month Ord was promoted to the rank of major general, Truman Seymour, another regular officer, succeeding to the command of Ord's brigade. So far, among the brigadiers, whatever of distinction was the outcome of war seemed to have fallen to Reynolds and Ord. Meade, however, was soon to have his opportunity. The authorities at Washington had decided to send McCall's division by water to McClellan, the straddle of whose army across the Chickahominy was being maintained in the expectation that McDowell would march across country from Fredericksburg to join the Army of the Poto-

mac. On Sunday, June 8th, the movement of McCall's division began. On Monday afternoon the first vessels, carrying the First and Second Brigades, steamed down that great water way whose Indian name, Rappahannock, means "the muddy waters." By four o'clock Tuesday afternoon the Chesapeake Bay was reached, and at nine o'clock Wednesday night the White House on the Pamunkey River. At once the march was taken up to a point near Tunstall's Station on the Richmond and York River Railroad. Meade had been detained at Fredericksburg by official business, but started to rejoin his command at Dispatch Station on the 12th. The Reserves had arrived in the vicinity just in time to give pause to Stuart's intention to destroy the supplies at White House in his raid around McClellan's army. On the 18th, the Reserves, with the exception of four companies of the Bucktails and the cavalry still with Bayard in the Shenandoah Valley, now reunited by the arrival of the Third Brigade, took up their quiet march to the position to be assigned them on the extreme right of McClellan's army.

Just before midnight of the 19th McClellan telegraphed Stanton that at this time he was obliged to leave part of McCall's division to guard his communications with White House. The Seventh Regiment had been left behind at Tunstall's Station. On the evening of the 18th, New Bridge on the Chickahominy was reached, and here, on Gaines's farm, Meade's brigade was left in a position commanding the bridge, when, on the morning of June 19th, the rest of the division moved to the right of the army at Mechanicsville. The position assigned to the Reserves was along the east bank of Beaver Dam Creek from the Chickahominy northwardly. Seymour's brigade extended from the Chickahominy to Reynolds's left, and Reynolds's brigade continued the line for two miles to the woods and swamp north of the Cold Harbor road. Five miles southwest was the Confederate capital. At Mechanicsville centered roads from Richmond on the southwest and Ashland and Hanover Court House on the northwest, and the position of the Reserves guarded the approaches diverging from Mechanicsville from the Confederate forces to McClellan's rear and communications. McCall had thrown up a series of earthworks along his line commanding the ravine formed by

Beaver Dam Creek. Upon this position, on the 26th, a portion of A. P. Hill's division of Lee's army, the assaulting force numbering about ten thousand men, without waiting for the contemplated co-operative movements of Jackson on the North, who was to take the Federal positions in the rear, hurled itself in repeated assaults with disastrous results to the Confederate arms.

The attacking forces were repulsed with a loss of nearly two thousand men, while the losses of the Union forces were only three hundred and sixty-one. The fighting lasted from three o'clock until nine in the evening. Meade's brigade, or at least three of its original regiments, had been held in reserve at Gaines's farm, about two miles in the rear, ready to act either in support of Reynolds and Seymour or to oppose any attempted crossing by the enemy of New Bridge. In the afternoon, when the pickets had been driven in, and the infantry and artillery in front of Mechanicsville had fallen back to the chosen line east of the creek, McCall ordered Meade to move his brigade to ground in rear of the line where it could promptly support any part of the field. General Seymour, who by the subsequent capture of McCall and Reynolds and the wounding of Meade at New Market Cross Roads, became the only general officer with the division, made a report covering the operations of the Reserves at Mechanicsville. His brigade was in the front line at that battle. He said that much of the credit of the day was due to the study of the ground and ample preparations, even to the smallest details, made by Reynolds, and he adds that the advice and presence of General Meade, who came up with his brigade, was of most valuable service.*

McClellan's change of base to the James River had already been decided upon, and the preliminary movements were actually under way at the time of Lee's attack upon the Reserves behind Beaver Dam Creek, so that, in pressing eastward north of the Chickahominy, Lee was following McClellan in the direction that the latter would have taken himself if let alone. During the night of the 26th, until an hour after midnight, the troops of McCall's division were busy cleaning their arms and distributing ammunition in

* Official War Records, vol. xi, part ii, p. 400.

the expectation of a renewal of the battle on the next day. But before daybreak the division commander received, through his corps commander General Fitz John Porter, the order of the commander in chief to fall back to Gaines's Mill on Powhite Creek, which stream flows into the Chickahominy from the north about four miles east of Beaver Dam Creek. The new position back of Gaines's Mill, and east of Powhite Creek, had been previously selected because it was in itself an advantageous one, curving from the valley of the Chickahominy on the south, along the middle high grounds and behind a nameless stream, to the swamp beyond McGehee's, and because it covered the bridges on the Chickahominy immediately in the rear. Here the Fifth Corps would be within supporting distance of the main army across the river, while it would act as rear guard of the movement to the James. McClellan says his object was to stand off Jackson with the Fifth Corps until he had safely retired his trains and heavy guns and made the movement to the James secure. In their first battle the Pennsylvania Reserves had repulsed a greatly superior force. The fighting at Mechanicsville had ceased at nine o'clock on the evening of the 26th. By seven o'clock on the morning of the 27th the killed had been buried and the wounded had been sent off. A day of hard fighting had been passed by a sleepless night, and the division was therefore placed in reserve in the new position back of Gaines's Mill, which was reached at ten o'clock in the morning. Meade's brigade had led the way and was followed by Reynolds's. Seymour covered the retirement of the Reserves, and for several hours of the morning there was skirmishing with the Confederates on the march.

On the left of Porter's curving line, covering the roads from Gaines's Mill and Old Cold Harbor, was Morrell's division of the Fifth Corps, and on the right was Sykes's division. McCall's troops were placed six hundred yards in rear of Morrell, Meade on the left, Seymour in the center, and Reynolds on the right. The retirement of Porter's troops had been somewhat cautiously followed by A. P. Hill from Mechanicsville by the roads leading from Gaines's Mill to New Cold Harbor, and these troops, in the early afternoon, had formed a line of battle parallel with Porter's

behind the crest of hills east of Powhite Creek. "Stonewall" Jackson's column, about to fulfill the purpose for which it had come from the Shenandoah Valley, but which it had not reached Beaver Dam Creek in time to promote at the battle of Mechanicsville, crossed that creek in the morning of the 27th, advanced to Walnut Grove Church, and moved toward Old Cold Harbor. Lee supposed that Jackson's coming would compel Porter to extend his line to the right and thus weaken the other portions of his line, and in this hope he held back Longstreet until he should hear from Jackson. At the hour named, Hill began his attack upon the Union position. Hill's brigades were thrown forward in repeated charges upon the Union center and left, but were driven back by a fire which their commanders said troops could not live under. At four o'clock Longstreet came to Hill's assistance, going into action upon his right, but he complained that the position which he had to attack, the wooded slope of Turkey Hill, fifty or sixty feet higher than the plain, which was a quarter of a mile wide and across which he had to advance, was the very position in which his enemy desired to be attacked. The advance of Jackson's corps, D. H. Hill's division, reached the vicinity of the McGehee house, the extreme Union right, about two o'clock in the afternoon; but Jackson patiently waited in the expectation that Hill and Longstreet would drive Porter's forces across his front, and he even posted D. H. Hill so that he would command a cleared space across which he expected Porter would have to retreat. In this expectation Jackson was disappointed. From the sound of the firing, he reached the conclusion that A. P. Hill was himself hard pressed, and at about the same hour at which Longstreet had come into action on the Union left, D. H. Hill began the battle on the extreme right of the Union line, the fighting being taken up by the rest of Jackson's divisions—Ewell's, Jackson's, and Whiting's in turn—which were moved to the support of A. P. Hill and Longstreet as needed. Lee's sixty thousand troops were thus engaged in a determined effort to drive Porter's thirty-five thousand from their position.

Soon after the commencement of the attack upon the center of Porter's line General Porter ordered McCall to

move forward the brigades of Meade and Seymour of the Pennsylvania Reserves to the support of the first line. The movement was made with a precision which aroused the admiration of the division commander, and in a short time Reynolds's brigade was also thrown into the fighting line. Reaching the immediate scene of action, none of the three brigades went into battle in its entirety, but by regiments, the troops being placed where most needed. The Third Regiment of Meade's brigade went to the support of the Fourth Michigan, which had shifted to the left under a galling fire, and held the enemy in check for two hours, when, the ammunition being exhausted, the Third was relieved by the Eleventh, also of Meade's brigade, and a New Jersey regiment. Meade, who was in the midst of the fighting, thanked the regiment, on its retiring, for the good service which it had rendered. The Fourth was sent to the support of Duryea's Zouaves, and, after forcing back the enemy for a time, was in turn driven back. Meade was immediately upon the spot and rallied the regiment, which was at first sent to the support of the Third and then to the left of the line, which in a few minutes gave way in the center, and the Fourth escaped by crossing the Chickahominy and coming into Smith's division. The Eleventh Regiment of Meade's brigade had a still more unfortunate fate. Ordered to the relief of an exhausted regiment in the front line, it came in upon the right of the Fourth New Jersey as Sykes's division was being relieved, about half past six in the evening. The promise was given to the Eleventh that, if hard pressed, it would be supported by the troops whom it had relieved. Being closely engaged with a Confederate regiment in his front, and the field being obscured by dense volumes of smoke, Colonel Gallagher, of the Eleventh, continued to fight without knowing that the line had been broken in the center and had retired. He found himself under the fire of a regiment on each flank besides the fire in front, and fell back, in good order and still maintaining his fire, upon the Fourth New Jersey, when, to his mortification, he discovered that both regiments were completely surrounded, a strong force of the enemy being already in the rear. Both regiments were captured, the Eleventh almost entire. This regiment had lost fifty killed before surrendering.

General Reynolds was at the same spot when the lines broke, and stayed in the timber during the night, but was discovered and captured the next morning. At four o'clock, when the last of the Pennsylvania Reserves had been put into the fight, Slocum's division arrived upon the scene and Newton's and Bartlett's brigades were advantageously placed, but the brigades of French and Meagher came up too late to affect the fortunes of the day. The charge of the Fifth United States Cavalry, ordered by General Philip St. George Cooke at the moment that Longstreet's men and the division of Whiting, of Jackson's corps, forced their way forward from what had been the left center of the Union line, may have tended to complete the Union disaster, because of the folly of sending a cavalry regiment against such an infantry force, with the resulting certainty of its coming back in confusion and causing still greater confusion among the men of the Union batteries and the infantry lines; but it is not probable that the defeat could have been longer stayed, since it was simply the outcome of overpowering numbers concentrated upon a position that had not been sufficiently fortified to make up for the great preponderance of the Confederate force. "Stonewall" Jackson was loath to believe that the Confederates greatly exceeded the Union troops engaged, and is said to have threatened to cut off the ears of a captured Union officer* for telling him, in response to an inquiry, that only Porter's corps had been engaged on the Union side. In his report he refers to the superior numbers of the Federals.

Porter, in his report, said that Meade led his regiments into the thickest of the fight, and McCall spoke of the skill to be expected of an officer of such distinction. There were killed in the Third, Fourth, Seventh, and Eleventh Regiments of Meade's brigade, seventy-seven; wounded, one hundred and eighteen; missing, the most of whom were accounted for in the capture of nearly the entire Eleventh Regiment, eight hundred and seventeen. The total Union losses were nearly seven thousand, and the Confederate losses still heavier. The corps reformed its line on the

* Lieutenant Patterson. See statement of B. J. Coll, 62d Pennsylvania, in Powell's *The Fifth Army Corps*, p. 105.

ground that had been held by the Pennsylvania Reserves, and during the night crossed the Chickahominy, destroying the bridges about daylight.

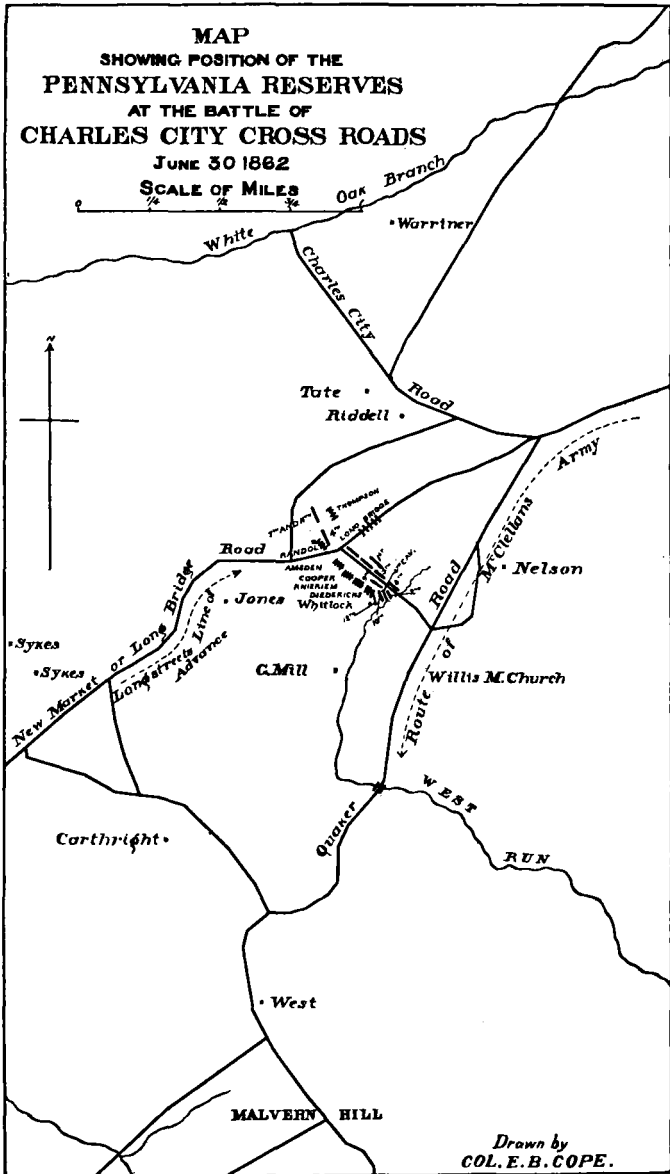
In the three battles in which the Reserves had now been engaged Meade had been a useful rather than a distinguished factor. He was learning the art of war, about which he had read much, in exactly the right way. Before he was called to high responsibilities he had given him, as had all the successful Union generals, opportunities to think about practical tactics and strategy as illustrated on the field, to see how troops should be handled on the march and in battle, and to profit by the mistakes of those officers who, with little experience, were so unfortunate as to be placed in the command of armies and corps at the outbreak of the war. Meade was a quick student. Concerning that which was within his own range of vision or personal knowledge, he reached results with an intuition that, in spite of the quickness of the process, appeared to work with the mathematical precision of slower methods. Upon another battlefield he was now about to render still more important service to his country, and by the topographical faculty which he possessed in such a remarkable degree he was about to save McClellan's army from a very serious disaster.

On Friday evening, June 27th, after the battle of Gaines's Mill, the Pennsylvania Reserves crossed the Chickahominy to Trent's farm opposite the battlefield. From the Trent house McClellan had moved his headquarters to Savage Station, and toward this latter place, in pursuance of the movement to the James River, the trains of some five thousand wagons, the siege train, and a herd of twenty-five hundred cattle were put in motion. Eighteen batteries of one hundred guns, comprising the Reserve artillery, commanded by General Henry J. Hunt, the chief of artillery under McClellan, Burnside, and Hooker from 1862 to 1863, as well as under Meade from 1863 to 1865, were still at the Trent farm, and this Reserve artillery, McCall's division, was chosen to guard on the march from Trent's farm to the Quaker road, south of White Oak Swamp. The train which McCall was called upon to protect was some seven miles long. The regiments were distributed through the

train, and flanking parties were thrown out to the right and left. The march was made on the dark and rainy night of the 28th, over a narrow and crowded road. Savage Station was reached on the morning of the 29th, and, after a brief rest, White Oak Swamp Creek was crossed in the early afternoon. At five o'clock in the afternoon McCall was relieved of the duty of protecting the Reserve artillery. While on the north side of the Chickahominy his division had been assigned to the Fifth Corps. When, after the crossing of the river, he had been ordered to protect the Reserve artillery, Porter apparently thought that his control over this division ended. McCall, on the other hand, appears to have thought—and, in the absence of definite orders, not unnaturally—that he was still a part of Porter's command. Out of this confusion there grew up a situation of considerable peril to the whole army. McCall and Porter were to move on the Quaker road to the James. The danger lay in an attack on the right flank over the roads leading eastward from Richmond. There were three such roads—one the Charles City, a second the Central, and the third the New Market road. The place where the Quaker road, running south to Turkey Island Bend, met the Charles City road, the most northerly of the three roads mentioned that ran eastwardly from Richmond, and the New Market or River road, the most southerly of the three roads, was a point of grave danger. Right at this point General Porter's corps went astray. Searching for the Quaker road, it passed that road and continued marching on the New Market road westward toward Richmond, the guide having been told by the inhabitants that the Quaker road ran southwardly from the New Market road at a point about five miles west of the road by which the troops had crossed the White Oak Swamp. The westward march was continued, and the head of the column, the Reserves being in the lead and preceded by an advance guard composed of a regiment of cavalry (Third Pennsylvania), a battery of regular artillery (Benson's), and the Eighth Reserves, all under the command of Colonel W. W. Averell, passed the junction with the Darbytown road. Meade's was the leading brigade of the Reserves, and in the darkness he followed the lead of the guide and an officer of Porter's staff until he be-

MAP
SHOWING POSITION OF THE
PENNSYLVANIA RESERVES
AT THE BATTLE OF
CHARLES CITY CROSS ROADS
JUNE 30 1862

SCALE OF MILES



Drawn by
COL. E. B. COPE.

came convinced that the command was on the wrong road.

It was a situation full of peril if a mistake had been made, and one likely to arouse fully his highly trained sense of locality, a faculty which the officers responsible for the position of the command seem not to have shared with him. It was now nearly midnight. Meade insisted that the troops were on the wrong road, and that the Quaker road had already been passed. He halted his brigade, and, accompanied by the guide, personally explored what the inhabitants said was the Quaker road. He found that it was overgrown, crossed by ditches and fences, and was impassable. Meade reported the situation to McCall, who sent a message to Porter. The latter rode forward and insisted that the troops were on the right road,* but directed McCall to bivouac by the roadside until morning. Colonel Powell, in his Fifth Army Corps,† says that during the night of June 29th General Porter started the head of his column for Malvern Hill, but in the darkness the guide, furnished from the headquarters of the army, mistook the road, and discovered his error only after coming in contact with the enemy's pickets. Consequently a countermarch and new start became necessary. Sypher, whose account of this affair was obtained from the immediate participants, while the war was still in progress, declares that the other divisions of Porter's corps, Sykes's and Morrell's, continued forward on the road, and, after a fruitless attempt to enter the "Old Quaker road," countermarched, and moving back by McCall's Camp, reached the Quaker road of the military maps by a private road through the woods and thus continued to the James. General Porter, however, did not withdraw the Reserves, and McCall was left where he was, in an extremely critical position, and in actual contact with the pickets of Longstreet,‡ whose advance had reached this point in their march from the Chickahominy by way of the Central and New Market roads.* Glendale, New Market

* Sypher's History of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps, p. 254.

† Page 134.

‡ Powell's Fifth Army Corps, p. 134.

* General Butterfield's Report (Official War Records, vol. xi, part ii, p. 319) says that his brigade (Third Brigade, First Division,

Cross Roads, Charles City Cross Roads, or Frazier's or Nelson's Farm, as the scene of the next contact between the opposing forces is variously called, was the very point where Lee, on the 29th, and while still north of the Chickahominy, had determined to strike McClellan's column as it was stretched out in its movement southward to the James. On the night of the 29th Longstreet camped at the intersection of the Central and New Market roads, about three miles southwest of Frazier's Farm, and on the morning of the 30th moved two miles nearer and made preparations to intercept the Federal column; but at the Cross Roads, immediately in his front, his intentions were interfered with by the discovery that McCall's division was already there in line of battle facing westward. Here was posted a division apparently without a corps commander, a division which was already reduced from ten thousand to six thousand in numbers by continued fighting by day, and worn by marches at night, and which had just been saved from wandering into the jaws of the enemy—the forces of Longstreet and A. P. Hill—solely by the sagacity of Meade. Moreover, the later placing of the Reserves in a position to resist Longstreet's attack was also due to the vigilance of Meade. On the morning of the 30th the division lay on the New Market road, the exhausted men thoroughly enjoying the short rest. The divisions of Morrell and Sykes had already passed on toward the James. Meade, the ranking brigadier present with the division, accompanied by General Seymour, commanding the Third Brigade, rode to the front and discovered that only a squadron of cavalry interposed between the division and the enemy, then known to be close at hand.* McCall's attention was immediately called to the strange oversight; two regiments of infantry, one of them the Third of Meade's brigade, were immediately placed on outpost duty, and the division was then posted in line of battle perpendicularly to the New Market road; Meade's brigade, with Randol's First and Thompson's Second United

Fifth Corps), at 8 p. m. of the 29th, moved out from the Charles City Cross Road with the rest of the division, some six miles and back, arriving at the vicinity of the former camp at daybreak.

* Report of General Seymour, Official War Records, vol. xi, part ii, p. 402.

States Artillery, of Kearny's division, to the right of that road; Thompson's battery being the extreme left of Kearny. The Third Brigade, General Seymour, continued the line southward and to the left of the New Market road, and the First Brigade, commanded, since the capture of Reynolds, by Colonel Seneca G. Simmons, was posted in the rear in reserve, along the edge of a wood on a by-road connecting the New Market road with the Quaker road. With the Third Brigade were four guns of Kern's Pennsylvania battery, under the command of Lieutenant Amsden, Cooper's Pennsylvania battery, and two New York batteries of Diederich and Knieriem temporarily with the Reserves. The infantry of the Third Brigade, south of the road, was posted behind their guns, except on the left, where the brigade line curved to the front. Of the artillery with Meade, north of the New Market road, Randol's battery was placed immediately to the right of the road. Behind it and to the right was the Fourth Reserves, whose line was continued northwestwardly by the Seventh and the two companies of the Eleventh Reserves.

General Seymour says that the division had hardly been formed in line when the battle opened with a distant fire of shot and shell. Colonel Sickel says it was about 11 A. M. when his regiment, the Third of Meade's brigade, was placed on outpost duty in consequence of Meade's discovery that nothing but a cavalry squadron covered the approaches from the enemy. He reported to the main column that the enemy was rapidly covering the front with heavy columns of infantry. At that hour Longstreet, who, with A. P. Hill's division, on the 29th had marched fourteen miles, crossing over to the Central or Darbytown road, and down that road to its intersection with the New Market road, and on the morning of the 30th had moved to within a mile of Frazier's Farm, was deploying his own division in line of battle along McCall's front. Hill's division he at first kept in the rear, but soon ordered one of Hill's brigades to cover his right, and held the other brigades of Hill in readiness to pursue the enemy, which he was confident of dislodging. This movement of Longstreet was only a part of Lee's plan to rout McClellan's army upon its flank march to the James River. Holmes's division was moving eastward toward

Malvern Hill on the New Market or River road south of the road by which Longstreet had approached. Huger's division was headed for McClellan's outstretched line on the Charles City road, north of Longstreet's line of march. Jackson with his command, following McClellan's rear, reached White Oak Swamp about noon of the 30th. Magruder's division was sent to re-enforce Holmes, and it looked as if McClellan's army would be fortunate indeed if it escaped the clutches of the forces which were thus enveloping it. Although Holmes reached Malvern at half past ten on the morning of the 30th with over five thousand troops, he did not occupy the hill. Huger was equally inactive on the Charles City road, and Jackson did not cross White Oak Swamp until Tuesday morning, July 1st. Thus it was that Longstreet, with Hill, was to make, on the 30th, his isolated attack, which first struck the Pennsylvania Reserves, and so it happened that by the time Lee's other corps and division commanders were ready to act, McClellan's army was safe, if fighting at Malvern Hill on much more advantageous terms could make it so.

From eleven o'clock in the morning until half past two on the 30th Longstreet waited in vain to hear that Jackson and Huger were ready to attack. At about the latter hour he heard, toward White Oak Swamp, firing, which he took for the expected signal, and ordered his batteries to give a signal in reply. The President of the Confederate States (Mr. Davis) and General Lee were with Longstreet when the battle opened, and a Union battery began sending shells into the group, the third shell killing two or three horses and wounding several men. Fifty-one Confederate regiments, six battalions, and some thirteen batteries of artillery comprised the forces of Longstreet and Hill. McCall had twelve exhausted and reduced regiments, part of another regiment, and five batteries of artillery. It is no wonder that Longstreet felt sure of dislodging his opponent. To the rear of the Reserves was the Quaker road, which must be held at all hazards, for it was the route by which McClellan's army was marching southward to the James. Running through the Reserves' battle line was the road by which Longstreet was seeking to reach the Quaker road. The firing over toward White Oak Swamp indicated that a large

part of McClellan's army was still to pass over the Quaker road, by which road Porter's corps had already moved to Malvern Hill. Holding this road was an isolated division without, as has been said, a corps commander, and without orders from the army commander except that the road must be held. In its immediate front was an enemy's force of three or four times its own numbers, and for a time it alone blocked the highway whose capture would have cut McClellan's army in two. There was in the position much of the heroic, but the times were such that deeds of heroism were merely the performance of the soldier's duty. It is true that Hooker's division, of the Third (Heintzelman's) Corps, was to the left and rear of McCall's line, but for a long while Hooker was unaware that any force held the salient position occupied by McCall. Kearny's division, also of Heintzelman's corps, was to the right of McCall, and had also been placed in position for the purpose of resisting a Confederate flank attack from the westward; but it was upon McCall's division, with its brigades on both sides of the New Market road, that the fierce assault of Longstreet first fell. General Kearny himself had time to ride over to McCall's line after Longstreet's assault was fully developed, and he returned to his own troops with the impression that the Confederate onslaught was being firmly resisted.* General Robinson, who commanded Kearny's left brigade, had time, after the attack upon McCall began, to start the construction of a barricade of rails before he saw any immediate danger of his own troops becoming involved.†

When, in the middle of the afternoon, the firing between outpost regiments of the Reserves (the First and Third) and the Confederates began, General Meade, who, as we have seen, was thus early in the war demonstrating beyond many officers of higher rank an appreciation of the vital need in warfare of ceaseless vigilance and of the equal necessity of personal attention to the details of war, rode forward to ascertain the cause of the firing, and inquired of Colonel Roberts, of the First Regiment, why he did not engage the enemy and ascertain his strength. Roberts, in reply, was telling of his efforts to draw the enemy's fire, when sharp

* Official War Records, vol. xi, part ii, p. 162.

† Ibid., p. 175.

firing was heard between the other outpost regiment (the Third) and the Confederates, whereupon Roberts's regiment was retired to its position in support of Cooper's battery, in the center of the line and on the left of the road. The Third Regiment retired upon the battle line, but, after repulsing a charge of the Ninth Virginia, was disorganized by the fire of a Union regiment in the rear, although the men in groups sought places in the battle line.

Under cover of an artillery fire the Confederates advanced a regiment, which Colonel Harvey, with the Seventh Reserves and two companies of the Eleventh Reserves, both of Meade's brigade, was ordered to charge with the bayonet. These troops drove the Confederates from the field, but, on their returning, the men of the Seventh were thrown into confusion by a grape and canister fire from Randol's United States battery which was endeavoring to cover their retirement. Another Confederate regiment, advancing on the left center, was driven back by the Twelfth Regiment.

Kemper's brigade of five Virginia regiments then advanced against McCall's left, the troops, in spite of orders to the contrary, breaking into double-quick time and uttering loud cheers, thus passing through two small woods and an intermediate field and covering a distance of perhaps one thousand yards, when suddenly, as they emerged into another field, they were confronted by the two New York German batteries that were temporarily with McCall.* The battery men fired a few wild shots, cut the harness of their horses, and rushed to the rear, breaking through and disorganizing the infantry lines.†

The Twelfth Reserves, Colonel Taggart, after being moved by McCall to the strip of timber on the left front of the line, had been divided by General Seymour, the brigade commander, and six companies had been placed in two log huts and a rail breastworks some two hundred yards in advance and to the left.‡ These six companies were in danger of being cut off from their division by Kemper's charge, and were swept back on the advancing flood to the

* Official War Records, vol. xi, part ii, p. 764.

† Sypher, p. 265.

‡ Powell's Fifth Corps, p. 138.

left and rear upon Hooker's division. McCall, who had himself halted the fleeing batterymen and sent them back to their guns, where they remained temporarily, ordered Colonel Simmons, commanding the First Brigade, to take two regiments—the Fifth, Lieutenant-Colonel Fisher, and the Eighth, Colonel Hays—to the support of the Ninth and Tenth Regiments of Seymour's brigade. Simmons faced his regiments to the left and ordered them to charge, drove the enemy before him, captured some three hundred, and fell mortally wounded. Driven back in turn after the fall of Simmons, these regiments fell back through the lines of the Second Regiment and the Bucktails, which troops lying down until the returning regiments had passed over them, then sprang to their feet, charged the Confederates, and thus gained time for the other regiments to reform in the edge of the woods in the rear. Four companies of the Twelfth Regiment joined the Second Regiment at this time, and formed in line with it. The other six companies of this regiment, which had been forced back upon Hooker, were pursued until the pursuers encountered Hooker's fire, when they in turn were rolled backward toward McCall's center, toward which point and the right, under Meade, the tide of battle now rushed. Before the firing commenced Seymour ordered Amsden's caissons to the rear, and the whereabouts of these, when ammunition ran short, could not be discovered. Amsden was therefore sent out of the firing line by General McCall, and later, on the advice of Meade, who, although at that time seriously wounded by a ball through the body, still had strength enough to think for the troops, started for the James River, where the missing caissons were recovered. Previous to this, attempts were made with continued charges to capture the guns of Cooper and Amsden. In the rear of Cooper's guns were the Ninth Reserves of Seymour's brigade and the First Reserves, Colonel Roberts. At the time that Colonel Simmons led his charge to the left, Roberts led the First Regiment in a charge upon a Confederate force advancing upon Cooper's battery. Three different charges upon these guns were driven back. The losses of the Confederates in advancing across an open field for eight hundred yards, in the face of a fierce fire of grape and canister, upon the guns of Cooper and Amsden,

were very heavy. For two hours the repeated assaults continued to end in disaster. Then Amsden fired his last charge, and had to retire because of his missing caissons, and, seeing the movement, the Confederates made still another desperate effort to capture the guns, but once more were repulsed by a counter charge of the First Regiment, which in turn was driven back by a flank charge from a fresh column of Confederates who rushed among Cooper's gunners and captured the pieces.

Just behind the ridge held by Cooper's battery lay the Ninth Reserves, Colonel C. Feger Jackson, a capable officer, who as a brigadier was to give up his life in the splendid charge of the Pennsylvania Reserves under Meade at Fredericksburg. Cooper reported the loss of his guns to Colonel Jackson, who at once determined to recapture them. He ordered a charge, and a fierce contest ensued among the pieces with bayonets, clubbed muskets, pistols, and even knives. The Confederates broke and ran, pursued by the Union troops across the field, through the woods and into the road, Private Gallagher, of Company F, killing a Confederate color bearer and bringing back the captured colors of the Tenth Alabama. The pursuing troops could not be checked until the officers seized the color bearers and forced them to return to the Union position.* A still larger force of the Confederates now advanced, and a fierce contest ensued with the Ninth Regiment, the foes being separated by a space of only fifty yards. The Ninth, however, held its line until nearly dark, when the arrival of Meagher's brigade of Sumner's corps enabled the exhausted troops of the First and Ninth to retire from the fighting line.

On the right, Lieutenant Randol, commanding Battery E of the First United States Artillery, had been ordered by General Meade to place his battery in a field on the right of the New Market road. During a lull after the first firing on the left, Meade directed Randol to fire into the woods in his front, but this evoked no reply. Soon afterward there began a series of charges upon Meade's line similar to those made upon the left and center. The Confederate regiments

* Statement of Captain John Cuthbertson, Official War Records, vol. xi. part ii, p. 396.

rushed to within fifty yards of the cannon of Randol, when, under the fire of canister and the fire of Meade's infantry, lying down between the lines of the limbers, they broke and retreated in confusion. The third Confederate advance had been turned and was being hotly pursued by the Fourth Reserves. This regiment in turn was attacked by fresh Confederate troops and driven back through Randol's battery, after capturing three of their flags and recapturing one Union flag and Lieutenant Hill, of the battery, who had been made a prisoner. Meade's weak brigade, now composed of the Fourth and Seventh Regiments and two companies of the Eleventh, was finally overpowered by superior numbers and forced from the field. The Confederates also retired from the field and abandoned Randol's guns. Urging on his troops, Meade had ridden where the fighting was fiercest, and there he received that severe wound in the body which for the rest of his life was to leave him with diminished health, and which, within the brief period of a decade, was to be the remote cause of his death. Dangerous as the wound was, the ball, as was discovered after death, indenting the liver, General Meade did not fall from his horse, but winced slightly and rode slowly to the rear, on the way stopping to advise Lieutenant Amsden to take his battery to the James River. Penetrating the body just above the hip joint, the ball had passed out near the spine, causing a loss of blood that made it impossible for him to remain upon the field as he at first set out to do. Simultaneously with this wounding, another ball had entered his arm. He was able to reach the field hospital, where Surgeon Collins dressed his wounds, and whence he was sent to the James in an ambulance. In his first important battle he was to be seriously hurt. Subsequently, at Fredericksburg, his hat would be perforated with bullets. Horses were to be killed under him. In front of Petersburg, a Whitworth shell, which, if an English contractor had not filled it with sand, would probably have killed him, indented his boot leg and benumbed the limb so as to cause him for an instant to fear to look at it, lest he should find that it had been shot off. And at the last, as he sat alone in his tent, while officers and men were celebrating the surrender of Lee, the mere change in a mood saved him from the desperate attempt

of a dashing Confederate cavalryman to capture him, run him off to the mountains, and hold him as a hostage for the safety of General Lee, then a prisoner of war. Meade was apt to be close to the firing line and he thus experienced many narrow escapes, but after the battle of New Market Cross Roads he was never again wounded. There were few experiences in war that he was not to possess, and doubtless an army commander is a better army commander, less brutally reckless of life and more apt to weigh well whether the object desired to be gained is worth the sacrifice of life necessary to gain it, because of the memory of his own wounds and suffering.

Meade's injuries were not received until evening, and the fighting was now practically over. From early afternoon until dark the Pennsylvania Reserves, without re-enforcements, had blocked the way to the cutting of McClellan's line in two. On the extreme left a part of a divided regiment had been swept back upon Hooker's lines. But the division, as a whole, reduced before the battle began by previous battles and marches to six thousand men, had done far more than any similar number of troops opposed by overwhelming forces should ever be expected to do without the protection of earthworks. On the left the division had fought so well that Kemper thought his brigade of five regiments was greatly outnumbered, although a regiment of Jenkins's brigade was between the road and Kemper's left, and the supporting troops of A. P. Hill's command were promptly ordered to sustain the first line of Confederates. Hill says that two brigades of Longstreet's were roughly handled, and Longstreet bears witness to the stubborn fighting of the Pennsylvania Reserves, when he says that his enemy contested the ground inch by inch, and, by holding his last position until dark, succeeded in withdrawing his forces under cover of the night.* On the day after the battle, Longstreet, at Webb's Church, told the Union surgeon, Marsh, who remained with the wounded, that but for the stubborn resistance of McCall's division McClellan's army would have been captured.† General Pryor spoke of

* Reports of Longstreet and Hill, Official War Records, vol. xi, part ii, pp. 750 and 838.

† Official War Records, vol. xi, part ii, p. 397.

the pluck of McCall's troops. Fitz John Porter wrote that if McCall had failed to maintain his position, McClellan's army would have been cut in two; and Meade said that it "was only the stubborn resistance offered by the division, prolonging the contest after dark and checking till that time the advance of the enemy, that enabled the concentration, during the night, of the whole army on the banks of the James River."

The day's reckoning showed serious additions to the Reserves' loss of officers. McCall, without an aid left to perform staff duty, was making a personal reconnoissance after dark, when he rode among some Confederate troops and was captured. Meade, his chief reliance during the day, had been wounded; Simmons, another of his brigadiers, killed, and Seymour had become separated from his troops. Reynolds had been captured at Gaines's Mill, and the division was, on the evening of the 30th, without a single general officer.

At Haxall's Landing, on the James, Meade was placed on a hospital boat and sent to Baltimore, and was there transferred to another boat and taken, by way of the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal, to Philadelphia. His recovery was so swift that in less than two months he rejoined the army at Harrison's Landing, where he found that the Reserves, under the command of Seymour, were about to be returned by boat to the vicinity of Fredericksburg. Meade therefore went to Washington, and as soon as he heard that the division had reached Falmouth, rejoined his command.*

In the seven days' battles the division lost three thousand and sixty-four, of which losses fourteen hundred, or nearly one half, belonged to Meade's brigade. The total losses of the army were fifteen thousand eight hundred and forty-nine, of which this single division contributed nearly a fifth. At New Market Cross Roads the Pennsylvania Reserves lost twelve hundred killed and wounded and four hundred captured, out of a force of six thousand.

* Bache's Meade, p. 144.

CHAPTER V.

POPE'S CAMPAIGN.

THE Pennsylvania Reserves, now commanded by Reynolds, with Meade commanding the reorganized First Brigade, composed of the Third, Fourth, Seventh, Eighth, and Thirteenth (First Rifles) Reserves, were the first troops of the Army of the Potomac to reach General Pope's army. On August 21, 1862, this division marched for Kelly's Ford on the Rappahannock, where it arrived on the next day; on the following day, the 23d, it joined the Army of Virginia at Rappahannock Station and thence moved to Warrenton, where the division was assigned to the First Corps, commanded by General McDowell.

On the day when the Reserves had been fighting their battle of Mechanicsville, June 26th, the forces of Fremont and Banks in the valley of the Shenandoah, and of McDowell on the Rappahannock, had been consolidated into the Army of Virginia under the command of John Pope, a major general of volunteers, the whole comprising an army of some fifty thousand men. Pope had concentrated his army east of the Blue Ridge, with Sigel, who had succeeded Fremont in command of the First Corps, at Sperryville, near Luray Gap; Banks at Little Washington; Ricketts's division of McDowell's corps at the place where the Warrenton and Sperryville turnpike crosses the Rappahannock; and King's division of the same corps at Fredericksburg. On July 11 Halleck had been made general in chief of all the Union armies. The concentration of Pope's army east of the mountains had been followed by his advance to Culpeper Court House, by the sending of Banks's corps forward on the Orange Court House road, and by the fighting on August 9th of the purposeless battle of Cedar Mountain,

the retreat of Jackson to the Rapidan on the night of the 11th, and the picketing of that stream by Pope's troops from Raccoon Ford, east of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, to the mountains on the west. On the 13th, Lee directed D. H. Hill to ascertain the truthfulness of the report of an English deserter that a part of McClellan's army had been embarked, and on the same day ordered Longstreet's corps to Gordonsville. On the next day he wrote to the Confederate Secretary of War, assigning the withdrawal of McClellan's forces from the James for the purpose of re-enforcing Pope as the cause of his own movements, and announced to General Gustavus W. Smith his intention of joining Longstreet in person.* Hood, with the brigades of Whiting and Hood, was ordered to join Longstreet, and Stuart's cavalry was sent to the same place. On the 13th, Lee had also received word of the re-enforcement of Pope by a part of Burnside's corps. His plans were already formed for the defeat of Pope, and he had talked with Longstreet of his intention to send Stuart around Pope's right and thus cut the Union army's communications. As early as the 14th, before starting to Gordonsville, he had practically decided in favor of the right flank movement.†

Lee's intention was by swift movements to defeat Pope's army before McClellan's troops could re-enforce him. It is said that when Meade reached Pope's army he exclaimed, "What is this army doing away out here? It should be falling back toward Washington." The purpose being to unite the forces of Pope and McClellan before Lee could strike Pope, it is plain that the quickest way of effecting that union was to have the two forces move toward each other and toward a point where, when united, they could effectually protect the National capital, and, if Lee would fight, give him battle under the most favorable terms. The dispatch of Halleck to McClellan, urging a prompt movement from the James, indicated that the new general in chief was fully alive to Pope's danger, and he was also aware that Pope's army was too far to the front; but when Lee's

* Official War Records, vol. xi, part iii, pp. 674-677.

† Ibid., vol. vi, part iii, p. 676.

plan had been made plain,* and Pope had fallen back of the Rappahannock, Halleck repeatedly urged him to hold fast there,† when it would have been better to have fallen back along the railroad, as Meade did when in command of the army in the fall of 1863, and threatened by a flanking movement similar to the one Lee was now about to undertake.

Lee had already fully considered both right flank and left flank operations, and when compelled to abandon the movement he preferred by reason of Pope's retirement behind the Rappahannock, he was quick to put the other in operation. Longstreet was at Kelly's Ford on the 20th, and Jackson and Stuart at Beverly Ford on the 21st. The next day Jackson marched northward to Sulphur Springs, ten miles north of the railroad crossing over the river, and there in the afternoon crossed the stream. Instead of falling back, as Meade did in the next year, to protect the railroad which by this flank movement Lee threatened to cut in Pope's rear, Pope at first decided, with Halleck's approval, to advance across the Rappahannock and assail Longstreet in the flank and rear. But during the night of the 22d and 23d a rain storm made the river unfordable, and Sigel's corps was therefore sent to Sulphur Springs in search of the isolated Jackson, who, if he could not be found at that place, was to be sought at Waterloo, still farther up the river. Sigel was to be supported by the corps of Banks and Reno, and McDowell was ordered back to Warrenton, from which place he could readily join Sigel either at Waterloo or Sulphur Springs. This was on the 23d, the day that the Pennsylvania Reserves, after their march from Falmouth, had succeeded in overtaking the moving army. On the night of the 21st, in a pouring rain and in pitch darkness, the division had searched for the right road until two o'clock in the morning. After three hours' rest it marched, on one of the hottest days of the scorching summer, twenty-seven miles to Kelly's Ford. On the 23d it arrived at Rappahannock Station, just as the rear of the army was leaving, and at night it bivouacked three miles from Warrenton,

* Pope had captured Stuart's adjutant general bearing a letter from Lee explaining his plans.

† Ropes's *The Army under Pope*, p. 36.

reaching that place on the 24th, when it was posted on the heights a mile south of the town.*

On the same day Sigel, with his supports, advanced to Sulphur Springs and Waterloo Bridge, to find that Jackson had fallen back across the river to Jefferson, from which place, on the morning of the 25th, he started upon his long flank march by way of Amissville, Orleans, Salem, White Plains, and Thoroughfare Gap with the purpose of striking Pope's railroad communications at Manassas. Pope was trying, under his instructions, to accomplish the difficult and here impossible undertaking of maintaining two lines of communication—one with Fredericksburg to the southeast, and the other the Orange and Alexandria Railroad leading to Washington—and with the greatest reluctance, he says, he undertook to make his communications with Fredericksburg secure.† He decided, therefore, to move back a part of his army toward the Rappahannock on the morning of the 25th. He feared that the river would again be fordable, and under his instructions it was necessary for him to cover the fords. He then purposed to wait until Halleck was ready for a new forward movement. ‡ Still he was uneasy at being tied to Burnside's forces at Fredericksburg. Halleck had told McClellan that when the two armies were united McClellan was to have command, but Pope had understood that Halleck himself intended to command. By evening of the 25th Pope was convinced that Lee had marched his whole army into the Shenandoah Valley,* but on the evening of the 26th, McDowell, from Warrenton, sent him word that the Confederates were moving in the direction of Thoroughfare Gap, and he was soon to have more definite information of Jackson's whereabouts. By this time re-enforcements from McClellan's army had reached Pope. Heintzelman's divisions of Hooker and Kearny, ten thousand five hundred men, reached Warrenton Junction on the 25th. Of the two divisions of Porter's Fifth Corps, Morrell was at Kelly's Ford and Sykes near by on the evening of

* Report of Meade, Official War Records, vol. xii, part ii, p. 397.

† Pope's Report.

‡ Pope to Halleck, Official War Records, vol. xii, part ii, p. 64.

* Pope to McDowell, *ibid.*, p. 67.

the same day. Piatt's brigade was added to it on the 27th, and Pope then had an army of seventy-five thousand men.

Jackson had completed his half circle around Pope's army with his force of twenty-five thousand troops when, toward evening of the 26th, he reached Bristoe station on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, and Trimble and Stuart captured a large quantity of stores and some prisoners at Manassas Junction. Jackson had placed himself between Pope's army and Washington, while McDowell, in pursuance of Pope's directions, was endeavoring to ascertain whether the Confederates were not on the other side of the Rappahannock at Waterloo Bridge. Then about 8 P. M. came a dispatch from the operator at Manassas telling of the presence of Jackson's troops at that place, and communication with the North beyond Warrenton Junction was cut off.* At seven in the evening, Pope, still unaware that the enemy was in his rear, but knowing that the Confederates were on his right flank, contemplated a concentration of his army upon Warrenton, ordering Porter to move northward from Bealeton through Fayetteville to the vicinity of Warrenton, near which place was McDowell with his own corps, the corps of Sigel, and Reynolds's division of the Pennsylvania Reserves; but at four o'clock the next morning, with full realization of what had happened, he directed Porter to march straight for Warrenton Junction. McDowell was ordered to move his Third Corps, the corps of Sigel, and the Pennsylvania Reserves on the Warrenton turnpike to Gainesville. Heintzelman, with Kearny's division of his own corps, and the Ninth Corps troops under Reno, was directed to take the road from Catlett's Station to Greenwich. Porter was directed to remain at Warrenton Junction until Banks's arrival, when he was ordered to move in the direction of Greenwich and Gainesville. Banks was instructed to cover the movement of the trains to Manassas Junction by the road south of the railroad, and to take position behind Cedar Run.†

Hooker's division of Heintzelman's corps was directed to move straight along the railroad from Warrenton Junc-

* Official War Records, vol. xii, part iii, p. 668.

† Ibid., vol. xii, part ii, p. 70.

tion toward Manassas. Four miles west of Bristoe Station, Hooker, on the afternoon of the 27th, struck Ewell's division of Jackson's command, and after a severe contest Ewell fell back of Broad Run.

With Sigel's corps in advance and Meade's brigade leading the division of Pennsylvania Reserves, which troops were the advance of McDowell's corps, that portion of Pope's army which had been the right when facing the Rappahannock, but which now on the march in search of Jackson had become the left, marched along the Warrenton Pike, Meade's brigade bivouacking that night at Buckland Mills on Broad Run. When, on the 28th, Sigel's corps, to carry out the purpose of advancing in line of battle in echelon as to McDowell's corps, moved off to the right in the direction of Manassas Railroad, Meade's brigade became the advance of the troops remaining on the turnpike. Meade was in the act of forming his brigade in line of battle when the enemy fired upon him with shot and shell from two guns posted on the heights near Groveton.* Meade completed the formation of his battle line across the road. Cooper's battery soon silenced the enemy's cannon, but not until Meade had suffered some loss. The brigade then advanced in line of battle through woods and across ravines until the plains of Manassas were reached, the purpose of McDowell's movement being to sweep the country east of the Manassas Gap Railroad in the hope of striking Jackson somewhere in the course of the movement. McDowell had left Ricketts's division east of Thoroughfare Gap in order that the union of Longstreet's forces, which were following upon Jackson's route, and the forces of Jackson might be delayed.

But during the night previous to McDowell's march to Manassas—that is, on the night of the 27th and on the morning of the 28th—Jackson had retired and taken up a position on the westerly side of Bull Run, on the field where the first battle at that place was fought, a field which was twice the scene of desperate battles, and which escaped from being the scene of a third one when Meade commanded the army

* Reports of Reynolds and Meade, Official War Records, vol. xii, part ii, pp. 392, 396.

in the next year, largely because disaster had already twice overtaken the Union armies there, and because of the unfavorable influence these memories would have upon the troops, although it was almost the only field adapted to defensive fighting in that vicinity.

On the north side of the Warrenton turnpike, therefore, on the 28th, Jackson, in a favorable position, was waiting for Lee, with the rest of the Confederate army, to join him. Reynolds had thought that the attack upon Meade was merely a demonstration to cover a wagon train, which was seen moving off on the Sudley Springs Road,* so that when the enemy seemed to withdraw the march was continued toward Manassas, where McDowell heard from Pope that Jackson was behind Bull Run, and was directed at 4.15 P. M., as was most of the army, to march upon Centreville with the idea of inclosing Jackson by movements from both the east and west. In pursuance of this order Meade's brigade, with the division, took the Sudley Springs road toward the Warrenton pike, and advanced until seven o'clock in the evening, when heavy firing was heard to the left and front in the vicinity of Groveton, and was supposed by Reynolds to indicate that a part of McDowell's corps (King's division) was engaged.

Jackson, supposing that Pope was retreating, had sent a column south on the Sudley Springs road, and had attacked King moving eastward on the pike. The firing to the left was between Ricketts's—posted by McDowell with the idea of checking Longstreet's eastward progress from Thoroughfare Gap—and Longstreet's advance. Reynolds, already moving that way, hastened his division toward the sound of the firing, and riding ahead in advance of his troops saw General King, and promised to bring up his division in the morning. Reynolds, however, did not get back to his troops until daylight next morning, and Meade, after marching until after dark and until the firing had ceased, being the ranking officer, bivouacked the division near the Conrad House. King's and Ricketts's divisions fell back to Manassas Junction and Bristoe, respectively, during the night, and there was now nothing to pre-

* Reynolds's Report.

vent the union of Longstreet and Jackson. In moving from Gainesville, at first toward Manassas and then toward Centreville, if General Pope was not taking the steps necessary to catch Jackson, which his left wing was entirely too far south to do, at least he was gradually getting his army between his enemy and Washington, and making sure of a line of retreat, even if he had lost for a time his line of communications. But as for catching Jackson, the nut had already slipped out of the nut cracker, and the hand wielding that implement was by no means a steady one or the eye directing it certain, for between Pope's lack of knowledge as to Jackson's exact whereabouts, his desire to crush him, and his other desire to get between the enemy and Washington, as manifested by the movements toward Manassas, and later upon Centreville, the Army of Virginia was drawn this way and that way in useless marches, which first permitted Jackson to escape from between the two wings of Pope's army and then vainly attempted to correct the mistake.

When the divisions of King and Ricketts, on the night of the 28th, fell back to the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, Reynolds, who was perfectly aware of the movement and had heard King moving off, determined to stay where troops seemed to be needed. Sigel had pushed northward to the Warrenton pike on the Sudley Springs road, skirmishing on the way, and Reynolds, as we have seen, had marched to the sound of the guns. On the morning of the 29th Reynolds closed up with Sigel's command, the division being formed on the left of Sigel's corps next the division of Schenck. Meade's brigade, with the division, moved northward with the advancing line of Sigel, now engaged along the whole front, until Meade had covered the Warrenton pike within a half mile of Groveton, where Meade posted Cooper's battery on the ridge supported by three of Meade's regiments, the Fourth, Seventh, and Eighth. Meade posted the Third Regiment along the pike, and sent the First Rifles up that highway as skirmishers. Sigel had orders from Pope to attack at daylight, with the hope that he would hold Jackson there until Fitz John Porter's Fifth Corps could be sent from the Orange and Alexandria Railroad by road and field immediately westward

of the Manassas Gap Railroad to a position on Jackson's right flank, McDowell could take his position on the pike, and Pope himself could press westward, from Centreville along the Warrenton pike, the divisions of Kearny and Hooker of Heintzelman's corps and the two divisions of Reno's corps. Porter took the road just west of the railroad leading toward Gainesville. McDowell, with the divisions of King and Ricketts, took the Sudley Springs road in the hope of establishing connection with Sigel and Reynolds. But Porter only got as far as Dawkins's Branch, where he found his farther advance opposed by the right of Longstreet's command, which had already effected union with Jackson, and there Porter remained during the day, his ten thousand men holding, it is true, the attention of the divisions of Jones and Wilcox of Longstreet's command, which were posted south of the Warrenton pike, but taking no active part in the battle of the day from which, as well as from the rest of Pope's army, he was completely isolated.

Meade's brigade had been advanced across the Warrenton pike with the idea of turning the enemy's right flank, but part of Schenck's division of Sigel's corps was withdrawn to support the hardly pressed Milroy, and Meade was then compelled to retire across the pike, where he posted his brigade on a plateau, near the Lewis House, overlooking Groveton and the pike leading to it. This position was held until dark, when the repulse on his right of King's division, now commanded by Hatch, of McDowell's corps, which division had arrived between five and six o'clock and attacked part of Hood's division of Longstreet's forces, made it advisable for Meade to withdraw his brigade to the position occupied by the rest of the division. The attack upon Jackson in the morning, and the attacks upon Jackson and Longstreet continued in the afternoon with the troops of Pope, which arrived by way of Centreville, were without permanent success in spite of most gallant fighting, and the battle of Groveton ended with only temporary gains for the Union arms, like the charge of Grover's brigade of Hooker's division, which carried the railroad embankment behind which Jackson's line extended, and Kearny's and Stevens's equally gallant assault upon the Confederate left. Pope

had been the assailant throughout, but at the close of the conflict the enemy remained in possession of his chosen line, to which he retired after the contests of the day.

It was this retirement, no doubt, that gave Pope and several of his subordinates the impression that the Confederates were retreating and that the Army of Virginia had won a victory, and it was the erroneous idea thus gained that caused Pope to issue at noon on the next day, August 30th, the orders that led to the second battle of Bull Run. At five o'clock on the morning of that day Pope telegraphed to Halleck * that the enemy had been driven from the field, badly used up, and was thought to be retreating toward the mountains; that he himself had lost eight thousand men, killed and wounded; that the enemy had lost at least two to one, and that he would push matters as soon as Fitz John Porter's corps came up from Manassas. At noon he issued an order † assigning McDowell to the "command of the pursuit," and directing Porter to push forward on the Warrenton turnpike, followed by the divisions of King (Hatch) and Reynolds. Ricketts was to pursue the Haymarket road, which is north of and parallel to the turnpike, and was to be followed by Heintzelman's corps. Pope's headquarters were to be on the pike. The movement here indicated was, of course, westward. The delusion under which Pope labored was to be quickly dissipated by the soldierly Reynolds. He had been ordered to post his division on the left of the pike near the Henry House Hill, where the division would become the pivot in the attack of Porter on his right. Meade's brigade advanced along the Warrenton pike with the Bucktail regiment in front as skirmishers. In the thick woods opposite Groveton the resistance to the Bucktails became so great that two additional regiments—the First of Seymour's brigade and the Seventh of Meade's—were advanced in support. Reynolds was convinced that the enemy was not in retreat, ‡ but was posted in force on his left flank, and at great personal risk he made an observation which convinced him of the correctness of his surmise.

* Official War Records, vol. xii, part iii, p. 741.

† Ibid.

‡ Reynolds's Report, Official War Records, vol. xii, part ii, p. 394.

He reported his discovery to the corps commander, and the division was formed to resist the threatened flank attack. In the meantime the advance of Porter and Hatch on the north side of the turnpike had reached the embankment of the old railroad cut, but could push Jackson's troops no farther. Jackson, fearful of the outcome, called upon Lee for help, but Longstreet, on Jackson's right, who was directed to send the re-enforcements asked for, merely placed cannon where their fire enfiladed the troops in Jackson's front. Within a quarter of an hour the attacking troops began to retire. With this retirement of the divisions of Morell and Hatch, Reynolds's division, about three o'clock, was ordered by Pope to cross the field to the rear of Porter and there form a line behind which the retiring troops could be rallied. Only the brigades of Meade and Seymour participated in this mistaken and useless movement, for before the Third Brigade—which, owing to the sickness of General Jackson, was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Henderson—could join in the movement the threatened attack of the Confederates on the Union left was made, and Colonel Henderson, to oppose this attack, was compelled to form his brigade with three batteries of artillery on the ground where they found themselves. The brigades of Meade and Seymour simply became entangled in the confusion caused by the retirement of the Union right, and the enemy came near to gaining possession of the pike and cutting off a portion of the Union army, by advancing from the Confederate right where there was nothing but scattered troops to resist this movement. The false movement had left Anderson in a most difficult situation, but his brigade, though attacked in front and flank, maintained its position until it was overwhelmed by numbers, as was also Warren's brigade of Sykes's Reserves, when it retired, taking up new positions wherever the ground offered favorable opportunities for doing so. Here Kerns lost his four guns and Cooper his caissons. Pope had placed nearly all his troops north of the turnpike, and it was now apparent that they were not in position to resist the main attack of the Confederates developing on Pope's left. Reynolds was immediately directed by an aid of General Pope's to march with the two brigades and one battery of artillery, which had

participated in the mistaken movement to the north of the pike, back to the Henry House Hill and take position to the right of the house. The brigades of Meade and Seymour were deployed in line of battle on the plateau there, by which time the enemy's advance had crossed the Sudley Springs road in the endeavor to capture the strong position at the Henry House, as the similar position at Bald Hill had already been taken.

The brigades of Meade and Seymour charged down the slope of the Henry House Hill toward the Sudley Springs road, driving before them and into the woods such of the enemy as had crossed the road. "The charge was made at a most critical period of the day," is the opinion expressed by Meade in his report, and he goes on to make it clear why this was so. He says that the enemy had repulsed the attack made by the Union troops on the right flank, and had himself assumed the offensive on the Union left; his infantry had emerged from the woods, had already captured one battery and was advancing to the Henry House ridge, which, if he had succeeded in gaining, might have caused a material alteration in the fortunes of the day. It was the good fortune of the Reserves to be brought into action at this moment, and by their gallant bearing and firm advance to compel the enemy to retire to the shelter of the woods, where he was held in check until the close of the action.*

General Meade was not without views as to the larger tactics of the three days' fighting. Before the McDowell Court of Inquiry he testified that he felt bound to say that, at the time, he thought the movement from the Warrenton pike toward Manassas, on the 28th, injudicious when there was evidence that the enemy was in the vicinity of Groveton, where, on the morning of that day, his own brigade on the march from Buckland Mills to Gainesville had been fired upon by a Confederate battery from Groveton heights.† And if Meade was forming opinions upon the conduct of battles and campaigns, his superior officers were forming opinions of him. At New Market Cross Roads he had been

* Meade's Report, Official War Records, vol. xii, part ii, p. 398.

† Official War Records, vol. xii, part i, p. 198.

the mainstay of General McCall, who thus early in the war commented with appreciative amusement upon the vigor with which Meade protested against his troops in the fighting line being subjected to the fire of Union batteries connected with divisions far to the rear, whose commanders afterward took upon themselves a larger share than they deserved of the credit of the critical battle at that place. On the night of the battle of Second Bull Run, General Fitz John Porter wrote to General McClellan: "The Pennsylvania Reserves did beautifully. They show the advantage of being well led by Reynolds, Meade, Seymour, and Jackson." In his statement before the Court of Inquiry, already referred to, General McDowell said that he had received from a general officer a most confused account of how matters were going on the left, an account which gave him nothing whatever on which he would be justified in acting, and was in doubt as to the course to be taken, when he received "a clear and definite message from that intelligent as well as gallant officer, General Meade, on which I knew I could rely, and immediately sent re-enforcements forward." *

The re-enforcements sent to Meade consisted of Buchanan's First Brigade of regular infantry, and these troops relieved the two weak brigades of the Pennsylvania Reserves of the duty of holding the advanced position which the charge of the brigades of Meade and Seymour had won. Meade's horse, "Old Baldy," whose head is preserved by Meade Post of Philadelphia, was wounded in this charge.

The Confederates did not capture the Henry House Hill. The retreat of Pope's army across Bull Run was made secure by the holding of this hill, and in saving this position Meade's brigade had a most important share. A battalion of the Bucktails of his brigade crossed the Stone Bridge over Bull Run about one o'clock in the night. They had been assigned by McDowell to the duty of covering the retreat. After they had crossed the bridge it was destroyed. The losses of the Confederates in the three days of fighting were placed at seventy-two hundred and forty-two killed

* Official War Records, vol. xii, part i, p. 320.

and wounded.* Lee claimed to have captured seven thousand prisoners, many of them no doubt wounded men left on the field. Statistics of the Union losses are not readily accessible, and are to be estimated from tables covering the entire campaign, but it is certain that Pope's losses were far greater than Lee's. In the operations under Pope from August 16th to September 2d, the total losses in Meade's brigade were twelve killed, ninety-six wounded, and seventy-seven missing.

After dark on the 30th the Pennsylvania Reserves followed Sykes's division on the Centreville road as far as Cub Run, where they bivouacked for the night on the east bank. The next day they marched to Centreville, when and where the thirty thousand men of Banks, Sumner, and Franklin joined the army, and were then returned to Cub Run to relieve Stevens's division. Here they remained during the night of the 31st. On the enemy showing a disposition to force the passage of the stream, Meade deployed his brigade on each side of the road on the crest of the ridge, and Ransom's battery opened upon the opposite ridge held by the enemy. The command was kept under arms all night, but on the morning of September 1st, the enemy having disappeared, the march was resumed by way of Centreville and Fairfax Court House to the neighborhood of the Arlington House, and on the afternoon of the 4th camp was made north of Munson's hill.

Finally, with much peril to the Union cause, and with many losses, Pope had been driven back of Bull Run, where he had much better have gone voluntarily in the first place and waited for his enemy to attack. The outcome of his campaign was an inglorious ending of his career as commander of the Army of Virginia. Instead of absorbing the Army of the Potomac, that army was now to absorb the Army of Virginia, and the President, in spite of the protests of his most active advisers, was compelled to turn to McClellan again. Pope disappeared from the scene, but the military authorities at Washington who controlled, only to cripple, the generals in the field learned nothing from Pope's failure, and the next year, when Meade avoided Pope's

* Official War Records, vol. xii, part ii, p. 562.

blunders, they set up the cry that Meade was on the back track again. Unfortunately they were not to be dispensed with as readily as Pope was retired. Nevertheless Halleck, the general in chief, should have shared Pope's fate. Possessing much of the skill of the lawyer and disputant, he was without military ability. The Secretary of War, like many other men who exercise vast power, was not always great enough to refrain from the use of his authority in matters where his knowledge and experience did not qualify him to form the soundest views. Acting with these military authorities were politicians like Wade and Chandler, men whose patriotism was of the exuberant kind, whose judgment in military matters was without value, but whose personal energy impelled them to have a controlling hand, if possible, in the conduct of the war. And behind the executive and political authorities was a Republican form of government adapted the least of any to making war successfully and with economy of effort and life, a clamorous press, and a people ready and able to express their offhand convictions at the polls.

CHAPTER VI.

SOUTH MOUNTAIN.

THE opposition on the part of Secretaries Stanton and Chase to the restoration of McClellan to command was so great that they were said, by Postmaster-General Blair, to have declared that they would prefer the loss of the National capital.* But President Lincoln thought that McClellan was better qualified than any one else to restore the organization of the defeated Union army and to resist the threatened invasion of Lee. On the 2d of September, by a verbal order, the President directed McClellan to undertake the defense of Washington and to meet and take command of the retreating army. On the 5th, Pope was relieved from duty with the army, and McClellan, who had remained in nominal command of the Army of the Potomac, but practically without troops to command, was once more in a position of authority and responsibility. Abandoning his position in front of Washington, Lee during the latter part of the first week in September crossed the fords of the Potomac to the eastward of the Blue Ridge in the neighborhood of Leesburg, his immediate purpose being to threaten Washington and Baltimore, and thus compel the withdrawal of the Union forces from the south side of the river, where they threatened Lee's communications. Lee then proposed to establish communications with Richmond by way of the Shenandoah Valley, to move into Western Maryland, and to threaten Pennsylvania.† The division of D. H. Hill was in the advance. The army encamped in the vicinity of Frederick behind the Monocacy. Finding that the ten thousand

* Letters quoted in McClellan's Own Story, p. 545.

† Lee's Report.

or eleven thousand men under Colonel Miles at Harper's Ferry and vicinity had not been withdrawn in consequence of his own northward movement, and that a small Union force still remained at Martinsburg, and thinking that it would be unsafe to leave so many Union troops within striking distance of his line of communications, Lee, from his headquarters near Frederick, on the 9th, directed * Jackson on the following day to recross the Potomac to Martinsburg, capture the Union troops there, and intercept those which might endeavor to escape to Harper's Ferry. McLaws, with his own division and that of R. H. Anderson, was ordered to follow, as far as Middletown only, Longstreet's command, which was ordered to Boonsborough on the Hagerstown road. At Middletown McLaws was to take the route to Harper's Ferry, possess himself of Maryland Heights, and endeavor to capture the Union forces at Harper's Ferry and vicinity. General Walker, with his division, was directed to cross the Potomac at Cheek's Ford, ascend the lower bank to Lovettsville, and take possession of Loudoun Heights. After accomplishing their purposes, Jackson, McLaws, and Walker were directed to rejoin the main army under Lee either at Boonsborough or Hagerstown.

With this minor expedition undertaken by Lee and the resulting capture of Colonel Miles's forces, this narrative is not concerned beyond the necessity of indicating the weakening of Lee's army, which McClellan had now succeeded in locating. McClellan started from Washington, his left on the Potomac, his right reaching out to the north, his plan being to cover Baltimore as well as Washington, with an effective army of about seventy thousand. The corps of the army were commanded as follows: First, Hooker; second, Sumner; sixth, Franklin; ninth, Burnside; twelfth, Mansfield. Burnside was in command of the right wing, the First and Ninth Corps; Sumner the center, Second and Twelfth Corps; and Franklin the left wing, the Sixth Corps and Couch's division of the Fourth Corps. Pleasonton commanded the cavalry. On the 12th, the divisions of Morell and Sykes of the Fifth Corps, under Porter, numbering about thirteen thousand men, were sent to

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part ii, p. 603.

McClellan. Lee's army probably numbered less than sixty thousand.

By the 13th of September, Lee, at Hagerstown, had become uneasy over the absence of so considerable a portion of his army. On that day he wrote to McLaws urging haste, saying that Jackson would be at Harper's Ferry at noon to co-operate with him, and expressing the view that McClellan had no doubt occupied Frederick and was following in the rear of the main Confederate army. He placed Longstreet's position at Hagerstown, and D. H. Hill's at the junction of the Sharpsburg and Hagerstown roads, a mile or two west of Boonsborough. He cautioned McLaws against a possible advance of the Union forces by the main road from Frederick to Harper's Ferry, and expressed a desire for a speedy concentration of the whole Confederate army.*

McClellan in person left Washington on the 7th. The army was partly reorganized on the march. By the 13th the bulk of McClellan's army was near Frederick, and in the abandoned Confederate camps was found on that day a copy of Lee's order assigning to each part of his army the movements for the 10th, and outlining the plan for the capture of Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry. The order was at once carried to McClellan, and the fact that McClellan was in possession of Lee's plans was promptly made known to the Confederate general by a southern sympathizer, who overheard the conversation going on at McClellan's headquarters when Lee's order was brought to the Union general.

At noon on the 13th McClellan sent the following message to the President: "I hope for a great success if the plans of the rebels remain unchanged. I have all the plans of the rebels, and will catch them in their own trap." † To Halleck he sent word that the army would move forward early the next morning and by forced marches endeavor to relieve Miles at Harper's Ferry, and that portions of Burnside's and Franklin's corps would advance on the evening of the 13th. On that day a portion of Rodman's division of Reno's corps (the Ninth) advanced in support of Pleasanton's cavalry, which was reconnoitering the South Mountain passes, and the remainder of the division was sent to

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part ii, p. 606. † Ibid., p. 281.

report to Colonel Rush, in command of the force ordered to communicate with General Franklin by way of Jefferson.* Later in the day Reno's corps was ordered to move to Middletown "immediately," and Hooker's corps was ordered to march at daylight next morning to the same place.

On the morning of the 14th, also, Franklin's corps marched from a point three miles east of Jefferson to Burkittsville, at Crampton's Pass over the South Mountain, five miles south of Turner's Pass, toward which latter place and Fox's Gap, between Turner's Pass and Crampton's Pass, the corps of Hooker and Reno were advancing. The old Sharpsburg road runs through Fox's Gap, the National turnpike through Turner's Pass, and by the movements through these mountain passes and Crampton's Gap McClellan threatened the rear of McLaws at Maryland Heights, to divide Lee's army and to cut the communications of the main part of it under Lee himself.

By the 13th Lee was fully aware of his perilous situation, but having scattered his army so widely it was impossible for him to concentrate it in time to prevent the passing of the South Mountain range by his opponent, even if he desired to give battle at the mountain passes, which it does not appear was his intention. Nevertheless he now set about attempting a resistance to the westward crossing of the mountains by McClellan's army. On the night of the 13th he determined to return Longstreet's command from Hagerstown eastward to the South Mountain in order to strengthen the infantry of D. H. Hill and Stuart's cavalry, which forces had been left to hold the passes. On approaching Boonsborough on his return to the mountains Lee received a message from Hill that he was being strongly pressed and required re-enforcements.

On the Union side the passage of the mountain at Turner's Gap was attempted by two movements: one to the left of the main gap by Reno's corps of Burnside's right wing of the army, and the other to the right of the gap by Hooker's corps of the same wing. These movements were over two roads leading to the left and right, both of them diverging from the National pike at Bolivar, and both

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 416.

BATTLE-FIELDS OF SOUTH MOUNTAIN

SHOWING THE POSITIONS OF THE
FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES

AND OF THE ENEMY

during the battle fought by the

ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

under the Command of

Maj. Gen. GEORGE B. McCLELLAN

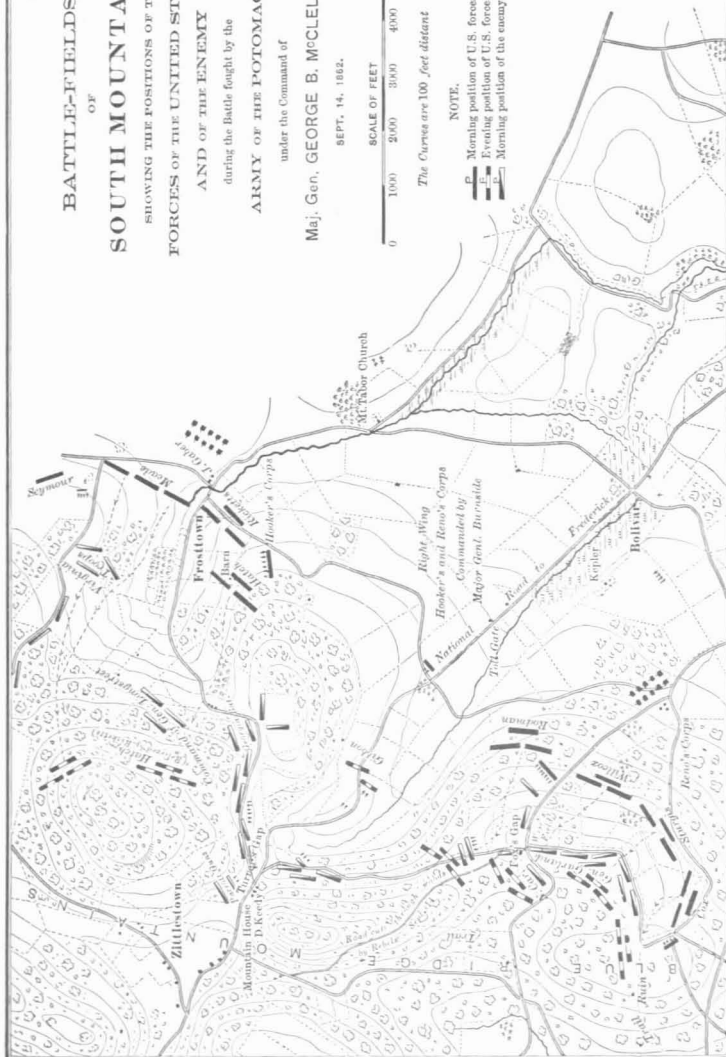
SEPT. 14, 1862.



The Curves are 100 feet distant

NOTE.

- Morning position of U.S. forces
- Evening position of U.S. forces
- Morning position of the enemy



ENGRAVED BY BURWAY & CO., N. Y.

of them, after winding up to the crest, returning to the turnpike near Turner's Gap. The use of the two side roads compelled Lee to divide his small force in order to hold the approaches on his right and left, while at the same time he had to guard against a possible advance on the National pike at his center. On the 13th the Confederates had retired before Pleasonton's cavalry to Turner's Gap, blowing up the bridge over the Catoctin Creek, and Pleasonton sent a force of dismounted cavalry up the mountain on the right of the turnpike.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 14th Cox's division of Reno's corps moved from Middletown to the support of Pleasonton, by the road to the left of the turnpike. Scammon's brigade, supported by Crook's, was to feel the enemy and ascertain whether the crest was held by any considerable force. The fact that the crest was so held was soon ascertained, and the division was ordered to assault. Advancing in the face of a galling fire, before noon the crest in their front was gained by the brigades of Scammon and Crook. During the next two hours the divisions of Willcox, Sturgis, and Rodman arrived. Willcox took position on Cox's right. Sturgis supported Willcox, and one of Rodman's brigades, commanded by Colonel Fairchild, was posted on the extreme left in line of battle with Cox's division, while Colonel Harland's brigade, under the personal supervision of General Rodman, was posted on the right. While Cox's supports were coming up the enemy made vigorous efforts to regain the crest, and Cox's troops were subjected to both the fire in front and that from the Confederate batteries posted on the opposite side of the gorge through which the National pike to Hagerstown runs. To await the arrival of his support, Cox, who commanded a force probably of three thousand men, and was opposed, until the Confederate supports came up, by Garland's brigade of one thousand, withdrew to a less advanced position on the hillside in the open fields, where his men were out of the reach of the Confederate guns.*

Hill says that the advance of Reno's corps was made at five o'clock, and Cox says it was made soon after the ar-

* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. ii, p. 567.

rival of Rodman's division, which was after four o'clock;* but the summit at the Mountain House at Turner's Gap, toward which the Union line had pressed, after gaining a position on the crest, had not been carried when darkness fell.

Reno's corps was composed of twenty-nine regiments of infantry, three companies of cavalry, and eight batteries of artillery. Opposed to it were the brigades of Garland, Anderson, and Ripley of D. H. Hill's division, and the brigades of Anderson, Drayton, Hood, and Law of Longstreet's command, in all composing twenty-three regiments, with artillery and some cavalry. In such a place cavalry was nearly useless.† Farther to the right, Gibbon's brigade of Hatch's division of Hooker's corps was moved directly upon the National pike, which was held by Colquitt's brigade of Hill's division.

On the right of Burnside's line, in which part of the battle of South Mountain Meade was an important actor, after Reno's division had passed to the front toward Fox's Gap, Hooker's corps, composed of the divisions of Meade, Ricketts, and Hatch, was ordered by Burnside to move by the road to the right of the National pike with the object of turning the enemy's left and gaining his rear. General Reynolds had left the army on the 12th, to go to Harrisburg to organize the defense to the threatened invasion of Pennsylvania, and Meade succeeded him in the command of the division. Reynolds desired to take the division, which originally had been organized for the defense of Pennsylvania in just such emergencies, into the State, but Halleck would not consent. Meade's division led the corps in the march to the right of Turner's Gap. After advancing a mile on the road to the right of the turnpike Meade turned across a field, and moved to an advantageous position in support of Cooper's battery, which was placed upon a high hill to the right of the turnpike and near the base of the mountain. A Confederate battery on the mountain side opened

* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. ii, p. 588.

† Stuart says he went to Crampton's Gap, leaving the Jeff Davis Legion at Turner's Gap and Rosser with a detachment at Braddock's Gap. War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 817.

on Meade's column, and Cooper threw twenty-five or thirty case shot among the enemy, but ceased firing by Hooker's order so that the infantry might advance.* The regiment of First Rifles of Meade's division was thrown forward as skirmishers, and, when it became apparent that the Confederates held the heights in force, Hooker directed Meade to move farther to the right, in the hope of outflanking the enemy and then to assault. Parallel to and east of the mountain ridge held by the Confederates was another ridge, separated from the first one at the turnpike crossing by a deep valley, but at the upper end the depression was small. A road led along the second ridge, and over this road Meade sent Seymour's brigade with directions to push forward and feel the enemy.

Meade's division was now on the extreme right of the attacking force. Hatch's division was formed on his left, and Ricketts was held in reserve. Meade's division had been on the extreme right of McClellan's army at the battle of Mechanicsville. It was to be on the extreme left at Fredericksburg, and now, as in the last-named battle, it was about to make under Meade's personal leadership a daring and highly successful assault. The battle lines at South Mountain ran north and south, as they did at the other battles fought north of the Potomac, Antietam, and Gettysburg, and as they did in the battles fought by this division at Mechanicsville and New Market Cross Roads.

Seymour reported to Meade that he could take the crest of the first ridge, and could then advance across the ravine to the second ridge; and Meade immediately ordered him to do it. At the same time Meade deployed his third brigade (Gallagher's) parallel to the mountain, and his second brigade (Magilton's) on the same line, but down in the valley, and when the line of battle was completely formed ordered the whole to advance. Seymour soon gained the crest of the first ridge and then moved in the same direction as the other two brigades, which advanced steadily to the foot of the mountain, where they encountered the Confederate in-

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 271. Cooper opened fire at 3.30 P. M.

fantry, and the action became general along the whole line. In Meade's division were thirteen regiments of infantry and three batteries of artillery, but the third regiment of Magilton's brigade was detached to watch the road and was not engaged. Opposed to Meade, and posted on two detached peaks, was the brigade of Rodes of D. H. Hill's division, a brigade of five regiments, and these were later re-enforced by the four regiments of Evans's brigade of Hood's division brought up by Longstreet in person, who also sent Kemper's and Pickett's brigades of the same division to oppose Hatch, who up to that time had been advancing entirely unopposed.* Just at the close of the action Duryea's brigade of the Reserve division was sent to Meade's support, but only one regiment of Duryea's had time to open fire before the enemy retired. Evans's Confederate brigade, however, participated more actively in the battle, on the right of Rodes.† Meade's advance is described from various points of view. In his report, made in 1862, the Confederate General Hill says: "A division of Yankees was advancing in handsome style against Rodes."‡ Long after, in describing the battle, he wrote: "Meade was one of our most dreaded foes; he was always in deadly earnest, and he eschewed all trifling. He had under him brigade commanders, officers, and soldiers worthy of his leadership."* Hooker, his corps commander, said: "Meade moved forward with great vigor, and soon became engaged, driving everything before him. Every step of the advance was resisted stubbornly; . . . and, besides, he had great natural obstacles to overcome, which impeded his advance but did not check it. From its great elevation and the dense smoke which rose over the top of the forest, the progress of the battle in this part of the field was watched with anxious interest for miles around, and while it elicited the applause of the spectators, they could not fail to admire

* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. ii, p. 574.

† Captain S. A. Durham, commanding Twenty-third South Carolina Infantry, Evans's brigade, says his right was on the left of small road leading from the turnpike. Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 949.

‡ Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 1021.

* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. ii, p. 574.

the steadiness, resolution, and courage of the brave officers and men engaged." *

Meade's assault was at first through a belt of woods, beyond which there was open ground to the summit, and beyond this open ground the two detached elevations, upon which Rodes's regiments were posted, were in plain view. Up and across the cleared ground the advance was made almost with the precision of a parade. Everywhere the officers could be heard by the foe repeating the orders, as gaps were made in the ranks by the Confederate fire, "Close up!" and "Forward!" The slope was precipitous and rugged, and would have been difficult of ascent for troops even in the absence of a foe. The enemy took every advantage offered by the rocks and trees on the slope and toward the top. Meade's right brigade (Seymour's) first gained the crest of the hill, firing a few volleys, and then advanced with bayonets leveled and the men cheering. Seymour's attainment of the crest was just in time to anticipate a body of Confederate re-enforcements, which then turned in retreat; and as he drove the enemy to the left along the ridge, the retiring Confederates met the fire of Meade's two other brigades. Before the advance the Bucktail regiment had been deployed as skirmishers. At the foot of the mountain side the First Brigade came upon cornfields behind a stone wall, from the protection of which a volley was fired that brought the Bucktails to a halt. Captain Park, of Colonel Gayle's Twelfth Alabama Regiment, says that thirty of Meade's First Brigade were killed or wounded at the second volley, and perhaps more by the first volley. The men of the Fifth Regiment (Fisher's) leaped the stone wall into the cornfield, where they captured eleven prisoners, and the line rushed through the field and up the steep hill over rocks, stone, logs, and underbrush. "What troops are these?" inquired a Confederate officer. "I don't know. I'll see," replied the colonel of an Alabama regiment. Peering over the rocky barrier that protected him, he exclaimed: "My God! it's the Pennsylvania Reserves," and instantly fell dead, literally riddled with bullets.

Before night Meade had captured the commanding hill

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 215.

on which Rodes had been posted, and the position thus gained was the key to the battlefield. Its capture made any position held by the Confederates on the pike or mountain crest untenable. At nine o'clock Lee consulted with Longstreet and Hill in regard to renewing the fight in the morning. On the Union right Reno's corps had not succeeded in taking the crest of the mountain at the National pike, and Reno himself was killed in Wise's field at seven in the evening, an hour at which at that time of the year it is already dark. Hill told Lee that the capture of the commanding knoll, from which Meade had driven Rodes's regiments, made the retirement of Lee's forces necessary, and Longstreet concurred in the view expressed by Hill.* The advance of Gibbon's brigade late in the afternoon on the right and left of the National pike was checked about 9 p. m. at the stone wall below the Summit, behind which Hill had posted Colquitt's brigade early in the day.

Night put an end to Meade's farther advance. In his Second Brigade the ammunition had given out. The men slept upon their arms. A part of the Third Brigade, whose commander, Colonel Gallagher, was wounded, when all their ammunition had been expended, in order to refill their cartridge boxes, fell back from the crest after it was dark and after Duryea's brigade had come up at the close of the battle. The rest of Meade's division remained upon the heights which they had carried, whose capture both Hill and Longstreet agreed made their holding of Turner's Gap impossible. On the same afternoon Franklin forced the passage of Crampton's Gap, thus threatening McLaws at Maryland Heights in the rear.

During the night the ammunition train was brought up. Cartridge boxes were refilled, and Meade made every preparation to renew the contest at daylight should the enemy be found to have made a stand. The morning opened with a heavy September fog that prevented any view from being obtained, but at seven o'clock it was ascertained that the enemy had retired entirely from the mountain.

The total losses—killed, wounded, and missing—in Hooker's corps were nine hundred and twenty-three, of

* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. ii, p. 571.

which losses three hundred and ninety-two belonged to Meade's division, the strength of which on entering the battle was less than five thousand effective men. With the exception of one man Meade's losses were entirely in killed and wounded. In Hatch's division the losses were four hundred and ninety-six, of which three hundred and eighteen occurred in Gibbon's brigade alone, which advanced up the National pike to the stone wall and there did more than its share of hard fighting even if it did not meet with the success that crowned Meade's assault on the right. The total losses in Reno's corps on the left were eight hundred and eighty-nine. Of the thirteen Union officers killed in the seven divisions of the two corps engaged, seven, or over one half, belonged to the one division under Meade's command. Rodes, who opposed Meade, lost two hundred and eighteen killed and wounded and two hundred and four missing—a larger loss than that of any other Confederate brigade.

“I desire,” said General Hooker, “to make special mention of Brigadier-General Meade for the great intelligence and gallantry displayed by him.”

CHAPTER VII.

ANTIETAM.

MCCLELLAN was over the mountains, but not in time to get between the separated portions of Lee's army, which now concentrated behind the Antietam Creek in the vicinity of Sharpsburg. Had McClellan known that Lee and Longstreet were at Hagerstown instead of Boonsborough, at which latter place they were located by the "lost dispatch"; had he known how feebly Turner's Gap was defended on the 13th, instead of acting on the apparently trustworthy information of Lee's orders, which placed the troops immediately under Lee's command near enough to the pass to hold it against a host, it is possible that Lee's fragment of the army might have been subjected to a severe reverse by actual contact. But it is idle to suppose that Lee would have fought against such odds without compensating advantages of position such as were offered at South Mountain; and, active as McClellan might have been, he could hardly have prevented Lee's escape over the Potomac at Williamsport. By interposing between the separated portions of Lee's army, he might have terminated Lee's campaign in a Confederate failure without subjecting his own army to the loss of life and material involved in fighting the battle of Antietam. The passing of the mountain by McClellan was also too late to save Harper's Ferry, which, with the Union troops there, was surrendered on the 15th. But McClellan had the best of authority—Lee's own order to his subordinates—for believing that Lee, with the two divisions of Longstreet, Hill and Stuart, were in a position to defend promptly the mountain pass, and if of minor things something escaped, the great object was gained. Lee was no longer the aggressor, as he had been all the way from

the Rappahannock, threatening Washington, Baltimore, and Pennsylvania. The foundations of his hopes and plans had been suddenly swept away by McClellan's movements and the battle of South Mountain. It was Lee now, not his opponent, who was in jeopardy. Concerned about the safety of his separated army, giving up perforce, as Pope had done before him, ambitious designs embracing the discomfiture of a people, and suddenly brought face to face with the realization that he must look sharply to his own lines of retreat and the welfare of the army upon which the fate of the Confederacy chiefly depended, his movement on the 15th of September was not toward Pennsylvania and the cities of the North, but toward a defensive position behind the Antietam, whence he might find his way in safety across the fords of the Potomac into Virginia. It was a swift, almost an amazing, change in the situation wrought by McClellan's passage of the South Mountain.

During the night of the 14th Lee withdrew Longstreet's and Hill's commands from their positions on the mountain, and about daybreak of the 15th took up a position on the heights in front of Sharpsburg and behind the Antietam Creek, facing east. His chief of artillery, at midnight of the 14th, was ordered to proceed with his command, with the exception of S. D. Lee's battalion, by the shortest route to Williamsport, to cross the Potomac and then to enter upon the duty of guarding the fords from Williamsport to Shepherdstown.* The Union troops at Harper's Ferry surrendered about half past eight on the morning of the 15th, and Jackson, leaving A. P. Hill to receive the surrender of the troops, artillery, small arms, and stores, marched with his remaining divisions to join Lee at Sharpsburg, by way of Boteler's Ford and the road from Shepherdstown. McLaws withdrew his troops to the right bank of the Potomac on the morning of the 16th, and, proceeding by the same route, the head of his column reached Sharpsburg at sunrise on the morning of the 17th. Jackson arrived at Sharpsburg early on the 16th, and Walker came up from the south side of the Potomac in the afternoon. Lee's first intention had been to retire from the South Mountain into Virginia, a

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 830.

movement which Longstreet had favored, since the moral effect of the Confederate campaign had been lost by the defeat at South Mountain.* But Lee soon abandoned his first intention, and determined to make a stand at Sharpsburg, where he threatened the rear and flank of any force attempting the relief of Harper's Ferry, where his own army could be concentrated without great difficulty, and where he would have the choice of several Potomac crossings by which to return to Virginia when such a movement should become desirable or necessary.

In the Union army, after dark on the 14th, the center, under Sumner, composed of the Second and Twelfth Corps, reached the immediate vicinity of Bolivar, from which place Meade had started upon his flank march. On the morning of that day McClellan had directed Porter to move up his Fifth Corps as rapidly as possible. With the dawn of the 15th, Hooker and Doubleday say, it was discovered that the Confederates had abandoned the mountain. Meade says the discovery was delayed until seven o'clock by the fog. The corps of Sumner, Hooker, and Mansfield were ordered in pursuit by way of the turnpike and Boonsborough. The corps of Burnside and Porter's one division (Sykes's) were directed to move by the old Sharpsburg road. Hooker's corps was temporarily detached from Burnside's command. About ten o'clock, Richardson's division of Sumner's corps, in the advance, found Lee posted behind the Antietam, seven or eight miles distant from Turner's Gap. The cavalry followed Richardson, and behind the cavalry marched Hooker's corps. Meade's division marched beyond Keedysville and bivouacked on the forks of the Big and Little Antietam. The Ninth Corps, at noon, marched through Fox's Gap to the Boonsborough and Sharpsburg turnpike, and in the middle of the afternoon reached the field at the Antietam, where McClellan had already arrived, and that night bivouacked a mile south of the Sharpsburg bridge and in rear of the hills bordering the creek. On arriving, in the afternoon of the 15th, upon the field to which McClellan had directed all his corps, except that of Franklin, the commander of the pursuing army found most

* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. ii, p. 666.

of his troops halted in the road and that it was too late to make an immediate attack, as he had desired to do. He designated the positions for the different corps on both sides of the Sharpsburg pike, but some of them did not reach their destinations until after sunrise next morning.

On the 16th, Lee's line, some three miles long, extended from a hill on the north, near the great bend of the Potomac, southwardly along the general line of the Sharpsburg and Hagerstown turnpike, as far as Sharpsburg, and thence still southwardly along the Potomac road to the mouth of the Antietam. This army, after the arrival, with the exception of McLaws's command, of the troops engaged in the Harper's Ferry operations, numbered perhaps thirty thousand men. From Sharpsburg southwardly Lee's line approached the Antietam to within the distance of half a mile, but northwardly the distance between his line and the stream constantly increased until, on his extreme left, it was two and a half miles. Halfway between Stuart's cavalry on the north and Munford's on the south was the village of Sharpsburg. A mile southeast of the village is the picturesque stone bridge, now not very appropriately called Burnside's Bridge, for the possession of which ensued a fierce struggle, but a purposeless one, since there were a number of places at which the Antietam could be forded with ease, and, with the exception of the pools, perhaps not many places at which it could not be forded with little difficulty. But the battlefield of Antietam was indicated by nature as one likely to be productive of disconnected contests for isolated positions. Although much of the field was cleared, the mountains were close by, and the low hills descending toward the Potomac were broken by ravines running eastward into the creek. On the north, and more distant from the Antietam, the field was less sharply marked by knolls and hollows, but it was not a field upon which any advancing line of battle, opposed by a foe taking advantage of every position of defense, would be likely to progress uniformly.

Another of the heavy fogs frequent on September mornings in river valleys of that section of the country hid the position and movements of Lee's army from the sight of their opponents on the morning of the 16th. At seven

o'clock McClellan telegraphed to Halleck that on account of the fog he had been unable to do more than ascertain that some of the enemy were still in his front, but that he would attack as soon as the situation of Lee's troops was developed.* Later in the day he called upon Burnside to explain why, when he was to have been in position at noon of the 16th, at sunset only one division and four batteries had reached the ground, and also to account for his delay of four hours in his movement on the previous day when Sykes's division of General Porter's corps had passed him on the road.

On the afternoon of the 16th McClellan opened the battle by throwing Hooker's corps on his extreme right across the Antietam upon the left of Lee. It was the part of his line which was farthest from the enemy and from which it seemed to be necessary to begin the movement if an assault was to be made along the whole front, or if assaults were to be made in unison upon the right and left. Meade's division was the advance of Hooker's corps. About 2 P. M. the divisions of Meade and Ricketts crossed over the bridge near Keedysville, Doubleday's division crossing at the ford just below. Following the winding road running northwestwardly toward Williamsport, upon which road, until the ascent from the immediate valley of the Antietam was gained, the movement was concealed by the rolling ground intervening between the road and the enemy, the division gained the higher ground on the north, and then, leaving the road, inclined to the left toward the crest. Here the cavalry advance was fired upon. Meade threw out toward what is called the East Woods, on his left, the Bucktails as skirmishers, and four companies of the Third Regiment were deployed on the right. Meade formed his main column of battalions in mass, division front. Advancing thus across the country the Bucktails' skirmishers soon discovered that the enemy was in force in the East Woods, and Meade directed Seymour to advance the First Brigade to their support. The troops encountered were the two brigades of Hood's division, Hood's and Law's of Longstreet's command. Seymour at once became closely en-

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part ii, p. 307.

gaged with the enemy, and he posted Cooper's battery to reply to the Confederate artillery. Riding to the crest, at the head of the column, Meade could plainly see the enemy's battery in the cornfield to the south, playing upon Seymour's troops, and the masses of Confederate infantry deployed about the battery. He would have endeavored to capture the battery with a charge, but only one regiment, the head of his column, was deployed. Therefore he ordered up Ransom's battery of light 12-pounders, which, from the edge of the woods where Meade was, a woods running along the pike in a direction perpendicular to Seymour's advance, opened a destructive enfilading fire upon the Confederate battery, and compelled it to withdraw to an eminence in the rear, from which latter position it commenced to shell the woods where Meade was, and the ridge behind. Thereupon Meade deployed in line of battle in support of Ransom's battery, his Second and Third Brigades (Magilton's and Anderson's). Colonel Wofford, commanding Hood's Texas brigade, with admirable candor, says: "I feel it due to truth to state that the enemy were informed of our position (at the cornfield) by the firing of a half dozen shots from a little battery of ours on the left of the brigade, which hastily beat a retreat as soon as their guns opened on us."

Meade says his brigade drove the enemy from the woods, but not from the field. The intervening darkness closed the contest for the night, with Seymour holding the woods immediately in front of the enemy, and Anderson's and Magilton's brigades the woods on their flank. The opposing forces slept within a few yards of one another. Six Confederate pickets unwittingly stepped within Seymour's line. Ransom's guns were withdrawn to the rear, but Cooper's battery and Simpson's howitzers remained in their positions. About ten o'clock at night Hood's troops were withdrawn from Meade's front, their place being taken by Lawton's two brigades. The troops lay on their arms, and during the night two attacks made upon Seymour's pickets were repulsed.

Hooker's corps had gained a foothold on the high ground and along the Hagerstown turnpike, and was now in close contact with the enemy. If Hooker could be sufficiently sup-

ported, and Burnside, with the Ninth Corps on McClellan's extreme left at the southern end of the field, could advance on the morrow as successfully as Hooker had done, there seemed to be no reason why McClellan should not repeat with advantage along the Antietam, the tactics which had proved so fortunate at South Mountain. If on each flank, McClellan's forces, which were twice as great as those of Lee's, could gain the ridge and Burnside could move northward as Hooker and his supports were moving southward, and Porter, in the center, could advance westward, the 17th of September, 1862, would be likely to prove a disastrous one for the army of Lee. There was, however, one great and important distinction between the situation at South Mountain and that at Antietam. In the former battle but two corps were maneuvered, and, although the ground was more difficult, the harmony of movement between the corps was sufficient to attain the end desired. At Antietam a whole army was to be maneuvered. McClellan's headquarters at the Pry House, while affording a commanding view of a considerable part of the field, were more than two miles in an air line from Burnside's Bridge, involving necessarily much delay in the receipt of reports and orders. The field, as has been said, was a broken one, and the outcome of these and other causes was lack of harmony in action and disconnected attacks.

When, during the night of the 16th, Hooker, the corps commander, visited Meade's lines, Seymour told him that "his men were sleeping feet to feet with the Confederates, and that the battle must begin as soon as it became light enough to distinguish friend from foe."

A message to this effect was carried by a courier of Hooker's to McClellan during the night, and it urged the necessity of re-enforcements before the battle should open. During the night Mansfield's Twelfth Corps, composed of the divisions of Williams and Greene, followed Hooker's route across the Antietam, and at the hour of two o'clock in the morning took a position a mile or a mile and a half in rear of Hooker. At daylight the battle was renewed with vigor on the line of Meade's left brigade, commanded by Seymour. Hooker sent his Second Division (Ricketts's) to Seymour's support, and advanced his First Division, now

commanded by Doubleday, along the woods occupied by Meade's right brigades, Magilton's and Anderson's. These two brigades were formed in column of battalions in mass and now advanced in rear of Doubleday, moving along the turnpike. The attack fell upon the Confederate divisions of Jones and Lawton of Jackson's command. The advance of Seymour and Ricketts through the woods on the left and Doubleday on the right left an open space between them, in which was a plowed field, an orchard, and, beyond, the famous cornfield, for the possession of which there was to ensue one of the fiercest contests of the war. Into the open space Ransom's battery was run forward, and all of Hooker's spare batteries, some five or six, were brought to bear upon the cornfield, which, it could be seen, was filled with the enemy with arms in their hands. Hooker says that in the time required to write it every stalk of corn in the north and greater part of the field was cut as closely as could have been done with a knife, and the slain lay in rows where they had stood a few moments before, and he adds, "It was never my fortune to witness a more bloody, dismal battlefield."

The brigades of Anderson and Magilton of Meade's division, on reaching the cornfield, were massed in a ravine extending up to the pike. Meade soon saw that Doubleday's advance was being driven out of the cornfield, and he immediately deployed both brigades and formed line of battle along the fence bordering the field, but just then he received an order to send a brigade to the East Woods, in the execution of which order Magilton's brigade, moving by the flank, was subjected to a hot fire from the cornfield.

On the Confederate side, shortly after dawn, Hay's brigade of Lawton's division was ordered by General Lawton from its position in rear of Early's brigade, across the turnpike, to the rear of the advanced line held by the brigades of Lawton and Trimble. At the request of Colonel Douglass, commanding Lawton's brigade, which was hard pressed, Hays went to his assistance, and beginning to fire as soon as he reached Douglass's line, he advanced beyond that line for a distance of one hundred and fifty yards. Colonel Walker, commanding Trimble's brigade, was in line between Lawton's brigade on his left and Ripley's brigade of D. H.

Hill's division on his right, Ripley forming nearly a right angle with Walker's line and facing the Antietam Creek. The troops of both Walker and Hays suffered greatly from the fire in front, and especially from the enfilading fire of Ransom's battery, which had been posted by General Meade.* Walker says that the fire from the Federal batteries on the hills across the Potomac was not destructive.† Hays found the enfilading and front fire so destructive, that in a short time three hundred and twenty-three of his men were killed and wounded out of a force of five hundred and fifty, ‡ and, on Hood's brigade coming up as a reinforcement, Hays retired. Hood's brigade, under Wofford, advanced from the woods in rear of the Dunker Church, where it had passed the night, toward the cornfield where one of his regiments, the First Texas, was cut down and scattered by the fire from three different Federal batteries, and Wofford speaks of his line as being almost annihilated. Wofford decided that he could neither advance nor hold his position, and he and Hays sought shelter from the artillery fire in a hollow.* Walker, commanding Trimble's brigade, says that the fresh Confederate troops which came to the assistance of Lawton's brigade ran off the field,|| and that he himself halted, because he was without support on the left, and was then compelled to fall back.

When, by Hooker's orders, Meade moved Magilton to the support of Ricketts and Seymour on the left, a gap had been left which was soon filled by the enemy, whose infantry advanced boldly through the cornfield into the East Woods. Meade thereupon rode up to Ransom's battery and directed his guns on the Confederate column, which enfilading fire from the right, together with the arrival on the left at the threatened point of Magilton's brigade, in connection with the troops of Seymour's brigade and Ricketts's division, drove the Confederates back, who, as they retreated, received another enfilading fire from the infantry of Anderson's brigade of Meade's division, still holding the position

* Sypher's History of the Pennsylvania Reserves, p. 382.

† Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 976.

‡ Ibid., p. 978.

* Ibid., p. 979.

|| Ibid., p. 977.

along the cornfield fence, where Meade had placed it. Meade's cross fire was an important factor at this critical stage of the battle, confusing and holding the enemy in check until the arrival on the field of Sumner's command. Cooper's battery and Simpson's howitzers, posted by Meade on the crest in the morning, commanded the enemy's flank throughout the day.

Before reaching the field, Mansfield had learned that all Hooker's Reserves were engaged, but before Mansfield's leading regiments were fairly in line of battle he was mortally wounded, and the command of the Twelfth Corps devolved upon Williams. Meade's division had now been fighting for five hours, and the ammunition of his troops was becoming rapidly exhausted. The First Division of Mansfield's corps (Williams's) moved forward with the right, Crawford's brigade, on the turnpike, Hawley's regiment being sent as far as the Miller farm, which Hooker ordered Crawford to hold at all hazards; Williams's Third Brigade (Gordon's) moved on Crawford's left, and the Confederates were driven into the woods beyond the Hagerstown pike. Two brigades of the Second Division of Mansfield's corps, under Greene, were sent to the left toward the burned buildings of Poffenberger.

Sumner's other corps, the Second, under Sumner's own command, marched from the neighborhood of Keedysville at 7.20 A. M. on the 17th and arrived upon the field about ten o'clock, by which time Hooker had been wounded and had requested that Meade take command of the First Corps. The most advanced position won by Meade with his division, the Pennsylvania Reserves, was the crest at the Miller House, on the pike, held by Anderson's brigade, while Seymour's brigade, supported by Magilton in the East Woods, was in advance of the road running from the Dunker Church toward Smoketown. The arrival of re-enforcements was at a time when Hooker's corps could do no more. It would have been better had the two re-enforcing corps followed Hooker immediately, or if the movement upon Lee's left by the three corps had been deferred until the morning of the 17th.

When Hooker left the field directing Meade to assume command of the corps, Meade ordered the various divisions

to be withdrawn as soon as they were relieved. His reasons for this action are found in the reports of the division commanders. The commander of the First Division, Doubleday, says: "My command had been fighting since daylight, and being out of ammunition was compelled to fall back." One of his batteries, Campbell's, had lost thirty-eight men in killed and wounded and had twenty-seven horses killed. He says that the brigades of Gibbon and Phelps were exhausted, and that Phelps reported his brigade as not numbering more than one hundred and fifty men. The commander of the Second Division, Ricketts, says his troops had kept up a fearful fire for four hours, that his ammunition was exhausted, and that it was therefore compelled to retire when the supports came up. The Third Division, Meade's, was likewise out of ammunition. The losses in the corps were twenty-six hundred and nineteen, the killed amounting to three hundred and forty-eight, and the wounded two thousand and sixteen. In Doubleday's division the losses were eight hundred and sixty-two; Ricketts reported that of the thirty-one hundred and fifty-eight men of his division taken into action, ten hundred and fifty-one were killed and wounded; his total losses were eleven hundred and eighty-eight. In Meade's division the losses were five hundred and sixty-nine; Meade said it went into action under three thousand strong. Fourteen months before the division numbered fifteen thousand men. It is indicative of the absence of petty traits in Meade's character that in his report he most cordially spoke of the good judgment and military skill of General Seymour, and expressly said that he had left to him the management of the First Brigade. After Meade was wounded at the close of the battle of New Market Cross Roads, Seymour had made a report covering the battle and had headed it "Seymour's Division." This was not robbing Meade of any special honor, since McCall and Reynolds, his ranking officers, were absent in captivity, as Meade was by reason of his wound; but Seymour's designation of the division was premature, and Meade's report of Antietam showed how completely he could overlook a minor defect and appreciate the substantial qualities of a good soldier.

McClellan, a few days after the battle, sent to Hooker a

message of sympathy springing from the writer's heart, and expressing the belief that if Hooker had not been wounded the entire Confederate army would have been destroyed. It was a gracious thing to say under the circumstances, even if it disregarded the exhausted condition of Hooker's divisions, as shown by the reports of the division commanders, from which quotations have been made. From the head, not from the heart, McClellan sent two messages to Meade. The first was dated September 17th, 1.25 P. M., and read as follows:

"The commanding general directs that you temporarily assume command of Hooker's corps, and use every effort in your power to reorganize it and make it serviceable."

The order would indicate that the general commanding the army had become aware that Hooker's corps temporarily was not in fighting condition. The second dispatch, dated at ten minutes past three in the afternoon, said:

"The commanding general directs that you at once take command of the army corps which was under the command of General Hooker this morning. This order is given without regard to rank, and all officers of the corps will obey your orders."*

In the battle Meade was struck by a spent grapeshot which made a severe contusion, and his horse Baldy, which had been wounded at Second Bull Run, was shot through the neck. His second horse was shot in the flank. At the earlier battle of New Market both rider and horse were wounded.†

It was in the middle forenoon that Meade withdrew the divisions of the First Corps to reassemble and reorganize them on the ridge in the rear. By two o'clock the Third Division, now commanded by Seymour, was supplied with ammunition on this ridge and held in readiness to repel any flank or front attack the enemy might make.

The battle on the Confederate left had been taken up by Mansfield's corps, which, when deployed, formed an obtuse angle with Meade's most advanced position on the right, and crossed the front of his most advanced position

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part ii, p. 315.

† Bache's Life of Meade, p. 212.

in the East Woods, with the line of which position it formed an acute angle. The general direction of Mansfield's charge, which drove the Confederates through the cornfield and into the Dunker Church Woods, was southwestwardly across Meade's two fronts. Mansfield's troops were driven back by Jackson, Hood, D. H. Hill, and Walker, whose command was brought up from the extreme Confederate right, and the Federal corps fell back of the position in the East Woods which had been held by Ricketts's division and Seymour's, and Magilton's brigade of Meade's division. By the time of the arrival of Sumner's corps, General Williams, who succeeded Mansfield in the command of the Twelfth Corps, says that his troops were exhausted by his night march and with fighting from half past six until nine o'clock, and that some of his old regiments had emptied their cartridge boxes.*

Sumner's corps, after reaching the field, formed to the south of the scene of Hooker's battle; the right division (Sedgwick), however, advanced across the cornfield and the turnpike and into the West Woods, from which position it was driven northward along the turnpike, the division of McLaws, which had arrived from Harper's Ferry, and Walker's division from Lee's right, assisting in the repulse. General Howard, who succeeded Sedgwick after the latter was wounded in the command of the division, says that the officers of every grade were occupied from eleven o'clock until noon in rallying and reorganizing the command, and he bears important testimony to the sagacity of General Meade, when he declares that, while this reorganization was going on, the batteries of the Pennsylvania Reserves, located on a high plateau of ground near the house of Joseph Poffenberger, opened fire and checked several attempts of the enemy to establish batteries in front of his right and to turn his right flank.†

The divisions of French and Richardson, of Sumner's corps farther to the south, drove D. H. Hill's troops from the Roulette farm, which is east of the Dunker Church and north of the Sunken road, and captured the position at the Piper House beyond the Sunken road, in which D. H. Hill

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 476. † Ibid., p. 306.

had reformed his line. The leading division of Franklin's corps—the Sixth—had reached the battlefield from Pleasant Valley about ten o'clock, and Slocum's division an hour later. Two of Franklin's brigades—Brooks's and Irwin's of Smith's division—supported French and Richardson, but the attack contemplated at the center by Franklin was not permitted by General Sumner. The divisions of D. H. Hill and R. H. Anderson, the latter transferred from Lee's left, continued the struggle for the ground about the Piper House.

In one respect McClellan's plan of battle had worked fairly well. From his right, Lee had sent at least six thousand troops to support his left. Could Burnside's corps have crossed the stream on the Federal left early in the day, McClellan's victory might possibly have been complete. Burnside placed the hour at which McClellan ordered him to cross the Antietam at ten o'clock. McClellan made two statements, in the one saying it was eight o'clock, in the other ten o'clock. General Cox, commanding the Ninth Corps under Burnside, has made two statements, in the second of which he coincides with Burnside, while in the first he says it was nine o'clock.* But whether the hour was eight o'clock or whether it was nine o'clock, or even somewhat later, if the crossing could have been made at once it would have materially assisted in carrying out a natural plan of battle. Sturgis, the division commander, and Ferrero, the brigade commander, fix the hour when the bridge was carried by Hartranft's Fifty-first Pennsylvania Regiment and Potter's Fifty-first New York Regiment, the former regiment leading, at one o'clock.† Colonel White, of the Twelfth Ohio Infantry, Scammon's brigade, Kanawha division, says that when his regiment crossed at the ford below the bridge, ‡ with that brigade and Rodman's division, the enemy's artillery fire upon the column did little injury. If, instead of prolonging the attempt to cross a narrow

* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. ii, p. 647.

† Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 448.

‡ The distance of this ford from the bridge is said by Colonel White to be a mile, by General Cox a third of a mile, and by General Burnside three quarters of a mile. Burnside speaks of a ford a short distance above.

bridge for three or four hours, the Ninth Corps had attempted to pass the stream at different crossings, after the fine weather which had prevailed, it is not likely that Walker's Confederate division could have successfully resisted the advance. According to Colonel Harland, commanding the Second Brigade of Rodman's division, the morning was well advanced before he attempted to find a ford.* The men were exhausted and the ammunition was expended by the fighting about the bridge and in gaining the crest beyond, and a long delay ensued while fresh troops were brought up to the position. By half past four the edge of the village had been gained and the high ground on the southeast, but the movement was checked by the timely arrival of A. P. Hill's division, which, with the exception of Thomas's brigade, left Harper's Ferry that morning at half past seven, and reached Sharpsburg, covering a distance of seventeen miles, at half past two in the afternoon, just in time to check the defeat of D. R. Jones's broken division by Burnside's command.

At twenty minutes past one in the afternoon McClellan telegraphed to Halleck: "Burnside is now attacking the right, and I hold my small reserve, consisting of Porter's Fifth Corps, ready to attack the center as soon as the flank movements are developed." The reserves were not thrown in; McClellan's combinations had failed to work upon the battlefield. Lee's scattered troops had arrived most opportunely from distant places. It was the bloodiest single day of the civil war. McClellan's losses in the battle were twelve thousand four hundred and ten. The Confederate losses, which can only be arrived at by estimates, were probably as great as those of the Federals, if not greater. In his report McClellan said that twenty-seven hundred of the Confederate dead were counted and buried by the Union troops. A portion of their dead had been buried by the Confederates. McClellan's killed numbered twenty-one hundred and eight. In the campaign, McClellan captured thirteen guns, thirty-nine colors, fifteen thousand stands of small arms, and six thousand prisoners. He did not lose a single gun or color. He was left in possession

* Official War Records, vol. xix, part i, p. 452.

of the field of Antietam by the Confederates, who recrossed the Potomac on the night of the 18th, and upon his victory was based the emancipation proclamation of President Lincoln.

From the field returns of officers and men present for duty Meade sent to the army commander a comparative statement for the dates September 18th and September 22d, showing that on the former date, the morning after the battle, eighty-five hundred and eighty-three men were absent from their commands in the First Corps who were present on the 22d. Between these dates the number present increased from fifty-nine hundred and ninety to fourteen thousand five hundred and seventy-three. Meade and McClellan were chiefly concerned over the prevalence of straggling which this statement revealed. But now the main value of the statement is in the showing which it makes of the exhausted condition of the First Corps when Meade took command of it on the field of Antietam.

On the 29th of September, Reynolds, who had commanded the division in which Meade was a brigadier, having returned to the army from detached service, was temporarily assigned to the command of the First Corps, as was due to his rank, and Meade was directed to resume command of the Third Division, which in Reynolds's absence he had led so brilliantly in the battle of South Mountain and at Antietam until, upon the wounding of Hooker, he had taken command of the corps.

CHAPTER VIII.

FREDERICKSBURG.

ON September 30th Governor Curtin wrote to the President, and subsequently to General McClellan, urging that the Pennsylvania Reserves should be returned to the State, in order that the reduced regiments of the division might be refilled. But the skeleton regiments could not be spared from the army. Nor could these regiments, many of them now commanded by captains, be recruited in the State, and it became necessary to add new regiments to the division. The One Hundred and Twenty-first Pennsylvania Volunteers, Colonel Chapman Biddle, was attached to the First Brigade, and the One Hundred and Forty-second Pennsylvania Volunteers, Colonel Robert P. Cummins, to the Second Brigade. General Jackson, having recovered from the injuries received at Second Bull Run, returned to the command of the Third Brigade.

General Meade, after the battle of Antietam, was compelled to pay for the shoeing of some twelve hundred horses and mules of his command out of his own pocket, there appearing to be no other way to get this work done. Many of the men did not have shoes. The official correspondence relating to the controversy over this question stops short of actually explaining why the troops did not receive the abundant supplies provided for them.

In a rain storm on Sunday, October 26th, Meade's division broke camp near Sharpsburg and bivouacked for the night in Pleasant Valley at the base of South Mountain. On the 30th he led his division across the bridge at Berlin, and, reaching Lovettsville, encamped there until November 1st. With the march of the Army of the Potomac up the Loudoun Valley the Pennsylvania Reserves passed through

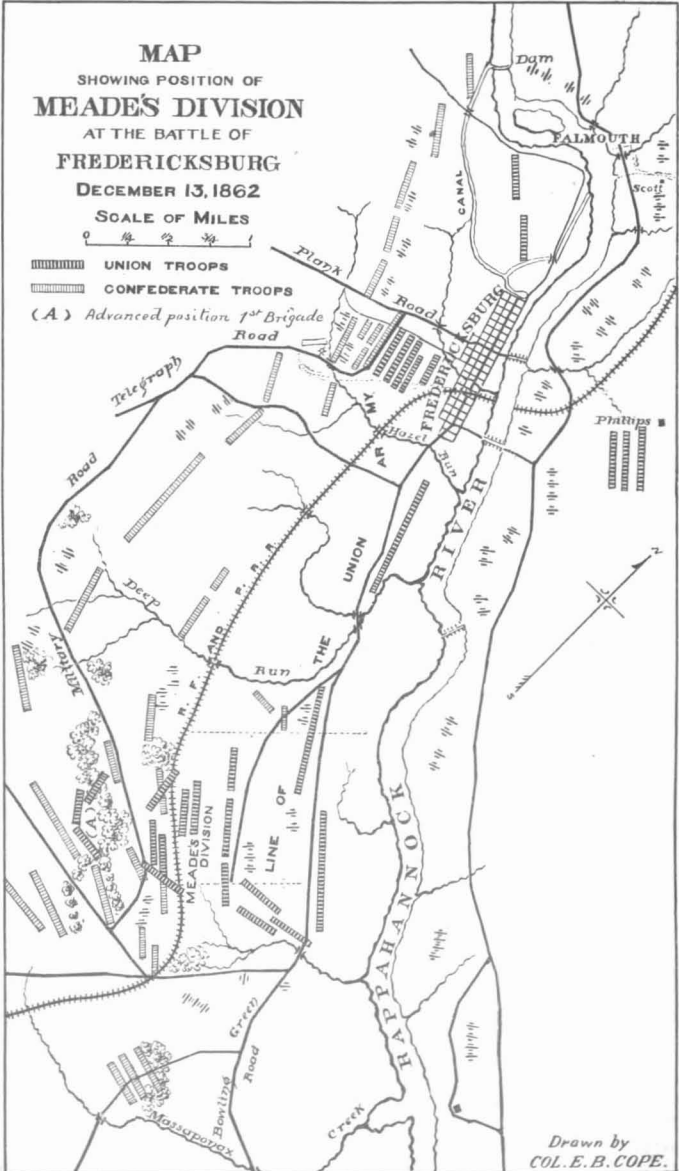
MAP
 SHOWING POSITION OF
MEADE'S DIVISION
 AT THE BATTLE OF
FREDERICKSBURG
 DECEMBER 13, 1862

SCALE OF MILES



 UNION TROOPS
 CONFEDERATE TROOPS

(A) Advanced position 1st Brigade
 Road



Drawn by
 COL. E. B. COPE.

Waterford, Pennsville, Union, and Middleburg, and on the evening of November 6th encamped south of Warrenton.

With the collapse of his Maryland campaign Lee did not give up the idea of an invasion of Pennsylvania. He still held such a movement in contemplation, and if it could not be carried out at once, as manifestly it could not be, he proposed to maneuver his foe into the Shenandoah Valley, where experience had shown how easy it was, by use of the mountain ranges and passes, to surprise, confuse, and defeat an opponent. As McClellan moved south he occupied the gaps of the Blue Ridge; but on November 7th, when he had concentrated his army at Warrenton, he was relieved from command of the army by an order of the President dated on the 5th, and Burnside was named as his successor. By that time Lee, with Longstreet's corps, leaving Jackson in the valley below Winchester, had crossed the Blue Ridge at Front Royal, and was in the vicinity of Culpeper Court House, and whether McClellan had remained in command or whether the commander was to be Burnside or somebody else, the problem before the Federal general was hardly less than it had been before the Antietam campaign. Still several things had been learned by experience, and one of these lessons was the difficulty of using the Orange and Alexandria Railroad as a line of supply.

Burnside's plan involved marching on the north side of the Rappahannock to Fredericksburg, at which place his army would be supplied by the short railroad communicating with Acquia Creek on the Potomac. Before he knew anything of the Federal intentions, Lee thought that McClellan's plans, as the winter advanced, would be to make a campaign south of the James River, and cut off Richmond from the South by attempting to gain possession of the Petersburg, Weldon, and Wilmington Railroad. He thought this movement, if successful, would be an almost hopeless disaster to the Confederate cause. But his opinion as to the Federal intentions changed as McClellan's whole army advanced with what Lee thought to be greater rapidity than usual, and if McClellan continued to press southward, Lee proposed to unite his two corps east of the mountains through Swift Run Gap, and hold himself on McClellan's right flank. At this time Lee's field returns showed an

army of seventy-one thousand men present for duty, out of an aggregate present of eighty-three thousand three hundred and eighty-five. Burnside's tri-monthly return showed the strength of his army in the field present for duty to be a little over one hundred and thirty thousand.

On November 14th Burnside organized his army in three grand divisions and a reserve corps; the right, composed of the Second and Ninth Corps, to be commanded by Sumner; the left, composed of the First and Sixth Corps, under Franklin; and the center, under Hooker, composed of the Third and Fifth Corps. Sigel commanded the Eleventh, the Reserve Corps. In the Left Grand Division, Reynolds commanded the First Corps and W. F. Smith the Sixth. Swinton compares, to Burnside's disadvantage, the delay of ten days made by that general in moving the army after he had assumed command, with Meade's promptness of action upon succeeding Hooker in the Gettysburg campaign; but Burnside at Warrenton did not receive the President's consent to the movement upon Fredericksburg until November 14th. Sumner's Grand Division marched at daylight of the 15th, and Franklin and Hooker started the next morning. Sumner reached Falmouth on the 17th, but, being without pontoons, Burnside wisely decided not to divide his army by the Rappahannock, which stream, at Fredericksburg, is one hundred and forty yards wide, and at that season of the year might be made unfordable by high water. The pontoons which Halleck had undertaken to forward from Washington, and which were so necessary to Burnside if he were to cross the river before Lee could oppose his passage, did not arrive until the 25th. On the 17th Lee sent the divisions of McLaws and Ransom, W. H. F. Lee's brigade of cavalry, and Lane's battery to Fredericksburg, and on the 19th Longstreet assigned his entire corps to a position on the heights behind the city and south of the Telegraph road. On the same day Lee wrote to Jackson at Winchester that he did not contemplate making a determined stand north of the North Anna. On the 23d he suggested that Jackson cross the mountains and move to the vicinity of Culpeper, and on the 26th he desired that Jackson join him by easy marches. On the 28th Lee wrote that he desired Jackson to take a position on Massa-

ponax Creek. He then thought that Burnside would not cross at Fredericksburg, but probably at Port Royal, moving thence by the Bowling Green road to the Fredericksburg and Richmond Railroad. On December 3d D. H. Hill's division was sent to Port Royal to oppose any attempt at crossing at that place, and was kept there until the evening of the 12th, when it made a night march to Fredericksburg. The delay in the concentration of Lee's army on the heights at Fredericksburg indicates how fortune favored him in the failure to supply Burnside with pontoons until the 25th.

Burnside's first plan was to cross the Rappahannock at Shinker's Neck, a dozen miles below Fredericksburg; but he gave up this plan in favor of a direct crossing at the town, because he thought the latter would be the less expected movement. Because of the non-arrival of his pontoons, he also abandoned his intention of having the cavalry cross the upper fords, seize the heights, and hold the south bank while the bridges were being laid. As Burnside had eliminated from the problem before him the possibility of crossing above or below, there was nothing left for him to do but to keep still, or to attempt a direct assault upon Lee's army upon the heights on the other side of the river. He decided upon the latter course, and threw two pontoon bridges across the stream opposite the upper part of the town, one near the lower part of the town, and two at a point about a mile below. One hundred and forty-seven cannon were posted on the heights on the north bank of the stream. Sumner was to cross at the upper, and Franklin at the lower bridges, and Hooker was to concentrate near and in the rear of Sumner. The night before the attack, two of Hooker's divisions—Sickles's and Birney's, of Stoneman's Third Corps—were sent to support Franklin. Burnside says that he hoped, by Franklin's movement, to seize some point on the enemy's line near the Massaponax and thereby separate his forces on the river below from those occupying the ridge behind the town.*

At five o'clock on the morning of December 11th Franklin's two corps—the First and Sixth—started from their

* Official War Records, vol. xxi, p. 88.

bivouacs, and by separate roads reached the bridges at half past seven. The bridges were not completed until eleven. Jackson's brigade of Meade's division had been posted on the river bank during the night to protect the working party, and had done so without any loss—a fact which shows how little opposition was made to the crossing at this point. Franklin was directed that evening to keep his command on the north bank of the river, with the exception of one brigade. At daylight of the 12th Smith's corps, the Sixth, crossed, and Reynolds's corps, the First, followed Bayard's brigade of cavalry. By 1 P. M. all of the Left Grand Division was on the south bank of the river. Smith's corps formed parallel to the Old Richmond road, with two divisions in front and one in reserve. Gibbon's division of Reynolds's corps was formed on Smith's left, and Meade's division, in two lines of brigades deployed, joined Gibbon's left at right angles, while Meade's left rested on the river about the hamlet of Smithfield. Doubleday's division was held in reserve on the river bank. In front of Meade was the Smithfield ravine. One of his regiments—the First Rifles—was here detached for picket duty, and another—the Second Infantry—was sent to occupy the buildings and out-houses at Smithfield and to hold the bridge across the ravine at its debouché into the river. The division batteries were posted in front of the First Brigade on the edge of the ravine, so as to command the front and the Bowling Green road. This position was occupied by Meade by 3 P. M., with only slight opposition from the enemy.

On the morning of the 13th Burnside sent to General Franklin a dispatch, dated 5.55 A. M., which read in part as follows:

“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, on this side of the Massaponax, taking care to keep it well supported and its line of retreat open. He has ordered another column of a division or more to be moved from General Sumner's command up the Plank road, where they will divide, with a view to seizing the heights on both sides of those roads.

Holding these heights, with the heights near Captain Hamilton's, will, he hopes, compel the enemy to evacuate the whole ridge between these points. He makes these moves by columns distant from each other with a view of avoiding the possibility of a collision of our own forces, which might occur in a general movement during the fog. Two of General Hooker's divisions are in your rear at the bridges and will remain as supports. You will keep your whole command in readiness to move at once as soon as the fog lifts." *

It is a curious fact that Parke, Burnside's Chief of Staff, who signed this order; Franklin, the commander of the Left Grand Division, to whom it was addressed; Reynolds, the corps commander, who was to have immediate charge of its execution; Meade, whose division was to be selected to seize the heights at Hamilton's crossing; and Gibbon and Birney, whose divisions were to support Meade, were all from the southeastern, Quaker, corner of Pennsylvania.

Early on the morning of the 13th Meade and Reynolds went to Franklin's headquarters. Meade was informed that his division had been selected to carry out Burnside's orders to Franklin—"to seize the heights near Captain Hamilton's"—and the point to be attacked was indicated. The field across which Meade was to move, unlike the ground in the immediate vicinity of Fredericksburg, where the disastrous assaults on the right were made on the same day, was an open and somewhat level plain, the ascent to the ridge held by the Confederates being gradual, and, so far as the movement of unopposed troops is concerned, being far more favorable than the field of South Mountain or Antietam. But it was a wide plain and an unsheltered one, and in this respect more disadvantageous when swept by an enemy's fire than that across which Pickett, Pettigrew, and Trimble charged on the third day at Gettysburg. From the bridge where Franklin crossed to the Old Richmond road, here running parallel with the river, the distance is about three quarters of a mile. This road is about halfway between the river and the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad. The distance from the highway to the Confederate position, beyond the open ground, and the railroad was

* Official War Records, vol. xxi, p. 457.

twelve hundred or thirteen hundred yards. Burnside's order was that the advancing division was to be well supported. So far as Reynolds's authority went, this order, at the beginning of Meade's movement, was carried out, and Meade was told by Reynolds that Gibbon's division would support him on the right, and Doubleday's division would cover his left.

It was about half past eight on the morning of the 13th when Meade crossed the Smithfield ravine, his division formed in column of two brigades, his artillery—Ransom's, Simpson's, Cooper's, and Amsden's batteries—between them, and his Third Brigade marching by the flank and rear. Colonel Sinclair commanded the First Brigade, Colonel Magilton the Second, and Brigadier-General C. Feger Jackson the Third. On the 29th of November, two weeks earlier, Meade himself, upon the earnest recommendation of General Hooker, had been promoted to the rank of major general of volunteers. His division numbered not more than forty-five hundred men. He moved it down the river some three quarters of a mile, passed the old Bernard House, where General Bayard was killed, and then moved obliquely to the left until the main road in front of the hill at Hamilton's Crossing was reached. Here the hedge-fences along the highway had to be removed and the roadside ditches bridged for the passage of the artillery. It was therefore between nine and ten o'clock when his column of attack was formed. He had now to descend a hollow to the railroad at the foot of the heights, and from the time of leaving the shelter of the country highway every movement would be in full view of the Confederates. The First Brigade was formed in line of battle on the crest of the hollow, and facing the railroad, with the Sixth Regiment deployed as skirmishers; the Second Brigade in rear of the First, three hundred paces; the Third Brigade was formed on the left of the First, its right flank being a few rods to the rear of that brigade, and, with the Ninth Regiment, deployed on its flank as skirmishers and flankers. The batteries were placed between the First and Second Brigades. The disposition had hardly been made when a Confederate battery, a part of Stuart's Horse Artillery, posted on the road to the left, opened a brisk fire upon Meade's left and rear. Regarding this battery fire as a possible prelude to

an attack along the road upon his flank, Meade faced his Third Brigade to the left, and then, advancing his batteries to favorable positions, opened upon the Confederate battery a fire which, after twenty minutes, in conjunction with the fire of Doubleday's batteries behind the road in Meade's rear, silenced the enemy's guns. The Confederate sharpshooters, sent from the left along the road, were driven back by two companies from Jackson's brigade. From this position Meade now began his preparations for his real assault. So far his movement had been the gaining and maintaining of a foothold from which to spring upon the troops of A. P. Hill's division, holding the ridge a quarter of a mile away across the unsheltered plain. His batteries shelled the heights. By Reynolds's directions, the Third Brigade faced to the front again. Ransom's battery moved to the right in order to protect the troops in case they had to fall back. The left of the Third Brigade, now formed in line of battle on the left of the First, was about opposite the end of the ridge which Meade was to assault. But now again a sharp artillery fire from the heights on his extreme left was commenced. On the hill at the right of his line A. P. Hill had in position fourteen rifle and Napolcon guns. Hill's front line consisted of two regiments of Brockenbrough's brigade and the brigades of Archer, Lane, and Pender. In his second line were the two remaining regiments of Brockenbrough, supporting the batteries on the Confederate right, Gregg's brigade, behind an interval between Archer and Lane caused by the low and swampy nature of the ground, and Thomas's brigade, crossing a similar interval between Lane and Pender. In these two intervals were the head waters of rivulets finding their way respectively into Deep Run on the north and a smaller stream at the lower end of this part of the field. A. P. Hill's front extended from Hamilton's Crossing nearly to Deep Run. Behind A. P. Hill's division was a second line, composed of the divisions of Early on the right and Taliaferro on the left, and behind the second line was D. H. Hill's division, also of Jackson's corps. The crest held by the Confederates was wooded. From the extreme right of the crest the slope in Meade's front, for a distance of three hundred or four hundred yards, was clear, and beyond this were

woods extending in places into the hollow and across the railroad. The projecting wood, the line of the railroad, and the wood in front, as well as the crest, were occupied by the Confederates. Three Confederate batteries were advanced beyond the railroad, and these were supported by Lane's troops. Cooper's, Amsden's, and Ransom's batteries of Meade's command had been turned immediately upon the Confederate battery firing from the heights on the Union left, and after the artillery combat had continued for half an hour, and two of the Confederate limbers or caissons had been blown up, these guns were abandoned. Meade now ordered his line of infantry to attack. Meade's movement was in full view of the Confederates. It was the season of short days, when the sun is in the southern quarter of the heavens; and in the afternoon, at which time of the day Meade's charge was made, the sun was already behind the backs of the Confederate troops and its rays were falling full upon the advancing lines. In the morning the ground had been frozen, but its surface was now softened. The early fog, for the disappearance of which Franklin had waited, had lifted in the forenoon, and the Confederates in front, and the Union troops on the heights across the river, had a rare opportunity to observe one of the most inspiring and impressive of the martial spectacles presented by the civil war. They saw Meade's light field batteries rushed to their positions at full speed; his mounted officers riding with sabres drawn; his flags flying in the breeze, and the rifle barrels of those long lines of infantry, that had been well drilled by some of the best officers of the Union army and were now advancing with the precision of a parade, shining like silver in the brilliant winter sunlight.*

Meade's First Brigade, driving the enemy's skirmishers before it, crossed the several hundred yards of cleared ground in its front, reached the woods projecting across the railroad, and drove the Confederates from this shelter back to the ditches and temporary defenses along the railroad. The rush upon the Confederates in the woods was so sudden that they did not have time to remove all their

* Statement of Lieutenant L. Taliaferro, of Jackson's command, to the author.

guns from the order in which these were stacked, and here many Confederate prisoners were taken. Once within the woods, its density and the unevenness of the ground destroyed the alignment of Meade's troops; but, encouraged by their officers and their own success, they pressed forward some seven hundred yards beyond the railroad and crossed the crest of the hill and the road which runs along the crest, and reached the open ground on the other side.* The brigade had inclined to the right toward the fire from that direction. The Second Brigade following the First, two of the regiments were checked at the railroad. The three other regiments reached a new line of the enemy beyond the summit of the heights, and the Seventh Regiment captured a stand of colors, many prisoners, and drove the enemy from the rifle pits. The advance of the Third Brigade, on the left of Meade's first line, had not proceeded more than one hundred yards when it was subjected to a heavy fire from the Confederate artillery on the left. Meade at once sent his aid-de-camp, Lieutenant Dehon, to tell General Jackson to move by the right flank till he could clear the open ground swept by the Confederate guns, and then, ascending the height through the woods, swing around to the left and take the battery. Just as he reached General Jackson the aid fell, and a few minutes afterward the brigade commander was killed. The movement intended was, however, partially executed. The brigade obliques to the right, crossed the railroad, and a portion of it penetrated into the enemy's camps and held its position until the last round of ammunition had been expended.†

Meade had sent to the rear two captured flags and two hundred prisoners. He had driven the enemy from the railroad, the woods, and the hill, and gained the road in the rear; but the support which he should have had did not come. McCandless, who, after Sinclair was wounded, took command of the First Brigade; Colonel Chapman Biddle, who commanded the One Hundred and Twenty-first Regiment of that brigade; and Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson, who succeeded General Jackson in the command of the Third Brigade, all say that if they had been supported they

* Official War Records, vol. xxi, p. 511.

† Ibid., p. 522.

could have held the positions which they had gained. Colonel McCandless, commanding the First Brigade, says: "We found our right flank unprotected, General Gibbon's division not having advanced parallel with us. . . . The rebel batteries on our right, not having anything to occupy their attention in front, concentrated on our right flank an enfilading fire that swept us down with murderous accuracy and compelled us to retire." It is impossible not to reach the conclusion that if, after the assaulting column was put in motion, the work of the divisions of Gibbon and Doubleday, of the corps commander Reynolds, and of Franklin, the commander of the Left Grand Division, had been done as well as Meade's work was done, the position gained by him, the heights which Burnside desired to be taken, could have been held. Reynolds's error seems to have been in giving too much personal attention to the main movement, that of Meade, his ablest division general, and not enough to the supporting divisions. Reynolds was just the soldier to infuse these supports with the necessary spirit, and had the work been divided between him and Meade in the way indicated the result would probably have been different.

Palfrey says that Gibbon's troops were poor, a statement which seems to be borne out by the reports of two of his brigadiers. A third brigade did better. When, at half past ten in the morning, Birney was ordered by General Stoneman to cross the river with his division, he was directed to report with it to Reynolds. At half past eleven, when Birney reported to Reynolds, he was told to deploy his division in the rear of Meade as a support to the intended attack.* Subsequently, Reynolds told Birney to fall behind the embankments of the Old Richmond road. Meade sent repeated requests to Birney for assistance. The battlefield stories of Meade's rage at what he undoubtedly considered Birney's failure to comply with his request, and his condemnation of the failure in vigorous terms to Birney's face, may or may not be exaggerated. Certain it is that it was a situation to arouse in Meade all that vigorous indignation of which he was so fully capable, over a breach of soldierly duty, and which he would not hesitate to express

* Birney's Report, Official War Records, vol. xxi, p. 362.

to any man when he thought himself justified in so doing.* It is equally certain that Birney's action was tardy and feeble. He had two brigades, Ward's and Berry's, near the road when Meade started. Ward's aggressive action was confined to supporting batteries, and, after Meade's retirement had set in, to advancing two regiments. Berry, by Birney's directions, also waited for Meade to be overpowered. If, instead of repeated requests and a final emphatic order from Meade, there had been an order from Reynolds to Birney to support Meade actively, there would have been no room for hesitation on Birney's part.

On Meade's right, Gibbon's brigades of Taylor and Lyle were thrown into confusion before the railroad was reached, and they consequently failed to keep the connection with Meade's line. No troops advanced on Gibbon's right, Smith's corps, the Sixth, being held along the Old Richmond road and Deep Creek. Burns's division of the Ninth Corps, which crossed Deep Run at three o'clock, did nothing more than to cover the bridges. Sickles's division of Stoneman's Third Corps did not cross the river until ten minutes past two in the afternoon. Newton's division of the Sixth Corps was also ordered to report to Reynolds after Meade's assault had been made. The late arriving supports saved some batteries, and helped to check any countercharge of the Confederates.

On the Confederate side, Early's conduct, when A. P. Hill asked for the help of his division, after Meade had broken through the ranks of Lane and Archer and Gregg, supported by Thomas and Brockenbrough, was different from that of Meade's supports. Hill says that Early came crashing through the woods on the double-quick. Early sent three brigades, and finally, by Stonewall Jackson's orders, a fourth brigade, and he says that Meade's troops were found in possession of the trenches of Archer's brigade on the crest of the hill and in the woods in rear of

* Sypher's History of the Pennsylvania Reserves, p. 414, says that Meade, recollecting that, though fighting in a brigadier-general's uniform, he had in his pocket the commission of a major general, galloped down to General Birney and exclaimed, "General, I assume the authority of ordering you up to the support of my men."

the crest. In his report Hill speaks of the gallantry with which Meade's assault was made. Palfrey says: "Meade's division fared as Pickett's division fared at Gettysburg. Having made a most brilliant advance, and penetrated the hostile line more deeply than Pickett did, it was enveloped by fire closing in upon it from every direction and compelled to withdraw. But it seems to have been better commanded than Pickett's division was." The comparison could be truthfully extended in Meade's favor. He advanced farther, and over more open ground, than Pickett did. Besides capturing two stands of colors and three hundred prisoners, whereas Pickett's record was one wholly of losses, Meade not only penetrated the Confederate lines; he held his position for a considerable time—Colonel Anderson, commanding the Third Brigade, says for an hour. When his command fell back, the men sharing the feelings of their commander, and resenting the mismanagement which had thrown away an advantage so bravely won, marched "sullenly but persistently" to the rear; Meade and Reynolds tried in vain to stop them. It was probably earlier in the day when Meade is said to have struck down with his sword a soldier who refused to advance, and who, upon being ordered to the front by Meade, drew his gun upon the general.

In that part of the battlefield of Fredericksburg where General Franklin was in supreme command under Burnside, the means provided for the assault were so inadequate, and the troops ready to defend a possible advance by the Confederates so numerous, that Franklin's contest may be described as an attempt to fight an offensive battle with defensive tactics, and its progress was marked with an uncertainty of purpose that could only be productive of disaster. According to the dispatches of General Hardie, of Burnside's staff, sent from Franklin's headquarters to the army commander, Meade's assault from his advanced position at the Old Richmond road began at noon. He was in the woods at 1.25 P. M., and at 2.15 P. M. was forced back from the woods. The statements of Burnside's aids-de-camp—Captains Lydig, Cutts, and Goddard—show that by two o'clock in the afternoon Burnside was sending orders to Franklin to attack with his whole force; but orders like

these, incapable of more than one interpretation, should have been sent in the early morning, or, better still, on the night before, at which time, according to General Smith, it was expected by Franklin, Reynolds, and himself that such orders would be received.* In their stead, Franklin received in the morning the vague order of 6.55 A. M., which resulted in Meade's gallant and temporarily successful assault. Did Burnside think that Lee still had any considerable number of troops at Port Royal, and that the heights assaulted by Meade could be easily taken? Hardly; for his crossing of troops on the 11th and 12th had given Lee ample warning of the attack of the 13th. Did he intend to be done what was actually done? An affirmative answer presupposes that he was in the unbalanced mental condition which Franklin described.† Such an assumption is unnecessary, and probably as unjust to Burnside as is the line of savage criticism applied to him by subordinates whose own inactivity at Fredericksburg calls for explanation and excuse. The secret of his failure is probably to be found in no isolated and distinctive cause, but in a combination of circumstances growing out of the fact that after he had started his Left Grand Division into an offensive battle, there was no provision made for the successful conduct of the contest. What was lacking in the chief in ability to command an army on the battlefield, his principal subordinate in this part of the battle of Fredericksburg did not supply. Burnside's early morning order could have been interpreted as readily in favor of doing much as in favor of doing little, and a vigorous lieutenant would not have missed the opportunity to win a victory offered by Meade's success, even if that success were unexpected. This part of the story of Fredericksburg reads as if the lieutenant had made up his mind that the assault would fail, and could not change his trend of thought quickly enough to rise to the occasion when the charge was crowned with success instead of failure.

Out of forty-five hundred men taken into action, Meade lost at Fredericksburg eighteen hundred and fifty-three, of whom twelve hundred and forty-one were wounded and

* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. iii, p. 133.

† Official War Records, vol. xxi, p. 1010.

one hundred and seventy-five killed. Finding that neither the efforts of Reynolds and himself, nor the regiment thrown for the purpose across the line of retreat, could stop the sullen and persistent, though not hurried, retirement of his men to the rear, Meade coolly rode among them, looking about for a favorable position upon which they could be reformed. Coming through the dense woods and undergrowth their ranks had been much broken. Meeting Franklin, Meade took off his hat, showed the holes made by two bullets that had barely escaped his head, and remarked that it had been hot enough for him up there. The horse which he rode had been wounded. Burnside probably intended to do at Fredericksburg what McClellan succeeded in doing at South Mountain and attempted at Antietam. That was, to carry the enemy's positions by assaults upon the left and right that would keep each extremity of Lee's line fully occupied and prevent him from re-enforcing one part of his line from the other, while movements toward the center from the flanks along the crest would drive him from his position in the same way that he had been compelled to abandon the heights at South Mountain. If this was his plan of battle, it fell far short of consummation, and the fighting on Burnside's right and upon his left comprised practically two separate battles.

It was at one o'clock when the divisions of Hancock and French of Couch's Second Corps were ordered to carry Marye's Heights back of the town. Howard's division was soon sent to Hancock's support. Hancock lost two thousand men; French, twelve hundred; and Howard, who went into action later, eight hundred and seventy-seven. Two brigades of Sturgis's division of the Ninth Corps were sent to support the assault and lost ten hundred and twenty-eight men. Carroll's brigade of Whipple's division of the Third Corps was in turn sent to Sturgis's support and lost one hundred and thirteen out of a force of eight hundred and fifty. Griffin's division of the Fifth Corps, also sent to support Sturgis, lost eight hundred and eighteen men in killed and wounded. The losses of the brigade of Getty's division of the Ninth Corps were slight. Finally, at 2.30 P. M., Humphreys's division, the third of the Fifth Corps, his infantry composed entirely of Pennsylvania regiments,

was sent across the river to support Couch. Humphreys's troops advanced to the position occupied by the Second Corps men, one hundred and fifty yards from the stone wall at the foot of the heights, and from this advanced position Humphreys ordered a bayonet charge of Allabach's brigade, which was broken by the deadly fire of musketry and artillery after it had gone to within twelve paces of the wall.* His other brigade, Tyler's, with which Colonel M. S. Quay was riding as a volunteer aid on the commander's staff, after his resignation on account of illness had been accepted, was brought to a stand when close to the wall. Two of Allabach's regiments retired hurraing and singing. Tyler's brigade had advanced through the men of the Second Corps, who were lying on the ground, from which position officers waved their swords and prostrate men cried out to Tyler's troops that they would be slaughtered in a well-meant attempt to stay a further and useless destruction of life.† Humphreys's command reached a position nearer the stone wall than that attained by any other troops, ‡ thus furnishing another of the coincidences of the battle in the fact that these Pennsylvania regiments on the right and Meade's Pennsylvania regiments on the left, both Meade and Humphreys coming from the same Pennsylvania city, advanced farther in their charges than any other Union troops. Humphreys's division went into action with forty-five hundred men; his losses were ten hundred and nineteen, and his repulse practically ended the fighting on the right. Sykes's division of the Fifth Corps lost two hundred and twenty-eight men.

The total losses in Burnside's army were twelve thousand six hundred and fifty-three, of which thirty-seven hundred and eighty-seven fell to Franklin, thirty-three hundred and fifty-five to Hooker's command, which was divided between the right, left, and center, and fifty-four hundred and forty-four to Sumner. Lee's losses were forty-eight hundred and fifty-four. Jackson lost, in killed and wounded, twenty-six hundred and eighty-two, and Longstreet, fifteen hundred and

* Official War Records, vol. xxi, p. 444.

† Ibid., p. 437.

‡ Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. iii, note on p. 115.

nineteen. The proposed renewal of the attack on the 14th was abandoned, and on the night of the 15th the army re-crossed the river.

The next few weeks were a season of rapid changes for Meade. He had now commanded a brigade, a division, a corps, and a division again. On December 23d he was assigned to the command of the Fifth Corps. On that day he was in temporary command of the First Corps. After what is called the mud march, he commanded the Center Grand Division composed of two corps. The record of that march is a brief one. On January 20th Meade's corps marched in the direction of Banks's Ford on the Rappahannock, and bivouacked near that place. In the evening a violent rain storm set in, making the roads impassable for artillery and wagon trains. On the 23d Meade received orders to return to the old camp, where his troops arrived during the night and next day. The storm ended with a snowfall, and the discomforts, labor, and sufferings of the troops, together with the complete failure of Burnside's plans, form an unfortunate climax in the career of that unsuccessful general.

CHAPTER IX.

CHANCELLORSVILLE.

IN the course of the changes which occurred in the Army of the Potomac on January 26th, Meade assumed command of the Center Grand Division, which at Fredericksburg was commanded by Hooker, who now commanded the army. Meade's grand division was comprised of the Third Corps, Brigadier-General Sickles, three divisions, and the Fifth Corps, Major-General Sykes, three divisions. During this period, on February 4th, Meade detailed three regiments of cavalry under the command of Colonel J. B. McIntosh, with a battery of artillery, and supported by Carr's division of the Third Corps, to destroy the railroad bridge where the Orange and Alexandria Railroad crosses the Rappahannock. The expedition set out in a violent snow-storm and successfully accomplished its object.* Meade was now commanding forty-two thousand nine hundred and seventy men present with the command, the number present for duty being thirty-four thousand one hundred and twenty-nine.

On February 5th Hooker abolished the grand divisions, which had been established by Burnside, and returned to the corps organization. He announced that the corps would be commanded as follows:

First, Reynolds; Second, Couch; Third, Sickles; Fifth, Meade; Sixth, Sedgwick; Eleventh, Sigel; Twelfth, Slocum. In the list were three, possibly four, corps commanders of the first order of ability. On the 7th Brigadier-General George Stoneman assumed command of the cavalry forces of the army. On March 21st, corps badges, to be worn upon

* Official War Records, vol. xxv, part 1, p. 7.

the center of the top of the cap, were adopted, the badge of the Fifth Corps being the Maltese Cross—in red for the First Division, white for the Second, and blue for the Third. Hooker's appointments of corps commanders were in the main confirmed by the President, April 15th; but Howard took Sigel's place as commander of the Eleventh Corps.

At his camp near Falmouth Hooker adopted a plan of campaign, which on April 11th he outlined in a communication to the President.* This plan involved turning the enemy's left and using the cavalry to sever his connections with Richmond. He hoped that the cavalry, when established on Lee's communications, would hold him in check until the rest of Hooker's army could fall on his rear; and, if not, that Lee would be compelled to fall back by way of Culpeper and Gordonsville over a longer line than Hooker's, with his supplies cut off. The Rappahannock is fed by mountain streams rising in the Blue Ridge, which in dry weather shrink into rivulets, and after a rain storm suddenly swell into impassable torrents, and as swiftly pour the mountain rainfall into the river.

Stoneman, starting with his cavalry corps, on April 13th, toward the fords of the upper Rappahannock, was retarded by freshets in the streams and was held on the north side of the river until the 29th, when the cavalry crossed at Kelly's Ford. On the 27th Hooker directed the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps to march to Kelly's Ford, twenty-five miles up the Rappahannock. The Fifth Corps was ordered to march the same day and reach Kelly's Ford by five o'clock in the afternoon of Tuesday, the 28th, Meade receiving his orders at two o'clock in the morning. Couch was directed to send two divisions of the Second Corps to Banks's Ford, six miles by road above Fredericksburg, and a brigade and battery to United States Ford, seven miles by road above Banks's Ford. One division was left to guard the river. It was expected that the Union forces advancing down the river from Kelly's Ford on the south bank would make the crossing at these lower fords secure. To conceal from Lee the movement indicated, Sedgwick was placed in command of three corps, those of Reynolds

* Official War Records, vol. xxv, part ii, p. 199.

and Sickles (the First and Third), in addition to his own (the Sixth), with orders to have these troops in position at river crossings below Fredericksburg by early morning of the 29th, by which time two bridges were to be laid at Franklin's crossing and two at Pollock's Mill crossing, the latter crossing being about three miles below Fredericksburg. On the morning of the 29th Sedgwick was to make a demonstration with the view of gaining possession of the Telegraph road along the crest on the other side of the river, but the next day he was informed that his movement was to be a demonstration only for the purpose of occupying the enemy's attention while the movements were carried on above, unless the enemy should leave the position or materially weaken his force. At eleven o'clock on the morning of the 29th Meade's First and Second Divisions (Sykes's and Griffin's) followed the Twelfth Corps over the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford, and, preceded by a small detachment of cavalry, marched to Ely's Ford on the Rapidan. Humphreys's division was left behind by Meade to take up the bridge over the Rappahannock, a duty which Meade was intrusted with, along with the work of guarding the construction of a bridge over United States Ford as soon as that place should be uncovered.* At Richards's Ford Meade's small force of cavalry surprised and captured several officers and thirty-five enlisted men comprising the enemy's picket force. The cavalry crossed the Rapidan at 5 P. M., drove off the Confederate videttes, and was followed immediately by the two divisions of infantry, the men wading through the stream which was from three to four feet deep and with a very rapid current. Here was displayed a practical overcoming of actual obstacles very different from the waste of a morning by Burnside's corps at Antietam Creek. By midnight the two divisions were bivouacked upon the right bank of the Rapidan. The next morning Meade sent out two squadrons of cavalry, one toward Chancellorsville and the other toward United States Ford on the Rappahannock. Word came to Meade from the Second Squadron that a brigade of Confederates was covering United States Ford. Meade therefore directed

* Official War Records, vol. xxv, part ii, p. 275.

Sykes's division to that place, and halted Griffin, after passing Hunting Creek, to await the development of Sykes's movement. Before hearing from Sykes, however, the First Squadron of cavalry reported their occupation of Chancellorsville after a slight skirmish with a small force of Confederates. This convinced Meade that there could be no force of the enemy at United States Ford, and he therefore pushed Griffin's division on to Chancellorsville, which place Griffin occupied about eleven o'clock in the morning. Sykes's division joined Griffin about one o'clock. As soon as his leading division occupied Chancellorsville Meade ordered Colonel Devin, commanding his cavalry force, to send out a strong picket on the Plank road, and to send out on the Banks's Ford or River road another party whose purpose should be to ascertain whether the enemy were in front. Through an error, the Second Squadron went down the Old Turnpike instead of the River road, struck the enemy's pickets and drove them until a line of battle was visible. As soon as this was reported to Meade he ordered Griffin to send a brigade to the support of the cavalry, and, if possible, drive the Confederate infantry and uncover Banks's Ford. An hour afterward Griffin reported that he was with his brigade (Barnes's) in the presence of a superior force of the enemy, and that if he were to retain his position he should require supports. Barnes had advanced on the turnpike about two miles from Chancellorsville toward Fredericksburg, and there he was confronted by Posey's and Mahone's brigades, which were posted on a ridge with artillery commanding the road. Barnes deployed two regiments, one on each side of the road, with the rest of the brigade in reserve. With the arrival of this report from Griffin Meade understood that his orders to uncover Banks's Ford were not being carried out, and that the cavalry had taken the wrong road, upon which road, of course, the infantry sent to the cavalry's support followed. It now became a question whether to support Barnes or to withdraw him. Just at that time General Slocum, Meade's senior, arrived. The question was submitted to him, and it was decided to withdraw Barnes. Both divisions were bivouacked in line of battle, the right resting on Chancellorsville and the left

extending in a northeasterly direction toward the Rappahannock River. Humphreys's division, which had been greatly delayed by the trains and cavalry in crossing the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford, and by losing the road on a night march toward the Rapidan, and which did not reach that stream until the other divisions of the Fifth Corps had departed, bivouacked on the night of the 30th at Hunting Creek, two miles in rear of Sykes and Griffin.

The Twelfth and Eleventh Corps arrived at Chancellorsville from Kelly's Ford by way of Germanna Bridge, about 2 P. M. on the 30th. These corps took up a position from Chancellorsville to Hunting Run facing south, the Eleventh Corps on the right. The United States Ford having been uncovered by the movement down the right bank of the Rappahannock, the First and Third Divisions of the Second Corps crossed at that point during the afternoon of the 30th, and bivouacked within a mile of Chancellorsville. The other division of the corps (Gibbon's) was finally sent to support Sedgwick at Fredericksburg. About noon of the 30th Hooker ordered Sickles to march the Third Corps by way of United States Ford to Chancellorsville, at which place Sickles reported at nine on the morning of May 1st, massing his forces in the woods near the junction of the Ely's Ford and United States Ford roads. The cavalry corps, under Stoneman, which crossed the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford on the 29th, moved toward Louisa Court House and Gordonsville, destroying the Virginia Central Railroad for eighteen miles eastward, and then striking the line of the Acquia and Richmond Railroad, the bridges of which were also destroyed, as were the road bridges across the South Anna and some of those across the North Anna. In Buford and Gregg Stoneman had very able subordinates, and whatever they had to do was certain to be well done. But the cavalry had been sent to Lee's rear for the purpose of delaying his retreat, and as it turned out it was the other army in the contest which retreated.

Until the morning of May 1st Hooker's movements were crowned with the complete success that sometimes attends brilliant and audacious generalship. But on that day he began to waver and hesitate. It was highly important that he should advance at once from the low wooded

ground about Chancellorsville and deploy his corps upon the higher open fields toward Fredericksburg.* It was also important that he should uncover Banks's Ford in order that Sedgwick might readily be communicated with. Hooker in person arrived at Chancellorsville on the evening of the 30th. He may have had some preconceived idea in favor of making his stand at that place, for a dispatch, dated 9.30 A. M., April 30th, from his Chief of Staff, Butterfield, who had remained at Falmouth for the purpose of facilitating communications with Sedgwick, said, "The maps indicate that a formidable position can be taken there" (at Chancellorsville), and, in addition, Butterfield desired General Warren to assist in establishing a line of defense at that place.†

It was not until eleven o'clock on the morning of May 1st that Hooker ordered Meade's corps, with three batteries, to move eastward on the River road until the head of the column reached by two o'clock a point between Mott's Run and Colin's Run. The Twelfth Corps was to be massed by twelve o'clock below the Plank road, the head of it resting near Tabernacle Church. The Eleventh Corps was to be massed on the Plank road by two o'clock, one mile in rear of the Twelfth. A division of the Second Corps was to take position at Todd's Tavern. For the movement to uncover Banks's Ford, Meade sent to his division commanders aids and sketches defining routes and positions. Sykes's division was to proceed along the Old Turnpike. After crossing Mott's Run he was to move to the left, deploy, and open communications with Slocum's corps on his right and Griffin's on the left, the latter of whom, advancing along the River road until the enemy was met, was to deploy, his left resting on the river and his right extending toward Sykes; Humphreys was to follow Griffin. Hooker had thus set in motion three parallel columns, which, when deployed in connection and continuing the advance, would be certain to bring on a battle. The columns advanced until they gained a ridge crossing the three roads about two miles

* General Francis A. Walker, in his *History of the Second Army Corps*, pp. 219, 220, discusses this question with intelligence.

† Official War Records, vol. xxv, part ii, p. 305.

from Chancellorsville. Griffin met no opposition; Sykes and Slocum drove before them the forces opposing their advance. Sykes's division of Meade's corps moved at the double-quick, attacked vigorously, and gained the crest by noon. Slocum's corps, however, did not advance so far as to make connection with Sykes.

The infirmity of purpose which caused Hooker to delay the advance of his right wing, and the demonstration of Sedgwick below Fredericksburg, gave Lee the opportunity he required. The brigades of Mahone, Wright, and Posey of Anderson's division took a position across the Turnpike and Plank road near the intersection of Mine road, and at midnight of the 30th, leaving Early's division of Jackson's corps, Barksdale's brigade of McLaws's division and part of the Reserve artillery, under Pendleton, to resist Sedgwick, Lee sent McLaws with the rest of his command to Chancellorsville; and at eight o'clock the next morning Jackson, with the remaining divisions of his corps, reached the position occupied by Anderson. Now was the time for both wings of Hooker's army to attack, while Sedgwick still had Reynolds's corps as well as his own below Fredericksburg. But owing to the failure to uncover Banks's Ford it was not until 5 P. M. on May 1st that Sedgwick received an order to make a demonstration at 1 P. M. of the same day. Although the hour named had long passed, Sedgwick was deploying his forces when he received another order countermanding the demonstration because of the delay in transmitting the first order by way of United States Ford.

In front of Chancellorsville, Sykes, after gaining the crest by sharp fighting, found that in his front was a heavy forest, and that he was within range of breastworks on his left. The enemy tried to turn both his flanks, but Sykes's dispositions prevented this being done. On Sykes's right and on his left were dense woods, and as Slocum on his right did not connect with him and Sykes's aids could not find Slocum, Sykes feared the enemy might reach his rear through the woods.

In the meantime Hooker received word from Butterfield that the Confederates were moving troops from Sedgwick's front to Hooker's front, and at two o'clock Hooker sent word to Butterfield that on account of the receipt of this

news he had suspended the attack of his right wing. Meade, Slocum, and Couch were ordered to retire their troops from the advanced and favorable positions which had been gained to the low ground about the Chancellor House, where Hooker hoped Lee would attack him. Couch described the position abandoned as high ground, more or less open in front, on which an army might move and artillery be used advantageously. On the ground to the rear taken up by Hooker there was no commanding position for artillery, and there was but little open country to operate over. The gratification of Hooker's corps commanders at the success of the preliminary movements in crossing the river and gaining a favorable position for attacking Lee without serious opposition, and, indeed, without his knowledge, was suddenly changed, by the retirement, to extreme disappointment. As Couch, Meade, Sykes, and Hancock sat on their horses in a group behind Hancock's division, Meade looking up the road from the new line, commanded and enfiladed by the batteries, which the advancing enemy were already establishing on the high, abandoned ground, exclaimed with emphasis, "My God, if we can't hold the top of a hill, we certainly can not hold the bottom of it!"*

In retiring, Sykes's division of Meade's corps had moved by brigades in succession, covered by skirmishers, in line of battle, back to the height where the McGee House stood. Here Sykes had met Couch advancing to his aid with Hancock's division, and Sykes's troops had been massed in Hancock's rear until both divisions were ordered by Hooker to retire. In the further retirement Hancock's division preceded O'Rorke's brigade of Sykes's division. Hancock sent word to O'Rorke that the enemy was following in force, and that he had better get his command into the road and follow after his (Hancock's) troops. But as O'Rorke had no orders from Sykes he concluded to hold his ground. He therefore deployed his brigade in line of battle, his left resting on a branch of Mott's Run, which here crosses the road, the right connecting with the Second Brigade. The movement was not finished when the pickets were driven in, and two lines of the enemy, each about a regimental

* Walker's Second Army Corps, p. 224.

front, were seen advancing over the crest of the ridge on the opposite side of the ravine. The rest of the Confederate lines were concealed by the woods. O'Rorke began at once a rapid fire by file, and the advancing Confederates paused and retired behind the hill.*

During the night, after the retirement to Chancellorsville, Hooker's lines were made as strong as the conditions admitted. Meade was ordered to hold a line from Chancellorsville to the river. Humphreys's division occupied the extreme left of this line running along the Mineral Spring road, and held the approaches to the United States Ford by the River road and its branches. The divisions of Griffin and Sykes extended their lines along the Mineral Spring road, connecting on the left with Humphreys and on the right with French's divisions of Couch's corps. The next morning Meade's line was strengthened by constructing rifle pits, abatis, etc. Roads under cover were opened communicating with United States Ford, and the artillery was posted so as to command the plain in front. Hancock's division of Couch's corps, on French's right, carried the line across the Turnpike, connecting with the Twelfth Corps near the Plank road. At these roads, therefore, an angle was presented toward the Confederate advance, and from this point Hooker's line was refused by the Twelfth, Third, and Eleventh Corps, in the order named, in the general direction of the Turnpike westwardly, the troops of these corps facing toward the south. The right of Howard's corps had no natural protection.

Hooker's desire now was to be attacked in a defensive position. A similar change in the conduct of the battle on the left at Fredericksburg had lost to Burnside the opportunity to win a victory. In retiring, Hooker had taken up a position at Chancellorsville which was to prove his destruction. From the Plank road, along which Jackson was advancing westwardly, a series of roads wound through the woods, making a circuit around Hooker's front and joining the Old Turnpike at a point about three miles west of the right of Howard's corps. These roads were the Furnace road, running southwestwardly from the Plank

* O'Rorke's Report, Official War Records, vol. xxv, part i, p. 542.

road, and the Brock road, running northwestwardly from its junction with the Furnace road, crossing the Orange Court House Plank road, the Culpeper Plank road, and reaching the Old Turnpike about a mile east of the Wilderness Tavern. On the night of May 1st Lee had halted his troops and formed line of battle in front of Chancellorsville at right angles to the Plank road, his right extending above the Turnpike to the Mine road and his left extending below the Plank road. The plans for Jackson's movement from the east front around to the right flank of Hooker's army were formed during the night by Lee and Jackson, and by early morning of the 2d Jackson's column of three divisions was already upon its flank march of more than a score of miles. The movement was covered by Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry under Stuart in person. Jackson's trains were moved by the Catharpin road, his troops keeping between the trains and the Union forces. As even an imperfect knowledge of the country and the roads would have suggested the movement which Jackson was now actually making, it is amazing that the preparations to meet it were so slight. Birney, at eight o'clock in the morning, reported the movement across his front to General Sickles, his corps commander, but Jackson was not to be diverted from his purpose by such slight opposition as was offered by the Third Corps during the day. On the right, Howard and Hooker seem to have thought the position of the Eleventh Corps satisfactory, save for the necessity of some slight modification suggested by the army commander.

Jackson's assault upon Howard's flank fell about six o'clock in the afternoon. Howard's divisions were broken and fled in confusion eastward, some of the troops in their panic fleeing even beyond the eastern front of the army along the roads leading toward Fredericksburg. In the morning, when Jackson's column, following the Furnace road, reached the vicinity of the Furnace, the troops, pursuing the bend of the road, turned their backs upon their foe and marched southwardly. Seeing this movement, the Union officers and men were deluded with the idea that Lee was in full retreat. In the morning Hooker had sent a message to Slocum and Howard warning them of the danger of a flank attack, and expressing the fear that the

dispositions on the right were not strong enough,* but the early uneasiness passed away largely in consequence of a peculiar movement of Sickles and the report which came from the Third Corps. When the southward movement of Jackson's corps at the Furnace was discovered in the morning, Sickles's divisions were pushed southward toward the Furnace in pursuit of the foe that was supposed to be in full retreat. The "pursuit" did not reach the Furnace until an hour in the afternoon when the Confederate column had already passed. A portion of the trains, however, had not passed, and a single Confederate regiment had been posted here to guard against just such a flank attack as Birney's division of Sickles's corps was now making. The Confederate regiment was supposed by the Union commanders to be the rear guard of a retreating army. Sickles sent a message to Howard, saying: "General Birney reports that he has reached a brigade of the enemy in rifle pits, posted, as I think, to cover the retreating column. I will attack, if the enemy is not stronger than the reports so far represent him, and occupy the road by which he is retreating"; † and that evening Butterfield, Hooker's Chief of Staff at Falmouth, was sending word to Gibbon that Sickles was "in the enemy's trains," thus extending the erroneous impression conveyed by Hooker to Butterfield, in a dispatch dated 4.10 P. M., in which he said, "We know that the enemy is fleeing, trying to save his trains." ‡ Even Howard and Slocum were directed to support Sickles's "pursuit" of a foe that had already covered many a mile of its aggressive march toward Hooker's right flank, a "pursuit" which ended abruptly in the evening, when it was learned that the troops of the Eleventh Corps were fleeing panic-stricken across Sickles's rear, with Jackson in close pursuit, and that Sickles's troops themselves were in grave danger for a time of being cut off from the rest of the Union army. With the approach of darkness Jackson had possession of the Union breastworks, and taking the Union line in reverse, he pushed forward toward Hooker's headquarters. His plan was to extend his left and cut off

* Official War Records, vol. xxv, part ii, p. 360.

† *Ibid.*, p. 370.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

Hooker from United States Ford. It has been assumed by some writers that if Jackson had not been mortally wounded while preparing for this movement it would have been carried out with success, but their assumption is hardly warranted in view of the steps taken by Meade to prevent such a catastrophe.

On Hooker's left, which bore back from Chancellorsville to the Rappahannock along the Mineral Springs road, as has been said, was posted Meade's corps. Meade was distant from the scene of action, but he had no sooner heard of the defeat of the Eleventh Corps than he comprehended the danger to the army and anticipated the very movement which Jackson had in contemplation, by sending Sykes's division on the double-quick out on the road leading to Ely's Ford, in front of the road to the United States Ford. It was upon the latter road that Meade feared Jackson would advance, and it was to prevent a movement in rear of the Union army that would have cut the line of retreat to the north bank of the river, that Meade sent Sykes with the utmost speed to cover and hold the road leading to the ford. In this prompt movement of Meade's there is found an indication of the line upon which the army was soon to be formed. To Reynolds, who by Hooker's orders recrossed the river below Fredericksburg on the morning of the 2d, and who, marching by way of United States Ford, reported to Hooker in person at six in the evening, his troops reaching Chancellorsville about daylight of the 3d, the commander of the army sent word, on the evening of the 2d, that he should post his troops on a line extending from the right of Sykes along Hunting Run and resting on the Rapidan.

In fact, as soon as the disaster fell, on the 2d, the steps taken to stay it were promptly made. Hooker himself gathered together the troops near at hand; the artillery did most effective service, and Jackson's attack, partly checked, partly halted by the loss of its own momentum, and partly stayed by the mortal wounding of the commander, had accomplished its utmost. The afternoon assaults under Lee upon that portion of Hooker's left held by the Second Corps had been successfully resisted. Hooker had formed two of Berry's brigades of the Third Corps perpendicular to the

Plank road facing west, and other troops of the Twelfth, Second, and Eleventh Corps had been brought up to hold the position. By the morning of the 3d, Sickles, with his two other divisions, had fought his way back into position. In the evening of the 2d Hooker turned to Sedgwick in the hope that he could relieve the pressure upon the Union forces at Chancellorsville, and after having drawn away from him, as we have seen, the corps of Sickles and Reynolds, at 9 P. M. he ordered Sedgwick to march on the south side of the Rappahannock to Chancellorsville. Hooker hoped that by Sedgwick's falling upon Lee's rear that portion of the Confederate army under Lee's immediate command would be crushed between the two wings of the Union army.

On Sunday morning, May 3d, Reynolds's corps held the new line along the east bank of Hunting Run, from the Rapidan to the crossing of the Chancellorsville and Ely's Ford road, and thence along that road toward Chancellorsville. Meade's corps came next, his right connecting with Reynolds's left, his left at the White House (Chandler's). Howard's corps took the position which Meade had held on the morning of the 2d, on the Mineral Springs road. The Second, Twelfth, and Third Corps were still kept on the more advanced line at Chancellorsville, one division of the Second Corps on the left from Mott's Run to Chancellorsville, the Twelfth Corps with a portion of the Third holding the center and facing south, while the remainder of the Third Corps and French's division of the Second Corps faced toward the west. Ere this the Confederate battle line had shifted until, instead of facing west, as it had done before Jackson's flank march, it faced mostly north and east, and the wings of Lee's army, widely and dangerously separated by Jackson's march, were now re-joined.

It will be observed from the position which Meade's corps now held that if Stuart, who had succeeded to Jackson's command, should continue the eastward movement thus far so successfully prosecuted by the Confederates, his advance would have to be across Meade's front, and that by making such an advance he would present to Hooker a golden opportunity to repair his shattered fortunes and

to turn disaster into victory. Across Meade's front, a mile and a half away, Stuart, in the early morning of the 3d, hurled his attacks upon the right of Hooker's advanced line. To the assistance of French Meade sent Sykes's brigade of Humphreys's division, the brigade being led to the scene of conflict by Colonel Webb, of Meade's staff. Hooker disapproved of this action of Meade, and ordered him not to send any more troops forward.* Previously Colonel Webb had ridden to the left of Stuart's line by Meade's orders and had seen the Confederates moving forward with arms at "a trail." Meade went with Webb to Hooker's tent, and the army commander was informed of what Meade's staff officer had seen, but Hooker positively refused to permit Meade to attack. The chief value of the study of the practice of war is found in the neglect or improvement of such an opportunity as this, not in mere contests of endurance, however much bravery these may call for. The fighting for the position about the Chancellor House was brave enough to arouse admiration wherever soldierly courage is appreciated, but on the Union side there was needed a commander to take advantage of the daring of the troops. The battle was continued fiercely during the morning in repeated assaults from the Confederate left center and right, with alternate successes and repulses. But Hooker kept the corps of Reynolds and Meade standing idle, while his three other corps were contending with their foes from the more advanced position. While standing at the Chancellor House Hooker was severely injured by a falling pillar which had been struck by a Confederate cannon shot. When he had recovered somewhat from the blow, he directed the three engaged corps to fall back to the line which Meade and Reynolds already occupied. The position at the Chancellor House was abandoned about noon; the woods took fire; the Sunday battle was over. By retiring to save himself, Hooker, after ordering Sedgwick into a position of the gravest danger, abandoned him to his fate. Lee was now at liberty to turn back four brigades under McLaws to the assistance of Wilcox confronting

* Statement of General Humphreys. See Powell's Fifth Army Corps, p. 478.

Sedgwick at Salem Church, five miles west of Fredericksburg. Although nearly surrounded by the enemy, his retreat to Fredericksburg being cut off on the 4th by Early, Sedgwick managed to hold his own and keep open the route to Banks's Ford, where soon after midnight he recrossed the river. Lee was fully occupied on the 4th with forcing Sedgwick across the river, having on that day sent Anderson with three brigades to join McLaws, Jackson's three divisions holding the position at Chancellorsville.

When, after Hooker's injury, he called Couch to his side and transferred to the Second Corps commander a not clearly defined control over the army, Couch says he found Meade at Hooker's tent looking as if he were still waiting for the order to "go in,"* an order which Meade had ardently desired during the whole morning, but one which Hooker had positively refused to make,† the army commander being determined, in spite of every temptation offered by the battle, to remain on the line occupied by Meade and Reynolds, a determination which has the appearance of confession that the general in command, if not his troops, had been whipped early in the contest. Colonel James C. Biddle, of Meade's staff, in a verbal statement to the present writer, ‡ said that after his injury Hooker had a tent pitched near Meade and held a conference with that officer. Biddle heard Meade urge repeatedly that he be permitted to attack, but Hooker positively refused. Couch shortly afterward appeared, and, upon issuing from the tent, directed Hooker's staff to report to himself, as he had been intrusted by Hooker with command of the army. Some of the members of the staff present then hurried into the tent, and in a little while Hooker appeared and said to Couch that he had not meant to relinquish command of the army, but had intended that Couch should consult with Meade in regard to what should be done. Couch says that Meade accompanied him toward the front. Meade himself sent a part of Allabach's brigade to hold the woods between Chandler's House and Chancellorsville until all the

* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. iii, p. 170.

† Official War Records, vol. xxv, part 1, p. 508.

‡ See also Bache's Meade, p. 272.

troops were withdrawn to the shorter line, and he ordered that all the available batteries be collected and placed in position around Chandler's (the White House) to cover the withdrawal and check the enemy's advance.* Captain Weed, who executed this order, collected fifty-six cannon in all, from nearly every corps in the army, and placed twenty-eight on the right, twenty-four on the left, and four in the angle, the artillery thus placed occupying about five hundred yards on each side of the angle.

At midnight of the 4th and 5th, Couch, Reynolds, Meade, Sickles, and Howard met Hooker in council. After submitting to the consideration of his corps commanders the question of retiring across the river, Hooker and his Chief of Staff, Butterfield, withdrew. Warren, Hooker's chief of engineers, remained for a time. Meade and Howard spoke in favor of attacking the enemy. Reynolds said that as his corps was the only one that had not been engaged, he ought not urge his opinion, but would agree to whatever Meade thought. Sickles made an elaborate argument sustaining Hooker, who it was clearly understood desired to withdraw. Couch's views were similar to Meade's, provided he could choose the point of attack, but upon a vote being taken, Meade, Reynolds, and Howard voted for an advance, and Sickles and Couch voted in opposition to it,† Couch being influenced entirely by his complete lack of confidence in the ability of the army commander. Hooker thereafter announced that he would retire. The 5th was spent in opening roads to the rear, and as soon as darkness fell the retreat across the river began. Meade's corps was designated as the rear guard, two of its divisions crossing about daylight of the 6th. These were followed by Meade's other division, that of Griffin, who kept a brigade constantly deployed in line of battle to cover the rear.

The crossing of the river was not without its perils. There had been a heavy downpour of rain in the afternoon. At midnight Meade sent word to Couch that the river was over the bridges, that Hooker was on the other

* Meade's order was ratified by Hooker.

† See Couch's statement in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. iii, p. 171. and Warren's memorandum and Reynolds's statement, *Official War Records*, vol. xxv, part i, pp. 510, 512.

side, and that communication with him was cut off. Couch, Reynolds, and Sickles went to Meade's headquarters to confer as to what should be done in the absence of the army commander. Couch, the senior major general, saying to Meade that they would stay where they were and fight it out, returned to his tent to obtain needed rest.* Meade thereupon told Colonel Biddle, of his staff, to cross the river by way of United States Ford, find General Hooker and ask for orders. The aid found the army commander fast asleep on the floor of a house on the north side of the river. He awakened Butterfield, Chief of Staff, and, reporting the situation, was informed that the order for a retreat was imperative. On reporting this reply to Meade, Biddle was directed to summon Meade's staff and to communicate to Reynolds the state of affairs. Reynolds said, "Tell General Meade that some one should be waked up to take command of this army." The water subsiding the passage of the river was resumed, and during its progress Reynolds rode up to Meade and exclaimed: "General, I will support you. If there is any fighting to be done we will do it together." †

The peremptory and prohibitive orders of Hooker had held the Fifth Corps in comparative inactivity during the battle of Chancellorsville so far as the fighting was concerned. Nevertheless Meade had rendered intelligent service, and had he been permitted to send his corps upon Stuart's flank, as he desired, with all the vigor with which he had thrown his division upon Jackson at Fredericksburg and D. H. Hill at South Mountain, the audacity of Lee might have received a timely punishment, and the confidence which led to the invasion of Pennsylvania might not have been acquired. As it was, Meade had been chosen to perform important service. It had been his duty to protect the taking up of the pontoons both on approaching Chancellorsville and in retiring from it; his corps had been the one chosen to descend along the Rappahannock and to uncover the fords; he had reached Chancellorsville

* Couch's statement, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. iii, p. 171.

† Statement of Colonel Biddle to author.

first of all; one of his divisions had gained the important crest in front of Chancellorsville, the most advanced ground held by Union troops; he had performed some of the duties of a general in chief during certain crises of the battle; upon Howard's defeat he had promptly guarded the main approach from the Confederate assaulting column to the rear of the Union army and the United States Ford; he had indicated by his movement on the Ely's Ford road the line upon which the army made its last stand; he had ordered the planting of the cannon for the protection of the whole army upon the angle at the White House when the army was without a commander; his conduct, and that of his equals in rank, had been such as to make it certain that the country was in no danger of witnessing the spectacle of a military junta, and he had successfully performed the perilous duty of a commander of a rear guard with a river in his front, daylight about him, and an exulting foe behind.

After Burnside's failure at Fredericksburg Meade had been considered, together with Hooker, for the difficult and responsible position of army commander. Political influence, of which Meade possessed none, had turned the scale in Hooker's favor. Now, when it was obvious that Hooker had been overweighted, Couch and Reynolds, each Meade's senior in rank, recommended Meade to the Washington authorities as Hooker's successor. From the field of Chancellorsville Webb wrote: "General Meade was head and shoulders above all out in the field. He advised the attacks which were not made and which would have gained the day; he asked to be allowed to attack with his corps, supported by Reynolds; it was refused. He advised not to fall back. And since the battle he has received messages from three senior generals stating that they would willingly serve under him." On May 22d Couch advised President Lincoln to place Meade in command of the army, adding that he himself would have the greatest pleasure in serving under that officer, though senior to him. Feeling that he could not lead his corps to purposeless slaughter under Hooker, Couch asked to be relieved from the command of the Second Corps. "It is a matter of regret," says General Francis A. Walker, "that General Couch did not for a little while longer possess his soul in patience. A

few weeks more would have seen the army commanded by an officer in whom he had the utmost confidence, and under whom he would have delighted to march at the head of his own gallant corps." *

According to the returns for April 30th Hooker had in infantry, "present for duty, equipped," in the Army of the Potomac, one hundred and thirteen thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven men. Of these, twenty-two thousand four hundred and twenty-seven were in Sedgwick's corps. Gibbon's division of the Second Corps was also at Fredericksburg. Hooker's losses in the campaign were seventeen thousand two hundred and eighty-seven. Lee had probably sixty thousand men and his losses were twelve thousand four hundred and sixty-three.

* History of Second Army Corps, p. 254.

CHAPTER X.

THE MARCH TO GETTYSBURG.

AFTER the battle of Chancellorsville it was a question for a time whether the defeated or the victorious army would be the first to resume offensive operations. The signs of preparations on the part of Hooker for another aggressive movement seem to have spurred Lee on to the invasion of Pennsylvania. Immediately after the defeat of Lee at Antietam we have seen him returning to the plan of such an invasion, which plan was interrupted, not definitely abandoned, in consequence of the battles of South Mountain and Antietam.

Lee began to withdraw his army from the vicinity of Fredericksburg on June 3d. In addition to the military advantages "it was hoped that other valuable results might be attained."* This hope embraced the prospect of interference on behalf of the confederacy by England and France. The corps of Longstreet and Ewell encamped at Culpeper on the 7th. Hill's corps was left at Fredericksburg to watch the force which Hooker threw across the Rappahannock below the town, and Hill was instructed to follow Lee as soon as the Federal troops retired. Ewell left Culpeper on the 10th, and marching into the valley by way of Chester Gap, captured a large part of Milroy's force at Winchester, and reaching Martinsburg on the 14th, cleared the valley of Union troops as far as the Potomac. On the 15th Longstreet left Culpeper, and advanced northward along the east side of the Blue Ridge, occupying Ashby's and Snicker's Gaps. Stuart, with three brigades of cavalry, moved on Longstreet's right. Hill then moved into

* Lee's Report. Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part ii, p. 305.

the valley in Longstreet's rear with orders to cross the Potomac at Shepherdstown, and when Hill had passed, Longstreet moved to the west of the Shenandoah and crossed the Potomac at Williamsport, where Ewell had crossed on the 22d.

On the 15th Hooker began to fall back along the direct route toward Washington. On the 23d Ewell was at Chambersburg in Pennsylvania, to which place Jenkins's cavalry had preceded him by a week. Longstreet and Hill crossed the Potomac on the 24th and 25th. On the 25th and 26th Hooker crossed that river at Edwards's Ferry. There had been a cavalry battle at Brandy Station on the 9th, and engagements at Aldie on the 17th, at Middleburg on the 18th and 19th, and at Upperville on the 21st.

On the 27th of June the First, Third, and Eleventh Corps of the Army of the Potomac, all under the command of Reynolds, were at Middletown, Md. The Twelfth Corps had reached Knoxville on its way from the mouth of the Monocacy to Harper's Ferry, Hooker's plan being to unite with the troops of French at that place and to cut Lee's communications. The Second Corps was at Barnesville, fifteen miles south of Frederick; the Fifth Corps at Balingers Creek, just south of Frederick; the Sixth Corps at Poolesville, south of Barnesville, and below that place and the Potomac; Buford's cavalry division was at Jefferson, at the foot of the Catoctin Mountains and southwest of Frederick; and Gregg's and Stahel's divisions were near Frederick. A part of the Pennsylvania Reserves, Meade's old command, now under Crawford, arrived at the mouth of the Monocacy from the defenses of Washington.

On the same day Rodes's and Johnson's divisions of Ewell's corps of Lee's army, with Jenkins's cavalry, were at Carlisle in Pennsylvania. The brigades of Early's division on that day and the previous one moved from Cash-town and Gettysburg to York. In the course of this movement, Early, on the 26th, drove the Twenty-sixth Pennsylvania Emergency Regiment from Gettysburg after a skirmish near that place. Longstreet was at Chambersburg, and A. P. Hill in the same vicinity. On the night of the 24th of June, leaving Robertson's small brigade of two regiments and Jones's brigade with the main army, Stuart with his

other cavalry brigades of Hampton, Fitzhugh Lee, and W. H. F. Lee, rendezvoused at Salem, passed through Glasscock's Gap in the Bull Run Mountain, and, marching around the rear of Hooker's army, started north between that army and Washington by way of Fairfax Court House, Dranesville, Rowser's Ford on the Potomac, Rockville and Westminster in Maryland, and Hanover, Pa. On approaching the last-named place on the 30th, he found, as at Littlestown, that the Union cavalry prevented him from carrying out his anxious desire to rejoin Lee's army.

From the location and movements of the two armies it will be seen that on June 28th Lee was moving northward and eastward toward Harrisburg and the Susquehanna at Wrightsville, where the only bridge between Harrisburg and Conowingo, Md., crossed the river, while Hooker, along the South Mountain in Maryland, was preparing to move westward upon his adversary's line of communications. Unwilling that Hooker should have command in another battle, the authorities at Washington refused him permission to abandon the position at Harper's Ferry, whereupon he asked to be relieved from the command of the army.

It was toward morning on the 28th of June that General Meade was aroused from his sleep by the arrival of peremptory orders from the War Department for him to take command of the Army of the Potomac,* and the troops temporarily assigned to duty with it. For the new commander of the army this night of partial rest was the last he was to enjoy for an eventful week. To General Hardie, Secretary Stanton's messenger, Meade protested that the order was unjust to Reynolds, his senior in rank, and unjust to himself. He knew nothing of Hooker's plans, was unaware of the location of the corps of his own army, and was ignorant of the whereabouts of the enemy. He was told that he had no choice in the matter. Colonel Locke, in an adjoining tent, who had been aroused at two o'clock in the morning, by the messenger seeking directions on his way, heard Meade's voice raised in protest against the order which had been sent him. C. W. Benjamin, who held a responsible position at the War Department, says it was a

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, p. 369.

mental relief to the stern Secretary of War, when Meade's spontaneous utterances were reported to him, to note that he had made no protest against Hooker's being relieved of the command, even in what might be called the presence of the enemy. Mr. Benjamin also says that this silence on the part of a man so regardless of himself, so regardful of others, Mr. Stanton accepted as being in itself his complete vindication. Meade had protested also against the requirement that he should go to Hooker's tent to take the command; but General Hardie finally convinced him that as soldier he could do nothing else than obey the order of his superior.* Calling his staff, Meade mounted and started on the long ride through the dark to Hooker's headquarters. On the way he seemed absorbed in thought, and maintained an uninterrupted silence. Day was breaking when the little company of horsemen drew near the army headquarters, and, as they approached, the flaps of Hooker's tent were thrown back and Hooker appeared clad in full uniform.† It was no doubt a relief to Meade to find that in some way Hooker had been prepared for what was coming. In his farewell order Hooker said, in part:

"In conformity with the orders of the War Department, dated June 27, 1863, I relinquish command of the Army of the Potomac. It is transferred to Major-General George G. Meade, a brave and accomplished officer, who has nobly earned the confidence and esteem of this army on many a well-fought field."

General Meade's assumption of command was conveyed to the army in an order which read, in part, as follows:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, *June 28, 1863.*

By direction of the President of the United States I hereby assume command of the Army of the Potomac.

As a soldier, in obeying this order, an order totally unexpected and unsolicited, I have no promises or pledges to make.

The country looks to this army to relieve it from the devastation and disgrace of a hostile invasion. Whatever fatigues and sacrifices we may be called upon to undergo, let us have

* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. iii, p. 243.

† Statement made in 1889 to author by the late Colonel George Meade of General Meade's staff.

in mind constantly the magnitude of the interests involved, and let each man determine to do his duty, leaving to an all-controlling Providence the decision of the contest. . . .

GEORGE G. MEADE, *Major General commanding.*

Expressive of the feeling of the most intelligent element in the army, Colonel Haskell, of General Gibbon's staff, wrote in 1863: "I believe the army in general, both officers and men, had no confidence in Hooker, . . . and now under his leadership they were marching against the enemy, and they knew of nothing short of the providence of God that could or would remove him. . . . On the 28th, while we were near this latter place [Uniontown], we breathed a full breath of joy and hope. The providence of God had been with us; we ought not to have doubted it. General Meade commanded the Army of the Potomac. From that moment my own mind was easy concerning results."*

From Hooker, who left the camp on the day that his successor assumed command, Meade received no intimation of any plan and no views in regard to what should be done.† Meade spent the day of the 28th in learning the location and condition of his own army, and was surprised that under the pressing need for concentration the corps should be as widely scattered as they were. Of the location of the enemy he knew about what the public knew. More definite information could only be had by a forward movement. He knew that the panic at the North, and especially in the great cities, had caused capital to take to itself wings, and that at no period during the war had the upholders of the Union sunk so far in despair. A jubilant foe, believing itself invincible because of its victories at Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg, was within a few short marches of some of the principal cities of the North, and if ever an invading army could maintain itself in an enemy's country it could be done here and now in the richest agricultural section of the United States.

So great was Meade's responsibility that of the approaching combat it may be said, as Hallam said of Charles

* See History of the Class of 1854 of Dartmouth College.

† Report of Committee on Conduct of the War, Army of the Potomac, p. 329.

Martel's victory over the Saracens between Tours and Poitiers, that it was one of those few battles of which the contrary event would have essentially varied the drama of the world in all its subsequent scenes; for it is apparent that the industrial position of the United States at the close of the nineteenth century, its promised commercial position, its financial independence of Old World creditors, and its rank among the nations would not have been established had the battle of Gettysburg created two nations where now there is but one.

With the order placing Meade in command, the general in chief at Washington, Halleck, sent a letter, saying truly, "Considering the circumstances, no one ever received a more important command." Halleck continued: "You will not be hampered by any minute instructions from these headquarters; your army is free to act as you may deem proper under the circumstances as they arise"; but after this declaration he took care to add: "You will, however, keep in view the important fact that the Army of the Potomac is the covering army of Washington, as well as the army of operation against the invading force of the rebels. You will therefore maneuver and fight in such a manner as to cover the capital, and also Baltimore, as far as circumstances will admit. Should General Lee move upon either of these places, it is expected that you will either anticipate him or arrive with him so as to give him battle." * Meade was then told that Harper's Ferry and its garrison were under his direct orders, and that he was authorized to make any removals or appointments in his army that he saw fit.

How promptly Meade made up his mind what he would do is shown in his message to Halleck, dated 7 A. M. of the morning on which he received the order to take command. In that dispatch Meade said:

"The order placing me in command of this army is received. As a soldier I obey it, and to the utmost of my ability will execute it. Totally unexpected as it has been, and in ignorance of the exact condition of the troops and position of the enemy, I can only now say that it appears to me I must move toward the Susquehanna, keeping Wash-

* Halleck to Meade, Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 61.

ington and Baltimore well covered, and if the enemy is checked in his attempt to cross the Susquehanna, or if he turns toward Baltimore, to give him battle." *

On the same day Meade issued his orders to the corps commanders for the next day's march, which was to begin, for five of the corps, at four o'clock in the morning. Nor were the marches marked out easy ones. The First (Reynolds) and Eleventh Corps (Howard) were ordered from Frederick to Emmitsburg by parallel roads; the Second (Hancock) from Monocacy Junction by way of Johnsville, Liberty, and Union to Frizzellburg; the Third (Sickles) to Taneytown; the Fifth (Sykes), following the Second, was to camp at Union; the Sixth Corps (Sedgwick) was directed upon New Windsor; the Twelfth (Slocum), including Lockwood's brigade, was ordered from Frederick to Taneytown. The Reserve artillery was to precede the Twelfth Corps at four o'clock. Headquarters for the following night were to be at Middleburg.

The movements for this day and the following one, when the First Corps, on the left, was pushed on to Marsh Run, and the Sixth Corps, on the right, was thrown as far to the east as Manchester, with the Third Corps at Bridgeport, the Fifth at Union Mills, the Twelfth at Littlestown, Kilpatrick's division of cavalry at Hanover, Gregg's at Manchester, and Buford's from near Fairfield to Gettysburg, show that Meade, while pressing steadily northward in search of Lee, was at the same time holding all the numerous roads leading from Gettysburg and Hanover toward Baltimore and Washington, and extending on the right toward the Northern Central Railroad connecting Harrisburg with Baltimore.

In the meantime, what was Halleck, the general in chief at Washington, doing to take advantage of a Union victory in case General Meade should prove to be the first Union general, in two years of trial, to overcome the Army of Northern Virginia, as well as the first to win that important victory for which Halleck, on March 1st, had held out the promise of a major generalship in the regular army to Hooker, Rosecrans, and Grant? On May 19th and 22d

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 61.

Grant had been repulsed with losses amounting to three thousand men in his attack upon the earthworks at Vicksburg, and the re-enforcements which he sought from the military authorities at Washington were being rapidly furnished him; for Halleck greatly feared that Grant and Banks, who had failed to unite their forces as Halleck desired, would be crushed separately. Inside of the next three weeks enough re-enforcements were sent to Grant to double his army, and among these re-enforcements were two divisions of the Ninth Corps, commanded by Burnside at Cincinnati, whose earlier service had been in the East.

There had been ample notice at Washington of the threatened invasion of Pennsylvania. The warnings began to come from trusted men in the secret service, in communications from citizens, and in the signs of military movements shortly after the battle of Chancellorsville. But so long as Washington was safe, and invasion was confined to the agricultural regions and small towns, the Washington authorities had come to view such incursions of the enemy with something like equanimity. Instead of concentrating troops at some point whence they could readily be thrown along the line of the Potomac in case Lee fought an unsuccessful battle in the North, the attention of the War Bureau at Washington, and its military mouthpiece, General Halleck, was centered upon Vicksburg at a time when, if ever, steps could have been taken to secure the capture or annihilation of Lee's army, a result which, had it been attainable, would have ended the war in 1863. About the middle of June the newspapers announced that President Lincoln would make a visit to New York city for the purpose of obtaining rest and recreation, and when, in spite of the month's unregarded warnings, the blow of invasion fell upon Meade's superior officers, the only military movement with auxiliary troops that Halleck could immediately think of was to start the forces along the Virginia coast upon a useless movement toward Richmond, the result of which efforts was that a force of fifteen thousand men captured an invalid Confederate general. In that part of Virginia, in North Carolina, at Washington, in the Middle Department under Kelley, along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, not to mention Burnside's corps, were seventy-

six thousand seven hundred and seventy-five effective troops, from which a force great enough to have ended the rebellion in 1863 could have been gathered under an alert commander and prepared to take advantage of Meade's victory at Gettysburg, by disputing Lee's retreat either through the mountains or across the Potomac while Meade struck him in rear.

The signs of that close attention to detail, which was characteristic of Meade, appear on the first day's march of his army. Hancock's corps had not started from Monocacy Junction until seven o'clock, because Meade's order to march had been left at Hancock's headquarters with a clerk who failed to deliver it. In expressing regret at the delay Meade suggested that the offender should be brought to punishment, something the vigilant Hancock had already done.

On the same day Meade informed Sickles that the train of the latter's corps was at a standstill at Middleburg and delaying everything behind it. Sickles was informed that he was expected to give his immediate and personal attention to keeping the train in motion, and on the next day the same corps commander was told that his march of the previous day had been too slow and that rapid movements were expected.

Meade had to decide quickly what to do with the garrison at Harper's Ferry. He was in favor of leaving the garrison intact, differing radically from Hooker in this view, but he agreed with that general in the opinion that the place itself was of no importance as a crossing place of the Potomac, its only value, Meade thought, being as a *débouché* into the Cumberland Valley. Meade had, however, temporarily retained as his chief of staff General Butterfield, who had held the same responsible position under Hooker. Warren, Humphreys, and Seth Williams, any one of whom Meade would have desired to occupy this important position, could not at the time take the office, and as Butterfield necessarily possessed much detailed information concerning the army, which it seemed likely neither Meade nor a new chief of staff would have time to acquire before meeting the foe, Butterfield was retained. He was naturally in favor of Hooker's plan, and he made the argu-

ment to Meade that the stores of the garrison were limited and that the communications with the place would be precarious. As Halleck had disapproved of the abandonment when proposed by Hooker, the presumption was that, if Meade accepted Butterfield's representations, the new commander of the army would at once run counter to the wishes of the general in chief, from which condition it would appear that Butterfield, at the start as at the finish, was more loyal to the memory of Hooker than he was to the interests of his new chief. In consequence of the representations of his chief of staff, who presumably was familiar with the situation at Harper's Ferry, Meade, on the 29th, directed General French, commanding at that place, to send the Government property in that vicinity to Washington by canal, escorted by not more than three thousand men. With his remaining force of seven thousand men, French, on July 1st, was ordered to hold Frederick and the Monocacy Bridge, guard the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, hold the line of communication to Frederick, and in the event of a repulse to Meade's army, to be prepared to throw his force into the defenses at Washington.* It was on this day that Governor Parker telegraphed to the President his apprehension that New Jersey would be invaded, that Simon Cameron was telling the President that if Lee crossed the Susquehanna disastrous results to the country would follow, and that President Felton, of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore railroad, was informing the Secretary of War that the Confederates were marching on Philadelphia in large force.† But while the panic spread, and in the Northern cities treasure and valuables were being shipped to distant places, and in the country regions men were burying their stores of wealth and driving off their live stock, there came this noble message from a former commander of the Army of the Potomac, who from personal experience appreciated, as only two or three men in the country could appreciate, the vastness of the burden which had been placed upon the soldierly spirit of the new commander of the army:

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, p. 462.

† Ibid., p. 409.

CINCINNATI, OHIO.

Major-General MEADE, Headquarters, Army of the Potomac:

I am sure that you are quite equal to the position you are called to fill. You are regarded by all who know you as an honest, skillful, and unselfish officer and a true, disinterested patriot.

I will not congratulate you, because I know it is no subject of congratulation to assume such a responsibility at such a time, but I will earnestly pray for your success.

A. E. BURNSIDE, *Major General.*

As Meade, keeping the parts of his army well together in the hope of falling upon isolated portions of Lee's army, and guided by his principal motive of finding and fighting the enemy to such an extent as to exclude military considerations of less importance, inclined to the right, he passed beyond the town of Westminster in Parr's Ridge, and, some ten miles beyond Westminster, the stream called Pipe Creek, the general course of which is from the northeast to the southwest to the Monocacy. Here along Pipe Creek was a line, and at Westminster was a base, most admirably adapted to Meade's strategical and tactical purposes. Thirty miles southeast of Westminster, and connected with it by rail, was the city of Baltimore, which he had instructions to cover. Along Pipe Creek was one of those naturally favorable positions which his opponent, Lee, as illustrated subsequently at Hagerstown and Mine Run, was quick to seize upon and improve, and which, if properly utilized in military movements where the troops of the contending armies were equally brave, could be depended upon to decide the fate of battles. Meade had his engineers survey the line of Pipe Creek, and his staff officers located upon it a position for every corps in the army. A few miles to the rear was a prospective base, within short railroad communication of the vast supplies of the North, the National Capitol, and the disciplined troops that were posted from the Ohio to the seaboard. In immediate proximity to this base in the rear was a mountain ridge, which, if he should be defeated in battle, would serve Meade the same purpose that the South Mountain Ridge served Lee after the latter's defeat at Gettysburg, by offering impregnable positions in which a small force could delay the advance of

an army. But of even more importance, there was the entire width of the valley to the west in which to move against a defeated foe seeking his selected crossings of the Potomac; the position was nearly a day's march nearer to these crossings than the position subsequently taken by Meade at Gettysburg, and in approaching these crossings Meade's army would move over the interior lines. Therefore in selecting the position at Pipe Creek as a proper place to fight a battle, if the opportunity were offered, General Meade, besides putting his army into prompt and energetic action and keeping a firm rein upon every part of it, was demonstrating that he possessed in an eminent degree the higher qualities of generalship.

The situation on the Union side at noon of June 30th is succinctly stated in Meade's dispatch from Taneytown to Reynolds at Marsh Creek: "We are as concentrated as my present information of the position of the enemy justifies. I have pushed out the cavalry in all directions to feel for them, and as soon as I have made up any positive opinion as to their position I will move again. In the meantime, if they advance against me I must concentrate at that point where they show the strongest force;" and he adds the significant remark that Reynolds's present position was given him more with a view to an advance on Gettysburg than as a defensive point.* That is, bearing in mind his threefold duty of covering the Northern cities, preventing Lee from crossing the Susquehanna, and defeating him in battle, every phase of which difficult problem, it may be said, was afterward accomplished with signal success, Meade was now holding his army so as to do with it at any moment what at the moment seemed best to do. He controlled its every nerve firmly and with complete mastery. He was prepared to hurl it forward upon the foe the instant that foe was exactly located, as the quoted dispatch to Reynolds shows. He was prepared, if the opportunity presented—having already by his rapid advance northward compelled Lee to loosen his hold upon the Susquehanna and accomplished all that was to be accomplished immediately by an aggressive movement—to wait for the attack that Lee was bound

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, p. 420.

to make on the favorable line at Pipe Creek; his cavalry was prepared by his orders to protect his flanks and scour the country for the enemy, and he was also prepared to abandon on the instant the plans that were most favorable to his own army and to fight a battle, not under the ideal conditions that as a great commander he would have preferred to obtain, but to make the most of such conditions as were open to him. "His instructions to his corps commanders," says General Humphreys, speaking of the precautionary order concerning the Pipe Creek plan, "prove his capacity to command an army. In similar circumstances the agreement between Wellington and Blücher to concentrate their two armies—nearly double the numbers of Napoleon—far to the rear in the vicinity of Waterloo, has been esteemed a proof of their great ability."

On the 30th, Stuart, as has been said, after a week's marching by night and day, with men tired out and horses exhausted, approached Hanover from the direction of Westminster in the hope of rejoining the Confederate army, only to be confronted at that place by Kilpatrick, Stahel's successor, advancing eastward from Littlestown. Stuart, more anxious to find Lee than to fight Kilpatrick, withdrew, after the engagement, to the eastward, and by fatiguing marches reached Carlisle on the 1st, only to learn that Ewell had left that place, whereupon he set out for Gettysburg.

On the 30th, Meade called on his corps and other commanding officers to address their troops and explain to them the immense issue involved in the approaching struggle. By that time he had reason to think that there were indications of a Confederate movement toward Gettysburg, and he expressed in orders his belief that he had relieved Harrisburg and Philadelphia, and his desire to look to his own army and assume a position for offensive or defensive purposes as occasion might require, as well as to rest the troops, whom he desired to be in condition for battle.* At noon of that day he requested Humphreys, commanding the Second Division of the Third Corps, to ascertain whether the ground at Emmitsburg afforded a good position for a battle, and on the evening of the same

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, p. 415.

day Reynolds, who commanded the First, Third, and Eleventh Corps, was ordered to report whether Gettysburg afforded a good battle ground. The corps commanders were directed to hold their commands in readiness to move at a moment's notice against the enemy and were told that no wagons, except ammunition wagons and ambulances, would be permitted to accompany the columns, and that the troops must carry on the person three days' rations and sixty rounds of ammunition.

Meade had kept the control of the cavalry well within his own hand. The headquarters of Pleasonton, who commanded the cavalry corps, were intentionally kept near Meade's headquarters in order that the army commander himself could receive the full benefit of the action of the cavalry in conjunction with the rest of the army. To a certain extent this reduced Pleasonton to a position somewhat like that of a staff officer. It undoubtedly destroyed the opportunities for winning personal glory, such as were so freely bestowed upon Sheridan subsequently, but it also removed the risk of the loss of the cavalry service when it was most needed, a loss to which both the Northern and Southern armies were subjected by numerous showy cavalry raids on both sides that contributed very little toward the general result. On the left flank of the army Buford's division of cavalry, on the 29th, had swept northward on both sides of the South Mountain range. On the 30th, Buford moved from near Fairfield to Gettysburg, turning toward Emmitsburg on his way and reaching Gettysburg in the afternoon. On the night of the 28th a Confederate scout brought to Longstreet at Chambersburg information that he had passed the Army of the Potomac at Frederick, thus confirming the rumor which Lee had communicated to Ewell on the 27th. Upon the receipt of this intelligence Lee abandoned his contemplated movement upon Harrisburg. His crossing of the Susquehanna at Wrightsville was prevented by the burning of the bridge at that place by order of Colonel Frick, in command of the Twenty-seventh Pennsylvania Emergency Regiment, and a portion of the Twenty-sixth Emergency Regiment which had arrived there from Gettysburg. The corps of Hill and Longstreet were ordered to move toward Cashtown on the

29th and 30th, Pickett's division being temporarily left behind at Chambersburg. Ewell was recalled from Carlisle with orders to proceed to Cashtown or Gettysburg. Heth's division of Hill's corps reached Cashtown on the 29th, and the next day Pettigrew's brigade, being sent to Gettysburg to obtain shoes, encountered Buford's cavalry of Meade's army at that place, and returned to Cashtown. Lee says that in his concentration, the advance of Meade to Gettysburg being unknown, and the weather inclement, the marches were made with a view to the comfort of his troops. As most of Lee's troops were within a day's march of Gettysburg when the concentration began, they could have reached that place by the evening of the 29th or morning of the 30th, had Lee possessed information of Meade's movements, of which knowledge he was deprived by the absence of his cavalry.

At the town of Gettysburg center seven main and as many more minor roads leading from all points of the compass, from the scattered parts of Lee's army as well as from those of Meade's. The presence of these roads offered opportunity for the prompt concentration of the armies near the town. For Lee's purposes the place was made a favorable one for a battle, because of the proximity of the South Mountain range, a dozen miles to the westward, through which he could retreat if defeated, and with a small force delay any direct advance of the victors. For Lee a battle or an immediate abandonment of the invasion was imperative. His movement had been a repetition on a large scale of his invasion of the previous year when he had been compelled to forego his designs upon Pennsylvania to fight at South Mountain and Antietam. Now once more he was compelled to turn back and fight a battle, and he did so with far more confidence than he had felt in September of the previous year, or at any previous period of the war. His two victories, won since Antietam, had given him a sense of power which he had not previously felt. His army had been perfected by marches and battles until it was a fit instrument for his purpose. Stonewall Jackson's death had given him opportunity to rid the army of the too bulky corps which existed at that time, and his army after Chancellorsville had been reorganized in three corps, commanded

by Longstreet, Ewell, and A. P. Hill. The President of the Confederate Government, Mr. Davis, has not received the credit which is his due for his wisdom in sustaining Lee and for leaving army matters, as far as possible, under control of the commander in the field. Lee could select his corps commanders. For the Army of the Potomac corps commanders were chosen at Washington, to such an extent that ability among Lee's corps commanders was far more evenly distributed than among Meade's, one of whom prided himself upon serving through the war without friction by never assuming a serious responsibility if he could avoid it; another of whom, of undoubted courage, was not a trained soldier, and whose military methods often seemed to savor of the practices adopted to produce political effects; while a third was lacking in moral stamina, a fourth in vigor, and a fifth, an unassuming and excellent subordinate, was probably outweighed with the command of a corps. To compensate for this great weakness in the Army of the Potomac there were other corps and division commanders and staff officers of signal ability. There was Hancock, as able a corps leader as an army commander ever relied upon; there was Reynolds, whose great reputation among the soldiers who knew him personally might have been sustained by the record had his career not been cut short, but whose actual performance in battle places him below Hancock. Reynolds had not been present at Antietam, had not been engaged at Chancellorsville, had erred in failing to support Meade at Fredericksburg, had no opportunity to take an active part at Dranesville, had hardly reached the Virginia Peninsula ere he was captured by the enemy; and he was now to fall almost at the first fire at Gettysburg. Ill fortune pursued him, but his martial and energetic spirit had profoundly impressed every one competent to weigh his character. Hooker thought him his ablest corps commander, and he was the especial intimate and confidant of Meade, who said that Reynolds was the bravest and noblest gentleman in the army. Besides Reynolds and Hancock there were the dependable Sedgwick; the alert and able Warren, Meade's chief of engineers, whose intellectual habit of weighing the orders given him Meade understood; the efficient chief of artillery, Hunt, the ablest artilleryman in

American history; and, conspicuous among division commanders, Humphreys, in the Third Corps, upon whom Meade relied as upon a strong fortress, and Buford and Gregg of the cavalry. There was also at least one division commander who made a creditable record during the war, yet who was so indifferent a soldier that his brigade commanders, by consultations before action, by a thorough mutual understanding and the exercise of much tact, practically took control of the division in battle. And there was a mighty host of officers and men in the ranks who were animated by the loftiest motives and sustained through the sufferings and dangers of a soldier's life by an unflinching courage, the sublimity of which appears none the less because of the matter-of-fact view with which they regarded themselves, and who were now inspired with a determination to retrieve the fortunes of war that had so persistently gone against them.

The confidence of Lee grew also out of the strength of his army. The Army of the Potomac at the Chancellorsville period had been reduced by the expiration of the enlistment period of thousands of men. Every effort had been made to swell the ranks of the Army of Northern Virginia. The foes now approached each other with forces that are still the subject of estimates. General Humphreys, in 1872, said that Meade had eighty thousand men, and Lee ninety-two thousand. The Comte de Paris places Meade's effective force at from eighty-two thousand to eighty-four thousand, and Lee's at eighty thousand men. One writer estimates Meade's force at ninety-four thousand seven hundred, and Lee's at eighty thousand.* But the latest and most exhaustive calculation gives Meade eighty-three thousand two hundred and eighty-nine effective troops, and Lee seventy-five thousand and fifty-four.† Lee's army, however, had had ample time to rest among the hills of Pennsylvania. Meade's army, officers and men, arrived upon the field worn with rapid marching by day and night.

On the 30th Meade sent hurry orders to Howard and

* Gettysburg, by John M. Vanderslice, of the Memorial Association, p. 29.

† Livermore's Numbers and Losses in the Civil War, pp. 102, 103.

Sickles, telling the former to move to Emmitsburg as soon as Reynolds moved out, and the latter to advance his infantry and artillery to the same place with all possible dispatch. He told Reynolds if he should be attacked in force he must fall back to Emmitsburg, where Reynolds had found a good line to occupy, and where he would be re-enforced by Sickles, then at Taneytown, and Slocum, at Littlestown. Slocum was directed to acquaint himself with the roads, lanes, and by-paths between Littlestown and Gettysburg, and between himself and Reynolds at Marsh Creek. Pleasonton was warned that his cavalry must give early information of any attempt on the part of Lee to get between Meade and the Susquehanna, or any movement toward Hagerstown and the mountain passes below Cash-town.* Sickles was told that Reynolds would command the left wing of the army, consisting of the First, Eleventh, and Third Corps, and was ordered to report to Reynolds, and throw out strong pickets on the roads from Emmitsburg to Greencastle and Chambersburg. Hancock was ordered to move to Taneytown. The engineer train was sent back to Baltimore or Washington. Sykes at Union Mills, commanding the Second Corps from the right, which was held by Sedgwick at Manchester, sent Meade word in the evening that his troops were footsore and weary, that Crawford's men had marched twenty-five miles during the day, and that his corps, the Fifth, had not been concentrated since leaving Fredericksburg.

Late on the 30th, after his orders had been given for the next day, Meade received definite information from General Couch, in command of the Department of the Susquehanna, of the falling back of Lee's army, and the movements reported to him by Buford seemed to indicate a concentration by Lee either at Chambersburg or at a point situated somewhere on a line drawn between Chambersburg and York, through Mummasburg, and to the north of Gettysburg. Although Halleck had said that he would leave Meade practically free in maneuvering the army, he now sent two messages, the outcome of his excessive alarm for the safety of Washington. These messages from the com-

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part ii, pp. 420, 421.

mander in chief told Meade that while his tactical movements were good, strategically he was too far east. Strategy, from the Washington point of view, consisted in moving an army so that a straight line drawn from Lee's headquarters to the White House should always run through the center of the Army of the Potomac. Halleck, who probably was only expressing the fears of the War Bureau at the Capitol and putting those fears into military terms, said there was grave danger of Lee's moving by Meade's left upon Frederick, and sent messages, that were equivalent to instructions, that this imaginary peril must be guarded against. Meade was confident, and expressed his confidence to Reynolds, that his own army was as large as Lee's, and he hoped that by July 2d French's command would arrive from Frederick and give him the superiority of numbers. He had had no opportunity, in the few hours that had elapsed since assuming command, to learn the army's condition as to *morale* or its proportionate strength as compared with the last return. It was to such disadvantages as this one under which Meade was preparing for battle that Lee alluded when he said that, while the change of commanders from Hooker to Meade was advantageous to the Federal cause, he was of opinion that the difficulties which would beset Meade in taking command of an army in the midst of a campaign would more than counterbalance his superiority as a general over the previous commander.*

When, on the night of the 30th, Meade learned from Buford, his cavalry commander on his left flank, that the heads of Lee's columns were approaching Gettysburg, he was brought face to face with a very serious and perplexing question. There was every reason to believe that Lee could have his whole army at that place long before some of Meade's corps could arrive. On the right, Longstreet and Hill were at Cashtown, only seven miles from Gettysburg, and Ewell was at Heidlersburg, only nine miles out on the Harrisburg road. On the same night Meade's headquarters were at Taneytown, thirteen miles from Gettysburg, and the First Corps at Marsh Creek, the Second at Uniontown, the Third at Bridgeport, the Fifth at Union Mills, the Sixth

* Long's Memoirs of Lee, p. 274.

at Manchester, the Eleventh at Emmitsburg, and the Twelfth at Littlestown, were at distances from Gettysburg of four, nineteen, fifteen, seventeen, thirty-five, and ten miles, respectively. With the ground in the immediate vicinity of Gettysburg General Meade was totally unfamiliar. He felt that Reynolds, who on the morning of the 1st had had at least opportunity for a hurried glance about him, knew more of the country at the front than he himself did, who had not yet been nearer to it than Taneytown. He suggested that Reynolds call Humphreys from Sickles's corps in consultation in regard to the nature of the ground for defensive and offensive operations. Reynolds went to Gettysburg on the 1st, in pursuance of the orders prepared for that morning's movements on the night before, which orders carried the First and Eleventh Corps to Gettysburg, the Third to Emmitsburg, the Second to Taneytown, the Fifth to Hanover, and the Twelfth to Two Taverns, Slocum being directed to take command of the Fifth as well as his own corps. The Sixth remained at Manchester. Reynolds was told that his movement upon Gettysburg was ordered before the positive knowledge of the enemy's withdrawal from the north and his concentration was received.

In the meantime, General Humphreys says at once, upon learning from Buford of the concentration of Lee's army, in view of his complete ignorance of the ground at Gettysburg and of Lee's greater proximity to that place, Meade prepared precautionary orders, which would insure the assumption of the Pipe Creek position without confusion and with good order, precision, and care, and without any detriment to the *morale* of the troops. The orders were communicated to the corps commanders, as was carefully explained by the army commander, so that a general plan, perfectly understood by all, might be adopted. At the same time the corps commanders were informed that developments might cause the commanding general to assume the offensive from his present position. The more closely this order is analyzed the higher is the praise to be accorded it. It outlined a definite and preferable plan of action, fitted to the policy that was best for the army to adopt in view of what it had already accomplished by aggressive action, namely, the relief of the cities previously threatened by

Lee, and it fitted also to what was now desirable to be accomplished, namely, the defeat of Lee in actual battle. It marked the dividing line between strategy and tactics with mathematical precision. It prepared the corps commanders for what was desirable at the time to be done, and also for an offensive movement from the present position that might prove to be desirable at any moment; and it showed a mastery of the military problem in all its complications and possible contingencies, and a readiness to meet whatever contingency might arise, that was new proof of the Army of the Potomac's having found at last a commander more than equal to the demands of a gigantic war. It seems incredible that this order should ever have been misconstrued, and it is enough to say that, had all the high officers of the Army of the Potomac possessed the military intelligence of Hancock, Reynolds, Warren, Humphreys, Sedgwick, and the soldiers worthy to be mentioned with these splendid names, and had the few political friends of Hooker in the army, and out of it, together with the few officers whom General Meade set aside because of their military shortcomings, been guided solely by patriotism and devotion to duty, this clear-headed order never would have been attacked in the hope that, by breaking down Meade, the Hooker interests, military and political, could be served by the preposterous proposition made to reinstate Hooker in command of the Army of the Potomac.* That effort long ago sank into oblivion, and the military reputations involved in its support are year by year falling farther below the horizon, although the time has not yet arrived in the progress of

* This extraordinary motive is revealed in the entry made upon the records of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, under date of March 4, 1864, by order of the chairman, Senator Benjamin F. Wade, of Ohio. It is there set forth that Messrs. Wade and Chandler (Zachariah), the latter a senator from Michigan, after hearing only the testimony of General Sickles, whom Meade refused to reinstate in command of the Third Corps, and Doubleday, whom he had relieved of the command of the First Corps, and before a word of testimony had been heard from Generals Meade, Warren, Humphreys, Hancock, Gibbon, Hunt, Sedgwick, and Seth Williams, had hurried off to President Lincoln, demanded the removal of Meade, and declared their entire satisfaction with Hooker and their belief that he was competent to command the army. See Report, Army of the Potomac, p. xix.

the world when, according to Mr. Blaine's prediction, as has been the case with the famous battles of antiquity, the name of the commander of the victorious army will be the only one remembered in connection with the battle of Gettysburg.

Meade's plans on the morning of the 1st, before he had positive knowledge of the impending concentration of Lee's army at Gettysburg, are also clearly indicated in a dispatch to Sedgwick, informing the Sixth Corps commander that from appearances the enemy was moving in heavy force on Gettysburg, both from Heidlersburg and Cashtown; that it was not improbable he would reach that place before Reynolds with the First and Eleventh Corps could arrive there; that if such proved to be the case, and Reynolds found himself in the presence of a superior force, he was instructed to hold the enemy in check and fall slowly back, and should this be possible, the Pipe Creek line, previously selected, would be occupied that night; but that, if circumstances arose rendering it necessary for Meade to fight on that day, Sedgwick should know that the troops already posted for Reynolds's support were, on his right at Two Taverns, the Twelfth Corps; at Hanover, the Fifth; on the road between Taneytown and Gettysburg, the Second; at Emmitsburg, the Third Corps.

At one o'clock on that day Meade learned that Reynolds had been killed, the beginning to the army of a series of disasters that but for the skillful generalship of the army commander and the fighting qualities of the troops would probably have given to Lee the victory which he sought and to the South a separate republic. It was impossible for Meade to go to the battlefield at once. Only two of his infantry corps were at that place. The great bulk of his army, five infantry corps and part of his cavalry, were many miles from Gettysburg; and it was therefore necessary for the army headquarters to remain near the center, from which point all the parts of the army could readily be communicated with and where corps commanders and staff officers could as readily find him. The clear-headed Meade was not the man to lose himself in relation to his corps commanders, as Hooker had done on the retreat from Chancellorsville. Meade now talked to Hancock at Taneytown in regard to

his views, as he had previously talked to Reynolds, and directed him to turn over the command of his corps to Gibbon, to go to the front and assume command of the Eleventh and First Corps at that place and the Third at Emmitsburg. To this order, by which Meade advanced two juniors over the heads of senior generals, the army commander added: "If you think the ground and position there a better one to fight a battle, under existing circumstances, you will so advise the general and he will order all the troops up. You know the general's views, and General Warren, who is fully aware of them, has gone out to see General Reynolds."* At the same time Hancock was told to have his own column in readiness to move. Jumping into an ambulance in order that he might have opportunity to study the map, with a led horse accompanying him, Hancock hastened off toward Gettysburg, passing Reynolds's dead body on the way, and reaching the field about half past three in the afternoon.

It will be observed how thus early in his command of the army, as fast as opportunity offered, Meade was picking out for the most responsible service the soldiers who, after four years of war, were to leave the greatest reputations in the Army of the Potomac. Already his marked preference had dwelt upon Reynolds, Hancock, Gibbon, Humphreys, and Warren; and now, exercising the unusual power conferred upon him for the emergency, he took Newton from the command of a division in the Sixth Corps and sent him in haste to assume command of the First Corps. An hour or two after his arrival upon the field Hancock reported to Meade that the front of Gettysburg and the town had been given up; that the troops then held a position at the cemetery that could not well be taken, but which could be easily turned; that the battle was quiet at the time of his writing; that when night came it could be told better what had best be done, and added: "I think we can retire; if not, we can fight here, as the ground appears not unfavorable, with good troops." †

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, p. 461.

† Report of Committee on the Conduct of the War, Army of the Potomac, p. 357.

It can not be said that this was a very enthusiastic report from Hancock in favor of Gettysburg as a battle ground. When Hancock wrote it, Slocum had already arrived upon the field and was about to take command. Slocum's report, dated 5 P. M., to Meade was as noncommittal as it could have been made. He said: "Matters do not appear well. . . . I hope the work for the day is nearly over." At 9.30 that night Sickles asked whether he should retire from Gettysburg to Emmitsburg. But without waiting for the report from Hancock, Meade decided to order the army to Gettysburg. As he said in a dispatch to Hancock and Doubleday, dated 6 P. M., the concentration toward Gettysburg had already gone so far that a battle at that place seemed now a necessity. At half past four in the afternoon an order had been issued to Sedgwick to begin his long march of thirty-five miles from Manchester by way of Taneytown; and again at half past seven Sedgwick was told to turn all trains out of the road and make a forced march to the scene of action. That portion of the Third Corps still at Emmitsburg was ordered to the front, and Sykes at Hanover was told to move at once. The Second Corps had already been ordered forward from Taneytown, and the Twelfth from the road between Littlestown and Two Taverns. Sedgwick's corps, which moved after dark toward Taneytown, had already crossed the Baltimore and Gettysburg turnpike when Meade's orders to proceed directly to Gettysburg by rapid marches were received. The Army of the Potomac had been making the hardest marches of its experience, but this night march of the Sixth Corps, continued hour after hour, with the riders fast asleep on their horses and men apparently asleep as they walked, persisted in through the whole summer night and the long morning of the hot summer day, until the hour of noon was past and the battlefield was reached, was one of the most extraordinary marches of the civil war.

The Fifth Corps immediately on receipt of Meade's order left Hanover at seven in the evening, and marched nine miles to Bonneauville, where it rested until four o'clock in the morning. After the different corps were started toward Gettysburg Meade kept sending aids-de-camp to his generals with messages urging them forward. He himself,

after all the necessary orders had been given and all his absent corps were hurrying toward the battlefield, waited at Taneytown until about midnight in the hope of seeing Sedgwick, and then set off upon his night ride to Gettysburg. Sedgwick's corps was the largest in the army, and one of the best in both officers and men. Meade feared now that the Sixth Corps, after so long a march, would not be in condition to do more than to take a position in line of battle, where Sedgwick could push forward in pursuit if Meade were successful and cover a withdrawal if such a movement should be necessary, and on starting for the front Meade left behind with his chief of staff general instructions for Sedgwick based upon what he thought it possible for Sedgwick's exhausted troops to accomplish. Then he rode away to examine in the dim light of the small hours of the night the battle line along which the destiny of his country was to be decided.

CHAPTER XI.

GETTYSBURG—THE FIRST DAY.

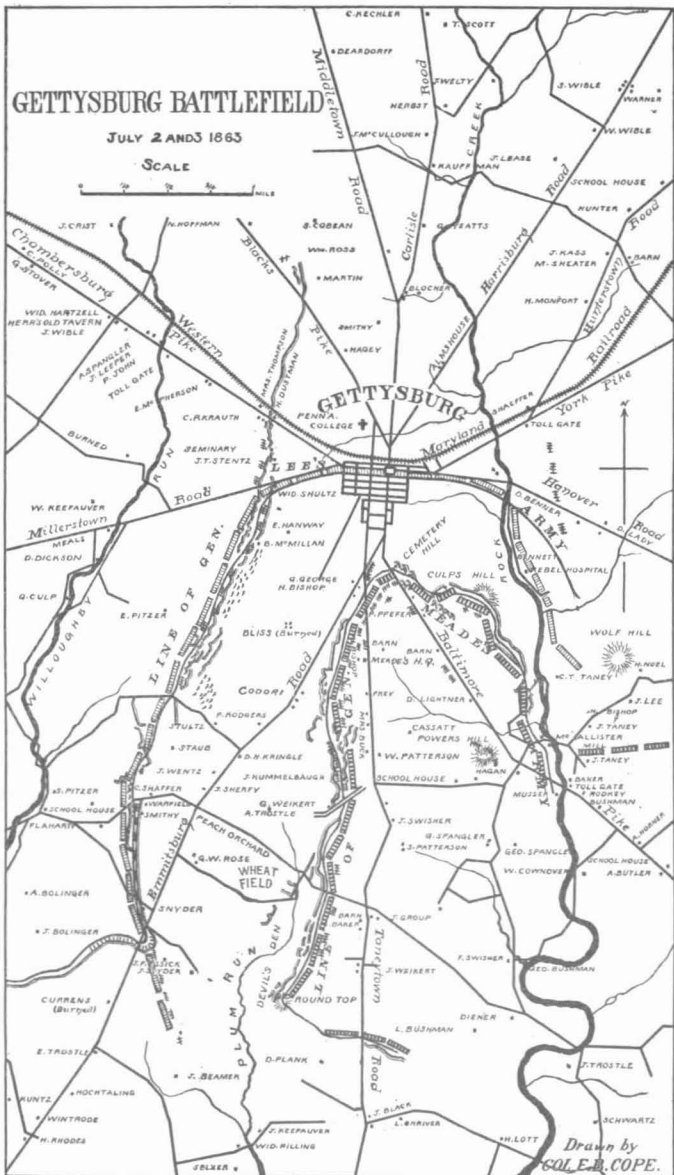
AT eight o'clock in the morning of the 1st of July, while Colonel Gamble's First Brigade of Buford's cavalry division was encamped near the Seminary building, west of Gettysburg, the pickets reported that the enemy, with infantry and artillery in strong force, were approaching from the direction of Cashtown. The information was conveyed to Buford, who ordered Gamble to be in immediate readiness to fight the enemy. Gamble posted his brigade along McPherson Ridge from the Fairfield road on the left to the railroad on the right. A section of Calef's battery, Second United States Artillery, was placed each side of the Chambersburg road and the other section on the right of his left regiment. Devin formed his brigade on the crest of the hill on Gamble's right, Devin's line extending as far as the Mummasburg road, and his vedettes being posted on the roads still farther to the right as far as the York road.

At half past ten on the previous night Buford had asked Reynolds what route should be pursued in case the cavalry should have to fall back—an inquiry which, like those dispatches sent on the evening of the 1st to Meade by Sickles, Hancock, and Slocum, all holding in contemplation the possibility of retiring from Gettysburg, is additional proof, if such were needed, that the battle was fought where it was fought by the will and decision not of any corps commander or subordinate, but of the army commander.

On the morning of the 1st, Gamble's dismounted cavalry made so brave a resistance to the advance of Heth on the Cashtown road, and Devin so stoutly disputed the Confederate advance from Heidlersburg, that Reynolds was enabled to bring up to the front of the town the First Corps

on the left and the Eleventh Corps on the right. The secret of Reynolds's intentions was buried with him. It is thought that he did not receive Meade's Pipe Creek circular; but he had other instructions from Meade, and these were that in the event of finding himself in the presence of a superior force, he was to hold the enemy in check and fall slowly back.* When Reynolds, on approaching Gettysburg, started his troops across the fields to the support of Buford's cavalry he had had little time to ascertain the fatal weakness of the Union position of the first day's fight in its relation to the advancing Confederates. What Reynolds would have done had he lived can never be known. His first soldierly impulse, as expressed in the support hurried to Buford, probably was to gain time in order to see what was best to do. Behind him was a position worth saving for the Union army, and to it the roads, by which Meade's corps were advancing, directly led. But the position where Buford was engaged, and toward which Reynolds now rushed his troops, was one which could not be held, for the simple reason that a number of roads from the north, by which the Confederates were advancing, led to its rear. The greater the number of troops advanced to this front in the attempt to hold the continuation of the ridge, along which Reynolds's cavalymen had been placed, the weaker the position became as a whole, because the extension on the right would carry the line farther and farther to the northward of the point at the town in the rear, where the numerous roads from the north and northeast met. Along these roads the Confederate troops were hurrying to Gettysburg, and without any tactical effort on their part a flank was being conveniently presented to them for attack. To gain such an advantage Stonewall Jackson had marched many miles at Chancellorsville, and Meade had fought his way up the steeps of South Mountain. Now, without special effort on their part, the troops of Ewell, which came in upon Howard's flank and rear, had presented to them such an opportunity in battle as is generally acquired only by prodigious effort. This essential weakness of the Union

* Meade to Sedgwick, July 1st, Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, p. 462.



position in front of Gettysburg was not as apparent to Reynolds, when he hurried his troops to the front to oppose Heth's progress from the west along the Cashtown or Chambersburg road, as it should have been to Howard, when the latter strove to extend the line of the First Corps on the right. With Archer's brigade in line of battle on the right of the road, Davis's brigade on the left, and the brigades of Pettigrew and Heth in reserve, Heth continued his advance until his progress was checked by Buford's cavalry. Heth had supposed that there was only Federal cavalry in the immediate vicinity of the town, supported possibly by a small infantry force. From what he saw from the second ridge west of the town he came to the conclusion that before him were Federal infantry, cavalry, and artillery.

At eight o'clock in the morning Reynolds had started the First Division (Wadsworth's) of the First Corps from Marsh Creek toward Gettysburg. A mile or more from the town he learned of Heth's advance, and turning the head of his column across the fields at about ten o'clock reached the Cashtown road at a point less than a mile west of the town. Reynolds had only time to hold a brief consultation with Buford, to send word back to Howard, whom Meade, at half past three that morning, had ordered to move within supporting distance of Reynolds,* to direct Doubleday to look after the Fairfield road, to send Cutler with three regiments north of the railroad cut, deploy the other two regiments of Cutler's brigade south of the pike, post Hall's Second Maine Battery near the road, and direct Meredith's "Iron Brigade" in a charge into McPherson's woods when he fell dead in the woods, shot down by a Confederate sharpshooter. His fall left the troops engaged in the first day's battle without a competent director until the arrival of Hancock in the late afternoon.

On the right, sharp fighting began before Cutler's regiments were deployed. The enemy was advancing in two lines in his front and on his right flank, and Wadsworth ordered Cutler to fall back to Seminary Ridge. Through the wounding of the regimental commander the order did

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, p. 457.

not reach the One Hundred and Forty-seventh New York, and it remained in position until Davis's Confederate brigade gained the railroad cut on the left, whereupon a charge by the left regiments became necessary in order to enable the One Hundred and Forty-seventh to retire. Davis was driven from the field with enormous losses, a triumph for the Union arms that had its counterpart on the left, where Meredith's charge into McPherson's woods resulted in the capture of General Archer and a number of his troops, and the driving of the remainder across Willoughby Run. Heth did not think that Davis's brigade could be of any further service that day, so, when he reformed his division on the south of the road, he placed Archer on the right, Pettigrew in the center, and Brockenbrough on the left, while Davis's brigade was kept on the north side of the road in order that it might collect its stragglers. Pender's division formed the second line.

On the Union side, where Doubleday now commanded, the divisions of Rowley and Robinson of the First Corps arrived upon the scene with the four other batteries of that corps. The two brigades of Rowley were placed in the line, one of them (Stone's) behind Meredith and Cutler, and the other (Biddle's), with Cooper's battery, on the ridge between McPherson's woods, now held by Meredith and the Fairfield Road. About noon General Howard came upon the field, and, by virtue of his rank, assumed command of the troops present, but at twenty minutes past three in the afternoon Buford said that there seemed to be no directing person present.* By the middle of the forenoon Buford discovered the presence of the enemy on the Heidlersburg Road, but neither Doubleday, nor Howard, who succeeded Doubleday in command on the field, was the soldier to understand quickly the full significance of Buford's information or to act promptly upon it as the situation required, although Howard had just come through a bitter experience at Chancellorsville that should have been sufficiently impressive of the catastrophes that might be looked for along roads leading to army flanks.

* Buford to Pleasonton, Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 925.

Starting from Heidlersburg that morning with Rodes's division for Cashtown, the Confederate general, Ewell, before reaching Middletown, received notice that Hill was marching toward Gettysburg. Ewell, therefore, at Middletown turned Rodes southward, and ordered Early's division to march to Gettysburg by the Heidlersburg road. These movements in a short time would bring Ewell's two divisions of nine brigades in the rear of the six brigades of Doubleday's corps. In Howard's Eleventh Corps, now temporarily commanded by Schurz, there were six brigades. The attempt to extend and hold an untenable line with the twelve brigades of the First and Eleventh Corps, and their artillery against front and rear movements of the seventeen brigades of the divisions of Early, Rodes, Heth, and Pender, was doomed to disaster from the start, not so much perhaps because of the disparity of numbers, as because the ridge which the Union forces were attempting to hold, instead of running across the roads upon which Ewell's troops were advancing, at the position taken ran somewhat parallel with these roads and in front of them. What Doubleday first, and Howard afterward, did, was to drift along currents that had already been started and that were leading to the rapids and maelstrom; but the final issue of the engagement, says the sensible Steinwehr, of Howard's corps, in his report, "could no longer be doubtful, especially as the enemy had also the formation of the ground in his favor." *

When Howard, on Cemetery Hill, turned over the command of the Eleventh Corps to Schurz and directed him to take the Third (Schimmelfennig's) and First (Barlow's) Divisions of that corps through the town and endeavor to gain possession of the eastern prolongation of the ridge then partly held by the First Corps, he was giving half expression to the doubt in his own mind, the whole utterance of which doubt is completed in his directions that the Second Division (Steinwehr's) should be posted on Cemetery Hill supporting the reserve artillery of the corps. Howard's best performance was in calling upon Sickles at Emmitsburg and Slocum at Two Taverns for help; and both officers, immediately upon the receipt of Howard's message,

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 721.

put their columns in motion, although their arrival would be too late to affect the fortunes of the day.

Upon arriving on the field Rodes saw that by keeping along the wooded ridge, which the Union troops were trying to hold, he would be moving under cover, and at the same time would strike Doubleday's corps on the flank. Therefore he came down the ridge with three brigades deployed—Dole's on the left, Rodes's old brigade (O'Neal's) in the center, and Iverson's on the right—his two other brigades and artillery in the rear. When within half a mile of the enemy Rodes could see no troops at all facing him. He was compelled to change direction to the right, moving by the right flank, and by the time his line was in the advantageous position on Oak Hill, two Union regiments of Stone's brigade of Rowley's division were facing that elevation from along the Chambersburg pike. Rodes now felt himself threatened in front and on his left by the troops of Howard advancing from the town; but he felt confident that Early's division would soon be coming down the Heidlersburg road to strike the flank of Howard. Robinson's Union division of the First Corps, upon arriving on the field, had been halted in reserve near the seminary. He now sent his two brigades to Cutler's right; Paul's brigade faced west; Baxter faced his brigade north to meet a flank attack. An interval of four hundred yards existed between Baxter and the left division of Howard's corps. Apparently threatened from two directions, Rodes determined to attack with his right and center, moving his left brigade (Dole's) into the open plain between the Newville road and the ridge, where he hoped it could maintain itself in the face of Howard's troops until the arrival of Early. The confused attack of O'Neal's brigade upon Baxter was quickly repulsed, and Iverson, who swept around to his left and attacked Paul, was so severely handled by Paul, assisted by Baxter and Cutler, that, after losing five hundred in killed and wounded, three of his regiments surrendered.

When Iverson bore to the left he unmasked those regiments of Daniel's brigade which had been formed in his rear, and Daniel, in the effort to conform to the movement and protect Iverson's right, also swung around to the left, and was thus brought farther to the south in front of

Stone, on the lower side of the railroad cut, while Ramseur's brigade, which followed Daniel's, swung in on Daniel's left upon Robinson's front. Stone, whose line formed a right angle facing north and west, and who had held his advanced position when the troops on his right, under the withering fire of Carter's artillery battalion, posted by Ewell on Oak Hill, had retired, placed a regiment in the railroad cut, which, waiting until Daniel came within pistol shot, gave the Confederates two staggering volleys, and charging, drove them back to the fence in the rear, but was soon compelled by an enfilading artillery fire to fall back to the Chambersburg road. The First Corps was now trying to maintain two fronts and repel the assaults of Rodes from the north and Hill from the west. With the arrival of Early in the middle of the afternoon Dole's brigade of Rodes's division, posted in the plain at the foot of Oak Ridge, advanced, driving Devin's skirmishers back and occupying at half past three the elevation now called Barlow's Knoll.

Schurz had sent Schimmelfennig's division toward the right of the First Corps and Barlow's to Schimmelfennig's right, Barlow's left being west of the Mummasburg road, his right east of that road. Barlow moved his division forward and seized the knoll that had been occupied by Dole's troops, and while Schurz was trying to fill the gaps in his long, thin, and broken line the expected arrival of Early's division, formed in battle line across the Heidlersburg road, took place. Jones's battalion of artillery was placed on a hill to the east of the road, and in front of Hoke's brigade, so as to enfilade Barlow's line. Gordon's brigade on Early's right, connected with Dole's brigade of Rodes's division, Hays's and Hoke's brigades in line and Early's artillery, supported by Smith's brigade, were all ordered forward. Barlow was driven from the hill. Barlow himself was wounded and taken prisoner. The corps was driven back to a line in front of the town, and at about half past four o'clock through the town to Cemetery Hill, from which elevation Coster's brigade of Steinwehr's division, had been drawn at a late hour, in the vain attempt to support the mistaken movements of the day.

The disaster to the Eleventh Corps, the second within eight weeks, the two being almost identical in cause, left

the First Corps' right flank exposed to an overwhelming force; and on the left Biddle was forced back, and Meredith and Dana, after hard fighting and temporary successes about McPherson's woods, were gradually driven back to Seminary Ridge, from which position, under the final attack of the fresh troops of Pender about four o'clock, Doubleday withdrew to Cemetery Hill. As the retreating troops came up the hill their confidence was restored by the presence of a new actor upon the scene—the martial Hancock, arrived at the front with Meade's order to take command of all the troops there assembled. Where before his coming there had been chaos, there was soon something like order brought out of the masses of defeated and retreating men. On the hill the remnants of the First Corps were placed on Steinwehr's left, while a nucleus of the fugitives of the Eleventh Corps was put in position on his right. The next morning Ames, who succeeded Barlow in command of the First Division of the Eleventh Corps, said that he had eleven hundred and fifty men in position, and Schurz reported fifteen hundred men in the Third Division.* Wadsworth was sent to hold Culp's Hill; batteries were posted in the afternoon of the 1st on Cemetery Hill; Buford, with his cavalry, which from the dawn had been doing valiant service, covered the left flank, but this brave show of resistance by the exhausted and decimated troops was perhaps less a factor in bringing the day's contest to a close than the decision of Lee, who had arrived upon Seminary Ridge, to defer the assault until the next morning, a decision influenced by the fact that the troops of Ewell's corps were jaded, that Johnson's division of that corps was coming up, and that with this division Ewell desired to occupy Culp's Hill, which commanded Cemetery Hill. At midnight Ewell ordered Johnson to take possession of Culp's Hill, if he had not already done so; an order which, had it been executed, would have driven Meade's troops from their position by a fire from the rear. Colonel Grover, of the Seventh Indiana Infantry, who was sent by Wadsworth to hold the crest of Culp's Hill, says that on reaching the hill his regiment immediately began the construction of

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, pp. 485, 486.

temporary breastworks, and that during the night the enemy attempted to penetrate his lines, but were easily driven off, supposing themselves confronted by a heavy force.*

When Slocum's corps arrived at Gettysburg about sunset his First Division left the Baltimore pike before reaching Rock Creek, and, following a cross road to the Hanover road, finally took position for the night near the creek. Two brigades of the Second Division (Geary's), by Hancock's orders, took position on the extreme left, Geary occupying Little Round Top with two regiments. Colonel Candy, commanding Geary's First Brigade, says: "Near about dark was ordered to throw forward two regiments to the left and occupy a high range of hills overlooking the surrounding country. . . . The Fifty-fifth Ohio and One Hundred and Forty-seventh Pennsylvania Volunteers occupied the above position during the night of July 1st." † Colonel Patrick, of the Fifth Ohio, says: "We commenced operations by an order to proceed to the extreme left of our line and occupied a hill covered with trees. The One Hundred and Forty-seventh Pennsylvania was also placed under my command to extend and increase the front of our position. We remained there until the following morning, when we received orders at five o'clock to return to the brigade." ‡ From the reports quoted, it is apparent that Little Round Top was occupied by General Geary on the night of July 1st. The report of General Birney, commanding the First Division of Sickles's corps, says: "At 7 A. M. (July 2d), under orders from General Sickles, I relieved Geary's division and formed a line resting its left on the Sugar Loaf Mountain (Little Round Top), and the right thrown in a direct line toward the cemetery connecting on the right with the Second Division of this corps." * The story of the abandonment of the strong position occupied on the night of July 1st, and held by Birney's division on the morning of the 2d, belongs to the narrative of the second day's battle.

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 284.

† Ibid., p. 836.

‡ Ibid., p. 839.

* Ibid., p. 482.

CHAPTER XII.

GETTYSBURG—THE SECOND DAY.

ON the morning of the 2d of July the commanders of the two opposing armies were both planning to attack. After midnight Meade had ridden up the Taneytown road to East Cemetery Hill, and accompanied by Hunt, the chief of artillery, and by Howard, had inspected, so far as was possible in the darkness, the position of the troops and the line which it was desirable for them to occupy. He told Hunt to examine the lines again in the morning and to see that the artillery was properly posted. Neither army was yet entirely concentrated. The absent portions of both armies were hurrying to the field. The hour was near at hand when Lee would lose the advantage in time which he now possessed, and it was therefore incumbent upon him to attack as speedily as possible if he meant to attack at all. Meade's plan was to make a vigorous attack from his extreme right upon Lee's left with the Twelfth, Fifth, and Sixth Corps, all under the command of Slocum. At half past nine in the morning Meade directed Slocum to examine the ground in his front and to make arrangements for the proposed attack, which, Meade said, he desired to be strong and decisive. Slocum's report, dated an hour later, was noncommittal. He said: "If it is true that the enemy are massing troops on our right, I do not think we could detach enough troops for an attack to insure success. I do not think the ground in my front, held by the enemy, possesses any peculiar advantages for him." Because of the nature of Slocum's report, and the fact that the Sixth Corps could not arrive upon the field until afternoon, as well as because of Warren's advice against it,

Meade abandoned his plan of attack.* At this time the Confederate position extended from Benner's Hill, on the east, around through the town and southward along Seminary Ridge, and it would be extended farther to the south on the arrival of Longstreet's troops. Meade's line curved like a reversed interrogation point, the dot represented by Little Round Top, and extended from that eminence northward along Cemetery Ridge, the northernmost extremity, sweeping to the right and east at Culp's Hill. The distance in an air line from Little Round Top to the edge of the curve at Cemetery Hill was a little over two miles, and the distance from that point to the Federal right about a mile and a quarter, while the two extremities of the Union line were only about a mile and three quarters apart. The Confederate position, on the other hand, when occupied, would cover a line, from one end to the other, six miles long. The distance between the two lines, not allowing for inequalities of the ground, varied from a mile to a mile and a quarter on that portion of the field which is south of Gettysburg. All through the forenoon, and until the middle of the afternoon, Meade's remaining corps were arriving on the field; the Second, and two divisions of the Fifth, at seven o'clock; Lockwood's brigade of the Twelfth at eight; two brigades of the Third Corps at nine; the artillery reserve at half past ten; Crawford's part of a division at noon; and the Sixth Corps at about four o'clock. On Lee's line, Ewell's front extended from Benner's Hill through the town to the seminary; Hill's front reached from Ewell's right southward toward the Peach Orchard; Longstreet was coming up from Marsh Creek.

After abandoning the proposed early morning attack upon Lee's left, Meade spent the morning in correcting his lines, studying the field, and posting the troops as they arrived.† He had occupied as his headquarters, because of its central location, a little frame house near the Taneytown road, about an eighth of a mile in the rear of Hancock's line of battle in the center. The nearness of these head-

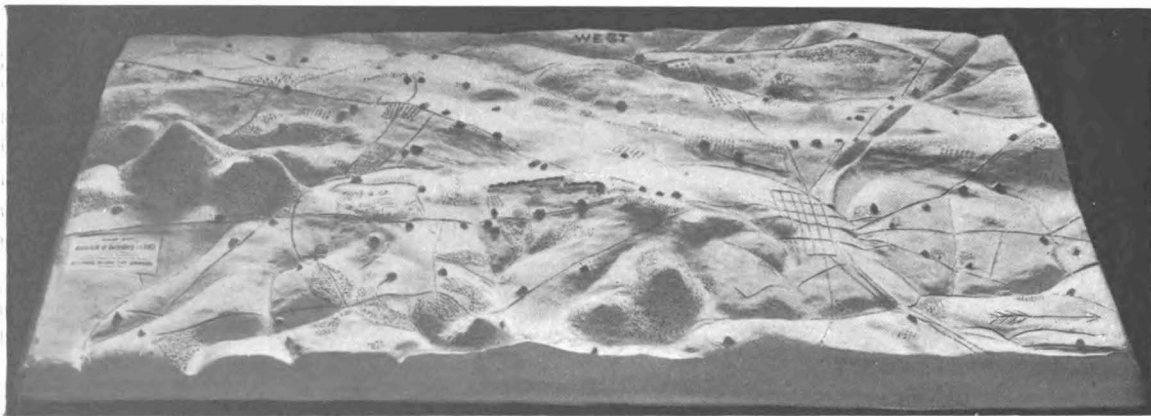
* Meade's statement before Committee on Conduct of the War.

† General Hunt in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. iii, p. 295.

quarters to the fighting line was in itself an indication of a marked change from the methods previously adopted by commanders in handling the army in battle, as illustrated on the Peninsula, at Antietam, and at Fredericksburg.

On the evening of July 1st, Longstreet, who had arrived in advance of his corps, advised Lee that the best plan would be to turn Meade's left flank.* Of this advice Meade afterward said that it was sound military sense; this was the step he feared Lee would take, and to meet it he had instructed his then Chief of Staff, Butterfield, to make inquiries as to routes, etc., by which the flank movement advised by Longstreet could be guarded against. The generalship on the Confederate side during the battle of July 1st had taken full advantage of the false position of the Union troops, of the numerous roads, and the ground. But with the arrival of Lee, who repeated his caution to Ewell concerning the danger of bringing on a general battle before the troops were up, the opportunity to seize Culp's Hill was lost; and from that time on matters did not go so well with the Confederates. Study of the movements on both sides compels the conviction that the Union victory was chiefly due to Meade's superiority on that field over Lee in tactical skill. Lee's second error was in not shortening his line of battle. It was a fatal mistake not to do so, the consequences of which are to be traced through all the subsequent movements of his troops upon the field. Respect for Lee's personal character, the natural admiration for him in the South, and in the North the lingering deference to English opinion in all matters, partly colonial and largely financial in origin, have combined to prevent public statement of the only conclusions that can be arrived at from the evidence in regard to Lee's dispositions and movements made upon the battlefield at Gettysburg. Rejecting Longstreet's sound advice that he move so as to threaten Meade's communications, Lee decided to assault on July 2d from both his right and left. When his decision was announced to Longstreet and Hill on the evening of July 1st, Longstreet's corps was still at Cashtown, but would bivouac at Willoughby's Run, some four miles from the battlefield, from which

* Long's Memoirs of Robert E. Lee, p. 277.



Round Top. Little Round Top. Peach Orchard. The Angle. Culp's Hill. Gettysburg. Barlow Knoll.
Meade's Headquarters.

Bird's-eye view of the Battlefield of Gettysburg.

Photographed from Huidekoper's relief map. Copyright, 1901, by H. S. Huidekoper. Scale, 5 × 3/4 miles.

position it was Lee's intention that it should move to Hill's right and attack early on the morning of the 2d. At the same time Ewell was to assault the Union right, and Hill from the center, along Seminary Ridge, was to strike where there was promise of attaining the greatest success.

On the other side, Meade's acts show that he fully appreciated the superiority of his position. At 3 P. M. of the 2d he sent to Halleck a message in which he said: "I have today up to this hour awaited the attack of the enemy, I having a strong position for the defensive." If Lee's movements did not indicate a serious intention of attempting to cut the communications of the Army of the Potomac, it was obvious to Meade that Lee would be compelled to attack or retreat, for the pressure of the situation must force the Confederate commander shortly to act. In an enemy's country he could only feed his troops by keeping them in motion. He could not remain idle at Gettysburg. If he moved as Longstreet wanted him to do he would defer the issue perhaps to less favorable conditions than at Gettysburg, for the Pipe Creek position had already been laid out by Meade's engineers and staff officers, and the entire army was prepared to assume it without confusion at a moment's notice. It was improbable that Lee would abandon the invasion without a battle; and, in the absence of an attempted flank movement, there was nothing left for Lee but a direct assault. With the situation firmly in his grasp, Meade calmly awaited the arrival of his absent troops and the attack which he knew must come, with every tactical advantage in his own favor. His equanimity was, however, disturbed by an unexpected occurrence for which his careful calculations had not provided. As we have seen, Geary, commanding the Second Division of the Twelfth Corps, upon arriving on the field on the afternoon of July 1st, with orders from Slocum to report to Howard, was unable to find that officer, and, reporting to Hancock, was told to take a position on the extreme left. Geary's line, taken up in consequence of Hancock's order, extended from the left of the First Corps along Cemetery Ridge to Little Round Top, which height he occupied with two regiments. Geary says in his report: "These hills I regarded as of the utmost importance, since their possession by the enemy would give

him an opportunity of enfilading our entire left wing and center with a fire which could not fail to dislodge us from our position." *

Among the many conflicting claims for the credit of first appreciating the importance of Little Round Top, those of Hancock and Geary are often ignored; but most of these claims never would have arisen had not the advantage of Geary's first occupancy of the height, confirmed the next morning when Birney's division of Sickles's corps relieved Geary, and formed a line with its left resting on Little Round Top, been thrown away by Sickles's subsequent movement to the Emmitsburg road.

Meade's preparations for an attack from his right in the early morning, and the movements involved in that quarter by his abandonment of that plan in consequence of Slocum's report, the advice of Warren, and the non-arrival of the Sixth Corps, had naturally demanded from him a large share of personal attention. Upon the arrival of the Sixth Corps in the middle of the afternoon he moved the Fifth Corps, in reserve on the right, to a position in reserve on the left, one of those numerous movements from wing to wing of his army made by the army commander during the battle, to which the final victory was largely due. In the morning he had sent instructions to Sickles that the Third Corps was to hold the line from Hancock's left to Little Round Top, relieving Geary, who had orders from Meade to rejoin his corps upon being relieved by Sickles, and Geary had sent to Sickles a staff officer with instructions to explain the position and its importance, and to ask, if troops could not be sent to hold it, that Sickles would send an officer to see the ground and post the Third Corps troops when they did come.† Twice during the early morning Meade had dispatched a staff officer to Sickles urging him to get into position, and, in reply to the second message, received at seven o'clock, Sickles had said that he was then moving into position. Again, at eleven o'clock, Meade told Sickles that his right was to be Hancock's left and his left on Round Top, which General Meade pointed out to him.‡

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 825.

† The Meade-Benedict Letter.

‡ Ibid.

While the Fifth Corps was moving to the left, a little before four o'clock in the afternoon, Meade rode to that part of the line for the purpose of inspecting the location of his own troops, and as far as possible that of the enemy, and of ordering an attack from there with the troops now assembling in that part of the field. On arriving at the left, Meade saw, to his amazement, that Sickles had thrown forward his line so that his right flank, instead of connecting with the left of Hancock, was from a half to three quarters of a mile in front of Hancock, leaving a large gap between the right of the Third Corps and the left of the Second, and that the left flank of the Third Corps, instead of resting on Little Round Top, was in advance of it, and that the Third Corps line, instead of being a prolongation of that held by Hancock, formed an angle, one side of which ran along the Emmitsburg road as far as the Peach Orchard, from which apex the other side was thrown back to the Devil's Den, the two lines delighting a foe by the opportunity which they offered for destruction from a raking artillery fire. Riding rapidly to the front, Meade told Sickles that he had advanced his line beyond the support of the army; that he was in danger of being attacked and of losing his artillery, to support which would involve the abandonment of all the rest of the line adopted for the army. The staff and other officers in the vicinity listened to the conversation with the keenest interest. In his reply Sickles was perfectly deferential and polite. He expressed regret that he had occupied a position which did not meet with General Meade's approval, offered to withdraw his troops to that ridge which the army commander had intended they should hold, and, in explanation of his forward movement, which had excited the amazement of those who witnessed it, said that the ground to which he had advanced was higher than that which he left. To his offer to withdraw, Meade said: "I wish to God you could, but the enemy will not permit it." To Sickles's claim that his change of position was justified by the greater elevation of the advanced position, Meade replied: "General Sickles, this is in some respects higher ground than that to the rear; but there is still higher ground in front of you, and if you keep on advancing you will find constantly higher ground all the

way to the mountains." That criticism of the movement of the Third Corps, made on the spot by the army commander, is as sound and unanswerable to-day as it was on July 2, 1863. Lord Kelvin has well said that more ships have been lost through bad logic than from bad seamanship. Sound logic is as necessary to the winning of battles as to the saving of ships.

A corps commander forgetful of the fact that each part of a battle line must bear a proper relation to the whole line, and that the portion which is not so good must be held along with the best; who should be tempted on and on, after the fashion of the children who followed the Pied Piper of Hamelin, by the successive ridges, each one higher than the last, would be led away to his own destruction, and probably to the undoing of the army which he had left behind. Moreover, if considered only as an isolated position, without regard to the rest of the army, the advanced position taken by Sickles was only in part better than the one which he abandoned, while in part it was worse. On the right, it left a wide gap in the Union line. On the left, if the ridge were to be followed, it would thrust a flank into the Confederate line. Therefore Birney's division was thrown back to the Devil's Den, across ground much of which was inferior to the straight line between Little Round Top and the Second Corps. Both the right and the left flanks were in the air, with a dangerous angle presented toward the enemy in front; both lines were exposed to an enfilading fire, and these two fronts were attempted to be held by a single corps that would have had all it could do to hold the shorter front which Meade designed it to occupy, and in which it could have been readily supported if it failed. However tempting the advanced position may have looked to Sickles, as he viewed it from the rear, it is extremely unlikely that he would have ventured to occupy it upon his own responsibility but for the spirit of insubordination prevailing among certain of the corps commanders of the Army of the Potomac previous to Meade's assumption of the chief command. Mr. Lincoln knew Hooker's weakness in this respect, and had expressed to him the fear that the spirit which Hooker had done so much to inculcate under Burnside, would weaken the operations of the army under

Hooker. Once on the march to Gettysburg, although Meade had warned Sickles of the proximity of the Confederates and that the greatest care must be exercised to take the proper road,* one of the Third Corps's divisions—that of Humphreys—had been sent upon the wrong road and directly into a force of Confederates at the Black Horse Tavern on the Fairfield road.† Twice on the march to Gettysburg Meade had felt it necessary to reprove Sickles: once for blocking the road, and again for making a slow march. The subsequent dispatches of Sickles, sent just previous to the battle, reveal on his part something of a querulous tendency that culminated in his insubordinate disregard of Meade's direct orders on the 2d of July. Had he been quicker to realize that a new state of things had come to the Army of the Potomac, and that it was now commanded by a soldier who, perfectly subordinate to his superior officers himself, would not tolerate insubordination in others, it is altogether probable that the line of Cemetery Ridge would have been held, as it was intended to be, without the unnecessary and enormous losses growing out of the advance of the Third Corps, and that Meade would have had the advantage in the battle of possessing both the position and the men, instead of being compelled to sacrifice the men to save the position.

As it was, Longstreet, who was to have attacked Meade's left in the early morning, enveloping the Union line and driving it in, placed his two divisions, those of McLaws and Hood, in position about four o'clock in the afternoon, McLaws opposite the Peach Orchard, and Hood still farther to the right, his line crossing the Emmitsburg road. On the Union side, Birney's division was posted from the Devil's Den to the Peach Orchard, Ward's brigade on the left, De Trobriand's in the center, and Graham's at the angle, the latter holding the apex and carrying the line northward along the Emmitsburg road. On Graham's right was Humphreys's division, Carr's brigade in the front line, Brewster's in the second. Humphreys's Third Brigade

* Butterfield to Sickles, Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, p. 467.

† Humphreys's report, Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 531. It is a matter of dispute in the records as to whether Sickles or his staff officer was responsible for the blunder.

(Burling's), with the exception of one regiment, was sent to Birney's support. As Humphreys's division moved forward in two lines, the enemy opened upon him with artillery from the left, enfilading his line, and upon his front; but Seeley's battery, placed at the left of a log house (Smith's) on the east side of the road, and opposite the middle of Humphreys's line, soon silenced the battery in front, and Seeley's vacated position was immediately occupied by parts of Turnbull's battery of the Artillery Reserve posted by Captain Ransom. While the infantry of the Confederates was making demonstrations on Humphreys's front, their batteries opened upon Birney's line, and, preceded by a cloud of skirmishers, the infantry of Hood's division, with the exception of Law's brigade, directed upon Little Round Top, was hurled upon Birney's line between the Peach Orchard and Devil's Den. Of the Third Corps artillery, Smith's battery had been posted on the rocky hill at the Devil's Den; Winslow's at the Wheatfield; Clark's on the crest looking south, and Randolph's near the angle, facing west.

Seeing at a glance the impossibility of withdrawing Sickles's corps, Meade had hurried away the members of his staff after artillery and infantry to support the corps and to prevent, if possible, a rout which might imperil the safety of the whole army. Thus suddenly made aware that his plan for occupying Little Round Top with Sickles's troops had miscarried, Meade directed Warren, his chief of engineers, to see that that important position was made secure, and he also sent Colonel Mason, of his staff, away upon the same errand.* Then he gave a personal order to Humphreys to move his division to that point, but concluding to rely upon his other dispositions, at once countermanded the order.

There had come without warning to the new army commander, not yet five days in control, a crisis in battle that would put to the severest test his ability as a tactician. It had come as suddenly as the first great responsibility of supreme authority had come to him. At Second Bull Run the

* Statements of Colonel Mason to Judge Searle, of Montrose, Pa., and of General Warren before Committee on Conduct of War.

Union army, with ample warning, had been so maneuvered that the right wing under attack could not be supported by Porter. At Chancellorsville the First and Fifth Corps were held in idleness while Stuart continued the flank attack begun by Jackson. North of the Chickahominy Porter had been left to withstand, practically alone, Lee's assaults upon the Union right. Now the left flank of the Army of the Potomac was being furiously assaulted. How would the fourth commander of that army meet the demands so unexpectedly made upon those qualities—quickness of perception, promptness in decision, energy in action, and mastery of the situation, which go to make up the great commander? At once Meade knew that the Third Corps could not hold the line which it had assumed. One after another he had sent his staff officers to hurry up the Fifth Corps. To all parts of his line he sent for troops. Tilton's brigade of four regiments of Barnes's division, Fifth Corps, was rushed forward from the bridge over Rock Creek on the Baltimore pike, a distance of two and a half miles, to the Rose House near the Emmitsburg road; Sweitzer's brigade, three regiments, came from the high ground west of the bridge over the creek to the Wheatfield woods, a distance of nearly two miles; Cross's brigade, four regiments, of Caldwell's division, Second Corps, came from its position west of the Patterson House on the Taneytown road to the Wheatfield woods, a distance of one mile; Kelly's brigade, five regiments, advanced a mile to the same wood from the right of Cross's original position; Zook's brigade, four regiments, which had been in the rear of Kelly's, marched by the left over a mile and formed line of battle on the edge of the Wheatfield woods; Brooke's brigade, five regiments, advanced more than a mile from west of the Hummelbach House to a position a fifth of a mile southeast of the Rose House; Burbank's brigade, Ayres's division of the Fifth Corps, five regiments, came from the Baltimore pike, seven hundred yards west of Rock Creek, to the Devil's Den Ridge, five hundred yards north of the Den, a distance of a mile and a half; Day's brigade was brought from the same place to the rear of Burbank; Willard's brigade of Hays's division, Second Corps, four regiments, moved by the left flank from Ziegler's Grove, crossing Plum Run in line of

battle, one mile to the Codori Grove; Lockwood's brigade of Ruger's division, Twelfth Corps, two regiments, which in the morning had been in position on Culp's Hill, was moved to the rear of the George Weikert House, from which point it charged in two lines, much of the time on the double-quick, for a distance of fourteen hundred yards, toward the Peach Orchard; Hall's brigade of Gibbon's division, Second Corps, two regiments, was thrown to the left to support Humphreys; Williams's division of the Twelfth Corps was brought from the south spur of Culp's Hill, a mile and a half to the west side of the Taneytown road, near the W. Patterson House; * Candy's and Kane's brigades of Geary's division of the Twelfth Corps, the former at the ravine at the west foot of Culp's Hill, the latter on the south spur of the hill, were started toward the threatened left; Robinson's division of the First Corps was moved from Ziegler's Grove, fourteen hundred yards to the left; the Third Division of the Sixth Corps (Wheaton's) and the Second Brigade (Bartlett's) of Wright's division of the same corps, after resting only two hours from a march of thirty-five miles, were given orders to move with all dispatch to the front, Nevin's brigade having barely assumed position, after an advance of two miles, when the troops in front, with the exception of McCandless's brigade, fell back through the Sixth Corps line; Crawford's division (five regiments of the Pennsylvania Reserves), which had arrived on the field under the guidance of Captain Moore, of Meade's staff, was divided, Fisher's brigade going to the left of Barnes's division on the crest of the ridge near the west slope of Little Round Top, while McCandless's brigade rushed ahead cheering, crossing the Wheatfield road and Plum Run to a stone wall on the edge of the woods, a distance of five hundred yards.

It will be seen that Meade had drawn troops from the First, the Second, the Fifth, the Sixth, and the Twelfth Corps, from every infantry corps in his army except the Eleventh, to repel the assault upon the Third Corps and to prevent the Confederates from gaining possession of the

* Colonel McDougall, commanding First Brigade, says he was conducted on his march to the left by an officer from the army headquarters, Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 785.

heights on the left of his line. In a similar manner the artillery reserve was drawn upon. Soon after the fighting began McGilvery's artillery brigade of the Reserve arrived, and Bigelow's, Phillips's, Hart's, Ames's, and Thompson's batteries were ordered into positions on the crests. But it was an open question whether the nearest of the troops would arrive in time to avert disaster. From the varying distances between them and the scene of conflict it was impossible that all the re-enforcements called for should arrive at the same time, and it was possible that each body of fresh troops upon arriving would encounter a confident and victorious enemy and be defeated in detail.

The gap between Hancock and Sickles gave Meade great anxiety, which was not lessened when he saw some Confederate regiments making directly for it. The troops on the right already sent for had not yet come up. There were no Union soldiers near the spot, with the exception of the commanding general of the army and the few of his staff officers who were not at the moment engaged in carrying urgent messages to the different parts of the army. Should the enemy succeed in pouring into that gap, the Army of the Potomac would be divided into two parts, and the severed portion attacked in front, in flank, and rear would be in the gravest danger of meeting the fate which the perilous situation assumed by it had invited. At such a time General Meade was not the man to say, "I have done my best, let come what will." There was still one thing more the impulse of his combative temperament suggested he could do. Facing the advancing enemy, like a flash he drew his sword; and the members of his staff, thinking that he was about to lead them in a desperate charge, also drew their weapons. The rattling of the blades against the scabbards had not ceased, the hearts of the little group were beating faster and faster with the excitement of the supreme moment, when some one called, "Here they come, General! Here they come!" Looking to the right, some Union regiments were seen approaching upon the double-quick. General Meade rode rapidly to the head of the column, and calling out, "This way! this way!" placed the brigade in the gap not an instant too soon. On the same afternoon he led Lockwood's brigade of the Twelfth

Corps, as described in Hancock's report, to the support of Sickles.* Once more Meade's horse, Old Baldy, was shot under him. Wounded five or six times during the war, he survived to follow his master to the grave.† The result of Meade's re-enforcement of the assaulted line is shown in the report of the commander of Hood's Third Brigade, General J. B. Robertson, who says: "As fast as we could break one line of the enemy another fresh one would present itself." The outcome of Meade's action in deciding that Little Round Top must be occupied from the rear, and not by the troops in his front line, and in countermanding instantly his order to Humphreys to retire his division to that point, thus placing his entire reliance in holding the height upon the Fifth Corps, upon Caldwell's division of the Second Corps, which he had ordered to report to General Sykes at Little Round Top, and upon the disposition of these troops that Warren and the corps commanders would make under his own orders, is the best justification of the quick but sound judgment dictating these dispositions—a judgment which had been so thoroughly trained that it could instantly classify facts as they were presented, and give to each factor in the problem arising its due weight and its proper relation to the whole.

It was half past four o'clock when Longstreet's two divisions were in position—Hood's on the right, McLaws's on the left—the line crossing the Emmitsburg road at an acute angle, Hood's division in front of Round Top, nearly a mile away. Hood's formation was in two lines, Law's and Robertson's brigades in front supported at a distance of two hundred yards by the brigades of Benning and G. T. Anderson, with three batteries, twenty guns in all, placed upon the ridge occupied by the infantry. The order of attack was that the movement should begin on the right, Law's

* General Hancock says: "On the left of the Second Corps, the line being still incomplete and intervals existing, through which the enemy approached our line of battle, General Meade brought up in person a part of the Twelfth Corps consisting of two regiments of Lockwood's Brigade. . . . By the advance of these regiments the artillery, which had been left on the field in the Third Corps line, was recaptured from the enemy." Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 371.

† Bache's Life of Meade.

brigade on that flank leading, the other commands taking the movement up successively toward the left.* About half past four o'clock Hood's line advanced rapidly across the valley, driving in the opposing skirmishers, encountering the Union line of battle and rolling it back. Hood being wounded by a Union artillery shot as his troops moved into action, Law took command of the division, the center of which moved directly upon the Union guns just to the north of the Devil's Den. Law extended his right flank well up on the side of Round Top, thus leaving an interval, into which he threw Benning's brigade, theretofore in the second line, on the right of Robertson. Anderson's brigade was thrown forward on his left flank. After desperate fighting, within an hour the hill at Devil's Den, with three pieces of artillery, was captured by Law; and his right brigade, sweeping over the northern slope of Round Top, made a partial change of front to the left, and advanced upon Little Round Top.

McLaws's assault farther to the Confederate left was delayed by the discovery that the situation of the Union troops did not accord with Longstreet's previous orders. Kershaw's directions were to rest his left on the Emmitsburg road extending along the cross road from Pitzer's school-house. He would thus have faced toward the town of Gettysburg,† and had he moved in attack in this direction his right flank would have been exposed to the Union fire. The situation was different from what the Confederate leaders thought it would be and with the arrival of the remaining corps of the Army of the Potomac the left flank extended farther southward than Lee and Longstreet thought. The Confederate dispositions contemplated a movement to the left and rear of an imaginary Union line running mostly east and west, with Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill for its strongholds. The extension of Meade's line to Little Round Top would appear, from the orders for attack given Hood and McLaws, to have been in the nature of a surprise to the Confederate chieftains, although they wasted much time in

* General E. M. Law in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. iii, p. 318.

† Kershaw's Report, *Official War Records*, vol. xxvii, part ii, p. 367.

trying to conceal the movements of their own troops from the Union Signal Station on Little Round Top, which was plainly visible to them.

However, McLaws's attack upon Sickles at the Peach Orchard was made about six o'clock, Barksdale's and Kershaw's brigades clearing the orchard, the brigades of Semmes and Wofford coming into action somewhat later, and Anderson's division of Hill's corps taking up the movement to the left and penetrating the Union line, with the result that the Union troops were driven back beyond the Wheatfield to the foot of the mountain. The resistance offered by Sickles's corps and by its supports was of a most gallant and stubborn character. Prodigies of valor were performed by officers and men in both infantry and artillery. Sickles himself was severely wounded and removed from the field, disappearing finally from the Army of the Potomac.* Birney succeeded him, but Hancock, by Meade's orders, took command of the Third as well as of his own corps. Humphreys's division fell back slowly, changing front to the rear and delivering volley after volley as it retired in a series of movements that excited the admiration of all who beheld them.

Colonel Haskell says, in his narrative already quoted from, that he heard both Hancock and Gibbon severely criticise Sickles's forward movement; and when, before

* When General Warren was before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, the chairman, Mr. Wade, whose purpose to draw forth an opinion favorable to General Sickles and whose desire to connect that officer in reputation with Reynolds and Hancock are guilelessly revealed, asked the witness the following leading question:

"You considered him [General Sickles] a man of resolution and courage, and one that would bring his corps into a fight well?" In reply to this and other similar questions General Warren said:

"I do not think that General Sickles would be a good man to fight an independent battle, which a corps commander would often have to do. I do not think General Sickles is as good a soldier as the others, but he did the best he could. . . . When you come down to the details of a battle, General Sickles has not had the same experience which others have had. The knowledge of those details do not make a soldier, but he should be possessed of them as much as he is of his own language." Butterfield, like Sickles, was not an educated soldier.

the Committee on the Conduct of the War, General Humphreys was asked whether it would not have been better had he taken at first the position to which he finally retired, he replied: "Undoubtedly, as the result showed. We were driven from the advanced position which we took up, and were not driven the next day from the Round Top ridge, although we had a reduced force then."

Leaving the Confederates in possession of Round Top, advancing across the intervening ravine upon Little Round Top and holding the base of that elevation in front, let us turn to the efforts which prevented their complete success and saved the position of the Army of the Potomac at Gettysburg. While the Fifth Corps was massed on Rock Creek as a reserve, Sykes received from General Meade an order to send a brigade to the support of Sickles if the latter should call for it. Accordingly, Weed's brigade was detailed and held ready for the expected emergency. About three o'clock Meade ordered Sykes to throw his whole corps immediately upon the left of the line and to hold it at all hazards. Sending at once a staff officer to put the troops in motion, and going to the left from Meade's headquarters, Sykes met two brigades of Barnes's division of his corps (Sweitzer's and Tilton's) as they crossed the Taneytown pike; and suggesting to Birney, of the Third Corps, that he close his division upon an exposed battery at the edge of the Devil's Den, which Birney did, Sykes filled the gap thus made with the two brigades that he had brought up. As Sykes and Barnes—the latter commanding the First Division of the Fifth Corps—rode in advance of the column, which now, by Meade's urgent orders, was in the neighborhood of Little Round Top, they were met by Warren of Meade's staff, sent by the army commander to see to the security of that important height, who urged upon Sykes the need for troops with which to hold it. Warren had first asked Sickles for troops with which to hold Little Round Top, but Sickles refused, saying all his troops were needed to hold his advanced line.* Sykes gave the necessary consent, and Barnes ordered Colonel Vincent, com-

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 138.

manding the Third Brigade, to secure the threatened position. Vincent's troops were posted under Warren's eye, and were followed by O'Rorke's regiment (One Hundred and Fortieth New York) of Weed's brigade and Hazlett's battery. In response to a call for help from Sickles, the other regiments of Weed's brigade went to the support of the Third Corps; but these troops fortunately were met by Sykes and were by him at once hurried back to Little Round Top, Meade's later orders to Sykes to hold the left at all hazards having of course made null his earlier order by which Weed's brigade had been detailed to go to Sickles's aid if called for.* By repeated orders, borne by one aid after another, Meade had hurried Sykes's corps to the battlefield. Once upon the field, he had ordered Sykes to hold the left at all hazards, thus countermanding an order under which Sickles would have drawn away to his own support from Little Round Top the brigade of Weed. Having provided the troops with which to hold the position, he had sent his staff officer, Warren, to see that the height was occupied; so that both the necessary force and the directing instrument sprang directly from the orders of the vigilant army commander, who in the peril and excitement of the battle at the front did not forget to make secure once more, and finally, the line that had been abandoned earlier in the day in violation of his orders.

The First and Second Brigades of Ayres's division from the right of Weed's brigade were ordered to advance and carry the wooded and rocky shelter two hundred and fifty yards in front, where the enemy's sharpshooters were especially annoying, which they did, forming on the left of Caldwell's division of the Second Corps, their line being nearly at right angles to the north and south line of battle; but Caldwell being forced to retire, Ayres had to fight his way back to the Cemetery Ridge line, some of his regiments losing sixty per cent of their men. Crawford's division of the same corps was later sent to the front, its advance being timed with the orders of the Confederate commanders to withdraw their troops. Barnes's advance had been partly over

* Letter of General Sykes, dated December 9, 1865, published in Washington Chronicle; also report of General Barnes.

a portion of the exhausted and defeated troops of the Third Corps who were lying upon the ground.

In the desperate struggle for the possession of Little Round Top, Weed and Hazlett were killed and Vincent was mortally wounded. From Round Top, Law's troops pressed up to within a dozen yards or so of the line of Chamberlain's Twentieth Maine Regiment, the left of Vincent's brigade on Little Round Top. Finally Chamberlain ordered a bayonet charge. A Confederate officer fired his pistol at Chamberlain's head with one hand, while with the other he offered his sword in surrender. General Hunt has summarized the result of the battle on the Union left by saying that "at the close of the day the Confederates held the base of the Round Tops, Devil's Den, its woods, and the Emmitsburg road, with skirmishers thrown out as far as the Trostle House," which was five hundred feet west of Plum Run; "the Federals had the two Round Tops, the Plum Run line" (the ridge on the east side of Plum Run between Cemetery Ridge and the Emmitsburg road ridge), "and Cemetery Ridge."* However, the Union troops abandoned most of the Plum Run line during the night, while the Confederates in the evening withdrew from that part of the field on the left, to which McCandless's brigade of Crawford's division advanced as the enemy retired. The other brigade of Crawford's division (Fisher's) was on Big Round Top. In the evening, what was left of Humphreys's division of the Third Corps was still in the front of the retired line facing Anderson, but separated from him by troops of the Second, Twelfth, and First Corps, and in the rear of these were the broken and disorganized remnants of the other division of the corps, that of Birney.

It was Lee's plan for Hill to threaten Meade's center and Ewell to make a demonstration on Meade's right simultaneously with the assault of Longstreet and of Anderson's division of Hill's corps. At the sound of Longstreet's guns, Ewell's left division (Johnson's) opened an artillery fire, which after an hour or more was smothered by the concentrated fire from the Union guns on Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill, and Johnson moved forward to assault

* Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. iii, p. 311.

Culp's Hill with the brigades of Jones, Nicholl, and Stuart, attacking that portion of the Union line held only by Greene's brigade, in the absence of Geary's two other brigades and the division of Ruger, which had been drawn away to the support of Sickles. Greene, re-enforced with less than a thousand men from the First and Eleventh Corps, fought with the greatest determination for several hours and held his line, but Stuart's brigade gained possession of that part of the Union works which had been abandoned. Greene's orders were to occupy with his brigade the whole of the intrenchments of the Twelfth Corps extending to his right, but he was attacked before more than a single regiment had moved into the position of the Second Brigade of Geary (Kane's). The First Division had moved out at half past six. Geary had been ordered to move at seven, and the attack of Johnson was made half an hour later. When the absent troops of the Twelfth Corps returned from the left during the night they found the Confederates in possession of part of their works.

Early, the center of Ewell's corps, attacked Cemetery Hill with great vigor, rushing up the ascent, fighting hand to hand, and reaching the crest where the artillery was posted. Ames's infantry were forced back, and the gunners of Ricketts's and Wiedrich's batteries beat the Confederates down with handspikes, rammers, and pistols. Howard had sent a request for assistance to Meade,* and the timely arrival of Carroll's brigade of the Second Corps sent by Hancock, which in the night charged toward the blaze of the fire of the foe, repulsed the assault that the artillerymen had momentarily checked. Support also came from Steinwehr and Schurz. In the thickest of the fight Meade is said to have ridden among the batteries on Cemetery Hill, saying to the officers and men, "You must hold this position if it costs every man."† Rodes, who was to have attacked simultaneously with Early, was not ready to move until Early's assault had been repulsed.

* Howard's Report, Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part 1, p. 706.

† See Battle of Gettysburg and Christian Commission, by A. B. Cross, in Library of Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

During the day Meade lost seventy-eight hundred and eighty-five in killed and wounded, and eleven hundred and fifty-four missing; Lee, fifty-eight hundred and sixty-six killed and wounded, and fourteen hundred and seventy-one missing.* Of Meade's losses, nearly ten thousand occurred in the fighting made necessary on the left by the advance of the Third Corps. As the losses in the First and Eleventh Corps on the first day of the battle had been eighty-nine hundred and fifty-five, nearly twenty thousand men of the Army of the Potomac had by this time been placed *hors du combat*. The loss in officers had been very heavy. The corps and division organizations were greatly broken by the rapid reinforcing of threatened points, and it was a debatable question how much longer the strain of battle could be endured by officers and men fatigued to the point of exhaustion by the long and hard marches that had brought Meade's army to the battlefield, and by fighting as severe as the world had ever seen for two days in the fiery heat of an American summer. When the fighting subsided along the line the men could seek rest and sleep, but the corps commanders were called together to inform Meade of the condition of their commands and to consult with him as to what should be done on the morrow. Meade had already decided that, unless developments prevented it, he would hold the army in the position it had now assumed and would await the attack which he felt confident Lee must make. At eight o'clock in the evening he had telegraphed to Halleck, "I shall remain in my present position to-morrow, but am not prepared to say, until better advised of the condition of the army, whether my operations will be of an offensive or defensive character." † To Gibbon he said, after he had obtained the information he desired from his corps commanders, "If Lee attacks to-morrow, it will be in your front"; and when Gibbon asked him why he thought so, replied, "Because he has made attacks on both flanks and failed, and if he concludes to try it again it will be on our center." ‡ The corps commanders present at the council

* Vanderslice's Gettysburg, p. 111.

† Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 72.

‡ General Gibbon in Philadelphia Weekly Press of July 6, 1887.

were Newton (First), Hancock and Gibbon (Second), Birney (Third), Sykes (Fifth), Sedgwick (Sixth), Howard (Eleventh), and Williams and Slocum (Twelfth). The Twelfth and Second Corps were each represented by two commanders, owing to a misunderstanding in the one case by General Slocum as to the length of the period during which he had been assigned to the command of more than one corps.*

Although Newton, the engineer officer now in command of the First Corps, thought the position of the army a bad one, and his professional view naturally influenced to some extent the opinions of Gibbon and Hancock, who voted with Newton in favor of correcting the position, the corps commanders almost unanimously favored remaining where they were and waiting for Lee to attack. Gibbon thought the army was in no condition to attack. Newton advised by all means not to attack, and Hancock said he would not attack unless the communications were cut; but there was also generally held the view that the waiting for an attack should be limited to a single day.

The advantages of the day were with Lee in the positions gained, in fewer losses, and in the possession of a greater number of fresh troops. Stuart had, at last, succeeded in bringing to him the cavalry, with the exception of Jones's and Robertson's brigades. A part of Meade's cavalry (Buford's division) was sent on the 2d to Westminster to guard the trains at that place; but the next day would find Merritt's brigade of this division with Kilpatrick on Meade's left, while Gregg, with Custer's brigade of Kilpatrick's division, was on the right.

* See Meade to Slocum, Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 769.

CHAPTER XIII.

GETTYSBURG—THE THIRD DAY.

LEE's success on the first and his degree of success on the second day of the battle were deceptive. He had gained from his foes positions which could not be held by them, and by these successes was tempted to attack a position which, occupied by the Army of the Potomac under its present commander, could not be taken. His plan for the morning of July 3d was to have Ewell on his left attack simultaneously with Longstreet on his right, the latter re-enforced by Pickett's fresh division, which had arrived on the afternoon of the 2d, and supported by the brigades of Lane and Scales and the division of Pettigrew of Hill's corps. But during the night Meade had been returning to the right some of the troops which had been drawn to the left,* and the discovery by the returning Twelfth Corps troops of the enemy in their breastworks, and their determination to recapture these, opened the battle on the morning of the 3d, too early for the perfect working of Lee's contemplated joint attack. Slocum obtained from Meade authority to attack with artillery at daybreak. The Twelfth Corps batteries were placed in position during the night. On the other side, Johnson was re-enforced during the night with the brigades of Smith from Early's division, and of Daniel and O'Neal from Rodes's division. With both sides

* General Greene said, long after the war, that Kane returned of his own volition. Kane does not say so in his report, neither does Cobham, the other commander of Kane's brigade. General Ruger, of the other division of the corps, says that both Sedgwick and Sykes sent him word that the assault had been repulsed, and his services were not needed. Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 780.

bent upon attacking at dawn the harmonious working of Lee's plan was likely to be disturbed; but had it worked perfectly, and had Longstreet been ready to assault as soon as Ewell was, the result in all probability would not have been far different from what it actually was, for the reason that while Meade, in Shaler's and Neill's brigades of the Sixth Corps, sent to the right enough troops to attain the end desired, he did not strip his other wing, as he had thought it necessary to do the day before. Lee is hardly to be blamed for failing to appreciate on the instant, from the way in which Sickles had been supported, that the time had gone by when he could count upon faulty Union generalship to help him defeat the Army of the Potomac in detail; but before the battle was over that conclusion was gaining ground among the Confederates, as appears from what Colonel Morrow, of the Twenty-fourth Michigan Infantry, who was taken prisoner on the first day of the battle, says on this point: "During the time I was a prisoner I conversed freely with distinguished rebel officers. . . . At first the officers seemed very sanguine of their ability to dislodge the Army of the Potomac from its position, and the capture of Washington and Baltimore was considered a thing almost accomplished, and this feeling was fully shared by the private soldiers; but the admirable means taken by General Meade to meet every attack, and the successful manner in which he repulsed them, seemed to have a powerful influence in abating their confidence before the final order was received for the evacuation of the town." *

On the Union side the plan was for Geary to follow the cessation of the artillery fire with an attack along the intrenchments now held by Johnson's troops, while the other division of the Twelfth Corps was prepared to assault over the low ground on the extreme right, or attack Johnson's left flank should he advance beyond the breastworks. But Johnson did not wait for Geary to attack. Instead, he attacked the Second Division (Geary's) with great fury. Two regiments of the First Division were thrown forward from the left into the woods toward a stone wall, which, with the breastworks just beyond, was held by the enemy.

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 272.

The lines of the First Division, on the right, and the Second, on the left, now formed a two-sided truncated triangle. Rock Creek on the right, the breastworks on the left, rocky and broken ground and a swale in front, made the movements of the troops extremely difficult. During the seven hours intervening between four o'clock and eleven the opposing lines swayed back and forth in a deadly struggle that left in the vicinity a forest of dead trees that had been killed by the musketry fire. Geary at first formed Kane's brigade perpendicular to Greene's in the breastworks, and at one o'clock in the morning Candy's brigade was placed on Kane's right. In front of Candy was a lane running from the Baltimore pike to the stone wall. Fourteen pieces of artillery were posted west of the turnpike and trained so as to fire over the troops upon the enemy. Lockwood's brigade at first supported the artillery, but afterward advanced. The first charges of the enemy on Geary fell upon Greene's brigade in the breastworks and Kane's in the open. At five o'clock the One Hundred and Forty-seventh Pennsylvania Infantry of Candy's brigade charged and carried the stone wall. At six o'clock the Sixty-sixth Ohio charged outside of and along Greene's intrenchments, some of the men in their ardor advancing so far that they were killed by their own artillery fire. At the same hour Candy's brigade relieved those of Greene's regiments that by this time were out of ammunition. At eight the Confederates redoubled their efforts to beat Geary back. Lockwood's little brigade had already been advanced to the rear of Greene's breastworks, and before nine o'clock Shaler's brigade of the Sixth Corps and two small regiments of the First Division of the First Corps came up as re-enforcements. About half past ten the last charge of the Confederates upon Geary's line was made, numbers of the advancing troops, when they came under the fire of Kane's brigade, throwing down their arms and rushing into the Union lines bearing aloft white flags, pocket handkerchiefs, and even pieces of paper. From personal observation, Geary, upon whose division of the Twelfth Corps the main attack of the Confederates fell, estimated the Confederate dead at twelve hundred, of which nine hundred were buried by the Union troops, and the wounded at nearly five thousand. He said

that five hundred Confederates surrendered, in addition to the six hundred wounded of Rodes's division, who fell into the hands of their opponents, and that five thousand small arms were left by the Confederates on this part of the field. The colors captured included the brigade colors of the Stonewall brigade. The Confederates, however, reported their losses as sixteen hundred and nine killed and wounded and three hundred and ninety-one missing. On the Union side the principal losses in the First Division were in the Second Massachusetts and Twenty-seventh Indiana of Colgrave's brigade, during the charge by those two regiments across the swale upon the Confederates sheltered by breastworks and rocks. The losses in that division during the battle were five hundred and two killed and wounded and thirty-one missing. The Second Division (Geary's) took into action thirty-nine hundred and twenty-two men, and lost five hundred and thirty-nine, of which thirty-four were in missing. The repeated attempts of the Confederates to regain the breastworks, from which they had been driven by the Twelfth Corps and part of the Sixth, ended with Johnson's withdrawal to Rock Creek. There was no nobler exhibition of valor upon the field, and probably the severest fighting of the battle took place during the struggle in the vicinity of Culp's Hill, which demonstrated to both armies the great value of quickly raised earthworks.

On the Confederate right, during the morning, Longstreet made arrangements for passing around the Round Top and attacking Meade's left and rear. He had given the orders for the movement, when Lee came to him and ordered a direct attack upon the Federal center with a column to be formed of Pickett's (First) division of Longstreet's corps, Pettigrew's division of Hill's corps, and the brigades of Lane and Scales, of which Trimble arrived upon the field in time to assume command, the brigades of Wilcox and Perry of Anderson's division, Hill's corps, being directed to move in rear of Pickett's right flank. Pickett's division was massed under cover of the ridge between Seminary Ridge and the Emmitsburg road and Pettigrew's behind Seminary Ridge. Lee had concentrated seventy-five cannon on the high ground from which Humphreys's divi-

sion had been driven, and there were sixty-three more on Seminary Ridge.

The center of the Union line about to be attacked was held by Hancock's Second Corps, with Hays's division on the right, Gibbon's in the center, and Caldwell's on the left. On the right of Hays was Robinson's division of the First Corps, and in the angle between Gibbon and Caldwell was Doubleday's division of the same corps. Meade had authorized Newton to draw troops from Sedgwick for the filling of a gap between Doubleday and Sykes, into which Caldwell's division of the Second Corps, sent on the previous day by Meade to Sickles's support, was placed; and Torbert's New Jersey brigade of Sedgwick's corps was put in position on Caldwell's left. On the Second Corps line within the space of a mile were seventy-seven cannon. The weight of artillery was decidedly with the Confederates. Looking at the Union center from the Confederate artillery line, General Wright, of Hill's corps, said to General Alexander, Longstreet's chief of artillery: "It is not so hard to go there as it looks. I was nearly there with my brigade yesterday. The trouble is to stay there. The whole Yankee army is there in a bunch"—a description of the situation which was exact enough, since, if as a matter of fact Meade's army did not remain bunched anywhere on his line longer than was necessary, it was now reasonably certain that it would be bunched at the point of contact when the occasion demanded it. In every direction possible Meade strengthened his position, giving his personal attention to details that in the excitement of the hour might well have been overlooked. Thus, he ordered the provost marshal's guards to be sent into the fighting line, and he himself stationed Colonel Taylor's First Pennsylvania Cavalry in rear of all the infantry at the center, and told the commander to use his weapons to prevent any straggling or breaking away from the front. He was early on horseback that morning, and rode along the whole line, inspecting it for himself, and sweeping with his glass the woods and fields in the direction of the enemy. Says Colonel Haskell: "His manner was calm and serious, but earnest. There was no arrogance of hope or timidity discernible in his face, but you would have supposed he would do his duty

conscientiously and well and would be willing to abide by the result. He was well pleased with the left of the line to-day; it was so strong with good troops; he had no apprehension for the right, where the fight was now going on, on account of the admirable position of our forces there. Should the enemy attack the center the general thought he could re-enforce in good season. I heard General Meade speak of these matters to General Hancock and others at about nine o'clock in the morning, while they were up by the line near the Second Corps."

It was very still over the battlefield about noon. General Gibbon was playing the host at a luncheon which he had provided. He had invited General Hancock to partake of his hospitality. The table was the top of a mess chest. Gibbon and Hancock sat upon stools, the aids-de-camp upon the ground. The bill of fare comprised toast, bread and butter, stewed chicken, potatoes, all hot, and tea and coffee. General Meade happening to ride by, Gibbon invited him also to luncheon, and a cracker box was provided for the army commander to sit upon. It was during this luncheon that Meade gave the order that all provost guards should join their regiments for the day.*

It was at one o'clock that two Confederate signal guns were fired, and at once there opened such an artillery combat as the armies had never before seen. As a spectacle, the fire from the two miles of Confederate batteries, stretching from the town of Gettysburg southward, was appalling; but practically the Confederate fire was too high, and most of the damage was done behind the ridge on which the Army of the Potomac was posted, although the damage along the ridge was also great. The little house just over the crest where Meade had his headquarters, and to which he had gone from Gibbon's luncheon, was torn with shot and shell. The army commander stood in the open doorway as a cannon shot, almost grazing his legs, buried itself in a box standing on the portico by the door. There were two small rooms on the ground floor of the house, and in the room where Meade had met his corps commanders the night before were a bed in the corner, a small pine table

* Colonel Haskell's narrative.

in the center, upon it a wooden pail of water, a tin drinking cup, and the remains of a melted tallow candle held upright by its own grease, that had served to light the proceedings of last night's council of war. One Confederate shell burst in the yard among the horses tied to the fence; nearly a score of dead horses lay along this fence, close to the house. One shell tore up the steps of the house; one carried away the supports of the portico; one went through the door, and another through the garret. It was impossible for aids to report or for orders to be given from the center of so much noise and confusion, and the little house was abandoned as a headquarters, to be turned, after the firing was over, into a hospital.

During the cannonade the infantry of Meade's army lay upon the ground behind the crest. By General Hunt's direction the Union artillery fire, with the exception of that of the Second Corps batteries, was reserved for a quarter of an hour and then concentrated upon the most destructive batteries of the foe.* After half an hour both Meade and his chief of artillery started messengers along the line to stop the firing, with the idea of reserving the ammunition for the infantry assault, which they well knew would soon be made. On the other side, Alexander sent word to Pickett to come quickly, and the Confederate assault began.

Crossing the depression of the ground, a part of the Confederate line, after emerging from the woods, found a mo-

* Of the Union artillery, Stewart's (United States), Wiedrich's (New York), Ricketts's (Pennsylvania), and Reynolds's (New York) batteries were on Cemetery Hill. Bancroft's (Fourth United States), Dilger's (First Ohio), Taft's (New York), Eakin's (First United States), Wheeler's (Thirteenth New York), Huntingdon's (Ohio), Hill's (First West Virginia), and Edgell's (New Hampshire) batteries, under Major Osborne, were placed in the cemetery. On the left of the cemetery, near Ziegler's Grove, were Woodruff's (United States), Arnold's (Rhode Island), Cushing's (United States), Brown's (Rhode Island), and Rorty's (New York) batteries, under Captain Hazzard. Still farther to the left were Fitzhugh's (New York), Parsons's (New Jersey), Daniels's (Michigan), Thomas's (United States), Thompson's (Pennsylvania), Phillips's (Massachusetts), Sterling's (Connecticut), Hart's (New York), Cooper's (Pennsylvania), Dow's (Maine), and Ames's (New York) batteries, under Major McGilvery. On the extreme left were Gibbs's (Ohio) and Hazlett's (United States) batteries, the latter commanded by Lieutenant Rittenhouse.

ment's rest and shelter, and then started toward the little umbrella-shaped clump of trees on the Union line, said to have been pointed out by Lee as the objective of the assault. On the left Pettigrew's division of four brigades advanced in one line, with Trimble's two brigades of Lane and Scales in the rear and right as supports. Pickett's division on the right advanced with the brigades of Kemper and Garnett in the front line and Armistead's brigade in rear of Garnett's on the left. Twenty minutes afterward the brigades of Wilcox and Perry were to advance on Pickett's right and repel any attempted flanking movement. The assault was made by eighteen thousand men. To cover the advance the Confederate artillery reopened, and when the infantry line appeared the Union guns were directed upon the ranks. Great volumes of smoke, however, soon obscured the field, and many of the Confederates could not see that there was a foe in front of them until they were within two hundred yards of the Union line.* Under the artillery fire from McGilvery and Rittenhouse on Pickett's right his part of the line drifted to the left, and thus, when the brigades of Wilcox and Perry marched straight ahead, as ordered, for the purpose of protecting Pickett's right flank, their course took them too far to the south to accomplish their purpose, even if the advanced line by that time had not gone into pieces. As Pettigrew had formed behind Seminary Ridge, his troops had to advance under fire a distance of at least thirteen hundred yards, while Pickett's place of formation was but nine hundred yards distant from the objective point. The start was made in echelon, with Pettigrew in the rear; but by the time the Emmitsburg road was reached both divisions were on a line, and they crossed the road together. Brockenbrough's Virginians, Pettigrew's left brigade, were disheartened by the flank fire of Hays's troops and Woodruff's battery after a loss of only twenty-five killed, and these troops either retreated, surrendered, or threw themselves on the ground for protection; but the other brigades of Pettigrew, as well as those of Trimble, advanced to the stone wall, stayed there as long as any other Con-

* Pickett or Pettigrew, by Captain W. R. Bond (Hall & Sledge, Weldon. N. C.), p. 22.

federate troops, and surrendered many fewer men than did Pickett.

The drifting of Pickett's division to the left exposed the flank of his right brigade (Kemper's) to the fire of Doubleday's division, a part of which moved with Pickett, thus continuing its deadly volleys, while Stannard's brigade, by Hancock's orders, changed front to the right, and opened a most destructive fire upon Kemper's flank. Armistead's brigade moved in between Kemper and Garnett, and together they marched upon the angle of the stone wall held by Webb's Philadelphia brigade, Garnett, just before his death, calling out to Colonel Frye, commanding Archer's brigade of Pettigrew's division, on his left, "I am dressing on you." Scales's brigade, whose commander, Colonel Lowrance, says it "had advanced over a wide, hot, and already crimson plain," and through whose ranks troops from the front began to rush to the rear before he had advanced two thirds of the way, together with Lane's brigade, advanced to the front line, Lowrance's brigade reaching the wall. The two guns of Cushing's battery at the wall were silenced. The greater part of the Seventy-first Pennsylvania Regiment of Webb's brigade had been withdrawn from the wall to make room for the artillery, and the two remaining companies, overwhelmed by the mass of the enemy concentrated at this point, were driven back from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet. Through this gap the Confederates crossed the wall, and Armistead, putting his hat on his sword, dashed toward the other guns of Cushing's battery, near the clump of trees, and fell dead by the side of Cushing. The Sixty-ninth Pennsylvania of Webb's brigade held its position at the wall, though passed on both the right and left flanks by the enemy. The Seventy-second Pennsylvania and two companies of the One Hundred and Sixth Pennsylvania advanced to the wall; Cowan's New York battery galloped up; Hall's brigade of Hancock's corps, by the orders of Hancock, on Webb's left, changed front, and poured its fire into the Confederates' flank; Harrow's brigade also attacked Pickett in flank. The attack of Pettigrew and Trimble, farther to the Union right, fell upon Hays's division of the Second Corps. The Eighth Ohio changed front, facing south, reversing the tactics of Hall's brigade on the

left, and opened a flank fire. General Pickett, in person, did not cross the Emmitsburg road. Of his three brigade commanders, Garnett and Armistead were killed, and within twenty-five paces of the stone wall Kemper was wounded and captured. Pettigrew and Trimble and three of their brigade commanders (Frye, Marshall, and Lowrance) were wounded. The brigades of Wilcox and Perry, exposed to a heavy artillery fire from the fresh batteries moved to Gibbon's front and the guns of McGilvery and Rittenhouse, and to the musketry fire of Stannard's two regiments, which had changed front again, and, seeing the repulse of the assault to their left, fell back to the main Confederate line.

Out of the fifty-five hundred men which Pickett took into action, fourteen hundred and ninety-nine surrendered, two hundred and twenty-four were killed, and eleven hundred and forty were reported wounded. Pickett lost twelve out of fifteen battle flags. Pettigrew's division, in which there was one brigade of North Carolina troops, lost in killed and wounded eight hundred and seventy-four, and in missing five hundred. Trimble's two North Carolina brigades lost in killed and wounded three hundred and eighty-nine, and in missing two hundred and sixty-one. The two brigades of Perry and Wilcox together lost three hundred and fifty-nine. Pettigrew's brigade of North Carolina regiments, commanded by Colonel Marshall, lost in the charge five hundred and twenty-eight, of which number three hundred were killed and wounded; and the Twenty-sixth North Carolina Regiment of this brigade, which regiment suffered greater losses during the war than any other on either side of the conflict, went into this charge with two hundred and sixteen men, and returned with but eighty-four. The percentage of losses in killed and wounded in the assaulting column, taken as a whole, was not extraordinary for the civil war. The place assaulted was less formidable than Fort Fisher, which was taken later in the war by Union troops, and the assault itself was far less successful than that of Meade's division at Fredericksburg. Its complete failure was due to the thorough dispositions made to meet it, and it is improbable that the result would have been reversed if McLaws and Hood, whose attention was occupied by the appearance of the Union cavalry on

their right, had participated in the assault. The tactical skill which had prevented the rout of the Third Corps from involving the whole army in a defeat on the second day of the battle, was exerted with equal success in supporting the center under attack on the third day.

Under the terrific artillery fire of the third day Shaler's brigade of the Sixth Corps was brought back from the right to the left center, and by General Meade's orders was posted behind the Third Corps. Bartlett, commanding his own brigade of the Sixth Corps, as well as Nevin's, was thrown forward from the rear of the Fifth Corps. Torbert's brigade of the Sixth Corps, as already described, was at the front under the orders of Newton of the First Corps, having been advanced over half a mile. Eustis's brigade of the Sixth Corps was also sent to report to Newton. Russell's brigade, Sixth Corps, was moved in the morning from Powers's Hill to the extreme left flank, a distance of a mile and a half. The right rested on the Taneytown road facing south, where with Grant's brigade of the same corps and two batteries of artillery, all under command of General Horatio G. Wright, it was in a position to give warning of any attempt to carry out that flank movement which Longstreet advised, and Meade guarded against, not only in this way, but with his cavalry and with those provisions so unintelligently misconstrued by Butterfield, that would have enabled the army to fall into the Pipe Creek line in case it had been maneuvered out of the Gettysburg position. When it became apparent that a flank movement was not contemplated by Lee, Russell's brigade was moved northward on the Taneytown road, a distance of fourteen hundred yards. Birney's division of the Third Corps, now under Ward's command, was moved forward to support Newton's line. Humphreys's division of the Third Corps, after being massed in rear of the First and Second Corps, was thrown to the rear of the Fifth Corps, and was again moved rapidly to the right, in rear and support of the left of the Second and right of the First Corps. Robinson's division of the First Corps, moved on the evening of the 2d from the south end of the Citizens' or Evergreen Cemetery one mile to the left, and returned again on the morning of the 3d, was ordered five hundred yards away to the front

of Ziegler's Grove on the right of the Second Corps. McDougall's brigade of the First Division, Twelfth Corps, was ordered from Culp's Hill to support the attacked center, but after advancing nearly half a mile was returned to its former position. Biddle's brigade of Doubleday's division in the morning was brought from its position west of Meade's headquarters to the right of Stannard's brigade of the same division, which, with Stone's brigade, on the previous evening, after moving south eight hundred yards, had advanced to a point four hundred yards southeast of the Codori House.

Here, at the center of Meade's position, were troops rank after rank, infantry division after division, line upon line, including even the provost guards, and, in rear of all, a regiment of cavalry waiting to shoot down the craven if he should discover himself. Against an army so disposed, in such a position, and so handled, its different parts thrown from point to point with certainty and promptitude, with every possible Confederate movement anticipated and provided for, the assault ordered by Lee was in truth the mad and reckless movement that Meade characterized it, and it accomplished no more than a slight fraying of the edge of the front Union line of troops.

On the Union side, Hancock, Gibbon, and Webb were wounded and carried from the field. The Union losses were twenty-three hundred and thirty-two, Webb's brigade losing more than any other. One hundred and fifty-eight artillerymen were killed or wounded. Before the attack Meade had told Hancock that if Lee attacked the Second Corps position he intended to put the Fifth and Sixth Corps on the enemy's flank. Recalling this remark of the army commander, Hancock, while lying on the ground wounded, dictated a note to Meade, expressing his belief that if the movement contemplated by the army commander were carried out a great success would be won.* The Sixth Corps, however, was not now a compact organization, its different parts, as has been narrated, having been disposed in different portions of the field. The Fifth Corps was ordered to carry out the contemplated movement, but it had also been

* Hancock's testimony before Committee on Conduct of War.

Head Quarters Army of the Potomac,

JULY 4th, 1863.

GENERAL ORDERS }
NO. 68.

THE Commanding General, in behalf of the country, thanks the Army of the Potomac for the glorious result of the recent operations.

An enemy superior in numbers and flushed with the pride of a successful invasion, attempted to overcome and destroy this Army. Utterly baffled and defeated, he has now withdrawn from the contest. The privations and fatigue the Army has endured, and the heroic courage and gallantry it has displayed will be matters of history to be ever remembered.

Our task is not yet accomplished, and the Commanding General looks to the Army for greater efforts to drive from our soil every vestige of the presence of the invader.

It is right and proper that we should, on all suitable occasions, return our grateful thanks to the Almighty Disposer of events, that in the goodness of his Providence He has thought fit to give victory to the cause of the just.

By command of

MAJ. GEN. MEADE.

S. WILLIAMS, Asst. Adj. General.

Facsimile of Meade's announcement of his victory over Lee at Gettysburg.

From the original in possession of Judge Samuel W. Pennypacker.

moved to support the center. There is a limit to human endurance, and the slowness with which the movement ordered by Meade was made, owing partly to the difficulty of collecting the troops, was no doubt largely due to sheer exhaustion caused by the supreme efforts which had now been prolonged for six midsummer days.

Having made his dispositions to support the attack upon his center, General Meade, accompanied by a single aid, his son, Colonel George Meade, rode to that point on the crest where now a great mass of surrendered men in gray, their faces still lit by battle excitement, and thankful for life where so many had fallen, were passing with uncertain, bewildered movements toward some desired place of safety. General Meade directed them which way to go. His subsequent movements are described in Colonel Haskell's narrative as follows:

"The principal horseman was no bedizened hero of some holiday review, but he was a plain man, dressed in a serviceable summer suit of dark blue cloth, without badge or ornament save the shoulder straps of his grade and a light, straight sword. He wore heavy, high top boots and buff gauntlets, and his soft black felt hat was slouched down over his eyes; his face was very white and pale, and the lines were marked and earnest and full of care. He arrived near me coming up the hill, and asked in a sharp, eager voice:

"How is it going here?"

"I believe, general, the enemy is repulsed," I answered. . . . By this time he was on the crest, and when his eye had for an instant swept over the field, taking in just a glance of the whole, the masses of prisoners, the numerous captured flags which the men were derisively flaunting about, the fugitives of the routed enemy disappearing with the speed of terror in the woods, partly at what I told him, partly at what he saw, he said impressively, and his face was lighted, 'Thank God!' He surveyed the field some minutes in silence and then gave directions for reforming the troops."

At the hour of Longstreet's assault Gregg won an important victory over Stuart at Rummell's farm, between the Hanover road and the York pike, in rear of Meade's line of

battle. Gregg's division (the Second) left Hanover at three o'clock on the morning of July 2d, and by way of McSherrytown and Bonneauville arrived at the crossing of the Salem Church road, three and a half miles east of Cemetery Ridge, occupying the crest of Brinkerhoff's Ridge, the general direction of which is from southwest to northeast, and which is crossed by the Bonneauville road a little over a mile west of the Salem road. Gregg with a half dozen squadrons engaged the attention of Walker's infantry brigade of Ewell's corps until dark, after which Gregg withdrew to the Baltimore pike to the south and bivouacked on White Run. But in the middle of the forenoon Gregg resumed his position of the day before, extending his Second Brigade (J. I. Gregg's) from the infantry on his left at Wolf's Hill to the Bonneauville road. McIntosh's brigade halted at the intersection of the Salem Church and Bonneauville roads, and Custer's brigade (the Second of Kilpatrick's division, temporarily under Gregg's command) occupied the ground in front and to the right of McIntosh. Stuart's cavalry of four brigades and four batteries, seeking Meade's rear, by Lee's directions, for the purpose of striking a blow from that direction while Longstreet attacked in front, had come out from the direction of Gettysburg, by way of the York pike, until it reached a country road connecting the pike with the Salem Church road. On this cross road Stuart had advanced as far as the heavily wooded Cress's ridge, three quarters of a mile north of Gregg's right flank. Between him and Gregg were open fields. Stuart's forces were hidden by the woods; Gregg's were in full view. Stuart's plan was to leave the cross road and move toward Meade's rear behind the woods on Cress's ridge, but owing to the disposition made by Gregg, who was warned at noon by receiving a copy of a dispatch from Howard to Meade announcing Stuart's movements, Stuart could not have continued a hidden movement even if Hampton and Fitzhugh Lee, continuing in the cross road beyond the point where Stuart had left it with the brigades of Chambliss and Jenkins, had not exposed themselves to Gregg's cavalry. A direct conflict could not now be avoided by Stuart unless he abandoned altogether his plan. He made the attempt to drive Gregg out of his way. The con-

test was fast and furious about the Rummell farm, and in the contending charges, in which the opposing forces rushed together, horses were turned end over end.* Owing to the excellent handling of his smaller force by Gregg, one of the ablest cavalry leaders produced by the war, Stuart was compelled to fall back to the hills, where he waited until dark in the vain hope of yet having an opportunity to strike a defeated Union army on the retreat. At last convinced of the failure of Lee's plans, Stuart withdrew to the York turnpike. Gregg had won the most important cavalry battle of the war.

On Meade's left Kilpatrick ordered a reckless cavalry charge upon infantry and artillery to be made by Farnsworth, who in obeying the rash order lost his life.

After the repulse of Longstreet's assault McCandless's brigade of the Fifth Corps, supported by Nevin's, was thrown forward, crossing the wheatfield and clearing the woods, and capturing several hundred prisoners and a stand of colors. As to the practicability of the return attack upon Lee, which Longstreet and Hill ardently desired in the hope that they would thus be given a chance to accord to Meade's troops as crushing a blow as they themselves had received, General Hunt says: "An advance of twenty thousand men from Cemetery Ridge in the face of the one hundred and forty guns then in position would have been stark madness. An immediate advance from any point in force was simply impracticable, and before due preparation could have been made for a change to the offensive, the favorable moment, had any resulted from the repulse, would have passed away."

At Waterloo, when after the failure of Napoleon's last direct attack upon Wellington and under the attack of the Prussians upon the French right, Napoleon withdrew from the field in some confusion, Wellington advanced no farther than the position which the French had held. Pursued by the Prussians, the French had to cross the river Sambre, only twenty-five miles from Waterloo, yet, as General Humphreys has pointed out, the Prussians took only six thousand prisoners, while Grouchy, who on the next day found

* Captain William E. Miller in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. iii, p. 397.

both Wellington and Blücher between him and the Sambre, escaped into France without loss. That is, even with an auxiliary army at his hand, Wellington failed to do at Waterloo what, it is not to be denied, some Americans, who consider Wellington a great commander, hold that Meade should have done at Gettysburg without any such auxiliary army. In this opinion, however, they do not agree with so high a military authority as General Humphreys, who says that Meade at Gettysburg had a more difficult task than Wellington had at Waterloo, and performed it equally well, though he had no Blücher to turn the scale in his favor.

After Napoleon's defeat at Leipsic he was intercepted by General Wrede with an army of forty-five thousand men at Hanau, on October 30, 1813, but Wrede was badly defeated, showing that the conditions must be right to insure a successful attack upon a defeated foe. The mistakes at Gettysburg were Lee's, not Meade's; and Lee's great initiatory mistake is clearly defined by General Sir Edward B. Hamley, formerly commandant of the British Staff College, who says:

"When the lines on which hostile armies are operating meet at an acute angle, that army which operates farthest from the angle obliges its enemy to take a flank position. Therefore such conditions offer a case eminently suited to maneuvering when the general and the army who can move with the greatest promptitude and precision force the enemy to receive battle at a disadvantage." The writer quoted then points out that the lines of operation of Meade and Lee from the Potomac met at an acute angle at Gettysburg, and that Lee, being at the point of the angle, attacked, forming front oblique to his line of retreat, with his left thrown forward considerably off that line; whereas by withdrawing a short distance from Gettysburg toward Fairfield and maneuvering by his right he could have forced Meade to retreat, or fight in a flank position.*

The fundamental weakness of Lee's tactics thus pointed out would not have existed had he continued the correct

* The Operations of War, fifth edition, William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1889, p. 420.

line of operations indicated by Longstreet toward Meade's right flank. In that case Lee would not have suffered the consequences of his rash and mad attacks, and Meade probably would have retired to the Pipe Creek line, as he had made every preparation to do in case Longstreet made the movement which Meade feared. The movements ordered by the two commanders compel the conviction that Meade comprehended the tactical principles involved better than did Lee, who, when Longstreet desired to make the flank movement referred to, advanced the objection that the armies were in too close contact to permit it, which was not strictly the case.

The following letter, written by the ablest and most experienced of American artillery officers, who made an exhaustive study of the Gettysburg campaign, summarizes its controversies:

SOLDIERS' HOME, WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 12, 1888.*

MY DEAR WEBB: . . . Now I was by no means a favorite with Meade; he rarely consulted me as a chief of artillery is consulted—or, e. g., he consulted the chief of engineers, or of staff, etc.

I am under no sort of obligation to him that would lead me to sustain him if wrong, nor have I any occasion for ill feeling or malice toward him—i. e., there were no close personal relations between us, such as there were with Humphreys and Gibbon and yourself, that could or would in any respect whatever sway my judgment. We differed on some points; sometimes I was vexed; once I demanded to be relieved, so I could be impartial, I think.

Now, Webb, as I have studied this battle because I have written about it and had to study it, Meade has grown and grown upon me. I won't say, for I don't know, what were his views and determinations about the different phases of the campaign and battles. He did not take me into his confidence. I don't complain of it, mind, but I am now very sorry that he did not. Had he done so, I am firmly convinced that I could now very effectively speak with authority in his favor. He did ask or direct me to look for a battlefield behind Pipe Creek, and of course I inquired of my own mind his reasons, as he did not give them to me himself. I did not have to look far, for the only reasonable solution presented itself. He did tell me, July 2d, that he feared we were in no condition to fight at Gettys-

burg, but in this matter he did give me his reason, so far as it concerned me—"lack of ammunition (artillery)." I assured him that, while we had none to throw away, there would be enough, and that apparently fully satisfied him. Therefore I concluded, when the charge was made that he didn't want to fight there, that it was all "poppycock."

More than that, I believed, as my Gettysburg paper, I think, shows, that Pipe Creek was our true place, and it was Meade's order to me to look for a field there that suggested that fact to me. I infer Meade's views and intentions from his acts. His word is sufficient to establish them—and does establish them—but they had no weight with me, because they were unnecessary to, yet confirmed my convictions, which were formed on his acts before he went before the committee.

Meade was suddenly placed in command. From that moment all his acts and intentions, as I can judge of them, were just what they ought to have been, except, perhaps, in his order to attack at Falling Waters on the morning of the 13th, and especially on the 14th of July, when his corps commanders reported against it, and I was then in favor of the attack, so I can't blame him. He was right in his orders as to Pipe Creek; right in his determination under certain circumstances to fall back to it; right in pushing up to Gettysburg after the battle commenced; right in remaining there; right in making his battle a purely defensive one; right, therefore, in taking the line he did; right in not attempting a counter-attack at any stage of the battle; right as to his pursuit of Lee. Rarely has more skill, vigor, or wisdom been shown under such circumstances as he was placed in, and it would, I think, belittle his grand record of that campaign by a formal defense against his detractors. . . .

I am bold enough to believe that, had the Rapidan campaign been conducted by him free from the trammels of the higher headquarters, it would have been better for the Army of the Potomac and for the country; but of this you need say nothing. I haven't finished my study of it yet.

H. J. HUNT.

To *Brevet Major-General* ALEXANDER S. WEBB, *U. S. Army.*

On the night of July 3d, General Meade, accompanied by his son, lay upon the ground seeking the rest which exhausted nature demanded after six days and seven nights of as arduous labor as man ever performed. He could not return to the little house which he had occupied as head-

quarters, for its contracted rooms were filled with the wounded and dying. At a spot some distance southeastward of that house he stretched his wearied limbs upon the earth that so lately had vibrated with the tumult of the mighty conflict. Soon that tumult seemed to be re-echoed from the sky, and, after perhaps an hour's sleep, his aid, awakened by a furious downpour of rain, looked about him in the darkness, and saw the victor at Gettysburg seated upon a rock near by, without any shelter, the storm beating upon him and drenching his clothing. But what did physical discomfort, in the hour of extreme mental, nervous, and muscular weariness, matter when he had fought the good fight, "gathered up the prisoners by thousands and their battle flags in sheaves," and knew that Gettysburg was won, and that the cause which he had so ably and supremely served was saved?

After Gettysburg the war was continued by the Confederates from political despair, not in military hope. There would be other bloody battles in the future to be fought by the victorious army, but none so gigantic, none in which victory was so necessary, none in which victory could be so readily traced to military ability of the highest order. And as such another battle did not follow Gettysburg, so none had preceded it. It stands alone, among the contests of the civil war, upon an historical eminence the ascent whereof is marked by the contests leading up to it, and the descent therefrom by less vital combats that gleaned where Meade had reaped. Meade's total losses at Gettysburg were twenty-three thousand and forty-nine, and Lee's twenty-eight thousand and sixty-three.*

* Livermore's Numbers and Losses in the Civil War, pp. 102, 103.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM GETTYSBURG TO THE RAPIDAN.

AFTER midnight of July 3d, General Lee, who at that hour arrived at his headquarters in a state of such extreme weariness that he could hardly dismount from his horse, ordered General Imboden to conduct the wounded of the Confederate army, by way of the Chambersburg road, without halt, to Williamsport on the Potomac, to which place Lee had ordered ammunition to be sent from Winchester. This train, seventeen miles long, started at four o'clock on the afternoon of the 4th, after a deluge which overflowed the fields and swept away the fences.

During the night of the 3d Lee withdrew his left back to the ridge that was the scene of the first day's battle, threw these troops in line of battle across the roads, and erected strong earthworks, in the hope, says General Johnson, of Ewell's corps, that "the enemy would give us battle on ground of our own selection." Lee's order of retreat was for Hill's corps to move at dark on the 4th by the Fairfield pass, to be followed by Longstreet's corps, while Ewell was to bring up the rear. But by ten o'clock the next morning all the troops of the other corps were not yet on the road, and therefore Ewell, with Gordon's brigade acting as the rear guard, did not march until noon, or reach Fairfield until four o'clock in the afternoon. Bivouacking in the mountain pass on the night of the 5th, Lee entered the Cumberland Valley on the morning of the 6th. Reaching the heights in front of the Potomac on the 7th, and finding the river impassable by reason of high water, and his pontoon bridge, which he had left there, destroyed by French's troops, Lee threw his army into a position of extraordinary strength, the left on the high plateau just north-

west of, and one hundred and fifty feet above, the town of Hagerstown, and the line following the high ridge for a distance of nearly ten miles and terminating upon a hill on the Potomac at the great bend of the river south of Falling Waters. He thus covered all the roads leading to the Potomac from Dam No. 4 on the south to a point on the river four miles above Williamsport, which town and crossing were in the rear of the center of his line, while the crossing at Falling Waters was in rear of his right. This line, selected by Lee, he says, previous to the need for its use, was naturally of the most formidable character, with a road in the rear parallel to it, over which road re-enforcements could be readily moved, and was immediately strengthened by the erection of earthworks, where the outcropping of the rock did not make such labor unnecessary. In front was a valley without shelter, from a mile to a mile and a half wide, across which an assaulting army must advance. The elevated plateau on the north was wide enough to permit the maneuvering upon it of large numbers of troops, and so commanded the cleared ground in front, on the left, and in the rear, as to make a flank movement by a foe in that quarter impracticable. The line of earthworks constructed by Lee can still be traced readily at the close of the century.

The line thus occupied and fortified with a skill that confirms the beholder's admiration for Lee's great ability in defensive warfare is stronger than that held by him at Fredericksburg or the line held by Meade at Gettysburg. Neither Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Stanton, General Halleck, nor those writers of war history who, without investigation, have simply followed the contemporary expression of disappointment over Lee's escape across the Potomac, ever saw the ground, and opinion which thus eliminates from consideration the most important element in the question presented to General Meade, is without other value than as a revelation of previous unwarranted hope and the depression following undue elation.

At Williamsport Lee received a fresh supply of ammunition. Captain Roberts, commanding the Confederate post at Martinsburg, less than a five hours' march from Williamsport, and still nearer to Falling Waters, reported to President Davis that ammunition stores for Lee's army

passed through that place on the 9th,* but previous thereto, Lee says, the difficulty of obtaining flour, owing to the high water having stopped the neighboring mills, was greater than the difficulty of obtaining ammunition.† We know that the greater difficulty of obtaining subsistence was overcome by Lee, and there can not be any doubt that the lesser difficulty was also promptly surmounted. ‡

On the Union side, on the evening of the third day, General Meade had gone to Little Round Top, and from there had ordered the troops at the wheatfield wall, a part of Crawford's division of Sykes's corps, to clear the woods in front. Sedgwick says * that these troops had a brisk skirmish with the Confederates who had not been engaged in Longstreet's assault, and that the Confederates were found in position awaiting attack. "On our right," says Early's assistant adjutant general, "Hood and McLaws; in the center, Anderson; and on the left, the whole corps of Ewell stood as steady and unmoved as if they had witnessed the mimic evolutions of a holiday review; and not only undismayed, but eager to welcome their antagonists 'with bloody hands to hospitable graves.'"|| The next day, the 4th, was spent by the Federal troops in burying the dead. The demonstrations ordered by Meade that morning were feebly made, according to Warren.^Δ The soldiers who

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, p. 988.

† See Lee's report, Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part ii, p. 209.

‡ "I can assure you there was no lack of ammunition for the regiment, brigade, and division [of Hood] with which I served, nor did I ever hear of any such thing as to the rest of Lee's army after our arrival at Hagerstown, and I have always understood that a supply of fresh ammunition was brought across the Potomac on boats. Though our infantry at no time was without a sufficient supply to fight a great battle, according to my understanding of the situation, some of our artillery used up nearly all of their ammunition in the great cannonade of the third day; but there can be no reasonable doubt that they received a fresh supply from across the river very soon after arriving at Hagerstown." Letter to the author from Major William M. Robbins, of the Gettysburg Battlefield Commission.

* Sedgwick's testimony before Committee on Conduct of War.

|| Address of Major John W. Daniel before Army of Northern Virginia, at Richmond, October 28, 1875.

^Δ Testimony on the Conduct of the War.

had succeeded to the command of corps since the death of Reynolds and the wounding of Hancock and Gibbon, found themselves unequal to the task of inspiring an exhausted army to fresh effort without an interval of rest. With some slight changes, Meade, until the reorganization of the army for the campaign of 1864, would be compelled to get along as best he could with the services of such corps commanders as were left to him by the fortunes of war at Gettysburg. Of these officers Warren says: "The corps commanders have not been the men they ought to be." He advised that the army commander be permitted to choose his own corps commanders, and corps commanders to choose their division commanders. He explained that by the change of army commanders the army had lost Meade as a corps commander; Hancock's services had been lost by reason of wounds, and Reynolds's by death, and he had less confidence after that period than ever before in the activity and spirit of the corps commanders of the army.*

The reconnoissance made by the regular troops of Sykes's corps on the 4th, had developed the enemy's line of battle intrenched; † but during the night this portion of the Confederate line was abandoned. The nature of the pursuit imposed upon Meade by the situation is clearly expressed by Lieutenant-Colonel Clery, late Professor of Tactics in the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, who, in his work entitled *Minor Tactics*, says: "When, therefore, time is allowed the vanquished to organize a retreat, the pursuing force must advance with a certain amount of caution; for the enemy's movement may no longer be entirely due to inability to fight. . . . Thus Napoleon, defeated by the Prussians at Brienne, fell back on Troyes, to deal them the crushing blows that followed a few days later. Frederick, heavily defeated at Hohenkirch, fell back on a position at Kreckwitz too formidable to meddle with. . . . Sufficient caution must be adopted to guard against surprise and coming on a concentrated enemy in too disseminated a condition. In the French pursuit of the allies after Bautzen, an ambush arranged by the Prussians at Hanau

* Testimony on the Conduct of the War.

† General Crawford's testimony on the Conduct of the War.

resulted in the surprise and rout of a whole French division. Moreau, pressed too closely by Latour in 1796, turned to bay at Biberach and inflicted a severe defeat on his opponent." *

Hamley says: "It is possible to force an enemy from the field without either menacing his flank or breaking his front. This may be effected either by pressing back his line throughout its extent, or by seizing on surrounding points of the battlefield, the loss of which renders his position untenable. *In either case trained troops, properly commanded, will withdraw in good order; a rear guard will be organized, defiles defended, pursuit checked, and the army at the first secure pause will be reorganized, and, except the loss of prestige and of ground, comparatively little the worse for the encounter.*"

The same authority says: "It is when troops are cut off from their line of retreat, or thrust off it, that great captures are made; it is when, to avoid such contingencies, they hurry in disorder from the field, . . . that a swift organized pursuit forces the fugitive bands, seeking safety and sustenance, to wider dispersion and converts defeat into ruin." †

Meade avoided the dangers of a rash pursuit, such as are alluded to by the military authorities above quoted, while the nature of Lee's retreat is described accurately by one of the quotations from Hamley. Lee's trained troops, properly commanded, withdrew in good order; a rear guard was organized and it held at bay at Fairfield the advance of Sedgwick to that place ordered by Meade on the 5th; defiles were defended, and pursuit was checked. Lee's retreat was directly along his line of communications, and, owing to the advantages to him of the field at Gettysburg, long before there could be any possibility of forcing him off this line by a flank movement through the mountain passes to the south of Fairfield, Lee falling back into his chosen line from the heights at Hagerstown to the Potomac, as Wellington had fallen back in October, 1810, into his fortified line of intrenchments at Torres Vedras, Portugal, could rest in perfect safety from any attacks by Meade, just as Wellington held his enemies at bay from autumn until spring, although

* Page 194.

† Operations of the War, pp. 148 and 418.

Massena, Napoleon's ablest marshal, searched every part of the line, which he dared not attack.

Meade received information that both the Fairfield and Cashtown passes through the mountains had been fortified, and could be held by a small force of the enemy. On the 6th, Sedgwick, who had been ordered to follow the enemy by way of Fairfield, and at whose command Meade had placed three army corps, reported that it would involve delay and waste of time to push the enemy any longer on the Fairfield road; whereupon, leaving Neill's brigade of the Sixth Corps, McIntosh's brigade of cavalry, and two batteries of artillery to harass the Confederate rear, Meade withdrew Sedgwick from Fairfield and resumed the flank movement to Middletown, which movement had been interrupted by the prospect that Sedgwick's advance might bring on a serious engagement. J. Irvin Gregg's brigade of cavalry, on the 5th, had gone in pursuit of Imboden's column on the Cashtown road. Buford was sent by way of Frederick toward Williamsport, and Kilpatrick's division was thrown through Monterey Pass.

Upon the hard and drained roads of the mountain passes Lee's troops found the mud ankle deep. In the lower land, through which led the roads now followed by Meade, the Army of the Potomac came near to being mired, and the roads for long distances were abandoned for the fields. It was only with the utmost difficulty that anything on wheels could be advanced on the line of march. On the march to Middletown Sedgwick commanded the First, Sixth, and Third Corps, Slocum the Twelfth and Second, and Howard the Fifth and Eleventh. On the 7th, with the exception of Kenly's brigade, French's troops, which had been engaged by Meade's orders in occupying the mountain passes, so that Lee could not hold these passes for the protection of his flank, were assigned to the Third Corps, and of this corps, upon the union of the forces, French became the commander. The army corps would then be commanded as follows: First, Newton; Second, William Hays; Third, French; Fifth, Sykes; Sixth, Sedgwick; Eleventh, Howard; Twelfth, Slocum; cavalry, Pleasonton; artillery, Hunt. At the outstart of the pursuit, Butterfield, the chief of staff, issued certain orders without Meade's authority, and for

a brief time we find Warren acting as temporary chief of staff, or Meade communicating personally with the corps commanders—a labor which, in addition to his other burdens, must have weighed heavily upon him. At ten o'clock on the night of the 6th Warren wrote that General Meade at that hour was refreshing himself with the first quiet sleep he had had since assuming command, if not for many nights before. On the 8th General Humphreys became chief of staff.

On the evening of the 7th, Birney, who had been ordered to Middletown, reported that his artillery horses were jaded and that he could get no farther than Mechanicstown. Two of Howard's divisions were stuck fast five miles back from Middletown; but Howard was hurried on to Boonsborough, being told that he must leave behind the men who had no shoes. On the 8th, Howard said one half of his command was unfitted to move for want of shoes, and there were no rations in the haversacks. Some of the other corps of the army were still farther in the rear of the terminus assigned for the day's march, and on the 8th, Sedgwick said the roads were so bad that the artillery of the Sixth and Third Corps could not arrive at Middletown until evening, a delay of twenty-four hours. Newton had been forced to leave behind the Vermont brigade of the First Corps because it had already made a day's march without rations. Barefooted and short of rations, one of Meade's corps marched on the day and night of the 7th thirty miles. Lieutenant Roebing, on the 8th, sent this message to Warren, the acting chief of staff: "Went over both gaps on the mountain. The roads are frightful. Colonel Reynolds has been trying all day to get the Sixth Corps batteries over. It will take until to-morrow noon before he is entirely across, and then the horses will be unfit for use."* Under these circumstances the irony with which Meade conveyed to the army a message from Halleck, saying the President was urgent that the enemy should be moved against with forced marches, is more enjoyable to-day than it was to the utterly fatigued, barefooted, and unfed troops of the Army of the Potomac, who had been making through the deep mud the

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, p. 606.

identical forced marches thus recommended a day after the affair.

By Halleck's instructions, from various points of the compass a certain kind of re-enforcements were now being sent to Meade. Some of these movements were too late. Of the militia sent from Harrisburg under the command of General W. F. Smith, an experienced officer, their commander sent the following description to Meade from Waynesborough on the 8th: "My command is an incoherent mass. . . . They can not be maneuvered, and as a command it is quite helpless. . . . I am utterly powerless, without aid and in the short time allotted, to infuse any discipline into these troops." * The enlistment period of some of the regiments coming from the seaboard had already expired, and some of the troops sent from Baltimore arrived without ammunition. Feeble as these steps to re-enforce Meade were in detail, it is to be said of them as a whole that they were taken too late if they were seriously intended by anybody to promote the fulfillment of a hope of preventing Lee's escape across the Potomac. The material, the hour, and the place were all poorly chosen.

Meade's orders for the 10th would carry his left, the Twelfth and Second Corps, from Rohrersville, west of the South Mountain, across the Antietam Creek along the northern edge of the battlefield of Antietam to Bakersville; the Fifth and Third Corps, composing his center, to the Antietam bridge on the Boonsborough and Williamsport road; and the Sixth Corps, his right, along the Hagerstown pike to the north side of Beaver Creek; the Eleventh Corps would be held in reserve northwest of Boonsborough. On the day when these orders were drawn up Halleck telegraphed to Meade: "Don't be influenced by any dispatch from here against your own judgment. Regard them as suggestions only. Our information here is not always correct"; and on the 10th he again telegraphed: "I think it would be best for you to postpone a general battle till you can concentrate all your forces and get up your reserves and re-enforcements. . . . Beware of partial combats. Bring up and hurl upon the enemy all your forces, good and bad."

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part iii, p. 611.

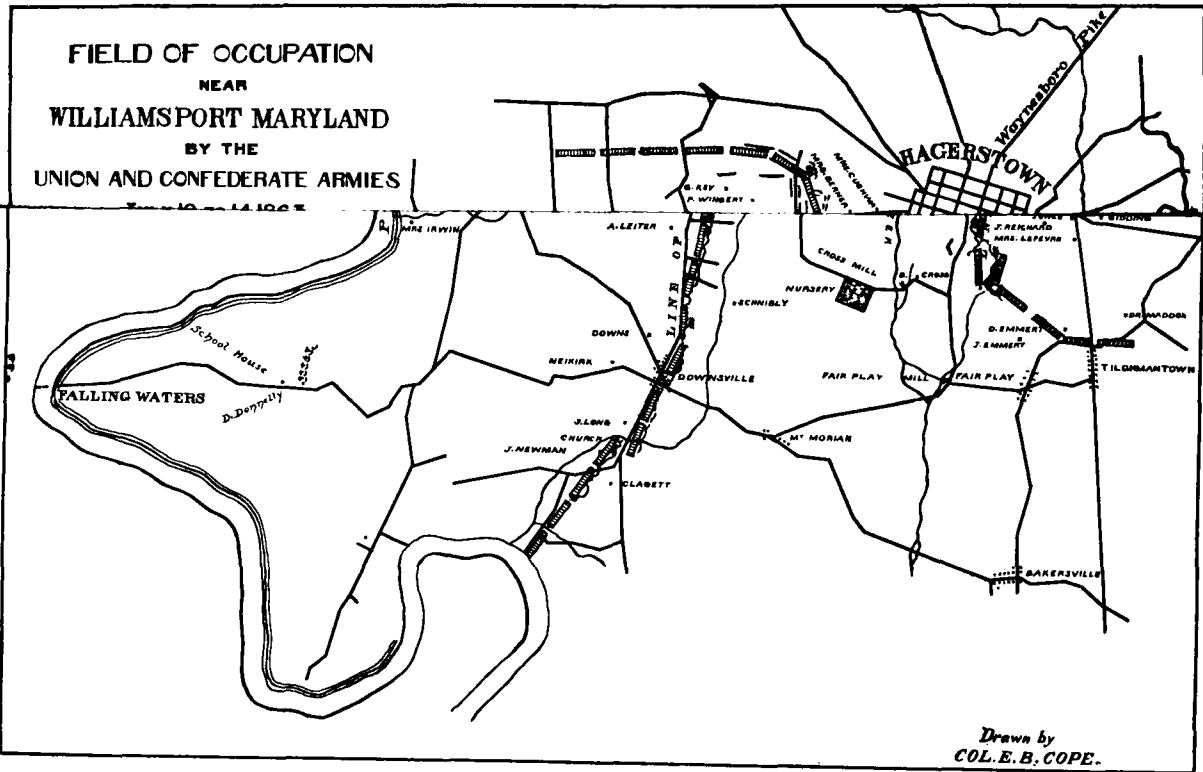
In the meantime, while in pursuance of these instructions from the general in chief, Meade was bringing up his army into line of battle in front of Lee's strong position—a position which could not be turned north of the Potomac; he also sent a pontoon bridge to Harper's Ferry and ordered a cavalry force there for the purpose of crossing the river and cutting Lee's communications. Meade had positive information that ammunition trains had been ferried across the Potomac to Lee,* and but for the flank movement begun by Meade there was no reason why Lee should not have stayed where he was, in the hope that Meade would deliver a front attack and an opportunity be offered to reverse the results of Gettysburg.

To the corps commanders and the army it was obvious that Lee could not be dislodged from the heights extending from Hagerstown to Falling Waters; and when the corps commanders were assembled on the evening of the 12th to impart such information concerning the position of the enemy as they had collected, and to receive instructions, with two exceptions—Howard and Wadsworth, the latter in temporary command of the First Corps—they voted in opposition to making an attack. On the 11th, Meade had thrown his right forward, making strong reconnoissances for the purpose of feeling the enemy, and his plan, formed on the 12th, was to advance the whole army, the reconnoissance to be converted into an attack at such favorable points as should be developed by the advance; but when his corps commanders so positively and unanimously opposed the plan, the army commander deferred to them so far as to postpone the movement until he could examine for himself the position to be assaulted. He felt that the messages from the President and Halleck required him to attack, although his own judgment and that of his officers might be against it. The view of the authorities at Washington is probably clearly expressed in General Humphreys's testimony on the conduct of the war, bearing directly on the question under discussion, wherein he says: "I think the public, and probably a great many officers, confound attacking field-works or intrenchments where there is a small body of

* Meade's testimony on Conduct of War.

FIELD OF OCCUPATION
NEAR
WILLIAMSPORT MARYLAND
BY THE
UNION AND CONFEDERATE ARMIES

From 10 to 14, 1863



Drawn by
COL. E. B. COPE.

men posted with attacking a whole army that has thrown up intrenchments. Now that is a different thing altogether. You may take fieldworks in which there are small garrisons by assault, but when you have to attack a whole army, well intrenched, you will suffer terribly in getting up to them"; and he added: "An army of sixty thousand or eighty thousand men is not to be knocked in pieces by any such battle as we have fought yet."

The 13th of July happened to be a wet and foggy day, shutting off any clear view of the enemy's position, and the examinations made by Meade himself and his officers were far from satisfactory. Buford, on the right, on the previous day, reported that the fog was so heavy it was hard to discover anything; and later he said that the enemy was not crossing, and had no means of crossing, at Williamsport except on flatboats. On the night of the 13th Meade ordered an advance to be made by the whole army at daylight. During the night Lee crossed the river into Virginia, his retirement being hastened not by Meade's preparations to attack him in front—an attack which Lee would have welcomed—but by his knowledge that the flank movement south of the river, already commenced by Meade and threatening his line of communications, would soon make his position an untenable one. For from Frederick, during the battle of Gettysburg, General French had sent Morris's brigade, four thousand strong, with artillery and cavalry, to the lower passes of the South Mountain. On the 5th another expedition had gone to Harper's Ferry. On the 6th and succeeding days Maryland Heights was reoccupied by the brigades of Kenly, Briggs, and Naglee; and on the 13th an order was issued for Gregg to cross the river at Harper's Ferry with two brigades of cavalry and to move upon the enemy's line between Williamsport and Winchester. At Harper's Ferry Gregg would be only fifteen miles from Martinsburg upon Lee's line.

While Meade faced Lee and occupied the line from the Antietam above Funkstown to a hill southwest of Jones's Cross Roads, Sedgwick, the one corps commander of the first order of ability left to the army, was placed in command of the First and Eleventh Corps as well as his own corps. In his testimony on the conduct of the war, Sedgwick said that

he had voted against an attack upon Lee's position at Hagerstown, that it was impracticable to obtain information of the time of Lee's crossing of the river, and that if the Army of the Potomac had attacked it would have been severely repulsed. He was confirmed in this opinion when he passed over the ground occupied by Lee and saw the Confederate works. Before the same committee Meade testified:

"It is proper I should say that an examination of the enemy's lines and of the defenses which he had made, of which I now have a map from an accurate survey, which can be laid before your committee, brings me clearly to the opinion that an attack under the circumstances in which I had proposed to make it would have resulted disastrously to our arms. . . . If I had attacked the enemy in the position which he then occupied, he having the advantage of position and being on the defensive, his artillery in position and his infantry behind parapets and rifle pits, the very same reasons and causes which produced my success at Gettysburg would have operated in his favor there, and be likely to produce success on his part."

General George H. Gordon gives the following glimpse of Meade at this time:

"His headquarters [Meade's] on the 14th of July, 1863, were established on a by-road in a small piece of woods about opposite the center of the army. A few tent flies for his staff, a single wall tent for himself (the allowance of a regimental field officer), and a traveling wagon for the adjutant general's department made up the substance of headquarters' camp equipage and baggage. . . . My inquiry for General Meade was answered by pointing to a wall tent, within which, on a camp bed, the only article of furniture, sat a major general talking to a youthful-looking brigadier. I was received very politely, though with something of a precise abruptness. General Meade was a remarkably fine-looking man, with a bright, intelligent countenance, piercing eye, face indicating power, straight in figure but not stiff. His nose entitled him to a place in a gallery of military heroes. He was about six feet high."*

* A War Diary of Events in the Great Rebellion, p. 141.

Gordon also describes the Confederate defenses which he then examined:

"I found them to be about six miles in length, resting on the Potomac on the right, and following prominent ridges through corn and wheat fields, over lawns, through dooryards, into forests and thickets, wherever the situation invited, until they touched the Potomac on the left. Every road from Hagerstown to Williamsport was thus crossed by intrenchments and covered with artillery. Sometimes the defenses were of two or three lines, as a prominent stone wall or any inviting natural barrier offered shelter to the assailed or an impediment to the assailant. Behind these works a thick forest would have enabled the occupants to continue the fight if they had been driven from their works, while in front slashed timber offered a serious obstacle to approach. The works were very strong and the position happily chosen."*

In contrast to the physical discomfort, endured as a matter of course during the campaign by the army commander, was an incident that occurred along the march through Maryland. Riding along the road with his staff Meade came to an imposing country place and asked to whom it belonged. The owner, under her married name, proved to be a society belle with whom he had been upon friendly terms in her girlhood days, and at once he decided to call upon her. She gave him a cordial welcome, and insisted upon his staying to dinner and bringing with him as many of his staff officers as he chose. At the appointed hour these sunburned, mud-bespattered campaigners, who for many a day had known nothing of the luxuries of life, and who recently had had a fair share of its hardships, were ushered into the dining room with the ladies in dinner dress, to be waited upon by a retinue of servants in swallow-tail coats, and at the proper time to be served with iced champagne. Through the windows the apparently endless column of troops could be seen trudging by from a scene of battle and death to other hardly less bloody fields. A few nights before the guest of honor had sat upon an unsheltered rock at midnight while the furious tempest raged. The

* A War Diary of Events in the Great Rebellion, p. 143.

present was a brief respite coming midway between the two years of warfare behind and the two years of warfare ahead. The column of troops was still marching by when the dinner came to an end. The adieus were said, and the army commander, mounting his horse, rode rapidly on.

On the 4th of July the Secretary of War, Mr. Stanton, telegraphed to Meade: "This department will rejoice to manifest honor and gratitude to you." On the 7th Halleck telegraphed: "It gives me great pleasure to inform you that you have been appointed a brigadier general in the regular army, to rank from July 3d, the date of your brilliant victory at Gettysburg." But on the 14th Halleck said: "I need hardly say to you that the escape of Lee's army without another battle has created great dissatisfaction in the mind of the President, and it will require an active and energetic pursuit on your part to remove the impression that it has not been sufficiently active before." To this, in view of all the circumstances, utterly uncalled-for and wholly extraordinary message of censure sent from Washington at one o'clock, the high-spirited Meade at half past two replied:

"Having performed my duty conscientiously and to the best of my ability, the censure of the President (conveyed in your dispatch of 1 P. M. this day) is, in my judgment, so undeserved that I feel compelled most respectfully to ask to be immediately relieved from the command of this army."

Halleck replied that his dispatch had not been intended as a censure, but as a stimulus to an active pursuit, and was not deemed a sufficient cause for the application to be relieved.

In the Hay and Nicolay Life of Lincoln undue importance is given to the draft of a letter from Lincoln to Meade, the authors of the biography attributing to the letter all the weight that it would have possessed had it actually been sent. But Mr. Lincoln's failure to forward the letter to Meade is convincing that he had doubts of the justness of his first impulse. In the opinion expressed in the draft, he erred because, as we know now, he was not in possession of all the facts. Difficult as it may be to be logical on paper, it is immeasurably easier than to accomplish material impossibilities and to remove insurmountable obstacles that stand between us and the fulfillment of our hopes.

That Mr. Lincoln changed his mind is shown by his remark to Simon Cameron in regard to Meade, "Why should we censure a man who has done so much for his country because he did not do a little more?"* The truth seems to be that Mr. Lincoln's temporary disappointment over the impossibility of destroying Lee's army was much like Thaddeus Stevens's disappointment over the apparent slowness at times of the political movements of Mr. Lincoln. Stevens, in his impatience, gave free utterance to unwarranted criticism of the administration; but Mr. Lincoln with more justice sought to withdraw, in the later message of Halleck to Meade, in his determination not to forward the letter which he himself had written, and in his remark to Cameron, his first expressions of disappointment, which he must have soon seen were not sustained by the military situation. Alluding indirectly to the unsuccessful assaults upon earthworks made the next year, Humphreys says the criticism of Meade for not attacking at Hagerstown was materially modified before the war closed.†

On the 15th Lee camped his army along the stream at Bunker Hill, Va. On the 17th and 18th Meade crossed the Potomac at Harper's Ferry and Berlin, and moved southward along the Blue Ridge in the Loudoun Valley, his movements being more rapid than Lee's. Meade's cavalry occupied Snicker's, Ashby's, and Manassas Gaps, but were driven back from Chester Gap. To avoid the danger of passing Lee and thus exposing his own communications, Meade halted during the 21st, but on the morning of the 23d, learning that Lee was in full movement toward Culpeper or Orange Court House by way of Chester Gap, Meade ordered two corps to cover his depots at Warrenton and White Plains and threw forward the rest of his army to Manassas Gap. He knew that he was ahead of Lee, and was fully alive to the advantageous opportunity offered to attack Lee's line as his army was stretched out upon its march. Gordon's division of fresh troops, which joined the army on the day after Lee crossed the Potomac, had

* Speech of Cameron before the Society of the Army of the Potomac, 1874.

† Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 8.

been added to the Third Corps of the Army of the Potomac, which corps was also provided with a new commander, as we have seen, in the person of General French.

In the important movement now to be undertaken, in which all the plans were made by Meade for an attack in force upon a part of Lee's army, French was given the advance. He was ordered to leave his trains behind at Piedmont, to move through Manassas Gap at 4 A. M. of the 23d, and to attack the column of the enemy then moving through Front Royal and Chester Gap. The Fifth Corps was ordered to support the Third. The Second Corps, leaving a brigade at Ashby's Gap, was ordered to move at 4 A. M. to Markham at the foot of Manassas Gap, and, keeping off the Manassas Gap road, hold itself in readiness to support the Third and Fifth Corps. The Sixth Corps, at Rectortown, was ordered to be prepared to move to Manassas Gap at a moment's notice, and the Twelfth Corps was to move to Paris.

While Meade was building his bridges over the Potomac and the Shenandoah with celerity, marching south up the Loudoun Valley and occupying the upper passes of the Blue Ridge, Lee was waiting at Bunker Hill in the Shenandoah Valley for the flood in the Shenandoah River to subside. On the 19th Longstreet was ordered to occupy Ashby's Gap. Marching early the next day, his advance reached Millwood on the west side of the Shenandoah that night, where Longstreet discovered that Meade's cavalry had driven Lee's cavalry from Ashby's Gap. On the 21st, therefore, he marched to Front Royal, where he was delayed by the fact that the bridges were not completed. However, Corse's brigade succeeded in crossing the stream, and Corse sent a regiment to Manassas Gap and reached Chester Gap a few minutes before Meade's troops appeared at that point. Longstreet continued the passage of the mountain ridge, and arrived at Culpeper at noon of the 24th. He was followed by Hill's corps, of which Wright's brigade, under Colonel Walker, was left behind on the 23d, to guard Manassas Gap until relieved by Ewell, who was still in the valley. In Wright's brigade were three regiments and a battalion.

As a corps commander French was untried, but he had moved promptly in Maryland, and in his corps were Gor-

don's fresh troops. His leading division (Ward's) left Up-
perville at 2 P. M. of the 22d, and before midnight was
within a mile and a half of Merritt's cavalry, then holding
Manassas Gap, and on the morning of the 23d joined the
cavalry between four and five o'clock. The Second and
Third Divisions marched from the bivouac at Piedmont
early on the morning of the 23d, and at about 9 A. M. over-
took the First Division at Linden. French was on the spot in
ample time to have pressed the attack, which Meade ardently
desired to make, but he wasted the whole day in feeble
movements, his Third Division not being ordered into line
of battle until five in the afternoon. Meade himself from
Linden took every precaution to support French's attack.
The Fifth Corps was in French's rear; the Second Corps
was moved to the road from Linden to Chester Gap, and the
Sixth Corps was moved from Rectortown to Barbee's Cross
Roads to watch Chester Gap; Merritt's cavalry was ordered
to move up to French from Markham's Station, and with
the dispositions of the rest of the cavalry French's flank
and rear were made secure, and French was told to push
the enemy with more rapidity.

Captain Andrews, who succeeded Walker in command
of Wright's brigade, says the Federals appeared in his front
with infantry, cavalry, and artillery about 11 A. M., and
about two o'clock formed for an advance.* He was thus
given abundant time to send word back to Ewell. Ewell and
Rodes both arrived upon the scene, and Ewell says that on
his arrival he found Wright's brigade deployed to repel a
large body of the enemy who were advancing upon it
through the gap, that the insignia of two corps could be
seen and a third was marching up. Ewell had only two
divisions within reach, Early being fifteen miles away, near
Winchester. With this small force Ewell detained French,
drew back his divisions in safety, and sought the passes far-
ther up the valley.

At a quarter to six Warren sent this dispatch from the
mountain signal station:

"General French's skirmishers only have been engaged.
The enemy shows about five thousand men and eight guns

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part ii, p. 626.

in line about a mile in front of General French's main body. Their position is a poor one in an open field. . . . General French's troops are not advancing."

Before the Congressional Committee Warren said:

"We then moved as rapidly as we could, and got into Manassas Gap on the 23d of July. General Meade then intended to attack General Lee's army, the whole of it or any part of it, for he knew he had got there before Lee had. General French then had the advance, and our troops were first-rate in hand, but General French made a very feeble attack with one brigade only and wasted a whole day, and the enemy got off again that night. . . . I am sure General Meade was more disappointed in that result than in anything else that had happened." *

That night Meade's headquarters were at Markham, five miles toward the gap from Piedmont. Leaving Humphreys, his chief of staff, and Williams at Linden, five miles still nearer the gap, Meade went out to the front to look at the situation for himself. In the evening he had ordered Sedgwick to bring up his corps, with ammunition and ambulances, in the hope that something might yet be done. At some time between night and the early morning, Meade, leaving the bulk of his army behind on the east side of the mountains, crossed to the west side upon his personal exploration, and at a quarter to seven in the morning, from near Front Royal, sent back information to Sedgwick that the enemy was withdrawing, and orders to halt his corps wherever he might be. French's inaction was to the army a misfortune that Meade found to be irretrievable. In the night the Confederate troops disappeared. On the 24th Meade issued orders that would carry his army to Warrenton. The brief and brilliant campaign, which, in the words of Halleck, had proved his superior generalship, was over. The aggregate losses to the Army of the Potomac from June 3d to August 1st were thirty-two thousand and forty-three.

On July 14th, the day Lee crossed the Potomac, draft riots broke out in New York city, and Meade was called upon to send troops to that place. On the 30th his army

* Warren's testimony before Committee on Conduct of War.

was required to furnish four additional regiments to go to New York, and Halleck on the previous day telegraphed Meade, who was preparing to cross the unfordable Rappahannock, that in view of the necessity of reducing his army caused by the draft riots in New York, it would be best to hold for the present the upper line of the Rappahannock without further pursuit of Lee.

On the 30th Meade telegraphed to Halleck that his army was of about the same strength that it was at Hagerstown, Gordon's re-enforcements being a set-off to the loss of the nine months' men. He continued as follows:

"So far as the question is a military one, dependent on the relative condition of the two armies, I am of opinion that, even if Lee has been re-enforced by ten thousand men, owing to the losses sustained by him in the campaign, I ought still to be able to cope with him, provided he is not found in a very strong position, where the natural and artificial obstacles to be overcome are such that with inferior or equal numbers on his part the advantages referred to in reality make him my superior. The information as to the enemy's position and movements, as previously reported, is very meager and unsatisfactory. I have still to rely on my own judgment and reasoning, which is, as before stated, that he will be found prepared to dispute the passage of the Rapidan, represented to be a very strong line for defense. With my pontoon bridges, the probabilities are that, avoiding the fords, where of course he will be prepared to receive me, I shall be able to find some point where, the commanding heights being on my side, with my artillery in position, I can force a passage; and the river once passed, his line becomes untenable. To do this, however, will require the whole force I possess. . . . To conclude, therefore, in my judgment, if there were no other considerations than the relative strength and position of the two armies, I should favor an advance. Of course you and the President will be governed by such other considerations as may exist, and your decision, when communicated, will be promptly and strictly complied with."

After pointing out that the line of the upper Rappahannock possessed no particular advantage as a defensive position for himself, since Lee's army could ford or cross it by

pontoons and turn Meade's flanks, Meade pertinently suggested that if he delayed to advance, Lee would be likely to gain in strength as rapidly as himself.

The campaign closed with the following correspondence between Halleck and Meade:

(Unofficial.)

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, WASHINGTON, *July 28, 1863.*

Major-General MEADE, Army of the Potomac, Warrenton, Va.:

GENERAL: I take this method of writing you a few words which I could not well communicate in any other way. Your fight at Gettysburg met with the universal approbation of all military men here. You handled your troops in that battle as well as, if not better than, any general has handled his army during the war. You brought all your forces into action at the right time and place, which no commander of the Army of the Potomac has done before. You may well be proud of that battle. The President's order, or proclamation, of July 4th showed how much he appreciated your success.

And now a few words in regard to subsequent events. You should not have been surprised or vexed at the President's disappointment at the escape of Lee's army. He had examined into all the details of sending you re-enforcements, to satisfy himself that every man who could possibly be spared from other places had been sent to your army.* He thought that Lee's defeat was so certain that he felt no little impatience at his unexpected escape. I have no doubt, general, that you felt the disappointment as keenly as any one else. Such things sometimes occur to us without any fault of our own. Take it altogether, your short campaign has proved your superior generalship, and you merit, as you will receive, the confidence of the Government and the gratitude of the country.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. W. HALLECK.

To this letter General Meade replied as follows:

(Unofficial.)

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, *July 31, 1863.*

Major-General HALLECK, General in Chief:

MY DEAR GENERAL: . . . The expression you have been pleased to use in your letter—to wit, "a feeling of disappoint-

* A few troops whose terms of enlistment had expired, Smith's unmanageable militia, and Gordon's division which arrived the day after Lee crossed the Potomac.

ment"—is one that I cheerfully accept, and readily admit was as keenly felt by myself as any one. But permit me, dear general, to call your attention to the distinction between disappointment and dissatisfaction. The one was a natural feeling, in view of the momentous consequences that would have resulted from a successful attack, but does not necessarily convey with it any censure. I could not view the use of the latter expression in any other light than as intending to convey an expression of opinion on the part of the President that I had failed to do what I might and should have done. . . . It was, I assure you, with such feelings that I applied to be relieved. It was not from any personal considerations, for I have tried in this whole war to forget all personal considerations, and have always maintained they should not for an instant influence any one's actions.

Of course, you will understand that I do not agree that the President was right, and I feel sure, when the true state of the case comes to be known, that however natural and great may be the feeling of disappointment, no blame will attach to any one.

Had I attacked Lee the day I proposed to do so, and in the ignorance that then existed of his position, I have every reason to believe the attack would have been unsuccessful, and would have resulted disastrously. This opinion is founded on the judgment of numerous distinguished officers after inspecting Lee's vacated works and position. Among these officers I could name Generals Sedgwick, Wright, Slocum, Hays, Sykes, and others.

The idea that Lee abandoned his lines early in the day that he withdrew I have positive intelligence is not correct, and that not a man was withdrawn till after dark. I mention these facts to remove the impression which newspaper correspondents have given to the public, that it was only necessary to advance to secure an easy victory. I had great responsibility thrown on me. On one side were the known and important fruits of victory, and on the other the equally important and terrible consequences of a defeat. I considered my position at Williamsport very different from that at Gettysburg. When I left Frederick it was with the firm determination to attack and fight Lee, without regard to time or place, as soon as I could come in contact with him; but after defeating him, and requiring him to abandon his schemes of invasion, I did not think myself justified in making a blind attack simply to prevent his escape, and running all the risks attending such a venture. Now, as I said before this, perhaps I erred in judgment, for I take this occasion to say to you, and through you to the President, that I have no pretensions to any superior capacity for the post he has assigned me

to; that all I can do is to exert my utmost efforts and do the best I can; but that the moment those who have a right to judge my actions think, or feel satisfied, either that I am wanting or that another would do better, that moment I earnestly desire to be relieved, not on my own account, but on account of the country and the cause." *

It is a curious fact that Lee reached similar conclusions in regard to himself, and on August 8th proposed to President Davis to be relieved. Says General Fitzhugh Lee: "The commanding generals of both armies, upright in character and scrupulous in the performance of their respective duties, were naturally sensitive to criticism, and the curious spectacle was presented that, after a gigantic and fierce contest against each other, both should ask to be relieved from their commands," † and he adds that the removal of Meade would have been an act of kindness to the Confederates.

The price of gold, which on the last day of the battle of Gettysburg was one hundred and forty-four and a half, in the following week fell to one hundred and thirty-one and a half. Of the five hundred million dollar issue of fifty-two bonds authorized February 25, 1862, but sixty-four million dollars worth had been sold up to May 1, 1863; during the next nine months the loan was subscribed for at the rate of nearly forty-nine million dollars a month.

On August 1st Buford's division of cavalry made a reconnoissance before which the enemy's cavalry retired to the vicinity of Culpeper Court House, and subsequently Lee withdrew his infantry to the south side of the Rapidan, because he said Meade's movements made it difficult for him to ascertain whether Meade intended to advance through Culpeper or fall down the Rappahannock to Fredericksburg. ‡

On August 5th Gordon's division was withdrawn from Meade's army by Halleck's orders and sent to the coast. On the 13th Meade was called to Washington for a consultation with the Secretary of War, and from Washington he ordered the division of regular troops of the Fifth Corps

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, pp. 104 and 108.

† General Lee, by Fitzhugh Lee, p. 311.

‡ Official War Records, vol. xxix, part ii, p. 624.

and the Vermont brigade of the Sixth Corps to proceed at once to Alexandria, whence they would go by boat to New York city, their presence at that place being necessary to quell the disturbances growing out of the resistance to the draft. Between the 14th and 16th a number of Meade's best regiments and best officers, numbering ninety-six hundred men, were sent to New York. Of this serious weakening of Meade's army Lee obtained early intelligence. At the end of the month he went to Richmond, and the movement of Longstreet's corps to the west, the purpose being to destroy the army of Rosecrans, was decided upon. By the end of the first week in September Longstreet's corps had taken up its march.

Learning of a movement by Longstreet in Lee's rear, on the 13th, Meade set about ascertaining its import by sending his cavalry corps and the Second Corps of infantry, to the command of which latter corps Warren succeeded on August 16th, across the Rappahannock. Pleasonton encountered Lee's cavalry and drove it across the Rapidan, capturing three guns and one hundred and twenty prisoners. There Hill and Ewell were found in position, holding the crossings of the Rapidan with artillery, and it was definitely learned that Longstreet's corps had gone south. Meade's orders from Halleck were to stand still, and he now found himself in the position which Reynolds no doubt anticipated when in the spring that general declined the command of the army—at the entrance of a governmental *cul-de-sac*. On July 29th Mr. Lincoln wrote to Halleck of his unwillingness for Meade to bring on a general engagement under the impression that he was being urged from Washington to do so, and saying that the President's judgment was against it.* But when Meade, holding Pleasonton at the fords of the Rapidan, Warren at Culpeper, between the Rappahannock and the Rapidan, and his other corps along the Rappahannock ready to advance, pointed out that with his present number of troops nothing substantial could be gained by forcing Lee back into the intrenchments of Richmond, Halleck submitted the problem to the President. In Mr. Lincoln's letter of September 19th he said: "To

* Official War Records, vol. xxvii, part i, p. 105.

avoid misunderstanding, let me say that to attempt to fight the enemy slowly back into his intrenchments at Richmond, and then to capture him, is an idea I have been trying to repudiate for quite a year. My judgment is so clear against it that I would scarcely allow the attempt to be made, if the general in command should desire to make it" *—a declaration which reads strangely enough in view of what was done in 1864-'65. The situation in which those who held the authority declined to exercise it, but told the subordinate that he must decide for himself whether he should do that which they did not desire, but which alone was possible to be done, was cut short by the victory of Bragg over Rosecrans on September 20th; and on the 24th, while a movement by the right flank to cross the Rapidan was under way, the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps were detached from the Army of the Potomac and sent to the west. The Washington authorities were contemplating the taking of still another corps away from Meade when Lee, who had promptly learned of the withdrawal of the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps, interrupted these fatuous plans.

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, part ii, p. 207.

CHAPTER XV.

" A CAMPAIGN OF MANEUVERS."

ON the 9th of October, says General Humphreys,* "General Meade and myself rode to Cedar Mountain to have a better look at the country in the direction of a certain pass through Southwest Mountain, having in view the movement by the right flank. Soon after we reached the mountain information was received from the Sixth Corps pickets that there was infantry among the troops moving on our right, and before we left the mountain, columns of infantry as well as cavalry were seen by us across the Upper Rapidan, moving in the direction of Madison Court House."

"Meade's position on the ridge north of Culpeper Court House," wrote Lee on September 30th, "answers as well for defense as attack."

On the 7th, dispatches from Stuart, indicating some movement had been intercepted, and Meade directed French to send a division to James City, seven miles southwest of Culpeper, at four o'clock on the morning of the 8th, to support Kilpatrick's cavalry. On the 9th Gregg was ordered to concentrate his cavalry division and march day and night to Culpeper. Kilpatrick was ordered to watch the roads on the right flank, and Buford to force a passage of the Rapidan at Germanna Ford, uncover Morton's Ford higher up the river, and communicate with Newton, who was directed to carry that ford, wait for Buford, and, supporting him, move up the river until the crossings in front of Sedgwick were uncovered, when the two infantry corps would support a movement by Buford toward Orange Court House. Sykes was also ordered to hold his corps on the

* Gettysburg to the Rapidan, by Andrew A. Humphreys, p. 12.

north bank of the river ready to support this movement on the south bank by way of either Morton's Ford or Raccoon Ford. Five days' rations were ordered to be carried in the knapsacks. Meade was now ready to pursue Lee if the latter were retreating, and to meet a flank movement if that proved to be Lee's intention.

At half past five on the afternoon of the 10th Meade informed Halleck that the enemy had forced back Kilpatrick's cavalry and the infantry support and seized Thoroughfare Mountain, thus covering his movement; that Hill and Ewell were turning his right flank, moving from Madison Court House to Sperryville, and that with so considerable a force of the enemy threatening his rear and communications it would be impossible for him to maintain his present position, and that he should that night withdraw to the north side of the Rappahannock.* Kilpatrick had posted a battalion at Criglersville, a hamlet on the Robinson River, and his line extended from the Sperryville pike on the right to Cedar Mountain on his left. Kilpatrick retired on the pike and the roads leading from Madison to Culpeper.

At this time Meade could not be certain whether Lee was advancing directly upon Culpeper, moving toward Warrenton, or marching for the Shenandoah Valley. He recalled his three infantry corps from the Rapidan to a position previously selected in front of Culpeper. In the afternoon the trains were ordered back beyond Rappahannock Station. During the day Davies's cavalry discovered that Lee was pressing northward toward Woodville, and Meade therefore decided to fall back toward Warrenton and attack Lee while the latter was crossing the Rappahannock at Waterloo and Sulphur Springs.

At three o'clock on the morning of the 11th Meade's army began the movement which would carry it across the Rappahannock to a line extending from Sulphur Springs Crossing, north of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, toward Kelly's Ford south of the railroad, the movement of the First, Second, and Sixth Corps being covered by the Fifth and Third in conjunction with the cavalry. Gregg's division of cavalry was sent to Sulphur Springs by the

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, part ii, pp. 278, 279.

Rixeyville road, and Kilpatrick's division followed the Fifth Corps along the line of the railroad.

The experience of the war, the failure of the direct assaults on the one side at Fredericksburg and on the other on the third day at Gettysburg, and the successes of the Confederate flank movements at Chancellorsville and on the first day at Gettysburg, had fully impressed both Meade and Lee, as well as the officers under them and the soldiers in the ranks, of the risks, immense losses, and futility of the former method of attack and of the great advantages of position. It had been fully proven to every competent soldier in both armies that direct attacks upon either army in a chosen position involved a reckless waste of life without the attainment of any object sufficient to justify such a waste; and it was not until the introduction of a new element in the army in the next year that these important truths through bloody object lessons had to be learned over again. At the present time Lee was not seeking to make a direct attack upon Meade at Culpeper, but was repeating the strategy that had proved so bewildering and disastrous to the Union forces in the Pope campaign by threatening Meade's rear and his communications.

On the morning of the 11th, Buford, on the south side of Morton's Ford, was overtaken by a belated order not to cross the Rapidan, which he had done long before. He therefore recrossed the river at that point to the north bank, and was attacked by Fitzhugh Lee, who with his cavalry and a detachment of infantry had been left south of the Rapidan. At Stevensburg Buford was again attacked, and was followed by the enemy to Brandy Station, where Buford joined Pleasonton in command of the cavalry rear guard of the army, and where the Confederates were held in check until night, when the Union cavalry followed the army.

Humphreys says that it was the presence of Walker's and Johnston's brigades of infantry with Fitzhugh Lee that gave rise to the unfortunate misapprehension on the part of Sykes and Pleasonton, commanding Meade's rear guard, that Lee had moved his army to Culpeper, whereas no part of Lee's infantry came nearer to that place than the roads leading to Warrenton from Madison Court House and

James City,* which roads are at the distances of ten and five miles from Culpeper.

Upon this same day, the 11th, Gregg's division of cavalry was in the vicinity of Sulphur Springs for the purpose of watching the course of Lee's movements, whether toward Warrenton or the mountains. At daylight of the 12th Gregg sent a regiment toward Little Washington and placed another at Jefferson. Ordinarily these provisions would have been ample to give Meade timely warning of the appearance of the head of Lee's column so far to the north; but though Gregg was engaged all the afternoon of the 12th in proffering a stout resistance to Lee's advance, and the moving columns of Lee's infantry were spread out in plain sight before him, not one of Gregg's messages conveying information of such vital importance reached Meade until after nine o'clock at night.

Hearing nothing from Gregg on the one hand, and therefore reasoning that the enemy was not moving toward his rear, and being told by the reports of his corps commanders with the rear guard that Lee was moving on Culpeper,† Meade decided at once to turn back to Brandy Station for the purpose of attacking the enemy. In the middle forenoon of the 12th he ordered Sedgwick, with his own corps (the Sixth), the Fifth Corps, and Buford's cavalry, to take a position on the heights at Brandy Station, and Warren was brought back to Rappahannock Station for the purpose of supporting the movement of Sedgwick, who was ordered to drive the enemy and hold the heights. "If," said Meade to Sedgwick, "upon the occupation of the heights, the enemy displays the intention of giving battle there, the major general commanding intends to throw forward rapidly the remainder of his army there and give battle."‡

Not a sound of the artillery firing in Gregg's combat along the Rixeyville road from the Hazel River through Jefferson back to the Rappahannock at Sulphur Springs reached the army headquarters. Not a word arrived to announce that Lee's army was pushing northward toward

* Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 17.

† Meade's Report, Official War Records, vol. xxix, part i, p. 10.

‡ Official War Records, vol. xxix, part ii, p. 296.

Warrenton in Meade's rear, until at a quarter past nine in the evening came the news—amazing, if we consider the previous absence of such reports on the one hand, and on the other the positive reports from corps commanders of Lee's presence at Culpeper—that Gregg had been driven away from Sulphur Springs, and that the enemy was crossing there in large force. With this startling information came instant appreciation of the need for rapid movements if Meade were to beat Lee in the race for possession of the railroad in Meade's rear, and prevent the inevitable consequences of the step that had been correct enough if the information on which it was based had been correct, but which, in view of the actual position of Lee as disclosed by Gregg's late-coming dispatch, was in the wrong direction.

Sedgwick, Sykes, and Buford were at once recalled. At eleven o'clock that night Warren received orders to march with the utmost promptitude to Fayetteville, at which place the Second Corps joined Gregg at one o'clock the next morning, after marching, without sleep, thirty-six miles since the morning of the 12th. Newton, at the same hour, was ordered to move the First Corps back to Warrenton Junction. The Third Corps, which was farther up the river, was ordered into position looking toward Sulphur Springs and Warrenton. Lee wrote the next day that his enemies were apprised of his movements and withdrew so rapidly that his own purpose could not be attained. Therefore he continued his movement "with the view of turning the right flank of Meade." Lee's movements, however, were slower than Meade's, and Hill and Ewell halted for the night of the 13th near Warrenton. Meade's orders for the 13th, dated 12.50 A. M., would carry the Third and Second Corps to the Warrenton Branch Railroad at a point three miles from Warrenton Junction, the Fifth and Sixth Corps to Warrenton Junction, and the First Corps about five miles beyond the Junction toward Bristoe Station. Meade was now aiming to reach the heights at Centreville before Lee, there being south of Broad Run, and between the Warrenton pike and Alexandria Railroad, no advantageous position for an army, while the Union disasters at Bull Run in 1861 and 1862, in Meade's opinion, made it undesirable for him to take up a position upon that field. At 1 P. M. of the

same day Meade issued additional orders which would cause the occupation of a line from Bristoe to Greenwich with the First and Third Corps; with the Second Corps at Auburn in rear of Greenwich; the Sixth Corps at Kettle Run in front of Auburn; the Fifth at Walnut Run; with Kilpatrick's division of cavalry on the left of the Third, and at Buckland Mills, occupying the Warrenton and Centreville road; Gregg's division between Warrenton and Auburn on Warren's left, and Buford's at Warrenton Junction on the right and rear. One brigade of cavalry was posted in advance from Bristoe to Manassas. A cordon of cavalry pickets was ordered around the army and the trains at Brentsville on the extreme right. Hearing from Gregg's cavalry that Lee was continuing his flank movement, Meade that night ordered the army to move next day to Centreville.* There Meade intended, with his trains in his rear toward Washington, to face Lee. Halleck thought Lee was heading toward the Shenandoah Valley upon another raid or invasion, and began to call southward troops from New York city.†

Neither army commander was informed of the exact location of his opponent. Lee, on the morning of October 14th, moved upon Bristoe Station from the vicinity of Warrenton, Hill's corps moving by way of the Warrenton and Alexandria turnpike to Broad Run Church and thence by the Greenwich road, while Ewell's corps and most of the cavalry moved by way of Auburn Mills and Greenwich.

At two o'clock on the morning of the 14th Captain Bingham, of Warren's staff, brought Warren orders from Meade to march from Auburn to Catlett's Station on the railroad and thence along the south side of the railroad toward Centreville. Warren would have to cross Cedar Run and turn sharp to the right down Cedar Run Valley, his line of march making a dangerous angle toward Warrenton. At this point, therefore, Warren placed Caldwell's division facing Warrenton and the batteries of Ricketts, Arnold, and Ames. In the early autumn morning the men of Caldwell's division lighted up the hill top, which they

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, pp. 304, 305.

† Ibid., p. 311.

occupied, with camp fires. It was not yet dawn, and heavy mists hung over the valleys. Hays's division of Warren's corps was just about following Caldwell's division across Cedar Run when a battery opened upon Caldwell's illuminated camp from the rear, one shell killing seven men. Caldwell promptly moved his division around the hill under cover, and Ricketts's battery even more promptly changed front and fired upon the enemy's guns. The fire upon Caldwell came from Stuart's cavalry. On the morning of the previous day Stuart, holding the roads from the east of Warrenton toward Meade's position, was ordered to make a reconnoissance toward Catlett's Station. Leaving one brigade at Auburn, Stuart, with two other brigades, continued his march toward Catlett's until he was within plain view of Meade's troops at that place and witnessed their movement up the railroad. By the movements of Warren's corps on that day to Auburn, Stuart found himself inclosed in a measure by Warren's troops and Gregg's cavalry of Meade's army, and decided to conceal the small command with him in a dense thicket and wait for morning. "The enemy," he says, "were only a short distance from us and we heard every word spoken. An army corps [Caldwell's division] halted on a hill just opposite to us, stacked arms, and went to making coffee. . . . A sharp volley of musketry was heard on the Warrenton road. . . . Believing that it was our attack in earnest, I opened seven guns upon the enemy and rained a storm of canister and shell upon the masses of men, muskets, and coffee pots." During the night Stuart sent half a dozen messengers to Lee notifying him of the position and movements of Meade's army. By bridging a mill-race Stuart escaped from his strange position, and pursued a more southerly route back to Ewell's infantry, which he found in front of Auburn, that place by this time having been abandoned by the Union troops.* While in the early morning Stuart was shelling Caldwell's division from the rear, Gregg, who at Auburn was picketing the road toward Warrenton with an entire regiment, was attacked west of this road; but forming his whole division he held his position until Warren could pass the troops

* Stuart's Report, Official War Records, vol. xxix, part i, p. 448.

still on the west side of Cedar Run over the crossing, while Caldwell's infantry held back that part of the advance of Ewell coming down on the east side of the run. Apparently encircled by the enemy in the darkness, with his corps in line of march and divided by a stream, Warren, by his excellent dispositions, showed how fully he merited the estimate Meade had formed of his ability and the confidence Meade had reposed in him by promoting him from a staff position to the command of a corps. The retirement of the corps and cavalry to Catlett's was resumed in safety, and the march to Bristoe continued, with Webb's division in the advance above the railroad, Hays's division following south of the railroad, Caldwell's division in the rear, and Gregg's cavalry covering the rear. To Warren, thus bringing up the rear guard of the army, Meade sent back a message saying it would be well to select points in advance of the head of the column upon which to form if followed by the enemy. Previous to the receipt of this order Warren had sent forward orders to his two leading divisions (Webb's and Hays's) to halt at Catlett's Station until Caldwell in the rear should come up, but before Warren's message reached the head of his corps both divisions had been halted and were waiting as the corps and army commander desired.

At Catlett's Warren received a message from Meade at Bristoe telling him the road was clear beyond that point; that Kilpatrick, at Buckland Mills on the pike, reported the enemy's infantry on that road; that Kilpatrick would leave that place at noon, and ordering Warren to move as rapidly as possible, as the enemy might send a column to Bristoe,* which was precisely what the enemy was engaged in doing. Warren was also told that Sykes had been directed to keep within supporting distance of him, and French with the Third Corps within supporting distance of Sykes, and that Sykes would remain at Bristoe until Warren came up. Sykes and French, however, moved off their corps as soon as the head of Warren's column appeared.

Debouching from the woods west of Broad Run about two o'clock, Webb, in command of Warren's leading divi-

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, part i, p. 241.

sion, found that the enemy had placed a battery north of the railroad on Webb's left and front, and that the Confederates, in two columns, were coming directly toward the railroad on his left flank. The head of Hill's column of Confederate troops, composed of Heth's, Anderson's, and Wilcox's divisions, marching in the order named from Greenwich, reached the hills near Bristoe just as the rear of Sykes's corps was moving off. Hill formed a line of battle, and was preparing to pursue Sykes on the north side of Broad Run, when he was informed of Warren's approach.

Warren fortunately knew the ground thoroughly. He halted Webb's division as it was crossing Broad Run, faced both Webb's and Hays's troops to the left, and as Heth's troops advanced southeastwardly in line of battle toward the railroad, Warren started Hays's division on the double-quick toward the cut. This advantageous position was firmly held by Warren's troops, and from it Warren beat back Heth's advance, capturing four hundred and fifty prisoners, two stands of colors, and five field pieces.

During the afternoon the corps of both Hill and Ewell were in Warren's front; but after Heth's repulse only feeble demonstrations were made against Warren, who had present three thousand infantry, three batteries of artillery, and Gregg's cavalry, while in the corps of Hill and Ewell were over thirty thousand men. Says Warren:

"The position I held was a good one, except on my left, and such that the enemy could only ascertain my force by a heavy attack. Relying upon the effect of the first repulse, I deemed that he would not do this till all his army arrived, and this would take the remainder of the day." Major Ludlow, of Meade's staff, who was with Warren during the day, left after the opening engagement to report to Meade, passing Sykes on the way. At 5 P. M., Sykes, who at first proposed to remain where he was and wait for Warren, started back in response to a call from Warren for aid, and reached Bristoe about dark. At half past seven Meade ordered Warren to withdraw to Centreville. The march began about 9 P. M., and was continued until four o'clock the next morning, when Warren bivouacked north of Blackburn's Ford on Bull Run.

At Auburn and Bristoe Warren's total losses were five hundred and forty-six, and the Confederate loss seven hundred and eighty-two. Between the Rapidan and Centreville the losses in the cavalry divisions of Buford and Gregg were eight hundred and thirteen. Says Humphreys:

"In the operations following midday of the 10th, most of the troops were marching during the night of the 10th and during the 11th until night, twenty-eight hours; they were marching during the afternoon and all the night of the 12th, and continuously on the 13th, until nine or ten o'clock at night—that is, thirty hours. These day and night marches averaged at least thirty miles for each corps. The Third, Fifth, and Second Corps, beginning their marches about daylight of the 14th, did not complete them until the morning of the 15th." *

In his reports and dispatches Lee repeatedly attributes the failure of his plan to the rapidity of Meade's movements.†

Meade in General Orders congratulated Warren upon his skill and promptitude, and the troops of the Second Corps upon their gallantry in repulsing the enemy. The Centreville position behind Bull Run was held during the 15th. Lee's series of flanking movements similar to those that proved so bewildering to Pope in 1862, had failed to attain their end owing to the way in which Meade had met them. Lee could not remain where he was because the country was destitute of supplies. He had no desire to attack Meade in the Centreville position, and he could accomplish little by further flanking movements. He therefore retired to the Rappahannock, destroying the railroad from Bristoe to the river, a distance of twenty miles.

On the 17th there were still six feet of water at the fords of Bull Run, owing to the heavy storm of the previous day, and the pontoons were back at Fairfax Station, a delay being thus caused in Meade's advance which gave Lee opportunity to destroy the railroad. Late that night Sedgwick, on the right, repeated his report of the presence of the enemy's infantry near Chantilly, a report which seemed

* Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 31.

† Lee to Davis, Official War Records, vol. xxix, part i, p. 408.

to indicate that Lee was continuing his flank movement. Meade thought that the force of the enemy near Sedgwick was small, and suggested to that officer that he push the enemy in the morning and compel him to show his hand, and at the same time he made dispositions to meet any movement of Lee toward Fairfax. On the 18th Halleck sent a report to Meade that the enemy had appeared near Harper's Ferry. Lee actually contemplated a movement toward the Potomac, but was deterred by the thought of the hardships which his army would have to endure in a rough country in cold weather. To Mr. Lincoln Meade said that it had been his intention to attack the enemy if he could be found on the field where the advantages would be equally divided between both armies, and that he had only delayed doing so because of the risk to his communications. In reply to the fretful dispatches of Halleck, who had learned nothing from Pope's campaign in the previous year, and whom Meade by his skillful movements had just saved from a repetition of the Washington panic of that year, Meade said on the 18th: "If he [Lee] is in the valley, any movement in the direction of the Rappahannock would be lost time. So also would any movement be toward Harper's Ferry if he is retiring to the Rappahannock, which, as far as I can judge, is his direction." *

On the night of the 18th, justifiably exasperated by Halleck's hectoring, Meade telegraphed to his superior in rank, but inferior in experience and in ability: "If you have any orders to give me I am prepared to receive and obey them, but I must insist on being spared the infliction of such truisms in the guise of opinions as you have recently honored me with, particularly as they were not asked for." †

In the apology which Halleck sent to Meade the nervousness of the persons composing the Government and their desire that Meade should allay their anxiety were advanced as the causes of his previous objectionable dispatches. ‡ The degree of mental and nervous breakdown at Washington under excitement at this time is indicated

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, part ii, p. 345.

† Ibid., p. 346.

‡ Ibid., p. 354.

by Halleck's dispatch to Kelly, saying that if the whole of Lee's army attacked Maryland Heights the place must be held until Meade's army came to the rescue, and that if the officers failed to do so they should be hanged.*

Before noon of the 18th Sedgwick reported that the enemy's infantry in his front, which, as Meade had thought, was not a strong force, had moved off; and at 5 p. m., the pontoon bridge being completed by that time at Blackburn's Ford, Warren threw across Bull Run two regiments of skirmishers. On that night Meade prepared orders which on the morning of the 19th would carry the army across Bull Run to a line from Haymarket, crossing the Warrenton pike through Gainesville to Bristoe, Kilpatrick's cavalry in the advance on the pike, and the divisions of Buford and Gregg covering the flanks of the trains to be brought up to Bull Run from Fairfax. Moving on the Warrenton and New Market roads, Kilpatrick engaged the enemy's cavalry from Groveton toward Gainesville. Information from Kilpatrick led Meade to expect that he would encounter Lee's army in front of Gainesville, the corps of both Hill and Ewell being reported at Warrenton. Expecting a battle, Meade concentrated his army at Gainesville by daylight of the 20th, Sykes and French being ordered to move at three and Warren at four o'clock. On that morning Kilpatrick was sent as far as possible toward Warrenton, throwing out a regiment toward Haymarket and one toward Greenwich. Learning that the enemy had retired toward Buckland Mills, on the pike, Kilpatrick followed until he came to Broad Run, on the south side of which Stuart determined to make a stand until Fitzhugh Lee should arrive from Auburn. Lee suggested that Stuart fall back toward Warrenton, drawing Kilpatrick after him and thus giving to Lee, following the road from Auburn, a most favorable opportunity to strike Kilpatrick on the flank and rear. Stuart retired to within two and a half miles of Warrenton, when, hearing the sound of Lee's guns toward Buckland Mills, he turned upon Davies's brigade. Davies was pursued to Buckland at full speed, and even to the pickets of Newton's corps. Custer, who had forced the passage of

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, part ii, p. 352.

Broad Run, recrossed that stream, and trying to protect Davies, was also forced back to the infantry at Gainesville, closely pursued by Fitzhugh Lee. Stuart and Lee had nearly seven thousand men, while Kilpatrick's division numbered about thirty-five hundred. Kilpatrick lost twenty killed, sixty wounded, and one hundred missing; and Stuart ten killed and forty wounded.

Before starting from Centreville Meade had no expectation of overtaking Lee's army because of the enforced delay to which he himself had been subjected by the flood in Bull Run. He now sent Warren forward to find Lee, and on the 21st, having moved toward Warrenton and discovered that Lee had recrossed the Rappahannock, Meade took up a position covering the pike and the railroad, with the cavalry at the fords. Lee's movement had been productive of nothing beyond the destruction of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad and a fresh demonstration of the essential weakness of that line of communications, and of any advanced position upon it, which would always invite a turning movement by the enemy.

According to General Long, Lee's biographer, "all the advantages of the campaign had been gained by Meade, and General Lee's well-designed movement had been defeated by untoward circumstances and by the alertness of the enemy."

By a system of logic which in this case did not produce correct results, Mr. Lincoln became convinced that Ewell's corps of Lee's army had gone to Tennessee, and he therefore ordered Meade to prepare to attack Lee and to make at all hazards a cavalry raid on the railroad at Lynchburg.* However, Meade's information as to the whereabouts of Ewell was more exact.

By November 1st the railroad was repaired, and was in working order as far as Warrenton Junction. Meade, on the 2d, proposed a flank movement on Lee's right, throwing the whole army rapidly and secretly across the Rappahannock at Banks's Ford and Fredericksburg and occupying the heights beyond the town. Mr. Lincoln refused his consent to the movement, probably because it would be

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, part ii, p. 375.

a departure from the plan of keeping the Army of the Potomac directly between Lee and the city of Washington; and Meade was told that, while tactically he would be permitted the largest liberty, no change in the line of communications would be permitted,* and he was thus held rigidly to a line of operations within narrow limits, upon which line, with the existing strength of the Army of the Potomac, it was nearly impossible to accomplish any substantial results. So hampered, neither Napoleon nor Stonewall Jackson, nor any other strategist that ever lived, could have defeated a foe. Meade, however, undertook to accomplish all that was possible, which was, as stated by that faithful soldier, "by a tactical maneuver on the enemy's flank to bring his army into contact with Lee's without giving the latter all the advantage of defense and position."

When Lee returned to the Rappahannock he placed Ewell's corps on the right of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, and Hill's on the left with the cavalry on each flank. To maintain his communication with the north bank of the river and thus threaten any attempted flank movement by Meade, Lee selected a point just above the railroad bridge where the hills on both sides of the river would protect his pontoons and afford means of defense. A small earthwork, which had been constructed by the Union troops on the north side, was converted into a *tête-de-pont*, and a line of rifle trenches extended along the crest of the hill, on which this work stood, both on the right and left to the river bank. The works on the south side were remodeled, and sunken batteries for additional guns were constructed on an adjacent hill to the left; on both sides of the railroad on the lower bank of the river sunken batteries and rifle pits were arranged to command the railroad embankment, under cover of which Meade might be expected to advance. Four pieces of artillery were placed in the *tête-de-pont* and eight others in the opposite works. The defense of this position was intrusted to Ewell, the troops of Johnson's and Early's divisions guarding them alternately. Rodes's division was stationed at Kelly's Ford farther down the stream.†

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, part ii, p. 412.

† Lee's Report.

On the 7th of November Hays's brigade, commanded by Colonel Penn, of Early's division, was guarding the Confederate works on the north side of the Rappahannock.

At dawn of that day French, in command of the Third, Second, and First Corps of the Army of the Potomac, was ordered by Meade to march to Kelly's Ford, to cross the river, effect a lodgment on the heights, and then move toward Lee's rear and assist the right column under Sedgwick in dislodging the enemy near Rappahannock Station. Should this be accomplished, the two columns were to advance upon Brandy Station. If Sedgwick should be unsuccessful, his column would be withdrawn to Kelly's Ford and thrown across the river there to support French in the movement upon Brandy Station. Meade told French that Lee's main force was assembled between Brandy Station, Culpeper, and Stevensburg, and that Lee held Rappahannock Station and Kelly's Ford in force with infantry, and probably artillery, at Ellis Ford and Beverly Ford, and had thrown up defensive works at the crossings. French was warned that he would be opposed, and was ordered to attack vigorously and throw his whole force upon the enemy, drive him from the position, and secure the high ground.

Sedgwick was assigned to the command of his own and the Fifth Corps, and directed to drive the enemy from the north side of the river as soon as he should reach it, which, it was expected, would be at sunset of the 7th, and the operations against the position on the south bank were to begin at once. French and Sedgwick were to maintain constant communication and connection with one another. Sedgwick was informed of the nature of the defenses in his front. Kilpatrick's cavalry would co-operate on French's left and Buford's on Sedgwick's right.

At three o'clock in the afternoon Sedgwick's column, with the Sixth Corps, under Wright, above the railroad, and the Fifth below it, drove the enemy's skirmishers to their rifle pits. Three batteries of the Sixth Corps, two of the Fifth, and one of the Artillery Reserve maintained a vigorous fire upon the earthworks. At dusk the brigades of Upton and Ellmaker of Russell's division assaulted the strong Confederate position above the railroad and carried

the works, capturing sixteen hundred prisoners, including one brigade commander and one hundred and thirty commissioned officers, four pieces of artillery with caissons and ammunition, two thousand stands of arms, eight colors, and a pontoon bridge. In the Fifth Corps seven men were killed, forty-five wounded and five captured. The losses in the Sixth Corps were four hundred and nineteen. The Fifth Corps entered the works simultaneously with the Sixth, but the principal resistance made by the Confederates was to the advance of the latter corps above the railroad.

When Sedgwick appeared in force at the bridge Early threw Hoke's brigade across the stream to re-enforce Hays, the two brigades being sufficient to man the works, and together comprising a front as extended as that to which Sedgwick, owing to the nature of the ground, was limited. Both Lee and Early were at the bridge on the south side of the stream, and the reports of both are elaborate explanations of what was to them a disaster, especially mortifying since it had so largely resulted from the overconfidence of both that the advanced position was safe until morning. Early says that he concurred in the opinion of Lee that no serious attack would be made after dark.* The truth seems to be that the total absence of bombast in Meade, and his scientific distaste for mere military pyrotechnics, of which some of what were called the "dashing" soldiers on both sides were so fond, had in a measure concealed from Lee, as these characteristics had concealed from the civilian authorities at Washington, the full import of that celerity of movement in Meade which had surprised Lee, according to General Long, in the Gettysburg campaign and in the movements about Centreville and at Manassas Gap. While the subsequent surprises from the same source, to which Lee was to be shortly subjected, can not be accounted for on other grounds, they go far toward justifying the statement attributed to Lee to the effect that Meade's movements mystified him more than those of any other Union general.

French's column of three corps, starting from Licking

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, part i, p. 623.

Run at five o'clock in the morning, marched to Mount Holly Church, a distance of seventeen miles, by noon. At half past twelve his batteries opened upon the Confederate rifle pits on the south side of the river; by half past one the leading brigade (De Trobriand's) of the Third Corps was across the stream, capturing three hundred prisoners in the rifle pits and in Kellysville, and by half past three an entire division forded the stream waist deep.

Lee's plan of resistance at this point was not to oppose the crossing, where the ground on the north bank was higher than that on the south, but merely to delay the passage until a previously selected line in rear of the ford could be taken up, and the Union advance there contested.* Into this selected position Rodes promptly ordered his division upon the appearance of French's column, and Johnson's division was ordered to re-enforce Rodes, Lee's hope being that he could hold back Sedgwick and concentrate against French; but Sedgwick's success frustrated this hope, and Lee fell back that night toward Culpeper, sending his trains to the Rapidan during the day, and on the following night retired his army to the south side of the stream.

French buried forty Confederate dead. His own losses numbered seventy killed and wounded.

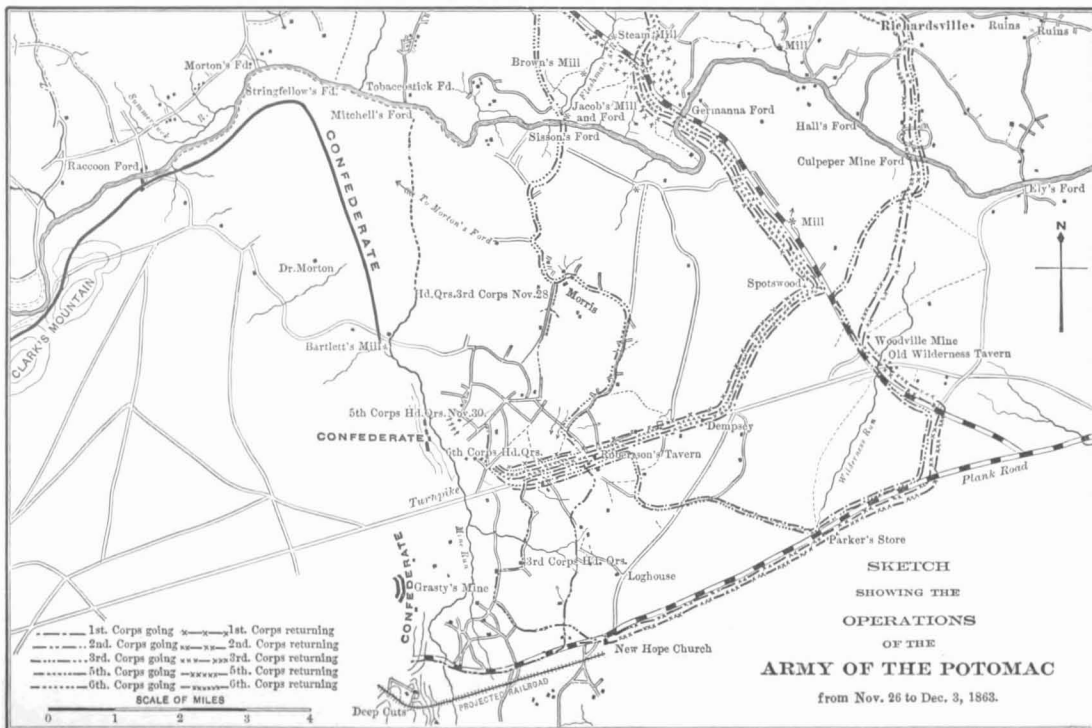
To the adjutant general of the army Meade sent, in charge of Brigadier-General Russell, the leader of the assault at the railroad crossing, seven battle flags and one staff. To Meade, Secretary Stanton sent a message of praise for the operations which "reflect such high credit upon the skill which planned and the bravery which successfully executed them." To Meade also, from President Lincoln, came the laconic message, "I wish to say, Well done." In General Orders Meade publicly recognized the services of Sedgwick and Russell, French and De Trobriand, and the officers and men of the Fifth, Sixth, and Third Corps.

The result of the movement shows that Meade had reasoned soundly when he expressed to Halleck his belief that he could by a swift movement transfer his army to the heights behind Fredericksburg before Lee would be aware

* Lee's Report, Official War Records, vol. xxix, part i, p. 612.

of it. The soldiers of Lee's army were building huts for winter use, huts of whose materials Meade's troops possessed themselves as they followed the Confederates to Brandy Station. Taken by surprise in his immediate front, Lee could have been much more readily surprised by Meade's proposed movement to the position at Fredericksburg, which Burnside and Hooker fought battles to attain, and in his failure to attain which Burnside was assured by the President that his endeavor was not without value.

In his second campaign against Lee, now brought to a close, a campaign throughout which the Union commander was anxious to fight a battle whenever he could do so upon an equal field that would not give to Lee all the advantages of position and the defense, although he was at the disadvantage, as compared with Lee, of being debarred by his Government from exercising any variety of strategical movement, and was rigidly held to one line of operations, his army at the same time being weakened to contribute to the success of Grant, then his only military rival in the North, Meade by his great tactical skill frustrated Lee's design, preserved his own communications, and threw his army in a strong position between his adversary and Washington, and when Lee in his retreat paused in fancied security behind the Rappahannock, with a boldness and celerity that are equally to be admired struck his adversary a telling blow and drove him mortified and discomfited back from the Rappahannock to the south side of the Rapidan.



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CHAPTER XVI.

ACROSS THE RAPIDAN.

MEADE had still another surprise in store for Lee before the winter set in. He knew that Lee's strong intrenchments on the Rapidan extended from the junction of the Rapidan and Rappahannock Rivers to Liberty Mills, west of Orange Court House. He also ascertained that Lee had abandoned the design of guarding the lower fords and was relying for the protection of his right flank upon an intrenched line, which left the Rapidan at a point between Raccoon Ford and Morton's Ford, and extended as far as Bartlett's Mill on Mine Run, at the crossing of the road from the Robertson Tavern to Raccoon Ford. He could learn of no works on the Orange and Fredericksburg turnpike or on the Plank road. Lee's army was widely scattered. Ewell's corps, temporarily commanded by Early, was distributed between Clark's Mountain and Mine Run, covering Mitchell's, Morton's, Raccoon, and Somerville Fords. Hill's corps extended as far to the west as Barnett's Ford. Stuart's cavalry protected the flanks.

The intelligence gathered by Meade preliminary to his proposed movement was accurate and complete. He learned that Lee at this time had in infantry less than forty thousand men; that there was no Confederate infantry below Mitchell's Ford, and that the Confederate right, running back to Mine Run, held a formidable position. The roads in Meade's front were examined and ascertained to be drying rapidly; where necessary, working parties were sent to repair them. The corps commanders were summoned to meet Meade on November 23d.

Meade's orders directed Warren, with the Second Corps, to move at daylight of the 26th to Germanna Ford, to force

the passage of the river, if necessary, and then to move by the Germanna Plank road and the Orange turnpike to Robertson's Tavern. French, with the Third Corps, was ordered to move at daylight, to cross the Rapidan at Jacobs's Mill, to move on the Jacobs's Ford and Robertson's Tavern road, and take position on the right of the Second Corps on the road from Raccoon Ford to Robertson's Tavern, covering the right from approach in the direction of Bartlett's Mill. Sykes, with the Fifth Corps, was directed to cross the Rapidan at Culpeper Ford, to proceed to Parker's store on the Orange Plank road, and, if practicable, to advance westwardly upon that road as far as the cross road from Robertson's Tavern. The Sixth Corps (Sedgwick) was directed to take position in rear of the Third Corps, and the First (Newton), followed by the Reserve artillery, in rear of the Fifth. French, Sykes, and Warren were each furnished with a detachment of cavalry and a bridge train. Gregg's cavalry would move on the left flank; Merritt would guard the trains at Richardsville, north of the river, and Custer the fords of the Rapidan. The trains, with the exception of one half of the infantry ammunition wagons, were left north of the river.

To the corps commanders full explanations of the project were given, and maps, with the routes of the different corps marked on them, were distributed, with verbal descriptions and explanations.* Humphreys says that the names and occupants of the few houses to be passed on the road and its branches were supplied to French, and he was cautioned to take the left-hand road at a certain Morris's, halfway to Robertson's Tavern, to which place this road led. It was expected that a part of the enemy would move from the river by the Raccoon Ford road, and, if encountered, might delay the concentration at the tavern. The right-hand road at Morris's led into the Raccoon Ford road two miles from Bartlett's Mill and three from Robertson's Tavern.

Swinton says Meade's plan of operations was "based upon a precise mathematical calculation of the elements of time and space, of the kind for which Napoleon was so

* Humphreys's Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 51.

famous, and depended absolutely for its success on a vigorous execution of all the foreordained movements in the foreordained time and way. Thus planning, Meade attempted the bold *coup d'essai* of cutting entirely loose from his base of supplies, and, providing his troops with ten days' rations, he left his trains on the north side of the river Rapidan, relying on the meditated success to open up new lines of communication." *

With his army on the turnpike and plank road, Meade would have two good broad highways upon which to move westward, and which would bring him to the south of Lee's strong fortifications along Mine Run.

French received Meade's order to march at twenty minutes past five in the morning of the 26th. Prince, in command of French's leading division, says he did not receive the order from French until half past six, and that the head of his column did not move until half past seven. In his report French says that Prince was habitually slow of movement, that he lost an hour in starting, and wasted time in preparing to cross the ford. From Prince's report it appears that the commander of the division leading the march of the Third Corps was uncertain in his knowledge of the road he was to take, both above and below the Rapidan River. The Third Corps, whose commanders seemed to transmit from one to another a capacity for blundering, had wasted the opportunity proffered at Manassas Gap on the march from Gettysburg and was two hours late in reaching the Rapidan, Meade being compelled to hold the other corps back until French came up. The corps of Sykes and Warren had reached the river before ten o'clock, and Meade himself, impatiently waiting for the arrival of French, was at the river bank by eleven o'clock. Sykes's entire corps was across the river by noon, and after being held back until three o'clock, Sykes was sent forward to the vicinity of the Wilderness Tavern, where he bivouacked; his march being made, in spite of the delay of three hours, with such success as to prove that if Meade's army corps had been commanded by the Hancocks and Reynolds lost at Gettysburg, his whole army would have been concentrated

* Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 391.

at Robertson's Tavern some time during the night of the 26th. Sedgwick, who had moved promptly at six o'clock, was brought to a halt at Brandy Station near his starting point, by the fact that French's corps, which should have been out of the way, occupied the road. Prince did not get across the river until four o'clock in the afternoon, and almost immediately upon resuming the march on the south bank he took the wrong road,* thus compelling a counter-march. The delays which had occurred made it impossible for the army to reach the point of concentration that night. The delay of an hour at the stream, caused by the error of the engineers in underestimating by one boat's length the necessary length of the pontoon bridges, would not have been fatal to the success of the first day's movement.

On the 25th Lee was informed of Meade's start by scouts, but Lee said there was nothing to indicate whether or not Meade would attempt to cross the Rapidan. On the night of the 26th, the night during which the bulk of Meade's army was held near the south shore of the Rapidan by French's delay, Lee withdrew his army from the Upper Rapidan. On the morning of the 26th, Early, commanding Ewell's corps on Lee's right, moved one brigade and part of another southward toward the turnpike; but Rodes, holding the center of Early's line along the Rapidan, did not begin the movement from Morton's Ford to the ridge between Mine Run and Walnut Branch until midnight, and it was not until two or three o'clock in the morning of the 27th that Hays, commanding Early's division, started upon his march to extend Rodes's line toward Verdierville. Hays reached the end of his designated march at the intersection of the road from Zoar Church to Verdierville with the turnpike at six o'clock in the morning, and an hour later was ordered to proceed eastward to Robertson's Tavern, toward which point, upon that morning, Early, by Lee's orders, moved his whole corps upon the supposition that Meade was marching toward Fredericksburg or Spottsylvania and that any troops appearing in Early's front would be merely a covering force for Meade's flank and rear.† This movement of

* Carr's Report, Official War Records, vol. xxix, part i, p. 777.

† Early's Report.

Early, which Lee subsequently directed him to continue toward Chancellorsville, of course carried his corps beyond the line of intrenchments behind Mine Run, and, but for French's delay, would have enabled Meade to defeat Lee's army in detail. Hill's corps, which was widely scattered, and part of which was as far to the west as Barnett's Ford, north of Orange Court House, did not march until the morning of the 27th, and the leading division (Heth's) did not reach Verdierville on the Plank road until 1 P. M. Had Meade's army been concentrated at Robertson's Tavern when Early's corps alone was approaching that place under the belief that Meade was marching toward Fredericksburg, Early would have been forced to withdraw in the face of an army, or Lee would have been compelled to support him, and either horn of the dilemma would have been for Meade a far more favorable opportunity for crushing Lee than he could have hoped for when he started across the Rapidan.

Johnson's division of Early's corps, which had originally held the right of Lee's line, but which became the Third Division from the right when Rodes and Hays extended Johnson's line toward the turnpike, moved toward Robertson's Tavern from the breastworks extending from Mountain Run to Walnut Run, the latter a tributary of Mine Run, by the road leading past Bartlett's Mill on Mine Run. The leading brigade of the division started from Morton's Ford at sunrise of the 27th. The last regiment of the Third Brigade, according to Lieutenant-Colonel Spengler, started from the breastworks at nine o'clock.* Stewart, bringing up Johnson's rear, says it was midday when, at a point between one and two miles beyond the crossing of Mine Run at Bartlett's Mill, the ambulances which preceded him, and which he was guarding, were fired upon by the enemy from the left. The explanation of this encounter with French's advance belongs to the narrative of the movement of Meade's army on the 27th.

Meade's orders for corps movements to begin at seven o'clock on the morning of the 27th were: Warren to Old Verdierville on the turnpike, and Sykes to New Verdierville on the Plank road. These corps were to form

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, part i, p. 854.

the advance of two parallel columns marching westward after the turn was made into the turnpike and Plank road. French, moving by the Robertson's Tavern road, was to close up on the Second Corps. Sedgwick was to follow French, and Newton was to follow Sykes. Sykes reached Parker's store on the Plank road at nine o'clock, and from there Gregg's cavalry preceded him toward Orange Court House. Gregg advanced westward to within a mile and a half of Mine Run, where he encountered Confederate cavalry, which he drove back about a mile upon a brigade of infantry of the leading division (Heth's) of Hill's corps. Gregg dismounted four regiments of Taylor's brigade and drove the Confederate infantry into the woods, capturing thirty-four prisoners of Hill's corps, Gregg himself losing nineteen killed and sixty-four wounded. Sykes's corps now arrived upon the scene. When Hays's division of Early's corps, with orders to gain position at Robertson's Tavern before the Union troops, after starting about seven o'clock upon his short march of six miles from Verdierville on the turnpike, to which place Hays had marched after midnight, came in sight of the tavern, he found the position already occupied by Warren with infantry and artillery.

Warren had saved much time by turning to the right from the Germanna Plank road about a mile south of Flat Run and following a byroad to the turnpike, and was marching rapidly in the direction of Old Verdierville, when his leading division encountered the advancing Confederates of Early's right division.

At seven o'clock in the morning French's leading division (Prince's) started from its bivouac, two miles south of the Rapidan, moved for a mile, and halted at the forks of the roads at Morris's, at which point a controversy arose between Prince and French as to which was the correct route. Prince thought he should turn to the left. French thought the right-hand road should be taken. Prince waited at the forks for two hours, by which time a reconnoitering party reported the left-hand road to be open. After further delay, French ordered Prince to take the right-hand road, which led directly into the road from Raccoon Ford to Robertson's Tavern, along which latter road Johnson's division of Early's corps was moving to that place. The con-

sequences of French's blunder were so far-reaching in their relations to Meade's immediate movement, to the war, and to Meade's personal fortunes, that the error, being irretrievable—like the error of the same corps commander at Manassas Gap, but unlike, in that respect, Sickles's false movement on the second day at Gettysburg—may be justly called the most momentous blunder made in the face of the enemy throughout the career of the Army of the Potomac.

Had French turned his corps promptly to the left at Morris's, as he was ordered to do, both his own corps, the Third, and the Sixth, which was following him, would have reached Robertson's Tavern as soon as Warren did, and the combined force of the three corps would have been more than double Early's corps moving upon that place, while Hill's corps, still some distance away, would have been held back by the corps of Sykes and Newton moving westward on the Plank road. Instead of turning to the left, French turned to the right, and thus encountered Johnson's division of Early's corps on its way to Robertson's Tavern over the Raccoon Ford road, and developed an unfortunate engagement, which held the Third Corps at that point during the day upon which Meade desired and had planned for, not a partial and useless encounter, but a swift concentration at the tavern. One can not but stand aghast at an error of such proportions committed by a corps commander not chosen by the army commander, but thrust upon him by an unmilitary system—a fatal error committed with the best intentions by one who afterward said that he loved General Meade and would have done anything in the world for him.

The weather had turned cold, but the cold did not prevent the sweat of mental torture from streaming down Meade's face as he impatiently waited at Robertson's Tavern for the arrival of the Third Corps, or to hear from its delinquent commander. "Where is French?" "What has become of French?" were the inquiries passed from one to another among high officers, who understood that everything was again waiting upon French and that French was blocking the Sixth Corps.

It was nearly noon when at last, by way of Germanna Ford, a dispatch, dated 9.20 A. M., was received at army

headquarters from French saying that his head of column was near the Plank road and waiting for General Warren *—a dispatch which shows that French was hopelessly confused. The bearer of the dispatch said that French was only three miles from Jacobs's Ford, and that the Sixth Corps, in French's rear, had not moved at all. In reply, French was told that no orders had been sent for him to wait for Warren anywhere, and that Warren was waiting for him at Robertson's Tavern, to which place French was again ordered to move as rapidly as possible. When, in the afternoon, Meade learned that the Third Corps had come in contact with the enemy, French was ordered to attack immediately and throw forward his left so as to connect with Warren, and was informed that the object of the attack was to connect with the Second Corps. French received this order at half past two.† Having come into contact with Johnson's division, French now made the further mistake of not pressing forward. In French's corps, on November 30th, were eight hundred and seventy-nine officers and fifteen thousand eight hundred and ninety-five men. In the Sixth Corps, which was near at hand, were eight hundred and ninety-one officers and fourteen thousand six hundred and ninety-two men. In Johnson's Confederate division, on November 20th, were five hundred and five officers and forty-seven hundred and ninety men. French permitted Johnson, with fifty-two hundred and ninety-five troops, to stop the march of thirty-two thousand three hundred and fifty-seven Union troops, nearly half of Meade's army, to the place of concentration at Robertson's Tavern.

The difficulties of communicating with French, where he stood fast, from Meade's headquarters were considerable, involving a roundabout ride of several hours, although the distance in a direct line between Meade and French was only about four miles. The dense woods between, and perhaps the direction of the wind, prevented any sound of French's engagement from reaching Robertson's Tavern. When, after dispatching messenger after messenger in search of French, Meade finally learned of the whereabouts

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, part ii, p. 498.

† Humphreys's Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 59.

of the other half of his army, he sent Colonel Biddle, of his staff, to show the Third Corps commander the way; but the day and the opportunity had been wasted. That night the Sixth Corps, followed by the Third, moved to Robertson's Tavern; the Sixth, at daylight next morning, taking position on Warren's right.

It was obvious to Lee now that Meade was not on his way to Fredericksburg or Spottsylvania. Rosser, commanding a brigade of cavalry guarding the roads from the lower fords to Fredericksburg, reported to Lee that Meade's whole army was on its way toward Orange Court House. Lee therefore during the night fell back across Mine Run into the strongly intrenched position on the ridge behind that stream. By four o'clock in the morning all of Early's corps had recrossed the run, and the ground occupied by the Confederate advance of the previous day, ground that was most unfavorable for giving or receiving an attack, was abandoned. Behind Mine Run Hill's corps held the Confederate line from the turnpike crossing the Plank road to the Catharpin road on the south, and Early's corps extended the line northward from the turnpike. The naturally strong position, already protected on the left by several lines of formidable earthworks, was quickly fortified on the right with rifle pits and gun pits. The Confederate artillery was placed in advantageous positions, and says Hill, "when the troops of the enemy were displayed upon the opposite hills, we were ready to receive them."* In this chosen position, strong by nature and fortified by art, Meade found his opponent when, at daylight of the 28th, he advanced westward in line of battle. A heavy, cold rain-storm prevailed all that dreary, disappointing, and disheartening day, whose overhanging clouds could not conceal the fact that a brilliantly planned and skillfully ordered movement had practically failed owing to a single defective cog in the army machinery. The Government had supplied the general with a faulty tool, it had broken down at a critical moment, and, according to Humphreys, "paralyzed the army."

A front attack upon Lee's army on the turnpike was

* Official War Records, vol. xxix, part i, p. 896.

out of the question. "The ravine of the run was difficult of passage, and the ground west of it was cleared for more than a thousand yards, rising very gradually over a hundred feet, with a space well up the ascent flanked by heavy belts of timber on both sides. The summit was crowned with intrenchments for infantry and artillery, strengthened by abatis."* The cold rainstorm caused much suffering among the troops, and made movements so difficult that it was evening before the army was in position on the east bank of Mine Run.

During the dark and stormy night of November 28th Meade directed his corps commanders to examine critically next day the Confederate position and ascertain the practicability of an assault, and ordered Warren to make a demonstration upon Lee's right, and, if no favorable point for assault could be found, to move around Lee's flank with the idea of maneuvering him out of his strong position. Warren was re-enforced with Terry's division of the Sixth Corps, six thousand strong, and three hundred cavalry.

On the evening of the 29th General Wright, an engineer officer commanding a division in the Sixth Corps, reported that he had discovered a point on the extreme right of Meade's line from which an assault was practicable with inconsiderable loss; and Major Ludlow, of Warren's staff, reported that Warren had moved westward on the Orange Plank road as far as the head of Mine Run, which he crossed, and that there was no commanding ground between Warren and the Confederate base of supplies. The approach of darkness prevented Warren from continuing his movement. At eight o'clock in the evening Warren himself returned to army headquarters, expressed complete confidence in his ability to carry everything before him, and added that he did not believe the enemy would remain in position over night, so completely did Warren's position command Lee's right. Previous to Warren's report, Meade had decided to make, on the 30th, three assaults: one on Lee's left with the Sixth and Fifth Corps, one on the center with the Third and First, and one on Lee's left by Warren.

The earnest confidence that Warren expressed in his

* Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 63.



ability to carry everything before him, together with French's opinion that he could not attack successfully in the center, although Captain Michler, of the engineers, had reported that an attack from the Third Corps front, though hazardous, was not impracticable, induced Meade to abandon his contemplated attack from his center, and to re-enforce Warren with two divisions of the Third Corps, thus giving to that officer command of six divisions, nearly half of the infantry force of the army. At eight o'clock in the morning the batteries of the center and right were to open and Warren was to make the main attack, while at nine o'clock Sedgwick was to assault, and when these attacks should prove successful, the Third and First Corps in the center, after making demonstrations at eight o'clock, would assault in conjunction with the attack on the right and left.

Warren's movement on Lee's right on the 29th, however, and the presence of his troops in that vicinity during the night, only served to attract Lee's attention to the weakness of his line there and the danger threatening him in that quarter. During the night the Confederates extended and intrenched their line on the right, and placed their reserve troops there. On the Union side the supporting troops moved to their assigned positions, where they were massed so as to be concealed from the enemy.

The next morning Meade's batteries opened punctually at eight o'clock. In the center the skirmishers crossed Mine Run and drove in the Confederate skirmishers. Sedgwick, on the right, was all ready and waiting; but at a quarter to eight Warren sent to Meade a dispatch saying, "The full light of the sun shows me that I can not succeed. His [the enemy's] position and strength seem so formidable in my present front that I advise against making the attack here."

This report made the suspension of Sedgwick's contemplated assault necessary, because one half of the army had been placed under Warren's command on the extreme left, and Meade did not have the force with which to support Sedgwick in case of a repulse or to re-enforce him in the event of success. Holding Sedgwick's hand just in time, Meade rode rapidly to Warren, four miles away. Warren had found by daylight that the Confederate line had been

re-enforced with all the troops and artillery that could be put in position; that breastworks, epaulements, and abatis had been perfected, and that a charge on the double-quick for eight minutes, exposed to every species of fire, would be necessary. When Meade arrived on the spot, Warren again advised against any farther movement. In brief, the whole campaign had failed with French's delays of the 26th and 27th. After that, after Lee had fallen back behind Mine Run, there was never more than a slight possibility of taking him at a disadvantage. Warren's movement of the 29th was unfortunate in that, like Hooker's movement at Antietam, it exposed the plan of attack; but as the roads were bad, the night stormy, and the woods dense, a night march of eleven miles to the assaulting position was deemed impracticable, and Warren's preliminary movement of the 29th thus became necessary. All the movements subsequent to Lee's retirement behind Mine Run were but attempts to rehabilitate a forfeited opportunity. The effort was worth while, but the time had now come when it must be abandoned.

To continue Warren's movement around Lee's right would necessitate a swinging around of the whole right of the army and the abandonment of the turnpike leading to Meade's supplies. Already approaching midday, it was too late to move Warren back for an assault in the center, and Lee would inevitably be given another night to make strong the weak place discovered by Wright on the Confederate left, with which defensive work he was seen to be busily engaged during the day. The trains had been left behind at Richardsville, and the winter had set in with such severity, after the rain of the 28th, that some of Meade's pickets were frozen to death at their posts.

Meade's view of the outcome of his movement was expressed with incontrovertible logic as follows:

"Prisoners reported that Hill did not come up till the afternoon of the 27th, so that if the movements of the Third Corps had been prompt and vigorous on the 27th, assisted by the Sixth and Second, there was every reason to believe Ewell could have been overcome before the arrival of Hill. And after the enemy, through these culpable delays, had been permitted to concentrate on Mine Run, I have reason

to believe, but for the unfortunate error of judgment of General Warren, my original plan of attack in three columns would have been successful, or at least, under the view I took of it, would certainly have been tried. It may be said I should not depend on the judgment of others, but it is impossible that a commanding general can reconnoiter in person a line of over seven miles in extent, and act on his own judgment as to the expediency of attacking or not. Again, it may be said that the effort should have been made to test the value of my judgment, or, in other words, that I should encounter what I believed to be certain defeat, so as to prove conclusively that victory was impossible. Considering how sacred is the trust of the lives of the brave men under my command, but willing as I am to shed their blood and my own where duty requires and my judgment dictates that the sacrifice will not be in vain, I can not be a party to a wanton slaughter of my troops for any mere personal end." *

On the night of December 1st Meade withdrew his army to the Rapidan so silently and rapidly, that when Lee's orders to advance were carried by his officers to their troops on the next morning the Confederates in places were found standing in line of battle peering toward the front and waiting for the expected advance of a foe who by that time was many miles away.

But for the orders imposed upon him from Washington, Meade, instead of recrossing the Rapidan on retiring from Mine Run, would have taken up position at Spottsylvania and wintered the army there. At the time, he said that he could now, without any loss, take a position there that would cost twenty thousand lives to gain in the spring. †

Humphreys says that had Meade been permitted to move toward Fredericksburg as he desired, the first battle with Lee in 1864 would not have been fought in the Wilderness, but in the open country. ‡

To Colonel Biddle, of his staff, Meade said: "I know I shall be relieved, but I could not order an assault against

* Meade's Report, Official War Records, vol. xxix, part i, p. 18.

† Statement of Colonel A. G. Mason, of Meade's staff, to Judge Searle, of Montrose, Pa.

‡ Gettysburg to the Rapidan, p. 68.

my conscience"; and to a friend he wrote: "I would rather a thousand times be relieved, charged with tardiness or incompetency, than have my conscience burdened with a wanton slaughter uselessly of brave men, or with having jeopardized the great cause by doing what I thought wrong."

Said Charles Gibbons:

"Heroism is not an uncommon virtue. There are others more rare and no less essential in forming the character of a great soldier. All America's soldiers, North and South, have proved themselves heroes, but we can not expect to find in every one a Thomas, a Washington, or a Meade. Such men are not common in any country. They seem to be set for special occasions and as examples. They do not thrust themselves into notice. They do not come swaggering into the history of the times. They are not vainglorious or envious. They 'bear their faculties' meekly, and are guided by a better cynosure than their own personal renown."

French's losses on the 28th were nine hundred and fifty-two; Johnson's, four hundred and ninety-eight; Meade's total losses in the movement were sixteen hundred and fifty-three.

There ensued on February 6th and 7th a demonstration under Sedgwick, and at the end of the month the Kilpatrick raid, which carried thirty-five hundred Union cavalrymen to the almost empty intrenchments of Richmond.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SOLDIER'S LAURELS.

IN August, 1863, the officers of the Pennsylvania Reserves, desiring to express to General Meade their admiration and affection for him, presented to him a sword of Damascus steel with a scabbard of gold. Near the hilt, inlaid in blue enamel and gold with diamonds, were the commander's initials. The handle was encircled with a row of opals, amethysts, and rubies. The blade was inscribed with the names of the numerous battles in which Meade and the Reserves had participated together. Accompanying the sword were a sash, belt, and pair of golden spurs. The speech of presentation was made by General Crawford. Governor Curtin was present and made an address. Meade, like Sherman, seemed always perfectly at ease upon such occasions. His thoughts were worthy of expression, and his speech was earnest and sure to be in good taste. He took that occasion to say of Reynolds: "He was the noblest as well as the bravest gentleman in the army. When he fell at Gettysburg, leading the advance, I lost not only a lieutenant of the utmost importance to me, but I may say that I lost a friend, aye, even a brother." In the course of his address he showed his thorough appreciation of the military situation by saying to the civilians present:

"Give us the numbers and the war will soon be concluded. I think the rebels are now satisfied that their struggle is only a matter of time, as we have the force on our side, and that as soon as they see that we are bringing out that force in earnest they will yield."

In January, 1864, while paying a brief visit to his home in Philadelphia, Meade was taken ill, and before his recovery was serenaded by a body of convalescents from the

army, and in his speech to them he said: "We want you all to return and bring all you can with you; and may you all live to see, what we all want to see, this struggle brought to a speedy and glorious end. It is a question of numbers and of time. You all know that if we but bring the men to the work it will end speedily." On the same evening the members of the Union League, preceded by a band, walked in a body to his house, and the street was blocked with the throng which assembled, and again he said: "What we need is men. I want you here, all of you, every man of you, however small may be his influence, to use that influence to send recruits to the army. The war must be ended by hard fighting."

Two days later Meade was invited to meet the members of the councils and the citizens in Independence Hall, and the sum of one thousand dollars was appropriated for the purchase of a sword to be presented to him. The city reception took place on February 9th. Mayor Henry welcomed the soldier in an address which happily joined the occurrences of the Fourth of July in 1776 and in 1863.

The resolutions of Congress thanking Meade for his victory at Gettysburg were so bunglingly drawn by enthusiastic politicians ignorant of the conduct of the battle, that their indiscriminating praise was made pointless and of little worth.

A more substantial reward was the confirmation by the Senate, on February 29, 1864, of Meade's appointment as brigadier general in the regular army, his commission to date from July 3, 1863. General Humphreys's comparison between the reward which Meade received from his Government for Gettysburg, and the rewards which Wellington received from England for his less difficult task at Waterloo, has already been quoted. Burdened with the expense of entertaining numerous distinguished officers from Europe who were anxious to witness something of the mighty drama of the civil war, Meade wrote to a member of his family: "You say I can buy a horse in Philadelphia for two hundred dollars, but where can I get the two hundred dollars?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

ACROSS THE RAPIDAN AGAIN.

BEFORE the Committee on the Conduct of the War General Warren testified that Meade's plans had not been carried out, and that opportunities to destroy the enemy at Manassas Gap, before Mine Run, and at Warrenton had been lost because of defects in the army organization. He thought that there were too many corps; stated that it was more difficult to obtain five able corps commanders than to obtain only three, and expressed his belief that all the corps commanders had not been equal to their positions. These combined defects established, in his opinion, a condition certain to impair every plan and jeopard every chance of victory.

Before the same body General Humphreys testified that the commander of the Army of the Potomac could never lose sight of the fact that he was to protect Washington as well as carry on offensive war, and he added: "The difference of numbers in our favor is not great enough to admit of our making such movements as will oblige the enemy to fight us with equal advantages of ground. For instance, suppose we had had force enough, when we made that movement on Mine Run, to have left a heavy column near Culpeper, and had moved on his flank and brought his army away from the Rapidan; then, having the column in position concealed, which might have been done, we could have thrown it on those portions of the enemy's lines which were not occupied, and have moved it to attack his left flank in connection with an attack on his front. If we had had force enough for that, there would have been no question as to the result. But such movements as these, being double movements, require a very great force, a very

large superiority of numbers, in order to be carried on successfully."

The defects in the organization of the Army of the Potomac pointed out by Warren were now to be corrected. The needed superiority of numbers, of which need Meade and Humphreys were so well aware, was about to be supplied. By orders from the War Department, dated March 23, 1864, the First and Third Corps were abolished. The troops of the First Corps were assigned to the Fifth, the First and Second Divisions of the Third Corps to the Second Corps, and the Third Division to the Sixth Corps. General Francis A. Walker says:

"The Mine Run campaign had been brought to utter failure by the incapacity of one out of the five commanders, and it was generally felt that two others of the group were beyond their depth, though intelligent and accomplished officers who were incapable of making gross mistakes or palpably falling short of their high office. General Meade believed that he could find three first-class commanders for the army assembled around Brandy Station; he did not feel sure of a fourth, much less of a fifth." *

Up to the failure of the Mine Run campaign, Meade in the East and Grant in the West had been running an even race for the foremost honors of the war. Though Meade had won the most important Union victory, he labored under the disadvantages of being pitted against the best Confederate army and the ablest Confederate general, and of having lost the services of his ablest subordinates, Reynolds and Hancock. Two of his corps had been sent west to help Grant win the battle of Chattanooga, and, unwittingly, the corps commander of the Army of the Potomac, referred to by Walker, by twice robbing Meade of victories through incompetence, contributed toward the advancement of Grant.

Nevertheless, no officer of the Army of the Potomac more cordially welcomed the arrival of Lieutenant-General Grant in Virginia than did General Meade. When informed of Grant's promotion and his intention to accompany the Army of the Potomac upon its campaigns, Meade said to

* General Walker's Life of Hancock, p. 153.

some of his most trusted subordinates: "I am glad of it. The Government will support General Grant." When, later, some of his officers questioned Grant's ability, Meade said: "You make a mistake. General Grant is a man of very great ability." When others said that Grant could not talk, he rebuked them, saying, "General Grant can talk, and talk intelligently. I only fear that he talks too much"; the qualification having reference, no doubt, to Grant's disposition to unbosom himself freely when among intimates.

Officially, the relations between Grant and Meade during the last year of the war were necessarily close; but there was an insurmountable obstacle to further intimacy in the dissimilarity of their tastes. Moreover, Grant's friendships had been formed in the Western army. Upon Sheridan, whom he brought to the East, he lavished the affection of an elder brother, guarding his interests with a watchfulness that no barrier could interrupt, protecting him from his errors, and creating for him anomalous commands and opportunities to win a "separate military renown." Of the greater soldiers of the Army of the Potomac and their greater services, of Meade and Hancock and Sedgwick and Humphreys, Grant's Memoirs are but coldly appreciative. Written long after the war, when doubtless it would have been impolitic to question the wisdom or justice of acts already done, these Memoirs follow closely the theory of the Military History of U. S. Grant, by an author whom Francis A. Walker calls the "spiteful Badeau." Because of the disparagement of Meade, which is so prominent a characteristic of the Memoirs, it is not improper to recall that when Badeau sent some of the manuscript of his military biography of General Grant to Meade for perusal, the latter warned the author that if he published a particular statement, which was false as it stood, Meade would publicly denounce the falsehood; whereupon the publication of Badeau's second volume was deferred, and it did not appear until after Meade's death.

Of Meade's soldierly subordination, of the fidelity and energy and promptness with which he obeyed not only every order of the lieutenant general, but even intimations, as when word was received from Grant's headquarters that Mr. Dana from the War Department was coming to head-

quarters and that discretion in conversation would be advisable, the Memoirs bear abundant testimony. The amount of camp gossip sent back to the Secretary of War by Dana after being gathered from the members of Grant's staff, who, since the orders to the army were carried by Meade's staff, had more leisure for gossip, shows that the discreet silence maintained by Meade's military family could wisely have been imitated elsewhere.

Although Meade so cordially welcomed Grant's coming to the East as a sign that the Government would bring to bear upon Lee's army the numbers necessary to end the war, the presence of two commanders in the field was a faulty arrangement. General Hunt, the chief of artillery of the Army of the Potomac, expressed his belief that had the Rapidan campaign been conducted by Meade free from the trammels of the higher headquarters, it would have been better for the army and the country.* Humphreys says: "There were two officers commanding the same army. Such a mixed command was not calculated to produce the best results that either, singly, was capable of bringing about."† Colonel Carswell McClellan more emphatically declares the conviction "held by many competent to judge, that the tragedy which commenced in the Wilderness on May 4th, and ended at Cold Harbor on June 3, 1864, would have been unnecessary had General Meade been unhampered by the constant overruling presence of General Grant."‡ In view of the fact that, while Meade was in unhampered command of the Army of the Potomac, Lee had been taken by surprise four different times within a half year—at Manassas Gap, at Rappahannock Station, at Mine Run, and at the time of the winter reconnoissance under Sedgwick—some such movement as that suggested in Humphreys's testimony, already quoted, would now seem to have been the natural outcome in the spring of 1864 of the previous experience of the Army of the Potomac. The effective force of that army was now increased to one hundred and twenty-three thousand officers and men, the Ninth

* Letter from Hunt to Webb, January 12, 1888.

† Virginia Campaign, p. 83.

‡ Grant *versus* the Record, p. 31.

Corps, under Burnside, uniting with it on May 6th, and becoming incorporated with it under Meade's command on the 24th of that month. Lee's army numbered sixty-two thousand officers and men.

When General Grant told Meade before the movement began that he did not want the army maneuvered for position, the latter replied: "General Grant, you are opposed by a general of consummate ability, and you will find that you will have to maneuver for position." * The opinion at Washington, however, as expressed in Halleck's letter to Grant of February 17th, † still was that Lee could be defeated by direct assaults. Behind Grant there was every encouragement from the authorities for him to undertake the kind of campaign he did undertake, and both outside of the army, and with the new element introduced within it, a new experience was a necessary preliminary to the conviction that force alone, even all the force that could be brought to bear against Lee, would not suffice to attain the end desired except at a sacrifice of life that the country would not endure.

Whether or not, as General Hunt, Colonel McClellan, and other writers believed, Meade would have pursued successfully a less bloody highway to final victory, if left to himself and given the preponderance of troops placed at Grant's command, is a question which the campaigns already past and the developments of the one about to open may be left to elucidate.

So far as the other armies under Grant's command were concerned, his presence with the Army of the Potomac was a serious disadvantage. He could only communicate with those armies or hear of their movements through Washington. It was not until two days after the events that he learned Butler had landed at City Point on May 5th, and had applied for re-enforcements on the 7th. He did not hear of Sigel's defeat at New Market on May 15th until the 17th. If the principle of the criticism applied by Grant to Warren—namely, that "he would go into action with one of his divisions, holding the other divisions until he could superintend

* Statement of Colonel Biddle, of Meade's staff.

† Official War Records, vol. xxxii, part ii, p. 411.

their movements in person also, forgetting that division commanders could execute an order without his presence"—be sound, the same principle applies with equal force to the operation of armies, and must so apply with peculiar force when the attempt is being made to prevent different armies from moving like a "balky team," to put an end to separate and independent action, and to secure co-operation. His personal presence with the Army of the Potomac, which army, Grant says, he regarded as the center of the vaster army under his command, delayed for four days, in the instance cited, the possibility of his left wing, the Army of the James, receiving an order from him in response to a change of the military situation; and a part of his right wing, the command of Sigel, for a similar reason and for the same length of time, was left outside the sphere of the lieutenant general's direct influence and beyond the limit of his control. Colonel McClellan's citation of facts, drawn from indisputable records, and the conclusion reached from a consideration of the military aspects of the question, that General Grant's headquarters should have been fixed at some central point where he could readily communicate with all the armies under his command, are enforced by the serious military mismanagement in the Shenandoah Valley, and the subsequent narrow escape of the National capital from capture in 1864 by General Early.*

In his report of July 22, 1865, General Grant says: "Commanding all the armies as I did, I tried as far as possible to leave General Meade in independent command of the Army of the Potomac. My instructions for that army were all through him, and were general in their nature, leaving all the details and the execution to him." In that army, Hancock, in a measure recovered from his wounds, now resumed command of the Second Corps; Sedgwick retained command of the Sixth; Warren, upon Meade's recommendation, was appointed to the command of the Fifth Corps; and Sheridan was assigned to the command of the cavalry corps. There were established a reserve park of artillery under the direction of Brigadier-General Hunt,

* Grant *versus* the Record, by Colonel Carswell McClellan. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston, 1887.

chief of artillery, the immediate commander being Colonel H. S. Burton; an engineer brigade and pontoon train under Major Duane; and a large park of supply wagons under Brigadier-General Rufus Ingalls, chief quartermaster. Meade's infantry lay between the Rapidan and Rappahannock, in the vicinity of Culpeper Court House, covering the roads to the front and picketing the river, and outside of the infantry pickets were cavalry pickets. Lee's army lay behind the Rapidan from Barnett's Ford to Morton's Ford, from near which latter crossing began the return intrenchments behind Mine Run, now extending southward beyond the Plank road. Lee's headquarters during the winter were in a tent pitched near Orange Court House. Two divisions of Longstreet's corps, returned from the West, were at Gordonsville before the Union movement began.

On April 9th Grant wrote to Meade: "Lee's army will be your objective point. Wherever Lee goes, there you will go also"; directions whose intent could not be carried out, for, as the campaign developed, it was seen that to whatever point the Army of the Potomac was moved, the movement was anticipated by Lee, and the Army of Northern Virginia either reached the destination first, or about the same time. In the same letter Grant gave general instructions to Meade to reduce baggage and to make arrangements for forwarding supplies to White House, on the Pamunkey.

On the 17th Meade wrote to Grant that notice had been given to the Commissary Department to have one million rations assembled on shipboard at Fortress Monroe by the end of the month; to the Quartermaster's Department to have forage and other supplies at the same place at the same time; to the Ordnance Department to have in similar readiness one hundred rounds of artillery ammunition per gun, and one hundred rounds of small-arms ammunition per man; to the Engineer Department to have the siege trains, then at Washington, in readiness for shipment with such engineering tools and supplies as would be required in the event of laying siege to Richmond; to the Medical Department to have, in addition to the stores at Alexandria, medical supplies for twelve thousand wounded in readiness to be thrown up the Pamunkey or James River. In addition,

Meade communicated the arrangements made for an immediate movement. These included one hundred and fifty rounds of small-arms ammunition per man, fifty rounds to be carried on the person and one hundred in the supply train; sixteen days' marching rations (four of salt beef and twelve of beef on the hoof), six days' rations to be carried on the person (three full rations in haversacks and three small rations in knapsacks), the balance in supply trains; ten days' full allowance of grain for animals, and hospital supplies for the sick. These preliminary arrangements being perfected, Meade said at least three days' notice would be required to load trains and prepare the army to move within an hour.

It being determined to move by Lee's right flank, Humphreys, Meade's chief of staff, was requested by Meade to prepare a project for the movement. Humphreys sketched two plans, one of them turning Lee's right by the Catharpin and Pamunkey roads, which was adopted, and in conformity with it Humphreys prepared the order of movement. The experience gathered in Meade's Mine Run campaign gave hope, if not confidence, that by setting the whole army in motion at midnight, with its reserve artillery and trains of more than four thousand wagons, it might move so far beyond the Rapidan the first day that it would be able to pass out of the Wilderness and turn, or partly turn, Lee's right flank before a general engagement took place. It was certain that the troops and the fighting trains could do this; but it was doubtful whether the great supply trains could be moved so great a distance simultaneously with the troops, so as to keep these trains covered by the army.*

The orders, dated May 2d, for the movement would carry Gregg's cavalry division, with half of the pontoon train, on the 3d to Richardsville, where in November Meade had left his trains when crossing the Rapidan to advance into the Wilderness. At two o'clock on the morning of the 4th Gregg would move to Ely's Ford, cross the Rapidan, and, on the arrival of Hancock's corps, advance to the vicinity of Piney Branch Church, throwing reconnoitering parties out on the Pamunkey road toward Spottsylvania Court

* Humphreys's Virginia Campaign, p. 10.

House, Hamilton's Crossing, and Fredericksburg. The Third Cavalry Division, moving at midnight of May 3d, would cross at Germanna Ford and advance to Parker's store on the Orange Plank road. Warren's corps, moving at midnight by way of Stevensburg, would cross Germanna Ford and move to the Old Wilderness Tavern on the Orange and Fredericksburg pike; Sedgwick's corps would follow Warren. Hancock's corps would cross at Ely's Ford and move toward Chancellorsville, followed by the reserve artillery. Warren and Sedgwick were directed to cover their right flank, and Hancock and Hunt to look out for their left flank.

On the 2d Meade temporarily adopted for his headquarters flag a magenta-colored swallow-tailed banner with an eagle in gold surrounded by a silver wreath for an emblem, but this was succeeded on the 25th by a small national flag. On the 2d, a mutiny having occurred in an Ohio regiment, he ordered that any soldier refusing to do duty should be shot without trial. He sent for Sheridan to come to headquarters, and that officer put off indefinitely a contemplated cavalry review. On the 3d Meade notified Grant that he had issued orders to move; that Burnside, coming up in the rear, had sent four hundred thousand rations to Brandy, which ought to be guarded; and that he himself would leave headquarters at five o'clock in the morning for Germanna Ford, where he would leave a staff officer to inform Grant of his whereabouts. On the 4th Meade issued an address to his army, in which he said:

"The time and the occasion are deemed opportune by your commanding general to address you a few words of confidence and caution. You have been reorganized, strengthened, and fully equipped in every respect. You form a part of the several armies of the country, the whole under the direction of an able and distinguished general who enjoys the confidence of the Government, the people, and the army. . . . Bear with patience the hardships and sacrifices you will be called upon to endure. Have confidence in your officers and in each other. Keep your ranks on the march and on the battlefield, and let each man earnestly implore God's blessing, and endeavor by his thoughts and actions to render himself worthy of the favor he seeks."

Meade's orders for the 5th, dated 6 P. M. of the 4th, directed Sheridan to move the cavalry divisions of Gregg and Torbert against the enemy's cavalry in the direction of Hamilton's Crossing, and Wilson's division to Craig's Meeting House on the Catharpin road; Hancock to move to Shady Grove Church, extending his right toward Warren at Parker's store; Warren to Parker's store, extending his right toward Sedgwick at Old Wilderness Tavern; and Sedgwick to the latter place, leaving a division to cover the bridge at Germanna Ford, until informed of the arrival there of Burnside's corps.

The above orders for the cavalry divisions of Gregg and Torbert were made upon information supplied by Sheridan and at Sheridan's suggestion. The orders for Wilson's cavalry division came from Grant and were undoubtedly known to Sheridan. Sheridan's information, upon which the orders for Gregg and Torbert were based, was erroneous, the Confederate cavalry having been called in to Lee's right. Having observed the Union movements on the morning of the 4th, and that they were in accordance with his opinion expressed to his corps and division commanders on the 2d, Lee ordered Ewell to move his corps toward Locust Grove (Robertson's Tavern), on the Orange pike. Hill, about midday of the 4th, moved eastward along the Plank road as far as Mine Run. Longstreet moved eastward from Gordonsville, and by the night of the 5th his troops were in the vicinity of Craig's Meeting House on the Catharpin road. On the morning of the 5th Ewell and Hill continued their eastward march toward the line of Meade's movement, Ewell on the pike, when within two miles of the Wilderness Tavern, waiting for Hill, and both delaying an engagement until Longstreet's arrival.

At a quarter past seven on the morning of the 5th Meade was riding toward Warren's headquarters near the Old Wilderness Tavern. Warren had bivouacked in that vicinity, and at six in the morning had started for Parker's store, Crawford's, Wadsworth, and Robinson's divisions marching in the order named. While on the road Meade received a dispatch from Warren saying that Confederate infantry was on the pike in force two miles from the Wilderness Tavern. A few moments later Meade was with

Warren, and at once directed him to attack the enemy with his whole force. To Grant—who had remained at the river to look after Burnside's movement, the Ninth Corps at that time not being under Meade's command—Meade sent word in a dispatch, received by Grant at half past seven, that the enemy had appeared in force on the Orange pike and were then reported to be forming line of battle in front of Griffin's division of the Fifth Corps; that he had ordered Warren to attack at once with his whole force; that until the movement of the enemy was developed the contemplated movement of the army must be suspended, and that, therefore, he had ordered Hancock not to advance beyond Todd's Tavern; the trains had been stopped, and he himself, for the present, would remain at the Wilderness Tavern. Hancock's leading division was a mile beyond Todd's Tavern when Meade's order to halt was received. Sedgwick, following the Germanna Plank road toward the Wilderness Tavern, was turned to the right by the cross road leading from Spotswood to the turnpike and directed to connect with the Fifth Corps on the pike and attack the enemy. "If," said Meade to Grant in a dispatch dated at 9 A. M., "Lee is disposed to fight this side of Mine Run at once, he shall be accommodated."

The orders promptly given by Meade upon the first appearance of the enemy, and in the absence of Grant, brought on the battle of the Wilderness upon a field where it had not been expected to fight a battle, the previous plans having all contemplated a turning movement. The army being where it was, a battle became necessary.

A repetition of the many descriptions of the Virginia Wilderness is unnecessary. Millions of the generations reaching maturity since the war have seen its counterpart of thin soil covered with a dense growth of scrub oak and pine, when passing to and from the summer and winter resorts of New Jersey. Perhaps it has best been described as a region in which troops, like ships on the trackless sea, could only keep their direction by the use of the compass. Lee could well afford to let Grant and Meade cross the Rapidan unopposed for the sake of encountering them in the tangled and almost impenetrable undergrowth of the Wilderness, whose by-ways were as familiar to the Con-

federates as the footpaths of the plantation forests to the night-roaming slave. When Grant received word from Meade that the enemy had been met, he waited to see Burnside, whose advance was crossing the Rapidan at Germanna Ford at half past eight, and then rode to the front. Grant and Meade took position on a knoll in the open ground around the Wilderness Tavern and the Lacy farm, and remained upon this knoll during the battle, with only an occasional brief absence to the nearest troops.* It was not a battlefield upon which personal leadership would have much influence or where there was much opportunity for generalship. Troops could be ordered in or ordered out. When ordered in, both armies would stay as long as possible. Tactically, the movements of Meade's army had to be, and were, of the simplest character. On encountering Hill's column at Chewning's farm, Crawford and Robinson formed line of battle to the left of the Lacy House, and Griffin's division was thrown across the turnpike to the right of the house. Wright's division of Sedgwick's corps, which was to have attacked on Warren's right, was delayed in getting into position on account of the dense undergrowth through which it had to pass. Between nine and ten o'clock Hancock was ordered to move up the Brock road to the Orange Plank road and be prepared to move out that road toward Parker's store, and about the same hour three brigades of Getty's division of Sedgwick's corps were ordered from the Wilderness Tavern by the Brock road to the Plank road, on which latter road Getty was to attempt to drive Hill's troops beyond Parker's store. It was nearly noon when Hancock received his orders. A few minutes after noon Getty reported that he had encountered Confederate infantry half a mile out on the Plank road, and he there awaited Hancock's arrival. From the day's fierce struggle in the woods between foes who much of the time could not see one another, though separated by but a few yards of space, there is little to be drawn for the guidance of campaigns and battles. There was promise of something important in the presence of Longstreet on the Catharpin road, but Lee thought it neces-

* Humphreys's Virginia Campaign, p. 24.

sary to call him over to the Plank road; Longstreet starting for Parker's store from Richards's shop on the Catharpin road shortly after midnight of the 5th and reaching his destination about dawn.

For a flank attack from Longstreet, Meade, however, was prepared, as appears from his dispatch to Grant of 10.30 P. M., which says: "He [Longstreet] probably will attack Hancock to-morrow. I have notified Hancock to look out for his left, but think it would be well to have Willcox [of Burnside's corps] up as soon as possible." *

Warren's attack upon Ewell along the turnpike with the divisions of Griffin and Wadsworth was at first successful, but owing to the slow progress of the Sixth Corps troops through the tangle of vines, bushes, and trees toward his right, Griffin's flank remained exposed and he was in turn forced back, losing two guns, the enemy advancing and holding the position from which they had been driven by Griffin's earlier advance. Wadsworth lost direction in advancing through the woods, and his left flank becoming exposed to the enemy, he was thrown back in confusion. McCandless's brigade of Crawford's division attempting to unite with Wadsworth's left was in part enveloped by Ewell's right and fell back with heavy losses. Crawford's division had to be drawn in. In the afternoon, Wright's division of the Sixth Corps, with Neill's brigade of Getty's division of the same corps, formed in the enemy's front north of the pike and repulsed Ewell's attack.

Meade's orders during the day manifest his anxiety to form something like a line of battle. His position, with the different parts of his army disconnected, was far from a desirable one, and had Lee commanded a larger army, or had Longstreet from the Catharpin road made a flank movement, the situation would have been one of grave peril. Meade's uneasiness is indicated in his repeated dispatches to Hancock to push out the Plank road and connect with Warren's left. Finally, at a quarter past three in the afternoon, he ordered Getty on the Plank road to attack, and Hancock to support Getty with the whole of the Second Corps. The disposition was left to Hancock's judgment,

* Official War Records, vol. xxxvii, part ii, p. 405.

but he was told that the attack up the Plank road must be made at once. Meade sent Colonel Lyman, one of his ablest staff officers, to keep him informed of how matters were going with Hancock, and at about six o'clock in the evening Lyman sent the following message to Meade: "We barely hold our own; on the right the pressure is heavy. General Hancock thinks he can hold the Plank and Brock roads in front of which he is, but he can't advance." Darkness put an end to Hancock's fierce contest. Since noon the army had been fighting in detachments. The right was not connected with the center. In the center the divisions of Warren's corps fought without connection with one another. On the left, Hancock's troops did not connect with Warren.

Being where it was on the morning of the 5th, and in contact with Lee's advance, there was nothing to do but attempt to make the best of a bad situation. But not for many a day had the Army of the Potomac been placed at such a disadvantage, or in a situation where the great tactical skill of Meade was unavailable, where the personal influence of Warren, Sedgwick, and Hancock, and the bravery of their subordinate commanders, counted for so little, where intelligence was so slight a factor in leading to results.

Before Meade's lesser army, in the winter, Lee had fallen behind Mine Run. But now he sprang forward to meet a far stronger enemy, and undoubtedly his action had been unexpected. At the end of the day's battle General Grant said to Colonel Biddle, of Meade's staff, that he had never seen such hard fighting. Nevertheless, he prepared to renew the battle on the next day. So fierce had been the struggle that upon the evening of the 5th Meade issued an order that all train guards and every man capable of bearing arms should go to the front before daylight. He said: "For the present the trains must be protected by the cavalry, and every man who can shoulder a musket must be in the ranks"; and he ordered corps commanders to send at once a staff officer to army headquarters to learn the location of trains, and conduct the train guards to the front. In view of the general situation, the question asked of headquarters on that evening, by Sheridan, conveyed a sug-

gestion of singular inappropriateness. Forgetting that he himself had conveyed to Meade the false information that the main body of the enemy's cavalry was at Hamilton's Crossing, he said, with a show of petulance, "Had I moved to Hamilton's Crossing early this morning, the enemy would have ruined everything," and then asked, "Why can not infantry be sent to guard the trains, and let me take the offensive?"

Wilson's cavalry division, which, after leaving five hundred men at Parker's store, had, in obedience to Grant's orders, proceeded toward Craig's Meeting House, on the Catharpin road, were driven back on that road as far as Todd's Tavern. Gregg, who in the morning had found no enemy at Fredericksburg, and had discovered two brigades of Confederate cavalry falling back from Hamilton's Crossing to Lee's right flank, was waiting at Todd's Tavern before three o'clock to receive the enemy pursuing Wilson, and in his turn drove the Confederate cavalry beyond Corbin's bridge.

After his night march from the Catharpin road, Longstreet, by dawn of the 6th, was advancing eastward from Parker's store on the Plank road to the relief of Hill. On the Union side Grant desired Meade to attack at half past four in the morning, but, after consulting his corps commanders, Meade believed it would be difficult, owing to the dense thicket in which the corps were posted and the fatigued condition of the men, to arouse them in time to attack at that early hour, and he thought also that some daylight would be necessary for the effective throwing in of re-enforcements. On the previous day re-enforcements had lost direction in the dense woods with the result that in places Meade's line was very thin, while in others the men were concentrated five or six rows deep. While ordering the attack for half past four, Meade suggested therefore that it be deferred until six o'clock. In the same dispatch he informed Grant of the probability of an attack by Longstreet on Hancock. Grant authorized Meade to change the hour of attack until five o'clock, fearing that a later start would give Lee the initiative. A few moments before that hour the Confederates began firing on both wings. The Sixth Corps attacks from Meade's right were repulsed, as

were also those of Warren from the center. On the left, Longstreet's expected flank movement was looked for on the road leading from the Catharpin road past Trigg's to the Brock road, and was guarded against by Hancock. Attacking with vigor, Hancock's right, on the Plank road, under Birney, broke the line of the enemy and drove him through the forest, but the arrival of Longstreet's troops checked Birney. It was intended to fill the gap between Warren and Hancock with Burnside's troops, and Hancock became anxious to hear the sounds of Burnside's guns, but Burnside failed to attack until two o'clock in the afternoon. Meade told Hancock, however, that his only reserve division would be thrown in if necessary, and that Sheridan had been ordered to attack Longstreet's flank and rear by the Brock road, Sheridan having received the order at Chancellorsville at eight o'clock, at which hour Stevenson's reserve division of Burnside's corps reported to Hancock. The fear of Longstreet's expected flank movement in a measure held back Gibbon, commanding Hancock's left, where officers and men mistook several hundred Union convalescents, approaching the army over the Brock road from Todd's Tavern, for Longstreet's infantry, and the force of dismounted Confederate cavalry, which at nine o'clock threatened Hancock's left at Trigg's, might well be supposed at first to be either Pickett's division of Longstreet's corps or Anderson's division of Hill's corps, both of which divisions were still unaccounted for in the information gathered by the Army of the Potomac from captured Confederates. Firing between Sheridan and Stuart at Todd's Tavern served to confirm the impression that the Confederates were making a serious flank movement upon Hancock. If the mere fear of such a movement were sufficient to cripple the attack from Meade's left, there is good reason to think that if Lee had moved Longstreet by the Catharpin road, the success of Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville might have been in a degree repeated, in spite of Meade's preparations for such an attack. The region was one naturally leading to panics, as was to be illustrated by the rumors growing out of movements on the Union right later in the day.

The contemporary impression among high officers in

Meade's army of a Union defeat at the battle of the Wilderness—an impression whose existence is hardly to be questioned after a reading of the dispatches sent from the field—began to grow with the repulse, in the morning, of Cutler's brigade of Wadsworth's division of Warren's corps, which division had been placed under Hancock's command. The brigade was driven back from the woods in a disorganized condition, with heavy losses, the enemy's skirmishers were approaching Warren's headquarters, and, in consequence, Warren was directed by Meade, at half past nine, to suspend operations on his right and to send a force to stop the pursuit of Cutler past his left. At the same hour Hancock was ordered to check this Confederate movement, which was done by Birney under Hancock's orders. At thirty-five minutes past ten Meade directed Sedgwick and Warren to suspend their attacks and to throw up defensive works to be held by as few troops as possible, with a view to a later attack from Hancock's right.

It was about this hour that Longstreet, from the Plank road, was starting a flank attack upon Birney's left, with the brigades of Wofford and Anderson of his own corps, and of Mahone and Davis of Hill's corps, these troops moving by way of the unfinished railroad between Orange Court House and Fredericksburg. Hancock was compelled to fall back to the breastworks on the Brock road from which his troops had advanced in the morning. General Wadsworth was mortally wounded and left lying on the ground in the enemy's hands. Making preparations for a front attack by the remainder of his troops, Longstreet, while riding along the Plank road at the head of his column, was fired upon by his flanking troops, which were in line parallel with that road. Longstreet himself was severely wounded; one of his brigadiers (Jenkins) was killed. Lee thereupon suspended the attack.

Burnside's corps, which during the early afternoon had been engaged in the woods in the vicinity of the farms of Tapp and Chewning, was ordered to co-operate with a contemplated attack by Hancock at six o'clock. At quarter past four, however, the Confederates made a determined attack upon Hancock, this attack being heaviest south of the Plank road. A part of Hancock's line was broken,

and one Confederate brigade gained a foothold upon Hancock's intrenchments and planted its colors upon them, but was soon driven out, and the attack was repulsed by five o'clock. Burnside, hearing the firing to his left, attacked with Willcox's division and drove back the brigades of Law and Perry, but these were re-enforced by Wofford's brigade and part of Heth's division and regained the lost ground. The situation for Hancock's troops was made more difficult from the fact that, before the attack upon them, their breastworks, made of logs, took fire from the burning battle ground of the morning, the heat and smoke compelling the troops to abandon that portion of the line where the enemy broke through.

On the Union right a still more important reverse was soon to occur. In the early morning Brigadier-General John B. Gordon, of Early's division of Ewell's corps, reconnoitered the position on Meade's extreme right held by Sedgwick, and found that it rested in a dense woodland unprotected, the troops being fully occupied with repeated assaults upon the front of Johnson's division. Gordon sent scouting parties to the rear of the Union right flank, discovering no supports, and that the only precautionary measures consisted of the posting of vedettes. Four hundred yards from this dangerously exposed flank lay an open field offering every opportunity for forming, out of view, an attacking line at right angles to the line of the Union troops. Gordon urged upon his superiors the importance of seizing this opportunity to turn Meade's right; but Early, his division commander, thought it unsafe to make the attempt. At the first opportunity, Ewell, the Confederate corps commander, made a personal examination of the ground, and authorized the movement to be made about sunset, supporting Gordon's brigade with Johnston's brigade of Rodes's division, and ordering each of his brigades, as its front was cleared, to unite in the attack.

In view of this exposed position of Meade's right flank, the previous orders relating to that part of the army become of unusual historical importance. Meade's orders to Sedgwick for the 5th of May had directed that corps commander, upon moving to the Wilderness Tavern on the turnpike, to leave a division to cover the bridge at Germanna Ford until

informed by Meade of the arrival there of Burnside's corps, which, it will be recalled, at that time formed no part of the Army of the Potomac, but was under the immediate command of General Grant, who remained at the river upon Meade's advance to overlook Burnside's movements. The division left to cover the Germanna bridge until relieved by Burnside was that of Ricketts. At twenty minutes past nine on the morning of the 5th Meade sent the following dispatch to Grant:

"I ordered General Ricketts to hold the roads leading from the enemy's line to our right flank. I am informed you have ordered him forward, as one of Burnside's divisions has arrived. I would suggest Burnside's division relieving Ricketts's on the roads, also a small party of cavalry I have in front of Ricketts. Ricketts, having received my order after yours, is awaiting your action on this suggestion."* At half past ten, Grant, from "Near Wilderness Tavern," sent the following dispatch to Burnside: "Lieutenant-General Grant desires that you consult with General Ricketts and relieve the two brigades he has moved out from the Plank road [Germanna Plank road] toward Mine Run, and which were to move out about a mile and hold the roads. You should send some cavalry out in front of your two brigades. The general desires that you should then mass your command about a mile this side of Germanna Ford on the Plank road and await orders." † At 8 P. M. on the 5th Grant added to an order directing Burnside to bring forward two of his divisions for the purpose of participating in the assault from the left center of the Army of the Potomac these words: "If you think there is no enemy in Willcox's front, bring him also." ‡ At six o'clock on the morning of the 6th Meade said to Grant, "Would it not be well for Burnside's cavalry to watch our extreme right by the fords, letting them go out on all the roads toward the enemy?"*—a suggestion which Grant within ten minutes afterward conveyed to Burnside. The position of

* Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part ii, p. 404.

† Ibid., p. 424.

‡ Ibid., p. 425.

* Ibid., p. 438.

Willcox's division, taken in accordance with Meade's suggestions to Grant, was within one hundred yards of the Rapidan along a run, which Hartranft's pickets crossed. To the right was cleared ground all the way to the river. That night additional troops of the Ninth Corps extended Willcox's line to the Rapidan, thus establishing the security of the right flank of the army. But, in accordance with Grant's order to Burnside to "bring Willcox also," these troops were withdrawn from the Union right, Burnside's movement to the south beginning at one o'clock on the morning of the 6th.

Upon the flank thus exposed Gordon made a vehement attack. The troops upon which the attack first fell were the brigades of Shaler and Seymour of the Sixth Corps, and, entirely unsupported and unprotected, the line of these brigades was rolled up with great rapidity. Haversacks and knapsacks were dropped in the flight. Gordon said that his prisoners counted four hundred Federal killed. Over four hundred Union prisoners, including Generals Shaler and Seymour, were taken by the Confederates. The Union regiments, thrown promptly from the left to the assaulted right, encountered a fire sweeping from the left across their line of march, and masses of men, breaking through their ranks, threw the supports coming from the right into inextricable confusion.

Fortunate it was for the Union arms that Gordon's attack was not made earlier in the day, and that the approach of night put an end to his movement. The Sixth Corps was compelled to take up a new line to the rear, to which the Fifth Corps conformed. The concurring dispatches of the day do not sustain the view often expressed by subsequent writers in regard to this affair. To Meade word was brought that Sedgwick's whole line had given way. Hancock was so informed, and was ordered to send all troops he could spare to the right as soon as possible. Meade ordered Warren to withdraw Griffin to his second line and strengthen his right, and Humphreys asked Warren for troops, saying that stragglers were coming down the road followed by the enemy.* By direct orders from General

* Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part ii, p. 455.

Grant, Ferrero, commanding a division of colored troops in Burnside's corps, on the 6th was assigned to the duty of guarding the Germanna Bridge. The trains under his care he was told to park on the south side of the river, and he was also ordered by Grant to guard the roads leading to the Jacobs Ferry road; but Ferrero's troops, which were thus assigned to the important duty of holding the right flank of the army—a duty for which only the most reliable troops should have been selected—were not assigned to a position where they could afford any protection to Sedgwick's right, and Ferrero's first knowledge of the disaster to Sedgwick came in the shape of a dispatch from General Grant, dated 8 P. M., saying that there was every probability that Ferrero would be cut off from the army, in which event he was to recross the Rapidan at once. An hour later General Grant still thought Ferrero's position perilous. In pursuance of his orders from the lieutenant general, Ferrero ordered the trains under his charge to the north side of the Rapidan, and thence by way of Ely's Ford to Chancellorsville. The next morning he advanced his troops to the Wilderness Tavern, whence he was ordered to Dowdall's Tavern and Chancellorsville to cover the army trains assembling at those places.*

Practically the battle of the Wilderness was now over. The Union losses were fifteen thousand three hundred and eighty-seven, of which twelve thousand four hundred and eighty-five were in killed and wounded. The Union assaults from the center had come to naught; and both flanks of the army had been so indifferently guarded that both were involved in disaster. The faulty disposition on the right flank has already been shown. The outward flank of an assailant who has thrown his army across a river beyond the flank of the defender is peculiarly exposed. Hamley says the most effective mode of meeting such an assailant is for the defender to march against the outward flank with all the troops available for immediate action.† Such a movement on the part of Lee was looked for by Meade.

* Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part ii, p. 465; vol. xxxvi, part i, p. 988.

† Operations of War, by General Sir E. B. Hamley, p. 256. William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London, 1899.

The fear of it, owing to Sheridan's absence from the left, to which he was ordered, confirmed by certain occurrences, was an important factor leading up to Hancock's reverse. There was much misinformation as to what was going on upon the roads leading to Hancock's left. Sheridan, it is true, was intrusted by Meade with the safety of the army trains, but Sheridan was also told by Meade, in an order dated 6 p. m. of the 5th, to cover the left flank. Sheridan was informed that the left flank rested at the intersection of the Brock road with the Orange Plank road, and Meade's order continued: "If you gain any information that leads you to conclude that you can take the offensive and harass the enemy without endangering the trains, you are at liberty to do so."* Inasmuch as the Army of the Potomac and Burnside's corps interposed between Lee's infantry and the Union trains, the latter were in no danger if Sheridan could dispose of Stuart's cavalry, which had been drawn in toward the Confederate right, and Meade's orders therefore gave to Sheridan a large liberty to improve that opportunity to defeat Lee's cavalry with his own cavalry, which Sheridan so much desired. In his report Sheridan says he was held responsible for the left flank of the army. But, as we have seen, the left flank met with disaster, because Meade and Hancock and Gibbon were entirely in the dark as to what was going on in the unexplored region to the left of the infantry, where Longstreet was not, but was thought to be. Only two cavalry brigades of Torbert's division were sent on the morning of the 6th down the Furnace road to the Brock road for the purpose of connecting with Hancock's left and attacking Longstreet, who, according to a dispatch from Torbert to Merritt, was reported on the Brock road on Hancock's left and rear. While Custer, in command of the two brigades, was at the intersection of the two roads, his pickets were driven in by Hampton's cavalry division. Gregg, at Todd's Tavern, sent Custer a section of artillery, and Gregg himself was engaged all day in light skirmishing with Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry. Custer repulsed the enemy, but Sheridan ordered him not to advance, and Custer therefore remained on the field until ordered to

* Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part ii, p. 428.

fall back by Sheridan, whose first information of the turning of Hancock's left, which he was to protect, was received in a dispatch from Meade, dated one o'clock, saying: "General Hancock has been heavily pressed and his left turned. The major general commanding thinks that you had better draw in your cavalry so as to secure the protection of the trains." This was not a peremptory order. It was a suggestion made to secure the protection of the trains. If matters on Hancock's left were not as bad as they had been represented to Meade, Sheridan should have been able to inform the army commander of the true state of affairs. He had under his command forty-one full regiments. Stuart's force all told numbered but twenty-five regiments and parts of regiments. If the trains were not in danger, there was no reason for Sheridan's retirement. His reports to Meade during the morning contained almost no information, for the very good reason that he had discovered nothing, although Meade's orders permitted him to take the offensive, and he was opposed by a far inferior force of Confederate cavalry. Upon the receipt of the information from Meade that Hancock's left had been turned and the accompanying suggestion, Sheridan promptly fell back toward Chancellorsville, making no apparent effort, as has been pointed out by Carswell McClellan, "to determine the exact condition of affairs before surrendering a tenable line holding the needed Brock road, and before abandoning Todd's Tavern, the key to the Federal left." * That evening Sheridan suggested to Meade's chief of staff that the trains should be sent back across the Rapidan at Ely's Ford.†

"I should like to know," said Hancock to Meade at twenty minutes past seven on the next morning, "whether the cavalry are at the Furnaces and at the junction of the Brock road from the Furnaces and at Todd's Tavern, or down the Brock road to my line"; and about the same time Meade was asking Hancock whether he was connected with the cavalry. At ten o'clock on the morning of the 7th Meade

* Notes on the Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan, p. 11. St. Paul, 1889.

† Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part ii, p. 467.

reminded Sheridan that he was already authorized, by existing instructions, to make such offensive operations against the enemy, as were consistent with the security of the trains, informed him that Ferrero's colored troops of Burnside's corps had been sent to assist him in the protection of the trains, and reiterated the permission already given to detach any portion of his command for offensive operations.*

Early on the morning of the 7th General Grant determined to abandon the attack upon Lee in the Wilderness and move during the day and night to Spottsylvania Court House, and in his directions to Meade, which in this instance were given in unusual detail, he said that the trains should be thrown forward early in the morning to the Ny River. The movement involved the adoption of Fredericksburg for a base, a change which the Washington authorities had refused Meade permission to make after Mine Run; and when at Spottsylvania, the army would be where Meade had desired to take it and could have taken it in the previous December without the loss of a single life.

Meade's orders, dated 3 P. M. of the 7th, would have carried the trains of the different corps upon that day to Chancellorsville, whence the Fifth and Sixth Corps trains would follow Sedgwick, who would reach that place by way of the pike and Plank road, past Alrich's and Piney Branch Church to the intersection of the road from that Church to Spottsylvania with the road from Alsop's to Block House. The Second Corps trains, keeping clear of the Brock road, would move by way of the Furnaces to Todd's Tavern. Warren, at 8.30 P. M., would move to Spottsylvania by way of the Brock road and Todd's Tavern, and Hancock would follow Warren. Grant ordered Burnside to follow Sedgwick and stop at Piney Branch Church. But on the 8th Sedgwick was halted between his first-named destination and Piney Branch Church, where the trains and reserve artillery were stopped, and Burnside's march was stayed at Alrich's. Meade ordered Sheridan to have a sufficient force on the approaches from the right to keep the corps commanders advised in time of the approach of the enemy. Sheridan was now relieved from the care of the

* Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part ii, p. 513.

trains which were to be parked on the left of the army, and his sole duty under his orders were to occupy the roads leading from the right and keep Stuart's cavalry off the Brock road, by which the troops of Warren and Hancock were to march.

On the morning of the 7th Custer and Devin were advanced to the position on the Brock road from which Sheridan had recalled them on the previous day, driving the Confederate cavalry to Todd's Tavern, at which point the fighting in Custer's front practically ceased.* Gregg's division came up on the left of Merritt, and the Confederate cavalry fell back on the Catharpin road across the Po River. One brigade of Merritt's division drove another force of Confederate cavalry some miles on the road to Spottsylvania. But at dark once more Sheridan called in his cavalry, and encamped Gregg and Merritt in the fields east of Todd's Tavern, thus abandoning the approaches from the right and possession of the wooded and most dangerous part of the Brock road over which the infantry must march; and in the morning Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry had possession of this road, had barricaded it by felling trees across it, and disputed every foot of ground, thus delaying the arrival at Spottsylvania until Lee's infantry were enabled to gain that point and successfully contest its occupation.

* Custer's Report.

CHAPTER XIX.

SPOTTSYLVANIA.

It was an hour before midnight when Meade, accompanied by Lieutenant-General Grant, left Hancock's headquarters and set out for Todd's Tavern along the narrow road through the woods which in places were still on fire. Compelled at one point by the burning forest to turn off the road to the right, the two generals were within a mile of Longstreet's corps, at that time on the way to Spottsylvania by a parallel road.* Meade, on arriving at Todd's Tavern at midnight, found Gregg and Merritt there without orders from Sheridan. The cavalry were in the way of the infantry, and therefore, at 1 A. M. of the 8th, Meade ordered Merritt to move his command immediately beyond Spottsylvania Court House, placing one brigade at Block House on the Shady Grove Church road. Merritt was told that it was of the utmost importance for him to open the Brock road to Spottsylvania without the slightest delay, as an infantry corps was then on its way to occupy that place. Gregg was ordered to move his division to Corbin's Bridge and to watch all the roads approaching from Parker's store, and, as soon as Hancock should occupy Todd's Tavern, to send a force on the Brock road to give warning to that general of the approach of the enemy. Here were orders once more contemplating the use of the cavalry as the eyes of the army and with a view to its welfare. It is true that these orders were in a way an indirect reflection upon Sheridan's abandonment of this important road, which two of the corps were ordered to use, and of the approaches to that road from the enemy, but it is certain that Meade had

* Humphreys's Virginia Campaign, p. 58.

no other thought than to make the most intelligent use possible of the misplaced cavalry force.

After Meade's orders had been given, orders from Sheridan were received by the cavalry directing Gregg to proceed at 5 A. M. by the Catharpin road to Shady Grove Church, Merritt to follow him to that place, pass him there, and turn eastward on the Shady Grove (Block House) road to Block House and there take position, Gregg then to move on the same road as far as the Po River, where he should take position supporting Merritt. Wilson was ordered from Alsop's by way of the Gate and Spottsylvania to Snell's Bridge, which is two miles south of the Court House. Wilson had bivouacked at Alrich's, not Alsop's. These orders of Sheridan, besides placing the cavalry with their backs toward the enemy for which they were to watch, were entirely impracticable, for the reason that at the time they were written the roads upon which Gregg and Merritt were ordered to move were held in force by the moving columns of the enemy, while Wilson, at Snell's bridge, would have been entirely outside of the arena of the movement, that crossing over the Po River not being used at all by the Confederates; and Wilson, had he succeeded in reaching the point to which he was ordered by Sheridan, would have been cut off by the advance of Longstreet's infantry from the rest of Meade's army,* and would have been in the same predicament in which Stuart found himself by the interposition of the Army of the Potomac in the Gettysburg campaign.

In the early morning Wilson drove Wickham's four regiments of cavalry from the Court House, but hearing that the Confederates were in force in the vicinity he evidently deemed it unwise to attempt to carry out Sheridan's order to proceed to Snell's bridge. Wilson occupied the Court House for two hours. In his report he says that if the Ninth Corps, which Grant had halted at Alrich's, had followed him this place could have been held; and he also expressed the opinion that if the troops on the Brock road

* For a full and authoritative discussion of this subject the reader is referred to Notes on the Personal Memories of P. H. Sheridan, by Carswell McClellan, Assistant Adjutant General of the First Division of the Cavalry Corps.

could have advanced farther, many Confederate prisoners could have been taken—the two opinions criticising movements on the flanks, for which no responsibility can attach to General Meade, similar to the errors already pointed out as occurring upon both flanks in the battle of the Wilderness. When Sheridan learned of the state of affairs on the Brock road he ordered Wilson back to Alsop's.

Upon receiving the orders of 1 A. M. of the 8th, which Meade had written with his own hand, Merritt at 3 A. M. advanced, and immediately found himself in contact with dismounted cavalry of the enemy. A half hour later the head of Warren's column reached Merritt's headquarters. At six o'clock, Merritt having suggested to Warren that the infantry could clear the road faster than the cavalry could, Warren started his troops forward, encountering at first slight opposition, which increased as he advanced, and at noon he was brought to a halt by Longstreet's troops just short of the junction of the road he was on with the road leading to the old Court House, where he was between two and three miles west of Spottsylvania. Merritt, on being relieved by Warren, was left along the Brock road awaiting orders from Sheridan until nearly noon. Of Sheridan's conduct of the cavalry corps a competent writer says: "General Sheridan, if the language of his Memoirs has weight in evidence, neglected the orders and rebelled against the authority of his superior and commanding officer, and Lieutenant-General Grant ordered him to the separate command that he coveted." *

On the 6th and 7th, as Meade had done with Pleasonton in the Gettysburg campaign, Lee kept Stuart, his cavalry commander, near himself. At dark on the 7th, preparatory to moving to Spottsylvania, he directed his chief of artillery, Pendleton, to send a staff officer to guide General Anderson, in command of Longstreet's corps, along a new road which had been cut out that day and which led to the right. Pendleton himself went to Anderson, who said his orders were to march at three in the morning, but he was preparing to start four hours earlier. A reconnoissance on Lee's extreme left on the morning of the 7th, as far as the Beale

* Carswell McClellan.

House on the Germanna road, had revealed to Lee the Union abandonment of the road and the ford,* and gave a clew to Grant's intentions. Ewell was told to extend to the right, and at daylight, if he found no large force in his front, he was to follow Anderson to Spottsylvania. Ewell was also told that Anderson had been directed to move as soon as he could withdraw, and would proceed by Todd's Tavern or Shady Grove Church, as circumstances might determine. Longstreet's corps, under Anderson, entered the Catharpin road between Todd's Tavern and Corbin's bridge, and after crossing the bridge followed the Shady Grove Church road to Spottsylvania Court House, reaching another bridge over the Po River, one mile west of the Block House and two and a half miles west of the Court House, at daylight of the 8th.† Here the two divisions, with the exception of two brigades sent to the Court House to help the Confederate cavalry there in their contest with Wilson's cavalry, turned off to the left to the support of Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry which were found disputing the Union advance.

Hancock was to follow Warren from the Wilderness, but his movement was necessarily retarded by the delay of Warren, who in turn was held back by the inability of Merritt to clear the Brock road, which, after being occupied, had been given up by Sheridan's orders on the previous day. When Hancock, at the head of his column, reached Todd's Tavern at nine o'clock on the morning of the 8th, he found that Gregg had been unable to carry out Meade's orders to advance to Corbin's bridge, and seeing the situation precisely as Meade had seen it, he sent a dispatch to Humphreys, Meade's chief of staff, saying: "I think the cavalry here ought to be pushed forward, supported, if necessary, by an infantry brigade. I shall send out a brigade immediately, with cavalry, to see what is on the Catharpin road."‡ This was done before noon. A Confederate horse battery, whose shells nearly reached the

* Pendleton's Report, Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part i, p. 1041.

† Humphreys's Virginia Campaign, p. 62.

‡ Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part ii, p. 531.

Tavern, was driven away. Advancing nearly to Corbin's bridge, Colonel Miles found that the enemy was on the opposite bank, and reported a long column of Confederate infantry moving south and toward Spottsylvania.

Ewell, moving past Parker's store and by the Shady Grove road, reached Spottsylvania at five o'clock on the 8th. Early, placed in command of Hill's corps owing to Hill's illness, and moving over by-roads, reached the Catharpin road south of Todd's Tavern, and about a mile from the Tavern encountered the infantry which Hancock had advanced.

By this time the cavalry had been withdrawn to participate in the cavalry raid which Grant that day authorized Sheridan to make. Hancock withdrew Miles, and as it was growing dark Early encamped for the night. As Hampton's cavalry participated in Early's attack upon Miles, it will be seen that the Union cavalry was withdrawn from contact with the Confederate cavalry upon the field of battle.

On the Union side, in the afternoon, Sedgwick was ordered to Warren's support. A strong attack was intended, of which Hancock was notified. The troops were exhausted. Daylight was fast disappearing. Little was accomplished, and after nightfall both sides extended their intrenchments. The presence of Fitzhugh Lee on the Brock road had given the possession of Spottsylvania to the Confederates.*

On the 9th, Hill's corps under Early, moving by way of the Shady Grove road, took position east of the Court House, covering the road to Fredericksburg. On the other side, Hancock moved into position on the right of Warren. In the morning the beloved Sedgwick was killed, Wright succeeding him in command of the Sixth Corps. Burnside moved from Alrich's on the Plank road to Gate on the road from Fredericksburg to Spottsylvania, his advance crossing the Ny River.

Lee's intrenched position literally covered Spottsylvania Court House and the approaches to that place from the west,

* The extraordinary misstatements made in Sheridan's interest in Badeau's Life of Grant and in the Memoirs of Grant and Sheridan are authoritatively corrected in Humphreys's Virginia Campaign, pp. 67-70.

north, and east as completely as an extinguisher covers a candle tip. From the Po River on the left, a third of a mile above the Shady Grove road bridge, which was covered by artillery, Lee's line ran north of east to the junction of the Brock and Block House roads and a half mile beyond, thence northwardly a half mile, thence eastwardly four hundred yards, and thence southwardly seven hundred yards to a point from which the line was continued subsequently in a southwardly direction until the Po River was reached south of Spottsylvania. Lee's position was one of extraordinary strength. Both his flanks rested on the river. Longstreet held the line on the left from the Po to the point beyond the junction of the Brock and Block House roads where the line turned northwardly, or, in other words, to the base of the salient. Ewell here took up the line holding the western side of the salient, the apex on the north and the eastern face, southwardly, for seven hundred yards. An interval was filled with skirmishers, and then Hill continued the line southwardly below Spottsylvania. In such a position, says Humphreys, Lee's strength was more than quadrupled.

Burnside's encounter on the 9th, on the Fredericksburg road, led Grant to think that Lee might be moving on his communications with Fredericksburg. On the evening of that day, therefore, Hancock, whose corps lay north of the Po, extending westwardly, from where that stream starts to run southwardly, toward old Court House, was ordered by Meade to cross the stream with a view to turning the enemy's left flank.

The crossing was effected, and Hancock swung eastward along the Block House road toward the wooden bridge over the Po. He was anxious to make the necessary second crossing of the stream here before halting, but found it impossible to do so on account of the woods and the darkness. The next morning Brooke's brigade crossed the Po a second time south of the bridge on the Shady Grove road, and Birney sent out on the Andrews Tavern road a force to cover Brooke's movement. This movement of Hancock so seriously threatened Lee's rear and his trains on the Louisa Court House road that had it not been made until the next morning, and had it then been pressed vigorously,

Humphreys thinks the Confederate left would have been turned and the enemy could have been attacked in front and rear at the same time.* As it was, Lee was given warning of the danger on his left just as Warren's movement at Mine Run and Hooker's advance across the Antietam had warned him of the danger to his flank upon earlier battlefields, and once more he hurried supports to the threatened point, Early, holding the Confederate line facing east, being ordered early on the 10th to move one of his divisions back to cover the crossing of the Po on the Shady Grove road, and to move another division by the road running northward into the Shady Grove road at Waites and drive back the Union troops, which had occupied the latter road and advanced to the south of it. Concerning the abandonment, on the 10th, of Hancock's turning movement, which change of plan for a direct frontal attack Humphreys says was a mistake,† the following assumption of responsibility is found in Grant's Memoirs: "Lee had weakened the other parts of his line to meet this movement of Hancock's, and I determined to take advantage of it. Accordingly, in the morning orders were issued for an attack in the afternoon on the center by Warren's and Wright's corps, Hancock to command all the attacking force. Two of his divisions were brought to the north side of the Po." ‡ Conceding this claim for the responsibility of Hancock's withdrawal, and pointing out that Hancock's command was to be confined to his own and Warren's corps in their joint operations, and that instead of commanding Wright, one of Hancock's divisions (that of Mott), which had been sent to the left of the Sixth Corps, was commanded by Wright, it is to be further observed that once more, as in the Wilderness, the movements of both flanks of the attacking forces were faulty, Burnside's corps on the left being isolated and unsupported.* As he had endeavored to guard his right in the Wilderness by suggesting that one of Burnside's divisions cover the roads where Ricketts had

* Virginia Campaign, p. 82.

† Ibid.

‡ Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, p. 222.

* Grant to Burnside, Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part ii, p. 611.

previously been stationed by his own orders, so now Meade fully considered the needs of the left flank. His information concerning the position of Burnside, who still remained outside of the Army of the Potomac, came from one of Grant's staff, as appears in Meade's dispatch to Grant of 12.40 P. M. of the 10th, saying that, from what Colonel Comstock had reported of the change of position of Burnside, and with Mott in that quarter, Wright ought to make a complete connection with Burnside.*

The attack from the center at 5 P. M. determined upon by Grant involved the return of Hancock's troops to the north bank of the Po, a movement full of peril for Barlow's division, which remained on the south bank after Birney and Gibbon had been withdrawn, and one which caused Meade so much anxiety that he asked Hancock to look after Barlow's withdrawal himself. Under Hancock's personal direction the successive steps of Barlow's movement were rapidly and skillfully made, the attacks of the enemy as the movement was under way being successfully repulsed.

At half past three in the afternoon Meade decided that Warren should attack at once, and ordered Gibbon's division of Hancock's corps to co-operate with Warren. Wright, on Warren's left, was ordered to be ready to attack, or to support Warren. By that time Warren had fought his way so close to the Confederate intrenchments that his men could not stand upon their feet without drawing a volley from the enemy. Attacking with the divisions of Crawford and Cutler and the brigades of Webb and Carroll under Gibbon, the right advancing through dense woods that disordered the ranks, Warren pressed forward under a heavy artillery and musketry fire, some of his troops going as far as the abatis and others reaching the crest of the parapet. Brigadier-General Rice, of Cutler's division, was mortally wounded, and Warren's attacking force was driven back with heavy loss. Hancock, returning to the ground as the fruitless assault was about over, was ordered to renew it with Birney's and Gibbon's divisions and part of the Fifth Corps; but this attack also failed. From Wright's front, Colonel Upton, in command of twelve regi-

* Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part ii, p. 596.

ments, was ordered to assault at six o'clock the angle of the enemy's works less than a mile to the left of the Spottsylvania road. Upton's arrangements for the assault were most carefully made, and may still serve as a model for an enterprise so desperate. After noiselessly moving to the edge of the woods, Upton's men, with a wild cheer and a rush, gained the parapet, where soldiers on both sides were bayoneted. Pouring over the works, Upton's troops gained a second line of intrenchments, but on his left he was not supported by Mott's division of the Second Corps as intended. Nevertheless, and though attacked front and flank, Upton formed his men outside of the works and held his ground until night, when he was ordered to withdraw. He lost one thousand in killed, wounded, and missing. He captured about as many prisoners, and also several stands of colors. During a reconnoissance made by the Ninth Corps along the Fredericksburg road toward the Court House, General Stevenson, commanding Burnside's First Division, was killed. General Crittenden arrived on the field and succeeded to the command on the next day.

At 3 P. M. on the afternoon of the 11th Grant directed Meade to move three divisions of the Second Corps by the rear of the Fifth and Sixth so as to join the Ninth Corps in a vigorous assault at four o'clock the next morning. In this dispatch Grant said: "I will send one or two staff officers over to-night to stay with Burnside and impress him with the importance of a prompt and vigorous attack." The point to be assaulted was the apex of the salient. There was to be a preliminary survey of the ground by Colonel Comstock, of Grant's staff, who set out in the afternoon in a rainstorm to lead three members of Hancock's staff to the vicinity where the assault was to be made. Comstock lost his way and wandered into the Ninth Corps lines, and it was consequently nearly dark before the contemplated survey began. Moving at ten o'clock of a pitch-dark night, Hancock's troops reached the Brown House, north of the salient, at midnight, and were advanced as near to the enemy's pickets as possible. Barlow, whose division was formed in two lines across the clearing, which curved from the Brown House to the apex of the salient, is said to have asked whether there was a ravine a thousand feet deep

between him and the enemy, and so imperfect had been the survey of the ground that he could get no definite reply to his question.* Birney formed in two lines on Barlow's right, Mott in rear of Birney, and Gibbon in reserve. The order to charge was given at half past four on the morning of the 12th. The divisions of Barlow and Birney rushed upon the Confederate works, the troops in the advance tearing down the abatis with their hands, bayoneting the Confederates, and converting the reversed muskets into clubs.

Four thousand prisoners, among them Major-General Edward Johnson and Brigadier-General George H. Steuart, thirty colors, and eighteen cannon, were captured. Hancock's impetuous advance continued until it encountered the second line of earthworks built by Gordon's division of Ewell's corps, and extending from Rodes's left center to Hill's left across the salient and cutting off the northern part of it. He was then compelled to fall back to the first line of works.

In Grant's dispatch to Meade of 3 P. M. of the 11th the lieutenant general had said that Warren and Wright should hold their corps as close as possible to the enemy in order to take advantage of any opportunity offered by the assault of Hancock and Burnside. Meade did not repeat to the corps commanders this portion of Grant's instructions, for the reason that Warren and Wright were already as close to the enemy as was judicious. Previous to the assault Meade held a personal conference with the corps commanders. Upon receiving word from Hancock of his success, Meade, before six o'clock, ordered Wright to assault on Hancock's right. The arrival of the Sixth Corps troops at the west angle of the salient was followed by furious fighting at this part of the enemy's works, the struggle extending along the whole line of the Second and Sixth Corps and continuing throughout the day. At six in the morning Meade told Warren that Wright would have to attack, and that he (Warren) might have to attack also and to be ready. Warren opened fire with his batteries and advanced his skirmishers. At eight, Meade told Warren to attack immediately with all possible force, in reply to which order

* Walker's The Second Army Corps, p. 469.

Warren objected that it gave him no time to attack the key point first. At quarter past nine Meade sent Warren a peremptory order to attack at all hazards with his whole force if necessary, and fifteen minutes later Warren was told not to hesitate to attack with the bayonet, that Meade had assumed the responsibility, and would take the consequences of failure. An hour later Grant told Meade that if Warren failed to attack promptly, to send Humphreys to relieve Warren. Warren's attack, which was repulsed, showed that Longstreet was holding the lower westward face of the salient in force, and that this part of the Confederate works had not been weakened for the purpose of resisting the assaults of Wright, Hancock, and Burnside. Indeed, it was vital to Lee to hold that portion of his line occupied by Longstreet.

Meade telegraphed to Grant, "Tell Hancock to hold on," for Meade, in the event of Warren's repulse, had ordered Warren to draw in his right and send his troops as fast as possible to Wright and Hancock.* Hancock's right was hard pressed, and when that gallant soldier asked Meade for help, the army commander told him at ten o'clock that he had not a man to spare, that all Warren's and Wright's troops were engaged; but if Warren failed, such of his troops as could be spared would be sent to Hancock's assistance. At half past ten Meade went to Hancock's line, and in his absence he directed his chief of staff to look after the shortening of Warren's line and the reinforcing of the left which he had previously ordered, and when an hour later, in reply to his inquiry of Humphreys, "What progress has been made?" the chief of staff replied that Crawford's division of Warren's corps was moving to Wright, but that it would be some time before the pickets were drawn in from the extreme right, Meade sent the urgent message, "Do not wait for pickets, but move on." Somewhat later he told Humphreys that he wanted one of Warren's divisions sent to Wright, and another to Hancock, and the rest of the corps to be held ready to follow, and at 2 P. M. he ordered Humphreys to make the movement indicated with the balance of the corps, Cutler having

* Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part ii, p. 654.

already gone and Meade himself having given the necessary order to Griffin. At 3 P. M. Meade informed Grant that he had organized a heavy column of assault from the Fifth and Sixth Corps and that Hancock would press forward at the same time, and he expressed the hope that Burnside, still under Grant's sole command, would do the same. Himself with Hancock, and sending Humphreys to Warren, Meade in the early morning had dispatched Colonel Lyman, of his staff, to follow and report the movements of Wright's corps. He was thus in close touch with the different parts of his army, and his dispatches to Hancock, Warren, Wright, and Humphreys bear abundant evidence of the ardor and energy displayed by Meade upon this field, as upon so many others.

Meade himself had suggested to Wright at noon the possibility of there being a point near the line of the Sixth Corps to which the whole of the Fifth Corps could be moved and thrown with success upon the enemy, and Wright had replied that with the combined troops of the two corps the line of the enemy at the angle could be carried, but at a later hour Hancock and Wright thought the prospect of success not bright enough to warrant the attempt, and the project was abandoned with Meade's approval. In the night the Union line was greatly shortened. On the left Burnside's assault produced no substantial results, and his position was a source of danger to Hancock, who, in the evening, said that Burnside's right did not connect with his own left. At the west angle the fighting continued during the night.

To Meade, the Secretary of War on this day sent a cordial dispatch as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON CITY, *May 12, 1864.*

This department congratulates you and your heroic army and returns its cordial thanks for their gallant achievements during the last seven days, and hopes that the valor and skill thus far manifested will be crowned with the fruits of ultimate and decisive victory. . . . Trusting that Divine Providence may have you in his keeping in the midst of the dangers that now surround you, I remain,

Truly yours,

EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*

On the next day Grant telegraphed to Stanton:

"General Meade has more than met my most sanguine expectations. He and Sherman are the fittest officers for large commands I have come in contact with. If their services can be rewarded by promotion to the rank of major general in the regular army the honor would be worthily bestowed, and I would feel personally gratified. I would not like to see one of these promotions at this time without seeing both." Halleck urged Grant to press the promotions of Meade and Sherman, and Stanton said the promotions would be made.

It is still to be regretted that General Grant did not follow his better instincts as expressed on the spot in this appreciative dispatch. Sherman's promotion was made, Meade's was not. When Meade asked Grant why this had happened, the lieutenant general replied, "Because, if the appointments had been made simultaneously, you would have ranked Sherman as a major general in the regular army, and I wanted him to rank you. But now that his appointment has been made I will see that yours is made right away."

The days went by, thousands and thousands of officers in the Army of the Potomac, from corps commanders down to company sergeants, had received their promotions for the Wilderness campaign. The services of nearly everybody, except the commander of the army, had been recognized, and then, to his amazement, General Meade heard of a proposal to make Sheridan, who was not a general officer in the regular army at all, a major general in that organization. Then General Meade went to Grant and said that the proposal to make Sheridan a major general in the regular army over his head was an insult to the army which he commanded and to him, that it should not be done without his protest, and that if it were done he would leave the army. Meade's indignation and vehemence made such an impression upon Grant that the latter promised to have Meade's appointment made at once, to date back some months so that he would continue to rank Sheridan, which was immediately done. It was after this interview that Grant expressed to Admiral Porter his regret that Meade felt so strongly in the matter, and again named Meade and

Sherman as the ablest army commanders of the Union side. But strangely enough, after the war, when Grant had become President, the curious and unfounded excuse was given for Sheridan's promotion to the lieutenant generalcy over the head of Meade, that previously Sheridan had been overslaughed by Meade in the promotion to the rank of major general.

On the 13th Grant said: "We must get by the right flank of the enemy for the next fight." On that morning it was discovered that Lee had withdrawn from the salient and had constructed a line of intrenchments across the base of this projection. Meade ordered Warren to march that night in rear of the army, pass to the left of the Ninth Corps, and make his dispositions to assault the enemy at four o'clock in the morning on the road from Gate to Spottsylvania Court House. Wright was ordered to the left of Warren for the purpose of attacking on the road from Massaponax Church to Spottsylvania. Warren was directed to move by way of Scott's, Landrum's, and the ford of Ny River, near Landrum's. The rear of Warren's column was off by midnight, the march being impeded by bad weather, heavy roads, and intense darkness, and the proposed attack had to be abandoned. Upton's brigade of the Sixth Corps occupied an elevation at Gayle's on the Massaponax Church road a half mile south of the Ny. Upton was forced from the hill by Mahone's infantry and Chambliss's cavalry brigade. Meade directed Wright to regain the hill and Warren to co-operate. Ayres's brigade of the Fifth Corps seized the position and was followed by Wright's troops. That night Meade suggested to Grant that Hancock should be moved around before daylight, and that Burnside, who had been on the left, should hold the right flank.*

In the midst of their cares and responsibilities it is interesting to find Meade telegraphing to Hancock that evening to send word to Mrs. Armstrong, at whose house Meade had his last headquarters, that her son had telegraphed news of her husband, and Hancock replying that the information had been sent.

* Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part ii, p. 747.

Hancock, leaving one division temporarily to cover Burnside's right, was directed to move at four o'clock on the morning of the 15th to the Fredericksburg and Spottsylvania road, following the Sixth Corps route. On the night of the 14th Field's division of Longstreet's corps was moved to Hill's right, and the next night Kershaw's division was also moved to the Confederate right.

While the North was enheartened by glowing accounts of the progress made, Brigadier-General Vogdes, with clearer vision, wrote from Portsmouth to General W. F. Smith on the 14th: "Our success in upper Virginia hitherto has been entirely due to superior numbers and strategical movements. On the field we have been tactically beaten."

On the 15th, owing to the absence of Sheridan's cavalry corps from the army, Rosser's brigade of Confederate cavalry was enabled to move from near Piney Branch Church to the Ny River in the rear of Grant's lines, a feat indicative of the danger to the army communications caused by the absence of the cavalry. Rosser stopped at the hospital of the Fifth Corps not far from where Meade's headquarters were on the night of the 13th, rescued all the Confederate prisoners who could walk, and captured those of the Union attendants who were without badges indicating that they belonged to the hospital service.

On the 16th Meade suggested to Grant that the Fredericksburg Railroad be put in order, and informed him that the work would take from ten to twelve days. On the 17th the construction corps began work on the railroad at Acquia Creek, and completed it on the 22d. On the night of the 17th Hancock and Wright were returned to the right, with the intention of attacking at daylight of the 18th. The enemy, however, was found on the alert behind new intrenchments, and the attacks were made without success. Neither the corps nor division commanders had much confidence in their ability to accomplish anything. Meade ordered the attack to be abandoned, and the Sixth Corps was moved back to the left of the Fifth. Meade directed Hancock to move after nine o'clock on the night of the 18th to the left again, to the vicinity of Anderson's Mill, where the Massaponax Church road crosses the Ny. Burnside was moved to the left of the Sixth Corps.

For the purpose of ascertaining whether the Army of the Potomac was moving to his right, Lee directed Ewell on the 19th to make a demonstration. Making a detour around the Union right, Ewell encountered Kitching's brigade of the Fifth Corps and Tyler's division, which joined the army on the 17th, and which was posted near the Harris House on the Fredericksburg road. Meade ordered Hancock on the left to move up a division in double-quick time, to be followed by the rest of the Second Corps. Warren was also ordered to send troops to the threatened point. The fighting continued until about nine o'clock, when Ewell fell back across the Ny. This sudden appearance on the right and rear of the army and near Meade's headquarters, causing a great panic among the trains, making the line of communications with Fredericksburg temporarily unsafe, and compelling Grant to postpone his contemplated flank movement to the left, would hardly have been possible if the cavalry of the army had covered the flanks.

By Grant's directions, given verbally on May 8th, Sheridan on the morning of the 9th had set out with some ten thousand cavalry and moved by Beaver Dam Station on the Virginia Central Railroad, Yellow Tavern, Meadow bridge, Gaines's Mill, and Bottom bridge to Haxall's Landing. His return route was by way of White House on the Pamunkey, Aylett's on the Mattapony, and Chesterfield Station on the Fredericksburg Railroad. One brigade of Confederate cavalry clung to his rear, while Stuart with two brigades made a circuit, and at Yellow Tavern interposed between Sheridan and Richmond. Here Stuart was mortally wounded, and his four thousand sabers, less than half of Sheridan's force, were defeated. It is not to be inferred from Humphreys's account of the movement that anything substantial was accomplished by it. Fitzhugh Lee says "it would have been the usual record of nothing accomplished and a broken-down command, except that at Yellow Tavern the Confederate cavalry chieftain was mortally wounded." *

At Chancellorsville Hooker was in the dark as to Lee's movements by reason of the absence of Stoneman and his

* General Lee, in Great Commanders Series, p. 337.

cavalry. In the Gettysburg campaign Lee had been at a disadvantage because of Stuart's absence. The Union right flank and rear at Spottsylvania were peculiarly exposed because of Sheridan's absence upon a raid, which, while it gave that corps commander the opportunity to attract public attention, if not to win "a separate military renown," contributed substantially very little toward the general result.

Humphreys states that the Union losses in killed and wounded at Spottsylvania, from the 8th to the night of the 19th, were fifteen thousand seven hundred and twenty-two, and in missing two thousand and one, making a total loss of seventeen thousand seven hundred and twenty-three.* He places the total Union losses at the battles of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania at thirty-three thousand one hundred and ten, increased to thirty-seven thousand three hundred and thirty-five by the four thousand two hundred and twenty-five sick sent to Washington.

* Virginia Campaign.

CHAPTER XX.

THE NORTH ANNA AND COLD HARBOR.

THE movement of the Army of the Potomac and Burnside's corps, postponed because of Ewell's demonstration on the 19th, was carried out on the night of the 20th and 21st. Hancock led the way through Guiney's Station, Bowling Green, and Milford to the right bank of the Mattapony. It was hoped Lee would come out of his intrenchments and attack Hancock, when Lee in turn would be attacked by the other corps of the Union army. Lee did nothing of the kind, but, when he learned of his opponent's movement, set out to interpose once more between the Army of the Potomac and Richmond, and moved to Hanover Junction, behind the North Anna River and less than a score of miles south of Meade's army. Grant determined to force the passage of the North Anna, to which Lee offered no very serious obstacles. After crossing that stream on the 23d and 24th, Grant wrote to Burnside that the situation appeared very different from what he had expected.* The inception and execution of this movement appear to have been almost entirely Lieutenant-General Grant's. His directions to Meade were given in much detail, and there is a conspicuous absence from the official records of those careful orders governing every part of the army which were characteristic of Meade, whether his chief of staff were Butterfield, Warren, Humphreys, or Webb, or whether the orders appeared over the name of the competent Seth Williams.

Grant's first direction was that Hancock should move as far toward Richmond on the line of the Fredericksburg

* Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part iiii, p. 168.

Railroad as he could go in a single march, it being desired to reach Bowling Green and Milford Station. To the corps commanders Meade simply inclosed Grant's orders for the 23d, carrying the different corps to the North Anna.

The distance from the right of Lee's position at Spottsylvania to Hanover Junction by the Telegraph road was twenty-eight miles. The distance from Hancock's starting point to the same place by the same road was three miles less. But Hancock's circuitous route to the railroad and thence to Hanover Junction would make a march of thirty-four miles. Humphreys says that if Hancock had been ordered to march by the more direct route over the Telegraph road, and had been followed by Warren, there would have been more chance of success, because Lee would not have been given time to put his army behind intrenchments on the south side of the North Anna, which point was reached by two of Lee's corps on the night of the 22d, while the corps of the Union army were still from fifteen to nineteen miles distant.

Once across the North Anna the Army of the Potomac found itself in a most extraordinary position. Lee's left rested on Little River, his line running northward to the North Anna at Oxford, thence extending eastward along the river for three quarters of a mile to a point from which the line ran back southeastwardly, being protected in front and on both flanks by water. When Grant threw his troops across the river to the right and left of these works he found that his army was divided by the enemy, and that to re-enforce either wing from the other the river would have to be crossed twice. Whatever the secret thoughts of Meade, Humphreys, Hancock, Warren, and Wright may have been in regard to this movement, those faithful soldiers let no personal views interfere with a prompt obedience of the lieutenant general's orders. The absence of Sheridan's cavalry corps, whose return was now hourly expected, again left Meade in the dark as to the situation of affairs on the right, and he said to Warren, on the 25th, that it was of the utmost importance to find out whether it was worth while to stay there and make any other movements on the enemy's left. As for himself, he was inclined to believe that, because of the several streams in that quarter, it

was not worth while. He could not say positively, for what of information, but as soon as Sheridan arrived he would have that officer make a reconnoissance. This, it may be said, it would have been better to have made before the North Anna was crossed.

There was nothing to do but to withdraw the troops. The army was fortunate to escape without disaster from so perilous a position. To the Confederates the opportunity was lost because General Lee was confined to his couch by illness. On the 24th, in order "to secure the greatest attainable unanimity in co-operative movements and greater efficiency in the administration of the army," by Grant's orders Burnside's corps was assigned to the Army of the Potomac. It is most creditable to Burnside that, having commanded the army when Meade was a mere division commander, he now served under that officer without a murmur.

At Hanover Junction Lee received re-enforcements numbering eighty-seven hundred muskets and six hundred officers. On the 26th Meade suggested to Grant that, in view of the contemplated movement to the left, General Smith at White House be directed to repair the railroad bridge at that point, and that arrangements be made for the transfer of the base of supplies from Port Royal to that place—suggestions which Grant immediately asked Halleck at Washington to carry out.

Recrossing the North Anna, the march now began after dark of the 26th, by way of the left bank of the Pamunkey to Hanover town, thirty-three miles away. Two divisions of the cavalry corps, once more with the army, preceded the infantry, and the other cavalry division brought up the rear after the reconnoissance across Little River on the right which Meade had desired. About midday of the 28th the Sixth Corps crossed the Pamunkey and took position across the Hanover Court House or River road at Crump's Creek. The Second Corps formed on the left of the Sixth, extending to Hawes's Shop. The Fifth Corps was posted two miles in front of Hanover town, its right on the Richmond road, its left near where the Totopotomoy is crossed by the road from Hawes's Shop to Old Church. The Ninth Corps crossed the Pamunkey at midnight. The march had

carried the Army of the Potomac from the north to the northeast of Richmond, Hanover town being seventeen miles from the Confederate capital.

On the morning of the 28th Sheridan was ordered to advance on the road from Hawes's Shop to Richmond to ascertain the whereabouts of the enemy. Gregg's division and Custer's brigade of Torbert's division drove back, from a position a mile beyond Hawes's Shop, five brigades of Confederate cavalry. On the previous evening Sheridan had reported that Breckinridge was said to be at Hanover Court House with ten thousand men, and that Wickham's and Lomax's cavalry brigades were said to be at the same place. At twenty minutes past five in the afternoon of a season when darkness comes latest Sheridan had stopped on the safe side of Crump's Swamp, and on the 29th it became necessary to send Russell's division of the Sixth Corps all the way to Hanover Court House to ascertain that there were no Confederate troops except small bodies of cavalry in that vicinity. This reconnoissance was extended on the left by Hancock toward Atlee's Station and Richmond, and by Warren toward Shady Grove, Burnside being held in reserve near Hawes's Shop. Meade was at Hancock's headquarters, and at half past three from Hawes's House he sent word to Grant that Hancock had encountered the enemy's skirmish line. Grant authorized Meade to strengthen the front either that night or the next morning. Meade threw forward supports from the Second and Fifth Corps, and told Wright to hold his advanced position.

The force of the enemy which Hancock's leading division, that of Barlow, discovered intrenched behind the Totopotomoy was the left of Lee's army once more interposed between Richmond and the Army of the Potomac. Ewell's corps, under Early, extended from near Beaver Dam Creek on the right to the Totopotomoy near Pole Green Church, about four miles from Hawes's Shop. Longstreet's corps was on Early's right, and Hill and Breckinridge on Early's left extended the line to a point beyond Atlee's Station. Lee was thus covering the roads leading from the Pamunkey to Richmond. Lee's troops had crossed the South Anna by the bridges on the Central and the Fredericksburg Railroads, Early moving past Merry Oaks and

Atlee's to Huntley's Corner, and Longstreet past Ashland and Atlee's. Both corps arrived at their destination on the afternoon of the 28th, before the Army of the Potomac had completed the crossing of the Pamunkey.

Barlow's division of the Second Corps on the evening of the 29th lay behind the Totopotomoy along the base of the angle formed by that stream, the road leading to Atlee's Station and the road connecting Cold Harbor and Hanover Court House, the apex of this angle being where these highways intersect just south of Polly Huntley's Corner. Being here, and finding the enemy, Barlow's division became the nucleus to the left and right of which Meade now gathered the Army of the Potomac. The Sixth Corps, to the right, was ordered to the south to connect with Hancock's right. Burnside was ordered into line on Hancock's left. Warren was directed to support Griffin's division moving toward the enemy on the south side of the Totopotomoy, and Sheridan, who upon that evening had his headquarters back at New Castle Ferry on the Pamunkey, was ordered to connect his pickets with Warren's and to keep up the connection.* All day on the 30th the Confederates continued to prove annoying on Warren's left. Warren informed Colonel Forsyth, of Sheridan's staff, of the presence of the enemy, and complained of the state of affairs to Meade at different hours of the day, from seven in the morning until afternoon, saying that Sheridan, instead of picketing his (Warren's) left, was picketing a road in the rear. Humphreys, Meade's chief of staff, replied that Sheridan's instructions called for the picketing of the roads as Warren desired. As late as 3 P. M. Warren had to send a large infantry force off his line of march to drive away what was thought to be the enemy's cavalry, and he said that Sheridan had entirely failed to cover his left and did not co-operate in any reliable way.

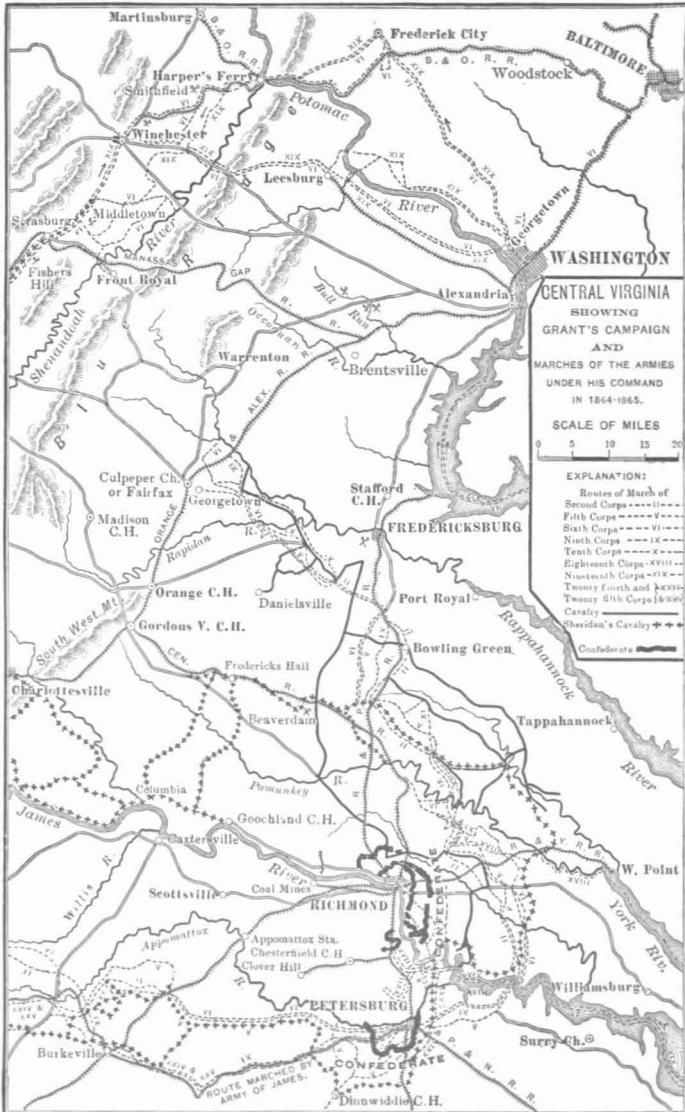
At 4 P. M. Warren reported to Meade that the enemy in force had got around his left flank. At half past six Warren was doing battle in the height of an attack from the road on his left, and Meade ordered Hancock and Burnside to attack for the purpose of relieving Warren.

* Official War Records, vol. xxxvi, part iii, p. 303.

Wright had previously been ordered to attack if practicable.

On the morning of the 30th, Lee anticipating that the Union commanders intended to extend their left to Bethesda Church on the Mechanicsville and Old Church road, and would then move by the left flank, and thinking that the threatened movement could only be arrested by striking at once that part of the Army of the Potomac which was south of the Totopotomoy, sent Early across Beaver Dam Creek and eastward on the Mechanicsville and Old Church pike as far as Bethesda Church. Had the Union cavalry picketed Warren's left, Warren would have been informed more exactly of the true state of affairs. As it was, as may be seen from his dispatches to Meade already cited, the force which Warren supposed to be Confederate cavalry was ascertained, when Crawford sent Hardin's brigade south as far as the Mechanicsville pike, to be Early's infantry, and Hardin's brigade was driven back to the Shady Grove Church road, followed by the enemy, who made a resolute attack at the place where the cross road from the pike enters the more northern road. This flank attack of the Confederates was repulsed, and at night Early fell back a short distance on the pike.

In reply to the communications sent him, Sheridan said in the evening that he had had troops on Warren's left all day; but Torbert's report shows that the pickets of his division were near the Matadequin, that his engagement on the road from Old Church to Cold Harbor did not take place until late in the afternoon, and that Torbert, after driving before him whatever force of Confederate cavalry was on that road, bivouacked within a mile and a half of Cold Harbor. Colonel Devin, commanding the Second Brigade of Torbert's division, says he was ordered to communicate with Warren's left and to picket the Cold Harbor road, and that he placed his pickets three fourths of a mile in front of Matadequin Run, his main force being posted on that run. Custer's brigade, which with Merritt's brigade went to Devin's support, encamped at Parsley's Mill on the Matadequin. At twenty minutes to three in the afternoon Sheridan also ordered Gregg's division down the Cold Harbor road as far as Prospect Church. These dispositions and



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movements of the cavalry, which failed to occupy the Mechanicsville pike on Warren's left, make it sufficiently plain why Warren's flank was in danger during the day, for Warren had moved westward along the Shady Grove road until he came to the wooded swamp between him and Early, and his engagement was in progress while Sheridan's cavalry was in the rear along the Matadequin.

Wilson's division of cavalry was kept on the right of the army with the twofold purpose of protecting that flank and destroying the bridges and two railroads. Wilson says that Sheridan relieved him of the latter duty; but by Meade's orders Wilson set out to resume the interrupted work late on the 31st, and drove Young's cavalry brigade through Hanover Court House. Instructed to advance on the Cold Harbor road, Sheridan found the enemy's cavalry and a brigade of infantry at Cold Harbor. After gaining possession of the place Sheridan directed Torbert to retire. Meade, however, ordered Sheridan to hold Cold Harbor at all hazards, the place, as pointed out in Humphreys's Virginia Campaign, being an important point to Meade's army and on its line of extension to the left.

At a quarter to ten on the evening of the 31st Meade ordered Wright to withdraw his corps and move to Cold Harbor. Wright was told that Sheridan had been ordered to hold Cold Harbor until the arrival of the Sixth Corps, and Wright was urged to reach his destination as soon after daylight as possible. Meade had inquired about the roads, and had ascertained that the road from Bethesda Church to Cold Harbor had been held by the enemy all day and was intrenched. Wright therefore was necessarily directed to follow the roundabout route by Hawes's Shop and the Old Church road.

General W. F. Smith, on the 30th, arrived at White House with a command which he reported to comprise sixteen thousand infantry. The previous evening Grant had ordered him to march up the south bank of the Pamunkey to New Castle. On the night of the 31st Smith halted near Old Church. At daylight the next morning Smith received the bewildering order from Grant's headquarters to proceed at once to New Castle Ferry and place himself between the Fifth and Sixth Corps. Without giving his

men time to make coffee, Smith marched to New Castle Ferry on the Pamunkey only to find that Meade's army was not in that vicinity. The error in the order—Smith's intended destination being Cold Harbor, and not New Castle Ferry—had been discovered at Old Church, while on his march to Cold Harbor, by General Wright, to whom Smith's aid showed the order, and Wright called Smith's attention to the probable mistake. Later in the day Grant ordered Smith to report to Meade.

Lee met the Union movement to the left by extending his right, at which part of his line, on the 31st, Longstreet's corps, under Anderson, relieved Ewell's corps, under Early. The extreme Confederate right was held by Hoke's division sent by Beauregard to Lee, and Kershaw moved down toward Gaines's Mill in the endeavor to connect with Hoke. On the 1st a Confederate movement by Hoke and Kershaw toward Old Cold Harbor was intended. Kershaw twice attacked Sheridan, but was repulsed, and at nine o'clock the head of Wright's corps arrived and relieved the cavalry, which, later in the day, Meade ordered to make a reconnoissance toward Sumner's bridge on the Chickahominy. Sheridan by this time, however, was encamped at Parsley's Mill and other points north of Cold Harbor and in the rear of the army, and it was too late to carry out Meade's order on that day.

In the early afternoon of the 1st Wright covered the road intersections at Cold Harbor, the Bethesda Church road, the Gaines's Mill road, and the road to Dispatch Station, with his right and left refused. He could not connect with Warren, and he was anxious for Smith's corps to fill up the gap. Smith, however, had lost four or five hours by going to New Castle Ferry, and, besides, he had come without ammunition except what the troops carried. Meade authorized him to call on the adjacent corps commanders to supply his immediate necessities, but informed Smith that the transportation of the army had been reduced to the minimum and that Smith must hurry his own trains forward. Smith thereupon asked Wright to send him ninety-five thousand rounds of ammunition that night. At noon Meade ordered Smith to follow Wright on the road from Old Church to Cold Harbor, to form on Wright's

right and to co-operate with Wright in a contemplated attack. To meet this threatened attack from the direction of Cold Harbor the divisions of Anderson's corps of Lee's army moved to the right on Hoke. This movement across Warren's front was observed by him at half past ten, and he was ordered by Meade to attack. The swamps and woods in front of Warren delayed him until the Confederate movement had been accomplished.

The attack of Wright and Smith upon the Confederate intrenchments running at right angles with the road from New Cold Harbor to Old Cold Harbor began at six o'clock. Ricketts's division moving along this road took five hundred prisoners, and carried the main line of the intrenchments, but the Confederates formed a new line in the rear. The losses in killed and wounded in the two Union corps engaged were twenty-two hundred.

At half past three in the afternoon Meade ordered Hancock to make arrangements for a night march by way of Hawes's Shop near Via's House, where Meade had his headquarters, to Cold Harbor, where Hancock would take position on Wright's left, which Meade said it was desired to extend to the Chickahominy. Meade's communications to Hancock often gave forth glints that indicated the meeting of two knightly spirits, and upon this occasion he added: "Every confidence is felt that your gallant corps of veterans will move with vigor and endure the necessary fatigue. You will pass by my headquarters, and I should like to see you as you pass"; and fifteen minutes later Hancock replied, "All right." Wherever the army commander wanted Hancock to go, there the corps commander would lead his troops if the way could be forced. The hour was never too late, the distance too long, or the difficulties to be overcome too great for the superb Hancock to take up the march or urge on the battle lines. Together these two had borne the burden of the day at Gettysburg. The quality of both as men and soldiers was something fine and noble, and when one reads now the message above quoted and comes later to Meade's words of manly sympathy sent to Hancock after Ream's Station, the pity grows that the need for creating a "separate military renown" for the differently fibered new element in the army should ever have

been permitted to make it appear that one of these great soldiers stood in the way of the advancement of the other.

During the day the enemy had made repeated attempts to retake the rifle pits beyond the Totopotomoy carried by Hancock on the 31st, and his troops had endured many days and nights of marching and fighting, but by half past eight in the evening his corps was starting toward Cold Harbor.

On the night of June 1st Meade said to Grant that he thought the attack at Cold Harbor should be renewed as soon as Hancock was within supporting distance, and be made by Wright, Smith, and Hancock, with Warren attacking in conjunction and Burnside held in readiness to support Warren. The plan had the immediate approval of Grant. To Wright Meade said: "I do not like extending too much; it is the trouble we have had all along of occupying too long lines and not massing enough." Meade was anxious to attack before the enemy could perfect his intrenchments, and said, "If we give them any time they will dig so as to prevent any advance on our part." At quarter past ten on the night of June 1st Meade had not heard a word from Smith, who in the morning had been ordered to report to him; and when Meade ordered Smith to be ready to attack on Wright's right on the morning of the 2d, Smith replied that "it was simply preposterous," thus indicating that two insubordinate corps commanders were now with the army where before there had been but one. Having supplied Smith with ammunition, forage, and rations, Meade then sent a division of Hancock's corps to his aid.

Wilson's cavalry division on the right, resuming by Meade's orders the work of destroying the railroads and bridges, accomplished that object, but one of his brigades at Ashland was attacked by cavalry from two directions and was driven back to Hanover Court House. Sheridan had been ordered by Meade to attack on Wright's left between Gaines's Mill and the Chickahominy, and Wright and Hancock were so informed by Meade, but, as we have seen, Sheridan reported to Meade at six o'clock in the evening that his camps were scattered in the rear of the army, and that he would make the movement in the morning. On June 2d, therefore, Gregg advanced to Sumner's bridge on

the Chickahominy, attacked with his two brigades the enemy's cavalry, infantry, and artillery, which he found strongly posted near the bridge, took their advanced positions, and held what he had gained until Hancock's corps arrived.

On the 2d Warren was closed up on Smith at Woody's, and Burnside was directed to withdraw from his position on the right flank of the army, which he held after Hancock's withdrawal. Before eight o'clock Hancock was in position on Wright's left. Lee made corresponding movements to his right, his cavalry crossing the Chickahominy. Owing to the heat and exhaustion of the troops Grant decided to postpone the contemplated attack until half past four the next morning. On the other side Lee attempted a flank movement on Meade's right in an effort to drive the Army of the Potomac along his front, but accomplished little more than the capture of a number of skirmishers.

With part of his cavalry south of the Chickahominy, the right of Lee's infantry rested on the swamps north of that stream and ran northwestwardly behind the road to Cold Harbor from Dispatch Station, which is farther down the Chickahominy, to the Shady Grove road on which Early's corps, on Lee's left, was intrenched after his movement upon the Union right flank. On the Union side Warren held the line from Bethesda Church southward to Smith's right near Woody's. Smith, Wright, and Hancock in the order named carried the line across the road between New Cold Harbor and Old Cold Harbor to Barker's Mill, on a stream which empties near by into the Chickahominy. Burnside's corps, to the right of Warren, occupied a line with the left near Bethesda Church, and running parallel with the Mechanicsville pike and crossing that road toward the Via House.

On Lee's right was high ground strengthened by intrenchments. In Warren's front were wooded swamps. Therefore, says Humphreys, Lee's front was the assailable part of his line.* At the hour named Hancock, Wright, and Smith advanced and gained a position, which they held, and intrenched close up to the main intrenchments of the

* Virginia Campaign, p. 181.

enemy. In less than an hour the three corps lost four thousand in killed and wounded. As has been said, at the North Anna the lieutenant general had directed the movement in detail, but at Cold Harbor he left the handling of the army to its immediate commander. Meade here encountered the same problem that had proved so serious to Lee at Gettysburg, namely, the difficulty of attaining simultaneous assaults by his corps commanders. At six in the morning Warren said he could not well advance unless the troops on his right and left also advanced. At quarter to eight Wright said that if he advanced without a corresponding advance on his right by Smith he would be taken in flank and reverse, and that his flanks were waiting for Smith and Hancock to move. At eight he said Smith was behind him, and that the enemy was firing down his lines. Smith said that he had no hope of being able to carry the works in his front unless a movement of the Sixth Corps on his left could relieve his flank. Out of such a difficulty presented to him by three corps commanders simultaneously there was but one opening, and that Meade seized by ordering his lieutenants to advance without waiting for one another. Early in the morning Grant had authorized Meade to suspend the attack as soon as it became certain that it could not succeed. The corps and division commanders being of opinion that the prospects of success in the event of further assaults were not bright, Meade at half past one suspended the attack. At this moment Burnside was advancing upon Early, whose left had been successfully attacked by Wilson's cavalry from the rear, a movement which Meade ordered. Warren co-operated with Burnside in the morning in driving Early from the Shady Grove road, and also repulsed an attack upon his right center by Gordon. Meade sent Birney's division of the Second Corps to Warren's support. Warren lost four hundred, and Burnside eight hundred, in killed and wounded. The advanced positions were held, and by Meade's orders the lines of Warren and Burnside contracted. Meade directed Sheridan to send another cavalry division to Wilson. That night Meade asked Grant if anything should be done about the York River Railroad, as the army would be embarrassed by "bad, detestably bad roads" if it were detained on the

Chickahominy, and Grant replied that he hoped before the 15th to change his base to the James River.

The losses in the Army of the Potomac in the assaults on the 1st and 3d of June numbered seventeen hundred and sixty-nine killed, fifteen hundred and thirty-seven missing (most of them killed), wounded sixty-six hundred and forty-two. Between the crossing of the Pamunkey on May 28th and June 1st the losses were four hundred killed, sixteen hundred and twenty-two wounded, and one thousand missing, making a total loss of twelve thousand nine hundred and seventy. According to Medical Director McParlin, the total losses, including the sick sent to Northern hospitals, amounted to seventeen thousand one hundred and twenty-nine for the five days.

Humphreys places the total Confederate losses, from June 1st to 12th, between four thousand and five thousand.

"I hope," said Meade, "the country has now had enough of direct assaults upon intrenchments."

Aside from the orders to make and suspend the attack, the voluminous records relating to Cold Harbor seem to indicate that possibly the result at the North Anna had convinced the lieutenant general of the possession in Meade of an instrument that might as well be relied upon. He did suggest on the 3d that two or more coehorns might be used in Barlow's front. Meade replied that the coehorns had been in use all the afternoon on Hancock's front. On the evening of the 4th Grant suggested to Meade that every battery fire upon the enemy for an hour at midnight. "It will have the effect," he said, "to wake up the whole of the enemy's camp and keep them on the watch until daylight." Meade replied as follows: "I can order the batteries to be opened as you suggest, but while it keeps the enemy awake, their reply, which they will undoubtedly make, will keep our people awake; and in addition it will interfere with the approaches I have ordered to be made to-night." Thereupon Grant said the firing need not begin. But Meade, with complete and soldierly fidelity to the spirit of even a suggestion from a superior authority, directed his corps commanders to fire in the event of the enemy opening fire, and if the return fire would not unnecessarily disturb the troops of his own army or interfere with intended movements.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MOVEMENT UPON PETERSBURG.

AFTER every battle, from the crossing of the Rapidan to the present time, Lee had remained in possession of the field. Nevertheless, and although tactically, without reference to the almost unvarying failure of the direct assaults, there was much that was faulty in the operations of the Union army in the face of the enemy—as in the exposure of both flanks at the Wilderness, in the failure of the cavalry to clear the road to Spottsylvania, in the exposure of the rear at the same place, in the assumption of the false position across the North Anna, and in the failure of Sheridan, upon his return to the army, to cover the left flank south of the Totopotomoy—in spite of these glaring, tactical defects, most of which would not have existed had the young, comparatively unknown and untested Sheridan been responsible to General Meade alone, strategically, Lieutenant-General Grant had been moving steadily toward a point where he would form a junction with Butler's forces, and, if he perceived them, not for an instant had he responded to Lee's invitations to operate on the Confederate left flank instead of the right. Successful as Lee had been in anticipating every one of Grant's movements toward Richmond and in repulsing the superior forces of his opponents, nevertheless the apparent political necessity of saving the Confederate capital from capture had already brought him so close to the point he was attempting to cover that his movements were promoting the juncture of hitherto separate Union armies. While tactically the Confederate movements were skillful and the Union movements often faulty, strategically Lee's movements were fatal to his army, while Grant's tended to secure a union of forces that eventually

must crush his opponent. Grant had now reached the scene of McClellan's battles with a loss of over fifty thousand men within a single month.

On June 5th Grant wrote to Halleck that he could not accomplish all he hoped without a greater sacrifice of life than he was willing to make. He said his plan from the start had been to beat Lee's army north of Richmond, to destroy the Confederate lines of communication north of the James, and then to transfer his own army to the south side of that river and besiege Lee in Richmond. After a month of desperate fighting Lee had not been beaten in a single contest, and the Confederate lines of communication north of the James had not yet been destroyed, although in places they had been temporarily injured. The movement by the left flank had thus far borne the Army of the Potomac away from any railroad that was of much importance to the Confederates, and the destructive work accomplished by the cavalry had hardly carried out the plan which Grant cherished at the outstart of the campaign. General Grant therefore now decided to send Sheridan on the back track for the purpose of destroying the Virginia Central Railroad from Beaver Dam for a distance of twenty-five or thirty miles westward, thus breaking up railroad connection between the Confederate capital and Lynchburg and the Shenandoah Valley. Sheridan was then to unite with Hunter, who was moving upon Lynchburg by way of the valley, and return with Hunter's forces to the Army of the Potomac. Wilson's division of cavalry would be left with the army under Meade's command. The day upon which Sheridan received the instructions for this movement was marked by still one more unseemly contest growing out of the failure of the cavalry on the right to carry out the instructions from army headquarters to picket from the right of the army to the Pamunkey. Warren complained that the nearest cavalry picket was two miles away. Sheridan was reminded of his instructions, and in reply he said: "Infantry commanders are very quick to give the alarm when their flanks are uncovered, but manifest inexcusable stupidity about the safety of cavalry flanks." The perfectly poised chief of staff, Humphreys, carefully explained the situation on the right to Sheridan, and from

the explanation it is sufficiently apparent that if any stupidity was displayed it was not by Warren, who in his experience at Bethesda Church had already learned that orders to Sheridan to cover a flank did not necessarily mean that the flank would be covered.

With the divisions of Torbert and Gregg numbering ten thousand three hundred and thirty-seven officers and men, Sheridan started on June 7th, moved northwardly toward the Mattapony, westwardly to Pole Station on the Fredericksburg Railroad, and then along the north bank of the North Anna, and on the 10th crossed both branches of the North Anna and encamped three miles northeast of Trevilian Station, which is on the Central Railroad west of Louisa Court House; and here, for the first time in his march, Sheridan was in a position to begin the carrying out of the object of his movement. Starting on the 8th with the purpose of heading off Sheridan, Hampton with his own division, Fitzhugh Lee's division following, the two numbering one half of Sheridan's force, in a two days' march reached the Green Spring Valley, and on the night of the 10th encamped three miles west of Trevilian Station, thus blocking Sheridan's further progress. Lee's division encamped the same night at Louisa Court House. The conflict at Trevilian Station on the 11th and 12th is claimed as a victory by both Hampton and Sheridan. Hampton said he captured five hundred and seventy prisoners, and that Sheridan left his dead and one hundred and twenty-five wounded scattered over the field. Hampton reported the losses in his own division at six hundred and twelve. At all events, Sheridan got no farther west; the object of his movement had to be abandoned, and on the night of the 12th, after doing some damage to the railroad in the immediate vicinity, he withdrew, recrossed the North Anna at Carpenter's Ford, retiring by way of Shady Grove Church, Spottsylvania, and Bowling Green, and "not liking to venture," he says, "between the Mattapony and Pamunkey Rivers," crossed to the north bank of the former stream. On the 20th, with jaded horses, he reached the Pamunkey opposite White House. On that day Grant told Meade to order Sheridan's return to the army. Moving south of the rivers, because he had no pontoons, Hamp-

ton had kept his cavalry interposed between Sheridan and the Army of the Potomac, and on the 24th, at St. Mary's Church, south of the Chickahominy, where Sheridan had placed Gregg's division, isolated and without support, to cover the trains which the cavalry were escorting from White House to Petersburg, defeated Gregg after the stubborn fight which that thorough soldier could always be depended upon to make. Sheridan then proceeded to Wyanoke Neck below Charles City Court House for the purpose of crossing the James River. The escorting by the cavalry of the nine hundred wagons from the White House across the Chickahominy and James was a useful service.

Lee now felt able to send Breckinridge's force back to the Shenandoah Valley, and on the 13th he sent Early's corps to Charlottesville with the object of striking Hunter in rear and moving down the valley to threaten Washington. This marked expression of confidence in his ability to defend his capital with his remaining troops followed closely upon Grant's communication to Halleck saying that the enemy deemed it of the first importance to run no risks. Butler's expedition of June 9th and 10th to occupy Petersburg in advance of the arrival of the Army of the Potomac failed. That army was now to make a sweep of fifty miles to Petersburg, the possession of which place was of the first importance, since it would give control of some of the most necessary of Richmond's railroad arteries. In the march two rivers would be crossed, the Chickahominy at Long bridge and Jones's bridge, the trains crossing still farther down, and the James River. Before the movement to Petersburg began a story to the effect that Meade had desired to recross the Rapidan, and was only prevented from doing so by the presence of Grant, was published in a Northern newspaper. On the other hand, a different version of Meade's attitude is given in the statement that he said to Grant: "By God, the army is across now, and it has got to stay across!" To Meade's great indignation the first tale was published in the Philadelphia Inquirer. It was not an invention of the correspondent, Crapsey, who was drummed out of the army and forbidden to come back. Subsequently, desiring to return, Crapsey signed an explanation giving the name of his informant. About the same time William

M. Meredith, a former Secretary of the Treasury, sent a letter from Washington saying that Congressman Washburn, a zealous and at times indiscreet champion of General Grant, who was a guest at Grant's headquarters, was sending back to Washington stories detrimental to Meade, and that the latter should be informed of his conduct.

The following extracts from a letter written by the New York Herald's correspondent at Grant's headquarters to one of Meade's staff officers indicates plainly enough that the Crapsey incident was a blunderbuss which both shot forward and kicked backward at Meade's public reputation:

SAN DIEGO, CAL., *April 5, 1894.*

Dr. CHARLES E. CADWALADER, Philadelphia:

DEAR SIR: I was correspondent for the New York Herald at General Grant's headquarters from October, 1862, until the end of the war; was the only war correspondent ever permitted to remain at his headquarters; accompanied him everywhere, and all the time from Vicksburg to Appomattox and Raleigh; was in the room when General Lee surrendered, and was introduced to the latter by General Grant; rode with General Grant's staff; messed with them, had transportation and subsistence, tent pitched and struck as for a staff officer; was frequently introduced as a member of the staff, and often performed important and confidential staff duty. . . .

I knew your chief, General Meade, quite intimately. . . . My wife was with me at City Point from New Year, 1865, to within a day or two of our breaking camp, and also became acquainted with General Meade. . . . Mrs. C. often speaks of him as being one of the best-bred gentlemen she ever met. . . .

You will doubtless remember that . . . General Meade had Edward Crapsey, correspondent of the Philadelphia Inquirer, arrested for some alleged libelous publications sent to the Inquirer and published, and, after parading him around the camp, placarded "Libeler of the Press," drummed him out of the army. I was absent in Washington at the time. On my return it was a matter of conversation by Grant's staff. . . . The sentiment of the staff favored Meade warmly. The newspapers and correspondents resented it, and made common cause against Meade. His name was not thereafter published in any prominent newspaper for a half year. If a general order was issued, General Meade's name was cut off before publication. . . .

Very truly yours, etc.,

S. CADWALLADER.

Captain Cadwalader says that while Meade acquiesced in Crapsey's punishment, it was instigated by the provost marshal general, who was very bitter in his hostility to the reporters. The newspaper boycott against Meade gave rise subsequently to the temptation, if not to the opportunity, to make Sheridan lieutenant general at Meade's expense. Mr. Dana telegraphed to the Secretary of War that the tale was entirely untrue, and Mr. Stanton sent the following reply:

WASHINGTON, *June 10, 1864, 11 P. M.*

Please say to General Meade that the lying report alluded to in your telegram was not even for a moment believed by the President or myself. We have the most perfect confidence in him. He could not wish a more exalted estimation of his ability, his firmness, and every quality of a commanding general than is entertained for him.

EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*

Perhaps, before leaving Cold Harbor, there should not be entirely ignored the curious record existing of the attempt on the part of General Grant to avoid asking Lee's permission to relieve the Union wounded who had been lying between the lines without shelter or medical aid ever since the 3d. At the same time Grant was willing that Meade should make this request of Lee. On the 5th Hancock asked if something could not be done for the wounded in his front. Meade inquired of Grant if it were possible to ask Lee, under flag of truce, for permission to remove the wounded in front of the Second, Sixth, and Eighteenth Corps. Now at Spottsylvania Grant had had notice from Meade that the enemy, under circumstances very similar to the present ones, refused to recognize Meade's command of the army while Grant was present with it. Nevertheless, to Meade Grant sent this reply: "A flag might be sent proposing to suspend firing where the wounded are until each party get their own. I have no objection to such a course." Whereupon Meade answered: "Any communication by flag of truce will have to come from you, as the enemy do not recognize me as in command while you are present." Grant now made a proposition to Lee, but the Confederate general insisted that Grant must send out a flag of truce in the usual way when he desired permission

to recover his wounded. Finally, on June 6th, Grant was compelled to ask for a suspension of hostilities. The wounded were then past caring for, and the dead presented a horrible spectacle. Francis A. Walker says: "If the wounded between the two lines were Union and not Confederate soldiers, as they unmistakably were, and if the assault of the 3d had been a defeat to us, as it clearly was, it became the part of the Union commander to ask for an opportunity to care for the wounded as a favor to himself and his army. Nothing is plainer than that General Lee was fairly entitled to all the moral and military advantages to be derived from the fact that he had beaten off Grant's assault." It may be added that Grant's first message to Meade on the subject shows his willingness that Meade should use the same method which Lee insisted should be used by Grant.

Grant's directions to Meade for the movement across the Chickahominy to the James, given in a communication dated the 11th, were in part as follows: "The Fifth Corps will seize Long bridge and move out on the Long bridge road to its junction with the Quaker road, or until stopped by the enemy. The other three corps will follow in such order as you may direct, one of them crossing at Long bridge and two at Jones's bridge." The Eighteenth Corps (Smith's) was to march to White House, whence it would be transferred by transports to Bermuda Hundred. Long bridge was fifteen miles, and Jones's bridge twenty miles, below Cold Harbor. The bridges had been destroyed. It will be observed that Grant's directions for the Fifth Corps would carry that corps to the junction of the Long bridge road and the Quaker road. If executed, this order would have carried Warren to Riddell's blacksmith shop, where three main roads leading eastwardly from Richmond enter the road upon which Warren was to move southwardly, would have carried him past a main road crossing White Oak Swamp on the right of Warren's line of march, and would have exposed his rear to attack over this road. Grant's orders to Meade were therefore corrected at Meade's headquarters, and preceded by a brigade of Wilson's cavalry division, Warren was directed to advance far enough along the Long bridge road to look toward the White Oak

Swamp crossing on his right, as well as the roads from Richmond centering at Riddell's, during the passage of the Army of the Potomac to the James. Hancock was ordered to cross the Chickahominy at Long bridge, and Burnside and Wright were directed to cross at Jones's bridge. The movement now under way was difficult and dangerous. Lee could not know that Grant had abandoned the policy of direct assaults so long persisted in, and Warren's position seems to have led the Confederate general to believe that a direct attack upon Richmond was meditated. Even at this time the ration of some of Lee's troops consisted of one fifth of a pound of meat with corn bread. Six pounds of sugar and three pounds of coffee were sometimes issued with every one hundred rations, but in that event the meat ration was cut off, and it was proposed to reduce the ration of all the troops to the same proportions. Breckenridge and Early had already gone to the Shenandoah Valley, and, thus weakened, Lee was not in a position to be audacious in attacking the Army of the Potomac. By the 14th four infantry corps of the Army of the Potomac were in the vicinity of Wilcox's Landing, near Charles City Court House, on the James, and by midnight of the 16th the crossing was effected, Wilson's cavalry being drawn in from their advanced positions and preceding the Sixth Corps across the James.

On the 13th Lee moved to the right, and by the 14th he knew that the Army of the Potomac had reached the James,* and Hoke's division was sent to Drewry's Bluff to re-enforce Beauregard in case Petersburg was threatened. On the 15th Beauregard abandoned his lines on Bermuda Neck to concentrate all his forces at Petersburg. On the morning of the 16th Lee himself arrived at Drewry's Bluff with Pickett's division, and reoccupied the abandoned lines. He did not know, however, that the Army of the Potomac had crossed the James. Lee, in person, arrived at Petersburg before midnight of the 18th.

General W. F. Smith, who with the Eighteenth Corps arrived from the Army of the Potomac, reported to General Butler at Bermuda Hundred on the evening of the 14th, re-

* Official War Records, vol. xl, part ii, p. 651.

ceived orders to move at daylight on Petersburg. Twenty-four hundred cavalry, under Kautz, and thirty-seven hundred colored troops, under Hinks, were assigned to Smith's command. At Broadway Landing there was a pontoon bridge over the Appomattox. From the bridge to the strong works which encircled Petersburg Smith would have to march about seven miles. In these intrenchments on the 15th were only twenty-four hundred Confederate infantry, under Wise, and a brigade of cavalry. The conception of the movement upon Petersburg indicated a high order of military ability. General Smith had proposed its capture early in May before embarking to join the Army of the Potomac. The details of the movement upon Petersburg from Cold Harbor had been elaborated by Meade and Humphreys, the two great masters of logistics in the Union army, with a care that left nothing unprovided for. The skillful corps commanders had executed the plans without a flaw in their movements. The final flourish with Wilson's cavalry toward Malvern Hill and White Oak Swamp, on the 14th and 15th, had caused the retention of the corps of Anderson and Hill of Lee's army in that vicinity. And after all, this brilliantly planned and executed movement failed to achieve its main object, and the capture of Petersburg was postponed for many a long and dreary month because Lieutenant-General Grant did not tell Meade or Hancock that the corps commanded by the latter was to take part in Smith's movement to capture the city. Bache suggests that Grant's motive in not informing Meade of the purpose with which the lieutenant general himself from Bermuda Hundred, on the 14th, had ordered Hancock forward,* was a wish to signalize himself by a master stroke of strategy.† Grant says his order was to halt Hancock at a designated place until Smith should be heard from. Hancock had been informed by Meade, on the night of the 14th, that Butler had been ordered to send him sixty thousand rations at Windmill Point, and that as soon as these were issued the Second Corps should move toward Petersburg. By half past three in the morning

* Grant's Memoirs, p. 294.

† Bache's Life of Meade, p. 467.

Hancock's rear brigade was crossing the James. At half past seven on the morning of the 15th Meade told Hancock not to wait for rations, but being informed by Hancock that the rations had arrived—an announcement which proved to be an error—added a paragraph authorizing the corps commander to use his own judgment as to which would be best, whether to wait for rations or to press forward without them. At twenty minutes to ten Hancock, who was still on the north bank of the river, reported that he had started his troops forward from the south bank without rations, and he was informed that all was quiet on the front.

Neither Grant nor Butler was certain about the location of Harrison's Creek, to which point Hancock was ordered on information supplied by Butler. The whereabouts of this creek Hancock, while on the march, made a vain endeavor to discover. Harrison's Creek was subsequently ascertained to be an insignificant rivulet within the enemy's lines. The day was gone when Hancock's troops arrived before Petersburg, and the opportunity to capture the town before Lee re-enforced the small number of Confederate troops behind the intrenchments was also gone, solely because Grant did not inform either Meade or Hancock what the Second Corps was intended to do. When it was too late, Hancock began to receive urgent messages to hurry forward from Grant and Butler and Smith, the last named of whom was for a time kept in equal ignorance of Hancock's coming. Even as late as the middle afternoon, in directing Meade to order forward another corps, Grant did not inform the army commander of the use to which the corps was to be put, but contented himself with expressing his opinion that Lee was crossing to the south side of the James—an opinion which Meade had previously formed for himself.

After carefully reconnoitering the enemy's position, Smith, about seven o'clock in the evening of the 15th, advanced and captured the Confederate redans extending from the City Point Railroad to the vicinity of the Jordan's Point road, a distance of a mile and a half, with some three hundred prisoners and sixteen guns. But before nine o'clock Hoke's division from Lee's army was in the Peters-

burg intrenchments, and a new line was constructed in rear of the captured parts. Johnson's division, drawn by Beauregard from the Bermuda Hundred lines, was also in the intrenchments early on the 16th. From near Petersburg, at fifteen minutes past ten on the morning of the 16th, Grant sent word for Meade to start by steamer for Petersburg and take command in person as soon as possible. Grant then went to City Point, leaving Hancock in command in front of Petersburg until Meade's arrival. Hancock was told by Grant to make all preparations for an attack about 6 p. m., but not to make the attack without further orders, and that Meade would probably arrive about five o'clock. Meade, however, leaving his staff behind, reached the front about two o'clock in the afternoon, and at four ordered Hancock to make an attack in his front at six, Hancock's attack to be extended by Burnside on the left and Smith on the right. Hancock's reconnoissance made in the morning had resulted in the capture of another redoubt. The assault now ordered by Meade carried three additional redoubts and drove back the enemy along the whole line. Telegraphic communication with Grant at City Point was interrupted both on the 17th and 18th. Grant said that night that he would leave it to Meade's judgment to decide how far and how hard to press forward in the morning, "knowing," he added, "that you will push any advantage that may be gained to-night." It was a fine moonlight night, and Meade, eager to capture Petersburg before Lee's entire army had reached there, continued to press the enemy all night. About four o'clock on the morning of the 17th, an attack by Burnside, preparations for which Meade ordered to be made on the previous evening, surprised the Confederate troops asleep on their arms, and captured additional redans between the Prince George road and the Sussex road, besides four guns, five colors, six hundred prisoners, and fifteen hundred stands of small arms. At seven in the morning Meade sent a hearty message of congratulation to Burnside, and in his dispatch to Grant called attention to the fact that Burnside's success had been won by troops who had made a night march of twenty-two miles, marched all the next day, and had no rest during the night previous to their successful assault.

Hancock, at half past five in the morning, was directed by Meade to push any advantage Burnside and Barlow had gained, and to call on Warren for troops if necessary. "I am satisfied," Meade said, "that Lee's army is coming up, and our only chance is now." Burnside's successful assault in the morning developed the fact that the enemy held a new intrenched position behind Harrison's Creek, extending from near the Appomattox to the Norfolk Railroad. A third assault, made later in the day by Burnside, supported by Hancock and Warren, was partially successful. But previous to these last assaults Meade wrote to Grant: "Our men are tired, and the attacks have not been made with the vigor and force which characterized our fighting in the Wilderness; if they had been, I think we should have been more successful."

During the night of the 17th Beauregard withdrew to an interior line, which was from five hundred to one thousand yards in rear of his advanced line. An hour before midnight Meade ordered a simultaneous assault for four o'clock in the morning by the whole force of the Fifth, Ninth, and Second Corps, to be supported, if opportunity offered, by the portions of the Sixth and Eighteenth Corps present—an order growing out of the statements of prisoners examined that Lee's army was not yet up, and the belief that Burnside had captured a part of the main works of the enemy.

On the morning of the 18th it was still impossible to obtain telegraphic communication with General Grant, and finding the enemy's outer line abandoned, the trenches being filled with Confederate dead, Meade ordered an advance of his whole line. All of Meade's movements and orders on the 18th, when he was practically in independent command of the army once more, as indeed he had been since the 16th, were the incarnation of a splendid vigor and energy. He believed that the enemy had not yet a regularly fortified line between the abandoned one and Petersburg. He was confident that the enemy had but thirty thousand troops, while he himself had fifty-five thousand. He knew that if given any time Beauregard would make a new intrenched line. He hoped to drive the enemy across the Appomattox, and he ordered the whole army forward in a

simultaneous movement to be made in strong columns of assault at twelve o'clock. Then there arose the same difficulty which had existed at Cold Harbor: one commander after another reported that he could not advance unless the troops to his right or left advanced. To Birney, temporarily commanding the Second Corps, Meade said, at ten o'clock: "There is too much time taken in preparations. I fear the enemy will make more of the delay than we can." To Warren, at the same hour, he said: "I desire the enemy attacked at all hazards by each corps, and desire to arrange for its being simultaneous; but if it requires much time to effect co-operation, the attack will be ordered for a fixed hour"; and when Warren replied that he could not tell when he would be ready, Meade ordered him to attack punctually at twelve o'clock, and to telegraph to headquarters for the correct time. Both Warren and Burnside hung back, and at twenty minutes past two in the afternoon Meade was compelled to send them a peremptory order to assault. The order was punctually obeyed by Birney and Martindale, the latter commanding parts of the Sixth and Eighteenth Corps. Made late in the day, the assaults of Warren and Burnside were unsuccessful, as was a vigorous assault made by Birney about four o'clock. The advanced positions gained close against the enemy's line were intrenched, and the two opposing lines remained nearly the same until the close of the war. At ten o'clock that night Grant sent word to Meade from City Point that he was perfectly satisfied all had been done that could have been done, that the troops should now take to the spade for protection, and that Wilson's cavalry should be used to cut the enemy's lines of communications. The Union losses in the attempt to capture Petersburg, from the 15th to the 18th of June, were ten thousand five hundred and eighty-six.

CHAPTER XXII.

ENVELOPING PETERSBURG.

"THE *morale* of the troops is not what I should like it to be," Meade wrote to Grant at this time; and Warren wrote to Meade on June 23d: "Officers and men are getting very weary and nervous. With our unparalleled losses and exhausting efforts we can scarcely say we are much nearer destroying Lee's army than we were on the Rapidan."

The progress made in this direction had indeed not been great. The substantial gain, however, had been made that Grant now had the armies of Meade and Butler concentrated, and that he had easy water communication with inexhaustible supplies. On the other hand, there had been a steady deterioration in Meade's army, owing to the frightful losses in officers and men, and the prolonged and unceasing strain which those that remained had been under. The nervous condition of high officers, and the irritability and jealousy manifested among some of them, were undoubtedly the product of a condition approaching exhaustion. Wright and Parke among the corps commanders lived to old age. Grant and Meade, Humphreys, Hancock, Warren, Gibbon, and Birney, and a long list of others in responsible places, died in middle life because of the exhaustion of their vital forces during the war.

Lee was now undertaking to defend two cities and a line of intrenchments thirty-five miles long. He could never know whether his foes would strike next between the two cities, north of the James or south of Petersburg. Grant's desire, as expressed to Meade on the 21st of June, was that Petersburg should be enveloped as far as possible without attacking fortifications. He added: "I am satisfied that you will adopt the best course to accomplish the work

that is to be done, and only give this [a proposition to hold a thin line with masses of reserves] as being suggested by the map, without having the personal knowledge of the ground that you have." The first movement, on the 21st and 22d, toward the Weldon and South Side Railroads was checked by A. P. Hill, who was sent by Lee down the Weldon Railroad, and who, passing between Wright and Birney, drove Birney back and captured seventeen hundred prisoners, four guns, and several colors. The Sixth Corps then took a position facing the Weldon Railroad.

On the 20th Grant desired that Wilson be sent on a raid to destroy portions of the Lynchburg and Petersburg and the Richmond and Danville Railroads. Meade desired that Sheridan should be kept north of the James to occupy Hampton's attention, or that Sheridan and Wilson should move together toward Hunter at Lynchburg from south of the James. Wilson himself said: "If Sheridan will look after Hampton, I apprehend no difficulty."* But what Meade feared actually happened. Sheridan crossed to the south side of the James, a movement which left Hampton free to move against Wilson. Wilson set out on the morning of the 22d with fifty-five hundred troops, and from Burkesville as a center, destroyed thirty miles of the Lynchburg Railroad and thirty miles of the Danville road. The Confederate cavalry division of W. H. F. Lee followed Wilson, and at Staunton River attacked Kautz's division of Wilson's force in rear, while Wilson's farther advance to the south was prevented by a Confederate force entrenched on the south bank of the stream. Wilson now set out upon his return, but Hampton had been sent to Stony Creek Depot, twenty miles south of Petersburg, on the Weldon Railroad, to intercept him. Here Hampton attacked Wilson, who veered westward, being again attacked as he withdrew to the Halifax road, upon which road Hampton again attempted to intercept him, but only encountered the rear of his adversary's column. Kautz, reaching Ream's Station early on the 29th, found there Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry, through whose line Captain Whitaker, of Wilson's staff, made a dash and carried the news of the

* Official War Records, vol. xl, part ii, p. 286.

cavalry's peril to Meade. Being nearly surrounded, Wilson was compelled to destroy or abandon his wagons and caissons, and then, to escape his foes, started south toward the Nottoway River. Kautz succeeded in getting around the enemy's left, and, after abandoning his artillery, reaching the Army of the Potomac. At Stony Creek crossing Wilson was again attacked in the rear, and he was compelled to cut loose from his following of one thousand negroes. Continuing his circuit to the south, east, and then north, followed by the Confederate cavalry, Wilson crossed the Blackwater at the site of Blunt's bridge, where the pursuit stopped, and reached Light House Point on July 2d. His losses were fifteen hundred and one men, twelve guns, and all his wagons.

On receiving Captain Whitaker's message from Kautz of Wilson's predicament, Meade at once ordered the Sixth Corps to Ream's Station, and directed Sheridan to hurry from Windmill Point to Wilson's assistance at the same place. Sheridan received the order at 2.45 P. M. on the 29th, but did not reach Ream's Station, some thirty-five miles away by the road, until late on the 30th. When he did reach his destination he concluded nothing could be done to help Wilson, and started to return, but Meade ordered him to renew the search for Wilson at daylight of the 1st, and to make every effort in his power to extricate the threatened cavalry force and secure its return. It is true that Sheridan complained of his horses being jaded, but jaded horses had not prevented Hampton from moving with vigor. On that day was received the news of Wilson's escape from a situation full of peril, which would not have originated if Meade's desire that Sheridan should keep Hampton busy north of the James had been carried out.

It was usually the result of the cavalry raids, of which Wilson's, up to this time, in spite of the disaster which overtook it, had been most productive of substantial results, that the command came in unfitted to take its legitimate part in furthering the general plans of the army; and now, because of the necessity of resting, reorganizing, and refitting Sheridan's command, Meade could not carry out his desire to use the cavalry for cutting off those supplies of Lee which were brought on the Weldon Railroad to Stony

Creek Depot, and thence transported by wagon to Petersburg. As to the possibility of doing what Meade wished to do in this respect, Lee agreed with the commander of the Army of the Potomac, and he reported to the Richmond authorities on June 26th that it would be easy to throw the Federal cavalry against the Weldon Railroad, and that its maintenance by the Confederates was impracticable. The damage done by Sheridan to the Virginia Central Railroad, as well as that done by Wilson near Hanover Court House, was repaired by the time Sheridan rejoined the army. The repairing of the Danville road began at once.

The total losses in the army in May and June are stated by Humphreys to have been sixty-one thousand four hundred, of which fifty thousand were in killed and wounded.

The movement of Hancock and Sheridan to Bailey's Creek on the north side of the James followed, July 26th to 28th, and the explosion of Burnside's mine took place on the 30th, the latter an attempt to cause a break in the Confederate line, the fundamental weakness of the project being that the precise dimensions and directions of the fissure could not be foreseen, and that it was therefore highly probable that the assaulting troops would not be posted so as to take full and immediate advantage of the results of the explosion. As a military expedient Meade had no great faith in the measure, but when it was adopted he took every precaution to overcome the difficulties which he so clearly foresaw. He talked with Burnside, the corps commander, and with Willcox, Potter, and Ledlie, the division commanders in Burnside's corps, and he endeavored to impress upon them that immediately after the explosion the crest beyond must be gained; that simply to hold the hole in the ground would be of no use, and that if the assault failed, the troops must be withdrawn at once. Meade's preliminary orders were so exact as to cause Grant to say, at the later investigation, that they could not be improved upon with all the light of subsequent results, and that if they had been obeyed Petersburg would have been captured. In spite of Meade's care there was done exactly what he tried to guard against. The troops rushed into the crater after the explosion, and stayed there in a hud-

dled mass without leaders or leadership, several division and brigade commanders not being present with their troops. The first precious hour after the explosion was wasted by the unreadiness of the other divisions of the Ninth Corps to advance upon the right and left of the leading divisions. Meade tried to push Burnside forward, and also to help him by advancing the corps on the right and left; but it was obvious after the first hour that the enterprise had already failed. At 9.45 A. M. Meade ordered all offensive operations to cease, and directed that the troops be withdrawn when it could be done with safety. Meade reported his total losses at forty-four hundred, nearly all in the Ninth Corps. Many officers and men were captured in the crater, and many were killed and wounded in retiring.

The Court of Inquiry, appointed by the President at Meade's request, of which court Hancock was president, found that Burnside failed to obey Meade's orders in not giving the proper formation to his assaulting column, in not preparing his parapets and abatis for the passage of assaulting columns, in not employing the engineer officers sent him to lead the assaulting columns, in not sending Ledlie's division from the crater to the crest or other troops to the same place, and in delaying until the enemy recovered from his surprise. The Court found that two of the division commanders, instead of being with their troops, were in bombproofs, and that one brigadier general did not advance with his brigade.

The Official War Records of the middle of July, relating to Early's movement upon the city of Washington, furnish a curious comment upon the attempt to command the armies of the United States from the field of operations of the Army of the Potomac. Early's movement developed the fact that the division of command among the forces protecting Washington was made more extensive, not less, by the creation of the office of lieutenant general, so long as the commander of all the armies remained at a point where he could control the movements of but a portion of his forces.

To Halleck, on the 26th, Grant telegraphed that it took a long time for dispatches to pass to and fro between Washington and City Point, and that therefore it was absolutely

necessary for some one in Washington to take command of all the forces within reach of the line of the Potomac. On the 27th Mr. Stanton directed Halleck to take upon himself such authority, and with it the practical command of four departments. On the 10th of July the President had telegraphed to Grant that in his opinion the lieutenant general himself should come to Washington.

Early's movement had restored within Halleck's breast the spirit that had prompted so many critical letters to commanders of the Army of the Potomac in times past, and on the 19th of July he wrote to Grant: "It has been proved that while your army is south of the James River and Lee's between you and Washington, he can make a pretty large detachment unknown to us for a week or ten days and send it against Washington, or into West Virginia or Pennsylvania or Maryland." He told Grant how narrowly Washington had escaped capture, and intimated that reinforcements would no longer be sent to Grant south of the James, as they had been sent while the Army of the Potomac was between Lee and Washington, but would be retained for the protection of the National Capitol from any movement like that of Early.*

This was a serious threat, and, moreover, the condition was serious. Until reassured by Meade, Grant himself was disposed to believe that with another corps besides Early's, Lee in person had marched upon Washington. It had been necessary to divert the Nineteenth Corps to Washington, and to send there, from the Army of the Potomac, the Sixth Corps and two divisions of the cavalry corps. It was a period of disappointment throughout the North. Even Mr. Lincoln ventured the mild disapprobation of the tragedy extending from the Wilderness to Cold Harbor, to be found in a comment made by the President upon a message from Grant to Sherman. Grant had said: "I shall make a desperate effort to get a position here which will hold the enemy without the necessity of so many men." The President thereupon telegraphed to Grant: "I do hope you may find a way that the effort shall not be desperate in the sense of great loss of life." And in his own front Grant now

* Official War Records, vol. xl, part iii, p. 333.

thought that fortifications came near holding themselves, that one infantryman to every six feet was sufficient to repulse any direct attack.* To allay the fear for the safety of Washington and remove the danger pointed out by Halleck to Grant, something had to be done, and that speedily. The lieutenant general discussed the subject with the commander of the Army of the Potomac, and said that, thinking Meade might prefer an independent command to serving immediately under the lieutenant general's eye, where Meade's actual services were in a great measure lost sight of by the public, he had determined to create a separate department in the Valley of the Shenandoah and give Meade the command of it. Meade thanked the lieutenant general, expressed his satisfaction with the project, and, after talking it over a while, took his departure. Meade heard nothing more on the subject until he learned that Sheridan was to be sent to the valley. Meade then went to Grant and said that, of course, it was the lieutenant general's privilege to select the commander for this work, that he should have nothing to say but for the fact that the lieutenant general had voluntarily spoken to him, and had announced the intention of appointing him to this command, and that he thought if any dissatisfaction with his work were felt either by the Government or the lieutenant general he ought to know it. Grant replied that the appointment of Sheridan was only temporary, and that there were no such reasons for it as Meade seemed to think might possibly exist. The conversation was soon followed by the creation of the department and Sheridan's assignment to the command. The earlier arrangement had been that when Meade went to the valley, Hancock was to succeed him in command of the Army of the Potomac. Hancock was subsequently under the impression that Meade had some option in an action which prevented Hancock from receiving the command of the army, but Meade had no such option, and never received any explanation of Grant's change of mind except such as was subsequently furnished him after the fighting was all over, in the appointment of Sheridan as lieutenant general. The valley command at this time was looked upon as in-

* Grant to Meade, Official War Records, vol. xl, part iii, p. 638.

volving no great military difficulties, and as offering a comparatively easy opportunity to win public applause. This opportunity was given to Sheridan in preference to Meade for several reasons, the principal one being the same motive of friendship for Sheridan which had protected that officer from the punishment meted out to Rosecrans, Crittenden, McCook, Negley, and other generals, when, like them, he abandoned Thomas to his fate upon the field of Chickamauga. There was also undoubtedly a feeling among the men surrounding the lieutenant general that it would be inadvisable to place the victor at Gettysburg in a position to add in a marked way to the separate military renown which he had already won before the new element in the army appeared upon the scene. Some of these men were very busily engaged in the effort of persuading Grant that Meade should be set aside. They were earnest purveyors of gossip. They made the most of every temporary difference like that between Meade and Warren of July 19th, without knowing how nobly Meade had forborne to exercise the brutality of power as it was subsequently exercised when Warren was placed at the mercy of Sheridan. Poured into the ears of Mr. Dana, and immediately transmitted by him to the War Department, this defamatory talk by men whose acts seemed expressive of a fear that Meade might be a rival to Grant in history, was operating on parallel lines with the newspaper boycott of Meade to damage that soldier in official and public estimation. As for Meade, he had the utmost confidence in what he believed to be the lieutenant general's real attitude toward himself. When friends warned Meade that it was the intention to ignore his services for the sake of advancing the interests of favorites, he refused to listen. If his suspicions were aroused by some fresh step to push forward Sheridan at his own expense, they were as promptly allayed by some assurance of continued confidence from Grant, as when, on October 24, 1864, the lieutenant general offered to lay before Meade all his communications with the War Department to show that he had never found fault with a single one of Meade's acts. Meade, perhaps, would have been less completely satisfied with this assurance had he known that, while Grant's reports of army movements were made up from Meade's reports to

him, they seldom contained any reference to Meade. Meade was a soldier and a gentleman, with no liking for intrigue and with no time for it, for he was busily engaged in a great work in a position of heavy responsibility. He loved the truth. Indirection had no part in his mental methods, and what he himself was he was apt to think others were also.

The middle of August was marked by the attempt to turn the enemy's position at Bailey's Creek, north of the James; Hancock was in immediate charge of the troops engaged, consisting of the Second Corps, part of the Tenth, and Gregg's cavalry. Had the movement succeeded, it would have given possession of Chaffin's Bluff, opposite Drewry's Bluff on the James, at which bluffs were the principal Confederate works holding the river. On the 18th, Warren, with his own corps and Spear's brigade of cavalry, was sent to hold the Weldon Railroad at the Globe Tavern, four miles south of Petersburg. Warren moved up the railroad toward the intersection of the Vaughan road. Beauregard sent two brigades, under Heth, down the Vaughan road, which force struck Warren's left, and drove back the left brigade and compelled the entire left division to retire temporarily, but afterward it drove Heth's troops from the ground, Warren's total loss being nearly one thousand. On the one side there was a determination to retain the hold gained upon the Weldon Railroad, and upon the other to loosen it. A. P. Hill, with five brigades, moved to the intersection of the Vaughan road with the Halifax road. Three of these brigades under Mahone, on the 19th, moved through the woods to Warren's right and then swept down the line. The other two brigades made a simultaneous attack upon Warren's left and center. Meade had directed the Ninth Corps, now commanded by Parke, to move to the left and co-operate with Warren, and Mahone's division was driven back to its intrenchments. Heth's assaults failed. Warren lost three hundred and eighty-two in killed and wounded and twenty-five hundred and eighteen missing, a result due, according to Humphreys, to the dense woods in which Warren's command was posted and which made him peculiarly liable to flank attacks. Nevertheless, the Confederates had displayed much audacity. It was about this time that Meade said it was impossible to get

his own troops to act with the audacity of the Confederates, and on the 21st he said to Grant that if the enemy brought a superior force to turn a flank, "we can not get our men to stand. They do not mind any orders when they find themselves outflanked, but move off boldly to the rear in spite of orders." *

On the 21st Hill again attacked on the Union left front and center, but was repulsed.

Meade had pointed out, some time before, the advisability of preventing Lee's use of the Weldon Railroad to a point within easy wagon haul of Petersburg. Warren's hold upon the road would not prevent this. Accordingly, on the 22d, with two divisions of his corps and Gregg's cavalry, Hancock began the work of destroying the road for a distance of thirteen miles from Warren's left, or as far as Rowanty Creek. On the 24th the work was progressing at Malone's bridge road, three miles south of Ream's Station, at which latter place upon that night Hancock's infantry bivouacked. Here were slight earthworks facing west, with returns at each end nearly as long as the front of the works. Hancock was warned that a force of Confederates was moving south by the Halifax and Vaughan roads, presumably to attack him. To support Hancock, Meade, on the 25th, sent southward the division of Willcox and a fragment of Mott's, and held Warren's troops in readiness for a possible attempt of the enemy to interpose between Warren and Hancock. It was reported that the enemy was moving on the Halifax road, and Willcox was ordered to use the Jerusalem Plank road, thus giving him a march of twelve miles. On the previous day Gregg, to the westward of Ream's Station, had held off the Confederate cavalry which was moving upon the station, Gregg's whole division being engaged for three hours and a half. About quarter after five o'clock in the afternoon Hill assaulted Hancock's right division under Miles. A part of the line held by new troops gave way, and a reserve brigade of Gibbon's division would not advance to fill the gap or to fire on the enemy. Nor when Gibbon's line was taken would his troops advance. The personal efforts of

* Official War Records, vol. xlii, part ii, p. 355.

Hancock and Miles, the steadiness of a part of Miles's division on the right, and the assistance of the dismounted cavalry under Gregg on the left prevented the spreading of disaster. Hancock's losses were twenty-three hundred and seventy-two, and nine guns. Hill reported that he lost seven hundred and twenty in killed and wounded, and captured twelve stands of colors, nine guns, ten caissons, twenty-one hundred and fifty prisoners, and thirty-one hundred stands of small arms.

The re-enforcements sent Hancock could not reach him in time to participate in the battle, the disastrous results of which are to be attributed to drafted men, substitutes, and "bounty jumpers." Here was additional evidence, if any were needed, that the Army of the Potomac was not what it had been. The infantry of both sides withdrew, Hampton's cavalry remaining at the Station.

The movement on the left was now alternated by a movement on the right again, when, on September 28th, the corps of Ord and Birney crossed the James and assaulted Forts Harrison and Gilmer near Chaffin's Bluff. While Fort Harrison was captured and the assaults elsewhere were partially successful, the attack upon Fort Gilmer, whose possession was necessary to control the defenses at Chaffin's Bluff, ended in failure. Grant in person took charge of the later assaults, and Lee joined Ewell on the other side. The Confederate intrenchments extended from the James northeastwardly to the Chickahominy at New bridge. The Union troops now intrenched from the New Market road to Fort Harrison, and from that point to the James above Dutch Gap. On the 30th the Confederates made three determined attempts to retake Fort Harrison, but were repulsed.

On the 27th Grant had informed Meade of the movement to be made north of the James, and desired him to make a co-operative movement on the south side. Grant said he would leave the details of the movement to Meade. "I want you to do it without waiting for instructions, and in your own way," he added. On the 28th Warren reported that the enemy were extending their line southwest of Petersburg and were building works on the Peebles farm, which works Meade at once saw were for the purpose of

holding the junction of the Squirrel Level and Poplar Springs Church roads. On the morning of the 30th, in a dispatch to Meade received at 8.25 A. M., Grant said: "You may move out now, and see if an advantage can be gained. It seems to me the enemy must be weak enough at one or the other place to let us in." At ten minutes to nine Meade ordered Warren, whose command had been held in readiness, to move out past Poplar Spring Church and endeavor to secure the intersection of the Squirrel Level road, "so as to enable us to gain a position on the right of the enemy." Warren was informed that Parke would follow and support him on the left, and that Gregg would move out on the Vaughan road. Warren carried the whole line of the enemy's intrenchment, and Parke moved in a north-westward direction through the Pegram farm toward the Boynton Plank road and South Side Railroad. The highway and railroad were covered by a line of Confederate intrenchments extending southwestwardly to Hatcher's Run. Advancing against this line, Parke was repulsed, losing four hundred and eighty-five in killed and wounded and a number of prisoners, but took up a new line and checked farther advance on the part of the Confederates. On October 2d, Parke, supported by Mott's division on his left, advanced again and established a line one mile from the enemy's intrenchment. As the advanced positions on the left were taken, they were connected by intrenchments with the line farther to the right. Warren's charge had passed for six hundred yards over a cleared field defended by infantry against a parapet flanked by an inclosed redoubt. In the movements indicated Gregg continued from day to day to perform most valuable service with his division of cavalry covering the flanks or the front, and in this service more than holding his own in hotly contested engagements. He was throughout a model of what a cavalry commander should be, fitting in perfectly with the whole scheme of movement, and not disposed to look upon every change of position as made chiefly to win distinction for himself.

On October 24th Grant directed Meade to make preparations for a movement, to start at an early hour of the 27th, for the purpose of gaining possession of the South Side Railroad. The lieutenant general said: "In commencing

your advance, move in three columns exactly as proposed by yourself in our conversation of last evening, and with the same force you proposed to take." The movement had been under contemplation for some days previous to the 24th, and over his own signature Meade had sent confidential letters to the corps commanders for the purpose of gathering the necessary preliminary information, the plan being to leave as few men as possible in the intrenchments and withdraw the remainder. Meade's order for the movement, which was prepared with great care, was dated the 25th. Being submitted to Grant, the lieutenant general had to offer but the one suggestion, that Parke, on confronting the enemy, had perhaps better wait for the completion of the movement of Hancock and Warren. Hancock, moving by the Vaughan road at two o'clock on the morning of the 27th, was to cross Hatcher's Run, pass by Dabney's Mill to the Boydton road, cross the open country to the intersection of the White Oak and Claiborne roads, and, recrossing Hatcher's Run, move northeastwardly to the South Side Railroad. Gregg's cavalry would move on Hancock's left. Parke would attack at dawn the enemy's right above Hatcher's Run. Warren was to move into position between the Run and Parke's left. If Parke's attack should fail, Warren was to cross the Run and turn the Confederate right by recrossing at the first practicable point above the Boydton road, keeping on Hancock's right.

The works in front of Parke were found to be strong and fully manned, and at nine o'clock Meade sent word to Hancock and Warren that Parke would probably be unable to carry the intrenchments; and at the same hour, having received word that Hancock had crossed Hatcher's Run at half past seven, he directed Warren to push to the Run, cross it with a part of his force, and communicate with Hancock. At Warren's headquarters, at half past ten, Grant and Meade decided that Warren should send a division across the Run and move up the stream, supporting Hancock, until opposite the right of the Confederate intrenchments, which should then be attacked in flank. It was nearly noon when Crawford, whose division was chosen for this movement, crossed the Run. The woods were so dense and the way so bewildering that it was four o'clock before

he had made the advance of a mile and a half that brought him to the enemy's right flank. At one o'clock Hancock received orders from Meade to halt on the Boynton Plank road, and the effort was made to extend Hancock's right so as to connect with Crawford. Grant and Meade by this time were with Hancock. Soon after they left Hancock was attacked on his right by the enemy, who crossed Hatcher's Run and got between Hancock and Warren at the same time that an attack was made on Hancock's left and Gregg was attacked in the rear. Hancock yielded the advance ground near the bridge, but repulsed the attacks with a loss of one hundred and twenty-three killed, seven hundred and thirty-four wounded, and six hundred and twenty-five missing. It was decided to withdraw that night, as both Hancock and Gregg were short of ammunition.

In November General Hancock left the Army of the Potomac to organize the new First Army Corps, it being thought by the Secretary of War that Hancock's great reputation would induce many veterans to re-enlist. Toward spring General Gregg, seeing that the end of the war was near at hand, and being broken in health from responsibility and fatigue, resigned from the service. In December the Sixth Corps rejoined the army. The Confederate intrenchments were extended across Hatcher's Run, a mile and a half above Armstrong's Mill, and also at the Boynton Plank road crossing and along the front of the White Oak road, and crossing the Claiborne road back to Hatcher's Run. These intrenchments were now thirty-seven miles long. Grant's policy of pressing the Confederates alternately on the right and left had resulted in stretching out the Confederate line so thin that in the spring it would be broken.

Major-General Andrew A. Humphreys succeeded Hancock in the command of the Second Corps. He had been an ideal chief of staff, but he had also been an ideal leader of division, and would prove equally competent as a corps leader. Brevet Major-General Alexander S. Webb became Meade's chief of staff.

After the movement early in February by Gregg, Warren, and Humphreys to cut off the Confederate supplies carried by wagons from Hicksford on the Weldon Railroad,

and the engagement caused by Lee's corresponding movement, the Union intrenchments extended to the Vaughan road crossing of Hatcher's Run. At the time of the capture of Fort Stedman by the Confederates and its recapture by Hartranft's division on March 25th, Meade was absent from the front, Parke being in command of the army.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE LAST CAMPAIGN.

THE last campaign began on the 29th of March, 1865, and ended on April 9th. The collapse of Lee's army within a period of twelve days was so swift and complete that a consideration of its causes inevitably raises the question whether it could not have been accomplished just as well in the previous October, when Parke, Hancock, Warren, and Gregg were started by Meade upon their movement toward the South Side Railroad, and Hancock was brought back after reaching the Boydton road crossing of Hatcher's Run. The earlier movement failed chiefly because of ignorance of the country through which the troops had to move. That ignorance would not have existed had the cavalry corps remained with the army to which it belonged. During that movement Gregg commanded less than two thousand sabers. Sheridan would now participate in the renewed attempt with a force of thirteen thousand cavalrymen which he brought back from the valley. Sheridan's orders, after the capture of Lynchburg, were to join Sherman or return to Winchester. Sheridan says he desired "his cavalry to be in at the death." With that motive, and without Grant's knowledge, he started upon his eastward march to White House, abandoning the department to which he had been assigned—an act that was in defiance of the Army Regulation declaring that an officer intrusted with a separate command should not surrender it to another unless regularly relieved from the duty assigned him. On March 20th, at White House, Sheridan issued orders headed "Headquarters Middle Military Division"; whereupon Halleck telegraphed to Grant that the headquarters of the middle military division were at Winchester, that Hancock

commanded the division by assignment of the President, and that there could not be at the same time two commanders of the same division.

The establishment of the cavalry as a separate and independent command was attended by a corresponding depreciation of the Army of the Potomac. That army had served its purpose. Its soldiers had fought the good fight. So far as could be, the laurels should be gathered by others. The process of disintegration which had been going on since the previous May was to be rapidly hastened within the next two weeks in the process of serving a single personal ambition. Throughout a long list of battlefields the Army of the Potomac had been the mainstay of the republic. A year before it had been the best equipped, the best organized, the best drilled of the nation's armies, the best in *morale* and in *personnel*. In the meantime it had been broken against intrenchments. Its pathway from the Wilderness to Petersburg had been strewn with the corpses of thousands of its bravest and best, without winning a single important victory or gaining more than a position. Its reserve artillery had been scattered early in the campaign. Numbers of its gallant and faithful officers, trained under the eye of Meade or the earlier commanders of the army, had been drawn away to supply the defects of other organizations. Seth Williams had been called for by Grant. There was a steady demand for Meade's engineers. Mackenzie was needed to command the cavalry of the Army of the James; Hancock and Gibbon had been called lately to other fields of duty; Gregg had gone; Birney had died; besides these there were still missed those truly great soldiers, Reynolds and Sedgwick, who had fallen in battle, and scores of equally brave, equally patriotic, if less famous, officers. Within a few days Warren would be put in the power of the younger soldier for whose benefit the army was now undergoing disintegration, and whose failure in soldierly duty at Cold Harbor he had reported, and would suffer a fate worse than a soldier's death in being relieved from command upon the field of his victory. The army was now an army without cavalry. One after another of its infantry corps, the Fifth and then the Sixth, would be taken away to increase the opportunities and add to the

fame of the favorite, and at the last moment the lieutenant general himself would ride away from the lines of the two corps remaining under Meade's command and defer the final surrender of Lee for hours in an effort to place one more laurel upon Sheridan's brow. Is it any wonder that the surviving soldiers of the Army of the Potomac looked back to Gettysburg as their most perfect and greatest achievement, or that in any just narrative of these last weeks an element of pity, and even a measure of shame, must mingle with the kindling pride that follows the movements of the two or three great hearts, who, after all the rest were departed, at the last remained with the thinned lines and tattered flags of the once mighty Army of the Potomac! If from the fires of patriotism and the pure sacrifice there would be seen arising the perfect flower of human conduct, it must be looked for not in plans and preparations to snatch the victor's prizes, but where Meade, on the 9th of April, 1865, held back the battle lines of Humphreys and Wright after he had brought to bay the bulk of what remained of Lee's army, and when he had only to advance in accordance with the lieutenant general's instructions to make, at the expense of a few more lives, the Confederate general with his principal lieutenants and most of the Confederate battalions his own captives, and himself the central figure of the closing scene in which it was deliberately intended that he should not participate. We know, as he knew, the opportunity, but what the strength of the temptation we shall never know. Whatever its measure, he put it aside, and nothing finer, nothing nobler, no action more free from earthly dross or more inspiring to Americans is recorded in our country's history.

Ord, who, like Meade, commanded a brigade in the first organization of the Pennsylvania Reserves, was now, like Meade, commanding an army in the movement which every soldier knew at the start was to be the final "round up." But of the long list of eminent soldiers who had held the places of greatest responsibility in the Army of the Potomac under the first three commanders, Meade alone remained. McClellan and his corps commanders, Burnside and his principal lieutenants, Hooker and his chief subordinates—all were gone except Meade. And death and divi-

sion had removed every corps commander who was with Meade at Gettysburg, with the single exception of Hunt, the chief of the artillery corps. McClellan, McDowell, Sumner, Heintzelman, Keyes, Fitz-John Porter, Burnside, Franklin, Couch, W. F. Smith, Hooker, Reno, Cox, Mansfield, Richardson, Sedgwick, Howard, Slocum, Stoneman, Reynolds, Hancock, Sickles, Birney, Gibbon, Sykes, Pleasanton, Butterfield, Hooker, Warren—not one of these names was on the roster of the Army of the Potomac on the day of Lee's surrender. But Meade, outlasting them all, was still the army commander as in 1863, and with him the two who as division commanders had helped him to win the fight at Gettysburg, Humphreys and Wright, as commanders now of the Second and Sixth Corps, kept alive the spirit that had prevailed in the noble Army of the Potomac in the days of its pride and strength, and infused into the fragment left of it, with which they stood confronting the lines of Longstreet's corps on April 9th, while the popular plaudits and public honors were being transferred from the soldiers who had combated Lee's legions upon every great battlefield of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, the same ardor and the same devotion to duty and principle and honor that had marked the rugged and difficult but lofty pathway from Mechanicsville to the final scene.

During the weary months spent in front of Petersburg, the official relations between Grant and Meade had been unusually cordial, if we may judge from the records. As has been indicated in this narrative, from the Wilderness there had been an alternate flood and ebb in the attitude of the lieutenant general. At the Wilderness Meade had ordered the battle on, and the impress of his hand is seen in every record, but at Todd's Tavern the cavalry had been removed out of the sphere of his authority. At Spottsylvania again he was in high favor, but at the North Anna Grant took matters into his own hands. At Cold Harbor once more the details are Meade's, but in the movement upon Petersburg Grant kept secret his intention to assault with Hancock and Smith. When this plan failed, Meade's authority in making the subsequent assaults suddenly became more supreme than it had been since the crossing of the Rappahannock. Twice when he went North—once to the bedside of

his dying son and again to his grave—Grant had telegraphed him to return immediately; and once more when he wished to leave the army for a few days in a period of inactivity to attend to some personal matters, Grant had said that he would be most reluctant to have him go.

On February 1, 1865, Meade's appointment as major general in the regular army was confirmed by the Senate.

On March 14th Grant notified Meade to keep his command in condition to move on the shortest possible notice in case the enemy should evacuate Petersburg. Meade's preparatory orders were dated the same day, and were directed to the commanding officers of the Second, Fifth, Sixth, and Ninth Corps, the Second Cavalry Division, the Engineer Brigade, and chiefs of staff. He announced that all the lines west of the Jerusalem Plank road would be abandoned in the event of a movement; that the Ninth Corps would hold the line from the Appomattox to Fort Davis and the return to the left; that the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps would be prepared to move with fifty rounds of ammunition and four days' rations with the men; three days' beef on the hoof to be driven in division herds, and ten days' beef on the hoof with each corps herd; one day's salt meat, four days' hard bread, coffee, sugar, and three days' salt would be carried by the men; and eight days' hard bread, coffee, sugar, and salt in each division supply train. Sutlers, camp followers, and the sick should go to the rear.

Grant's instructions, dated the 24th, for the 29th were directed to Meade, Ord, and Sheridan. Sheridan, joined by the division of cavalry up to that time with Meade's army, was to move down the Weldon Railroad and Jerusalem Plank road and turn west north of Stony Creek toward the South Side and Danville Railroads. Ord was to hold his lines with a small force and march to the left of the Army of the Potomac; two of his divisions were then to follow the left column of Meade's army, and another division the right column of that army, Ord's movement to the left to begin on the night of the 27th. Meade, leaving for the present the Ninth Corps intact and the Sixth Corps to hold the Petersburg lines or part thereof, was to move two corps toward Dinwiddie Court House, moving in two columns

and taking the two roads crossing Hatcher's Run nearest where the Union line reached that stream.

On the 26th Meade suggested to Grant a modification of these instructions, and that, instead of placing Ord's command on the two roads used by Warren and Humphreys, it be massed on the Halifax road in rear of the Union earthworks, and, when Humphreys had moved out the Vaughan road, that Ord move as far as the crossing of Hatcher's Run. Ord would thus keep up communication with Wright and cover Meade's supply trains, which Meade said he would park at the Stage road crossing of Hatcher's Run, which crossing was near the mouth of Gravelly Run. The Stage road was the route assigned to Warren. Meade said he also proposed to have Humphreys's pickets, from Hatcher's Run to Wright's left, relieved by Ord. These suggestions Grant at once adopted.* On the same day Meade asked that Parke and Humphreys be assigned permanently to the corps which they had been commanding ever since the departure of Burnside and Hancock from the army, and that Hartranft be made a brevet major general and assigned to the permanent command of the division which he had conducted so handsomely at the recapture of Fort Stedman. These appointments were at once made.

In response to Ord's inquiry as to where he had better camp and by what roads he had better move, Meade replied that the Army of the James, in order to avoid being seen by the enemy, had better move over the road from Point of Rocks bridge to the City Point Railroad at Bland's House, thence to Shands, thence southwardly past Bowles and Birchett's to McCann's Station on the Norfolk Railroad, and thence westwardly by the Gurley House to the Weldon Railroad. Meade told Ord that he would send a staff officer to guide the Army of the James over this route, and suggested that if the Point of Rocks bridge were crossed at night, a guard be placed there to prevent trains and stragglers crossing after daylight, causes which had revealed similar movements to the enemy on other occasions. Ord's leading division was directed to follow the route indicated by Meade.†

* Official War Records, vol. xlvi, part iii, p. 172. † Ibid., p. 211.

On the morning of the 28th Grant and Meade talked over the movement for the next day, and Meade's final orders directed Warren at three o'clock on the next morning to move to the crossing of Hatcher's Run at the Perkins House, and thence westwardly to the junction of the Vaughan and Quaker roads, where he should remain until Humphreys, moving down the Vaughan road to the westward of Warren's route and crossing Hatcher's Run, should take up a position, his right resting on the Run and his left extending to the Quaker road. On being notified that Humphreys was in position, Warren was directed to advance on the Boydton Plank road, his right connecting with Humphreys, his left refused and guarded. In case the enemy were found outside his works, Warren was to force him back to them. Warren was informed that the cavalry corps would be operating upon his left. Ord's army would relieve Humphreys, who held a line from Fort Welch south-westwardly to Hatcher's Run. It was Warren who pointed out that the Union commanders were using the name of Hatcher's Run wrongly, and that the stream which he would cross on the 29th was Rowanty Creek, Hatcher's Run properly terminating just above, at its junction with Gravelly Run. To deceive the enemy, Warren directed that his musicians be left in camp and sound the usual reveille, after which they should overtake their commands.

Sheridan ordered his cavalry to Dinwiddie Court House, which is twelve miles southwest of Petersburg, crossing Rowanty Creek at Malone bridge, less than four miles below Ream's Station. On the morning of the 29th Meade was at the Second Corps headquarters. His chief of staff during the afternoon was with Warren. In the morning Meade ordered Warren to move up the Quaker road beyond Gravelly Run. He was delayed in the movement by the necessity of bridging this stream, but about four o'clock, when he had reached a point a mile and a half beyond the Run, he was attacked by two brigades of Johnson's division of Anderson's corps. This attack was repulsed, and Anderson withdrew Johnson's division, directing it at first to take a position across the Boydton road, and subsequently to fall back to the Confederate earthworks near Burgess's Mill and south of Hatcher's Run. His staff officer not being

able to find Humphreys, Meade himself ordered Miles's division of the Second Corps to support Warren.

Lee brought infantry to his right, and on the 28th he had ordered Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry to Five Forks to oppose Sheridan's movement, which General Lee foresaw. After Humphreys had advanced on the 29th on Warren's right as far as Dabney's Mill and beyond the advance of Ord's left, Meade suggested to Grant that Ord's line was a good one to retain for the present, but that as it could be held with two divisions, it would be well to throw the other division across Hatcher's Run to take position on Humphreys's right and advance with him in the morning. For this proposed movement of the Army of the James, Grant gave the necessary orders. That night Meade ordered Warren, if he found himself against the enemy's works in the morning, to deploy to the left as far as possible, secure his flank, and develop the Confederate line. Warren's right would cross the Quaker road. Humphreys was directed to advance to Warren's right to ascertain if the Confederate line was a continuous one, and if not, his movement would turn their works on the Boydton road. Sheridan was directed by Grant to push around the enemy and get in his right rear in the morning. Meade was left without any information of Sheridan's movements except the general statement that the cavalry was to turn the enemy's right, and he so informed Warren, when the latter, at 5.50 A. M. of the 30th, in reply to Meade's order to deploy to the left as far as possible, said: "My left on the Plank road can not be extended with propriety till I can get some idea of General Sheridan's movements, and now rests on Gravelly Run, and if I move it will be in the air." Meade replied that Warren's action would have to be independent of Sheridan, of whose movements the Army of the Potomac had been left in the dark, and insisted that Warren should occupy as long a front as possible with Griffin's and Crawford's divisions, keeping a portion of each in reserve and covering the left flank with Ayres's division.

The troops having been moved out of their intrenchments, and the direction of the movement changed from the southwest to the northwest, there followed a period of hesitation and doubt before the next step was taken. At half

past eight on the evening of the 30th Grant was still apparently undetermined as to the next movement, for at that hour he sent the following message to Meade: "I have pretty much made up my mind on the course to pursue, and will inform you in the morning what it is." The easiest thing to do was to move upon the path of least resistance, and with this somewhat vague and undefined lead the situation solved itself through Meade's direction to Warren to extend his left. About ten o'clock in the morning a messenger from Sheridan at Dinwiddie Court House passed Warren's headquarters on his roundabout way to inform Grant at Gravelly Run that Sheridan was still at Dinwiddie with one division, that another division of cavalry was still farther back at the Vaughan road crossing of Stony Creek, but that still another division was about to advance northward from Dinwiddie Court House and feel out toward the White Oak road. Warren therefore said he would extend his left northwestwardly toward Dabney's, where he could co-operate with Sheridan if the latter came within reach. By 4 P. M. Warren's advance was in sight of the White Oak road, and Warren suggested to Meade that if Griffin, who was holding the line from a point about five hundred yards west of the Boydton road, with the return down that road, could be relieved by Humphreys, the Fifth Corps could be moved to hold the White Oak road. At half past eight on the evening of the 30th Grant had directed that Humphreys and Warren should stand still and await orders; but on receiving Meade's dispatch conveying Warren's suggestion, with Meade's recommendation that it was the best thing to do, Grant at once approved of the proposition. Sheridan, however, advancing Merritt's division northward from Dinwiddie Court House, intending to take the right-hand road at J. Boisseau's and reach the White Oak road, found Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry on both the right and left hand roads, and at dark Fitzhugh Lee was joined by the divisions of W. H. F. Lee and Rosser, who had come up from the south side of Stony Creek. From the extreme left of the Confederate army Fitzhugh Lee had arrived at Sutherland's Station on the night of the 29th, and early on the morning of the 30th had marched to Five Forks and then advanced toward Dinwiddie. The

total Confederate cavalry force confronting Sheridan was less than eight thousand, and although scattered until the night of the 30th, it had retarded Sheridan's movement with thirteen thousand sabres in such a way as to permit the concentration at Five Forks, on the evening of that day, of five Confederate brigades under Pickett, and to cause Grant to say to Meade that Warren would not have the cavalry support on his left flank that had been expected to be there,* and to fear that Warren's left flank would be attacked in the morning. Meade therefore ordered Warren to make his left at S. Dabney's secure, and Humphreys was directed to help Warren if necessary.

The fears felt for Warren's flank were in a measure realized on the 31st. Warren's situation was almost a duplication of his peril at Bethesda Church. Once more on the left flank of the army, and told that the cavalry were covering that flank, he was suddenly to find that this expected protection had not been afforded. Lee was making all his preparations to strike Warren's left and roll him back across the Confederate front—a plan that was facilitated by the halting of the contemplated attack from the Union right by Parke and Wright. Grant was now preparing to give Sheridan command of the Fifth Corps, "entirely detached from the balance of the army," with a view to turning the Confederate right. The initiatory movement had shown that there was already too much division of leadership among the Union forces, but it was proposed to increase the complications growing out of such division. Early on the morning of the 31st Grant told Meade to have the Fifth Corps draw three days' more rations, probably with a view to this movement which the lieutenant general had planned for Sheridan, but developments which could not be controlled somewhat deferred this operation. At quarter to eight on the morning of the 31st Warren said his advance division (Ayres's) would be near S. Dabney's, which adjoined W. Dabney's on the south, W. Dabney's being on the White Oak road west of the Claiborne road, and that Griffin's troops would be massed near Mrs. Butler's on the Boydton road with Crawford's division halfway

* Grant to Meade, Official War Records, vol. xlvi, part iii, p. 324.

between, the general line being along a wood road running from near Mrs. Butler's on the Boydton road to W. Dabney's on the White Oak road. Warned of Pickett's presence at Five Forks, four miles from the left of Warren's advance, this division of Warren's corps, that of Ayres, was formed in open ground about six hundred yards south of the White Oak road near W. Dabney's, with one brigade facing north and fronting the road, another brigade along a ravine and facing west, and a third brigade in rear of the center. At twenty minutes to eight that morning Grant had told Meade that owing to the heavy rain the troops would remain stationary. At twenty minutes to ten, however, Warren sent word to Meade that the enemy's pickets were on the south side of the White Oak road, which the Confederates were using, and that he had directed Ayres to try and drive them off. Immediately Meade ordered Warren to get possession of the White Oak road if he could, notwithstanding the order to suspend operations. The movement was a fortunate one, for the advance of Ayres's two brigades interrupted the preparations which Lee in person was directing for an attack on Warren's left flank, and the Confederates who were not altogether in position for their contemplated attack advanced to meet Ayres's brigades. Ayres was driven back on Crawford, and both divisions fell back across a branch of Gravelly Run, where Griffin was in position, and to the intrenchments along the Boydton road. Meade rode to the front and met Humphreys on the Boydton road, and between them it was decided to send Miles's division of the Second Corps to Warren's support, instead of attacking on Humphreys's front; Miles in turn striking the Confederates on the front and left, drove Wise's brigade back into the Confederate intrenchments, capturing some three hundred prisoners and one flag, and the whole force of three Confederate brigades engaged fell back. In the afternoon Warren advanced and regained the position held by him in the morning, and Humphreys attacked the Confederate redoubts at the Crow House and at Burgess's on the Boydton road. Warren's losses during the day were fourteen hundred and six, and Humphreys lost three hundred and seventy-four in killed and wounded.

About noon of the 31st Grant informed Sheridan that Warren was about to advance again, and that it was desirable for the cavalry to push toward the White Oak road, and in a second dispatch said: "I hope your cavalry is up where it will be of assistance. . . . If it had been possible to have had a division or two of them well up on the right-hand road . . . they could have fallen on the enemy's rear as they were pursuing Ayres and Crawford." * But seldom since the crossing of the Rapidan—not at the Wilderness, or at Todd's Tavern on the way to Spottsylvania, or at Bethesda Church, not at Petersburg at the time of Wilson's raid, or in the present movement—had Sheridan fitted into the scheme of army movement; and at the present moment, instead of covering the flank or being the star performer, as designed by the programme, Sheridan was about undergoing the most humiliating defeat that the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac had experienced since the "Buckland races" of 1863.

On the morning of the 31st one division of Sheridan's cavalry, that of Devin, was on the direct road from Dinwiddie Court House to Five Forks, near the point where this road is joined by the road leading northward to Gravelly Run Church. Another division, that of Crook, was some two miles south of Devin's position holding the crossing over Chamberlaine's Creek at Fitzgerald's, and also Danse's crossing, which was somewhat nearer to Devin. Custer's division was four miles in rear of the Court House. Leaving one division of cavalry to hold Devin, Pickett with five small brigades of infantry, and Fitzhugh Lee with W. H. F. Lee's and Rosser's cavalry divisions, started to gain Sheridan's left flank by the road leading southward from Five Forks through Little Five Forks. The crossing of Chamberlaine's Creek at Danse's was forced by the Confederates, and Davies's brigade, which was holding the crossing, was driven back by Pickett upon Devin's division, which was also forced back from its advanced position at the junction of the Gravelly Run Church road with the direct road from Dinwiddie to Five Forks, and Pickett thus

* Grant to Sheridan, Official War Records, vol. xlvi, part iii, p. 381.

interposed between Sheridan's two divisions. W. H. F. Lee also forced the crossing at Fitzgerald's and moved northwardly to Pickett's right. Devin and Davies were obliged to retreat across the country, pursued by the enemy to the Boydton Plank road, over which road and the Vaughan road they found their way to the Court House. Crook's other two brigades were also driven back, and Crook's division bivouacked that night on the Vaughan road three miles east of Dinwiddie.

On the Union side everything now had to be deferred in the urgent need of extricating Sheridan. Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee were in the rear of the main line of the Army of the Potomac. The last possible movement of the kind that had succeeded so well at Chancellorsville had been made by the Confederates, and was limited in its results solely by the weakness of Lee's army, but up to this point it had been as successful as if it had possessed all the advantage of the surprise of an unknown maneuver.

Meade was at Warren's headquarters during the afternoon. The sound of firing receding toward Dinwiddie Court House announced Sheridan's defeat, and that he was retreating instead of coming up on the left, where Grant had hoped he would be and where Meade had been led to believe that he was. At quarter past five Meade ordered Warren to push a force down the White Oak road to cooperate with Sheridan, but as soon as Sheridan's reverse began to be understood, and it was learned that Pickett had gained Meade's rear, Warren was directed to send the relief, which had already been ordered, down the Boydton Plank road. Without orders, Warren had at once sent a brigade across country toward the sound of the guns. At 9 p. m. Meade ordered Warren to draw back to the road and send a division down the Plank road to Sheridan, who was contemplating retirement from Dinwiddie over the Vaughan road.* Meade also ordered the Sixth Corps ambulances to go for Sheridan's wounded, and sent his own cavalry escort, an officer and forty men to communicate with Sheridan. At quarter to ten Meade asked Grant, "Would it not

* Official War Records, vol. xlvi, part iii, p. 341, Statement of Captain Sheridan to Meade.

be well for Warren to go down with his whole corps and smash up the force in front of Sheridan?"—a suggestion originating with Warren, but then coupled with a condition. An hour later Warren was directed by Meade to move the rest of his corps, Griffin's division having already been ordered southward on the Plank road, down the road running south from the White Oak road to Dinwiddie, and to attack the enemy in rear. Sheridan was informed of these measures for his relief by Meade. The lieutenant general, who had found fault with Warren for the temporary repulse suffered by the Fifth Corps in the morning, now told Meade that Sheridan should have command of that corps in addition to the cavalry; but Meade's messenger had already gone, and it was too late to inform Sheridan of Grant's desire. Grant on the previous day had written to Sheridan of a plan in the latter's behalf, which plan this movement of Warren, made in consequence of Sheridan's unlooked-for dilemma, strangely enough promoted without apparent design.

Meade's dispatches to Warren all dwelt upon the necessity of making haste, and when Meade learned that the bridge over Gravelly Run on the Boydton road had been destroyed, the stream not being fordable by infantry, and that a span of forty feet was required to complete the bridge, he asked Warren, "Would not time be gained by sending troops by the Quaker road?" and he added: "Time is of the utmost consequence. Sheridan can not maintain himself at Dinwiddie without re-enforcements, and yours are the only ones that can be sent. Use every exertion to get the troops to him as soon as possible. If necessary, send troops by both roads and give up the rear attack."

In withdrawing from his advanced position to the Boydton road Warren had naturally retired in the order of Ayres, Crawford, and Griffin, and to have carried out Meade's order to send Griffin down the road would have caused delay and confusion, so Warren properly sent Ayres, and informed Meade that he would send Griffin and Crawford down the next road to the west (which road leads from the White Oak road past J. Boisseau's to Dinwiddie), in accordance with the general tenor of Meade's order at 10.15 P. M. To comply with Meade's suggestion to move

by the Quaker road would involve a somewhat roundabout march, and Warren properly decided that time would be gained by waiting for the completion of the bridge over Gravelly Run on the Boydton road. This he did, the bridge being built upon a night of intense darkness with material taken from a house in the vicinity by Warren's orders. Events proved that Warren's judgment was correct. By two o'clock in the morning the bridge was completed, and an hour before daybreak Ayres, at that time within two miles of Dinwiddie, was met by a staff officer of Sheridan, who moved Ayres back to the Brooks Cross road and westwardly to the junction of the Dinwiddie and White Oak road. In getting a division to Sheridan before daylight Warren had complied with the main object of Meade's orders, and his advance of Bartlett's brigade as far as the north side of Gravelly Run and the White Oak and Dinwiddie road caused the withdrawal of Fitzhugh Lee and Pickett to Five Forks during the night, for the Confederates inferred that the Fifth Corps was following Bartlett.

Sheridan's order to Warren of 3 A. M. of April 1st was based upon a misconception of the situation. He thought Warren had a division at J. Boisseau's, whereas there had been but a brigade on the other side of Gravelly Run, and Meade withdrew this on the evening of the 31st. Sheridan ordered Warren to attack at daylight, whereas at daylight there was no enemy to attack, the entire force of Confederates having fallen back to Five Forks in consequence of their mistaking Bartlett's brigade of Warren's corps for the entire corps.* The appearance of a single brigade of the Fifth Corps of the Army of the Potomac had compelled the retirement of a foe that had driven "The Army of the Shenandoah," or "The Middle Military Division," or whatever other name from the confusion of terms officially used is to be applied to the separate command exercised by Sheridan, from within a mile and a quarter of Five Forks to Dinwiddie Court House and the Vaughan road. At seven in the morning the head of Warren's other two divisions reported to Sheridan at J. Boisseau's. Mackenzie's cavalry

* Fitzhugh Lee's testimony before the Warren Court of Inquiry, Humphreys's Virginia Campaign, pp. 342 and 343, notes.

from Ord's army reached Dinwiddie pursuant to Grant's orders.

After having thus sprung to Sheridan's aid and extricated him from his dilemma when the head of Warren's second column reported to Sheridan at Boisseau's, and that officer was informed that Warren was in the rear, he said to Warren's subordinate, "That is where I should expect him to be." As Warren was withdrawing from a foe and expected to be pursued, his personal position in relation to his troops was correct enough. Humphreys says that Sheridan knew very little of Warren. While that is true, Sheridan apparently had not forgotten or forgiven, because of the important help just rendered him, Warren's complaint that Sheridan did not cover his flank on several fields.*

* Sheridan's record in the East is not inconsistent with his career in the West. See description of battle of Chickamauga in *History of the Civil War in America*, by the Comte de Paris, vol. iv, pp. 158 and 160. A bridge which Sheridan was ordered to construct over the French Broad River at Dandridge, East Tennessee, was found, when the troops began the movement across it, to terminate upon an island in midstream, a long delay with heavy loss of life among the Union forces resulting. (Report of General John G. Parke, *Official War Records*, vol. xxxii, part i, p. 79.)

CHAPTER XXIV.

FIVE FORKS.

AT Five Forks Pickett intrenched himself along the White Oak road for a distance extending a mile west and three quarters of a mile east of that place, this line at Pickett's left having a return northward of three hundred feet. Sheridan decided to threaten Pickett's right with part of the cavalry, assault the left with Warren's infantry corps, and have the cavalry attack in front at the sound of Warren's guns. Warren was ordered to form his corps in the vicinity of Gravelly Run Church, six hundred or eight hundred yards south of the White Oak road. The cavalry from Ord's army under Mackenzie was sent to this road at a point three miles east of Five Forks. Sheridan told Warren that the enemy's left rested where the Gravelly Run Church road joined the White Oak road. Warren's corps, in pursuance of Sheridan's orders, was formed to assault the angle formed by the return of the Confederate line, which angle was asserted to be at this road junction. Crawford's division was formed on the right of the Gravelly Run Church road so that his center would strike the angle at its supposed location. Griffin was in rear of Crawford. Ayres's division was placed on the left of the road, to assault the Confederate front and prevent re-enforcements from being sent to the defense of the angle where it was supposed the hard fighting would be. The assaulting column was formed obliquely to the road, and when the highway was reached was to change direction to the west. But after the line had started forward, and crossed the White Oak road it was discovered that the enemy's left was not where Sheridan had informed Warren that it was. Sheridan had made no reconnoissance. His engineer officer, Colonel Gil-

lespie, said subsequently he did not know that there was a return to the enemy's works. Warren's advance at four o'clock in the afternoon led to the discovery that this return was eight hundred yards west of the point which Warren had been ordered to assault. Sheridan had made the mistake of putting all his infantry into position for a movement upon an object which was not where he supposed it to be. The information, or lack of it, the formation, the direction given for the assault, all were Sheridan's and all were wrong. The farther the two divisions on the right advanced beyond the White Oak road in search of an enemy the farther they were being carried away from any possible field of battle. The discovery of the true location of the enemy's line was not made until after Warren's left division (Ayres's) had crossed the road and received a fire upon its flank. Sheridan's plan of battle being one thing and the situation a very different thing, the faulty movement had to be corrected while the advance was going on. On receiving the flank fire mentioned, Ayres immediately changed front so as to face the enemy's return work, which was concealed by a thick growth of evergreens. But with Crawford disappearing through the woods to the north in search of the foe, and Griffin following Crawford, Ayres's change of front to the west exposed the right flank of this division; and it is to be said that the troops of the Fifth Corps had had more than their share of experiences with the dangers arising from exposed flanks. The result of this erratic movement would have been disastrous to the Union arms if the contending forces at the battle of Five Forks had been nearly equal. Fitzhugh Lee says the Confederate force of all arms was seven thousand. Sheridan had in the Fifth Corps twelve thousand men, besides the cavalry divisions of Devin and Custer and Mackenzie's command. After Ayres had made his timely change of front, Sheridan went to him three times at short intervals and expressed the fear that the change had been made too soon and before Ayres had reached a point sufficiently far north. By the greatest exertions of himself and his staff, Warren succeeded in changing the direction of Griffin and Crawford.

Seeing that the brunt of the battle would fall upon

Ayres's small division, and not upon Crawford, as Sheridan had planned, Warren had at once ordered Winthrop's reserve brigade to form on Ayres's left so as to connect with Devin's cavalry. At one stage of the battle Warren's energetic and intelligent efforts were seriously interfered with by a staff officer of Sheridan, who, without Warren's knowledge, moved off Kellogg's brigade, which Warren had himself faced to the west and upon which he had ordered Crawford to form his division. Ayres carried the return intrenchment, capturing one thousand prisoners and several battle flags, and was then halted by Sheridan's orders. Moving over the thickly wooded country, Warren overtook Griffin at the northern end of the Sydnor farm, eight hundred yards above the enemy's intrenchments, and at that time moving southwest. Warren ordered Griffin to attack the rear of a new line which the enemy had formed to oppose Ayres's westward advance. Riding to Ayres and finding him halted by Sheridan's orders, Warren followed Crawford's track of killed and wounded, lost in driving Munford's cavalry before him, and found this division on the Young-Boisseau farm facing west. Warren changed Crawford's front to the south, led it along the Ford road toward the rear of the Confederates' front line of intrenchments, and drove back the line which Pickett established to confront this rear attack. Warren here captured four guns. Pickett now formed another line running north and south and farther to the west, to cover his retreat. Warren changed Crawford's direction again to the west, facing these new intrenchments, and, riding forward with the corps flag in his hand, led Crawford's troops across the Gilliam field. Warren's horse was shot under him, an orderly was killed at his side, and he himself was only spared from death or injury by the act of Colonel Richardson, of the Seventh Wisconsin, who threw himself between his corps commander and the enemy and was severely wounded. Ayres and Griffin pushed westwardly along the Confederate front line, and at Five Forks met Fitzhugh's brigade of Union cavalry, which charged the front simultaneously with Crawford's success in the rear and captured one thousand prisoners, three guns, and two battle flags. Custer, on the left front with two brigades, also charged W. H. F.

Lee's one brigade, but Lee held his position. Warren continued the pursuit west for half a mile, by which time the enemy had disappeared. Pickett lost forty-five hundred in prisoners, thirteen colors, and six guns, Warren's Fifth Corps having taken thirty-two hundred and forty-four prisoners, eleven regimental colors, and one four-gun battery.

Warren's reward for his great efforts in correcting the errors made in the preliminary dispositions and subsequent movements, and for his untiring zeal and gallantry, was to be relieved from the command of his corps by Sheridan. He asked Sheridan to reconsider the act, but the latter replied, "Reconsider? Hell! I don't reconsider my determination." Meade twice suggested to Grant that Warren be reinstated, but Grant made no direct reply. Warren could not obtain a court of inquiry as long as Grant remained at the head of the army or the nation. The findings of this court, granted under the administration of President Hayes, when some of Warren's most important witnesses were dead, were that there had been no unnecessary delay by Warren in the formation of the Fifth Corps, and that, in correcting the movement of Crawford and Griffin, by the continuous exertions of himself and staff he had substantially remedied matters, the court expressing the opinion that this was the essential point to be attended to, and that it exacted his whole efforts to accomplish. These findings, adverse to the imputations and contentions of the superior officer of the members of the court and a number of witnesses, Sheridan being then the lieutenant general of the army, indicate the strict justice of Meade's repeated suggestion to Grant that Warren be restored to the command of the Fifth Corps. At this distant day, in the light of all the facts, Meade's inquiry of Grant on the evening of April 1st, "What part did Warren take? I take it for granted that he was engaged," a question in reply to Grant's message, "Sheridan has captured everything before him," assumes an ironical aspect that it was not intended to have at the time.

The total losses in the Fifth Corps were but six hundred and thirty-four, the largest loss being in Crawford's division, which was led by Warren in person. The cavalry losses were small.

The Confederate troops were without leadership, both Pickett and Fitzhugh Lee being north of Hatcher's Run. Pickett rode to the field down the Ford road under Crawford's fire. The Confederate cavalry and the remnant of Pickett's division fell back to the South Side Railroad. On the Union side Miles's division of the Second Corps was sent down the White Oak road to Sheridan.

CHAPTER XXV.

FROM PETERSBURG TO APPOMATTOX.

ON April 17, 1865, General Meade said, in an address to the officers and soldiers of the Sixth Corps who had just presented to him numerous battle flags captured by that corps: "Candor compels me to say that, in my opinion, the decisive moment of this campaign, which resulted in the capture of the Army of Northern Virginia, was the gallant and successful assault of the Sixth Corps on the morning of the 2d of April." Humphreys also says that Wright's assault forced Lee to abandon Petersburg.* Swinton points out that beyond the Weldon Railroad the extension to the left had carried the army no nearer to Lee's line of communications—in fact, had carried it farther away from that line.† The battle of Five Forks was not an essential preliminary to the capture of Petersburg, and, for both the Union and Confederate sides, may be said to have been an unnecessary battle. The Danville Railroad, its connections with the South Side Railroad, and the rolling stock of both roads, remained in possession of the Confederates, and, says Humphreys, so long as they held their intrenchments they could defer their movement to Danville until the wagon roads became passable.

On Wright's front, southwest of Petersburg, from Fort Urmiston to Fort Fisher, and southward again through Fort Welch and Fort Gregg to Fort Sampson, the Union line approached nearest to the South Side Railroad. On the morning of March 25th, after the recapture of Fort Stedman by Hartranft's division of the Ninth Corps, Meade

* Virginia Campaign, p. 363.

† Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, p. 552.

had ordered Wright to drive in the Confederate pickets in front of the Sixth Corps, and Wright had carried the enemy's intrenched picket line under a sharp fire of artillery and musketry, capturing four hundred and sixty-two prisoners. In his report of his successful assault of April 2d Wright says that, but for this success of the 25th of March, the attack upon the enemy's main line of April 2d could not have been successful—a view which is adopted by Humphreys in his Virginia Campaign.

Uneasiness on the part of General Grant over Sheridan's isolated position at Five Forks plainly appears to have been the directing influence in the arrangement of the next movements of the Army of the Potomac; but Humphreys points out that, with the White Oak road close to the enemy's intrenchments at the intersection of the Claiborne road, strongly held by the Second Corps at the close of the battle of Five Forks, Sheridan was in no danger unless Lee had enough troops to attack Sheridan without abandoning his intrenchments, which he had not. Nevertheless, Meade's orders of 9 p. m. of April 1st to Parke, Wright, and Humphreys, to feel for a chance to get through the enemy's intrenched lines at once in order to prevent the enemy from sending troops to attack Sheridan, did not allay the uneasiness in the mind of Grant, who said to Meade, "Sheridan may find everything against him," and desired that first Miles, and then the entire Second Corps, should join Sheridan; but this plan was changed when Humphreys's advance on the left to the White Oak road developed the fact that the enemy held his intrenchments in strength, and Miles's division alone was therefore sent down the White Oak road to Sheridan.

Previous to learning the result of the battle of Five Forks, Meade had ordered Wright to assault the enemy's works at four o'clock on the morning of the 2d, Wright being informed that Parke and Ord would assault at the same time. At twenty-five minutes to ten on the night of the 1st Grant modified the orders to assault, saying that Parke and Wright should open with artillery and feel the enemy with skirmishers, and push him only in the event of his giving way. At 11 p. m. Wright telegraphed to

Webb, Meade's chief of staff: "The corps will go in solid, and I am sure will make the fur fly. The general plan being understood well by the various commanders, there will be no hesitation from want of knowledge of what is expected. If the corps does half as well as I expect, we will have broken through the rebel lines fifteen minutes from the word 'Go!'" Wright opened with his artillery and picket firing that night, and formed his assaulting columns for the advance to take place in front of Forts Fisher and Welch at four o'clock on the next morning. At the firing of the signal gun from Fort Fisher at twenty minutes to five, at which hour it was barely light enough to see, Wright's troops advanced, brushing away the enemy's picket line, and poured their masses over the main defenses under a heavy fire of artillery and musketry. The whole front of attack was gained, and by their own ardor some of the troops were carried as far as the Boydton Plank road and the South Side Railroad. Leaving a brigade to hold the captured lines, Wright wheeled his troops to the left, with the left of line guiding on the Confederate intrenchments, and advanced southwestward as far as Hatcher's Run. There Wright, learning that other Union troops were rushing toward that point, faced his corps about and swept back toward Petersburg along the Boydton road, and, in conjunction with the Twenty-fourth Corps and part of the Second Corps, closely invested the town from the Appomattox River on the left. Wright lost eleven hundred officers and men in killed and wounded within the first fifteen minutes after his columns started. He captured some three thousand prisoners. Parke, on the right, advanced from the right and left of Fort Sedgwick, carried the enemy's works on each side of the Jerusalem Plank road, and captured twelve guns, colors, and eight hundred prisoners; but he was unsuccessful in his attempt to carry a rear line of works. Humphreys, whose contemplated attack in the vicinity of the Crow House had been deferred by Grant because of his anxiety on Sheridan's account and the apparent necessity of sending one of Humphreys's divisions to Sheridan's assistance, was ordered by Meade to push out and do all he could, as soon as Meade received the reports from his corps commanders on the right of the

success of their assaults.* Humphreys carried the Crow House redoubts and the intrenched picket line at Burgess's Mill. Meade had informed him that Grant had ordered Sheridan to push up the White Oak road toward Petersburg at daybreak, and Meade's directions to Humphreys were made largely with a view toward helping Sheridan's supposed movement and assisting him in case he should be attacked. At half past nine Meade informed Grant that the enemy had abandoned Humphreys's front, and that he was pushing Humphreys's troops up the Boydton road and the Claiborne road to try and connect on the right and left, and if firing were heard on the left from Sheridan he should attack there with Humphreys's corps. The lack of any cavalry in connection with Humphreys's movement was so seriously felt that Meade, from Humphreys's headquarters, sent an order to his own headquarters to have General Macy collect any cavalry force he could get together and join Humphreys.

Three separate and distinct controlling influences promoted wavering, indecision, and confusion on the Union side on the 2d. One of these influences was the Confederate force shut up within the inner works of Petersburg, cut off from the railroad and highways south of the Appomattox, and threatened on the north side by Wright's successful assault in the morning, and by his subsequent close investment of the town. Another influence was the flight of that portion of the Confederate army consisting of four brigades of Hill's corps under Heth, Anderson's two divisions, and Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry, all of which had now been cut off from Petersburg; while still another diverting influence is found in Grant's desire not only to attain Confederate defeat, but to attain it chiefly with a particular instrument. We find all of these diverse influences operating at the same time, when Humphreys proposed to follow the fleeing Confederate force with his whole corps toward Sutherland's Station in the expectation that Sheridan would strike their front and flank, and Grant countermanded Humphreys's orders, directing him

* Meade to Grant, 6.45 A. M., April 2d, Official War Records, vol. xlvii, part iii, p. 454.

to move eastward toward Petersburg over the Boydton road.

Miles having marched at midnight of the 1st over the White Oak road to Sheridan, at half past seven on the morning of the 2d, by Sheridan's orders, started back again over the same road, and when the enemy abandoned his earthworks in Humphreys's front, Miles followed in pursuit toward Sutherland's Station. After making two unsuccessful assaults, Miles, at a quarter to three in the afternoon, by a feint on one Confederate flank and a real attack upon the other, swept down the earthworks, captured six hundred prisoners, one battle flag, and two pieces of artillery. Miles was here fighting an independent battle. By Meade's orders he was again under Humphreys's command, but Humphreys declined to dispute with Sheridan the latter's claim to command Miles, and finding the last named confident that he could defeat the force before him, Humphreys left him to do so and rejoined his other two divisions on their way to Petersburg, where they formed on Wright's right.

Before Miles's final success, Meade, receiving from Miles, through Colonel Humphreys, a request for assistance,* ordered General Humphreys to go in person with another division of the Second Corps to Miles's support. This would have been entirely unnecessary but for the erratic movements of the Fifth Corps, which, under Sheridan's orders on the morning of the 2d, marched eastward over the White Oak road from the vicinity of Five Forks to within a mile of the junction of the White Oak and Claiborne roads. After remaining massed at this point until the middle forenoon, the corps was countermarched to Five Forks and thence by the Ford road across Hatcher's Run to the Cox road, thus marching away from Miles's battlefield at Sutherland's Station and leaving Miles entirely unsupported. After reaching the Cox road, the Fifth Corps was moved eastwardly toward Sutherland's Station, but turned off on the Namozine road and bivouacked at the intersection of that road with the River road.

* Reply to Horace Porter's Century articles by Lieutenant-Colonel H. H. Humphreys (1898), p. 25.

At ten o'clock in the morning Meade sent a message to Sheridan, saying that the latter was presumed to be on the Cox and River roads, and requested him to move toward Humphreys, who was moving out on the Boydton and Claiborne roads. Had this supposition been correct, the force of Confederates which had abandoned Humphreys's front would have been entrapped between the Second Corps in their rear and Sheridan's forces on their flank and front. To Grant, that evening, Meade said: "It is a pity Sheridan did not move, as I suggested, on the Cox and River roads, for had he done so, these fellows would have been cut off." In the morning Meade had said to Grant: "If Sheridan pushes his cavalry rapidly, he ought to cut off some of them [the enemy] if they are going across the Appomattox, as I suppose." At nine o'clock that night Grant sent word to Meade that Sheridan was marching on the Cox and River roads, but at that hour such a movement would have been too late even had it been under way. Sheridan's loss of time in marching and countermarching the Fifth Corps on the White Oak road, at first toward the enemy's front and then away from it, has been narrated. His cavalry, under Merritt, spent some time in tearing up the railroad track between Ford's and Sutherland's Stations; but this road was no longer of any use to Lee, and after Mackenzie joined Merritt, the advance northward of the cavalry toward Scott's Forks, five miles above the railroad, was impeded by W. H. F. Lee's small cavalry division, and when Merritt's advance below Namozine Creek reached the fork of the road along which the Confederates were fleeing toward Amelia Court House, it was held in check by infantry and artillery, and night soon followed. Owing to the movements of the infantry and cavalry under Sheridan's orders, that portion of the enemy which Wright had cut off from Petersburg had escaped, and the pursuit had to be resumed on the next day.

When Wright's troops arrived in front of the inner works at Petersburg they were exhausted, having been under arms for some eighteen hours. Ord's troops, however, carried Forts Gregg and Baldwin, the Confederates fighting hand to hand for a half hour after the troops of the divisions of Foster and Turner, of Gibbon's corps, had

gained the parapet of Fort Gregg. Gibbon's corps of Ord's command captured three hundred officers and men, two guns, and several colors, while his losses in assaulting Fort Gregg were seven hundred and fourteen in killed and wounded. The Confederate force in the main line of works, and the two advanced works, Gregg and Baldwin, comprised a division of Longstreet's corps, two brigades of Gordon's corps, and a fragment of Hill's corps.

When General Lee, whose headquarters were at the Turnbull House near the river, west of the town, learned that Wright had carried the Confederate lines, he notified Jefferson Davis that it would be necessary to abandon the Confederate position that night; that he would withdraw north of the Appomattox, and that, moving by way of Amelia Court House, he hoped to concentrate the separated wings of his army near the Danville Railroad. He advised that all preparations be made for leaving Richmond during the night. Mr. Davis wished for a little longer delay in order to save valuables, but Lee replied that the movement was absolutely necessary to avoid the risk of being cut off in the morning. The corps of Longstreet and Hill were ordered to take the River road on the north side of the Appomattox to Bevill's bridge that night. Gordon's corps would follow to the same place. Mahone's division would take a more northerly route to Goode's bridge. Ewell's command, crossing the James River at Richmond, was directed to follow a still more northerly route to Genito bridge and Amelia Court House, the movements of all the troops to commence at eight o'clock that evening. Lee's forces were thus assigned a night march averaging about thirty miles between the Appomattox and James Rivers. Bevill's bridge being out of order, the troops assigned to that route were compelled to extend their march to Goode's bridge. To Ewell, later, Lee, in communicating the information that there was no bridge at Genito, said, "Get to Amelia Court House as soon as possible."

At four o'clock on the morning of the 3d Meade informed Grant of the probability that Petersburg had been evacuated during the night; that he had directed Parke and Wright to push forward strong lines of skirmishers

and use every effort to ascertain the condition of the enemy, and that he had kept Ord informed. A few minutes after five o'clock he sent word to the lieutenant general of the occupation of Petersburg. At 8 p. m. of the previous evening Meade had made this important suggestion to Grant: "Had I not better send a pontoon bridge to Humphreys, at Sutherland's Station, and authorize his advancing by the Exeter Mills and crossing the river?" But Grant was acting upon the belief conveyed by Sheridan that a state of affairs existed which was not the actual situation. To Meade, Grant said, on the evening before the evacuation of Petersburg: "I have just heard from Sheridan. Lee himself escaped up the river. I think there is nothing in Petersburg except the remnants of Gordon's corps and a few men brought from the north side of the river." Sheridan sent a message to Grant, dated April 2d, expressing the belief that everything had left Petersburg, and he said he was in doubt about the result of moving north of the Appomattox. This, as we now know, was not the case, and if Sheridan with his cavalry, the Fifth and the Second Corps, as suggested by Meade in his dispatch of 8 p. m., had crossed the Appomattox, three corps could have been placed across the line of Lee's retreat. Seeing Grant's ever-present and invariably manifested desire that Sheridan should have whatever was left over in the way of final honors, Meade effaced himself entirely in his anxiety to bring the war to an immediate end, by saying: "I would suggest Humphreys taking the Fifth Corps and the two divisions of the Second and crossing at Exeter Mills, I sending him a bridge train. He can, when across, cooperate with or take orders from Sheridan." But Grant desired that Meade send no orders to Humphreys except to report to Sheridan, and that the Fifth Corps remain with Sheridan. Meade's information that some of the Confederate troops on the south side were crossing the Appomattox at Exeter Mills was correct; but regardless of this fact, a prompt movement upon the line of his suggestion to Grant would have headed off the forces about to flee from Petersburg, Chester Station, and Richmond; for the Confederate Chief of Artillery, Pendleton, says that the guns from Petersburg were not all across to the north side of

the Appomattox until two o'clock on the morning of the 3d, that the march of that day was fatiguing and slow on account of the immense number of carriages with the army, and that by night he was still nine miles from Goode's bridge. It was not until the night of the 4th that the Richmond troops crossed the Appomattox at the Mattoax railroad bridge.*

Grant's orders to Meade, on the morning of the 3d, to march immediately with his army westward on the south side of the Appomattox, leaving one division to hold Petersburg, was the safer course to pursue, since the Union forces would thus be kept together, but it turned the movement into a pursuit, and the Confederate forces between the Appomattox and James Rivers, as well as the force which, after being cut off by Wright, had escaped Sheridan, all reached Amelia Court House on the Danville Railroad by noon of the 5th, by which time the last corps to come up, that of Ewell, had arrived at the point of concentration. Lee himself reached that point with the advance of his troops on the morning of the 4th, and not finding the supplies ordered to meet him there, wasted twenty-four hours in endeavoring to collect from the country subsistence for men and horses. At that time his way to Danville was clear. Sheridan's command—the cavalry and Fifth Corps—encamped on the night of the 3d at Deep Creek, seven miles southeast of Amelia Court House. Crook's cavalry did not reach Jetersville until the afternoon of the 4th, and it was not until the approach of darkness that the Fifth Corps was formed in line of battle below Jetersville, with its left extending across the Danville Railroad. Late as this one division of cavalry and one infantry corps were in getting across Lee's route to Danville, they could still have been brushed aside on the morning of the 5th but for the accident which detained Lee in the search of provisions. There were abundant supplies at Danville, and the train load ordered thence to Amelia Court House was carried by mistake to Richmond.

* In his Memoirs, written many years after the event, Lieutenant-General Grant assigns this suggestion of Meade's, made on the 2d, to the 3d.

The opportunity for Lee to join Johnston was preserved for the Confederates during a considerable portion of April 5th by the extraordinary movements of the remaining divisions of Sheridan's cavalry, which are described in the report of General Humphreys, commanding the Second Corps, who was vainly trying to keep close up to the Fifth Corps. The situation at Jetersville imperatively demanded the early arrival of Meade's infantry.

When, after starting what was left of his army, Meade went to the front and joined Humphreys on the 4th, he found what was in some respects an exasperating situation to a commander who felt every fiber of his body thrilling with the need of haste. In the first place, he found the colored division of Ord's army, instead of being on the Cox road, the route assigned to Ord, on the Namozine road, which Meade was to pursue, and he sent word to Grant that the responsible officer should be held accountable for not knowing how to follow his column. The road, near the river bed, was almost impassable for trains. Sheridan's trains would have stuck fast in the mud if Meade had not helped them along and repaired the roads with the troops of the Second and Sixth Corps. Meade had hoped that Humphreys would be able to make a long march on the 4th, but two divisions of Sheridan's cavalry came into Humphreys's road from the right, cut the column, and interposed between Humphreys and the Fifth Corps, which Humphreys had been ordered to follow closely. Humphreys says his way was blocked from eleven o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock in the evening by the cavalry, so that the Second Corps only reached Deep Creek that night. Here Meade found Humphreys, who had been acting under Sheridan's orders, without any message from Sheridan urging haste, and with the cavalry in his front preventing him from moving. The Second Corps troops had been on their feet for fourteen hours. Meade ordered Humphreys to march at one o'clock on the morning of the 5th for Jetersville, but just beyond Deep Creek Humphreys found the road again blocked by the cavalry; the way was not opened until eight o'clock, and in consequence the Second Corps did not reach Jetersville until three o'clock in the afternoon, and was then posted on the right and left of the Fifth Corps.

Meade's dispatches and orders of the 4th speak for themselves. To Grant he sent back word from Deep Creek that night:

"I have now ordered him [Humphreys] to move at all hazards at 3 A. M. to-morrow [afterward changed to one o'clock], but if his rations can be issued prior to that, to march as soon as issued, or if the temper of the men . . . leads to the belief that they will march with spirit, then to push on at once, as soon as they can be got under arms. . . . You may rest assured that every exertion will be made by myself and subordinate commanders to reach the point with the men in such condition that they may be available for immediate action."

In his orders of half past nine that night Meade said:

"The troops of the Second Corps and Sixth Corps will be put in motion to-morrow by 3 A. M., regardless of every consideration but the one of finishing the war."

His was the responsibility for pushing forward the supplies for Sheridan as well as for his own troops, and he directed that if the wagon trains could not be moved, that beef should be driven and pack mules used; and, in conclusion, he impressed upon all officers and men the necessity of promptitude and of undergoing necessities and privations, and expressed his confidence that when it was understood that only these sacrifices were required to bring the long and desperate conflict to a triumphant issue, the soldiers would show themselves as willing to die of fatigue and starvation as they had ever been ready to fall by the bullets of the enemy. But early that morning Meade had been looking beyond Amelia Court House to Farmville and gathering information about the roads leading to that place.

There were also larger difficulties to be overcome than those growing out of blocked and impassable roads, and these difficulties, which sprang from the anomalous division of command, Meade also overcame. "Will you let me know to what point you are moving, and by what roads?" Meade asked Sheridan at 2.45 P. M. of the 4th, and he felt it necessary to explain that the information was needed in order for him to decide upon the movements of his own command. Sheridan replied at 7 P. M. that the Confederate army was in his front; that if the Sixth Corps would hurry up he

would be strong enough, and made an appeal for rations. He did not give the exact location of the Confederate army, but said that the enemy was moving from Amelia Court House, *via* Jetersville, to Danville. To Sheridan that night Meade sent this message:

“The Second and Sixth Corps shall be with you as soon as possible. In the meantime, your wishes or suggestions as to any movement other than the simple one of overtaking you will be promptly acceded to by me, regardless of any other consideration than the vital one of destroying the Army of Northern Virginia.” *

This narrative has failed of its purpose if the reader, considering all that transpired between May, 1864, and April, 1865, does not esteem that message as springing from the breast of a great-souled soldier and patriot. From Wilson's Station, at four o'clock on the morning of the 5th, Grant sent his approval of Meade's action and orders on the previous day with these words: “I do not see that greater efforts can be made than you are making to get up with the

* An example of the inaccuracy of the gossip sent from the army by Assistant Secretary of War Dana to Mr. Stanton is found in a dispatch of April 5th, wherein it is asserted that Ewell had set fire to Richmond, whereas Ewell tried to suppress the mob; that Grant had relieved Warren from the command of the Fifth Corps for the disaster of Friday—a statement that included two misrepresentations—and that Grant had commanded the armies in person since the beginning of operations, having got disgusted with Meade's stickling about his dignity. But on the 5th Grant telegraphed to Stanton that he had had no communication with Meade that day, and Meade's message to Sheridan is sufficient refutation, if any were needed, of the remaining assertion in regard to Meade. Mr. Dana embodied in his *Recollections* the substance of one of his war-time dispatches asserting that Meade had scarcely a friend in the army. From his deathbed General Wright sent to the author of this biography a message, saying how gladly he would bear testimony to his admiration for Meade's ability and character, and his sincere regard for him. After Meade's death Warren gave eloquent expression to his feelings of friendship and respect. Humphreys and Hunt placed on record their high appreciation of Meade. General Gregg, in a letter to the author, says the assertion of Mr. Dana “is too absurd to be considered or replied to. He was held in the highest respect by the army which he commanded. I can not better express my high estimate of his abilities as a soldier and his character as a gentleman, than I did in an address delivered at the dedication of the Meade monument at Gettysburg in June, 1896.”

enemy. We want to reach the remnant of Lee's army wherever it may be found by the shortest and most practicable route. That your order provides for, and has my hearty approval."

When Humphreys marched from Deep Run at one o'clock on the morning of the 5th he was without rations. Wright, with the Sixth Corps, reached Deep Run at seven in the morning without rations, but Meade supplied him from the Fifth Corps train and ordered him to press forward at once. Meade in person pushed ahead of the Second Corps, reaching Jetersville at two o'clock. The Second Corps arrived half an hour later, but the Sixth Corps could not get up until six o'clock in the evening, having been held back by the Second, which in turn was delayed by the cavalry ahead. Meade found Sheridan entrenched in anticipation of being attacked. It was too late for Meade to attack that night, but he issued orders, dated 7 P. M., for the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps to attack the enemy vigorously at Amelia Court House at six o'clock in the morning, if he were found in position there.

From Meade's orders it is apparent that he was doubtful whether Lee would be found at Amelia Court House on the morning of the 6th. On the 4th Meade had naturally turned to the commander of the cavalry for information concerning the enemy's position, and had told Sheridan that unless the latter had information which rendered it proper for Meade's troops to go to Jetersville, they would be moved directly from Deep Creek to Farmville; and to Grant, Meade sent word early on the morning of the 5th, from Deep Creek, that if it were not necessary to go to Jetersville, he would move directly upon Farmville.

If Lee's army could make in time the leap from Amelia Court House to Farmville across the base of the inverted triangle whose apex is at Burkeville Junction, and whose sides are formed by the Richmond and Danville Railroad on the east and the Petersburg and Lynchburg Railroad on the west, the Confederate forces might yet make good their escape. Unless Farmville were reached by the Union troops ahead of the Confederates, Lee might be pursued, but he would not be headed off. When the Second and Sixth Corps on the afternoon and evening of the 5th reached

Jetersville, at which place the foot soldiers overtook the cavalry, Lee was stopped, as he had not been up to that time, from moving over the Danville Road to Danville, but the way to Lynchburg still lay open to him unbarred by the forces under Lieutenant-General Grant's immediate command—the army of Meade, the army of Ord, or the cavalry of Sheridan.

With his thorough appreciation of the importance of the position at Farmville, Meade would probably have pushed his infantry toward that place from Jetersville on the 5th, had not the cavalry so completely blocked his march that the Sixth Corps did not reach Jetersville until nearly dark, and the Second not until the middle afternoon. Such a movement, however, in the absence of Grant would have required that Sheridan should be as willing and prompt to co-operate with Meade as Meade was to co-operate with Sheridan. Without any authority over that fine body of cavalry, which had proved so effective in the Gettysburg campaign under his own direction and wherever it had been properly used, Meade had been compelled, at half past four on the morning of the 5th, to notify Sheridan that if the latter wished the infantry to reach Jetersville that day he would have to send back and clear the road of cavalry. The situation, with Meade arrived and again in command of the three infantry corps and ordering an attack, did not meet with Sheridan's expectations or his liking. Sheridan was strongly imbued with the idea that the advance of Lee would be toward Burkeville. Meade, as we have seen, had been looking toward Farmville. Sheridan expressed his dissatisfaction in two notes forwarded to Grant, and on the night of the 5th the latter, after directing Ord to intrench at Burkeville for the night, rode across country from Ord's column in the vicinity of Nottoway Court House to Sheridan's headquarters, and at half past ten that night he sent a message to Meade approving the latter's orders, already given for the morning, and adding, "I would go over to see you this evening, but it is late, and I have ridden a long distance to-day."* Sheridan's views

* This approval of Meade's orders does not accord with the statement concerning this affair made in Grant's Memoirs. The




Statue of General Meade, Philadelphia.

are expressed in a dispatch sent by that officer to Ord at Burkeville, as late as the morning of the 6th, to the effect that Lee's army was making directly toward Ord at that place. After reaching Jetersville on the night of the 5th, and again on the morning of the 6th, Grant also cautioned Ord that Lee was apparently moving directly for Burkeville. The facts were that Lee, moving toward Jetersville on the afternoon of the 5th with the purpose of attacking Sheridan in case Meade's infantry had not come up, was warned by his own cavalry that the Union lines had been heavily re-enforced. Lee therefore turned his column northward across Flat Creek, destroying the bridges behind him, and started upon his march by way of Deatonsville and Rice's Station toward Farmville, in the expectation of reaching Lynchburg and possibly Danville. By sunrise of the 6th, Lee in person, and the head of Longstreet's corps, after the night march, reached Rice's Station; Anderson, Ewell, and Gordon followed Longstreet in the order named, the Confederate cavalry leaving Amelia Springs at about the same hour at which the head of the Army of Northern Virginia reached Rice's Station, where Longstreet halted to wait for the rest of the army. It is inconceivable, if Sheridan's cavalry had gained any positive knowledge of this march, that Ord would have been permitted, in pursuance of Grant's orders for the destruction of High bridge and the bridges over the Appomattox at Farmville, to send his headquarters cavalry of eighty men and two small infantry regiments against the line of march of Lee's army—an error that cost the lives of General Read and Colonel Washburn and many officers and men, and the capture of the rest of the little command.

At daylight of the 6th Meade advanced the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps along the railroad toward Amelia Court House—the Second Corps on the left, the Fifth in the center, the Sixth on the right. Soon after starting Meade's signal officers reported Confederate trains moving northwest toward Deatonsville. Four miles out Humphreys

account above given, and other variations from Grant's narrative, are made in justice to Meade, not to point out inaccuracies and misstatements in the Memoirs, written many years after the event, and when their author was greatly enfeebled by disease.



discovered an infantry column of the enemy beyond Flat Creek marching west, and, sending a brigade in pursuit, informed Meade. Griffin learned that Lee had left Amelia Court House and was moving west. Meade at once changed the direction of his army and positions of his corps, moving the Second on Deatonville, the Fifth, on the right, moving through Paineville, while the Sixth, facing about and moving by the left flank, took position on the left of the Second. Forging Flat Creek, where the water was up to their armpits, and rapidly throwing across bridges for artillery and ambulances, Humphreys's troops kept up a running fight with Gordon's corps, which was acting as Lee's rear guard, for seventeen miles through woods, swamps, and open fields, carrying intrenched positions and capturing thirteen flags, four guns, seventeen hundred prisoners, and, at Perkinson's Mills on Sailor's Creek, a large part of Lee's trains. Night put an end to the pursuit.

Attempting after midday to cut out the enemy's trains at the road forks near J. Hotts, three miles west of Deatonville, Crook's cavalry division was first repelled by Anderson, and then both Crook and Merritt were repulsed by Anderson and Ewell, the latter of whom came up from the rear. Anderson then crossed Sailors Creek and formed across the road to Rice's Station, and Ewell followed. In the meantime Merritt and Crook hung upon the left of the line of retreat. Custer, finding a weak spot, destroyed many wagons and captured twelve guns, and the cavalry, taking possession of the road ahead of Anderson, formed across it. Wright now led up two divisions of the Sixth Corps which had made many changes of direction, had struck across the open country to the sound of the cavalry engagement at Hotts, and then had pressed Ewell back toward Sailor's Creek. Behind this deep and difficult stream Ewell now turned to face the Sixth Corps. Wright charged upon Ewell and carried the position, except at one point, where he met a resistance of which he naively says, "I was never more astonished." The marine brigade and a small number of Confederate troops, which had held the Richmond lines, made a countercharge, although they were surrounded by Wright's two divisions on their flanks, his third division, which had now come up, in their front, and Sheridan's cav-

alry in their rear. As an act of humanity Wright had already ordered his artillery to cease firing upon these gallant Confederates, and his amazement was great when they charged upon his front, only to be compelled to surrender. Stagg's brigade of cavalry, directed by Sheridan, struck Ewell's right flank, and Crook and Merritt carried Anderson's position. Wright says that the cavalry captured many prisoners driven back by his front attack. The honors of the victory belonged in a peculiar sense to Wright, for Merritt and Crook combined had been unable to make any impression upon the same force of Confederates earlier in the day, and Anderson and Ewell were about to cut their way through the cavalry when Wright's troops came upon the field. Humphreys says the combined Confederate force was ten thousand, and their losses six thousand in killed, wounded, and prisoners. The Confederate Generals Ewell, Kershaw, Custis Lee, Dubose, Hunton, and Corse were among the prisoners taken. Wright lost in killed and wounded four hundred and forty-two. Humphreys and Wright and the cavalry together had inflicted a loss upon the Confederates during the day of at least eight thousand. It was after midday when Sheridan sent word to Grant that Lee was moving to the left, and added, "Now is the time to attack with all your infantry." The infantry had been attacking ever since early in the morning.

Ever appreciative of good work, Meade that night transmitted to Grant, who had gone back to Burkeville, the dispatches of Humphreys and Wright, "which," he said, "in justice to those distinguished officers and the gallant corps they command, I beg may be sent to the War Department for immediate publication." Humphreys's dispatches disappeared. In a dispatch to Grant, Sheridan claimed for himself the honors of the victory at Sailor's Creek; but Wright, on the ground that he was acting under Meade's orders, declined to make a report of his triumph to Sheridan until on May 6th, nearly a month after the war closed, he was ordered to do so by Grant. In response to Sheridan's demand made on April 13th for a report, Wright said on the same day: "I have to state that, as I informed you on the day of the battle, I was under the orders of Major-General Meade, to whose army my corps belonged, and that I should

make my report to him. My preliminary report of the battle of Sailor's Creek was sent to Brevet Major-General Webb, Chief of Staff, Army of the Potomac, on the night of the 6th inst." Whatever might be done subsequently in order to transfer to Sheridan a large share of Wright's honors, the dispatches show that at the time Wright was acting under Meade's orders, as Wright said, and that neither Meade nor Wright knew anything to the contrary, for Meade continued to direct Wright's movements and Wright continued to obey Meade's directions, and these Grant continued to approve. *Post facto* constructive honors grow imperceptible in the white light and glory of actual achievement. To the public it was announced by the Secretary of War that Sheridan had attacked and routed Lee's army.

On the afternoon of the 6th Grant directed Ord at Burkeville to send two divisions to Farmville, in one dispatch to Ord expressing the opinion that Lee was trying to move to Danville, and in another and later dispatch that he was "evidently making for Ligontown and Stony Point bridges." These crossings are northeast of Farmville and lead toward Cumberland Court House. Crook's cavalry went to Farmville and Merritt's to Prince Edward Court House. By Grant's orders, the Fifth Corps also went to Prince Edward Court House.

On the Confederate side, Longstreet, who had remained at Rice's Station all day, set out at night for Farmville, where he crossed to the north bank of the Appomattox, and on the morning of the 7th continued his westward march. He was followed by Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry. At Farmville Lee distributed eighty thousand rations. Gordon's corps and Bushrod Johnson's and Mahone's divisions crossed to the north side of the Appomattox at High bridge before the early morning of the 7th.

The movement of the Union troops was still essentially a pursuit, and unless one of the pursuing columns could detain the fleeing Confederates until another column could be thrown squarely across Lee's path, the capture of the remainder of the Army of Northern Virginia would not be assured. Nor would the cavalry alone be sufficient to block Lee's way to the west. Under the circumstances the most

important thing to be accomplished was the detention of Lee, and this service Humphreys, by extraordinary energy and activity, was enabled to perform.

Grant expressed the hope, in sending Ord's two divisions to Farmville on the afternoon of the 6th, after the incorrectness of Sheridan's information of a direct Confederate movement upon Burkeville had been demonstrated, that the enemy would be headed off; but Longstreet had been at Rice's Station upon Ord's direct route to Farmville all day, and Longstreet had been joined at that place by the Confederate cavalry. Ord's movement would therefore be too late to accomplish the object expected of it.

At four o'clock on the afternoon of the 6th Meade had ordered Humphreys and Wright to continue the direct pursuit as long as it promised success; but twenty minutes later, evidently by Grant's instructions, Meade ordered Wright to move to Farmville, unless he was in the immediate presence of the enemy, and Wright was informed that he would find two divisions of the Twenty-fourth Corps of Ord's army at that point. At the time of receiving this order Wright was driving the enemy, and therefore that night Meade ordered Griffin to move the Fifth Corps at five o'clock in the morning by way of Rice's store to Farmville, and to be prepared on the way to support Humphreys or Wright if necessary.

Renewing the pursuit at half past five o'clock on the morning of the 7th, Humphreys saved most of the railroad bridge, and, by advancing Barlow's division at the double-quick, also saved the wagon road bridge at High bridge from destruction by fire, drove off the Confederates, and crossed the Appomattox. Sending Barlow's division in pursuit of Gordon along the railroad westward toward Farmville, Humphreys, moving northwestwardly toward the stage road to Lynchburg, came upon Lee in a strong entrenched position on the crest of a slope, with artillery in place, the Confederate rear toward Farmville being covered by cavalry and Heth's infantry. Humphreys sent word to Meade that he had come up with the whole of Lee's remaining force, and suggested an attack from Farmville in connection with an attack by himself. In the meantime Meade was making every effort to get the Sixth Corps for-

ward as rapidly as possible, but the army and corps commanders were both working in the dark, and without information which a cavalry force effectively operated would have supplied. Neither Meade nor Humphreys was informed that the Confederates had succeeded in destroying the bridges at Farmville. Inasmuch as Humphreys, by a vigorous pursuit, had saved for his own use the two bridges at High bridge, a similar vigorous cavalry pursuit to Farmville, if it did not succeed in saving the bridges at that point, would at least have kept the commander of the Army of the Potomac informed of the true state of affairs. The only troops under Meade's command on the Farmville route were those of the Sixth Corps, and once more, as in the approach to Jetersville, the march of this corps was retarded by a division of cavalry which passed Sandy River in Wright's front, and by the Twenty-fourth Corps, which Wright overtook before reaching Farmville. In contrast to this interruption to their marches complained of by Humphreys at Jetersville and Wright on the way to Farmville, are Meade's own orders to Griffin, on the 7th, to send staff officers and make sure of not cutting the columns of other corps. However, the necessity of not entangling his columns was to Meade such an elementary acquirement in the art of moving an army that he guarded against it as a matter of course. Meade had intended that Wright, on the 7th, should move in the same general direction as Humphreys, and had this been done, Wright, instead of being blocked by the troops and wagons in his front so that he could not move at all on the way to Farmville, would have been within supporting distance of Humphreys. Grant, who passed Wright between Sandy Run and Farmville before five o'clock in the afternoon, ordered the Sixth Corps to remain massed. At 3.50 P. M. Meade sent Wright a message, which was received at seven minutes past five, saying that Lee's whole army was moving to outflank Humphreys, and that if the Sixth Corps could not move to Humphreys's assistance, for Wright to order forward the Twenty-fourth Corps at once in General Meade's name. It was not until about six o'clock in the evening that Meade was informed of the destruction of the bridges at Farmville. At twenty minutes to seven Meade received word from Wright that

Grant was at Farmville and would direct in Meade's absence; that the pontoon train of the Twenty-fourth Corps had been ordered up, and that upon its arrival Wright would move promptly to the support of Humphreys, some four miles north of Farmville. In the meantime Humphreys had sent for Barlow's division, which, it will be remembered, had advanced westward along the railroad on the north side of the Appomattox, and he waited anxiously for the expected appearance of the Sixth Corps from the direction of Farmville. The firing of Crook's cavalry, which, after fording the river, was defeated and recalled, was mistaken for the advance of the Sixth Corps. Miles made an attack with part of a brigade, which was repulsed. It was dark before Barlow could be put in position with the rest of the Second Corps, and the Sixth Corps, which had arrived at Farmville at two o'clock in the afternoon, did not cross the river until two o'clock the next morning.

Humphreys, however, had detained Lee's army on the heights north of Farmville during the day, and by this delay Sheridan and his cavalry, and Ord with the Fifth and Twenty-fourth Corps, were enabled to post themselves across Lee's path at Appomattox Court House. Without that service rendered by the Second Corps on the 7th, Lee could have reached New Store that night, Appomattox Station on the afternoon of the 8th, where he would have obtained rations, and could have moved on the evening of the 8th toward Lynchburg.

The loss in the Second Corps during the day was five hundred and seventy-one, including Brigadier-General Smyth, mortally wounded in Barlow's attack upon Gordon's troops.

One of the unexplained, if not unfathomed, mysteries of the war grows out of the blocking of the progress of the Sixth Corps, out of the peculiar dispatch of Grant to Humphreys, dated Farmville, 5 P. M., telling Humphreys that a division of Humphreys's corps was at Farmville—something that Humphreys of course already knew, as he had sent Barlow to that place—and that the enemy could not cross at Farmville, when the enemy was moving in the other direction after crossing at Farmville, and out of the lieutenant general's failure to throw troops promptly across

the Appomattox to Humphreys's support. The water was but three feet deep. Humphreys's troops, on the 6th, had waded across Flat Run with the water up to their armpits. But here, with Grant on the spot and in personal command, the troops waited until a foot bridge was built for the infantry and pontoons were laid for the artillery and trains. Had the Twenty-fourth and Sixth Corps crossed promptly, the war would probably have ended where Humphreys detained Lee during the 7th of April.

The advance of the Union cavalry under Custer did not reach Appomattox Station until the night of the 8th, after which arrival Merritt formed his cavalry command across the road upon which the enemy was approaching. Crook's cavalry, with Mackenzie following, reached Appomattox Station on the evening of the 8th, and a brigade of cavalry was sent to Appomattox Court House to hold the Lynchburg road.

Ord, in command of the Fifth and Twenty-fourth Corps, arrived near Appomattox Court House from Prospect Station about ten o'clock on the morning of the 9th. Lee had planned that the Confederate cavalry and Gordon's corps should attack Sheridan's cavalry on the morning of the 9th, and open a way for the rest of the Confederate troops. This attack fell upon Crook's command on the Lynchburg road west of Appomattox Court House. The Union cavalry was quickly driven out of the way, with the loss of two guns and a number of prisoners. Fortunately, just at this time Ord's infantry arrived on the double-quick. Ord says that his infantry was just in time, "for, in spite of General Sheridan's attempts, the cavalry was falling back in confusion before Lee's infantry." The Confederate orders were that if infantry in force were found supporting Sheridan, General Lee was to be notified at once. Upon the arrival of the two corps of infantry under Ord, the attacking Confederate force retired.

On the evening of the 7th Grant directed Meade to order the Fifth Corps to follow the Twenty-fourth in the morning, and the Second and Sixth to follow the enemy north of the river. Meade decided that, owing to the difficulty of obtaining in advance knowledge of the roads, time would be gained by having the Sixth Corps follow directly

after the Second. These two corps, the Second in advance, resumed the pursuit of Lee at half past five on the morning of the 8th, pressing the enemy closely. After marching seventeen miles, Humphreys, upon the approach of evening, halted his corps near New Store, but soon received a message from Meade desiring him to push on until the Second Corps was in the presence of the enemy. Humphreys ordered the troops forward again, halting at midnight after a march that day of twenty-six miles. Wright was directed by Meade to try and reach New Store and encamp there, and both corps were ordered by Meade to attack at five o'clock in the morning. As Humphreys's Third Division had not halted until four o'clock in the morning, he could not resume the pursuit until eight o'clock on the 9th. By eleven o'clock the Second Corps had come up with Longstreet's command intrenched in the vicinity of Appomattox Court House. Before that time Meade ordered Wright to pass Humphreys's train and push to the front. The Second and Sixth Corps were now formed for attack, the Sixth Corps on the right, and the attack was just about to be made, when Meade arrived at the front and granted to Lee a cessation of hostilities for an hour in view of the negotiations for surrender.

On the evening of the 7th, while the Second Corps was confronting Lee on the heights north of Farmville, General Seth Williams brought to Humphreys Grant's first letter to Lee asking the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, with the request that Humphreys have the letter delivered. Lee's answer came back within an hour, so close was Humphreys to the center and heart of the Confederate army. Grant's second letter to Lee was also sent through Humphreys's line while on the march on the morning of the 8th, and Lee's reply was received at dusk by Humphreys at a point two miles west of New Store. Grant and Meade spent that night at Curdsville, ten miles back on the route from Farmville to Appomattox, and there Grant received Lee's second letter at midnight. On the morning of the 9th Humphreys forwarded Grant's third letter to Lee, and it was delivered to the Confederate chief-tain only a few miles away from the Second Corps. Lee's reply, written at nine o'clock on the morning of the 9th

and asking for an interview with reference to the surrender, was sent by Humphreys to Meade. But near New Store Grant left Meade's line of march, and began a long ride to join Sheridan by way of a cross road leading south and a road leading westward on the south side of the Appomattox. Lee's hope of meeting Grant was, in consequence, not fulfilled until some hours later, and the surrender was for the same reason delayed from midday or earlier until four o'clock in the afternoon,* at which hour it took place in the presence of Sheridan and a few other officers. Meade's staff officer had ridden fourteen miles before overtaking Grant, who was still eight miles from Appomattox. Meade had opened and read Lee's letter to Grant, and he sent a reply to Lee which has disappeared from the records. In granting a suspension of hostilities, Meade wrote at noon to Lee as follows:

"I have no authority to suspend hostilities unless it is with the distinct understanding that you are prepared to accept the terms indicated in the letter of Lieutenant-General Grant sent to you yesterday. I understand General Grant did not accede to your proposition for an interview. Your letter will be at once forwarded to Lieutenant-General Grant, and perhaps I may be sooner advised by him if you have any communications with other parts of our line. I am now advised by General Forsyth that a cessation of hostilities has been agreed upon between your command and General Ord. Under these circumstances, to enable General Forsyth to return and report my action, I agree to a suspension of hostilities until 2 P. M. this day, and shall be glad to prolong it on being advised by you that you agree to General Grant's terms."

Of the final scene before alluded to in these pages, there can be no better description given than that of Colonel Carswell McClellan in the following words:

"The world is familiar with accounts of the scene which soon followed, with General Grant and General Lee for the central figures.

"There is another scene connected with that day to which but little heed has yet been given. It will find proper

* Humphreys's Virginia Campaign, p. 394.

place in history. Nearly three miles northeast of Appomattox Court House, on the road to Petersburg, stands New Hope Church. Covering the forks of the road just south and west of this church, General Longstreet, with almost all that is left of the organized Army of Northern Virginia, stands at bay in line of battle. . . . At eleven o'clock the Second Corps came up with General Longstreet's entrenched position. Dispositions were at once made for attack, the Sixth Corps forming on the right of the Second. But at the moment the assault was about to be made General Meade arrived upon the ground. There they stood, face to face for the last effort of the war. Comrades through fiery years confronted foemen grim with scars and staunch in war-won honors. Who can doubt the hour of trial to General Meade? Victory was beckoning for his grasp—and dearly the soldier loves the laurels plucked from under battle clouds. No new order was necessary. His matchless lieutenant was ready, *he* had but to keep silent, and before the commander in chief could have answered General Lee, the prize must have been won. It would have cost life and limb, of course, but what of that? Look back over the gory road from the Rapidan! A few more graves, a few more darkened homes and broken forms—what could they count beside the honor won?

“But General Meade had read the answer of General Lee before he forwarded it to General Grant. He knew the end would come, and—*noblesse oblige*—the truce was granted, the long carnage ended; and Generals Meade, Humphreys, and Wright, with their veterans formed around them, waited further orders from the lieutenant general. *Noblesse oblige?* Yes; with them it was constitutional.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

AFTER THE WAR.

WORN in body, his hair turned gray by the anxieties and responsibilities of his campaigns, with but a few years of life before him, not yet recovered from the illness due to his wound, in spite of which, and from his ambulance, he had pressed his infantry forward from Petersburg to Appomattox, mounting his horse on supreme occasions only with great effort and by the aid of his staff officers, Meade, although he had been recalled but lately to the front from an open family grave, without time to mourn with the bereaved wife and mother, now endured without a murmur the dreary stay at Burkeville, obeyed again the self-conscious orders of Halleck, and participated in the tiresome march of the army to Washington, reporting its arrival to Grant, who had long before preceded him to that place, and who from there had taken forethought to send to Sheridan, still in the first flush of manhood and without family ties, an order excusing that officer from accompanying his troops on their march to the National Capitol. "Faithful to the end," says Charles Devens of Meade, "to that great and high idea of duty which he expressed on taking command of the army." On May 23d, in the grand review in Washington, Meade rode at the head of his army, for that occasion once more placed in command of the cavalry corps. On June 28th Meade issued the following address to the army:

"Soldiers: This day two years ago I assumed command of you under the orders of the President of the United States. To-day, by virtue of the same authority, this army ceasing to exist, I have to announce my transfer to other duties and my separation from you.

“ It is unnecessary to enumerate here all that has occurred in these two eventful years, from the grand and decisive battle at Gettysburg, the turning point of the war, to the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House. Suffice it to say that history will do you justice. A grateful country will honor the living, cherish and support the disabled, and sincerely mourn the dead.

“ In parting from you, your commanding general will ever bear in memory your noble devotion to your country, your patience and cheerfulness under all the privations and sacrifices you have been called on to endure.

“ Soldiers, having accomplished the work set before us, having vindicated the honor and integrity of our Government and flag, let us return thanks to Almighty God for his blessing in granting us victory and peace, and let us earnestly pray for strength and light to discharge our duties as citizens as we have endeavored to discharge them as soldiers.”

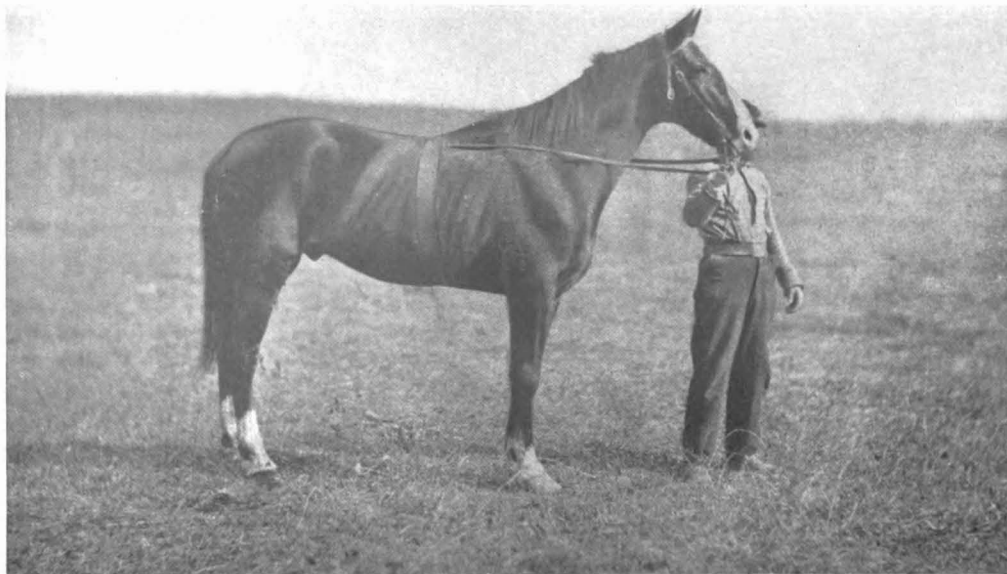
On July 1st Meade was assigned to the command of the Military Division of the Atlantic, with headquarters at Philadelphia.

On January 6, 1868, he took command of the Third Military District, comprising the States of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, with headquarters at Atlanta; and in August of the same year assumed command of the Department of the South, the States of North Carolina and South Carolina also thus coming under his authority. Under his immediate direction the final steps toward the formation of State Governments in these five States were taken. The Governor of Georgia declaring that he would not be bound by the Reconstruction acts of Congress, Meade removed him from office, appointing General Ruger in his place. Subsequently he removed the State Treasurer and Comptroller, appointing army officers to the positions vacated. To protect debtors, he ordered the Relief Laws of Alabama and Georgia into immediate effect. He declined to remove incumbents from office except for neglect of duty, malfeasance in office, or open refusal to obey or attempt to obstruct the Reconstruction laws, and required written charges, supported by evidence, and these were investi-

gated by boards of officers. Upon his representation Congress decided not to pass an act vacating all offices held by persons not capable of taking the test oath. In Georgia he took the position that he was not called upon to pass upon the eligibility of members of a parliamentary body, but he compelled the State Legislature to investigate the eligibility of its own members, and declined to act upon the Provisional Governor's request that he declare vacant the seats of certain persons in the Legislature whom the Governor asserted were ineligible.

From the first Meade determined to ignore all partisan considerations, to execute the laws faithfully without reference to persons or parties, and to refrain from any interference with the rights or liberties of individuals. He opposed the influences urging him to set aside the civil power. The labor devolved upon him was delicate, difficult, and great. From January 1 to November 1, 1868, in the administration of his command, fifty-four hundred and thirty-two letters were received at his headquarters, eighteen hundred and eighty-three letters were sent, and six thousand and eighty-four indorsements were made upon orders, instructions, and decisions—and this before the improvement of the typewriting machine. As soon as the States were admitted to representation Meade ordered the cessation of all intervention on the part of the military officers in civil affairs, and the detached bodies of troops were concentrated at railroad centers. The riot at Camilla, Ga., occurred soon thereafter. Nine colored persons were killed and thirty wounded; six white citizens of Camilla were slightly wounded. Meade made a thorough investigation, was satisfied that both parties were in the wrong, and decided that the matter should be left in the hands of the civil authorities. During the whole period of Meade's administration but one person was convicted and held in confinement for violation of civil law, after trial by military commission, on the cessation of military authority—sufficient proof that in Meade's hands military power was not despotically and arbitrarily exercised.

Returning to the command of the Military Division of the Atlantic, with headquarters at Philadelphia, Meade had time for social and civil affairs. Turning a deaf ear to all



BALDY, General Meade's war-horse, was wounded twice at the battle of Bull Run, under General David Hunter, July 21, 1861; once at the second Bull Run, August 30, 1862, under his new owner, General Meade; again at Antietam, September 17, 1862; at Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862; and at Gettysburg, July, 2, 1863.—EDITOR.

suggestions of his name in connection with high political office, he was always ready to serve the public in other directions. His earnestness and force as well as his great military fame created a demand for his services as a speaker at those public meetings which were not of a political nature, and he made an address at Harvard College on the day that Lowell read his commemoration ode. In that year (1865) he was one of the two recipients of the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Harvard. He was elected a member of the Porcellian Club, and duly signed the constitution of the club.

In accepting, for the Commissioners of Fairmount Park, an equestrian statue of General Meade, George H. Boker said:

“To him, more than to any other single man, we owe the admirable arrangement of the drives, the rides, and the walks of our spacious public pleasure ground. When these lands were but broken, disjointed, and in some cases almost abandoned country seats—when, so far as may be said of Nature, there was no harmony in the relation of one place to another—when, although the lands had been thrown into one, the dividing lines between places were as strongly marked as when fences and hedges were standing—early and late, in fair weather and in foul, the stately form of General Meade was seen, mounted or on foot, studying the topography of what was to be the park, planning the various ways of access to its best features, blending together its incongruous details, and reducing all to that harmony which in anticipation was pictured already in his own cultured imagination. To form a park like this is to write a rural poem in field, in wood, and in water; and Heaven lent him the inspiration necessary for its production. He gave his time without stint to the labor of love which was before him, and he found in the work its own exceeding great reward. The services which he rendered to the city in those days were priceless, and by the city unpurchasable; for what he did from a sense of duty, and from his personal artistic interest in the work itself, he could not have been induced to do through any offer of pecuniary or of political recompense. Low motives never received consideration from his lofty mind. They were not

only too far beneath him to be distinguished; they were absolutely invisible to his purer sense.

"I need not dwell on what was the result accomplished by General Meade's keen topographical eye, his scientific mind, his foreseeing imagination, and his careful and sedulous labor. The work speaks for itself; its monument lies all around you. Like Orlando's passion, its inscription is upon every tree."

The advancement of his junior, Sheridan, to the office of lieutenant general, one of the earliest acts of President Grant's administration in March, 1869, was more than a mere disappointment to Meade. He died November 6, 1872, and his modest grave is in Laurel Hill Cemetery.

Meade was not a man who wore his heart upon his sleeve. His wife, perhaps, alone knew how deeply the iron had entered the soul. But at the same time that he wrote to her, "The blow has fallen," he said they must help one another bear it bravely before the world. In the last year of the war, and afterward, Meade had had entire confidence that Grant would properly recognize his services. Had not Grant himself said so? Had not the lieutenant general in his final report expressed his high opinion of Meade's zeal and ability, and declared that as the commander of the Army of the Potomac he had been the right man in the right place? And what was any single battle from the Wilderness to Appomattox, compared with Gettysburg, in value to the Union cause? And in the whole group of final battles, which together crowned the work accomplished at Gettysburg, had not Meade labored zealously and skillfully night and day, with his own highly trained mind supplying the defects and correcting the errors of plans and movements, disentangling the columns when they were ensnarled, as they often were, springing to the aid again and again of the "Army of the Shenandoah" and rescuing it from defeat, and at the same time enacting his own part with such high ability as to cause General Hunt to express the conviction that it would have been better for the army and the cause if Meade had been left in supreme control? Had it not been the Sixth Corps of his own army, under his immediate command, which had compelled the evacuation of Petersburg, and the Second Corps which had dis-

covered and overtaken Lee's fleeing army, and by holding it on Farmville Heights compelled the surrender? But as the army, to serve a favorite, had been disrupted in a fashion so crude, first the cavalry and then one after another the Fifth, the Second, and the Sixth Corps being assigned to Sheridan's command, and with consequences so serious that only the splendid energy and high-minded patriotism of Meade and his subordinates averted more than one serious disaster, so now the army commander himself, the war being over, was cast aside in the same personal interests. It is a complex story in detail, a simple one in motive, and its moral is for the entire nation in the conduct of future wars. Neither Lieutenant-General Grant's great natural ability, nor his strong will, nor the personal devotion of the technically unskilled Rawlins, his chief of staff, could prevent in such a movement as the one across the North Anna, or the other upon Petersburg, the manifestation of an imperfect mastery of the intricate and complicated problems involved in the operations of a vast army. The situation demanded either that the lieutenant general should supply himself with the most capable chief of staff that could be found, or that he should rely upon General Meade. He did not adopt the first policy, for the obvious reason that in Meade himself, in Meade's chief of staff, Humphreys, and in the skilled officers whom Meade had selected for responsible positions, the lieutenant general in the spring of 1864 had placed at his command an accomplished and effective army organization. But as the desire to advance Sheridan grew into a governing instinct, the Army of the Potomac was more and more subordinated to the serving of this personal interest. The second policy that had been partly adopted by General Grant was thus departed from to such an extent that Meade and Humphreys, both of them strong in those scientific acquirements in which, in the absence of these two soldiers, the command of the army would have been conspicuously weak, were assigned in the last campaign to the thankless task of correction and rehabilitation, instead of being utilized to the greatest possible degree as directing and initiatory intelligences. Their skill and energy were thus wastefully expended in a way that would have proved unavailing and

fruitless if the opposing forces had been of equal or nearly equal numbers. Such vital services as the Sixth Corps rendered in breaking the Confederate line at Petersburg, and the Second Corps in holding Lee at bay at Farmville, grew out of the exigencies of the moment, and were as accidental to the general purpose as was the charge made by the troops of Thomas up the slopes of Missionary Ridge to what had been planned previously for Sherman to do.

In the history of the wars of the United States it does not appear that the nation has ever profited by the services of any other army commander who combined thorough training with personal energy and skill on the battlefield as General Meade did. The discipline of his mind was such that facts as they developed were at once assigned to their proper places and fitted to the general scheme. Before Petersburg he received or transmitted one hundred dispatches or orders in a period of five hours, or one for every three minutes. The comprehension of his plans was such that no contingency and no essential detail were left unprovided for. He sometimes acted wrongly upon erroneous information that seemed to be fortified by an equally erroneous confirmation, but given a clew or a fact to reason from, his conclusions were wonderfully accurate. In army movements or in action he did not lose sight of or forget the connection between the part and the whole, as Grant forgot that Hancock was to support Smith in assaulting Petersburg. Meade is seen at his best when he was in independent command, but he was serving a Government which did not appreciate a trained soldier at his true worth—as official Germany would have done—which was lavish in its praise of superficial attainments, and which indeed had not at any time anything more than a general conception of what the army was doing. The avenues between Meade and the public were long closed by the newspaper boycott already referred to, and by the failure of the official dispatches sent to the War Department to set forth his real services. But in the Official War Records—the compilation of orders and correspondence in the field—his record is deep and indelible. In the light of those records, as the Wellington legend began to fade a half century after the battle of Waterloo, so some of the legends of our own civil war

fade into the nebulous foundation upon which they were built. In the light of those records, too, other figures assume larger proportions. None stands this severe test better than Meade, and few bear it so well. When we search, not for what others said of him, but for what he said himself and for what he did himself, we find everywhere the sleepless, comprehensive vigilance, the untiring energy, the sagacious forethought, the ability and skill that in winning the great battle of Gettysburg saved the Union, accompanied by a love of truth and justice, an unselfish patriotism, and a standard of honor and conduct that distinguished Meade even among such high-minded friends and comrades in arms as Hancock, Reynolds, Humphreys, Sedgwick, Warren, and Wright, and separated him by a wide gulf from others of coarser mold, men of "all vulgar outlines, flaws and seams," soldiers without

"that hereditary grace

Which marks the gain or loss of some time-fondled race,"

but who nevertheless, according to their light, and with incidental yieldings to the service of less noble ends, were also earnestly engaged in the advancement of a common cause.

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