

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE INVASION OF MARYLAND.—ANTIETAM.

Result of the Campaign in Virginia.—The Invasion of the North.—Maryland! my Maryland!—Jackson's Scheme.—Lee's Design.—His Force.—Crossing the Potomac.—The Confederate Force.—Lee's Address to the People of Maryland.—His Reception.—The Command given to McClellan.—Reorganization of the Federal Army.—Movements of the Army.—Lee divides his Force.—Harper's Ferry.—The March upon the Ferry.—Lee's Order comes into the Hands of McClellan.—The Investment of Harper's Ferry.—Its Capture.—McClellan and Halleck.—McClellan advances.—Battle at Turner's Gap.—Battle at Crampton's Gap.—Lee's Position.—He falls back across the Antietam.—The Battle-field of Antietam.—Approach of the Union Force.—Confederate Troops come up from Harper's Ferry.—Movements of September 16.—McClellan's Plan of Battle for the next Day.—Hooker attacks the Confederate Left.—Is wounded.—His Corps repulsed.—Sumner attacks the Left and Centre.—Sedgwick repulsed on the Left.—The Fight in the Centre.—State of the Action at Noon.—Arrival of Franklin's Corps.—Its Part in the Engagement.—The Confederates worsted.—Their critical Position on the Left.—Over-caution of Sumner and McClellan.—Burnside's dilatory Movements.—He crosses the Antietam and drives back the Enemy.—A. P. Hill comes up from Harper's Ferry.—Burnside repulsed.—Close of the Battle.—Forces in and out of Action.—Estimate of Losses.—Results of the Battle.—The President's Proclamation freeing the Slaves.—After the Battle.—Lee recrosses the Potomac.—Affair at Shepherdstown.—McClellan and the Administration.—Stuart's Raid.—The President's Orders to Advance.—His Letter to McClellan.—McClellan's Plans.—He crosses the Potomac.—Advances toward Warrenton.—Lee moves to Culpeper.—Position of the Armies.—McClellan removed from Command, and Burnside appointed.

IN the brief campaign, lasting only twenty days from the time when the contending forces first encountered at Cedar Run, and only a week after the decisive movement for taking Pope's army in the rear was commenced, Lee had accomplished more than he had ventured to hope. Not only had the siege of Richmond been raised, but Virginia was virtually freed from the presence of the Federal armies; the main part of the force which had threatened North Carolina was withdrawn, and the whole plan of the Peninsular campaign thwarted; and, what was of still greater importance, the abundant harvests of the Valley of the Shenandoah would be reaped by Confederate sickles, and serve for the maintenance of Confederate armies. A bolder thought now came into the mind of the Confederate leader. There were yet some weeks, the most favorable in all the year for active military operations. During these, at least, the war might be carried on in the enemy's country. And so the noise of the battle of Groveton had scarcely ceased, when it was resolved to invade the State of Maryland.

Political considerations had much to do with this determination. It had come to be an article of faith that Maryland, from geographical position and community of institutions, belonged to the Confederacy. Richmond was thronged with refugees from Maryland who declared that the state was held within the Union by mere force, and that she wanted only an opportunity to break the hated bond. The song, "Maryland! my Maryland!" was thrummed on every piano, and sung by every voice. It was held to be the utterance of the people.¹ It needed only the presence of a powerful army to arouse the whole state, and bring her at once into the Confederacy. This accomplished, all the slave states—for Kentucky and Missouri were already claimed by the Confederacy and were represented in its Congress—would be detached from the Union. After the secession of Maryland, Washington could be no longer held as the Federal capital.

Jackson had long wished to lead or follow in an invasion of the North. Immediately after the battle of Bull Run he proposed to march directly into Western Virginia with 10,000 men, there recruit his army to 25,000, and then the Army of the Potomac, crossing at Leesburg, should unite with his own force; both should advance upon Harrisburg, and thence upon Philadelphia in the spring of 1862. With the heart of the North thus pierced by the Southern troops, the strategic points captured, and Washington evacuated, he believed that the Federal government would succumb and agree upon terms of peace.² How far Lee shared in these sanguine anticipations is doubtful. His Report, prepared seven months later, seems to imply that he proposed merely to occupy Maryland, and threaten Pennsylvania. He says: "To prolong a state of affairs every way desirable, and not to let the season for active operations pass without endeavoring to inflict farther injury upon the enemy, the best course appeared to be to transfer the army into Maryland. The condition of Maryland encouraged the belief that the presence of our army, however inferior to that of the enemy, would induce the Washington government to retain all its available force to provide against contingencies which its course toward the people of that state gave it reason to apprehend. At the same time, it was hoped that military success might afford us an opportunity to aid the citizens of Maryland in any efforts they might be disposed to make to recover their liberty." "It was proposed to move the army into Western Virginia, establish our communications with Richmond through the Valley of the Shenandoah, and, by threatening Pennsylvania, induce the enemy to follow, and thus draw him from his base of supplies."³

On the 2d of September Lee was joined at Chantilly by the division of D. H. Hill, consisting of five brigades. This gave him a force of about 70,000 men of all arms with which to undertake the invasion of the North; for by battle, disease, and straggling he had lost 30,000. The united army pushed rapidly on to the Potomac, Jackson in the advance. He crossed the river at a ford midway between Harper's Ferry and Washington, thirty miles from each, almost at the point where eight months before the Union

forces had passed over into Virginia to meet the disaster of Ball's Bluff. There was nothing to oppose the passage. As the head of the column reached the middle of the river, Jackson, raised from his usual calm demeanor by what seemed the beginning of his cherished plan of an invasion of the North, paused, raised his hat, while bands and voices struck up the words and music of "My Maryland." The entire Confederate force followed hard after, and on the 7th was concentrated near Frederick City, next after Baltimore the largest town in Maryland. All told they numbered barely 60,000, for without a battle thousands had fallen exhausted by the way, unable to keep up with the swift march.⁴

Lee issued an address to the people of Maryland. It was right, he said, that they should know, as far as concerned them, the purpose which had brought the Confederate army into the state. "The people of the Confederate States had long watched the wrongs and outrages which had been inflicted upon the citizens of a commonwealth allied to the states of the South by the strongest social, political, and commercial ties," and, "believing that the people of Maryland possessed a spirit too lofty to submit to such a government," the people of the South wished to aid them in "throwing off this foreign yoke." There would be no constraint or intimidation; "this army will respect your choice, whatever it may be; and while the Southern people will rejoice to welcome you to your natural position among them, they will only welcome you when you come of your own free will."

But if Lee had anticipated a general rising in Maryland, or even any considerable accession to his army, he was doomed to disappointment. Bradley Johnson, a Marylander who held a command in the Confederate army, was placed in charge of the provost-guard at Frederick. He put forth an address to the people calling upon them to join the delivering forces. "We have arms for you," he said; "I am authorized to muster in for the war companies and regiments. Let each man provide himself with a stout pair of shoes, a good blanket, and a tin cup. Jackson's men have no baggage." This prospect was not alluring to those to whom war had presented itself as a gay holiday show. When the theoretical secessionists of Maryland saw their liberators, officers as well as men, barefoot, ragged, and filthy,⁵ they looked upon them with hardly concealed aversion. Yet that ragged and begrimed army was as brave a body of soldiers as the world ever saw. The enthusiasm of the Maryland secessionists exhausted itself in a few women secretly sewing clothing for the army, and in presenting to Jackson a magnificent horse, which threw him the first time he mounted it.⁶

The command of the Union army passed quietly and almost as a matter of course into the hands of McClellan even before Pope had asked to be relieved.⁵ The President and General Halleck went to McClellan's house on the morning of the 2d. Lincoln said that things were going on badly in front; the army was in full retreat upon the defenses of Washington, and the roads were filled with stragglers. McClellan should go out and meet the army, take command of it as it approached the works, and put the troops in the best position for defense. Until this was said Halleck had no knowledge of the President's purpose.⁶ Lincoln had resolved, in his quiet way, that he must exercise his authority as commander-in-chief of the army until he could find some man into whose hands this power could be intrusted. How often he tried to find such a man, and how fully he trusted him when found, this history will show. A formal order was forthwith issued: "Major General McClellan will have command of the fortifications of Washington, and of all the troops for the defense of the capital."

McClellan set vigorously to work to reorganize the shattered army. Some changes were made in the distribution of corps and commanders. Banks was placed in charge of the fortifications around Washington, the command of his corps in the field being given to Mansfield, a veteran officer who had never held any prominent command, but had shown at Norfolk high qualifications. Hooker was placed in command of the corps of McDowell, who disappeared from active duty. Burnside, Sumner, Franklin, and Porter retained the command of their corps. Thus, with the exception of Burnside, who was his personal friend, all the corps commanders had served under McClellan on the Peninsula. The core of the army consisted of the force brought from before Richmond. So admirably had this been organized by McClellan that, in spite of the shock which it had experienced in its retreat from the Chickahominy, its withdrawal from the James, and the disasters which a part of it had suffered under Pope, it took at once the form of a regular army, and formed a nucleus around which were rallied the troops gathered from every quarter. In a week, besides 72,000 men around Washington, and 13,000, mostly new recruits, left un-

¹ Stonewall Jackson, 308.

² The extent to which the army was reduced by fatigue and exhaustion is abundantly testified to by all Confederate accounts. Lee says (*Rep.*, i., 35): "The arduous services in which our troops had been engaged, their great privations of rest and food, and the long marches without shoes, had greatly reduced our ranks. These causes had compelled thousands of brave men to absent themselves, and many more had done so through unworthy motives." Cooke says (*Stonewall Jackson*, 341): "All the roads of Northern Virginia were lined with soldiers, comprehensively denominated 'stragglers,' but the great majority of these men had fallen out from the advancing column from physical impossibility to keep up with it; thousands were not with General Lee because they had no shoes, and their bleeding feet would carry them no farther, or the heavy march without rations had broken them down. This great crowd toiled on painfully on the wake of the army, dragging themselves five or six miles a day; and when they came to the Potomac, near Leesburg, it was only to find that General Lee had swept on, that General McClellan's column was between him and them, and that they could not rejoin their commands. The citizens of that whole region, who fed these unfortunate persons, will bear testimony that numbers sufficient to constitute an army in themselves passed the Blue Ridge to rendezvous, by General Lee's orders, at Winchester. These 20,000 or 30,000 men were not in the battle."

³ "Never had the army been so dirty, ragged, and ill-provided as on this march."—D. R. Jones, in *Lee's Rep.*, ii., 221. ⁴ *Stonewall Jackson*, 309, 312; *Lee's Rep.*, ii., 111.

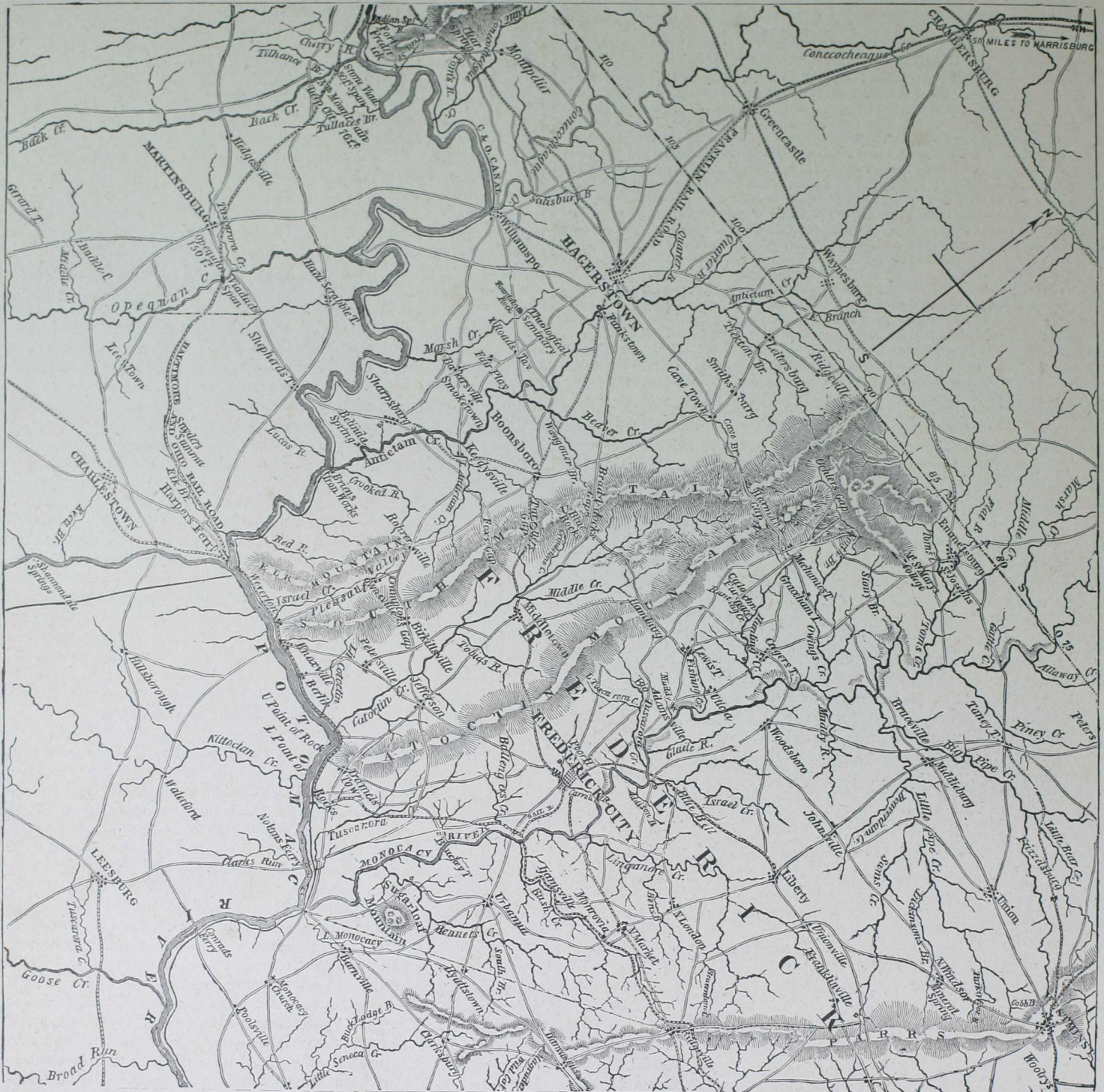
⁵ The government had, indeed, wished to remove him from the command, and had twice urged it upon Burnside. He declined to accept it, and declared that if matters could be so arranged as to remove the objections to him, McClellan could do more with the army than any other man.—*Com. Rep.*, 650. ⁶ *McC. Rep.*, 345; Halleck, in *Com. Rep.*, 451.

¹ Here are two stanzas of this song:
"The despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland! my Maryland!
His touch is on thy temple door,
Maryland! my Maryland!
Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the Battle-queen of yore,
Maryland! my Maryland!"

"I hear the distant thunder hum,
Maryland! my Maryland!
The Old Line's bugle, fife, and drum,
Maryland! my Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb,
Huzzah! she spurs the Northern scum,
She breathes, she burns, she'll come, she'll come,
Maryland! my Maryland!"

² Cooke's *Stonewall Jackson*, 86-88.

³ *Lee's Rep.*, i., 27, 28.



MAP OF OPERATIONS IN MARYLAND.

accountably and against McClellan's wish at Harper's Ferry, there was a movable force of nearly 100,000 men to operate against Lee in Maryland. McClellan took the field at the head of this force.

McClellan took the field in Maryland in person on the 7th, when the march toward Lee was fairly begun. The army moved in three columns. The right wing, under Burnside, comprised his own corps and that of Hooker. The centre, under Sumner, comprised his own corps and that of Mansfield. Franklin, in command of his corps and Couch's division, had the left. Porter's corps, not fully organized, followed after. The movement was slow, for Lee's plan had not yet developed itself. In the six days, from the 7th to the 13th, the advance was barely thirty miles. McClellan was also deceived as to the strength of the enemy, estimating it at 120,000 men—twice the real number.

Lee's object in crossing the Potomac at a point so near Washington, instead of at Harper's Ferry or above, and thence advancing into the heart of Maryland, was to assume a position which should threaten both Washington and Baltimore. This he supposed would draw the enemy after him; and he proposed to give battle to the Union army as far as possible from its base of supplies. For the accomplishment of this purpose, he believed that the possession of Harper's Ferry was indispensable, in order to enable him to keep open his communications with Richmond through the Valley of the Shenandoah. He assumed that the march into Maryland would have caused the Union troops at Harper's Ferry to be withdrawn, as they should have been, and as McClellan wished. This not being done, Lee undertook to dislodge, and, if possible, capture the forces there. To effect this, he divided his army, sending the whole of Jackson's command and half of Longstreet's toward Harper's Ferry, retaining with himself D. H. Hill's division, half of Longstreet's corps, and the greater part of the cavalry.¹ McClellan's advance had been so slow that Lee trusted that

Harper's Ferry could be reduced and his army reunited before he would be called upon to meet the enemy.¹ In forming his plan of operations, Lee must have under-estimated the Federal force as greatly as McClellan over-estimated that of the Confederates. He could not have supposed that the enemy whom he had outnumbered and defeated at Groveton, and whom he had seen in full retreat to the fortifications at Washington, should within ten days have swelled to a force outnumbering his own almost three to one.² He must have supposed that his own effective force and that of the enemy were about equal.

Harper's Ferry is at the junction of the Potomac and the Shenandoah. The Potomac, coming from the north, meets the Shenandoah, ranging from the west, at the foot of a spur of the Blue Ridge, here known as Elk Mountain. The united streams have torn a narrow passage through the mountain, rendering it from summit to base, leaving on either side steep cliffs a thousand feet high. The eastern cliff is Maryland Heights; the western, on the Virginia side, Loudon Heights. In the angle at the junction of the rivers is an elevated plateau, falling steeply toward the Potomac, and sloping gently toward the Shenandoah, and stretching backward at the level of the surrounding country. The ridge of this plateau is Bolivar Heights, at the foot of which nestles the village of Harper's Ferry. Some one had once

street's "command" properly comprised 21 brigades; but at this time 10 of these were detached for the Harper's Ferry operation, and did not act during the remainder of this campaign under Longstreet. In the remainder of this chapter "Longstreet's corps" will indicate only the 11 brigades which remained with him. The others will be designated by the name of the respective division commanders, McLaws, Anderson, and Walker. D. H. Hill's division consisted of 5 brigades. Thus 24 brigades were detached to Harper's Ferry, and 16 remained with Lee. The effective strength of a brigade at this time, previous to losses in battle, was 1500; some, however, were much stronger, some much weaker.

¹ Lee's *Rep.*, i., 28.
² On the 20th of September, after the loss of 15,000 at South Mountain and Antietam, no considerable re-enforcements having been received in the interval, the Army of the Potomac numbered "present for duty" 164,359, of whom 71,210 were stationed within the defenses at Washington, leaving in the field directly under McClellan 93,169. The nominal force—present for duty, sick, and absent—was 293,798.—*Com. Rep.*, 492.

¹ Jackson's "command," including A. P. Hill's division, comprised 14 brigades. Long-



VIEW FROM MARYLAND HEIGHTS

called this place "the Thermopylæ of America." It might have been so in the times when war was waged with bow and sword, with spear and sling, but with the appliances of modern warfare the place has no defensive value. It is completely overlooked by both Loudon and Maryland Heights at such a distance and height that a plunging fire of artillery or musketry can be poured into it from either without the possibility of reply. It is a mere military trap, unless the commanding heights are also held in force; and then it is worthless, as no enemy need go near it in order to cross the Potomac from either direction to invade Maryland or Virginia. Johnston had perceived this fifteen months before, and abandoned the place without resistance, and against positive orders, the moment it was menaced. Lee strangely considered its possession essential to his proposed operations, and, in order to seize it, divided his army. Had he done otherwise, the course of the campaign must have been wholly different. He would have fought the decisive battle far in the interior with the whole, instead of with a part of his force. Had he been defeated, his army must have been annihilated, for the victorious enemy would have been between him and Virginia, cutting off all possibility of succor or retreat. Had he been victorious, he might probably have anticipated Sherman's march to the sea, for beyond the Alleghanies there was no army to oppose him; and from Philadelphia he might have dictated terms of peace.

Harper's Ferry was held by a force of about 13,000, including an outpost at Martinsburg. They were raw troops, commanded by Colonel Miles. About 1500 men were posted on Maryland Heights, the remainder were intrenched on Bolivar Heights. Lee's plan was to surround this force, and thus capture it. His orders were issued on the 9th, and their execution commenced the next morning. Walker, whose two brigades had been sent to the mouth of the Monocacy to destroy the canal aqueduct, was to cross the Potomac, ascend its right bank, and seize Loudon Heights. McLaws, with eight brigades, was to march from Frederick, pass the South Mountain at Crampton's Gap, cross the narrow valley to the foot of Maryland Heights, which he was to ascend and occupy, disposing his forces in such a way as to hold the roads winding around its base, thus cutting off all retreat in that direction. Jackson, with fourteen brigades, was to cross the South Mountain at Turner's Gap, advance to the Potomac, cross it high above Harper's Ferry, sweep down its right bank, capturing or driving back the force at Martinsburg, and then march directly upon Harper's Ferry. The remainder of the army was to march toward Hagerstown, where, or at Boonesboro', it was to be rejoined by that portion which, it was assumed, would have succeeded in its designs upon Harper's Ferry.

The directions of this order were executed with great precision. Walker took possession of Loudon Heights on the 13th, without encountering the slightest opposition. McLaws reached the foot of Maryland Heights on the 12th. He sent two brigades to scale the ascent and gain the summit. They encountered some resistance from the troops posted there, but this was overcome, the Federals abandoning their works, pitching the guns down the cliff, and making their way across the river to Harper's Ferry. Maryland Heights was in the possession of the infantry of McLaws on the evening of the 13th. The next morning was employed in cutting a road to the top of the Heights practicable for artillery, along which four guns were laboriously dragged, and from these fire was opened upon the town.

Jackson, in the mean while, was pressing upon his longer march with that speed which had gained for his command the name of the "foot cavalry." Leaving Frederick on the 10th, he reached the Potomac next day at Williamsport, 25 miles above Harper's Ferry, and on the 12th entered Martinsburg. The Federal troops abandoned this place at his approach, and fell back to Harper's Ferry. Jackson followed hard after, and on the following morning came in sight of the Union force, drawn up on Bolivar Heights. In three days he had marched 80 miles. The remainder of that day and the whole of the 14th were spent by Jackson in ascertaining, by courier and signal, the positions of Walker and McLaws upon Loudon and Maryland Heights. He found that they had gained the positions appointed for them, and commanded the only roads by which the Federals could retreat down the Potomac or up the Shenandoah, but that the enemy on Bolivar Heights were beyond the effective range of his light guns. Separated as they were from him by rivers, they could afford no direct assistance in capturing the Federal force as it then stood. Jackson undertook to

¹ Lee's Rep., i, 28. For the full text of this order, see *McC. Rep.*, 353. D. H. Hill had left his copy of the order in his room at Frederick, where it was found and given to McClellan three days after. It placed him in full possession of the plans of his enemy; too late, indeed, to enable him to thwart them entirely, but in time to enable him to strike an unexpected blow.



SIGNAL STATION, SUMMIT OF MARYLAND HEIGHTS.

dislodge the enemy from Bolivar Heights, and drive them down into the slaughter-pen of Harper's Ferry. The force with which he was to do this exceeded only slightly that opposed to him. Miles had 12,000 or 13,000. Jackson's "command" numbered at the outset about 32,000. It had fought at Cedar Run, Bristoe, the three battles near Groveton, and at Chantilly, losing in all 6000 men, killed and wounded. Not less than 10,000 had fallen out from sickness or exhaustion on the long march from the Rapidan to the Potomac. He could not have brought more than 15,000 to Harper's Ferry. For the rest, the affair reads almost like a farce, with a few tragic lines interpolated.

By the morning of the 15th Jackson had fairly surrounded Miles; batteries from one side opened upon the other on the Bolivar plateau; the guns from Loudon and Maryland Heights played at the heads of those below, and were duly answered; none doing harm, except that one Confederate shot struck a Federal caisson. Miles called a council of war, and said he had resolved to surrender; one or two of his officers wished to "cut their way out;" the cavalry, 1500 strong, rode up the Potomac, with or without orders, and got off, encountering no opposition, and destroying in their way 75 wagons of the Confederate train. If the infantry had gone the same way there was nothing to hinder; but they were raw troops, commanded by worse than raw officers. Miles raised the white flag in token of surrender. Before it was perceived, he was mortally wounded by a chance shot. White, his superior in rank, who, on coming in from Martinsburg, had waived the command in Miles's favor, went to Jackson to arrange terms of surrender. There was then nothing else to be done, for the troops had degenerated into a crowd of frightened men. He found the Confederate general fast asleep on the ground. Hill, whom White had first encountered, aroused Jackson. "General," said he, "this is General White,



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a road, rough though passable, runs along the summits of each of the ridges which bound the Gap on either side; by these the main attack of the Federals was made, the object being to turn, either by the right or the left, or by both, the Confederate force holding the summit of the Gap. Reno's division took the road to the left, and, after sharp fighting, succeeded at noon in gaining the summit, or rather one of the summits, for the crest of the mountain is cloven by a deep ravine, and beyond this the enemy held a strong position. There was now a lull in the contest lasting for a couple of hours, while Hooker, who had reached the base of the mountain after Reno, was working his way up the road on the right of the pass. A solitary peak, which overlooked the country for miles, was the key to the whole position. Whoever held that held the pass. Both sides seemed to apprehend this at once, and each endeavored to gain it. Hooker's men were climbing the steep slope, too steep for artillery to be dragged up. Hill, from the valley below, trained his guns upon the peak, but with little effect. He sent three brigades of infantry up to hold the peak. The lines met, and engaged in a fierce but desultory combat, each availing itself of every natural defense.

Until late in the afternoon the battle on the Confederate side had been fought wholly by Hill. But about four o'clock Longstreet had come up with eight brigades, worn and exhausted by the long march from Hagerstown. Some of these were hotly engaged, but they came two hours too late to change the fortunes of the day. When night closed in the Federals had won every position and held the Gap, through which their whole force could pour on the following morning. Nothing was left for Lee but to retreat, leaving his dead and wounded behind. The action was fought with determined bravery on both sides. In all, the Federals had brought in about 30,000 men, the Confederates 17,000.¹ The Federal loss in this action was 312 killed, 1234 wounded. That of the Confederates was greater. Hill lost, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, nearly 2000; for at Antietam, three days later, he could bring into action only 3000.² Some of Longstreet's brigades also lost heavily. The Federals secured 1500 prisoners, most of them from the wounded. The entire loss of the Confederates, in killed and wounded, was probably something more than 2000. Reno was killed near the close of the battle. The Confederates lost Garland. Both were brave officers and accomplished gentlemen.³

Simultaneously with the battle at Turner's Gap, an action had been going on at Crampton's Gap, a few miles distant. Franklin, with his corps, lacking Couch's division, which had not come up, advanced toward this gap. The foot of the pass was slightly held, and the force pressed on up the slope. Tidings of the approach of Franklin reached McLaws, who had just established himself on Maryland Heights. He sent Cobb back with three brigades, directing him to hold the pass if it cost the last man. Cobb took post near the top of the mountain, behind a stone wall; Slocum's division

charged this in front, while Smith moved round to assail it in flank and rear. The Confederates broke and fled down the slope in confusion, and in the evening Franklin debouched into Pleasant Valley, three miles from Maryland Heights on the opposite side, and only six from Harper's Ferry, whence the sound of firing indicated that the place was still held. The Federals lost 115 killed and 416 wounded; the Confederates more, for they left behind 600 prisoners, mostly wounded.

On the morning of the 15th McLaws drew back his whole force, leaving only two regiments upon the heights, and formed it across the lower end of the Valley, Franklin forming his across the upper end. Both lay watching each other all the morning, each supposing the other to be superior, and neither daring to attack. The numbers were, in reality, nearly equal, the Confederates having a small preponderance.¹

The passes of the South Mountain having been forced, the position of Lee was perilous. He had with him less than 25,000 men of all arms, infantry, cavalry, and artillery. So long as Harper's Ferry held out, the forces sent to capture it were cut off from reuniting with him. The position here was singular. If Jackson and McLaws held the garrison of the Ferry in a vice, that garrison and Franklin held McLaws and Walker in as close a grip. McLaws could not join Lee by marching up Pleasant Valley, for Franklin barred the way; he could not cross the Elk Mountain, for that was impassable for an army; until Harper's Ferry was taken, he could not cross the Potomac, and, by going up its south bank and recrossing, rejoin Lee. "There was," he says, "no outlet in any direction for any thing but the troops, and that very doubtful; in no contingency could I have saved the troops and artillery."² Walker, on Loudon Heights, was equally isolated, for between him and Lee was interposed both the Shenandoah and the Potomac. But when Turner's Gap was forced, Harper's Ferry was still uncaptured; but tidings had just come that the place must soon fall, when the troops beleaguering, and themselves beleaguered, would be set at liberty. If a battle could be postponed two days, Lee would be able to bring into action as many of these separated forces as would be able to endure the long march to join him. To shorten this march, he retreated during the night of the 14th toward the Potomac, and, placing the Antietam Creek between himself and McClellan, took up a strong defensive position near the village of Sharpsburg.

The Potomac makes a bend shaped somewhat like the two-horned antique bow, about six miles from tip to tip. The Antietam is like the loosened string of this bow. This stream in itself is no formidable military obstacle. It is passable for infantry at almost every point. Three stone bridges and several fords, within a distance of three or four miles, afford abundant passage for artillery, provided the approaches to them are not fully commanded by an enemy. The region beyond, that is, on the western side, is somewhat broken. There are low swells, with narrow intervening valleys, and patches of woodland and cultivated fields, cut up by roads, fences, and stone walls. The limestone rock every where crops up above the surface, affording tolerable shelter for troops. The position is such that, in case of need, a general with 20,000 men might fairly venture to hold it against 30,000; one with 30,000 might fairly venture to assail an enemy posted there with 20,000.

Lee reached this position on the morning of the 15th, the cavalry forming his rear-guard, somewhat closely pressed by the Union horse. The head of the foremost pursuing infantry column reached the east bank of the Antietam in the afternoon. McClellan had hoped to bring on an action that day. His orders were, that if the enemy were overtaken on the march, they should be attacked at once; if found in force and position, the advanced corps should halt and await his arrival. Coming to the front late in the afternoon, McClellan found the enemy drawn up beyond the Antietam, making an ostentatious display of infantry, artillery, and cavalry on the opposite crests. The Union corps, coming after in different columns, had become somewhat entangled, and McClellan decided, in view of what he saw and could then have known, that it was too late to attack that day. If he had been aware how weak was the force in his front, he might, perhaps, have determined otherwise.

Lee had scarcely crossed the Antietam before he learned that Harper's Ferry had been surrendered, and that all obstacles, except those of time and space, to the reunion of his army were removed. Orders were at once sent for the whole force near the Ferry to hasten to Sharpsburg. Jackson was the first to move.

At 3 in the afternoon his men were ordered to cook two days' rations, and be ready to march. The march was begun an hour past midnight. On the morning of the 16th the corps were within two miles of Sharpsburg. They had made a night-march of fifteen miles in less than six hours, fording the Potomac by the way. The addition which he brought to Lee was small in numbers. The two divisions, Jackson's, or the "Stonewall," and Ewell's, had set out from Richmond 20,000 strong. Within six weeks they had fought at Cedar Run, Bristoe, and during all the three days at Groveton. They had marched from the Rappahannock to Manassas, from Manassas to the Potomac, from the Potomac to Frederick, from Frederick to Harper's Ferry, from Harper's Ferry back to Sharpsburg, losing

¹ Franklin's corps (Couch not having arrived) numbered not quite 13,000. McLaws's command was made up of troops which had suffered least in the previous actions, having been mostly in reserve, and only partially engaged at Groveton. His eight brigades would probably average at this time 1800 each. Deducting the losses of the day before, and the two regiments left on the Heights, there would be between 13,000 and 14,000. He himself says (*Lee's Rep.*, ii, 167): "The force in Harper's Ferry was nearly, if not quite equal to my own, and that above was far superior." He had just before estimated the "force above," that is, Franklin's, at "from 15,000 to 25,000 and upward." The force at Harper's Ferry he knew, at the time of making the report, to have been more than 11,000, for that number had surrendered, and the whole cavalry force had escaped. Our estimate of McLaws's strength is also confirmed by the numbers which he was able to bring upon the field at Antietam two days later.

² See McLaws, in *Lee's Rep.*, ii, 167.

³ McClellan says: "We went into action with about 30,000 men." He supposed that he had encountered "D. H. Hill's corps, 15,500, and a part, if not the whole of Longstreet's, and perhaps a portion of Jackson's" (*Rep.*, 372). But he had actually met eight brigades of Longstreet's, about 12,000, and D. H. Hill's, 5000. Such was, however, the strength of the position, that if the Confederates had been able in the morning to have brought 10,000 or 15,000 men to its defense, and so held the crests on the two sides of the Gap with artillery, they could not have been dislodged by five times their number—See Longstreet and D. H. Hill, in *Lee's Rep.*, ii, 84, 114.

⁴ *Lee's Rep.*, ii, 114.

⁵ D. H. Hill thus brutally mentions the death of these two generals: "This brilliant service cost us the life of that pure, gallant, and accomplished Christian soldier, General Garland, who had no superior and few equals in the service. The Yankees, on their side, lost General Reno, a renegade Virginian, who was killed by a happy shot from the 23d North Carolina."