CAMPAIGNS OF THE CIVIL WAR

THE PENINSULA

ALEXANDER S.WEBB

CAMPAIGNS OF THE CIVIL WAR. AND THE CAMPAIGNS OF THE CIVIL WAR. AND THE TAY

THE PENINSULA

McCLELLAN'S CAMPAIGN OF 1862

BY

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PREFACE.

To be of any practical use, all history, and particularly military history, must be gradually sifted and reduced to small compass. To carry out this idea, the publishers have asked the writer to prepare for them, in a condensed form, that part of the History of the War of the Rebellion which includes the operations of the Army of the Potomac from the assumption of the command of that army by General McClellan, in July, 1861, to its arrival at Harrison's Landing, in July, 1862.

So much has been written on this subject that it would not at first appear to be a difficult matter to condense the various accounts; but to the writer's task has been added the special work required in comparing and collating for careful investigation the *new material* gathered by the War Department, and now for the first time made the basis of a history of that period. The results of that labor he presents in these pages.

1886

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An actor himself in everything here treated of, he has in a large measure been guided in his research by his memory of scenes never to be effaced, but not by the false impressions of those days, with which, on most occasions, he was heartily in accord.

In speaking of the "President of the United States and his advisers," he must not be understood as recalling or changing at any time his constant and repeated expressions of admiration, affection and regard for the President himself. He appeals to the closing chapter, reviewing the whole work of the army during the twelve months covered by this volume, to prove that he is as loyal to that noble man's memory as ever he was to him in person, and is but doing the work of an honest historian in recording the sad tale of the want of unity, the want of confidence, the want of co-operation between the Administration and the General commanding the army.

In this work we cannot give *in extenso* the most important of the better-known documents, so often printed by the writers on both sides of the questions which arose between General McClellan and the Administration, and omit every one not absolutely necessary to a proper understanding of the narrative. We hope, however, that the attention of thinking men will be attracted to a more thorough investigation of the questions not yet settled, and that this work will serve as an aid to any one who desires to seek what is

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the vital lesson to be derived from our failure on the Peninsula.

We have been unable to do justice to many of our most gallant officers or to their commands, by giving in full the history of their achievements during this campaign. We have been limited in the space assigned to this narrative, and we have been forced to choose between repeating the well-known accounts of various battles and giving from new data the proof of the restless and daring activity of the Rebels who fought us. We have chosen the latter course, believing that there is a public demand for information of this kind. Our sketch of the campaign will, we hope, serve as a reliable introduction to a larger volume.

We are under especial obligations to Secretary of War Lincoln, to Secretary of the Navy Hunt, to Colonel Robert N. Scott, of the Bureau of Archives in the War Department, to Generals Wright, Meigs, Barnes, Humphreys, Keyes, and others, for their continued kindness in furnishing maps and documents, during the four months in which we have been engaged in the preparation of this volume.

NEW YORK CITY, November, 1881.

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CHAPTER I.

GENERAL MCCLELLAN AND THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

WHEN the Union troops returned to Washington from the disastrous field of Manassas, or the better known Bull Run, the usual results of a defeat, where the forces engaged have been raw levies led by untried and unskilled commanders, were presented to the general Government. The capital of the nation was almost within the lines of the rebellious territory. All that was most demoralized or least apt to present either a truthful or fair account of the incidents of the few past days swarmed in the streets of Washington, and through the medium of a sensitive press spread alarm on every side. From such a presentation of the situation in front, it was not to be expected that the Government, surrounded by every evidence of the complete discomfiture of its main army, would be found either ready to view the reverses calmly or to act with the boldness and promptitude which the sudden events then demanded. Centreville, the key-point, or point of safety, twenty miles in advance of Washington, was given up; the reserves, under Colonel Miles, were allowed to leave it; and the whole force of the

nation was immediately called into action to solve the great problem—how to regain the abandoned position and finally compel the submission of the enemy.

The rebels, at first no wiser than ourselves, were there taught that, by a little attention to our general tardiness or want of prompt decision in cases of emergency, they might hold their interior lines for an indefinite period. Men on the defensive are receptive scholars, and we found that our adversaries had learned this great lesson still more perfectly after our bitter experience in the Peninsula campaign.

On July 21st the streets of Washington were crowded with stragglers from the Army of the Potomac. On July 22d, General George B. McClellan was relieved from command of the Army of the West, and that command was given to General W. S. Rosecrans. On July 27th, General McClellan, by order of President Lincoln, assumed control of the lately defeated troops in the vicinity of the capital.

Who was this new general selected to produce order and organize our armies?

George Brinton McClellan was born in Philadelphia, December 3, 1826. He entered the Military Academy in June, 1842, and graduated in June, 1846. After serving under Captain A. J. Smith and Lieutenant Gustavus W. Smith, with the new engineer company of sappers and miners at West Point, he sailed for the army in Mexico in September, 1846, and served with especial distinction until the army under General Scott entered the capital, on September 14, 1847. For distinguished services and personal gallantry he was breveted first lieutenant and captain, to date from the day of the capture of that city. He served at West Point with the Engineer Company; with Captain Randolph B. Marcy, Fifth Infantry, in making the explorations of the

country embraced within the basin of the upper Red River; on the staff of General Persifer F. Smith, in Texas, as Chief Engineer; under Governor Isaac I. Stevens, of Washington Territory, examining the lines of the forty-seventh and fortyninth parallels of north latitude, and determining a railroad route from the head waters of the Mississippi to Puget Sound; was detailed to select a coaling-station in the West Indies; and employed on duties in Washington connected with the Pacific Railroad surveys. In all these various positions he exhibited the largest capacity and the most commendable zeal. As a reward and as an exhibit of the special favor in which he was held by the United States Government, he was appointed one of the Military Commission to Europe to observe the operations in the Crimea. With him were associated General Delafield and Major Mordecai, then majors in the regular army.

At that time he was in his twenty-ninth year, and was one of the youngest captains in the United States Army. Returning from this duty, after hard mental labor, and after gaining a valuable experience as an officer, he served in various stations until 1857, when he resigned his commission and accepted the appointment of Chief Engineer of the Illinois Central Railroad, of which corporation he was made Vice-President in a very short period. In 1860 he was chosen President of the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad, and resided in Cincinnati until the war of the rebellion.

When the rebels had taken Sumter, and the North was turning to the graduates of the military academy for assistance and direction in the organization of the new troops to be ordered into the field, Governor William Denison, of Ohio, naturally sought the advice and counsel of George B. McClellan, and finally appointed him Major-General of the "Militia Volunteers" of that State. His friends realized

that he had a heavy task before him, but his large experience and general military education rendered him equal to its requirements, and he readily organized, equipped, and put in the field the Army of the Department of the Ohio. As the result of his operations in Western Virginia the Government of the United States received from that army the glad intelligence of the rout of Garnett and Pegram, on July 12 and 13, 1861. It was, therefore, but natural that he should have been summoned to Washington to recreate the army which was destined to defend the capital for the next three years.

From July 27th to October 31st, General McClellan remained in command of the Army of the Potomac only, until, on November 1st, he assumed control of the armies of the United States in accordance with General Order No. 94. His own order of that date is noteworthy, as coming from so young an officer on assuming so vast a responsibility. His subsequent orders to General Buell, in charge of the Department of the Ohio, and General Halleck, in charge of that of the Missouri, together with his letters to General Sherman, commanding at Port Royal, and to General Butler in the Southwest, show the vigor of thought and the grasp of the man who had been called to the prosecution of a war which extended over half the continent. He perfected a grand scheme, in which all the armies were to bear their part, and in which the Army of the Potomac had only its subordinate movements assigned to it.

General McClellan became the Commander-in-Chief of the forces of the United States through the expressed will of the people and with the approval of the veteran General Scott. No higher compliment could have been paid the new commander than that contained in the message of President Lincoln, in December, 1861, when he says, that

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"the retiring chief expressed his judgment in favor of General McClellan for the position, and in this the nation seemed to give an unanimous concurrence."

Such was the man who was to command the Army of the Potomac in its campaign against Richmond. No one had then the right to complain or to protest against his appointment. He was at that date our most successful general. He accepted the full responsibility devolved upon him, and the nation has much to thank him for. It was he who organized, equipped, and trained, with skill, that grand body of troops which for four long years "confronted the strongest, best appointed, and most confident army in the South."*

Upon reaching Washington, on July 27, 1861, the General found the forces in and around the city numbering about fifty thousand infantry, less than one thousand cavalry, and six hundred and fifty artillerymen, with nine imperfect field-batteries of thirty pieces and four hundred horses. No more faithful picture of the situation there could be presented than is to be found in the General's own report, as follows:

"On the Virginia bank of the Potomac the brigade organization of General McDowell still existed, and the troops were stationed at and in rear of Forts Corcoran, Arlington, and Fort Albany, at Fort Runyon, Roach's Mills, Cole's Mills, and in the vicinity of Fort Ellsworth, with a detachment at the Theological Seminary, near Alexandria. There were no troops south of Hunting Creek, and many of the regiments were encamped on the low grounds bordering the Potomac—seldom in the best positions for defence, and entirely inadequate in numbers and condition to defend the long line from Fort Corcoran to Alexandria. On the Mary-

^{*} Grant to Washburne, December 23, 1861.

land side of the river, upon the heights overlooking the Chain Bridge, two regiments were stationed, whose commanders were independent of each other. There were no troops on the important Tenallytown road, or on the roads entering the city from the south. The camps were located without regard to purposes of defence or instruction; the roads were not picketed, and there was no attempt at an organization into brigades.

"In no quarter were the dispositions for defence such as to offer a vigorous resistance to a respectable body of the enemy, either in the positions or numbers of the troops, or the number and character of the defensive works. Earthworks, in the nature of têtes-de-pont looked upon the approaches to the Georgetown aqueduct and ferry, the Long Bridge, and Alexandria, by the Little River Turnpike, and some simple defensive arrangements were made at the Chain Bridge. With the latter exception, not a single defensive work had been constructed on the Marvland side. There was nothing to prevent the enemy from shelling the city from the opposite heights, which were within easy range, and which could have been occupied by a hostile column almost without resistance. Many soldiers had deserted, and the streets of Washington were crowded with straggling officers and men, absent from their stations without authority, whose behavior indicated the general want of discipline and organization."

General McClellan immediately appointed his general staff, and the work of receiving, organizing, and preparing for the field an enormous army was forthwith undertaken. On October 27, 1861, he officially reported to the Secretary of War that on that date there were present *for duty* 147,695 men, with an aggregate strength of 168,318. Of this number, 4,268 cavalry were completely unarmed, 3,163 partially

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armed, 5,979 infantry unequipped—making 13,410 unfit for the field, but leaving an effective force of 134,285. He states that he had 76,285 men disposable for an advance, but had but two hundred and twenty-eight artillery pieces ready for the field, and required one hundred and twelve more. This seems to have been a rapid increase for the army in ninety days, being an addition of 40,000 men per month.*

Proceeding to its efficient organization, the General formed the new levies of infantry, upon their arrival in Washington, into provisional brigades, and stationed them in the suburbs of the city to be perfected by instruction and discipline. Brigadier-General F. J. Porter was at first assigned to the charge of these brigades. He was followed by Brigadier-General A. E. Burnside, who, in turn, was soon after relieved by Brigadier-General Silas Casey, who continued in charge of the constantly arriving regiments until the Army embarked for the Peninsula in March, 1862. The new artillery troops reported to Brigadier-General William F. Barry,

* The following abstract from the consolidated monthly returns of the Army of the Potomac shows its strength, from November 30, 1861, to the time it took the field on the Peninsula, inclusive of troops in the Shenandoah, on the Potomac, and at posts in the vicinity of Washington :

	PRESENT	FOR DUTY.	Aggregate	PIECES OF ARTILLERY.			
Date of Returns.	Officers.	Men.	present and absent.	Heavy.	Field.	Mountain	
November 30, 1861 December 31, 1861 January 31, 1862 February 28, 1862 March 31, 1862	6,867 7,653 7,842 7,862 7,760	155,870 175,854 174,831 177,556 171,602	198,238 219,781 222,227 222,018 214,983	133 221 92 69 242	248 293 881 465 440	2 216	

Records Adjutant-General's Office.

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the Chief of Artillery, and the cavalry to Brigadier-General George Stoneman, Chief of Cavalry.

By the opening of the spring of 1862 the expectations of General McClellan appear to have been realized in the creation of as noble a body of men as could have been raised. under similar circumstances, the world over. Exclusive of detachments necessary to garrison the defences of Washington and Alexandria, to retain Manassas and Warrenton, to watch the Valley of the Shenandoah, and guard the Maryland shore of the Potomac, both above and below the capital, which together mustered fifty-five thousand strong, the army proper, intended by its commander to act as a solid body for field operations, represented a force, on the rolls, of 158,000 men. At the close of this volume is inserted a roster showing its final composition and organization, to which the interested reader may wish to refer. From an examination of the tables there given, we may deduce much that would seem to secure to the General-in-Chief, for his labors, the respect and admiration of his countrymen. At the same time, to have been enabled to establish a force of such proportions and efficiency within a few months, he must necessarily have received from the general Government, from the governors of the several States, and from the various bureaus and offices under the War Department, the most cordial and largest assistance. Without that support, and without almost superhuman efforts on their part, such an army could never have been created.

It was an army, furthermore, which was thoroughly representative; an army of volunteers, composing, with the armies elsewhere in the field, the nation's *posse comitatus*. The troops immediately under the leadership of General McClellan, in March, 1862—this Army of the Potomac—were drawn, naturally, from the Eastern and Atlantic States of the Union,

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as the armies operating along the lines of the Tennessee and Mississippi were recruited, in the main, from the Central States and the great Northwest. The New England States contributed a quota of some thirty-five regiments; New York, seventy; New Jersey, ten; Pennsylvania, sixty; Delaware, one; Maryland, nine (posted chiefly along the Potomac); while Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Minnesota were also in line with from one to three thousand men each. The little corps of regulars, mustering in August, 1861, only a thousand strong, had been increased by April 30, 1862, to a respectable and highly effective brigade of 4,600, rank and file, under Brigadier-General George Sykes, then Major of the Third Infantry. Irrespective of the latter, the mass of the army was composed of intelligent voters, coming from every walk in life. It represented the bone and sinew of the land, its truest homes and best industries, its humblest, its toiling, its prosperous, and its educated classes alike. They were men, the vast majority of them, who thoroughly understood the merits of the struggle, who appreciated the value of the principle at stake, who believed they were right, and were ready to support their convictions and their Government with their blood. It was, indeed, a people's cause and a people's war. Bull Run had neither dispirited nor overawed them. That defeat had served only to bring into clearer light the magnitude and desperate character of the work in hand, and they girded their loins for the emergency. They were, in a word, as they have been and always must be described, an organized collection of citizen-soldiers, who did not despair of the Union, and only prayed that they might be ably led against the enemy, that their services and sacrifices might contribute decisively to success.

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CHAPTER II.

CAMPAIGN PLANS.

NECESSARILY, soon after assuming his duties as Commanderin-Chief, General McClellan turned his attention to the entire field of operations, treating the Army of the Potomac as only one, although the most important of the several armies under his control. Already, as Department Commander, he had prepared for the President, at the latter's request, a memorandum setting forth his views as to the proper method of suppressing the rebellion, which views he still retained. and upon which, it is generally claimed by his friends, the subsequent successful campaigns were practically based. He proposed to strike at two centres. East and West-Richmond and Nashville-moving thus into the heart of secession; while, at the same time, expeditionary forces were to assail the principal points on the coast, and on and beyond the Mississippi. War all along the line was his purpose. While he himself marched down into Virginia, General Buell, in Eastern Kentucky, was to secure that State, relieve Eastern Tennessee, and then point to Nashville; General Halleck was to look after the troublesome State of Missouri, and Western Kentucky, and Tennessee; General Burnside was to occupy the coast of North Carolina; General T. W. Sherman was to seize Savannah, but chiefly to prepare to regain Charleston ; for by the capture of that city, "the greatest moral effect would be produced," as it was the birthplace of the rebellion,

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and "the centre of the boasted power and courage of the rebels;" (and lastly, General Butler was to attempt the recovery of New Orleans, by which, the eventual control of the Mississippi could be more easily established.

That this extensive plan might work effectually, General McClellan aimed to deliver the meditated blows, or the principal ones, simultaneously. The responsibility, accordingly, devolved upon him to have everything ready everywhere at the proper moment. This alone would have been a great task, especially as he claims that no general plan existed before his assumption of the chief command, and that he was wholly ignorant of the "utter disorganization and want of preparation" that pervaded the Western armies. "The labor of creation and organization had to be performed there" as well as in the East, says the General; and by January 1, 1862, the forward movement was still delayed. Several months thus passed devoted to preparation, and the country for the most part, understanding that the inaction was necessary, quietly awaited the compensating results that were expected to follow when active movements should begin.

But the trouble was that the delay was protracted too long, even for a patient people. The fall of 1861 passed, and the rebels were as strong as ever and more defiant. The following winter also promised to be one of stagnation, especially for the Army of the Potomac, and soon toward the close of 1861, and in the beginning of 1862, much curiosity and uneasiness was betrayed respecting the intentions of the new and then popular Commander-in-Chief. The latter, however, was clearly determined not to be hurried. As late as February 3, 1862, he wrote to the President, "I have ever regarded our true policy as being that of fully preparing ourselves, and then seeking for the most decisive results ;" and it was not

until a short time before that date, that he disclosed his own plan of campaign in Virginia to the Government authorities. His inaction he reported to be unavoidable. Preparations for the execution of the general plan—the simultaneous movement—were incomplete. He had hoped that everything would have been ready to take advantage of the good weather in the previous December, but it was not. His own army even, he declared, was not yet in condition to take the field. "We are still delayed," he told the President, in his February letter, and, furthermore, gave no hint as to the time when he should be completely ready.

How this unfortunate situation might have been avoidedwhat General McClellan ought to have done during those six months his army remained around Washington-is a speculative question which we do not feel called upon to consider. It will be enough to discuss the plan for action which he finally did propose, and to follow out his movements in the field when actually undertaken. That the delay, however satisfactory or unsatisfactory his own explanation and defence of it may be regarded, worked to his disadvantage and paved the way for future distrust of his generalship, is certain. He drew too heavily upon the faith of the public. By March 1st the nation had incurred a debt of \$600,000,000 for the war; while the results were far from commensurate with such a cost. Dissatisfaction arose, especially at Washington, in Government circles, and in Congress. Criticisms were freely indulged in. The General, in addition, kept his councils to himself, consulted with but one or two favorite officers, and seemed to hold close relations with men not in. political sympathy with the Administration. All this gave umbrage in high places; and it became the more incumbent upon him to act, to act speedily, energetically, and successfully, if he hoped to retain the confidence of the powers to

which he was amenable, or entitle himself to the obligations of a grateful people.

At length General McClellan was compelled to divulge his plans and move forward; and this brings us to some important points in the history of the campaign.

Among those who deeply felt the necessity of renewing the advance upon the enemy, was President Lincoln. An immense and oppressive responsibility rested upon his shoulders. He was constantly anxious both in success and defeat; and extremely anxious now, at the close of the year The situation was anything but satisfactory. 1861. In October previous, the disastrous affair of Ball's Bluff had occurred, in which Colonel Baker, lately of the Senate, lost his life. The rebels, also, had blocked the navigation of the Potomac by planting batteries on the Virginia side twenty or thirty miles down the river; and their flag floated insultingly, from their advanced works on Munson's Hill, in sight of Washington. These untoward circumstances, and the inactivity of McClellan, seemed to have prompted the President, as early as December 1st, to propose informally to the General, a plan of attack upon the enemy-his idea being that a column of 50,000 men should menace and hold the rebels at their Centreville position, while 50,000 more-part going by the Potomac, and part by land-should move to Occoquan Creek below, and place themselves nearer to Richmond than the main body of the enemy were at Centreville. This is interesting, not only as being the first plan, so far as the writer can discover from the records, suggested for the campaign, but as emanating from Mr. Lincoln himself, who made no pretensions to military knowledge; thus disclosing his intense desire that something should be done.

Up to this time, General McClellan had given no intima-

tion of his own plans, other than the general assertion, made in the latter part of October, that "the crushing defeat of the rebel army at Manassas," was the great object to be accomplished; and that the advance upon it "should not be postponed beyond November 25th." On December 10th, however, he wrote a confidential note to the President, apparently in answer to the latter's proposal, in which he impliedly disapproved of it, by stating that he believed the enemy's force to be equal to his own; and then added, "I have now my mind actually turned toward *another plan of campaign* that I do not think at all anticipated by the enemy, nor by many of our own people."* This is the first hint we have that any plan was taking shape in the General's mind; and the first that foreshadowed the final move to the Peninsula.

It will be observed, that here was the possibility of a serious conflict of opinion. In case the President and the General matured plans diametrically opposed to each other, which was to be followed? What is our highest military authority? According to the Constitution, it is the President, Commander-in-Chief of all the land and naval forces of the United States. But if the President disclaims all military ability, as Mr. Lincoln did, it still becomes a question how far he should defer the conduct of a war to his generals commanding in the field. In the closing chapter of this work certain precedents are adduced upon this point, showing the position assumed by our Presidents during the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. They asserted their right to disapprove and interfere, and the propriety of their interference seemed to be justified. There never was any question in President Lincoln's case, as to his right to order and direct; but the dilemma lay here-whose plans and ad-

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^{*} See Appendix to Raymond's Life of Lincoln for this note and the President's plan referred to.

vice should he follow where it was necessary for him to approve and decide, where he did not or would not trust his own judgment? Should he lean implicitly on the general actually in command of the armies, placed there by virtue of his presumed fitness for the position, or upon other selected advisers? We are bold to say that it was doubt and hesitation upon this point, that occasioned many of the blunders of the campaign. Instead of one mind, there were many minds influencing the management of military affairs.

To one source of this influence, beyond the members of the President's Cabinet, who were by right his advisers, we must revert. This was the Joint Committee of Congress, appointed in December, 1861, to inquire into the conduct of the war. Its members were Hons. Benjamin F. Wade, of Ohio, Zachariah Chandler, of Michigan, and Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee, from the Senate ; and Hons. Daniel W. Gooch, of Massachusetts, John Covode, of Pennsylvania, George W. Julian, of Indiana, and Moses F. Odell, of New York, from the House of Representatives. Organizing December 20th, with Senator Wade as chairman, it proceeded to summon many of the general officers of the army to obtain their views as to its efficiency, and the best lines of advance upon the enemy. It was a strong representative committee, and not only held consultations with the President and the new Secretary of War, Hon. Edwin M. Stanton, but also with the President and his entire Cabinet. No record of these interviews appears to have been preserved; but no one can doubt their effect upon the Administration in influencing its action. Executive, Cabinet and Committee, were in earnest in their wish to prosecute the war to a speedy and successful termination.

In common with the President and the country at large, this Committee was entirely dissatisfied with the prolonged

inactivity of the Army of the Potomac. The members were especially mortified and indignant that the rebels should have been suffered to blockade the Potomac River so long, preventing free access by water to the capital of the nation, and thereby seriously affecting our delicate relations abroad. They demanded from the Secretary of War that the blockade should be raised-the chairman, on one occasion, using "pretty strong and emphatic language" on the subject in the presence of both the Secretary and General McClellan; and in their report the Committee lay the blame upon the General, who, in his report, holds the navy accountable. Again, the Committee examined many officers on the subject of organizing the army into corps; and finding great unanimity as to the necessity of such organization, pressed the matter upon the attention of the President more than once. Their last consultation with him on this subject occurred on March 5th, when he promised to take the matter "into earnest and serious consideration." Three days later, on the 8th, he promulgated an order dividing the army into four army corps, to the command of which Generals McDowell, Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes were assigned. The order was contrary to the wishes of McClellan, who proposed to defer the organization until after active operations had opened. The Committee, furthermore, obtained opinions from officers as to the best line of attack for the army to follow: and seemed to have become impressed with the superior advantages of a direct advance upon Centreville. That its preferences were known to the President, can hardly be questioned. Indeed, without a particular examination of the proceedings of this important Committee and a proper estimate of its influence, the action of Mr. Lincoln and his Cabinet, in certain matters affecting this campaign, cannot be fully understood. That body must be counted

among the President's most influential advisers. It was a power during the war.

Returning to the plan of the campaign, we find that Mr. Lincoln, who on December 1st had suggested operating against the enemy in front and flank, took up the matter again early in January following, by seeking the opinions of a few of the more prominent generals in the army. General McClellan had had the misfortune of falling ill about the middle of December, and was confined to his house for nearly a month. Mr. Lincoln, more than ever exercised and worried over the delays, called in Generals McDowell and Franklin, and in a confidential interview inquired as to the possibility of soon commencing active operations with the Army of the Potomac. The President stated that "if something was not soon done, the bottom would be out of the whole affair."* A day or two later these officers, who had consulted with Quartermaster-General Meigs and others, reported, that of the two lines of attack considered-one direct upon the enemy, the other by moving the army to another base down the Chesapeake-they advised the former, which could be undertaken in three weeks. † General McClellan, recovering from his illness, and finding that "excessive anxiety for an immediate movement of the Army of the Potomac had taken possession of the minds of the Administration," finally unfolded his plan of operations to the President, which contemplated an attack upon Richmond by the lower Chesapeake. He was not in favor of a direct attack upon

^{*} General McDowell's memorandum in Swinton's "Army of the Potomac,"

[†]General Franklin, it seems, favored a movement by way of the York River, and so testified before the Committee on the Conduct of the War; but according to General McDowell's statements (in Swinton) he deferred his plan in favor of a direct attack on the enemy as the most feasible at that time, namely, in January, and because of the President's wish for immediate action.

the enemy at Centreville. But the President had now become confirmed in his preference for the latter plan by the opinions of McDowell, Franklin and Meigs; and undoubtedly, as stated above, by the known preferences of the Committee on the Conduct of the War. We thus find the two leaders upon whom the eyes of the nation were then fixed—Mr. Lincoln and General McClellan—at issue with each other at a most critical moment.

It has been, and probably always will be one of the standing questions of dispute in this campaign, whose plan was the soundest, the President's or the General's? The President, certainly, was so far convinced of the advisability of adopting his own, or, as it may be called, the Administration plan, that he formally disapproved of McClellan's, and in a *special* war order, "No. 1," dated January 31st, directed that the Army of the Potomac, "after providing safely for the defence of Washington," should move forward, on or before February 22d, and seize and occupy a point upon the railroad southwest of Manassas Junction. The first effect of this, would be the withdrawal of the enemy from their position in front of the capital. Four days before—January 27th—the President had ordered a general advance of all the armies of the United States upon the same date.

General McClellan, feeling that his own plan should be preferred, obtained permission from Mr. Lincoln to present his reasons therefor, in full; and in a letter prepared under date of February 3d, he reviewed the military situation at large and discussed in particular the two different lines of advance proposed for the army of the Potomac. The "best possible plan," in his judgment, he believed to be, to descend the Potomac, enter the Rappahannock, land at Urbana for a base, and by a rapid march gain West Point at the head of the York River; and thus threaten Richmond before John-

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ston's army at Centreville could fall back and meet him in condition to resist his progress. In other words, he proposed to outflank the enemy far on the left, and suddenly turn the tables by making the vicinity of Richmond and not Washington, the theatre of operations. This plan, he claimed, presented the shortest land route to the Confederate capital, and struck directly at the heart of the enemy's power at the East. Explaining further, he wrote :* "The total force to be thrown upon the new line would be, according to circumstances, from one hundred and ten thousand to one hundred and forty thousand. I hope to use the latter number by bringing fresh troops into Washington, and still leaving it quite safe. I fully realize that, in all projects offered, time will probably be the most valuable consideration. It is my decided opinion that in that point of view, the second plan should be adopted. It is possiblenay, highly probable, that the weather and state of the roads may be such as to delay the direct movement from Washington, with its unsatisfactory results and great risks, far bevond the time required to complete the second plan. In the first case, we can fix no definite time for an advance. The roads have gone from bad to worse. Nothing like their present condition was ever known here before; they are impassable at present. We are entirely at the mercy of the weather. It is by no means certain that we can beat them at Manassas. On the other line I regard success as certain by all the chances of war. We demoralize the enemy by forcing him to abandon his prepared position for one which we have chosen, in which all is in our favor, and where success must produce immense results. My judgment as a general is clearly in favor of this project. Nothing is cer-

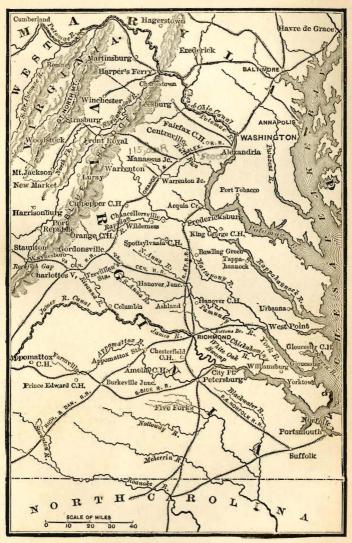
* To Secretary Stanton.

tain in war, but all the chances are in favor of this movement. So much am I in favor of the southern line of operations, that *I would prefer the move from Fortress Monroe as a base*, as a certain though less brilliant movement than that from Urbana, to an attack upon Manassas. I know that the President and you and I all agree in our wishes, and that these wishes are to bring this war to a close as promptly as the means in our possession will permit. I believe that the mass of the people have entire confidence in us—I am sure of it. Let us then look only to the great result to be accomplished, and disregard everything else."

The merits of the Administration plan, on the other hand, as claimed by its advocates, lay in the fact, that a direct advance upon the enemy in front, first of all, kept the army between Washington and the rebels and rendered a counter attack upon the city impossible. This was a point of the greatest consequence. Washington, at all events, for sound political reasons, should be secured from insult and capture. The direct attack also involved a smaller expenditure of time and money; and in case of disaster, retreat could be effected with less difficulty.

Now, in regard to the Urbana plan, pronounced absurd by some of our best critics, we think that it was bold and not rash; that it was general and not limited. It was proved to be possible, if carried out as at first conceived. What principle of war is violated we are not prepared to discuss, unless we take time and space to show how little we applied such principles throughout the contest. In handling the army of the Potomac, our main principle was to secure Washington and take Richmond.

The rebels' principle was to take advantage, after they had had experience, of every demonstration of distrust or doubt of our ability to do that which would have been ordinarily done in war.



Field of Operations in Virginia.

This plan comprehended decided and active operations in the Shenandoah Valley; it designed to turn Yorktown and Gloucester; it ignored Norfolk and the use of the James; it carried with it all the dash of spirit a good plan should require and produce.

General McClellan became convinced that the enemy had 115,000 men at Manassas and on its flanks; and upon these false data, he determined that he could not take or turn those works. He was therefore driven to other plans than those involving direct attack. He did not prepare to carry out the plan proposed and endorsed by President Lincoln.

His sole object was to bring his army, as an invading army, as close to the enemy's capital as possible. He hoped to prevent unnecessary bloodshed; he expected to demoralize the enemy by rapid movements, bringing his army close to Richmond, to meet the rebels near that point before their troops should be "brought well in hand."

There was nothing in this plan new or impossible.

One of the best military authorities we have now living, General A. A. Humphreys, late Chief of Engineers, former Chief of Staff to General Meade, late Commander of the Second Army Corps in front of Richmond, was in favor of this movement. Combined with a strong and active series of operations in the valley, it threatened Richmond in rear and front, and *protected Washington*; and it would have forced a sudden attempt to bring about reconciliation and a patchwork peace from the rebels then and there, if our rulers were meek enough to make such a one. Some feared they were. They proved they were not. The fears of our best counsellors were transmitted to our generals. Politics entered and strategy retired.

The general commanding had conceived a plan which could have been carried out; and which would have placed us close to the city of Richmond in a very few days. He foresaw the trouble we afterward encountered by the direct route. He turned all the defences south of Urbana, and protected Washington, we repeat, through active operations directly upon Richmond; and more than all, he protected Washington by menacing the rebel communications with the West, through the operations in the valley of the Shenandoah.

It was absolutely impossible for the enemy to threaten Washington, even morally, if *he* were rapid and dashing in his movements. The movement to Urbana might have been the "stride of the giant."

Criticisms of this plan, based upon operations conducted in countries where every stream is well known, where every road is accurately mapped, and based upon so-called principles of war, cannot apply to this movement of new troops against new levies of insurgents, in a country of which but little was known to either of the commanding generals.

Finally, after many conferences, and the result of a council of war, wherein eight out of the twelve division commanders of the army reported in favor of McClellan's route by way of the lower Chesapeake, President Lincoln yielded his preference, and on March 8th, issued the following order:*

The Committee on the Conduct of the War report that they had "no evidence, either oral or documentary, of the discussions that ensued, or the arguments that were submitted to the consideration of the President, that led him to relinquish his own line of operations, and consent to the one proposed by General McClellan, except the result of this Council of War."

^{*} The generals favoring the Administration plan were McDowell, Sumner, Heintzelman, and Barnard, the latter, Chief of Engineers. Those favoring the Urbana movement were Keyes, Franklin, Fitz-John Porter, W. F. Smith, McCall, Blenker, Andrew Porter, and Naglee, who represented Hooker. Keyes voted with the qualification that no change of base should be made until the Potomac was cleared of the rebel batteries.

PRESIDENT'S GENERAL WAR ORDER, NO. 3.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, March 8, 1862.

Ordered, That no change of the base of operations of the Army of the Potomac shall be made without leaving in and about Washington such a force as, in the opinion of the General-in-Chief and the commanders of army corps, shall leave said city entirely secure.

That no more than two army corps (about fifty thousand troops) of said Army of the Potomac shall be moved en route for a new base of operations until the navigation of the Potomac from Washington to Chesapeake Bay shall be free from the enemy's batteries and other obstructions, or until the President shall hereafter give express permission.

That any movement as aforesaid, en route for a new base of operations, which may be ordered by the General-in-Chief, and which may be intended to move upon the Chesapeake Bay, shall begin to move upon the bay as early as the 18th of March instant; and the General-in-Chief shall be responsible that it so moves as early as that day.

Ordered, That the army and navy co-operate in an immediate effort so capture the enemy's batteries upon the Potomac, between Washington and the Chesapeake Bay.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

L. THOMAS, Adjutant-General.

On March 9th, the day after the issue of this order, the rebels *evacuated Centreville*.

This unexpected evacuation, General McClellan claims in his testimony before the Committee of Congress, to have been induced by information which reached the enemy while he was discussing his plans with the Administration. One reason why he had been so reserved was a mistrust that secrecy was not closely observed by others with whom he was obliged to have official communications. But General Johnston, on the other side, makes no admission that his movements were guided by espionage. He shows, in his .

"Narrative," that the abandonment of Centreville had been contemplated for more than two weeks; and actually begun on March 7th, or the day before the promulgation of the President's order given above. Johnston's reasons for falling back and taking up a new position on the line of the Rappahannock are so fully expressed, that we quote his words : "We had to regard," he says, "four routes to Richmond as practicable for the Federal army: that chosen in the previous July [via Bull Run]; another east of the Potomac to the mouth of Potomac Creek, and thence by Fredericksburg; the third and fourth by water-the one to the Lower Rappahannock, the other to Fort Monroe; and from these points respectively by direct roads. As the Confederate troops in Virginia were disposed, it seemed to me that invasion by the second route would be the most difficult to meet: for as the march in Marvland would be covered by the Potomac, the Federal general might hope to conceal it from us until the passage of the river was begun, and so place himself at least two days' march nearer to Richmond than the Army of Northern Virginia on Bull Run. I did not doubt, therefore, that this route would be taken by General McClellan. The opinion was first suggested by the location of a division of the United States Army [Hooker's] opposite to Dumfries. On the 5th, information from Brigadier-General Whiting of unusal activity in the division opposite to him-that referred to above-suggested that the Federal army was about to take the field, so I determined to move to the position already prepared for such an emergency -the south bank of the Rappahannock, strengthened by fieldworks, and provided with a depot of food ; for in it we should be better able to resist the Federal army advancing by Manassas, and near enough to Fredericksburg to meet the enemy there, should he take that route, as well as to unite with any

Confederate forces that might be sent to oppose him should he move by the Lower Rappahannock or Fort Monroe."*

By the 11th the entire rebel army had moved unmolested to the south bank of the Rappahannock, where Johnston fixed his headquarters near Rappahannock Station.

To but a single fact do we call attention in this connection: that during all the time that army lay at Centreville, insolently menacing Washington and frightening our civil and military authorities into the concentration of an enormous force around the city, it never presented an effective strength of over 50,000 men. †

With more than thrice that number, McClellan remained inactive for many precious weeks, under the delusion that he was confronted by a force very nearly equal to his own. It is astonishing that neither the General, nor the President, nor the searching Committee of Congress, nor the exacting Secretary of War, should have been able to ascertain the truth in the case during this long period. The only sources of intelligence upon which estimates seem to have been made, were the reports of deserters, contrabands, and country people who came into the lines, and underwent an examination at the hands of a detective at headquarters, who ranked upon the rolls as Chief of the Secret Service.

There now again arose the question, what was to be done? Upon hearing that the rebels had left his front, McClellan broke up his camps around the capital and marched toward Centreville, establishing himself at Fairfax Court House.

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^{*} Narrative of Military Operations Directed during the Late War between the States, p. 101. By Joseph E. Johnston, General C.S.A.

⁺ The aggregate "present" in camp in Johnston's army for February, 1862, was 56,392; present for duty, 47,306. McClellan's aggregate, present for duty, for the same month was 150,000 in round numbers, excluding troops in the valley and in Maryland,

CAMPAIGN PLANS.

No wonder the Prince de Joinville describes the young general as appearing anxious and disturbed when directing this movement. To follow the enemy was deemed impracticable; to change the base seemed at this time to be the only plan which would give to the out-generalled army a chance to gain either reputation or increase of spirit.

General McClellan had left his headquarters in Washington, and might well be considered to have taken the field; and on March 11th, the President in another war order, relieved him of the command of all the military departments save the Department of the Potomac. Commanding from this period this army and department only, he confined his attention to active operations.

To repeat—what was to be done under the changed situation? Should the Urbana plan still be carried out?

To solve this new question, a council of war assembled at Fairfax Court House, March 13th, composed of the four Corps Commanders, Generals McDowell, Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes; before whom, in what seems to have been an informal conversation, General McClellan laid the proposition of moving further down the Chesapeake, and making Fort Monroe the base of operations.* This was at last the Peninsula plan, the third that had been considered, a kind of It had already been mentioned by "dernier ressort." McClellan, as a possible alternative, in his letter of February 3d, where he writes : "Should circumstances render it not advisable to land at Urbana, we can use Mob Jack Bavor the worst coming to the worst, we can take Fort Monroe as a base, and operate with complete security, although with less celerity and brilliancy of results, up the Peninsula." Tho Urbana plan had been shorn of its merits and feasibility

* This council was summoned by General McClellan, not by the President.

since Johnston's retirement to the Rappahannock. McClellan now could not expect to steal a march upon him. There remained no other course but to take what the General describes as the safe route between the York and the James. That it was a route which had its advantages will not be denied. It was expected that West Point could be speedily reached at little sacrifice of life; and, as meditated in the Urbana plan, the scene of operations would thus be transferred to the immediate vicinity of Richmond. If the Urbana plan was a good one, as we thoroughly believe it to have been, there are substantial reasons for also regarding the Peninsula plan in a favorable light; securing, as it would have done, about the same, or at least, satisfactory results. Necessarily the approval of any plan must be premised upon the expected vigorous execution of it.

The corps commanders at the council of the 13th, although three of their number (McDowell, Sumner, and Heintzelman) had, as division commanders, disapproved the Urbana plan, adopted General McClellan's final Peninsula proposition, without dissent. Their proceedings were summed up as follows:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,

FAIRFAX COURT HOUSE, March 13, 1862.

"A council of the generals commanding army corps, at the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac, were of the opinion :

"I. That, the enemy having retreated from Manassas to Gordonsville, behind the Rappahannock and Rapidan, it is the opinion of generals commanding army corps that the operations to be carried on will be best undertaken from Old Point Comfort, between the York and James Rivers, provided, 1st, that the enemy's vessel, Merrimac, can be neutralized; 2d, that the means of transportation sufficient for an immediate transfer of the force to its new base can be ready at Washington and Alexandria to move down the Potomac; and 3d, that a naval auxiliary force can be had to silence, or aid in silencing the enemy's batter-

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ies on the York River; 4th, that the force to be left to cover Washington shall be such as to give an entire feeling of security for its safety from menace. (Unanimous.)

"II. If the foregoing cannot be, the army should then be moved against the enemy behind the Rappahannock at the earliest possible moment, and the means for reconstructing bridges, repairing railroads, and stocking them with materials for supplying the army should at once be collected for both the Orange and Alexandria and the Acquia and Richmond Railroads (unanimous). N. B.—That, with the forts on the right bank of the Potomac fully garrisoned, and those on the left bank occupied, a covering force in front of the Virginia line of twenty-five thousand men would suffice (Keyes, Heintzelman, and Me-Dowell). A total of forty thousand men for the defence of the city would suffice (Sumner)."

This was approved by General McClellan, and immediately communicated to the War Department; and on the same day the following reply was received:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, March 13, 1862.

"The President, having considered the plan of operations agreed upon by yourself and the commanders of army corps, makes no objection to the same, but gives the following directions as to its execution:

"1. Leave such force at Manassas Junction as shall make it entirely certain that the enemy shall not repossess himself of that situation and line of communication.

"2. Leave Washington entirely secure.

"3. Move the remainder of the force down the Potomac, choosing a new base at Fortress Monroe, or anywhere between there and here; or at any event, move such remainder of the army at once in pursuit of the enemy by some route.

"EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War. "Major-General George B. McClellan."

But the council demanded a great deal more than it was ever possible to carry out. The whole position of affairs, as presented when General McClellan made known his first

plans, had been changed by the appearance of the rebel ram Merrimac, or Virginia, on March 8th.* Although the navy had neutralized her power in so far as to prevent her injuring our new base, she still prevented us from utilizing the James River, and also demanded the diversion of a large portion of the naval forces to watch her, and prevented the admiral even from considering the practicability of running by the batteries at Yorktown or co-operating with the army in the movement up the Peninsula, had he been called upon so to do. General McClellan (page 118, Report) says : "The general plan, therefore, remained undisturbed, although less promising in its details than when the James River was in our control." Unfortunately, the fact was that we were now to work upon Plan No. 3, or the plan of the council, with the western flank of the Army of the Peninsula resting on the rebel gunboats, and not on the United States Navy.

Here, also, let us present one fatal consequence of McClellan's long dwelling on the Urbana plan, and his delay in executing it. He probably, little thought he would be driven to his "dernier ressort" for a base; and he committed a fatal error in leaving Norfolk to be turned.

Admiral Goldsborough, commanding the fleet in the lower Chesapeake, Assistant Secretary of the Navy G. V. Fox, and General J. G. Barnard had, as early as December, 1861, pointed out to General McClellan the necessity of his taking Norfolk. This rebel navy yard was in full blast, and the rebel rams and the Merrimac were growing, and threatening our navy and our transports. All that was required to secure to us the whole of their machinery, naval supplies, and their fleet, was a detachment of thirty or forty thousand

^{*} The doings of the Merrimac and the subsequent gallant action of the Monitor are omitted here to preserve the continuity of the narrative. We must refer the reader to more extended works for the naval operations.

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men. The capture of Norfolk would have changed everything. General McClellan probably believed that that place would fall through his own then contemplated movement; and he did nothing to carry out these views, so ably presented by our very best naval and military advisers.

Had he made the attempt and secured the success of this movement by a strong attack or feint threatening Manassas, the problem presented to the council of corps commanders would have been very different from the one they encountered at Fairfax Court House.

Nothing that was proposed or ordered, which contemplated making Fortress Monroe a base, had anything to do with General McClellan's first and only well-digested plan.

At this point we defer all further consideration of the campaign plans, and the plan finally adopted, for a brief review in the closing chapter. Why the Peninsula route was at length followed, we have seen. McClellan could not bring himself to adopt the Administration plan of a direct advance upon Centreville and the overland route to Richmond. Mr. Lincoln could not agree with the General in the choice of the Urbana base, but yielded his preferences; especially before the expressed opinion of the council of division commanders. Johnston suddenly moved and deranged the Urbana scheme; and McClellan and his corps commanders could fix upon nothing else than an advance upon Richmond by way of the Peninsula. To this the President gave his consent, under certain conditions; and it remained the final plan for the campaign.

When the plan had been adopted, the Secretary of War naturally required from General McClellan a detailed statement of his designs with regard to the employment of the

Army of the Potomac; and on March 19th the General gave to the Secretary, the following as these details: Fort Monroe was to be the base; the line of operations, that of Yorktown and West Point upon Richmond. A decisive battle was to be expected between West Point and Richmond. To succeed. he wished all the available forces to be collected at once. and to reach West Point as soon as possible, in order that he might establish his main depot there. To reach West Point he stated there were two methods: First, to move directly from Fortress Monroe with the main force, and to land troops near Yorktown, driving out the troops south of that point; then reduce Yorktown and Gloucester by a siege ; second, to make a combined naval and land attack upon Yorktown, the first object of the campaign. To do this he required a concentration of all the most powerful batteries in the navy upon the York River; and he urged repeatedly, the necessity of the navy's throwing all its available force against Yorktown. Neither in this letter, nor in any communication that we can discover, did General McClellan intimate that he could carry out the orders of the Government with a smaller movable force than that he had first proposed; that is to say, 140,000 men.

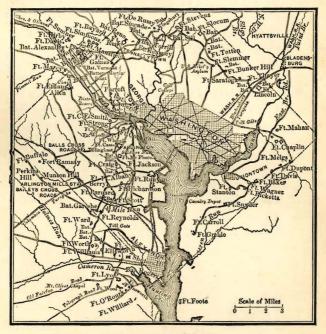
Our unhappy campaign opened with a march to Centreville—a mere movement, calculated to rid the army of useless baggage, and fit it for embarkation for the new base. During this month, the transports which had previously been collected at Annapolis for the Urbana movement, were rapidly accumulating at Alexandria; but they did not assemble in numbers and capacity sufficient to transport, as General McClellan claims he was promised they would, 50,000 men at a time.

The embarkation began March 17th. Heintzelman's corps

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VEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY LIBRAR CAMPAIGN PLANS. MOROANTOWN, W.YA.

led, Hamilton's division moving first; on the 22d Porter's followed, and the General placed both in position on roads leading to Newport News and to Yorktown. The rest of the army embarked as best it could. General McClellan left with his headquarters on the steamer Commodore, on April 1st, and



Washington and its Defences.

reached Fort Monroe on the afternoon of the 2d. He reports that he had at Fort Monroe and its vicinity, ready to move, two divisions of the Third Corps under General Heintzelman; two divisions of the Fourth, or Keyes' corps; 3

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THE PENINSULA.

one division of the Second, or Sumner's corps; Sykes' regular infantry brigade; Hunt's reserve artillery, and three regiments of cavalry, in all about fifty-eight thousand men and one hundred guns. Casey's division of the Fourth Corps could not move without wagons, and Richardson's division of the Second, and Hooker's, of the Third Corps, had not arrived.

At Washington, as will be seen, there was to be left a garrison of about twenty thousand men, some of them raw and indifferent troops, who were expected to hold the defences against sudden attack. These defences consisted of a cordon of strong, independent forts, supporting each other, and extending on the south bank of the Potomac from below Alexandria along beyond Arlington Heights to Chain Bridge, above the capital. On the Maryland side the line continued from the Potomac to the eastern branch, near Bladensburgh, and thence along the heights south of the eastern branch to a point nearly opposite Alexandria—making a circuit, or "total development," as Barnard reports, of thirty-three miles.

CHAPTER III.

ACTIVE OPERATIONS .- SIEGE OF YORKTOWN.

Is entering upon the narrative of the active operations of the campaign, the two leading facts to be met and dealt with are:

First.—That while General McClellan succeeded in reaching the vicinity of his objective point—the Confederate capital—the results at each stage of his progress were inadequate and disappointing.

Second.—That when that point seemed to be within his grasp, his army suddenly encountered reverses, and retreated from its advanced position to the banks of the James.

The history of the campaign, in short, is the history of a lamentable failure—nothing less; and in presenting its features and incidents, the natural tendency will be to investigate fully and radically, so far as such a course is possible, those movements or delays upon which the failure apparently hinged. The point of interest must always necessarily be, to indicate and establish the responsibility in each case; whether that responsibility is found to rest with one individual or many, or with those unforeseen or uncontrollable agencies which are vaguely described as the "fortune of war," but which usually prove to be the superior ability or resources of the antagonist.

What, then, we ask, as a proper initial inquiry, were

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General McClellan's intentions and immediate plan upon arriving to take the field from Fort Monroe?

He proposed the prompt, direct, and vigorous offensive. Upon this point there is no obscurity. "I had hoped," says the General in his report, "by rapid movements to drive before me or capture the enemy on the Peninsula, open the James River, and push on to Richmond before he should be materially reinforced from other portions of his territory." Entering into details, it will be observed that the plan contemplated the advance of the main body of the army up the Peninsula, with the co-operation of the navy in the rivers; while a powerful column, consisting of McDowell's First Corps, over 40,000 strong, was to operate upon the right, on either bank of the York, to turn the enemy's positions should they offer resistance on the direct route.* This was but a proposal to execute one of those large flank movements which met with such frequent success on both sides in the after-campaigns of the war. Under this plan it was expected that the advance of the army would be continuous, or at least be only briefly delayed, until West Point should be reached, where the base of immediate operations against Richmond was to be established.

But McClellan had not been on the Peninsula six days, before he experienced two serious disappointments—his plans suffered derangement in two important respects. In the first place, he ascertained upon his arrival at Fort Monroe that the navy would be unable to co-operate with him efficiently; and five days later the more surprising information was received, that McDowell's entire corps was detached from his command and ordered to remain in front of Wash-

^{*} Referring to the First Corps, McClellan reports: ". . . I intended to move it in mass to its point of disembarkation, and to land it on either bank of the York, as might then be determined."—Report, p. 73.

ington. Whether General McClellan was himself at fault in the case, and made his combinations upon insufficient assurance that he would receive all the assistance he expected, is a question to be considered; but the fact itself stands, that after entering upon the execution of his matured plans, he found them unexpectedly interrupted and requiring, as he believed, material modification.*

Now, as to the failure of the navy, or rather its non-cooperation, the question of responsibility turns upon the representations made to General McClellan before he left Washington. That he confidently anticipated its aid, is clear from what he says in proposing a combined naval and land attack upon Yorktown as the preliminary operation on the Peninsula. "To accomplish this," he wrote to Secretary Stanton, March 19th, "the navy should at once concentrate upon the York River all their available and most powerful batteries; its reduction should not in that case require many hours. A strong corps would be pushed up the York, under cover of the navy, directly upon West Point, immediately upon the fall of Yorktown, and we could at once establish our new base of operations at a distance of some twenty-five miles from Richmond; with every facility for developing and bringing into play the whole of our available force on either or both banks of the James. It is impossible to urge too strongly the absolute necessity of the full cooperation of the navy as a part of this programme."

So urgent was McClellan on this point, that on the same evening he telegraphed from Fairfax Court House to the Secretary as follows :

^{* &}quot;This army being reduced by forty-five thousand troops—some of them among the best in the service—and without the support of the navy, the plan to which we are reduced bears scarcely any resemblance to the one I voted for."—General Keyes to Senator Harris : McClellan's Report, p. 80.

"Please have an immediate decision upon the letter which will reach you to-morrow morning in regard to co-operation of the navy. That matter is important."

Mr. Stanton replied at once :

"In order to determine the precise co-operation you want with the navy, the President will go immediately to Alexandria, and desires you to meet him at the wharf."

The result of this interview, if it occurred, does not appear; but on that day, the 20th, McDowell was at Washington, and wrote the following to McClellan:

"Nothing decisive at the President's.

"The plan seemed to find favor with all who spoke. The only question seemed to be as to the ability of the navy to do their part. I am to go again in the morning when Barnard returns. Whether the navy can or not do anything, I think it evident they cannot before you can ship another division of Heintzelman's to Old Point. I spoke to the President, and he thought this would be best, so as not to keep the means of transportation idle. I would therefore send Heintzelman's second division at once, or as soon as you can. His first arrived safe last night and was landing. The Secretary says you should have no difficulty with Wool."

Three days before, on the 17th, McDowell had written this:

"In connection with General Barnard, I have had a long conference with the Assistant Secretary, Fox, as to naval co-operation. He promises all the power of the Department shall be at our disposal. At my suggestion he has told Commodore Goldsborough to confer with Colonel Woodbury concerning the plans now in view."

On the same day Mr. Welles, Secretary of the Navy, sent despatches to the commandants of the navy yards at New York and Boston, to send what gunboats they had ready "to Hampton Roads at once."* Furthermore, General

^{*} The despatches quoted appear on file in the War and Navy Departments.

Barnard went down to Hampton Roads, to consult Commodore Goldsborough, but it would appear from the latter's testimony, that the question of breaking through between Yorktown and Gloucester was not discussed.

From the foregoing despatches, it is evident that McClellan cannot be charged with not having pressed the matter of naval co-operation upon the attention of the Government.

On the other hand, how did the naval authorities understand this plan of co-operation with the army? If General 'McClellan was distinctly informed, as stated by himself, that the navy would assist him as he desired, it is impossible to assume that either the Secretary of the Navy or the officer commanding the fleet in Hampton Roads would not have known the fact, and been impressed with his needs and expectations.

The naval authorities, on the contrary, claim to have received no intimation that any *special* co-operation, in the way of a difficult attempt, was required of them. The testimony of Mr. Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and of Admiral Goldsborough, commanding the Hampton Roads fleet, is conclusive as to this. Mr. Fox, for instance, was asked by Mr. Gooch :

Question.—"Do you know whether or not it was expected that the navy should take the batteries of the enemy at or about Yorktown?"

Answer.—"I never heard that it was."

Question .- "Was that feasible?"

Answer.—"Not to attack those batteries. Wooden vessels could not have attacked the batteries at Yorktown and Gloucester with any degree of success. The forts at Yorktown were situated too high; were beyond the reach of naval guns; and I understood that General McClellan never expected any attack to be made upon them by the navy."

And to a previous question he had replied in the same vein: "So far as I know, all the vessels that General McClellan required in his operations against Yorktown, were placed at his disposal by Admiral Goldsborough. I am not aware that he ever required that we should attack Yorktown; or that it was ever expected that we should do so."

Admiral Goldsborough's testimony is still more emphatic: Question.—"What part was the navy called upon to act in the campaign of the Peninsula, as it is called?"

Answer .- "With regard to that campaign, no naval authority whatever, to my knowledge, was ever consulted until after a considerable part of the army got down there. The whole matter was arranged here in Washington by officers in the army, as I understood. I believe they never said a word, even to the Secretary of the Navy. Certainly, nothing was ever said to me until the eleventh hour. Then it was that I heard that they expected the navy to co-operate with them. The Assistant Secretary of War, Mr. Watson, came down to see me in behalf, as he said, of the Secretary of War and the President of the United States. He told me of the great anxiety felt in Washington in regard to the Merrimac; that they were apprehensive she might get up the York River and entirely disconcert all the movements of the army. I told Mr. Watson that the President might make his mind perfectly easy about the Merrimac going up York River; that she never could get there, for I had ample means to prevent that. This was in the latter part of March, 1862. The army at that time was about assembling at Old Point Comfort. General McClellan had not then arrived."

The Admiral goes on further to declare, that he did everything that the General requested of him—detailing seven gunboats for his purposes, being all the former wanted; and adds that, upon the day of his arrival off Fort Monroe and before going ashore, the General came on board of his ship to consult with him "as to the best mode of attacking Yorktown." This mode contemplated a flank attack by way of the Severn River upon the Gloucester works; on the fall of which, the gunboats could run by Yorktown and render that position untenable.

These extracts from the testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, are introduced for the single purpose of testing the charge that the navy is to be held responsible for causing the first serious derangement of McClellan's campaign plan. The navy was clearly ignorant of the scope and intent of that plan; was not a party to it; had not promised to join in a combined attack upon York town, and moreover, could probably have effected nothing in such an attempt.*

* The files of the Navy Department contain no orders in the matter. At a later date, April 17th, Secretary Welles sent the following to Admiral Goldsborough, the tenor of which hardly warrants the inference that he had previously despatched more specific instructions:

"Sir—The attention of the whole country, as well as of the Department, is turned with intense interest at this time to the naval and army movements in Lower Virginia. I commend your determination not to be drawn into a conflict where the enemy can take you at disadvantage, and would enjoin unceasing vigilance at every point. It cannot be many days before the Galena, which is now receiving her armament on board, will be with you, and will, I trust, prove an efficient acquisition to your squadron. Your determination, should the enemy shell Newport News, not to be drawn among the shoals and narrow waters thereabouts, seems to me wise and proper.

"You will actively and earnestly co-operate with Major-General McClellan, whose position and movements at Yorktown and on York River are of momentous interest and consequence to the whole country. Any and all aid that you can render him and the army you will extend at all times. It is important and absolutely essential that he should scentre all the assistance that he may require of the navy and that it is in your power to bestow consistently with your other duties.

"The general objects and designs of the Government and the great interests dependent on the naval and army movements in the vicinity of Hampton Roads are well understood by you.

"In addition to the general facts from time to time communicated to you, the

The whole explanation of the matter seems to be, that while General McClellan expressed his profound anxiety that the navy should render its aid, he expected more than the Government could promise or the navy accomplish. If he was disappointed to find at Fort Monroe that the gunboats were not to batter down and run by Yorktown, we must assume that it was because he had not assured himself before leaving Washington that that particular service could be and was to be performed by them. The General distinctly intimated that he should depend upon them to reduce the place, but it remains to be shown by evidence which has not come within our reach, whether he had been promised that they would. To us it appears that McClellan meant one thing by "co-operation," and that the navy, then absorbed with the Merrimac, and not impressed with the scope of his expectations, meant another.

The nature of General McClellan's second disappointment —the retention of McDowell's corps—and who was there at fault, will be presently noticed in its proper connection.

Compelled to forego all thought of valuable assistance from the navy, McClellan, depending now entirely upon his

Assistant Secretary of the Navy has visited you on your station and made known the wishes of the Government in person.

"I am, respectfully,

"Your ob't servant, "GIDEON WELLES.

"Flag Officer L. M. GOLDSBOROUGH,

"Command'g N. A. Block'g Squad.,

"Hampton Roads, Va."

[From the MS. Records, Navy Department.]

[&]quot;Whether and to what extent you can detach any portion of your command from their employment on other stations at this juncture, I am unable to decide. To your judgment these and other matters are confided with a solicitude and anxiety I cannot express, but with a confidence that the country will not be disappointed in you.

army, modified his plans to a certain extent. The modification, however, does not prove to have been radical. No important change was made. He proceeded with the original idea—an advance of the main army up the Peninsula, with a flanking column on the right. The only deviation appears in the fact that whereas, before, the navy was expected to attack and reduce Yorktown without delay, and continue to turn all the enemy's positions on the York, this work was now to be done somewhat more slowly by McDowell's flanking column, moving up the left bank of that river.

In other words, General McClellan's initial plan, adopted at and undertaken from Fort Monroe, was this : to move forward, first, in two columns with the troops already disembarked-one column marching on the right direct to Yorktown, and another along the James River westward of and beyond Yorktown to the vicinity of Williamsburg. Then. to use the General's own words, it was designed, "should the works at Yorktown and Williamsburg offer serious resistance, to land the First Corps (McDowell's), reinforced if necessary, on the left bank of the York or on the Severn, to move it on Gloucester and West Point, in order to take in reverse whatever force the enemy might have on the Peninsula, and compel him to abandon his positions." From this it will be seen, that whatever obstacles the main army met with in marching to Richmond, or the base at West Point, they were all to be turned by McDowell. Delay in carrying these positions would thus be overcome and preliminary losses avoided. The plan was based on sound military principles.

The movement forward began on April 4th. The column directed against Yorktown included the Third Corps—Porter's and Hamilton's divisions only having arrived—Sedgwick's division of the Second Corps, and Averill's Third

Pennsylvania Cavalry, under General Heintzelman. The column on the left, commanded by General Keyes, was composed of the divisions of Smith and Couch, of the Fourth Corps, with the Fifth Regular Cavalry temporarily attached. The transportation of Casey's division, of the Fourth, not being disembarked, it remained in camp at Newport News, from which point the left column started. The columns marched from ten to twelve miles and bivouacked at night at Young's Mills on the left, near the James, and on the right at Howard's Bridge and Cockletown beyond. The enemy showed themselves on the right; but offered no serious resistance. The reserve, consisting of Hunt's artillery, Stoneman's cavalry, and Sykes' brigade of regular infantry, encamped at Big Bethel.

At six o'clock on the following morning, the 5th, the march was resumed. Heintzelman received orders to advance with the Third Corps to a point two and three-fourths miles from Yorktown; while Keyes was instructed to continue on the left, by way of Warwick Court House, to an old landmark known as the "Half-way House," between Yorktown and Williamsburg. The orders to Keyes, which will be presently noticed, were significant; requiring him to occupy and hold "the narrow dividing ridge near the Half-way House, so as to prevent the escape of the garrison at Yorktown by land, and prevent reinforcements being thrown in." Had these orders been executed to the letter, and the left column especially been able to reach and hold the point indicated, on the evening of the 5th, the Commanding General would have had the satisfaction of reporting most substantial progress made "up the Peninsula" during these first two days.

But hardly had the army filed into the roads for the march of the 5th, before it encountered that series of fatalities which were to be its almost daily experience through this disheartening campaign. To follow the column under Keyes, whose immediate success was of most importance, we find that general sending word to headquarters just as Smith's division was moving out, "6 A.M.," that, from the best information he could obtain, a large force of the enemy was occupying a strong position, defended by three guns, at Lee's Mills, six miles beyond on the road he was following. "It is my opinion," he said, "that we shall encounter very serious resistance; if so, we shall not be able to reach the Half-way House on the Yorktown and Williamsburg road to-day. . . . I respectfully suggest that a strong reserve force be within my reach. . . . Our wagons did not arrive last night, and we shall be obliged to halt at Warwick Court House for the infantry reserve ammunition to come up. . . . It is a heavy march to the Half-way House, even without opposition." At half-past seven he added : "The roads are very bad ahead. Shall I push on to Halfway House if artillery cannot get on fast enough? I suppose not, of course." And again, at 3 p.m., he reports : "I am stopped by the enemy's works at Lee's Mills, which offer a severe resistance; the road through the woods for nearly a mile having become absolutely impassable for artillery, I am cutting a new road through. One battery is replying to the enemy, and another is nearly or quite through."

The rain had been falling in torrents all the morning; and it was not until about noon that the advance, under Keyes, struck the enemy's skirmishers. Hancock's brigade, of Smith's division, deployed on the right, Davidson's on the left, and Brooks' in reserve. Couch's division rested at Warwick Court House, with part of Peek's and Graham's brigades, extended down the Warwick River. Finding the march thus seriously obstructed at Lee's Mills, the column encamped for the night in the above order.

Upon the right, Heintzelman was also stopped; but that was expected, his march being upon Yorktown. From Cockletown, Porter's division moved forward on the 5th, with Morell's brigade in advance-Berdan's Independent Regiment of Sharpshooters taking the lead-and after a march of three miles, came under the fire of the enemy's works. It happened to be at the point designated by General McClellan, where this column was to halt for further orders, and General Morell thus describes the preliminary incidents in his report to General Porter: "At seven o'clock on the morning of the 5th, we were again in motion, the cavalry still in the rear. The rain commenced falling at the same time, which made the road exceedingly heavy, and delayed our progress. You joined me at the saw-mill, your staff and mine forming a conspicuous group; and at 10 A.M., as we arrived at the junction of the Warwick with the Yorktown road, we received the first shot from the enemy. It came from their works on our right near the town, and was well aimed, though a little too high. The sharpshooters, under Colonel Berdan, were alone in front of us." "Looming up in the mist and rain," says General Porter at the same time, "were extensive defences of the enemy, from which we were immediately saluted with the fire of artillery." Porter at once made his dispositions : Morell deploying in front and supporting Weeden's and Griffin's batteries, which opened upon the enemy's works at a distance of two thousand yards, and Martindale's brigade, at one o'clock, taking position on the left of Morell's, with Butterfield's brigade in reserve. Artillery firing and some skirmishing occurred with little loss during the afternoon; and at night, the division encamped on the ground fronting the works at Yorktown and those connecting on its right.

The position, then, of McClellan's army, on the morning

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of the 6th, was not that contemplated in his orders for the 5th. Keyes, certainly, should have been at the Half-way House, near Williamsburg. But he had met an obstruction. His progress on the 5th was five miles—no more; Porter's, four. Right here begins that month's delay at Yorktown. One thing is certain: it was not strategic delay—delay for a purpose, since the General had promised rapid movements forward, and had provided flank operations to expedite the direct. What, then, caused it? Could not and ought not the delay to have been avoided? Let us look at this carefully and impartially.

Preliminary to these questions, it should be ascertained what the enemy had been doing on the Peninsula, and what precisely was their position on the 5th, when resistance by them first proved serious.

The Confederate attitude in this guarter had been, from the first, that of defence. For some time after the affair of Big Bethel, June 10, 1861, they had made Yorktown their base of observation, with posts thrown out several miles in advance. Major-General J. Bankhead Magruder, late of the United States Army, commanded. By March 1, 1862, Magruder had laid out, and partially completed, three defensive lines across the Peninsula, from Williamsburg down toward Fort Monroe. What he proposed and describes as his "real line of defence positions," was the one at the front, seven miles below Yorktown; or at that point between Howard's and Young's Mills, where the setting back of the Poquosin River from the York and the mouths of the Warwick and Deep Creek, on the James, contract the intervening solid ground to the short distance of three miles. "Both flanks of this line," says Magruder, "were defended by boggy and difficult streams and swamps. In addition, the left flank was defended by elaborate fortifications at

Ship Point, connected by a broken line of redoubts crossing the heads of the various ravines emptying into York River and Wormley's Creek, and terminating at Fort Grafton, nearly in front of Yorktown. The right flank was defended by the fortifications at the mouth of Warwick River and at Mulberry Island Point, and the redoubts extending from the Warwick to James River. · Intervening between the two mills was a wooded country, about two miles in extent. This wooded line, forming the centre, needed the defence of infantry in a sufficient force to prevent any attempt on the part of the enemy to break through it. In my opinion, this advanced line, with its flank defences, might have been held by 20,000 troops. With 25,000 I do not believe it could have been broken by any force the enemy could have brought against it. Its two flanks were protected by the Virginia (Merrimac) and the works on one side, and the fortifications at Yorktown and Gloucester Point on the other."

His force being reduced by detachments sent across the James to Suffolk and Portsmouth, Magruder abandoned this advanced line about March 1st, and fell back to his second line, running from Yorktown on his left along the Warwick River to Mulberry Island, and the James upon the right. The third line, to be noticed later, was that constructed in front of Williamsburg, eleven miles farther up the Peninsula. His second, or the Yorktown position, was, in point of extent, the least defensible of the three ; but it presented the counterbalancing advantage of having its left protected by the projecting bank of the York at Gloucester, whose works, in conjunction with those at Yorktown opposite, were expected to close the river to the passage of the Union gun-boats.*

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^{*} The Count de Paris in his well known and admirable work, states that Magruder persisted in holding the Yorktown position in spite of orders from Richmond to abandon it. I find no confirmation of this statement, but infer from

Although embracing a front of "twelve miles," as Magruder reports, this line had been converted by various fortifications and devices into a considerable barrier. Around Yorktown itself, the old embankments thrown up by the British in 1781, were substantially revived; and, at commanding positions outside of the village, two works were constructed, known as the "red" and "white" redoubts, united by long curtains. In the vicinity and to the west of these, or a mile and a half from Yorktown, the Warwick River takes its rise and flows in a southerly direction to the James. Its upper part, originally known as Beaverdam Creek, is described by Magruder as a "sluggish and boggy stream," twenty or thirty yards wide in some places, and running through "a dense wood fringed by swamps." There were two mills with dams upon its banks, one-Wynne's Mill-about three miles from Yorktown ; the other-Lee's Mills-two and one-half miles below, where the James River road crosses the stream. Three additional dams were constructed by the enemy, making five in all; which had the effect of backing up the water and rendering its passage impracticable for either artillery or infantry, for nearly threefourths of the distance. So, at least, reports Magruder. Each dam was covered by artillery and earthworks; while along the rear of the line, ran a recently opened military road. At Lee's Mills, strong fortifications had been erected, and from that point, the line presented a refused right, turning across Mulberry Island to Skiff Creek. The Confederate force defending this position, numbered 11,000 strong at the time McClellan moved forward from Fort Monroe, 6,000 defending the flanks at Yorktown and Mulberry Island,

what both Davis and Johnston say, and from Magruder's own report, that he was expected to dispute every inch of the Peninsula—the retention of Norfolk depending on his position.

and 5,000 posted at the dams and assailable points along the Warwick front.*

The existence of this line, in front of which he was brought to a halt on April 5th, was unknown to General McClellan. Both in the report of his operations and in his testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War. he refers to the lack of precise information respecting the topography of the Peninsula, as an element of delay and confusion in his movements. "Our maps," he testifies, "proved entirely inaccurate, and did us more harm than good, for we were constantly misled by them." Again, in his report, he observes : "The country, though known in its general features, we found to be inaccurately described in essential particulars in the only maps and geographical memoirs or papers to which access could be had. Erroneous courses to streams and roads were frequently given, and no dependence could be placed on the information thus derived. . . . Reconnoissances, frequently under fire, proved the only trustworthy sources of information." Heintzelman, Keves, and other officers, mention the same want; and the inconvenience and difficulties arising from it.

^{*} Colonel Cabell, of the Confederate artillery, reported May 10, 1862, as follows in regard to this position : "Three roads led up from the Peninsula and crossed the line of our defences. The first on our right was the Warwick road, that crossed at Lee's Mills; the second crossed at Wynne's Mill, and the third was commanded by the reboubts (Nos. 4 and 5) near Yorktown. The crossing at Lee's Mills was naturally strong, and fortifications had been erected there and at Wynne's Mill. Below Lee's Mills the Warwick River, affected by the tides and invested by swamps on each side, formed a tolerable protection; but the marshes could easily be made passable and the river bridged. Between Lee's and Wynne's Mills an unbroken forest extended on the right bank of the stream to a distance of about three miles. Two additional dams were constructed, the one (Dam No. 1) nearest to Wynne's Mill, and the other, Dam No. 2. A dam called the upper dam was constructed in the stream above Wynne's Mill. This detailed description of the line of defence seems necessary to explain the position of the artillery of the Peninsula."

But this was to have been anticipated. The Virginia Peninsula, like many portions even of the older States, was practically terra incognita for military purposes. Careful surveys of its entire extent had never been made, and when the topographical engineers set to work to construct maps for General McClellan's guidance, in view of his possible movement by that route, their results were necessarily insufficiently full or precise. Major-General A. A. Humphreys, then at the head of the Topographical Corps, consulted every available authority and record bearing upon the features of that region; and this information was used by the Commanding General. Among other maps brought to light, were the British plans of the siege of Yorktown, in 1781, and the orig. inal survey of the Peninsula from Fort Monroe to Williamsburg, made in 1818 by Major James Kearney, of the corps of Topographical Engineers, both of which satisfactorily established certain points. Various outlines were compiled; but the most elaborate, so far as it went, and the one followed by General McClellan, was that furnished by Lieutenant-Colonel T. J. Cram, then serving as engineer and aid-de-camp to General Wool, at Fort Monroe, which embraced Norfolk, Suffolk, and the Peninsula as far as the Half-way House above Yorktown. And yet this map, which, in view of its source, appears to have been regarded as the most reliable, was found to be in error in several important particulars. especially in indicating the course of the Warwick; which it represented as running nearly parallel with the road up the Peninsula, instead of running across it to the vicinity of Yorktown. Kearney's survey, on the other hand, indicates the true direction of the stream; but gives it no prominence as an impediment. With these maps before him, it is clear that McClellan did not expect to find the extensive line of defence which, as we have seen, Magruder had constructed

and occupied. Thus, to the question asked by the Committee on the Conduct of the War,—whether he knew of the enemy's works before he landed on the Peninsula, McClellan replied: "No; we did not know of the line of works along the Warwick. We knew that Yorktown itself was surrounded by a continuous line of earthworks, but we did not know of the line of the Warwick. . . . When we did advance, we found the enemy intrenched and in strong force wherever we approached. The nature and extent of his position along the Warwick River was not known to us when we left Fort Monroe."

How far a general may base the delay or failure of his movements on the meagreness and inaccuracy of his topographical information, depends upon the given case. General McClellan's situation in this respect, was probably but little different from that of other generals in other parts of the field. It was a war in which he who pushed and found out for himself, was the most likely to achieve results. In this particular instance, we may be permitted to quote from General Humphreys, that the information collected by his corps, in advancing up the Peninsula, "was quite as full as anything we had in the pursuit of Lee in April, 1865, after we got ten miles from Petersburg—indeed, more full, more complete." *

But, aside from the inadequate and misleading maps aside, in fact, from the alleged non-co-operation of the navy, an important criticism is here suggested. Was this advance from Fort Monroe toward Yorktown itself, conducted upon correct tactical principles? Was it based upon a proper appreciation of the enemy's probable dispositions and foresight?

* Letter from General Humphreys to the writer, June, 1881.

Two things are beyond dispute: the topographical maps presented an accurate *outline* of the Peninsula—that is, the lines of the James and York; and, second, McClellan advanced upon the enemy in expectation of meeting resistance at Yorktown. As to the latter point, he states in his report, that, as he had ascertained that the Confederate General Huger could readily reinforce Magruder from Norfolk, and had already done so, and that Johnston's army could be rapidly transferred from Manassas to Yorktown, he proposed "to invest that town without delay." Cram's map, says McClellan, indicated "the feasibility of the design;" and from Fort Monroe the General hurried forward to execute it before the enemy could be reinforced. This was to be the first of the promised "rapid movements" toward Richmond.

By the courtesy of General H. G. Wright, the present Chief of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, the author is placed in possession of all the requisite official maps covering this campaign, inclusive of tracings of those by Kearney and Cram; and it is to be admitted, that according to the latter, Yorktown stands in a dangerously isolated situation, inviting attack, being apparently fortified for no other purpose than to close the York River in connection with the Gloucester works, and having no relation to the Peninsula as a defence against the approach of an army by land. To the uneducated eye, it seems to be a most "feasible" manœuvre to march to its rear, surround and invest it, and thus repeat what Washington effected upon the same spot in 1781, or what Grant enforced at Vicksburg in 1863. That General McClellan expected, upon the strength of Cram's map, to be able to surround Yorktown, is not only evident from his report, but, as we have already noticed, his orders to Keyes on April 5th, to march and encamp at the Half-way

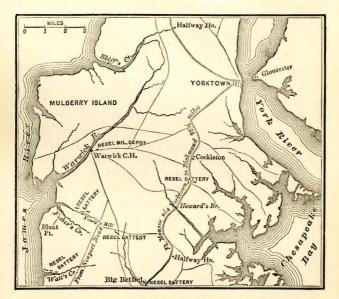
House, six miles in the rear of Yorktown, indicate no misgivings on his part as to Keyes' ability to reach that point without much, if any, resistance.

But General McClellan's expectations here, were clearly too sanguine. Sound military judgment would have pronounced at once, that Keyes could not reach the Half-way House, nor any point to the rear of Yorktown, without the most obstinate resistance; and that, if that resistance had been overcome, the Confederates would have immediately abandoned the town. It was correctly presumed, that Magruder's purpose was to delay McClellan's progress up the Peninsula as long as possible. But did not this require him to present a front entirely across the Peninsula? What would it have availed to hold the road up the York and leave that along the James unguarded? Did McClellan expect that Magruder would shut himself up within the "continuous line of earthworks" around Yorktown, and suffer the former to throw a heavy column in his rear and thus prevent his escape? The moment Keyes reached the Half-way House, Magruder would be doomed. And yet it appears that the advance from Fort Monroe was based and hurried, upon this very anticipation. It will be observed, for instance, that McClellan reports himself as being surprised to learn that Keyes was checked in his march on April 5th. "Unexpectedly," he says, Keyes was brought to a halt before the enemy's works at Lee's Mills.

Now, on the contrary, just such a halt *ought to have been* expected. Nothing less than a continuous front of opposition from the York to the James should have been looked for. The existence of a strong fortified post at Yorktown, necessitated and implied the existence of an equally strong barrier at the other flank on the James, at or about Lee's Mills, with the intervening centre also defended. General Ma-

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gruder, on the other side, certainly felt the necessity. "Deeming it of vital importance," he reports, "to hold Yorktown, on York River, and Mulberry Island, on James River, and to keep the enemy in check by an intervening line, until the authorities might take such steps as should be deemed



The "Cram" Map.

necessary to meet a serious advance of the enemy on the Peninsula, I felt compelled to dispose my forces in such a manner as to accomplish these objects with the least risk possible, under the circumstances of great hazard which surrounded the little army I commanded." Cram's map

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erroneously places Warwick Court House on the Warwick River, where Lee's Mills should be, the latter not being indicated at all, and describes it simply as a "rebel military depot," eight or ten miles distant from Yorktown. That it is gravely misleading in its representation of the Confederate situation and the topography in that vicinity, is not to be denied. But the fact that it was accepted as correct, and made the basis of operations, when obviously it was to be discredited as a compilation made upon uncertain and meagre information, is open to the criticism suggested.

If blunders were committed in the advance upon Richmond, this may be regarded as the first one: the failure to divine the probable position of the enemy at the Yorktown line. The natural desire and determination to reach it before they were reinforced, was, unfortunately, unaccompanied with a right appreciation of the true method of taking advantage of their weakness. McClellan estimated the enemy's strength at about fifteen thousand; his own, at the start, was fiftyeight thousand. He proposed to use this preponderating force immediately and with effect; and it could only have been so used, by expecting to find a long defensive line in front of the enemy, and marching with a view of discovering its weakest point with the least possible delay, and breaking through it at once. But, instead, we find surprise at meeting with opposition—halt, and uncertainty.

In advancing these criticisms, it is true, a certain modification is to be made in General McClellan's favor. His plan of campaign did not require absolutely precise information of the enemy's position at Yorktown, or anywhere else on the Peninsula, with the view of overcoming it. That plan already provided for the obstacle of the Warwick. If anything like it existed, and could not readily be forced, it was to be *turned*. Whatever obstruction the main force on the Penin-

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sula encountered, McDowell was expected to outflank it on the other side of the York. So that, while McClellan blundered in his expectations of surrounding Yorktown, his general plan remained feasible. The Warwick, in the execution of the latter, should have delayed him but a few days. Magruder would have retreated on learning of McDowell's march along the York to the White House in his rear.

It is at this point that we reach McClellan's second disappointment in the campaign—the retention of McDowell's corps at Washington.

The facts here may be briefly summarized as follows : One of the conditions on which the President approved the Peninsula plan, was, that Washington should be left completely secure against attack; and the council of corps commanders on March 13th, had named a force of about 55,000 men as necessary for this purpose. Upon McClellan's departure, General Wadsworth, the Military Governor of the city, reported that he could muster scarcely 20,000 troops for its defence in case of an emergency. Apparently alarmed that so scanty a force had been left, President Lincoln directed, on April 3d, that either McDowell's or Sumner's Corps, which had not all embarked for the new base, should be retained in front of Washington. It was claimed that McClellan had not complied with the condition above referred to, and that the retention of part of his own force was necessary for the safety of the capital. In his report the General ventures the defence, that he had left the prescribed number of troops; but we find that he includes among them the force under Banks, in the Shenandoah-a force which he regarded as a movable column thrown out for the defence of the capital. The corps commanders at the council did not so regard Banks, but fixed the 55,000 men for Washington as

over and above what the latter commanded. In this light it is to be admitted that McClellan had failed to comply with President Lincoln's "explicit directions" and the decision of the council; and in view of the well-known feeling of the Government respecting the safety of the city, and the fact that the not over-friendly Committee of Congress watched every step he took, it is strange that the General should have given even the semblance of an opportunity to be interfered with, after once taking the field. A grave mistake it was, when he left Washington without having the President's assurance that all was well at least there.

That the withholding of McDowell was a shock to Mc-Clellan is certain. The news reached him on the 5th, conveved in a brief telegram from the Adjutant-General, at the very moment when the Warwick was discovered to be a considerable obstruction; and when the necessity of a flanking column was immediately obvious. Right in the emergency, that column was withheld from his control; and we affirm, that, looking at the matter irrespective of every political bias, no matter how far McClellan's alleged disregard of instructions in leaving Washington unprotected, may have been true-no matter what the alarm of the commander of the Washington defences, or of the President's military advisers-either McClellan should have been relieved, or else every possible effort should have been made to keep his force, now actively engaged in the field, at the full strength with which alone he proposed to undertake his operations. Whether his own view was correct or incorrect, in that view he was crippled. He proposed a plan with McDowell as a principal actor in it. McDowell withdrawn, the plan was radically interfered with.

Writers have said that McClellan had none but himself to blame. Granted. But who shall be blamed for permit-

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ting a situation which, at all hazards, should just then have been avoided? If McClellan was still retained, one duty was incumbent upon the Government: it should have suffered at least half of McDowell's corps to proceed to the Peninsula at once, and then made every effort to reinforce the capital from other points. To allow the General to remain in command and then cut off the very arm with which he was about to strike, we hold to have been inexcusable and unmilitary to the last degree.

Leaving this question as, perhaps, the leading point of dispute in the campaign, and one which may never be satisfactorily set at rest, there come up all those various speculations indulged in by critics, respecting the course McClellan ought to have pursued after losing McDowell. A general of high spirit and sensitive soul might have found in the Government's action the occasion for sending in his resignation. Another, deeply earnest in the national behalf, might have suddenly roused himself to great exertions, and proved by successful strokes that he was worthy of the fullest confidence. General McClellan continued in command, accepted the situation, and endeavored to make the best of it.

What to do—was now the question. It has been claimed that the General should have immediately forced the Warwick, and effected the capture or compelled the evacuation of Yorktown—thus opening the York River and securing the White House as a base. That the Warwick line could have been readily broken within a week after the army's arrival before it, we now know. McClellan at the time was of a different opinion; although but a few days before he had calculated the relative forces at 58,000 against 15,000. In explanation he testified that Johnston arrived opposite to him the same evening that he reached the Yorktown front, April

5th, implying that the rebel army lately at Manassas was now again in his front. The General's information—based, by the way, on altogether insufficient, if not unreliable data —was erroneous. Johnston did not arrive in person to supersede Magruder until after the 14th; and of his army, the advance division, under General D. H. Hill, did not arrive at Yorktown until the 10th; the other divisions following a few days later. For six days at least, after McClellan appeared in front of the Warwick, he was fully three times stronger than the enemy in point of numbers.

But here again, it is to be admitted that McClellan presented plausible reasons-reasons already referred to-for not attempting a direct attack on Magruder's position at that The General, despite the retention of McDowell, still time. clung to his original plan (modified slightly) of flanking the enemy. It was a plan adopted after long deliberation; and he was wholly unwilling to abandon it, though seemingly deprived of the means of its execution. Thus, when President Lincoln urged him, April 6th, to break the line of the Warwick at once, McClellan replied : "Under the circumstances that have been developed since we arrived here, I feel fully impressed with the conviction, that here is to be fought the great battle that is to decide the existing contest. I shall, of course, commence the attack as soon as I can get up my siege-train, and shall do all in my power to carry the enemy's works; but, to do this with a reasonable degree of certainty, requires, in my judgment, that I should, if possible, have at least the whole of the First Army Corps (McDowell's) to land upon York River and attack Gloucester in the rear. My present strength will not admit of a detachment sufficient for this purpose without materially impairing the efficiency of this column." More definitely he writes to Secretary Stanton on the 10th: "The reconnoissance to-day,

proves that it is necessary to invest and attack Gloucester Point. Give me Franklin's and McCall's divisions (of Mc-Dowell's corps), under command of Franklin, and I will at once undertake it. If circumstances of which I am not aware, make it impossible for you to send me two divisions to carry out this final plan of campaign, I will run the risk, and hold myself responsible for the results, if you will give me Franklin's division. If you still confide in my judgment, I entreat that you will grant this request. The fate of our cause depends upon it. Although willing, under the pressure of necessity, to carry this through with Franklin alone, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I think two divisions necessary. Franklin and his division are indispensable to me. General Barnard concurs in this view." And once more, on the 12th and 13th, he adds: "Franklin will attack on the other side. . . ." "Our work progressing well. We shall soon be at them, and I am sure of the result."

In response to these very urgent and confident expressions on McClellan's part, the President ordered Franklin's division to report to him forthwith; but it failed to reach the landing at Cheesman's Creek, below Yorktown, until the 20th of the month. Late as it was, preparations were begun to disembark the division on the Gloucester side, about three and a half miles below that point. A reconnoissance of the shore was made "a few days" after the arrival of the division by McClellan in person, in company with General Franklin, Captain Rodgers, of the navy, and Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander, of the Corps of Engineers. The latter officer was then instructed to devise the proper arrangements and superintend the landing of the troops ; but, extraordinary as it may seem, more than two weeks were consumed in the preliminaries; and when everything was nearly ready for the disembarkation, the enemy had vanished from

the scene! "All these preparations," to quote from Alexander's report, "were about completed, and we were engaged in making scaling-ladders, thinking we might be called upon to assault the works at Gloucester Point, when suddenly, on the morning of May 4th, the news spread through the fleet, that the enemy had evacuated Yorktown." How long it would have taken the whole of McDowell's corps to disembark at this rate, assuming that it was to disembark at the same point, the reader may judge ; and yet for days it had been General McClellan's pet project, in connection with his plan of campaign, to utilize McDowell in just this manner as a flanking column. The merest novice in military matters would assume that every preparation for its prompt disembarkation would have been attended to, and delays avoided. So much for the project on the Gloucester sideexcellent in conception, necessary to swift advance, but sadly interfered with by the Government; and, as far as attempted, too sluggishly prosecuted.

Surprised that he could not surround the place in the first instance, overawed by the appearance of the Warwick and its supposed defences, estimating the enemy's numbers far beyond the fact, and delayed or delaying in the attempt upon Gloucester—McClellan settled down to the scientific siege of Yorktown. Beyond noticing some of its incidents, we shall not dwell upon this final operation. It is clear that McClellan had it in contemplation, as an alternative, before he left Washington. Why take along a siege-train? If it was meant for the investment of Richmond, it should have come later by way of the James. It was out of place in active field movements. The Army of the Potomac had been placed in the General's hands as a drawn sword, to be wielded with rapid and sweeping effect; not only was success looked for, but immediate success. No wonder many

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hearts at the North betrayed anxiety, as time passed at Yorktown with nothing done and a siege in progress.

No doubt a brilliant siege operation would have been most acceptable to the country, as it certainly was coveted by McClellan, could it have been attended by the usual results of such an operation, namely, the capture of many prisoners, or the rout and demoralization of the enemy's force; but in this case, these results were not to be anticipated. There could be no siege in the true sense of the term. It was simply an approach to the enemy's position, which they could leave the moment they pleased, and in good order. Under the circumstances, it could hardly be regarded as a great triumph, that we were finally enabled to follow them.

Having determined thus to besiege Yorktown, McClellan appears to have given up all thought of piercing the Warwick line at any point; but meditated instead a grand assault on the main works after damaging them sufficiently with his heavy guns. The latter plan would have resulted in serious loss of life; with results less satisfactory, probably, than would have attended an attempt to break through at the weakest point. Reconnoissances, however, were made all along the front, and the enemy kept in anticipation of an attack; but no assaulting columns were ever organized, to take advantage of any opportunity offered. The brisk affair which occurred on April 16th, in front of Smith's division on the right of Keyes' corps, which has sometimes been represented as the beginning of a determined attack, had another purpose. "The object of the movement," says McClellan, " was to force the enemy to discontinue his work in strengthening his batteries, to silence his fire, and gain control of the dam existing at that point." *

^{*} McClellan to Adjutant-General Thomas, April 19, 1862. This letter is not included in the former's official report.

The position in question was known as Dam No. 1, on the Warwick, nearly midway between Lee's and Wynn's Mills, and in front of a clearing just in advance of Smith's division, in which three burned chimneys stood-"Garrow's chimneys" the spot was called. On the rebel side, the crossing at the dam was covered by a one-gun battery ; near which other works were supposed to be in process of construction. In pursuance of instructions conveyed by McClellan himself, General William F. Smith proceeded, on the morning of the 16th, to closely reconnoitre the position, and for the purpose, advanced Brooks' Vermont Brigade, with Captain Mott's Third New York Battery, toward the dam. The troops pushed well forward, carrying on a sharp fire; during which Smith examined the ground. "I ascertained from personal observation," he reports, "that the gun in the angle of the upper work had been replaced by a wooden gun, and that scarcely anybody showed above the parapet, the skirmishers from the Fourth Vermont doing good execution." More important was a daring feat on the part of Lieutenant E. M. Noyes, of the Third Vermont, aid to General Brooks, who actually crossed the Warwick below the dam, finding the water about waist-deep, and approached within fifty yards of the enemy's works undiscovered. Returning, he reported his observations to General McClellan, who now, about noon, had come upon the field, and who had ordered Smith to bring up his entire division to hold or command the advanced position occupied by Brooks' brigade. Smith, however, who heard what Lieutenant Noves reported, went farther and obtained the consent of the General Commanding to push on a strong party across the stream, "to ascertain if the works had been sufficiently denuded to enable a column to effect a lodgement." Four companies of Colonel Hyde's Third Vermont, 200 strong, under

Captain F. C. Harrington, of that regiment, were accordingly ordered to advance and cross the Warwick, to determine, as Brooks reports, "the true state of affairs" on the other side. Promptly and gallantly the troops dashed through the water, and under a close fire from the enemy gained the latter's rifle-pits; which they held for over half an hour, returning the fire with spirit.

The enemy, who seem to have been surprised at this bold manœuvre, quickly increased in strength at this point. Magruder admits that the charge of the Vermonters was "very rapid and vigorous," and that the Fifteenth North Carolina, who were throwing up a work beyond the rifle-pits for the protection of their camp, were thrown into confusion and their Colonel, McKenney, killed in attempting to recover the pits. But other troops, including Anderson's Georgia brigade, under Howell Cobb, were brought up and the skirmish grew in intensity. Unfortunately, Captain Harrington failed to be reinforced in time; and receiving orders to withdraw, he recrossed the stream with a loss of 75 men, 22 of whom were killed. This was at about four o'clock in the afternoon.

The practicability of effecting a lodgement on the other side being thus demonstrated, another effort was made a little later; when four companies of the Sixth Vermont, under Colonel Lord, were ordered to cross at the point of Captain Harrington's advance, while Colonel Stoughton with four companies of the Fourth Vermont was directed to attempt the passage of the dam above, under the fire of the division batteries, all of which—20 guns—were brought into position. Lord's detachment, however, was met by a heavy fire from the now watchful enemy; and could not reach the rifle-pits. Colonel Stoughton reached the dam and prepared to push across, when General Smith ordered his return, and Lord followed. Notwithstanding the well-directed fire of the guns

under Captain Ayres, Division Chief of Artillery, the enemy were able to deliver a heavy musketry fire; and the second attempt to cross was thus abandoned. "It will be apparent," says General Smith, in his report, "that no attempt to mass the troops of the division was made for an assault upon the works, but only such troops as were absolutely necessary to cover the movements of the companies of the Third and Fourth Vermont, and to be at hand to secure to us the enemy's works if we found them abandoned. The moment I found resistance serious, and the numbers opposed great, I acted in obedience to the warning instructions of the Generalin-Chief, and withdrew the small number of troops exposed from under fire." Regret that the movement was not pushed is enhanced by Smith's reflection, that among the four companies of the Third Vermont, who first crossed the creek, there were "more individual acts of heroism performed" than he had ever before read of.

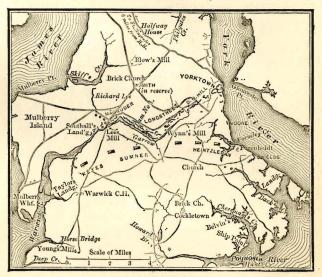
Thus a fair opportunity to break the Warwick line was missed. Had the same effort been made when the army first reached the line, there can be little doubt that success would have attended it.

Passing to the siege itself, we find that the operations were conducted with skill. Batteries were constructed under the supervision of Generals F. J. Porter, W. F. Barry, Chief of Artillery, and J. G. Barnard, Chief of Engineers; the former being designated as Director of the Siege. Nearly one hundred heavy Parrott guns, mortars, and howitzers were established opposite the town and the redoubts to its right, at ranges varying from fifteen hundred to two thousand yards. The enemy made but a slight effort to interfere with the work on our batteries and parallels; and on May 1st, Battery No. 1, on the bank of the river below the Moore House, was opened on the town and its dock, as Bar-

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nard reports, "with great effect." Four days later the fire was to open from all the guns and the siege pressed with vigor until the final assault should be deemed practicable.

There was at this time a small fleet of gunboats in the river (the greater part of the naval armament being still engaged at Hampton Roads watching the Merrimac), and their participation in the siege operations was expected, but how



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much their officers felt able or willing to do may be gathered from the tenor of the following letter from Commander Missroon, of the Wachusett, to Admiral Goldsborough, dated April 23d:

"The works of the enemy are excessively strong and powerfully armed. Their cannon are managed and served with surprising accuracy,

But the enemy were too shrewd to await our onslaught with guns and storming columns. By May 5th, they had remained long enough at the Yorktown line for their purpose. A month's time had been gained in keeping Mc-Clellan back, and early on the morning of the 5th, after an unusual cannonade of our lines during the previous night, they abandoned Yorktown and the Warwick line; retreating up the Peninsula through Williamsburg.

* From archives, Navy Department.

CHAPTER IV.

FORWARD FROM YORKTOWN-BATTLE OF WIL-LIAMSBURG.

THE evacuation of Yorktown took the Union army by surprise. If the somewhat tardy pursuit of the enemy be any indication, the movement was not anticipated at head-quarters. The troops had settled down to siege preparations, and a fixed camp life for at least a time longer. Hence, when orders came to break up and push after the rebels, several hours were consumed in having the commands properly provisioned for the march. The evacuation was reported at dawn, and the report confirmed soon after; it was not until noon that the cavalry and infantry were fairly off. The delay may have been immaterial; but it was a delay which presupposed the continuation of the siege.

The enemy, on their part, abandoned the place deliberately. If their retreat was a measure of safety, and so far forced upon them, it was still in accordance with a settled plan. They proposed to remain at the Warwick line only so long as prudence dictated, and for the single purpose of delaying McClellan. This they had succeeded in doing for an entire month. General Johnston is clear on this point. "It seemed to me," he reported May 19th, "that there were but two objects in remaining on the Peninsula. The possibility of an advance upon us by the enemy, and gaining time in which arms might be received and troops organized. I determined, therefore, to hold the position as long as it could be done without exposing our troops to the fire of the powerful artillery, which, I doubted not, would be brought to bear upon them. I believed that after silencing our batteries on York River, the enemy would attempt to turn us by moving up to West Point by water. . . Circumstances indicating that the enemy's batteries were nearly ready, I directed the troops to move toward Williamsburg on the night of the 3d." His narrative on this point is to the same effect; in fact, Johnston, we have seen, did not favor the defence of the Peninsula, from the outset. On the 4th, at noon, his troops had all reached Williamsburg, whence they were ordered to march to Richmond, with Magruder's division leading.

The Union forces, once upon the road, hurried after the retreating enemy. Stoneman, with the cavalry, received orders to harass their rear, and, if possible, cut off that portion of it which must have taken the longer route by the Lee's Mills road. As the rebels had some twelve hours the start-the rear, certainly six-Stoneman could not have accomplished the latter object. He caught up with Stuart's cavalry near the Half-way House, which fell back skirmishing as far as a line of redoubts which Magruder had thrown up long before as a possible defensive position across the Peninsula-the most westerly of the three he had partially or wholly completed. When Stoneman neared this line, of which he had but a vague, if any knowledge, he sent General Emory to the left, to head off such rebels as might be on that road. Emory encountered a cavalry regiment and battery under Stuart himself; but, without infantry supports, could not corner them. To the front, Stoneman pursued with General Cooke's command of the First and Sixth Regular Cavalry, and a battery of horse-artillery; and soon en-

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countered the works referred to. The larger redoubt, in his immediate front, Fort Magruder, was occupied, while those to its left seemed to be empty; but as he manœuvred and skirmished, the enemy were seen to be reoccupying them, and he retired to await the arrival of infantry. In doing so, the enemy attacked him, though without much effect; the one piece of artillery that was lost had to be abandoned in the mud, after the unavailing efforts of ten horses to bring it off.

To follow and co-operate with Stoneman, the infantry divisions of Hooker, of the Third Corps, and Smith of the Fourth, were directed by McClellan, to take the lead of the columns and hasten forward—Hooker marching by the direct and shorter road on the right from Yorktown to Williamsburg, and Smith filing from his position opposite "Dam No. 1," into the Lee's Mills road on the left. Kearney was to follow Hooker; Couch and Casey were to follow Smith. In the afternoon of the next day, the divisions of Sedgwick and Richardson, or Sumner's corps, were also set in motion, while Franklin and Porter remained at Yorktown to go up the river in transports. The entire army was thus upon its feet again, with the eyes of the country intent upon its progress.

The General Commanding, not anticipating any serious engagement during the first day or two of the pursuit, kept his headquarters near Yorktown, to superintend what he regarded as the more important advance of Franklin by water. The direction of the divisions moving by land, was accordingly assigned to Sumner, second in rank to the Chief. His instructions, received at noon on the 4th, were "to take command of the troops ordered in pursuit of the enemy" until McClellan's arrival. General Heintzelman, on the other hand, moving with his corps, confesses some surprise at finding Sumner at the front and in charge, since he re-

ports that he had been directed "to take control of the entire movement" himself. It is probable that Heintzelman was expected to be in the advance sooner than Sumner, where his "control," until the latter's arrival, would be necessary. As it was, they seemed, with Keyes, the remaining corps commander, to act in unison during the approaching events; but the tone of certain passages in Heintzelman's report and the sensitive reply of Sumner, indicate, that as between these two officers, an undercurrent of jealousy or unfriendliness existed, which, on a subsequent occasion, came near working mischief.

The troops under Sumner's command, who were to become identified more than others with the approaching battle of Williamsburg, were Hooker's, Smith's, Kearney's and part of Couch's divisions. Hooker on the march was expected to be up first to support the cavalry. Smith, moving on the parallel road to the left, made greater progress, but was stopped at the head of Skiff Creek, by the burning of the bridge. Between two and three o'clock, Sumner ordered him to turn to the right and into the road which Hooker was following. Smith reached it near the Half-way house just before Hooker's troops came up; and keeping on, obliged the latter to halt for over three hours. Contrary, thus, to the original intention, Smith was in the same road with, and in advance of Hooker, scarcely six miles distant from their respective starting-points; and as Hooker now could not act as the immediate support of the cavalry, he suggested to his Corps Commander, Heintzelman, who consented, that after advancing about three miles, he in turn should cross over to the road Smith was to have followed, and where Emory's cavalry were, and pursue or attack from that direction. How far this apparent confusion and change of place on the part of the two divisions affected the pursuit

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on that day may be a question, Stoneman claiming that had Smith been able to continue on the Lee's Mills road he might have assisted Emory and his cavalry in capturing Stuart's troopers; while Hooker, with his own road clear before him, could have pushed on and taken possession of the enemy's works before they could be reoccupied. But, as a matter of fact, Stuart was in no immediate danger; and as to the works, Smith reached the front, under Sumner, quite as soon as Hooker could have done.

Smith's division-Hancock's brigade in advance-came up with the cavalry about half-past five o'clock in the afternoon. Sumner, who tells us that he felt "the importance of pressing the pursuit as fast as possible," encouraged by Stoneman's representations, that the infantry could accomplish what the cavalry could not, determined, late as it was, to advance at once upon the enemy. Forming his division in three lines of battle, Smith prepared for a charge through a piece of woods and beyond to the works. It was half-past six before the lines moved; and hardly did they move before the woods were found to be "utterly impracticable." What with the close, tangled undergrowth and the increasing darkness in which the formations could not be preserved, a halt was ordered and the troops bivouacked where they were, Sumner, himself, remaining with Hancock and Brooks until dawn; whence the report arose, that he had lost his way and slept at the foot of a tree between our own and the enemy's pickets. Hooker, meanwhile, after filing to the left, marched until eleven o'clock at night, halting at about the same distance from the enemy that Smith was, on the main road to his right.

On the following morning the battle of Williamsburg opened,—a battle fought without a plan, with inadequate numbers, and at a serious sacrifice without compensating re-

sult. The responsibility has been laid by some upon the shoulders of McClellan because of his absence from the field; and by others upon Sunner, who seems to have directed the movements of the day without method. Whatever may have prevented McClellan's presence with the advance, one might at least expect that his senior corps commander should have been competent to fight a battle of moderate proportions.

Hooker began the attack. He began it on the strength of the orders he had received from McClellan the previous morning, before leaving Yorktown-a noteworthy feature of the battle, in view of the fact that three corps commanders, Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes, were then at the front, and the former in command. Heintzelman, to whose corps Hooker belonged, thought, as we infer from his report, that Sumner should have given directions to the leading divisions on the preceding night, if a battle was imminent, and states that he could not be found; but he nevertheless failed himself to caution Hooker as to his movements, without first hearing from Sumner. So Hooker, in the position of an independent commander, moved to attack the enemy early on the morning of the 5th. There was something vigorous about his action. Despite the rain which was falling plentifully, and the thick, slippery mud, into which the artillery wheels sank deep, he pressed forward and soon became engaged. Fort Magruder stood in his immediate front commanding the junction of the left or Hampton road, into which he had turned, and the main Yorktown road, where Sumner, with Smith's division, was to be found. To the right and left the smaller redoubts, twelve in all, formed an irregular line nearly across the peninsula. Resting on creeks and marshes, with a belt of clearing in their front, they could have proved, if properly manned and

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supported, a formidable barrier. The approaches to the line were singularly disadvantageous for the attacking party, thick woods lining the roads, in which artillery could not operate, and the clearings being "dotted all over," as Hooker reports, with rifle-pits, from which a deadly fire was directed against the troops while taking up position.

As early as half-past seven, the First Brigade, Grover's, was at work. "Being in pursuit of a retreating army," says Hooker, "I deemed it my duty to lose no time in making the disposition of my forces to attack, regardless of their number and position, except to accomplish the result with the least possible sacrifice of life. By so doing, my division, if it did not capture the army before me, would at least hold it that some others might and Grover was directed to commence the attack." The latter opened fire upon the rifle-pits from the woods to the right and left of the road, and Webber's and Bramhall's batteries were brought into action on the right, some seven hundred vards from Fort Magruder. By nine o'clock the fort was silenced and all the enemy's troops in sight on the plain dispersed. This was satisfactory, as well as the movement of two of Grover's regiments on the right, who were directed by Hooker to open up communication with Sumner on the Yorktown road. These regiments, the Eleventh Massachusetts and Twentysixth Pennsylvania, skirmished through the woods, found no enemy, communicated with Sumner's command, and the former returning, reported the fact to Hooker, who now felt that he was not fighting in an isolated position, but on the right of a general line which could be kept connected under the control of his superior.

Meanwhile, the rear divisions of the enemy had halted in their retreat. The demonstration of the Union cavalry the previous afternoon, and Hooker's pressure early the next

morning, compelled them to face about to escape being run over at will by their pursuers. Johnston left Longstreet in command at Williamsburg, on the 5th, and that officer, in the course of the morning, put his entire division in front of Hooker. As the successive brigades went into action, it increased in intensity, and, at eleven o'clock, Hooker found himself warmly engaged. R. H. Anderson's and Pryor's brigades formed the right and left of the enemy's line. Wilcox reinforced Anderson, with A. P. Hill in supporting distance, and, at ten o'clock, Pickett's brigade was also added. These brigades Longstreet directed against Hooker's centre and left, and endeavored to turn his position. They issued from and about the redoubts to the right of Fort Magruder into a wooded ravine, and pressed in masses upon our line. The left especially was in danger, where Patterson's Third Brigade, of New Jersey troops, was fighting manfully against superior numbers. Grover, who also felt the attack, moved part of his first brigade to Patterson's support. The line nevertheless was pushed back as far as the batteries in tho road, and that of Webber was lost, and Bramhall's abandoned but recovered again. The situation was growing serious, and Hooker called for reinforcements, or rather for a diversion in his favor. At half-past eleven he sent a note to Heintzelman, who was supposed to be with Sumner. "I have had a hard contest all the morning," he wrote, "but do not despair of success. My men are hard at work, but a good deal exhausted. It is reported to me that my communication with you by the Yorktown road is clear of the enemy. Batteries, cavalry, and infantry can take post by the side of mine to whip the enemy." It was this latter suggestion that should have been followed out, but Heintzelman was not in command and did not receive the message, as he had started by a roundabout road to reach Hooker, and

Summer, to whom the note was handed, returned it with the single endorsement that he had opened and read it. Just before that he had sent word to Kearney to hurry to Hooker's support. Why he did not send Casey, who was much nearer, and two of whose brigades were once ordered to Hooker and then ordered back, is not perfectly clear. There was confusion in the instructions.

Thus from seven o'clock, A.M., till about twelve, Hooker, alone on the left, had been doing all the fighting. No troops fell into line of battle on his right. No other line was engaged anywhere during the forenoon.

This state of things reveals the true defect of the Williamsburg affair. The fact is that when Hooker began his attack, Sumner, Heintzelman, and Keyes had adopted another plan of action, irrespective of Hooker. There was no concerted movement; hence failure.

The plan these corps commanders agreed upon at an informal consultation early in the morning meditated a flank movement around the enemy's left. Neither of them seemed to know what Hooker proposed to do. They looked to another part of the field. A countryman had reported that the rebels had not occupied certain works on their left, and negroes, questioned by Keyes and others, confirmed the story. To put the matter beyond doubt, Captain Stewart, of the Engineer Corps, and four companies of the Fourth Vermont, were sent, under General Smith's direction, to ascertain the topography of the country, and learn whether a road existed by which the works in question could be seized or turned, if found to be occupied. At ten o'clock Stewart reported that a redoubt, covering a stream called Cub Dam Creek, on the right, seemed to be abandoned. Sumner then directed General Hancock, who was sent for, to march with his own and part of Davidson's brigades, of Smith's division,

and Cowan's New York Battery, of six guns, and take the redoubt.

The passage of the dam was only practicable by the narrow mill bridge across its breast, and which was about two hundred and thirty feet in length. Major Larabee with the Fifth Wisconsin and Sixth Maine in column of assault, led by Lieutenant Custer, the late cavalry general, entered the redoubt and found it unoccupied. Hancock immediately garrisoned it with three companies of the Thirtythird New York, as a rear guard. He then threw his skirmishers into the open field beyond the earthwork, the remainder of his infantry in line of battle to their rear, with the artillery in the centre. At twelve o'clock, word was dispatched to Smith that the redoubt and the important position at Cub Dam Creek were in possession of the Union troops, under Hancock. Here was the first advantage gained by the Federals, and it ultimately determined the result. By this time Hooker's entire command had been precipitated against the enemy on the left. This stubborn fight so engrossed the attention of the Confederate leader that Hancock's manœuvre had been executed before its dangerous significance became apparent. But Hancock was uneasy and readily appreciated the necessity of securing another work, two-thirds of a mile in advance, as it commanded the position he then occupied. He accordingly requested Smith to reinforce him with a brigade of infantry to protect his rear from sudden assault.

Smith promised him four regiments and one battery. Acting on this assurance Hancock took quiet possession of the advance redoubt. In order to divert the heavy firing on Hooker, he (Hancock) now determined to engage the enemy and endeavor to drive them out of two works nearest to his front. His position was a strong one, having a crest

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and natural glacis on either flank, extending to the woods on the right and left. Advancing his skirmishers he soon drove the enemy out of the position, but declined occupying it, as the reinforcements did not arrive. A little later he deemed it prudent to fall back to a crest near the redoubt first reached.

By these movements on our right, the enemy were forced to pay special attention to Hancock. They proposed to attack him. Johnston states that neither he nor Longstreet knew of the abandoned redoubts until late in the afternoon, when General Early sent an officer to report the situation in that part of the field, and request permission to drive off the Union troops, which Johnston gave. D. H. Hill, senior in command on that flank, was directed to take charge of the movement. Four regiments were pushed forward. Early led the Twenty-fourth and Thirty-eighth Virginia on the left; Hill commanded the Fifth and Twenty-third North Carolina on the right. They crossed a stream in their front, and pushed through a dense undergrowth to an open field. In this passage the line was broken, and when the brigade reached the open, the left wing was in advance, chasing the "Yankees," according to Hill, who soon found himself in a most unpleasant position. For, as the rebels emerged into easy range, Hancock, who appeared to be retiring, turned upon them-his men cheering and firing over the crest mentioned-and dealt destruction in their ranks. The volleys of musketry were followed up with an effective charge. Early was wounded and many of his men and officers fell. Hill endeavored to support him, but his regiments could not be handled under fire, and the entire force fell back. It had suffered a bloody repulse, losing nearly 400 men. Hill's and Early's discomfited commands remained in line of battle at a distance all night, expecting to be attacked, and suffered greatly from the cold rain that fell.

This conduct of Hancock and his command was the relieving feature of the day. "The brilliancy of the plan of battle," reports General Smith, "the coolness of its execution, the seizing of the proper instant for changing from the defensive to the offensive, the steadiness of the troops engaged, and the completeness of the victory, are subjects to which I earnestly call the attention of the General-in-Chief for his just praise."

Upon the left, meantime, Hooker had been fighting manfully, but lost ground, until Kearney came to his relief about two o'clock, and threw Birney's and Berry's brigades into the action, with Jameson's forming a second line. Hooker's men fell back out of fire, exhausted and with thinned ranks. Kearney engaged the enemy vigorously, and by nightfall had recovered the field. About the same time in the afternoon, two o'clock, Couch's division appeared on the ground on the main road, and Peck's brigade was ordered to deploy as near as possible on Hooker's right, where he also became closely engaged, but held his own. When night closed, the Union forces were still confronting the line of rebel works. The tactics of the day had proved a failure. Sumner had hoped to accomplish something by Hancock's move, but was distracted by Hooker's serious action. He proposed to reinforce Hancock with the rest of Smith's division, but the heavy firing on his left warned him that the enemy might succeed in interposing themselves between Hooker and Smith, and the latter was retained near the centre, or rather near the main road; for it would be within the truth to say that up to two o'clock, when Peck arrived, there was no centre to this battle. During the forenoon at least, Hooker was fighting a battle of his own on the left and Sumner was planning to fight another on the right. At the moment the latter wished to follow up his own plan and push

Hancock forward, Hooker's somewhat alarming situation, which had not been counted on, suddenly baffled him. In a word, neither Sumner nor any one else had the entire field under his eye and control. The battle was fought by piecemeal and ended in disappointment. We lost that day, 2,228 killed, wounded, and missing, and five guns. Longstreet reports the total rebel loss at 1,560.

Toward five o'clock the continued cheering of troops at Sumner's front announced the arrival of General McClellan upon the field. He had hastily ridden forward on receiving the tardy intelligence, conveyed to him by two members of his staff, that matters were not going on well at the front. There he made the necessary dispositions for more united action on the following day. By this time the divisions of Hooker, Kearney, Smith, Couch, and Casey were well in hand. Sedgwick's and Richardson's were turned back to Yorktown to follow Franklin's and Porter's to West Point by water.

At night the enemy abandoned Williamsburg, and continued their retreat toward Richmond.

That portion of the army that was to advance by water from Yorktown made more comfortable progress and at less sacrifice than the divisions which had been marching by land and fighting at Williamsburg. Something more was expected of it at first than simple progress. It was intended that Franklin, followed by Porter, Sedgwick, and Richardson, should be moved in transports to West Point above, and striking across to the main roads, cut off the retreat of such bodies of the enemy as might be below. But delays, as usual, prevented. Franklin, whose troops had been so long on the boats, tiring of inaction, obtained permission the day before the evacuation of Yorktown to land his men and go

into camp. Ordered back again the next day, it was evening before all were ready to steam forward, and then, in consequence of the extreme darkness of the night, the commander of the gunboat flotilla declined to act as convoy until the following morning. So Franklin did not get off from Yorktown until the 6th. At one o'clock he reached Eltham Landing above West Point, disembarked his troops, and immediately sent the transports back for Sedgwick's division. His instructions were to wait at Eltham until further orders. No mention was made about cutting off the enemy. To make the attempt alone would have been hazardous, and the remaining divisions could not concentrate for several days. Franklin, indeed, on the 7th, was himself attacked. About nine o'clock in the morning, a large force of the enemy appeared in front of General Newton's brigade, which they attacked with vigor an hour later. Parts of Slocum's and Taylor's brigades supported Newton, and a smart action continued until three o'clock, when the enemy withdrew. Their object in attacking was twofold: first, to protect their trains, which were in an exposed position at Barhamsville, and upon which they apprehended an assault from the troops landed from the transports at West Point; and second to drive the Union army into the river if they could, or, at least, send them back under the protection of their gunboats. The rebel force consisted of Whitney's division of G. W. Smith's command, the command of General Magruder, then under Brigadier-General Jones, and Hill and Longstreet's forces in reserve.

CHAPTER V.

TO THE CHICKAHOMINY — McDOWELL — JACKSON IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY—AFFAIR OF HANOVER COURT HOUSE.

AFTER Williamsburg, as from the outset, the course of advance up the peninsula lay straight toward Richmond, with the base of supplies either on the York or the James. The York was followed, and within two weeks the army had again been concentrated, resting between that river, or its southern branch-the Pamunkey-and the Chickahominy. From Williamsburg, the distance marched in the interval was no more than forty miles-the few and wretched roads continuing to prove serious obstacles-and the promise of a rapid pursuit failed of being made good. The troops moved on the 8th, Keyes in advance, following Stoneman's cavalry, who opened communication with Franklin at Eltham. On the 15th, headquarters were established at Cumberland on the south bank or the Pamunkey, and on the following day at the White House, where a permanent depot was organized, the troops having marched up through Barhamsville, Roper's Church, and New Kent Court House. On the 21st the army was collected and in line once more, with its face toward Richmond, from seven to twelve miles distant. The intervening obstacles to be overcome were the ever-present enemy, and in addition, as it was to prove, the formidable Chickahominy. Franklin's

newly organized corps* held the right of the line three miles from New Bridge, with Porter's corps, also just formed, supporting, while Sumner occupied the centre, connecting with Keyes, who held the left near Bottom's Bridge, with Heintzelman in reserve. Stoneman and the cavalry watched the extreme right within a mile of New Bridge.

The position thus occupied by the Union army is one to be noticed, since General McClellan implies in his report that it was not entirely his own choice. The reason of his being there, as explained by himself, introduces the reader to a new phase of the campaign, with McDowell reappearing as the aid with whom alone success could be hoped for.

Soon after the Williamsburg battle McClellan resumed his calls for a larger force. Casualties and sickness had reduced his numbers considerably, and on the 14th he reported that he could not put into battle against the enemy more than 80,000 men at the utmost. Johnston, he believed, was far stronger. To the President he reported: "I have found no fighting men left in this Peninsula. All are in the ranks of the opposing foe;" and then he urged that he might be reinforced with all the disposable troops of the Government. "I ask for every man that the War Department can send me," was his powerful appeal. "I will fight the enemy," he continues, "whatever their force may be, with whatever force I may have, and I firmly believe that we shall beat them, but our triumph should be made decisive and complete. The soldiers of this army love their Government,

^{*} The two new "Provisional" Corps, as they were called, became the Fifth and Sixth. They were organized about May 15th, by making Franklin commander of the former, which was composed of his own division, now Sloeum's, with Smith's from Keyes Corps, and Fitz John Porter commander of the latter, including his own division, now Morell's, and another under Sykes. The latter's brigade of regulars had been enlarged to a division by the addition of Duryea's New York Zouaves, and the Tenth New York, under Colonel Bendix.

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and will fight well in its support. You may rely upon them. They have confidence in me as their General, and in you as their President. Strong reinforcements will at least save the lives of many of them. The greater our force the more perfect will be our combinations, and the less our loss."

To this pressing entreaty for more troops, President Lincoln returned an encouraging reply. There was McDowell's corps, which had been withheld from the Peninsula Army since March, still in front of Washington. It had been guarding the city with eminent satisfaction during McClellan's weary progress toward Richmond, and was to continue there for that purpose until the Government could safely spare it for more active operations. "You will consider the national capital," wrote Stanton to McDowell, April 11th, "as especially under your protection, and make no movement throwing your force out of position for the discharge of this primary duty." McDowell repaired first to Catlett's Station, and in the direction of Culpeper, and soon after moved down the Rappahannock opposite to Fredericksburg, intending to occupy that town as his advanced defensive position in front of Washington. To supply the place of Franklin's division of his corps which had joined McClellan. General Shields' division of Banks' Shenandoah force was ordered to report to him. With his corps thus augmented and completed-his four Division Commanders being McCall, King, Ord, and Shields-General McDowell could muster, about May 20th, the very respectable army of 41,000 men. inclusive of a brigade of cavalry and 100 pieces of artillery. Opposed to him, hovering to the south of and in the vicinity of Fredericksburg, was a fluctuating force of the rebels, generally some twelve thousand strong, commanded by Brigadier-General J. R. Anderson, of the Tradegar Iron Works, Virginia.

It was necessarily to McDowell's command that President Lincoln looked when he received McClellan's urgent call for There were no other troops to be had. On reinforcements. May 17th, accordingly, the former received instructions to move down the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad and "co-operate" with the army under McClellan, then threatening the Confederate capital, as we have seen, from the line of the Pamunkey and York Rivers. It will be observed that this was not a reinforcement proper, but an independent cooperating army. The "primary duty" of protecting Washington still outweighed all other considerations, and McDowell thus could not, in the eyes of the Government, be placed under the untrammelled command of McClellan with any more reason now than at the beginning of the campaign. Stanton's reply to the latter presents the situation perfectly. "Your despatch to the President," he writes, May 17th, 2 P.M., "asking reinforcements, has been received and carefully considered. The President is not willing to uncover the capital entirely, and it is believed that, even if this were prudent, it would require more time to effect a junction between your army and that of the Rappahannock by the way of the Potomac and York rivers than by a land march. In order, therefore, to increase the strength of the attack upon Richmond at the earliest moment, General McDowell has been ordered to murch upon that city by the shortest route. . . . At your earnest call for reinforcements he is sent forward to co-operate in the reduction of Richmond, but charged, in attempting this, not to uncover the city of Washington; and you will give no orders, either before or after your junction, which can put him out of position to cover

To these instructions McClellan demurred at the time only so far as to request that McDowell be placed under his

this city."

orders in the usual way after the junction, and the obligation imposed upon himself not to uncover Washington; and to this the President assented. What seems strange, however, in the perusal of the despatches, is that McClellan felt hampered rather than relieved by the Government's answer to his appeal. The claim, for instance, is made in that document that the order to McDowell to move down upon Richmond forced him to take up a position to the north of that city and establish depots on the Pamunkey, by which he was prevented from using the James River as a line of operations. "I had advised and preferred," writes the General, "that reinforcements should be sent by water for the reasons that their arrival would be more safe and certain, and that [would be left free to rest the army on the James River whenever the navigation of that stream should be opened. . Had General McDowell joined me by water I could have approached Richmond by the James, and thus avoided the delays and losses incurred in bridging the Chickahominy, and would have had the army massed in one body instead of being necessarily divided by that stream." But in regard to this, it is but repeating the proper criticisms made by other writers that General McClellan had frequently mentioned the Pamunkey as his prospective base, that he made no representation to the Government at the time that he wished to be free to move by the James, and that (to anticipate somewhat) it was within his power during the first three weeks of June, when he found that McDowell was again withheld from him, to follow the latter route. On one point there can be no question, that the position of his army, as already given, along the left bank of the Chickahominy from Bottom's toward New Bridge, on May 20th, with the White House, on the Pamunkey, as the base of supplies, was one of McClellan's own choice, uninfluenced by McDowell's movements.

The interests of the North and the reputations of the generals commanding everywhere in the field called loudly for ction and success. It was time something was done, especially in Virginia. Forty thousand or even twenty thousand men joined to McClellan's army would seem to have made it irresistible, regardless of the route it might take. McClellan must have thought so then, whatever he may have written afterward, and it is certain that he did his part to form a unction with McDowell as soon as possible. Unfortunately for the fate of the campaign the latter was delayed. It was ten days after the order to move down, before he could do so. That delay, at least, could not be laid at McClellan's doors. Lields' division for one thing was behind in its supplies, but could not the other three have advanced without him? The very demonstration might have proved effectual in preventing or modifying the subsequent situation in the Shenandoah Valley, which so seriously disturbed the situation on the Peninsula. Not until the 26th could McDowell promise to march.

But McDowell was destined not to move toward Richmond at all. The fatality which had so far attended the Peninsula movements, was to afflict other fields nearer Washington. A new element had now to be considered in calculating the chances of the campaign—"Stonewall" Jackson; and to the field of his fame, the Shenandoah Valley, let us turn for a moment.

In December, 1861, Rosecrans, who commanded in West Virginia, proposed to occupy Winchester, as the best way to cover that State, and guard the Baltimore and Ohio Railway. His plan was foiled by Jackson, who took possession of Winchester in force, in November of that year. In January, 1862, he moved against Bath, in Morgan County, which was evacuated; but General Lander, who had succeeded

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Rosecrans in command, prevented him from crossing the Potomac-though not from damaging the railroad and placing himself between General Lander at Hancock, and Kelly at Romney. Compelling the evacuation of Romney, Jackson remained in winter quarters at Winchester, until the advance of Banks, in March, obliged him to withdraw to Woodstock, forty miles farther south. As soon as this advance of Banks relieved McClellan of anxiety as to that guarter, he ordered Banks, on March 16th, to post his command in the vicinity of Manassas, to rebuild the railway from Washington, occupy Winchester, and scour the country south of the railroad and up the Shenandoah Valley. Shields was withdrawn from Strasburg, and Jackson immediately followed him. Ashby's cavalry came up with his rear guard within a mile of Winchester-and encamped for the night at Kernstown, three miles south of that place, where he was joined by Jackson with his whole force at 2 P.M. on March 23d. Shields, who did not expect an attack, had posted his force on a ridge near Kernstown, with Kimball's brigade and Daum's artillery in advance, Sullivan's in his rear, and Tyler with Broadhead's cavalry in reserve. Jackson, who was deceived as to the number of the troops in his front, attacked about three o'clock, and led his men, weary as they were by a long march, against the ridge where the right flank of Shields was posted, hoping to turn it and cut them off from Winchester. The impetus of his assault was sufficient to carry him to the top of the ridge, but there Shields held him until he brought his own reserves into action and became the attacking party.

After a stubborn contest of three hours, Jackson was defeated, with the loss of two guns and 200 prisoners, besides 500 killed and wounded. The unexpected audacity of this attack had immediate and important results; Banks' corps was turned back from its march to the Potomac and Man-

assas, and he himself returned to take command of the pursuit, which was continued to Woodstock. A few days later, March 31st, Blenker's division, 10,000 strong, was ordered to join Fremont, lately appointed to the command in West Virginia-with instructions to report to Banks, and remain with him as long as there was any apprehension of Jackson's renewing the attack. Banks followed Jackson down the valley, and about April 20th, the latter took up a strong position at Swift Run gap-his front covered by the Shenandoah, his flanks by the mountains, and with good roads to his rear, toward Gordonsville, where lay General Ewell's division of Johnston's army, within easy reach. Should Banks endeavor to go on to Staunton, he exposed his flank and rear and his line of communication with the Potomac to attack from Jackson, while if he attacked Jackson, and should be defeated, his army would be cut off in the heart of a hostile country.

This was the situation on April 28th, when Jackson again assumed the offensive, and began that succession of movements which ended in the complete derangement of the Union plans in Virginia—on the Peninsula as well as in the Shenandoah.

In order that he might operate effectively, Jackson applied to Lee for reinforcements, and asked that Ewell's division might be given him. Lee answered on the 29th, that he feared to detach Ewell, lest he should invite an attack on Richmond and peril the safety of the army on the Peninsula; but he put the command of Edward Johnson, 3,500 strong, then at West View, seven miles west of Staunton, under his orders. The letter suggests that in case Jackson should feel strong enough to hold Banks in check, Ewell and Anderson's army near Fredericksburg might attack Mc-Dowell between that place and Acquia Creek, with much

promise of success. This shows that the great flank movement of Jackson, made later, was not then thought of.

At that time the Union forces in Northern Virginia were disposed as follows: Banks with about 20,000 men near Harrisonburg; Schenck and Milroy, of Fremont's corps, with 6,000 men, had pushed their pickets east of the mountains and were in front of Johnson; Fremont, with 10,000 more, was marching to join them; McDowell, with 40,000, was at Fredericksburg. Jackson proceeded to act. Joining his own forces and Johnson's he moved promptly to attack Milroy, leaving Ewell, who was freed by McDowell's change of position, to watch Banks. Jackson moved by a roundabout course to Staunton. Pushing forward from that place, he reached the village of McDowell, where he gained a hill which commanded the camps of Milrov and Schenck, who had united. These, in order to escape, were obliged to attack Jackson in his strong position on Sittlington's Hill. The battle continued for three or four hours, but was unfavorable to the Union arms. Their forces were withdrawn during the night and retired to Franklin, where a junction was made with Fremont. Banks' force had been weakened by Shields' division sent to McDowell, and learning that Ewell was in the valley, he fell back to New Market, and thence to Strasburg, which he fortified to cover the valley and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Jackson followed swiftly, united with Ewell, and fell upon Colonel Kenly's force of 1,000 men at Front Royal, which he destroyed, and thence pressed forward against Banks, who, hearing of his approach, retreated in considerable confusion and disorder to Winchester. Here he made a stand, but the rebel attack was too vigorous and in too overwhelming numbers to be resisted. The retreat was resumed and did not stop short of the Potomac River.

The sudden intelligence of Banks' reverses, and the fact that Jackson was on the Potomac, caused the wildest excitement at Washington. McDowell, who had already taken up his line of march to join McClellan, was turned back and ordered to put 20,000 men in motion at once for the Shenandoah, in conjunction with Fremont, to capture the force of Jackson and Ewell; and on the 24th McClellan was advised by telegraph from the President that he must not look for cooperation from that quarter. So here again did the promising plan on the Peninsula fall through. McClellan was not to have McDowell's 40,000 men. Both generals protested or represented to the Government that Jackson's movement was evidently intended as a "scare," and that not only was Washington not in danger, but that an attempt to entrap "Stonewall" in the Valley by moving part of McDowell's corps to that quarter would probably not succeed. The Government authorities and "advisers" however, appear to have been in no mood to listen to calm military reasoning, and McDowell was again withheld from McClellan, while his reinforcements, as predicted, could effect nothing against Jackson. The latter eluded Fremont, approaching from the West, and Shields' from the East, fought and gained the battles of Cross Keys and Port Republic, and resumed a safe position up the Valley. By these flying movements he had paralyzed McDowell's force, which was to have, and should have, joined McClellan and fallen like a hammer upon Richmond.*

^{*} The proceedings of the McDowell Court of Inquiry in December, 1862, contain important testimony and documents in regard to this period of the campaign. The following is a brief extract from General McClellan's statements:

[&]quot;I have no doubt said, for it has ever been my opinion, that the Army of the Potomac would have taken Richmond had not the corps of General McDowell been separated from it. It is also my opinion that had the command of General McDowell joined the Army of the Potomac in the month of May by way of Han-

Proceeding with the narrative of McClellan's movements. we recall the fact that Anderson's rebel brigade was near Fredericksburg, and a part of Stewart's cavalry also, watching the movements of McDowell. Branch's brigade was at Hanover Court House, fourteen miles north of Richmond. The two brigades, in number some twelve thousand men, thus interposed between the right of McClellan and McDowell's line of advance, was a threat which was not to be disregarded. They were at once a menace to his flank and McDowell's approach. When McClellan was advised of these facts, and that McDowell's forward movement had begun, he resolved to take the initiative and strike a blow at Branch which should make him harmless for a time, relieve his own flank and rear, hinder him from reinforcing Jackson and impeding McDowell, who at this time was eight miles south of Fredericksburg.

This task was intrusted to General Fitz John Porter with a command of his own selection, about 12,000 strong. Porter adds that the object of the expedition was "to clear the enemy from the Upper Peninsula as far as Hanover Court House or beyond;" the destruction of the bridges over the South Anna and Pamunkey Rivers, in order to prevent the enemy in large force from getting into our rear from that direction, and in order, further, to cut one great line of the enemy's communications, *i.e.*, that "connecting Richmond directly with Northern Virginia."

For the destruction of the bridges over the Pamunkey, Warren's brigade had been already detailed and had been posted at Old Church. It was composed, provisionally, of the Fifth New York, Warren's regiment, the Thirteenth New

over Court House from Fredericksburg, that we would have had Richmond within a week after the junction. I do not hold General McDowell responsible in my own mind for the failure to join me on either occasion."

York, under Colonel Marshall, the First Connecticut Artillery under Colonel R. O. Tyler, the Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry and Weeden's battery. This force had already been successful in destroying all means of communication over the Pamunkey as far as Hanover Court House. On the morning of May 27th the brigade moved toward the Court House, on a road running parallel to the Pamunkey. At 4 A.M. the same day General Porter left New Bridge with General Morell's division, consisting of his old brigade, commanded by Colonel McQuade, and Generals Butterfield's and Martindale's brigades. This infantry force was preceded by an advance guard under General Emory, composed of the Fifth and Sixth regiments of United States Cavalry and Benson's Horse Battery of the Second United States Artillery. The route was from New Bridge, via Mechanicsville, to Hanover Court House, north.

As usual, it rained heavily and the roads were reduced to a terrible condition. About noon, the cavalry, upon passing the junction of the Ashland road and the Hanover Court House road, encountered a portion of Branch's brigade of North Carolina men, which, supporting two pieces of artillery posted near Dr. Kinney's house, attempted to hold the road leading to the Court House. Colonel Johnson's regiment, the Twenty-fifth New York Volunteers, was moving with the cavalry, with skirmishers deployed, and came in direct collision with a portion of Branch's command, which extended into the woods on the right and east of the Court House road. The cavalry had disengaged itself from the main column and had moved toward the front, leaving Benson's battery engaged with the rebels, who had developed at that time but little strength. Owing to our ignorance of the enemy's position, a portion of Johnson's regiment was captured near Kinney's house, by that portion of the enemy

which had been passed by the cavalry, and which was hidden by the woods before alluded to. One piece of rebel artillery was driven from the field and one piece disabled by Benson. Upon reaching the front General Porter, finding that the existence of both infantry and artillery had been developed during this action near Kinney's house, deployed General Butterfield's brigade in two lines and directed him to charge and drive the rebels from the wheat field. Butterfield's brigade moved over in handsome style, as if on parade, captured the gun and cleared the field. It was then supposed that the enemy had retreated from his front in the direction of Hanover Court House, and orders were given to pursue. But upon approaching the junction of these roads, General Porter sent toward Ashland two regiments of Martindale's brigade to guard our flank from an approach from Richmond, and to destroy the railroad and telegraph lines running to that city. This command discovered the presence of a large force of rebels at the railroad station, and Martindale's brigade thus became immediately engaged. All this was unknown to the corps commander, who was pressing toward the Court House with the remainder of Morell's division, Butterfield leading. The Twenty-eighth North Carolina, which had retreated toward the Court House, was almost entirely captured by our cavalry under Emory, who at that time, and until he was ordered to return, was accompanied by the Seventeenth New York, under Colonel Lansing.

Thus Martindale was left to meet a sudden attack from Branch's whole command, and it was with difficulty that he could inform General Porter of his exact position, so little was it thought possible for a rebel force to appear on our left and rear. When informed of the critical situation of Martindale's brigade, General Porter ordered the entire command to face about and toward Martindale, left in front.

General Morell, leading his old brigade, now under Colonel McQuade, reached Martindale, who had been forced back to the east of the main road, with the Fourteenth New York in advance, and in time to change the whole face of affairs. This regiment relieved the Second Maine and Forty-fourth New York, who had been nearly overwhelmed by Branch's large brigade, and who were also almost out of ammunition. The remainder of McQuade's brigade moved toward the west *en eschelon* and through the woods, striking Branch on his left and rear; and in conjunction with Martindale, who now pushed forward, completely routed the enemy.

In the meantime Butterfield, brought by Porter's movement into the rear of the column, directed his troops toward the sound of the firing, in two columns—one along the railroad and one by the turnpike. This force came upon , the field as the enemy were being driven, but in time to take some prisoners on their left. Griffin's Battery "D" Fifth United States Artillery, Martin's Battery "C" Massachusetts Artillery, and Benson's battery were warmly engaged for some hours. On the rebel side the troops were mainly of Branch's North Carolinians, but General Porter reports that Georgia troops were present. These latter must have belonged to R. H. Anderson's brigade, which had fallen back from the front of General McDowell then advancing from Fredericksburg. Branch's command must have been about 10,000 strong.

The objects of the expedition were accomplished, and the destruction of bridges and railroads as far as Ashland being completed, General Porter returned to his old camps.

CHAPTER VI.

BATTLE OF FAIR OAKS.

MEANWHILE McClellan was moving steadily toward the rebel capital. On May 20th Naglee's brigade, of Casey's division, crossed the Chickahominy at Bottom's Bridge, and, three days later, the remainder of the corps, the Fourth, followed under General Keyes. On the 25th it took up a position at the Seven Pines, on the main turnpike leading to Richmond, about five miles from the city. The Third Corps, Heintzelman's, also crossed on this date. Hooker's division moved southward to guard the White Oak Swamp Bridge, and Kearny's division took position in advance of Savage's Station. On the left bank of the Chickahominy were Sumner's, Franklin's, and Porter's corps, with General McClellan's Headquarters at Gaines' Mill. The consolidated returns of the army show an aggregate of 126,089 officers and men present on May 31st, with 280 pieces of field artillery.

Serious work was now at hand, and we pass to the incidents of the first bloody and important contest of the campaign, known as the Battle of Fair Oaks or Seven Pines.

Johnston, who was in communication with Jackson, and probably felt certain that the junction of McDowell would be attempted as the best way to utilize that force, and as suggested by military prudence, resolved to anticipate the event and strike McClellan before he was reinforced by so formidable a body of fresh troops. He had made all neces-

sary dispositions for an attack. Huger's division of three brigades was moved up from Petersburg. A. P. Hill's was ordered to march to the north of the Chickahominy at Meadows Bridge and to remain on that side of the stream. General Smith was directed to place his division on the left of Magruder's on the Mechanicsville turnpike, that he, the second officer in rank, might be in position to command on the left. Longstreet's division was placed on the left of that of D. H. Hill, and Huger's in rear of the interval between those last named. It was intended that Smith and Huger should move against the Union right, that Magruder and Hill, crossing by New Bridge, should form between the left wing and the Chickahominy, while Longstreet's and D. H. Hill's, their left thrown forward, assailed the right flank of the two corps on the Williamsburg road and on the Richmond side of the stream. Johnston supposed that the bridges and fords would furnish sufficient means of communication between the two parts of the Confederate army. Such are the words used by General Johnston in his narrative. It is true that he writes after the fact, but it is plain that he had no fear as to the result of an encounter with the whole of McClellan's force, and also that he did not regard the Chickahominy as a barrier to prompt and easy communication between the two wings of his own army, which, by this plan of battle, would be divided by that stream. While the generals of division were with Johnston to receive his final instructions for this attack, the expediency of which was urged before the accession of McDowell's large and fresh corps, General Stewart, who had a small force of cavalry watching McDowell at Fredericksburg, reported that the force, which had been marching southward, had turned back, indicating a change of intention by the two portions of the Federal army. This intelligence caused

General Johnston to begin the offensive at once and attack the two Federal corps on the south of the Chickahominy at Fair Oaks as soon as they had advanced far enough to put a sufficient interval between themselves and the three corps on the left bank of the river. On the morning of the 30th, by orders of General D. H. Hill, a reconnoissance in force was made by Brigadier-General Rhodes on the Charles City road, and by Brigadier-General Garland on the Williamsburg road. General Rhodes met no enemy, but General Garland encountered Federal outposts more than two miles to the west of Seven Pines, in numbers sufficient to indicate the presence of a corps at least. Of this Johnston was informed about noon and at once told General Hill to prepare for an attack the next morning. Orders were promptly given to concentrate twenty-three out of twenty-seven brigades of the rebel army against the two Union corps, about two-fifths of McClellan's army. The four others were observing the river from New Bridge up to Meadow Bridge. Longstreet and Hill were directed to move to D. H. Hill's position as early as possible next morning, and Smith to march with his to the point of meeting of the New Bridge and Nine Mile roads, near which Magruder had five brigades.

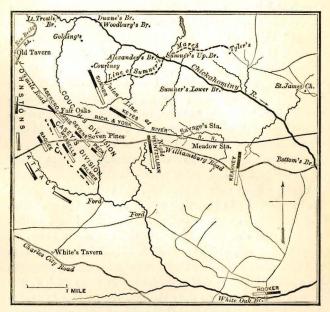
Longstreet, the ranking officer of the three divisions to be united near Hill's camp, was instructed verbally to form his own and Hill's division in two lines of attack at right angles to the Williamsburg road, and Huger was instructed to advance down the Charles City road until he reached a point opposite, and in the rear of the Federal left flank, to attack as soon as he became aware that they were fully engaged in front. In case abatis or entrenchments were encountered, the troops were ordered to turn them. General Smith was to engage reinforcements should any be sent across the Chickahominy; and, in case he should encounter none, to

attack on the left of the troops already engaged. Although the second in command, General Smith was not transferred to the point of first attack, lest the delay in moving his troops from the left, where they lay, should take up valuable time.

Let us turn to the Federal side, and study the disposition of the left wing, advanced and cut off from support, as Johnston supposed it was, after the passage of the Chickahominy. On the 24th General Naglee led a reconnoissance in force from the camp near Bottom's Bridge, and penetrated as far along the right bank of the river as the woods next beyond Savage's Station, where he met a strong body of the rebels, consisting of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, under command of General Stuart. As he reports, a conflict ensued, which resulted in the enforced abandonment of their position by the rebels.

On the 27th the troops again moved forward, and supported the advanced picket-line, which was within about five miles of Richmond. The Eleventh Maine and One Hundred and Fourth Pennsylvania held this honorable and exposed position, which they maintained until the 31st, when they met the first force of the enemy's attack. General Keyes, commanding the corps, was ordered to select and fortify. a strong position on the Richmond road. He accordingly commenced a line near Savage's Station, a mile and a half behind Seven Pines. This is the work mentioned by General Couch, in his diary, on the 27th, where he speaks of a strong entrenched line constructed by his men, under orders of General McClellan-the position of which is shown on the map. As it was deemed important by the commanding general that the position of Seven Pines-the junction of the Williamsburg road with the Nine Mile road-should be strongly held, Lieutenant McAllester was directed by General Barnard, Chief of Engineers, to fortify the ground.

He selected a position a mile and a half in advance of the Seven Pines, which he deemed tenable, and which was visited by General Barnard on the 28th, who directed the commencement of a redoubt, rifle-pits, felling of trees, etc. McAllester was unable to procure men enough to throw up rapidly an adequate defensive line, and the redoubt was un-



Battle-field of "Fair Oaks."

finished at the time of the attack. The brigades composing Casey's Second Division, Fourth Corps, which occupied the advance of this wing, covered only by the unfinished works above described, were, respectively: 1st, Naglee on the right; 2d, Wessels in the centre; 3d, Palmer on the

left. The First Division, Couchs', consisted of: 1st, Peck's Brigade; 2d, Abercrombie's; 3d, Devens'. The corps numbered on the muster-rolls about 12,000 men, of all arms, but no more than two-thirds were present fit for duty on May 31, 1862.

General Keyes expected, and was preparing for, a battle. Couch in his diary notes that he was sending back wagons to the north side of the river. His own division was encamped at Seven Pines about half a mile in the rear of Casey's, of whom he speaks, saying that Casey's pickets were skirmishing hotly on the 29th, and that the enemy were threatening both flanks of the corps. On the 30th he notes that the skirmishing was so severe in Casey's front that at his request a part of Peck's brigade was sent to him. This is the reconnoissance mentioned by Johnston, which determined the time and manner of his attack.

It will readily be seen that there was nothing in the nature of a surprise about the rebel attack on the 31st. The commanding officers were on the alert, and everything indicated that a few hours at the latest would open the contest. But before the strife of men began the elements joined battle. On the night of the 30th and 31st there was a storm of tropical violence, which is mentioned in all the reports. It is not often that within the limits of the stern brevity required by a military report that any allusion is made such as the fury of this storm drew from General Keyes, who in speaking of it, says: "From their beds of mud and the peltings of this storm the Fourth Corps rose to fight the battle of May 31, 1862." At about ten o'clock in the morning, Lieutenant Washington, an aide-de-camp of General Johnston's, was captured by the Federal pickets in an open field to the right of Fair Oaks, which was the extremity of General Casey's line, and brought before General Keyes. As the enemy

BATTLE OF FAIR OAKS.

appeared to be in force on the right, Keyes anticipated the weight of attack from that quarter. He gave orders to have the troops under arms at eleven o'clock and rode over to Fair Oaks Station, meeting on the way Colonel Bailey, chief of artillery, whom he ordered to put his guns in readiness for action. Finding nothing unusual at Fair Oaks he returned toward Seven Pines, and as the firing in front of Casey grew more brisk, as a precaution, he ordered Couch to send Peck's Brigade to his support.

At about 12.30 P.M. it became suddenly manifest that the attack was made in great force and General Keyes sent at once to General Heintzelman for reinforcements. His message was delayed and it was not until 3 P M. that Berry's and Jamieson's brigades of Kearny's division reached the scene of action. Casey's division was in front of the abatis and his pickets about one thousand yards beyond, it being impossible to extend them farther because the ground immediately in front of that point was held by the enemy in force. The pickets, reinforced by the One Hundred and Third Pennsylvania, soon broke and, joined by a large number of sick, camp followers and skulkers, flowed in a steady stream to the rear, thus giving the impression that Casey's division had broken in a panic, and left the field without making any firm or prolonged resistance. So strong was that impression, that General McClellan, who did not make his appearance on the ground until the next day, telegraphed to Mr. Stanton : " Casey's division, which was the first line, gave way unaccountably and discreditably." In his report, made at a later day, he retracted this injurious expression, but for some time this division, which, as will be shown, fought well and lost heavily, remained under the gravest accusations of cowardice. An examination in detail of the reports of the brigade commanders, will show the facts. Palmer reports

that the Third Brigade, composed of new troops, was in a poor state of discipline, not controlled by the officers. About 400 were detailed on picket duty, and were stragglers; the remainder, about 1,000 strong, were attacked in front and on both flanks, and after returning the enemy's fire with spirit, fell back to the woods in their rear. The Eighty-first New York lost its colonel, major, one captain, and many men killed. Colonel Hunt of the Ninety-second was wounded and obliged to leave the field. The regiments were scattered; the smoke made it impossible to observe more than one regiment at a time, and when Palmer applied for reinforcements he was told to fall back on the new line formed in the rear. He claims his loss to have been about one-fourth of the number engaged, and blames those who placed a small force of the rawest men in the army in the most exposed position to bear the brunt of an attack.

General Wessels reports that of an actual effective force in his brigade of 1,500 men, 34 were killed, 271 wounded, and 55 missing, and tells the same story of stubborn resistance, that regiment after regiment, enveloped by superior numbers and enfiladed on both flanks, fell back from position to position, until at nightfall, having been driven from the last post to which he had been assigned on the right of Devens, he encamped near Savage's Station.

General Naglee was more fortunate in two respects, the quality of his men and the result of the action; for although he with the others was compelled to fall back, it would seem that they made a more stubborn resistance, favored in some respects by the nature of the ground, and by the fact that they were enabled to form a junction with the reinforcements brought up on the right. At about one o'clock, by order of General Casey, the One Hundredth New York, One Hundred and Fourth Pennsylvania, and Eleventh Maine, made a

charge on the enemy in their front. Passing over a rail fence they came into the open held by the rebels, where the fire became hotter than before, Spratt's battery taking an active part. By this time the left of Casey's command had been forced back upon the position of Couch, the colonel of the One Hundredth New York was killed, that of the One Hundred and Fourth was wounded, half the men were killed and wounded, and the enemy, constantly reinforced, pressed them so closely that Sergeant Porter, left guide of the One Hundred and Fourth, was struck over the neck with a musket. Orders were given to retire. The horses of one of Spratt's guns being killed, the piece was abandoned. All this time the men had been fighting in front of the intrenchment. Now, as they fell back, an opportunity was afforded to Colonel Bailey, of the First New York artillery, who promptly ordered the batteries of Fitch and Bates to open on the rebels as they pressed forward in pursuit. The order was obeyed with so good effect of grape and canister, that although repeatedly urged to the assault and coming up with courage, such was their loss that the enemy fell back from this point.

A little later the rebels advanced on the left and in the rear of the redoubt, and stationed sharpshooters in the trees in such position as to command that point and the rifle-pits. Here their fire at short range was most fatal and effective. Colonel Bailey was shot through the head while directing the batteries in the redoubt and giving instructions as to spiking the guns if they must be abandoned. Major Van Valkenberg and Adjutant Rumsey, of the same regiment, were killed shortly after, and the battery left without officers, and in the course of the next hour it was necessary to leave the guns, most of the horses having been killed, with the exception of a part of Regan's battery, which was brought off,

the men supporting the wounded horses to keep them from falling in the traces. The rebels now turned the guns left in the redoubt upon the left flank of the Fifty-sixth New York, Eleventh Maine, and Fifty-second Pennsylvania. This with the fire in front was not to be endured, and they were withdrawn and put in position in the rear of the Nine Mile road, about three hundred yards from the Seven Pines. This line was held till toward dark, when the enemy, advancing in masses down the rear of the Nine Mile road, compelled a general retrograde movement, which did not stop till all arrived at a new line of defence, one mile in the rear.

The report of General Keyes shows that he was called upon early in the action to reinforce the first line, and did so until he had so far depleted the second that he could not with safety weaken it farther. He bears testimony to the determined gallantry with which the majority of Casey's division held its ground, only giving way when overwhelmed by masses of the enemy. Under his direction, with the assistance of Generals Naglee and Devens, a change of front of the troops on the Williamsburg road was effected, by which a line in the rear of the Nine Mile road was formed, which proved so firm a barrier to the advance of the rebels, and which finally fell back in good order to the line near Savage's Station.

About 4.12 P.M., seeing the enemy advancing in overwhelming numbers on the right, General Keyes himself hastened to the left to bring up reinforcements, and with the assent of General Heintzelman sent forward General Peck with the One Hundred and Second, and Ninety-third Pennsylvania regiments. Colonels Rowley and McCarter were ordered to advance across the open space to attack. They advanced under a heavy fire, and formed in a line oblique to the Nine Mile road, where they maintained their position

for half an hour, doing great execution. Compelled at length to give way, Peck and the One Hundred and Second crossed the Williamsburg road to the wood, and McCarter, with the bulk of the Ninety-second, passed to the right, where they took part in the last line of battle, formed about 6 P.M. Colonel Briggs, of the Tenth Massachusetts, under orders from General Keves, led his regiment in face of a heavy fire and formed with the precision of parade on the right of this last mentioned line. It was a most favorable position, being in a wood without much undergrowth, where the ground sloped somewhat abruptly to the rear. Had the regiment been two minutes later, this fine position would have been lost, and it would have been impossible to form the last line which stemmed the tide of defeat and made victory possible. This success was begun here by the Fourth Corps and the two brigades of Kearny's division. When this position was taken, it was observed that the left of the line was dwindling away, that the artillery had withdrawn, that the centre was weakening, and large bodies of rebels were pouring down the Williamsburg road to the rear. Generals Keyes, Heintzelman, and others passed through the opening of the entrenchments of the 28th, and by strenuous efforts rallied a number of men, and induced them to turn about and join a line better organized, posted in the woods, and formed perpendicular to the road, and advanced some sixty yards to the left of the road toward the field where the battle had been confined for more than two hours against vastly superior numbers. The line was formed of companies, regiments, and parts of regiments, fragments of divisions and brigades which had lost their integrity in the fierce fight of the afternoon. Casey, Couch, Kearny, Birney were all represented, and the men stood firm, shoulder to shoulder, in the fading light.

In the course of the two hours preceding these events. three Pennsylvania batteries under Major Roberts (Hood's, McCarty's and Miller's) of Couch's division, did admirable Miller's in particular, from its central position, service. threw shell with great precision over the heads of our troops, which fell into the masses of the enemy, and later, when the enemy were rushing in upon the right, he threw case and canister among them, doing frightful execution. This substantially closes the action of May 31st, as to that portion of it which was fought in front of Casev's division. and in which the troops of Keyes' and Heintzelman's corps participated. Of these, every division except the Second Division of Hooker was heavily engaged during the long hours from 12.30 to 6.30 P.M. Early in the afternoon, when the first weight of the rebel assault was thrown upon Casey's right, which had been driven back upon Couch's division, the latter, by the weight and impetus of the charge, was cut off from his command with Abercrombie and four regiments with a battery and prisoners. After endeavoring to cut his way back to his main force and finding the odds against him too great, he withdrew toward the Grape Vine Bridge on the Chickahominy, and took a position facing Fair Oaks.

So McClellan's promising advance toward Richmond received an unexpected repulse. Keyes' Corps and half of Heintzelman's, which had reinforced him, had been driven back a mile.

Let us return for a moment to the rebel side and see what were the reasons for the partial failure of their admirably formed plan of attack upon two comparatively weak corps of McClellan's army, separated from their comrades by the treacherous Chickahominy. Their order of battle, it will be remembered, put G. W. Smith on the right, Johnston being with him, Longstreet and D. H. Hill in the centre,

and Huger on the left, with orders to move on the left flank and rear of the Federals. Some recrimination was indulged in by the commanding officers, on account of the delay on Longstreet's part in making the attack, and the alleged total failure of Huger to co-operate at all.

While the long time which elapsed, after the attack was begun by Hill and before Smith co-operated, formed the subject of criticism, it is urged on behalf of Huger that his troops were unaccustomed to marching, having been in garrison duty so long at Norfolk, and that finding the road heavy and the swamp overflowed, they were unable to take position in time to be of any service. Huger for himself says that his instructions were not positive, and that he was not informed of the place of attack. General Johnston has charged as follows: "Had General Huger's division been in position and ready for action when those of Smith, Longstreet, and Hill moved, I am satisfied that Keves' corps would have been destroyed instead of merely defeated. Had it gone into action at even four o'clock the victory would have been much more complete." Huger replied in his demand for a court of inquiry: "To the last paragraph I have only to say that if it did not go into action by four o'clock, it was because General Longstreet did not require it, as it was in position and awaiting his orders. Four of the brigades had been sent for and did go into action on Saturday afternoon-three of Longstreet's and one of Huger's--the other two were in position and could have gone if ordered." Johnston's report ignores the presence of Huger's division at any part of the action. This request for a Court of Inquiry by Huger, addressed to Jefferson Davis, as President, through George W. Randolph, Secretary of War, was referred to General Johnston and indorsed by Davis favorably, unless General Longstreet's reply "will enable Johnston to relieve Huger

of his grievance." Huger seems to have defended himself successfully.

As to Smith, on the other hand, a cause for the delay in his attack is found in a peculiar condition of the elements. Although General Johnston was only separated from General Longstreet at the centre by a brief interval of three miles or more, he left the time of the commencement of the action by the latter to be determined by the sound of the musketry which he supposed would be distinctly audible at his position, instead of making certain of the fact by means of an aide who could have brought him the news of Hill's advance the moment the order was given. The wind proved an unreliable courier; it took up the sound of the cannon and carried that only to Johnston and Smith. It was not until Hill's movement had resulted in a heavy engagement which had lasted for some hours that, about three o'clock P.M., Smith was informed of the state of affairs and pushed in on Couch's right, cutting the latter off from the remainder of his division. These mistakes on the part of the enemy saved us from a more serious disaster than we suffered.

Upon the Union side there are other and more satisfactory incidents of the day to be noticed.

General McClellan's headquarters at this time were at Gaines' Mill, on the opposite side of the Chickahominy. Hearing the firing at Keyes' front, he ordered Sumner, then encamped with his corps near Tyler's house, on the same side of the stream, to be in readiness to march at a moment's warning. Sumner instantly put his men under arms, and, at two o'clock, General Sedgwick's division left camp and advanced to the upper bridge, where they halted to await further orders. At half-past two orders to march to the support of Heintzelman were received, and the column was at once pushed forward, Gorman's brigade in advance, followed

by Kirby's battery; then Burns' and Dana's brigades, followed by Tompkins', Bartlett's, and Devens' batteries. The river had risen during the night and morning, the causeways approaching the bridge on either side were overflowed, and the bridges, trembling under the strong current which covered the planking, were in momentary danger of destruction; and it was not till the weight of the marching column steadied Sumner's upper bridge that confidence was felt that the structure would stand. The utmost difficulty was experienced in getting the guns along; it was necessary to unlimber and use the prolongs, the men tugging at the mired pieces up to their waists in water. Of Richardson's division, French's brigade only was able to cross at the lower bridge, and Howard's and Meagher's brigades were obliged to cross by the upper bridge, opposite General Sedgwick's camp. Sedgwick's advance-the First Minnesota, Colonel Sully, leading-arrived on the field about 4.30 P.M., and found Abercrombie's brigade, of Couch's division, southwest of Courtney's house, hard pressed by the enemy. Colonel Sully formed his regiment on his right. Gorman's brigade formed on Abercrombie's left, becoming hotly engaged; it was charged by the enemy, who were repulsed; when charging in turn, it drove them from their position. Kirby's battery arrived on the field, and, with three pieces and one caisson, was put into action on the left. Soon Lieutenants French and Woodruff arrived with three more pieces; the caisson was in the rear, buried in the mud; the trail of one gun broke at the fourth discharge. The enemy prepared to charge on Kirby's right, but he changed front to the right, and sent back two limbers to the caisson for ammunition, firing round shot in the meantime. The enemy came down a road, and found themselves in front instead of to right of Kirby's guns, and exposed to a fire of canister from five

light 12-pounders, and were compelled to retreat to the woods in disorder; the recoil buried the guns to their axles in the mud; at one time three pieces were in that condition, and were only extricated with the aid of the Fifteenth Massachusetts Volunteers. This battery was the only one which arrived in time to take part in the action at this point. Generals Burns and Dana were prompt to arrive, the latter with only two regiments, the Twentieth Massachusetts and Seventh Michigan, the other two, the Nineteenth Massachusetts and Forty-second New York, having been left behind, the one on picket, the other to protect the crossing and assist the passage of the artillery. General Dana soon after went into action on the left of Gorman's brigade, and took part in a brilliant charge. General Burns took post on the right of Colonel Sully with two regiments, holding two in reserve-the Seventy-second Pennsylvania, Colonel Baxter, overlapping Colonel Sully's right, and the Sixty-ninth Pennsylvania, Colonel Owens, on his right and rear, covering the right of the road from Courtney's to Golding's house. During the night the Seventy-first Pennsylvania, and First California of this division, with the Nineteenth Massachusetts, Sixty-third and Forty-second New York were ordered back toward the Chickahominy, to hold the line of communication and protect the ammunition and artillery, nearly all of which was mired on the south side of the river.

The troops to whom this line was opposed during the latter part of the day were Hood's brigade, Whiting's, Pettigrew's, Hampton's, and Hatton's, and the attacks upon Kirby's battery were made successively by Whiting, Pettigrew, and Hampton. General Hampton reports that after driving the enemy a short distance through the woods, he found that they were being rapidly reinforced and held a strong posi-

tion either fortified or affording natural shelter, and even fast extending beyond his (Hampton's) left. Upon being informed of the state of affairs by Colonel Lee (rebel) of the artillery, General G. W. Smith, in his report says, that he immediately ordered up Hatton's brigade and Colonel Lightfoot's regiment of Pettigrew's, until then held in reserve, into action upon Hampton's left, where the whole line came within fifteen or twenty yards of the line of the enemy's (Federal) fire, which apparently came from the low bank of an old ditch, either a drain or the foundation of a fence very near the surface of the ground. Various attempts were made to charge the enemy, but for want of concert all failed. In this engagement the rebel loss as reported by General Smith, was 1,283, killed, wounded, and missing. General Pettigrew was wounded and taken prisoner, General Hampton wounded, and General Hatton killed. General Smith expresses the rather sanguine opinion that if he could have had an hour more of daylight, with the assistance of Hood's brigade of Texans on the right, supported by Griffith's of Mississippi on the left, as well as by the brigade of General Simms, all fresh troops, the enemy would have been driven into the swamps of the Chickahominy. As it was, darkness compelled him to relinguish "an unfinished task," a task, it may be here said, which was still unfinished the next day, when he had all the advantages to be derived from daylight and opportunity.

Three times in his report of this day's action General Smith speaks of the enemy's (Federal) strong position, as "either fortified or offering natural shelter"; again the "strong position of the enemy is better understood"; again, "reconnoisance made during the morning developed the fact that the enemy (Federal) were strongly fortified in the position attacked by my division on the previous evening."

There was no fortification, or the semblance of one, on any part of the line held by the fragment of Couch's division under General Abercrombie and the troops of Sumner's corps as they arrived on the field in the afternoon; the only artillery on the ground was a section of Brady's battery and Kirby's First Artillery, which was posted in the open field near Adams' house; the remainder of the artillery of Sumner's corps came on the ground only in time to be used in the action of the next morning. The imaginary fortified position which Smith encountered was, in fact, the living wall of brave men who withstood his advance and compelled him finally to retreat. The First Division of Sumner's Corps, General Richardson's, did not arrive on the field until the firing in Couch's and Sedgwick's division had ceased, it being then dark.

On reporting to Sumner, Richardson was ordered to take position on the line of the railroad, on the left of General Sedgwick, and to communicate with the pickets of General Birney on the left. The brigade of General French was placed on the railroad, three regiments of General Howard in second line, three regiments of General Meagher in third line, and one of General Howard's, the Fifth New Hampshire, as the advance guard to General French. The men bivouacked under arms, and one regiment of General Meagher's command, the Sixty-third New York, was sent back, with General Sumner's permission, to try and get up at least two pieces of artillery before morning. The Fifth New Hampshire during the night were within half musket shot of the Second and Fifth Texas; the Second Mississippi, upon whom General Smith relied to take the enemy's (Federal) fortifications the next morning, were withdrawn before daylight. At two o'clock of the morning of June 1st, a council of war was held in General Sumner's tent, and it was re-

solved to attack the enemy as soon as disposition for that purpose could be made.

Again glancing at the entire operations of the day, we find the situation relieved by the conduct of Sumner, who came on the field in time to restore our line on the right, and check the further progress of the enemy. The exertions of Keyes, Heintzelman, and their officers and men were thus prevented from proving futile. The rebels pouring down in great numbers to drive us into the Chickahominy had failed of their object.

On the following morning, June 1st, the battle was renewed, and ended with success of the Union troops and the re-establishment of the lines lost the previous day.

About sunset on May 31st, General J. E. Johnston, Commander-in-Chief of the rebel army, who had been shortly before wounded by a bullet in the shoulder, was struck from his horse by a shell, and severely injured and carried from the field. The command devolved upon General G. W. Smith, second in rank, who directed operations until June 2d, when General R. E. Lee was placed in command of the Army of Northern Virginia, a position which he held with honor until April, 1865. On the morning of June 1st, the rebels took the initiative, and about 5 o'clock A.M. a column of cavalry and a line of infantry pickets were seen deploying in an open field on the right of the position held by General Richardson. If this was intended, as he thinks, for the head of a real attack, it was broken up and driven back by Captain Pettit's battery, which had just come on the field, and no further attempt was made from that direction. Finding that a gap existed between General French's left and the right of General Birney, which was unoccupied, and exposed the line to be cut at this point, General Richardson moved General French three battalions' length to the

left, and put in a regiment of General Howard's still farther to the left, and the Fifth New Hampshire in second line. Hardly had these arrangements been completed, when about 6.30 A.M. a furious fire of musketry began from a distance of about fifty yards. Near our left two roads crossed the railroad, and up these the enemy moved his column of attack, supported on his left by battalions deployed in line of battle in the woods, the whole line coming up at once without any skirmishers in advance. Our men returned the fire with vivacity, and the fire soon became the heaviest yet experienced, the enemy putting in fresh regiments five times to allow their men to replenish ammunition. This lasted for an hour and a half, when the enemy, unable any longer to bear the fire, fell back, but in the course of half an hour renewed the contest with reinforcements, when an action of about one hour's duration ensued, at the end of which time the division charged on the enemy in their front, supported at the moment by a charge upon their left and rear, led by General French in person, and compelled them to fall back, their retreat being precipitated by the fire of four guns of Pettit's battery. The division lost about 900 killed, wounded, and missing.

General Sickles, in his report of the advance on June 1st, says the fields were strewn with Enfield rifles marked "Tower, 1862," and muskets marked "Virginia" thrown away by the enemy in his sudden retreat. In the camp occupied by Generals Casey and Couch were found rebel caissons filled with ammunition, a large number of small arms, and several baggage wagons, besides two barns filled with subsistence and forage.

The attempt of the rebels to drive the left wing into the Chickahominy, and cut McClellan's line of supply from White House, which opened with every prospect of success, was turned first into failure and then into disaster, which sent them back to Richmond in a panic on the night of June 1st.

General Johnston, who refers in his report to the entrenchments which prevented General G. W. Smith from attacking the right of Summer's line on June 1st, claims a victory on that day, when he was not on the field, and on the 31st, he alleges that his forces took 10 guns, 6,000 muskets, 1 garrison flag, and 4 regimental colors, and many hundred prisoners, and states his total loss to have been 4,283.

D. H. Hill, who led the advance on Casey's camp, claims to have driven the Union troops first a mile and a half, and subsequently a mile further, meeting with a constant series of successes on May 31st and June 1st, until, by reason of the "Yankees" occupying ground in his rear on the Nine Mile road (a strange place for a beaten enemy to be in), it was deemed best to withdraw to Richmond.