

The War Fifty Years Ago

Confederate Enterprise In the Far Southwest---Fighting on the Rio Grande---The South Plans to Seize California's Wealth---Federal March Across the Great Desert---A Battle on the Border---A Duel at the Cannon's Mouth---The Famous Scout, Kit Carson, Leads a Charge---Federal Plans For a Spring Campaign---Lincoln's Orders For a General Advance Anticipated In North Carolina and Tennessee.

about 10,000 strong. The Army of the Potomac was covering the line about fifty miles along the Potomac, above and below Washington, part of it being in Maryland and part in Virginia. The Army of Western Virginia was scattered in detachments. That near Munfordsville, Ky., was the force under General D. C. Buell. The army at Cairo consisted of about 30,000 men under General U. S. Grant. It belonged to the department commanded by General H. W. Halleck, who made his headquarters at St. Louis. The flotilla there comprised four new ironclads, which were experiments, and three wooden gunboats. The commander was Commodore A. H. Foote. The naval force on the gulf of Mexico consisted of old line steam frigates, and they were serving on blockade duty. Additions to the fleet were being made daily, but its new commander, Farragut, received his orders only a few days before, and his force was still unorganized. All the forces were commanded by General George B. McClellan, and he laid before the president at the time the order was issued, weeks

By Captain GEORGE L. KILMER, Late U. S. V.

THE summer of 1861 had been an eventful one in the states, and the authorities had paid scant attention to affairs far beyond the Mississippi. The Confederate cause grew day by day in the empire along the Rio Grande and the Gila. By the 1st of August all the forts of southern New Mexico were in the hands of the Confederates, and the commander, Colonel John R. Baylor, by proclamation constituted the Confederate territory of Arizona. Soon afterward General H. H. Sibley arrived and assumed command of the Confederate "Army of



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GENERAL H. H. SIBLEY, U. S. A., COMMANDER IN TEXAS AND NEW MEXICO.

New Mexico" and set out to capture Fort Craig, the extreme southerly post of Union forces in the territory. About this time General E. R. S. Canby was sent from Washington to organize the Federal military and make what defense he could of eastern New Mexico.

General Sibley's instructions on taking command of the Arizona Confederates had been to enlist volunteers promptly in all that region, to open negotiations with the governors of Mexican territory for supplies and as soon as the Federal forces could be driven from New Mexico on the east the Confederates would move toward the coast with the cry "On to San Francisco!" This point gained, the Mexican states adjoining would enter the alliance and an outlet for African slavery and a supply of treasure would be insured to the south at one grand stroke. Sibley certainly intended to raise an army of southern sympathizers in New Mexico, Colorado and California and supply it from Mexico. "The objective aim of the campaign," to use his own words, "was the conquest of California."

March Across the Desert.

The Federal commander on the Pacific coast was General H. G. Wright, and to him occurred the bold idea of striking the Arizona Confederates in the rear by a force organized in California; to march across the desert, recapture the government forts along the southern border, reclaim all the region to the Union and open the old southern mail route between Santa Fe, N. M., and Fort Yuma, Cal. The plan was immediately approved in Washington, and troops were designated to form the expedition. Colonel James H. Carleton of the First California volunteers was chosen leader. The intention was to move during the winter and thus spare the men and animals the exposure to the burning Colorado and Gila deserts, which in summer are considered impassable. The distance to be marched from the rendezvous on the coast to the Rio Grande was upward of 1,000 miles, and that nearly all through a region of complete desolation. But an insurmountable obstacle to the winter march presented itself at once in the shape of unprecedented rains. The country was flooded, open plains became quagmires, and cattle and horses were swallowed up without a chance of rescue. Vehicles of transportation could not move, and after long delay supplies were sent around by water through the gulf of California to Fort Yuma, and a depot was established there. The Confederates occupied Tucson and were pushing westward, and Carleton's advance encountered them within fifty miles of Fort Yuma.

A Battle on the Border.

Meanwhile on Feb. 21, 1862, the Federal and Confederate forces on the southwestern border met in combat at Valverde, N. M. The troops on both sides were chiefly local volunteers, although the Federal ranks were led by regular officers, and many of the Confederate army had served in the old army. The campaign opened with the advance of General Sibley up the Rio

Grande from Texas with 2,000 men to seize or capture the government posts on the river. He arrived opposite Fort Craig on the 21st. General Canby commanded at the fort. A part of the garrison, which numbered 4,000 men, sallied out, crossed the river and drove the enemy from his chosen positions. At 3 o'clock the victory seemed to hang over the Union banners. In desperation Sibley sent two storming parties

against Canby's flanks. The stormers were on foot, armed with shotguns, squirrel rifles, revolvers and lances.

On the Federal right Hill's battery, supported by Colonel Kit Carson's dismounted cavalry and a battalion of regulars, drove back the stormers with fearful slaughter, but on the left there was another story to tell. Captain Alexander McRae's battery formed the chief element of strength on that flank. It was manned by regulars and defended until every horse and half the cannoners had been shot down.

A Duel at the Cannon's Mouth.

Major S. A. Lockridge, an old regular army officer and former comrade of McRae, stood by the last gun, surrounded by his fallen braves. Lockridge placed his palm upon the muzzle of the piece and demanded surrender. The two were not three feet apart. Looking each other in the face, both raised their revolvers and fired. Together they dropped dead in their tracks. The disaster to McRae's battery turned the tide in favor of Sibley, and Canby withdrew his lines to the fort.

Carson commanded the First New Mexico cavalry, and the same characteristics distinguished him in the army that he displayed in the exploring and hunting camps. He attacked Sibley's men boldly and was gaining the day when sudden orders came to retreat across the river. In his report Carson offered no protest, but simply said that his command was sweeping everything before it when it was called off.

Canby remained isolated in Fort Craig until Sibley was disposed of through natural causes. The Confederates marched up the river to Albuquerque, where Canby planned to attack them. But all the subsistence of the region was in Federal hands or hidden in private storage. Sibley had no funds to buy from the people and finally retreated toward the Texas border. Learning that Carleton's California column was approaching, he continued on to San Antonio with his force depleted nearly one-half during his campaign up the Rio Grande. Carleton ultimately joined forces with Canby, and the old regular forts on the Rio Grande were held to the end of the war.

Other Events of the Week.

On Feb. 19 the United States congress revived the grade of lieutenant general in the army. It had been held by Washington and ended with his death. Brigadier General U. S. Grant was promoted major general in recognition of his victory at Fort Donelson. The Confederate forces were abandoning their base of supplies at Nashville and retreating westward to the Mississippi river and southward toward Corinth.

Feb. 22 Jefferson Davis and Alexander H. Stephens were inaugurated at Richmond, Va., as permanent president and vice president of the Confederate States of America. In his inaugural address President Davis said that



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GENERAL E. R. S. CANBY, U. S. A., COMMANDER ON THE RIO GRANDE.

within a year a new government had been established over 700,000 square miles of territory. Imposing demonstrations in honor of Washington's birthday were the rule throughout the northern states.

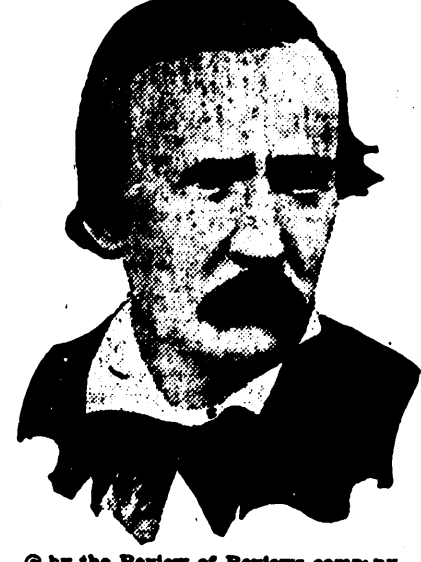
Lincoln's First War Orders.

On Feb. 24 Nashville, the former base of supplies for the Confederate armies in northern Tennessee and Kentucky, was occupied by General Buell's Federal forces. The fall of Fort Donelson on the 16th rendered the position untenable for the Confederates. Its capture had been the chief object of the winter campaign waged by the Federal

forces in southwestern Kentucky and northern Tennessee.

Feb. 22 was the date set for a great military event which did not take place. This was a movement in concert of all the armies and fleets of the United States, as follows:

"Ordered, that the 22d day of February, 1862, be a day for a general movement of the land and naval forces of the United States against the insurgent forces. That especially the army of and about Fortress Monroe, the army of the Potomac, the army of western Virginia, the army near Munfordsville, Ky., the army and flotilla at Cairo and the naval force in the gulf of Mexico be ready to move on that day." For a proper understanding of the application of the order to conditions existing Feb. 22 it is necessary to glance at the situation on that date. The army at Fortress Monroe was



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COLONEL KIT CARSON, U. S. A., LEADER OF NEW MEXICO CAVALRY.

before the date set, a plan of campaign already under way, and Mr. Lincoln permitted the order to go unheeded.

A force was already forming to attack the North Carolina coast. This was the Burnside expedition. A force under General W. T. Sherman was operating around Savannah, Ga., and Beaufort, S. C. General Buell's force in Kentucky was confronted by a large body of Confederates, located in southern Kentucky and Tennessee. General Halleck at St. Louis commanded not only Grant's contingent at Cairo, but detachments operating in Arkansas and Missouri.

Buell and Halleck had already been ordered to act by McClellan, and by Feb. 22 the Confederates had been driven from Kentucky. Nashville was in the grasp of Buell. Fort Henry and Fort Donelson had been captured by the Cairo forces, and Burnside had captured Roanoke island and was firmly established on the coast.

General Plan of Campaign.

McClellan recalled the orders under which the forces named by the president were acting or would be acting before Feb. 22 and outlined the results looked for at the end of the spring campaign. Burnside at the time of his writing, Feb. 8, was about to land on the North Carolina coast, and the army and flotilla at Cairo were actually advancing up the Tennessee river. With success along the line "our position would be: Burnside forming our left, Norfolk held securely; our center connecting Burnside with Buell in eastern Tennessee and north Alabama; Halleck at Nashville and Memphis. The next movement would be to connect with Sherman on the left by reducing Wilmington and Charleston; to advance our center into South Carolina and Georgia; to push Buell either toward Montgomery or to unite with the main army in Georgia; to throw Halleck southward to meet the naval expedition from New Orleans. We should then be in condition to reduce at our leisure all the southern seaports, to occupy all the avenues of communication, to use the great outlet of the Mississippi, to re-establish our government and army in Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas; to force the slaves to labor for our subsistence instead of that of the rebels, to bid defiance to all foreign interference."

The significant thing about McClellan's plans is that they contained the germ of the plans which eventually won success. McClellan's friends gave him credit for the plans. His critics said that the ideas behind the plans were on file at headquarters when he succeeded General Scott in November, 1861. Whoever conceived them, the fact that early in 1862 the forces of the north were moving according to a well devised and practical scheme of concentration and co-operation is of historical interest. All was not left to blind chance, as some critics of the war administration have often declared.

Uncle Zeb Says

The next best thing to getting out of going to visit somebody is to have

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14 head of high grade 8 years old. This is among the best for Mules, that we have ever had for sale. Will do good work HORS
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