

THE PERSONAL MEMOIRS AND  
MILITARY HISTORY OF  
U. S. GRANT

*VERSUS*

THE RECORD OF THE ARMY OF THE  
POTOMAC

BY

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BREVET LIEUTENANT-COLONEL U. S. VOLUNTEERS, TOPOGRAPHICAL  
ASSISTANT, ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL, AND SPECIAL  
AIDE, ON STAFF OF GENERAL ANDREW A. HUMPHREYS,  
JUNE, 1862, TO APRIL, 1864



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY  
*The Riverside Press, Cambridge*  
1887

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*The Riverside Press, Cambridge :*  
Electrotyped and Printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.

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## PREFACE.

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THIS volume has grown from what was, at first, intended to be a brief memorandum of review for private use. It is offered to the public, not as an attempt to write or correct history, but earnestly to ask that history already written shall be remembered.

SAINT PAUL, MINN., *May*, 1887.

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# GRANT VERSUS THE RECORD.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

WITH the emphasis of rapidly approaching death upon his words, General Grant concludes the Preface to his "Personal Memoirs" with the words: "I have used my best efforts, with the aid of my eldest son, F. D. Grant, assisted by his brothers, to verify from the records every statement of fact given. The comments are my own, and show how I saw the matters treated of whether others saw them in the same light or not.

"With these remarks I present these volumes to the public, asking no favor but hoping they will meet the approval of the reader."

While through and between the characteristic lines, and woven among statements of facts, errors and omissions, in the work thus proffered as an applicant for place in history, the thoughtful reader finds much that surprises him, and much that justice forbids should pass unnoticed;

no one can wish to doubt the sincerity of words thus written, though obvious infatuation sadly burdens faith with wonder.

Naturally one hesitates before taking ground against testimony given as General Grant's has been. There cannot but be diffidence in opposing one so exalted by his countrymen. It is no grateful task to stand before the tomb at Riverside and bring evidence against the words of him whose form lies there. But there are voices calling from other graves; there are memories shrining other names precious to comrades and countrymen; and it were craven to stand in acquiescent silence while bias strives anew to mar the record of manly effort with detraction.

It is not contemplated to attempt a technical criticism of the plans, on which were based the campaigns of General Grant. However military authorities may review them from the vantage ground of science; however strong may seem the theoretic proof that other plans, if carried out with equal energy and the same support, might, or would, have attained the same results at a less cost of life and time and treasure, — the fact remains established and accepted, that success crowned the adopted method with practical approval. The campaigns of General Grant have spoken for themselves for more than a score of years. Doubtless the study of his operations will bear fruit should war come again

upon our land; but it is not purposed now to enter upon the labor of conjecturing what might have been or may be.

It is the "Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant," in their relation to the record upon which they purport to be founded, which now invite attention; for in them have been revived issues of the past which might well have been left beneath the veil that time was kindly drawing over them, and through them false impressions find their way to-day into the hearts and minds of thousands.

In examining the legacy General Grant has left, no reflection should be cast upon his exercise of the undoubted right to preferences for individuals among those coöperating with or under him. Such preferences were inevitable. They were within his prerogative as much as any exercise of judgment. Neither will an attempt now be made to defend those of whom the Memoirs appear to treat unjustly further than may be necessary to illustrate the character of the offered statements. Within the compass of the work designed, an exhaustive criticism would be impossible. *The object aimed at now is to incite investigation which shall decide the historic value of this widely published work.*

Had General Grant confined himself to expressions of opinions, none would gainsay his right; but when, in sustaining his opinions, he throws broadcast on the winds assertions as to

facts, the record claims its place beside his statements. Some portions of the evidence seem to have escaped the notice of the author of the *Memoirs* and his assistants, and the reader is now asked to examine somewhat of the matters treated of in the light of neglected facts and authorities.

It is difficult to separate the "Personal Memoirs" of General Grant from the "Military History of U. S. Grant." So identical in subject matter, so harmonious in style and treatment, so consistent in mutual inconsistency, and so united in intent are the two works, it is impossible to escape the conviction that each is but the duplicate and authorized complement of the other. While General Grant has noticeably intensified some reflections contained in General Badeau's books, he has offered no protest to anything therein, except in the single instance of General Butler's operations at Bermuda Hundred. Moreover, he makes several references to "Badeau's history of my campaigns" as reliable authority, and thus accepts and endorses the statements of the earlier work. Constant effort will be made, however, to keep distinct all references to either.

Able pens have commented on events leading up to the operations of 1864 and 1865, and it is only to the record of the campaigns of those years, in which the Army of the Potomac participated, that attention will now be directed.



The "Military History of U. S. Grant," written by General Adam Badeau, Military Secretary and Aide-de-Camp to General Grant, was published in 1881. In 1883 Charles Scribner's Sons published "The Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865," written by General Andrew A. Humphreys, Chief of Engineers U. S. Army. The well-known intimate acquaintance of General Humphreys with all the campaigns of the Army of the Potomac, he having served continuously therein from 1861 to the close of the war in 1865; the positions of Chief of Staff of the Army, and afterwards of Corps Commander, in which he had served with marked distinction during the campaign of which he wrote; his acknowledged ability as a soldier thoroughly schooled and experienced; and his character as a man, — all combine to render his work an authority of the highest order. It is believed that not one material fact as recorded by him has been questioned or controverted. To this General Grant bears silent but positive testimony. Although General Humphreys has noted and corrected some of the deviations from the record into which General Badeau had wandered, and which General Grant has persistently followed, the entire ignoring in the Memoirs of the name of General Humphreys, as far as the matters treated of will in any way permit, is the only discoverable evidence that General Grant, or his assistants, have been aware of the existence of

“The Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865.”  
The supposition that they were in actual ignorance of this authority cannot be entertained; nor can it be believed that they would have failed to produce antagonistic authorities had such been obtainable.

It is proposed, therefore, for the convenience of the reader, to use, with very little other reference, the work of General Humphreys, as embodying substantially the established record, as far as it shall be necessary to examine it.

## CHAPTER II.

### GENERAL GRANT'S COMMAND.

ENTERING upon the proposed examination, it is well, especially for the non-military reader, to recall the position from which General Grant contemplated and judged the events of the closing year of the war. His authority and jurisdiction first suggest themselves in this connection.

On March 9, 1864, by order of the President, General Grant assumed command of the armies of the United States, and under circumstances very different from those that had been accorded to any predecessor. The battle of Gettysburg had been fought and won; the armies in the field were veteran troops inured to all the demands of war; and at last it had come to be acknowledged by the government at Washington, in theory at least, that but one chief must, or could, direct. The Army of the Potomac had not fought and suffered altogether in vain. With his commission as lieutenant-general there were pledged by the President to General Grant absolute freedom of action and the heartiest support for all his plans. That the pledge was

redeemed General Badeau bears testimony when he says: "Probably no commander ever found a government more anxious to assist him, or more efficient in carrying out his plans;"<sup>1</sup> and again, when stating the effective strength of the armies under General Grant's command to be five hundred and thirty-three thousand men, he says: "Over this force Grant was as absolutely supreme, as free to dictate its every movement, as any general not a monarch who ever took the field."<sup>2</sup> The new era had dawned for the general-in-chief.

Of the forces composing his command, a brief summary only is necessary. He found the Union armies divided into seventeen distinct commands which had hitherto been acting separately and independently. He writes: "I determined to stop this. To this end I regarded the Army of the Potomac as the centre, and all west to Memphis along the line described as our position at the time, and north of it, the right wing; the Army of the James, under General Butler, as the left wing, and all the troops south, as a force in the rear of the enemy."<sup>3</sup>

His general plan, as stated, was to concentrate all the force possible against the Army of Northern Virginia on the south bank of the Rapidan, and against the Army under General Joseph E. Johnston at Dalton, Georgia. To this end, he

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 127.

arranged for a simultaneous movement all along the line of his extended command. General Sherman was to move from Chattanooga, having General Johnston's army and Atlanta for his objective points. General Crook, commanding in West Virginia, was to move from the mouth of the Gauley River, and, with a cavalry force and artillery, strike the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. General Sigel, who was in command in the Valley of Virginia, was to advance up that valley. General Butler was to advance by the James River, having Richmond and Petersburg as his objective. General Banks, in the department of the Gulf, was ordered to assemble at New Orleans all the troops he had, in time to join the general move, Mobile to be his objective.

The armies were to move for the accomplishment of a single object. They were to act as a unit as far as such a thing was possible over such a vast field. General Lee, with the capital of the Confederacy, was the main end to which all were to work. General Johnston, with Atlanta, was so important an obstacle in the way of accomplishing the main result as to be almost an independent objective. All other troops were to be employed exclusively in support of the two chief movements. This was the plan.<sup>1</sup> Truly a mighty plan, and a tremendous line of battle, that would tax the full ability and closest care

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 129-146.

of the mightiest merely human mind to guide in concert to success.

Of his lieutenants in chief subordinate commands, General Sherman, commanding his extreme right wing, was notably his intimate friend and trusted adviser; and General Meade, commanding the centre, was known to him as the commander who, but three days after being placed at the head of the Army of the Potomac when in motion to overtake General Lee's invading army, had fought and won the battle from which dated the downfall of the Confederacy.

On March 9, General Grant received his commission as lieutenant-general. On March 10, he for the first time visited the Army of the Potomac, and, as General Humphreys states,<sup>1</sup> then announced to General Meade his intention of making his headquarters with that army. March 11, he returned to Washington, and at once started for Nashville to install his successor in the command of the western, or right, wing of his army. On March 17, he formally assumed command of all the armies. On March 23, he arrived again at Washington, and on March 26, established his headquarters at Culpeper, a little country town, not fifteen miles from the Rappahannock, "a few miles south of the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac,"<sup>2</sup> and about seventy miles by rail southwest from Washington.

The order announcing the advancement of

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 121.

General Grant to the supreme command was issued March 12, 1864, as follows:—

“Major-General Halleck is, at his own request, relieved from duty as General-in-Chief of the Army, and Lieutenant-General U. S. Grant is assigned to the command of the Armies of the United States. The headquarters of the army will be in Washington, and also with Lieutenant-General Grant in the field.”<sup>1</sup>

On March 11, 1862, the President had issued War Order No. 3, as follows: “Major-General McClellan, *having personally taken the field at the head of the Army of the Potomac,*<sup>2</sup> until otherwise ordered, *he is relieved from the command of the other military departments,* he retaining command of the Department of the Potomac.”

These orders, separated by an interval of just two years, while they furnish another indication of the scope conceded to General Grant, do not appear to show that the question of the proper location for the headquarters of the general-in-chief had been positively settled. The old plan of division still obtained. While the fact seems to have been accepted that where the personal presence of the directing chief could most aid the accomplishment of the plans in hand, there he should be, and there his headquarters must for the time perforce accompany him, it was evi-

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> All italics are the writer's unless otherwise stated.

dently held that the *permanent* location should still remain at Washington. That there were strong practical arguments sustaining this last conclusion General Grant bears witness. Writing of his arrival in Washington to assume his new command, he says: —

“It had been my intention before this to remain in the West, even if I was made lieutenant-general; but when I got to Washington and saw the situation, it was plain that here was the point for the commanding general to be. No one else could, probably, resist the pressure that would be brought to bear upon him to desist from his own plans and pursue others.”<sup>1</sup>

General Badeau states the same, and adds: “The transcendent importance of the issues in Virginia, upon which the fate of both the national and the rebel capital depended, made it apparent at the outset that the new general-in-chief must either remain at Washington, in order to direct the movements in that vicinity, or take the field in person with the Army of the Potomac. For the entire rebel strength culminated in Virginia; whatever efforts were made elsewhere, however sturdy a defence at the South or West, only here could the battles be fought which would absolutely end the war.”<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere this same authority would seem to have offered strong arguments against the latter alternative of assuming a personal command of

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 116.

<sup>2</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 11.



the Army of the Potomac, or any other of the armies composing his forces. Having stated the firm determination of General Grant to neglect none of the advantages of force or skill, to leave no door open for failure, but to apply all the resources at his command to secure the success of his plans for the overthrow of the rebellion,<sup>1</sup> he repeatedly impresses upon his readers the fact, necessary to be borne constantly in mind, "that the campaign from the Rapidan was only one part of a comprehensive scheme."<sup>2</sup> His impression (evidently the correct one) of the proper and only location of the point from which the influence of a guiding chief could best be exercised, may be inferred from his statement, that on May 12, before Spottsylvania Court House, "Grant's headquarters were in a thickly-wooded dell, from which it was impossible to distinguish any portion of the field, *but the necessity of remaining at a point where he could be readily reached by every corps commander left him no option.*"<sup>3</sup> If that necessity existed upon the comparatively contracted field at Spottsylvania Court House, with practically but two corps claiming his attention (for General Meade was there in command of the Army of the Potomac), it certainly applied with equal if not greater force upon the mighty field which, stretching from Virginia and the Ohio River to the Gulf

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, pp. 173, 174.

of Mexico, and from the Atlantic Ocean to and beyond the Mississippi River, claimed the care of the general-in-chief. General Grant had been elevated to the chief command expressly that he might give his constant and most energetic supervision to this field; and only from Washington could he readily, and without loss of time or power, reach the seventeen component parts of his widespread command.

We learn from General Badeau: "During the last year of the war, while Grant was actually in the field, most of his orders to important subordinates were transmitted first to Halleck, and by him repeated in Grant's name. So, also, many of the reports of generals at a distance were addressed originally to Halleck, as Chief of Staff, and then forwarded to Grant. The lieutenant-general himself, *was obliged to send all his telegrams to Washington, as his only line of communication lay through that city*; and he therefore proposed that, for the sake of uniformity, all his messages for the government should be addressed to the Chief of Staff of the Army. In consequence, very few communications passed direct between the general-in-chief and the President or the Secretary of War."<sup>1</sup>

This, of course, was the only method practicable in the absence of the commanding general from the seat of government and centre of communication. It was evidently hoped, if not ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 81.

pected, that under the new dispensation it would be found more satisfactory than previous experiments could be said to guarantee. On the night of May 4, while the Army of the Potomac was crossing the Rapidan, General Grant and General Meade, while upon the southern bank discussing plans for the morrow, received the information that Generals Sherman, Butler, and Crook had advanced as contemplated and ordered. Thereupon General Badeau's enthusiasm writes :

“ It had never happened before in the history of war that one man directed so completely four distinct armies separated by thousands of miles and numbering more than a quarter of a million soldiers ; ordering the operations of each for the same day, and receiving at night reports from each that his orders had been obeyed. The coöperation so long desired and planned had at last begun.”<sup>1</sup>

Subsequent experience, soon to be encountered, hardly sustained this sanguine conception. It was three o'clock on the afternoon of May 7, when a messenger from Washington reached General Grant, with the information that General Butler had landed his force at City Point on the 5th, and that General Sherman expected to give battle to General Johnston on the 7th.<sup>2</sup> It was not until noon of May 9th that General Grant learned that on the 7th, in a dispatch to Washington containing “ dubious ” news, Gen-

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 133.

eral Butler had applied for reinforcements.<sup>1</sup> It was only on May 17th that the lieutenant-general received the news of General Sigel's defeat at Newmarket on the 15th, and learned that General Butler had been shut up within his intrenchments at Bermuda Hundred on the 16th; the information reaching him in General Halleck's despatch, reading: "Sigel is in full retreat on Strasburg. He will do nothing but run; never did anything else. . . . Butler is falling back. Don't rely on him."<sup>2</sup>

From the James River, on June 24th, General Grant informed the President as follows: "During the last raid, the wires happened to be down between here and Fortress Monroe, and the cable broken between there and Cherrystone. This made it take from twelve to twenty-four hours, each way, for despatches to pass. Under such circumstances, it was difficult for me to give orders or directions, because I could not tell how the conditions might change during the transit of despatches."<sup>3</sup>

These instances, taken at random from the acknowledged record, would seem to intimate that if the coöperation so long desired and planned had at last begun, it was at best but partial and temporary, and that the necessity of remaining at a point where he could be readily reached by his subordinate commanders offered serious objections to the continued presence of

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 150.    <sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 200.    <sup>3</sup> *Id.*, p. 453.

General Grant with *any one* of the armies of his command.

General Badeau suggests another argument which seems to bear upon this point. Writing of the relations which existed between General Grant and General Meade, and the opinion entertained by some of those attached to General Grant's person and headquarters that it would have been better had General Meade been relieved from the command of the Army of the Potomac, he says: "If Grant could communicate direct with his corps commanders, it was believed that he might convey or infuse something of his own spirit and character, but the result of having a middleman was to make the whole organization wooden. Meade severed the nerve between the general-in-chief and the army. He was a non-conductor."<sup>1</sup> It would seem that this, also, applies with greater force to the greater command, — in fact, that the application of the idea embodied in the argument to the management of *all the armies in the field*, was the *prime reason* calling for the elevation of General Grant to the high rank he held.

This appears to have been President Lincoln's impression. Having seen General Grant's despatch of August 1, 1864, directing the dispositions to be made after his discovery of the fact that General Wright's pursuit of General Early "was feeble because of the constant and con-

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 187.

trary orders he had been receiving from Washington, while I (Grant) was cut off from immediate communication by means of our cable across Chesapeake Bay being broken,"<sup>1</sup> he despatched to General Grant, under date of August 3, 1864, as follows:—

“I have seen your dispatch in which you say, ‘I want Sheridan put in command of all the troops in the field, with instructions to put himself south of the enemy, and follow him to the death. Wherever the enemy goes let our troops go also.’ This I think is exactly right, as to how our forces should move. But please look over the dispatches you may have received from here, even since you made that order, and discover, if you can, that there is any idea in the head of any one here of ‘putting our army *south* of the enemy,’ or of ‘following him to the *death*’ in any direction. *I repeat to you* it will neither be done nor attempted unless you watch it every day, and hour, and force it.”

General Grant replied that he “would start in two hours *for Washington.*”<sup>2</sup>

The character of the existing channels of communication in and through Washington was well known to General Grant even before he left his western command. It certainly could not have surprised him that when, on July 12, 1864, General Early threatened Washington during

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 315, 316.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, vol. ii., pp. 318, 319.

the absence of the general-in-chief, the result was what General Badeau terms "a period of confusion and distracted counsels, of blunders in the cabinet and mismanagement in the field, almost unparalleled during the war."<sup>1</sup> He does not appear to have been surprised when General Hunter informed him "that he was so embarrassed with orders from Washington moving him first to the right and then to the left that he had lost all trace of the enemy."<sup>2</sup> When, in speaking of the orders he forwarded to General Sheridan, about October 10th, he says: "But this order had to go through Washington where it was intercepted; and when Sheridan received what purported to be a statement of what I wanted him to do it was something entirely different,"<sup>3</sup> he seems simply to be relating an incident such as he had contemplated when deciding that in Washington was the point for the commanding general to be.

But General Grant himself suggests another objection to the location of the headquarters of the armies of the United States with one of the armies in the field, when, bringing his gravest imputation, often repeated in substance, against General Warren, he says: "Warren's difficulty was two-fold: when he received an order to do anything, it would at once occur to his mind how all the balance of the army should be en-

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 444.

<sup>2</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 319.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, p. 337.

gaged so as properly to coöperate with him. His ideas were generally good, but he would forget that the person giving him orders had thought of others at the time he had of him. In like manner, when he did get ready to execute an order, after giving most intelligent instructions to division commanders, he would go in with one division, holding the others in reserve until he could superintend their movements in person also, forgetting that division commanders could execute an order without his presence. His difficulty was constitutional and beyond his control. He was an officer of superior ability, quick perceptions, and personal courage to accomplish anything that could be done with a small command.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, an instinctive impulse on General Warren’s part to combine in his single person, at one and the same time, the army, corps and division commands and cares, and the resultant inability to confine himself to his proper sphere of action, neutralized his usefulness in spite of his ability, perception and courage. General Grant mentions no instance where General Warren exhibited the fault imputed to him; but he does state what would seem to be an illustrative case in point, when he relates that, on May 10th, the general-in-chief, whose attention had been absorbed by the battle waged by the Army of the Potomac, ordered General Burnside, who at the time was

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 214, 215.



not under General Meade's orders, to fall back from a position he had gained within a few hundred yards of Spottsylvania Court House, completely turning General Lee's right, as he (the general-in-chief) did not at the time know of the advantage that had been gained.<sup>1</sup>

No one will dispute the greatness of the fault thus imputed to General Warren; but many will fail to see, even through the sophistries of General Badeau, how this specific trait, so reprehensible in a subordinate, can become commendable and prove unerring judgment in a superior.

Why the opinion formed by General Grant on his arrival in Washington, March 9th, "that here was the point for the commanding general to be," was changed in the few hours intervening between that arrival and his visit to the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac, is not stated in terms. General Badeau says, in addition to what has already been quoted as bearing on this point, that "from the moment, therefore, when it was decided that he should be entrusted with supreme command, Grant had no doubt whatever of his duty or *his design*. In Washington *he would not stay* in time of war; he must then direct in person the campaigns of that renowned Army of the Potomac which had passed through so many vicissitudes, encountered so many hardships, and withstood so many dangers, and still seemed as far from its goal as if

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 225.

those vicissitudes and hardships and dangers had never been endured.”<sup>1</sup> Whether there is any connection between this statement of General Badeau and the remark of General Grant elsewhere that “it was not an uncommon thing for my staff-officers to hear from Eastern officers, ‘Well Grant has not met Bobby Lee yet,’ ”<sup>2</sup> can only be inferred. Whether the ultimate decision was one of the “judgments, made apparently at the moment, which he never reversed, and which the world has never seen reason to reverse,”<sup>3</sup> it is not necessary now to decide.

Whether General Sigel would have retired as rapidly as he is said to have done, or General Butler have caused what General Badeau calls “the total failure of one part of his scheme ; a part too, which he had every reason to expect would have proved of *so great assistance*,” had they been more immediately under the direction of the lieutenant-general, who had planned their movements for them ; whether General Banks would have failed so utterly, or his failure have so entirely “eliminated the use of forty thousand veterans whose coöperation in the grand campaign had been expected ;” whether General Hunter would have been better able to interpret the orders he received, or to locate the enemy with greater accuracy than has been credited to him ; whether General Early could have terrified as

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 292.

<sup>3</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 21.

thoroughly as he is supposed to have done the government at Washington, or Generals Forrest and Morgan have preyed at will upon the Federal communications in the west; whether, in fact, *any* advantage would have been gained, had the directing general remained at a point where he could be readily reached by, and from which he could readily reach, his subordinates in command of his widespread forces, can never now be positively known.

It is sufficient for the present purpose to note that, with reference to his command, General Grant confessedly did not maintain a position such as his authorized historian distinctly states was necessary for the commander of an army to occupy; and that his choice and decision, while undoubtedly in his judgment for the best, not only were open to, but invited, criticism. Under such circumstances, no matter how complete the triumph which ultimately crowned the vicissitudes, hardships and dangers of the Army of the Potomac, Generals Grant and Badeau, as historians of the campaign of 1864 and 1865, labor at an irremediable disadvantage. Of this the desperate rhapsodies, penned by General Badeau and complacently adopted by General Grant, bear witness.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE RELATIONS ESTABLISHED BY GENERAL GRANT WITH GENERAL MEADE AND THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

FOLLOWING an examination of the bearing of the location of General Grant's headquarters upon his authority and jurisdiction, and the consequent effect upon his historical efforts, there should be considered in the same connection the relations established by that location between General Grant and the Army of the Potomac and its commander.

In his account of the advance from Shiloh upon Corinth in 1862, General Grant says: "General Halleck arrived at Pittsburg Landing on the 11th of April and immediately assumed command in the field. . . . I was named second in command of the whole, and was also supposed to be in command of the right wing and reserve. . . . For myself I was little more than an observer. Orders were sent direct to the right wing or reserve, ignoring me, and advances were made from one line of intrenchments to another without notifying me. My position was so em-

barrassing in fact that I made several applications during the siege to be relieved.

“General Halleck kept his head-quarters generally, if not all the time, with the right wing. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

From his own experience, therefore, General Grant understood the unenviable position in which his choice of location for his permanent headquarters would of necessity place General Meade. Writing of the first meeting of the lieutenant-general with the commander of the Army of the Potomac, General Badeau says: “The position of *Meade* was now one of peculiar delicacy. . . . Although he had not, indeed, been superseded, another was set over him, with the especial idea of controlling the movements of that army which he had led to decided victory. He might very naturally have been discontented; but no manifestation of such a feeling was apparent. He displayed, on the contrary, a marked magnanimity.”<sup>2</sup>

Both General Grant and General Badeau relate how, in this first interview with his new superior in command, General Meade himself referred to the possibility that General Grant might desire to place some one with whom he was personally better acquainted in command of the Army of the Potomac, and requested that, if such was the case, he would not hesitate to act as his judgment dictated, adding the assurance

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. i., pp. 371-377.

<sup>2</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 15.

that, as for himself, he would serve to the best of his ability wherever placed. General Grant comments on this: "I assured him that I had no thought of substituting any one for him. . . . This incident gave me even a more favorable opinion of Meade than did his great victory at Gettysburg the July before. It is men who wait to be selected, and not those who seek, from whom we may always expect the most efficient service." <sup>1</sup>

General Badeau adds his testimony, as follows: "It was this spirit which animated all of Grant's greatest subordinates, which inspired Sherman, and Thomas, and others whose story I have yet to relate, and made them, instead of rivals, co-adjutors of their chief, and enabled him to be secure of their support in the most trying emergencies, and *with their aid to accomplish what, without just such cordial coöperation, and just such self-sacrifice, could never have been achieved.*

"But Grant had no desire for the removal of Meade. . . . The question of Meade's removal was never mooted between the administration and the lieutenant-general." <sup>2</sup>

In his official report General Grant specifically defines the relations established between them. He says: "Major-General George G. Meade had the immediate command of the Army of the Potomac, from where I exercised general supervision of the movements of all our armies.

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., pp. 15, 16.

“ . . . I may here state that, 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. The campaigns that followed proved him to be the right man in the right place. His commanding always in the presence of an officer superior to him in rank, has drawn from him much of that public attention that his zeal and ability entitle him to, and which he would otherwise have received.”<sup>1</sup>

In his dispatch to the Secretary of War, dated Spottsylvania C. H., May 13, 1864, he had previously put on record: “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.”<sup>2</sup>

It must be accepted that General Grant appreciated, in some degree at least, the position of his subordinate, the character he evinced, and the consideration which was his due.

But commenting upon the despatch just quoted, General Badeau says: “In this estimate of Meade’s ability Grant never wavered, although soldiers and civilians of importance often sought to change his mind.

“To some indeed of Grant’s well-wishers, one thing seemed evident, after this week of battle,

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 558, 563, 564.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 235.

and that was the impolicy of retaining an officer in the position of Meade, who could not, it was thought, exert a legitimate influence over his own subordinates with a superior immediately present, known to be directing all his movements; while Grant's personal traits lost half their force, obscured by an intermediary.

.....

"It does not need to suppose that Meade was lacking either in ability or earnestness, to see that he might be an impediment. He certainly had succeeded when he had been more untrammelled, and his magnanimous loyalty has been already shown; but, if his energies ever flagged when Grant's were fresh, if he failed to appreciate in any particular the designs of his chief, if the two were not on every occasion in perfect intellectual accord, there was one chance more of failure.

.....

"These ideas were pressed upon General Grant by a few, to whom he allowed a sufficient degree of intimacy, some of whom were besides convinced that Meade lacked many of the qualities essential in a great commander. The general-in-chief, however, always defended his subordinate, and believed, as he said when the war was over, that Meade was the right man in the right place."

It seems manifest from these last quotations,—



taken from six consecutive pages<sup>1</sup> devoted to the subject by the versatile writer who, as has just been seen, ranked General Meade among those whose coöperation was a vital factor in the achievement of General Grant's success, that no matter how clear may have been General Grant's conviction of the merits of his subordinate, or how uninterrupted the friendliness of their relations, the general-in-chief of all the armies was surrounded by an atmosphere at least threatening the maintenance of the accuracy of his judgment. That he was conscious the relations he had established were debatable, if not incongruous, is indicated by the acknowledged necessity for the statement quoted from his official report; and that the arguments of the "soldiers and civilians of importance" who surrounded him had some influence upon his mind may be inferred from the modified language with which, in the Memoirs, he repeats in substance the frank statement in his report. He says: "*Meade's position afterwards proved embarrassing to me if not to him. He was commanding an army and, for nearly a year previous to my taking command of all the armies, was in supreme command of the Army of the Potomac—except from the authorities at Washington. All other general officers occupying similar positions were independent in their commands as far as any one present with them was concerned. I tried to make General Meade's*

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, pp. 186-192.

position as nearly as possible what it would have been if I had been in Washington or any other place away from his command. I therefore gave all orders for the movements of the Army of the Potomac to Meade to have them executed. To avoid the necessity of having to give orders direct, I established my head-quarters near his, unless there were reasons for locating them elsewhere. This sometimes happened, and I had on occasion to give orders direct to the troops affected.”<sup>1</sup>

These last sentences recall General Grant's own embarrassing experiences in the Shiloh-Corinth campaign and suggest one complication certain to arise under the conditions deliberately established here by himself. In a foot-note appended to his account of the movements of General Hancock's corps at Spottsylvania Court House, May 9-10, General Humphreys remarks:

“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. It naturally caused some vagueness and uncertainty as to the exact sphere of each, and sometimes took away from the positiveness, fulness, and earnestness of the consideration of an intended operation or tactical movement that, had there been but one commander, would have had the most earnest attention and corresponding action.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 117, 118.

<sup>2</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 83.

It is not intended to criticise the judgment which brought about the relations here considered, or to discuss the point of which commander should have been withdrawn in favor of the other, but only to recognize the facts; and it is enough at present to note, as an indication of one disadvantage under which General Grant as historian has labored, that, while General Meade remained constantly in the definitely specified command to which he had been assigned, it is *General Meade's position* which embarrassed General Grant and called forth General Badaeu's labored pleadings. When Lieutenant-General Grant, exercising his command from the position he himself selected, stood embarrassed in the presence of his illustrious subordinate, one scarce need wonder at the anomalies encountered in the Memoirs. The urgently suggested but ungrateful proposition that General Grant could have succeeded better had he been relieved from the presence and coöperation of General Meade in command of the Army of the Potomac, is now, at best, no less problematic than the conviction held by many competent to judge, that the tragedy which commenced in the Wilderness on May 4, 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.

No one will dispute with the author of the "Military History of U. S. Grant" when he as-

serts: "The whole campaign against Lee was his, and the whole responsibility."<sup>1</sup> In his official report General Grant says: "The movement of the Army of the Potomac commenced early in the morning of the 4th of May, under the immediate direction and orders of Major-General Meade, *pursuant to instructions.*"<sup>2</sup> There can be no question on the point, and here the obligations arising from the relations assumed toward that army by the lieutenant-general suggest themselves for brief consideration.

Describing the position held by General Lee on the southern bank of the Rapidan, General Badeau writes: "The right, commanded by Ewell, was covered not only by Mine Run itself, but by a strong entrenched line, outside of which lay an impenetrable region called the 'Wilderness,' a forest miles in extent, with few and narrow roads, and a dense and tangled undergrowth, the most impracticable country possible for the manœuvres of an army; . . .

"It was of course out of the question to make a front attack on an army thus strongly situated, and Grant's first problem was to force or tempt the rebels out of their works to fight. With this view, he decided to plunge direct into the Wilderness, and threaten the right of Lee. It was not his object to avoid the enemy; not even, as some have supposed, to pass beyond him; he did not desire to out-flank the rebel army, in a

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 564.

purely strategic sense, so much as to bring it to speedy battle. Lee could not possibly remain within his works when the national troops advanced, for that would be to abandon his communications and supplies; so that by moving to the right of the Army of Northern Virginia, Grant really compelled either immediate battle or the immediate retreat of Lee. Accordingly, the orders were issued for the Army of the Potomac to cross the Rapidan at Germanna and Ely fords, and to march into the Wilderness by the roads nearest the rebel lines."

And he remarks further, in a foot-note: "The absurd idea that Grant hoped or desired to pass unobserved by his right, and reach his rear without a battle, could never have been entertained by a soldier;" and, recording the despatch sent by General Grant to General Halleck on the night of May 4, he notes: "This despatch sufficiently disproves the assertion that Grant expected to advance without a battle." The despatch was as follows:—

"Crossing of the Rapidan effected. *Forty-eight hours* will now demonstrate whether the enemy intends giving battle *this side of Richmond*. Telegraph Butler that we have crossed the Rapidan."<sup>1</sup>

General Humphreys says concerning this: "The objection to moving by our left consisted in the character of the country south of the

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., pp. 96-100.

Rapidan, through which we must pass for the distance of ten or fifteen miles after crossing the river, and in which we might be obliged to fight the first battle. . . . There was some reason to believe, however, from our experience in the movement against Lee in the preceding November, that by setting the whole army in motion at midnight, with its reserve artillery and great trains of over 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*, the right flank of Lee before a general engagement took place."

He continues: "The movement by the left flank was adopted, and I was requested by General Meade to prepare a project for it. Two were sketched out by me, the one *turning Lee's right* by the Catharpin and Pamunkey roads in comparatively open country, the other by roads having about the same general direction as the Pamunkey, but from five to eight miles eastward of it, passing two to four miles west of Spottsylvania Court House. The two projects were coincident for the first day and for a part of the second, and both were subject to material modification or entire abandonment on the second day, dependent upon the movements of Lee.

"The first project was adopted, and the order of movement was prepared by me in conformity to it. The order for continuing the movement on the 5th of May, issued on the evening of the

4th, also conformed to it, but owing to indications of the enemy's movement on the 4th, the order of march was partial only, and held in view the probability of a general engagement on that day." <sup>1</sup>

In addition he refers directly to the account given by General Badeau, as follows: "General Badeau, in his 'Military Life of General Grant,' appears to intimate that General Grant intended to bring on a general engagement on the 5th of May, in the preliminary position directed to be taken up in the order of march issued on the 4th. But that view is not consistent with the orders issued nor with what was best to do. Had he really wished to fight a battle on the 5th, the Second Corps, after crossing at Ely's Ford on the 4th, should have moved out the Orange plank road to New Hope Church; the Fifth Corps out the pike to Robertson's tavern; the Sixth Corps to Old Wilderness tavern; and, on the morning of the 5th, to position between the Second and Fifth Corps; Wilson's cavalry out the Orange plank road in advance of the Second Corps, and moving to the left at New Hope Church. That would have brought on a battle in more open and better ground for the Army of the Potomac than that of the Wilderness. Had Lee gone into the strong, intrenched position of Mine Run, or had he withdrawn to it after the battle, we could have moved to turn his

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 10-13.

right as soon as the trains were sufficiently advanced to admit of it, and in doing so should have found still more open country. I do not perceive that there is anything to induce the belief that General Grant intended or wished to fight a battle in the Wilderness. His doing so was, *under the circumstances, unavoidable*, not a matter of choice. Further, it would have been strange if the Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac, whose special occupation concerned the operations of that army, its movements and battles and their object, should not have known of this intention if it had any existence.”<sup>1</sup>

Aside from the indisputable statement of General Humphreys, it is difficult to believe that the general whose “first problem was to force or tempt the rebels *out of their works* to fight,” would, as General Badeau seems intent on maintaining, have projected, or expected, his first battle *immediately in front of* the strong lines of Mine Run, to which the enemy could retire at will, and in “the most impracticable country possible for the manœuvres of an army:” a country so densely wooded that, while neither army might, before battle was joined, hold any advantage of position, the attacked lines retained advantages equivalent to intrenchments, and the attacking forces (as General Hancock proved) were debarred from discovering, or efficiently following up, any success they might achieve. It

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 56.



is far more reasonable to suppose that General Grant, while determined to fight at any cost wherever he met the enemy, desired and expected to carry out, in some measure at least, his favorite movement "to get south" of his adversary before joining in a general engagement; but General Lee proved not to be General Pemberton.

But, be that as it may, the indignant protests of General Badeau establish here another obstacle to be overcome by General Grant and the historian of his campaign, in that they manifestly feel called upon to offer ambiguous explanation and defence of the initial and governing movement of that campaign professedly aggressive.

When General Warren, under orders pursuant to instructions given by General Grant, halted at the Wilderness Tavern on May 4, there remained only to fight it out on that line, or retire. After that halt, again and again the favorite movement was attempted, and again and again it was met and foiled, till the James River was reached and crossed, and the army took breath to count the strategic value of "mere attrition."<sup>1</sup> And through all, right loyally, that renowned Army of the Potomac responded to the orders and seconded the efforts of the lieutenant-general commanding all the armies of the United States. Repeating the story often told of Gen-

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 556.

eral Warren's troops at Mine Run in November, 1863, standing steadily before the impregnable lines they expected to be hurled against, and noting their recognition of the desperateness of the task before them by quietly pinning upon their blouse-breasts slips of paper bearing their names and army designations, the Comte de Paris writes: "If it is only a legend . . . it is worth being quoted, for it perfectly describes the character of the Army of the Potomac." That army fully understood the magnitude of the price it must pay for victory in that spring of 1864, no matter who might be its commander; and, — though "even Shiloh was not comparable with the Wilderness,"<sup>1</sup> — through the Wilderness — through Spottsylvania, bloodier still — to cruel, murderous Cold Harbor, right manfully it paid the price to the uttermost precious drop.

What of its recompense? Reviewing the Wilderness, General Grant declares: "More desperate fighting has not been witnessed on this continent than that of the 5th and 6th of May. Our victory consisted in having successfully crossed a formidable stream, almost in the face of the enemy, and in getting the army together as a unit. . . . As we stood at the close, the two armies were relatively in about the same condition to meet each other as when the river divided them. *But the fact of having safely*

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 127.

crossed was a victory.”<sup>1</sup> When General Albert Sidney Johnston marched his army unobserved some sixteen miles from Corinth, and, without loss, formed in triple line of battle around the Federal camps which he pressed back upon Pittsburg Landing in April, 1862, General Grant denounced all claims to a Confederate victory as absurd: “The victory was not to either party until the battle was over.”<sup>2</sup> The battle joined May 5, 1864, was not over until April 9, 1865. Looking backward from Cold Harbor, General Badeau cannot but admit: “The campaign had lasted thirty days of incessant battle, and the Army of the Potomac had neither captured Richmond nor conquered Lee. *The contest was still at its height and apparently undecided.*”<sup>3</sup>

The campaign and the whole responsibility were General Grant's, as his historian affirms. However much his views may be regretted, no one doubts the sincerity of his statement when, in writing of his plans officially, he says: “Whether they might have been better in conception and execution is for the people, who mourn the loss of friends fallen, and who have to pay the pecuniary cost, to say. All I can say is, that what I have done has been done conscientiously, to the best of my ability, and in what I conceived to be for the best interests of the whole country;”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 204.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, vol. i., p. 364.

<sup>3</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 324.

<sup>4</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 556.

but, to account the leader of a campaign confessedly fruitful almost solely of carnage, as the untrammelled relator of its story, is to hold him deified, — and this is not the day of Herod Antipas.

Concluding General Badeau's pages, bearing upon the continuance of General Meade in the command of the Army of the Potomac, from which quotation has already been made, the following paragraph occurs: —

“ But more than all, Grant had political reasons for his course, political in the highest sense of the word; reasons based on the peculiarities of human nature, as well as on purely military considerations. He believed that the removal of Meade would have a direct unfortunate influence on the army, more than counterbalancing any good which it might secure. There undoubtedly existed in the Army of the Potomac a dissatisfaction, half expressed, perhaps only half formed, that a Western man should have been brought to command it, who had not shared its earlier campaigns and difficulties and dangers. If that Western man should now remove the commander who had already led it to decided victory, a greater soreness still might be occasioned; its spirit might be galled, its working become less harmonious. Grant's military ability was always based upon his knowledge of human nature; he selected his generals for their personal characteristics as well as for their professional qualities or

acquirements, and he looked upon an army not as a machine, but as a mass of human beings, with prejudices and partialities and passions, like us all. He was also most unwilling to excite anything approaching to sectional feeling. So, while asserting always the military ability and loyalty of Meade, he believed besides, that even if some evils were created by his retention, others still more alarming were certain to arise, in case he was removed. In this view he persisted, and *with this view Meade was retained*, and Grant stood by him unwaveringly.”<sup>1</sup>

Concluding the one protest he has seen fit to offer against anything written in the “Military History of U. S. Grant,” — in amends for a figurative expression used in his official report, and which was repeated by his historian, — General Grant says :<sup>2</sup> —

“I make this statement here because, although I have often made it before, it has never been in my power until now to place it where it will correct history ; and I desire to rectify all injustice that I may have done to individuals, particularly to officers who were gallantly serving their country during the trying period of the war for the preservation of the Union. General Butler certainly gave his very earnest support to the war ; and he gave his own best efforts personally to the suppression of the rebellion.” And yet, after acknowledging the personal disadvantage he

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., pp. 191, 192.    <sup>2</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 152.

caused General Meade to suffer by his (General Grant's) continued presence with the Army of the Potomac, and after his unqualified commendations of his faithful subordinate as the right man in the right place and the peer of the renowned General Sherman, he silently sanctions these stultifying statements of General Badeau. Here candid history seems obscured.

General Grant silently acknowledges the views imputed to him by his biographer. He could not comprehend the Army of the Potomac and its leaders.

That army was composed of citizens of our entire Union — men of the North and South, and East and West, stood side by side in its ranks and led its columns. The conquering of "sectional feeling" was the very duty that had called out and created, from an untrained mass of patriots, an army of loyal veterans — "the grandest army gathered on this continent, at all times true to its commander-in-chief, whoever it might be." There was no vain boasting in the grim story written all along the way from the James River up to Gettysburg, and invincible indeed must be the prejudice that failed to read the deep-marked crimson lines. Its soldiers had prejudices, it is true. No unreasoning herd, they gave their toil and suffering for freedom's sake, and not to set on high a Gessler cap. They had partialities, and strong ones; but their patriotism was stronger. However blind they may have been

to the personal identity of "that Western man" with the cause for which they fought,<sup>1</sup> they never failed to see and own the authority of their land vested in any accredited commander. They had passions — yes — and brightest and strongest among them burned their loyalty. The haunted jungle of the Wilderness, the hideous "angle" at Spottsylvania, and the death-filled trenches at Cold Harbor, attest that duty could ask no effort they would shrink from, — and their leader proved it in himself.

<sup>1</sup> General Badeau (on p. 191, vol. ii.) describes "General Rawlins, the nominal Chief of Staff of the General-in-chief," as "simply an earnest, able man, who devoted himself absolutely to serving his country, and for him this was synonymous with serving Grant."

## CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL GRANT'S STATEMENTS WITH REGARD TO MOVEMENT TO SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE, AND HIS REFLECTIONS ON GENERAL MEADE IN CONNECTION THEREWITH.

SPECIFYING it as an evidence of unparalleled confidence, General Badeau states that General Grant "was anxious to give Sherman every opportunity to achieve a separate renown,"<sup>1</sup> and certainly the Memoirs contain nothing antagonistic to the statement. General Grant seems desirous of rendering unstinted tribute to the splendid leadership of his eminent friend, and the confidence thus manifested unquestionably is unique, as regards his pages. To General Sherman and General Sheridan, alone of all his subordinates, is this recompense awarded.

One seeks in vain for words of commendation of any specific act of General Meade in the conduct of his arduous and exacting duties, save in the single instance of the "mine explosion" before Petersburg, which, at the request of General Meade, had been officially investigated by order of the authorities at Washington. On the

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 24.



contrary, naturally resultant from the conditions and relations which have been considered, much is found not only adverse to the terms of general commendation used, but inconsistent with a willingness unqualifiedly to acknowledge the service rendered by the commander of the Army of the Potomac. The passages already quoted, which sustain this statement, are not exceptional.

General Grant's version of the opening of the battle of the Wilderness illustrates the unvarying habit of his Memoirs in noting the movements of the Army of the Potomac. In it he says: "At six o'clock, before reaching Parker's store, Warren discovered the enemy. He sent word back to this effect, and was ordered to halt and prepare to meet and attack him. . . . Meade moved his head-quarters on to Old Wilderness Tavern, four miles south of the river, as soon as it was light enough to see the road. I remained to hasten Burnside's crossing and to put him in position. Burnside at this time was not under Meade's command, and was his senior in rank. Getting information of the proximity of the enemy, *I informed Meade*, and, without waiting to see Burnside, at once moved forward my head-quarters to where Meade was."<sup>1</sup>

General Badeau says: "The general-in-chief was promptly informed of the approach of Lee, and, at 8.24 A. M., he sent word to Meade: '*Your note giving movements of enemy and*

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 192, 193.

*your dispositions received. . . . If any opportunity presents itself for pitching into a part of Lee's army, do so, without giving time for dispositions.'"*<sup>1</sup> And again, in a foot-note defending General Grant from the charge of having been surprised in the Wilderness, he says: "As early as 7.30 A. M., *Meade informed Grant of the appearance of the enemy.*"<sup>2</sup>

General Humphreys states in substance that, by six o'clock in the morning of May 5, General Warren discovered the enemy in force on the Pike about two miles from the Wilderness Tavern. General Meade received a despatch to this effect from General Warren at a quarter past seven, when on his way to the headquarters of the Fifth Corps. He at once hastened to General Warren and ordered him to halt his column and attack, sending at the same time orders to General Hancock to halt his corps at Todd's Tavern, and to General Sedgwick to move out, attack the enemy, and connect with General Warren on the Pike. He also informed General Grant of the situation and was soon after joined by him.<sup>3</sup>

But the general terms of commendation vouchsafed to General Meade by Generals Grant and Badeau are modified by more than innuendo. Positive statements invite investigation, and concerning the movements from the Wilderness to Spottsylvania Court House, it is necessary to quote at length from General Badeau, who says:

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, vol. ii., p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 23, 24.

“On Saturday, the 7th of May, the Brock road, as far as Todd’s tavern, was in the hands of Grant, while the more western route, by Shady Grove, remained in the possession of Lee. The rebels also held the intervening country, a strip about three miles wide, and in this space, covered by their entrenchments, were several less important roads, by which they commanded a somewhat shorter line to Spottsylvania. . . . Beyond Todd’s tavern, the Brock road itself was occupied by Stuart’s cavalry, which had retreated in this direction after Sheridan’s fight on Saturday afternoon. This almost amounted to a possession of Spottsylvania by the enemy; . . . he might very well delay the national advance until the rebel infantry arrived.

. . . “The river Po, a tortuous stream, with rugged banks and difficult to ford, crosses the Catharpen road at Corbyn’s bridge, two miles west of Todd’s tavern, and in its after-windings strikes the road from Shady Grove to Spottsylvania, at a wooden bridge west of the Blockhouse; and again at Snell’s bridge, it crosses the road running south from the court-house to Richmond. These bridges were of the first importance, for they commanded Lee’s only approaches to Spottsylvania, and Sheridan, who had been ordered to keep a good look-out toward the enemy, disposed his force so as to secure all three positions. Wilson was ordered to advance on the left, by the Fredericksburg road, to take

possession of the court-house, and then move into position at Snell's bridge; while Gregg and Merritt, on the right, were directed to proceed to the same point crossing the Po at Corbyn's bridge, and then advance by Shady Grove and the Block-house road. The cavalry had been marching and fighting incessantly for now four days, and the battle at Todd's tavern, on the 7th, had lasted until after dark, but all three divisions were to move again at daylight. Had these orders been carried out, every avenue to Spottsylvania would have been closed to the rebel army.

"But Meade arrived at Todd's tavern at midnight, where Gregg and Merritt were bivouacked. Sheridan's orders had not yet arrived, and Meade at once issued new and different ones, Gregg being simply instructed to move to the vicinity of Corbyn's bridge, and watch the roads from Parker's store, while Merritt was ordered to open the Brock road to Spottsylvania; Snell's bridge and that on the Block-house road, the most important points of all, being utterly ignored. Meade, indeed, directed Merritt to place a brigade at the Block-house, and to picket the roads leading to the court-house; but the Block-house was a mile from the bridge, which was not mentioned in the order; and one brigade could hardly withstand the rebel army. Sheridan had ordered two divisions to hold these points.

"The blunders, however, were not all on one

side. Lee had early discovered the movement of Grant's trains, . . . But the rebel leader read the signs entirely wrong, and supposed that Grant was falling back on Fredericksburg. Under this delusion, on Saturday night, he ordered Anderson, now in command of Longstreet's corps, to move to Spottsylvania *in the morning*.<sup>1</sup> The woods, however, were on fire, and Anderson could find no place to bivouac, and began his march at once, without the sanction of Lee, who remained in his mistake all night. Even on the 8th, Early, . . . was ordered 'to move by *Todd's tavern, along the Brock road*,<sup>1</sup> to Spottsylvania court-house, as soon as his front was clear of the enemy'; and still later, Lee telegraphed the good news to Richmond: 'The enemy has abandoned his position, and is moving towards Fredericksburg. This army is in motion on his right flank, and our advance is now at Spottsylvania court-house.' His advance had arrived there so soon, by accident, . . . the whole movement of the rebel army was based on a blunder of its commander, *one entire corps being ordered to move by a road actually in possession of Grant*. Yet these very mistakes were destined to thwart the well-laid scheme of the national general. So manifold and marvellous are the chances of war.

"Wilson moved promptly on the morning of the 8th, according to Sheridan's orders, which,

<sup>1</sup> Italics in original.

in his case, had not been reversed by Meade ; . . . Merritt, meanwhile, had encountered greater difficulty in carrying out Meade's instructions, for the Fifth corps was already moving on the Brock road, by which he had been ordered to advance, and the infantry and cavalry soon became entangled. Great confusion and delay ensued, and when Merritt's men at last made their way to the front, they were met by Stuart's cavalry, which had thrown up temporary breastworks to obstruct the national advance. . . . But by this time Anderson also had come upon the field, having crossed the Po without opposition.<sup>1</sup> . . . The two accidents, that Sheridan's orders had been changed by Meade, and that Lee's orders had been transcended by Anderson, had frustrated the purpose of the national movement. . . . Lee, however, could claim no credit for having out-generalled his rival. He had utterly misapprehended Grant's design, and acted on the misapprehension. . . . It was the soldierly instincts of Stuart, leading him to oppose the national advance, *although he probably had no idea of its meaning*, and the rapid marching of Anderson, *also without any specific object*, that secured Spottsylvania for Lee. . . . But if fortune was thus thrust upon Lee by his lieutenants, it was just the other way with Grant. He had been baffled by the same accidents that had assisted his adversary, and by circumstances

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 137 *et seq.*

which his own generals should have rendered impossible. . . . and it certainly seems that a greater degree of vigor shown by the corps commanders at the front would not have allowed the prize of the entire movement to slip from their grasp.”<sup>1</sup>

General Grant, giving in the Memoirs an outline of the movement, endorses, substantially, General Badeau's statements, even including the indiscreet disparagement of the adversary who for very nearly a year withstood his most strenuous efforts, and writes specifically as follows: —

“Sheridan's cavalry had had considerable fighting during the afternoon of the 7th, lasting at Todd's Tavern until after night, with the field his at the close. He issued the necessary orders for seizing Spottsylvania and holding the bridge over the Po River, which Lee's troops would have to cross to get to Spottsylvania. But Meade changed Sheridan's orders to Merritt — who was holding the bridge — on his arrival at Todd's Tavern, and thereby left the road free for Anderson when he came up. Wilson, who was ordered to seize the town, did so, with his division of cavalry; but he could not hold it against the Confederate corps which had not been detained at the crossing of the Po, as it would have been but for the unfortunate change in Merritt's orders. Had he been permitted to

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 145.

execute the orders Sheridan gave him, he would have been guarding with two brigades of cavalry the bridge over the Po River which Anderson had to cross, and must have detained him long enough to enable Warren to reinforce Wilson and hold the town.”<sup>1</sup>

Not as an unnecessary defence of General R. E. Lee, but as illustrative of the general character of the “Military History” and “Personal Memoirs,” a brief consideration of the strictures upon General Lee’s ability seems to be a pertinent introduction to the examination of the further statements in these passages.

Both General Grant and General Badeau state that General Lee supposed the Federal army was falling back on Fredericksburg, and so telegraphed to Richmond, and General Badeau quotes, from a despatch without address or date, in substantiation of the assertion. No such despatch, however, appears in the official war records. But it would really seem to matter little whether General Lee clearly divined the ultimate object of General Grant’s movement on the night of May 7, or not, so long as he comprehended enough to enable him to defeat it. The Wilderness had already proven that unerring prediction could not be demanded of the brightest military mind. The course of the Federal trains in the afternoon had, as was apprehended, told General Lee that an eastern movement would be

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 211-213.



attempted that night, and the presence of the Federal cavalry informed him that the Brock Road would be used. That his own cavalry were pushed back upon the Catharpen Road only far enough to clear Todd's Tavern, may have suggested the thought that Fredericksburg was the objective; but however strong this erroneous surmise, he certainly did not move blindly or inertly. Major H. B. McClellan, Assistant Adjutant-General of the Cavalry Corps Army of Northern Virginia, in his "Life and Campaigns of Major-General J. E. B. Stuart," page 407, says: "The movement was discovered in time, and Fitz Lee's division was thrown in front of the Federal column, to delay it until Longstreet's corps, under Anderson, could reach Spottsylvania Court House."

In a recent communication the same authority informs the writer that General Stuart remained with the main army, in close proximity to General R. E. Lee, during the 6th and 7th, the actual fighting of the cavalry being intrusted to General Hampton and the two Lees; and that, on the night of the 7th, General Stuart bivouacked near General Anderson's (Longstreet's) Corps, and marched with the advance of that command, that night, to Spottsylvania Court House. His explanation of these unusual circumstances is that, probably, General Lee wished to have his chief of cavalry with or near him, to enable him to direct the movements of that corps in

the most certain and speedy manner, with the view to obtaining the earliest and most accurate information of the Federal movements, that he might meet them promptly and properly; and that he probably also desired to have the benefit of General Stuart's judgment, on which he had learned to place great reliance. It would seem, therefore, that General Lee must be allowed a share in the "soldierly instincts" accorded to General Stuart by General Badeau. The Confederate cavalry divisions were not handled in such a way as to indicate ignorance of the object in view, and they undoubtedly succeeded in delaying the Federal column until General Anderson reached Spottsylvania Court House.

The statement that General Anderson was accidentally driven by the fires in the woods into moving his corps during the night of the 7th, instead of on the morning of the 8th, as it is claimed his orders directed, is insisted upon by both Generals Grant and Badeau as being one of the explanations of the failure of the Federal movement. But no authority is cited in either the *Memoirs* or the *Military History* for the statement that General Lee "ordered Longstreet's corps — now commanded by Anderson — to move in the morning (the 8th) to Spottsylvania," nor for the declaration that "the woods were on fire, and Anderson could find no place to bivouac, and began his march at once, without the sanction of Lee, who remained in his mistake

all night." General Anderson *had remained in position during the 7th*, and until ordered to move to Spottsylvania, *in spite of the burning woods*; and the supposition that he was by that fire driven into transcending the orders he received cannot be entertained on mere assertion. The troops of the Army of Northern Virginia have been everywhere credited with a greater discipline than would have been evinced by any commander who should, for any cause, leave his post in line of battle eight hours before the time assigned him and without the sanction of his superior.

The report of Brigadier-General W. N. Pendleton, Chief of Artillery Army of Northern Virginia, from May 4 to December 1, 1864, and dated February 28, 1865, contains the following paragraph bearing on this point: —

“About dark of the 7th the general chief of artillery [was] directed by the commanding general to send to General Anderson, who had on General Longstreet's being wounded succeeded to the command of the First Corps, a staff-officer who could guide that general along the new road cut out that day. The general chief of artillery went himself to General Anderson, described the route, and left an officer as guide. Here a circumstance occurred which should be specially noticed. General Anderson stated that his orders were to march by 3 [o'clock] next morning. He was preparing to start at 11 [o'clock]

that night. Those four hours anticipated proved of incalculable value next day. The artillery of the First Corps, which as already mentioned had not been able to find opportunity in the battle of the Wilderness, received orders to march on the night of the 7th, and from its several positions struck into the column *en route* for Spottsylvania Court-House."

From this it appears that General Anderson was ordered to march *by* three o'clock on the morning of the 8th, and that his *being ready* to start at 11 o'clock P. M. on the 7th attracted the particular attention of General Pendleton, who does not mention the burning woods at all. It is to be noticed also, that General Anderson's march was guided by a staff officer, who accompanied him *by order of General Lee*, and was over a new road which had been *cut out on the 7th, in anticipation of his movement*; and further, that it was *about dark of the 7th*, when General Pendleton was ordered to send the guide to the First Corps. The preparation of the new road is inconsistent with the supposition that the movement of the corps was without any specific object, and it is highly improbable that General Pendleton returned to General Lee from General Anderson, or issued the orders necessary to reunite the artillery with the First Corps, without reporting the time at which it would move; or that General Stuart, after being detained for two days in close proximity to Gen-

eral Lee, left with General Anderson's advance without General Lee being aware of the time of his departure.

In view of the further facts that General Ewell in his report states: "On the night of the 7th the general commanding sent me word to extend to the right *in conformity to the movements of the troops there, and if, at daylight, I found no large force in my front, to follow General Anderson toward Spottsylvania*"; and that General Early was ordered to move by Todd's Tavern along the Brock Road to the same place as soon as his front was clear of the enemy, and, in carrying out those orders, detained General Hancock at Todd's Tavern till the 9th: there would really appear to have been a specific object in General Lee's "blunder," if such his movement can be called when bearing the practical endorsement of success. And the arguments of the Military History and Memoirs are not subversive of the fact. In addition to what has been quoted, General Badeau, in vol. ii., page 143, states: "Meanwhile, the movement of Early towards Todd's tavern had been discovered, . . . Hancock at once sent out a force on the Catharpen road, and the rebel approach was checked without much difficulty . . . *but Hancock was of course detained to cover the right flank and the rear of the army.*" In a foot-note, on page 144, he explains further: "The disposition thus made of Hancock's force

has been severely criticised by writers who were ignorant of the fact that Early's entire corps was on the Catharpen road all day, on the 8th, moving towards Todd's tavern. Of course, if Hancock had not been detained at this very point, *Early might have advanced upon the rear and flank of Meade, and done infinite damage.*" Then, on the next page, immediately opposite this foot-note, he remarks: "Even when he (General Lee) thought his enemy was retreating, he did not propose to follow till the next day, and then he divided his army and sent a third of it *on the wrong road, wasting the strength of Early's entire command for twenty-four hours.*" General Grant remarks upon this point: "Early only found that he had been following us when he ran against Hancock at Todd's Tavern. His coming detained Hancock from the battle-field of Spottsylvania for that day; but he, in like manner, kept Early back and forced him to move by another route."<sup>1</sup>

But to return to the narrative as it affects General Meade. General Badeau's account states that the Federal forces held the Brock Road as far as Todd's Tavern, and that the Confederate forces held the same road from beyond the tavern, and the country up to the Shady Grove Road, which "*almost amounted to a possession of Spottsylvania by the enemy.*" He states that General Sheridan, who had been ordered to keep

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 215.

a good look-out towards the enemy, *disposed his forces* so as to secure the Corbin, Block-house, and Snell bridges, and he further adds that "the battle at Todd's tavern, on the 7th, had lasted until after dark, but all three divisions *were to move again at daylight,*" and all the avenues to Spottsylvania were to be closed to the enemy *by that movement.* General Grant says that General Sheridan "issued the necessary orders," the context implying, immediately after the fight at the tavern; that General Merritt under those orders "*was holding the bridge,*" and that General Meade, on arriving at Todd's Tavern, "*changed Sheridan's orders*"; while General Badeau expresses it: "Sheridan's orders *had not yet arrived,* and Meade at once *issued new and different ones,*" and both agree that, by thus interfering with the cavalry corps, General Meade left Spottsylvania open to the enemy.

General Humphreys, in "The Virginia Campaign," pages 57-70, establishes the following facts. After the cavalry engagement at Todd's Tavern, on the afternoon of May 7, General Hampton retired a short distance on the Catharpen Road and held it with his division, while General Fitz Lee with his command held the Brock Road, east of the tavern. When General Meade arrived at midnight he found General Gregg bivouacked at the tavern, holding the junction of the roads against General Hampton, while General Merritt's command was halted

upon the Brock Road about a mile east of General Gregg and confronted by General Fitz Lee. General Meade then discovered that neither General Gregg nor General Merritt had orders for their further movement, and he directed General Merritt to push forward, *at once*, to and beyond Spottsylvania Court House, so as to open the roads for the infantry, and also to hold the Shady Grove Road at the Block-house and bridge, and to picket the roads approaching the Court House. General Gregg he directed to move *at once*, to the vicinity of Corbin's Bridge and watch the roads coming from Parker's Store; and, when the Second Corps arrived at Todd's Tavern, to put a force to watch the Brock Road in the direction of the Wilderness. These orders *were given at one A. M.*

General Merritt proceeded to carry out the orders he received. There was no entangling of cavalry and infantry, such as General Badeau describes. General Merritt's command had made its way to the front and had been met by Stuart's cavalry, late in the afternoon preceding, and had bivouacked in contact with it. General Warren, with the head of his column, did not reach General Merritt's headquarters till about half-past three A. M. Here he halted and massed his troops while General Merritt continued his efforts, which had commenced some time before General Warren's arrival. There was delay, but it arose from the darkness



of the night, the thickness of the brush and timber, and the obstructions that General Lee's troopers had been able to improvise. General Merritt forced his way ahead as rapidly as was possible under such circumstances; but at about six A. M. he suggested to General Warren that infantry with rifles could push the enemy faster than he could with his carbines, and General Warren then ordered up his leading division, under General Robinson, who relieved General Merritt's command without confusion or difficulty. In reporting this change to General Meade, General Warren noted his appreciation of General Merritt's efforts by the remark: "It is difficult to do much with troops in an expeditious manner in these dense woods."

General Gregg's division had not been able to reach the vicinity of Corbin's Bridge. When General Hancock reached Todd's Tavern about nine o'clock on the morning of the 8th, he found General Gregg still engaged with General Hampton's cavalry in front of the tavern. The explanation is obvious, and not detrimental to General Gregg.

General Anderson's command (Longstreet's Corps), under orders for Spottsylvania Court House, moved out from General Hancock's front on the Wilderness lines, at eleven o'clock on the night of the 7th. Following a road leading south from the right of its position, this corps, after marching about two miles, reached *the Ca-*

*tharpin Road between Todd's Tavern and Corbin's Bridge, presumably about one A. M. They then followed the Catharpin Road to the Shady Grove Road, and thence to Spottsylvania Court House, reaching the bridge crossing the Po River, a mile west of the Block House, about daylight of the 8th.*

General Ewell was under orders to move at *daylight*, if he then found no large force in his front, and follow General Anderson to Spottsylvania Court House. He moved accordingly past Parker's Store and *by the Shady Grove Road*, reaching Spottsylvania about five P. M.

General Early, having while on the road been assigned to the command of General Hill's corps, moving through by-roads leading *into the Catharpin Road south of Todd's Tavern*, encountered a reconnoissance from the Second Corps under General Miles about half-past five P. M., and was aided in the skirmish which followed by General Hampton's division of cavalry, which still held the Catharpin Road confronting General Miles at Corbin's Bridge.

General Sheridan's order, the changing of which by General Meade is claimed by General Grant and General Badeau to have cost General Grant the possession of Spottsylvania Court House, was not received when General Meade's order was given. This General Badeau confesses. The order, as General Gregg received it, is as follows: —

“ May 8th, 1 A. M.

“ *Move with your command at 5 A. M., on the Catharpin road, crossing at Corbin’s bridge, and taking position at Shady Grove Church. General Merritt will follow you, and at Shady Grove Church will take the left hand, or Block House road, moving forward and taking up position at that point [viz., Block House]. Immediately after he has passed, you will move forward with your division, on the same road, to the crossing of Po River, where you will take up position supporting General Merritt. General Wilson with his division will march from Alsop’s by way of Spottsylvania Court House and the Gate to Snell’s bridge, where he will take up position. . . . The infantry march to Spottsylvania to-night.*”

It is scarcely necessary to note the fact that the order entirely ignores the presence of General Fitz Lee’s cavalry on the Brock Road; or that the movements ordered were not to commence until five A. M. on the 8th, by which time the Fifth Corps was expected, *as the order announces*, to be in position at Spottsylvania Court House; nor is it necessary to make prominent the fact that the order placing General Merritt at the Block House, with General Gregg *supporting* him at the bridge over the Po River, reversed the arrangement usual in such cases, and placed the cavalry confronting the Fifth Corps and with their backs to the enemy, for whom

they were to watch. The one fact is sufficient that *when the order was written, the enemy*, as is stated by General Badeau and as is shown by their movements just noted, *held the Shady Grove Road* and the country intervening up to the Brock Road, including that road from about a mile and a half east of the tavern. They held every avenue of approach to Spottsylvania Court House from the west; and the successful execution of General Sheridan's order required the defeat of General Hampton's cavalry division backed by at least one corps of Confederate infantry. General Badeau's comment, "the whole movement of the rebel army was based on a blunder of its commander, *one entire corps being ordered to move by a road actually in possession of Grant*," reads here with a peculiarly reflex emphasis.

It is evident to the most casual observation that General Meade gave the only directions that were in any way practicable when he found his cavalry waiting orders at Todd's Tavern. General Humphreys tells the whole story when he says:<sup>1</sup> "The presence of Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry on the Brock road, and Hampton's cavalry and Longstreet's Corps on the Shady Grove road, settled the question as to who should first hold the Court House with infantry, whatever might have been the disposition of our cavalry."

Ignoring stated truth does not substantiate

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 70.

repeated error, and it is impossible to escape regret that General Grant should have seen fit not only to endorse, but even to repeat with added emphasis, the glaring errors which had been so clearly exposed by General Humphreys's statements. One cannot but believe it would have been far better had he confined himself to the simple candor of his official report, which says: "On the night of the 7th, the march was commenced towards Spottsylvania Court House, the Fifth Corps moving on the most direct road. But the enemy having become apprised of our movements, and having the shorter line, was enabled to reach there first."<sup>1</sup>

This examination would be incomplete without recalling that the orders for movements on May 7 were issued from headquarters of the Army of the Potomac at three P. M. Trains were ordered to commence moving at four P. M. and the troops at half-past eight P. M.; and Major-General Sheridan, commanding cavalry corps, was directed 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.<sup>2</sup> At half-past three A. M. on the 8th, eleven and a half hours after the trains, according to orders, had been set in motion, the head of the infantry column found the cavalry only so far advanced on the Catharpin Road as barely to clear Todd's Tavern on the flank; and so far on

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 565.

<sup>2</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 425.

the Brock Road, the direct line of march, as to a point only about a mile and a half east of the tavern. The cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac numbered about twelve thousand men, and that of the Army of Northern Virginia about eight thousand men.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 14 and 17.

## CHAPTER V.

**COLD HARBOR, JUNE 1, 1864. — CROSSING OF THE  
CHICKAHOMINY, JUNE 13, 1864. — ATTACK ON  
PETERSBURG, JUNE 15, 1864. — GENERAL MEADE  
AT JETERSVILLE, APRIL 5, 1865.**

RECALLING General Badeau's reference to General Meade as a detrimental intermediary between the general-in-chief and the Army of the Potomac, it seems well to notice an instance recorded as connected with the intermediary staff attached by the exigencies of the service to the headquarters of the lieutenant-general.

In General Humphreys's account of the Cold Harbor movements we read : —

“ General W. F. Smith had landed about twelve thousand five hundred men at the White House by three o'clock in the afternoon of the 31st, and leaving General Ames there with two thousand five hundred men to guard the landing-place, marched with ten thousand men and all his artillery, sixteen guns, toward New Castle on the Pamunkey, to which place he had been directed to proceed by despatches of the 28th from General Rawlins, General Grant's Chief-of-Staff. All his troops had not arrived, nor had any of

his wagons or ammunition. About ten o'clock at night he halted at Bassett's, near Old Church, his troops suffering from the heat of the day, and from being unaccustomed to heavy marching. Reporting by despatch for orders, the next morning at daylight he received an order from General Grant's Headquarters to proceed at once to *New Castle Ferry*, and take position between the Fifth and Sixth Corps. *Cold Harbor was intended*. Marching at once, General Smith perceived, upon arriving at New Castle Ferry, that there must be some mistake in his order, and sent word to General Grant, who, in the mean time, hearing of the mistake that had been made, had sent Colonel Babcock to correct it. Some four or five hours were lost in this way, and the march of the troops increased several miles." <sup>1</sup>

General Badeau's account of the same reads: "Smith had arrived at the White House at eleven o'clock on the morning of the 30th, with sixteen thousand men on transports. He debarked his troops that afternoon, and *as time was of the first importance*, took up his march on the 31st, without waiting for supply wagons, or even for ammunition, beyond what the men carried in their cartridge-boxes. That night he halted at Old Church, on the Cold Harbor Road, and before daylight of the 1st of June, he received an order to move direct to New Castle, on

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 172, 173.



the Pamunkey River, and place himself between the Fifth and the Sixth Corps. *A battle was imminent*, and he started at once, not even allowing his men time to make their coffee; but when he arrived at New Castle, the Fifth and Sixth Corps were nowhere in the vicinity. A mistake, it was evident, had occurred, and he sent at once to ask for an explanation; but before his messenger returned, another arrived from Grant, to say that Smith should have marched to Cold Harbor instead of to New Castle. The officer who wrote out the order had substituted the wrong name. The command was at once marched back over the road it had just travelled, but this time in the direction of Cold Harbor. The day was intensely hot, and the dust stifling; the men from Butler's command were unused to marching, and fatigue and exhaustion thinned their ranks; one division had been left at the White House, to guard that point; but the remainder of the column, now not more than ten thousand strong, pushed on, and soon after three o'clock, Smith had reached his place between Wright and Warren. He had marched more than twenty five miles."<sup>1</sup>

In the *Memoirs* (vol. ii., p. 265) we find: "Smith, who was coming up from White House, was also directed to march directly to Cold Harbor, and was expected early on the morning of the 1st of June: but by some blunder the order

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., pp. 278, 279.

which reached Smith directed him to New Castle instead of Cold Harbor. Through this blunder Smith did not reach his destination until three o'clock in the afternoon, and then with tired and worn-out men from their long and dusty march. He landed twelve thousand five hundred men from Butler's command, but a division was left at White House temporarily and many men had fallen out of ranks in their long march."

These three accounts are quoted at length for comparison. They show that the mildest censure is withheld from an officer in responsible position upon the staff of the lieutenant-general, when he had been guilty of a blunder which could have originated only in either carelessness or ignorance of no ordinary degree. This is the more striking for the reason that the order to General Smith was to bring him into position in line of projected battle; and, on page 187 of his second volume, General Badeau states that General Grant "always wrote his own orders for battle, and with rare exceptions, his orders in battle; he wanted no intermediary then." It has already been seen, and will hereafter appear in even stronger light, that General Meade and corps commanders of the Army of the Potomac have not escaped detraction when censure is based not on facts, but solely on conjecture and assertion.

Continuing his remarks upon the page last noted, General Badeau laments: "but having

sent his orders to Meade, they percolated through two or three brains, before they reached a corps commander." To illustrate the evils which might thus possibly arise, in a foot-note on pages 187 and 188, he instances the fact that on May 11, in issuing his orders to his corps commanders, General Meade omitted to use a certain expression contained in General Grant's instructions to him. It appears, however ("Virginia Campaign," p. 91), that the conditions necessitating the use of that expression did not exist at the time General Meade's order was given, and it is evident that General Badeau was in ignorance of the details of the line of battle of the Army of the Potomac.

General Grant's order dated Cold Harbor, Va., June 11, 1864, giving directions to General Meade for withdrawing from Cold Harbor and crossing the Chickahominy, is a more practically suggestive illustration in this connection, though with a significance directly opposite to that intended by General Badeau. It contains the following explicit instructions: ". . . The 5th Corps will seize Long Bridge and move out on the Long Bridge Road to its junction with 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. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The general direction of the Long Bridge

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 286.

Road from the Chickahominy is south-westerly. Six miles out, it is entered by the Charles City Road, running south-easterly from Richmond, and by the Quaker Road, coming north from the River Road at Malvern Hill. Riddle's Shop is here located. About three miles still farther to the south-west the Long Bridge Road is entered by the Darbytown or Central Road, and about a mile still farther on it unites with the River Road. Three direct lines of communication with Richmond thus centre at Riddle's Shop. But, about a mile *east* of Riddle's the Long Bridge Road is entered by the road from White Oak Swamp Bridge, a little more than a mile from that bridge, which is not only reached by two roads from Richmond, but is on the direct line of approach from Cold Harbor. The instructions which reached the Fifth Corps commander, after percolating through the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac, were: —

“2. During Saturday, the 11th instant, Major-General Warren will move the two divisions of his corps now held in reserve to Moody's, by way of Parsley's Mill and Prospect Church, etc., so as to avoid the observation of the enemy. At dark on the evening of the 12th instant, he will move his whole corps to Long Bridge, by the shortest route, across the Chickahominy, and move on the road to White Oak Swamp Bridge (called Long Bridge Road) and *hold that road, looking toward the crossing of White Oak*

*Swamp and Charles City, Central and New Market roads, during the passage of the army toward James River.”*<sup>1</sup>

Explanatory of this, General Humphreys says: “In preparing the programme of movement, it appeared to me important that General Warren should move out the Long Bridge Road, not only far enough to cover the crossing of the Chickahominy by the army, but so far as to hold the bridge over the White Oak Swamp, and to look toward the three roads to Richmond already mentioned, which substantially met at Riddle’s shop, about a mile in advance of the position General Warren was directed to take. *He could not well advance to Riddle’s shop, since that would have exposed him to attack in rear from White Oak Bridge.* It was expected that such a movement by General Warren would deceive Lee, and give him the impression that the Army of the Potomac was advancing upon Richmond, or, if intending to cross the James, that it would do so near Malvern Hill, at City Point, or above. The movement made the desired impression upon him, and to a greater extent than was contemplated, for, . . . he was uncertain what the Army of the Potomac was doing until the afternoon of the 17th of June.”<sup>2</sup>

General Grant simply says: “As soon as Warren’s corps was over the Chickahominy it marched out and joined the cavalry in holding

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 426.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, pp. 201, 202.

the roads from Richmond while the army passed. No attempt was made by the enemy to impede our march, however, but Warren and Wilson reported the enemy strongly fortified in their front."<sup>1</sup>

General Badeau writes somewhat more at length, on pp. 348 and 349 of his second volume, and states: ". . . Warren and Wilson now reported, from the other side of the Chickahominy, that the enemy in their front had seized and fortified strong positions, north of the James. Lee, indeed, had discovered the movement at daybreak, and telegraphed to Richmond that the army of Grant had left his front. He seemed, however, unable to divine the intentions of the national commander, *for Warren's dispositions completely masked the operations of the Army of the Potomac*; some sharp skirmishing occurred at Riddle's shop, in the White Oak Swamp, and Lee doubtless supposed a direct advance on Richmond to be the object of Grant, for he entrenched in front of Wilson and Warren. His appearance here indicated one of the dangers to which Grant's army was exposed, that of attack on the right, in the midst of the flanking movement. . . ."

It is safe to say that if the original order of General Grant had been carried out as given, a more extended account and a more direct reference to the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac would have been developed.

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 289.

Turning now to the accounts of the passage of the James River by the Army of the Potomac and the attack upon Petersburg by General W. F. Smith, June 15, 1864, we find in the Memoirs (vol. ii., pp. 293-295) as follows:—

“I then, on the 14th, took a steamer and ran up to Bermuda Hundred to see General Butler for the purpose of directing a movement against Petersburg, while our troops of the Army of the Potomac were crossing.

“I had sent General W. F. Smith back from Cold Harbor by the way of White House, thence on steamers to City Point for the purpose of giving General Butler more troops with which to accomplish this result. General Butler was ordered to send Smith with his troops reinforced, as far as that could be conveniently done, from other parts of the Army of the James. . . .

“The distance which Smith had to move to reach the enemy’s lines was about six miles, . . . Smith was to move under cover of night, up close to the enemy’s works, and assault as soon as he could after daylight . . . I informed General Butler that Hancock’s corps would cross the river and move to Petersburg to support Smith in case the latter was successful, . . .

“I returned down the river to where the troops of the Army of the Potomac now were, communicated to General Meade, in writing, the directions I had given to General Butler and directed him (Meade) to cross Hancock’s corps

over under cover of night, and push them forward in the morning to Petersburg; halting them, however, at a designated point until they could hear from Smith. I also informed General Meade that I had ordered rations from Bermuda Hundred for Hancock's corps, and desired him to issue them speedily, and to lose no more time than was absolutely necessary. The rations did not reach him, however, and Hancock, while he got all his corps over during the night, remained until half-past ten in the hope of receiving them. He then moved without them, and on the road received a note from General W. F. Smith, asking him to come on. This seems to be the first information that General Hancock had received of the fact that he was to go to Petersburg, or that anything particular was expected of him. Otherwise he would have been there by four o'clock in the afternoon."

On page 298 of the same volume, General Grant continues this last thought as follows: "If General Hancock's orders of the 15th had been communicated to him, that officer, with his usual promptness, would undoubtedly have been upon the ground around Petersburg as early as four o'clock in the afternoon of the 15th. The days were long and it would have given him considerable time before night. I do not think there is any doubt that Petersburg itself could have been carried without much loss; or, at least, if protected by inner detached works, that a line could



have been established very much in rear of the one then occupied by the enemy. This would have given us control of both the Weldon and South Side railroads. This would also have saved an immense amount of hard fighting which had to be done from the 15th to the 18th, and would have given us greatly the advantage in the long siege which ensued."

It is difficult to see how General Grant's insinuation can be applied justly to General Meade, as it is evidently intended it shall be. General Grant himself says that he went to see *General Butler*, "for the purpose of directing a movement against Petersburg, *while our troops of the Army of the Potomac were crossing.*" The movement was to be made by General W. F. Smith, who was to report back to *General Butler for that purpose*, and who was to be reinforced from General Butler's command. General Badeau says that "Grant proceeded, by transport, to Bermuda Hundred, to issue the necessary orders for the *immediate* capture of Petersburg,"<sup>1</sup> and the circumstances would seem to justify the confidence of the language used. Nearly fourteen thousand infantry, two thousand four hundred cavalry and a proper proportion of artillery, certainly constituted a force that could reasonably be expected to capture the city when guarded, as it was, by far less than five thousand men all told.<sup>2</sup> General Grant evidently looked upon the

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 352.

<sup>2</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 206, 207.

matter in that light ; for he says that he informed General Butler that General Hancock would move to Petersburg "to support Smith *in case the latter was successful.*" He also says that "Smith was to move under cover of night, up close to the enemy's works, and assault *as soon as he could after daylight,*" and that he directed General Meade "to cross Hancock's corps over under cover of night, and push them forward *in the morning* to Petersburg." After using all possible despatch, the Second Corps had only crossed the James River at daylight of the 15th, and then, by the most direct route, was at least sixteen miles from the outer defences of Petersburg, and could not, by any possibility, participate in the assault as projected. Rations were also to be issued ; and General Badeau states that, when ordering the sixty thousand rations to be sent to Windmill Point for General Hancock, General Grant informed General Butler that "without this precaution, the services of this corps cannot be had *for any emergency to-morrow.*"<sup>1</sup>

General Grant directed General Meade, after issuing rations with as little delay as possible, to push the Second Corps "forward in the morning to Petersburg ; *halting them, however, at a designated point until they could hear from Smith*" ; and General Badeau states that, after returning to Wilcox's Landing from Bermuda Hundred, General Grant, at 8 P. M., sent word to

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 354.

General Butler that "General Hancock's corps . . . will march in the morning direct for Petersburg, with directions however to halt at a point on that road *nearest City Point, unless he receives further orders.* If the force going into Petersburg finds reinforcements necessary, *by sending back to General Hancock* he will push forward." <sup>1</sup>

General Meade's duty under the orders he received would seem to have been to get General Hancock with his corps to this "designated point" with the least possible delay, that the reinforcements might be available if needed; and this he certainly accomplished.

From General Badeau it appears that, at half past eight A. M. of the 14th, General Meade directed General Hancock to begin crossing the James River on transports, and that, at half past nine, he said: "You need not spend any time in taking up a line, but hold yourself ready to move, as *you may receive orders to march to Petersburg*, in which case rations will be sent you from City Point." <sup>2</sup>

General Humphreys states as follows: "On the evening of the 14th he [Hancock] was directed by General Meade to hold his troops in readiness to move, and was informed that it was probable he would be instructed to march toward Petersburg, and that rations for his command would be sent him from City Point. At ten

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., pp. 353, 354.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, pp. 351, 352.

o'clock that night the following despatch was sent him by General Meade: 'General Butler has been ordered to send to you at Windmill Point 60,000 rations. So soon as these are received and issued, you will move your corps by the most direct route to Petersburg, taking up a position where the City Point Railroad crosses Harrison's Creek, where we now have a work. After Barlow has crossed you will cross as much of your artillery and ammunition train as possible up to the moment you are ready to move, and if all is quiet at that time the ferriage of the rest can be continued and they can join you.' But the rations did not arrive, as expected, that night or the next morning, and the corps marched without them at half past ten on the 15th."<sup>1</sup> In a foot-note he states further:—

"At 7.30 A. M. of the 15th, after receiving several despatches from General Hancock concerning the rations, and the readiness of the corps for movement, General Meade sent a despatch to him saying: 'You will not wait for the rations, but move immediately to the position assigned you last evening,' etc., etc. Then, continuing, 'Your despatch just received' (concerning the reported arrival of rations, which turned out to be erroneous). 'It is important you should move. Exercise your judgment as to which will be best, to issue rations now, or send them as directed in the foregoing.' At nine o'clock,

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 205.

finding that the rations had not arrived, General Hancock ordered the corps to move, but the signal officer by whom the order was sent failed in some way to communicate it; and the boat in which Colonel Morgan, who carried the same order, crossed the river grounded, so that the column did not begin to move until half-past ten."

All accounts show that, as far as General Meade and General Hancock were concerned, no unnecessary delay occurred in crossing and starting upon the march; for the corps finally moved without the rations which General Grant had, with such emphasis, ordered to be supplied by General Butler. It is clear also that — in crossing the Second Corps as expeditiously as possible; in starting it upon the prescribed route without delay; and in instructing General Hancock, who never needed urging, that it was important he should move immediately to the position assigned him — General Meade had carried out General Grant's orders as General Grant says they were given to him.

Unquestionably, General Hancock was informed by General Meade that Petersburg was his *ultimate* objective point; but, *under the orders given by General Grant*, he could not have reached, *or have been expected to reach*, that place sooner than he did, for he was confined to the indistinctly "designated point," "where the City Point Railroad crosses Harri-

son's Creek, where we now have a work," *until he received further orders which could only come from General Grant or by his authority.* This is sustained by General Badeau's statement that at 3.30 P. M., on the 15th, General Grant said to General Butler: "The Second Corps, 28,000 strong, was directed to march this morning, on the direct road from Windmill Point to Petersburg, stopping at Harrison's Creek, in the absence of further orders. . . . I have sent back orders to hurry up this corps. *If you require it, send back to General Hancock, under cover to General Gibbon, with directions for him to read, and the corps will push forward with all speed.*"<sup>1</sup> It is also sustained by the fact stated by General Humphreys, on p. 208, that it was *about four o'clock in the afternoon* when General Grant, through a staff officer, informed General Smith that the Second Corps was marching towards him. Had his orders been simply to move to Petersburg by the most direct route from Windmill Point, General Hancock undoubtedly would have reached there by four o'clock in the afternoon. The "designated point," however, at which he was so expressly ordered to halt, was at some unknown distance to the right of the most direct route through Prince George Court House, and he had not yet reached this point, nor indeed been able to locate it, *at half past five* in the afternoon, when he received

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 379.

General Grant's order to hasten to the assistance of General Smith, and General Smith's request that he would come up as rapidly as possible.<sup>1</sup>

General Hancock's report as quoted by General Badeau states<sup>2</sup>: "The messages from Lieutenant-General Grant and from General Smith which I received between five and six P. M., on the 15th, were the first and only intimations I had that Petersburg was to be attacked that day. Up to that hour I had not been notified from any source that I was expected to assist General Smith in assaulting that city." General Grant regards this as established. By his statement that he "communicated to General Meade, in writing, the directions I (he) had given to General Butler," and his suggestion that "if General Hancock's orders of the 15th had been communicated to him," success would have followed the movements of the day, he evidently intends to place upon General Meade the responsibility for General Hancock's want of information and consequent failure to reach Petersburg at four o'clock in the afternoon.

In his "History of the Second Army Corps," just published, General Francis A. Walker (then assistant adjutant-general of the corps), after referring to the delay caused by waiting for rations and the endeavor to find the "desig-

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 209; and Walker's *Hist. Second Army Corps*, pp. 529, 530.

<sup>2</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 377.

nated point," on p. 528 states very positively: "Although the immediate cause of this loss of time was found in the misunderstandings and miscarryings related, *the real cause lay in the failure of General Grant to inform General Meade of Smith's contemplated attack.*" General Walker is not disproved by General Grant or General Badeau.

On p. 377 of his second volume, General Badeau quotes General Meade's endorsement upon General Hancock's request for an investigation as follows: "Had General Hancock and myself been apprised in time of the contemplated movement against Petersburg and the necessity of his coöperation, I am of the opinion that he could have been pushed much earlier to the scene of operations; but as matters occurred, and with our knowledge of them, I do not see how any censure can be attached to General Hancock and his corps."

General Badeau resents the intimation that General Grant had not properly informed his subordinates as to his plans, and presumably presents his strongest attainable arguments against it. He first scouts the idea of ignorance, on the part of Generals Meade and Hancock, of General Grant's plans as intimated by the movement of the Second Corps, as refuted by the military reputation of either officer. General Grant, however, does not agree with his historian on this point; for, as we have seen, he claims ignorance



on *General Hancock's* part as the basis for an attempted reflection on General Meade, but produces no evidence further than his own insinuation. Continuing his argument, after repeating as evidence the orders and despatches which have been considered, and after stating that, on the evening of the 14th, "Grant communicated his plans to Meade *in conversation*, as was often the case," General Badeau says: "At 6.30 P. M., on the 15th, *before Meade could have heard of Hancock's arrival at the front*, he ordered Burnside 'to cross the river immediately and move up to Harrison's Creek, and form on Hancock's left. Harrison's Creek is about two and a half miles from Petersburg. General W. F. Smith advanced on Petersburg this morning, and *has been engaged with the enemy all day*. Hancock left this morning for the same place or Harrison's Creek, *and is supporting Smith*. The commanding general directs that you do the same.'" The italics in this quotation are General Badeau's. He evidently feels that he here makes a strong point. He seems to have forgotten that but a few leaves back in this same volume, on p. 363, he had said: "This day, Grant's headquarters were removed to City Point, and, during the afternoon, the general-in-chief became satisfied that Lee was crossing the James, in force, near Drury's Bluff. *He at once sent word to Meade, at Windmill Point, to dispatch another corps to Petersburg*. 'A night march,' he said,

'may be necessary.' *This order was received at six o'clock, and Burnside, still on the northern bank, was immediately put in motion, crossing the James by the pontoon bridge.*" Certainly this does not weaken *General Meade's* statement.

In the conclusion of his argument, on p. 379, General Badeau states: "*Hancock moved exactly as he had been ordered; and when six miles from Petersburg, received Grant's orders to advance in support of Smith. He did advance promptly, connecting with that commander, 'about five o'clock.' The combination was complete. Grant found no fault with Meade or Hancock, and so informed them, stating that no investigation was necessary.*"

In consideration of the acknowledgments contained in this passage one would willingly overlook the inexactness of a few hours in the time mentioned therein, but justice requires that the subject should conclude with a further quotation from General Walker's "History of the Second Corps." In a foot-note on page 530, that author, now unquestionably the highest living authority upon the point in question, says: "A great deal has been made of the despatch said to have been sent by General Hancock to General Butler, informing that officer that his (Hancock's) leading division connected with General Smith '*about five o'clock.*' Badeau uses this to disprove the statements of Meade and Hancock relative to the

operations of the 15th. Such a despatch was sent, but the hour named was not five o'clock. At that time Hancock was still several miles from Petersburg, and had not the faintest notion that General Smith was assaulting that place. The hour written was probably *eight* o'clock, the figures 5 and 8, when written in pencil, on a scrap of paper, by the light of a camp-fire, being easily confounded." The italics are General Walker's.

One reference more will suffice to indicate the spirit manifest in both the "Military History" and the "Personal Memoirs" towards General Meade. In General Badeau's statement of events connected with the movements around Jetersville, April 3 to 5, 1865, we find<sup>1</sup>: —

"Meanwhile, discovering that Lee and his army were certainly at Amelia, Sheridan hurried up the Fifth Corps, and ordered Griffin to intrench across the railroad until he could be reinforced. The isolated command went into position, throwing up breastworks as it arrived, and Sheridan at once sent information back to Grant that he had intercepted Lee. As Meade, however, was nearer than the general-in-chief, and time was of inestimable importance now, he despatched an aide-de-camp also to the head-quarters of the Army of the Potomac, at Deep Creek, where Humphreys had gone into camp — a long day's

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., pp. 553-556.

march from Jetersville. It was well into the night before the messenger arrived. Meade was unwell, and had taken to his soldier's bed, but he roused himself at the stirring news. His men were weary with their march, and with helping wagons out of the mire; they had no rations in their haversacks, and the supply trains were far in the rear. But the sick commander issued an order to march at three o'clock in the morning.

“At 10.45 P. M., he sent word to Grant: ‘I have ordered Humphreys to move out at all hazards at three A. M.; but if the rations can be issued to them prior to that, to march as soon as issued; or if the temper of the men on hearing the despatch of General Sheridan communicated to them leads to the belief that they will march with spirit, then to push on at once as soon as they could 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 instant action*. . . .’ Meade was full of fire on this occasion. Every-thing he said and did was in splendid soldierly spirit. ‘The troops will be put in motion,’ he said in his order, ‘regardless of every consideration but the one of ending the war. . . . The major-general commanding impresses on all, officers and men, the necessity of promptitude, and of undergoing the necessities and privations they

are herein enjoined to. The major-general commanding feels he has but to recall to the Army of the Potomac the glorious record of its repeated and gallant contests with the Army of Northern Virginia, and when he assures the army that, in the opinion of so distinguished an officer as Major-General Sheridan, it only requires these sacrifices to bring this long and desperate contest to a triumphant issue, the men of his army will show that they are as willing to die of fatigue and of starvation as they have ever shown themselves ready to fall by the bullets of the enemy.'

"Meade himself was willing to make his own sacrifices. He was the senior of Sheridan in rank and service, but he sent him word: '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 was the stuff of which commanders should be made.

"Humphreys moved between one and two o'clock, and Wright at three in the morning, both corps without rations. Meanwhile Sheridan had recalled Merritt and Mackenzie from the right, and the head of Meade's command encountered the cavalry marching in the darkness. The double column crowded the road, and the infantry was delayed till Merritt's troopers had

passed. . . . It was indispensable, however, that the cavalry should have precedence, and Humphreys accordingly gave way, but took advantage of the enforced halt to issue rations to his command. Between seven and eight A. M. he moved again.

“At night on the 4th, Grant was at Wilson’s station, on the Southside road, with the Army of the James. . . .

“Before daylight on the 5th, Grant received Meade’s despatch of the night before, and replied at once, from his bivouac at Wilson’s station: ‘Your note of 10.45 last night and order for movement this morning is received. I do not see that greater efforts can be made than you are making to get up with the 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 very hearty approval.’”

After noting that General Sheridan sent General Davies, on the morning of the 5th, to Paine’s cross-roads, and the result, General Badeau, on page 559 of his third volume, says: “By two o’clock Meade had arrived at Jetersville, in advance of the Second Corps, which came up an hour later. Meade, however, was still unwell, and requested Sheridan to put the Army of the Potomac in position as it arrived. Accordingly Sheridan put two divisions of Humphreys on the left of the Fifth Corps, and one on the right,

while Meade retired to a little house near by, where Sheridan had slept the night before. Merritt had also now come up, and was placed on the left of the infantry. The vigorous movement against Crook on the left led Sheridan to believe that Lee was attempting to escape in that direction, and he was anxious to attack at once with the force in hand — his cavalry and two corps of infantry; but at this juncture Meade felt himself well enough to come out and *assume* command, and, much to Sheridan's mortification, he decided not to attack until the arrival of the Sixth Corps."

General Grant's account of the approach to Jetersville is somewhat more condensed than that of General Badeau. He says<sup>1</sup>: "Griffin's corps was intrenched across the railroad south of Jetersville, and Sheridan notified *me* of the situation. *I again ordered Meade up with all dispatch*, Sheridan having but the one corps of infantry with a little cavalry confronting Lee's entire army. Meade, always prompt in obeying orders, *now* pushed forward with great energy, although he was himself sick and hardly able to be out of bed."

Continuing the narrative from where it is left by the last quotation from General Badeau, he adds<sup>2</sup>: "At this juncture Sheridan sent me a letter which had been handed to him by a colored man, with a note from himself saying that

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 465, 466.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, pp. 468, 469.

he wished I was there myself. . . . I received a second message from Sheridan on the 5th, in which he urged more emphatically the importance of my presence. This was brought to me by a scout in gray uniform. . . . It was nearly night when this letter was received. I gave Ord directions to continue his march to Burkesville . . . I then started with a few of my staff and a very small escort of cavalry, going directly through the woods, to join Meade's army. The distance was about sixteen miles ; but the night being dark our progress was slow through the woods in the absence of direct roads. However, we got to the outposts about ten o'clock in the evening, and after some little parley convinced the sentinels of our identity and were conducted in to where Sheridan was bivouacked. We talked over the situation for some little time, Sheridan explaining to me what he thought Lee was trying to do, and that Meade's orders, if carried out, moving to the right flank, would give him the coveted opportunity of escaping us and putting us in rear of him.

"We then together visited Meade, reaching his headquarters about midnight. I explained to Meade that we did not want to follow the enemy ; we wanted to get ahead of him, and that his orders would allow the enemy to escape, and besides that, I had no doubt that Lee was moving right then. *Meade changed his orders at once.* They were *now* given for an advance on Amelia Court House, at an early hour in the morning, as



the army then lay; that is, the infantry being across the railroad, most of it to the west of the road, with the cavalry swung out still farther to the left."

Why "Humphreys had gone into camp—a long day's march from Jetersville" on the night of the 4th, should here be briefly stated. On the night of the 3rd, the Fifth Corps and the cavalry camped at Deep Creek, the Second Corps not far behind. General Grant and General Meade, with the Sixth and Ninth Corps, camped at Sutherland Station.<sup>1</sup> At daylight on the 4th, General Merritt moved toward the Appomattox, General Crook toward the Danville Road south of Jetersville, and the Fifth Corps toward Jetersville. General Grant accompanied General Ord's command on the Cox Road along the Southside Railroad. "The roads were all bad, and *the cavalry often cut into the infantry columns*, which were instructed always to give it way."<sup>2</sup> General Grant, at noon, was informed by General Sheridan of his movements, and communicated the same to General Meade, with the direction: "If you cannot find roads free from trains, let your troops pass them and press on, making as long a march today as possible."<sup>3</sup> This was received by General Meade by 2.30 p. m., and is undoubtedly the order to which General Grant refers when (Mem., vol. ii., p. 464) he says: "After I had received the despatch from Sheridan saying that Crook

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., p. 547.    <sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 549.    <sup>3</sup> *Id.*, p. 550.

was on the Danville Road, I immediately ordered Meade to make a forced march with the Army of the Potomac." General Badeau, continuing, says: "The Second Corps arrived at Deep Creek between seven and eight o'clock. The men were fatigued, having been marching, working, or standing for fourteen hours; they were out of rations, expecting to receive them during the night. Meade, therefore, directed Humphreys to go into bivouac."<sup>1</sup>

General Humphreys says: "The Second and Sixth Corps had followed the Fifth Corps closely until about eleven o'clock in the morning of the 4th, when Merritt's cavalry, coming in from the right, and having precedence, necessarily delayed the progress of the infantry, so that it was night by the time it reached Deep Creek."<sup>2</sup> In a footnote on the next page he adds: "Large working parties from the Second and Sixth Corps were at work on the roads during the 3d, 4th, and 5th, for they were nearly impassable for wagon trains."

According to General Badeau, it was well into the night when the aide-de-camp sent by General Sheridan to General Meade, to notify him of the situation at Jetersville *at the time that he sent the same information to General Grant*, reached General Meade. He states also that, at 10.45 P. M., General Meade informed General Grant as to the orders he had issued for the immediate movement of the Second and Sixth

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., p. 550.

<sup>2</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 374.

Corps, and that General Grant received and answered General Meade's despatch "before daylight on the 5th." General Grant was then at Wilson's Station, and General Meade at Deep Creek, about half-way between Wilson's Station and Jetersville. If General Grant received General Meade's despatch at, say, four A. M., more than an hour before day-break, it would have been over five hours in reaching him. As General Meade was halted on the most direct route from Jetersville to Wilson's Station, it is not probable that General Sheridan's communication reached General Grant much, if at all, in advance of General Meade's, if indeed it did not accompany it. It is difficult, therefore, to understand how General Grant could possibly have "again ordered Meade up with all dispatch," and that order have been the incentive to General Meade's exertions; for General Meade *had started* the Second Corps upon the road at one o'clock, and the Sixth Corps followed an hour later, or *at least an hour before General Grant could have received the despatches from Jetersville*, and at least five hours before an order from General Grant, based on those despatches, could have reached him. General Grant evidently had neither desire nor intention that General Meade should "achieve a separate renown."

In connection with the statements given of General Sheridan's anxiety to move at once, after the arrival of the Second Corps at Jetersville, in an

attack upon General Lee at Amelia Court House, it is well to remember that, on the afternoon of the 5th, General Lee advanced towards Jetersville for the purpose of attacking General Sheridan if he had not been reinforced.<sup>1</sup> General Lee had with him General W. H. F. Lee's cavalry; and General Longstreet's, General Ewell's, General Anderson's, and General Gordon's corps:<sup>2</sup> according to General Badeau's estimate (vol. iii., p. 551), "more than forty thousand soldiers." Informed by his cavalry that General Sheridan had been reinforced, General Lee turned to the right and crossed Flat Creek, about five miles from the position held by General Meade; General Longstreet, with the head of his column, reaching Amelia Sulphur Springs just after sunset.<sup>1</sup> At Sailor's Creek, the next day, the cavalry corps, with the Sixth Corps, were engaged with not over one fourth of General Lee's command, attacking them in flank and rear while in retreat and without artillery;<sup>3</sup> and the record of that affair would seem to indicate that General Meade had made no injudicious decision when he determined to await the arrival of the Sixth Corps at Jetersville before making a front attack upon the whole command in position to receive him.

General Badeau's account of the situation on General Grant's arrival at Jetersville on the night

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 376.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 375.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, pp. 382, 383; and *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., p. 567.

of the 5th, reads: "He found the cavalry commander more than anxious lest Lee should effect his escape. The Sixth Corps had arrived at six o'clock, and was placed by Meade on the right of the army, but no arrangement had been made to advance before morning." And he says further: "Meade's orders all contemplated a movement by the right flank, . . ." <sup>1</sup> General Grant is equally vague in his statement with regard to this order. Neither author offers any information as to its requirements or instructions, and both here ignore General Meade's despatch of 8.30 A. M. April 5, which is quoted by General Badeau (vol. 3, p. 558) as saying: "Sheridan moving the cavalry would indicate the situation of affairs at Jetersville changed. I have sent forward to inquire, and if it is not necessary to go to Jetersville, I will move on the most direct road to *Farmville*."

General Humphreys more explicitly says: "At eight o'clock on the night of the 5th, General Meade, *in his despatch to General Grant*, who had not yet arrived at Jetersville, informed him that as the Sixth Corps could not get up until about six o'clock, he was unable to attack that night, but that he would attack Lee at six o'clock on the morning of the 6th with the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Corps, in conjunction with General Sheridan. In accordance with that despatch, he directed those corps to advance the

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., p. 563.

next morning at that hour on the enemy at Amelia Court House, and attack him, *the Fifth Corps to move along the rail-road, the Second Corps on its left, the Sixth Corps on its right.*"<sup>1</sup> There is in this no hint of any changed orders or of any ordered movements by either flank.

As Jetersville is about two and a half miles south, and over six miles west, of Amelia Court House, and as General Lee must move westward, or south, if he left the latter place at all, one fails to understand how General Meade could possibly have arranged, even in contemplation, the project of a movement for attack *by his right flank and in pursuit* of his enemy. His established reputation as a soldier forbids the supposition that, having reached Jetersville after the severest toil and exertion, undergone for the express purpose of intercepting General Lee's retreat, his next movement would have been to retrace, unnecessarily, any of the steps so painfully taken.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 377, 378.

<sup>2</sup> Since the above was written, the following information, kindly taken by General Fred. T. Locke from his diary while assistant adjutant-general Fifth Army Corps, has been received: "We received orders (the Fifth Corps) on the 5th of April, 1865, in the afternoon, I think, to report to General Meade, commanding A. of P. Order came from General Sheridan. *The same evening received orders from General Meade to march at 6 A. M. April 6th to Amelia C. H.* April 6, marched at 6 A. M. in the direction of Amelia C. H., halted within three miles of the C. H., and were ordered by General Meade in person — General Grant being with him — to take the Pridenville road

On the morning of the 6th, General Ord was notified by General Sheridan that General Lee was apparently moving direct for Burkesville Junction.<sup>1</sup> On the morning of the 7th, General Humphreys was informed from headquarters that General Lee was probably moving toward Danville;<sup>2</sup> and at about four o'clock in the afternoon of the same day General Grant informed him that General Lee could not recross to the south bank of the Appomattox at Farmville.<sup>3</sup>

Bearing these facts in mind, together with the constantly close and often retarding connection maintained between the cavalry corps and the infantry of the Army of the Potomac, and recalling the accounts of the movement of the Army of the Potomac from the Wilderness to Spottsylvania Court House, one is not unprepared to find Generals Grant and Badeau again in error as to orders issued by General Meade.

We have more than once referred to General Grant's acknowledgments of the character and ability of General Meade, which culminate in coupling his name with that of General Sherman in official commendation. We have seen that General Badeau repeats the same expressions; and, in quotations just made, that he recognizes the "splendid soldierly spirit" of General Meade,

and march *via* Painesville to Ligonton Ford on the Appomattox — reaching the Ford about 8 P. M. that day after a march of 30 miles and building three bridges on the way."

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 385, and *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., p. 567.

<sup>2</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 389.

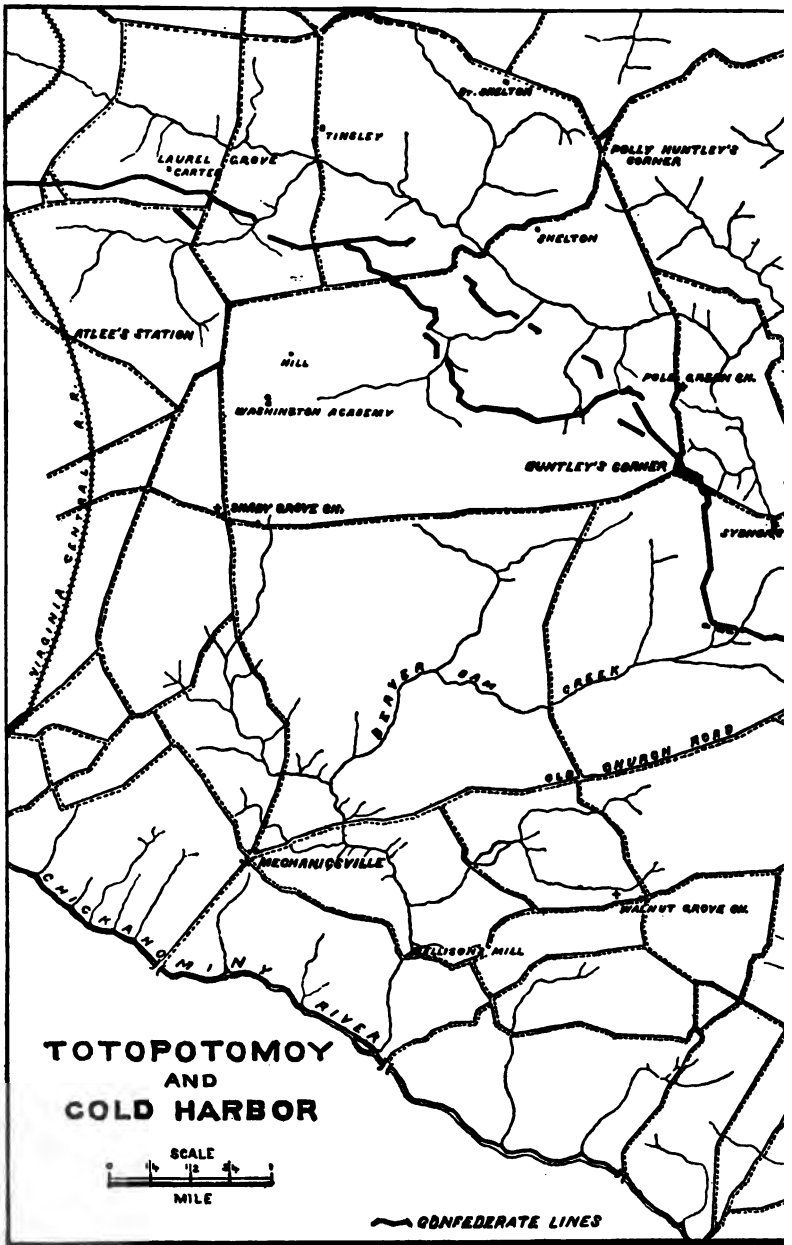
<sup>3</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., p. 584.

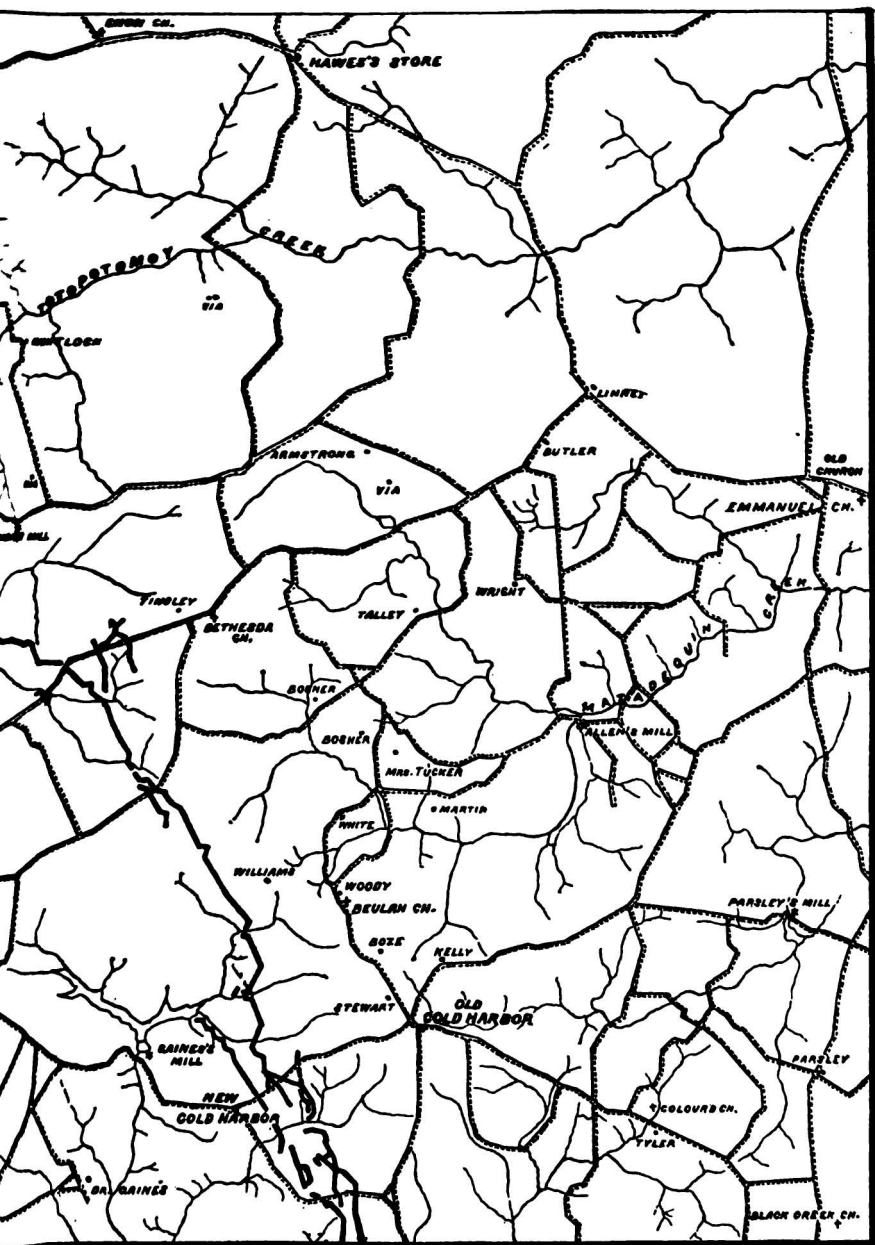
until he "assumed" command over General Sheridan at Jetersville; and that he could not but acknowledge him possessed of much of "the stuff of which commanders should be made." We find on p. 538 of the second volume of the *Memoirs* that, in his concluding estimate of the character of his subordinate, General Grant describes him as an officer of great merit; subordinate to an uncommon degree; brave and conscientious, and commanding the respect of all who knew him; and, in spite of some drawbacks to his usefulness, arising from an unfortunate infirmity of temper and his training and experience as an officer of the Engineer Corps before the war, "a most valuable officer and deserves a high place in the annals of his country."

It is to be regretted that the leader of the victorious armies of our country could condescend to laborious effort to modify, almost to retraction, his official commendations of the services of a magnanimous lieutenant who, even General Badeau confesses, "never failed in soldierly loyalty."

Before General Grant had been placed over him in command, General George G. Meade had achieved a separate renown; and, even carping criticism bearing witness, he held it unsullied to the end.







## CHAPTER VI.

### GENERAL WARREN AT SPOTTSYLVANIA C. H.

ON p. 107 of the second volume of the "Military History of U. S. Grant," after relating the story of General Warren's assault upon General Ewell, in the Wilderness, May 5, 1864, General Badeau comments as follows: "This assault had been skilfully and gallantly made. Troops enough to ensure complete success had been ordered to combine—all of the Fifth Corps and two divisions of Sedgwick's; while, as has been seen, *the promptness* of the attack took the rebels by surprise; but the labyrinth in which the movements were made rendered effectual co-operation impossible, even among the troops nearest each other, and Sedgwick's divisions were unable to attack at all. Only these circumstances prevented the overthrow of Lee's entire left, for the rout at first was absolute." General Grant condenses this into: "About this hour Warren was ready, and attacked with favorable though not decisive results."<sup>1</sup> This conciseness is significant here only because of its

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 193.

being the first notice given by General Grant to General Warren's services in action under his supervision, and therefore introductory to the frequent and complex statements to which attention must now be given.

In his account of the movement from the Wilderness to Spottsylvania Court House, on the night of May 7, General Grant makes more extended mention of the commander of the Fifth Army Corps. Commencing on p. 210 of the second volume of the Memoirs, he says: "Soon after dark Warren withdrew from the front of the enemy, and was soon followed by Sedgwick. Warren's march carried him immediately behind the works where Hancock's command lay on the Brock Road. With my staff and a small escort of cavalry I preceded the troops. Meade with his staff accompanied me. The greatest enthusiasm was manifested by Hancock's men as we passed by. No doubt it was inspired by the fact that the movement was south. It indicated to them that they had passed through the 'beginning of the end' in the battle just fought. The cheering was so lusty that the enemy must have taken it for a night attack. At all events it drew from him a furious fusillade of artillery and musketry, plainly heard but not felt by us." Then, following his speculations concerning the reasons for the failure to win success in the Wilderness engagement, and to reach Spottsylvania Court House in advance of General Lee's

troops, on p. 213, he continues: "Anderson soon intrenched himself — if indeed the intrenchments were not already made — immediately across Warren's front. Warren was not aware of his presence, but probably supposed it was the cavalry which Merritt had engaged earlier in the day. He assaulted at once, but was repulsed. He soon organized his men, as they were not pursued by the enemy, and made a second attack, this time with his whole corps. He now succeeded in gaining a position immediately in the enemy's front, where he intrenched. His right and left divisions — the former Crawford's, the latter Wadsworth's, now commanded by Cutler — drove the enemy back some distance.

"At this time my headquarters had been advanced to Piney Branch Church. I was anxious to crush Anderson before Lee could get a force to his support. To this end Sedgwick, who was at Piney Branch Church, was ordered to Warren's support. . . . Sedgwick was slow in getting up for some reason — probably unavoidable, because he was never at fault when serious work was to be done — so that it was near night before the combined forces were ready to attack. Even then all of Sedgwick's command did not get into the engagement. *Warren led the last assault, one division at a time, and of course it failed.*"

Here follows the description of General Warren's imputed twofold constitutional difficulty, which has already been quoted at length in our

second chapter. Then, after an explanation of General Early's accidental detention of General Hancock at Todd's Tavern, near the foot of page 215, General Grant continues:—

“Had I ordered the movement for the night of the 7th by my left flank, it would have put Hancock in the lead. It would also have given us an hour or more earlier start. *It took all that time for Warren to get the head of his column to the left of Hancock after he had got his troops out of their line confronting the enemy.* This hour, and Hancock's capacity to use his whole force when necessary, would, no doubt, have enabled him to crush Anderson before he could be reinforced. But the movement made was tactical. . . . Then, too, I had not yet learned the special qualifications of the different corps commanders. At that time my judgment was that Warren was the man I would suggest to succeed Meade should anything happen to that gallant soldier to take him from the field. As I have before said, Warren was a gallant soldier, an able man; and he was besides thoroughly imbued with the solemnity and importance of the duty he had to perform.”

The first point to be noted in this account is, that, up to the evening of May 7, 1864, General Warren, as a gallant soldier and able man, actuated by a thorough comprehension of his duty, held a high place in the estimation of Lieutenant-General Grant. It is to the record of subse-

quent events, therefore, one must look for an explanation of the evident change which so speedily occurred in the opinion of the commander-in-chief. Here, first in order of movements, is presented General Grant's insinuation that General Warren was so unnecessarily tardy in moving his troops from the Wilderness lines, that perhaps, after all, it would have been better had he (General Grant) risked the hazardous experiment of a movement by his left flank, so as to give General Hancock the lead on the road to Spottsylvania Court House.

It is to be remarked, that while General Grant's memory is tenacious of some facts connected with the visit to General Hancock and the night ride to Todd's Tavern, it is noticeably oblivious as to others. General Badeau, whose account as a whole agrees substantially with General Grant's, makes no mention of dilatoriness on General Warren's part. He says simply: "During the afternoon, Sheridan had a serious fight at Todd's Tavern, driving the rebel cavalry so as to make way for Warren; and, as soon as the darkness was deep enough to conceal the movement, the Fifth Corps came out of its works, and fell into the road to Spottsylvania."<sup>1</sup> There seems to be no question that the movement of the Fifth Corps commenced as ordered, at half past eight o'clock in the evening of the 7th, in accordance with the project of General Grant.

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 134.

General Humphreys says, concerning this: "After overlooking, for a time, the commencement of the movement, General Meade, with General Grant, rode to General Hancock's headquarters on the Brock Road, near the left of his line, to await there the arrival of the head of Warren's column, and about eleven o'clock set out for Todd's Tavern, in advance of the Fifth Corps, reaching there about midnight."<sup>1</sup> In a foot-note, on the same page, he adds: "While at General Hancock's headquarters it was learnt, about eleven o'clock, that the head of Warren's column was near by, halted and seriously delayed by the mounted troops of the Provost-Marshal-General, which, following the headquarters, had occupied the road instead of drawing out of it. General Warren had remained in the vicinity of the Lacy house to oversee the withdrawal of his troops, the most important part of his duty. Had he been at the head of his column the delay would not have occurred, since he would at once have notified General Meade of the obstruction, and it would have been removed immediately. The headquarters at once set out as the speediest way of removing the obstacle, and rode rapidly to Todd's Tavern, reaching there about midnight." It is not to be supposed that the necessity which shortened his visit to General Hancock that night, escaped the attention of General Grant.

But had either General Warren or General

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 58.



Hancock reached the point east of Todd's Tavern at any time that night before half-past three A. M., the time of General Warren's arrival, he would still have found General Fitz Lee's division, across the road to Spottsylvania, confronting General Merritt; for General Sheridan had not succeeded in "driving the rebel cavalry so as to make way for Warren." The road must still have been cleared, and there is no derogation in the belief that General Hancock could have reached the enemy in front of Spottsylvania Court House no sooner than did General Warren. The insinuation of reprehensible tardiness on General Warren's part would seem here to be as unmerited as it is unnecessary.

General Badeau's account of the debouchment of the Fifth Corps upon the field in front of Spottsylvania Court House, and the ensuing operations of the afternoon of May 8, differs from that of General Grant only in that General Badeau credits the troops with their march of the previous night and their engagement with the enemy since early that morning<sup>1</sup> (which facts General Grant ignores), and in that he delegates to Mr. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, the duty of embodying in a despatch to the War Department the reflections upon General Warren's leadership. General Grant's most tangible accusation is when, concerning the closing operations of the day, he says: "Warren led the last

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 142.

assault, one division at a time, and of course it failed." Mr. Dana's despatch, while equally inaccurate, is, at least, more specific. It is dated May 9, and relates to the operations of the afternoon of the 8th. As given by General Badeau in a foot note on page 144 of the second volume of the Military History, it is as follows: —

"Prisoners were taken by Wilson, who reported that two divisions of Longstreet's " [Anderson's] "corps had just come up, they having marched all night. General Grant at once gave orders for attacking these troops with the whole of Warren's corps, to whose support Sedgwick was hurrying up, in order to destroy them before the rest of the rebel army could arrive. Warren, however, proceeded with exceeding caution, and when he finally did attack, sent a single division at a time, and *was constantly repulsed*. The general attack Generals Grant and Meade directed was never made, for reasons which I have not yet been able to learn, but *successive assaults were made upon this and that point* in the rebel positions, with no decisive results."

The definite record, established on pages 59 to 61 of "The Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865," contains the following facts: After relieving General Merritt's cavalry, about six o'clock in the morning of May 8, General Robinson's division, leading the Fifth Corps column and pushing before it the enemy's cavalry that had obstructed the road, reached the forks of the road

near Alsop's about half-past eight o'clock. The division, then moving down the *left-hand* road about a mile to where the forks reunite, reformed and moved across the open ground, which there occurred, till they were met by a sudden and heavy fire of musketry and artillery from the enemy holding the wood covering the junction of the old Court House Road with the Brock Road. General Robinson was severely wounded while leading his men and his division, its left having been turned, finally fell back, *followed by the enemy* until they were checked by the Maryland Brigade, which formed in the woods from which the division had advanced. *In the meantime* General Griffin's division had moved down the *right* fork of the road, his leading brigade, under General Bartlett, in line of battle, and came under fire from the enemy very soon after General Robinson's division. General Bartlett's brigade was also somewhat disordered at first by the fire it encountered, but it quickly reformed under cover of its supports, and the division advanced to the line it held for several days, General Crawford coming up promptly with his division and driving the enemy from General Griffin's left. By this time, General Field's division of General Anderson's corps had come up and threatened General Griffin's right, but General Cutler's division of the Fifth Corps, arriving in its turn, pushed in to the attack, drove the enemy back and established a line connecting with General Griffin.

There was, in fact, but *one attack* upon the enemy's line before noon. The Fifth Corps, advancing with the head of its column deployed only enough to clear the road in front, coming suddenly upon the enemy in strong position, promptly moved forward to the attack, the leading divisions engaging practically together and the remainder of the corps participating immediately upon reaching the field. There does not appear to have been any delay or any repulse of a first attack followed by reorganization and advance by the whole corps. The divisions as they reached the ground fought their way, as they had done at Gettysburg, from column into line of battle, and the movement was continuous from commencement to ending, through more than two hours of what Confederate authority called "stubborn" fighting.

Concerning the operations of the afternoon, General Humphreys says: "At one o'clock General Meade ordered General Sedgwick to move to Spottsylvania Court House and unite with General Warren in an immediate and vigorous attack upon the enemy. . . . The arrangements for the attack of the Fifth and Sixth Corps were not completed until late in the afternoon, and it was then only partial, and not determined and vigorous. The ground was new to everyone, and the troops were tired. It was also made too late in the day to be followed up advantageously if successful. Some advance was made by a part of

the Sixth Corps, and Penrose's New Jersey brigade of Wright's division, leading the advance in open ground, was repulsed by a sharp fire from the wood in their front. A little later, toward dusk, General Crawford passed over the open ground into the woods beyond — he had, it appears, passed the right of Longstreet's corps, and had come upon Rodes's division of Ewell's corps unexpectedly to them, while they were moving by a flank, and forced them back three-quarters of a mile, it is stated, taking some prisoners. After night-fall Crawford fell back to the line of the corps.”<sup>1</sup>

One cannot discover here any warrant for General Grant's assertion that “Warren led the last assault, one division at a time, and of course it failed,” or for Mr. Dana's statement that General Warren was “constantly repulsed,” and that “successive assaults were made upon this and that point in the rebel positions.” *At one o'clock* General Sedgwick, who was at Piney Branch Church,<sup>2</sup> was ordered to move to Spottsylvania and unite with General Warren in an immediate attack upon the enemy. General *Sedgwick* therefore, by seniority of rank, commanded the proposed combined attack; and as no one will for a moment question General Grant's statement that “he was never at fault when serious work was to be done,” it must be accepted that the failure to make the attack as ordered was “probably unavoidable,” or at least had some

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 65, 66.

<sup>2</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 214.

excuse, as General Humphreys has suggested, and was not to be charged to any inefficiency of the junior corps commander. General Humphreys assigns the credit for leading the only "assault" made that afternoon, by troops of the Fifth Corps, to General Crawford, whose movement was at least so far successful that he was not repulsed, but fell back unmolested after night to the line held by the corps.

General Grant states that General Warren was not aware of General Anderson's presence at Spottsylvania, "but probably supposed it was the cavalry which *Merritt* had engaged earlier in the day." The statement is not improbable. General Warren, though leading the advance of the Federal infantry, had at his command no means of learning the numbers and character of the troops opposing him, except through the developments of attack.

The cavalry force he had engaged at six o'clock in the morning was still confronting him late in the afternoon; for General Stuart, who reached the Court House with General Anderson's column, extended the left of the Confederate infantry line with General Fitz Lee's cavalry division, and occupied that position until the arrival of the main body of the army.<sup>1</sup> With the Federal advance it was different. Though General Merritt's cavalry division remained on and

<sup>1</sup> McClellan's *Life and Campaigns of Maj.-Gen. J. E. B. Stuart*, pp. 408, 409.

near the Brock Road until near noon, after being relieved by the Fifth Corps in the early morning, and was engaged nowhere else that day, it was assigned no part whatever in the further advance of the infantry. General Wilson's cavalry division, which had reached Spottsylvania Court House early in the morning, and was therefore in the rear of the enemy's right flank when General Warren attacked, was ordered to retire from the field and accordingly withdrew. Of this General Badeau (vol. ii., pp. 140, 141) says:—

“Wilson moved promptly on the morning of the 8th, according to Sheridan's orders, which, in his case, had not been reversed by Meade; and brushing away a mounted picket, crossed the Ny and pushed into Spottsylvania, where he encountered and dispersed a body of rebel cavalry. He was about advancing upon Snell's bridge, to make the junction ordered with Merritt and Gregg, when he heard heavy firing from the north, on the roads from Todd's Tavern and Piney Branch Church, and moving towards the sound of battle, his advance soon found itself behind a line of rebel infantry—two divisions of Anderson's command. . . . But by this time Anderson . . . obliged Wilson to evacuate Spottsylvania, etc. etc.” In a foot-note he adds: “As soon as Sheridan learned the change which Meade had made in the orders to Merritt and Gregg, and the consequent isolation of Wilson, he sent orders to that officer to fall back from Spottsylvania.”

It is sufficient now to notice only that General Wilson started for Spottsylvania at five o'clock in the morning;<sup>1</sup> and that General Sheridan's order retiring him from the Court House must have been received about ten o'clock, and must have been issued after it was known to General Sheridan that General Warren was advancing toward the same objective with his progress impeded by a force which might readily have been attacked successfully in flank and rear by General Wilson had he been promptly advised.

The report of Brigadier-General W. N. Pendleton, Chief of Artillery Army of Northern Virginia, touches upon this point and says: "About 9 A. M. of the 8th the head of the column came in sight of the court-house, and found the enemy just getting into view on the Fredericksburg road, driving back a small cavalry force which there opposed them. *At the same time* a strong infantry column assailed another cavalry force which disputed their entrance on the Todd's Tavern road. General Alexander, accompanying General Anderson with his advanced column, immediately sent Major Haskell with two batteries to the assistance of our cavalry. On the Todd's Tavern road two infantry brigades also went in support. These batteries were *stubbornly engaged for two hours*. Their ammunition being then exhausted and considerable loss experienced, they were withdrawn.

<sup>1</sup> See *Gen. Sheridan's Order*, quoted in chapter iv.



*During a part of the action they had suffered under a flank reverse fire from a battery belonging to that force of the enemy which had reached the court-house by the other route."*

The report of Brigadier-General John Bratton, C. S. Army, states: "We moved, in accordance with orders, across the railroad by the Catharpin road to Spottsylvania Court-House, and arrived in the vicinity on the next morning (the 8th) at *about 10 o'clock* to find the enemy's cavalry in possession of and between us and the court-house. My brigade formed on the right of the road and moved down to the court-house, *the enemy retiring before us and abandoning the place without a fight.*"

It would seem that General Grant's order — "Push the enemy with all your might. That's the way to connect."<sup>1</sup> — would have been in place with the commander of the cavalry corps at this earlier date. One finds grounds for more than mere idle speculation in the almost certainty of what might have been, had the hardy veterans of the First Cavalry Division been thrown in, as they could well have been, upon the left of General Warren's line, and had General Wilson been pushed home upon the exposed Confederate right.

General Grant expresses his regret that General Meade's orders to his cavalry prevented General Warren from reinforcing General Wilson

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 177 (foot-note).

and holding the town,<sup>1</sup> but he omits all mention of General Sheridan's order, which called off General Wilson when he might have reinforced General Warren and have enabled him to gain the Court House.

On May 10, Mr. Dana informed the authorities in Washington : " Further to the left, where Mott's division held ground between Wright and Burnside, *we were disgraced by the retreat of that division without loss, and apparently without any considerable force to oppose them.*"<sup>2</sup> If he forwarded any comments on the withdrawal of General Wilson from Spottsylvania, General Badeau has failed to reproduce them.

With regard to these despatches from Mr. Dana, it is well to note General Badeau's statement of their origin, character, and purpose. At the foot of page 144 of his second volume, that historian explains as follows : —

" Grant was so averse to writing long despatches that the government sent the Honorable Charles A. Dana, at this time Assistant Secretary of War, to his head-quarters, to report more fully than the general-in-chief was in the habit of doing. Dana's despatches were not submitted to Grant, and furnish evidence which will not be suspected of partiality."

In a note appended to his account of the Cold Harbor movements, on page 277 of the same

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii. p. 213.    <sup>2</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii. p. 167 (note).

volume, he again remarks: "It must be remembered that Mr. Dana's criticisms were not invariably those of the general-in-chief, although they frequently, perhaps generally, concurred. Mr. Dana was naturally freer in his censures than the officer whose responsibilities not only to those he commanded, but to the government and the country, were so great. Besides this, strictures often seemed warranted at the moment, which a fuller knowledge and later judgment quite reversed. Probably, Dana himself would not have liked to endorse all the despatches he sent from the turmoil of the camp and the battle-field. His opinions were his own; but as a rule, the statements of fact that he made to the government were identical with what Grant believed at the time."

The concluding sentence demands notice of the despatches here. The impressions upon which they were based were unquestionably received in great part from General Grant, for whose relief Mr. Dana was detailed, apparently in the especial character of censorial assistant, from the War Department. Doubtless also, willing aid was never lacking from Mr. Dana's companions on the lieutenant-general's staff — his despatches all evidencing the spirit declared by General Badeau to have prevailed at the headquarters of the armies of the United States. General Grant has entered no protest against their reproduction, although General Badeau,

even while proffering them in evidence, acknowledges their possible injustice. Had they been revived simply as illustrations of what General Grant and those surrounding him "believed at the time," there would be no occasion to remark upon them; but when they are propounded as "evidence which will not be suspected of partiality," in support of statements opposed to facts established by a "fuller knowledge and later judgment," their character should be examined. In addition to what has been already quoted from them, one more example will suffice.

On page 163 of his second volume, General Badeau adds a foot-note, saying: "Mr. Dana thus reports: 'The general assault took place about 6.30 P. M. I witnessed it on Warren's front, where it was executed with the caution and absence of comprehensive *ensemble* which seem to characterize that officer.' This criticism appears to me too severe."

This report, formulated by a civilian bureau officer against the corps commander who but four days previously was regarded by General Grant as the possible successor to the command of the Army of the Potomac, is, singularly enough, appended by General Badeau to his account of General Warren's assault, which was made at about four o'clock in the afternoon of May 10, and which General Grant says was promptly made on a field which "was so densely covered with forest that but little could be seen, by any

one person, as to the progress made.”<sup>1</sup> In his account, General Badeau had said: “The point of attack was a densely wooded hill in front of Warren, its crest crowned with earthworks, and the entire front swept by cross and enfilading fires of musketry and artillery. . . . Grant and Meade took position on an elevated plateau opposite the hill, to watch the battle; but here, as in the Wilderness, the woods prevented them from observing in detail the progress of the fight. All they could discern was the wooded ridge in the background, the swamp at its base covered with underbrush, and nearer still, the lines of the troops about to enter the thicket. . . . Across the open plain, through reaches of wood, through depths of swamp, the lines of the battalions struggled forward under a fearful fire, until they were lost to view in the jungle and the smoke of battle. . . . the troops pressed on and up within the woods, until at one or two points they mounted the enemy’s breastworks. But their greeting was too terrible; they stood for a moment on the crest, then wavered, and fell back, disordered by the enfilading fire on either side. . . .”

On the next page, he says of the assault Mr. Dana claims to have witnessed and which General Grant states was “gallantly made”:<sup>2</sup> —

“Hancock had by this time arrived upon the field, with Birney’s division. A furious cannonade was maintained while the troops that Warren

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, vol. ii., p. 224.

had led were re-formed, and at *half-past six*, the untired and undaunted Fifth corps, with two divisions of the Sixth, again advanced, this time *under the immediate command of Hancock*. But the same obstacles were encountered which had forced the troops to retire two hours before, and although they again reached, and again even overleapt the breastworks, they were unable to hold them, and fell back at dark, with serious loss. Price, a gallant brigadier in the Fifth corps, was killed in the advance. *That corps indeed never bore less than its share of the brunt of any battle, and none of its officers, of whatever grade, failed to set a worthy example to their soldiers.*"

Further comment on Mr. Dana's despatch would be superfluous.

Of General Warren's part in the assault upon the salient, May 12, General Grant<sup>1</sup> states: ". . . Warren and Wright were ordered to hold themselves in readiness to join in the assault if circumstances made it advisable. . . . About six o'clock I ordered Warren's corps *to the support of Hancock*. . . . At eight o'clock Warren was ordered up again, but was so slow in making his dispositions that his orders were frequently repeated, and with emphasis. At eleven o'clock I gave Meade written orders to relieve Warren from his command if he failed to move promptly.

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 228 to 233.

. . . If the 5th corps, or rather if Warren, had been as prompt as Wright was with the 6th corps, better results might have been obtained.

“Lee massed heavily *from his left flank* on the broken point of his line. . . .

“Warren’s corps was now *temporarily broken up*, Cutler’s division sent to Wright, and Griffin’s to Hancock. Meade ordered his chief of staff, General Humphreys, to remain with Warren and the remaining division, and authorized him to give it orders in his name.”

This was the occasion upon which General Grant’s headquarters “were in a thickly wooded dell, from which it was impossible to distinguish any portion of the field, but the necessity of remaining at a point where he could be readily reached by every corps commander left him no option.”

Concerning General Warren, General Badeau amplifies substantially the same account as that outlined by General Grant, but states that General Warren was ordered “to attack” instead of “to the support of Hancock.”<sup>1</sup> On pages 182 and 183, he remarks: “. . . No absolute tactical result was achieved by the exploit of the Second corps.

“Hancock had indeed dealt the severest blow of the campaign, but, as happened in the Wilderness, under the same commander, after a brilliant and successful onset, his troops became disorgan-

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., pp. 177 to 185.

ized by victory, and he seemed unable to follow up his advantage, or even to retain all that he had gained, until fresh supports arrived. He could inspire, but apparently not control his soldiers. In the Wilderness, all the splendid results of his success on the 6th of May, were lost by this same incapacity; . . . But there are hundreds of men who can lead a charge, for one who can control his soldiers or his own faculties in the hurly-burly afterwards. One achievement requires physical courage and personal magnetism; the other, mental and moral power.

“It was, however, Warren’s feebleness which especially prevented Grant from following up the advantage that Hancock had obtained; and the trait which afterwards occasioned Warren’s downfall on the field of battle, was in this emergency at least equally conspicuous, and still more inopportune. . . .”

The paragraph concerning General Hancock is here quoted as a specimen of the insatiable spirit of criticism, which is not only characteristic of General Badeau’s writing, but, by his showing, was the unvarying sentiment of those surrounding General Grant, who would seem to have felt called upon to neutralize as far as possible, all unavoidable acknowledgments of worth in his subordinates of the Army of the Potomac. The pages of the Memoirs indicate that General Grant himself sympathized with his historian.

Referring to General Humphreys’s account, on



page 89, we find that, on the afternoon of the 11th, General Meade received General Grant's order dated 3 P. M., instructing him "to move three divisions of the Second corps by the rear of the Fifth and Sixth corps under cover of night, so as to join the Ninth corps in a vigorous assault on the enemy at four o'clock A. M. tomorrow. . . . Warren and Wright should hold their corps as close to the enemy as possible to take advantage of any diversion caused by this attack and to break in if the opportunity presents itself. . . ." It is concerning the transmission of this order to the corps commanders that General Badeau makes some characteristic remarks, to which attention was called in our last chapter, and referring to which General Humphreys, in a note on page 91, says: "From the hour of our arrival before Spottsylvania Court House, the greater part of my time was passed with the troops; the ground occupied by them, and between them and the enemy, was therefore well known to me.

"Badeau, not acquainted with it or the enemy's works, and because the direction of General Grant that Warren and Wright should hold their corps as close as possible to the enemy was not repeated by Meade in his order (*their corps being already as close to the enemy as was judicious*), descants upon the loss of Grant's spirit and force by his orders percolating through three brains before they reached a corps commander. But he does

not attempt to point out in what manner the dispositions ordered by Meade were inapplicable, nor how, with any reference to the ground and the enemy's works, they could have been bettered, nor where, nor how they caused any failure in promptitude or efficiency to meet the necessities of the day. On the contrary, it is very evident from what took place that they met in the best possible manner the requirements of the day. Badeau does not seem to have known, even when he wrote his account of the operations of the 12th of May, that Longstreet's troops remained that day in their intrenchments as strong as they were on the 10th of May, when the repeated assaults on their position proved it to be too strong to be carried by assault, *if well manned*.<sup>1</sup> *It was of the utmost importance to the enemy to maintain that part of their works, for if it had been carried the troops in the salient would have been taken in rear and flank. It was their point of support and the hinge upon which Lee was to swing back from the salient, and its giving way would have proved disastrous to him.*"

On page 91 we also learn that General Wright and General Warren "were directed to have their troops in readiness at the hour named for the combined attack of Burnside and Hancock, when, it was understood, they might be required, according to the developments of the day, *either to attack in their fronts, or move elsewhere and*

<sup>1</sup> Italics in original.

*attack.*" On page 100, continuing the narrative of the Fifth Corps, General Humphreys says: "Early in the morning of the 12th, General Warren opened with all his artillery, and pressed forward his skirmish line. The intrenchments of the enemy gave no sign of having been stripped of any of their troops to meet Hancock's and Wright's attacks on the salient, but the manner in which the contest there was carried on and the reinforcements the enemy received, together with the fact that Burnside was attacking on the east face of the salient, led to the conclusion that the enemy could not be very strong in Warren's front, and at 9.15 A. M. he was ordered to attack at once at all hazards, with his whole force if necessary. He accordingly prepared to do so, and assaulted, but was repulsed, for Longstreet's corps was holding its intrenchments in force, the only change made in his line being the extension of his right to fill the place from which Ramseur's brigade had been taken. . . . Immediately upon the failure of Warren's attack he was directed to send General Cutler's division to General Wright and *be prepared to follow with his whole corps.* . . . It appearing probable that the enemy's intrenchments in the vicinity of the west angle could be carried if assaulted by the whole Fifth Corps, General Warren was directed to withdraw from his front *and move with his whole corps to the designated point and attack.* Griffin's division followed Cutler's closely. The other

troops of the Fifth Corps were following, except Crawford's division, when the project of further assault was given up, as it did not appear to promise a complete success. . . ."

In his report of the battle in the salient, General Ewell says: "General Kershaw<sup>1</sup> extended so as to allow Ramseur to be withdrawn, and as Daniel's right was unprotected, Ramseur was sent in there. . . . But the salient was still held by the enemy, and a most deadly fire poured on his right flank. Accordingly, Harris's Mississippi brigade, which came to my assistance about 9 A. M., was sent to Ramseur's right; but as it still failed to fill the trenches, McGowan's South Carolina brigade, which arrived an hour later, was ordered to the same point. . . . The engagement was spoken of in Northern papers as a general attack by their army. *It was met only by my corps and three brigades sent to my aid, etc.*"

It appears, then, that General Warren was not ordered to support General Hancock, but to attack the enemy in his own front, and that he wasted no time in dispositions, they having been already made according to order; but, early in the morning, attacking by opening with his artillery and pressing forward his skirmish line, he demonstrated that Longstreet's corps still held their intrenchments in force. As the

<sup>1</sup> General Kershaw's division, on the east of the Brock Road, extended beyond the left of the Fifth Corps.

attacks of the 10th had proven the enemy's lines to be impregnable when thus held, General Warren, reporting the situation, waited further orders instead of sacrificing his men uselessly. General Grant, however, could not bring himself to believe that General Lee was keeping well guarded the lines which protected the left flank and rear of the salient he held so stubbornly, and which formed his *point d'appui* if his right should be forced back; and, refusing to understand otherwise than that General Warren must be at fault, he persisted in ordering the assault along his front. It is also evident that, immediately after General Warren's second attack failed and he reported at about 9.30 A. M. "I cannot advance my men farther at present,"<sup>1</sup> General Meade and General Humphreys were personally present with the Fifth Corps and had examined into the condition of the field in its front; for General Meade's order, of 10.33 A.M., to General Humphreys, reads: "Please *remain here*, and in my name attend to the shortening of the line and the sending reinforcements to Wright and Hancock."<sup>2</sup> That their investigations led in no way to General Warren's discredit is indicated by the fact that, despite the unjust censures and threatening order for removal by General Grant, there was no temporary breaking up of his command, as is alleged; but that, as had

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 181.

from the beginning of the movement been anticipated as possibly necessary, he was ordered to transfer his efforts from his own front to aid the Sixth Corps in the vicinity of the west angle, leaving General Crawford's division to hold his intrenchments.

What General Badeau assumes to call General Warren's "feeble attempts to assault," the enemy described as "two violent assaults" on General Field's lines, and upon General Bratton's line, a beautiful advance over open ground, in two lines of battle, pushed up to within fifty yards of their intrenchments, where it was broken by their fire; and the men of Longstreet's corps were veteran judges. General Humphreys says: "I was overlooking the right of the army, and gave the order for the assaults there to cease, as soon as I was satisfied they could not succeed; and directed the transfer of the troops to the centre for attack there."<sup>1</sup> When General Andrew A. Humphreys decided that an assault by the Fifth Army Corps could not succeed, few experienced military men would wish to disregard his judgment, and small room was left for criticism of defeated effort.

Unquestionably, an "absence of comprehensive *ensemble*" was noticeable in the conduct of the battle of May 12, but the record does not trace it home to General Warren.

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 101.

## CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL WARREN AT SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT  
HOUSE, MAY 19, AND AT COLD HARBOR,  
JUNE 1 AND 2.

IN the report of Lieutenant-General R. S. Ewell, C. S. Army, of operations May 4 to 29, we find : "On May 19th General Lee directed me to demonstrate against the enemy in my front, as he believed they were moving to his right and wished to ascertain. As they were strongly entrenched in front I obtained leave to move round their right. After a detour of several miles through roads impassable for my artillery I came on the enemy *prepared to receive me*. My force was about six thousand, his much larger. His position being developed and my object attained, I was about to retire when he attacked me. Part of my line was shaken, but Pegram's brigade, of Early's division, (Colonel Hoffman commanding,) and Ramseur's, of Rodes', held their ground so firmly that I maintained my position till night-fall, then withdrew unmolested."

Concerning the operations of that day, General Grant states : "Up to this time I had re-

ceived no reinforcements, except six thousand raw troops under Brigadier-General Robert O. Tyler, just arrived. They had not yet joined their command, Hancock's corps, but were on our right. This corps had been brought to the rear of the centre, ready to move in any direction. Lee, probably suspecting some move on my part, and seeing our right entirely abandoned, moved Ewell's corps, about five o'clock in the afternoon, with Early's as a reserve, to attack us in that quarter. Tyler had come up from Fredericksburg, and had been halted on the road to the right of our line, near Kitching's brigade of Warren's corps. Tyler received the attack with his raw troops, and they maintained their position, until reinforced, in a manner worthy of veterans.

“ Hancock was in a position to reinforce speedily, and was the soldier to do it without waiting to make dispositions. Birney was thrown to Tyler's right and Crawford to his left, with Gibbon as a reserve; and Ewell was whirled back speedily and with heavy loss.

“ Warren had been ordered to get on Ewell's flank and in his rear, to cut him off from his intrenchments. But his efforts were so feeble that under the cover of night Ewell got back with only the loss of a few hundred prisoners, besides his killed and wounded. The army being engaged until after dark, I rescinded the order for the march by our left flank that night.



“As soon as it was discovered that the enemy were coming out to attack, I naturally supposed they would detach a force to destroy our trains. The withdrawal of Hancock from the right uncovered one road from Spottsylvania to Fredericksburg over which trains drew our supplies. This was guarded by a division of colored troops, commanded by General Ferrero, belonging to Burnside’s corps. Ferrero was therefore promptly notified, and ordered to throw his cavalry pickets out to the south and be prepared to meet the enemy if he should come; if he had to retreat to do so towards Fredericksburg. The enemy did detach as expected, and captured twenty-five or thirty wagons which, however, were soon retaken.”<sup>1</sup>

General Badeau’s account (vol. ii., pp. 206–208) in outline is identical with that of General Grant. He amplifies somewhat, however, saying: “The assault was sudden and vigorous, but *Grant* at once ordered up the Second and Fifth corps to the support of Tyler, who held his own splendidly. . . . Hancock himself soon came upon the field, and found Tyler in the midst of a hot engagement. Birney’s division was hurried forward, and thrown in on the right, and Warren moved Crawford rapidly up on Tyler’s left. The two other divisions of the Second corps were in reserve.

“Ferrero with his colored division was *on the*

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 239, 240.

road to *Fredericksburg*, in rear and on the right of *Tyler*, and near the point where *Ewell* struck the national line." Then, after repeating General Grant's cautionary directions to General Ferrero, including the "cavalry pickets well out on the *plank road*, and all other roads *leading west and south*," he continues: "The rebels did indeed push on as far as the *Fredericksburg road*, but Ferrero and his colored division handled them severely. Twenty-seven wagons were captured in the first surprise, but all retaken; and on the soil of Virginia, men who had once been slaves beat back the forces of those who had held them in slavery. . . .

"By dark, the whole movement of *Ewell* was repulsed, and several hundred prisoners were left in *Tyler's* hands. . . . *Warren* had participated in the battle, on the left of the Second corps, and when the rebels were seen to be repelled, he was ordered to fall upon their flank and rear with the view of cutting off and capturing *Ewell's* entire column; but he failed to carry out his instructions, and under cover of night the enemy retired."

The Ferrero episode is pertinent to the present consideration as being another example of the imaginative inexactness of many of the results of General Badeau's historical investigations. General Grant states that General Ferrero's division was guarding a road from Spottsylvania to *Fredericksburg* over which trains were drawing sup-

plies for the army, and which had been uncovered by the withdrawal of General Hancock from the right. General Badeau locates the colored division "on the road to Fredericksburg, in rear and on the right of Tyler, and near the point where Ewell struck the national line," and adds that "The rebels did indeed push on as far as the Fredericksburg road." As neither General Ewell nor General Ramseur who commanded his leading brigade make any mention of having reached the Fredericksburg Road, although the latter claims to have driven "the enemy rapidly and with severe loss," the presumptive evidence from the Confederate side is opposed to General Badeau's statement on that point. In addition to this — the order sent by General Grant to General Ferrero to keep his "cavalry pickets well out on *the plank road*, and *all other roads leading west and south*," is inconsistent with the location assigned to the division by Generals Grant and Badeau. The roads *west* and *south* of that location were then occupied, in full force, by the Army of the Potomac, and General Ferrero, as located, would have been exposed only on the north. General Humphreys, in a note on page 115, states facts more in accordance with the order. He says: —

"Ferrero's division of colored troops was not in rear and on the right of Tyler, nor near the point where Ewell struck the National line, nor was he on the road forming Grant's direct com-

munication with his base (the Fredericksburg and Spottsylvania Court House road) but *on the plank road from Orange Court House to Fredericksburg*, not far from Salem Church, and *over five miles north of the Harris farm where Ewell was encountered* as narrated by me. General Ferrero had with him besides his division, the Second Ohio and the Third New Jersey (both white veteran cavalry regiments) thrown out in advance of his infantry, and this cavalry had an outpost on the road from Alsop's to Silver's on the Orange plank road. This outpost was driven in about half-past five in the afternoon by some cavalry and artillery force of the enemy. This force the Second Ohio and the Third New Jersey engaged, and Ferrero formed his division in line to support them. The enemy fell back with slight loss, our two cavalry regiments losing two enlisted men killed, seven wounded, and two missing. The colored division had not a casualty of any kind whatever, handled nobody, severely or otherwise; in fact, *were not engaged*.

"The wagons captured were taken near the Harris farm, and were retaken by the troops there, not by Ferrero's troops."

General Ewell states that his movement was made through roads impassable for his artillery. Brigadier-General A. L. Long, C. S. Army, Chief of Artillery of General Ewell's corps, says in his report: "In the afternoon, [the 19th,] General Ewell having determined to make a flank move-

ment, Lieutenant-Colonel Braxton was directed to accompany him with six guns of select calibre. After proceeding two or three miles the roads were found to be impracticable for artillery, and Braxton was ordered to return to his former position." The attack upon General Ferrero's cavalry outpost could not possibly have been made by a detachment from General Ewell's command; for General Ferrero was at least five miles from the point of General Ewell's attack, and his pickets were driven in by a cavalry force *with artillery at the same hour that General Tyler was engaged.*

Referring now to pages 111 to 114 of the "Virginia Campaign," we find that, on the night of the 18th, the divisions of the Second Corps commanded by Generals Barlow, Gibbon, and Birney were moved to the vicinity of Anderson's Mill on the east side of the Ny River and below the left of the Sixth Corps. This accords with General Grant's statement that the "corps had been brought to the rear of the centre." General Tyler's division was posted on the road from Spottsylvania Court House to Fredericksburg near the Harris House, and Colonel Kitching's brigade of the Fifth Corps was stationed in the same vicinity and on the left of General Tyler. The Second Corps, therefore, was stationed between two and three miles south, and a little east, from General Tyler's command. It was held, under orders, ready to move *southward* the night of

the 19th. The Fifth Corps, however, held the right of the army, its intrenchments crossing the Ny River above the Fredericksburg road-crossing about one mile south and west from the Harris House. The commands of Colonel Kitching and General Tyler, therefore, *extended the right of the Fifth Corps*, and covered the road to Fredericksburg, and General Warren's reserve was available for support if needed.

On the afternoon of the 19th, Colonel Kitching discovered indications of the enemy's movement, and preparations were made to meet it, as General Ewell has reported. The firing began about half-past five o'clock, and as it became heavy, General Meade directed General Hancock to send one division in double quick to General Tyler's aid, and hold his corps ready to follow; and General Warren, being the nearest to the battle, was also ordered to support. He at once despatched the Maryland Brigade, which arrived in time to take an active part in the fight on the left, while the First Maryland Regiment, reaching the ground on a return march from Fredericksburg, immediately joined in the encounter on General Tyler's right. General Grant ignores Colonel Kitching and the Maryland regiments.

General Hancock, on receiving orders, directed General Birney to move at once to the support of the troops engaged, and Generals Barlow and Gibbon to be ready to follow, and went directly to the ground himself. General Birney arrived

shortly before dark and was thrown in upon the right of General Tyler's troops, and General Crawford, arriving soon after, supported the left of the Federal line. Though General Hancock says the fighting was obstinate till about nine o'clock, it seems that the severity of the action was over before the arrival of Generals Birney and Crawford. General Hancock was the corps commander present, and General Warren does not appear to have taken personally any part in the action. General Badeau, however, says that General Warren "participated in the battle, on the left of the Second corps, and when the rebels were seen to be repelled, he was ordered to fall upon their flank and rear." It is not at all probable that on such a field as that of May 19, *after the enemy was seen to be repulsed*, either General Meade or General Hancock would have ordered General Warren, or any other commander in the line of battle, to fall upon the flank and rear of the retreat; and General Badeau here entirely ignores the fact that General Early was in position to threaten the right of General Cutler's division of the Fifth Corps and protect the right flank of General Ewell's command. General Grant is equally forgetful. But there is positive refutation of this item in the systematic detraction, so apparent in the Military History and Memoirs, in what relates to General Warren. In a note on page 114 of the "Virginia Campaign," in answer to General Badeau's erroneous account, General Humphreys says:—

“The troops from both corps engaged received the same orders from General Meade, and continued the action together, both equally close to the enemy until its close. Nothing took place on the field nor is there anything on record to support the statement of Badeau. Ewell was close to the ford near Landron’s when the fighting terminated, *two miles from Warren*, who was with Griffin’s and Catlin’s divisions close up to the Spottsylvania intrenchments, under orders to attack them if there was promise of success.” This correction General Grant entirely overlooks.

It is not gratifying to be obliged to reconcile the sincerity one must accord to the views of General Grant, with this persistence in gratuitous aspersion of one confessed to be an able, dutiful, and gallant soldier.

From May 19 to June 1, General Warren is fortunate in that he at least escapes unfavorable mention. Recalling the exigencies of Cold Harbor seems to have revived the flagging memory of his claims; and, of the movements of the latter date, General Badeau says: “Grant had expected a serious battle before obtaining possession of Cold Harbor, and the moment he heard of its capture, the Sixth corps was ordered from the right to the relief of Sheridan; while Smith, now moving up from the Pamunkey, was directed to march upon the same point. . . . But Lee at once discovered the manœuvre, and withdrew



Anderson's corps from the rebel left, marching it towards Cold Harbor, — a movement exactly parallel to that of the Sixth corps.

“ Meanwhile, exactly as Lee had discovered the movement of Wright, so Grant detected the transfer of Anderson. At an early hour on the 1st of June, a heavy column was observed passing in front of the Fifth corps, towards the right of Lee, and Warren was at once ordered to fall upon it in flank, while Wright was directed to attack the head of the column with his whole command, and crush the rebels on their arrival, before they could have time to entrench. If these orders had been carried out, the destruction of Lee's army might have been consummated at Cold Harbor. But Warren opened with artillery instead of attacking in force, and at three P. M., he reported that the entrenchments of the rebels were exceedingly strong, and his own lines so long that he had no mass of troops to assault with. Wright also reconnoitred and skirmished, until at two P. M., he found no rebels in his front: the enemy had fallen back and fortified, as soon as it was certain that Old Cold Harbor was lost to Lee. The condition of the Sixth corps, after a long and fatiguing night march, and its newness on the ground, accounted, indeed, for its delay; yet the enemy had the same difficulties to overcome; Anderson marched nearly as far as Wright, and then began entrenching; while

Warren's failure to assault was doubtless the result of those peculiarities already described, which made this officer hesitate so often and so long, before an action, although when once engaged, no soldier in the army excelled him."<sup>1</sup>

General Grant repeats the story, as follows: "Finding at daylight that Wright had left his front, Lee evidently divined that he had gone to our left. At all events, soon after light on the 1st of June Anderson, who commanded the corps on Lee's left, was seen moving along Warren's front. Warren was ordered to attack him vigorously in flank, while Wright was directed to move out and get on his front. Warren fired his artillery at the enemy; but lost so much time in making ready that the enemy got by, and at three o'clock he reported the enemy was strongly intrenched in his front, and besides his lines were so long that he had no mass of troops to move with. He seemed to have forgotten that lines in rear of an army hold themselves while their defenders are fighting in their front. Wright reconnoitred some distance to his front: but the enemy finding Old Cold Harbor already taken had halted and fortified some distance west."<sup>2</sup>

For a correct understanding of these statements, a brief review of the relative positions of the opposing corps is necessary. Referring to

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., pp. 275-278.

<sup>2</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 265, 266.

pages 165 to 174 of the "Virginia Campaign" we find that, on the 28th of May, General Ewell's corps, under the command of General Early, was in position covering the road from Hanover Town to Richmond by way of Hawes's Shop, and the road from White House to Richmond by way of Old Church and Shady Grove Church. His right rested near Beaver Dam Creek and his left on the Totopotomoy, near Pole Green Church. General Anderson, with Longstreet's corps, was in position covering the road from White House to Richmond by Old Church, Bethesda Church, and Mechanicsville, and therefore on the right of General Early. From General Early's left the command of General Breckinridge, and General Hill's corps, extended the Confederate lines along the Totopotomoy to the vicinity of Atlee's Station, crossing the railroad a mile north of that point. This whole line was well intrenched. On the 30th General Hancock's corps was in position on the road from Hawes's Shop to Richmond, one division on the left and the remainder of the corps to the right of the road. The Sixth Corps came into position still farther on the right, in the afternoon. These two corps confronted General Breckinridge's command and General Hill's corps, on the Confederate left, and General Hancock's left also extended in front of General Early's extreme left. General Burnside's corps came into position on the left of General Hancock, its right being near the Whitlock House,

and its left near the Shady Grove Church Road. While General Warren was moving into position on the left of General Burnside, General Early moved out by his flank, on the Old Church Road, to attack him, and General Anderson moved up into the position thus vacated by General Early. At evening General Warren had driven General Early back till he formed the right of General Anderson's line, while the Fifth Corps took position holding the left of the Federal infantry lines. General Sheridan, with two divisions of cavalry, covered the left of the army.

On the 31st General Early extended to the left so as to place one division west of Beaver Dam Creek, and General Anderson's corps was moved to the right of General Early, General Kershaw's division being placed near Beulah Church, about a mile north of Cold Harbor, General Pickett's division on General Kershaw's left extending in the direction of the Walnut Grove Church Road, and General Field still farther to the left, his left flank resting on the Mechanicsville Pike. General Hoke, who had come up with his division during the night, was placed on the extreme right of the Confederate line, near Cold Harbor. This extension of the lines to General Lee's right was at once partially intrenched. General Sheridan was holding Cold Harbor with his two cavalry divisions, confronting General Fitz Lee's cavalry and one brigade of General Hoke's division of infantry. General Humphreys

says: "The presence of General Hoke near Cold Harbor was known to General Meade from Sheridan's reports, but it was not known that Kershaw was near him, or that Anderson's (Longstreet's) corps was on the right of Early, between Bethesda Church and Cold Harbor."

Of the situation on the 31st General Humphreys says: "The infantry corps were pressed up against the enemy as close as practicable without assaulting, but the position was so strong naturally, and so well intrenched, and the intrenchments so strongly held that an assault was not attempted; the skirmish lines, however, were kept up against the enemy's, and an attack threatened."

On page 172, General Humphreys continues: "An attack on the enemy's position on the Totopotomoy, and covering the Shady Grove Church road and Mechanicsville pike, giving no promise of success, it was determined to send two infantry corps to maintain possession of Cold Harbor, and attack the enemy there before they and the troops sent to their support could intrench. General Wright was directed to move that night, and make every effort to get to Cold Harbor by daylight of the 1st of June, for it was believed that Sheridan would be attacked heavily at daybreak. But Wright's only practicable route was by Hawes's shop and across to the road from Old Church to Cold Harbor, a night march of more than fifteen miles, through

a strange country covered with an intricate network of narrow, ill-defined roads."

General W. F. Smith was also expected to be at Cold Harbor early in the morning of June 1 with his troops, which had landed at White House on the afternoon of May 31. On the morning of the 1st, General Hoke did not become engaged, but established his position on the right. General Kershaw, however, made two attacks upon General Sheridan, both of which were repulsed; and at nine o'clock General Wright arrived with the head of the Sixth Corps column and relieved the cavalry, which moved toward the Chickahominy, covering the left of the army.

General Humphreys here continues: "The arrival of the Sixth corps was observed by the enemy, and Kershaw at once closed in to the right on Hoke, Pickett on Kershaw, and Field on Pickett.

"This closing in to the right by Longstreet's corps, which occupied about an hour, and was made under cover of intrenchments in Warren's front and beyond his left, was observed by him at half-past ten, and under General Meade's order to attack, he deployed Lockwood's and Cutler's divisions, but these troops were embarrassed and delayed in forming by the wooded swamps of the Totopotomoy and Matadequin, and by the time they were in line in open ground the enemy's movement to the right had ceased. Their intrenchments were too formidable to attack.

“By two o’clock in the afternoon the Sixth Corps was all up, and covered the roads to Cold Harbor from Bethesda Church, New Bridge, and Despatch Station on the York River Railroad near the Chickahominy.”

Investigation, therefore, develops that General Lee did not withdraw General Anderson “from the rebel left” and make with his corps “a movement exactly parallel to that of the Sixth Corps,” for General Anderson’s corps never occupied the Confederate left at any time from May 28 to June 1, but held the right centre, and right, of General Lee’s line. For the same reason General Grant could not have “detected the transfer of Anderson,” and the statement that “Anderson marched nearly as far as Wright and then began intrenching” is merely another of General Badeau’s characteristic inaccuracies. The Confederate lines at Cold Harbor were at least partially intrenched on May 31. General Warren himself discovered the movement, which was not that of any corps moving in column from any part of the line, but the closing together of the troops *holding the intrenchments* in his front and beyond his left, that they might connect firmly with General Hoke when General Wright had reached Cold Harbor. On reporting the movement and receiving orders to attack, General Warren not only opened with his artillery, but immediately advanced two divisions of his corps. His troops, however, could not force

their way across intervening swamps before the movement, which occupied in all but about an hour, had ceased and the enemy were ready to receive them from behind intrenchments already decided, by his superiors in command, to be too formidable to be attacked with promise of success. In fact, when it is remembered that the movement to Cold Harbor was necessitated by the ascertained strength of the lines held by the enemy from General Warren's front to the Confederate left, and that it was over three hours after all movement in General Lee's lines had ceased, when General Warren is said by General Grant to have reported himself unable to assault, the attempted slur written in the Memoirs becomes as meaningless as it is unjust.

We find, further, that the Sixth Corps was not all up at Cold Harbor until two o'clock in the afternoon, and that the fulfilment of the orders General Wright is said to have received, "to attack the head of the column" or "get on his front," would have necessitated the carrying of the lines in *his* front, for which purpose General Grant himself considered the coöperation of, at first, two, and, afterwards, three corps necessary.

It is to be remembered that these events occurred upon the day when some one connected with the headquarters of the general-in-chief had ordered General W. F. Smith, with his command, to New Castle Ferry instead of to Cold Harbor.



In his account of the operations of June 1 and 2, General Grant has said: "Hancock was moved from his place in line during the night and ordered to the left of Wright. I expected to take the offensive on the morning of the 2d, but the night was so dark, the heat and dust so excessive and the roads so intricate and hard to keep, that the head of column only reached Old Cold Harbor at six o'clock, but was in position at 7.30 A. M. Preparations were made for an attack in the afternoon, but did not take place until the next morning. Warren's corps was moved to the left to connect with Smith: Hancock's corps was got into position to the left of Wright's, and Burnside was moved to Bethesda Church in reserve. While Warren and Burnside were making these changes the enemy came out several times and attacked them, capturing several hundred prisoners. The attacks were repulsed, but not followed up as they should have been. I was so annoyed at this that I directed Meade to instruct his corps commanders that they should seize all such opportunities when they occurred, and not wait for orders, all of our manœuvres being made for the very purpose of getting the enemy out of his cover."<sup>1</sup>

On pages 177 to 180 of the "Virginia Campaign," a detailed account of the operations of June 2 is given. General Humphreys there states: "On the morning of the 2d, General

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 268.

Warren was directed to extend his left so as to unite with Smith at Woody's, and to contract his right to such extent as to make one-half his force available for attack. This, it was expected, would bring his right to the vicinity of Bethesda Church. General Burnside was directed to withdraw his force and mass it in rear of Warren's right, to protect that flank and support Warren. But this gave General Warren a line about three miles long, the left of which he held chiefly with artillery. It was interrupted here and there by the swamps of the Matadequin, which virtually shortened his lines, as he could command the swamps without occupying them. General Wilson was directed to cover the right of the army from the vicinity of Bethesda Church to the Pamunkey. The main body of the Confederate cavalry was on Lee's left, Fitz Lee's division on his right.

"Early on the night of the 1st, General Hancock began to withdraw . . .

Perceiving the withdrawal from our right, General Lee, on the morning of the 2d, sent General Breckenridge and General Hill, with Wilcox's and Mahone's divisions, to his right, . . . Early remained on the left with his own corps and Heth's division. Intrenching went on all day, with heavy skirmishing and artillery fire.

"But General Lee directed General Early to get upon our right flank and drive down in front

of the Confederate line. To carry out this order Rodes's division moved out the Shady Grove Church road in the afternoon, Gordon swung around to keep pace with Rodes, and Heth, following Rodes, took position on his left. This movement brought on sharp fighting, which lasted until night, but did not accomplish what was designed. It found General Burnside's withdrawal unfinished, and his skirmish line, occupying the corps intrenchments, was driven from them by Rodes's division, and a large number of prisoners taken from it. In this way Rodes's troops got in rear of the Fifth Corps skirmishers unperceived, and captured a number of them.

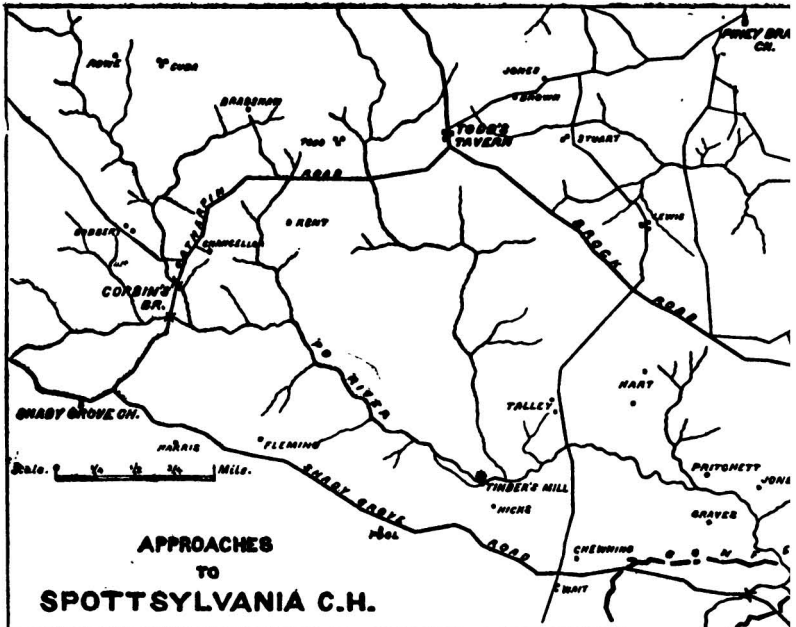
“Cutler and Crawford held the long line from Bethesda Church to Smith's right. Griffin's division was massed at Bethesda Church, but as soon as Early's movement was discovered it was formed in line, Ayres on the left, Bartlett in the centre, Sweitzer on the right, and moved forward under musketry and artillery fire, to the attack of Rodes's division, which had advanced from the Shady Grove Church road. Rodes was forced back to the road, and in this encounter lost a gallant officer, Brigadier-General Doles, who was killed.

“General Crittenden's division brought up the rear in the withdrawal of Burnside, and was attacked with some vigor in doing so, but held Heth in check until Willcox and Potter got into position and stopped his further advance.

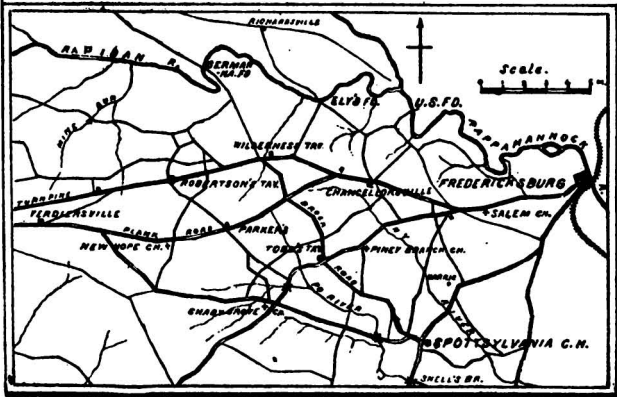
“Early’s troops remained on the Shady Grove Church road, and intrenched during the night, while Ramseur’s division held the intrenchments on the left of Anderson’s (Longstreet’s) corps.”

General Badeau’s account, on pages 281 and 282 of the second volume of his Military History, is essentially the same as that given by General Grant, except that he mentions only *one* attack by the enemy, and undoubtedly he is to that extent less inaccurate. The spasmodic tactics imputed to the Confederate troops by the author of the Memoirs is not consistent with the established character of those troops, or the possibilities of the field. Had he been content to write, “several of the enemy came out and attacked them,” his statement would have been equally euphonious and more in accordance with the probabilities in the case. It is evident, also, that the enemy did not come out so far from his cover, or in such a manner, as to endanger his return should he desire, or be obliged, to fall back. General Gordon on his right held fast to his lines and could only be attacked by General Warren at the expense of the already attenuated line of the Fifth Corps. General Griffin did not “repulse” any attack that day, but *attacked* General Rodes’s division and forced it back to the Shady Grove Church Road.

How more than was done could have been done, neither General Grant nor General Badeau has indicated; and it is believed that, as far as



**APPROACHES  
TO  
SPOTTSYLVANIA C.H.**





the Fifth Corps is concerned, in default of anything more tangible than the indefinite complaint as made, the names of Warren, Griffin, Ayres, Bartlett, and Sweitzer will be a sufficient guarantee that all that the circumstances of the case permitted was accomplished.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WHITE OAK ROAD AND DINWIDDIE COURT HOUSE,  
MARCH 31, 1865.

IN a foot-note on page 449 of his third volume, General Badeau remarks : " It is a common manoeuvre for some rebel advocate or apologist to assert that such and such was the intention or result of a certain operation, without giving the slightest proof of the correctness of the statement ; and then for all the rest to quote him as authority. . . .

" No statement of national or rebel intentions, or strength, or losses, or of any material fact on either side, *should be accepted without positive proof of its correctness* ; and it is not sufficient to mention an authority ; the absolute quotation should be verified."

Nevertheless, thus far at least, the reflections upon General Warren have been of a very general and indefinite character, and have been projected upon very vapory evidence, if even such it can be called. We come now to consider the close of his career as commander of the Fifth Army Corps.

Early in the morning of March 29, 1865,



General Warren moved with the Fifth Corps as ordered, crossing Hatcher's Run at Monk's Neck Bridge. He was to proceed no farther than the junction of the Vaughan and Quaker roads until the Second Corps was in position on his right, when he was to advance toward the enemy's lines by the Boydton Road. At mid-day, however, his orders were modified; and, as then directed, he moved up the Quaker Road in the afternoon, and, about a mile from its junction with the Boydton Road, encountered two brigades of General Anderson's command which were forced to fall back into the intrenchments on the White Oak Road after a sharp engagement and severe loss.

On the 30th, General Warren moved up the Quaker and Boydton roads as far as the Dabney Mill Road, and occupied a line covering the Boydton Road as far as Gravelly Run. General Ayres, with his division, made a reconnoissance northwestward to the vicinity of the point where the Confederate intrenchments turned north to cover the Claiborne Road, and established a picket line in that direction, supported by part of his division, the other part remaining on the left of General Griffin in advance of the Boydton Road. Late in the afternoon, in reporting General Ayres's reconnoissance, General Warren suggested that a division of the Second Corps should take the place of General Griffin's division during the night, and that the Fifth Corps

should occupy the White Oak Road early the next morning. This suggestion was in part approved. General Humphreys was directed to, and did, relieve General Griffin's with General Miles's division before daylight of the 31st; and General Warren was ordered to place General Crawford's and General Griffin's divisions within supporting distance of General Ayres. General Ayres was directed by General Warren to reinforce his advance, by daylight of the 31st, with his whole division; General Crawford to hold his command ready to follow General Ayres; and General Griffin to take up the position General Ayres had held at Mrs. Butler's, as soon as his division was relieved by General Miles. General Ayres's advanced position was in open ground south of the White Oak Road near W. Dabney's.

At 7 A. M. of the 31st, General Crawford moved out, taking position at the Halliday House about five hundred yards in rear of General Ayres. General Griffin was about one thousand yards in the rear of General Crawford and on the south-east side of a branch of Gravelly Run. These dispositions will be again noted further on. General Ayres, who was informed of the presence of General Pickett at Five Forks, about four miles from his left, prepared to meet attack from that quarter as well as in front. He formed his division with General Winthrop's brigade looking north, fronting the White Oak Road; the Maryland Brigade along a ravine on

General Winthrop's left, looking west ; his third brigade to General Winthrop's right, and one of General Crawford's brigades in rear of his centre.

At half-past eight A. M., corps commanders were notified that there would be no movement that day ; but at 9.40 A. M., General Warren reporting that he had directed General Ayres to drive the enemy's pickets off the White Oak Road or ascertain with what force the road was held, he was instructed by General Meade that, if he found he could get possession of the road and hold it, he was to do so, notwithstanding the order suspending operations.

At *eleven o'clock*, General Winthrop's brigade moved forward, supported by General Gwyn's brigade on the right. When within fifty yards of the White Oak Road, the enemy in line of battle, suddenly breaking cover, moved across the road and forward to meet them. General Ayres's advance had developed the fact that General Lee was, in person, directing a movement for the purpose of attacking the left of the Fifth Corps. He had sent General McGowan with two brigades to get across the flank of General Ayres's command, and had drawn up General Hunton's brigade in the woods along the north side of the White Oak Road, with General Wise's brigade formed on his left. General Hunton's formation was scarcely completed when General Winthrop advanced upon his position, and General McGowan had not completed his movement

across the flank when the firing in front began, and he at once ordered the charge. Despite General Ayres's efforts, his command was driven back to where General Griffin was in position, and General Crawford's division fell back in confusion.

Warned by the heavy musketry firing and the drifting of stragglers to the rear, General Humphreys, divining that General Warren needed support, ordered General Miles to advance at once with two brigades and attack the left flank of the advancing enemy. General Miles's other two brigades followed soon after. General Humphreys also ordered General Mott and General Hayes to attack the lines in their front. These orders were similar to those *afterwards* received from General Meade. General Miles struck General Wise's brigade in front and flank, and drove him back, capturing the flag of an Alabama regiment and over three hundred prisoners. This forced General Hunton also to fall back, and General Warren having got a part of General Griffin's division across the run and upon General McGowan's flank, the whole attacking force fell back to the position occupied by General Ayres in the morning.

By *half-past two o'clock*, General Warren had re-formed his corps on the north side of the branch of Gravelly Run, and moved forward, General Griffin's division in the centre, with General Ayres's division on the left and General Craw-

ford's on the right, both in *échelon*. After a short but sharp encounter the brigades of Generals Chamberlain and Gregory drove the enemy back within the White Oak Road intrenchments.<sup>1</sup>

On page 435 of the second volume of the Memoirs, General Grant, referring to these operations, says simply: "There was considerable fighting in taking up these new positions for the 2d and 5th corps, in which the Army of the James had also to participate somewhat, and the losses were quite severe.

"This was what was known as the battle of White Oak road."

On page 445 of the same volume, he states that he was much dissatisfied with General Warren's "dilatatory movements" on that occasion. His historian, however, attempts a more extended account of the affair and of General Warren's alleged faults therein. (See *Mil. Hist.*, vol iii., pp. 460-466.) He charges that, on the night of March 30, General Warren, "in direct violation of his orders, stretched out his three divisions in *échelon*; placing Ayres on the left, then Crawford, and Griffin in the rear," and produces as evidence a despatch from General Webb, chief of staff, to General Warren, dated 9.30 A. M. of March 30, saying: "He [General Meade] is very anxious to have you cover as much of the front line as possible, and *his idea was that you would put both Griffin and Crawford in front, keeping*

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 324-334.

a portion of each as a reserve, and keeping Ayres to cover your left flank." He does not, however, quote another despatch which will be noted a little further on. After relating the repulse of the morning of the 31st, he states: "There was a *delay of several hours* before the Fifth corps was ready, and Meade evidently shared the feeling in regard to Warren that was entertained by Sheridan and Grant." In support of this assertion he repeats his theories regarding General Warren's peculiarities, and appends in fancied substantiation a selection of despatches and extracts which, if they prove anything further than the weakness of his own position, show merely that both General Meade and General Warren could be impatient on occasion; that gallant General "Andy" Webb could sometimes irritate with pen as well as sword; and that General Badeau was incapable of comprehending soldiers of the grade of those whose words he strives to marshal to his aid. General Badeau apparently forgot his criticism of General Meade, on page 370 of his second volume, and his softening admission: "Unjust at times, as every intense soldier is apt to be, when his orders are not carried out — for reproof will come, even though the fault is not with him who is reproved — *yet Meade did ample justice afterwards.*" It is to be regretted that General Meade's example, in this last respect, was not more contagious.

It is not easy to see just how the charge of

“dilatatory movements,” in this affair, can be maintained against General Warren. The Fifth Corps was in position before the order suspending operations for the day was received by the corps commanders; the advance of General Ayres’s troops which precipitated General Lee’s attack, was made at General Warren’s own suggestion; and as but three hours and a half intervened between the time of starting General Ayres’s advance in the morning, and the final advance of the corps which drove the enemy within his works, it is manifest there could have been no “delay of several hours” in reforming the corps after the severe repulse at first encountered.

In his official Report (see Mem., vol. ii., p. 622) General Grant had said: “On the morning of the 31st, General Warren reported favorably to getting possession of the White Oak road, and was directed to do so. To accomplish this, he moved with one division, instead of his whole corps, which was attacked by the enemy in superior force and driven back on the 2d division before it had time to form, and it, in turn, forced back upon the 3d division, when the enemy was checked. A division of the 2d corps was immediately sent to his support, the enemy driven back with heavy loss, and possession of the White Oak Road gained.”

At the request of General Warren, a court of inquiry was appointed by the President to investigate this and other matters connected with the

operations of March 30 to April 1. Concerning the imputation contained in this passage in General Grant's report, that court rendered the following:—

“OPINION.

“There seems to be no evidence that General Warren, on the morning of March 31, or at any other time, reported favorably to getting possession of the White Oak road except in his despatch (v.) of 4 P. M., March 30, already referred to, and the movement suggested in that was practically set aside by General Grant's despatch (viii.) of March 30, heretofore quoted. General Warren's report, in his despatch (LXXXIV.) of 9.40 A. M., March 31, quoted above, that he had given orders to drive the enemy's pickets off the White Oak road or develop what force of the enemy held it, could not be fairly construed as being able to take possession of it.

“With regard to that portion of the imputation contained in the statement that General Warren was directed to take possession of the White Oak road, the following despatch from General Meade is the only one that can bear that construction:—

LXXXV.

“U. S. M. T.

“HEADQUARTERS ARMIES U. S.,  
10.30. A. M., March 31, 1865.

“To Major-General G. K. WARREN.

“Your despatch giving Ayres's position is re-



ceived. General Meade directs that should you determine by your reconnoissance that you can get possession of and hold the White Oak road, you are to do so, notwithstanding the orders to suspend operations to-day.

ALEX. S. WEBB,  
Bt. M. G. C. S.'

“ And the evidence before the court shows that the order was not received by General Warren till after the fighting that resulted from the attempted reconnoissance had begun.

“ It is in evidence by Ayres's and Crawford's testimony that General Warren had in his advance two divisions, though the testimony does not clearly show how long before the attack of the enemy upon Ayres the division of Crawford reached him.

“ Griffin's division was held in reserve along the branch of Gravelly run nearest to and north-west from the Boydton plank road, and it may have been so held to carry out the intention of the following despatch from General Meade's Headquarters.

LXXIX.

“ ‘ 8.32 A. M., U. S. M. T.

“ ‘ HEADQUARTERS A. of P. 8.25, *March 31, '65.*

“ ‘ To Major-General WARREN.

“ ‘ There is firing along Humphreys's front. The Maj. Gen. Comandg. desires you to be ready

to send your reserve if it should be called for, to support Humphreys. There will be no movement of troops to-day.

A. S. WEBB,  
B. M. G.

“ ‘Recd. 8.40 A. M., G. K. W.’ ”

“The Court is further of the opinion that, considering the Fifth Corps constituted the extreme left wing of the armies operating against Richmond, and that the corps was in a delicate position and liable to be attacked at any moment, of which liability General Warren had been repeatedly warned, he should have been with his advanced divisions, guiding and directing them, and that he should have started earlier to the front than he did and not have waited at the telegraph office to keep in communication with General Meade’s Headquarters, unless he had direct orders that morning so to do, which however does not appear in the evidence.”

The despatches referred to, but not quoted, in this opinion, are as follows:—

V.

“ 4 P. M., March 30.

“General WEBB, Chief of Staff.

“General: General Ayres’s advance now sees the White Oak road near W. Dabney’s for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. There is a difficult swamp between the plank road and that place. I have now a continuous intrenched line from my right across

Griffin's front and along the plank road nearly down to Gravelly Run. If General Humphreys can take charge of Griffin's front, about 500 yards west of plank road with the return down it I can take my corps and block the White Oak road.

G. K. WARREN, *M. G.*"

VIII.

"U. S. Mily. Telegraph. By telegraph from Gravelly Run.  
*March 30, 1865.*

"To Major-General MEADE.

"Your orders to Warren are right. I do not expect to advance him in the morning. I supposed, however, that he was now up to the White Oak road. If he is not, I do not want him to move up without further orders.

U. S. GRANT, *Lt.-Gen.*"

The first part of this Opinion, dealing with matters of fact, speaks clearly for itself, and certainly vindicates General Warren as far as General Grant's official imputation is concerned.

Of the second part it may be remarked, that it expresses an opinion upon a point of tactical detail which might possibly have been materially modified, if not entirely reversed, had the Court been in possession of evidence which would have been attainable during the lifetime of General Meade. That General Grant could not have considered such a difference of opinion as reflect-

ing seriously upon General Warren, may confidently be inferred from his well-known approval of the location adopted by the commander of the Federal forces at Pittsburg Landing, April 5, 1862; and from the approved movements of the commander of the cavalry corps Army of the Potomac, on March 30, 1865, when all the circumstances noted in the Opinion applied with peculiar force to that corps. It is to be remembered that General Warren remained constantly within the limits of his corps, and that he had intrusted his advance to a command and commander both acknowledged as preëminently reliable.

It is necessary now to review briefly the operations on the extreme left of General Grant's lines. On the 28th, General Grant instructed General Sheridan: "The Fifth corps will move by the Vaughan road at three A. M. to-morrow morning. . . . Move your cavalry at as early an hour as you can, and without being confined to any particular road or roads. You may go out by the nearest roads in rear of the Fifth corps, pass by its left, and, passing near to or through Dinwiddie, reach the right and rear of the enemy as soon as you can. It is not the intention to attack the enemy in his entrenched position, but to *force him out if possible. Should he come out and attack us, or get himself where he can be attacked, move in with your entire*

*force in your own way, and with the full reliance that the army will engage or follow, as circumstances will dictate. I shall be on the field, and will probably be able to communicate with you.*"<sup>1</sup> The italics are General Badeau's.

At dark on the 29th, General Sheridan had reached Dinwiddie Court House, and General Grant sent him word there: ". . . *In the morning, push around the enemy, if you can, and get on his right rear.* The movements of the enemy's cavalry may, of course, modify your action. We will all act together as one army, until it is seen what can be done with the enemy."<sup>2</sup>

On the night of the 29th, General Grant's headquarters were on Gravelly Run, south of the crossing of the Vaughan Road. All through the night the rain fell in torrents, and before morning it became impossible to move anything on wheels except as corduroy roads were laid. All was gloomy and uncomfortable at headquarters, "until, like a gleam of light, Sheridan, with his cheery manner and never-failing confidence, came riding up from Dinwiddie, to confer with Grant about 'ending the matter.'" After a conference with the general-in-chief, "Sheridan went back to Dinwiddie with orders to gain possession of Five Forks," and then "Sheridan pushed out a *division* from Dinwiddie, but found

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., pp. 450, 451.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, p. 453.

the enemy in force at the junction, and the condition of the roads still prevented any serious attack by the cavalry.”<sup>1</sup>

Referring to the Thirteenth Chapter of “The Virginia Campaign,” we find that, on March 28, General R. E. Lee directed General Fitz Lee to move at once to Five Forks, assume command of all the cavalry, and, with the infantry supports he would send, attack General Sheridan in that vicinity. General Fitz Lee reached Sutherland Station with his division on the night of the 29th, and early on the morning of the 30th, marched by the most direct route to Five Forks; and, advancing from there toward Dinwiddie Court House, encountered General Sheridan’s cavalry. At dark on the evening of the 30th, General W. H. F. Lee and General Rosser joined General Fitz Lee with their commands; and about the same time General Pickett arrived at Five Forks by way of the White Oak Road, from the intrenched lines at the Claiborne Road Forks, with three brigades of his own division and two from General Johnson’s division.

When, therefore, General Sheridan halted with his thirteen thousand troopers at and near Dinwiddie Court House, on the evening of the 29th, there was no enemy before him excepting the small brigade of General Roberts picketing the White Oak Road; while the division of General Fitz Lee, not two thousand strong, on his right

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., pp. 456, 457.

front at Sutherland Station, was more than eight miles distant in a straight line. But while General Sheridan rode on the morning of the 30th to General Grant's headquarters, about eight miles east of Dinwiddie Court House, for the purpose, apparently, of having his orders repeated yet again, *General Fitz Lee was moving his division from Sutherland Station to Five Forks*. The importance of the possession of that point was thoroughly understood; and, even admitting necessity for General Sheridan's morning ride to General Grant's headquarters, one cannot understand why, with the force at his disposal, he could not occupy it before noon on the 30th; for it is evident that till the evening of that day it was defended only by General Fitz Lee's division and General Roberts's brigade. It was nearer to Dinwiddie Court House than to Sutherland Station by more than two miles. The roads were not impassable, for General Lee moved from Sutherland Station between early day and the time of his meeting General Merritt half-way between Dinwiddie and Five Forks. General Badeau is manifestly in error when he says, "the condition of the roads still prevented any serious attack by the cavalry;" for, at J. Boisseau's, General Lee, with a command much less than half the size of that led by General Merritt, held two roads, after "sharp skirmishing." General Grant, however, gives no sign of finding dilatoriness here. He remembers, and

recounts approvingly, the visit of General Sheridan to his headquarters, but fails to give the date or to recall to mind the orders issued to the cavalry on the days preceding.

During the 30th, General Grant decided to reinforce General Sheridan with an infantry corps, and, with his command thus strengthened, attempt to turn General Lee's right, and then assault along his whole line. He said to General Sheridan: "If your situation is such as to justify the belief that you can turn the enemy's right with the assistance of a corps of infantry entirely detached from the balance of the army, I will so detach the Fifth corps, and place the whole under your command for the operation. Let me know, as early in the morning as you can, your judgment in the matter, and I will make the necessary orders." On the morning of the 31st, General Sheridan replied: ". . . If the ground would permit, I could, with the Sixth corps, turn the enemy's right, or break through his lines; but I would not like the Fifth corps to make such an attempt." General Grant replied at once: "It will be impossible to give you the Sixth corps for the operations by our left. . . . I could relieve the Second with the Fifth corps, and give you that." General Badeau here remarks: "Sheridan evidently did not want the Fifth corps, doubtless because he was aware of the idiosyncrasies of its commander; and



Grant desired to regard his preference. Events, however, settled the point for them all.”<sup>1</sup>

General Grant's official report (Mem., vol. ii., p. 622), referring to General Sheridan's advance towards Five Forks, and the engagement which resulted on the 31st, says: “Sheridan advanced, and with a portion of his cavalry got possession of the Five Forks; but the enemy, after the affair with the 5th corps, reinforced the rebel cavalry, defending that point with infantry, and forced him back towards Dinwiddie Court House. Here General Sheridan displayed great generalship. Instead of retreating with his whole command on the main army, to tell the story of superior forces encountered, he deployed his cavalry on foot, leaving only mounted men enough to take charge of the horses. This compelled the enemy to deploy over a vast extent of wooded and broken country, and made his progress slow. At this juncture he dispatched to me what had taken place, and that he was dropping back slowly on Dinwiddie Court House.”

In his account, on page 442 of the second volume, he says: “Sheridan moved back to Dinwiddie Court-House on the night of the 30th, and then took a road leading north-west to Five Forks. He had only his cavalry with him. Soon encountering the rebel cavalry he met with a very stout resistance. He gradually drove them back however until in the neighborhood of Five

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., pp. 458-460.

Forks. Here he had to encounter other troops besides those he had been contending with, and was forced to give way.

“In this condition of affairs he notified me of what had taken place and stated that he was falling back toward Dinwiddie gradually and slowly, and asked me to send Wright’s corps to his assistance. . . .”

Before noting the peculiarities of these accounts given by General Grant, reference should again be made to the record as stated in the thirteenth chapter of “The Virginia Campaign,” which in substance is as follows : —

On the 30th, General Merritt, with General Devin’s division and General Davies’s brigade of General Crook’s division, moving under orders from General Sheridan to gain possession of Five Forks, encountered, as we have before noted, General Fitz Lee’s command, about two thousand strong, just beyond the point where the road from J. Boisseau’s, leading past Dr. Boisseau’s, to the White Oak Road, leaves the direct road from Dinwiddie Court House to Five Forks, and about midway between those points. Both roads were held by the enemy. General Devin halted for the night at the forks near J. Boisseau’s.

At dark, General W. H. F. Lee and General Rosser reinforced General Fitz Lee with their divisions, giving him, in all, about eight thousand cavalry, and General Pickett reached Five Forks at about the same time, with six thousand six

hundred infantry. General Pickett assumed command of the combined force. On the morning of the 31st, General Fitz Lee, moving with his cavalry on the direct road to Dinwiddie Court House, met General Devin's division, advancing upon Five Forks, near the fork of the Gravelly Run Church Road. Leaving General Munford with one division confronting General Devin, General Lee moved with his other two divisions of cavalry by way of Little Five Forks, west of Chamberlain's Bed, or Run, to Fitzgerald's and Danse's crossings of that stream, General Pickett following with the infantry command. General Crook held Fitzgerald's crossing with General Smith's brigade, Danse's crossing, a mile above, with General Davies's brigade, and General Gregg was in reserve.

Immediately on arriving, General W. H. F. Lee attempted to force the passage of Fitzgerald's crossing. He got over, but was driven back with heavy loss. The enemy's cavalry failed also to effect a crossing at Danse's; but the infantry coming up, General Corse's brigade leading, succeeded after sharp fighting and severe loss, General Gregg holding them for a time. Meanwhile, General Munford was forcing General Devin back, and General Pickett's infantry now pushing General Davies upon General Devin's left, forced their way in between General Devin and General Crook. General Gibbs, however, withdrew his brigade of General Devin's division, in time to

join General Crook. This closed the direct road to Dinwiddie Court House to Generals Devins and Davies, and they were ordered to fall back fighting towards the Boydton Road and by that road reach the Court House.

General W. H. F. Lee had now forced his way at Fitzgerald's crossing; had obliged General Smith's and General Gregg's brigades to fall back; and, moving over by the road through the Adams farms, had taken position on the right of General Pickett's line, General Munford forming the left. Under General Sheridan's order General Gibbs and General Gregg attacked the rear of General Pickett's line, which was exposed as it advanced on General Devin, and General Custer joined them in the attack with two of his brigades. This freed Generals Devin and Davies, by forcing General Pickett to face about and confront General Sheridan's line in front of the Court House. A severe contest now ensued, lasting until night. General Devin and General Davies reached the Court House by way of the Boydton Road, but not in time to take part in the action.

That night General Pickett's infantry lay across the road from Dinwiddie Court House to Five Forks, with cavalry on either flank extending with pickets to Fitzgerald's crossing of Chamberlain's Run on the right, and nearly to the Boydton Road in the vicinity of G. U. Brooks's on the left. General Custer held the Federal

front supported by General Devin. The ground fought over during the day was generally very heavy and in large part densely wooded.

General Grant states in his report: "Sheridan advanced, and with a portion of his cavalry got possession of the Five Forks," and in the Memoirs he expresses it: "Sheridan moved back to Dinwiddie Court-House on the night of the 30th, and then took a road leading north west to Five Forks. He had only his cavalry with him. Soon encountering the rebel cavalry he met with a very stout resistance. He gradually drove them back however until in the neighborhood of Five Forks."

The record reads that on the night of March 30, General Devin, with General Sheridan's advance, halted for the night at the forks of the road near J. Boisseau's, having encountered General Fitz Lee's division near that point; and that on the morning of the 31st, General Devin, again advancing, reached the fork of the Gravelly Run Church Road, where he again met General Fitz Lee. This point is about a mile and a half south east of Five Forks, and no part of General Sheridan's command advanced beyond it on the 31st; but, on the contrary, General Devin was driven backward from it, and at evening had returned to Dinwiddie Court House.

General Grant's report continues: "but the enemy, after the affair with the 5th corps, reinforced the rebel cavalry, defending that point

with infantry, and forced him back toward Dinwiddie Court House." The Memoirs state it: "Here he had to encounter other troops besides those he had been contending with, and was forced to give way."

When considering the battle of White Oak Road, we have seen that, *at eight o'clock* in the morning of the 31st, General Ayres was notified of General Pickett's presence at Five Forks and cautioned to be prepared for an attack on his left flank, and also that *at eleven o'clock* General Ayres advanced to the White Oak Road and thereby brought on "the affair with the 5th corps," which was not concluded until about *three o'clock* in the afternoon. General Grant says on page 440 of the second volume of the Memoirs, that General Lee, *on the 30th*, sent "Pickett with five brigades at reinforce Five Forks." General Badeau, on page 468 of his third volume, states that General Pickett's attack on Fitzgerald's crossing of Chamberlain's Bed was made at *ten o'clock*. It is manifest that General Pickett received no aid from the main lines "after the affair with the 5th corps."

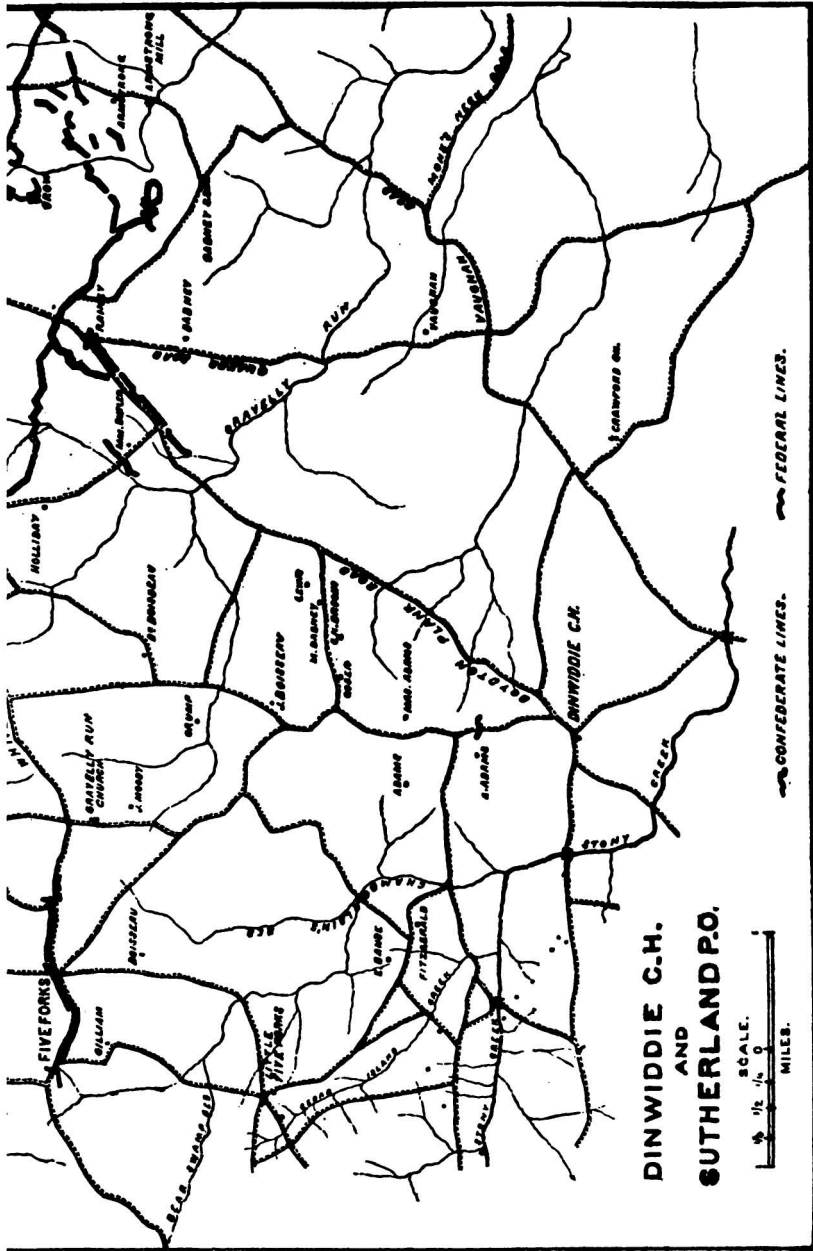
General Grant's report states that "Here General Sheridan displayed great generalship." As proof of this he states that General Sheridan "deployed his cavalry on foot, leaving only mounted men enough to take charge of the horses. *This* compelled the enemy to deploy over a vast extent of *wooded and broken coun-*

try, and made his progress slow." Coming from any other source than the lieutenant-general in command of the armies of the United States, such proof would need no notice. Proffered as it is, it needs but to be noted—it speaks for itself. General Grant says that General Sheridan's tactics were adopted "instead of retreating with his whole command on the main army to tell the story of superior forces encountered." General Sheridan certainly retreated with his whole force to within reach of the main army, and General Grant states that he at once asked to be reinforced with the Sixth Corps. Somebody told the story of superior numbers, and has continued to tell it to this day. The morning report of March 31, 1865, gives the strength of General Sheridan's cavalry command at thirteen thousand enlisted men present for duty. General Badeau states that the combined force under General Pickett, confronting General Sheridan at Dinwiddie Court House, was nearly eighteen thousand strong. *Fourteen thousand* was much more nearly correct, and still in excess; but, allowing General Badeau's estimate, the odds, even then, against General Sheridan were no greater than those that many of the veterans of the unappreciated Fifth Corps had stood steadily against under General Fitz John Porter at Gaines's Mills, and on more than one field thereafter; and were as nothing compared with what the First Cavalry Division,

under General John Buford, had held its own against at Gettysburg. It is also proper to note that the superior numbers claimed by General Badeau to have here opposed General Sheridan's command, give not quite the odds against him that undoubtedly existed in his favor on the afternoon of May 7, 1864, when the Brock Road was *not* opened for the movement of the Fifth Corps to Spottsylvania Court House.







**DINWIDDIE C.H.  
AND  
SUTHERLAND P.O.**



CONFEDERATE LINES. FEDERAL LINES.

## CHAPTER IX.

GENERAL WARREN FROM AFTERNOON OF MARCH  
31 TO MORNING OF APRIL 1, 1865.

CONTINUING his report from where it speaks of General Sheridan "dropping back slowly on Dinwiddie Court House," Lieutenant-General Grant says: "General Mackenzie's cavalry and one division of the 5th corps were immediately ordered to his assistance. Soon after receiving a report from General Meade that Humphreys could hold our position on the Boydton Road, and that the other two divisions of the 5th corps could go to Sheridan, they were so ordered at once. Thus the operations of the day necessitated the sending of Warren, because of his accessibility, instead of Humphreys, as was intended, and precipitated intended movements. On the morning of the 1st of April, General Sheridan, reinforced by General Warren, drove the enemy back on Five Forks, where, late in the evening, he assaulted and carried his strongly fortified position, capturing all his artillery and between five and six thousand prisoners.

"About the close of this battle, Brevet Major-General Charles Griffin relieved Major-General

Warren in command of the 5th corps. The report of this reached me after nightfall."

Resuming General Grant's narrative at the same point, we find in the Memoirs: "In this condition of affairs he [Sheridan] notified me of what had taken place and stated that he was falling back toward Dinwiddie gradually and slowly, and asked me to send Wright's corps to his assistance. I replied to him that it was impossible to send Wright's corps because that corps was already in line close up to the enemy, where we should want to assault when the proper time came, and was besides a long distance from him; but the 2d (Humphreys's) and 5th (Warren's) corps were on our extreme left and a little to the rear of it in a position to threaten the left flank of the enemy at Five Forks, and that I would send Warren.

"Accordingly orders were sent to Warren to move at once that night (the 31st) to Dinwiddie Court House and put himself in communication with Sheridan as soon as possible, and report to him. He was very slow in moving, some of his troops not starting until after 5 o'clock next morning. When he did move it was done very deliberately, and on arriving at Gravelly Run he found the stream swollen from the recent rains so that he regarded it as not fordable. Sheridan of course knew of his coming, and being impatient to get the troops up as soon as possible, sent orders to him to hasten. He was also hastened or at least

ordered to move up rapidly by General Meade. He now felt that he could not cross that creek without bridges, and his orders were changed to move so as to strike the pursuing enemy in flank or get in their rear ; but he was so late in getting up that Sheridan determined to move forward without him. However, Ayres's division of Warren's corps reached him in time to be in the fight all day, most of the time separated from the remainder of the 5th corps and fighting directly under Sheridan.

“Warren reported to Sheridan about 11 o'clock on the 1st, but the whole of his troops were not up so as to be much engaged until late in the afternoon. Griffin's division in backing to get out of the way of a severe cross fire of the enemy was found marching away from the fighting. This did not continue long, however ; the division was brought back and with Ayres's division did most excellent service during the day. Crawford's division of the same corps had backed still farther off, and although orders were sent repeatedly to bring it up, it was late before it finally got to where it could be of material assistance. Once there it did very excellent service.

“Sheridan succeeded by the middle of the afternoon or a little later, in advancing up to the point from which to make his designed assault upon Five Forks itself. He was very impatient to make the assault and have it all over before

night, because the ground he occupied would be untenable for him in bivouac during the night. Unless the assault was made and was successful, he would be obliged to return to Dinwiddie Court-House or even further than that for the night.

“It was at this junction of affairs that Sheridan wanted to get Crawford’s division in hand, and he also wanted Warren. He sent staff officer after staff officer in search of Warren, directing that general to report to him, but they were unable to find him. At all events Sheridan was unable to get that officer to him. Finally he went himself. He issued an order relieving Warren and assigning Griffin to the command of the 5th corps. The troops were then brought up and the assault successfully made.

“I was so much dissatisfied with Warren’s dilatory movements in the battle of White Oak Road and in his failure to reach Sheridan in time, that I was very much afraid that at the last moment he would fail Sheridan. He was a man of fine intelligence, great earnestness, quick perception, and could make his dispositions as quickly as any officer, under difficulties when he was forced to act. But I had before discovered a defect which was beyond his control, that was very prejudicial to his usefulness in emergencies like the one just before us. He could see every danger at a glance before he had encountered it. He would not only make preparations to meet

the danger which might occur, but he would inform his commanding officer what others should do while he was executing his move.

“ I had sent a staff officer to General Sheridan to call his attention to these defects, and to say that as much as I liked General Warren, now was not a time when we could let our personal feelings for any one stand in the way of success ; and if his removal was necessary to success, not to hesitate. It was upon that authorization that Sheridan removed Warren. I was very sorry that it had been done, and regretted still more that I had not long before taken occasion to assign him to another field of duty.”

General Grant here expresses regret that General Sheridan had acted on his plain suggestion, and yet, — while, as will be seen hereafter, General Sheridan extended the authority given him by General Grant, and removed General Warren from his corps command after he had with that corps *secured* success for General Sheridan, — *through all the years in which he had the power, General Grant denied to General Warren the meagre justice of official inquiry and statement of the facts pertaining to the case.*

General Warren,<sup>1</sup> while at W. Dabney's on the White Oak Road, about five o'clock in the afternoon of March 31, heard the sound of General Sheridan's engagement coming from the south-west, and, as it appeared to him to be re-

<sup>1</sup> Reference resumed to 13th chap. *Va. Camp.*

ceding, he at once and without waiting for orders sent General Bartlett with his brigade of General Griffin's division toward the firing, with directions to attack the enemy in flank. This prompt and, as will be seen, efficient aid from what General Badeau calls "Warren's disorganized flank," is not alluded to in General Grant's Report or Memoirs, or in General Badeau's History.

Soon after five o'clock, General Warren received orders from General Meade to push a brigade down *the White Oak Road*, so as to open it for General Sheridan. He was directed to support this brigade if necessary. At half-past six this order was recalled, and he was directed to send the brigade down *the Boydton Plank Road* as promptly as possible, as it was reported to General Meade, by an officer of General Merritt's staff, that the enemy had penetrated between General Sheridan's main command and General Warren's position. As General Bartlett had by this time advanced too far to be promptly recalled, General Warren directed General Pearson, who with three regiments was on the Boydton Road, to move at once toward Dinwiddie Court House. The order was promptly obeyed; but the bridge at the Boydton Road crossing of Gravelly Run had been destroyed by the enemy on the 29th, and, the stream being swollen from the rain and unfordable for infantry, General Pearson was compelled to halt



at that point. Why this bridge had not been examined and repaired on the 30th, and held ready for just such an emergency as this, does not appear. Both General Grant and General Meade seem to have been ignorant of this serious break in the lines of communication with the cavalry corps until informed by General Warren.

At eight o'clock, General Warren was informed that, as General Sheridan had been forced back to Dinwiddie Court House and the rear of the Fifth and Second Corps was thus left exposed on the Boydton Road, the brigade sent down that road should not go farther than Gravelly Run. About half-past nine, however, he was ordered to withdraw the Fifth Corps from the White Oak Road to the Boydton Road, and send General Griffin's division *at once* to General Sheridan by the Boydton Road. He immediately sent a staff officer, and then Captain Benyaurd of the Engineer Corps, to repair or rebuild the bridge; and, advising General Meade of the situation and condition of his command, prepared to withdraw from the White Oak Road to the Boydton Road, and to send General Griffin, as ordered, to General Sheridan. He was soon after notified that the division ordered to General Sheridan *must start at once*, and in reply stated the condition of the bridge, and that he was making every effort to have it passable by the time General Griffin

reached it. General Warren's headquarters were on the Boydton Road; General Meade's were at the Vaughan Road crossing of Hatcher's Run, about five miles from General Warren, and about two miles from General Grant's headquarters, which were near Dabney's Mill, a point west from General Meade and about eight miles from Dinwiddie Court House. The telegraph lines between these headquarters were working badly.

At 8.40 P. M. General Warren had telegraphed General Meade, suggesting that, if the enemy did not threaten south of Gravelly Run and east of the Boydton Plank Road, he could move with his corps and attack the enemy near Dinwiddie Court House on one side, while General Sheridan attacked on the other. In a note on page 477 of his third volume, General Badeau gives General Warren's despatch as follows: "The line along the plank road is very strong. One division, with my artillery, I think, can hold it, if we are not threatened south of Gravelly run. East of the plank road, General Humphreys and my batteries, I think, could hold this securely, and let me move down and attack the enemy at Dinwiddie court-house on one side, and Sheridan on the other. On account of Bartlett's position, they [the enemy] will have to make a considerable detour to reinforce their troops at that point from the north. Unless General Sheridan has been too badly

handled, I think we should have a chance for an open-field fight that should be made use of." At 9.45 P. M. this proposition was submitted to General Grant by General Meade, who at the same time stated the position of General Bartlett's brigade near Gravelly Run, on the road from Dinwiddie Court House, past J. Boisseau's, to the White Oak Road. General Meade also stated that in this way General Warren could move at once and take the enemy in rear, or he could send one division to General Sheridan near Dinwiddie Court House, and move on the enemy's rear with the other two divisions of his corps. General Grant replied, "Let Warren move in the way you propose, and urge him not to stop for anything. *Let Griffin go on as he was first directed.*"

At 10.50 P. M. General Warren received General Meade's reply to his suggestion made at 8.40 P. M. He was now directed to send General Griffin's division promptly, as ordered, by the Boydton Road; and with the rest of his corps to move, very promptly and without encumbering himself with anything that would prevent his moving in any direction or impede him in any way, by the road General Bartlett was on, so as to strike the enemy in rear, and get the forks of the Brooks Cross-Roads so as to open communication with the Boydton Road. Both General Grant and General Meade informed General Sheridan of the steps taken to reinforce

him. General Warren answered General Meade's despatch, received at 10.50, saying that, as in withdrawing his corps to the Boydton Road, as previously ordered, General Ayres's division was necessarily the first to reach the road, he would send him, instead of General Griffin, to General Sheridan by the Boydton Road, and move with General Crawford and General Griffin to strike the rear of the enemy as just directed. He at the same time gave the preliminary orders for the movements of these divisions.

*Not till one o'clock in the morning of April 1,* did General Warren receive a reply from General Meade to his despatch concerning the destruction of the bridge over Gravelly Run. It was then suggested that the troops for General Sheridan should be sent over the Quaker Road, or *by both roads* if necessary, and *the rear attack be given up*, as time was of the utmost importance; for General Sheridan could not maintain himself at Dinwiddie Court House without reinforcements, and General Warren *must use every exertion to get troops to him as soon as possible*. It was also stated that if General Sheridan was not reinforced and must fall back, he would retire by the Vaughan Road. It was nine or ten miles from General Warren's position to Dinwiddie Court House by way of the Quaker Road, and by that route reinforcements could scarcely reach General Sheridan before eight o'clock in the morning. While

advising General Meade of this, General Warren assured him that if he failed to get his troops through by the road they were on, he would do so by the Quaker Road.

As the tenor of the despatch appeared to General Warren to leave to his discretion the decision of how he could best reinforce General Sheridan, he decided to persevere in the movement in progress, as in his opinion he could best reach the rear of the enemy by the Boydton Road, should General Sheridan, through failure of reinforcements to reach him in time, be forced to fall back by the Vaughan Road. At two o'clock in the morning General Ayres was crossing the repaired bridge over Gravelly Run and advancing with his division toward Dinwiddie Court House. General Meade was informed of this fact. An hour before daybreak of April 1, an officer of General Sheridan's staff met General Ayres about two miles from Dinwiddie Court House, and led him back about a mile to the Brooks Cross-Road, and along that road to its intersection with the direct road from the Court House to Five Forks. In this vicinity General Ayres's division was massed to await further orders. Soon after the division entered the Brooks Road, about the dawn of day, one of General Munford's *videttes* was seen retiring.

At half-past four A. M. General Warren learned that General Ayres had communicated with General Sheridan. The tenor of all General

Meade's instructions to him had been that *the most important duty assigned him was to make sure that a division reached General Sheridan in time to go into action at daylight. Having fulfilled that duty, he was about joining the remaining divisions of his corps to move them, as he had also been directed, when he received General Sheridan's despatch sent at three A. M. This despatch said: "I am holding in front of Dinwiddie Court House, on the road leading to Five Forks, for three-quarters of a mile, with General Custer's division. The enemy are in his immediate front, lying so as to cover the road just this side of the Adams' House, which leads out across Chamberlain's Bed or Run. I understand you have a division at J. Boisseau's; if so, you are in rear of the enemy's line, and almost on his flank. I will hold on here. Possibly they may attack Custer at daylight; if so, have this division attack instantly and in full force. Attack at daylight anyway, and I will make an effort to get the road this side of Adams' House, and if I do, you can capture the whole of them. Any force moving down the road I am holding, or on the White Oak road, will be in the enemy's rear, and in all probability get any force that may escape you by a flank attack. Do not fear my leaving here. If the enemy remain I shall fight at daylight."*

At five o'clock in the morning of April 1, General Griffin's division moved from the White

Oak Road, followed by General Crawford's division, to Crump's, and thence to the forks of the road near J. Boisseau's. Here General Devin's cavalry division was met about seven o'clock, and General Sheridan directed General Warren to remain at J. Boisseau's to rest his men, holding them ready to move to the front when required.

General Bartlett, when ordered by General Warren, at five o'clock on the afternoon of the 31st, to proceed from near W. Dabney's house on the White Oak Road toward the sound of firing in the direction of Dinwiddie Court House, had moved by a wood road, which led him to Dr. Boisseau's house on the direct road from the White Oak Road to the Court House. Here his skirmishers met those of the enemy and drove them across Gravelly Run on the road at Crump's. At dark General Bartlett established his picket line along the run.

About ten o'clock at night (March 31) General Pickett was informed of the presence of General Bartlett on the road near Crump's, and thinking it to be the advance of the Fifth Corps he decided to fall back to Five Forks during the night. His ambulances and ammunition trains and the artillery began to move back at about midnight, and were followed by the infantry on the most direct road to Five Forks; General Corse's brigade bringing up the rear of the infantry and getting off just before daylight. General Munford's division of cavalry followed the infantry

about daylight; and about the same time General W. H. F. Lee and General Rosser, with their cavalry divisions, recrossed Chamberlain's Bed and moved back through Little Five Forks.

The Opinion of the Warren Court of Inquiry upon the second imputation or accusation laid before it was as follows:—

“SECOND IMPUTATION.

“The second imputation is found in the following extract from General Sheridan's report of May 15, 1865 (see Record, pp. 21 and 48), as follows:—

“‘. . . had General Warren moved according to the expectations of the Lieutenant General, there would appear to have been but little chance for the escape of the enemy's infantry in front of Dinwiddie Court House.’

“OPINION.

“It is supposed that the expectations of the Lieutenant General, referred to in the imputation, are those expressed in his despatch to General Sheridan of 10.45 P. M. of March 31, 1865, as follows:—

CLXXIX.

“‘DABNEY'S MILLS,

*March 31, 1865, 10.45 P. M.*

“‘MAJOR-GENERAL SHERIDAN.

“‘The Fifth corps has been ordered to your support. Two divisions will go by J. Boisseau's



and one down the Boydton road. In addition to this I have sent Mackenzie's cavalry, which will reach you by the Vaughan road. All these forces, except the cavalry, should reach you by 12 m. to-night. You will assume command of the whole force sent to operate with you and use it to the best of your ability to destroy the force which your command has fought so gallantly to-day.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieut. Gen.*'

In which he says, 'all these forces except the cavalry, should reach you by 12 to-night.'

"If this supposition be correct, the Court is of the opinion, considering the condition of the roads and surrounding country over part of which the troops had to march, the darkness of the night, the distance to be travelled, and the hour at which the order for the march reached General Warren, 10.50 P. M., that it was not practicable for the Fifth corps to have reached General Sheridan at 12 o'clock on the night of March 31.

"Notwithstanding that dispositions suitable for the contingency of Sheridan's falling back from Dinwiddie might well have occupied and perplexed General Warren's mind during the night, the Court is of the opinion that he should have moved the two divisions by the Crump road in obedience to the orders and expectations of his commander, upon whom alone rested the responsibility of the consequences.

“It appears from the despatches and General Warren’s testimony, that neither Generals Meade, Sheridan, nor Warren expressed an intention of having this column attack before daylight.

“The Court is further of the opinion that General Warren should have started with two divisions, as directed by General Meade’s despatch (CIV., heretofore quoted), as early after its receipt at 10.50 P. M., as he could be assured of the prospect of Ayres’s departure down the Boydton plank-road, and should have advanced on the Crump road as far as directed in that despatch, or as far as might be practicable or necessary to fulfil General Meade’s intentions; whereas the evidence shows that he did not start until between five and six o’clock on the morning of the 1st of April, and did not reach J. Boisseau’s with the head of the column till about seven o’clock in the morning.

“The despatches show that Generals Meade and Warren anticipated a withdrawal during the night of the enemy’s forces fronting General Sheridan, which was rendered highly probable from the known position in their rear of a portion of the Fifth corps (Bartlett’s brigade) at G. Boisseau’s, and the event justified the anticipation.”

General Grant’s official report states only the fact that, on the night of the 31st, the Fifth Corps was ordered to move to the support of General Sheridan. The narrative of the Memoirs, how-

ever, charges that, being ordered on that night to report to General Sheridan, General Warren was very slow in moving ;— that when he did move it was very deliberately done ; and that, in spite of hastening orders from Generals Meade and Sheridan, he allowed his command to be unnecessarily delayed by the broken bridge over Gravelly Run, and thereby failed to reinforce General Sheridan as promptly as he should have done.

We find from the Record, however, that General Warren *was the first to move in sending aid to General Sheridan* ; for, acting on the authority of his soldierly intelligence alone, *before General Grant was aware of General Sheridan's discomfiture*, he had sent General Bartlett with his brigade toward the sound of General Sheridan's battle as soon as it reached his ears, and by this timely aid effectually reinforced General Sheridan against General Pickett's "superior forces," which dare not remain confronting him with this threatening force upon the rear of their left flank.

We find also that *it was General Warren who proposed* the movement of the Fifth Corps upon the rear of the enemy at Dinwiddie Court House ; and that when his suggestion was sent back to him approved, it was too late to make the movement he had proposed successfully, for General Pickett had been warned nearly an hour before General Warren received permission to

move against him, and was, of course, prepared to meet him. In addition, General Warren's ordered movement was hampered with the repeated and positive injunction to make sure that one division of his corps reached General Sheridan before daylight by the Boydton Road; and by his anxiety faithfully to fulfil this additional obligation laid upon him, he incurred the only censure put upon his actions in this movement by the Court.

It is to be remembered that it was not till one o'clock in the morning of April 1, that General Meade became aware of the destruction of the bridge over Gravelly Run; that his orders to General Warren subordinated everything to the necessity of reinforcing General Sheridan by the Boydton Road; that he even proposed to abandon the movement by Boisseau's to insure the arrival of a division at Dinwiddie Court House; and that his death, here also, deprived the Court of evidence very material to the question as to which of the orders he received demanded the first and greatest care from General Warren. No word in the Opinion of the Court implies that anything of negligence or want of energy was shown by General Warren; and when we consider the expressed opinion that it was impracticable for the Fifth Corps to have reached General Sheridan as soon as General Grant expected, and the further statements of the Court as to the expectations of attacking the enemy, and the

evidence with regard to the removal of General Pickett's forces, — it may be safely said that the fault of which General Warren was in the opinion of the Court guilty, was at the most technical, rather than culpable, in character.

## CHAPTER X.

### FIVE FORKS.

BEING directed by General R. E. Lee to maintain the position at Five Forks, General Pickett at once intrenched himself along the White Oak Road, his line extending from Five Forks to the west about a mile, and to the east about three quarters of a mile, with a short return about a hundred yards long at his left. General W. H. F. Lee's cavalry division was on his right along the west line of the Gilliam Field. General Corse's infantry brigade, next on the left, lay along the north side of the same field; and then in order came Colonel Mayo's, General Steuart's, General Ransom's, and Colonel Wallace's brigades of infantry, with General Munford's cavalry division, dismounted, on the extreme left, covering between Colonel Wallace's left and Hatcher's Run. Three guns of Colonel Pegram's battalion of artillery were posted on General Corse's right, and three at the Five Forks. McGregor's battery of four guns was on the left. General Roberts's cavalry brigade picketed from General Munford's left towards

the right of the main line of works covering the Claiborne Road ; and General Rosser guarded the trains on the north side of Hatcher's Run, near the Ford Road.

At daylight of April 1, General Merritt moved forward toward Five Forks with General Sheridan's cavalry, pressing the rear of the enemy. General Custer's division, dismounted, moved along Chamberlain's Bed or Run ; General Devin's division advanced on the right ; and General Crook's division was held in reserve. General Merritt pressed close up to General Pickett's intrenchments.

General Sheridan's plan of attack was to manœuvre as if to turn the enemy's right flank with his cavalry, and assault their left with the Fifth Corps ; General Merritt to attack the intrenchments in his front as soon as the infantry became engaged. At one o'clock he directed General Warren to bring up the Fifth Corps and form it on the right of General Devin, six or eight hundred yards south of the White Oak Road. Captain Gillespie, engineer officer on General Sheridan's staff, had examined the ground where the Fifth Corps was formed. General Mackenzie had been sent from Dinwiddie Court House to get possession of the White Oak Road at a point about three miles east of Five Forks. He succeeded after a brisk skirmish with some of the enemy's cavalry, and moved down to the right of the Fifth Corps,

being ordered to move in conjunction with that corps, on its right, and gain the flank and rear of the enemy, and hold the Ford Road crossing of Gravelly Run to cut off their retreat.

General Sheridan, besides informing General Warren as to the general plan of the battle, instructed him that the enemy was in line of battle along the White Oak Road, their left resting not far from the crossing of the Gravelly Run Church Road ; that he was to form his line so that he could strike with his right centre on the angle of the works and let his left engage the front ; that he was to place one division behind his right to support the attack on the angle, and to give his line such a direction that its obliquity to the road would correspond with the supposed position of the works of the enemy. The matter was talked over at length, and General Warren drew a diagram of the proposed plan and wrote upon it the instructions he had received for the assault.

General Crawford with his division arrived first upon the ground, and was followed by General Griffin, General Ayres arriving last. General Crawford's division was placed upon the right of the Gravelly Run Church Road obliquely to that road, so that his centre would strike where it was supposed the angle was located, and be the first to reach the works. General Griffin's division was placed in rear of General Crawford. General Ayres's division,



the smallest, was placed on the left of the road, and was to engage the enemy's front and prevent support being sent to the angle when General Crawford should become engaged at that point. A copy of General Warren's diagram, with the instructions noted upon it, was given to each division commander and the plan explained to them verbally in addition. The line was to move forward as formed till it reached the White Oak Road, when it was to swing around to the left until perpendicular to that road.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, as soon as General Ayres's division was formed, the Fifth Corps was ordered to attack. Advancing, and receiving only a skirmish fire as he crossed the White Oak Road with his right, General Warren, thinking the enemy's line of battle was probably in the edge of the woods about three hundred yards north of the road, continued to advance in the direction in which he had started until the left of General Ayres's division had crossed. General Ayres then received a musketry and artillery fire on his left, which evidently came from the enemy's intrenchments at the return, which was, in fact, seven or eight hundred yards west of the Gravelly Run Church Road, instead of in the near vicinity of that road as General Sheridan had supposed it to be. On receiving this fire General Ayres at once changed front and faced the return. General Winthrop's

brigade, which was in reserve, was brought in double quick to the left of the line, which then advanced and finally carried the works, capturing a large number of prisoners and many battle flags.

When the fire opened on General Ayres's left, General Warren, seeing that the fight at the angle would fall on General Ayres and not on General Crawford as had been planned, at once ordered General Winthrop to General Ayres's left to connect with General Devin, and sent word to General Griffin to support General Ayres's right as quickly as he could, and to General Crawford to change direction to the left at right angles to the line he was following. General Sheridan, who was with General Ayres's division through the greater part of the battle, also sent orders to General Griffin and General Crawford to come in on General Ayres's right. But a large part of both General Crawford's and General Griffin's divisions had entered the woods north of the White Oak Road.

General Warren also directed Colonel Kellogg, commanding General Crawford's left, to form his brigade at right angles to its first direction and to hold it there for the division to align upon; and he then directed Colonel Coulter, who was following in reserve, to form on Colonel Kellogg. Searching through the dense woods for General Crawford, and sending repeated orders for him to change direction to the left and keep closed

on Colonel Kellogg, so as to advance against the rear of the enemy, General Warren returning to Colonel Kellogg's position found that officer had been removed by one of General Sheridan's aides. All of General Warren's staff had now been sent to bring General Griffin and General Crawford to attack the enemy in rear, and many of General Sheridan's staff had been dispatched for the same purpose; and in spite of the dense woods the direction of both divisions had soon been changed, and they came into the open ground of the Sydnor Farm about eight hundred yards from the enemy's intrenchments near the return.

General Warren found General Griffin, and directed him to attack General Ransom's brigade, which, with part of Colonel Wallace's brigade, had formed a new line, slightly intrenched, connected with and at right angles to their main line. He then rode to General Ayres; and finding that he had carried the return and was re-forming his troops to face the new line taken up by the enemy, he started to find General Crawford, who had passed through the Sydnor field driving General Munford's dismounted cavalry westward before him. Following in his track, General Warren found General Crawford in the Young-Boisseau Farm, with his command facing west and in good order, Colonel Kellogg's brigade having rejoined the division. First sending Colonel Spear to hold the Ford Road crossing of Hatcher's Run,

General Warren changed the direction of the division to the south, and led it along the Ford Road toward the rear of the enemy's lines, meeting, however, at the edge of the woods on the south side of the farm, a sharp fire from a line which General Pickett, having reached the field, had formed across the Ford Road with Colonel Mayo's brigade, some of General Ransom's troops just driven from the south-west corner of the Sydnor field by General Griffin, and McGregor's four guns which had drawn back from the return on the left. The resistance here was brief, and General Crawford captured the four guns. Part of General Bartlett's brigade joined General Crawford in this field; but neither General Griffin nor General Ayres had yet reached this point, the resistance of General Ransom's and Colonel Wallace's men having been stubborn and protracted for about half an hour.

General Pickett, seeing that the line upon the Ford Road could not be maintained, gave direction to General Corse to form a line along the west side of the Gilliam field, at right angles to the main intrenchments and extending into the woods to the north, to cover as far as possible the retreat of the infantry. General Warren, with General Crawford's division, pursuing the enemy as they fell back to the westward, came upon the Gilliam field. Here General Crawford's line was formed in the edge of the woods

on the east of the field, the right being north of the White Oak Road. A sharp fire was being kept up from the enemy's quickly occupied and partially intrenched new line, and there was some little hesitation in General Crawford's tired command about advancing to the attack; but General Warren, riding forward with the corps flag in his hand, led them across the field. General Custer advanced from the south at the same time, having sent word by a staff officer that he would do so. The fire was severe. Close up to the enemy's lines General Warren's horse fell dead under him, his orderly was killed at his side, and Colonel Richardson, of the Seventh Wisconsin, springing between his chief and the enemy, fell severely wounded; but in a few moments the intrenchments were carried and many prisoners taken. It was now dusk, and General Warren, after continuing the pursuit westward for half a mile, General Custer having passed on his left with his cavalry division, and there being no enemy in sight, halted his command and reported for further orders. *This is not what General Grant has written, but it is the Record.*

General Custer's division, on the left in the assault, had but one brigade dismounted. With that he had kept up a constant fire upon the enemy's lines. With his two other brigades mounted, he charged General W. H. F. Lee's right, and a spirited encounter took place; but General Lee held his position.

General Devin's division advanced upon the enemy's front dismounted, when the Fifth Corps moved to attack, and kept up a constant fire. When the enemy were falling back from the Young-Boisseau field, Colonel Fitzhugh's brigade charged and carried the lines in its front, capturing three guns, two battle flags, and over a thousand prisoners.

General Mackenzie, moving on General Crawford's right, had once crossed Hatcher's Run, against which he was crowded by the infantry; but he recrossed to the south side, along which he advanced westward to the Ford Road crossing, which he had been directed to hold.

We are told by General Badeau that General Crook's division "was south of Dinwiddie on the 1st of April, and as far from the battle field as the left of the Army of the Potomac."<sup>1</sup>

General Pickett was routed with a loss of not less than four thousand five hundred prisoners, thirteen colors, and seven guns. Of these the Fifth Corps captured over three thousand two hundred prisoners, eleven colors, and four guns, the larger part of the prisoners being taken by General Ayres's and General Griffin's divisions. The Fifth Corps lost—in killed, wounded, and missing—in General Crawford's division three hundred, in General Ayres's division two hundred and five, and in General Griffin's division one hundred and twenty-five. Total, six hun-

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., p. 495, note.

dred and thirty-four. Among the killed was General Fred. Winthrop. The proportion of cavalry officers killed and wounded was large, but the total casualties in that corps was not large.

The success of General Sheridan's command was complete, and *after the last of the enemy had been driven from or captured at Five Forks*, at seven o'clock in the evening, he sent an order to General Warren relieving him from duty with the Fifth Corps, and directing him to report for orders to Lieutenant-General Grant.

On the morning of April 1, General Hunt, chief of artillery, had sent Captain E. R. Warner, Third U. S. Artillery, to the old headquarters camp of the Fifth Corps on some artillery duty. General Warren had insisted upon his staff getting some sleep during the night of the 31st, and when he moved with his command on the morning of the 1st, had left some of them still sleeping, among them Colonel Locke, assistant adjutant-general. Captain Warner was directed by General Rawlins to ascertain where the Fifth Corps was; and meeting Colonel Locke about nine o'clock, asked him for the information. Colonel Locke replied that when he last heard from them a portion of the corps had halted to bridge a stream, meaning that he had gone to sleep before the bridge was built and had received no further information since. Upon returning to headquarters about ten o'clock,

Captain Warner stated to General Rawlins that the Fifth Corps, or a portion of it, when last heard from, was delayed building a bridge, and that they were there still delayed.

We have referred already to the correspondence between General Grant and General Sheridan, on March 30, with regard to reinforcing the latter with a corps of infantry, and General Sheridan's unwillingness to have the Fifth Corps sent to him. In addition we are told by General Badeau (vol. iii., pp. 497-499), with reference to the operations of April 1: "The general-in-chief had three aides-de-camp with Sheridan this day, sending them in succession to communicate his views. Colonel Porter was instructed first to say that the movements of the main army would very much depend upon the result of Sheridan's operations; that Grant would have preferred to send him the Sixth corps, but it was at too great distance to reach him in time; and that the Fifth corps, being the nearest, had been dispatched instead. A little before noon Colonel Babcock arrived with a verbal message from Grant to the effect that Sheridan was to have complete control of his own movement; that the responsibility would rest entirely with him; and that, if in his judgment, *Warren should not prove equal to the task assigned him*, Sheridan must not hesitate to relieve him and put another in command of the Fifth corps."



And he adds further: "He hesitated some hours before sending this *permission*, which was, indeed, *almost an invitation*, to Sheridan."

He concludes his chapter with the inspired remark, "The success of the one is the explanation of the failure of the other," which may well bear a more candid construction than that its author evidently intended.

General Humphreys has frankly stated that "At times, during the campaign beginning in May, there had been misunderstandings between General Meade and General Warren, the latter sometimes modifying the plan of operations prescribed by the orders of the day for the Fifth corps, so as to make them accord with his own judgment, as the day went on, modifications which General Meade sometimes did not approve, and hence something like controversy grew up occasionally in the despatches that passed between them. It appears to be probable that General Grant apprehended that something of this kind might occur between General Sheridan and General Warren, and considering the time to be a critical one, sent the message mentioned to General Sheridan." It is to be remembered, however, that though the pages of both the *Military History* and the *Memoirs of U. S. Grant* teem with evidence of the implacable spirit in which every act of General Warren, from the passage of the Rapidan to the final shout of victory at Five Forks, has been

assailed by his ruthless critics, *not one specific instance of culpable neglect of duty or transcending of authority has been confirmed against him.* Intangible general assertions are freely made, *but not one honest charge sustained.*

General Sheridan's imputations against General Warren, as embodied in his report of the battle of Five Forks, dated May 16, 1865, are of this same general and intangible character. He says: "General Warren did not exert himself to get up his corps as rapidly as he might have done, and his manner gave me the impression that he wished the sun to go down before dispositions for the attack could be completed." And again: "During this attack [upon General Pickett's position] I again became dissatisfied with General Warren. During the engagement portions of his lines gave way when not exposed to a heavy fire, and simply for want of confidence on the part of the troops, which General Warren did not exert himself to inspire. I therefore relieved him from the command of the Fifth corps, authority for the action having been sent to me, before the battle, unsolicited."

General Humphreys well says: "These are very grave accusations or imputations, and of such serious character that no officer could rest under them. Any officer against whom they were made would be entitled, whatever his rank might be, to an investigation of them before a proper court."

For nearly fifteen years this right of investigation was denied to General Warren. *While General Grant remained in power as General of the Army and President of the United States, even this scant justice was withheld.* Finally, after repeated requests from General Warren, and seven years after the death of General Meade had removed one of his most material witnesses, in December 1879, by order of President Hayes, a Court of Inquiry was convened, to which were submitted all the circumstances attending the battle of Five Forks for its consideration and statement of opinion. Many Confederate as well as United States officers who had been engaged in the battle appeared and testified.

General Sheridan explained to the Court that, though his troops were victorious at Five Forks, they were isolated from the Army of the Potomac; and that the extreme left of that army had been thrown back to the Boydton Road, while the enemy held strongly at the intersection of the White Oak and Claiborne roads directly in his rear, which they, being only about three and a half miles distant, might attack early the next morning. He does not appear, however, to have stated that he had from the commencement of the movement been instructed by General Grant, in the event of the enemy offering him an opportunity for attack, to move in with his entire force in his own way, and with the full reliance that the army would engage or follow, as cir-

cumstances might dictate ; and that he had reason to believe that General Grant, in fulfilment of that assurance, would, *as he did before the close of the battle of Five Forks*, cause the White Oak Road to be held by advancing the refused left wing of his army.

Colonel Gillespie, engineer officer on General Sheridan's staff, April 1, 1865, testified that he made no reconnoissance of the enemy's works before the attack ; that the cavalry had moved directly up the road and gradually pressed the enemy behind his works ; *that he did not know there was a return*, nor did he know its direction from the position where the Fifth Corps was formed ; that he was instructed by General Sheridan to select ground which would hold General Warren's corps close under the right flank of General Devin's command and beyond the observation of the enemy, as he wanted to put General Warren in as a turning column.

As to the giving way of portions of General Warren's troops, it was in evidence that the skirmish line of General Ayres's division, on entering the woods north of the open ground on the north side of the White Oak Road, fell back, lay down, and began to fire in the air ; and that they were made to go forward again by General Sheridan, General Ayres, and their staff ; and further, that when General Ayres changed front, General Gwyn's brigade, on his right, fell into some confusion, which was also remedied by Gen-

eral Sheridan, General Ayres, and their staff. General Ayres, however, does not appear to have regarded the disorder as serious. General Warren, it was also in evidence, was at that time engaged in rectifying the position and direction of movement of General Griffin's and General Crawford's divisions.

The following are the reports and opinions of the Court upon the imputations or accusations quoted from General Sheridan's report:—

“THIRD IMPUTATION.

“The third imputation is found in an extract from General Sheridan's report of May 16, 1865 (see Record, pp. 21 and 48), as follows:—

“‘. . . General Warren did not exert himself to get up his corps as rapidly as he might have done, and his manner gave me the impression that he wished the sun to go down before dispositions for the attack could be completed.’

“On the afternoon of April 1st, the Fifth Corps was massed as follows: Crawford's and Griffin's divisions at the forks of the Crump road and the main road from Dinwiddie Court House to Five Forks, and Ayres's division on the Brooke's road, about one-fourth of a mile east from the forks of that road and the road to Five Forks.

“The distance from the position of Griffin and Crawford to the place of formation of the Fifth Corps, near Gravelly Run Church, was about two

and a half miles, and the length of the corps, when spread out in column of route, would be about two and three-eighths miles. The last file of the column required as much time to reach the place of formation as it would have taken to march about five miles.

“General Warren received his orders near Gravelly Run Church to move up his corps at 1 P. M., and it took some time to communicate those orders to the divisions and for the movement to begin.

“The route to the place of formation was along a narrow road, very muddy and slippery, somewhat encumbered with wagons and led horses of the Cavalry Corps, and the men were fatigued. The testimony of the brigade and division commanders is to the effect that the corps in line of march was well closed up, and that no unnecessary delay was incurred.

“The corps reached its destination, and was formed ready to advance against the enemy at 4 P. M.

“It is in evidence that General Warren remained near Gravelly Run Church, directing the formation, explaining the mode of attack to the division and brigade commanders, with sketches prepared for the purpose.

“General Warren also repeatedly sent out staff officers to the division commanders in order to expedite the march.

## " OPINION.

"The Court is of the opinion that there was no unnecessary delay in this march of the Fifth Corps, and that General Warren took the usual methods of a corps commander to prevent delay.

"The question regarding General Warren's manner appears to be too intangible and the evidence on it too contradictory for the Court to decide, separate from the context, that he appeared to wish 'the sun to go down before dispositions for the attack could be completed;' but his actions, as shown by the evidence, do not appear to have corresponded with such wish, if ever he entertained it.

## " FOURTH IMPUTATION.

"The fourth imputation is found in an extract from General Sheridan's report of May 16, 1865 (see Record, pp. 22 and 48), as follows:—

• • • • •  
 " "During this attack I again became dissatisfied with General Warren. During the engagement portions of his line gave way when not exposed to a heavy fire, and simply from want of confidence on the part of the troops, which General Warren did not exert himself to inspire."

• • • • •  
 "When the Fifth Corps moved up to the attack, General Sheridan said to General Ayres, 'I will ride with you.' General Warren was on the

left of Crawford's division, between Crawford and Ayres.

"When General Ayres's command struck the White Oak road it received a fire in flank from the enemy's 'return' nearly at right angles to the road. He changed front immediately at right angles and faced the 'return,' his right receiving a fire from Munford's Confederate division of dismounted cavalry distributed along the edge of the woods to the north of the White Oak road. There was some confusion, which was immediately checked by the exertions of General Sheridan, General Ayres, and other officers.

"The evidence shows that General Warren was observant of Ayres, because he sent orders to Winthrop's reserve brigade to form on the left of Ayres's new line.

"This necessary change of front of Ayres increased the interval between him and Crawford on his right; the latter was marching without change of direction until, as he expressed it, he would clear the right of Ayres, when he was also to change front to the left.

"At this moment Warren, who saw that Crawford, with Griffin following, was disappearing in the woods to the north of the White Oak road, sent a staff-officer to Griffin to come as quickly as he could to sustain Ayres; went himself to the left brigade of Crawford and caused a line to be marked out, facing to the west, directing



the brigade commander to form on it; then went into the woods and gave orders to the right brigade of Crawford to form on the same line. When he returned to the open ground the brigade he had directed to change front had disappeared, as appears by the evidence, in consequence of orders given by an officer of General Sheridan's staff. General Warren sent repeated orders by staff-officers to both Griffin and Crawford to change direction, and went himself to both; and finally by these means corrected, as far as was possible under the circumstances, the divergence of these two divisions.

“ It appears from evidence that these two divisions were operating in the woods and over a difficult country, and received a fire in their front from the dismounted cavalry of Munford posted in the woods to the north of the White Oak road, which led to the belief, for some time, that the enemy had a line of battle in front; and this may furnish one reason why it was so difficult at first to change their direction to the proper one.

#### “ OPINION.

“ General Warren's attention appears to have been drawn, almost immediately after Ayres received the flank fire from the ‘return’ and his consequent change of front, to the probability of Crawford with Griffin diverging too much from and being separated from Ayres, and by continuous exertions of himself and staff sub-

stantially remedied matters; and the Court thinks that this was for him the essential point to be attended to, which also exacted his whole efforts to accomplish."

These are the reports and opinions of officers of high rank and large experience, given under the sanctity of an oath to examine into the matter submitted to them, and to decide and report thereon according to the evidence, without partiality, favor, affection, prejudice, or hope of reward.

The established Record shows that there was no noticeable fighting by General Sheridan's command upon April 1, until after four o'clock P. M., but that his cavalry simply followed closely after the enemy as they retired upon Five Forks; that General Warren was not relieved before the assault upon the enemy's intrenchments, as General Grant states in his Memoirs, but after the engagement was ended, as General Grant's report more correctly says; that General Warren promptly responded to the orders of General Sheridan; that the disorder incident upon the opening of the assault was in no way attributable to him, but was due to the erroneous information concerning the enemy's works given him by General Sheridan; that he did what man could do to remedy the matter; and that, while he probably did not expend his energies in the rôle of incarnate blasphemy and malediction, he directed

and led his troops in a victorious sweep along and beyond the length of the enemy's whole line, himself carrying his corps flag in triumph over their last intrenchment; and *therefore* he could not be found by General Sheridan.

One can readily imagine how, in the heat and turmoil of active warfare, injustice may very naturally result from laudable impetuosity and earnestness. There has been no war but has its record of wrong honestly inflicted; there has been no honorable peace succeeding, without its recompense of manly acknowledgment and atonement: but, in General Warren's case, the pages of the Memoirs prove that prejudice again would raise its unrelenting cry to drown, if possible, beneath assertion the muffled voice of tardy justice.

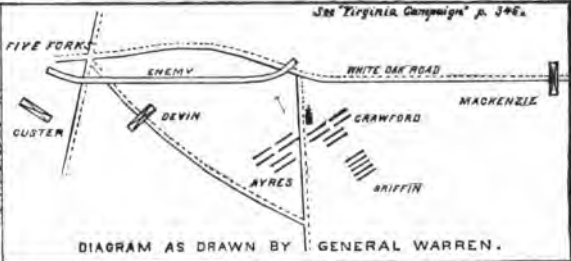
It is not difficult to understand how General Badeau, in his effort to laud his chief, could fail to see aright truth clear as light to others; but it is impossible to comprehend, with pleasure, the motive which produced the alleged record of events proffered by General Grant, and which we have been considering. General Grant, as to his statements of facts, has challenged reference to the Record. His work submitted to that test, — we cannot but perceive that, as authority upon historic facts, or as delineator of character other than his own, the kindest critic must acknowledge “drawbacks to his usefulness, constitutional and beyond his control.” “How I saw the matters treated of” may make clear the

influence causing the exaggerated repetition of disproved detraction ; but by no construction can it defend or excuse it.

There had been no limit to the ready offering of blood, limb, life, homes, happiness, or hope, that at the bidding of General Grant had been made for the safety of the land ; and there was no limit to the recompense that land laid gladly at the feet of the Chieftain of our victorious hosts : as General, adding to the largess of the present the stored memories of the past that clung about the title ; as President, twice seated in regal opulence, ruling the loyal confidence and gratitude of his countrymen ; as Citizen, the world receiving with glad hearts and generous hands, and friends barring from him and his the possibilities of toil or care ; not one leaf, or bud, or flower that gratitude could gather was wanting to the garland placed upon his brow, — and not least frequent or least fragrant of them all was Charity. Death came : the world looked on with bated breath at the stern struggle between the Chief, crowned Victor, and the Destroyer ; and when the inevitable surrender came, — with pageant seldom seen before on earth, midst re-gathered ranks of war-worn comrades and clustering groups of one-time foes now grown to friends, and the bowed heads of a nation, — the honored form was laid to rest.

*Only the pen of General Grant himself could blot the name that had been so glorified.*





This is a detailed topographical map of the Five Forks region. The terrain is depicted with dense stippling to represent wooded areas and lighter shading for open fields. A network of roads is shown, including the prominent 'WHITE OAK ROAD' that runs from the top right towards the bottom right. Other roads include 'GRAVELLY RUN CH.' and 'BOISSEAU'. Several military positions are marked with small squares and labeled: 'R. SYDNOR' on the left, 'HAMAN' and 'ROBERTS' in the upper center, 'T. BARNES' in the lower center, 'J. MOODY' in the lower right, and 'D. GRANT' on the right side. The 'FIVE FORKS' location is indicated on the left edge. A scale bar at the bottom left is labeled 'SCALE OF MILES.' with markings for 1/4, 1/2, and 3/4 mile.

U.S.A.

There was no waiting world without the door — only a weeping family gathered round — when Warren, the savior of Gettysburg, the hero of Mine Run, the victor of Five Forks, lay down to die, slain in the house of his friends! But as the wasted failing arms reached up to clasp in last embrace a brother's neck, unconsciously they appealed, with deathless power, to many a heart bound by ties forged in battle fire and shock, to the gallant comrade, noble chief, of the Fifth Army Corps!

The gratitude of patriotism has no authority to hold the loyalty of friendship forever silent under repeated wrong.

## CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL SHERIDAN'S RICHMOND RAID, MAY, 1864.

— MENTION OF GENERAL A. A. HUMPHREYS IN THE MEMOIRS. — BATTLE OF SUTHERLAND STATION, APRIL 2, 1865.

It was impossible that General Grant could, in the compass of his work, accord mention to all of those who under his command earned recognition of their services. There are instances, however, when silence practically takes the place of positive misstatement. Intentional omission, entrenched in silence, is often more unjust than active criticism that may be met with protest; and undue commendation lavished upon one, makes noticeable the unwarrantable silence or slighting notice assigned to others.

General Grant devotes nearly four pages of the Memoirs (vol. ii., pp. 153 to 157) to a description of General Sheridan's raid to Richmond in May, 1864, which, he states, "attained in its brilliant execution and results all the proportions of an independent campaign." He says: —

"On the 8th of May, just after the battle of the Wilderness and when we were moving on



Spottsylvania I directed Sheridan verbally to cut loose from the Army of the Potomac, pass around the left of Lee's army and attack his cavalry: to cut the two roads—one running west through Gordonsville, Charlottesville and Lynchburg, the other to Richmond, and, when compelled to do so for want of forage and rations, to move on to the James River and draw these from Butler's supplies. This move took him past the entire rear of Lee's army. These orders were also given in writing through Meade.

“The object of this move was three-fold. First, if successfully executed, and it was, he would annoy the enemy by cutting his line of supplies and telegraphic communications, and destroy or get for his own use supplies in store in the rear and coming up. Second, he would draw the enemy's cavalry after him, and thus better protect our flanks, rear and trains than by remaining with the army. Third, his absence would save the trains drawing his forage and other supplies from Fredericksburg, which had now become our base. He started at daylight the next morning, and accomplished more than was expected. It was sixteen days before he got back to the Army of the Potomac.

“The course Sheridan took was directly to Richmond. Before night Stuart, commanding the Confederate cavalry, came on to the rear of his command. But the advance kept on, crossed the North Anna, and at Beaver Dam, a station

on the Virginia Central Railroad, recaptured four hundred Union prisoners on their way to Richmond, destroyed the road and used and destroyed a large amount of subsistence and medical stores.

“Stuart, . . . by a detour and an exhausting march, interposed between Sheridan and Richmond at Yellow Tavern, only about six miles north of the city. . . . A severe engagement ensued in which the losses were heavy on both sides, but the rebels were beaten, their leader mortally wounded, and some guns and many prisoners were captured.

“Sheridan passed through the outer defences of Richmond, and could, no doubt, have passed through the inner ones. . . . After caring for his wounded he struck for the James River below the city, . . .

“He moved first between the Chickahominy and the James, but in the morning (the 12th) he was stopped by batteries at Mechanicsville. . . .

“He was now in a perilous position, one from which but few generals could have extricated themselves. The defences of Richmond, manned, were to the right, the Chickahominy was to the left with no bridge remaining and the opposite bank guarded, to the rear was a force from Richmond. This force was attacked and beaten by Wilson’s and Gregg’s divisions, while Sheridan turned to the left with the remaining division and hastily built a bridge over the Chickahominy under the fire of the enemy, forced a crossing

and soon dispersed the Confederates he found there. The enemy was held back from the stream by the fire of the troops not engaged in bridge building.

“Sheridan in this memorable raid passed entirely around Lee’s army: encountered his cavalry in four engagements, and defeated them in all; recaptured four hundred Union prisoners and killed and captured many of the enemy; destroyed and used many supplies and munitions of war; destroyed miles of railroad and telegraph, and freed us from annoyance by the cavalry of the enemy for more than two weeks.”

It is not intended now to criticise either the conduct or value of this “memorable raid,” but simply to note a few established facts in contrast with General Grant’s enthusiastic statements.

A glance at the map of Virginia will demonstrate that Beaver Dam Station, on the Virginia Central Railroad, the most westerly point touched by General Sheridan’s command during this movement, is about seventeen miles directly south of the left of the lines held by General R. E. Lee at Spottsylvania Court House. From there the command moved by Yellow Tavern, Meadow Bridge, Gaines’s Mills, and Bottom Bridge to Haxall’s Landing. General Sheridan rejoined General Grant, by way of White House on the Pamunkey, passing through Aylett’s on the Matapony to the vicinity of Chesterfield Station

on the Fredericksburg Railroad. General Grant, therefore, is in error when he states that "Sheridan in this memorable raid passed entirely around Lee's army."

Official reports state that on May 1, 1864, General Sheridan's available cavalry force numbered about twelve thousand men. It is within safe limits therefore to estimate that he set out upon this raid with at least ten thousand cavalry and a proper proportion of artillery. South of the Ta River the rear of the command was attacked by a brigade of General Stuart's cavalry, and from that point, until the column had crossed the North Anna and entered the Negro Foot Road, about five miles from Ground Squirrel Bridge, General Gordon's brigade of North Carolina cavalry clung to the rear. Early in the morning of May 11, General Davies had a slight skirmish at Ashland, on the Fredericksburg Railroad, and rejoined the command at Allen's Station. General Sheridan then encountered General Stuart, who, with General Fitz Lee's command consisting of General Wickham's and General Lomax's brigades, had made a circuit and interposed between him and Richmond at the Yellow Tavern on the Brook Pike, about six miles from Richmond, while General Gordon's brigade still followed the Federal rear. The three Confederate brigades, constituting less than half of the cavalry corps of the Army of Northern Virginia, according to official reports num-

bered only about four thousand men. Here followed the engagement which ended in the defeat of the Confederate force and the mortal wounding of General J. E. B. Stuart and General Jas. B. Gordon. The casualties on both sides were severe.

On pages 135 and 136, General Humphreys says: "Following up the part of Stuart's force that fell back towards Richmond,<sup>1</sup> General Sheridan crossed Brook Run and entered the most advanced line of intrenchments. Intending to keep south of the Chickahominy, and passing by Fair Oaks, to make a demonstration in favor of General Butler, who, he was informed, was on the south side of the James four miles from Richmond, he massed his force at daylight of the 12th on the plateau at Meadow bridge. Some force of the enemy's cavalry held the north bank at the bridge, which had been so injured as to be impassable. Merritt's division *repaired* it, crossed and followed up the other side to Gaines's Mill.

<sup>1</sup> On page 412 of McClellan's *Life and Campaigns of Major-General J. E. B. Stuart*, it appears that by two o'clock in the afternoon General Sheridan held the Brook Pike between Yellow Tavern and Richmond. Major McClellan recently states to the writer: "General Humphreys is in error here. No part of Stuart's force fell back towards Richmond. He had nothing on the Brook Turnpike, although it was in sight of his position. Both Lomax and Wickham were on the Telegraph Road; and the Brook Pike was left open as if to tempt Sheridan to move on it and expose his flank to attack." The same authority also says: "General Gordon's arm was broken by a shot, and was subsequently amputated. He died in hospital in Richmond several days after he received the wound."

“On the Mechanicsville road the defensive works of Richmond extended out close to the Chickahominy, and Wilson found that he could not pass them. Two brigades of infantry, Barton’s and Gracie’s, with some dismounted cavalry, advanced from these works, and in conjunction with their artillery attacked Wilson and Gregg, and at first with success, but finally they were forced to withdraw within their lines, and Wilson and Gregg crossed the Chickahominy above the Mechanicsville bridge. . . .

“The casualties on our part in this operation [the entire raid] were four hundred and twenty-five killed, wounded, and missing. . . .”

The Record speaks of *but one* engagement of any importance, — Stuart’s desperate stand at the Yellow Tavern, — and considering the force at General Sheridan’s disposal, the circumstances, numbers, and positions of those opposed to him in front of Richmond, the remark, “He was now in a perilous position, *one from which but few generals could have extricated themselves,*” appears, as a matter of fact, to be a feebly supported reflection upon the disparaged many.

General Grant states positively that General Sheridan was directed to “pass around the left of Lee’s army and *attack his cavalry.*” General Humphreys expresses it: “In compliance with his instructions of the 8th of May to concentrate his available mounted force and *proceed against the enemy’s cavalry,* . . .” The only portions

of the enemy's cavalry encountered in any force were the brigade which *clung to the rear* of General Sheridan's column after it had crossed the Ta River, and the two brigades which interposed between the head of the column and Richmond. These three brigades comprised less than half of the enemy's cavalry force, and numbered much less than half of the force under General Sheridan's command. The enemy's cavalry was at no time "attacked" or "proceeded against," in force, except when it opposed the march of the Federal column *away* from the Confederate forces. If an attack upon the enemy's cavalry was, as the reported orders indicate, a material point in the projected raid, it is impossible to see how the Federal cavalry "accomplished more than was expected." General Grant does not so interpret slighter deviations from the letter of his orders when imputed to others of his subordinates.

On the morning of June 22, 1864, General J. H. Wilson, with a cavalry force consisting of his own and General Kautz's divisions, and numbering in all about five thousand five hundred men, set out upon the expedition against the Petersburg and Lynchburg, and Richmond and Danville railroads, to which he had been ordered. He was instructed that the destruction of these roads, to such an extent that they could not be useful to the enemy in Richmond during the future operations, was *an important part of the*

*plan of the campaign*, and he was therefore to continue their destruction till driven from his work by such forces as he could no longer resist. He was informed that General Sheridan was at White House confronted by General Hampton; that General Hunter was supposed to be near Lynchburg; that the Weldon Railroad would be held by the Army of the Potomac on the day of his departure; and that it was expected the Petersburg and Lynchburg road would be taken possession of soon after. In a note to General Humphreys, chief of staff Army of the Potomac, written on the evening of the 21st, General Wilson said: "If Sheridan will look after Hampton, I apprehend no difficulty and hope to be able to do the enemy great damage." General Meade, in his correspondence with General Grant, had expressed the hope and expectation that General Sheridan would keep General Hampton occupied on the north side of the James River during General Wilson's raid; and in reply to General Wilson General Humphreys referred him, as an assurance, to the close contact that had been maintained between General Sheridan and General Hampton since early in June.

General Wilson crossed the Weldon Railroad at Reams's Station, which he destroyed; and, striking the Lynchburg Railroad about fourteen miles west of Petersburg, destroyed it for about thirty miles to the crossing of the Danville



Railroad at Burkesville. At Nottoway Court House there was a sharp engagement with General W. H. F. Lee's cavalry division. Burkesville Junction was destroyed, and also the Danville Railroad to Staunton River, about thirty miles southward. At Staunton River General Wilson's advance was checked by a large force of militia intrenched with artillery; at the same time General W. H. F. Lee attacked his rear. Being now nearly one hundred miles from Petersburg, General Wilson determined to return.

But General Sheridan had left White House on the 22d, the day that General Wilson had started on his raid, and was crossing to the south of the James River on the 26th. Consequently, on arriving between Stony Creek Depot and Reams's Station on the Weldon Railroad, General Wilson found himself, on the 29th, confronted and flanked by the cavalry divisions of Generals Hampton, W. H. F. and Fitz Lee, and two brigades of infantry, with artillery, under General Mahone; the Weldon Road not having been occupied by Federal troops, as he had expected. He was therefore forced backward to the south of the Nottoway River. Then moving eastward, he arrived at Light House Point on the afternoon of July 2, having been gone ten and a half days, during which he had marched over three hundred miles and destroyed sixty miles of railroad. At no place had he

halted more than six hours, and for the last four days at no time longer than four hours. His casualties were two hundred and forty killed and wounded, and one thousand two hundred and sixty-one missing, — a total of one thousand five hundred and one. Twelve guns were abandoned and his wagons burned or captured. General Sheridan, attempting to relieve General Wilson, reached Reams's Station after the enemy had returned to their own lines on July 1.<sup>1</sup>

Of this raid, General Grant (vol. ii., p. 303) says: "In the meantime Meade had sent Wilson's division on a raid to destroy the Weldon and South Side roads. *Now that Sheridan was safe and Hampton free to return to Richmond with his cavalry, Wilson's position became precarious. Meade therefore, on the 27th, ordered Sheridan over the river to make a demonstration in favor of Wilson. Wilson got back, though not without severe loss, having struck both roads, but the damage done was soon repaired.*"

On page 172 of his second volume, describing another raid, General Grant says: "Kilpatrick started on the night of the 18th of August to reach the Macon road about Jonesboro. He succeeded in doing so, passed entirely around the Confederate lines of Atlanta, and was back again in his former position on our left by the 22d. *These little affairs, however, contributed*

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 236-241.

*but very little to the grand result. They annoyed, it is true, but any damage thus done to a railroad by any cavalry expedition is soon repaired."*

General Grant does not thus dismiss General Sheridan's raids.

In the *Memoirs*, on page 541 of volume ii., we find: "Griffin, Humphreys, and Mackenzie were good corps commanders, but came into that position so near to the close of the war as not to attract public attention. All three served as such, in the last campaign of the armies of the Potomac and the James, which culminated at Appomattox Court House, on the 9th of April, 1865. The sudden collapse of the rebellion monopolized attention to the exclusion of almost everything else. I regarded Mackenzie as the most promising young officer in the army. Graduating at West Point, as he did, during the second year of the war, he had won his way up to the command of a corps before its close. This he did upon his own merit and without influence."

This, together with the bare mention that on May 13, 1864, he had asked the confirmation of General Humphreys's appointment to the rank of Major-General, comprises all of commendation General Grant can find to say of one who, from July 8, 1863, to November 26, 1864, had filled the exacting position of chief of staff of the Army of the Potomac; and who after the latter

date succeeded General Hancock in command of the Second Army Corps : exhibiting in both positions, energy, devotion, and ability undeniably preëminent.

When on the morning of March 25, 1865, General Gordon attempted his sortie aimed at the Federal supplies and material at City Point, and pierced the right of the lines investing Petersburg, General Humphreys, who was on the left, received a telegram from General Hunt, chief of artillery, a little before six o'clock A. M., informing him of the situation. He immediately got his corps under arms and advanced, capturing the enemy's intrenched picket line in his front, and, pressing toward their main works, developed the fact that they had not been depleted to aid in the attack upon the right and were still too strong for successful assault. The intrenched picket lines were held by him against repeated attempts at recapture; and thus the successful assault on the Confederate lines, on April 2, was made practicable. His action was duly reported to and was approved by General Meade.

General Grant says of this: "After the recapture of the batteries taken by the Confederates, our troops made a charge and carried the enemy's intrenched picket line, which they strengthened and held. This, in turn, gave us but a short distance to charge over when our attack came to be made a few days later."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 434.

Possibly the subject was exhausted by General Badeau, who says: "When Meade arrived on the field; he promptly ordered Wright and Humphreys to advance and feel the enemy in their respective fronts, west of Parke, but Humphreys had already advanced without orders. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

It has been already shown that, on March 31, General Humphreys becoming aware of the repulse encountered by General Warren, on his left, without waiting for orders promptly threw General Miles with his division upon the left flank of the enemy pressing upon the Fifth Corps, and with General Mott and General Hays attacked the intrenchments in his own front, thus securing the repulse of the enemy and the ultimate advance to, and occupation of, the White Oak Road. No mention of this circumstance can be discovered in the Memoirs, though General Badeau affirms that when the next day *General Sheridan* with General Gibbs and General Gregg attacked the rear of General Pickett's troops, when it was exposed in their pursuit of General Merritt, and obliged them "to change the direction of their march and the whole character of the battle," it "*constituted one of the most brilliant strokes of military genius displayed during the war.*"

This silence on the part of General Grant would be inoffensive, though ungracious, but that in connection with other parts of the narrative in the Memoirs it becomes noticeable.

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. ii., p. 447.

Continuing his account of the assault upon and capture of the Confederate lines in front of Petersburg, April 2, 1865, General Grant says:—

“Sheridan, after he had returned to Five Forks, swept down to Petersburg, coming in on our left. This gave us a continuous line from the Appomattox River below the city to the same river above. . . .

“I had ordered Miles in the morning to report to Sheridan. In moving to execute this order he came upon the enemy at the intersection of the White Oak Road and the Claiborne Road. The enemy fell back to Sutherland Station on the South Side Road and were followed by Miles. This position, naturally a strong and defensible one, was also strongly intrenched. Sheridan now came up and Miles asked permission from him to make the assault, which Sheridan gave. By this time Humphreys had got through the outer works in his front, and came up also and assumed command over Miles, who commanded a division in his corps. I had sent an order to Humphreys to turn to his right and move towards Petersburg. This order he now got, and started off, thus leaving Miles alone. The latter made two assaults, both of which failed, and he had to fall back a few hundred yards.

“Hearing that Miles had been left in this position, I directed Humphreys to send a division back to his relief. He went himself.

“Sheridan before starting to sweep down to

Petersburg had sent Merritt with his cavalry to the west to attack some Confederate cavalry that had assembled there. Merritt drove them north to the Appomattox River. Sheridan then took the enemy at Sutherland Station on the reverse side from where Miles was, and the two together captured the place, with a large number of prisoners and some pieces of artillery, and put the remainder, portions of three Confederate corps, to flight. Sheridan followed, and drove them until night, when further pursuit was stopped. Miles bivouacked for the night on the ground which he with Sheridan had carried so handsomely by assault. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

In the official report of Lieutenant-General Grant, an account materially different in some points is found. It says: “The report of this [the battle at Five Forks] reached me after nightfall. Some apprehensions filled my mind lest the enemy might desert his lines during the night and by falling upon General Sheridan before assistance could reach him, drive him from his position and open the way for retreat. To guard against this, General Miles’s division of Humphreys’s corps was sent to reinforce him, and a bombardment was commenced and kept up until four o’clock in the morning (April 2) when an assault was ordered on the enemy’s lines.

. . . General Sheridan being advised of the

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 450-452.

condition of affairs, [the success of the assault], returned General Miles to his proper command.

. . . . .

The enemy south of Hatcher's run retreated westward to Sutherland's Station, where they were overtaken by Miles's division. A severe engagement ensued, and lasted until both his right and left flanks were threatened by the approach of General Sheridan, who was moving from Ford's Station towards Petersburg, and a division sent by General Meade from the front of Petersburg, when he broke in the utmost confusion leaving in our hands his guns and many prisoners."<sup>1</sup>

General Badeau appears again as a connecting link between the Report and the Memoirs. In his third volume, pages 522 to 525, we find:—

“Meanwhile Sheridan had been busy on a more distant portion of the field. Miles reported to him at daybreak, and was ordered to move back towards Petersburg, and attack the enemy at the intersection of the White Oak and Claiborne roads. The rebels were found at this point, in force and in position, and Sheridan followed Miles immediately with two divisions of the Fifth corps. The enemy, however, withdrew from the junction, and Miles pursued with great zeal, pushing the fugitives across Hatcher's run, and following them up towards Sutherland station, on the Southside railroad. North of

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., pp. 623, 624.



Hatcher's run, Sheridan came up with Miles, who had a fine and spirited division, and was anxious to attack, and Sheridan gave him leave. About this time Humphreys also arrived with the remainder of his corps, having made his breach in the lines, and moved up from the Boydton road. He now re-assumed command of Miles, and Sheridan faced the Fifth corps by the rear, and returning to Five Forks, marched out by the Ford road to Hatcher's run.

*“Grant, however, had intended to leave Sheridan in command of Miles, and indeed in full control of all the operations in this quarter of the field; and supposing his views to have been carried out, it was at this juncture that he ordered Humphreys to be faced to the right and moved towards Petersburg. This left Miles unsupported by either Humphreys or Sheridan. Nevertheless, that gallant commander made his assault. But the rebel position was naturally strong as well as defended by breastworks and artillery, and Miles was compelled to retire. A second attack at half-past twelve met with no better fortune, although supported by a vigorous shelling from the artillery of the division. The position was important, for it covered the right of Lee's army; the rebels resisted vigorously, and Miles fell back to a crest about eight hundred yards from the enemy's line.*

*“News of the repulse was carried to Grant, now nearly five miles away, and for a while the*

general-in-chief was anxious about the fate of Miles. . . . Humphreys was accordingly ordered to send another division to the support of Miles. He went himself with Hays's division. . . .

“Sheridan meantime had sent Merritt westward to cross Hatcher's run, and break up the rebel cavalry, which had assembled in considerable force north of the stream; . . . Sheridan himself with the Fifth corps crossed Hatcher's run, and struck the Southside railroad, north of Five Forks; then meeting with no opposition, he marched rapidly towards Sutherland, and came up in flank and rear of the enemy opposing Miles, just as Humphreys was returning on the right from Petersburg.

“Miles, in the interval, had devised a plan not unlike the strategy of Sheridan at Five Forks, though on a smaller scale. He made a feint against the rebel right, pushing a strong skirmish line around that flank until he overlapped it and reached to the railroad; and while the enemy's attention was thus diverted, at 2.45 P. M. he assaulted the opposite flank, sweeping rapidly down inside the breastworks, capturing nearly a thousand prisoners and two pieces of artillery, and putting the remainder of the force to precipitate flight.

“Sheridan overtook the rebels in their rout on the main road along the Appomattox river, and the cavalry and Crawford's division attacked them at nightfall; . . .

“When Grant heard of the action at Sutherland, he declared to Meade: ‘*Miles* has made a big thing of it, and deserves the highest praise for the pertinacity with which he stuck to the enemy and wrung from him victory.’”

General Sheridan, after his return to Five Forks, could not have swept down to Petersburg and come in on the left of a line from the Appomattox River below the city to the same river above, as General Grant states; for the further narratives of both General Grant and General Badeau do not locate that officer, or his command, east of the Claiborne Road, at any time during April 2, and General Badeau (vol. iii., p. 520) states: “*At noon, the left wing under Sheridan was still unheard from.*”

General Grant states that he ordered General Miles to report to General Sheridan *in the morning*; and that, in attempting to execute the order, General Miles came upon the enemy at the intersection of the White Oak and Claiborne roads; and that, the enemy falling back, General Miles followed to Sutherland Station, where General Sheridan overtook him, and gave permission for him to attack; and that General Humphreys *then* arrived and *assumed* command of General Miles.

General Badeau's statement is, that General Miles reported to General Sheridan *at daybreak* and was ordered *to move back* and attack the enemy at the intersection of the roads; and that

General Sheridan followed General Miles immediately with two divisions of the Fifth Corps, and *north of Hatcher's Run* overtook him and gave permission for the attack on Sutherland Station; and that, General Humphreys *then* arriving and *reassuming* command of General Miles, General Sheridan faced the Fifth Corps by the rear and returned to Five Forks, and moved again on Sutherland Station by way of the Ford and Cox roads.

Without pausing to defend General Sheridan from the suggestion that, having arrived with the Fifth Corps at a point within two miles, at farthest, of an anticipated battle field, he counter-marched his command and made an unnecessary detour of from twelve to fifteen miles to threaten the flank of the enemy's position, because General Humphreys had resumed command of his own troops; it is to be observed that neither of these statements by Generals Grant and Badeau, accords with General Grant's official report that when General Sheridan, after being reinforced by General Miles during the night previous, learned the condition of affairs on the morning of April 2, he "*returned General Miles to his proper command.*"

Both General Grant and General Badeau locate General Sheridan with the Fifth Corps during the 2d: the first stating, in addition to what has just been noted, that after sending his cavalry to the west General Sheridan "then took the enemy

at Sutherland Station on the reverse side from where Miles was ;” and the latter saying, “Sheridan himself *with the Fifth corps* crossed Hatcher’s run and struck the Southside railroad north of Five Forks, etc.”

On page 446 of volume ii., General Grant states that, on the evening of April 1, General Sheridan sent the Fifth Corps “across Hatcher’s Run to just south-west of Petersburg, and facing them toward it ;” but this is manifestly an unintentional inaccuracy, since it would have bivouacked the corps within the Confederate lines. After the victory at Five Forks, two divisions of the Fifth Corps were posted for the night across the White Oak Road near Gravelly Run Church facing Petersburg, and one on the Ford Road. General Mackenzie’s cavalry division guarded the Ford Road crossing of Hatcher’s Run, and General Merritt’s cavalry were at or near Five Forks.<sup>1</sup> On the morning of April 2, General Merritt was sent across Hatcher’s Run, and north-westerly across the Southside Railroad to engage the enemy’s cavalry in that direction. On page 370 of “The Virginia Campaign,” General Humphreys outlines the movements of the Fifth Corps on the same day, as follows: “General Sheridan moved the Fifth corps up the White Oak road two miles *toward* the Claiborne road, when it returned to Five Forks and moved across Hatcher’s Run on the Ford road, and

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, pp. 494, 495 ; and *Va. Camp.*, p. 354.

across the South Side Railroad to the Cox road, driving out of the way some dismounted cavalry, then moved eastward along the Cox road toward Sutherland Station, *but turned off on the Namozine road*, and halted for the night near Williamson's, at the intersection of the Namozine by the River road. General Crawford's division was sent forward to General Merritt at the crossing of Namozine Creek." This is sustained by the diary of General Fred. T. Locke, assistant adjutant-general Fifth Army Corps, for April 2, 1865, from which we are permitted to quote, as follows: "Marched at 6 A. M. *toward the Claiborne road*. Received orders to cross Hatcher's Run to Cox's Station. Arrived at South Side R. R. at 2 P. M. Captured one engine and three cars, and tore up the rails. Moved up to Sutherland's Station, thence to Williamson's house, and went into camp about 6.30 P. M. Crawford with 3rd Division moved out on the Namozine road and had a skirmish about 8 P. M. developing the enemy's force of two divisions of infantry and one of cavalry." It is not possible that the Fifth Corps could have marched from the Gravelly Run Church Road on the White Oak Road to the Claiborne Road, and thence northward across, or to the vicinity of Hatcher's Run, to within two or three miles of Sutherland Station where General Miles was preparing to attack the enemy, and then counter-marched to its place of starting and again moved north to

Cox's Station, and the movement not have been more fully noted by General Locke, if indeed it could have been accomplished between the hours of six A. M. and two P. M. on roads, partially at least, occupied by the Second Corps moving northward.

The consistent and authoritative narrative of General Humphreys records that, at half-past five in the afternoon of April 1, General Grant directed the left of the Second Corps to be thrown forward so as to hold the White Oak Road and prevent any force of the enemy being sent by that road against General Sheridan at Five Forks. General Miles's division was promptly advanced and occupied the road in force. At nine o'clock on the night of the 1st, General Grant, learning of the defeat of General Pickett, and being anxious lest General Lee should abandon his lines and drive General Sheridan from his position, ordered that General Humphreys should feel for a vulnerable point in the enemy's intrenchments, and if such should be found, that he should attack at once, and if successful push after the enemy. General Humphreys was further directed, if an attack should prove impracticable, to send General Miles to reinforce General Sheridan. A heavy fire was at once opened from the corps artillery, and General Miles's and General Mott's divisions attacked with vigor; but, though they forced their way close to the slashings of the intrenchments, they

could not carry them; and General Miles was sent to General Sheridan *shortly after midnight*, communication with his cavalry along the White Oak Road having been previously opened. General Mott's left was then thrown back; but both he and General Hays held close up to, and constantly felt, the enemy through the night, with their divisions ready for immediate assault should opportunity offer.

This occupation of the White Oak Road, and subsequent laborious precautions for General Sheridan's safety, are entirely ignored by Generals Grant and Badeau, except in that they state that General Miles was directed by General Grant to reinforce General Sheridan.

General Humphreys states that, his command having been weakened by detaching General Miles, he was directed not to attack the Crow House redoubts during the night of the 1st and 2d. But about six A. M., on the 2d, learning from General Meade of the success of the assault on the right, and his preparations having been made during the night, he directed General Hays to assault; which he did successfully, capturing redoubts, artillery, and the greater portion of the garrison. About half-past seven General Mott captured the intrenched picket line in his front, and *about half-past eight* the enemy were moving out of their intrenchments by their right flank, sharply attacked by General Mott. *At nine o'clock General Miles, on the White Oak Road*



*about two miles west of the Claiborne Road Junction, reported his command as on its return, and General Humphreys directed General Miles, General Mott, and General Hays to pursue the enemy by the Claiborne Road toward Sutherland Station.* By this movement, which was in strict compliance with general instructions repeatedly given by General Grant, General Humphreys expected to close in upon the rear of all of the enemy's forces which were cut off from Petersburg, while General Sheridan with his command would probably strike them in front and flank. This force of the enemy consisted of four brigades of General Hill's corps, under General Heth; General Johnson's and General Pickett's divisions under General Anderson; and General Fitz Lee's cavalry division.

General Humphreys reported his intentions immediately to General Meade, and his orders were countermanded — General Badeau and the *Memoirs* state — by direction of General Grant. General Mott and General Hays were now ordered to move eastward by the Boydton Road and connect on the right with the Sixth Corps, and did so. General Miles was to move in the same direction by the first road found after crossing Hatcher's Run; but when General Humphreys overtook him near Sutherland Station, he found that General Miles had there brought to bay the four brigades under General Heth.

General Miles was satisfied he could defeat the force before him; and being thus assured, General Humphreys left the matter in his hands and rejoined the remainder of his command then moving toward Petersburg.

General Miles assaulted first with the brigades of Colonels Nugent and Madill, but was repulsed. A second attack was made at about half-past twelve by Colonel Madill's brigade under General McDougall; but this was also repulsed. About three o'clock, General Miles, having enveloped the enemy's right with a heavy skirmish line, successfully assaulted his left with Colonel Ramsey's brigade, sweeping behind the breastworks and capturing six hundred prisoners, one battle flag, and two guns.

General Humphreys says: "About half-past two General Meade, having learned that General Miles needed support, directed General Humphreys to take one of his divisions toward Sutherland Station for that purpose. Arriving there by the Cox road, General Humphreys found that General Miles's last attack *had been* completely successful. Probably the whole force would have been captured in the morning had the Second Corps continued its march toward Sutherland Station."<sup>1</sup>

General Grant's remark, "By this time [General Miles having come up with the enemy at Sutherland Station] Humphreys having got

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 368, 369.

through the outer works in his front, came up also and assumed command over Miles, who commanded a division in his corps," is unjust; inasmuch as General Humphreys had carried the intrenchments in his front while General Miles was yet on the White Oak Road two miles west of the Claiborne Road Junction; and further, in that General Humphreys "assumed" no authority, but simply resumed command of his subordinate who reported back to him with his command after the enemy's lines had been carried, *as General Grant has stated in his official report.* General Grant is unjust also when he says: "I had sent an order to Humphreys to turn to his right and move toward Petersburg. *This order he now [when finding General Miles confronting the enemy at Sutherland Station] got, and started off, thus leaving Miles alone.*" Had this been the actual state of the case, General Humphreys would only have done in obedience to orders what General Badeau states, with evident satisfaction, was done by General Sheridan in consequence of General Humphreys's resumption of his legitimate authority. But General Badeau has located General Sheridan as crossing Hatcher's Run with the Fifth Corps, and he must therefore have been at least five miles distant from General Miles and General Humphreys; while the order taking the Second Corps towards Petersburg was received by General Humphreys in time for him to direct the

divisions of Generals Mott and Hays to move by the Boydton Road. He had overtaken General Miles for the purpose of turning him also toward Petersburg, but finding him confronting the enemy, and being very willing his subordinate should "achieve a separate renown," *when he was assured of General Miles's confidence in his ability to cope with the force in his front*, he left him, in order that he might reap the benefit of the opportunity he had gained. This would appear to relieve both General Sheridan and General Humphreys of the imputation of having left General Miles in the lurch.

General Grant also reflects unnecessarily upon General Humphreys in the petulant brevity of his "He went himself," with which he closes his statement that he directed him to send a division back to General Miles's relief. General Badeau's statement that General Grant had intended to leave General Sheridan in full command of that part of the field explains the irritability of the notation; but General Humphreys states that General Meade directed him "to take one of his divisions toward Sutherland Station," on learning that General Miles might need support. General Meade was evidently unaware of any valid reason for depriving General Humphreys of the command of the Second Army Corps.

Both General Grant and General Badeau persist in connecting General Sheridan with General Miles's victory. General Humphreys frankly

credits the whole achievement to General Miles. General Badeau claims that, after crossing Hatcher's Run with the Fifth Corps, General Sheridan "marched rapidly towards Sutherland, and *came up in flank and rear of the enemy opposing Miles, just as Humphreys was returning on the right from Petersburg.*" General Grant is more explicit, saying that "Sheridan then took the enemy at Sutherland Station on the reverse side from where Miles was, and *the two together captured the place,*" and further, that "Miles bivouacked for the night on the ground which *he with Sheridan had carried so handsomely by assault.*"

The plan adopted by General Miles in his last and successful assault is stated by General Badeau, as follows: "He made a feint against the rebel right, pushing a strong skirmish line *around that flank until he overlapped it and reached to the railroad;* and while the enemy's attention was thus diverted, at 2.45 P. M. he *assaulted the opposite flank.*" In order, therefore, to come up "in flank and rear of the enemy opposing Miles," General Sheridan, coming from the west, would have been obliged to cross the South Side Railroad to the River Road; but, according to General Badeau, it was *nightfall* when General Sheridan overtook the *routed* enemy on that road. It is difficult, also, to understand how General Sheridan, as stated by General Grant, took the enemy "on *the reverse side* from where Miles was."

General Badeau states that General Sheridan "came up . . . just as *Humphreys* was returning on the right from *Petersburg*." General *Humphreys* states that about half-past two General *Meade* directed him to return with one division toward *Sutherland Station*. As he was about five miles from that point when receiving the order, it can hardly be doubted that it was at least *four o'clock* before he reached the battle field. General *Badeau* states that General *Miles's* assault was made at 2.45 P. M. General *Humphreys* says "about three o'clock," and he states unreservedly that on his return he "found that General *Miles's* last attack had been completely successful." The diary of the adjutant-general of the Fifth Corps locates that command arriving at *Cox's Station*, at least three miles west of *Sutherland Station*, at 2 P. M., tearing up the railroad. That work could not have been completed even by the Fifth Corps, in time to take any part in the assault made by General *Miles* at 2.45 P. M.

The paragraph, on page 525, with which General *Badeau* closes his account of General *Miles's* movements on April 2, illustrates the thorough inconsistency of the attempts to share General *Miles's* triumph with another. He says: "Miles had been ordered to pursue the enemy towards *Petersburg*, and advanced in that direction about two miles, when he met *Humphreys* with *Hays's* division coming up to his relief. He thereupon returned to *Sutherland* and went into bivouac."

Only half a page back, he had described General Miles's assault upon the left flank of the enemy which effectually cut them off from Petersburg, and but a few lines still further back he had recorded General Sheridan as arriving "in flank and rear of the enemy opposing Miles, *just as Humphreys was returning on the right from Petersburg.*"

It would seem in fact that it would have been wiser in General Grant had he adhered to the statement credited to him by General Badeau, on this same page 525, viz. : "*Miles has made a big thing of it, and deserves the highest praise for the pertinacity with which he stuck to the enemy and wrung from him victory.*"

## CHAPTER XII.

### FROM JETERSVILLE TO APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE.

ON the morning of April 6, 1865, General Sheridan with his cavalry was dispatched from Jetersville in the direction of Deatonville, and General Meade, with the Second, Fifth, and Sixth corps, moved toward Amelia Court House. At half-past eight A. M., when about four miles out from Jetersville, General Humphreys discovered a strong column of the enemy moving westward on the north bank of Flat Creek. He immediately ordered General Mott to send a brigade to attack and develop the force, and halted the rest of his command; sending the information to General Meade and preparing to cross the creek. General Miles opened fire upon the column with artillery, and thus announced that the rear of General Lee's army was overtaken. General Meade directed the Second Corps to move on Deatonville; the Fifth Corps through Painesville, on the right of the Second, to Ligontown Ferry; and the Sixth, through Jetersville to the left of the Second.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 378, 379.



Of this, General Badeau says: "As soon as the retreat of Lee from Amelia became a matter of certainty, the direction of the Army of the Potomac was changed, and the whole command faced west instead of north. The Sixth corps, which had been on the right, was moved across the rear of the army to the left; the Fifth corps marched to the extreme right, and the Second became the centre. This disposition afforded an admirable opportunity to attack the rebels in flank, and was made under the immediate direction of Grant."<sup>1</sup>

General Grant is here more candid than General Badeau. He says: "When the move towards Amelia Court House had commenced that morning, I ordered Wright's corps, which was on the extreme right, to be moved to the left past the whole army, to take the place of Griffin's, and ordered the latter at the same time to move by and place itself on the right. *The object of this movement was to get the 6th corps, Wright's, next to the cavalry, with which they had formerly served so harmoniously and so efficiently in the valley of Virginia.*

"The 6th corps now remained with the cavalry and under Sheridan's direct command until after the surrender."<sup>2</sup>

General Grant is clearly in error in this last statement. The Sixth Corps, changing position, formed the left of General Meade's line, as

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., pp. 568, 569. <sup>2</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 473.

stated. As such it took part in the engagement at Sailor's Creek on the afternoon of the 6th. On the 7th it moved to Farmville, and crossing the Appomattox at that place, on the evening of the same day, remained with the Second Corps under General Meade's immediate orders until the end. On the 6th, after changing position, the Fifth Corps became the right of General Meade's line and marched through Paineville to Ligontown Ferry, a distance of thirty-two miles. On the 7th it was ordered by General Meade to Prince Edward Court House. Early in the morning of the 8th it moved toward Appomattox Court House, joined the Twenty-second Corps at Prospect Station, and, under General Ord's command, the two corps reached Appomattox Court House about ten A. M. on the 9th, as General Ord states, barely in time, "for in spite of General Sheridan's attempts the cavalry was falling back in confusion before Lee's infantry; . . ."

We return now to the morning of April 6. General Meade's orders being received, the Second Corps crossed Flat Creek, part of the troops wading in water up to their armpits, and part on bridges hastily constructed by themselves. General Gordon's corps was at once engaged and a sharp running fight ensued which continued uninterruptedly over a distance of fourteen miles. The country was broken and difficult in places, but artillery moved with the skirmish line, and the lines of battle followed

closely "with a rapidity and good order that is believed to be unexampled."<sup>1</sup> General Badeau says: "the lines of battle followed the skirmishers so closely and rapidly as to astonish veteran soldiers."<sup>2</sup> Arriving at the forks near J. Hott's house, where the road running north to Perkinson's Mills on Sailor's Creek leaves the road from Deatonville to Rice's Station, General Humphreys — leaving the commands of General Anderson and General Ewell, together numbering about ten thousand men, but without any artillery, to be engaged on the Rice's Station Road by the cavalry and Sixth Corps — pressed on after General Gordon's corps, which turned down the road to Perkinson's Mills, and continued his running fight. Just before dark General Gordon made his last determined stand at the mills, and after a sharp engagement was again defeated. In this fight, made by General Humphreys with *but two divisions* of his corps over fourteen miles of country, several partially intrenched positions defended by artillery were carried, and thirteen flags, four guns, seventeen hundred prisoners, and a large part of the main trains of General Lee's army were captured. One division (General Barlow's) of the Second Corps was not engaged on the 6th, having been detached to the extreme right on erroneous information of a column of the enemy being on the Paineville Road. According to the Records of the War

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, p. 379.

<sup>2</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., p. 578.

Department, an aggregate of seven thousand two hundred officers and men of General Gordon's corps were paroled, April 9, 1865. The force encountered on the Rice's Station Road, April 6, by the Sixth Corps and the cavalry corps (*two corps*), under General Sheridan, numbered but ten thousand men and was without artillery.

In his official report of the movements of the 6th, General Grant says: "The movements of the 2d corps and General Ord's command contributed greatly to the day's success."<sup>1</sup> In the Memoirs he is silent concerning the Second Corps but, after relating the desperate combat and gallant death of General Read, Colonel Washburn, and their comrades (the only portion of General Ord's command engaged that day) near Farmville, about noon of the 6th, he conjectures that "the Confederates took this to be only the advance of a larger column which had headed them off, and so stopped to intrench; so that this gallant band of six hundred had checked the progress of a strong detachment of the Confederate army.

"This stoppage of Lee's column no doubt saved to us the trains following."<sup>2</sup>

The Record fails to establish even this compensation for the sacrifice of that little band of heroes. General Ord, with the Twenty-fourth Corps, arrived at Burkesville late at night on April

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 625.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, pp. 474, 476.

5, under orders from General Grant to intrench for the night, "and in the morning to move west to cut off all the roads between there and Farmville."<sup>1</sup> On page 567 of his third volume, General Badeau adds the following information: "Grant had already directed Ord to cut the bridge at Farmville. . . . The Southside railroad crosses the Appomattox twice in this immediate neighborhood, first at High bridge, five miles east of the town, and again directly in Farmville. The wagon road to Lynchburg also crosses the Appomattox in the town. The river was too deep to ford, and *Farmville therefore became the point aimed at by both armies.*" Nevertheless, though the reconnoissance of General Davies on the 5th had ascertained the movement of the Confederate trains westward upon the roads leading to the crossings of the Appomattox at and below Farmville, the cavalry corps under General Sheridan remained near Jetersville, and, during the night of the 5th, General Ord was further instructed by General Grant to "move west at eight *A. M.* tomorrow," and cautioned, both then and upon the morning of the 6th, that General Lee was apparently moving direct for *Burkesville.*<sup>2</sup> In obedience to his instructions, before daylight of the 6th, General Ord sent two small regiments of infantry, together numbering but five hundred men, and his head-

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 468.

<sup>2</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., pp. 563, 567.

quarter escort of eighty cavalry, under Colonel Washburn, of the Fifth Massachusetts Regiment, to burn the bridges at Farmville and High Bridge, if not too strongly guarded, and then fall back upon the main command. General Theodore Read, of General Ord's staff, conducted the party. General Ord, moving westward later with his command, came upon General Longstreet's corps *intrenched* at Rice's Station; but it was night before the Twenty-fourth Corps was in position to attack. General Ord had endeavored to communicate with General Read and Colonel Washburn, to warn them of the Confederate movements, but was unsuccessful. The little command passed through Farmville, and *about mid-day*, when within about two miles of High Bridge, encountered two divisions of Confederate cavalry under General Rosser. As a result, General Read, Colonel Washburn, and all the Federal cavalry officers were killed, and after a magnificent fight the entire command was captured or destroyed.

General Longstreet with his corps left Amelia Springs on the evening of April 5; and marching during the night reached Rice's Station, on the Lynchburg Railroad, *about sunrise of the 6th*, and there halted to wait till the troops in his rear guarding the trains should come up. General Lee joined him here during the course of the morning. General Fitz Lee's cavalry halted for the night at Amelia Springs, but marched at

daylight, and reached the vicinity of Rice's Station just before noon of the 6th. General Anderson, with his command, followed General Longstreet, halting during the morning at J. Hott's house to protect the trains passing west on the Jamestown Road. General Ewell, with the remainder of the Confederate forces, left Amelia Springs soon after eight o'clock in the morning, General Gordon's corps being his rear-guard.<sup>1</sup> General Crook and General Merritt, endeavoring on the morning of the 6th to push through to Deatonville, found the moving trains under a guard too strong to be forced until the Second and Sixth corps had closed down upon the retreating column; and history says that these trains were saved to the Federal troops by the tireless energy and ability of General Humphreys, seconded by the gallantry of his command, rather than by any other agency.

The Second Corps resumed the pursuit at half-past five in the morning of the 7th, and came upon High Bridge just as the enemy had set fire to the railroad bridge and were attempting to burn the wagon road bridge. General Barlow, being in the lead, sent his advance forward at double-quick and secured the wagon bridge; and Colonel Livermore, of General Humphreys's staff, with a party, extinguished the fire on the railroad bridge while the enemy's skirmishers were fighting under their feet.

<sup>1</sup> *Va. Camp.*, pp. 377-379.

Crossing the Appomattox at High Bridge, General Humphreys pushed rapidly after the retreating enemy. General Gordon's corps retired up the river, along the railroad bed; and General Humphreys having been informed in the morning, from headquarters, that General Lee was probably moving toward Danville, directed General Barlow to follow General Gordon. Believing that General Lee was moving toward Lynchburg, he himself moved with the divisions of Generals Miles and De Trobriand, on a road intersecting the stage road to that place north of the Appomattox River; and about one o'clock came upon General Lee's whole army in position, covering the plank and stage roads to Lynchburg, at Cumberland Church. General Barlow had overtaken and attacked part of General Gordon's corps and cut off and burned a large number of wagons. Farmville he found to be still in possession of the enemy, who had set the bridges on fire and were crossing a wagon train to the north bank.

On coming in contact with the enemy General Humphreys immediately made dispositions for attack, and pressed a heavy skirmish line close up to develop his position. He found General Lee's whole army on the crest of a long slope of ground, intrenched sufficiently for cover, and with artillery in place. General Fitz Lee's cavalry command covered the rear toward Farmville, supported by General Heth's infantry. General



Humphreys ordered General Barlow up from his position opposite Farmville, and informed General Meade of the fact that he had come up with and was confronting General Lee's whole remaining force; and suggested that a corps should attack from the direction of Farmville at the same time that he attacked from the opposite direction. General Meade sent directions to General Gibbon with the Twenty-fourth Corps, and General Wright with the Sixth Corps, both of which were at or near Farmville, to cross the river there and attack jointly with the Second Corps. Neither General Meade nor General Humphreys were aware that the river at Farmville was impassable.

General Badeau places General Grant in personal command at Farmville at this juncture, and says: "He at once ordered Crook to ford the river and proceed to the support of Humphreys, and the cavalry waded belly-deep across the Appomattox. Next a re-assuring message was sent to Humphreys: 'Your note of 1.20 P. M. to Major General Meade is just seen. Mott's [Barlow's] division of your corps and Crook's cavalry are both across the river at this point. The Sixth and Twenty-fourth corps *are here. The enemy cannot cross at Farmville.*'<sup>1</sup> The Army of the James *was then ordered out of the*

<sup>1</sup> It is to be remembered that General Lee had but barely crossed from Farmville to the north side of the Appomattox River *burning the bridges behind him*, when General Humphreys closed in upon him with the Second Corps.

way, to follow *Sheridan* on the road to Prince Edward, and *Wright* was directed to build a foot bridge for his infantry, and to bring up pontoons for the artillery and the trains. These orders were all obeyed, and *before dark* *Wright's* column was filing across the Appomattox, *Crook* was fighting on the northern bank, and *Ord* was far on the road to Prince Edward."

He continues: "The army of the Potomac had pursued with tremendous vigor, the infantry crossing at one bridge which had already been fired, and building another, and the cavalry wading; the *vanguard* of both *Humphreys* and *Crook* had come up with the enemy north of the river, while on the southern side *Sheridan*, followed by *Griffin* and *Ord* was stretching out rapidly, once more to head the flying column of *Lee* and cut off his hoped-for supplies."<sup>1</sup>

In his official report, General Grant says: "It was soon found that the enemy had crossed to the north side of the Appomattox; but so close was the pursuit, that the 2d corps got possession of the common bridge at High Bridge before the enemy could destroy it, and immediately crossed over. The 6th corps and a division of cavalry crossed at Farmville to its support."<sup>2</sup> In the Memoirs he amplifies somewhat, saying: "Lee himself pushed on and crossed the wagon road bridge near the High Bridge, and at-

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., pp. 584-586.

<sup>2</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 625.

tempted to destroy it. He did set fire to it, but the flames had made but little headway when Humphreys came up with his corps and drove away the rear-guard which had been left to protect it while it was burned up. Humphreys forced his way across with some loss, and followed Lee to the intersection of the road crossing at Farmville with the one from Petersburg. Here Lee held a position which was very strong, naturally, besides being intrenched. Humphreys was alone, confronting him all through the day, and in a very hazardous position. He put on a bold face, however, and assaulted with some loss, but was not assaulted in return.”<sup>1</sup> In addition he repeats, in substance, what General Badeau has said about the Sixth Corps and General Crook’s cavalry division crossing to the support of the Second Corps.

General Crook crossed the Appomattox about four o’clock in the afternoon. General Gregg’s brigade was in advance, and, moving out the Plank Road, encountered General Fitz Lee’s cavalry, supported by General Heth’s infantry. General Lee attacked, General Gregg was captured, and his brigade driven back. *General Crook was then recalled to Farmville, and moved to Prospect Station, about twelve miles west, reaching there about midnight.*

When General Humphreys — waiting the arrival of General Barlow and fully expecting

<sup>1</sup> *Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 476.

that an attack would be made from the direction of Farmville (General Grant's "reassuring despatch" not being received) — heard the sound of the firing in General Gregg's affair, noticing at the same time that the enemy was shortening his right flank, he contracted his left, and extended his right to envelop the enemy's left. While this movement was being made, General Miles thought he saw an opportunity to attack, and attempted it with a part of his First brigade, but was repulsed with considerable loss. General Barlow's division arrived about sunset but could not get into position before dark. General Lee, as was of course anticipated, moved off in the night. General Fitz Lee with the cavalry rear-guard left the ground about midnight.

As an example of what he calls "pressing up against an enemy without *serious* fighting," General Humphreys appends an extract from "McGowan's South Carolina Brigade," upon the situation when the *two divisions* of the Second Corps overtook General Lee's forces at Cumberland Church. It is as follows:—

"The enemy seemed ubiquitous. We were instructed to be prepared to fight on either flank. On our right flank firing was pretty steadily kept up; in our front a regular battle was going on. Mahone's division was engaged, and a portion of Field's. . . . The firing increased in rapidity and extent until three sides

were at once set upon by the enemy. . . . I never was so bewildered as on this occasion. . . .” General Badeau condenses this into “. . . the vanguard of . . . Humphreys . . . had come up with the enemy north of the river.”

The loss of the Second Corps on the 7th was five hundred and seventy-one officers and men killed, wounded, and missing.

General Grant reached Farmville about four o'clock in the afternoon. The “reassuring message” sent by him to General Humphreys is worthy of attention. Except the item in regard to General Crook’s cavalry division, it imparts no information not already had by General Humphreys, and one seeks in vain for word of commendation, encouragement, or promise of support. It is to be remembered too that this despatch was written, and the subsequent orders for the crossing of the Sixth Corps to the north bank given, by the same general-in-chief who just one week before had been so embarrassed and perturbed when General Warren found it necessary to bridge Gravelly Run before sending General Ayres’s division to aid General Sheridan at Dinwiddie Court House. Of that Gravelly Run crossing, General Badeau writes: “The infantry would doubtless have had some difficulty in crossing, but war is full of difficulties as well as dangers, and the officer who allows them to deter and overcome him is apt to terminate his career in failure, and never pleases such superiors as

Sheridan and Grant.”<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, we read that, with daylight in his favor and the enemy almost in sight where they had been brought to a stand by the Second Corps, General Grant here ordered General Wright “to build a foot bridge for his infantry, and to bring up pontoons for the artillery *and the trains.*”

General Badeau fixes the depth of the ford at which General Crook crossed the Appomattox at “belly-deep” — that is about three feet. General Humphreys, on the 6th, had waded Flat Creek *armpit or over four feet deep*, with a portion of the Second Corps, *to reach the enemy he now held at bay.*

In the “Magazine of American History” of October, 1886, Major-General J. W. DePeyster, commenting on the position, and the probable results which would have obtained had the Sixth and Twenty-fourth corps promptly crossed to the north of the Appomattox, remarks: “Why did not this occur? The problem is insoluble. Troops have forded and bridged broader, more boisterous and deeper rivers successfully, under similar and more difficult circumstances, and under fire, crossing victoriously in the teeth of opposition through water arm-pit, even cravat deep, on very many occasions. There was no

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., p. 481. It was in evidence before the Warren Court of Inquiry that, at the Boydton Road crossing of Gravelly Run, the banks were low and marshy, and the stream about four and a half feet deep. The crossing of General Warren's troops was effected in the darkness of night.

lack of material of every kind — buildings and large trees in abundance near at hand. . . . Meanwhile, if the cavalry and infantry got through, artillery could have been hauled across by hand if the teams could not perform their duty. . . . but nothing was done until too late, and Meade telegraphed toward night-fall to Humphreys: 'You must look out for yourself.' He had done so, and he continued to do so." This quotation suggests views held by able and well-informed judges, of the position maintained by General Humphreys on April 7, 1865. If, as General Grant informed General Meade on the 5th, the aim of his movements was "to reach the remnant of Lee's army wherever it may be found, by the shortest and most practicable route,"<sup>1</sup> the opportunity was offered, then and there, by General Humphreys.

It is competent and proper to notice here the undeniable effect had upon the ultimate result by the conduct of the Second Corps on the 7th. By detaining General Lee at Cumberland Church until the night of that date, General Humphreys enabled General Ord to reach Appomattox Court House in time to intercept the further retreat of the remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia. General Ord's infantry which checked the Confederate advance as it was breaking through General Sheridan's cavalry lines, did not reach Appomattox Court House till ten o'clock in the

<sup>1</sup> *Mil. Hist.*, vol. iii., p. 556.

morning of the 9th ; and but for the detention at Cumberland Church, General Lee could readily have reached Lynchburg before that time.

It is proper also to note the fact that, at Cumberland Church, on April 7, 1865, the last attack of the war upon the Army of Northern Virginia was made and maintained by the unsupported Second Corps under the command of General A. A. Humphreys.

These facts have entirely escaped the notice of General Grant and his accredited historian.

About half-past eight o'clock in the evening of the 7th, while General Humphreys, was pressing against the enemy still at Cumberland Church, General Seth Williams, Adjutant-General of the Army of the Potomac, brought to him General Grant's first letter to General Lee, written from Farmville, with the request that it be delivered. General Humphreys at once sent it through his picket line, and authorized a truce for an hour to enable the enemy to carry in their wounded lying between the lines. General Lee's answer was brought back within an hour, and General Williams returned with it *via* High Bridge to General Grant at Farmville.

At half-past five o'clock in the morning of the 8th the pursuit of the enemy was resumed by the Second Corps, followed by the Sixth. While on the march in the morning, General Williams brought to General Humphreys General Grant's



second letter to General Lee. This was forwarded through General Fitz Lee's cavalry rear-guard close in General Humphreys's front. General Lee's answer to this second letter was received by General Humphreys about dusk and was delivered to General Grant about midnight by Colonel Whittier, Assistant Adjutant General of the Second Corps. General Grant and General Meade had halted for the night at Curdsville, about ten miles to the rear.

On the morning of the 9th, General Humphreys received General Grant's third letter to General Lee, written that morning at Curdsville. General Longstreet's command was about three miles distant in front of the Second Corps, and Colonel Whittier was sent forward with the letter. Meeting first one of General Lee's couriers and immediately afterwards Colonel Marshall, of General Lee's staff, he was conducted by the latter to General Lee, to whom he delivered General Grant's letter. General Lee dictated his answer to Colonel Marshall, who wrote it. General Lee signed it and Colonel Marshall delivered it to Colonel Whittier. The letter was written about nine o'clock in the morning. Returning to General Humphreys, Colonel Whittier was sent to deliver General Lee's answer to General Grant.

But, when nearing New Store that morning, General Grant had turned off from the road followed by the Second and Sixth corps, as Gen-

eral Badeau states, "to join Sheridan's column," apparently deeming *his personal aid now necessary to the commander of the advance of his left wing.*

Colonel Whittier, therefore, delivered General Lee's letter to General Meade at about ten o'clock. General Meade forwarded it, with a note from himself, to General Grant by Lieutenant Pease, of the headquarter staff of the Army of the Potomac. After a ride of twelve or fourteen miles from near New Store, Lieutenant Pease delivered the letters to General Grant, at 11.50 A. M., when about eight miles from Appomattox Court House. General Grant's answer was forwarded to General Lee through General Ord's and General Sheridan's lines. 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 place in history. Near three miles north-east 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.

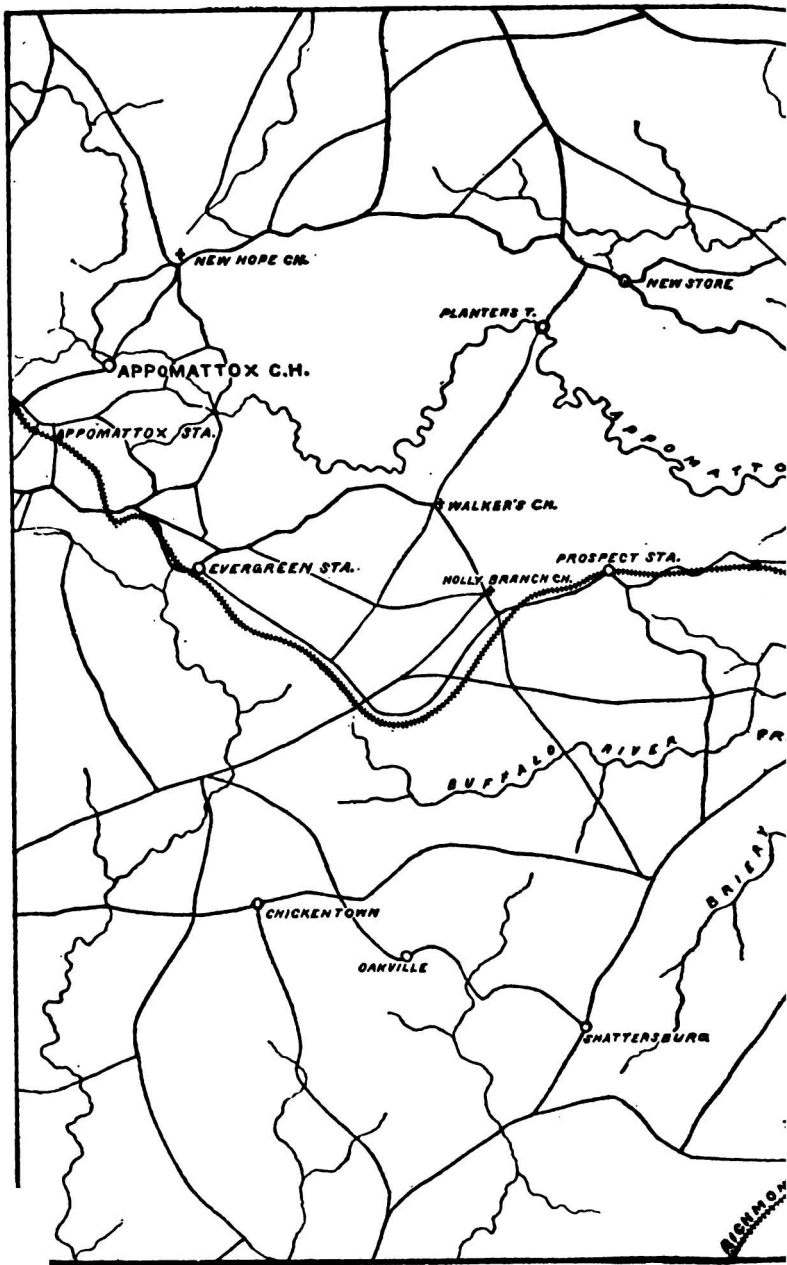
With the letters sent to him for transmission to General Lee, General Humphreys had been

notified that this correspondence was in no way to interfere with his operations. About half-past ten the Second Corps, with the Sixth following closely, began to overtake the rear of General Longstreet's troops. General Humphreys then received two urgent verbal requests from General Lee, by a staff officer bearing a flag of truce, that he would not continue to press forward, but halt and await the issue of pending negotiations for a surrender. Under the instructions he had received he did not feel authorized to comply with these requests; and, having so informed General Lee, he continued his advance. So urgent was General Lee's staff officer in making his last request, that General Humphreys was obliged to send him word twice that compliance was impossible, and that he must retire from the position he occupied on the road not a hundred yards distant from the head of the Second Corps column. At eleven o'clock the Second Corps came up with General Longstreet's intrenched 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 trial of that hour to General Meade? Victory was

beckoning for his grasp, — and dearly the soldier loves the laurel plucked from under battle clouds. No new order even 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 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.



# JETERSVILLE AND APPOMATTOX C.H.



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**By H. B. McClellan.**

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