

Eighteen days after the Army of the Cumberland crossed the Tennessee it was concentrated in Chattanooga. The campaign, so far as it concerned this army alone, was over. It had been a tedious campaign of wearisome marches, terminating in a doubtful and unnecessary battle. Many mistakes had been made by both the Federal and Confederate commanders. Risks had been run on the one side which imperiled a whole army, and the disastrous results of which were only averted by delays and neglect of opportunities on the other. The battle itself was badly managed by General Rosecrans. His personal supervision of its details on the 19th would have enabled Thomas to strike blows so decisive that it is doubtful if there would have been a second day's battle. On the 20th there was, from the beginning of the fight, nothing but disorder and confusion on the right; nearly every order was either disobeyed or misunderstood. If on this day Rosecrans had devoted himself to seeing that Thomas was supported, and to such a disposition of his right as the transfer of troops to the left made necessary, there would have been no disaster, no serious loss of artillery or prisoners, and no necessity of abandoning the field to the foe. Rosecrans relied upon McCook and Crittenden to do what he ought to have known—if he knew any thing of men—would not be done by those commanders. Herein consisted his greatest blunder at Chickamauga.¹ All else—that, indeed, for which he was chiefly blamed—the historian will regard as the result of a natural mistake.

The missing, as precisely reported, we have found amounted to 882. It would be fair to suppose that the missing of Ector's and Gst's brigades and of Cheatham's division would increase this number to at least 1000. Subtracting this from the entire loss thus far estimated, we have left 12,850 as the killed and wounded, leaving out those of Longstreet's corps. Now, taking the very lowest estimate of Bragg's infantry force (as made up from official reports), it amounts to 48,000. Forty per cent. of this would give 19,200 as the number of killed and wounded in infantry alone. This would make the loss in Longstreet's corps the difference between 19,200 and 12,850, or 6350. But Bragg reports that only 5000 of Longstreet's corps took part in the battle. This estimate excludes prisoners captured from Bragg, which Rosecrans reports as 2003. We have already estimated the missing from all the other commands except Longstreet's corps as 1000; the other thousand, therefore, must have been from this corps. This would make the entire Confederate loss in infantry—killed, wounded, and missing—21,200, and Longstreet's entire loss 7350, or 2350 more men lost than, according to Bragg's report, he brought into battle.

The precise reports we are compelled to assume as correct. The error, therefore, is either in an extravagant overestimate on Bragg's part of his loss, or an equally extravagant underestimate of the number of Longstreet's corps engaged in the battle. One thing, however, is certain—namely, that the loss in Longstreet's corps was considerably above the general average. Hood's three brigades fought both days, and suffered severely on both. Kershaw's and Humphreys's brigades were engaged only on the 20th, but they sustained a fearful loss in their assaults on the afternoon of that day. It would not be extravagant, therefore, to estimate Longstreet's loss as 45 per cent. of his command. Then, supposing the entire loss of the army to have been about what Halleck says the Confederate journals stated it, 18,000, and deducting 1000 for casualties in the cavalry force, Longstreet's loss would be the difference between 17,000 and 13,850, or 3150, which would be 45 per cent. of 7000, the latter being the number which in a preceding note we gave as the probable estimate of Longstreet's force actually engaged. This calculation would decrease the percentage of loss in killed and wounded from 40 to about 30 per cent., and give Longstreet 2000 more men than Bragg gave him in his report.

The loss in some brigades of Bragg's army was almost incredible. Helm's brigade, of Breckinridge's division, went into battle with 1763 men, and came out with 432, losing over two thirds, besides its commander. Bate's brigade, of Buckner's corps, lost 608 out of 1085. Liddell's division lost 1402 out of 3175, nearly 50 per cent. In the space of a single hour, on the afternoon of the 20th, Gracie's brigade, of the same corps, lost 698 out of 2003. Another brigade (Kelly's) of this corps reports a loss of 300 out of 876. Still another reports a loss of 50 per cent. B. R. Johnson's division out of 3683 lost 1435, nearly one half. Maney's brigade, of Cheatham's division, lost half its numbers. Jackson's brigade, of the same division, lost 490 out of 1405; the loss in one of its regiments (the Fifth Georgia) was 55 per cent. Wilson's brigade lost 50 per cent., and Ector's in the same proportion.

¹ Rosecrans made no charges against McCook or Crittenden. On the contrary, in his report, he accorded them only praise. The court of inquiry which investigated Negley's conduct also considered the cases of McCook and Crittenden. We quote below the findings of the court in each case. But these opinions do not in the least affect General Rosecrans's responsibility.

Decision in McCook's Case.

"It appears from the investigation that Major General McCook commanded the Twentieth Army Corps, composed of Sheridan's, Johnson's, and Davis's divisions.

"His command on the 19th of September, 1863 (the first day of the battle of Chickamauga), consisted of Davis's and Sheridan's divisions, and of Negley's temporarily, and occupied the right of the line, Johnson's having been detached to Thomas's command. The evidence shows that General McCook did his whole duty faithfully on that day with activity and intelligence.

"Early on the 20th of September General McCook had under his command the divisions of Sheridan and Davis (the latter only 1300 to 1400 strong), and Wilder's brigade, and the senior officers of the cavalry were told they must take orders from him, though attend to their own business.

"The posting of these troops was not satisfactory to the commanding general, who in person directed several changes between 8 and 10½ o'clock P.M.

"During these changes, involving a flank movement of the whole right to the left, the enemy made a fierce attack, taking advantage of a break in the line caused by the precipitate and inopportune withdrawal of his division by Brigadier General T. J. Wood, passing through the interval, and routing the whole right and centre up to Brannan's position.

"The court deem it unnecessary to express an opinion as to the relative merits of the position taken by General McCook and that subsequently ordered to be taken by the commanding general, but it is apparent from the testimony that General McCook was not responsible for the delay in forming the new line on that occasion.

"It further appears that General McCook not only had impressed on him the vital importance of keeping well closed to the left and of maintaining a compact centre, but he was also ordered to hold the Dry Valley Road. This caused the line to be 'attenuated,' as stated in the testimony of the commanding general, who says that its length was greater than he thought it was when assumed.

"It is shown, too, that the cavalry did not obey General McCook's orders.

"The above facts, and the additional one that the small force at General McCook's disposal was inadequate to defend against greatly superior numbers the long line hastily taken under instructions, relieve General McCook entirely from the responsibility for the reverse which ensued.

"It is fully established that General McCook did every thing he could to rally and hold his troops after the line was broken, giving the necessary orders, etc., to his subordinates.

"The court are of opinion, however, that in leaving the field to go to Chattanooga, General McCook committed a mistake, but his gallant conduct in the engagements forbids the idea that he was influenced by considerations of personal safety.

"Bearing in mind that, the commanding general having previously gone to Chattanooga, it was natural for General McCook to infer that all the discomfited troops were expected to rally there, as well as to presume that a conference with the commanding general on that important subject was both desirable and necessary, the court can not regard this act of General McCook as other than an error of judgment."

Decision in Crittenden's Case.

"General Crittenden commanded the Twenty-first Army Corps, composed of Palmer's, Wood's, and Van Cleve's divisions.

"On the 19th of September, 1863 (the first day of the battle of Chickamauga), his command consisted of those divisions, except Wagner's brigade, which garrisoned Chattanooga.

"The evidence adduced respecting General Crittenden's operations on that day not only shows no cause for censure, but, on the contrary, that his whole conduct was most creditable; for by his watchfulness, and prompt and judicious support of troops engaged, serious consequences to our army were prevented, and the enemy's plans for the day disconcerted.

"Early on the morning of the 20th General Crittenden's command consisted of Wood's and Van Cleve's divisions; but as, about 8 o'clock A.M. Wood's division was detached, to take post in Thomas's line, General Crittenden is not responsible for its subsequent conduct.

"Van Cleve's division was shortly after ordered to the left, and General Crittenden was to accompany it.

The battle left Rosecrans with an army in and about Chattanooga 45,000 strong. Bragg was left with an army numbering over 50,000 men, to which re-enforcements were daily being added. It was evident, therefore, that nothing farther could be accomplished by the Army of the Cumberland until it should be largely re-enforced. Rosecrans proceeded to fortify Chattanooga. Hooker's corps was sent to him from the East on the 23d of September. Other re-enforcements were on the way from Grant's army. As soon as the latter arrived Rosecrans was relieved of his command, on the 19th of October,¹ and General Grant, with the armies of the Cumberland, the Ohio, and the Tennessee, entered upon that brilliant campaign which terminated in General Bragg's utter defeat before the close of the year.²

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CHATTANOOGA CAMPAIGN.

V. THE SIEGE OF KNOXVILLE.

The Campaign for Chattanooga involved the East Tennessee Problem.—Halleck's Mistake; his Contradictory Orders.—The tardy and feeble Effort toward co-operation with Rosecrans.—Plans for subsequent Movements suggested by Burnside.—Halleck still insists upon the Occupation of the Upper Valley of the Holston and Co-operation with Rosecrans at the same Time.—Why Bragg did not move on Rosecrans's Rear directly after the Battle of Chickamauga.—The Confederates occupy Lookout Mountain, abandoned by Rosecrans.—The Mistake of Rosecrans deprives him of his shortest Line of Communication.—Wheeler's Raid north of the Tennessee.—Destruction of a Federal Train.—Capture of McMinnville.—Conflict with Crook's Federal Cavalry near Farmington.—The Difficulty of supplying Chattanooga prevents the accession of Burnside's Army to the Defense of that Place.—The Campaign against Sam Jones in East Tennessee.—Longstreet crosses the Tennessee, November 14, 1863.—Burnside, in accordance with Grant's Instructions, falls back toward Knoxville.—The Battle at Campbell's Station.—Burnside's Situation after reaching Knoxville.—Longstreet, needed by Bragg, can not afford to wait, and Assaults on the 18th.—Death of General Sanders.—Defeat of Longstreet's second Assault, November 29th.—Grant sends Sherman to the Relief of Knoxville.—The Siege is raised, and Longstreet retreats eastward.

IN the campaign of General Rosecrans against Bragg, General Burnside's army had been utilized only to a very small extent. The advance upon Knoxville had been unresisted. The occupation of that point was of considerable importance. By his possession of the railroad connecting East Tennessee with Virginia, Burnside compelled the Confederate re-enforcements to Bragg's army from the east to make an extensive detour by way of Atlanta. His presence on Rosecrans's left and rear made his army a large reserve force relatively to Rosecrans; but the Army of the Ohio was too distant to answer the chief use of a reserve corps—that of active co-operation in case of necessity. The idea that Burnside's army, by remaining in the Valley of the Holston, secured the possession of East Tennessee, is simply absurd. It was security enough, doubtless, against Sam Jones's little army, or any other inconsiderable detachments which might straggle across the mountains from West Virginia. But these were only demonstrating columns sent for the purpose of keeping Burnside's army where it was. The Confederate force which was really fighting for East Tennessee was Bragg's army. The only force which actually contested Bragg's possession of this prize was the Army of the Cumberland; and it maintained the contest single-handed, while Burnside's army accomplished little beyond the illustration of General Halleck's pet theories. The enemy thoroughly understood that the defeat of General Rosecrans was the recovery not only of Chattanooga, but of all else which Bragg and Buckner had abandoned. If Rosecrans could be cut off from Chattanooga—and at one stage of the campaign this seemed likely to be accomplished—there was no alternative to Burnside's retreat but overwhelming disaster. The continued separation of the two armies was too auspicious to the Confederate government to be counted upon, and, therefore, Longstreet had been sent to Bragg.

"As it was moving the attack took place, and the troops were broken by our retreating artillery and infantry, as well as by the furious attack of the enemy.

"For the disaster which ensued he is in no way responsible.

"Changes were ordered to be made in the line. The break which occurred while the troops were moving by flank from the right to the left to conform to these changes was taken advantage of by the enemy, and disaster and rout ensued. It is amply proven that General Crittenden did every thing he could, by example and personal exertion, to rally and hold his troops, and to prevent the evils resulting from such a condition of affairs, but without avail.

"Believing that by his presence on the field nothing more could be effected, he left for Rossville, where he learned little else than that the commanding general had gone to Chattanooga.

"He repaired thither, where one of his brigades was stationed.

"In the opinion of the court, General Crittenden is not censurable for this act."

¹ The following is a copy of General Rosecrans's order upon leaving his army:

"General Orders, No. 242.

"Headquarters Department of the Cumberland, Chattanooga, Tenn., October 19th, 1863.

"The general commanding announces to the officers and soldiers of the Army of the Cumberland that he leaves them, under orders from the President.

"Major General George H. Thomas, in compliance with orders, will assume the command of this army and department.

"The chiefs of all the staff departments will report to him.

"In taking leave of you, his brothers in arms—officers and soldiers—he congratulates you that your new commander comes not to you as he did, a stranger. General Thomas has been identified with this army from its first organization. He has led you often in battle. To his known prudence, dauntless courage, and true patriotism you may look with confidence that under God he will lead you to victory.

"The general commanding doubts not you will be as true to yourselves and your country in the future as you have been in the past.

"To the division and brigade commanders he tenders his cordial thanks for their valuable and hearty co-operation in all that he has undertaken.

"To the chiefs of the staff departments and their subordinates whom he leaves behind he owes a debt of gratitude for their fidelity and untiring devotion to duty.

"Companions in arms—officers and soldiers—farewell; and may God bless you!

"W. S. ROSECRANS, Major General."

² We have dealt thus elaborately with the history of Rosecrans's Chickamauga campaign on account of the general misapprehension which exists in regard to many of its most important features. We have endeavored to do justice to all the actors concerned. The writer has made no statement in regard to any point in dispute without substantiating it. His materials have been abundant, consisting in no small proportion of unpublished official documents. If he has erred in any important particular, it has not been from prejudice, but because the evidence before him was, after all, incomplete. Whatever mistakes may have been made on this account, time alone can correct. A fair history of any event is not often written while the historian rests under its shadow. If the present writer has failed to do justice, still justice will be done; if he has not told the exact truth, still, sooner or later, the exact truth will be told.

Burnside had received orders instructing him to co-operate with Rosecrans, but it had all the while been insisted upon that he must hold the Valley of the Holston from Rosecrans's left to the Virginia boundary, a line of nearly 200 miles. Not till it was too late did he receive an explicit order to move to Chattanooga. The first order to this effect he got on the 16th, only three days before the battle of Chickamauga. The Ninth Corps, which had been resting for the last fortnight after its struggle in Mississippi, was now ordered to move. But the necessity for haste does not seem to have been appreciated. The next night a more urgent dispatch was received from General Halleck, who wrote, "There are several reasons why you should re-enforce Rosecrans with all possible dispatch. It is believed the enemy will concentrate to give him battle. You must be there to help him." On the 21st a peremptory order came from the President, commanding Burnside to join Rosecrans without delay. By this time all the forces had been, with great deliberation, put in motion, except a small detachment of infantry and cavalry confronting the enemy on the Watauga River. With this latter force Burnside remained. Not venturing to withdraw while the enemy was in his front, he determined to wait until the next morning, and fight a battle before obeying the President's order. The next morning disclosed the fact that the enemy had retreated, burning the bridge behind him. The Federal column at this point was then started for Knoxville, where, by the 25th, the troops were all concentrated. It was then known that the battle of Chickamauga had been fought, and the emergency was past. Some correspondence followed between Halleck and Burnside, the result of which was that the command of the latter remained in East Tennessee. Burnside proposed to the general-in-chief three separate plans for the future operations of his army.

The first of these contemplated the abandonment of the railroad and East Tennessee, leaving only a small garrison at Cumberland Gap. This would leave free an army of full 20,000 men to move down the Tennessee and re-enforce Rosecrans.

The second plan suggested the movement of his main body—say 18,000 men—along the line of the railroad against Bragg's right at Cleveland, leaving garrisons at Knoxville and Loudon, also at Cumberland Gap, and at Bull's Gap and Rogersville, to cover Cumberland Gap.

The third plan proposed the movement of a force, consisting of 7000 infantry and 5000 cavalry, south of the Tennessee River, through Athens, Columbus, and Benton, past the right flank of the enemy, "down the line of the East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad to Dalton, destroying the enemy's communications, sending a cavalry force to Rome to destroy the machine works and powder-mills at that place, the main body moving on the direct road to Atlanta, the railroad centre of Georgia, and there entirely destroying the enemy's communications, breaking up the dépôts, etc., thence moving to some point on the coast where cover could be obtained." No trains were to be taken. The troops were to live upon the country. This would divert the attention of the enemy, and materially relieve Rosecrans. The chances of escape from pursuing columns of the enemy Burnside thought were in his favor.

Burnside was partial to the plan last described, which, by the way, on a miniature scale resembled Sherman's brilliant march from Atlanta to the sea, undertaken more than a year afterward. Halleck replied somewhat testily, decidedly objecting to Burnside's proposed raid. He was in favor of immediately co-operating with Rosecrans by a movement on the north side of the Tennessee. But he still insisted upon Burnside's holding the upper valley of the Holston, 200 miles away from Chattanooga.¹

Rosecrans favored the first of the plans proposed by Burnside, but events soon occurred which made this impracticable. While the Federal commanders had been forming plans, General Bragg had not been idle. The very next day after the battle of Chickamauga, Longstreet had suggested a movement to Rosecrans's rear, above Chattanooga, to cut off his communications, and compel him to fall back to Nashville. At first Bragg seemed inclined to adopt this plan—at least Longstreet so understood. But if Bragg for a moment entertained such a scheme, he soon gave it up as impracticable.² But, while keeping his main army south of the Tennessee, Bragg assumed the offensive with considerable energy.

Rosecrans's most convenient line of communication with Murfreesborough

¹ Halleck says: "The purport of all your instructions has been that you should hold some point near the upper end of the valley, and with all your available force move to the assistance of Rosecrans. Since the battle of Chickamauga, and the wear of our force to paper, you have been repeatedly told that it would be dangerous to form a connection on the south side of the Tennessee River, and consequently that you ought to march on the north side. Rosecrans has now telegraphed to you that it is not necessary to join him at Chattanooga, but only to move down to such a position that you can go to his assistance should he require it. You are in direct communication with Rosecrans, and can learn his condition and wants sooner than I can. Distant expeditions into Georgia are not now contemplated. The object is to hold East Tennessee by forcing the enemy south of the passes, and closing the passes against his return."

² "The suggestion of a movement by our right, immediately after the battle to the north of the Tennessee, and thence upon Nashville, requires notice only because it will find a place among the files of the department. Such a movement was utterly impossible for want of transportation. Nearly half our army consisted of re-enforcements just before the battle, without a wagon or an artillery horse, and nearly, if not quite a third of the artillery horses on the field had been lost. The railroad bridges, too, had been destroyed to a point south of Ringgold, and in all the road from Cleveland to Knoxville. To these insurmountable difficulties were added the entire absence of means to cross the river, except by fording at a few precarious points too deep for artillery, and the well-known danger of sudden rises, by which all communication would be cut—a contingency which did actually happen a few days after the visionary scheme was proposed. But the most serious objection to the proposition was its entire want of military propriety. It abandoned to the enemy our entire line of communication, and laid open to him our dépôts of supplies, while it placed us, with a greatly inferior force, beyond a difficult, and, at times, impassable river, in a country affording no subsistence to men or animals. It also left open to the enemy, at a distance of only ten miles, our battle-field, with thousands of our wounded and his own, and all the trophies and supplies we had won. All this was to be risked and given up for what? To gain the enemy's rear, and cut him off from his dépôt of supplies by the route over the mountains, when the very movement abandoned to his unmolested use the better and more practicable route of half the length on the south side of the river. It is hardly necessary to say the proposition was not even entertained, whatever may be the inferences drawn from subsequent movements."—Bragg's Report.

was through Bridgeport, and the shortest road from Chattanooga to this point lay along the south bank of the Tennessee. This route could be rendered secure only by holding the point of Lookout Mountain, and Stevens's and Cooper's Gaps. Rosecrans, after retreating to Chattanooga, gave up these important positions to the enemy. He claims that he could not have held them and Chattanooga at the same time.¹ The enemy immediately occupied Lookout Mountain, and thus compelled Rosecrans to transport his supplies by the more difficult route across the mountains. But even this latter route was not left undisturbed. Bragg sent Wheeler, with a large cavalry force—Wharton's, Martin's, Davidson's, and Armstrong's commands—against this line of communication. Wheeler's command crossed the Tennessee above Chattanooga, and on the 2d of November reached the Sequatchie Valley. Proceeding around Chattanooga on the north side to Jasper and Anderson's Cross-roads, two wagon trains were captured, one of them ten miles in length, consisting of from 800 to 1500 wagons, and heavily loaded with ordnance and provisions. This train was destroyed, and during the night Wheeler crossed the Cumberland Mountains, and the next morning headed his columns toward McMinnville. Although the Federal cavalry was in close pursuit, he succeeded in capturing the place, with its fortifications, and its garrison of 587 men and 200 horses. Then he moved westward to Murfreesborough. Only time was allowed for a feint on this point, but the stockade guarding the railroad bridge over Stone River was captured, and the bridge, together with the track for a distance of three miles, was destroyed. On the 5th the railroad bridges and trestles between Murfreesborough and Wartrace were destroyed, also a large quantity of stores at Shelbyville. Wheeler was now ready to withdraw; but Davidson, on the Duck River, did not retire with sufficient promptness, and was overtaken by the Federal cavalry. Rosecrans, after the battle of Chickamauga, had sent most of his cavalry north of the Tennessee to guard the fords of the river. Those nearest Chattanooga were guarded by Colonel Miller, commanding Wilder's brigade. Farther up the river were Minty's and Long's brigades, under the command of General Crook. Wheeler, as we have seen, was not thus prevented from crossing into Sequatchie Valley; but, as soon as he had crossed, the cavalry brigades along the river combined under General Crook's command, and pressed on in the pursuit. This force was soon joined by Mitchell's cavalry division. The pursuit was close, though it did not prevent the enemy from doing very great injury. There were some inconsiderable fights with the rear of Wheeler's column, but no battle until Davidson's command was engaged near Farmington. Wheeler, with Martin's division, came up just in time to relieve Davidson from his perilous situation. Both Crook and Wheeler claim each to have driven the other. Certainly Wheeler stood only long enough to secure the safety of his trains, when he withdrew.

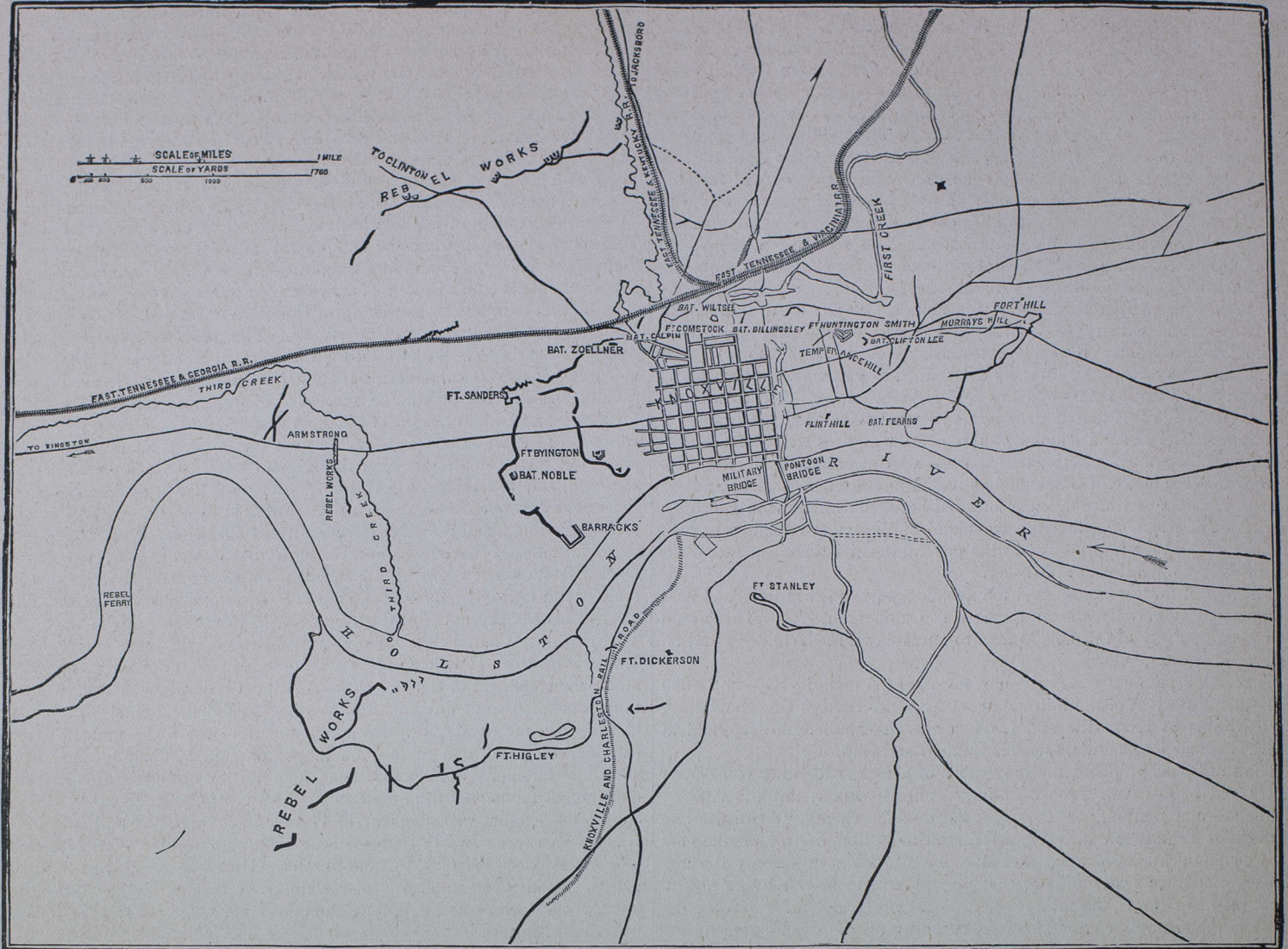
There was, apart from any interruption from the enemy, great difficulty in supplying Rosecrans's army. Wheeler's movement had added to the embarrassment rising from this cause. Under such circumstances, the addition of Burnside's army to that which was already encamped at Chattanooga was inexpedient, unless absolutely necessary.

In the mean time the enemy, under General Sam Jones, was again threatening Burnside's left. He had advanced, by the 8th of October, as far as Blue Springs. Burnside had a small body of infantry at Morristown, and a cavalry brigade at Bull's Gap. The Ninth Corps, re-enforced by Willcox's division and Shackleford's cavalry, were on the 10th led against the enemy in front, while Colonel Foster's brigade of cavalry was sent *via* Rogersville to the enemy's rear, to intercept his retreat. The Confederates were driven by the attack in front, but escaped Foster's blow by withdrawing during the night. Shackleford pursued, driving the enemy into Virginia. Burnside lost about 100 killed and wounded, and took 150 prisoners.

A week or more after the fight at Blue Springs General Grant assumed command of the "Military Division of the Mississippi," which was now made to comprise the three departments of the Ohio, the Cumberland, and the Tennessee. Thomas succeeded Rosecrans as commander of the Army of the Cumberland, and McCook and Crittenden were ordered to Cincinnati. Sherman commanded the Army of the Tennessee, and Burnside retained his present command. Hooker's corps had come from the East, and there were now four different Federal armies operating upon the soil of Tennessee. Halleck, after so long a time, saw the necessity of unity in the action of these various commands in order to their effective co-operation, and the control of these four armies was therefore given to General Grant.

¹ In his evidence before the Congressional Committee, Rosecrans says: "General Halleck, in his annual report, says I abandoned the passes of Lookout Mountain, leaving the public to imagine that these passages were within the possible control of my army, and their abandonment not justified as a military measure. I call the attention of the committee to the fact that one of these passes was forty-two miles south of Chattanooga, and the next nearest twenty-six miles south of Chattanooga, and the nearest at the extremity of Lookout Mountain in front of our lines. This latter may have been the one which gave rise to his report, and if so it ought to have been so stated. I was satisfied that I could not even hold this pass and Chattanooga at the same time if the enemy did his duty, and therefore withdrew my troops from it, but established batteries on the other side of the river, which rendered it practically of little, if any use to them. Subsequent events amply justified the wisdom of this decision, for the enemy, with a division and a half, were unable to hold it against General Hooker, and it was their attempt to cover this point which was one of the causes of their being beaten so easily at Missionary Ridge."

This apology is exceedingly weak. In the first place, Rosecrans, after abandoning the point of Lookout Mountain overlooking Chattanooga and its approach *via* the south bank of the Tennessee, and finding that the enemy had immediately occupied it, saw that he had made a mistake in giving it up, and ordered McCook to storm and recapture the position. McCook stoutly objected that the thing couldn't be done, and was supported in this opinion by the judgment of some of the best officers in the army. As to the other point, namely, the enemy's inability to hold the same position subsequently against Hooker, the argument is no more pertinent. Hooker did not, and could not have succeeded in a direct attack upon the position, such as McCook was ordered to make. He surprised the enemy by taking their works in flank. Now such a movement was impossible to the enemy in the case of Rosecrans's holding the position. This is as clear as daylight. For, of course, the Federal works would have fronted the enemy, and the entire disposition, both of the forces holding the position as well as of the fortifications themselves, would have been altered, so that Bragg must have assaulted in front, or not at all.



OFFICIAL MAP ILLUSTRATING THE SIEGE OF KNOXVILLE.

About the middle of October, just after Wheeler's return from Middle Tennessee, there had been indications of a movement by the enemy toward Knoxville. Bragg's right flank had begun to extend beyond Cleveland. On the 20th, Colonel Woolford, holding the Sweetwater Valley, south of the Tennessee, was attacked by a superior force of the enemy near Philadelphia, and, after several hours' fighting, finding that he was being surrounded, retired to Loudon, leaving in the enemy's hands thirty-eight wagons, six small howitzers, and between 300 and 400 prisoners. It soon became evident that Bragg was threatening Burnside with a formidable force, and the latter withdrew all his troops to the north side of the river, occupying the heights about Loudon. To this point Burnside moved his headquarters on the 28th, where he remained until the 31st, when the emergency appeared to have passed, and he returned to Knoxville. The enemy, in his operations south of the river, had captured 650 prisoners. On the 10th of November the Federal garrison at Rogersville was attacked by forces from Virginia and driven back to Morristown, with a loss of 500 prisoners, four guns, and thirty-six wagons.

Early in November, Longstreet's corps, now consisting of 12,000 men, was detached from Bragg's army, and, accompanied by 5000 cavalry under Wheeler, began to move against Burnside. Upon learning this fact, General Grant urged Burnside to concentrate his army at Kingston, where he would be in more intimate connection with the forces at Chattanooga. Burnside preferred Knoxville to Kingston. It had already been partially fortified under the superintendence of Captain O. M. Poe, who had erected two earth-works near the town. His reluctance to abandon East Tennessee was also an argument in favor of this point. About this time Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, and Colonel Wilson, of Grant's staff, visited Knoxville. These gentlemen agreed with General Burnside, and Grant yielded the point. It seemed also to be a great advantage to Grant that Longstreet should be diverted as far as possible from Chattanooga. The movement of his corps into East Tennessee, though he had urged it at an earlier period, was at this time, it appears, opposed by Longstreet; but both Davis and Bragg insisted upon the undertaking. Longstreet was promised the support of Stevenson's and Cheatham's divisions, which would have increased his strength to over 27,000 men; but upon reaching Sweetwater (near Loudon) he discovered that they were ordered in the opposite direction. There were no indications, either, of the supplies, of which he was in pressing need, and which had been promised him. He was obliged to halt for some days at Sweetwater, losing most precious time, while he sent out his foraging expeditions in every direction to gather up corn stacked in the fields, which was then threshed and baked. His men were thinly clad; their shoes were unserviceable; they had few blankets, and no tents; but they had marched before in the same plight, and uttered no complaint.

On the morning of November 14th Longstreet's advance crossed the Tennessee at Hough's Ferry, six miles below Loudon, demonstrating against Knoxville with his cavalry at the same time. At Lenoir's General Potter was stationed, with the Ninth Corps and one division of the Twenty-third, under Brigadier General Julius White. Longstreet did not cross the river without resistance. General White fell upon his advance in the afternoon, and drove it back for two miles to the river. Burnside would have attacked again on the morning of the 15th, but he received late at night an order from General Grant to withdraw his troops. The design was to draw Longstreet on to Knoxville. The order was promptly obeyed. "If General Grant," said Burnside, "can destroy Bragg, it is of no great consequence what becomes of ourselves. Order the troops to be ready to march in the morning." Burnside fell back to Lenoir's on the 15th, and on the night of that day prepared to continue his retreat to Campbell's Station.

The enemy endeavored by a flank movement to anticipate General Burnside in the possession of Campbell's Station, but the Federal troops reached this important position first. Here a stand was made on the 16th by Hartranft's division, while the main portion of the Federal army and the trains passed along the Loudon Road toward Knoxville. Hartranft had reached the Station a quarter of an hour before Longstreet's advance came up. He succeeded in holding his ground and covering the retreat until the army and the trains had passed the threatened point. Then Burnside, forming his army upon a low range of hills, half a mile from Campbell's, covering the approaches to Knoxville, awaited the enemy's attack. Several assaults were made upon this position, which were repulsed with great loss to the enemy. Longstreet advancing upon his rear in the afternoon, Burnside withdrew to a second position, equally strong, 1000 yards in rear of the first. The enemy repeated his attack with determination, but was finally forced to withdraw, and that night Burnside's army retired within its intrenchments at Knoxville.

In the mean time General Sanders had met the enemy's cavalry south of the Holston, on the opposite bank from Knoxville. General Parke, now Burnside's chief of staff, had been left in command of the town. A pontoon bridge was thrown across the Holston, by means of which Sanders kept up communication with the garrison defending the town. Holding this position, General Sanders successfully maintained it until Burnside's army entered Knoxville.

General Burnside held a position of great strength. His force was fully equal to that of the enemy, and the hills around Knoxville, previously fortified by General Buckner, and now connected by means of rifle-pits, formed a vast fortified camp. General Sanders's force was now drawn across the river, and covered the Loudon Road. Longstreet had already lost much time. Grant was ready to move upon Bragg, and if Longstreet would be



Fort Sanders, College.



VIEW OF KNOXVILLE FROM KETTEL'S HILLS, Cumberland Gap.

back in time to assist the latter, his work at Knoxville must proceed rapidly. This necessity of haste led Longstreet to make an immediate assault on the Federal works on the 18th. During the 17th there had been skirmishing on the Lenoir Road, while the Federal army was busily occupied in getting into position, collecting supplies, and strengthening its fortifications. The attack of the 18th fell mainly upon Sanders's cavalry. It was the enemy's design to push back this cavalry force into the town, and then enter with a triumphant charge; but Sanders's men, though unrelieved for several days, and though opposed by superior numbers, were not thus easily driven. After a gallant resistance of three hours they were pushed back, but Ferrero's guns at Rebel Point checked the enemy. Sanders then renewed the unequal conflict. He made a charge, and was repulsed by superior numbers. At 4 o'clock P.M. he fell, mortally wounded, and the hill and the fort which he had maintained so long was surrendered to the enemy. His death was a sad misfortune to the army. Three weeks before, he had been promoted to a brigadier generalship at General Burnside's earnest solicitation, and had been assigned to the command of a cavalry division. Burnside felt his loss most keenly, and ordered that the earth-work in front of which he fell should be named Fort Sanders in honor of his memory. On being informed that the wound was mortal, General Sanders replied, "Well, I am not afraid to die. . . . I have done my duty, and have served my country as well as I could." Burnside and his staff stood by his bedside when he died. His midnight burial was the saddest among the many sad incidents connected with the siege of Knoxville.

The partial success gained by Longstreet on the 18th proved of little value. To push this slight advantage against works so gallantly defended could only result in increased loss to his command, without any reasonable chance of victory. He therefore determined to reduce the garrison to surrender by famine. Burnside's army held the roads approaching Knoxville from the west; on each side of the city ran the Holston. The assault on the 18th had been on the Federal left.

Burnside was fairly besieged on the night of the 18th. The enemy had cut off communication with Cumberland Gap, and held the approaches to Knoxville on the northwest and southwest. The Federal army was supplied for three weeks; the fortifications were hourly strengthened; a *chevaux de frise* of pikes was set up in front of the rifle-pits, and the heights on the opposite side of the Holston were securely held and fortified. Burnside was urged by Grant to hold on to Knoxville. Fortunately, he was better supplied with provisions than the enemy conjectured, and had lost no time in his work upon the fortifications, which had become almost impregnable. His only hope now was Grant's speedy victory over Bragg, and the approach of a relieving force.

Grant's work, as we shall see in the next chapter, was speedily and effectually accomplished. One week after Longstreet's assault on the 18th, Bragg was defeated before Chattanooga, and Longstreet's position was rendered extremely perilous. But the latter determined to make a final effort, risking every thing upon the chances of a bold assault on Burnside's lines before a Federal force could reach his own rear. He had in the mean while



JOHN G. PARKE.

been re-enforced by two brigades of B. R. Johnson's division. The morning of the 29th of November was fixed for the assault.

The point selected for the attack was Fort Sanders, which commanded the Kingston Road, and overlooked Knoxville. The capture of this fort would be decisive, and every nerve was strained for its accomplishment. This position was held by a portion of the Ninth Corps. It was well protected by a wide ditch in front, by thickly laid abatis, and by a network of wires stretched from stump to stump.

In the gray of the morning three picked brigades of McLaws's division

appeared in front of the fort, while a Georgia regiment of sharpshooters silenced the Federal guns. Leaving the shelter of the woods, the storming column advanced up the slope. Only at the edge of the ditch did the enemy halt. Here it was found that an important feature in the assault had been forgotten. There were no means at hand for crossing this ditch. It was now the moment of glorious opportunity to the defenders of the fort, who poured a deadly fire upon the hesitating column, checking the first impetus of its assault. But, though retarded in their movement, the courage of the assailants was indomitable. They broke through the entanglement of wires, they cut their way through the abatis; the carnage made among them by musketry and artillery could not daunt their brave spirits; they filled the ditch; some of them assailed the scarp of the fort, pushing each other up to reach the parapet; a few forced their way through the embrasures. Here, with these few, a hand-to-hand conflict was waged. One officer advanced with a flag and boldly demanded the surrender of the fort, and was dragged inside a prisoner. Those who had reached the parapet were shot and hurled back into the ditch, which now writhed with its dead and wounded, while, to increase the maddening torment, hand grenades were thrown into their midst. Meanwhile, into the rear the artillery hurled its fatal missiles, until at length, entirely baffled, this column was withdrawn and another took its place, and the carnage was renewed. But no impression was made upon the garrison. After a display of courage probably unequalled by that exhibited in any assault during this war, and never surpassed in any other war, the attack was abandoned. There followed a truce, to permit the enemy to gather up his dead and wounded—over 500 all told—and here from the lips of the enemy was heard the first tidings of Grant's victory. The loss in the fort was 8 killed, 5 wounded, and about 30 captured. An assault made at the same time upon General Shackleford on the south side of the Holston had also been repulsed.

This repulse of the enemy, though it did not immediately terminate the siege, was its last important event. The day before the assault Sherman had been ordered with 25,000 men to march to the relief of Knoxville. Elliot's cavalry division were sent in the same direction. Sherman advanced along the south side of the Tennessee, cutting off Longstreet's retreat, and by the 4th of December his army was within two or three marches of Knoxville. On the 5th the enemy retired and the siege was raised. Longstreet retired up the Holston River, but there was no pursuit. He did not entirely abandon East Tennessee until the following spring, when his command rejoined the Army of Northern Virginia.¹

¹ With the siege of Knoxville closed the active services of General Burnside in East Tennessee. The command was transferred to General Foster. The transfer was actually made on the 11th of December. Three days afterward Burnside left Knoxville, and reached his home in Providence, R. I., on the 23d. On January 28th, 1864, President Lincoln approved a resolution "that the thanks of Congress be, and they hereby are, presented to Major General Ambrose E. Burnside, and through him to the officers and men who have fought under his command, for their gallantry, good conduct, and soldier-like endurance."



LONGSTREET'S ASSAULT ON FORT SANDERS.