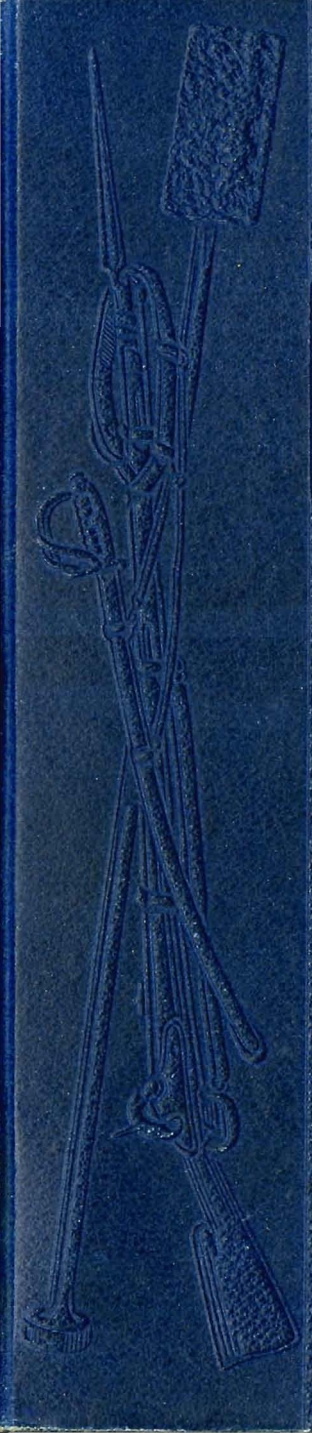

CAMPAIGNS
OF THE
CIVIL WAR

THE MARCH TO THE SEA—
FRANKLIN AND NASHVILLE

JACOB D. COX

CAMPAIGNS OF THE CIVIL WAR.—X.

THE MARCH TO THE SEA

FRANKLIN AND NASHVILLE

BY

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PREFACE.

THE class of readers which has been most in the author's mind in preparing the two volumes assigned him in the series, is that which includes the surviving officers and men who served in the late war. His aim has been to supplement their personal knowledge by the facts which are within the reach of recent research, and to give unity and symmetry to the history of the campaigns here told, by examining each in the light of the plans and purposes of the leaders on both sides.

The limits assigned to the volumes have made it necessary to choose between the narration of incidents which would enliven the story, and that fulness of strictly military detail which seemed necessary to make the several campaigns clearly intelligible, and to enable the reader to judge, with some degree of satisfaction, the character of the operations. The former course would perhaps have made the work more popular, but the latter has seemed likely to make it more useful and to meet the wishes of those for whom it has been chiefly written. It is still hoped, however, that the general reader will not find it difficult to follow the movements described, and that the effort to do so will give to such a broader understanding of what the great game of war really is.

The maps in both volumes are, with two exceptions, re-

duced copies of the official surveys made by the engineers of the army. For the originals the author is indebted to the courtesy of General Poe, U. S. Engineers. In reducing them it has not been possible to preserve all the details of the originals; but the effort has been to give accurately what is most essential. The reader is presumed to make reference to an ordinary hand-atlas for the relations of the special theatre of operations to that of the whole war. To have illustrated the text by larger and more elaborate maps would have thwarted the purpose of the publishers to put the series within the reach of all.

To General Drum, Adjutant-General, and to Colonel Scott, of the War Records Office, the author is greatly indebted for access to unpublished archives, and for official information without which it would have been impossible to reach the degree of accuracy which he hopes will be found to mark the more important parts of the narrative: it would be vain to expect to escape all error with our present means of investigation. A still greater debt of obligation, if possible, is due to Major E. C. Dawes, late of the Fifty-third Ohio, who has not only given the use of his valuable collection of books and documents relating to the war, but has thought no personal trouble too great in assisting to verify facts and trace events, and whose zeal in investigation has been a constant aid and stimulus.

CINCINNATI, September, 1882.

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THE MARCH TO THE SEA.

CHAPTER I.

PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN.

When Sherman stood upon the border of Alabama, at the close of October, 1864, looking toward Gadsden, and following in his mind's eye the retreating forces of Hood who was marching westward, he had an undoubting conviction that the true counter-movement was to turn his back upon his adversary and march away for Savannah and the sea. He had formed the opinion at the beginning of the month, but the campaign of October made him sure of it. The mobility of Hood's army was such that there was little hope of coming up with it till accident, or the exhaustion of the country, should force him to come to bay. The delays to a pursuing column may be indefinitely increased by an active and well-handled rear guard, and the moral effect of allowing the war to be transferred again to Tennessee would be every way bad. Still, if Hood had crossed the Tennessee anywhere between Stevenson and Guntersville, in the bend of the river, Sherman would have pursued him; but when he marched to Decatur, and, upon General R. S. Granger

showing a bold front there, moved still further west to Tuscumbia, nearly at the Mississippi line, it was clear as day to the National Commander that the only way to preserve the moral superiority and the initiative, was to put in operation his previous plan. He thought it probable that Hood would be forced to follow him, especially since the latter had been made, by a recent order of the Confederate Government, subordinate to General Beauregard, who had been invested with the military command of all the territory between Middle Georgia and the Mississippi River. He was not mistaken in his forecast of Beauregard's judgment in this respect, as will soon be seen; but Beauregard did not feel authorized to take actual control of Hood's movements under the somewhat peculiar orders given by President Davis. To try whether an indication of his counter-movement would call Hood back from the west, Sherman marched again into Georgia in the first days of November, and concentrated his army at Rome and Kingston. There, upon the second of the month, he got from Grant the final assent to his plan, and put all the capacity of the railroad, now repaired, to the utmost strain to remove surplus stores and material of war from Atlanta and other posts in Georgia to Nashville.

No military operation of the war has been so commonly misunderstood as the campaign on which Sherman was now entering. The brilliancy of its design and the immense results which followed, have captivated the popular imagination and deeply impressed students of military history everywhere; but there has been a singular tendency to treat the conception of a march from Atlanta to the gulf or to the ocean as if that were an invention or a discovery. People have disputed the priority of idea, as if it were a patent right; and, besides the military claimants of the honor of

the invention, non-combatants of both sexes have entered the lists and claimed to have given expression to the thought of such a movement before Sherman had captured Atlanta. General Badeau, the historian of Grant's campaigns, must be held responsible for a good deal of this misapprehension, which he seems to have shared himself; for he treats Grant's earlier indications of Mobile as an objective point, as if these contained the essential parts of the campaign as actually conducted. For the matter of that, we have seen, in a former volume, that Sherman gave a sufficiently clear outline of the movement in his letter to the General-in-Chief before the campaign of Atlanta had opened in the spring. In that, not only the march to the coast was foreshadowed, but the subsequent campaign through the Carolinas, which was to make, as he said, "short work" of what was left of the Confederate Government and cause.

Whoever will reflect a little, will see, however, that not even in this fuller anticipation of the outward form of the movement are found the essential features which gave to Sherman's decision and plan in October their peculiar military character. Unless the campaign just closed had been an aimless thing, we must suppose that both Grant and Sherman had reflected upon what should be done when Atlanta fell. Every intelligent person in the country, in or out of the army, must have seen that the successful march of a great army from Chattanooga southward, meant not only the capture of Atlanta, but more. The problems of war are not matters of occult science, and while it was hoped that in some decisive engagement Johnston's army might be routed before it reached the Chattahoochee, it took no genius to see that if its retreat to Atlanta should leave it with a still formidable organization, further opera-

tions would be necessary. These would naturally be such as would turn to good use the auxiliary efforts which Canby and the Navy were making to reduce Mobile, and, by reaching a hand to Sherman from the South, put the whole of Alabama and Mississippi behind a wall of national bayonets moving Eastward, and driving the Confederate Army before them. This was the course of events which would be the natural sequence of what had gone before, if no disaster befell us; and had things worked in this way, we should never have had the almost absurd debate upon the question of intellectual authorship.

It was Hood's audacious movement upon Sherman's communications that changed all that. His design was to carry back the war from Central Georgia to Tennessee, as, once and again, Lee had carried it back from Central Virginia to the Potomac. A weak general would have made haste to put the National Army on the north side of the Tennessee to cover and protect his communications; and Hood's purpose would have been successfully accomplished. It would have been much better than this to have followed Hood across Alabama, striving to get between him and his own dépôts of supply, though this might have had no really decisive results. To provide for a sufficient force to keep him from reaching the Northern States before the rapidly collecting recruits should swell Thomas's army to a size fully able to deal with him, and with sixty thousand veterans strike for the very heart of the Confederacy, was completely to turn the tables upon the enterprising Southern general, and make his very audacity prove at once his own ruin and the ruin of the cause for which he fought. This was what Sherman did, and the determination to do it, in the actual situation, before any base upon the distant seacoast had been secured, called for the very highest qualities in a commander.

The moral courage which decides upon a daring course, when failure must involve terrible and far-reaching consequences, is far greater in kind and in degree than that which the subordinate or the soldier in the ranks is called upon to show. The cool-headed, practical skill which carries out such a plan, through the vicissitudes of a campaign where the circumstances are always the unexpected, is only possible to one who unites physical hardihood to mental grasp and unbending will.

In thus fixing his purpose, Sherman had no assistance. He had heard nothing from Grant in reply to his proposal of the movement, though the latter had sent, on October 11th, a conditional approval, which the interruption of communications had prevented Sherman from receiving. Thomas advised against his plan,[1] and on November 1st Grant suggested to him to resume that of following Hood.[2] But Sherman was immovable in his judgment, unless Hood should try to cross the Tennessee somewhere near him, and on the second of the month Grant gave formal and final consent. Grant's sympathies were never lacking for a bold and decided course, but in this instance he had less faith than Sherman that all would go well in Tennessee in the interval. Lincoln, as he himself said a little later, "was anxious, if not fearful," but did not interfere.

So long as it seemed probable that he would force his adversary to follow him, Sherman's purpose had been to

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[1] Despatch of October 17th.

[2] Despatch of that date: "Do you not think it advisable, now that Hood has gone so far North, to entirely ruin him before starting on your proposed campaign." Badeau says, vol. iii., p. 62: "Sherman declared Hood would follow him; Grant was certain that the rebel army would go North." Neither statement is quite accurate. He wrote this, forgetting that in the despatch of November 1st (which he himself quotes on page 157) Grant said: "I believed, and still believe, that if you had started South while Hood was in the neighborhood of you, he would have been forced to go after you." There was no real difference of opinion on this point.

leave only the Fourth Corps (Stanley's) in addition to the troops already stationed in Tennessee, and these, with the recruits which were rapidly enrolling, would have given Thomas very soon an army quite large enough for all probable needs. When Hood had passed Decatur, however, Sherman determined to send back Schofield with the Twenty-third Corps also, reckoning that the two corps, together with that of Major General A. J. Smith, which was ordered to join Thomas as speedily as possible, and the garrisons and posts in Tennessee, would make an army equal to Hood's at the opening of the new campaign. The recruits which would be added to this would soon give it a decided superiority, the real risk being limited to the time within which Thomas should be concentrating his forces.

Three divisions of the Sixteenth Corps were at this time under General A. J. Smith in Missouri, near the Kansas border, but on October 29th, General Rosecrans, who commanded that department, was directed from Washington to send Smith's troops to Nashville, and promptly put them in motion for the Mississippi River. Sherman had hoped that steamboats might meet them at Booneville on the Missouri and transport them directly to Paducah on the Ohio; but the Missouri was so low that navigation could not be depended upon, and Smith's troops were obliged to move by land to St. Louis from Warrensburg, where they were on November 2d.

Sherman had the most implicit confidence in General Thomas's ability to bear the great responsibilities to be imposed upon him, writing to Halleck that he was better suited to the emergency than any man he had. The very differences in temperament between the two men seemed to adapt them to the work each was to do. The task before Thomas

was to conduct a cautious and purposely dilatory campaign till his reinforcements should be well in hand, and then, resuming the aggressive, to drive Hood southward and follow him wherever he should go. His whole career had borne witness to the unflinching courage with which he would meet the impetuosity of his opponent, and the tenacity with which he would stick to the contest even if the odds should be against him. Yet he would have been glad to avoid the task, and had said to Sherman, when the plan was first opened to him, that the one thing he did not wish was to assume the part allotted to him, unless Sherman and the authorities at Washington deemed it absolutely necessary. With the addition to his forces of Schofield's Twenty-third Corps he believed he would be strong enough to drive Hood back, but this increase he urged as indispensable, and as soon as Grant's definitive consent to the new plan of campaign was received, Schofield was ordered to march to Resaca and Dalton, where his troops were to meet the trains and be transported by rail to Nashville. The burden of taking to the rear the surplus material at Atlanta and of carrying to that place the stores Sherman intended to take with him, was overtaxing the railway, and it was not till November 7th that the last of Schofield's command procured transportation, though he had gone on to Nashville upon the 4th, for the purpose of arranging with Thomas the details of the operations committed to them.

This assignment of the Twenty-third Corps to duty under General Thomas had been at Schofield's own suggestion, and was agreeable, therefore, to both officers. Schofield's departmental command covered East Tennessee and part of Kentucky, and his presence saved the necessity of any change in the organization there. But still stronger motives were

found in the fact that the strength of the Twenty-third Corps had been reduced below ten thousand men present for duty, by the casualties of the campaign, and the opportunity would thus be given it to recruit the two divisions already belonging to it, while a third division of new troops was ordered to join it when the new levies should reach the front. Schofield also believed that the campaign in Tennessee was to be an important one, full of varied military problems and contingencies, and that he could be quite as useful there as in any other field of operations.

For a full understanding of the situation in the Confederate army, and of the motives which controlled Hood's subsequent plan of campaign, we must go back to the beginning of September. The fall of Atlanta had been followed by differences between Confederate leaders as to the policy which should now be pursued. Governor Brown of Georgia had assumed the responsibility of giving a general furlough to the Georgia militia, ostensibly for the purpose of gathering the autumnal crops. Against this the President of the Confederacy protested, as well as against the claim of Governor Brown that the militia of the State were in the field under State authority for the defence of the State, and that as Governor he had the right to appoint and assign the officers to these State forces, and to keep them within the State boundaries. This assertion by the State executive of a very mild form of the doctrine of State rights, was looked upon as hardly less than treason by the Confederate Government. A war begun to assert the doctrine that every State was itself the judge of its rights under the Constitution and of the measure of redress when it considered those rights violated, had resulted in a centralization of which no Northern statesman had ever dreamed.

On September 8th, Hood telegraphed to General Bragg, at Richmond, suggesting that all the reserves of Georgia, under General Cobb, be ordered to his army, and that General Taylor be ordered to relieve Hardee in the command of his corps, bringing with him all the troops which could be spared from the department Taylor was then commanding, and which included Alabama and Mississippi. No immediate notice seems to have been taken of this at Richmond, and, on the 13th, Hood repeated the request to Davis himself, charging Hardee with being the cause of all the defeats his army had suffered, except that of July 28th at Ezra Church. A week later, still apparently without a reply, he sketched his proposed movement upon Sherman's communications, and he now learned that the Confederate President would immediately visit his camp. Accordingly, on September 25th, Davis reached Hood's headquarters at Palmetto, and a couple of days were spent in conference not only with Hood, but with his principal subordinates. The general plan of Hood's new campaign was approved, with the understanding that if he should succeed in drawing Sherman away from Atlanta, the new invasion of Tennessee should be made by crossing the river near Guntersville, not far from the Georgia line. The decision upon Hood's demand for Hardee's removal from his corps was a more troublesome question than the approval of the plan of operations. The great injustice of Hood's charges has been shown in the story of the Atlanta campaign; but the dissatisfaction of a commanding general with a subordinate is so strong a reason for a change that it will rarely do to ignore it. Lieutenant-General Richard Taylor, whom Hood suggested as Hardee's successor, was the brother-in-law of Mr. Davis, and the latter very well knew that this relationship would complicate the difficulty and be seized upon by many as proof

of personal motives on his part if he should give Hood his wish. He seems, besides, to have had a real respect for Hardee, and to have been driven to very serious doubts of his own wisdom in giving Hood the command from which he had hoped so much. The solution he reached was perhaps the best the situation allowed. He determined to transfer Hardee to a departmental command, including Eastern Georgia and the adjacent territory in South Carolina and Florida, a promotion in form, while he combined Hood's and Taylor's department in one military division and assigned General Beauregard to the command, with the understanding that Hood's army organization should not be disturbed, though Beauregard was expected to assume the personal control whenever he might deem it necessary to be with the troops.

Hood learned of the intended changes by a communication from Davis on September 28th or 29th, and the formal orders followed in a day or two. Davis met Beauregard at Augusta, in the first week of October, explained to him Hood's plan of operations, which he had already begun to execute, and no doubt impressed upon him the policy of making no unnecessary interference with Hood's purposes. Certain it is that it must have been in deference to some such instructions that Beauregard carefully avoided establishing his headquarters with the army in the field, though he kept near enough to Hood to have frequent conferences with him, until the latter crossed the Tennessee, some six weeks later. Hood was already across the Chattahoochee on his northward march when the formal order placing Beauregard over him was issued, and as it had no influence upon the campaign till the Confederate army reached Gadsden at the close of October, no mention was made of these changes in the narrative of operations in the last volume.

Beauregard had indeed overtaken Hood on October 9th, at Cave Spring, near Rome, before the crossing of the Coosa, but the conference does not appear to have had any significance. At Gadsden, however, on the 20th and 21st, the two generals fully discussed the situation, and Hood's proposal to march on Guntersville and cross the Tennessee there, was approved by Beauregard. It was arranged that Wheeler's cavalry corps, consisting of twelve brigades (to be increased by another sent from Jackson's division) should closely watch Sherman's movement, opposing and harassing his advance, whatever way he turned; and if he should march for the sea, Governor Brown and General Cobb held out expectations that, in the emergency, seventeen thousand Georgia troops could join Wheeler, and throw themselves across Sherman's path. Beauregard also expected in this event to draw some five thousand men from the Carolinas, making, as he reckoned, an army of twenty-nine thousand to oppose the eastward march of the National forces.[1]

In the invasion of Tennessee, Hood would be accompanied by part of Jackson's division of cavalry, and Forrest, who was between Tuscumbia and Corinth, was ordered to join him with all his mounted force. At Florence, on November 6th, and before beginning his movement against Schofield, Hood had present with him 41,185 infantry and artillery, and 3,544 cavalry, making an aggregate of 44,729. About No-

[1] Beauregard's Official Report.' In this, however, he has underestimated Wheeler's cavalry. That corps reported at Lovejoy Station, August 1st, an "effective" total of enlisted men of 6,283, and it does not appear to have suffered notably between that time and the opening of the new campaign. It was joined by a brigade from Jackson's division, and a Kentucky infantry brigade, which was mounted. These made about two thousand seven hundred enlisted men, and adding the usual proportion of officers to the whole list of "effectives," it gives Wheeler an actual force, in round numbers, of 10,000, instead of 7,000, as estimated by Beauregard. Hood puts the number at 10,000 (Advance and Retreat, p. 310).

vember 15th he was joined by Forrest with his cavalry corps, numbering 9,209 present, and increasing the aggregate to 53,938 officers and men present.[1]

After his conference with Beauregard, Hood had gone but one day's march from Gadsden toward Guntersville when he suddenly turned his columns to the west, making first for Decatur. He learned that Forrest had started upon a raid northward into West Tennessee, and that it was uncertain how long it might be before that cavalry could join him. On October 7th, and before seeing Beauregard, he had asked General Taylor to send Forrest a second time into Tennessee to break the Nashville and Chattanooga Railway, if he could, or at least to occupy Thomas's forces so as to create a diversion in his favor. Forrest was at Cherokee Station, where he had been refitting and resting his command, and both Taylor and he misapprehended Hood's wish to have a strong cavalry force with his moving column as

[1] These figures are taken from the official returns in the Adjutant-General's office at Washington, and are distributed as follows:

Infantry.		Artillery.		Cavalry.	
S. D. Lee's corps	11,784	Lee's	909	Jackson's division	3,152
A. P. Stewart's corps	11,524	Stewart's	958	Buford's "	3,857
B. F. Cheatham's corps	14,325	Cheatham's	880	Chalmers's "	2,841
Engineers	484	Jackson's	321	Roddey's "	2,511
				Escorts	392
Totals	38,117		3,068		12,753

This is exclusive of Forrest's artillery, and of about one thousand men made up of the Fifth Mississippi Cavalry and several battalions of State reserves which joined Forrest. Roddey's division was left in Alabama to hold the line of the Tennessee River. The "present sick" were reported at 2,000, and the present on "extra duty" at 8,267, but these last were, when necessary, put into action by the Confederates. Beauregard's estimate of the "effective" force (deducting officers, etc.) was 27,285 infantry and artillery, and 7,700 cavalry, or an aggregate of 35,000. This is less than two-thirds of the number shown to be present by the official returns. See also Appendix A, 2.

soon as possible. They conceived the idea that a strong diversion in his favor west of the Tennessee would be of most use to him, and Forrest accordingly started northward on the 18th and was at Jackson, Tenn., on the day Hood left the Guntersville road to move westward. But Hood's statement that this news from Forrest was the reason for his change of plan is more specious than sound. Forrest remained at Jackson till the 28th, when Beauregard and Hood were in conference near Decatur, and the orders which apparently stopped him there could have brought him back to Tuscumbia, or to any other place where the Tennessee could be more easily crossed and a junction with Hood more speedily made. It is more probable that Hood's real motive was to get rid of Sherman, who would have been close upon his heels at Guntersville. He hoped that when he should cross the river at Decatur or at Tuscumbia, Sherman would hasten to concentrate in front of Nashville to meet him, and that his brilliant strategy would thus undo all that had been done since the battle of Stone's River. After his disappointment and defeat, it was natural that he should seek plausible reasons for what had proven so disastrous a movement. There certainly was no excuse for making so radical a change in plans without consulting his superior, and his doing so shows that he was determined to treat his subordination to Beauregard as only a nominal thing, while he sought to regain his own prestige by a brilliant stroke.[1]

Beauregard, amazed at the sudden change of movement, hastened after Hood and overtook him at Decatur, where he had expected to cross the river, but where the vigorous defense of the post satisfied both the Confederate officers that

[1] Beauregard's Report; also, Taylor's Destruction and Reconstruction, pp. 207, 208, and Jordan and Prior's Campaigns of Forrest, pp. 589, 590.

it would be quite too costly to force a crossing there, if it could be done at all. The post was commanded by Colonel Doolittle, of the Eighteenth Michigan, whose bold and judicious use of the garrison promptly repulsed the first efforts to carry the place. General R. S. Granger arrived with reinforcements at the close of the first day. A brisk sortie from the garrison captured over a hundred prisoners from Cheatham's corps, spiking a couple of guns, and inflicting considerable loss in killed and wounded. Hood now marched to Tuscumbia, and by the last day of October secured an unobstructed crossing, occupying the town of Florence on the northern bank of the river. At this point the navigation of the Tennessee is interrupted by Muscle Shoals above and Colbert Shoals below, so that it was only in the highest water that even light gunboats could pass. Croxton's brigade of cavalry was in observation near Florence, but was unable to make any serious opposition, and pontoon bridges were soon laid. Could Hood then have marched at once upon Pulaski he would have found but little opposition south of Duck River. It was necessary, however, to rearrange his lines of communication and accumulate at Florence supplies for the campaign. He had left Gadsden with twenty days' rations, but when soldiers' haversacks are overloaded there is always a great waste of food, and his wagons had been unable to keep up with the troops. The prisoners taken by Granger at Decatur reported that the men were half mutinous at the scanty issue of supplies, and when Tuscumbia was reached the sustenance of the army had become the problem demanding first attention. Hood professes to believe he had reason to expect supplies to meet him at Tuscumbia; but the superintendent of the railway reported the road in no condition to furnish the requisite transportation, and in spite of the most earnest efforts of

Beauregard and Taylor to put it speedily in repair, the greater part of the three weeks' delay at Florence must probably be attributed to its half ruined and decayed condition. Stores were collected at points on the Mobile and Ohio Railroad in Mississippi, carried to Corinth and thence east to Cherokee Station upon a piece of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad which Forrest had been able to protect. But from Cherokee Station to Tuscumbia was a gap of fifteen or sixteen miles where the road had never been rebuilt, and here the army stores must be hauled in wagon trains over a wretched country road, which became a quagmire as soon as the rains began.

Beauregard does not seem to have ventured upon any peremptory interference with Hood at their meeting at Decatur, but acquiesced in what was done, sharing, no doubt, the hopes of the latter that the news of their crossing at Florence would be quickly followed by that of the return of Sherman to Middle Tennessee. But it had become evident that there would be delays; and Forrest, who had been waiting at Jackson, resumed his expedition with a purpose of attracting Thomas's attention to the west and rear of Nashville, so as to draw troops in that direction and prevent the concentration in front of Hood, where alone was any serious danger. He struck the river on the 29th, a few miles above Fort Henry, and his batteries disabled and brought to three transports and a "tin-clad" gunboat, the Undine. The latter, after a stout defence, was injured in her machinery and was run ashore and abandoned. Two of the transports were burned, but the gunboat and the other transport were in the possession of Forrest's "horse-marines" for a couple of days, when the transport with her lading of stores was recaptured and the Undine was run ashore and burned. Forrest's first appearance on the river was at the most north-

ern point he reached, and he returned, making demonstrations to assist his purpose at various places along the western bank. On November 4th he appeared opposite Johnsonville, eighty miles directly west of Nashville, and by a noisy cannonade caused a panic in the garrison. Three gunboats, eight transports, and some barges were moored to the river bank, and great quantities of stores were in warehouses at the landing. All these were abandoned and burned by the crews and garrison, and the troops fled toward Nashville, the commandant telegraphing Thomas that Forrest was across the river and marching in pursuit.[1] But Forrest had not crossed, and continued his march up the river. At Perryville he put over part of Rucker's brigade, but kept the body of his troops on the western side, reaching Cherokee Station on the 15th and joining Hood at Florence next day. The dates which have been given and the character of Forrest's movement, which came in contact with no National forces west of the river, plainly prove the purposes of the Confederate generals. Time was needed to repair the railway and collect supplies at Tuscumbia, and this was the easiest way to get it.

Sherman's attitude, however, was not without its influence upon his adversaries. They knew that the Twentieth Corps was still at Atlanta and that Sherman with three others was observing them at Rome or Kingston. It was quite among the possibilities that he might march westward across Alabama, destroying all railway lines and close in upon the rear of Hood's army, while Thomas delayed him in the "barrens" of Tennessee, where the country could do but little to sustain such an army. The desire to see Sher-

[1] The garrison consisted of about 1,000 men, of the Twelfth United States colored troops, Forty-third Wisconsin Infantry, and Eleventh Tennessee Cavalry, all under command of Colonel C. R. Thompson, of the first-named regiment.

man begin some definite movement undoubtedly worked upon Hood, and after the expected preparation for his advance was made he still delayed till Beauregard spurred him anew to his work by urgent despatches of a kind to which he was not used. It is not unreasonable to suppose that he was bitterly disappointed in finding that Sherman did not hasten back to Tennessee, and was oppressed with the foreboding that if this part of his plan failed and Sherman turned eastward, he would be in no small measure responsible for the impending ruin of the Confederate cause.

Returning to the preparations Sherman was making to give Thomas forces enough to cope with Hood in Tennessee, we find that on October 30th Wood's division of Stanley's (Fourth) corps was moving by rail from Chattanooga, and by November 3d the whole corps was concentrated at Pulaski, eighty miles south of Nashville and forty-four north of Decatur, upon the railway connecting those places. Decatur and Athens were held by General Granger, who commanded the District of Northern Alabama, which also included Huntsville and Stevenson; but the bridges and trestles on the railway between Pulaski and Athens at the crossing of Elk River had been destroyed by Forrest in the latter part of September and had not been rebuilt, and Pulaski was therefore the terminus of the direct railway line south from Nashville. When it was definitely known that the Confederate army was at Tuscumbia and Florence, Thomas had ordered Stanley to get together his corps at Pulaski, but he did not put Granger under his command, and the latter continued through the whole campaign to receive his orders direct from Nashville.

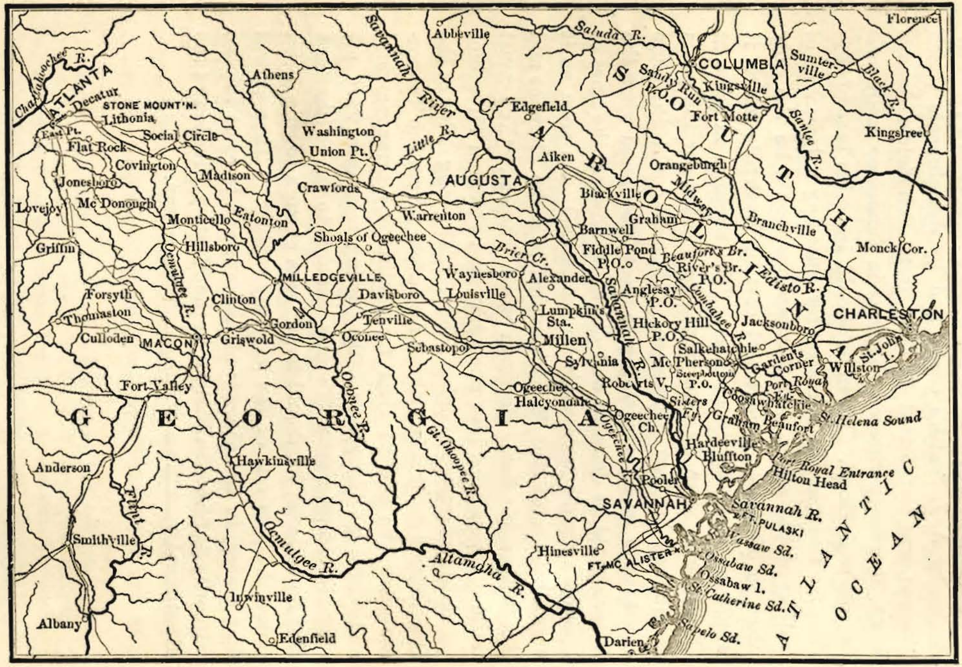
On November 3d, Schofield started Cooper's division of the Twenty-third Corps upon the railway trains for Nashville, leaving Cox's division for several days at Dalton till transportation could be got for it. Schofield himself went

forward with the advance, and when he reached Nashville next day, Thomas had just received the first alarming news from Johnsonville, and hurried Schofield in person with Gallup's brigade (the first of the Twenty-third Corps to arrive) to Gillem's Station, on the railway from Nashville to the abandoned post. Finding no enemy near Gillem's, Schofield marched to Johnsonville on the 6th, and was able to give Thomas the truth as to the disgraceful affair. General Cooper, with Gallup's and Moore's brigades of his division, were placed at Johnsonville for a time, with orders to fortify it in accordance with a general plan prepared by the engineers. Schofield returned to Nashville, whence he was sent on the 11th by Thomas to Pulaski, to assume command of the forces assembling there. The remainder of the Twenty-third Corps reached Nashville on the 9th, and went forward by easy stages. On the 15th, Schofield had at Pulaski the Fourth Corps and Cox's division of the Twenty-third, Strickland's brigade of the latter corps was at Columbia, and the cavalry under General Hatch was covering the front and right, toward Florence and Waynesboro.

When the Fourth and Twenty-third Corps reported to Thomas, and even before the arrival of A. J. Smith with the divisions of the Sixteenth Corps, his official returns showed a force present for duty just about equal to that of Hood, though differently divided, being stronger in infantry and weaker in cavalry. The latter numbered 5,591, being less than half Hood's strength in that arm, but the infantry and artillery were 48,975.[1] When this force should be increased

[1] These figures give the "present for duty" on October 31st, and were distributed as follows: Fourth Corps, 12,331; Twenty-third Corps, 10,624; cavalry, 5,591; District of Tennessee, 18,661; unassigned detachments, 7,359—total, 54,566. This does not include the District of Etowah under Steedman, which first appears in Thomas's report for November 20th, and which numbered 6,421. The official returns for subsequent dates will be found in Appendix A.

by Steedman's garrisons in Northern Georgia and at Chattanooga, by A. J. Smith's corps, and by detachments which Thomas was authorized to draw from Schofield's department, Sherman estimated the army in Tennessee easily able to cope with Hood. When he should leave his base of supplies in Georgia, the necessity for guarding a long line of railway would cease, and Chattanooga would be the only place in Thomas's department east of Nashville which it would be necessary to garrison. The supplies in store at Chattanooga were all that would be needed for the posts maintained in East Tennessee. Thomas could therefore concentrate nearly everything to meet Hood, and when the latter should be defeated and driven southward, the lines of operation would necessarily be rearranged. As soon as it seemed probable that Hood intended to make Florence and Tuscumbia his base, Sherman wrote Thomas, "You must unite all your men into one army, and abandon all minor points if you expect to defeat Hood." The long delay of the Confederate general in making his advance from the Tennessee gave the needed time for preliminary arrangements; and when, on November 12th, parting messages were exchanged between them, Thomas was able to say to Sherman that he believed he should have "men enough to ruin Hood unless he gets out of the way very rapidly." Thomas was empowered, in the absence of his superior, to exert all the authority of Sherman himself in the Military Division of the Mississippi, and the new campaign was begun.



Atlanta to Savannah.

CHAPTER II.

THE MARCH THROUGH GEORGIA.

At Rome, when parting with one of the officers he was sending back to Tennessee, Sherman said, "If there's to be any hard fighting, you will have it to do." He perfectly understood that there was no sufficient force in Georgia to thwart his plan or even to delay his march. Before leaving Atlanta he pointed out to one of his principal subordinates that a National army at Columbia, S. C., would end the war unless it should be routed and destroyed. Deprived of the material support of all the States but North Carolina, it would be impossible for the Confederate Government to feed its army at Richmond, or to fill its exchequer. The experience it had with the country west of the Mississippi proved that a region isolated from the rest of the Confederacy would not furnish men or money, and could not furnish supplies; while anxiety for their families, who were within the National lines, tempted the soldiers from those States to desert, and weakened the confidence of the whole army. In such a situation credit would be destroyed, the Confederate paper money would become worthless, its foreign assistance would be cut off, and the rebellion must end. The one chance left would be for Lee to break away from Grant, overwhelm Sherman, and re-establish the Confederate power in a central position by the abandonment of Virginia. But this implied that Lee could break away from Grant, who, on the

south side of Petersburg, was as near Columbia as his opponent, and would be close upon his heels from the moment the lines about Richmond were abandoned.

If Sherman, therefore, should reach Columbia with an army that could resist the first onslaught of Lee, the last hope of the Confederacy would be crushed between the national forces meeting from the east and west. Of course, this implied that Thomas should, at least, be able to resist Hood till the Eastern campaign should be ended, when, in the general collapse of the Richmond Government, Hood must as certainly abandon the hopeless cause, as Johnston was in fact forced to do after Lee's surrender in the following spring.

To establish a new base upon the sea was a necessary part of such a plan, for the old base at Chattanooga must be abandoned from the start, and the practical separation of the Carolinas from the Gulf States could only be accomplished by a great and thorough destruction of railway lines in Georgia. The army could live upon the country while marching, but it must have the ordinary means of supply within a very few days from the time of halting, or it would starve. The country through which it moved was hostile, no local government could be made to respond to formal requisitions for subsistence, and the wasteful method of foraging itself made a necessity for moving on into new fields. A rapid march to the sea, the occupation of some harbor capable of becoming a fortified base, and the opening of lines of ocean communication with the great dépôts of the North must therefore constitute the first part of the vast project. Beyond this Sherman did not venture to plan in detail, and recognizing the possibility that unlooked-for opposition might force a modification even of this, he kept in mind the alternative that he might have to go west rather than

east of Macon. He requested that the fleets on the coast might watch for his appearance at Morris Island near Charleston, at Ossabaw Sound just south of Savannah, and at Pensacola and Mobile. If he should reach Morris Island, it would naturally be by the way of Augusta and the left bank of the Savannah River. Ossabaw Sound would, in like manner, indicate the route by way of Milledgeville, Millen, and the valley of the Ogeechee. The Gulf ports would only be chosen if his course to the east should be made impracticable.

On November 12th communication with the rear was broken. The railway bridge at Alatoona was taken to pieces and carried to the rear to be stored; but from the crossing of the Etowah, southward to Atlanta, the whole line of the road was thoroughly destroyed. The foundries, machine-shops, and factories at Rome were burned, lest they should be again turned to use by the enemy, and on the 14th the army was concentrated at Atlanta. Sherman's force now consisted of two corps of the Army of the Tennessee under General Howard, and two of the Army of the Cumberland under General Slocum, which were respectively designated as right and left wing. Logan was absent, and his corps (the Fifteenth) was in command of Major-General P. J. Osterhaus. The division of General J. E. Smith, which had been distributed along the railroad in Northern Georgia, had joined that corps, which now consisted of four divisions, commanded by Generals Woods, Hazen, Smith, and Corse. Blair's corps (Seventeenth) had three divisions, viz., Mower's, Leggett's, and Giles A. Smith's. The assignment of Slocum to the command of the wing left the Twentieth Corps under Brigadier-General A. S. Williams, with Geary, Ward, and Jackson as division commanders. Davis's (Fourteenth) corps retained the organization it had at the

close of the Atlanta campaign, and consisted of Carlin's, Morgan's, and Baird's divisions. The cavalry was under Kilpatrick, and was but a single division, composed of the two brigades of Murray and Atkins. The numerical force of the whole, according to the returns of November 10th, only two days before communication with the North was broken, was a little over fifty-nine thousand, but furloughed men and recruits hurried so fast to the front in those last days that the muster at Atlanta showed a total of over sixty-two thousand.[1] No pains had been spared to make this a thoroughly efficient force, for an army in an enemy's country and without a base cannot afford to be encumbered with sick, or to have its trains or its artillery delayed by weak or insufficient teams. The artillery was reduced to about one gun to a thousand men, and the batteries usually to four guns each, with eight good horses to each gun or caisson. Twenty days' rations were in hand, and two hundred rounds of ammunition of all kinds were in the wagons. Droves of beef cattle to furnish the meat ration were ready to accompany the march, and these grew larger rather than smaller as the army moved through the country.

The determination to abandon Atlanta involved also the undoing of much work that had been done there in the early autumn. As the town could not be used by the National forces, the defences must be destroyed, the workshops, mills, and dépôts ruined and burned. This task had been given to Colonel Poe, Chief Engineer, and was completed by the time the army was assembled and ready to march southward.

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[1] Fifteenth Corps, infantry, 15,894; Seventeenth Corps, 11,732; Fourteenth Corps, 13,962; Twentieth Corps, 13,741; artillery, 1,812; cavalry, 5,063—total, 62,204.

On the morning of November 15th the movement began. The two corps of each wing were ordered to march upon separate roads, at first diverging sharply, and threatening both Macon and Augusta, but having the neighborhood of Milledgeville, the capital of the State, for their place of rendezvous at the end of the first stage. Sherman himself accompanied the left wing, which followed the line of railway leading from Atlanta to Augusta; for, by doing so, he could get the earliest and best information of any new efforts the Confederate Government might make for the defence of the Carolinas. In this way he could best decide upon the proper direction for his columns after he should reach the Oconee River.

After leaving the mountainous region of Northern Georgia, the topography of the country is determined by the river courses, which run in radiating lines from the highlands a hundred miles northeast of Atlanta. The Savannah River, which separates the State from South Carolina, flows nearly southeast in a very direct general line to the sea. Augusta is on the right bank like a half-way house, and Savannah, on the same side of the stream, is near its mouth. The Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers rise near Atlanta, and flow in parallel valleys about forty miles apart in the same southeasterly direction nearly two hundred miles, when they unite to form the Altamaha, which enters the ocean a little north of the Florida line. Macon is on the west bank of the Ocmulgee, about a hundred miles from Atlanta, and Milledgeville, thirty miles northeast of Macon, is on the same side of the Oconee, which, however, has a direction more nearly north and south above the city. The only other stream of any importance in this part of the State is the Ogeechee, which rises midway between Milledgeville and Augusta, but gradually approaches the Savannah, so that for fifty or sixty

miles from the ocean these rivers are nearly parallel and from fifteen to twenty miles apart.

The general line of Sherman's march was between the Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers, though he sent his right wing at first along the Macon Railroad by more westerly routes, for the purpose of deceiving the enemy, and to drive off Wheeler's cavalry and some three thousand Georgia militia, under General G. W. Smith, which had been assembled at Lovejoy Station for some days. Howard's right (Fifteenth Corps) marched by way of Jonesboro, McDonough, and Indian Spring to the crossing of the Ocmulgee at Planters' Factory, the Seventeenth Corps keeping a little farther east, but reaching the river at the same place. Kilpatrick, with most of the cavalry, was upon this flank, and drove the enemy's skirmishers before him to Lovejoy's. Smith had retired rapidly upon Macon with his infantry, but the old lines at Lovejoy's were held by two brigades of cavalry with two pieces of artillery. Kilpatrick dismounted his men and charged the works on foot, carrying them handsomely. He followed his success with a rapid attack by another column, which captured the guns and followed the retreating enemy some miles toward Macon. The cavalry continued its demonstrations nearly to Forsyth, creating the impression of an advance in force in that direction; then it turned eastward and crossed the Ocmulgee with the infantry.

A section of pontoon train was with each corps, and Howard put down two bridges;[1] but though his head of column reached Planters' Factory on the 18th, and the bridges were kept full day and night, it was not till the morning of the

[1] The pontoons used by Sherman, both in the Atlanta campaign and the present one, were those of canvas, of which the frames could be disjointed. Their lightness and serviceability left little to be desired, and they proved thoroughly satisfactory in hard and constant campaign use.

20th that the rear guard was able to cross. The bank on the eastern side of the river was steep and slippery from rain, making it tedious work getting the trains up the hill. His heads of columns were pushing forward meanwhile, and reached Clinton, a few miles north of Macon, by the time the rear was over the river. Kilpatrick now made a feint upon Macon, striking the railway a little east of the town, capturing and destroying a train of cars, and tearing up the track for a mile. Under cover of this demonstration and while the cavalry were holding all roads north and east of Macon, Howard's infantry on the 22d closed up toward Gordon, a station on the Savannah railroad, twenty miles eastward. Woods's division of the Fifteenth Corps brought up the rear and was approaching Griswoldville.

Returning to the left wing, which Sherman accompanied, we find that it had applied itself in earnest to the destruction of the railway from Atlanta to Augusta, making thorough work of it to Madison, seventy miles from Atlanta, and destroying the bridge over the Oconee River, ten or twelve miles further on. Here, the divergence between the wings was greatest, the distance from Slocum's left to Kilpatrick, on the right, being fifty miles in a direct line. Sherman, however, did not cross the Oconee, but directed Slocum to turn southward along the right bank of the river with Williams's (Twentieth) corps, while Davis's (Fourteenth) took the interior line by a more direct route to Milledgeville, where the left wing assembled on the 23d, the advance of the Twentieth Corps having entered the city the day before, driving out a small force of the enemy, which retreated rapidly across the river, leaving the bridge uninjured. Slocum immediately threw out Jackson's division to the east, covering and securing the bridge for further operations.

Sherman's advance from Atlanta drew from Beauregard a

rattling volley of telegraphic despatches to all the Confederate officials, civil and military. In these he made much of the fact that he had ordered General Taylor in Alabama to move with his available forces into Georgia; but Taylor had no available forces, and could only go in person to Macon, where he arrived on the 22d, just in time to meet Governor Brown with his Adjutant, Toombs, escaping from the State Capitol on the approach of Slocum's columns. The only organized troops were Wheeler's cavalry, Smith's division of Georgia militia, and a couple of battalions of local volunteers. General Howell Cobb was nominally Confederate commander of "reserves," but there seems to have been no reserves to command. Hardee had been there the day before, coming up from Savannah, and judging rightly that the spread of Sherman's wings from Oconee Bridge to Planters' Factory argued a course toward Augusta or Savannah, he declared that Macon was in no danger and directed Smith to move his division rapidly eastward, to interpose, if possible, between Sherman and Augusta, delaying his march and obstructing the roads. Wheeler, under orders already given, would continue to harass the flank and rear of the National forces. Orders from Richmond had extended Hardee's authority over the theatre of operations in Georgia, and having given the best directions the circumstances allowed, he hastened back to Savannah to strengthen its means of defence and to be in direct communication with Augusta, Charleston, and Richmond.

Beauregard issued from Corinth, Miss., a proclamation to the people of Georgia, calling upon them to arise for the defence of the State, and to "obstruct and destroy all roads in Sherman's front, flank, and rear," assuring them that the enemy would then starve in their midst. He strove to raise vague hopes also by announcing that he was hastening to

join them in defence of their homes and firesides. A more practical step was his order to Hood to begin the Tennessee campaign, the only counter-stroke in his power. At Milledgeville, the approach of Sherman was met by an Act of the Legislature to levy *en masse* the population, with a hysterical preamble, picturing the National general as an ogre, and exhorting the people "to die freemen rather than live slaves." The act, to have been of any use, should have been passed a month before, when Hood was starting west from Gadsden. It was now only a confession of terror, for there was no time to organize. Any disposition of the inhabitants along his route to destroy roads was effectually checked by Sherman's making it known that the houses and property of those who did so would be destroyed. Such opposition to a large army can never be of real use; its common effect is only to increase by retaliation the miseries of the unfortunate people along the line of march, and in this case there was, besides, no lack of evidence that most of them were heartily tired of the war, and had lost all the enthusiasm which leads to self-sacrifice. Even in such a panic the strife of political factions was not stilled, and the opponents of Governor Brown's States-rights policy took advantage of the flight from the Capital to perpetrate a novel absurdity. The Lieutenant-Governor, Wright, was also a general in the Confederate army, and on the 21st, the day before our occupation of the Capital, issued a proclamation from Augusta, declaring himself *ex-officio* Governor of the part of the State east of the Oconee, and ordering the people under the levy *en masse* to report to him, by reason of what a Confederate historian calls the "territorial disability" of the Governor.[1] The proclamation had no result, but

[1] Jones's Siege of Savannah, etc., p. 18.

the ridiculousness of it is shown by the fact that the Georgia militia under Smith were moved by Brown's orders to Savannah, reaching there on the 30th, and General Taylor returned from Savaunah to Macon after that time, as will be seen. In truth, communication by courier from Augusta to Macon was only interrupted while the army was passing.

While Taylor, Brown, Toombs, and Cobb were conferring at Macon on the 22d, the division of Georgia militia under Brigadier General Phillips was marching toward Gordon in the effort to obey Hardee's order. At Griswoldville, about eight miles out, they ran into Walcutt's brigade of Woods's division, which was the rear guard of the right wing, and attacked it with more courage than discretion. Walcutt had been making a reconnoisance toward Macon, driving back Wheeler's cavalry, and was recalled by General Woods to a position on the Duncan Farm, a little east of the town. Here his flanks were protected by swampy ground, his line was on the crest of a hill, with open ground in front, on which the enemy must attack. This Phillips did with a great deal of vigor, putting in all four of his brigades, and striving hard also to turn the flanks of Walcutt's position. He was superior in artillery, as Walcutt had only two guns with him, and was obliged to withdraw these early in the engagement. But the infantry attacks, which were renewed several times, were repulsed with severe loss, and Phillips retreated, after several hours' fighting, having lost over six hundred in killed and wounded. On the National side, General Woods, who was present, reports a total of ninety-four casualties. Walcutt was severely wounded in the leg, and the command of the brigade devolved upon Colonel Catterson (Ninety-seventh Indiana) during the latter half of the combat. Both officers distinguished themselves by their conduct and courage.

Nothing could be more useless than this engagement, for Phillips had before him two corps if Walcutt had been driven off; but he had been ordered to move along the railroad, and thought he was obliged to do so till he should be recalled. This was done as soon as Smith at Macon heard of the fight, and the division, at the instance of Taylor, was sent southward by rail to Albany, which was the end of the railway in that direction. Thence they marched sixty miles to Thomasville on the Savannah and Gulf Railroad, where Toombs hectored the railway officials into furnishing transportation with unwonted promptness, and they reported to Hardee in Savannah on the last day of the month. Hardee's orders to Wheeler now directed him to get in front of Sherman's forces and cover all the roads by which he might move. Wheeler accordingly marched south of the Central Railroad, swam the Oconee River, and reached Sandersville on the 26th, just before the National columns. The change of position of the Confederate cavalry was followed by Kilpatrick, who moved, by Sherman's direction, to the front and left of the infantry, there being no enemy whatever on the right flank after crossing the Oconee.

Sherman had not delayed at Milledgeville, but had marched again on the 24th. Davis's (Fourteenth) corps now became the flanking column on the left. The Twentieth Corps (Williams's), after passing Sandersville, reached the Central Railroad at Tennille and marched to Davisboro, destroying the track as they went. From Davisboro both corps of the left wing moved by the same road to Louisville, crossing the Ogeechee River before reaching that place, where they camped on the 29th. The work of destroying the railway was begun by the right wing at Griswoldville, and of the hundred miles between that station and Millen very little of the road was left. Howard found the crossing

of the Oconee near Ball's Ferry a difficult operation, for the river was up and the current so swift that the ferry could not be used. Wheeler's cavalry made some resistance from the other side. A detachment of Blair's corps, directed by the engineers, succeeded in constructing a flying bridge some two miles above the ferry, and getting over to the left bank, moved down to the principal road, which had been cleared of the enemy by the artillery on the hither side. The pontoons were then laid and the march resumed.

On leaving Milledgeville, Sherman ordered Kilpatrick to make a considerable detour to the north, feinting strongly on Augusta, but trying hard to reach and destroy the important railway bridge and trestles at Briar Creek, near Waynesboro, half way between Augusta and Millen. He was then to move rapidly on Millen in the hope of releasing the National prisoners of war who were in a prison camp near that place. Kilpatrick moved by one of the principal roads to Augusta, giving out that he was marching on that city. After he had passed the Ogeechee Shoals, Wheeler heard of his movement, and rapidly concentrated his force on the Augusta road, where it debouches from the swamps of Briar Creek. Kilpatrick, however, in obedience to his orders, turned the head of his columns to the right, upon the road running from Warrenton to Waynesboro, and they were well on their way to the latter place before Wheeler was aware of it. Murray's brigade was in the rear, and two of his regiments, the Eighth Indiana and Second Kentucky, constituted the rear-guard. These became too far separated from the column when they camped at evening near a place called Sylvan Grove. Wheeler heard of their whereabouts, and attacked them in the middle of the night. Though surprised and driven from their camps, the regiments stoutly fought their way back, and were only gradu-

ally driven in on the rest of Murray's brigade. Wheeler followed up persistently with his superior forces, harassing the rear and flank of the column, and causing some confusion, but gaining no important advantage, except that Kilpatrick was obliged to abandon the effort to burn the Briar Creek bridge and trestles, and to turn his line of march southwesterly from Waynesboro, after destroying a mile or two of the railroad. He reported that he here learned that the Millen prisoners had been removed, and determined to rejoin the army at Louisville. On the 27th Murray's brigade passed through that of Atkins, which now became the rear-guard, and on the 28th this order was reversed, each brigade taking, alternately, the brunt of the continuing fight with Wheeler. Early in the morning of the 28th Kilpatrick himself narrowly escaped capture, having improperly made his quarters for the night at some distance from the body of his command, the Ninth Michigan being with him as a guard. The enemy got between him and the column, and it was with no little difficulty he succeeded in cutting his way out, and saving himself from the consequences of his own folly. The long causeway and bridge at Buckhead Creek was held while the division passed, by Colonel Heath and the Fifth Ohio, with two howitzers, and Wheeler there received a severe check. The bridge was destroyed, and Kilpatrick took a strong position at Reynolds's plantation. Wheeler here attacked in force, but was decisively repulsed, and Kilpatrick effected his junction with the infantry without further molestation. Wheeler's whole corps, consisting of Dibrell's, Hume's, and Anderson's divisions, was engaged in this series of sharp skirmishes, and he boasted loudly that he had routed Kilpatrick, causing him to fly in confusion with a loss of nearly two hundred in killed, wounded, and captured. Chafing

at this rebuff, Kilpatrick obtained permission to deliver a return blow, and after resting his horses a day or two, marched from Louisville on Waynesboro, supported by Baird's division of Davis's (Fourteenth) corps. He attacked Wheeler near the town, and drove him by very spirited charges from three successive lines of barricades, chasing him through Waynesboro, and over Briar Creek. Wheeler admits that it was with difficulty he "succeeded in withdrawing" from his position at the town, but seeks to take off the edge of his chagrin by reporting that he was attacked by the Fourteenth Corps, as well as by Kilpatrick's cavalry. Baird's division was not actually engaged, but its presence and close support no doubt assisted Kilpatrick, by enabling him to make more decisive movements than he could otherwise have ventured on, as he could freely use his horsemen on the flanks of a solid body of advancing infantry.

Millen was reached on December 3d, by Blair's corps, which Sherman accompanied, and the direct railway communication between Savannah and Augusta was cut. Three corps now moved down the narrowing space between the Savannah and Ogeechee Rivers, while Osterhaus, with the Fifteenth, marched on the right bank of the latter stream in two columns some miles apart. Howard was in person with this corps and met with no resistance. Indeed from Millen onward the march of the whole army was a methodic progress with no noticeable opposition, for even Wheeler's horsemen generally kept a respectful distance, and soon crossed to the left bank of the Savannah. The country became more sandy, corn and grain grew scarcer, and all began to realize that they were approaching the low country bordering the sea, where but little breadstuffs or forage would be found. On the 9th and 10th the columns closed in upon the defences of Savannah, Davis's corps rest-

ing its left upon the Savannah River, Williams's, Blair's, and Osterhaus's continuing the line toward the right, near the Ogeechee. Cavalry detachments, and skilful infantry scouts were sent out to open communication with the fleet and to cut the Gulf Railway, thus severing the last connection of the city with the south. But before tracing these operations farther, some of the characteristic features of the march just made are worthy of a little more attention.

The destruction of railway communication between the Confederate Army at Richmond, and the Gulf States, had been a very important part of Sherman's purpose, and he spared no pains to do this thoroughly. A battalion of mechanics was selected and furnished with tools for ripping the rails from the cross-ties and twisting them when heated, and these were kept constantly at work; but the infantry on the march became expert in methods of their own, and the cavalry also joined in the work, though the almost constant skirmishing on the flanks and rear of the army usually kept the mounted troops otherwise employed. A division of infantry would be extended along the railway line about the length of its proper front. The men, stacking arms, would cluster along one side of the track, and at the word of command, lifting together, would raise the line of rail with the ties as high as their shoulders; then at another command they would let the whole drop, stepping back out of the way as it fell. The heavy fall would shake loose many of the spikes and chairs, and seizing the loosened rails, the men, using them as levers, would quickly pry off the rest. The cross-ties would now be piled up like cob-houses, and with these and other fuel a brisk fire would be made; the rails were piled upon the fire, and in half an hour would be red hot in the middle. Seizing the rail now by the two ends, the soldiers would twist it about a tree, or interlace and

twine the whole pile together in great iron knots, making them useless for anything but old iron, and most unmanageable and troublesome, even to convey away to a mill. In this way it was not difficult for a corps marching along the railway to destroy, in a day, ten or fifteen miles of track most completely; and Sherman himself gave close watch to the work, to see that it was not slighted. Then all machine-shops, stations, bridges, and culverts were destroyed, and the masonry blown up.

The extent of line destroyed was enormous. From the Etowah River through Atlanta southward to Lovejoy's, for a hundred miles nothing was left of the road. From Fairburn through Atlanta eastward to Madison and the Oconee River, another hundred miles, the destruction was equally complete. From Gordon southeastwardly the ruin of the Central road was continued to the very suburbs of Savannah, a hundred and sixty miles. Then there were serious breaks in the branch road from Gordon northward through Milledgeville, and in that connecting Augusta and Millen. So great a destruction would have been a long and serious interruption even at the North; but the blockade of Southern ports and the small facilities for manufacture in the Confederate States made the damage practically irreparable. The lines which were wrecked were the only ones which then connected the Gulf States with the Carolinas, and even if Sherman had not marched northward from Savannah the resources of the Confederacy would have been seriously crippled. The forage of the country was also destroyed throughout a belt fifty or sixty miles in width. Both armies cooperated in this; the Confederate cavalry burning it that it might not fall into the hands of the National Army, and the latter leaving none that they could not themselves use, so that wagon transportation of military supplies across the belt might be made more difficult.

As the campaign progressed, great numbers of negroes attached themselves to the columns and accompanied the march. This was contrary to the wish of Sherman, who felt the embarrassment of having thousands of mouths added to the number of those who must be fed from the country as he moved. Those who had less responsibility for the campaign did not trouble themselves so much with this consideration, and the men in the ranks generally encouraged the slaves to leave the plantations. The negroes themselves found it hard to let slip the present opportunity of getting out of bondage, and their uneducated minds could not estimate the hope of freedom at the close of the war as having much weight against the instant liberty which was to be had by simply tramping away after the blue-coated soldiers.

The natural result was that the regular bivouacs of the troops were fringed by numberless gipsy camps, where the negro families, old and young, endured every privation, living upon the charity of the soldiers, helping themselves to what they could glean in the track of the army foragers. On the march, they trudged along, making no complaint, full of a simple faith that "Lincoln's men" were leading them to abodes of ease and plenty.

When the lower and less fruitful lands were reached, the embarrassment and military annoyance increased. This was more particularly felt in the left wing, which was then the only one exposed to the attacks of the enemy. Losing patience at the failure of all orders and exhortations to these poor people to stay at home, General Davis (commanding the Fourteenth Corps), ordered the pontoon bridge at Ebenezer Creek to be taken up before the refugees who were following that corps had crossed, so as to leave them on the further bank of the unfordable stream and thus disembarrass the marching troops. It would be unjust to that officer

to believe that the order would have been given, if the effect had been foreseen. The poor refugees had their hearts so set on liberation, and the fear of falling into the hands of the Confederate cavalry was so great, that, with wild wailings and cries, the great crowd rushed, like a stampeded drove of cattle, into the water, those who could not swim as well as those who could, and many were drowned in spite of the earnest efforts of the soldiers to help them. As soon as the character of the unthinking rush and panic was seen, all was done that could be done to save them from the water; but the loss of life was still great enough to prove that there were many ignorant, simple souls to whom it was literally preferable to die freemen rather than to live slaves.

When Savannah was reached, the great number of colored refugees with all the columns were placed on the Sea Islands, under the care of government officers, and added largely to the colonies already established there. The Freedmen's Bureau was afterward, in great measure, the necessary outgrowth of this organization.

The subsistence of the army upon the country was a necessary part of Sherman's plan, and the bizarre character given it by the humor of the soldiers has made it a striking feature of the march. It is important, however, to distinguish between what was planned and ordered, and what was an accidental growth of the soldier's disposition to make sport of everything that could be turned to amusement. The orders issued were of a strictly proper military character. The supplies in the trains were to be treated as a reserve to be drawn upon only in case of necessity, and a systematic foraging upon the country for daily food was the regular means of getting rations. Each regiment organized a foraging party of about one-twentieth of its numbers under command of an officer. These parties set out first

of all, in the morning, those of the same brigades and divisions working in concert, keeping near enough together to be a mutual support if attacked by the enemy, and aiming to rejoin the column at the halting place appointed for the end of the day's march. The foragers became the *beau ideal* of partisan troops. Their self-confidence and daring increased to a wonderful pitch, and no organized line of skirmishers could so quickly clear the head of column of the opposing cavalry of the enemy. Nothing short of an intrenched line of battle could stop them, and when they were far scattered on the flank, plying their vocation, if a body of hostile cavalry approached, a singular sight was to be seen. Here and there, from barn, from granary and smoke-house, and from the kitchen gardens of the plantations, isolated foragers would hasten by converging lines, driving before them the laden mule heaped high with vegetables, smoked bacon, fresh meat, and poultry. As soon as two or three of these met, one would drive the animals, and the others, from fence corners or behind trees, would begin a bold skirmish, their Springfield rifles giving them the advantage in range over the carbines of the horsemen. As they were pressed they would continue falling back and assembling, the regimental platoons falling in beside each other till their line of fire would become too hot for their opponents, and these would retire reporting that they had driven in the skirmishers upon the main column which was probably miles away. The work of foraging would then be resumed. It was of the rarest possible occurrence that Wheeler's men succeeded in breaking through these enterprising flankers and approaching the troops of the line, and as the columns approached the place designated for their evening camp, they would find this ludicrous but most bountiful supply train waiting for them at every fork of the

road, with as much regularity as a railway train running on "schedule time."

They brought in all animals that could be applied to army use, and as the mule teams or artillery horses broke down in pulling through the swamps which made a wide border for every stream, fresh animals were ready, so that on reaching Savannah the teams were fat and sleek and in far better condition than they had been at Atlanta.

The orders given these parties forbade their entering occupied private houses, or meddling with private property of the kinds not included in supplies and munitions of war, and in the best disciplined divisions these orders were enforced. Discipline in armies, however, is apt to be uneven, and among sixty thousand men there are men enough who are willing to become robbers, and officers enough who are willing to wink at irregularities or to share the loot, to make such a march a terrible scourge to any country. A bad eminence in this respect was generally accorded to Kilpatrick, whose notorious immoralities and rapacity set so demoralizing an example to his troops that the best disciplinarians among his subordinates could only mitigate its influence. His enterprise and daring had made his two brigades usually hold their own against the dozen which Wheeler commanded, and the value of his services made his commander willing to be ignorant of *escapades* which he could hardly condone, and which on more than one occasion came near resulting in Kilpatrick's own capture and the rout of his command. But he was quite capable, in a night attack of this kind, of mounting, bare-backed, the first animal, horse or mule, that came to hand, and charging in his shirt at the head of his troopers with a dare-devil recklessness that dismayed his opponents and imparted his own daring to his men.

Then, the confirmed and habitual stragglers soon became

numerous enough to be a nuisance upon the line of march. Here again the difference in portions of the army was very marked. In some brigades every regiment was made to keep its own rear guard to prevent straggling, and the brigade provost guard marched in rear of all, arresting any who sought to leave the ranks, and reporting the regimental commander who allowed his men to scatter. But little by little the stragglers became numerous enough to cause serious complaint, and they followed the command without joining it for days together, living on the country, and shirking the labors of their comrades. It was to these that the name "bummer" was properly applied. This class was numerous in the Confederate as in the National Army, in proportion to its strength, and the Southern people cried out for the most summary execution of military justice against them. Responsible persons addressed specific complaints to the Confederate War Secretary, charging robbery and pillage of the most scandalous kinds against their own troops. Their leading newspapers demanded the cashiering and shooting of colonels and other officers, and declared their conduct worse than the enemy's. It is perhaps vain to hope that a great war can ever be conducted without abuses of this kind, and we may congratulate ourselves that the wrongs done were almost without exception to property, and that murders, rapes, and other heinous personal offences were nearly unknown.[1]

The great mass of the officers and soldiers of the line worked hard and continuously, day by day, in marching, in bridging streams, in making corduroy roads through the swamps, in lifting the wagons and cannon from mud-holes, and in tearing up the railways. They saw little or nothing

[1] For a few extracts from Southern newspapers corroborating what is here stated see Appendix C.

of the people of the country, and knew comparatively little of the foragers' work, except to enjoy the fruits of it and the unspeakable ludicrousness of the cavalcade as it came in at night. The foragers turned into beasts of burden, oxen and cows as well as the horses and mules. Here would be a silver-mounted family carriage drawn by a jackass and a cow, loaded inside and out with everything the country produced, vegetable and animal, dead and alive. There would be an ox-cart, similarly loaded, and drawn by a nondescript tandem team, equally incongruous. Perched upon the top would be a ragged forager, rigged out in a fur hat of a fashion worn by dandies of a century ago, or a dress-coat which had done service at stylish balls of a former generation. The jibes and jeers, the fun and the practical jokes ran down the whole line as the *cortege* came in, and no masquerade in carnival could compare with it for original humor and rollicking enjoyment.[1]

The weather had generally been perfect. A flurry of snow and a sharp, cold wind had lasted for a day or two about November 23d, but the Indian summer set in after that, and on December 8th the heat was even sultry. The camps in the open pine-woods, the bonfires along the railways, the occasional sham-battles at night, with blazing pine-knots for weapons whirling in the darkness, all combined to leave upon the minds of officers and men the impression of a vast holiday frolic; and in the reunions of the veterans since the war, this campaign has always been a romantic dream more than a reality, and no chorus rings out with so joyous a swell as when they join in the refrain,

"As we were marching through Georgia."

[1] For details and incidents of all the phases of the march, see Colonel Nichols's Story of the Great March; Reminiscences of the War, by Samuel Toombs; The Ninety-second Illinois Volunteers, by Gen. Atkins, etc., etc.

CHAPTER III.

SAVANNAH.

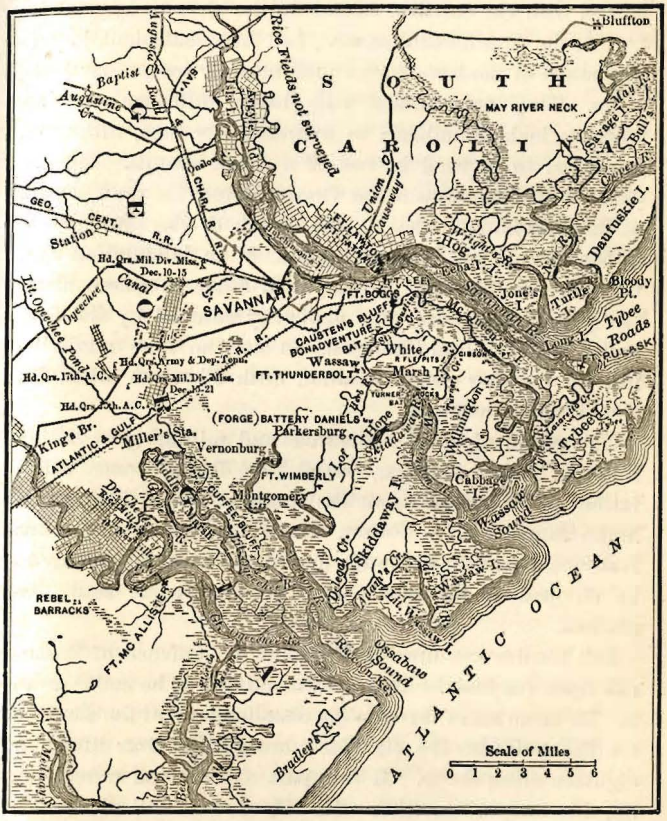
SAVANNAH was then a city of about twenty-five thousand inhabitants, on the Georgia side of the Savannah River, and had been the home of a well-to-do people who had made it one of the pleasantest towns of the South. It is built upon a sandy plateau some forty feet above the water, and though fifteen miles distant from the ocean, it is the nearest point to the harbor entrance where a city could be built. A little below, the land sinks almost to the level of the sea; the whole coast is low and cut into islands by deep sinuous natural canals or creeks. These are widely bordered by the salt marsh which is all awash at high tide. The upland on which the place is built is almost like an island in the swamps, and has a width of six or eight miles. Other upland knolls are found here and there through the region, and these were usually the places of plantation homesteads, in the midst of broad rice-fields which had been reclaimed from the surrounding marsh.

The Savannah and Ogeechee Rivers approach each other at the ocean, as has already been stated, so that the tongue of land which separates them is scarcely more than ten or fifteen miles in width for a distance of nearly fifty miles from the sea. Both rivers are bordered by the rice swamps which make a natural barrier around the city on the northwest, about three miles away, and which, in their original

condition, were the savannahs from which the early navigators gave the name to the river. Besides these, the Little Ogeechee flows between the greater stream of the same name and the Savannah, skirting the city or the adjoining plantations on the southwest. The natural line of defence for the town on the north, therefore, was also a series of suburban plantations with their rice-fields in front: these, beginning on the Savannah, were known as Williamson's, Daly's, Lawton's, and the Silk Hope plantations, and beyond them the Salt Creek marshes and the Little Ogeechee continued the line of defence to the railway bridge of the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad. The roads into the city were narrow causeways, heaped high enough to be out of water when the rice-fields were overflowed, as they often were, to a depth of from three to six feet. Extensive dams, canals, and flood-gates were part of the system by which the artificial inundation necessary for rice tillage was made, and these works were easily modified so as to become an essential part of the military defence.

The Savannah River, from the city to the sea, is a broad estuary with small, scattered islands. Immediately in front of the town is Hutchinson Island, much larger than those below, being about five miles long and dividing the river into two narrower channels. Nearly half of this island is above Williamson's plantation, and therefore was outside of the natural line of defence above described. The lower half of it, however, was held by the Confederate troops, as its occupation was necessary not only to holding the city, but to the preservation of a line of retreat toward Charleston. Immediately above Hutchinson Island was Argyle Island, ten miles long, with a smaller one (Onslow Island) on the west of it, so that for some distance there were three channels for the river.

Before Sherman's appearance in Eastern Georgia the sea defences of Savannah had been the only ones of impor-



Savannah and Vicinity.

tance, and after the fall of Fort Pulaski, in the spring of 1862, these had been somewhat contracted, and now con-

sisted of a line of redoubts and strong detached forts along the interior channels connecting the Savannah River with the Great Ogeechee, from Fort Jackson to Fort MacAllister. These, with the fortified islands in the river and a work or two on the South Carolina side, had been sufficient for the protection of the town from expeditions by sea and naval attacks. They were armed with heavy ordnance, ranging from ten inch columbiads to smooth thirty-twos, with some howitzers to be used in case of a direct assault. The expansion of the mouths of the Ogeechee into the sea is known as Ossabaw Sound; that at the mouth of the Savannah is Tybee Sound, and Warsaw Sound[1] is an indentation half way between the two. These, with other entrances along that part of the shore, were anxiously watched by the fleet under Rear-Admiral Dahlgren, so that no time might be lost in opening communication with Sherman when he should reach the coast.

The principal naval rendezvous and military post of the National forces, however, was at Port Royal, twenty miles farther to the northeast, at the mouth of Broad River; and Major-General J. G. Foster, whose headquarters were at Beaufort, had collected large quantities of supplies ready to be shipped to Sherman's army as soon as it could be reached.

But Hardee was unwilling to make his defence of Savannah upon the interior line of fortifications, if he could avoid it. To do so would involve the abandonment of the Charleston Railroad near the city, for it crossed the river fifteen or eighteen miles above. If this part of the road were given up, his only connection with Charleston and the North

[1] Many of our best maps call this name Wassaw. I follow the authority of Colonel Jones, author of The Siege of Savannah, and a long time resident of the

would be by the Union Causeway to Hardeeville, a station about six miles from the river in South Carolina, which would become the terminus of the railway. This causeway, which became a little later Hardee's way of escape from Savannah, starts at a ferry near the lower end of Hutchinson Island and runs northward for a long distance through rice swamps, which protect it from lateral approach. It had been impossible for Hardee to accumulate supplies enough for any protracted siege, even if he had been willing to allow himself to be invested; and the difficulties of his situation would be greatly increased, if fifteen or twenty miles of waggoning over a single road were necessary to the introduction of provisions for his troops and for the citizens. His first purpose, therefore, was to make and hold a line between the Savannah and the Ogeechee, far enough out to cover the Charleston railway bridge. An excellent position had been selected and entrenched, running from a point above the bridge, southwest behind Monteith Swamp to the Great Ogeechee River. Detached works had been built along this line, and infantry and artillery had been put in them, but Sherman had made them of no avail by marching Howard with the Fifteenth Corps down the right bank of the Ogeechee, flanking and turning them, so that Hardee had no choice but to destroy the railway bridge and fall back to his interior works at the city.

But let us return a moment to the last days of November, when General Richard Taylor, by the aid of Toombs as State Adjutant, was bringing to Savannah the militia derisively called Governor Brown's army, but which was now proving almost the sole resource of the Confederacy. Never was energy more timely in a pinch than that which now brought this division to the critical point. Taylor had hastened to Savannah in advance of it, and while consulting with Hardee

on November 29th, news came that a division of National troops under General Hatch had landed that morning at Boyd's Neck, on Broad River, and was marching on Grahamville and the Charleston Railroad, about twenty miles from the Savannah crossing. General Foster had ordered this movement as one likely to be of use to Sherman whether he arrived at Beaufort or at Savannah, and had Hatch succeeded in establishing himself on the railway, it is hard to see how Hardee could have extricated himself from his difficulties. The Georgia militia were enlisted on the condition that they were not to be ordered out of the State, but Taylor and Toombs laid their heads together and delighted Hardee by arranging with General G. W. Smith to switch off the trains upon the Charleston road before reaching Savannah, and in the night, so that the State troops awoke at the station near Grahamville in South Carolina, having been made, as Taylor humorously tells the story, "unconscious patriots."[1] But the vigor of the Confederates had been lacking on the National side. Hatch delayed advancing on the 29th, when there was nothing between him and the railway but a handful of cavalry, and intrenched a position near his landing place, though Grahamville was less than ten miles away. When he advanced next day, Smith with his Georgia troops was ready to meet him, and taking advantage of the swamps, which gave him, near Honey Hill, a position that could only be approached by a causeway, the advance of the National column was checked by artillery. Hatch attempted a flanking movement, but the Confederates set fire to the broomsedge, which was dead and dry in the late autumn, and this prairie fire sweeping down before the wind upon our troops forced them to seek cover of some watercourse. Hatch,

[1] Taylor's Destruction and Reconstruction, p. 215. Jones's Siege of Savannah, p. 36.

however, advanced again, and drove the enemy back a mile and a half upon an intrenched line which had been previously made. Here several courageous assaults were made, but they were repulsed, and in the night Hatch retired upon his own fortifications near Boyd's Neck. The Confederates report their loss as less than fifty, while ours was over seven hundred. It was only a fresh instance of the manner in which irresolute leadership in war wastes the lives of men by alternating between an ill-timed caution and an equally ill-timed rashness. No maxim is supported by more abundant proof than that which enjoins audacity and speed in the earlier steps of such expeditions, of which the essential feature is that they should be in the nature of a surprise.

The result of the consultation between Hardee and Taylor was that the latter sent a report to the Richmond Government which contained a very just estimate of the situation. They rightly thought that Sherman would not attempt to enter South Carolina before establishing a new base of supplies upon the coast, and that the greater ease in following the upland roads between rivers would prevent him from moving at once upon Charleston, where his route would be across numerous deep rivers and swamps. They assumed, therefore, that he would continue to move on Savannah, and advised that Hardee should prepare to abandon that place before he should be completely invested. Then, Hardee's troops should be united with those which Bragg was now assembling at Augusta, and with the garrison of Charleston, and all the scattered detachments in the Carolinas, the whole should be vigorously used to oppose the march northward which Sherman must be expected to make as soon as he had established a base on the ocean. No sounder military judgment could be made, and the subsequent errors of Beauregard and Bragg grew out of their departure from it

when Sherman's skilful demonstrations threw them into doubt as to his purpose. Writing of it later, Taylor expressed his own sense of the crisis by saying it was plain that "unless a force could be interposed between Sherman and Lee's rear, the game would be over when the former moved."[1]

Hardee assigned troops and commanders to his lines of defence as follows. From the Savannah, at Williamson's plantation, to the Central Railroad crossing, the Georgia militia under General G. W. Smith held the lines with twenty guns in position. The batteries at the Central Railroad and on the Louisville road with the lines to the head of Shaw's Dam were held by the troops of General McLaws with twenty-nine pieces of artillery. General Wright commanded the left, reaching from Shaw's Dam to the bridge of the Gulf Railway over the Little Ogeechee, and had thirty-two guns in position on his front. The artillery above referred to was the heavier armament, besides which the light artillery, consisting of eleven batteries of forty-eight guns in all, under Colonel Jones, was distributed as the necessity of the moment demanded.

The forts and fixed batteries on the side toward the sea were under the command of Colonel E. C. Anderson. Of these, Fort McAllister was the only one within the scope of the National attack, and is, therefore, the only one which need be described. It was situated at Genesis Point on the right bank of the Great Ogeechee River, commanding the channel of approach from Ossabaw Sound and covering the important bridge of the Gulf Railway across the river. It was a heavy earthwork with its principal front toward the river it was intended to command; but the gorge had also

[1] Destruction and Reconstruction, p. 218.

been closed by a straight infantry line with works for the protection of artillery at intervals in it. The armament consisted of seven heavy guns in permanent position, and eight light field guns, all mounted in barbette. The river was planted with torpedoes, and before the arrival of Sherman, sub-terra shells had also been placed along the land face, where the ditch was further protected by palisades and a fraise. As it was possible this fort would become isolated, it had been supplied with about fifty days' rations. Its garrison was about two hundred men under command of Major G. W. Anderson. Immediately above the fort the river makes a double loop, the straight line across either neck being less than a quarter of a mile, while the course by the stream is nine miles. In nearly a direct line across the broader part of the loop above the fort is the Cheves plantation with its rice-mill, two miles away, upon the other bank of the river. The fort was at the edge of the higher ground, and south of it the land fell away to the broad salt marshes over which the Sound and the sea could be seen in the distance.

Hardee's whole force consisted of about eighteen thousand men, from which must be deducted about one thousand sick in hospital. The garrisons for the forts on the sea front were small, though these, of course, could not be evacuated, as the navy was likely to make some efforts at co-operation with Sherman.[1] The inhabitants would also be available, to some extent, under the *levy en masse* which

[1] Jones's Siege of Savannah is the chief authority for the details of the situation within the Confederate lines. He says (p. 91) that the rations issued by the Commissary on December 16th were as follows: viz., to Confederate troops, 11,291; to Militia, 3,249; to hospitals, 1,282; total, 15,822. Assuming that officers either commuted their rations, or bought from the Commissary, about 2,000 must be added to these. Colonel Jones says that only 10,000 men were available for active duty on the western line, but this would depend on the judgment of the general in command.

the Legislature had ordered, and which was enforced by Hardee under a proclamation of the Mayor issued on November 28th.

Such was the situation in Savannah when, on December 10th, the National army closed in on the works around the city. A day or two was spent in bringing the several corps into position, but on the 12th the investment was complete from the Savannah River to the Ogeechee. Jackson's division of Williams's (Twentieth) corps rested on the river at the extreme left, and the other divisions of that corps extended the line to the Central Railroad. Here Davis's (Fourteenth) corps joined it and reached somewhat beyond the Ogeechee Canal, near the Lawton plantation, where it united with the left of Blair's (Seventeenth) corps. Osterhaus's (Fifteenth) corps completed the line to the Great Ogeechee River, near King's Bridge, a structure a thousand feet long, which the enemy had destroyed; but the posts were still standing, and under the direction of Howard's chief engineer, Captain Reese, the bridge was rebuilt and fit for use by the 13th. On the Central Railroad Slocum's pickets were close to the three-mile post, the Confederate entrenched line being a quarter of a mile nearer to the city; but the works were farther from the town in front of Howard.

During the last few days breadstuffs had been very scarce in the country, and foraging was not bringing in the bountiful supply which had been usual. The bread ration was drawn from the train, and rice was nearly the only thing the country now furnished the troops. Sherman's first task, therefore, was to open communication with the fleet and establish a base of supplies by means of transports plying between Ossabaw Sound and Port Royal. Howard had sent a skilful scouting officer, Captain Duncan, with two

men to pass Fort McAllister in the night in a canoe, and Duncan had succeeded in reaching Admiral Dahlgren, though it was not known till a day or two later. Kilpatrick also was pushing light parties of horse along the coast for the same purpose. To make use of the Ogeechee River, however, would be impossible till Fort McAllister was taken, and no sooner was King's Bridge passable than Sherman ordered Howard to send a sufficient force to attack and carry the fort by storm, believing that the more promptly this should be done the less the loss would be in doing it. Howard assigned Hazen's division of the Fifteenth Corps to the duty, and this command crossed the bridge at daybreak of the 13th, and moving down the right bank of the river, reached the vicinity of the fort before noon.

General Howard had established a signal station at Cheves's rice-mill on the left bank of the river, which has already been referred to, and there a section of DeGres's battery of twenty-pound Parrotts had been intrenched, covering the rear of the investing line. Sherman and Howard were both at the signal station on the roof of the mill, communicating with Hazen, and watching for boats from the fleet.

Hazen's men had captured a picket about a mile from the fort, and had learned of the position of a line of torpedoes in the road; these had been removed, and the advanced brigade under Colonel W. S. Jones had approached within half a mile of the fort early in the afternoon. Jones was anxious to attack at once, but Hazen thought it wiser to make the assault with portions of each of his three brigades, and delayed the attack till they could be brought into position. The reserve was placed where the torpedoes had been found, and three regiments from each brigade were detailed to make the assault. Colonel Wells S. Jones's brigade was on the left, Colonel Oliver's in the centre, and Colonel

Theodore Jones's on the right. The latter of these found considerable difficulty in getting into position, and it was nearly five o'clock before the signal for the attack could be given. The garrison of the fort had recently added an abattis to their defences on the land side, but had not had time to remove the large trunks of the trees from which the branches for this use had been taken. These trunks gave good cover to the skirmish line, which was pressed so close to the fort as to pick off the gunners and prevent the effective use of the artillery.

Meanwhile Sherman and Howard, full of impatience, were watching the declining sun from the top of Cheves's mill, and signalling their orders to hasten. A tug-boat from the fleet had come in sight, and approached as close as it was safe; and to its captain's question whether the fort had been taken, which reached Sherman just as Hazen's signal to his troops to advance had been given, he answered, "Not yet, but it will be in a minute." The gallant dash of the line fulfilled the promise. A short, sharp struggle ensued, and the parapet was crowned on all sides by the detachments, at nearly the same moment. The attack had been in a thin line concentrating as they reached the fort, and the men passed the abatis, the palisades, and the ditch with scarce a perceptible halt. Their greatest loss was from the torpedoes which exploded under their feet just before the ditch was reached. Part of the troops on the extreme flanks got around the palisading, where the angle of the works at the river's edge was not so well protected, and were helped by the fact that the tide was out, the abatis not extending below high-water mark. It was all over in fifteen minutes, and the National flag floated on the staff from which the Confederate ensign was pulled down, while the victors fired a *feu-de-joie*. Hazen's loss was 24 killed and 110 wounded;

that of the garrison was 48. There was no formal surrender, but officers and men ceased the struggle when they found that they were overpowered. Colonel W. S. Jones fell severely wounded as the assault began, and the command of that brigade devolved on Colonel Martin of the One Hundred and Eleventh Illinois.

The capture of the fort had an importance to Sherman far out of proportion to its military strength. The Great Ogeechee was now open and vessels could reach King's Bridge in rear of the right of his line. So the question of a base on the sea was already solved, and the opportune presence of the tug which Sherman had signalled from Cheves's mill enabled him to send despatches that same night to Admiral Dahlgren's flag-ship in Warsaw Sound, for General Foster at Port Royal and General Grant at City Point. Before morning he heard of General Foster's arrival in the river, though unable to reach Fort McAllister because of the torpedoes planted below it. Thereupon Sherman again took a small boat and joined Foster upon his steamer, when he decided that the best economy of time would be found in proceeding at once to find Admiral Dahlgren in Warsaw Sound. The admiral entered earnestly into the plans for co-operation, undertook to find light-draught vessels for the transportation of supplies to King's Bridge, and to remove the obstructions from the Ogeechee.

Foster reported the efforts he had made to reach the Charleston railway, and that although he had not succeeded in getting actual possession of any point of the road, he had, about a week before, intrenched a position near Coosawhatchee from which his guns commanded the railroad. He was unable to be in the saddle owing to the breaking out of an old wound, and this was a serious misfortune, for the juncture was one in which the presence of the responsible

commander is the only guaranty for thorough work at the front. The truth was, that although the position referred to was within a mile of the railway, the enemy continued to operate the road without serious interruption as far as Hardeeville, from which point the connection with Savannah was made by the Union Causeway. Within the range of the guns at Foster's position the railway was used chiefly at night, and the trains were kept running till the evacuation of Savannah, a week later.

Foster, however, was directed to establish himself upon the railway, if possible, and Sherman returned on the morning of December 15th to Howard's headquarters. Strong reconnoissances had meanwhile been made by the corps commanders, the approaches to Hardee's works had been carefully studied, and the preliminary steps taken to drain off the overflow from portions of the rice-fields in front of the city. By mending some of the breaks in the causeways and canals, and especially in the Ogeechee Canal, and by rearranging the flood-gates within our lines so that they should shut out the water from the rivers instead of shutting it in, the depth of the inundations began to be sensibly diminished. Till the water should be a good deal reduced an assault could hardly be thought of, for narrow columns along the causeways and dykes would have little chance, and in the overflowed fields the certainty of all wounded men being drowned would make an unjustifiable waste of human life.

On the night of the 11th, General Williams of the Twentieth Corps had put over part of the Third Wisconsin upon Argyle Island, and next morning the rest of the regiment. While these troops were crossing, three armed steamers of the Confederates attempted to descend the river, but were fired upon by Winegar's rifled battery, two of them were

driven back, and one, the Resolute, was driven ashore upon the island and captured with its crew by Colonel Hawley and the Wisconsin regiment. Hardee had other gunboats below, and the presence of these in the river made it seem unadvisable to lay pontoon bridges till some thorough means of protecting them could be arranged. By an unfortunate mistake the Resolute was burned by her captors, when she would have been of inestimable value in ferrying troops and supplies. The Confederates had carefully removed all flat-boats and barges from the river, and the great exposure of detached troops on the South Carolina side, with no assured means of communication or of supply, made it seem better to trust to Foster's ability to complete the investment on the east by seizing the railway to which his troops were so near.

Large quantities of rice were found on the island, and for some days this was the only breadstuff the men could procure, while the rice-straw was the only forage for animals. On the 16th, Colonel Carman with the remainder of his brigade joined Hawley on the island, while at the same time Wheeler began a concentration of the Confederate cavalry opposite, to contest any landing on the Carolina shore.

At the right, Howard was making corduroy roads to connect the camps with the new dépôt that was preparing at King's Bridge, and was hurrying the operations which were expected to drain the rice-fields. His divisions and Slocum's were also arranging earthworks to receive some heavy rifled guns which Sherman had directed Foster to send from Port Royal, as the light artillery brought with the army could not cope with the armament of the Confederate fortifications. In many places a fringe of pine woods protected the camps of the National troops, and it was noticed that when this was half a mile deep, the shot from even the

heaviest of the enemy's guns failed to pass through it. Around the plantation houses were groves of giant live-oaks festooned with the tillandsia, the long moss of the South, and the headquarters tents were picturesquely dotted among these.

A despatch boat had been waiting on the coast with the mail for the army, and Sherman received despatches from Grant, dated the 3d and 6th of December, in which he directed that an intrenched position be established at any eligible point, and that the bulk of the army should then be shipped by sea, to join the forces before Richmond. Sherman responded to these at some length on the 16th, accepting the rôle assigned him with hearty subordination, but saying that his own expectation had been to reduce Savannah and then march to Columbia. To the officers of Grant's staff, who were the bearers of the despatches, he explained more fully his plans, and very vigorously urged the advantages of the movements he had proposed, so that these might be properly laid before the General-in-Chief.[1] It happened, however, that on the very day when Sherman was thus replying, Grant had himself reached the conclusion to leave his subordinate free to choose his own course, and Halleck was writing to Sherman, by his direction, the authority to act upon his own judgment. The true strategic purpose of the campaign was thus maintained, but as the despatches of the 16th and 18th did not reach Sherman till Savannah was in his possession, the effect was to make him less decisive than he would otherwise have been in putting the left wing of the army into positions on the Carolina side of the river, and in committing himself to siege operations and to a completed investment, from which it

[1] My authority for this is Colonel G. W. Nichols, of Sherman's staff, who was present at the conversation.

would not have been easy to withdraw when the expected transports should appear to take away the army. As a middle course, therefore, he determined to rely mainly upon Foster for operations in South Carolina, limiting Slocum to such auxiliary efforts from Argyle Island as might at any time be withdrawn. That such a middle course was a comparatively weak one, no one was better aware than Sherman, but it was that which duty seemed to dictate. He directed his Chief Engineer, Colonel Poe, to lay out an intrenched camp at Fort McAllister, which might be held in the manner indicated by General Grant's first despatches, and ordered the corps commanders to press the siege with the means in hand.

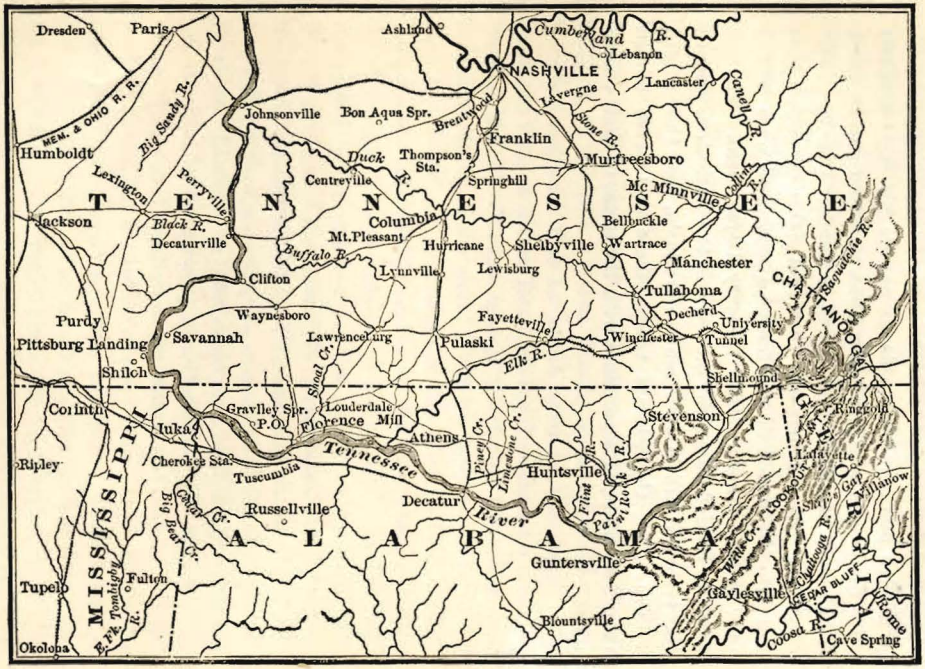
In the hope also that the boldness of the demand might have some moral effect, he sent on the 17th a formal summons to Hardee to surrender, but this was refused. We have already seen that the Confederate commander was determined not to allow himself to be shut up in the city, and the only question with him was how long he could stay without too seriously endangering his escape. Beauregard had reached Augusta, and was in general command, and this officer had accepted and earnestly reiterated the views which Hardee and Taylor had laid before the Confederate Government on this subject. General S. Jones, now in command at Charleston, was ordered to Pocatligo to keep open the railroad at every hazard, and a bridge of boats was built across the two channels of the river, from Savannah to Hutchinson Island and thence to the Carolina shore.

Meanwhile the waters on the inundated rice-fields were slowly subsiding, Howard and Slocum had their siege batteries in position, some of their divisions had prepared light bridges to be carried by the men and thrown across the ditches, and other preparations were made for an assault

which must have been sanguinary, but which they believed could be successfully made. On the 19th Carman's brigade was ferried across from Argyle Island to the Carolina shore, and obtained a strong defensive position at Izard's mill, but the fields were under water there also, and all bridges were burned, so that it was not an easy thing to advance. The movement, however, satisfied Hardee that he could not delay longer, and he began the evacuation, first sending over a strong detachment to resist fiercely the advance of Carman along the dykes. Knowing the danger of Hardee's escape, and believing that a vigorous effort by Foster's troops might still prevent it, Sherman started in person by steamer, on the 18th, to visit Foster, whose physical condition was not such that he could come to the camp. He spent the 20th at Hilton Head, giving directions for a movement of Hatch's division against the Union Causeway, and started to return in the night; but his boat was delayed by high winds and by grounding at low tide, so that he did not get back till toward evening on the 21st, when he found the city already in possession of his troops. Hardee had completed the evacuation in the night of the 20th, and Geary's division of the Twentieth Corps, being the nearest to the town, had marched in at daybreak next morning. Sherman's despatch announcing the possession of the city reached President Lincoln on Christmas eve, and its publication was received by the country as a Christmas gift of priceless value. The moral prestige of the march was greatly heightened by the so quick capture of one of the principal Southern cities and seaports. The escape of Hardee was a disappointment, but as we now know that he had been carefully watching the roads since the first approach of the National army, with the determination to abandon the city before the investment could have been made complete,

the only question was whether he should make the evacuation a few days sooner or later.

Hardee had only been able to remove his light artillery with his troops, and the heavy guns, mounted and in store, which were captured, were found to number over two hundred and fifty. Thirty-one thousand bales of cotton also fell into the hands of the National army and were turned over to the officers of the Treasury Department. The retreating Confederate army moved first to Charleston, whence the Georgia militia were sent to Augusta, that they might relieve other Confederate troops there and serve within their own State, in accordance with the terms of their enlistment.



Middle Tennessee.

CHAPTER IV.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE—PULASKI TO SPRING HILL.

WHILE the events described in the last chapters were occurring in Georgia, the struggle in Middle Tennessee had reached a crisis. We have seen that before November 15th Forrest's cavalry had joined Hood, and that a portion of the Confederate infantry occupied Florence, covering the bridge that was laid there in preparation for the advance of the whole of Hood's army. General Thomas had committed to General Schofield the command of the troops immediately opposed to Hood, but it was the universal expectation that a rapid concentration of the National forces would be made in time to prevent the Confederate army from advancing far.[1]

In East Tennessee the enemy, under Breckenridge, made an attack upon General Gillem, who commanded a body of our cavalry there; but this was simply a diversion intended to delay the concentration of our forces, like that made just before by Forrest, and had no further significance. Sherman's march from Atlanta made it necessary for Hood to do promptly whatever he meant to do, and his cavalry began to make demonstrations toward Lawrenceburg and Waynesboro as early as the 15th. The weather, however, had proven a formidable obstacle, delaying the rebuilding of the railroad between Tuscumbia and Cherokee Station, and

[1] For organization of the armies of Thomas and Hood, see Appendix B.

delaying still more the wagon trains which were toiling through the mud in the effort to accumulate supplies sufficient to warrant the opening of an active campaign. The storms, of which only the edge reached Sherman near Macon, were continuous and severe in Tennessee, alternating between rains and severe frosts, covering the roads with a frozen crust over deep mire, just strong enough to make the utmost obstruction, without getting the solidity necessary to bear up the wagons and teams.

Beauregard had left Hood on the 17th, after issuing the order which directed the latter to advance with the least possible delay, and on the 20th had reached West Point, Miss., whence he telegraphed to Hood to "push an active offensive immediately." On that day, Lee's corps marched ten miles out from Florence, on a road between those leading to Waynesboro and to Lawrenceburg, and on the 21st the whole of the army was in motion, Hood hoping by a rapid march to get in rear of Schofield's forces before they could reach Duck River. Schofield received word on the 20th from Hatch, who commanded his cavalry, that the advance had begun, and as soon as it was evident that Hood was moving on the Lawrenceburg road, he sent back his surplus stores from Pulaski, and prepared to retreat to Columbia. He had ordered Colonel Strickland, who was at the last-named place, to prepare a defensive line by which he could hold the town, or at least the crossings of Duck River at the railway and pontoon bridges. On the 21st the cavalry reports left no doubt that Hood was near Lawrenceburg, and the next morning Cox's division of the Twenty-third Corps was sent to Lynnville, about half way between Pulaski and Columbia, where it was joined in the evening by Wagner's division of the Fourth Corps. At this point they covered an important cross-road coming in from Lawrenceburg

to the railway. Thomas's despatches to Schofield had all contained the strong wish that the troops might retreat as little and as slowly as possible, for on Sunday, the 20th, he had abandoned the expectation of seeing A. J. Smith's troops before the following Friday. He expressed a hope that Pulaski might be held till then, but coincided in Schofield's opinion that, if Hood attempted to get in his rear, it would be necessary to retire to Columbia, covering the railway. The mingled and continuous storms of snow, sleet, and rain were delaying Hood, and he was not yet so far North as to make it sure that he would not seek to reach the railway south of Columbia. On the 23d, Schofield's movement kept pace with Hood's, Cox's division being sent ten miles farther north to Hurricane, the crossing of the railway by the Mount Pleasant and Shelbyville road, and Stanley, with the whole of the Fourth Corps, was moved to Lynnville. But during the night Schofield received word that the cavalry on the Mount Pleasant and Columbia Pike were unable to resist the determined advance of Forrest, and before daybreak of the 24th he put his little army in rapid motion for Columbia. Cox's division, having the shorter distance to travel, approached the town first, and hearing the noise of the cavalry combat on the converging road at the west, marched by a cross-road some two miles out of town, and reached that on which the fight was going on in time to interpose the infantry skirmishers, moving at double-quick, between Forrest's cavalry and the brigade of Colonel Capron, which was rapidly retreating into the place. The enemy was quickly checked and a line formed behind Bigby Creek. It was now a little after seven o'clock; in less than three hours Stanley's head of column came up, and a strong position was taken by the whole command, covering the town on the south. Hood did not succeed in getting the whole of

his forces up until the 26th, his utmost exertions having failed to move his army faster than ten miles a day. Schofield was joined on the march by General Wilson, who took command of all the cavalry, which was slowly reinforced, and he was met at Columbia by General Ruger, with one of the brigades of the Twenty-third Corps, which had been left at Johnsonville. General Cooper, who had also been at Johnsonville, was ordered by General Thomas to march with his brigade from there to Centreville, a crossing of the Duck River, thirty miles west of Columbia, where it was thought Forrest's cavalry might try to pass that stream. Part of Ruger's command was scattered at several points on the river, within a few miles of Columbia, to protect crossings and fords on Schofield's right flank. Wilson, with the cavalry, was directed to operate on the left, covering the country in the direction of Lewisburg and Shelbyville as well as possible, besides watching the fords and crossings of the river above Columbia.

Schofield's position was a strong one if the attack were made upon him in front, but it had the great disadvantage of a river at his back. No line north of the river could be occupied without abandoning the railroad bridge to destruction, and this would be needed again as soon as a forward movement should begin. The river at the town makes a horse-shoe bend to the south, and the land on the north bank in the bend is low, and completely commanded by that on the south. Hood was too wary to make an assault of the lines, and contented himself with a sharp skirmishing engagement, while he prepared to turn Schofield's position by crossing the river some miles above.

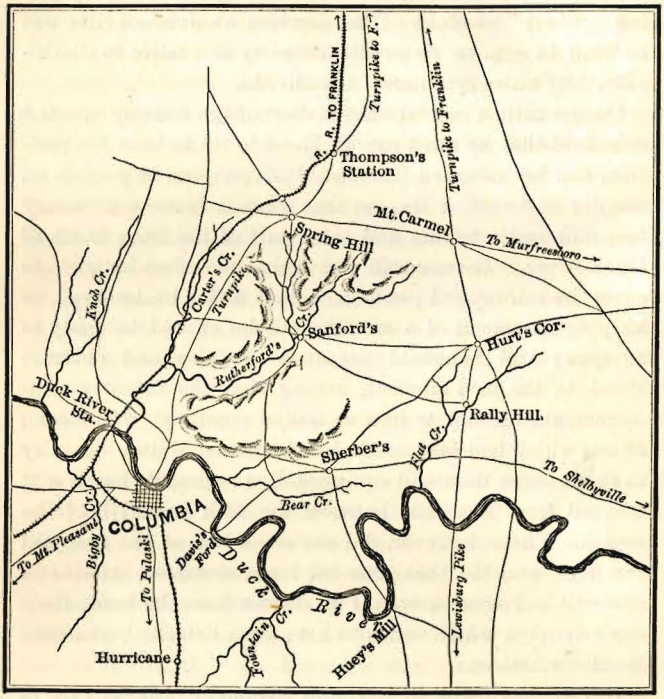
Thomas had given orders to General Granger, at Decatur, prior to the retrograde movement, under which that officer, on the same day that Schofield abandoned Pulaski, with-

drew his garrisons from Athens, Decatur, and Huntsville, and concentrated his division at Stevenson, a hundred miles east. The relations of this singular divergent movement will be considered later; its immediate effect was to relieve Hood of any embarrassment as to his right flank in operating against Schofield. The garrison at Johnsonville was ordered to remove the public property and retire to Clarksville, fifty miles northwest of Nashville.

On the 24th, a careful examination of the country satisfied Schofield that he must expect Hood to try to turn his position, and he informed Thomas of his purpose to prepare an interior and shorter line, so that when it became necessary he could retire to this and send part of his force north of Duck River. Thomas still urged that the effort be made to cover the railway and pontoon bridges with a bridge-head, so keeping command of a crossing till he should be ready to advance; and Schofield prepared to delay and obstruct Hood to the last moment, urging that the infantry reinforcements be sent to him as fast as possible. The strong efforts which had been made had increased Wilson's cavalry to about seven thousand equipped, five regiments being sent forward from Nashville between the 24th and 27th of the month. These, however, did not reach him at the front till the 30th, and till that time his force remained inferior in strength to Forrest's, even if we deduct from the latter Roddey's division, which seems to have been detached, guarding Northern Alabama.

During the night of the 25th Schofield ordered Cox to move two brigades of his division to the north side of the river, and take a position covering the pontoon bridge which was at the ford. On the 26th, this was strengthened by breastworks on indented lines, where the brigades and regiments were separately intrenched, taking advantage of every

irregularity of the ground and of groves of timber to protect the force from the cross-fire of artillery which the enemy would have from the higher ground on the south of the stream. Pits were also made for a line of skirmishers close



Vicinity of Columbia, Tenn.

to the river bank. The Fourth Corps troops were brought into the interior line which had been constructed on the other side, and the town and bridges were still held.

Hood felt cautiously the new line in front of Columbia

but still did not attack, and the whole of his infantry being up, he began a movement to cross the river above. Forrest assembled most of the Confederate cavalry between Hood's right and the turnpike, and other roads leading from Lewisburg to Franklin eastward of Columbia, trying the different fords. Wilson was actively at work to prevent the crossing, watching the country as far as Shelbyville. The indications of Hood's purpose were now so plain that Schofield felt he could no longer delay, and moved the whole of his command to the north side of the river, in the night of the 27th, partly destroying the railway bridge, so that the enemy could not make use of it. He was also obliged to destroy the pontoon bridge, which was of heavy wooden boats, for which he had no means of transportation. He earnestly assured Thomas that he had held on as long as was at all safe, and he was plainly right, the only doubt being whether, in his zeal to give Thomas all the time possible for the intended concentration, he was not taking too great a risk.

Wilson heard, on the afternoon of the 28th, that Forrest had forced a crossing at Huey's mill, eight miles above Columbia.[1] He tried to unite his forces as rapidly as possible in front of the enemy, but Hurt's cross-roads, between Spring Hill and the Lewisburg pike, was the first point at which he was able to make any continued stand. At eight in the evening his information seemed to show that Forrest was moving eastward toward the Lewisburg pike, and that none of the enemy had gone toward the Franklin pike, in

[1] The official reports and memoirs on both sides are full of differences as to the distance from Columbia to the place where Hood's infantry crossed. The Confederate accounts say nothing of Huey's mill, and do not distinctly fix the place of their pontoon bridge. By the courtesy of Capt. R. D. Smith, of Columbia, who was in Hood's army at the time, I am able to say definitely that the bridge was laid at Davis's ford, between five and six miles from Columbia. Some of the cavalry crossed at Huey's mill.

rear of Schofield. At one o'clock, however, he received information that pontoons were laid at Huey's mill, and that Hood's infantry were crossing. This he immediately despatched to Schofield; but the messenger had to go by Spring Hill, and the way was long, so that the intelligence was only received at daylight in the morning. A brigade of infantry (Post's of Wood's division) was immediately sent upon a reconnoissance up the river, accompanied by one of Schofield's staff, with orders to observe and report the movements of the enemy. Stanley was ordered to march at eight o'clock with two divisions of his corps to Spring Hill, eleven miles, leaving Wood in support of Post's reconnoissance, and about a mile in rear of Cox's division, which was ordered to hold stubbornly the crossing at Columbia and the tongue of land in the bend of the river. Ruger was ordered to hasten the blockade of the fords and roads below the town by felling trees, and then to march also to Spring Hill. Stewart's brigade of cavalry, which had been watching the lower fords, had been ordered the preceding evening to proceed rapidly to join Wilson by way of Spring Hill; and Hammond's brigade, which was coming from Nashville freshly remounted, was ordered to stop at the same place and move as Wilson should direct. As another precaution Schofield had telegraphed Thomas, asking that a pontoon bridge be sent to Franklin, where the wagon bridge had been carried away by a freshet.

Soon after daylight the Confederate artillery around the whole bend of the river opened upon the division entrenched in the lower lands along the north shore, but the precautions that had been taken by building traverses and angles in the lines prevented any serious loss. The fire was returned from our batteries, and the renewal of the artillery combat at different times through the day, by

showing that Hood's cannon were in position, proved also that his whole army could not have moved.

The truth was that Hood had left two divisions of Lee's corps, and the whole of his artillery, in Columbia, with orders to make strong demonstrations in the morning, and to force the crossing of the river later in the day. The roads by which he was leading Cheatham's and Stewart's corps were not thought practicable for the cannon. Schofield needed time for Ruger to complete his work at the fords below, and to ship by rail some artillery which had no horses and other material for which transportation was lacking. He judged also from the strong force of the enemy in Columbia that Hood was not unlikely to move straight down the river upon his flank, when the two parts of the Confederate army could co-operate. He therefore modified his order to Stanley, so as to place Kimball's division near Rutherford Creek crossing, about two miles from Wood, and let Stanley proceed to Spring Hill with Wagner's division alone. Ruger was ready to march early in the day, and leaving one regiment as an outpost on the right, he hastened with the rest of his two brigades over Rutherford Creek, when he halted, by Schofield's orders, a short distance beyond the position of Kimball. The wagon trains of the army had been ordered to Spring Hill, and Stanley reached that place about noon, and just in time to prevent their capture by the enemy's cavalry.

Forrest had, on the 28th, placed Buford's division upon the Lewisburg and Franklin turnpike, Chalmers's division at Holland's Ford, about seven miles east of Columbia, and Jackson's at Huey's mill, between Chalmers and Buford, while he himself, with his escort, and Biffle's demi-brigade attempted Davis's Ford, two miles west of Chalmers.[1] The

[1] Jordan and Prior's Campaigns of Forrest, p. 619.

two divisions of the National cavalry were broken into smaller detachments, part of them well out toward Shelbyville, the nearest to the infantry being part of Capron's brigade, at Rally Hill, on the Lewisburg pike, where a branch turnpike turns off to Spring Hill. The resistance made to Buford was so vigorous that he could not get over the river, but Jackson and Chalmers forced a crossing after a sharp skirmish, and Forrest himself does not seem to have found any resistance. He soon struck the Columbia and Murfreesboro road, and turning Chalmers and Jackson to the east, drove Wilson's detachment beyond Rally Hill. The enemy was now between the main body of our cavalry and the parties watching the fords near the Lewisburg crossing. These were collected by Major Young (Fifth Iowa Cavalry) and under his lead they daringly cut their way through. Wilson now called in his detachments toward Hurt's Corners as rapidly as possible, but his despatch to Schofield at eight o'clock, giving the information already referred to, shows that he was misled as to Forrest's purposes. It is true that the latter was moving eastward with two-thirds of his command, but he was doing so only to clear the way for Buford, and at Rally Hill he was in possession of the only macadamized road leading directly to Schofield's rear at Spring Hill. Wilson had been able to rally his whole command at Hurt's Corners, and checked the further advance of the enemy in the evening, but Buford joined Forrest in the night, and early in the morning the whole of the Confederate cavalry again advanced. Wilson made a brave and determined resistance, putting Croxton's brigade of Johnson's division in the rear, to contest every foot of the way. Capron's brigade of the same division, which had been badly worsted the evening before, took the advance on the Franklin road, and Hatch's division was

the middle of the column supporting Croxton. Forrest operated by flank movements, using his heavier force to turn the positions selected by Wilson, and by the middle of the forenoon had gained Mount Carmel, where the Murfreesboro and Spring Hill road crosses the turnpike on which our cavalry was retiring. Here Coon's brigade of Hatch's division occupied a barricade which had been previously made by Capron, and the rest of the command moved through it. The enemy made two determined charges upon it, but were repulsed. Wilson continued, however, to retire slowly on Franklin, and Forrest, who now had possession of the direct road to Spring Hill, covering that by which Hood's infantry was moving, no longer pressed the pursuit; but leaving a detachment in observation, he moved directly upon Spring Hill, where Stanley arrived almost at the same moment with him, as we have seen. It is now plain that Wilson erred in adhering to the line of the Lewisburg and Franklin pike after Forrest gained Rally Hill. By doing so he allowed Forrest to cut him off both from Schofield's infantry, and from the two brigades of cavalry which were ordered to Spring Hill to reinforce him, and Schofield was left, during the whole of the critical day and night of the 29th, without the means of learning Hood's movements except from his infantry reconnoissances. The true line of action was manifestly to regain the road from Rally Hill to Spring Hill in the night of the 28th, or, failing that, to have made a rapid march by Mount Carmel to Spring Hill, so as to anticipate Forrest there.

Hood did not cross Duck River with his infantry in the night, as had been expected, but Cleburne's division of Cheatham's corps, which was his head of column, crossed soon after daylight in the morning upon the pontoon bridge at Davis's Ford, followed by Bate and Brown. Stewart's

corps came next, the rear being brought up by Johnson's division of Lee's corps, which was temporarily reporting to Stewart. Hood himself accompanied the advance guard, but despite all his efforts it was three o'clock in the afternoon, or later, when Cleburne reached the Rally Hill turnpike where it crosses Rutherford Creek, two and a half miles from Spring Hill. Ordering Cheatham to remain and hurry the crossing of his other divisions, Cleburne was directed to press forward and attack whatever force there might be at Spring Hill, where the noise of Stanley's artillery warned them that Forrest was meeting with opposition. But the distant firing at Columbia could also be heard, and the tenacity with which Schofield hung on to the line of Duck River apparently raised doubts in Hood's mind whether the National commander might not have received reinforcements enough to cut boldly between the now separated wings of his army. Post's reconnoissance had gone far enough to observe the movement, and it is probable that it had in turn been seen by Hood's command, and he would thus know that infantry was approaching his line of march. But whatever the reasons which induced it, Hood ordered Stewart to form his corps in line of battle south of Rutherford Creek, facing west, and this instruction necessarily implies the expectation of the approach of an enemy from that direction, or the purpose of himself making an attack upon the line which Schofield had prepared to receive him by putting Wood's, Kimball's, and Ruger's divisions within supporting distance of each other upon the extension of Cox's left. He may have thought that the resistance at Spring Hill would be slight when Cheatham reached the field, and that this corps sweeping down the turnpike toward Columbia would meet the convergent advance of Stewart in a general attack upon Schofield's flank. The advantages of the

defence in a broken and wooded country, and the prudent disposal of his force, by which Schofield had now some miles of line facing the east, would possibly have made such an attack as disastrous as the one at Franklin next day; but Hood did not attack there, and Stewart remained in line till Cheatham had been repulsed at Spring Hill, and was then ordered up when darkness had fallen and it was thought too late for further action that night.

When Stanley had reached Spring Hill he found a part of Forrest's command already in the outskirts of the place. He ordered Wagner to put Opdycke's and Lane's brigades in position to cover the village, and advanced Bradley's brigade to a wooded hill about three-fourths of a mile east of the turnpike, which commanded the approaches from that direction. One battery of artillery had accompanied Wagner, but Captain Bridges, Chief of Artillery of the Fourth Corps, had followed Stanley's march with six batteries, leaving one with Wood's division. This had been done only to get them well forward *en route* to Franklin; but on reaching Spring Hill, Captain Bridges had with wise precaution put his guns in battery on a commanding bench just west of the road, and where a little later they proved of great use and most fortunate in position. The enemy's cavalry made active efforts to reach the trains, which were parked by the roadside, and also to destroy the railway station a short distance west of the turnpike, and the protection of all these kept Opdycke and Lane fully employed. Bradley was engaged at the same time, but the affair was not serious until the arrival of Cleburne's division on the field. This officer formed his command along the Rally Hill road, and, advancing at right angles to it, attempted to reach the Columbia turnpike. He does not seem to have been fully aware of Bradley's position, for his extreme right (Lowry's brigade) alone reached it,

and was received with so rude a shock that Cleburne was quickly forced to change front nearly at right angles in order to engage his opponent. Bate's division, which followed Cleburne, had formed in the same manner and took the same line of direction. It had nearly reached the Columbia road when Bate discovered that Cleburne had changed direction, and his orders being to form on the left of that division, much time was consumed in rectifying the line. Brown's division had followed Bate and had been sent forward on Cleburne's right. Bradley's position had been too isolated to be held by a single brigade against so extended a line of battle, and after his first sharp encounter with Cleburne he retreated in some disorder, he himself being severely wounded. The brigade was quickly reformed on the right of Lane, at the southern edge of the village commanding the Columbia road, and a regiment was detached from Opdycke to strengthen it. Wagner's line was now a semicircle, reaching from the Columbia road around the eastern side of the place to the railway station on the northwest, Opdycke's brigade being stretched out till it was only a strong line of skirmishers. A regiment which was with the trains as a guard was also utilized, and advantage was taken of the ground to present the strongest front possible. Cleburne and Brown followed up Bradley's retreat, but were met with so continuous a fire and on so long a defensive line, that they were made to believe they were in the presence of a superior force. The concentration of artillery fire upon them was so far beyond what they could expect from a single division, that it checked them as much, perhaps, by producing the conviction that they had most of Schofield's army before them, as by the severe losses caused by the terrible fire of shrapnel and canister. It was now growing dark, and Hood having reached the conclusion that

he needed Stewart's corps also, ordered this up from Rutherford Creek, with Johnson's division of Lee's corps which accompanied it. Jackson's division of cavalry occupied Thompson's Station, three miles north of Spring Hill, and the rest of Forrest's horsemen were in that direction. When Stewart arrived it was already night, and he was ordered to bivouac on the right and rear of Cheatham.

Meanwhile Schofield had issued his orders that Cox's division should continue to hold the bank of the river opposite Columbia till nightfall, if possible, and then, leaving a skirmish line in position, should march to Spring Hill, followed in turn by Wood's and Kimball's divisions. The skirmishers were directed to remain till midnight unless driven off, and to join the rear guard of the army or follow it. The divisions were all to move by the left flank, so that whenever they should halt and face they would be in line of battle, and could use the road fences for barricades if attacked by Hood. The whole line would thus be shortened from the right till Kimball only should remain on that flank, when he also would march to Spring Hill. By this arrangement there was the least risk of confusion and the greatest readiness for any contingency which might arise.

On hearing from Stanley that he was attacked by infantry, Schofield hastened to Ruger's division, which, it will be remembered, was nearest to Spring Hill, and led its two brigades in person by a rapid march to Stanley's support. As he approached the village he found pickets of the enemy on the road, but these were driven off and he joined Stanley at seven o'clock. Whittaker's brigade of Kimball's division had also been ordered up, and followed Ruger closely. When it arrived it was placed on the right of Wagner's line, to cover the march of the rest of the column as it should approach. Learning from Stanley that some force of the

enemy was at Thompson's Station, Schofield immediately marched with Ruger's division to that point to open the way to Franklin. At his approach Jackson withdrew his cavalry and Ruger was placed in position there without a contest. Schofield now returned to Spring Hill, reaching the village at midnight, and meeting there the head of Cox's division which had moved from Duck River in accordance with his orders.

It is necessary, to a complete understanding of the situation, that we should go back a little and notice the efforts which Lee made to carry out Hood's orders, and force the crossing of Duck River in the afternoon. He had kept up, at intervals, an annoying plunging fire upon Cox's troops in the bend of the river, but our rifled cannon, by greater range and better practice, had prevented the enemy's artillery from maintaining its positions or doing much damage. A line of skirmishers' pits on the very end of the tongue of land had been made untenable, but a fringe of wood, a little further back, afforded a cover which gave complete command of the open ground to the edge of the river bank. About four o'clock the efforts of Lee to effect a crossing became more energetic. Some pontoons were brought to the south bank of the river, and, under cover of a rapid artillery fire, a few boats were run down to the water. Some troops were ferried over in these, and so long as they remained under protection of the river bank, they could not be reached by our fire. As soon, however, as they appeared above its edge, and attempted to advance against the fringe of woods held by the Twelfth and Sixteenth Kentucky (part of Reilly's brigade) they were met by the most determined resistance. The Sixty-third Indiana and One Hundred and Twelfth Illinois, of Henderson's brigade (temporarily commanded by Colonel Stiles), were sent forward to support the right of

Reilly's men, and the enemy was driven from the open ground to the cover of the river bank again, and made no further effort to cross the river during the evening.

Soon after nightfall the line of pickets near the river was strengthened, the two Kentucky regiments, under command of Colonel White, were left as their support, the Division Inspector-General, Major Dow, being with them, and having orders to bring them off at midnight. The division then marched to Spring Hill, where it was directed by General Schofield to take the advance and proceed at once to Franklin, twelve miles further. The other divisions followed in the appointed manner and without serious interruption. The pickets at the river were withdrawn, as directed, and overtook the rear of Wood's division a little beyond Spring Hill, and, under orders from that officer, protected the flank of the trains from the cavalry of the enemy on the remainder of the march to Franklin.

Wagner's division was kept in position at Spring Hill till the trains and all the other troops were in movement, and Opdycke's brigade, which was the rear guard of the whole, did not march until six o'clock in the morning. About midnight Hood was informed that troops were passing on the Columbia road, and sent Johnson's division of Lee's corps to extend Bate's line and stop the movement; but the night was dark and the country unfamiliar, and nothing came of it but a slight occasional skirmish, while our columns marched by in full view of the enemy's camp-fires, which were burning less than half a mile away.

Here, as at Atlanta, Hood sought to shift the responsibility for his failure upon a subordinate, and Cheatham was now selected to bear the burden. Hood charged him with tardiness and weakness in the attack upon Stanley, and asked to have him relieved from his command. This request was

withdrawn after the battle of Franklin, though without retracting the charge. But a commander who is personally with the head of column in such a movement and upon the field, has the means of enforcing his orders by direct commands to the divisions. Had his own confidence not wavered, and had he not begun to yield to the belief that much more than one division was before him, his own energy would have carried his subordinates with him, and would have made the assault as desperate, if need be, as it was next day. But he seems to have lacked the grasp of mind which enables a general to judge and to act with vigor in the presence of circumstances which throw doubt upon his plan, and he proved inferior to his opponent in a strategic contest, which has been generally regarded as one of the most critical and instructive conjunctures of the war. The circumstances, as narrated by the leading Confederate officers who were present, show that Hood had an access of hesitation at the very moment when the success of his movement demanded that all doubts should be thrown to the winds and everything risked upon a desperate stroke.[1]

[1] A paper read in December, 1881, before a society of Southern officers at Louisville, Ky., by General Cheatham, contains a very full array of the evidence which sustains the above view.

CHAPTER V.

BATTLE OF FRANKLIN.

THE march of the National army from Spring Hill to Franklin was not seriously interrupted. Forrest's troopers made an occasional dash at the long wagon train, but only in one or two instances did they succeed in reaching it, and very few wagons were lost. After seeing his columns fairly started, Schofield rode forward and overtook General Cox with the advanced division just before the village of Franklin was reached. He had, about noon, urgently renewed his request to Thomas to send a pontoon bridge to the crossing of the Harpeth River, but having received no answer, he spurred forward with his staff to see if it had arrived. It was not yet daybreak, and the division was ordered to mass by the roadside to allow the trains to pass into the town. The division commander and his staff had halted at the house of a Mr. Carter, at the edge of the village (a house soon to become the key-point of a fierce battle) and were trying to catch a few minutes' sleep upon the floor, when General Schofield returned, much disturbed at finding that no pontoons had come.[1] He ordered General Cox to as-

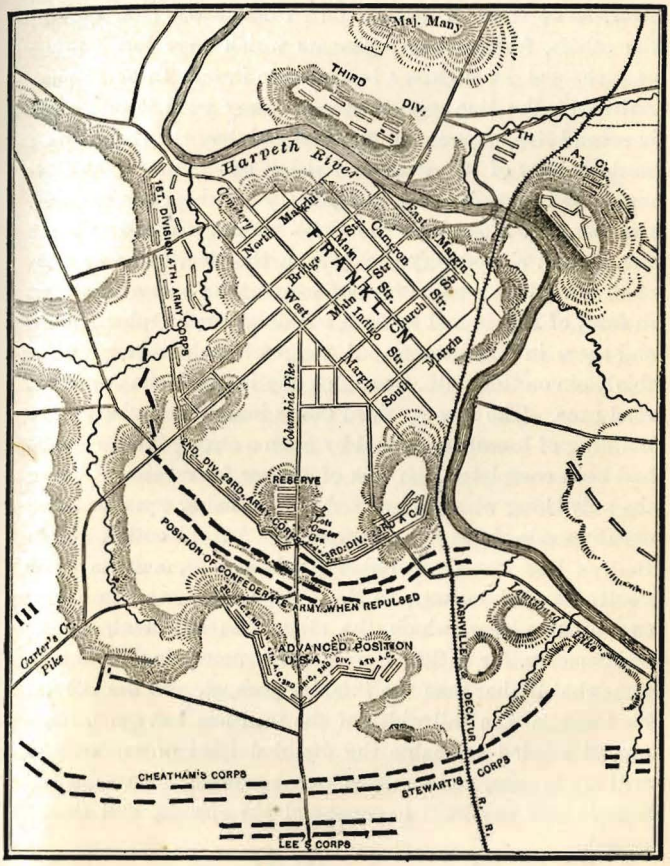
[1] In the correspondence on file in the War Records office, no response to the second request for pontoons is found, and General Schofield informs the author that he received none. The same files do not contain any explanation of the destruction of the boats at Columbia, and it would therefore seem that General Thomas must have continued to assume that they were available, notwithstanding the strong implication of Schofield's despatches. See Appendix D.

sume command of both divisions of the Twenty-third Corps, and, as soon as day should dawn, intrench them upon the best line which could be made right and left of the knoll on which the Carter house stood, to cover the crossing of the trains and the rest of the army. He himself, with Major Twining, his Chief Engineer, began immediately to plan such improvements of the river crossings as should enable him to get the trains and the artillery upon the north side of the Harpeth at the earliest possible hour.

The village of Franklin is upon the south side of the river, which partly encloses it in a deep curve to the northeast. The northern bank is here considerably higher than the other, and, upon a hill commanding the railway and wagon-road bridges, an earthwork called Fort Granger had been built more than a year before. The railway approaches the town from the south, parallel to the Columbia turnpike, and about five hundred yards east of it. For a thousand yards it runs close to the bank of the river and on the eastern edge of the village, then crosses without change of direction, for the river here makes a turn to the west, nearly at right angles to its former course. Through a part of the distance last traversed the railway is in a considerable cut, and this as well as the bridges and the reach of the river, is completely under the fire of the fort. The Carter's Creek turnpike runs southwest from the centre of the town.

The line selected for defence was a curve which would be very nearly that struck with a radius of a thousand yards from the junction of the two turnpikes in the village. Its centre was a few rods in front of the Carter house on the Columbia road, and was upon a gentle rise of ground. Its left was at the railway cut close to the river, where was another knoll. Upon this line the Carter's Creek turnpike is about the same distance from the Columbia turnpike as the

railway, and this constituted the proper front facing Columbia and Spring Hill, whence Hood was advancing. The third division of the Twenty-third Corps (General Reilly in



Battle-Field of Franklin.

temporary command) was placed on the left, Reilly's own brigade resting its flank on the pike, with Casement's and Henderson's brigades (Colonel Stiles in temporary command of the latter) continuing the line to the railway and river. The front of Reilly's own brigade was shorter than the others, for the two regiments which were left behind as pickets at Duck River belonged to it, and these did not arrive till the line was occupied. They were then placed in second line, supporting the first and less than a hundred yards in rear of it. Ruger's division was between the Columbia and Carter's Creek turnpikes, Strickland's brigade on the left, and Moore's on the right. Along the whole front the ground sloped very gently from the line, and was only obstructed by a small grove of locust trees a short distance in front of Ruger, and by farm buildings, with orchards here and there in the distance. A range of high hills bounded this plain on the south, through a gap in which the Columbia road runs. The Twenty-third Corps immediately began the building of breastworks, and by noon a strong intrenchment had been completed, the lack of timber for revetment being the only thing which prevented it from being equal to those usually made during the campaign. An old cotton gin in Reilly's line furnished timber for head-logs, and upon the knoll near the railway, at the Carter house, and in one or two other places, where the slope was sufficient, strong epaulements for artillery were constructed inside of and somewhat higher than the infantry parapet. At the Columbia turnpike the full width of the road was left open, for it was all needed to enable the doubled lines of wagons and artillery to pass, and a retrenchment crossing the road a few rods in rear was built to command the opening and its approach.

At the river it had been found that by scarping the banks,

the ford, though a very bad one, could be used to some extent. Some wooden buildings were dismantled to furnish planking for the railway bridge, and a wagon approach to this was made. The lower part of the posts of the county bridge were found to be good, and these were sawn off nearly level with the water, crossbeams and planking were laid upon them, and by noon the army was provided with two passable bridges. The artillery of the Twenty-third Corps passed over first of all at the ford, to gain time, and part of it was placed on the fort on the north bank, General Stanley being directed to send several batteries of the Fourth Corps to report to the commandant upon the line when they should arrive. The trench on the left, in front of Stiles, was placed close behind a thick-set hedge of osage orange, which was thinned out so as to make an impassable thorny palisade, and the material was used to make a slight obstruction in front of Reilly's brigades. In front of Ruger the locust grove was cut down for the same use, though the trees were much too small for the purpose. At General Cox's request for troops to cover the right flank, since his force was not sufficient to reach the river on that side, Kimball's division of the Fourth Corps was ordered to report to him as it came in, and was placed there.[1]

Wood's division of the Fourth Corps arrived and crossed to the north bank, Kimball had taken his place in the line, Wilson's cavalry was upon Wood's left, opposing the efforts of Forrest to cross the river in that direction, the town was full of wagons waiting their turn at the bridges, and some of them struggling through the ford. The wearied troops, which had fought and marched since daybreak of the preceding day, dropped to sleep as soon as their breast-

[1] See Appendix D.

works were built, and caught such rest as they could preparatory to a more terrible struggle and another night of marching.

On the Confederate side, Lee had sent forward the artillery from Columbia, as soon as it could be crossed over Duck River in the morning, and with it went ammunition for Forrest's men, who were getting short of it. The march in pursuit does not seem to have been hurried, and the single brigade, which was rear-guard, had no difficulty in holding back the enemy. A more annoying task was to drive forward the stragglers. A number of new regiments had joined the army at Columbia, and in these were many inexperienced recruits, who were not hardened to their work, and who had overloaded their knapsacks. It required the utmost exertion to prevent these men from falling into the enemy's hands, footsore and dispirited from fatigue as they were. To keep them up, Colonel Opdycke was obliged to order their knapsack straps to be cut, and to detail a provost guard to hurry them on.

About noon the rear-guard reached the hills at the border of the Harpeth Valley, from which the heavy columns of Hood's army could now be seen advancing rapidly. Opdycke checked them for a time by opening upon them with artillery, but was then withdrawn and brought within the lines, where he was placed in reserve upon the west of the Columbia road, two or three hundred yards from the Carter house. Wagner placed the rest of his division (Lane's and Conrad's brigades) astride the Columbia turnpike, about half a mile in front of the principal line. The commandant upon the line was notified by General Schofield that Wagner's orders directed him to remain in observation only till Hood should show a disposition to advance in force, and then to retire within the lines to Opdycke's position and act

as a general reserve. Wagner, on being shown the note conveying this notice, said that such were his orders.

By three o'clock the trains were nearly all over the river, and Schofield had issued orders that the troops should also pass over at six o'clock if the enemy should not attack before sunset. But the period of depression and recrimination in Hood's army in the morning seems to have been followed by fierce excitement. Cleburne talked with Brown, as they rode along, complaining bitterly that Hood had censured him, and telling of his determination to demand an investigation.[1] Evidently all were keyed to a high moral tension, and were determined that at the next opportunity, their commander should not have it to say that his plans had failed from any lack of energy or courage on their part. Hood, himself, had resolved upon a desperate effort to destroy Schofield's army before any further concentration of Thomas's forces could be made.

About three o'clock word was sent from Wagner's brigades in front that the enemy was forming at the foot of the hills in heavy force, and reiterating to General Wagner the directions already given him, the commandant upon the line went to the knoll in Stiles's brigade, which afforded a better view of the whole field. General Schofield had moved his headquarters to the north side of the river, and was personally at the fort on the hill, which not only commanded a view of the field, but was nearest the bridges by which communication was kept up, and where alone he could see the cavalry demonstrations on the left where Forrest and Wilson were already engaged. The village itself is on a plateau lower than the line intrenched, and from it

[1] Statement of General Brown in General Cheatham's paper before referred to. Hood, however, in his Advance and Retreat, p. 294, speaks of a cordial understanding with Cleburne before he entered the battle.

nothing whatever could be seen. General Stanley, who had been ill during the morning, had also his quarters on the north of the Harpeth, with Wood's division.

A depression in front of Wagner's brigades and some scattered trees shut out Hood's lines from view at the Carter house, but from Stiles's position they were plainly seen, formed apparently in double and triple lines of brigades, with artillery in the intervals between the columns. Hood had placed Cheatham's corps upon the Columbia turnpike with Cleburne's division on the east of the road, Brown's on the west of it, and Bate's in échelon on Brown's flank. Stewart's corps was on the right (east) of Cheatham, the order of his divisions from Cleburne's flank being French, Walthall, and Loring. Johnson's division was the only one of S. D. Lee's corps which had yet come up, and it was kept in reserve.

Very few battlefields of the war were so free from obstruction to the view. Here, along a mile and a half of front, the imposing array of the Confederate army could be seen advancing at quick step with trailed arms, the artillery in the intervals galloping forward, unlimbering and firing as soon as they were within range.[1] A section of artillery with Wagner's brigades first opened on the advancing enemy, but as they approached it limbered up and deliberately trotted within the principal line, in accordance with orders sent it by the Chief of Artillery. It was now four o'clock, and to the amazement of the thousands who were watching them, Wagner's infantry opened fire. There was a rattling fusillade for a few moments, Cleburne and Brown were checked for an instant, but the Confederate forces passed the flanks of Lane and Conrad, to right and left, a rush and a yell fol-

[1] Hood says he did not use artillery. That he is in error of recollection is abundantly shown by reports and printed statements on both sides. The writer speaks from his personal observation.

lowed, and the two hapless brigades came streaming to the rear in a disorganized crowd, running rapidly to reach the parapets behind them. Orders were quickly sent down the line to withhold the fire at the centre till our own men should be in, but to make the utmost use of the artillery and small arms on the flanks. Opdycke was warned to be ready for a rush to the centre if the line should give way there, and the second line along the whole front was similarly prepared. A few moments later, the head of the flying mass was seen swarming over the works at the turnpike, and orders were sent for all reserves to charge. The men in the trenches, confused by the crowd trampling over them, and hearing Wagner's officers calling upon their men to rally at the rear, were carried away by the surging mass, and for the length of a regiment on the left, and more than that on the right, they fell away from the works. Neither Colonel White, commanding Reilly's second line, nor Colonel Opdycke waited for the word to charge, but were in motion before the order could reach them. White was nearest the parapet and reached it soonest, but his line did not reach quite to the turnpike. The Carter house and out-buildings on the right of the road obstructed the movement to the front, and Opdycke made part of his brigade oblique to the left till clear of the obstacles, and they then charged headlong upon the enemy. Part also went forward on the west of the houses, and Strickland's brigade rallying with them, the Confederates were driven back here also; but that the gap was open longer here than on the left, was proven by the enemy's dead who were found fifty yards within the lines.

Stanley, forgetting his illness, had mounted his horse at the first sound of the cannonade, and the commandants of the two corps met on the turnpike just as Opdycke and his

men were rushing to the front. Four guns, which had been placed a few yards to the left of the road, were in the enemy's hands, and were loaded with canister. These were turned upon the flank of Reilly's line, but the frightened horses had run off with the ammunition chests which contained the primers, and while the captors were unsuccessfully trying to fire the pieces, the reserve was upon them. Four other guns on the right of the road were also in the enemy's hands. There was a few minutes' fierce mêlée, but the guns were retaken and all of the men in gray who were inside the parapet were dead or prisoners. Yet the successive lines of assailants charging the works allowed no respite. Colonel White received a severe wound in the face, but refused to leave the line till after nightfall, and Opdycke had joined personally in the thickest of the deadly tussle on the turnpike. Our men, who had been driven back from the line, rallied by officers of all grades, returned to their posts, mingling with those who were there, making a wall three or four deep, those in rear loading the muskets for those who were firing. While rallying these men Stanley was wounded, his horse was shot under him, and he was reluctantly persuaded to return to his quarters for surgical help.

Farther to the right, and in part of what had been Strickland's brigade line, the Confederates of Brown's division held the outside of our parapet, so that when their comrades were driven back they were able to prevent our men from reaching it again. These, seizing upon fences and such material as came to hand, made a new barricade within about twenty-five yards of the first, and across the narrow interval the battle raged with most persistent fierceness. It was hard to tell where either brigade line ended, for Opdycke's men mingled with Reilly's on the one side, and with Strickland's on the other, and the three crowded the space

where two had been. Officers and men had been conscious that with the centre broken, nothing but superhuman exertions could keep one wing, at least, of the little army from being driven into the river. They were equal to the occasion and they saved the day.

But though the crisis of the engagement was at the centre, the fight was by no means all there. In other parts the veterans of the Atlanta campaign held their lines without flinching, though the assaults of Stewart's divisions rivalled those of Cheatham in their gallantry, and they made the most daring efforts to reach the bridges which were on that flank. Loring's men came upon the hedge in front of Stiles, and attempted in vain to tear it away, or to pass it. Henderson, who had been for some days ill, rejoined his brigade, and both he and Stiles directed the firing, which, sweeping along the ground, mowed down all before it. The Confederate officers urged their men to the right, hoping to pass through the railway cut, but here they were met by the shrapnel and canister of the guns in the fort north of the river. The batteries in Stiles's line were also admirably handled, and the attack here had never a chance.

On Casement's line, Walthall's and part of Loring's divisions made the assault, and as there was here no obstruction in front of the trench worth naming, the possibility of carrying such a line when properly held was fully tested. General John Adams led his brigade, riding straight at the ditch, leaping it, and mounting the parapet, where his horse was killed astride of it, and he himself pitched headlong among Casement's men, mortally wounded. Scott, commanding another of Loring's brigades, was wounded. In Walthall's division not only had Quarles fallen in leading his brigade to the assault, but the loss of officers was so great that, at the close of the battle, a captain was the rank-

ing officer in that brigade.[1] It was only when the last of Stewart's reserves had tried all that courage and dash could accomplish, that they relaxed their efforts. Some asked for quarter in the ditch, and came in as prisoners; some lay down in front of the hedge, and waited for darkness to enable them to crawl away undiscovered. The remainder fell back to a position near the extension of the line Wagner's brigades had occupied.

Cleburne had led his division forward, on the east of the central turnpike, with a desperation that was born of the wounded feelings he had shown in the morning, and he fell among the first who were at the ditch when the rush of our reserves restored the line between the cotton-gin and the road. His three successive lines pressed forward to avenge his death, but only to leave a thousand gallant officers and men beside him. On the other flank, Bate had moved forward his division at the same time with Brown, deploying as he went. His left reached beyond the Carter's Creek road as he neared the intrenchments, but the shape of our lines, which there bent back to the river, made him travel on a large curve, and his assault was considerably later than Brown's. It struck the right of Ruger's division, and the left of Kimball's, but finding the works before him stoutly held, and that the cavalry which he expected to advance upon his flank were not doing so, his attack was not pressed as determinedly as that of Brown. The success which this division seemed to have at the first, and the fact that for some distance they continued to hold the outside of the works, encouraged them to the most desperate and persistent efforts there. General Strahl was with his brigade in the ditch, personally directing the fire of his men who got

[1] Walthall's official report.

a foothold in the outside of the slope, and making those in rear supply the front rank with loaded guns. As darkness came on, and it came quickly on that short winter day, the two breastworks, so little apart, were lines of continuous flame, as the men fired at the flash of each other's guns. On other parts of the field, there were, after dark, frequent vollies, as the Confederate generals strove to assist the central attack by strong demonstrations; but here the roar was for a long time incessant and deafening. Others suggested to Strahl to withdraw, or to surrender, but he steadily repeated the command, "keep firing," till he was himself struck down. He called for Colonel Stafford, to turn over the command, and they tried to carry him to the rear, but on the way a second and a third ball struck him, killing him instantly.[1] Colonel Stafford continued the contest with the same determination. Messengers were sent to General Brown to tell him of Strahl's death and ask for orders, but they found that he was already disabled by a wound, and the staff supposed Strahl to be in command of the division. Cheatham had sent in all of Brown's brigades, but Gordon had been captured in the first mêlée, Gist, as well as Strahl, was dead, and Carter was wounded. Hood was called upon for assistance, and he sent forward Johnson's division of Lee's corps, but this, too, was driven back by that terrible fire, leaving General Manigault wounded on the field.

On the National side the One Hundred and Twelfth Illinois was brought over from Stiles's brigade, and put in to assist Strickland. An effort was made to get this regiment forward over the little interval between the two breastworks, but it was not successful. The oblique fire from our

[1] The details of the situation on the Confederate side at this point are chiefly drawn from a pamphlet by S. A. Cunningham, Sergeant-Major, entitled Reminiscences of the Forty-first Tennessee Regiment.

troops, on right and left, when they were not hotly engaged in front, was turned upon Cheatham's men, but it was nine o'clock before they gave up the contest, and those that were left were reformed on the line occupied by Stewart and Lee, though for more than an hour occasional volleys were exchanged. At eleven o'clock, the whole front being quiet, Schofield ordered the withdrawal of our troops to the north side of the river, but an accidental fire broke out in the village, making a bright background on which our lines could be too plainly seen by the enemy, and it was necessary to wait an hour till the fire was extinguished. Kimball's division then marched by the rear to the wagon bridge, Ruger's passed behind the lines to the railroad bridge, Opdycke's brigade was sent to follow Kimball, and Reilly's division crossed behind Ruger, a line of skirmishers, under command of Major Dow, Inspector General, remaining in the trenches till all the rest were over and the plank taken from the wagon bridge, when these also crossed at the railway. The dead could not be removed, but the well disciplined ambulance corps, under Surgeon Frink, had taken off all the wounded who could endure transportation, except some who had crawled away into buildings and sheds and were not found in the darkness. Reilly's division carried off as trophies twenty-two battle flags of the enemy, and Opdycke's brigade ten.[1]

The battle had been peculiar, partly by reason of the late hour in the day at which it began, which prolonged the hard fighting far into the night, and partly from the character of the weather. A day or two of sunshine had followed the continuous storms of the preceding fortnight,

[1] Hood says that thirteen was the number of flags he lost, but the number stated above was officially reported by our division and brigade commanders and verified at the time.

and the air had been still and hazy. The smoke of the battle did not rise or drift away, but settled on the field in a thick cloud, obscuring the vision far more than common. It was said that this had led to the mistake, on Hood's part, of supposing that his first advantage at the centre was much greater than in fact it was, and resulted in greater destruction to the Confederate troops, by repeated assaults after all real chance of success was gone.

The Confederate accounts of the condition of the field next morning are full of tragic interest. Before daybreak it was learned that the National lines were empty, and the plain was covered with torchbearers seeking their comrades and friends. Colonel Stafford was found in the ditch General Strahl and he had so stubbornly held. The dead lay literally in a pile about him. They had fallen about his legs and behind him, till when he at last received a fatal shot, he did not wholly fall, but was found stiffened in death and partly upright, seeming still to command the ghastly line of his comrades lying beneath the parapet. The color-bearer of the Forty-first Tennessee had fallen between the two lines of breastworks, but neither friend nor foe had been able to reach the flag till it was hidden by the night, and in the morning it was found where it dropped.[1]

But even civil war rarely furnishes so sad a story as that which the Carter family have to tell. The house was occupied by an elderly man and his two daughters. Their presence during the day had been respected and had kept their property from unnecessary disturbance, and the day was so far gone that they thought there was no need to leave their home. The battle, when it came, broke upon them so suddenly that they did not dare to leave, and they took

[1] Sergeant-Major Cunningham's pamphlet.

refuge in the cellar. The house was in the focus of the storm which raged about it for hours. They said that while the horrid din lasted, it seemed that they must die of terror if it did not cease; but when there was a lull, the suspense of fearful expectation seemed worse than the din, and it was almost a relief when the combat was renewed. The long night ended at last, and with the first light the young women found relief in ministering to the wounded who had crept into the house and outbuildings, and in carrying water to those on the field. But, as they climbed the parapet at the rear of the house, among the first they found was a young staff officer, their own brother, mortally wounded, lying, as he had fallen at sunset, almost at the door of his home.

The withdrawal of Schofield's forces in the night left no opportunity to reckon the Confederate losses. Hood says that his casualties, computed ten days after the battle by means of the returns of "effective strength," were found to be 7,547 since the opening of this campaign, and including the losses about Columbia and Spring Hill. This, however, excludes all the slightly wounded who had returned to duty, and all officers, and makes no account of the accessions he had by the return of absentees and the joining of recruits. It still acknowledges a loss of 6,300 in this battle, of which 700 were prisoners in our hands. It is very certain that the whole Confederacy was deeply impressed with the frightful carnage of their troops, and their writers, with common accord, spoke of the desperate fighting as remarkable even in this war of desperate combats. The partial returns accessible seem to show clearly that no one of the divisions engaged (except Bate's), lost less than eight hundred, and that Brown's and Cleburne's, at the centre, and Loring's, on our left, lost much more heavily. The long list of general

officers killed and wounded gives terrible significance to the recriminations which the affair at Spring Hill had excited. We have seen that Brown and all four of his brigadiers were disabled or killed. In Cleburne's division, Granberry besides himself fell. In Loring's division they lost Generals John Adams and Scott. In French's, Cockrell; in Walthall's, Quarles; and in Johnson's, Manigault; twelve generals in all, besides Stafford, and a long list of colonels and field officers who succeeded to brigade commands.

On the National side the losses were 2,326, of which more than one thousand were in the two brigades of Wagner, which were so unnecessarily compromised at the front. Near the centre, where the line was temporarily broken, the losses were naturally much heavier than on the flanks, where our men stoutly held the breastworks and fought under good cover. The result well illustrates the fearful odds at which the bravest troops assault a line of earthworks over open ground, even when a grave fault of a subordinate has given them an exceptional and unlooked-for advantage. General Wagner's place of duty was with the two brigades of his division which were exposed in front, and the order to bring them in without fighting had been sent through the Fourth Corps' head-quarters, and had been received by him. He was at the Carter house when the message came from the front that Hood was forming in line of battle, and, in a moment of excitement, forgetting himself and his orders, he sent back a command to fight.[1] The overwhelming of the two brigades and the peril to the whole line were the necessary consequence. He rallied the disorganized brigades at the river, but they were not again carried into action.

During the battle and in preparation for any contingency

[1] This is stated to the writer by two officers who were present and heard it.

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which might arise, General Schofield directed General Wood to put the three brigades of his division in position to cover the flanks of the troops in front of the town, and to protect the bridges in case of need. Wood accordingly placed Post's brigade opposite Kimball's flank, below the town, Streight's near the bridges, and Beatty's above Fort Granger, all on the high ground of the north bank of the Harpeth; and these brigades maintained their position in the night till the rest of the infantry had passed through their lines and marched to Brentwood. General Wilson, with the cavalry, had, during the afternoon, a warm skirmish with Forrest, who tried in vain to cross the Harpeth beyond the left of Schofield's forces. Thomas sent a warm congratulatory despatch when the result of the engagement was announced to him; but, as he thought three days would still be needed to prepare his concentrated army for aggressive operations, and as this was a longer time than Schofield could engage to hold the line of the Harpeth without reinforcements, he directed the latter to retire upon Brentwood, and thence to Nashville.[1] Despatches had been sent to General Cooper, who, it will be remembered, had been stationed at Centreville, on Duck River, with a brigade of the Twenty-third Corps, directing him to fall back on Franklin. But unavoidable delays occurred, and when he approached Franklin, the enemy was in possession. He was similarly anticipated at Brentwood, but by coolness and good conduct brought in his command safely to Nashville.

[1] For correspondence between these officers on November 29th and 30th, see Appendix D.

CHAPTER VI.

BATTLE OF NASHVILLE.

SCHOFIELD'S little army reached Nashville in the morning of December 1st, and was merged in the forces which General Thomas was assembling there. General A. J. Smith, after many unforeseen delays, had arrived with his detachments from the Army of the Tennessee, consisting of three divisions, aggregating nearly twelve thousand men. Of these, something over nine thousand men reached Nashville early in the morning of November 30th, and the rest on the next day. The first intention of General Thomas had been to meet Schofield at Brentwood, ten miles in front of Nashville, with these troops, while Schofield marched the ten miles from Franklin to the same point; but he concluded later to make the union at Nashville. When he received from Schofield and from Wilson the reports of Hood's movement of the 28th and 29th, by which the cavalry had been separated from Schofield, and Forrest was reported pushing eastward, he ordered Steedman to leave a garrison in Chattanooga and take his other available forces to Cowan, a station near Elk River, on the Nashville and Chattanooga Railway. Steedman reached there on the morning of the 30th and put his troops in position; but in the evening, Thomas, having learned of Hood's attack in force upon Schofield at Franklin, ordered Steedman to hasten to Nashville. The troops were accordingly put upon the railway

trains again, and most of them reached their destination safely on the evening of December 1st. One train, being delayed by an accident, did not arrive till the 2d, and was attacked by Forrest five miles south of Nashville, but the troops made their way through without serious loss, though the train was captured and destroyed. Of the 8,000 men who had been at Chattanooga on the 30th, Steedman brought with him 5,200, consisting of two brigades of colored troops, and a provisional division made up of soldiers belonging to the army with Sherman, but who had arrived at the front too late to rejoin their own regiments.

Most of the troops under General R. S. Granger, in North Alabama, and of those under General Milroy, at Tullahoma, were ordered to Murfreesboro, where the whole, amounting to about eight thousand men, were placed under command of General Rousseau, and remained until after Hood's defeat on December 15th and 16th. The block-house garrison, at the important railroad bridge on the Elk River, was the only considerable detachment left along the line of the Chattanooga Road, between Murfreesboro and Stevenson.

In Nashville, on November 30th, besides Smith's forces, Thomas had about six thousand infantry and artillery, and three thousand cavalry, mostly dismounted.[1] The Chief Quartermaster, General Donaldson, had also armed and organized into a division the employés of his and the commissary department, and these were prepared to serve as an addition to the garrison when needed. The new regiments which arrived were gradually assigned to the old divisions,

[1] By the table in Appendix A, it will be seen that the cavalry "present for duty" were 10,884, of which 2,272 were not "equipped," *i.e.*, were dismounted. I have not been able to procure the exact figures showing how many were with Wilson in the field, and what other small detachments there might be. The infantry would be the difference between 14,000 and the number at Murfreesboro. See Appendix A.

and the additions to the list of Sherman's convalescents and returning men were united to those who had come with Steedman, making, by December 14th, a division of over five thousand men, under command of General Cruft.

Accepting Hood's statements of his losses thus far in the campaign, the army which he led against Nashville consisted of about forty-four thousand men of all arms.[1] His means of information were such that he had pretty full knowledge of the concentration Thomas was now effecting, and the motives which induced a march to Nashville are matters of interesting inquiry. Beauregard, in his preliminary report to the Confederate War Department, said: "It is clear to my mind that after the great loss of life at Franklin, the army was no longer in a condition to make a successful attack on Nashville." Hood's own statement, which would be entitled to the greatest weight if his subsequent writings were not so full of evidence that they are labored apologies for his misfortunes, is that he expected reinforcements from Texas, and that he hoped by intrenching near Nashville he could maintain himself in a defensive attitude till these should arrive; or that he might even take advantage of a reverse to Thomas, if the latter should be beaten in an attack upon his fortified line. The hope of aid from Texas was a forlorn one, for no organized body of Confederates had for a long time succeeded in passing the Mississippi River. From other sources, however, we learn that the show of confidence and of success was relied upon to induce recruiting in Tennessee, and that the pretended Governor, Harris, was with Hood, endeavoring to enforce the conscription in that State. This, and the collection of supplies, give an intelligible reason for occupying as much territory as possible,

[1] See Appendix A.

and for an appearance of bravado which could hardly be justified on military grounds. Doubtless, too, Hood believed that while his veterans might be forced to retreat, they could not be routed; and he underestimated the discouragement that began to pervade them when they were taught, by the terrible lesson of Franklin, how hopeless was that dream of conquest with which their leaders had tried to inspire them when they crossed the Tennessee. Hood also says he learned that Schofield retreated in alarm; but never was a greater mistake. Schofield's officers on the line had reported their perfect confidence in their ability to hold it, and the withdrawal from the Harpeth had been based solely on the probability of the position being turned before reinforcements could be sure to arrive.

In truth, Hood's situation was a very difficult one, and to go forward or to go back was almost equally unpromising. He followed his natural bent, therefore, which always favored the appearance, at least, of aggression, and he marched after Schofield to Nashville. On approaching the town, he put Lee's corps in the centre, across the Franklin turnpike, for it had suffered least in the campaign, and was now his strongest corps. Cheatham took the right, and Stewart the left of the line, while Forrest, with the cavalry, occupied the country between Stewart and the river below Nashville. Attempts were made to repair the railway from Corinth to Decatur, and thence by Pulaski to Hood's rear. Hood tells us that he gained possession of two locomotives and several cars (perhaps at Spring Hill), and that these were used to help transport supplies.

Thomas put his troops in position upon the heights surrounding Nashville, General Smith's divisions on the right, the Fourth Corps (General Wood temporarily commanding) in the centre, and Schofield's Twenty-third Corps on the

Milroy's attack fell obliquely upon the extremity of Bate's line, which was quickly rolled up and put to rout, losing two pieces of artillery. Bate admits 213 casualties in the infantry, but those of the cavalry are not given. Milroy took 207 prisoners, and his own losses in the affair were 30 killed, and 175 wounded. Meanwhile, Buford's division attempted to enter the town by another road, but was also defeated and driven off.

Bate's division was now recalled to Nashville, and replaced by a brigade under Colonel Olmstead (formerly Mercer's) so that Forrest retained three brigades of infantry as a support for his cavalry. He continued till the 15th to operate on the east of Nashville, and along the south bank of the Cumberland, part of his duty being to "drain the country of persons liable to military service, animals suitable for army purposes, and subsistence supplies."[1] On the 15th Jackson's division captured a railway train of supplies going from Stevenson to Murfreesboro, for the garrison there, who, it would seem, must have been in danger of running short of rations, since the breaking of their communications with Nashville.

At Thomas's request, Lieutenant-Commander Fitch patrolled the Cumberland with gunboats above and below Nashville, to prevent the crossing of that stream by the enemy, and Wilson sent Hammond's brigade of cavalry to Gallatin to watch the north bank of the river as far as Carthage.

From the time of Hood's arrival in front of Nashville, the President and Secretary of War became very urgent in their desire that Thomas should at once assume the aggressive.

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[1] Campaigns of Forrest, p. 634. Thomas's report puts the affair at Murfreesboro on the 8th, but both Bate's report and Forrest's biographers say it was the 7th.

At their suggestion, General Grant telegraphed on December 2, advising Thomas to leave the defences of Nashville to General Donaldson's organized employés, and attack Hood at once. Grant's language was scarcely less imperative than an order, but Thomas was so desirous of increasing his force of mounted men that he determined to wait a few days. On the 8th, the weather, which had been good for more than a week, suddenly changed. A freezing storm of snow and sleet covered the ground, and for two or three days the alternations of rain and frost made the hills about Nashville slopes of slippery ice, on which movement was impracticable. As Hood's positions could only be reached by deployed lines advancing over these hills and hollows, everybody in Thomas's army felt the absolute necessity of now waiting a little longer, till the ice should thaw. This was not fully appreciated by the authorities at Washington, who connected it too closely with Thomas's previous wish for more time, and a rapid correspondence by telegraph took place, in which Thomas was ordered to attack at once or to turn over his command to General Schofield. He assembled his corps commanders and asked their advice, saying that he was ordered to give Hood battle immediately or surrender his command. To whom the army would be transferred was not stated, but it was matter of inference, and he declined to submit the despatch itself to the council of war, though one of the junior officers intimated a wish to know its terms. By the custom of such councils the opinion of officers is given in the inverse order of their grade; but General Schofield, feeling the delicacy of his position as senior subordinate, volunteered his own opinion first, that till the ice should melt it was not now practicable to move.[1]

[1] In the account of this meeting, the author follows a written statement of General Schofield.

All concurred in this, and Thomas telegraphed Grant that he felt compelled to wait till the storm should break, but would submit without a murmur if it was thought necessary to relieve him. On the 13th, General Logan, who, it will be remembered, was temporarily absent from the Fifteenth Corps, was ordered to Nashville for the purpose of superseding Thomas in command of the Department and Army of the Cumberland, and Grant himself was on the way there also, when the result of the first day of the battle of Nashville (December 15th) stopped further action in that direction.

As early as December 6th, the troops had been ordered to be ready to move against the enemy, and the plan of battle afterward adopted had been in substance determined. From day to day Hood appeared to be taking ground to the east, so as to bring himself more closely into support of Forrest's operations. This led to a suggestion to Thomas from his corps commanders to modify his plan which had looked to the use of the Twenty-third Corps to demonstrate on the left, and give more weight to an attack by the right. From the 8th to the 14th, it was definitely understood in camp that an attack would be made the moment the ice melted, and on the date last mentioned a warm rain made it certain the ground would be bare next day. The position of Hood had not materially changed for a week. Chalmers was operating with a division of cavalry along the Cumberland, for some miles below Nashville, as Buford was above; but, while ordinary steamboat transportation was thus interrupted, the navy patrolled the river and prevented the enemy from crossing. Hood had sent a detachment of cavalry also, supported by Cockrell's brigade of infantry to the mouth of Duck River, on the Tennessee, to blockade that stream also, if possible. In his anxiety to cover so large a territory, the

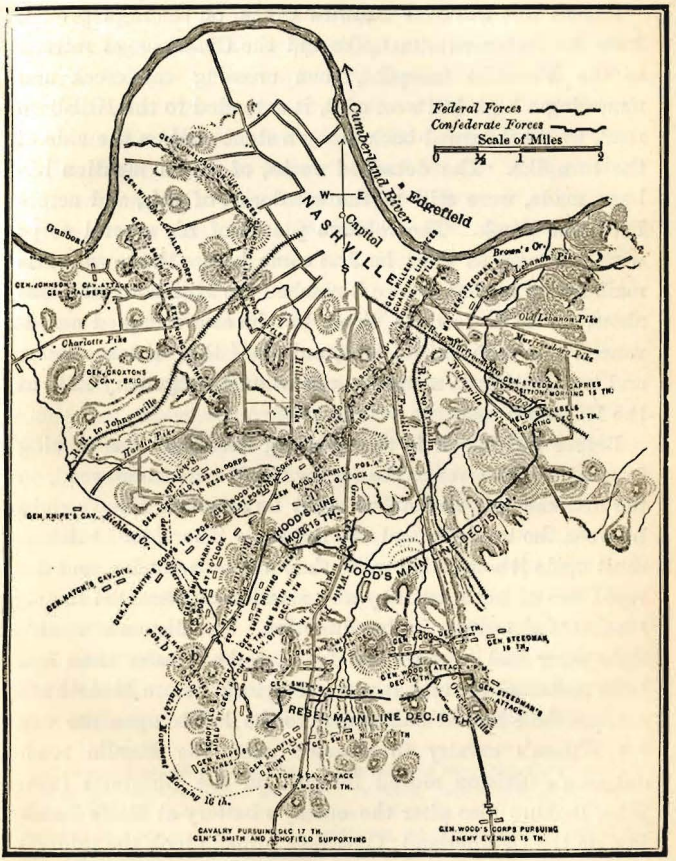
Confederate general was too much extended, and in front of Thomas's right his flank was only covered by Chalmers's division of horse. To make some connection with the river on this side, he had built a number of detached works, but these were not completed, though he had put artillery in them, supported by detachments of infantry from Walthall's division. Reports brought in by deserters indicated that he was intending to withdraw from his advanced lines since the 10th, but the same causes which prevented Thomas from moving, affected him also, and a change of quarters, to his ill-clad and poorly shod troops, would have been the cause of much suffering, if it were made during the severe weather of that week.

On the morning of the 15th a heavy fog obscured the dawn and hid the early movements of Thomas's army. The ice had given place to mud, and the manœuvres, like those of all winter campaigns, were slow. The modified order of the day directed a strong demonstration by Steedman on the extreme left, with two brigades; one commanded by Colonel Grosvenor, Eighteenth Ohio, and the other (colored troops) commanded by Colonel Morgan, Fourteenth United States Colored. General Wood, with the Fourth Corps, and General Smith, with the Sixteenth Corps, were ordered to form upon a position nearly continuous with the eastern line of the city defences, extending from a salient on the Acklen place across the Hillsborough turnpike toward the Hardin turnpike in a southwest direction. Advancing toward the southeast these corps would make the principal attack obliquely upon the left of Hood's line. General Wilson, with three divisions of cavalry, was ordered to clear the Hardin and Charlotte turnpikes of the enemy (still farther to the west) and move forward on the right of Smith's corps. General Schofield, with the Twenty-third Corps,

constituted the reserve, and was placed in rear of Wood, to strengthen and extend the attack on the right. As Smith had occupied the fortifications on the right of the line about the city, these orders would be executed by wheeling the whole of both corps forward to the left, upon the salient at the Acklen place as a pivot, after Wood had taken ground to the right by the distance of say half a mile, so as to bring his left flank at the point named. Schofield, who had been in the fortifications still to the left of Wood, marched from his lines at daybreak, and passing through the works at the Hillsborough pike moved to the east into the position assigned him, as soon as the wheel of the right wing made room for him. The interior lines at the city were held by General Donaldson's men, while General Cruft, with his division, occupied those from which Schofield and Steedman moved.

Standing in the salient in Wood's line, which has been mentioned, the topography of the country about Nashville is clearly seen. On the left, toward the east, is a valley in which Brown's Creek flows north into the Cumberland. It rises in the high Brentwood Hills, which shut out the view toward the south a little more than four miles away, and its course is nearly parallel to the eastern line of Thomas's intrenchments. On the right, but a little farther off, is Richland Creek, flowing northwest into the Cumberland. It rises also in the Brentwood Hills, not more than a mile west of Brown's Creek, and runs nearly parallel with it toward the city for some distance, when the two curve away to right and left, encircling the place, and marking its strong and natural line of defence. On the high ridge between the creeks is the Granny White turnpike. A mile eastward is the Franklin turnpike, diverging about thirty degrees. At nearly equal distances, on that side, the Nolensville and

Murfreesboro turnpikes leave the city successively. Turning toward the west from our station, the Hillsboro, the Hardin, and the Charlotte turnpikes successively go out at



Map of Battle-Field of Nashville.

similar angles, all radiating from the centre of the town. The ground is hilly, rising into knobs and eminences two or three hundred feet above the Cumberland, but mostly open, with groves of timber here and there.

Hood's line was over Brown's Creek, on the high ground from the Nolensville turnpike and the Chattanooga railway to the Franklin turnpike, then crossing the creek and mounting a high hill west of it, it extended to the Hillsboro road, where it turned back along a stone wall on the side of the turnpike. The detached works, of which mention has been made, were still to the southwest of this, and across Richland Creek. The relative places of his several corps were the same as when he first came before the town. His main line at his left, where it reached the Hillsboro pike, was about a mile in front of Wood, but he also occupied an advanced line with skirmishers, only half that distance away, and terminating in a strong outpost on Montgomery Hill, at the Hillsboro road.

Before six o'clock in the morning Steedman was moving forward under cover of the fog by the Murfreesboro road, on the extreme left, and about eight he attacked Hood's right between the turnpike and the railway. The vigor of the assault made it something more than a demonstration, and the rapid fire of both artillery and small arms attracted the attention of the enemy in that direction. The distance Smith's right wing had to move was found to be greater than had been reckoned on, and it was ten o'clock before McArthur's division had moved sufficiently to the left to open the way for Wilson's cavalry to advance upon the Hardin road. Johnson's division moved forward on the Charlotte turnpike, looking also after the enemy's battery at Bell's Landing, on the Cumberland; Croxton's brigade took the interval to the Hardin turnpike, Hatch's division continued the line

to the flank of Smith's infantry, and Knipe's division was in reserve. Smith formed the Sixteenth Corps with Garrard's division on his left, connecting with the Fourth Corps, and McArthur's division on the right. The division of Moore was in reserve. On the other side Chalmers did what he could to oppose them, supported by Coleman's (formerly Ector's) brigade of infantry,[1] but the odds was too great, and they were driven steadily back. Half a mile southeast of the Hardin road the first of Hood's detached works, containing four guns, was found. The batteries of McArthur and Hatch were brought to bear upon it from all sides, and, after a severe cannonade, McMillan's and Hubbard's brigades of infantry and Coon's of cavalry (dismounted) attacked and carried the redoubt.[2] Stewart now recalled Coleman and directed him to report to Walthall, whose division occupied the stone wall bordering the Hillsboro turnpike. Walthall placed him on the extension of his line southward, upon some high points covering the Granny White road. This left the other redoubts to their fate, as Chalmers was far too much over-matched to make much resistance with his cavalry. He had been driven back so fast that his train, with his headquarters baggage and papers, had been captured. The next redoubt, about four hundred yards to the right, was carried by the same troops, and two guns in it were taken. Another four-gun battery, intrenched on a detached hill, was stormed and captured by the cavalry, and a two-gun battery by Hill's brigade of McArthur's division, though with the loss of Colonel Hill, who fell in the

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moment of success. Smith's corps now bore somewhat to the left, striking the extreme flank of the stone wall held by Walthall's division, driving Reynolds's brigade from it in confusion. At the same time, Schofield, who had followed the movement closely with the Twenty-third Corps, in accordance with Thomas's order, pushed Couch's division (formerly Cooper's) past Smith's flank, and beyond the last redoubt which had been captured. Now advancing on the line from the Hillsboro road, eastward, across an open valley half a mile wide, Couch assaulted and carried the left of a series of hills parallel to the Granny White turnpike. The assault was made by Cooper's brigade, and the rest of the division was quickly brought up in support, while Cox's division marched still farther to the right and occupied the continuation of the line of hills along Richland Creek with two brigades, keeping the third (Stiles's) on the heights west of the creek to cover the flank.

These last movements had occurred just as darkness was falling, and completed the day's work on the extreme right. It is now necesaary to go back and trace the progress of the Fourth Corps. General Wood had formed the corps with Elliott's division (formerly Wagner's) on the right, connecting with Smith's corps, while Kimball's and Beatty's extended the line to the left. The time occupied in the deployed movement of the right of the army made it one o'clock before it was time for the extreme left to move. Wood then ordered forward Post's brigade of Beatty's division to attack Montgomery Hill, the high point half a mile in front of the salient of our line, on which was Hood's advanced guard. The assault was preceded by rapid artillery fire and was gallantly executed. The general advance of the line was now progressing, and Schofield's corps was ordered away by General Thomas to support the movement of the right flank.

Wood met with a strong skirmishing resistance, but the lines went forward steadily, keeping pace with the troops on the right, till Smith's attack upon the south end of the stone wall along the Hillsboro road, which was held by Walthall. Kimball's division was opposite the angle in Hood's line where Walthall joined upon Loring, having Sears's brigade of French's division between them. Kimball pushed straight at the angle, and the right of the stone wall having already been carried, Walthall's brigades, under Johnston (formerly Quarles's) and Shelley, successively gave way. Elliott's division of Wood's corps lapped upon Garrard's of the Sixteenth, and the whole went forward with enthusiasm, capturing several guns and many prisoners.

Hood's left was now hopelessly broken, and he made haste to draw back his shattered divisions upon a new line. Schofield's advance had separated Coleman's brigade from Walthall, but it occupied a commanding hill (afterward known as Shy's Hill),[1] and held on with tenacity till Walthall, helped by the gathering darkness, could form along its right across the Granny White road. At the first news of the loss of the redoubts, Hood ordered Cheatham's corps (except Smith's, formerly Cleburne's division) from the right to the left, and his divisions, hurrying by the Franklin pike toward Overton's Hill, passed great numbers of stragglers streaming to the rear. Bate was ordered to relieve part of Walthall's division, so as to make a stronger line between Shy's Hill and the Granny White road, and Walthall closed to the right upon Loring. South of Shy's Hill, Lowry's (formerly Brown's) division extended the Confederate left in front of Schofield, and the whole worked diligently to intrench themselves. Lee's corps was drawn back till his right en-

[1] This name is given the hill by General Bate, whose troops held it, in honor of Colonel Shy who fell there. It seems to have had no special name before.

circled Overton's Hill, on which Clayton's division was placed, supported by Brantley's brigade, while Stevenson's and Johnson's divisions extended the line to the west till it united with Loring's division of Stewart's corps.

On our left Steedman had kept his men active. He had attacked and carried an earthwork near the Raines house early in the day, and had followed up the progressive movement of the army, harassing the enemy's right as it drew back.

About nightfall there was a strong appearance of a precipitate retreat of the enemy, and Thomas ordered Wood to move his corps farther to the left, reaching the Franklin turnpike, if possible, and to push southward upon it. This direction was a wise one if the enemy continued his retreat, for it prevented the crowding of the army upon a single road; but had Thomas been sure that Hood would reform upon the new line, he would, no doubt, have continued the general movement of the day by extending his forces to the right. The darkness stopped Wood before he had reached the Franklin road, and he bivouacked where night overtook him, ready to continue the march in the morning. His right was near Smith's left, and his own left was diagonally toward the rear, in the works which Lee's corps had abandoned on the hither side of Brown's Creek.

For the results obtained, the losses had been astonishingly light. Wood reports only three hundred and fifty casualties in his corps, Smith's were about the same, and Schofield's not over one hundred and fifty. Those of Steedman and of Wilson were proportionately small, though the exact figures cannot be given, as the losses of the first and second days are not discriminated in any report but Wood's. Sixteen pieces of artillery and twelve hundred prisoners had been taken, and Hood's whole line had been driven back fully

two miles. The work was not completed, but should the enemy maintain his position, the promise for the morrow was good.

Hood now realized the mistake his over-confidence had led him into, by inducing him not only to extend his lines beyond what was prudent, but, worst of all, to allow Forrest to become so far detached that he could not be recalled in time for the battle. Sears's brigade had been brought back to the lines before the 15th, but two others were still with Forrest, and Cockrell's was at Duck River. The Confederate commander set to work in earnest, however, to repair his mistake. The cavalry was too far away to join him in twenty-four hours, but orders were despatched recalling Forrest, and preparations were made to hold the new line another day. As his left still seemed his weak point, Hood ordered the whole of Cheatham's corps to that flank. Shy's Hill, which was held by Coleman's brigade, made the angle in the line, from which the sharply refused flank continued southward, Lowry's division and Smith's (formerly Cleburne's) extending it to the Brentwood Hills. Bate's division was placed, as we have already seen, between Shy's Hill and the flank of Stewart's corps, facing north. Chalmers's division of cavalry was close upon the left of the infantry, bending the line back, somewhat, toward the Granny White road.

The Confederate line now rested upon high hills, Overton's and Shy's, between which the ground was lower, though rolling, and was broken by the upper branches of Brown's Creek, which ran in nearly straight courses northward, crossing Hood's position at right angles. Overton's hill was a broad, rounded elevation, and the works, in curving southward around its summit, did not present any sharp angle to weaken their strength. Shy's Hill, however, though

high, was of less extent, and the lines of Bate and Lowry made a right angle there. Bate complained of the position, but Hood's engineers had established it, and Cheatham did not feel at liberty to change it. Indeed, it could not have been changed much, unless the whole Confederate army were to retreat. Coleman had been driven to Shy's Hill by Schofield's advance at dusk, and had all he could do to hold on to it at all. The extension of the Twenty-third Corps along the east side of Richland Creek left only the hills directly south of Shy's unoccupied, and it was there alone that the advance of Thomas's right wing could be checked. The National skirmish lines were so close that the digging had to be done on the inside of the parapet chiefly, getting cover for the men as soon as possible. The hill on our side, held by Couch's division, was only three hundred yards from Shy's, and the work on the latter, built under fire, was weak. Farther south, the confronting hills, held by the rest of Cheatham's corps on the one side, and Schofield's on the other, were farther apart, and that in the Confederate line was considerably higher and well wooded on the top. A strong work was made upon it, revetted with timber, with embrasures for cannon, and a parapet high enough to defilade the interior; but the fire of our sharpshooters prevented any abatis being made.

General Thomas held a council with his corps commanders in the evening, but no new orders seem to have been issued, except some directions as to movements in the event of a retreat of Hood during the night. If he remained in position, the movements progressing at the close of the day would be continued. During the night the lines on the National side also were adjusted. In Schofield's corps, Couch's division, in making connection with Smith, opened a gap between it and Cox's division, which, after extending

the two brigades, which were over Richland Creek, in single line, without reserves, was still unable to join Couch's left by as much as three hundred yards. The disadvantage of drawing in and contracting the extension of the right flank was so manifest, that, upon the report of the fact, Schofield applied to Smith for some of his reserves to complete the line, and at six o'clock in the morning, Colonel Moore reported with five regiments and a battery, and was placed there.[1] Three of the regiments were put in the trenches already there, and two in support of the artillery in rear.

At the same hour, Wood resumed the movement of the Fourth Corps, which had been interrupted in the evening, and Steedman advanced upon the Nolensville pike to the abandoned line of the Confederate works, where he half wheeled to the right and came up on Wood's left. The latter first formed his corps with Beatty's division on the left of the Franklin road, and Kimball's on the right, with Elliott in reserve; but finding a large space vacant between himself and the centre of the army, he moved Elliott's division forward into line continuous with Smith's corps. The left of the Fourth Corps, where it now connected with Steedman, remained across the Franklin road, and opposite Overton's Hill, where Hood's line bent back to the south. The National line, therefore, instead of being oblique to the enemy, and far outreaching it on the right, as on the previous day, was parallel and exterior to it from flank to flank, nowhere reaching beyond it, except where Wilson's cavalry was operating beyond Schofield on the Hillsboro road.

About noon, Steedman's troops formed a connection with Wood's, and the latter, by order of General Thomas, took direction of both. Along the whole line the skirmishers

[1] In Smith's report this is spoken of by mistake as Moore's division, but it was, in fact, only part of his division.

were advanced close to the enemy's works, and various points were reconnoitred to determine the feasibility of an assault. Thomas did not order an attack upon the intrenchments, but left the corps commanders to their own discretion in this respect. Wood concentrated his artillery fire upon Overton's Hill, Smith and Schofield maintained a severe cross-fire upon the angle at Shy's Hill, and at other points on the line the opposing batteries were warmly engaged.

Finding that the enemy was strongly intrenched in Wood's front, General Thomas rode to Smith, and learned the results of the reconnoissance there, and, after examining for himself the position, continued on to Schofield's lines on the right. Schofield had ordered Stiles's brigade of Cox's division to leave its position in rear of the extreme right and march farther south, then, turning to the east, to push forward upon a wooded hill on the extension of the line of the division. Thence he was to keep pace with the advance of Wilson's dismounted cavalry, and attack with the rest of the line when it should go forward. The termination of the Confederate continuous works in Cheatham's line, was the embrasured earthwork already referred to, with a recurved flank facing the south. A four-gun battery, of smooth twelve-pound guns, was in this fort, with four more in the curtain connecting it with Shy's Hill. The rifled guns of Cockerell's battery, on the west side of Richland Creek, were able to reach the embrasures of the work in front, while the shells of the smooth guns fell short in the efforts at reply, and the superiority of the National artillery was such that the Confederate gunners were forced to reload their pieces, by drawing them aside with the *prolonge*, to the protection of the parapet.

On learning the nature of the works in front of Schofield,

and the extent of the enemy's line, Thomas ordered Smith to send one of his divisions to extend that flank, but on representations as to the condition of affairs in Smith's front, the order was withdrawn.

Wilson, however, was making good progress with his cavalry, which must now be traced. Johnson's division had not felt strong enough to attack the position of Chalmers, near Bell's Landing, on the 15th, and Wilson's movements had been made with the rest of the corps. The concentration of Chalmers's division in the night, enabled Wilson to bring Johnson up in the morning, and he now had all three of his divisions in hand. Hammond's had pickets toward the Granny White turnpike, in rear of Hood's left, Hatch's division was ordered to move from his bivouac on the Hillsboro road, on the left of Hammond, and upon the enemy's rear. Johnson was moving across the country from near Bell's Landing. By noon, or shortly after, Wilson's skirmishers formed a continuous curved line from Schofield's right around the enemy's flank across the Granny White road. It was at this time that Schofield ordered the movement of Stiles's brigade, which has been mentioned, and had suggested the desirability of sending a full division of infantry beyond Hood's flank, if one could be spared from the line. He did not think it wise to assault the heavy work in front of Cox's division, except in connection with a general advance.

The situation at the angle on Shy's Hill, however, was opening the prospect of a successful attack there. The advance of Wilson's dismounted cavalry from one wooded hill to another on the south, was making Hood uneasy, and his vehement exhortation to Chalmers, to hold his own, not being enough to overcome the odds against that officer, he was forced to withdraw Govan's brigade from Cheatham's

line, and send it to Chalmers's support. Bate was ordered to extend his left, and occupy Shy's Hill, while Coleman, who had been there, was sent to fill Govan's place. Bate's line was now a good deal stretched, and he found also that the earthworks built in the night were too far back from the brow of the hill, so that they did not command its slope. The fire upon it was too hot to change it, he could get no reinforcements, and he could only hold on to the last. Bate's own words best describe his situation in the afternoon: "The enemy, he says, opened a most terrific fire of artillery, and kept it up during the day. In the afternoon, he planted a battery in the woods, in the rear of Mrs. Bradford's house (this was in McArthur's line), fired directly across both lines composing the angle, and threw shells directly in the back of my left brigade; also placed a battery on a hill diagonally to my left, which took my first brigade in reverse. (This was in Cox's line.) The batteries on the hill, in its front, not more than three hundred yards distant (in Couch's line) had borne the concentrated fire of my Whitworth rifles all day, and must have suffered heavily, but were not silenced. These rifled guns of the enemy being so close, razed the works on the left of the angle for fifty or sixty yards." [1]

General McArthur, from his position, was able to see something of the mischief done to Bate's line, and reported that an assault upon the angle was practicable. He proposed to move McMillan's brigade to the right, in front of the hill held by Couch, and to charge under the cover of Couch's guns, where the hillside gave most protection to an advance. Thomas approved the plan, and Smith sent to Schofield for directions to Couch to co-operate. Schofield

[1] General Bate's official report.

acceded to this, and directed Cox also to attack the hill in his front simultaneously, while Stiles should advance beyond the flank with the cavalry. It was now near four o'clock, and Thomas was in person at Schofield's position, from which Shy's Hill, and the whole range south, to the Brentwood Hills, were in full view.

The whole connection of events will be best understood if we now return to the left flank, where Wood had been making anxious examination of the enemy's position on Overton's Hill, and upon the report of a reconnoissance by Colonel Post, had determined to try the chances of an attack there. The assault from the Fourth Corps' position was assigned to Post's brigade of Beatty's division, supported by Streight's. Thompson's colored brigade, of Steedman's command, supported by Grosvenor's brigade, were to attack at the same time from the east. A concentrated artillery fire upon the hill preceded the assault, and at three o'clock the order to advance was given. A cloud of skirmishers ran forward to draw the enemy's fire and to annoy the artillerists in the works, and the brigades in line followed them. Nearing the intrenchments, they rushed forward, some of the men gaining the parapet, but they were received with so hot a fire, that they could not endure it, and after a short, sharp struggle they recoiled. Their retreat was covered by the rest of Beatty's division and Steedman's reserves, and by the artillery. These were so handled that the enemy did not venture from his works, and our wounded were brought safely off; but the casualties were probably half of all that occurred in the battle, adding another to the many proofs of the terrible disadvantage at which a direct assault of a well intrenched line is usually made. Colonel Post was killed, and the loss in officers was heavy, for they exposed themselves fearlessly in leading their men.

At the angle in the Confederate works held by Bate, at Shy's Hill, the circumstances were different. His lines, as we have seen, were enfiladed and taken in reverse; his parapet was levelled for some distance; the closeness of Couch's batteries, the near approach of our skirmishers, the attenuation of Bate's troops, the cover for the approach of the assailing force under the hill-slope, all combined to neutralize the advantage of modern weapons, and to give the assault the preponderance of chances which justify it. While the fire upon the angle was kept up with increasing severity, McArthur ordered Colonel McMillan to form his brigade in the hollow before Couch's works, and when they should be half-way up the hill, the brigades to the left were to advance in *échelon*, attacking the lower line before them.

Wilson's dismounted cavalry had been advancing from the south, gaining position after position, and increasing their ardor as they advanced. Their numbers enabled them to outflank Govan's brigade, which Hood had sent to assist Chalmers in holding them back, and as they approached Schofield's position Stiles's brigade of infantry came in close support.[1] The balls from this attacking force were now falling in rear of Bate and Lowry, and the men of Cleburne's old division were vainly trying to form a line long or strong enough to match that which was coming from the south. Wilson had gone in person to Thomas, at Schofield's position, to report what his men were doing, and reached him just as McMillan's brigade was seen to rush forward upon the slope of Shy's Hill. At a sign from Schofield, Cox's division started also on the run, Doolittle's brigade in

[1] In his report General Schofield expressed some disappointment that this brigade had not been able to get forward faster; but Colonel Stiles's account of the matter and of the nature of the ground show that he accomplished all that could be expected of so small a force moving over rough, detached hills.

advance. Wilson turned to gallop back to his command, but before he could get half-way there, the whole Confederate left was crushed in like an egg-shell.

McMillan swept unchecked over Bate's ruined line at Shy's Hill. The gallant Colonel of the Thirty-seventh Georgia did all that man could do to hold it, and dying at his post, gave to the height the name it bears. The arch was broken; there were no reserves to restore it, and from right and left the Confederate troops peeled away from the works in wild confusion. From the heavy earthwork in front of Doolittle one volley of cannon and small arms was fired, but in the excitement it was aimed so high as to do no mischief, and Cox's whole division was over the works before they could reload. At the same time Hatch and Knipe, with their divisions of dismounted men, rushed in from the right, and, abandoning their artillery, the Confederates west of the Granny White road crowded eastward, running for life. Some were killed, many were captured, and Smith's and Schofield's men met upon the turnpike at right angles, and were halted to prevent their organizations from being confused together.

Hubbard's brigade, of McArthur's division, which followed McMillan's movement, met with more resistance, and suffered more severely; but though some of the Confederate regiments held tenaciously to their works, and surrendered in form, most of the troops broke their organizations entirely when the advance was taken up from centre to wings, and Wood's divisions now charged, with hardly a show of opposition, over Overton's Hill, from which they had been driven back an hour before.