



GRANT'S HEADQUARTERS, CITY POINT.

CHAPTER LXI.

THE CAPTURE OF PETERSBURG AND RICHMOND.

Position in the Autumn of 1864.—Davis's Macon Speech.—Political Aspect.—Presidential Election at the North.—The Democratic Convention.—How McClellan's Nomination was regarded at the South.—Views of Alexander H. Stephens.—Moral Effect of Sherman's Campaign.—Forces of Johnston.—Military Situation in the Spring of 1865.—Actual Boundaries of the Confederacy.—Forces in the Field.—Strength of Lee's Army.—Project for arming the Slaves.—Opposed by the President and Secretary of War.—Favored by Lee.—Act passed for this purpose.—Protest by Mr. Hunter.—Provisions of the Act.—Confederate Finances.—Enormous Issue of Paper Money.—Practical Repudiation.—Depreciation of the Currency.—The Confederate Commissariat.—Difficulty in Feeding the Armies in Virginia.—New Tax Laws.—Lee determines to abandon Richmond.—His Plans.—Grant's Plans.—His Orders to Sheridan.—Sheridan moves up the Valley.—Routes Early at Waynesborough.—Destroys Canal and Railroads.—Joins Grant at Petersburg.—Designs of Lee and Grant.—Changes in the Organization of the Federal Army.—Commanders and Position.—The Confederate Lines.—Strategical Position of the Five Forks.—General Confederate Position.—The Confederates assault Fort Steadman.—The Fort surprised and taken.—The Confederates checked by Hartranft.—They are cut off, and surrender.—The Confederate Picket Line assaulted and carried.—Losses on both Sides.—Grant's Plans unchanged.—The Idea of the Operations.—Special Directions to Sheridan.—Strength of Sheridan's Cavalry.—Advance of Warren's Corps.—Lee's Counter-movement.—He masses Troops against Sheridan and Warren.—Operations suspended by a Storm.—Battle of White Oak Ridge, March 31.—Sheridan reaches Five Forks, and is forced back.—Action at Dinwiddie Court-house.—Warren directed to join Sheridan.—The Orders received by him.—The Confederates fall back to the Five Forks.—Sheridan's Movements.—Sheridan and Warren.—The Battle of the Five Forks.—The Fifth Corps captures the Confederate Lines.—Cavalry Operations.—The last Confederate Stand.—Their Rout.—How Lee received the Tidings.—Warren superseded.—Sheridan's Reasons.—Bombardment of Petersburg.—The general Assault.—The Ninth Corps carries the first Lines in their Front, and is checked.—The Sixth Corps pierces the Confederate Lines.—Capture of Fort Gregg.—Movements of Sheridan and Humphreys.—Death of A. P. Hill.—Lee determines to abandon his Position.—His Strength at the Time.—He concentrates his Force, and assaults the Union Lines.—Fort Mahone captured and recaptured.—Petersburg abandoned.—Davis notified of the intended Evacuation.—Scenes in Richmond.—Davis leaves Richmond.—Riots and Pillaging.—Ewell fires the Warehouses.—The Conflagration at Richmond.—In the Lines.—Musical Interlude.—Weitzel enters Richmond.—Hoisting of the Union Flag upon the Capitol.—Shepley appointed Military Governor.—His Orders.—The Conflagration checked.—Jefferson Davis reaches Danville.—His last Proclamation.

Veheement opposition speeches were indeed made, but, as the sessions were mainly held in secret, they had little influence upon public opinion. It was different in the Union. There had all along been an active party opposed to the administration and to the conduct of the war, if not, as was believed at the South, to the war itself. The presidential election was approaching; all the elements of opposition had combined in the nomination of McClellan. The Chicago Convention had embraced in its platform a proffer of thanks to the soldiery of the army and the sailors of the navy, who had fought upon land and water under the flag of the country; but it had also declared that the four years of war had been a failure, and that immediate efforts should be made for a cessation of hostilities, with a view to an ultimate Convention of the states, or other means, for the restoration of peace. It was indeed added that the restoration should be "on the basis of the Federal Union of the states." But so emphatic had been the declaration of the South against any restoration or reconstruction of the Union, that it was firmly believed that, should the opposition come into power, hostilities be suspended, and a Convention called, the North would yield this point, and consent to a separation. So the South looked with much anxiety and something of hope to the result of the coming election at the North.<sup>1</sup>

These hopes, political and military, were soon dispelled. Lincoln was re-elected as President; Sherman accomplished his march through Georgia, and thence traversed South Carolina, and penetrated the very heart of North Carolina, with scarcely a show of opposition. Hood's army was crushed, and in effect annihilated in Tennessee. Sherman's march demonstrated to both parties and to the world the exhaustion of the Confederacy. It was not so much that the march was effected, but that there was no force left to dispute it. Johnston, once more called to the rescue, and placed in command of all the Confederate forces east of the Mississippi up to the very lines of Petersburg, swept together all the troops left in that wide region. Saving those shut up at Mobile, he drew together almost every man from Mississippi to Alabama, from Alabama to Georgia, with all in the two Carolinas. By the Confederate muster-rolls there were still enough for a great army. But to gather them was like collecting water with a sieve. On the last day of January Hardee had in South Carolina 23,000 men present for duty. Three weeks after he evacuated Charleston with 18,000; three weeks later, when he joined Johnston in North Carolina, he had but 6000. The Governor of South Carolina had withdrawn from him 1100 state troops; the remaining 11,000 missing had deserted on the march.<sup>2</sup> All told, the garrisons of Savannah, Charleston, Wilmington, and Augusta, with the relics of Hood's army, Johnston could not gather more than 40,000 men.<sup>3</sup> Pressing hard upon these was Sherman, now re-enforced by Schofield from Thomas's victorious army, raising his force to fully 100,000.

Before the last week of March, when the active operations of the campaign were opened, the field of contest had been restricted within narrow

As the spring of 1865 drew near, all men might see that the end of the Confederacy was close at hand. Late into the autumn of the preceding year its fortunes had seemed far from desperate. Never had it borne itself to the world more defiantly than in October. The two great armies east of the Mississippi, for the destruction of which the campaign of 1864 had been planned, were in October as strong as they had been in May. In Virginia Grant had been brought to a dead stand by Lee before Petersburg. Early lay in the Valley of the Shenandoah, threatening a renewed invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania. Sherman had indeed penetrated far into Georgia, and had won Atlanta—a heavy blow, but one lighter than others from which the Confederacy had apparently recovered. Sherman's position, indeed, seemed full of peril. He was 300 miles from his only source of supplies, with which he was connected by two slender lines, and if these should be severed his army would be starved out. So it seemed to Jefferson Davis, who had gone on a tour of inspection to the West. The army of Sherman, he declared in public speeches, "would meet the fate that befell the army of the French empire in its retreat from Moscow." "Our cavalry and our people," he said, "will harass and destroy his army as did the Cossacks that of Napoleon, and the Yankee general will, like him, escape with only a body-guard." "Be of good cheer," he said to a division of Tennessee troops; "for within a short time your faces will be turned homeward, and your feet pressing Tennessee soil."<sup>2</sup> All thoughts of peace which did not start with the recognition of the absolute independence of the Confederacy were scouted.

While the military operations of the campaign had not been decidedly unfavorable, and it needed only a sanguine spirit to consider them rather favorable than otherwise to the Confederate cause, there was much in the apparent political aspect of affairs to encourage the South. To all appearance the Confederacy was yet thoroughly united for the prosecution of the war to the utmost extremity. It is now known that a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the government was growing up, but hitherto it had hardly manifested itself openly. All the functions of authority had been merged in the executive. Congress was little more than a debating club.

<sup>1</sup> "The action of the Chicago Convention, so far as its platform of principles goes, presents a ray of light which, under Providence, may prove the dawn of day to this long and cheerless night—the first ray of real light I have seen from the North since the war began." (Alexander H. Stephens, September 22, 1864.)—"I look upon the election of McClellan as a matter of vast importance to us in every view of the case, and hence I thought it judicious, patriotic, and wise to do every thing that could properly be done to aid in his election. Whatever may be his individual opinions, he is the candidate of the State Rights party at the North, in opposition to the Centralists and Consolidationists, whose hobby now is abolitionism. . . . Some think that if what they term a Conservative man should be elected, or any on the Chicago platform even, that such terms for a restoration of the Union would be offered as our people could accept. The spectre of reconstruction rears its ghastly head at every corner, and haunts their imagination. These apprehensions, I doubt not, are sincere, but I entertain none such myself. The old Union and the old Constitution are both dead—dead forever, except so far as the Constitution has been preserved by us. There is for the Union as it was no resurrection by any power short of that which brought Lazarus from the tomb. These fears of voluntary reconstruction are but chimeras of the brain. No one need entertain any such from McClellan's election. But, on the contrary, I think that peace—and peace on the basis of a separation of the states and our independence—would be the almost certain result. . . . So, in any and every view I can take of the subject, I regard the election of McClellan and the success of the State Rights party at the North, whose nominee he is, as of the utmost importance to us. . . . On the question of reconstruction, I stand now just where I did in October, 1861, when I wrote to a gentleman, in answer to a letter from him stating that I was charged with such sentiments, that I looked upon such charges as no less an imputation upon my intelligence than upon my integrity. The issue of this war, in my judgment, was subjection or independence." (Alexander H. Stephens, November 5, 1864.)

<sup>2</sup> Johnston surrendered 31,243; but in this number were included many not actually present with him in front of Sherman. By his own statement, which must pass unquestioned, he had with him near Raleigh about 24,000, of whom 18,578 were infantry and artillery, and a little more than 5000 cavalry. In the interval he had lost some thousands in battle, and it is presumable many more by desertion. Our estimate of 40,000 will unquestionably cover his force when the largest.

<sup>1</sup> September and October, 1864.

<sup>2</sup> Davis's speech at Macon, September, 1864.





FIELD HOSPITAL OF NINTH CORPS.

limits. There was still a considerable Southern force beyond the Mississippi, but this was so thoroughly isolated from the remainder of the Confederacy that it could effect nothing toward the general result. The West was swept clear of Confederate troops. In Alabama they held useless and precarious possession of Mobile, with feeble garrisons at a few points in the interior. The remainder of the state, together with Georgia, South Carolina, and two thirds of North Carolina, were held by the Federals. Wilson's and Stoneman's cavalry, sent out by Thomas, rode at will, with none to molest or hinder them. If they gained no great victories, it was because there was no enemy to encounter save in trifling skirmishes. All Northern and Eastern Virginia, down to the banks of the James, had been wrested from the hands of the Confederates. As a military, and, by consequence, as a political power, the Confederacy now embraced only the southern third of Virginia and the northern third of North Carolina. Its boundaries were the James on the North and the Neuse on the south, the Atlantic on the east and the Alleghanies on the west—one hundred and fifty miles from Raleigh to Richmond, and cutting off a broad strip on the sea-board, practi-

cally in Federal hands, as far from the mountains toward the ocean—a territory of 22,500 square miles, less than one half of the area once comprised in the State of Virginia. Within these boundaries the Confederate armies numbered about 100,000, with no prospect of the addition of a single regiment; the Union forces numbered fully 250,000, with 100,000 more ready to be launched thither, and still another 100,000 in arms, which could be sent in a few weeks.<sup>1</sup> Lee, indeed, still held his strong lines at Petersburg with a powerful army. On paper it numbered 175,000 men; but of these more than half were absent, and only about 65,000 present for

<sup>1</sup> The Federal force "available and present for duty" on the 1st of March numbered 602,598, of whom about 150,000 were with Grant, and 100,000 with Sherman. There were 40,000 in the departments of Washington and West Virginia; these, with quite 60,000 from various departments of the West where hostilities had ceased, could have been sent at once to Virginia and North Carolina, leaving 252,000 for operations in the extreme South and elsewhere, from which another 100,000 could, in case of need, have been spared for operations on the actual scene of war. Besides the 602,000, there were 180,000 in hospitals or on sick leave, and 50,000 absent as prisoners of war or without leave; there were 132,000 on detached service in the different military departments, many of whom could have been brought into active service. The entire nominal force of the Union armies on the 1st of March was 965,591.—See Report of the Secretary of War for 1865.



NEGRO QUARTERS ARMY OF THE JAMES.



duty.<sup>1</sup> With such an army, according to the dictum of Napoleon, Lee might have held Richmond against the whole Federal army, had that been the simple problem presented to him for solution. But, as we have seen, the maintenance of Richmond involved also the holding of a long line of intrenchments, designed to cover the only communications by means of which his army could be fed.

But the depletion of the army was only an external symptom of the general infirmity which had fallen upon the Confederate state. As usual, the patient tried to remove the symptom rather than heal the disease. The project began to be broached of replenishing the army by arming the slaves. A proceeding so utterly at variance with every idea upon which Southern society was based met at first with little favor. Slaves had, indeed, from the very first, been employed as laborers upon fortifications, and gradually as teamsters and pioneers in the field. In September, 1864, the Governor of Louisiana urged upon the Secretary of War that the time had come to put into the army every able-bodied negro as a soldier. "I would," he said, "free all able to bear arms, and put them into the field at once." In his message in November Mr. Davis discussed the question. It was to be viewed, he said, "solely in the light of policy and our domestic economy. When so regarded, I must dissent from those who advise a general levy and arming of the slaves for the duty of soldiers; but," he added, "should the alternative ever be presented of subjugation or the employment of the slave as a soldier, there seems no reason to doubt what should then be our decision." Mr. Seddon, then Secretary of War, took the same view. So long as there were whites who could be brought into the army, it was not safe to "risk our liberties and safety on the negro. For the present, it seems best to leave the subordinate labors of society to the negro, and to impose its highest, as now existing, on the superior class." But it became apparent that few more whites could be brought into the depleted armies. Late in February, 1865, Lee strongly urged the employment of negroes as soldiers. "I think," he said, "the measure not only important, but necessary. I do not think our white population can supply the necessities of a long war. I think those who are employed should be freed. It would not be just or wise to require them to remain as slaves." An impressment or draft he thought would not bring out the best class; he would rather call upon those who were willing to come, with the consent of their owners. "If," he wrote, "Congress would authorize their reception, and empower the President to call upon individuals or states for such as they are willing to contribute, with the condition of emancipation to all enrolled, a sufficient number would be forthcoming to enable us to try the experiment." Soon after an act was passed by Congress for this purpose. It had passed the House, and was lost in the Senate by a single vote; but the Legislature of Virginia having instructed the senators from that state to vote for it, it was reconsidered, and passed by one majority. Mr. Hunter, who had before voted against the bill, in now voting for it in obedience to the instructions of the Legislature, accompanied his vote with an emphatic protest. "When we left the old government," he said, "we thought we had got rid forever of the slavery agitation. We insisted that Congress had no right to interfere with slavery. We contended that whenever the two races were thrown together, one must be master and the other slave. We insisted that slavery was the best and happiest condition of the negro; now, if we offer slaves their freedom as a boon, we confess that we were insincere and hypocritical. Yet, if the negroes were made soldiers, they must be made freemen. There is something in the human heart that tells us that when they come out scarred from this conflict they must be free. If we can make them soldiers—the condition of the soldier being socially equal to any other—we can make them officers, perhaps to command white men. If we are right in passing this measure, we were wrong in denying to the old government the right to interfere with the institution of slavery and to emancipate slaves." The measure, he said, would also injure the Confederacy abroad. It would be regarded as a confession of despair, and an abandonment of the ground upon which secession was based. As a matter of expediency, it was, he declared, worse than as a question of principle. No considerable body of negro troops could be got together without stripping the country of the labor absolutely necessary to produce food. Moreover, the negroes abhorred the profession of a soldier. They would not volunteer, and if they were impressed they would desert to the Yankees, who could give them a better price than the Confederacy could do. The act, as passed, empowered the President to ask for and accept from owners of slaves such number of negroes as he should deem expedient, for and during the war, "to perform military service in whatever capacity he may direct." They were to be formed into companies and regiments by the general-in-chief, and commanded by such officers as the President should appoint, and to receive the same

pay and rations as other troops in the same branch of the service. If a sufficient number was not thus raised, the President might call upon each state for her quota of any number not exceeding 300,000 troops, in addition to those subject to military service under existing laws, "to be raised from such classes of the population, irrespective of color, in each state as the proper authorities thereof may determine." But it was provided that "nothing in this act shall be construed to authorize a change in the relation of the said slave;" and that not more than a quarter of the male slaves between the ages of eighteen and forty-five should be called for. Whatever might have been the effect of such a law if enacted at an earlier period, it came too late. The Confederacy had now no arms to put into their hands, and no means of producing them at home or procuring them from abroad;<sup>1</sup> and, moreover, long before the requisition could be made and complied with, the Confederacy had ceased to exist.

The finances of the Confederacy were even in a worse condition than its armies. It had long since practically ceased to pay its soldiers. It was hardly worth the trouble even to go through the form, when a month's pay of a soldier in paper money would not buy a pair of shoes. Yet, for many purposes, the government must have something to represent money; and at last notes and bonds were put forth with a profusion limited only by the ability of the printing-press to execute them. What the total sum was no man can tell with any approach to accuracy.<sup>2</sup> The financial measures of the government have been made the subject of unbounded animadversion; but it is hard to see how the wisest financier could have materially changed the general results. Most of the twenty millions of specie in the Confederacy was loaned to government, or soon became absorbed in the tempting business of blockade-running; all that government could borrow or raise by the export of cotton was spent abroad for vessels, arms, munitions, and military supplies. Bank-notes, themselves in the end to become almost worthless, were carefully hoarded, and the government could only pay its home expenses in its own notes and bonds; and these, as the expenses accumulated, must be issued in larger and still larger quantities, accelerated by what was styled the universal advance in prices, but which was really the depreciation in the estimate put upon the circulating medium. The Confederate financiers had laid upon them a task more grievous than that imposed by the Egyptians upon the Hebrews. They had to make bricks not only without straw, but without clay—with nothing but sand. No wonder that their bricks crumbled at a touch. The Confederate paper depreciated until it had a real purchasing power of only a twentieth, a fortieth, and finally a sixtieth of its nominal value. It grew to be a common jest, that when one went to market he needed a basket to carry his money, and only a wallet to bring home his purchases.

A vigorous government may for a long time keep armies in the field without pay, but not without food. The Confederate commissariat was in worse plight than its treasury. The South, though essentially agricultural, and abundantly supplied with food, had yet no large accumulations. It had no great dépôts where supplies were collected in advance. The crops were consumed in the year of their harvesting, and mainly in the region of their production. The means were scanty for their transportation from place to place. Hence, when the sudden necessity arose for accumulating large amounts at Richmond, it was with the utmost difficulty that this want could be met. We have already<sup>3</sup> seen how sorely this difficulty pressed upon Lee in the summer and autumn of 1864. As weeks passed on, the difficulty became greater and greater. The immediate region was well-nigh exhausted. Early in the winter the state of things was thus set forth in secret session of Congress:<sup>4</sup> There was not meat enough in the Confederacy for the armies it had in the field. In Virginia there was not meat enough for the armies within her limits. The supply of even bread depended upon keeping open railroad connections with the South. Meat must be obtained from abroad; and bread could no longer be had by impressment, but must be paid for at market rates, and in a better currency than that in circulation.

Grave as were these difficulties, they grew rapidly graver. The capture of Fort Fisher, by closing the port of Wilmington, shut off all possibility of obtaining meat from abroad. The wharves at Nassau might be piled with meat purchased for the Confederacy, but not a barrel could reach the army. Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas had severed all connection with the regions where bread was mostly to be found. Even if it was to be found, whence was to come that better currency wherewith to purchase it? Congress, near the close of its last session, made a desperate ef-

<sup>1</sup> The strength of Lee's force has been most persistently and strangely understated. Pollard (*Lost Cause*, 679) asserts that "in the first months of 1865 Lee held both Richmond and Petersburg with not more than 33,000 men." Swinton (*Army of the Potomac*, 573) says: "At the opening of the spring campaign General Lee had on paper 160,000 men, but, in reality, less than 50,000, from which, if there be deducted the 10,000 troops on detached duty, it will appear that he had 40,000 men wherewithal to defend forty miles of intrenchments." It is somewhat strange that Mr. Swinton should have failed to refer to the Confederate reports which he had in his possession. These reports give the following as the sum of Lee's force at the close of February:

	Present	Absent	Present.	Present for Duty.
Army of Northern Virginia.....	160,411	.....	73,349	..... 59,094
Department of Richmond.....	9,675	.....	5,431	..... 4,692
Total.....	170,086	.....	78,780	..... 64,786

The troops in the Department of Richmond, under Ewell, were the actual garrison of Richmond; they marched out at the evacuation, and formed the rear-guard of the retreating army. Upon what "detached duty" any of Lee's force could have been engaged, it is hard to see. The one thing to be done was to defend his lines. It is probable that Lee's force was slightly increased during the three weeks between the date of this report and the commencement of operations; for, as will be seen hereafter, about 65,000 are definitely accounted for as killed and wounded, captured on the field, or surrendered; and it is certain that considerable numbers escaped, and were not included in the lists of paroled prisoners.

<sup>1</sup> At the time when "Congress was debating a bill to put 300,000 negroes into the Confederate armies, there were not five thousand spare arms in the Confederacy, and our returned prisoners could not actually find muskets with which to resume their places in the field."—Pollard, *Lost Cause*, 660.

<sup>2</sup> Pollard (*Lost Cause*, 420) says: "The total cost of the war to the Confederate government had reached at its close, according to the opinion of intelligent officers of the Treasury, about thirty-five hundred millions of dollars. Of this total about twenty-five hundred millions consisted of eight, six, and four per cent. bonds of long dates, of treasury notes, unsettled accounts," etc.; the remaining thousand millions being in the form of unpaid claims for property purchased or impressed and damages sustained at the hands of the enemy. He elsewhere (page 651) puts down the amount of treasury notes in circulation as money at three hundred and twenty-five millions; but, as appears, many millions had been practically repudiated by the government a year before. At that time the amount of notes was more than six hundred millions. By the law of February 17, 1864, holders of these notes above the denomination of five dollars were for a few months to be allowed to exchange them for four per cent. bonds; after that they should cease to be current, but might be exchanged for new notes at the rate of three of the old for two of the new. Old notes of one hundred dollars could not be exchanged for the new ones, but only for four per cent. bonds; all of them outstanding after April 1 were to be taxed ten per cent. a month until January, 1865, when they should be taxed one hundred per cent.—that is, repudiated wholly. Notes of the new issue, and the small ones of the old sealed down to two thirds of their value, might be exchanged for certificates bearing four per cent. interest, and payable two years after the notification of a treaty of peace with the United States. A large majority of the note-holders, it is added, exchanged the old notes for new ones under the conviction that the reduction of the amount of the currency would make the two dollars worth more than three now were. If we suppose that this large majority held two thirds of the whole six hundred millions, the scaling down was in effect a repudiation of one hundred and fifty millions of dollars.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante*, p. 693.

<sup>4</sup> Pollard (*Lost Cause*), 649.





UNION AND CONFEDERATE WORKS SOUTHWEST OF PETERSBURG. FROM SIGNAL STATION.



fort to grapple with this last difficulty. Early in March a tax-bill was passed, more stringent than any civilized people had ever endured. Agriculturists must pay in kind a tenth of their produce. All property, real and personal, not otherwise provided for, must pay eight per cent.; specie, bullion, and bills of exchange, twenty per cent.; paper money five per cent.; incomes five per cent.; all profits of above twenty-five per cent. upon sales, twenty-five per cent. Upon all prescribed taxes, of whatever kind, there was to be an addition of one eighth, to be applied toward the increased pay of soldiers. On the 17th of March another act was passed, "to raise coin for the purpose of furnishing necessaries for the army." A tax of twenty-five per cent. was imposed upon all coin held by banks or individuals in excess of two hundred dollars; not, however, to go into effect in case banks and individuals would, within a month, raise a loan of two millions to the government. The tax was also commuted in cases where the owners of coin would exchange it for cotton at the rate of fifteen cents a pound. On the 28th, the very day before Grant opened the final ten days' campaign, the State of Virginia advanced three hundred thousand dollars in coin, taking in exchange an order from the Secretary of the Treasury for two millions of pounds of cotton, "with the right to export the same free of all conditions except the payment of the export duty of seventy-five cents a pound." This duty, being payable in paper, was, at the then existing rate, equivalent to one and a quarter cents a pound in coin.

Thus threatened with starvation, imminent at the best, and certain in case either of the two railroads running southward were interrupted even for a week, Lee at last determined that his position was no longer tenable. He resolved to abandon it, and unite with Johnston somewhere near the borders of Virginia and North Carolina. If the retreat could be successfully executed, he would have a force of nearly or quite 100,000. Perhaps he might be able to crush Sherman, and thus regain possession of the Carolinas and Georgia, and then, gathering together the troops beyond the Mississippi, inaugurate a new war. At worst, the contest could be prolonged for a while, for it would be a work of months for the Federal army, with its material, to concentrate upon this new and difficult field of operations, and who could tell what changes a few months might not bring? Would the North hold out for another campaign? At all events, the army would escape immediate peril of starvation. If its food could not come to it, it would be going toward its food. This resolution was formed early in March, and the arrangements for its execution concerted with Johnston. But time was required to carry these arrangements into effect. Dépôts of provisions must be gathered at different points on the way, and the march could not begin until opening spring should make the roads practicable for an army and its trains of material.

Grant, on his part, was aware of the situation of Lee, and divined what must be the means which he would essay to extricate himself. Day after day was spent by him in anxiety lest each morning should bring the report that his opponent had retreated the night before. He had before meditated bringing Sherman, by water or land, upon the rear of Lee's position, but he became convinced that Sherman's crossing the Roanoke would be the signal for Lee to march toward Johnston. To forestall the junction of these two armies, and thus prevent a long and tedious campaign, seemed the thing nearest at hand to be done. Perhaps, also, he wished that the armies of the East, after their long and as yet not successful struggle, should have the glory of destroying their stout opponent, and thus match the achievements of their heretofore more fortunate comrades of the West. Something which seemed almost an accident now favored the execution of this design.

Early in February Grant had begun to make dispositions for the campaign. In the far South, Canby was moving upon Mobile, while Thomas was to send his cavalry to raid in different directions. Sheridan had wintered at Winchester, where he had recruited his cavalry until he had more than 10,000 in excellent condition. These, Merritt being Chief of Cavalry, had been organized into two divisions, under Devin and Custer. On the 20th Grant sent his orders, or rather suggestions, to Sheridan. As soon as the roads would permit, he would find no difficulty in going with cavalry alone up the Valley of the Shenandoah, and thence crossing the Blue Ridge still farther southward to Lynchburg. From there he was to destroy the canal and railroads in every direction, so that they would be of no farther use to the enemy. Grant was desirous to re-enforce Sherman with cavalry, in which arm he was greatly inferior to the enemy. Accordingly, when Sheridan had reached Lynchburg, and done his work in that region, he might, if circumstances should warrant, strike southward, heading the streams in Virginia, and push on to join Sherman, whom he would be likely to find somewhere near Raleigh.

Sheridan set out from Winchester on the 27th of February, his men carrying five days' rations in haversacks, and each horse bearing thirty pounds of forage; fifteen days' rations of coffee, sugar, and salt were borne in wagons. Besides the ammunition trains, a pontoon train of eight boats, eight ambulances, and one wagon for each division headquarters, no vehicle was permitted to accompany the march. Thus lightly equipped, the command moved rapidly, though the weather was bad. The mountains were covered with snow, rapidly disappearing under the heavy rains, rendering most of the streams past fording. Small parties of guerrillas hovered upon the flanks of the column; but they kept at a respectful distance, and no notice was taken of them. Once, however, Rosser, with one or two hundred cavalry, attempted to impede the march by burning a bridge over a fork of the Shenandoah, but was driven off with loss of men and material. In three days Staunton was reached, the farthest point which any Union force had hitherto attained by this route. Early, with a miscellaneous force of 2000 men, had been hovering in this region ever since his defeat at Cedar

River. He retreated eastward, leaving word behind that he would fight at Waynesborough, which commanded the only practicable gorge through the Blue Mountains, which Sheridan must pass to debouch into the Valley of the James, and reach Lynchburg. Custer's division was pushed in pursuit. He found Early, true to his word, well posted, with two divisions of infantry and Rosser's cavalry, behind breastworks. Without even pausing to reconnoitre, with his troopers partly dismounted and partly in the saddle, Custer dashed straight at the works, drove the enemy out, pursued them until they were brought up by the river, where they threw up their hands in token of surrender, "with cheers at the suddenness with which they had been captured."<sup>1</sup> The fruits of this brilliant dash were 1600 prisoners, 11 guns, and 200 wagons, with ammunition and subsistence. Early escaped with two of his staff. Rosser's cavalry also rode off, to appear for a moment a few days later. Herewith Early disappears from the war. On the 30th of March Lee wrote, dismissing him from command, couching his order in the kindest terms possible: He himself had full confidence in Early's zeal, ability, and discretion; but he had lost public confidence, and a commander must be sought for who could secure this. Lee had no occasion to make this search; for, before Early had received the order of dismissal, Lee was forced from Petersburg, and was on his disastrous retreat, which ten days after closed in his surrender.

Sheridan pushed through the gorge in the Blue Mountains thus opened to him, and reached Charlottesville in the Valley of the James, where he was obliged to wait two days for his trains to make their slow way through the thick mud. The prisoners, meanwhile, were sent under a strong escort toward Winchester. Rosser followed this body, and at Mount Jackson made an attack, hoping to rescue the prisoners. He was repulsed, and left behind some of his own men. The delay at Charlottesville enabled the Confederates to gather at Lynchburg a force too strong to be assailed by cavalry. Sheridan abandoned the purpose of reaching that point, but sent his troopers in every direction to destroy the canal, railroad, and public property. The James River Canal was for miles so thoroughly destroyed as to be impassable, and thus one important means of supply for Lee's army was cut off. Sheridan then proposed to cross the James between Lynchburg and Richmond, and, pressing southward, to reach the Southside Railroad fifty miles in the rear of Lee's lines. But the Confederates succeeded in destroying every bridge between these two points, and the pontoons would not half span the still swollen stream.

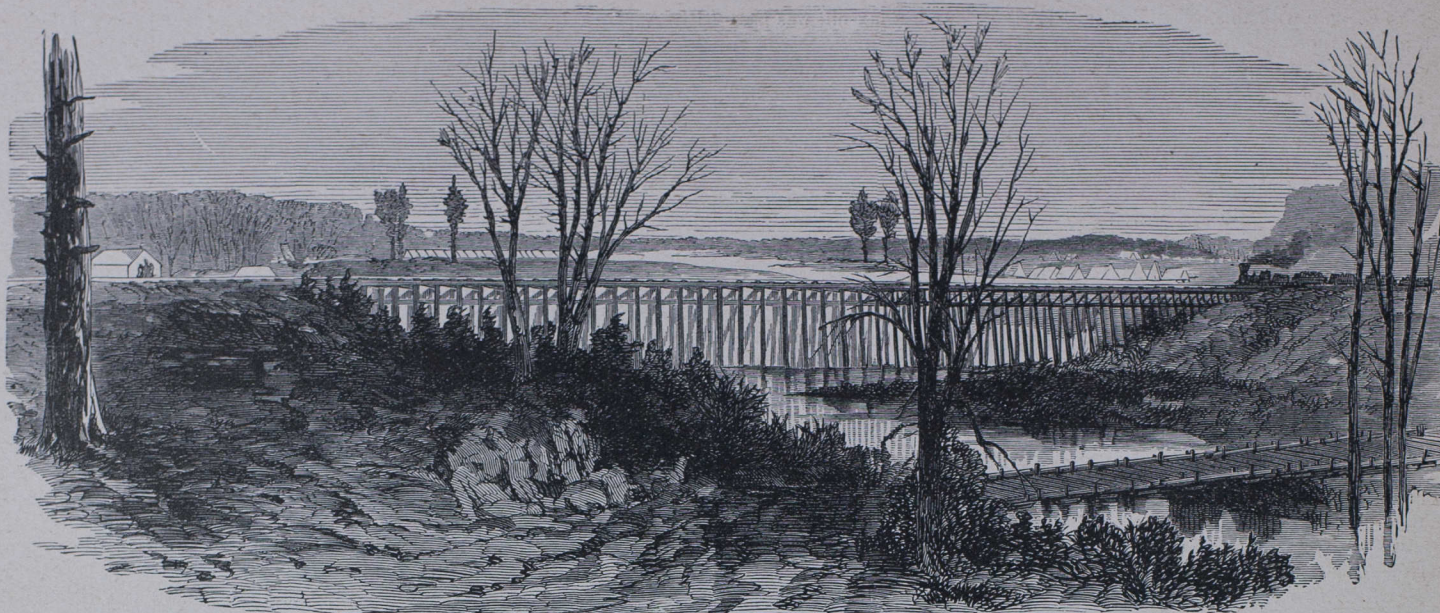
Sheridan now, exercising the discretion which had been wisely given him, resolved, instead of endeavoring to join Sherman in North Carolina, to more thoroughly destroy the railroads leading northward from Richmond, and then, pressing eastward to the York River, bend southward, and, after eight months' absence, rejoin Grant in front of Petersburg. After raiding hither and yon for a week, destroying every thing destructible down to within ten miles of Richmond, he resumed his march. Nature imposed obstacles to this march such as had been heretofore pronounced insurmountable. It was the worst season of the Virginian year. There were incessant rain, deep and almost impassable streams, swamp and mud to be endured or overcome. The animals suffered much, mostly from hoof-rot. The men, buoyed up by the thought that they had completed their work in the Valley of the Shenandoah, and were now on their way to aid in what remained to be done upon the Appomattox, bore up bravely. The whole loss on the march was not more than a hundred men, and some of these were left by the wayside, overborne by fatigue. Crossing the South and North Anna Rivers, passing hard by many famous battle-fields whereon there was now no hostile force, this cavalry force reached the site of the memorable White House upon the 19th of March. Sheridan's march from Winchester had occupied twenty days. In its course he had traversed thirteen counties in Virginia, and, by the almost utter destruction of the James River Canal and of the railroads, had effectually deprived the Confederate army at Richmond of all subsistence from the region of Virginia lying north and east of the James River. After resting and refitting for a week at the White House, Sheridan resumed his route. Crossing the Chickahominy and the James, he encamped near Petersburg on the evening of the 26th of March.

Here, at points only a few score rods apart, two men, neither of them to a casual observer notable for any thing but the rare faculty of saying little, however much they might think, yet both somehow having that power of command which more showy men never cared to question, had fixed upon measures the result of which was to determine the issue of the war. Each of these two men, Grant and Lee, had by this time learned to value the other; each knew nearly the condition of the other, and so could gauge what he should, and therefore would endeavor. Either could then play the part of his opponent almost as well as his own. Lee's main purpose toward the close of March was to withdraw his army, with its materials, from the James and the Appomattox, and, joining Johnston, to carry on the fight in North Carolina, or, events favoring, far to the southward. Grant's purpose was to prevent this orderly retreat, either by shutting up Lee within his lines, and therein forcing him to surrender by assault or famine, or to drive him out by sheer force, in which case he would be able to follow hard on in pursuit.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sheridan's Report.

<sup>2</sup> Neither Lee himself, nor any one qualified by position or knowledge to speak for him, has as yet undertaken to set forth the purpose of the Confederate commander at this period; but his operations, soon to be described—such as bringing to Petersburg only the food needed from day to day, accumulating supplies at different points on the railroads, and the assault upon Fort Steadman—can be explained and justified only upon this theory. Grant, in a few significant sentences, clearly sets forth his design. He says: "The greatest source of uneasiness to me was the fear that the enemy would leave his strong lines about Petersburg and Richmond, for the purpose of uniting with Johnston, before he was driven from them by battle or I was prepared to make an effectual pursuit. . . . With Johnston and him combined, a long, tedious, and expensive campaign, consuming most of the summer, might become necessary. By moving out I would put the army in better condition for pursuit, and would at least, by the destruction of the Danville Road, retard





BRIDGE ON MILITARY RAILROAD.

Important changes had within a few months taken place in the organization of the Federal armies in Virginia. Not long after the failure of the mine enterprise, and in consequence of the censure of the Court of Inquiry, Burnside, at his own request, received leave of absence. He wished to resign his commission, but the President refused to accept it, thinking that there would arise occasion to place him again in active service. The command of the Ninth Corps was in the mean time given to Parke, who happened to be the ranking general in command of a corps, and who consequently found himself at an imminent moment in command of the whole army. Hancock, never fully recovered from his wound at Gettysburg, had given up the command of the Second Corps, and gone East to recruit a new corps, to be known as the First. Humphreys, who had acted as chief of staff to Meade, was placed at the head of the Second Corps, Webb taking his place as Meade's chief of staff. Wright retained the command of the Sixth Corps, to which he had acceded upon the death of Sedgwick at Spottsylvania. This corps, having done brave service in the annihilation of Early in the Valley of the Shenandoah, had returned to the Appomattox, and to it was reserved the honor of giving two out of the three great blows which decided the issue of the war.<sup>1</sup> Warren still retained the command of the Fifth Corps. Butler had been, at the special request of Grant, removed from the command of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, including what was known as the Army of the James. This army had been reorganized. The former Tenth and Eighteenth Corps had been discontinued, and the troops, to which was added the colored division formerly attached to Burnside's corps, were formed into two corps, designated as the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth. Ord, having performed brilliant service in the West and Southwest, had been ordered to the North, and had replaced Smith at the head of the old Eighteenth Corps, and was at length placed in command of the department vacated by the removal of Butler, the newly-arranged Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Corps, constituting the Army of the James, being confided to Gibbon and Birney. Thus it happened that, of the six generals who commanded corps in the combined armies of the East at the opening of operations in May, 1864, Warren only retained his place in March, 1865. Sheridan also, though now with his troopers upon the James, was still nominally commander of the Army of the Shenandoah. But the distinction between the armies of the Potomac, the James, and the Shenandoah had been practically set aside. The entire force around Richmond and Petersburg was directly under Grant, Meade being second in command, Sheridan coming next in grade, the corps commanders following in order of seniority in the date of their commissions. The combined force of all arms numbered about 150,000 men present for duty, of whom about two thirds were available for direct offensive operations in the field, the remainder being required for guards, camp duty, and other multifarious work.<sup>2</sup> As posted, Ord lay on the right, north of the James, and at Ber-

the concentration of the two armies of Lee and Johnston, and cause the enemy to abandon much material that he might otherwise save." As late as March 27, just two days before active operations commenced, Grant concerted with Sherman, who had come to City Point from North Carolina, a plan of campaign based on the supposition that Lee would continue to hold his lines at Petersburg and Richmond. Sherman, on the 20th of April, was to move northward, his army fully equipped and rationed for twenty days. He would, as circumstances should indicate, strike the Danville and Southside Railroads at their junction at Burkesville, 52 miles in the rear of Lee's lines, or join the armies operating in front of Richmond. Sherman, unless otherwise directed, was to begin this movement on the 10th of April; but, as events finally shaped themselves, on the very day before, Lee, having been forced from Richmond and Petersburg, surrendered his army at Appomattox Court-house. It may be safely assumed that, at the opening of the spring campaign of 1865, both of the opposing commanders so well understood the whole situation, that the immediate aim of each was to prevent the other from accomplishing the thing which at the moment he most desired. As, therefore, Grant's main purpose was to prevent Lee from getting safely away from his lines, it may be safely assumed that thus to get away was the main purpose of Lee. Each general, of course, was eager to avail himself of any advantage which circumstances should throw into his hands. In this view of the plans of the opponents—that is, Lee wishing to carry off his army and material, and Grant wishing to prevent him from so doing—the operations of the last fortnight of this long campaign are clearly explicable.

<sup>1</sup> The three great blows were: (1st) The battle of the Five Forks, won April 1 by Warren's Fifth Corps and Sheridan's Cavalry; (2d) The piercing of the Confederate lines, April 2, by the Sixth Corps; (3d) The capture of Ewell's Corps at Sailor's Creek, April 6, mainly by the Sixth Corps. These three blows cost the Confederates a loss of 20,000 prisoners, and probably 5000 in killed and wounded—nearly a half of the nominal, and more than a half of the real fighting force which Lee had left to him on the 31st of March.

<sup>2</sup> Force present for duty, March 1: Army of the Potomac, Meade, 103,273; Department of

muda Hundred; next, and before Petersburg, Parke; then Wright; then Humphreys; and upon the extreme left, Warren.

Lee had, during the winter, continued his intrenchments two miles farther westward, bending the extremity in a sharp crotchet to the north. Farther he could not go from sheer want of men to hold the lines; otherwise there was no reason why they might not have stretched across the continent. Four miles beyond where the works ceased was a point as important as any other. Here three roads came together, the point of junction being known as the Five Forks. One, the White-oak Road, ran westward from the Boydton Plank Road, nearly parallel with the vital Southside Railroad, from which at the Five Forks it was but three miles distant, by way of the Ford Road, running north and south. An enemy, having gained the Five Forks, could in an hour strike the railroad, and in a few hours so damage it that days would be required for its repair. It was of prime importance that the Five Forks should be guarded. Intrenchments were therefore laid out here, stretching for two miles north and south behind the White-oak Road. This, between the Forks and the extremity of the regular lines, ran along a slight ridge, southward of which the region was woody and swampy. The White-oak Road thus formed practically a covered way by which troops could, in case of a menaced movement by the enemy, be hurried to the defense of the Forks. Thus, at the opening of spring, the absolute right of the Confederate line was a mile to the west of the Five Forks: this was watched by the bulk of the cavalry under Fitzhugh Lee. Thence it stretched eastward and northward, girdling Petersburg and Richmond. Ewell commanded the few thousand men which formed the proper garrison of Richmond. Longstreet commanded below the city, north of the James, and across the river to within a few miles of Petersburg. Then came Gordon at Petersburg, the bulk of his force consisting of the remnants of the three divisions reduced to the numbers of one in the disastrous campaign in the Valley of the Shenandoah. Lastly came Hill with three strong divisions, holding the long line south and west of Petersburg. Lee's headquarters were with Hill's division.

On the 24th of March Grant issued his order for a grand movement to be commenced on the 29th against the Confederate right. Lee, knowing the imminency of such a movement, and perceiving that the time had now come for the evacuation of his position, resolved to anticipate the movement of his antagonist by an offensive thrust which should facilitate his own withdrawal. The thing to be done was to prevent Grant from adding to the strength upon his left, and, if possible, to cripple for a space the forces already there, so as to leave open his own meditated line of retreat. He therefore planned a sudden assault upon the Federal right, the point farthest removed from that upon which the effect of the blow was to be felt.

The point chosen was Fort Steadman, close by the crater where Burnside's mine had so signally failed. This fort occupied a salient projected forward toward the Confederate works, the distance between being only one hundred and fifty yards. The fort itself was of no great strength. It was a small earthwork, without bastions, slightly constructed originally, and now much dilapidated by the frosts and rains of winter. So completely was it covered by the enemy's artillery that it was impossible to make any repairs except imperfectly and by stealth. This, however, was of less consequence, as the hill<sup>1</sup> upon which it stood was commanded in the immediate rear by a crest of nearly equal height, and covered upon each side by flanking batteries. Still it seemed to Lee that if the fort and a few of the flanking batteries could be taken by surprise, an opening could be made through which a strong column could be thrust, which should carry the

Virginia, Ord, 45,986, some thousands being at Fortress Monroe and elsewhere, and so not available for direct operations; cavalry of Middle Division, 12,980, of whom there were, at the close of March, about 9000 under Sheridan, at hand on the James. The actual movable force may be estimated from the fact that when Warren moved on the 29th of March, his corps counted 15,300 men. The corps appear to have been of about equal strength, so that the six would have contained 91,800 movable men. Add to these 9000 cavalry, and there will be 100,800 at Grant's command for immediate offensive operations.

<sup>1</sup> Known as Hare's Hill. Confederate writers usually denominate the action which here ensued as the battle of Hare's Hill.



heights in the rear, and thus effectually pierce the Federal lines. Thence a sudden rush of less than two miles would reach the military railroad which Grant had constructed from City Point southwestward, by which the left of the Union army received its supplies. Such an attack, it was not unreasonably anticipated, would induce Grant to bring all his force from both extremities of his lines. If nothing more than this was accomplished, Longstreet and Hill, relieved from immediate pressure in front and on flank, could start southward without obstruction, while the assaulting column would be suddenly withdrawn and follow in their rear, and, before the Federal commander could reorganize his army for pursuit, would, with its material, be fairly on its way, with two full days' start, to unite with Johnston, and could so obstruct the roads behind them that they could not be overtaken until the junction already prepared for was effected. It was not wholly impossible that still greater results might be accomplished. The railroad destroyed, City Point itself might perhaps be reached, and in a brief space the great accumulation of stores there be given to the flames. The plan was a bold one; but Lee was now in such case that he must venture much. In its very audacity lay its best augury of success.

Lee left nothing undone which it was in his power to do to insure success. The initial blow was to be struck by Gordon with two of his divisions, while 20,000 more were massed to follow up the blow in case an opening was made at Fort Steadman and the crest in its rear was gained. The first blow must be given by surprise. Accident favored this. The Federal picket-line was advanced fifty yards in front of the fortifications, and within a hundred yards of the Confederate works. Across this narrow space deserters, often in squads and with arms in their hands, had been wont to make their way within the Union lines. At four o'clock on the morning of March 25 the officer on duty made his rounds along the picket-line; the men were alert, and there was no indication of any movement on the part of the enemy. Soon after, squad after squad, announcing themselves as deserters, began to drop in. The occurrence had come to be so common that no alarm was taken. Suddenly these squads dashed upon the pickets, and overpowered them with scarcely a show of resistance. At the same moment the near Confederate abatis was opened and three strong columns emerged. The central column struck straight for Fort Steadman; the others diverged to the right and left, taking in reverse small advanced batteries which flanked the fort on either hand. All these were carried with a rush, the garrison, five hundred strong, being made prisoners. A gap of a quarter of a mile wide had been made into, but not through the Union lines—an opening large enough to give passage to the 20,000 who had been massed to follow up the assault. If they had followed promptly in the gray dawn no man can say what would have been the result. They might possibly have won the commanding crest in the rear, and thence dashed upon the railroad; they might thus have won a great success, or they might have been cut off to a man, shut in by the enemy closing in behind them. By whose merit or whose fault it was that the 5000 whom Gordon pushed forward were left unsupported has been left untold.<sup>1</sup>

The lines, for a long distance to the right and left of Fort Steadman, were held by Parke's Ninth Corps. At half past five, when the attempt of the enemy was apparent, he sent tidings of it to headquarters. Three times within half an hour the message was repeated without an answer. Then came the reply through the telegraph operator: "General Meade is not here, and the command devolves upon you." Hurrying couriers to City Point to inform Grant and Meade of what was going on, Parke summoned Wright and Warren to move troops toward the point assailed. But before they could come up the Ninth Corps had done the work. Tidball, chief of artillery, was ordered to post his batteries upon the hill in the rear. These effectually stopped the advance of the central column. The two other assailing columns soon came to grief. The right column met Hartranft's division, which had sprung to arms; they were checked, and soon forced back. The left gained some success, capturing momentarily two batteries, but were in like manner checked and forced back. The three columns were now drawn together within the captured works of Fort Steadman; but these were commanded by Fort Haskell on the left, as well as by the batteries in the rear. After making a feeble attempt to take this fort, the troops of Gordon crouched in disorder behind the breastworks which they had captured, for the way of retreat was by this time closed upon them. Forts Haskell on the left, and McGilvery on the right, swept the narrow space to the Confederate lines with a fire under which no troops could live. Hartranft, upon whom the immediate direction of operations had devolved, had posted his own division and portions of others so as to cover their front and both flanks.<sup>2</sup> Hartranft now dashed upon the works, and carried them with hardly a show of resistance. Some of the Confederates ran the terrible

cross-lines of fire and got back to their own lines, but nearly 2000 of them surrendered. Their loss in killed and wounded is unknown, but it must have exceeded that of the Federals, which amounted to 500. Of the 5000 men whom Gordon led to the attack, about 3000 were killed, wounded, or captured.

The Confederate disasters of the day were not yet over. The conflict at Fort Steadman was finished before nine o'clock, only a part of the Ninth Corps having taken part in it. Wright and Humphreys, whose corps were now well in hand, were anxious to follow up the advantage by an assault in their fronts; but Parke considered that his accidental and temporary command of the entire army would not warrant him in forcing a general engagement. Meade, who soon after came upon the field, forbade a general attack, but later in the day pushed forward the Second and Sixth Corps to feel the enemy in their respective fronts. After a fierce struggle the strong Confederate picket-lines were carried, and held in spite of desperate attempts to retake them. This cost the Federals 1100 men, of whom 200 were missing. The Confederates lost 800 prisoners, and probably as many in killed and wounded. The entire Confederate loss on this day was not far from 4500, that of the Federals 2000.<sup>1</sup>

There was nothing in the result of the affair on the 25th of March to induce Grant to change his order issued the day before, to be carried into effect four days later. The essential thing contemplated in this plan was that Sheridan, with all the cavalry of all the armies upon and near the James and the Appomattox, should, by a wide detour, pass clear beyond the utmost westward extension of Lee's lines, and cut the railroads by which the Confederate army was fed, nearly half way to the point where Johnston was presumably awaiting the approach of the Army of Northern Virginia. This movement was rendered feasible only by what we have already styled the "accident" whereby Sheridan was in Virginia, instead of far away in North Carolina, ready to operate with Grant instead of with Sherman. Subsidiary to this cavalry movement, the infantry was to make a determined effort to turn the enemy out of his position around Petersburg. To effect this, every available man of the two armies of the Potomac and the James was to be brought against the Confederate right before Petersburg, and to its south and southwest.

Ord, leaving Weitzel in command north of the Potomac, was to bring half of his two corps over, and, sweeping around in the rear of the lines before Petersburg, pass toward the left of the position. Parke was to hold the position which his corps had so long maintained; Wright, next to him, was to be ready to hold his lines or to move; Humphreys, and the movable part of Ord's corps, and that of Warren, were to form the great turning column whose movements, it was hoped, would force the abandonment of Petersburg; the general purpose of all being "not to attack the enemy in his intrenched position, but to turn him out of it if possible." But, at the same time, all corps and division commanders were to hold themselves ready for offense should the enemy weaken himself in their front. Above all things, no commander of a corps or division, in case of attack, was to wait for special orders from headquarters. The strength of the enemy was pretty well ascertained. Should he appear in great force at any one point, it could only be by weakening himself elsewhere. Advantage should be promptly taken of every weakening, and every advantage any where gained should be promptly followed up. For the rest, the men of the moving column were to take four days' rations in their haversacks, twice as much following in wagons. The artillery was to be kept within the smallest compass, six or eight guns to a division being the utmost to be taken; for in the woody and swampy region where operations were to be carried on, artillery would be an incumbrance rather than aid. Such was the substance of the general order of the 24th.

The order to Sheridan, given on the 28th, just as he was setting out, was to the same purport, but with some special additions: First and foremost, he was to aim at the railroads; "but if the enemy should come out of his own lines and attack, or put himself in a position where he can be attacked, move in your own way; the army will engage or follow, as circumstances will dictate. Having accomplished the destruction of the two railroads," so concluded the order, "which are now the only avenues of supply to Lee's army, you may return to this army, selecting your road farther south, or may go on into North Carolina, and join General Sherman." No wider discretion was ever given to a general than this of Grant to Sheridan. Next day, indeed, March 29, when matters had apparently taken shape, this order was modified: "I feel like ending this matter, if it is possible to do so, before going back," wrote Grant. "I do not want you, therefore, to cut loose and go after the enemy's roads at present. In the morning, push around the enemy's rear, if you can, and get on to his right rear. We will act all together as one army here until it is seen what can be done with the enemy." How nearly this last plan failed of the success which it finally attained is now to be shown.

<sup>1</sup> Pollard (*Lost Cause*, 686) says: "Had this opportunity" (that is, the capture of the fort and batteries) "been taken advantage of, there is no telling the result; but the troops could not be induced to leave the breastworks they had taken from the enemy, and to advance beyond them and seize the crest in rear of the line they had occupied." But nothing can be clearer than that the force which had effected the capture was inadequate for any thing more. Swinton (*Army of the Potomac*, 597) says: "It is well known that there was great dereliction on the part of the supporting columns, for Gordon's attack was left almost wholly unsupported, notwithstanding that Lee had massed in the vicinity all his available force." He, however, fails to give his authority for this representation, and does not state upon whom rests the blame of this dereliction. The one thing certain is, that this supporting force was not pushed forward. We can hardly suppose that a movement upon which so much was staked should have been made except under the direct supervision of Lee. In the light of the account given in the text, which shows how rapidly the Union troops recovered from their momentary surprise, we think that the failure to follow up the attack was wise. Twenty thousand men could not then have carried the lines. It was better to submit to the inevitable loss of a fifth than to risk the almost certain destruction of the whole of the force assigned to the adventure.

<sup>2</sup> "At half past seven o'clock the position of affairs was thus: Batteries 11 and 12 had been recaptured; a cordon of troops, consisting of Hartranft's division, with regiments belonging to McLaughlin's and Ely's brigades, was formed around Fort Steadman and battery 10, into which the enemy was forced. There he was exposed to a concentrated fire from all the artillery in position bearing on these points, and the reserve batteries in the rear."—*Parke's Report*.

<sup>1</sup> The entire Federal loss is officially given. It was, at Fort Steadman, 68 killed, 337 wounded, 506 missing—in all, 911; at the picket-lines, 52 killed, 864 wounded, 207 missing—in all, 1123; a total of 2034. The number of Confederate prisoners taken is also given: these were, at Fort Steadman, 1900; at the picket-lines, 834—in all, 2734. Their loss in killed and wounded is purely conjectural. From the facts that at Fort Steadman they were for two or three hours under heavy fire, and that at the picket-lines they were repulsed after desperate charges, it is safe to assume that it was in both cases considerably greater than that of their opponents. Grant, in his final Report, says: "Their loss in killed and wounded was far greater than ours." In his first dispatch, he says: "Humphreys estimates the loss of the enemy in his front at three times his own, and Wright, in his front, as double that of ours." This would indicate the entire Confederate loss to have been greater than we have estimated it. But those who have had occasion to compare these guesses, on either side, with actual facts as subsequently verified, will place little reliance upon them. In the absence of authenticated reports, they will rather rely upon estimates based upon the nature of the operations. Thus, in the case under consideration, the Union loss in killed and wounded having been shown to have been 1300, and that of the Confederates considerably greater, though far from two or three times as large, by placing it at about 1700 we reach approximately at the result given in the text.





EWELL'S HEADQUARTERS, NEAR RICHMOND.

Sheridan had a month before set out from Winchester with 10,000 horsemen. Of these, 1500 had been sent back to guard the prisoners taken from Early at Waynesborough. In his great ride up the Valley, and thence through thirteen counties, he had lost by casualty hardly a hundred men. But his animals had suffered severely, and when he joined Grant, his two divisions, under Devin and Custer, numbered 5700 men in saddle;<sup>1</sup> but Crook, with 3800, was ready to join him, and he thus set out with 9000. In a day or two, McKenzie, with 1000 horsemen from the Army of the James, was added to his mounted command, making 10,000 in all. The Confederate cavalry under Fitzhugh Lee could hardly have reached a third of this number. With this magnificent force Sheridan swept southward and then westward, until, after encountering a few mounted pickets, who were easily brushed away, he reached Dinwiddie Court-house. Here several roads centred, along some of which his proposed raid would be conducted. Here, on the evening of the 29th, he received the order from Grant countermanding the plan of a raid, and directing him to co-operate with the infantry in the effort to turn the right flank of Lee's army.

Warren's corps—the Fifth—consisting of the three divisions of Crawford, Griffin, and Ayres, 15,300 strong in all, with twenty guns, marched out at three o'clock on the morning of the 29th.<sup>2</sup> They moved southwestward until they struck the Quaker Road running straight north to the Confederate lines. Turning up this, Griffin, whose division was in the advance, encountered a force of the enemy pushed in front of their lines, and after a sharp conflict, in which some four hundred were killed and wounded on each side, forced them back within the shelter of their intrenchments. Humphreys, also moving to the right of Warren, got close up to the Confederate fortified line without meeting opposition. It seemed now that the enemy was shut up in his lines to their utmost westward reach; and now, if this could be turned by Sheridan, it was as sure as any thing can be in warfare that the matter might be ended. To secure this, Grant was prepared, if need were, to give up every thing south of the position still held by Parke, flinging upon Lee's right his cavalry, with the entire corps of Warren, Humphreys, and Wright, with the three divisions detached from Ord. It was then that the order was sent to Sheridan to abstain from his projected raid upon the railroads.

Lee had in the mean time learned something of the mighty effort to be put forth against him. He still misconceived its ultimate purport. He thought it only a more determined repetition of the old efforts to reach the railroads, for the great sweep of Sheridan's cavalry was still unknown to him. Yet this must be thwarted at all hazards, and those roads protected for a few days, or all was lost; for, these roads seized, he had no means of feeding his army for a week, and no means of escaping from his position. So, stripping his intrenchments in front of Petersburg until to guard ten miles of works there were hardly as many thousand men, he gathered a mobile force, which, added to the cavalry on his right, numbered in all some

15,000 or 20,000, to meet the endeavor of Grant.<sup>1</sup> This column was only sent out after nightfall, and there was a fearful probability that it would not reach the scene of operations, fifteen miles away, until it was too late. But a fortune which neither general could anticipate intervened in favor of Lee. During the night a furious rain set in, which lasted all through the next day, the 30th. The region through which Warren was working his way was a low land covered mainly with tangled woods, threaded every where with swampy brooks, which a sharp shower would render difficult of passage. The soil of mingled sand and clay, upheaved by the winter frosts, was still soft, and the rain quickly converted the ill-made roads into mortar-beds. Any thing on wheels could hardly move a rod unless the road was laboriously corduroyed. Footmen and cavalry could indeed advance slowly; so, during the 30th, Warren and Sheridan worked their way a little onward, the former toward the White-oak Road, the latter toward the Five Forks. Lee's column had much farther to go, but they had the advantage of a less intolerable road, and thus, on the morning of the 31st, had passed beyond the extremity of the intrenched line, and occupied the White-oak Road toward the Five Forks.

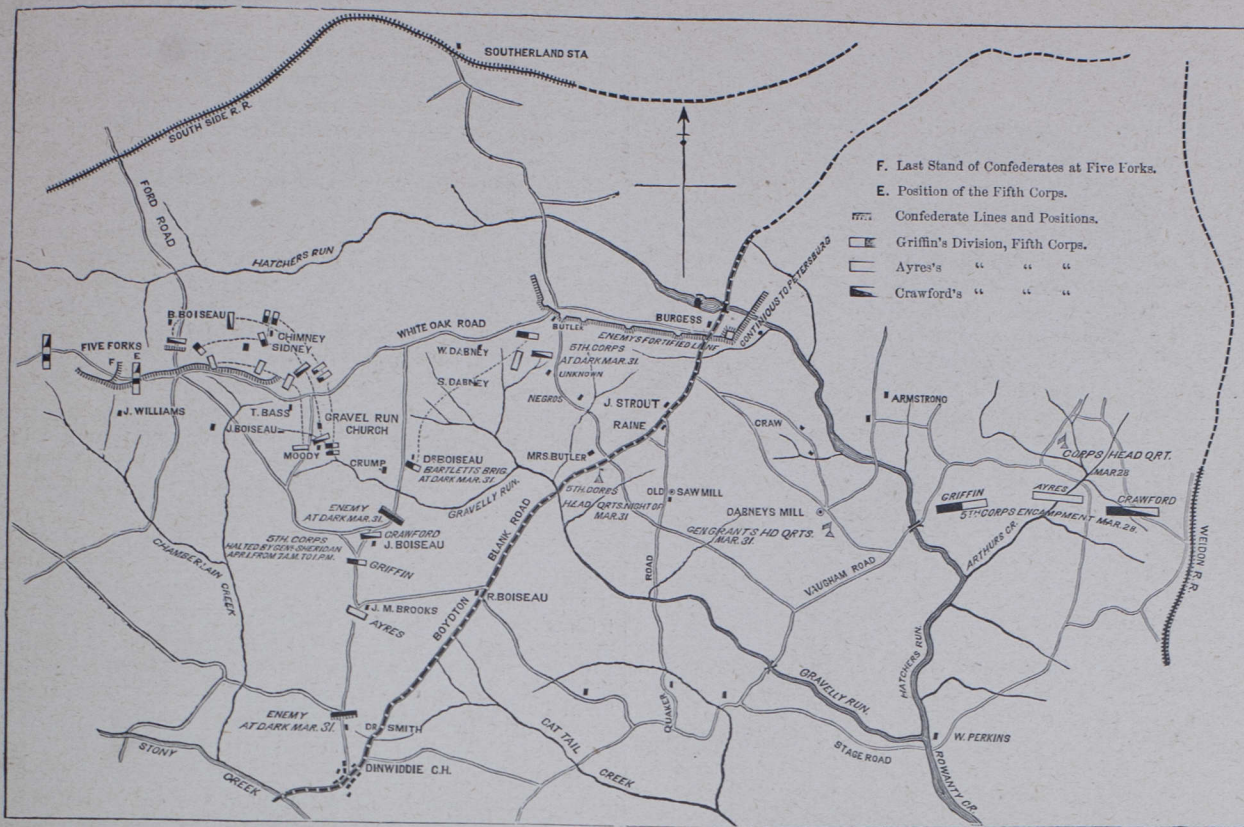
On the morning of Friday, March 31, Warren's corps had worked itself up in sight of the White-oak Road, clear beyond the line of the enemy's intrenchments. On account of the woods and swamps, they could not form a regular line of battle, but each division was so massed that it could fight in any direction. Humphreys's corps had connected with Warren on the right. Just before nine o'clock Warren received an order from Meade, informing him that there was firing along Humphreys's front, and directing him to be ready to support Humphreys, if necessary, adding that there would be no movement of troops that day. Warren replied that he thought it best, if possible, to drive the enemy from the road, and in two hours received permission to make the attempt. Winthrop's brigade of Ayres's division was sent to make the attempt. The Confederates, at the same time, had planned a counter-move to drive Warren off. They rushed forward from both north and west. Ayres's division was forced back in confusion upon Crawford's, which lay next behind. This also gave way, and both fell back upon Griffin, who was posted in an opening in the woods large enough to give room for all. The two divisions which had fallen back, bewildered by the fierce assault in front and flank, amidst the unknown forests and swamps, rallied with that of Griffin, and held their ground. Humphreys, in the mean while, had sent Miles's division against the enemy's left flank. Warren, at two o'clock, finding that the enemy had ceased from his onset, advanced upon him with all his force. To his surprise, he met with little resistance; only one of his brigades was seriously engaged, and this swept up nearly a whole Confederate regiment, with its flags. At half

<sup>1</sup> The numbers of this body are given conjecturally from the indicia afforded by its known losses. Swinton (*Army of the Potomac*, 585; *Decisive Battles*, 485) gives the number at 15,000, apparently exclusive of the cavalry, which could not then have been more than 3000. In this statement he apparently follows Pollard (*Lost Cause*, 689), whose words are: "In the night of the 29th, General Lee, having perceived Grant's manoeuvre, dispatched Pickett's and Bushrod Johnson's divisions, Wise's and Ransom's brigades, Huger's battalion of infantry, and Fitzhugh Lee's division—in all about 17,000 men—to encounter the turning column of the enemy." But Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry division were already upon the right, falling back before Sheridan. Taking into account the ascertained losses in this force, we think that Pollard's statement is a very close approximation to the actual number.

<sup>2</sup> These two divisions formed Merritt's command; Sheridan directing all the cavalry, together with such infantry as were at times added to it for special operations.

<sup>3</sup> For the movements of March 29, 30, 31, and April 1, culminating in the battle of the Five Forks, one needs to compare Sheridan's Report with Warren's Account of Operations. For the operations of the Fifth Corps we rely upon Warren; for those of the cavalry, upon Sheridan. Grant's report of this critical period is very meagre. Confederate reports are wholly wanting.





FIVE FORKS—MOVEMENTS OF THE FIFTH CORPS, MARCH 28-APRIL 1.

past three he wrote from the White-oak Road to Meade's chief of staff: "We have driven the enemy, I think, into his breastworks. The prisoners report General Lee here to-day, and also that their breastworks are filled with troops. We have prisoners from a portion of Pickett's and Johnson's divisions." He had, to appearance, won a decided victory on the White-oak Ridge, though at heavy cost, for his losses in killed and wounded numbered 1400.

Lee had, indeed, recoiled from the attack. Possibly he would in any case have given it up after having forced Warren back a space from his threatening position, for he was in no condition to run great risks, unless urged by imperative necessity. But the immediate occasion was that he was called upon to meet a still more imminent peril. To understand this, we must look to Sheridan's movements.

On the 30th, Sheridan, in spite of the rain, had pushed a part of his command toward the Five Forks, forcing the Confederate cavalry westward, and right away from the army of Lee. In the forenoon of the 31st a division of the cavalry reached the Forks. This point must be regained by Lee at all hazards, so the force which had been engaged with Warren was withdrawn and sent down the White-oak Road, and, falling upon the Union cavalry, drove them from the Forks. Then, uniting with the cavalry of Fitzhugh Lee, the whole force pressed upon Sheridan's cavalry, who were much scattered, and, in spite of strong resistance, forced them back upon Dinwiddie Court-house. The two divisions of Devin and Davies were cut off from a direct retreat, and compelled to make a wide detour to gain the main body at Dinwiddie, reaching it only after the fight which there ensued was over. But Sheridan's horsemen, dismounting, took post behind a slight breastwork of rails, where they recovered and repulsed the assault of the enemy, who at dark withdrew a little, and lay upon their arms within a hundred yards. During the evening, Sheridan was informed by a dispatch from Grant that Warren's corps were ordered to report to him, and would reach him by midnight. This dispatch was written hours before—Grant's headquarters being ten miles away—and in ignorance of what had transpired. Warren also, some time before, had begun to receive orders from Meade. At five o'clock he was told that Sheridan was pushing up the White-oak Road, and he might send down a small force to communicate with him, but must be careful not to fire into his advance. An hour and a half later, the tidings to Warren were that a portion of Pickett's force had penetrated between him and Sheridan. Warren had learned this before. An hour and a half more, and tidings came that Sheridan had been forced back to Dinwiddie by a strong force of cavalry, supported by infantry. Close upon the heels of this came an intimation from Meade that "the probability is that we shall have to contract our lines to-night." To contract the lines was equivalent to a retreat. All the indications at the moment were that this movement would be a repetition of those which had gone before. Warren urged that, instead of retreating, he might be allowed to move down to Dinwiddie, and attack the enemy on one side, while Sheridan assailed him on the other. Orders for movements were given, few of which, owing to the darkness, were capable of exact literal execution, but the general purport of all was that Warren should advance to the aid of Sheridan.<sup>1</sup> He obeyed the intent of his orders, and moved as rapidly as possible.

<sup>1</sup> The last order from Meade to Warren, written a quarter of an hour before midnight, and received an hour after, contained these sentences: "Sheridan can not maintain himself at Dinwiddie without re-enforcements, and yours are the only ones that can be sent. Time is of the utmost importance. Use every exertion to get troops to him as soon as possible. If Sheridan is not re-enforced, and is compelled to fall back, he will retire by the Vaughan Road."

But, in the mean time, the Confederates had their own difficulties to encounter. They had found it impossible to shake Sheridan away from Dinwiddie; and, knowing that re-enforcements were coming to him, they began a little after midnight to retire cautiously toward the Five Forks. Sheridan suspected that this movement was going on, and so notified Meade by verbal message; but he could not be sure, for at three o'clock he sent an order to Warren stating that he was holding on at Dinwiddie with Custer's division, where he might be attacked at daybreak. In that case, Warren, who was thought to be nearer than he was, should also attack in flank and rear. "Do not fear," added Sheridan, "my leaving here. If the enemy remain I shall fight at daylight." But just after daylight, when Ayres's division, the advance of Warren's corps, came in sight, the enemy "hastily decamped,"<sup>2</sup> and hurried back toward their intrenchments at the Five Forks. Merritt followed hard after with the cavalry, until he saw the enemy fairly within their works, and had even driven them from two lines of temporary works.

The whole of Warren's corps were united at seven o'clock on the morning of April 1 at a point three miles from the Forks, and somewhat to the right of the extremity of the Confederate works, which had in the mean while been much strengthened. Here they were halted for four hours by Sheridan until he could complete his arrangements for attack, for he proposed nothing less than to dispose absolutely of this body, crushing it if possible, and driving westward any who might escape, isolating them from the main army at Petersburg. There was a likelihood that Lee, comprehending the peril, might venture to send re-enforcements down the White-oak Road to the Forks. Fortunately, Sheridan had just been joined by McKenzie's fresh cavalry, a thousand strong. These were sent straight to the White-oak Road, with orders to attack any force of the enemy which they might find. The prevision was justified. McKenzie met a force coming down, and drove it back.

The day was wearing away when Sheridan had completed his preliminary dispositions. His plan was beautiful in its simplicity. Merritt was to hold the enemy in front with a part of the cavalry, while with the remainder he should demonstrate as if proposing to turn their right flank. Warren was to move the infantry up to the White-oak Road, and then, by a sharp wheel to the right, strike the enemy's left, and, doubling it up, gain their rear. This plan presupposed a great superiority of force, but that was at hand. Sheridan had of cavalry and infantry quite 20,000; the Confederates could hardly number more than 10,000 infantry, with only a few guns; and they do not appear to have brought their cavalry behind their intrenchments, where they could be of little service.

Having, as was his wont, made his plans with careful deliberation, Sheridan was eager for their prompt execution. He chafed at every thing which looked like delay. Warren, quite as earnest, strove to repress all outward manifestations of impatience, which he thought would tend to impair the confidence of his troops. "When every thing possible is being done," he argued, "it is important to have the men think it is all that success demands." So Sheridan rode off firmly impressed with the idea that Warren was not exerting himself to get his corps up as rapidly as he should have done, and that "he wished the sun to go down before the dispositions for the attack could be completed."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ayres's Report.

<sup>2</sup> Sheridan's Report.—Sheridan had also been previously dissatisfied with Warren. He had, very naturally, asked that Wright's corps, which had been with him in the Valley of the Shenandoah, should be sent to him instead of that of Warren. This, owing to its position, could not be





ROMEYN B. AYRES.

But the sun was still more than two hours high when Warren advanced from the point where his corps had been formed, a thousand yards from the White-oak Road. In the operations of the three days about 2000 of his corps had been disabled, and 1000 more had fallen out from weariness, or been sent on detached duty, so that the corps went into action 12,000 strong. Ayres's division, the weakest, was on the left; next came Crawford's, with Griffin's as a support, in its rear, and a little to the right. It was supposed that upon reaching the road they would strike just upon the enemy's left; then, pivoting upon Ayres's division, the others were to wheel round, so that Crawford's would just fall upon the flank. But, on reaching the road, it was found that they were some distance from the hostile line, which was also hidden in a thick wood beyond an open space. This mistake, slight in itself, changed the whole order of the battle. The division of Ayres, forming that part of the radius nearest to the centre of the semi-circle to be described in the turning movement, and thus having the shortest distance to be traversed, effected its change of front earliest, and moved across the open space toward the enemy's position. The order given to each division was to keep closed upon that to its left; and as the region where they were to move was wholly unknown, the direction to march was to be maintained by keeping the sun over their left shoulders. But now, Crawford having the larger distance to sweep, his left became disjoined from Ayres's right, which was thus thrown out into the air, in the open space over which both were advancing. At this moment, also, a sharp fire was poured from the woods upon these exposed flanks—Ayres's right and Crawford's left. The effect was that the right of Ayres became disordered, many of the men rushing back to the rear, while Crawford's left obliqued to the right, where the woods and a slight ridge gave shelter. Thus the interval between the two became still wider. The firing, however, was more noisy than destructive, owing to the dense wood through which the shot had to pass. Ayres soon rectified his line; the portions which had become unsteady "moved up and bore their part of the action in a handsome manner."<sup>1</sup> Pressing forward, he soon came upon the enemy's position. The Confederate line ran from west to east, but its extremity was turned at a right angle northward for a hundred yards. This crochet, fronting to the east, was that part of the line facing Ayres. It was a strong breastwork secured behind a dense undergrowth of pines. Through this undergrowth and over the breastwork Ayres's corps charged with the bayonet, and captured a thousand prisoners—more than a third of its own number.<sup>2</sup> Here it was halted by Sheridan, who was now on this part of the field, awaiting the result of what was transpiring elsewhere. It was soon "apparent that the enemy were giving way generally," and Ayres pushed forward rapidly, holding his men in hand, and marching steadily in line of battle.<sup>3</sup>

Crawford, having completed his wider circuit, moved steadily westward, urged on by both Sheridan and Warren. His way lay through bogs, tangled woods, and thickets of pines, interspersed here and there with open spaces. The Confederate skirmishers spread northward from the extremity

granted. He also believed that Warren had not joined him as promptly as he should have done; and had even received, "unsolicited," as he says, authority to remove him. But it is hardly possible that such permission would have been expressly given unless Grant, to whom Sheridan directly reported, was somehow assured that it was desired.

<sup>1</sup> Ayres's Report. <sup>2</sup> Ayres's division marched out on the 29th not quite 4000 strong. In the interval it had lost about 1000.—Warren's Narrative, <sup>3</sup> Ayres's Report.

of their intrenched line. These were steadily driven back; and so Crawford moved straight along parallel to the enemy's main line until he reached the Ford Road, running north from the Five Forks, and directly in the rear of what had been its centre. It was no longer its centre. Griffin, whose circle of movement was a little exterior to that of Crawford, moved on a little behind. Pressing westward for a mile, and finding nothing on his front except a few cavalry vedettes, he halted to reconnoitre. Heavy firing to his left and rear showed that the enemy were in that direction, and thither he directed his march. Warren had sent a messenger with orders to that effect. Moving at double-quick, he struck the rear of the enemy's left, capturing the breastworks, and securing 1500 prisoners.

The whole Confederate left almost to its centre was now driven in. Half or more of it were prisoners. The rest streamed down the White-oak Road. But Crawford had reached the Ford Road, and barred the only avenue of escape to the north. Down this pressed Crawford, with whom Warren had now taken his position. Sheridan had before directed McKenzie with his cavalry to sweep clear to the right of the infantry and gain the Ford Road. He took too wide a circuit through an unknown region, and found himself moving away from the battle; and, turning back, reached the road, not till after Crawford had won it, but in time to take part in the closing scenes of the fight and the pursuit.

Meanwhile the cavalry had borne their share in the action. Two divisions of Crook's command had been left behind at Dinwiddie to guard the trains and crossings of the streams; the other, that of Gregg, was on the left and rear, skirmishing with the Confederate cavalry. Merritt, with the divisions of Devin and Custer, charged the enemy's lines in front, the signal being the firing of Warren's infantry. They carried the lines at several points, not without enduring heavy loss. While Griffin and Ayres pressed upon the routed left flank, Crawford came down upon their rear. One brief but determined effort was made to stop him. A stiff line, supported by artillery, was formed across the road, from which Coulter's brigade suffered severely. But the effort was vain. Entrapped, assailed in front, flank, and rear, almost the whole of the force surrendered to Crawford.

Warren now rode on to the coveted Five Forks, thence westward along the White-oak Road. A mile beyond the Forks the remnant of the Confederates made one more attempt to stand. Their line was formed at a right angle, one branch facing southward toward Merritt's cavalry, the other eastward to confront Warren, whose three divisions had come up in pursuit. These were somewhat disordered by their long march and fighting through the woods. They halted, but kept up a rapid fire. Warren, with a few of his staff, dashed to the front, shouting to those at hand to follow. He was met with a single sharp fusillade; his horse was shot under him, an aid at his side was killed, and Colonel Richardson, who had sprung right between him and the enemy, fell sorely wounded. But Warren's appeal had not been in vain. All along the line officers and color-bearers sprang to the front; and the troops, advancing at a run, and without firing, captured every man in their front. Those who had been trying to make a stand against Merritt broke and fled in wild confusion by the only way open to them—that leading westward. Merritt and McKenzie dashed forward in pursuit, which was kept up for six miles, and until long after darkness had set in. The two divisions upon which Lee had counted for the salvation of his army were gone. Johnson's was utterly annihilated; of Pickett's we find, five days later, note of a remnant of a few hundred men. Whether they had been in the fight and escaped, or whether they had been kept back, is not recorded. The Union loss in the battle of the Five Forks was about 1000, of which 634 were of Warren's corps. Of the Confederate killed and wounded there is no statement. They lost in prisoners between 5000 and 6000, of whom 3244 were captured by Warren.

The blow to Lee was a crushing one. It is said that upon the receipt of the tidings of his loss, he for the only time gave utterance to any reproach in the field. The next time his troops were taken into the field he would put himself at their head; and, turning to one of his generals, he ordered him sharply to gather up and put under guard all the stragglers in the field—officers as well as men. It may be granted that the Confederates fought at Five Forks with less than their wonted vigor; but they must have felt that, after Sheridan had fairly shut them up within their lines, victory was impossible; and, moreover, could they have made their escape, now that their lines were fairly turned, it would be but to prolong for a few days a hopeless struggle.

When Warren had captured the last of the enemy opposed to him, he sent to Sheridan a report of the result, and asked for farther instructions. The reply was that his instructions had been sent. They reached him at seven o'clock. Surely no general who had just gained a victory so brilliant and decisive ever before received upon the field which he had won such a message. The order ran thus: "Major General Warren, commanding Fifth Corps, is relieved from duty, and will report at once for orders to Lieutenant General Grant, commanding armies U. S." The command of the corps was conferred upon Griffin.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That the general credit of the victory of the Five Forks must be given to Sheridan is undoubted. The plans were his, and they were, as he affirms, "successfully executed." But the essential feature of these plans, without which all else would have been comparatively fruitless, was the operations of the Fifth Corps. These operations were conducted by Warren. After the movement was begun, there is record of but a single order given by Sheridan to any portion of this corps. The main allegation brought by Sheridan against Warren is that "General Warren did not exert himself to get up his corps as rapidly as he might have done, and his manner gave me the impression that he wished the sun to go down before dispositions for the attack could be completed." But the dispositions were made and the attack commenced while the sun was yet more than two hours high, and in time to win the victory before it had set. Moreover, each of Warren's division commanders—and no one more explicitly than Griffin, who succeeded him—aver that their divisions were formed without any unnecessary delay. Sheridan, indeed, makes two other specifications against Warren: (1.) "Had General Warren moved according to the expectations of the Lieutenant General, there would appear to have been but little chance for the escape of the enemy's





CHARLES GRIFFIN.

While the result of the movements of Sheridan and Warren were uncertain, active operations directly before Petersburg were suspended to await the issue upon the extreme Union left. When, at nightfall, Sheridan had utterly routed the force directly opposed to him, his position was not free from peril. His command, now numbering about 18,000 cavalry and infantry, was widely separated from the main army, and there was reason to apprehend that Lee would, during the night, abandon his lines, and, falling upon Sheridan, drive him off, and thus open the way for retreat. To guard against this, Miles's division of Humphreys's corps was sent to the support of Sheridan, while a furious bombardment was opened along the whole line, sweeping from the north of Petersburg clear around to Hatcher's Run. The Union batteries had gradually crept closer to the city, and for the first time during the siege the balls fairly crashed through the streets of Petersburg. This fierce fire was kept up until almost daybreak, when the general assault was ordered. Parke and Wright had before expressed their belief that they could carry the lines in their front.

The assault commenced just before daybreak on the morning of Sunday, April 2. Parke's Ninth Corps was in front of the strongest portion of the Confederate defenses. The general plan for this corps was that Wilcox's division should make a feint in front of Fort Steadman, while the divisions of Potter and Hartranft were to make the assault to the left, at the very points which it had been hoped would have been opened by the explosion of the mine eight months before. Each column was accompanied by pioneers with axes, and details of artillerymen to work any guns that might be captured. Wilcox's feint was successful. His division carried the whole outer line in its front, causing the Confederates to concentrate a heavy force to stay their farther advance. Then, at half past four, the signal was given for the opening of the main assault. The troops, eager to avenge their former repulse, sprang forward with a rush, and in the teeth of a deadly storm of grape, canister, and musketry, plunged through the ditch, tore away the

infantry in front of Dinwiddie Court-house' on the morning of the 1st of April. Whether or not Warren could, either with or without the expectation of Grant, have made movements which would have had this result, it is certain that Sheridan, on the evening of that day, could have had no adequate means of knowing. (2.) "During this attack I again became dissatisfied with General Warren. In this engagement, portions of his line gave way when not exposed to a heavy fire, and simply from want of confidence on the part of the troops, which General Warren did not exert himself to inspire. I therefore relieved him from the command of the Fifth Corps, authority for this action having been sent to me before the battle unsolicited."—Leaving out of view Sheridan's emphatic testimony to the gallantry of the troops in this engagement, there is no mention of any part of Warren's line giving way under any fire, light or heavy, saving the very brief one of a part of Ayres's division, and this was soon rectified; and these very men, in a few minutes, bore a part in a handsome manner in the first brilliant charge which took place." In any case, Warren could not personally inspire them with confidence, for he was in a different part of the field; and he, as commander of the corps, had a right to judge on what portion of the field his presence was most required, subject, of course, to the ultimate decision of his superiors, upon due consideration, as to the military soundness of his judgment. In any case, Sheridan, being on a still different part of the field, could have had no personal knowledge on this point; and, in the interval of less than two hours between any possible giving way and the order of superseding, could not have had opportunity to ascertain the facts in the case with sufficient certainty to warrant such a summary procedure. The misconduct, if any had existed, could no longer produce any evil effect, for the victory had been fully won when the superseding took place. The order was certainly over-hasty, and we think no one who examines the question will hesitate to say unjust. There is, indeed, no reason to suppose that Sheridan was moved by any unworthy personal feeling, for the two generals had never happened to serve together. Sheridan was likely somewhat annoyed that Warren's corps, instead of Wright's, was sent to him; for on the day before, in writing his plans to Grant, he said: "I believe I could, with the Sixth Corps, turn the enemy's left or break through his lines, but I would not like the Fifth Corps to make such an attempt." But the Fifth Corps, under his own dispositions, did make the attempt, and with a success which did not fall short of his most sanguine anticipations of what the Sixth would have accomplished. Warren, on reporting to Grant, was at once assigned to the command of the defenses at City Point and Bermuda Hundred. Just a month after his superseding from the command of the Fifth Corps he was assigned to the command of the Department of the Mississippi, the only one in which there was then any prospect of farther hostilities.

abatis, mounted the parapet, and carried the line of works. Here Hartranft's division captured 12 guns and 800 prisoners. Potter's division, next on the left, attacked with equal vigor, and, in spite of the most gallant opposition, pressed the enemy clear back to his interior cordon of works. This inner line had within the last few months been most elaborately fortified. From it the position gained by Parke was swept on the right and the left by an enfilading fire of artillery. Potter made a determined but unsuccessful effort to force this inner cordon. He fell severely wounded, and the command of his division fell upon Griffin.<sup>1</sup> But the assault in other quarters had met with such success that there was no need for the Ninth Corps to essay to carry the lines opposed to them. Parke was directed not to advance unless he saw the way clear to success, but to strengthen his position so as to hold it against any assailing force.

The Sixth Corps, under Wright, was next on the left to that of the Ninth. As it lay, it occupied a salient where the Union lines, after trending away from the Confederate works, again closely approached them. Here, during the darkness, this corps had been formed into a mighty wedge, which was, in the result, to be driven straight through the Confederate lines which had for so long bidden defiance to all assault. At half past four a single gun gave signal for the advance of the Sixth. It happened that the very point where the edge of the wedge was to strike had been left weakly held by the withdrawal of the force which had held it to defend a point which seemed of more pressing importance. The Confederate pickets and skirmishers were swept away in a moment, the three lines of abatis overpassed, the works crowned, the long lines which had guarded Petersburg and its railway communications pierced. The Confederate army, a quarter of which had twelve hours before been annihilated by Sheridan and Warren, was again cut in two, a quarter of what remained being to all appearance wholly severed from the main body. Wright swept leftward for a space down the line of the Confederate intrenchments, repeating Warren's movement at Five Forks, and capturing some thousands of prisoners; and then, being joined by portions of Ord's command and Humphreys's corps, who had carried every thing in their own fronts, turned to the right, and moved straight toward Petersburg, leaving that portion of the Confederate force which had been severed from the main army to be disposed of by Sheridan, whose command had in the mean while been augmented by Miles's division of Humphreys's corps.

Miles was ordered by Sheridan to move up the White-oak Road and attack the extreme right of the enemy. This, in the mean time, had been cut off from Petersburg by Wright and by Humphreys, who, with the divisions of Hays and Mott, carried a redoubt in their front, and then swept round and took up their position upon the left of Wright. The Confederates here made no opposition, and their isolated right fled northward, crossing Hatcher's Run, and took up a position at Southerland's Station, on the Southside Railroad. Miles was anxious to attack, and Sheridan gave him permission to do so; but at this moment Meade directed that Miles should be returned to the command of Humphreys, and the attack, to Sheridan's regret, was not made. Sheridan, who had been moving in the same direction with the Fifth Corps, now retraced his steps, and moved back to the Five Forks. Thence they struck the railroad, and, after destroying it for

<sup>1</sup> General S. G. Griffin, who commanded the division during the few remaining days of the campaign with such ability that he received therefor the brevet rank of major general. He is to be distinguished from General Charles Griffin, who was now in command of the Fifth Corps.



NELSON A. MILES.



a space, moved up it toward Southerland's Station, upon the flank of the Confederates who still held position there. His cavalry meanwhile had been sent westward to break up the Confederate cavalry, who had gathered in some force, but not sufficient to offer any resistance. These operations consumed the whole day. Toward evening Miles attacked the enemy at Southerland's, and, after a brief conflict, routed them, capturing 600 prisoners, and driving them in confusion to the Appomattox. It was supposed that the river was impassable, and that this body, shut in by Sheridan on the one side and Humphreys on the left, must surrender. But there happened to be a ford, over which they escaped, leaving their guns behind, and next day joined Lee in his retreat.

Two or three hundred yards behind the lines which Wright had carried a series of strong forts had been erected to guard against just such results as had ensued. In the movement which had followed, Gibbon's division of Ord's command came right upon the two strongest of these, Forts Alexander and Gregg, which were all that stood in the way of the Federal forces marching straight upon Petersburg by the rear. Gibbon dashed upon these. Fort Alexander was carried with a rush. Within Fort Gregg had been gathered a mixed garrison from the very extremities of the Confederacy. There were Virginians and Louisianians, North Carolinians and Mississippians. Its commander was Captain Chew, of Maryland. Gibbon marched straight for this fort, but was met by a fire so fierce and deadly that the troops recoiled for a moment. Then the charge was renewed; the assailants, unchecked by the fusillade which met them, swarmed up the parapet. Once, twice, and thrice they were pressed back; but at length the crest was gained, and a brief hand-to-hand conflict ensued. The fort was carried. Of its two hundred and fifty defenders, only thirty survived; of the assailants, five hundred lay dead or wounded.

It was now barely seven o'clock, hardly three hours from the time when the grand assault had been commenced; but within that time the whole outer line of defenses had been carried, and what remained of the Confederate army was shut up within the interior lines. Lee, with Hill and Mahone, was within the city, listening to the noise of battle which sounded from every side, and endeavoring from it to judge how the fight was going, and to decide upon what remained to be done. The reports grew momentarily nearer and nearer. "How is this, general?" exclaimed Lee to Hill; "your men are giving way!" Hill, buttoning around him a rough citizen's coat, upon the shoulders of which were only the stars of a colonel, and accompanied by a single orderly, rode out to reconnoitre. In a wooded ravine he came upon half a dozen soldiers in the blue Federal uniform. They had penetrated in advance of their comrades. He ordered them to surrender. For an instant they were confounded by the very audacity of the demand. The next instant their answer was given from their rifles, and Hill fell dead from his horse. Of all the great generals in the Confederate army, no other one had borne part in so many of the great battles in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, from Bull Run onward. No one division of the Army of Northern Virginia had been engaged in so many fights as his. After the seven days on the Peninsula, it had formed part of Jackson's command while that daring general lived. It bore the brunt of the fight at Groveton, saved the lost day at Antietam, won the action at Chancellorsville, was foremost in the Wilderness, and to it, during this last campaign, was confided the most important task, that of holding the Confederate lines on the right, the vital point in Lee's system of defense.

Sheridan's victory at the Five Forks and Wright's piercing of the Confederate lines had in a few hours solved the long-questioned problem of the siege of Petersburg. The place was no longer tenable, for its avenues of supply were lost beyond all hope of recovery. Lee resolved upon a speedy abandonment of the lines which he had held so long. The bells were ringing for church on that Sunday morning when a dispatch was sent to President Davis, at Richmond, giving notice of what had happened, and informing him that the two besieged cities would be abandoned by the army, and advising that the authorities should make preparations to leave the capital that night.

Lee, indeed, was shut up to the alternative to surrender or to make his escape, and try the almost desperate chance of a race for life or death with a victorious army of thrice his force close upon his rear and flank. He chose the latter course, and in the execution of it manifested energy and skill not exceeded in any other portion of his career. After all the losses of the two days, he had still an army of more than 40,000 men; but they were widely scattered. Some 5000, cut off from the rest, were at Southerland's, fifteen miles west of Petersburg; as many more were in Richmond, a score of miles to the north; Longstreet, with half the remainder, was on the James; leaving 15,000 at and around Petersburg, confronting the corps of Parke, Wright, and Humphreys, with half that of Ord—in all not less than 50,000 men ready for action; while upon the flank of his line of retreat was Sheridan with well-nigh 20,000 cavalry and infantry.<sup>1</sup> The obstinate defense of Fort Gregg gave Lee a breathing space, and enabled him to assume a strong defensive position which could be held for a brief space. It must be held for twelve hours at all hazards; for the retreat could not be begun until darkness had come on, veiling the movement from the eyes that were keenly watching every sign of the abandonment, which all saw was speedily inevitable.

<sup>1</sup> The data upon which I estimate the present force of Lee will be stated hereafter. In giving that of Grant, I only include the numbers actually available for immediate pursuit from before Petersburg. Besides these 70,000, there was a considerable force at City Point, and half of the Army of the James, left under Weitzel on the north side of the James. The actual number in each corps available for instant action in the field at the commencement of operations on the 29th was about 15,000, or 90,000 in all. To these are to be added 10,000 cavalry. The losses in the interval had been not far from 10,000 in killed, wounded, and prisoners.



WORKS CAPTURED BY THE SIXTH CORPS.





THE EVACUATION OF PETERSBURG.

Lee was still ignorant that the force north of the James had been reduced to three divisions. But immediately after the tidings of the disaster at Five Forks he had ordered Longstreet to send re-enforcements from the James to the Appomattox. That veteran commander, with a few brigades, arrived just in time to stay the Federal advance, and enable Lee to form his new line. This, in a narrow semicircle, girdled Petersburg, each flank resting upon the Appomattox. A show of offense was the best defensive, and at intervals, from ten o'clock until dark, blows were struck at various parts of the Federal line closely encircling his own. These attempts were mainly directed upon that part of the line held by the Ninth Corps. In one of these assaults Fort Mahone fell again into the hands of the Confederates.<sup>1</sup> So threatening were these assaults, that two brigades were ordered up from City Point and one from the Sixth Corps to re-enforce the Ninth. Fort Mahone was soon recaptured, and Parke wished to renew the assault which had been closed in the morning; but, finding that his men were greatly exhausted, he decided merely to make his position perfectly secure, and await the operations of the next day, but in the mean while to be in a position to take advantage of any movement which the enemy might make showing an intention of evacuating his position.

The night had almost passed before any such indications were perceived. At two o'clock in the morning the Confederate pickets were still out; but the evacuation had been commenced in the darkness hours before. By three o'clock the troops were all across the river, and the only bridge in flames, while the air was luminous with the glare of the burning warehouses. At this moment the heavily-charged magazine of the battery of siege-guns before Bermuda Hundred was blown up; then followed the explosion of that of Fort Clifton on the James. The explosion was taken up all along the line to Richmond, giving some tokens that the evacuation was accomplished, and the Confederate army in full retreat. The skirmishers of the Ninth were at once pushed forward, but found no trace of an enemy. The entire corps went forward, Ely's brigade leading. They were met by the mayor and a deputation from the Common Council, who announced that the city, having been evacuated, was formally surrendered, and asked for the protection of the persons and property of the inhabitants. At half past four the flag of the First Michigan Regiment was raised upon the Court-house of Petersburg.

The dispatch of Lee, announcing his purpose to evacuate the cities, was received by Davis while in church. Three years before, lacking a month, he had been baptized and confirmed on the same day, and had since been a devout worshiper. As nearly as such hurried moments can be noted, the message reached the church just when the Litany, with its solemn responses, "Good Lord, deliver us!" was being uttered. The Confederate President rose from his knees and left the house with his wonted stately step. But men remembered, or thought they remembered, that he seemed to have grown older by years since he had entered the sacred edifice an hour before. Evil tidings find speedy messengers. Though no announcement was made, within an hour every inhabitant knew that the Confederate capital was to be abandoned. In the leading Presbyterian Church, the minister, at the close of his sermon, announced to the congregation that there was sad news; the army had met with great reverses, and it was not likely that the congregation would ever again assemble in that house of God.

Never since when the Babylonians learned that Cyrus had penetrated their walls, or when the dwellers in New Carthage assembled in the theatre were told that the Vandals of Genseric were upon them, was there a greater surprise than at Richmond when on that bright April Sabbath it was made known that within a few hours the city was to fall into the hands of the beleaguering force. They could see no signs of siege. They knew, indeed, that for months a great hostile force was encamped not far away, but between them and it was their own invincible army under its indomitable commander, who had three years before driven off a like threatening force, and had held this at bay so that not a sound of battle had reached their ears, and who had vowed that he would die before he would abandon their defense. Richmond had been notably gay all through the winter and spring, so much so that the clergy had been constrained to institute special religious services to counteract the prevailing current of dissipation. The newspapers were allowed to give only brief scraps of tidings furnished by the War Department, and these amounted simply to nothing. But in the absence of all true accounts there was a superabundance of rumors and reports. One day it was said that a messenger was making his way overland with a treaty duly signed, whereby the French emperor, and, by consequence, the British queen, had formed an alliance with the Confederacy against the Union. Again it was reported that Johnston had crushed Sherman, and was in full march to unite with Lee, and that by the combined force the army of Grant would be swept away, as that of McClellan had been swept away not three years before. Of the great battles which had been fought not a score of miles away, not a word was told; but on the very day before they commenced, the morning train from Petersburg brought reports that Lee had made a night attack, in which he had crushed the enemy along his whole line. That day John Daniel, the editor of the leading Richmond paper, and the wielder of the most trenchant pen in the Confederacy, had died. Next morning his obituary appeared in the papers, closing with a regret that "the great Virginian" had passed away just as the decisive victory had been won which was likely to prove the turning-point to the success of the Southern Confederacy. So, of all the days in the year, this bright April Sabbath seemed the last which was to be the day of doom to the Confederacy.

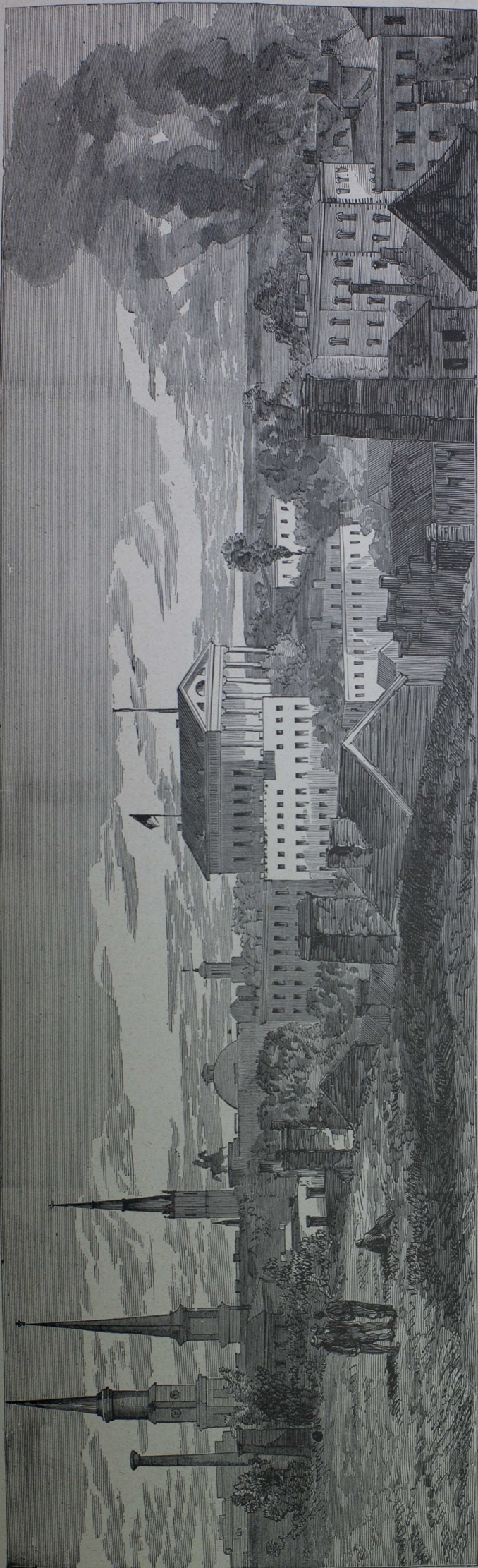
<sup>1</sup> Fort Mahone was at a point where the two lines had approached most closely. Opposite to it was Fort Sedgwick. So fierce and continuous had been the fire from these forts that the latter was known in the army as "Fort Hell," and the former as "Fort Damnation."





THE OCCUPATION OF PETERSBURG.





Custom-house.

Governor's House.

Capitol.

1st Baptist Church.

City Hall.

Presbyterian Church.

2d Baptist Church.

St. Paul's.

RICHMOND, FROM GAMBLE'S HILL.

When, therefore, the authentic tidings came that before another sun should rise the Confederate capital was to be abandoned, they were like a thunder-clap from a cloudless sky. All was confusion and dismay. Those who rushed to the government offices could learn nothing; but the hasty packing of archives, and the long lines of wagons conveying them to the railroad depôts, told the story. A special train during the afternoon bore the President and a part of his cabinet toward Danville. This was now the only avenue for those who hoped to escape from the apprehended horrors of a sacked city. They could not forget how the Confederates had wantonly burned Cumberland; they knew what had befallen Columbia. So the great throng of those who had means of paying their fare pressed to the depôt of the Danville Road. They found the doors guarded by lines of soldiers, with orders to allow no one to enter without a special pass from the Secretary of War. To find that functionary was hopeless. Now and then one who knew the premises, or had special means of influence, succeeded in getting within, only to find the waiting trains loaded to twice their regulated capacity with the employés and effects of the government.

In the streets the disorder grew fiercer and fiercer till it rose to tumult and riot. As night closed in all the rascality of the city seemed let loose, and surged around every spot where there was a chance of pillage. There were numerous stores and warehouses filled with goods which, having run the blockade, were rated at prices which, reckoned in Confederate currency, were worth a prince's ransom. These were broken open, and their contents borne away with scarcely a pretense of opposition. The poorest scoundrel in the city was for the moment a richer man than he had ever hoped to become. For a few hours there had been a lingering hope that Lee would be able to escape the necessity of withdrawing his army. But when at last the mayor announced that this hope was vain, and that the evacuation was a foregone conclusion, the city council proposed to get together some regiments of militia to preserve order, and to establish a regular patrol for the night. Above all, every drop of liquor in the shops and warehouses was to be destroyed. This was partially executed, and the gutters ran with a liquor feshet whose reeking fumes filled the air. But the destruction could be only partial. Not a few who were to carry out the order chose to drink rather than destroy the liquor. The militia slipped through the hands of their officers; the patrols disappeared; soldiers, half famished during the long months in the intrenchments, straggled from their commands, maddened by the thirst for liquor, which they now found it easy to satiate. The city was given up to pillage; stores were entered and stripped; the sidewalks were strewn with a mingled rubbish of costly goods, provisions, and broken glass. The early night was made hideous by the shouts of the mob, the yells of drunken men, and wild cries of distress from women and children.

But the horrors of that night had only begun. The great body of troops from the fortifications had been passing through the city, and had crossed the river. Their presence had some effect in checking the outrages. To Ewell's corps, the rear-guard, had been committed the task of destroying the bridges across the James, and blowing up the iron-clad vessels which lay in the stream, and, in general, of making way with every thing which could be of use to the enemy. In the very heart of the town were four warehouses filled from top to bottom with tobacco; close by were the great Gallego Flour-mills, the largest in the world, with all the combustible materials which gather around such establishments. To these Ewell ordered the torch to be applied. A fire breaking out here at any time would be disastrous; now, when all means of checking it were paralyzed, a general conflagration was inevitable. The mayor and a committee of citizens remonstrated against the execution of this order. The warehouses were fired, the flames spread from building to building, and from street to street, over whole acres of ground whereon was the whole business part of Richmond. Within its area were all the banks, insurance offices, auction stores, newspaper offices, and nearly all the mercantile houses. Here, too, were arsenals stored with shells and munitions of war: the successive explosion of these sounded like a continuous peal of thunder. While this great conflagration was raging, without even an effort to check it, the tumult, and riot, and ravaging, and pillaging grew madder and madder all through that long night.

When the sun rose in the morning it looked upon a strange and sorrowful scene. The streets were crowded with a motley throng—drays loaded with goods, men toilsomely rolling barrels, women and children of all colors staggering under heavy loads, their own goods or that which they had plundered. The Capitol Square, seeming to be safest from the conflagration, was covered over with piles of furniture dragged from the burning houses, among which were huddled together women and children, whose only homes were now beneath the open sky; even here the air was dim with smoke, and blinding with a snow of fiery cinders. The sun was an hour high when from the rear of the motley crowd pressing up Main Street arose the ominous cry of "The Yankees! The Yankees!"

During the three days while fighting had been going on around Petersburg there had been perfect quiet on the James. Confederates and Federals seemed aware that nothing which could be done there would influence the issue. When that Sabbath night closed in, each was aware that the result was decided. All the bands in Weitzel's lines struck up the national airs. They were answered with corresponding music from the Confederate lines. Until midnight the air was vocal with the strains of "Hail Columbia" and "Dixie," the "Star-spangled Banner" and the "Bonnie Blue Flag." Then came a brief interval of absolute repose, during which the Confederate troops were silently withdrawn, and, as morning was breaking, the glare of the flames, and the dense masses of smoke which rose over Richmond, proclaimed to Weitzel that the Confederate capital, the prize of such long endeavor,





RUINS OF RICHMOND—MAIN STREET.

was probably at his mercy. Slowly and cautiously at first he put his troops in motion. They threaded the intricate lines of works before which they had so long lain, and for the first time learned how formidable they were. Every thing showed how hasty had been the abandonment. Around Fort Field, the first approached, were three lines of abatis and one of torpedoes. The flags which marked the place of the torpedoes had not been taken down. The torpedoes were carefully removed by the advance-guard. A second and third line, each commanding that exterior to it, was passed. The camps were entered, the tents still standing, and all the furniture within. Then, when, for the first time, Richmond was fairly in view by a Federal army, Weitzel sent forward a squad of cavalry, twoscore strong, to enter the city. It was this little body whose coming aroused the cry of "The Yankees!" They proceeded at a leisurely walk up the main street. The crowd fled cursing and trampling up the main street and down the by-streets. The troopers then broke into a trot for the public square, and in a few minutes their guidons were fluttering from the Capitol. Soon afterward a regular flag was raised. This was the same which had been hoisted over the headquarters of Butler at New Orleans. It had been brought there by Shepley, who hoped to raise it over the Capitol at Richmond. It had been given in charge of Johnston de Peyster, a young aid of Shepley, who had asked permission to hoist it himself when the Confederate capital should be captured. By some misapprehension, the flag was raised over the "State" end of the Capitol instead of over the "Confederate States" end. Those who believed in omens saw in this an augury that Federal authority had now triumphed over the cherished theory of "States Rights."

Soon they were followed by all the troops, marching in order, but with cheers and martial music. It was noted with bitter indignation that a regiment of colored cavalry, as if moved by an irrepressible impulse as they swept by the principal hotel, drew their sabres and broke into wild shouts. Mayo, the mayor, had gone out to surrender the city, but missed his way. Three years before he had declared that "when the citizens of Richmond demand of me to surrender the capital of Virginia and the Confederacy, they must find some other man to fill my place." But the scenes of the past night, and the flames which were still surging and spreading, were enough to convince him that there was something worse even than surrender to the Yankees. The city had been fired against his earnest remonstrance, and now the conquering army alone could put a stop to the conflagration, and prevent a general pillage which was going on.

General Shepley, the same who had been appointed military governor of New Orleans, was placed in command of Richmond. He issued orders at once. The first duty of the army was to save the city, which the Confederate army, unable to hold, had sought to destroy. The fire department of the city would report to the provost-marshal, who would aid them with a detachment of troops; all attempts at plunder, whether by soldiers or citizens, would be summarily punished; no officer or soldier should enter any private dwelling without express orders; no soldier should use offensive words or gestures toward citizens; no treasonable expressions, or insults to the national flag or cause, would be allowed; the rights and duties of the citizens were laid down in the proclamations of the President; and, finally, "with the restoration of the flag of the Union, the citizens might expect the

restoration of that peace, prosperity, and happiness which they enjoyed under the Union of which that flag was the glorious symbol."

All attempts to check the conflagration seemed unavailing; but toward evening the wind changed, blowing the flames back in the direction from which they had spread, and the fire died out for lack of fuel. A third part of Richmond had been burnt. The pencil of the surveyor could not have more distinctly marked out the business portion of the city. For a night and a day the Confederate capital had undergone all the horrors of a sacked town; but they had been inflicted by its own populace, not by the victors. The bitterest enemies of the conquerors find hardly an instance of the slightest outrage committed by the Federal troops.<sup>1</sup> Men have wrongly, we think, in the main, charged the burning of Columbia upon the Federal troops; but no one has ventured to charge upon them the far more destructive conflagration of Richmond. The responsibility for this wanton act, palliated by no possible pretext of military necessity, rests solely upon Ewell, who had for well-nigh a year commanded the garrison of the city. Deliberately, and against all remonstrance, he applied the torch where there was no human possibility that the result could have been other than what it was.

Jefferson Davis had in the mean while reached Danville, where, on the next day, he issued a characteristic proclamation. The general-in-chief, he said, had found it necessary to make such movements of his troops as to uncover the capital. The loss of the capital was certainly a great misfortune; for months the finest army of the Confederacy had been obliged, in order to defend Richmond, to forego many promising enterprises. But now a new phase of the struggle had begun. The army, free from the necessity of guarding particular points, was free to move, and could strike the enemy in detail far from his base. Virginia, and no part of it, should be permanently abandoned. If compelled temporarily to withdraw, the army would return until the baffled and exhausted enemy should give over the contest; and no peace should ever be made with the infamous invaders. The people of Richmond only knew of this proclamation when they read it in the Northern newspapers. Before that time arrived the Confederate army had surrendered. Davis, indeed, returned to Virginia, but it was as a prisoner of state, captured in the vain attempt to escape to a foreign soil.

<sup>1</sup> The best account of the incidents at the capture of Richmond is that given by the Rev. Dr. Leyburn, in *Harper's Magazine* for June, 1866. From this we cite a few sentences: "The curtain had now fallen on one act of the stupendous drama. It was soon to rise on what, in its opening at least, would prove even more striking and impressive. The government and army which for years had protected us was gone; that other army, which had come so near that they could hear the sound of our church-bells, and we could see the flash and smoke of their guns—that army, probably by this time exasperated and infuriated to the last degree, was to be upon us with the dawn of the coming day, and we helplessly at their mercy. . . . Imagine our condition, left by our own army and anticipating the enemy's; the entire business part of the city on fire—stores, warehouses, mills, dépôts, and bridges, all covering acres, one sea of flame; and as an accompaniment, the thunder of exploding shells, and in the midst of it that long-threatening, hostile army entering to seize its prey. . . . Up to this time I do not remember to have seen a fire-engine at work. I went to one of the Federals and told him that, unless they went to work to arrest the conflagration, the entire city would be swept away. Soon after, the military authorities organized the crowds of blacks as a fire corps, and this, with their own efforts and the steam-engines at length brought to play, was instrumental in checking, and at length stopping the tempest of fire. But all the forenoon, and till well on in the afternoon, flame and smoke, and burning brands, and showers of blazing sparks filled the air. Seldom has a city in proportion to its population and wealth suffered so terribly. Very agreeable was the disappointment at the behavior of the victorious army. The fact was that, with few exceptions, the troops behaved astonishingly well, and were remarkably courteous and respectful. Some cases of outrage were committed in the suburbs, but every attempt of the sort in the city of which I heard was followed by condign punishment."