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*CAMPAIGNS OF THE CIVIL WAR.—V.*

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THE ANTIETAM  
AND  
FREDERICKSBURG

BY

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TORICAL SOCIETY OF MASSACHUSETTS.

NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

743 AND 745 BROADWAY

1883

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NEW YORK

## PREFACE.

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IN preparing this book, I have made free use of the material furnished by my own recollection, memoranda, and correspondence. I have also consulted many volumes by different hands. As I think that most readers are impatient, and with reason, of quotation-marks and foot-notes, I have been sparing of both. By far the largest assistance I have had, has been derived from advance sheets of the Government publication of the Reports of Military Operations During the Rebellion, placed at my disposal by Colonel Robert N. Scott, the officer in charge of the War Records Office of the War Department of the United States.

F. W. P.

# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
LIST OF MAPS, . . . . .	xi

## CHAPTER I.

THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN, . . . .	1
---	---

## CHAPTER II.

SOUTH MOUNTAIN, . . . . .	27
---------------------------	----

## CHAPTER III.

THE ANTIETAM, . . . . .	42
-------------------------	----

## CHAPTER IV.

FREDERICKSBURG, . . . . .	136
---------------------------	-----

---

## APPENDIX A.

COMMANDERS IN THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC UNDER MAJOR-GENERAL GEORGE B. MCCLELLAN ON SEP- TEMBER 14, 1862, . . . . .	191
--	-----

## APPENDIX B.

PAGE

ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA, FROM AUGUST 13 TO NOVEMBER 15, 1862, FROM RE- PORTS OF MILITARY OPERATIONS DURING THE RE- BELLION, 1860-65, WASHINGTON, ADJUTANT-GEN- ERAL'S PRINTING OFFICE, . . . . .	194
--	-----

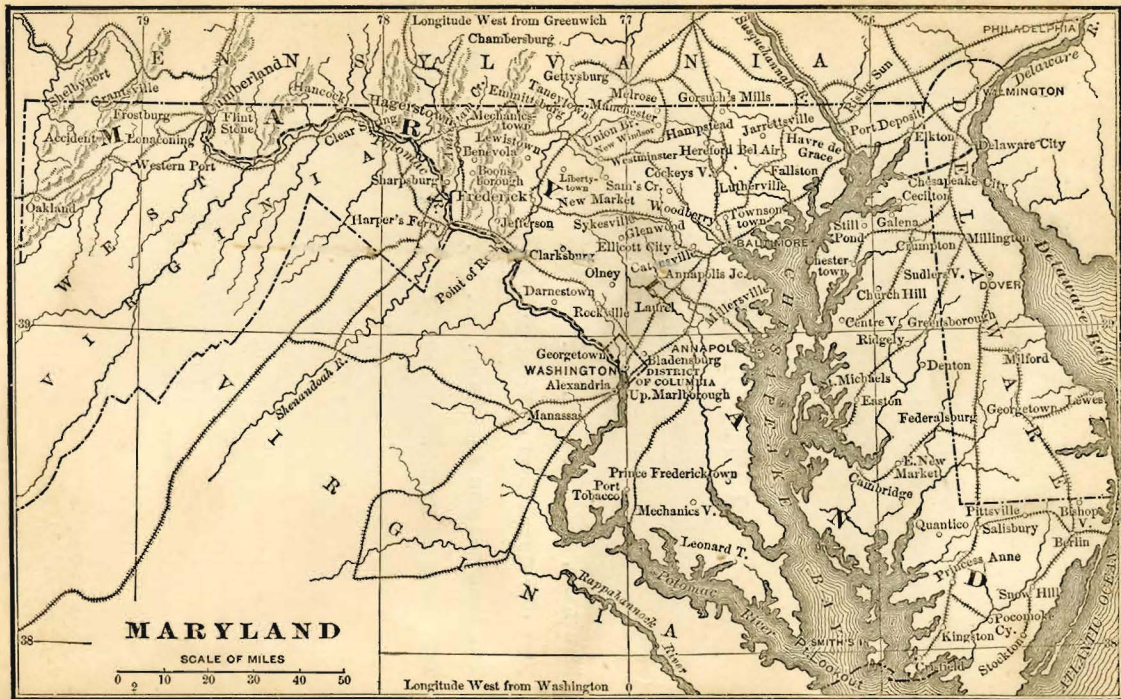
## APPENDIX C.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, DECEM- BER, 1862, MAJOR-GENERAL A. E. BURNSIDE COM- MANDING, . . . . .	199
INDEX . . . . .	211

## LIST OF MAPS.

---

	PAGE
MARYLAND, . . . . .	1
FIELD OF OPERATIONS IN VIRGINIA, . . . .	12
THE FIELD OF THE ANTIETAM, . . . . .	49
THE FIELD OF FREDERICKSBURG, . . . . .	142



# THE ANTIETAM AND FREDERICKSBURG.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE CAMPAIGN.

THE campaigns in the East in the summer of 1862 were a disappointment to the North. McClellan and the Army of the Potomac not only did not capture Richmond or disable the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, but were forced back from the furthest point of their advance. Though they inflicted heavy loss upon the enemy, they suffered heavy losses themselves, in men, guns, and property of all kinds. The last serious fighting they did in the Peninsular campaign was at Malvern Hill, on July 1st, and no further events of importance took place in that region. The army was withdrawn from the Peninsula, under the orders of the Government, in the following month of August. Whether McClellan himself had failed, and whether he was not in a better position for offensive operations when he was withdrawn than he had ever occupied elsewhere, is an interesting question, but one which does not fall within the scheme of this volume to discuss.

While McClellan and the main Eastern army were in the Peninsula, various bodies of troops were held by the Government in positions nearer Washington, to ensure the safety of the capital. The most important of these were the armies of McDowell, Fremont, and Banks. By an order dated June 26, 1862, these forces were consolidated into the Army of Virginia,<sup>1</sup> and placed under the command of General Pope. Its career under Pope was unfortunate. The Southern generals found it easier to deal with Banks and Pope than with McClellan, and at Cedar Mountain and at the second battle of Manassas they inflicted upon them disastrous defeats. The guns that they took were counted by tens, the prisoners by thousands, while the lists of our killed and wounded were long and ghastly. It is at this time, when the Army of Virginia and the Army of the Potomac were united within the lines constructed for the defence of Washington, that our story begins, on September 2, 1862.

It is not to be imagined that the Union forces thus collected in front of Washington were a rabble. It is true that even successful battle produces much disorganization, and that defeat, and still more, a series of defeats, produces much more. Officers are killed and wounded, men stray from their colors, arms and equipments are lost, and much confusion is caused, and the effective force of an army is sometimes very seriously impaired; but with even tolerable troops it is very rarely destroyed altogether, even for a day.

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<sup>1</sup> It is important for the reader to bear in mind the fact that the principal Confederate Army in Virginia was known for the whole time that Lee commanded it, that is to say, from the evening of May 31st, 1862, to the end of the war, as the Army of Northern Virginia, while the name "Army of Virginia" was never applied, so far as we know, to any body of troops except Pope's army, which was under his command for only about two months. When he was relieved of command, at the beginning of September, 1862, the Army of Virginia passed out of existence, and the troops composing it became part of the Army of the Potomac.

It hardly ever happens that all the troops on either side are engaged. Some are held as reserves, and not brought into action; some are detached, guarding trains or roads or bridges, or posted to meet an attack which is not made; others are in the order of battle, but by some one or more of the singular accidents of the field, they remain practically untouched while death is busy around them. These bodies of troops, except in extreme cases, preserve their organization and their efficiency, and may be made of infinite service in forming lines under cover of which the regiments which have been more roughly handled may reform. Then, in war, it is the universal principle that there is never a vacancy. The instant a superior falls, the man next him takes his place, without an order, without an assignment. The colonel replaces the general, the line officer the field officer, the non-commissioned officer the commissioned officer. However vacancies may be filled by orders from headquarters, whatever form promotion may take, this is the universal rule in action—as soon as a vacancy occurs, the man next in rank fills it the moment he knows that it exists, and he continues to fill it till orders from superior authority make a different arrangement. Thus, except in those very rare cases in which an army becomes a mob, even defeat works no destruction of the framework of the great machine, and when the men are fairly intelligent, brave, and disciplined, order and efficiency are restored with great rapidity. Thus, after the severe defeats which Lee inflicted upon Pope, the rear guard of infantry, artillery, and cavalry was orderly and calm, and formed a strong line between the Federal and Confederate forces. Lee sent Jackson to the Little River Turnpike, to attempt to turn our right and intercept our retreat to Washington, and a sharp engagement, in which the Federal General Kearney was killed, took place on Septem-

ber 1, near Germantown, not far from Fairfax Court House. Lee admits that "the conflict was obstinately maintained by the enemy till dark," and that the attempt was abandoned. His army rested on the 2d, near the ground where this last engagement was fought, and marched on the 3d toward Leesburg.

It is not necessary to attempt in this place to state in detail the very peculiar position which General McClellan occupied during the last days of August.<sup>1</sup> It may be sufficient to say that he was practically a commander without a command. General Halleck was General-in-Chief, and he appears to have been both confused and scared, and to have been hostile to McClellan. On the 1st of September, when Pope was at and in rear of Centreville, and Jackson was moving to assail his right flank and rear, and all or nearly all of the army of the Potomac had been sent out to join Pope, McClellan left his camp near Alexandria, where he had only his staff and a small camp-guard, and went into Washington. There General Halleck instructed him, verbally, to take command of the defences of Washington, but expressly limited his jurisdiction to the works and their garrisons, and prohibited him from exercising any control over the troops actively engaged in front under General Pope.

On the morning of the 2d, McClellan says: "The President and General Halleck came to my house, when the President informed me that Colonel Kelton<sup>2</sup> had returned from the front; that our affairs were in a bad condition; that the

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<sup>1</sup> There is some reason for believing that Pope was called from the West to command Banks and Fremont, and perhaps McDowell, and eventually to supersede McClellan; that while the belief prevailed at Washington that Pope had been successful on the 29th of August, and because of that belief, McClellan was deprived of his troops.

<sup>2</sup> An aide of the General-in-Chief, sent the day before to the army under General Pope, for the purpose of ascertaining the exact condition of affairs.

army was in full retreat upon the defences of Washington; the roads filled with stragglers, etc. He instructed me to take steps at once to stop and collect the stragglers; to place the works in a proper state of defence, and to go out to meet and take command of the army, when it approached the vicinity of the works, then to place the troops in the best position—committing everything to my hands."

So far as appears, this verbal order of the President was the only one by which McClellan was reinstated in command, and there does not seem to have been any order issued by virtue of which the Army of Virginia ceased to exist. McClellan's first official act was to send a letter of suggestion, rather than command, to Pope, and he addressed it to "Major-General John Pope, Commanding Army of Virginia," and signed it "Geo. B. McClellan, Major-General United States Army." Eleven days later we find him dating a letter "Headquarters Army of the Potomac," and adding to his signature the words "Major-General Commanding."

McClellan's talents as an organizer are generally admitted, and there is no doubt that at the date of which we are writing he was extremely popular with his men. As all pressure of the enemy was removed, as we have seen, on the day after the President directed him to take command of the army, he had a breathing-space in which to provide for the defences of Washington and to reorganize his army, but as the information which he received on the 3d led him to believe that the enemy intended to cross the upper Potomac into Maryland, it was necessary that the process of reorganization should go on while the troops were moving.

The necessary arrangements for the defence of the Capital were made, and General Banks was placed in command. He received his instructions from McClellan, and he had

under his command the Third Corps, General Heintzelman, the Fifth Corps, General Porter, and the Eleventh Corps, General Sigel. These troops, with other troops in and about Washington, which may or may not have been included in these three corps, were reported to amount in all to 72,500 men.

The army which McClellan led from Washington was made up of the First Corps, to the command of which General Hooker was assigned ; of the Second Corps, under Sumner ; of one division of the Fourth Corps, under Couch ; of the Sixth Corps, under Franklin ; of the Ninth Corps, under Reno, and the Twelfth Corps, under Mansfield. General Couch's division was attached to the Sixth Corps. The First and Ninth Corps formed the right, under General Burnside ; the Second and Twelfth the centre, under General Sumner ; and the Sixth Corps, reinforced by the division of Couch, the left, under Franklin. Porter's Fifth Corps was, on the 11th of September, ordered forward to join McClellan. The aggregate present for duty of these forces, as reported by McClellan, September 20th, including the cavalry under General Pleasonton, was 89,452. He reported his losses in the two battles of South Mountain and the Antietam, both fought before the latter date, as 14,794. The aggregate of these two totals is 104,246. Swinton, in his "Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac," states that the army with which McClellan set out on the Maryland Campaign made an aggregate of 87,164 men of all arms. McClellan, in his Report, states that the total of his own forces in action at the battle of the Antietam was 87,164. The coincidence is suspicious, and leads one to believe that Swinton is in error. McClellan's statement of his numbers present for duty September 20, 1862, is officially certified as accurately compiled from his morning report of that day.

The total of 89,452 therein given, not including the forces in the defences of Washington and certain detachments in Maryland, is partly made up of Porter's Corps, set down at 19,477. Deducting the latter number from the former, the remainder is 69,975. Add the losses at South Mountain and the Antietam, 14,794, we have a total of 84,769 as the force with which he left Washington. Of course, the effective force of an army varies from day to day, from illness, death, discharge, and desertion on the one hand, and the arrival of convalescents and recruits on the other. It seems, therefore, fair to assume that McClellan left Washington with about 85,000 men, and that the arrival of Porter increased his force by an amount about equal to the losses which he sustained in the battles of the 14th and 17th of September.

General Lee's army seems to have been made up of Longstreet's command, of five divisions, containing twenty brigades; of Jackson's command, of three divisions, containing fourteen brigades; of D. H. Hill's division, of five brigades; the unattached brigade of Evans, and a very considerable force of cavalry and artillery, and probably numbered between forty and fifty thousand men, present for duty, but this question of the numbers actually engaged on each side in the Maryland campaign will receive more particular attention hereafter.

Washington and its environs presented singular sights in the early days of September, 1862. The luxury and refinements of peace contrasted sharply with the privations and squalor of war. There are few prettier suburban drives than those in the neighborhood of Washington, and no weather is more delightful than that of late summer there, when a cooler air comes with the shortening days. As the shadows lengthened in the golden afternoon, well-appointed carriages

rolled along those charming drives, bearing fair women in cool and fresh costumes, and by their side the ragged, dusty, sunburnt regiments from the Peninsula trudged along. Rest, cleanliness, ice, food, drink, every indulgence of civilized life within reach at hand, but our hands could not be stretched out to grasp them. Military discipline was the dragon that guarded the golden apples of the Hesperides. They were so near and yet so far. The mythic Tantalus must have been present to the minds of many of those who then marched by the road which leads from Washington to the Chain bridge. The carriages returned to their stables, the fair ladies returned to the enjoyment of every pleasure that Washington could confer, but the Army of the Potomac moved steadily northward, to bivouac under the stars or the clouds, and to march again in its tatters through the dust and the sunshine, through the rain and the mud. Fortunately we had by this time become soldiers in something more than the name; we had learned to make much out of little, we were cheered by the more wholesome air and the more variegated country, we were glad to get out of the wilderness of the Peninsula. It was pleasant, too, to be once more in a country that was at least nominally friendly. Whatever the real feelings of the Marylanders might be, the stars and stripes might often be seen in other places than above the heads of the color-guards. Whether the natives sold to us gladly or not, they had much to sell, and that in itself was a most agreeable novelty to us. In the Peninsula, the country afforded us nothing, and the change from the land where our meat was fat pork, or odious beef served quivering from an animal heated by the long day's march and killed as soon as the day's march was ended, to a land where fresh vegetables and poultry were not rare, was very cheering. Money was not scarce. The pay of the army was liberal, and we had

had no chance to spend money on the Peninsula. So our march was pleasant. Wood and water were easy to find, instead of requiring weary searches at the end of a weary day. We no longer had to send the pioneers to search for stakes, and then to fix them toilsomely in the hard, bare earth with their picks, before we could unsaddle and let our horses' bridles go. The foragers found forage for the poor beasts in abundance, and the little tins in which we had learned to cook so cleverly had often something in them better than hard bread, water, salt, pepper, and ration meat.

We knew nothing of the enemy's movements, and though we all expected to fight again, yet the general impression seemed to be that it would be, as Dickens says, at that somewhat indefinite period which is commonly known as one of these days. But it was a time of sharp surprises. No leaves to enter Washington were granted, but when the army was at Tenallytown, kind-hearted "Uncle John" Sedgwick, then commanding the Second Division of the Second Corps, ordered one of his officers into Washington for two days, "on regimental business." About noon of the second day following, the officer heard that his command had moved, and so hastened to overtake it. Nothing could have been more peaceful than the appearance of Washington as he left it on a lovely afternoon. The signs of war were always plenty there, of course, but there was absolutely nothing to indicate the neighborhood of an enemy. Every one seemed to be as absorbed in the pursuits of peaceful business and secure pleasure as if the blast of war had not been heard in the land. On foot, on horseback, in carriages, every one seemed to be out of doors, and enjoying, whether working or playing, the perfect close of a perfect day. The officer had not ridden many miles when he met a squad of prisoners, and learned that they had been taken that morning in a skirmish on the

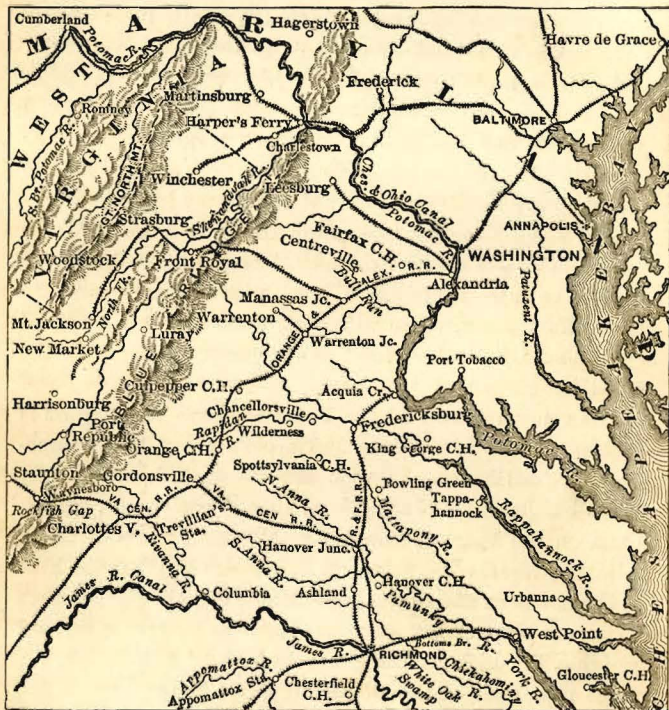
Maryland side of the Potomac. So Lee, or some of Lee's men, had invaded a loyal State, and there was every prospect that there would soon be wigs on the green. Proceeding a few miles farther, the officer found his regiment, part of a line sleeping on its arms in the order of battle, and supporting some batteries, of which the guns were unlimbered, with the gunners lying at the trails of the pieces. The report was that Jackson, with a largely superior force, was close at hand, and apparently proposing to attack in the morning. It was a dramatic changing of the scene, from the comfort and careless gayety of Washington to a starlit bivouac, with every preparation made for meeting an impending attack.

Thus did the Army of the Potomac move out in the Maryland campaign, but we must go backward a little to tell how it moved. As Lee had by September 3d disappeared from the front of Washington, and as McClellan had received information which induced him to believe that he intended to cross the upper Potomac into Maryland, he thought it likely that he might be obliged not only to protect Washington, but to cover Baltimore, and to prevent the invasion of Pennsylvania. He therefore, on the 3d, sent his cavalry to the fords near Poolesville, to watch the enemy and impede a crossing in that vicinity, while he sent the Second and Twelfth Corps to Tenallytown, and the Ninth to a point on the Seventh Street road, near Washington; and in these positions, and on the Virginia side of the Potomac, near Washington, the whole of the army seems to have remained on the 4th and part of the 5th, but by the 6th Couch's division of the Fourth Corps and Franklin's Sixth Corps were at Tenallytown and Offut's Cross Roads, the Second and Twelfth Corps were at Rockville, and the First and Ninth at Leesboro'. On the 7th McClellan left Washington, and headquarters and the Sixth Corps were moved to Rockville. By this time,

McClellan knew that the mass of the rebel army had passed up the south side of the Potomac in the direction of Leesburg, and that a portion of their army had crossed into Maryland, but he had no means of determining whether Lee proposed to cross his whole force with a view to turn Washington by a flank movement down the north bank of the Potomac, to move on Baltimore, or to invade Pennsylvania. This uncertainty made it appear to him necessary "to march cautiously, and to advance the army in such order as to keep Washington and Baltimore continually covered, and at the same time to hold the troops well in hand, so as to be able to concentrate and follow rapidly if the enemy took the direction of Pennsylvania, or to return to the defence of Washington, if, as was greatly feared by the authorities, the enemy should be merely making a feint with a small force to draw off our army, while with their main forces they stood ready to seize the first favorable opportunity to attack the Capital."

The general course of the Potomac above Washington is from northwest to southeast. Harper's Ferry, at the junction of the Shenandoah with the Potomac, is nearly fifty miles northwest of Washington, in a straight line. Leesburg, on the Virginia side of the Potomac, is about thirty miles northwest of Washington. Loudoun Heights, the hills at the northern end of the Blue Ridge, and the Shenandoah River, are between Leesburg and Harper's Ferry. Maryland Heights, the hills at the southern end of Elk Ridge, the ridge next west of the South Mountain range, are on the Maryland side of the Potomac, and that river flows between them and Harper's Ferry. Frederick City is in Maryland, forty miles from Washington, and a little west of north of it. Baltimore is about thirty-five miles northeast of Washington, measuring in a straight line, and Philadelphia,

measuring in the same way, is about ninety miles northeast of Baltimore. Thus McClellan's field of possible operations was, or was likely to be, the quadrant of a circle, of which the radius must be thirty miles, and might be four times



Field of Operations in Virginia.

that. Experience had shown that his adversary and one of his first lieutenants were enterprising, and that their army was extremely mobile. His left was tied to the Potomac, if

not by the necessities of the case, at least by the fears of the authorities at Washington, and he could only reach out to the right so far as was consistent with the preservation of a line of prudent strength, and with the possibility of rapid concentration.

The army moved slowly, but the process of reorganization proceeded rapidly, the more rapidly, no doubt, by reason of the slowness of the march. On the 9th, Couch's division, the extreme left of the army, touched the Potomac, at the mouth of Seneca Creek. Franklin's corps was at Darnestown. The Second and Twelfth Corps, constituting the centre, were at Middleburg (or Middlebrook), and the First and Ninth Corps, forming the right, were at Brookville, while the division of Sykes, of Porter's Fifth Corps, was in the rear at Tenallytown. Thus the army, Sykes's division excepted, was on the 9th on the circumference of a circle described from the centre of Washington, with a radius of twenty miles, and with an extension from left to right of about twenty-five miles.<sup>1</sup> Couch's division moved by the river road, watching the fords of the Potomac, and ultimately following and supporting the Sixth Corps. Moving through Poolesville and Barnesville, it reached Licksville by the 13th. Franklin moved by Dawsonville and Barnesville to Buckeystown, "covering the road (to the rear) from the mouth of the Monocacy to Rockville, and being in a position to connect with and support the centre should it have been necessary (as McClellan supposed) to force the line of the Monocacy." It reached Buckeystown on the 13th. Sykes's division moved by Rockville, Middleburg, and Urbanna to

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<sup>1</sup> "It seems as if our left rested on the river, and advanced slowly, while our line stretched far inland, the right advancing more rapidly, as if we were executing a vast left wheel, one end of the spoke, the hub end, being on the river."

—Extract from army letter, dated September 11, 1862.

Frederick, which place it reached on the 13th. The Second Corps moved from Middleburg through Clarksburg and Urbanna, and the Twelfth through Damascus and thence between Urbanna and New Market, to Frederick, which place both corps reached on the 13th. The First and the Ninth Corps, constituting the right wing as before, moved on Frederick, the latter by Damascus and New Market, and the former, holding the extreme right, by Cooksville and Ridgeville. All of the right wing was at Frederick on the 13th, except that by night of that day all of the Ninth Corps except Rodman's division was advanced to Middletown. Thus by night of the 13th of September, the Army of the Potomac was disposed as follows: The bulk of the army was near Frederick, with a part of the Ninth Corps advanced some eight miles to Middletown, Franklin was at Buckeystown, some five miles to the left and rear, and Couch was at Licksville, a place in the northern angle formed by the junction of the Monocacy with the Potomac. The average distance of the army from Washington may be set down at forty miles. By this time, McClellan had come into possession of some very important information, but what it was may better be left untold till some account has been given of what Lee had been doing in the last ten days, and of the state of things existing at Harper's Ferry, which place was separated by probably ten miles from the nearest troops of McClellan, as well as by a river and some very mountainous country.

The views entertained by General Lee when he entered upon the Maryland campaign are here given in his own words, taken from his official Report, dated March 6, 1863, and printed in the first volume of the "Reports of the Operations of the Army of Northern Virginia, Richmond, 1864."

The armies of General McClellan and Pope had now been brought back to the point from which they set out on the campaigns of the spring and summer. The objects of those campaigns had been frustrated, and the designs of the enemy on the coast of North Carolina and in Western Virginia thwarted by the withdrawal of the main body of his forces from those regions. Northeastern Virginia was freed from the presence of Federal soldiers up to the intrenchments of Washington, and soon after the arrival of the army at Leesburg information was received that the troops which had occupied Winchester had retired to Harper's Ferry and Martinsburg. The war was thus transferred from the interior to the frontier, and the supplies of rich and productive districts made accessible to our army. To prolong a state of affairs in every way desirable, and not to permit the season for active operations to pass without endeavoring to inflict further injury upon the enemy, the best course appeared to be the transfer of the army into Maryland. Although not properly equipped for invasion, lacking much of the material of war, and feeble in transportation, the troops poorly provided with clothing, and thousands of them destitute of shoes, it was yet believed to be strong enough to detain the enemy upon the northern frontier until the approach of winter should render his advance into Virginia difficult, if not impracticable. The condition of Maryland encouraged the belief that the presence of our army, however inferior to that of the enemy, would induce the Washington Government to retain all its available force to provide against contingencies which its course toward the people of that State gave it reason to apprehend. At the same time it was hoped that military success might afford us an opportunity to aid the citizens of Maryland in any efforts they might be disposed to make to recover their liberties. The difficulties that surrounded them were fully appreciated, and we expected to derive more assistance in the attainment of our object from the just fears of the Washington Government, than from active demonstration on the part of the people, unless success should enable us to give them assurance of continued protection.

Influenced by these considerations, the army was put in motion, D. H. Hill's division, which had joined us on the 2d, being in advance, and between September 4th and 7th crossed the Potomac at the fords near Leesburg, and encamped in the vicinity of Fredericktown.

It was decided to cross the Potomac east of the Blue Ridge, in order,

by threatening Washington and Baltimore, to cause the enemy to withdraw from the south bank, where his presence endangered our communications and the safety of those engaged in the removal of our wounded and the captured property from the late battle-fields. Having accomplished this result, it was proposed to move the army into Western Maryland, establish our communications with Richmond through the Valley of the Shenandoah, and by threatening Pennsylvania induce the enemy to follow, and thus draw him from his base of supplies.

It may be remarked, in relation to this allegation of incomplete equipment, that it seems like an excuse for failure, made after the failure had occurred, and antedated, for Lee asserts in the same Report that in the series of engagements on the plains of Manassas, which had taken place just before, there had been captured more than nine thousand prisoners, wounded and unwounded, thirty pieces of artillery, upward of twenty thousand stand of small arms, and a large amount of stores, besides those taken by General Jackson at Manassas Junction. Jackson says<sup>1</sup> that he captured there eight guns, with seventy-two horses, equipments and ammunition complete, "immense supplies" of commissary and quartermaster stores, etc. With these additions to his supplies, it would seem as if the little army with which Lee says he fought the battles of the Maryland Campaign, might have been fairly well equipped, especially when we remember how far from scrupulous the Confederates were in exchanging their shoes and clothing for the better shoes and clothing of their prisoners.

Lee's plan was a good one. It is not probable that he promised himself the capture of Philadelphia, or Baltimore, or Washington, but he might fairly believe that the chances of war might change the improbable into the possible, and the possible into the actual. He had a right to expect to

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<sup>1</sup> A. N. Va., ii., 93.

get more recruits from Maryland when his army was there, than when it was on the other side of the Potomac, without anticipating that "my Maryland" would breathe or burn in any exceptional fashion, or "be the battle-queen of yore." Without indulging in the illusions of audacious hope, he might fairly count upon great and certain gains from transferring his army to the soil of Maryland. By so doing he shifted the burden of military occupation from Confederate to Federal soil. He secured to the Virginians the precious crops of the Shenandoah Valley and their other Northeastern counties. He had two or three months of fine weather before him. He had for his opponent McClellan, and experience had shown him that McClellan never attacked, and always let him choose his own time and place for fighting. His army had learned to march with great rapidity and to fight with great gallantry and tenacity, and he had several lieutenants upon whom he knew he could place very great reliance. Under all the circumstances, he might well think that at the head of his army, with its habit of victory, and with the Shenandoah Valley open behind him, he had everything to gain and nothing to lose from an autumn campaign in Maryland, against the Army of the Potomac with its habit of defeat, and against McClellan with his want of initiative. Whether he knew or even suspected how heavily the brave and loyal and long-suffering Army of the Potomac was handicapped by the miserable jealousies, civil and military, that prevailed at the time, cannot be told. If he did, the knowledge must have greatly raised his hopes and increased his confidence. If Lee had been in McClellan's place on the 17th of September, and had sent Jackson to conduct the right attack and Longstreet to force the passage of the lower bridge and turn the Confederate left, the Army of Northern Virginia, though commanded by a second Lee, a second

Jackson, and a second Longstreet, would have ceased to exist that day.

In the northward movement of Lee's army, D. H. Hill had the advance. The crossing of the Potomac was effected at the ford near Leesburg, between the 4th and the 7th of September, and the army encamped in the vicinity of Frederick. The march was unopposed. The concentration was effected while McClellan's army was still twenty miles or more away.

Lee had expected that the advance upon Frederick would lead to the evacuation of Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry, and thus open his line of communication through the Valley of Virginia. Troops had been placed there, 2,500 men at Martinsburg under General White, and 9,000 men at Harper's Ferry, under Colonel Miles, of the Second United States Infantry, to command the débouché of the Shenandoah Valley. Whatever the propriety of placing such forces in such positions in ordinary times may have been, it is plain that the presence of Lee's army in Maryland put a new face upon the matter, and that these troops must then either be able to hold their position till relieved, in other words, be able to stand a siege, or ought at once to decamp and join themselves to the nearest substantial Union force. Lee thought they or their superiors would see this, and that they would be ordered to go. He says<sup>1</sup> "it had been supposed that the advance upon Frederick would lead to the evacuation of Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry, thus opening the line of communication through the Valley. This not having occurred, it became necessary to dislodge the enemy from those positions before concentrating the army west of the mountains." McClellan perceived that

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<sup>1</sup> A. N. Va., i., 28.

these troops were of little or no use where they were, in the altered position of affairs, and he probably knew that they could not hold Harper's Ferry against Lee if Lee turned against them. At any rate he telegraphed General Halleck, the General-in-Chief, on the 11th, "Colonel Miles . . . can do nothing where he is, but could be of great service if ordered to join me. I suggest that he be ordered at once to join me by the most practicable route." General Halleck replied by telegraph the same day: "There is no way for Colonel Miles to join you at present. The only chance is to defend his works until you can open a communication with him. When you do so, he will be subject to your orders." General Halleck seems to have been mistaken in the facts, as Loudoun Heights were not reached by the enemy till the 13th, and there seems to be no reason why Miles might not have retreated by the south bank of the Potomac long before the toils were drawn around him. Halleck seems to have been in error, as a matter of military principle, but the error probably resulted favorably for the Union arms, as will be seen.

The position, then, was this: Lee, with his army concentrated at Frederick, knew that there was a comparatively small force of the enemy in his rear, and on his main line of communication, and that it must be dislodged before he concentrated his army west of the mountains. He also knew that the Federal army was advancing slowly, and giving him a chance to operate against Harper's Ferry. McClellan knew by the 10th that it was "quite probable" that Lee's army was in the vicinity of Frederick, and on the next day that the General-in-Chief declined to move Miles from Harper's Ferry, and left him to open communications with him. Here, then, was the best possible opportunity for a race. It should be said, in justice to McClellan, that before he left Wash-

ington, and when the movement was not only possible but easy, he had recommended that the garrison of Harper's Ferry should be withdrawn by the way of Hagerstown, to aid in covering the Cumberland Valley, or that, taking up the pontoon bridge across the Potomac, and obstructing the railroad bridge, it should fall back to Maryland Heights, and there hold out to the last. Neither of these suggestions was adopted, and there was nothing left for McClellan to do but to endeavor to relieve the garrison. It was plainly a case for great activity on McClellan's part. His uncertainty, up to the 13th of September, as to the intentions of the enemy, and the telegraphic messages from Halleck, the General-in-Chief, cautioning him against exposing his left and rear and uncovering Washington, may be accepted as valid excuses for the slowness of his movements, and his unwillingness to advance his left more rapidly than his other columns, but on the 13th the position of things changed, and all uncertainty as to the intentions of the enemy were dispelled. On that day, at an hour which we have no means of fixing, further than that it was before 6.20 P.M., an order of such importance fell into his hands that we copy it in full.

SPECIAL ORDERS No. 191.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,  
September 9, 1862.

The army will resume its march to-morrow, taking the Hagerstown road. General Jackson's command will form the advance, and, after passing Middletown, with such portion as he may select, take the route toward Sharpsburg, cross the Potomac at the most convenient point, and by Friday night take possession of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and capture such of the enemy as may be at Martinsburg, and intercept such as may attempt to escape from Harper's Ferry.

General Longstreet's command will pursue the same road as far as

Boonsboro', where it will halt with the reserve, supply, and baggage trains of the army.

General McLaws, with his own division and that of General R. H. Anderson, will follow General Longstreet; on reaching Middletown, he will take the route to Harper's Ferry, and by Friday morning possess himself of the Maryland Heights, and endeavor to capture the enemy at Harper's Ferry and vicinity.

General Walker, with his division, after accomplishing the object in which he is now engaged, will cross the Potomac at Cheek's Ford, ascend its right bank to Lovettsville, take possession of Loudoun heights, if practicable, by Friday morning, Keys' ford on his left and the road between the end of the mountain and the Potomac on his right. He will, as far as practicable, co-operate with General McLaws and General Jackson in intercepting the retreat of the enemy.

General D. H. Hill's division will form the rear guard of the army, pursuing the road taken by the main body. The reserve artillery, ordnance and supply trains, etc., will precede General Hill.

General Stuart will detach a squadron of cavalry to accompany the commands of Generals Longstreet, Jackson, and McLaws, and with the main body of the cavalry will cover the route of the army and bring up all stragglers that may have been left behind.

The commands of Generals Jackson, McLaws, and Walker, after accomplishing the objects for which they have been detached, will join the main body of the army at Boonsboro' or Hagerstown.

Each regiment on the march will habitually carry its axes in the regimental ordnance wagons, for use of the men at their encampments, to procure wood, etc.

By command of GENERAL R. E. LEE.

R. H. CHILTON,  
*Assistant Adjutant General.*

MAJOR-GENERAL D. H. HILL,  
*Commanding Division.*

It appears from the statement of Colonel Taylor, Adjutant-General of the Army of Northern Virginia, that at this time General D. H. Hill was in command of a division which had not been attached to nor incorporated with either of the two

wings of that army, and that one copy of Special Orders No. 191, was sent to him directly from headquarters, and that General Jackson also sent him a copy, as he regarded Hill in his command, and that the order sent from general headquarters was carelessly left by some one in Hill's camp; while the other, which was in Jackson's own hand, was preserved by Hill.

This order told McClellan two things, both of great importance.

*First.*—That Lee, by orders issued four days before, had divided his army, sending Jackson and his command, and Walker's division, across the Potomac.

*Second.*—That the object of this division was the capture of the garrison at Harper's Ferry, and the large outpost at Martinsburg. It also gave him the additional and scarcely less important information, where the rest of the army, trains, rear guard, cavalry, and all, were to march and to halt, and where the detached commands were to join the main body.

The finding of this paper was a piece of rare good fortune. It placed the Army of Northern Virginia at the mercy of McClellan, provided only that he came up with it and struck while its separation continued. If he hurried his left column by Burkittsville, through Crampton's Gap, it would come directly upon the rear of McLaws's force on Maryland Heights. If he pressed his right by Middletown, through Turner's Gap, he would interpose between Hill and Longstreet on the one hand, and all the troops beyond the Potomac on the other. The case called for the utmost exertion, and the utmost speed. He could afford to let one of the three great divisions of his army move less rapidly, but not a moment should have been lost in pushing his columns detailed for the left and right advance through the South Mountain passes. Twenty miles is a liberal estimate of the

distance which each column had to march. It was a case for straining every nerve, and, though it is not certain at just what times the Confederate troops sent back to hold these passes actually occupied them, yet it is certain that they were very feebly held as late as the morning of the 14th, and that Harper's Ferry was not surrendered till 8 A.M. on the 15th, thirty-eight hours certainly, probably considerably more, after the lost order came to the hands of McClellan. It cannot be said that he did not act with considerable energy, but he did not act with sufficient. The opportunity came within his reach, such an opportunity as hardly ever presented itself to a commander of the Army of the Potomac, and he almost grasped it, but not quite. As Lee's movements were earlier in point of time, we will describe them first, and it will be seen that nothing could have been neater or completer than the way in which his lieutenants carried out his orders.

Jackson's command left the vicinity of Frederick on the 10th, and passing rapidly through Middletown, Boonsboro' and Williamsport, twenty-five miles or more from Frederick, crossed the Potomac into Virginia on the 11th. From Williamsport, one division moved on the turnpike from that town to Martinsburg. The two other divisions moved further to the west, to prevent the Federal forces at Martinsburg from escaping westward unobserved. General White, in command of the outpost at Martinsburg, becoming advised of the Confederate approach, left that town on the night of the 11th, and retreated to Harper's Ferry. Early on the 12th, the head of the Confederate column came in view of the Federal troops, drawn up on Bolivar Heights, above Harper's Ferry. The three divisions went into camp at and near Halltown, about two miles from the Federal position. There they waited for news from the co-operating columns.

General McLaws, with his own and General Anderson's divisions, moved on the 10th by Burkittsville, into Pleasant Valley. This valley runs north and south, between the South Mountains on the east and Elk Ridge on the west. The southern extremity of Elk Ridge, where it is cut by the Potomac, is called Maryland Heights, and these heights completely command Harper's Ferry with a plunging fire. While Maryland Heights were held by the Federals, Harper's Ferry could not be occupied by the Confederates. If the Confederates gained possession of those heights, the town was no longer tenable by the Federals. After meeting and overcoming some opposition, McLaws gained full possession of Maryland Heights by 4.30 P.M. of the 13th. He promptly made such dispositions of his troops as prevented all possibility of escape from the town to the east, and then waited to hear from Jackson and Walker. He employed his time in getting artillery into position on the heights, and by 2 P.M. of the 14th he opened fire from four guns.

General Walker crossed the Potomac at Point of Rocks, during the night of the 10th and by daylight of the 11th, and proceeded the next day toward Harper's Ferry, encamping at Hillsborough. On the morning of the 13th, he reached the foot of the Loudoun Heights, and presently occupied them with two regiments. In the afternoon, he learned that McLaws had possession of Maryland Heights, which commanded the Loudoun Heights as well as Harper's Ferry, and he proceeded to place all of his division which was not on the heights in position to prevent the escape of the garrison of Harper's Ferry down the right bank of the Potomac.

By these movements of Jackson, McLaws, and Walker, the Federal force at Harper's Ferry was surrounded, and at the mercy of the enemy. Colonel Miles, its commander,

was killed in the operations which led to the reduction of the place, and it is not known upon what grounds he could have expected to hold the place, if attacked with energy and intelligence, without retaining possession of Maryland Heights. It is stated by McClellan, however, that on the morning of the 14th, a messenger reached him from Colonel Miles, and told him that Maryland Heights had been abandoned by his troops, and that they as well as the Loudoun and Bolivar Heights had been occupied by the enemy. The messenger also said that Colonel Miles instructed him to say that he could hold out with certainty two days longer. If Colonel Miles really sent this message, it is difficult to understand how he could have entertained such a belief.

A man may travel far and wide in America without coming upon a lovelier spot than the heights above Harper's Ferry. The town itself is low and possesses no particular attractions, but one who stands above it may see the beautiful Valley of Virginia extending far to the folded hills of the southwest. As he looks to the town, the Loudoun Heights rise boldly on his right, and between him and them the Shenandoah, a stream that deserves the epithet of arrowy as well as the Rhone, rushes to its union with the broad and yellow and sluggish Potomac. In the hollow before him is the town, with Maryland Heights rising like the Trossachs beyond the river, and, that nothing may be wanting to the picture, there is the canal, with its "margin willow veiled," and its barges, to give the contrast of utter, dreamy repose to the vehemence of the Shenandoah and the rugged grandeur of the hills.

On September 14th Jackson made his final dispositions, causing A. P. Hill to advance on his right till he reached the Shenandoah, and from there to move forward till his guns and troops were above, to the right, and in rear of the

left of the Federal line of defence. Ewell's division, under Lawton, moved along the turnpike, to support Hill and aid in the general movement. Jackson's own division, under J. R. Jones, secured with one brigade a commanding hill to the left, near the Potomac, the rest moving along the turnpike as a reserve. During the night, seven batteries were placed in advanced positions, and ten guns were taken across the Shenandoah, and established on its right bank, in a position which gave them an enfilade fire on the Federal line on Bolivar Heights, while the remaining batteries of Jackson's command were placed in position on School House Hill. Early on the 15th every Confederate gun opened fire—the numerous batteries of Jackson's command, Walker's guns from Loudoun Heights, the guns sent across the Shenandoah during the night, McLaws's guns from Maryland Heights. In an hour the Federal fire seemed to be silenced, the signal for storming the works was given, and the advance was begun, when the Federal fire reopened. The Confederate guns replied, and at once the white flag was displayed by the Federals, and presently General White, who had succeeded to the command when Colonel Miles received a mortal wound, surrendered himself and 11,000 men, with 73 pieces of artillery, many small arms and other stores.

The first part of the Confederate programme had been carried out with complete success, but with greater expenditure of time than Lee had anticipated, and it will be seen that the delay almost proved fatal to him, and that McClellan ought to have made it absolutely fatal to him.

## CHAPTER II.

### SOUTH MOUNTAIN.

JACKSON left Hill to receive the surrender of the Federal troops and property, and moved at once with his remaining divisions to rejoin Lee in Maryland. By what he calls a severe night march,<sup>1</sup> he reached the vicinity of Sharpsburg on the morning of the 16th. Walker's division followed closely, and also reported to General Lee near Sharpsburg early on the 16th.

We left McClellan at Frederick, on the 13th, with the copy of Lee's order in his hands. For military reasons, which seem sufficient as he states them, he determined not to attempt to move by the most direct road, through Jefferson to Knoxville, and thence up the river to Harper's Ferry, but to move his left by Burkittsville to and through Crampton's Pass, while his centre and right marched by Middletown to Turner's Pass. These passes are gaps or gorges through which the roads across the South Mountains run. It must be remembered that the South Mountains are a continuous range of hills, and not detached heights. By moving through Crampton's Pass, the Union left would debouch in rear of Maryland Heights and of the forces under McLaws which Lee had ordered there, while the route chosen for the rest

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<sup>1</sup> Seventeen miles. A. N. Va., ii., 128.

of the army would place it between Longstreet and D. H. Hill on the right, and Jackson's forces beyond the Potomac on the left.

It has been said that it does not appear at what hour on the 13th McClellan came into possession of Lee's order. A somewhat long letter written by him to General Franklin on the 13th, is dated 6.20 P.M. In that letter he gave Franklin the substance of the information which he had obtained from Lee's order, and also told him that his signal officers reported that McLaws was in Pleasant Valley, and that the firing showed that Miles still held out. He also informed him that his right advance had occupied Middletown in the Catoctin Valley, and that the four corps of his centre and right, with Sykes's division, would move that night and early the next morning upon Boonsboro', to carry that position; that Couch<sup>1</sup> had been ordered to concentrate his division and join him as rapidly as possible; that, without waiting for the whole of that division to join, he was to "move at daybreak in the morning by Jefferson and Burkittsville upon the road to Rohrer'sville." The letter proceeded thus: "I have reliable information that the mountain pass by this road is practicable for artillery and wagons. If this pass is not occupied by the enemy in force, seize it as soon as practicable, and debouch upon Rohrer'sville in order to cut off the retreat of, or destroy McLaws's command. If you find this pass held by the enemy in large force, make all your dispositions for the attack, and commence it about half an hour after you hear severe firing at the pass on the Hagerstown pike, where the main body will attack. Having gained the pass, your duty will be first to cut off, destroy, or capture McLaws's command, and relieve Colonel Miles.

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<sup>1</sup> Who was at Licksville.

If you effect this, you will order him to join you at once with all his disposable troops, first destroying the bridges over the Potomac, if not already done, and, leaving a sufficient garrison to prevent the enemy from passing the ford, you will then return by Rohrersville on the direct road to Boonsboro', if the main column has not succeeded in its attack. If it has succeeded, take the road to Rohrersville, to Sharpsburg and Williamsport, in order either to cut off the retreat of Hill and Longstreet to the Potomac, or prevent the re-passage of Jackson. My general idea is to cut the enemy in two and beat him in detail. I believe I have sufficiently explained my intentions. I ask of you, at this important moment, all your intellect and the utmost activity that a general can exercise."

It is proper to dwell upon this letter of McClellan's, because it seems to be the first order that he issued after he came into possession of Lee's lost order, and it seems to be indisputable that in issuing it he made a mistake, which made his Maryland campaign a moderate success, bought at a great price, instead of a cheap and overwhelming victory. His "general idea" was excellent, but time was of the essence of the enterprise, and he let time go by, and so failed to relieve Miles, and failed to interpose his masses between the wings of Lee's separated army. "Move at daybreak in the morning." Let us see what this means. Franklin was at Buckeyston. The orders were issued from "Camp near Frederick," at 6.20 P.M. Buckeyston is about twelve miles by road from the top of Crampton's Gap. Franklin's troops, like all the troops of a force marching to meet and fight an invading army, were, or should have been, in condition to move at a moment's notice. The weather on the 13th was extremely fine, and the roads in good condition. There was no reason why Franklin's corps should not have moved that

night, instead of at daybreak the next morning. There was every reason for believing that there were no Confederate troops to interfere with him in his march to the Gap, for McClellan knew that they were all fully employed elsewhere, and, if there were, the advance guard would give him timely notice of it, and if he stopped then he would be just so much nearer his goal. We know now that if he had marched no farther than to the foot of the range that night, a distance which he ought to have accomplished by midnight, he could have passed through it the next morning substantially unopposed, and that advantage gained, the Federal army ought to have relieved Harper's Ferry or fatally separated the wings of Lee's army, or both. And what we know now, McClellan had strong reasons for believing then, and strong belief is more than sufficient reason for action, especially where, as in this case, he could not lose and might win by speed, and gained nothing and might lose almost everything by delay. He was playing for a great stake, and fortune had given him a wonderfully good chance of winning, and he should have used every card to the very utmost, and left nothing to chance that he could compass by skill and energy. But there are some soldiers who are much more ingenious in finding reasons for not doing the very best thing in the very best way, than they are vigorous and irresistible in clearing away the obstacles to doing the very best thing in the very best way.

As McClellan respected the night's sleep of Franklin and his men, so did he that of the rest of his army. No portion of it was ordered to move that night, with the possible exception of Couch, who was ordered to join Franklin "as rapidly as possible," and no portion of it other than Franklin's was ordered to move so early as daybreak the next morning. The earliest hour for marching that was pre-

scribed to any other command was "daylight," on the 14th, at which hour Hooker was to set out from the Monocacy and go to Middletown.

As the distance between Crampton's Gap and Turner's Gap is about six miles in a straight line, and as the country between is a practically unbroken range of rugged hills, the attack and defence of each pass was quite isolated from the other, though the fighting was going on at each place on the same day, all day at Turner's Gap, and all the afternoon at Crampton's. As the most immediate object, in point of time, was the relief of Harper's Ferry, and as the Union left carried its pass much earlier than the Union right, the action at Crampton's Gap may as well be described first.

General McLaws does not seem to have apprehended any very prompt action on the part of McClellan by the way of the South Mountain passes, but he was too good a soldier to leave his rear quite unprotected. So, while he was busy in taking Maryland Heights, at the southern end of Pleasant Valley, and aiding in the capture of Harper's Ferry, he not only drew a thin line of troops across the valley in his rear, but sent some troops and guns to the lower passes of the South Mountain range. On the 13th, cannonading to the east and northeast, and the reports of his cavalry scouts, indicated the advance of the enemy from various directions; but he did not attach much importance to these indications, as the lookout from the mountains saw nothing to confirm them. On the following day, news of an advance of the enemy toward the Brownsville Gap (the one next south of Crampton's Gap, and about a mile from it) led him to call up two more brigades, and he sent word to General Cobb, who commanded one of them, to take command of Crampton's Gap so soon as he should arrive in that vicinity. The Gap was over five miles from the position of his main force, and

he himself was directing the fire of his guns on Maryland Heights, when he heard cannonading from the direction of Crampton's. Still he did not feel any solicitude at first, and simply sent orders to Cobb to hold the Gap to the last man, but presently he set out for the Gap himself. On his way there, he met one of his messengers returning, who told him that the Federals had forced the Gap, and that Cobb needed reinforcements. The news was true, and the comparative ease and rapidity with which the Federals had achieved this success, showed how possible it would have been to gain it earlier, and so save several priceless hours. Franklin's superiority of force was such that he gained the crest after a spirited action of three hours, beginning at about noon on the 14th. He lost about five hundred and thirty men, and estimated the enemy's loss in killed and wounded at about the same; but he took from him four hundred prisoners, a gun, and three colors. His advance moved into Pleasant Valley that night, and the remnant of the brigades he had beaten, those of Cobb, Semmes, and Mahone, helped to form McLaws's defensive line of battle across Pleasant Valley.

The action at Turner's Gap was on a larger scale, took longer to decide, and was more costly. By the afternoon of the 13th, Lee heard that McClellan was approaching by that road, and D. H. Hill was ordered to guard the pass, and Longstreet to march from Hagerstown to his support. Lee's information seems to have come from Stuart, who commanded his cavalry, and it was undoubtedly Pleasonton's cavalry advance which Stuart encountered and reported. Hill sent back the brigades of Garland and Colquitt to hold the pass, but subsequently ordered up the rest of his division from the neighborhood of Boonsboro'. This, however, he did not do till the next day, after an examination of the pass, made by him very early on the morning of the 14th,

had satisfied him that it could only be held by a large force.<sup>1</sup>

So much of the battle of South Mountain as was fought at Turner's Gap hardly admits of a precise description. It lasted a long time, from about seven in the morning till well into the evening, and a good many troops were used first and last, but the ground was so peculiar and so little known to our commanders, that much precious time and many gallant efforts were almost wasted, and it was not till the day was near its end that the Federal advance was conducted with *ensemble*. There was plenty of hard fighting, but much of it was sharp skirmishing, and the whole affair, till near the end, was rather many little battles than one connected battle. There were frequent charges and counter-charges, and many attempts, more or less successful, to turn the flanks of the opposing forces.

The main road from Frederick, by Middletown to Hagerstown, crosses the South Mountain at Turner's Gap. The mountain is at this point about one thousand feet high, but the depression of the Gap is some four hundred feet. The mountain on the north side of the main road is divided into two crests by a narrow valley, which is deep where it touches the road, but much less so a mile to the north. At Bolivar, a small village between Middletown and the Gap, roads branch to the right and left. The one on the right, called the "Old Hagerstown Road," passes up a ravine and leads to the left over and along the first of the two crests above mentioned, and enters the turnpike at the Mountain House, near the summit of the pass. The left-hand road, called the "Old Sharpsburg Road," follows a somewhat cir-

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<sup>1</sup> The map of South Mountain, prepared in 1872, in the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, gives an excellent idea of this peculiar position.

cuitous route to Fox's Gap, at the top of the Mountain, and about a mile south of the Mountain House, and thence descends to the westward. Two or three wood roads lead northward from this road to, and to the westward of, the Mountain House. The mountains are steep, rugged, and thickly wooded, and rendered peculiarly hard to climb by reason of the presence of many ledges and loose rocks. A good many stone fences also were found there, and they afforded much protection to the troops defending the position.

At 6 A.M., on Sunday the 14th, General Cox, commanding the Kanawha division of Reno's (Ninth) Corps, marched from Middletown under an order received by him from Reno, directing him to support with his division the advance of Pleasonton's command, which was composed of cavalry and artillery. He took the road to the left of the main road, and ordered his leading brigade, Colonel Scammon commanding, to feel the enemy, and to ascertain whether the crest of South Mountain on that side was held by any considerable force. As the brigade moved out, he accompanied it, and presently met a paroled officer returning. An involuntary exclamation of this officer, when he told him where he was going, made him suspect that the enemy was in force at the Gap, and he thereupon ordered his second brigade, Colonel Crook commanding, to follow in support, and sent word back to Reno that he was moving his whole division, and notified Pleasonton that if the command got into an engagement, he should command as senior till Reno should come up. Reno sent word that Burnside and he approved, and that he would bring up the rest of the corps. As the first brigade advanced, Colonel Hayes (our late President) was sent with his regiment to the left, to gain, if possible, the enemy's right. He succeeded in gaining the crest on the

left, and established himself there, in spite of vigorous resistance on the part of the Confederates. The rest of the command, with some aid from the artillery of the division, carried the entire crest by about 9 A.M. The enemy made several attempts to retake it, but though the fortunes of the fight were for some time uncertain, the Federals were solidly established by noon upon the ground they had won. The Confederate troops opposed to the Federals on this part of the field, were Garland's brigade, which lost its commander and was badly demoralized by his fall and the rough treatment it received, Anderson's brigade, Ripley's brigade, and part of Colquitt's, all of D. H. Hill's division, and Colonel Rosser, who had some cavalry, artillery, and sharpshooters.

At about 2 P.M., Federal reinforcements began to appear in masses, and something like a continuous line was formed. Willcox's division of the Ninth Corps was the first to arrive upon the ground, and it took position on the right of Cox, sending one regiment, however, to the extreme left, where a turning movement was threatened. Sturgis's division of the same corps supported Willcox, and of Rodman's division Fairchild's brigade was sent to the extreme left and Harlan's was placed on the right; but all these troops were on the south of the turnpike, that is to say, to the left of it, as seen from the Federal headquarters. Of Hooker's corps, Gibbon's brigade was placed on the turnpike, to make a demonstration on the centre so soon as the movements on the right and left had sufficiently progressed. The next troops to the right were Hatch's division, and beyond him was Meade, who moved up the "Old Hagerstown Road" to Mount Tabor Church, and deployed a short distance in advance of it. General Ricketts's division came up considerably later, and was deployed in the rear. Artillery was placed in position wherever it was thought it could be of service to

the Federal attack, cavalry was thrown out to watch suspicious roads, and skirmishers were used freely to cover the front of the advancing brigades. At about 4 P.M. the general advance of the Federals began. The general scheme of it was that Reno's men should close in upon the Gap from the ground which they had won to the south, while Hooker's men were to reach the same point by circling round through the valley which formed the approach from the north to the Mountain House. In executing this movement, it was intended that Gallagher's and Magilton's brigades of Meade's division should pass through the ravine. Seymour's brigade of the same division was to move along the summit on the right, parallel to the ravine, and Hatch's division was to take the crest on the left; Ricketts's division was to follow in reserve; Gibbon's employment has already been indicated. Thus, including the reserves, eighteen Federal brigades, with artillery and cavalry, were used in this final operation.

To meet this general attack, there were present on the Confederate side the five brigades of D. H. Hill, viz. : Garland's, Colquitt's, Ripley's, Rodes's, and G. B. Anderson's. To these were added, about 3 P.M., from Longstreet's command, the brigades of Drayton and D. R. Jones (under Colonel G. T. Anderson), and at about 4 P.M. the brigades of Evans, Pickett (under Garnett), Kemper, and Jenkins (under Walker), and Hood's division of two brigades, commanded respectively by Wofford and by Law. If we call Rosser's command a brigade, it will appear that the Confederates at Turner's Gap met with fourteen brigades the assault of the Federal right, made with eighteen brigades.

In the afternoon fighting, Colquitt's brigade was in the centre, astride of the turnpike. The right was formed of the brigades of Drayton, G. T. Anderson, Ripley, and G. B.

Anderson, in the order named from left to right, supported by Hood's two brigades, and with Rosser's men and what was left of Garland's brigade at and in rear of the right ; on the left were the brigades of Rodes, who did most of the fighting there, and of Evans, Kemper, Pickett, and Jenkins. The Confederates had plenty of artillery, and they placed guns wherever they could find ground for them.

The Confederate reports of this action are not characterized by that fine tone of superiority with which all students of their reports are familiar. They claim to check and repulse and drive back the Federals, but the general result is an admission of defeat. It is refreshing to find that farcical overestimates of the strength of the enemy were not confined to the Federal side. General Garnett's report contains these words: "It has been subsequently ascertained that General McClellan's army, consisting of at least eighty thousand men, assailed our position, only defended by General D. H. Hill's division, and a part of General Longstreet's corps." The burden of all their reports, indeed, is that they were overwhelmed by numbers, and by them forced to yield, and were "withdrawn," one of their division commanders says, "in comparatively good order to the foot of the hill." D. H. Hill does not write like a soldier, and permits himself strange assertions. After describing his formation of a line of four brigades, with Drayton on one flank, he says: "Three Yankee brigades moved up in beautiful order against Drayton, and his men were soon beaten and went streaming to the rear. Rosser, Anderson, and Ripley still held their ground, and the Yankees could not gain our rear." If Rosser, Ripley, and Anderson could hold their ground, when three Yankee brigades had uncovered their flank, they were heroes indeed.

The truth is that this engagement was far from being

creditable to the Confederates. Some of them undoubtedly fought extremely well, notably Rodes's brigade, which lost very heavily. They were not well handled. The position was not one of a

Straight pass in which a thousand,  
Might well be stopped by three,

because of the lateral roads which led into it and partially by it; but it was one which gave great advantage to the defenders. It is probable that the Federals outnumbered the Confederates to some extent, but probably not to a great extent. If Ricketts's three brigades, which were hardly, if at all, used, be subtracted from the Federal total of eighteen, it will leave them fifteen brigades against fourteen Confederate brigades, and there is no reason for supposing that these Federal brigades went into action very much stronger than their opponents. It is true that Longstreet's men went into action after a toilsome march, but the Union troops had done some marching, too, and they had to fight up hill. Moreover the Confederates were familiar with the *terrain*, and the Federals were not. It is altogether probable that D. H. Hill's assertion is true, that if Longstreet's troops, as they came on the ground, had reported to him, who had become familiar with the ground and knew all the vital points, the result might have been different. "As it was, they took wrong positions, and in their exhausted condition, after a long march, they were broken and scattered." <sup>1</sup>

General McClellan's estimate of the numbers on each side is about as oriental as usual. He calls the Confederate force "probably some thirty thousand in all," and says, "we went

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<sup>1</sup> A. N. Va., ii., 113.

into action with about thirty thousand men." This is an extract from his report dated August 4, 1863, when he had had plenty of time to think, and must be accepted as deliberate. It deserves attentive consideration. In the first place, let us consider his own numbers. It is impossible, from his own figures, to place the aggregate of the First and Ninth Corps present for duty September 14, 1862, higher than 35,155. If he went into action with 30,000, he took in more than five-sixths of his aggregate present for duty, and no soldier who served in the second year of our war will believe that he even approximated that. In the second place, did he believe in August, 1863—did he believe in September, 1862—that he had driven 30,000 of Lee's army from a very strong position with 30,000 of his own? Bunker Hill, if he had read no further in the history of war, might have taught him the absolute folly of such an idea. And Lee's men were not embattled farmers, or raw levies, or discontented conscripts. They were men passionately in earnest, men who had developed a natural aptitude for fighting by fourteen months of sharp and usually successful campaigning. They had shown that they could fight hard and march hard—that their audacity and tenacity were alike remarkable—that they were far more likely to carry difficult positions than to be driven from them. For McClellan, a year after the event, to profess to believe that he drove Longstreet and Hill with 30,000 men from the heights of South Mountain with 30,000 of his own men, is one of those extraordinary, inconceivable, aggravating things that stirs everything that is acrid in the nature of those who follow his career.

General McClellan reported a loss in this engagement of 1,568 men, of whom all but 22 were killed or wounded. Of this loss a large part fell upon Cox's Kanawha division, which had 442 men killed and wounded. Willcox's division

also suffered heavily. The Federal General Reno<sup>1</sup> was killed almost as soon as he came up to the line occupied by his men, at about dark. About fifteen hundred Confederate prisoners were taken. Many of them were taken from Rodes's brigade, which also had 218 men killed and wounded. Five Confederate colonels and lieutenant-colonels were killed or dangerously wounded, besides one brigadier-general killed.

The untrustworthy character of military reports is illustrated by what we read in print from Federal and Confederate sources as to the advance up the turnpike made late in the engagement by Gibbon's brigade. McClellan says: "The brigade advanced steadily, driving the enemy from his positions in the woods and behind stone walls until . . . The fight continued until nine o'clock, the enemy being entirely repulsed, and the brigade . . . continued to hold the ground it had so gallantly won until twelve o'clock, when it was relieved." Colonel Meredith, commanding a regiment in this brigade, says: "It was a glorious victory on the part of General Gibbon's brigade, driving the enemy from their strong position in the mountain gorge." On the other hand, General Hill reports that this advance was "heroically met and bloodily repulsed" by two regiments of Colquitt's brigade, and that the fight "gradually subsided as the Yankees retired." Colquitt himself says: "Not an inch of ground was yielded." It is of little consequence which is nearer the truth. The great fact remains that the two battles of South Mountain were tactical defeats to the Confederates, but strategical victories won by them. General Hill was right in saying, "We retreated that night to Sharpsburg, having

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<sup>1</sup> General D. H. Hill sweetly says (A. N. Va., ii., 111), "a renegade Virginian, who was killed by a happy shot from the Twenty-third North Carolina."

accomplished all that was required, the delay of the Yankee army until Harper's Ferry could not be relieved." This of itself was bad enough for McClellan, but it was not all. He had lost his opportunity not only to save the garrison of Harper's Ferry, but to interpose between the wings of Lee's army. A night march of his left and right wing on the evening of the 13th—a far easier march than Jackson made on the night of the 15th, from Harper's Ferry to Sharpsburg—would have given him possession of both passes early in the morning of the 14th, and if he had been there it is hard to see how he could have failed to do such things as fairly startle one to think of. To crush McLaws, relieve Harper's Ferry, turn every gun he could get on to Maryland Heights upon Jackson and Walker, and hurl forty or fifty thousand men onto D. H. Hill and Longstreet while he interposed between them and Jackson, seem things not only within the range of possibility, but of easy possibility. But he was not equal to the occasion. He threw away his chance, and a precious opportunity for making a great name passed away. It is no wonder that Lee and Jackson were audacious at Chancellorsville. After their experiences with Pope and McClellan, they had some right to believe that a division of their forces in the immediate presence of the enemy might be ventured upon. It may be said that McClellan did better than Pope, and this is true, but such faint praise is the most that can be said of his action on this important occasion, and as for his tactical victory, it is curious to read, as we shall presently, that he did not learn till daylight the following morning, that the enemy had abandoned his positions.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE ANTIETAM.

LEE and his generals were not slow to act in presence of the danger which still impended. General McLaws made haste, during the night of the 14th, to form his command in line of battle across Pleasant Valley, about a mile and a half below Crampton's, leaving one regiment to support the artillery on Maryland Heights, and two brigades on each of the roads from Harper's Ferry, *i.e.*, the road which ran from there over the Brownsville Pass, and that by the Weverton Pass. The object of this was to prevent the escape of the garrison of Harper's Ferry by either road, as well as to protect his own right flank. The commands of Longstreet and D. H. Hill reached Sharpsburg on the morning of the 15th, and were placed in position along the range of hills between the town and the Antietam, nearly parallel to the course of the stream, Longstreet on the right of the road to Boonsboro', and Hill on the left.

Lee moved to Sharpsburg, because he would there be upon the flank and rear of any force moving against McLaws, and because the army could unite there to advantage. Longstreet says that this position was a strong defensive one, besides possessing the advantage just mentioned. As no other Confederate troops came up to this position till the following day, it is convenient to return to the Federal headquar-

ters, and tell what McClellan and his troops did after the fighting at South Mountain ended.

It has already been said that Franklin's advance moved into Pleasant Valley on the night of the 14th. An hour after midnight of that day, McClellan sent Franklin orders to occupy the road from Rohrer'sville to Harper's Ferry, placing a sufficient force at Rohrer'sville to hold the position against an attack from the Boonsboro' direction, that is to say, from the forces of Longstreet and Hill. He also directed him to attack and destroy such of the enemy as he might find in Pleasant Valley, and, if possible, to withdraw Miles's command. The letter ends: "You will then proceed to Boonsboro', which place the Commanding General intends to attack to-morrow, and join the main body of the army at that place. Should you find, however, that the enemy have retreated from Boonsboro' towards Sharpsburg, you will endeavor to fall upon him and cut off his retreat." These orders made Franklin's duty perfectly clear, and it is not easy to see why he did not obey them, except that he seems to have had a fatal tendency to see lions in his path. Couch joined him at 10 P.M. of the night of the 14th, thus raising his forces to a nominal aggregate of upward of eighteen thousand men present for duty, which must have much more than equalled the strength of the twelve brigades which McLaws had to oppose to him. He was fully informed of McClellan's plans and wishes before these orders reached him, and he knew from the tenor of McClellan's letter, if he did not know it directly and in terms, that he had forced the passage of Turner's Gap. Under these circumstances the duty was pressing to put forth, as McClellan had begged him to, "the utmost activity that a general can exercise." Unfortunately for the success of the Union arms, Franklin was not the man for the place. At ten minutes before 9 A.M. of the

15th, he was two miles from the line of the enemy, which was drawn between him and the place he was ordered to relieve, and waiting (which McClellan had not told him to do) to be sure that Rohrer'sville was occupied before moving forward to attack the enemy, and reporting that this might require two hours' further delay. He also reported that the cessation of firing at Harper's Ferry made him fear that it had fallen, and his opinion that, if that proved to be true, he would need to be strongly reinforced. By eleven o'clock he had satisfied himself that the enemy in his front outnumbered him two to one.

Harper's Ferry was surrendered at 8 A.M. of this day. It was lost because Miles did not make his main defence on Maryland Heights, because McClellan's orders were not equal to the emergency, and because Franklin's action was not equal to the orders he received. After what has been said, it is hardly necessary to say that Franklin did not make himself disagreeable in any way to McLaws. McClellan seems to have thought that the "gigantic rebel army" <sup>1</sup> before him was so gigantic that, with Longstreet and D. H. Hill and Walker and Jackson's entire command away, McLaws could still outnumber three Federal divisions two to one, for he ordered General Franklin to remain where he was "to watch the large force in front of him," and protect his left and rear till the night of the 16th, when he was to send Couch's division to Maryland Heights, and himself join the main army at Keedysville. How he could have expected to beat the whole of Lee's army, when he attributed such

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<sup>1</sup> McClellan's letter of September 11, 1862 (Com. C. W., i., 39). The army estimate of the relative strength of the two armies was not, at least in the Second Corps, the same as McClellan's. "We outnumber the enemy" (extract from army letter, dated Frederick, September 13, 1861).

strength to a fraction of it, is a riddle which it passes human powers to solve.

General Franklin watched the large force in front of him to so much and so little purpose, that they sent their trains back across the river, and gradually withdrew themselves, marched through Harper's Ferry, camped at Halltown, and joined the main army at Sharpsburg on the morning of September 17th. The scheme of interposing the Federal army between the wings of Lee's army was rapidly coming to naught.

On the night of the 14th September, the centre, under General Sumner, came up in rear of the right wing, shortly after dark. Richardson's division of the Second Corps was placed at Mount Tabor Church on the "Old Hagerstown Road," about a mile north of Bolivar, and the rest of the Second Corps, and all the Twelfth Corps around Bolivar. Sykes's division and the artillery reserve halted for the night at Middletown. Orders were given to the Federal commanders to press forward the pickets at early dawn. Their advance revealed the fact that the Confederates had retreated during the night.<sup>1</sup> An immediate pursuit was ordered. Pleasonton's cavalry, the First Corps under Hooker, the Second under Sumner, and the Twelfth, now under Mansfield, were to follow the turnpike to and through Boonsboro', while Burnside and Porter, with the Ninth Corps and Sykes's division, were to take the "Old Sharpsburg Road" on the left. Burnside and Porter were to be governed by circumstances on reaching the road from Boonsboro' to Rohrer'sville, whether to reinforce Franklin or to move on Sharpsburg. The Federal advance made its appearance

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<sup>1</sup> Meade says in his report: "Morning opened with a heavy mist, which prevented any view being obtained, so that it was not till 7 A.M. that it was ascertained the enemy had retired entirely from the Mountain."

on the west side of the Boonsboro' Pass at 8 A.M. of the 15th. This was the hour at which Harper's Ferry was surrendered. The fact of the surrender, and the hour at which it took place, were speedily made known to McClellan. It was reasonably certain that the troops assigned by Lee's special order No. 191 to the duty of capturing the garrison at Harper's Ferry, were then around that place, and most of them far from Lee, and all of them separated from him either by distance and the Potomac, or by Union troops, or both. Whatever his estimate may have been of the amount of the force so employed, he knew that it comprised all or part of Jackson's command, and the divisions of McLaws, R. H. Anderson, and Walker. If he looked for no aggressive action on the part of Franklin and Couch, he could at least look to them to hold in check and neutralize the forces of McLaws and R. H. Anderson, and this left him free to use his First, Second, Ninth, and Twelfth Corps, with all of the Fifth Corps that was with him, and Pleasonton's cavalry command, against Longstreet and D. H. Hill. In other words, in fine country and in fine weather, he had thirty-five brigades of infantry to use against Longstreet's nine brigades, and D. H. Hill's five brigades. Pleasonton's cavalry and the reserve artillery were probably as numerous as Stuart's and Rosser's cavalry and their artillery. We assume this, in the absence of figures. At any rate, McClellan claims that his cavalry on the 15th overtook the enemy's cavalry, made a daring charge, and captured 250 prisoners and two guns. Here again was a great opportunity. With a long day before him, a force that outnumbered his opponent as five to two, and probably as six to two,<sup>1</sup> and the

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<sup>1</sup> It will be observed that here and elsewhere numbers are treated in accordance with the facts, and not in accordance with McClellan's statements of his estimate of them. It is true that a commander must shape his action with ref-

knowledge that the large detachments his opponent had made could not join him for twenty-four hours, and might not join him for forty-eight or more, it was a time for rapid action. It would seem that he ought to have pressed his troops forward unrestingly till they reached cannon-shot distance from the enemy, and made his reconnoissances as his columns were advancing. He would speedily have learned the length of the enemy's line, and as the distance from the summit of Turner's Gap to Sharpsburg is only seven or eight miles, it is not easy to see why he might not have attacked in force early in the afternoon. He had every reason for believing that delay would strengthen the enemy much more proportionately than it would strengthen him, and he might be sure that delay would be at least as serviceable to the enemy as to him in acquiring knowledge of the ground, and much more so in putting that knowledge to account. But it was not to be. With all his amiable and estimable and admirable qualities, there was something wanting in McClellan. If he had used the priceless hours of the 15th September, and the still precious, though less precious hours of the 16th as he might have, his name would have stood high in the roll of great commanders; but he let those hours go by, and, as will presently be told in detail, it took him forty-eight hours to get ready to deliver his main attack, and then he had to deal not only with Lee and Longstreet and Hood and D. H. Hill, but with all of them, with Stonewall Jackson added, with two of his divisions, and

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erence to his estimate of his own and his opponent's force, but it must be said without reservation that it is impossible to believe that McClellan believed that on the Peninsula or in Maryland the Confederates had the forces he attributed to them. If he did believe it, he ought, with his knowledge of their fighting qualities, to have abandoned offensive operations and thrown his army behind fortifications constructed to protect Washington, Baltimore, and Philadelphia, and waited for more troops.

McLaws and Walker. It has already been suggested that Halleck's error in insisting on retaining Miles at Harper's Ferry came near being very damaging to Lee. In the sequel it proved damaging only to the extent of the weakening of his force by straggling upon the march, and the somewhat enfeebled condition of some of his troops at Sharpsburg; but if the most had been made of the opportunity by the Federal commander, Halleck's error would have proved more useful than the wisest piece of strategy has often been.

Richardson's division of the Second Corps moved rapidly through Boonsboro' and Keedysville, and found the Confederates occupying the position they had chosen beyond the Antietam. In obedience to orders, it halted and deployed on the east of the stream, on the right of the Sharpsburg road. Sykes's division came up and deployed on the left of Richardson, and on the left of the Sharpsburg road. The Confederate artillery opened on the Federal columns as they came in sight, from positions on the high ground on the west side of the stream.

Between Mercersville on the north and the confluence of the Antietam with the Potomac on the south, a distance of about six miles in a straight line, the Potomac follows a series of remarkable curves, but its general course is such that a line of battle something less than six miles long may be drawn, from a point a little below Mercersville to a point a little above the mouth of the Antietam, so as to rest both its flanks upon the Potomac, to cover the Shepherdstown Ford and the town of Sharpsburg, and to have its front covered by Antietam Creek. The Antietam is crossed by four bridges, of which that nearest its confluence with the Potomac was not used during the battle, except by the troops of A. P. Hill, coming from Harper's Ferry to reinforce Lee. The

next, known as the "Burnside Bridge," is that by which the road from Sharpsburg to Rohrersville crosses the stream. The next above is the bridge of the Sharpsburg, Keedysville, and Boonsboro' turnpike, and another, two miles and a half higher up, is the bridge of the road from Keedysville to Williamsport. The stream is sluggish and winding, and though it possesses several fords, they are difficult. In the rear of Sharpsburg a good road leads to the Shepherds-town Ford of the Potomac. Besides the roads already mentioned, an important turnpike leads northward from Sharpsburg to Hagerstown. On the western side of the Antietam, the ground rises in a slope of woods and fields to a somewhat bold crest, and then falls away to the Potomac.

In this "strong defensive position," Lee proceeded to form his men for the action which events had so forced upon him that he could not avoid it without loss of prestige. His front was covered by the Antietam, his line of retreat was convenient and open, and the way was clear for all his detachments to join him. He was in a position from which he could not hope to escape without serious fighting and serious loss, but he had not to fear destruction unless his opponent struck at once and struck hard. His position was very different from what he appears to have expected, and it must have been with a strong sense of disappointment as well as of anxiety that he formed his thin lines in front of Sharpsburg. The dream of raiding northward to the Susquehanna, and of drawing McClellan so far away as to permit him to make a point on Washington, had to be abandoned, and instead of that he had to prepare for a tough struggle to be made with a small army at best, and with only half of that if his opponent was prompt.

The National Cemetery at Sharpsburg is situated upon the crest of a hill to the eastward of the town, and just outside

the houses. It fronts upon the main road from the town to Keedysville, and lies on the southerly side of that road. It commands a view of remarkable beauty and extent. Within its enclosure is a small mass of limestone upon which it is said Lee stood to direct the battle. If one enters the cemetery and takes his position at the base of the flag-staff, which stands on the highest ground, he will be within the concave of the Confederate line as it stood at the commencement of the battle. On his left, as he looks northward, is the town of Sharpsburg, lying in a hollow between the ridge which rises to the west of the Antietam, and the Potomac, which is not in sight. The Hagerstown pike may be partially seen, extending northerly from the town, and with a slightly oblique direction to the right. At the distance of about a mile, upon the western edge, and in plain view, stands the famous Dunker Church, in the border of a patch of woods. To the right of it, and to the east of the turnpike, is open ground, and this is bordered on the right by another patch of woods. These two patches of timber, with the fields between, were the scene of the most sanguinary fighting of the 17th of September. Looking further to the right, to the northeast of the position of the observer, and at a distance of something less than two miles, a large brick building may be seen. This is Fry's house, round which the tents of McClellan's headquarters were pitched before and during the battle. The Antietam cannot be seen, because of the depth of the ravine which forms its bed, but its course may easily be traced by the abundant growth of the trees which fringe its banks. Looking to the right, and to a distance of about a mile, one sees the upper part of a basin formed by some hills. At the base of these hills the "Burnside Bridge" crosses the stream. In the further distance to the right, the spurs of Maryland Heights and the

stately South Mountain range frame the picture, which is as full of beauty as it is of interest. Practically the whole of the battle-field may be seen from this single point. To complete the description of it, it is to be added that the woods in which the Dunker Church stands, fringe the western side of the Hagerstown pike for about a quarter of a mile. Then they turn to the westward for about one hundred and fifty yards, and, turning again at right angles, the edge of the woods is parallel to the turnpike for another quarter of a mile. Further to the north, the ground is open immediately to the west of the pike, and there are two sizable woods, detached from each other, further to the west.<sup>1</sup> For convenience of description, the woods to the west, north and northwest of the Dunker Church will be called the West Woods, and the woods opposite and to the east of the pike, and separated from it by open ground, will be called the East Woods. At the Dunker Church two roads meet the turnpike, almost forming a right angle with each other. The course of the easterly of these two roads is southwesterly to the pike, while the other, which is little more than a wood road, runs a little north of west from the church. The West Woods are full of outcropping ledges of limestone, which afford excellent cover for troops. To the west of the northern portion of the West Woods is a height, far enough to the west to enable the force holding it to take not

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the reports speak of a stone house, with straw stacks near it. It is probable, but not certain, that the stone house was Nicodemus's, west of the Hagerstown pike, and in the angle between it and the road to Williamsport. The "burning buildings" were, almost certainly, one Mume's, east of the Hagerstown Pike, and not very far from D. R. Miller's house. They are not shown on the plan. I saw them in flames, on the right of Sedgwick's division, as I went into action, and when I next visited the ground, some few years after, I was assured that they were Mume's. The Dutch or German settlers of the neighborhood seem to have been family connections. I found three separate families of Poffenbergers, for instance.—F. W. P.

only in flank but in reverse the whole of the Confederate position.

As we have now reached the point at which the nucleus of Lee's army has taken position in front of Sharpsburg, while two divisions of McClellan's army have formed up for the attack, the time seems to have come for some remarks upon the character of the two armies. There is no occasion for saying much about the rank and file of either side, for the soldierly qualities of both are too well known. After eighty years of peace, the surface of which had been scarcely ruffled by the war of 1812 and the Mexican war, the men of the North and of the South had shown that they still possessed the soldierly qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race. For fourteen months they had been opposed to each other, and from the first to the second Bull Run, at Williamsburg and Fair Oaks, and Gaines's Mill, and Malvern Hill, and in all the campaigning which came between the first clash of arms and the last struggle at South Mountain, they had displayed intelligence, courage, endurance, tenacity, and patriotism. The qualities that had enabled the South to win the first battle of Bull Run, and had made Massachusetts men "stand in the evil hour" at Ball's Bluff, had been developed and disciplined by the experience of war, and Lee and McClellan now had each an instrument to work with, which had been not perfected, but much bettered by the tempering processes of the field.

When we pass from the men to the commanders, there is more to be said. Lee had Longstreet and D. H. Hill and Hood and Stuart with him, while Jackson and A. P. Hill, and McLaws and Walker were hastening to join him. McClellan had for corps commanders, Hooker and Sumner, and Porter and Franklin, and Burnside and Mansfield, while his division commanders were Cox, Couch, Doubleday,

French, Greene, Hatch, Meade, Morell, Richardson, Ricketts, Rodman, Sedgwick, Slocum, W. F. Smith, Sturgis, Willcox, and Williams. If a student of military history, familiar with the characters who figured in the war of secession, but happening to be ignorant of the story of the battle of the Antietam, should be told that the men we have named held the high commands there, he would say that with anything like an equality of forces, the Confederates must have won, for their leaders were men who made great names in the war, while the Federal leaders were, with few exceptions, men who never became conspicuous, or became conspicuous only through failure. Their names are for the most part unknown to the public, and few can say who among them are alive or dead. In September, 1862, McClellan had been fifteen years a graduate of the Military Academy, and for all but about four of these years he had been in the military service of the United States. He had resigned in January, 1857, giving up the commission of a captain of cavalry, and he had been raised at one step from civil life, in May, 1861, to the position of major-general in the army. He was a man of short and solid figure, good carriage, and singularly pleasing manners. He was never in a hurry, and always seemed to have plenty of time at his command. He had shown marked ability as an organizer, and his men generally felt an almost idolatrous enthusiasm for him. He had been so slow to commence operations against the army that had beaten McDowell in 1861, that many people had come to entertain grave doubts of his capacity, and the doubters had grown more numerous and positive since the failure of his Peninsular campaign, though his shortcomings there did not then incur all the censure they deserved, because of the very generally entertained belief that the failure was owing to interference at Washington with his plans. After

Pope's defeat the army turned to him passionately, and the people hopefully, and the time was now coming that was to test the question of his talents.

McClellan's lieutenants were Sumner, Burnside, and Franklin. Sumner was quite an old man, though still vigorous and active. He was not a graduate of West Point, but he had been a soldier all his life, and he was rapidly promoted from a colonelcy of cavalry to the grade of major-general of volunteers. (He was a most excellent and every way respectable man, and he had in the highest degree the courage of a soldier,) but he was wanting in the courage of a general. He was apt to be demoralized by hard fighting, and to overestimate the losses of his own side and the strength of the enemy, and he seems to have possessed no judgment as a tactician. It is probable that his training as a cavalry officer had done him positive harm as a leader of infantry. Franklin had been a soldier all his life—that is to say, he had been first in his class at West Point, and from 1843, when he graduated, he had been serving in the Topographical Engineers, till May, 1861, when he was commissioned brigadier-general of volunteers. Something has been said of him already, and more will be said of him, when his part in the battle of Fredericksburg is discussed. For the present it is sufficient to say that whatever his merits may have been, he distinctly did not belong to the class of fortunate and successful soldiers. Burnside, also, was a West Point graduate, but he had been out of the service more than seven years when the war broke out. Few men, probably, have risen so high upon so slight a foundation as he. He is dead, and what must be said of him is therefore to be said with forbearance. His personal appearance was striking and fine, and his manner was frank and captivating. Nobody could encounter his smile and receive the grasp of his hand with-

out being for some time under a potent influence. It is probably true that that man's manners made his fortune, for he remained long in the service in high places, and yet his presence was an element of weakness where he was a subordinate, and was disastrous when he held a great command. Hooker, too, is dead. Brave, handsome, vain, insubordinate, plausible, untrustworthy, he had many of the merits of a lieutenant, but not all, and he too failed dismally when he was made commander-in-chief. As an inferior, he planned badly and fought well; as chief, he planned well and fought badly. He was so unfortunate in his bearing as a corps commander that his great chief Sherman was glad to be rid of him, and he left the army in front of Atlanta, and never was set to work against troops again. Of the unfortunate Porter it is unnecessary to speak. His vindication at the hands of the Military Commission is magnificent, but he had little to do at the battle of the Antietam, and nothing to do afterward. The excellent Sedgwick never climbed high on the hill of fame, and Grant's presence so overshadowed Meade from the spring of 1864, that one is left to saying with some diffidence that he seems to have been rather a meritorious than a brilliant commander. The names which afterward became more or less splendid, such names as Hancock, Humphreys, Griffin, Warren, Barlow, and Miles, belonged to men who, in September, 1862, were brigade commanders or not so high. The only other division commander who went into action on the Federal side at the Antietam who calls for special mention, was Cox, a useful citizen of the Garfield type, a good soldier, and an admirable man. As a corps commander in Sherman's army, and afterward as Governor of Ohio, he came to be widely and favorably known in the West, but he was almost a stranger to the army of the Potomac, with which he only served for about two months.

On the afternoon of the hot fifteenth of September, while the long columns of the Federal army were resting along the Boonsboro' road, General McClellan passed through them to the front, and had from them such a magnificent reception as was worth living for. Far from the rear the cheers were heard, faintly at first, and gradually the sound increased and grew to a roar as he approached. The weary men sprang to their feet and cheered and cheered, and as he went the cheers went before him and with him and after him, till the sound receding with the distance at last died away. The troops moved on later, slowly and wearily, and some of them were not in position till the next morning.

General McClellan says that after a rapid examination of the position, he found it was too late to attack on Monday. He does not say at what hour he reached the front, but, as has been said, it was well into the afternoon. Neither does he tell us why he arrived so late. Besides making the rapid examination of which he speaks, he seems to have done nothing beyond directing the placing of the batteries in the centre, and indicating the bivouacs for the different corps. This last was a simple matter, as he merely massed them near and on both sides of the road from Keedysville to Sharpsburg. So all this day, the fifteenth of September, Lee stood in front of Sharpsburg with the troops of Longstreet and D. H. Hill alone, while the whole army of the Potomac, excepting Franklin's command, was near him.

Tuesday the sixteenth was a terribly hot day in its early hours, with a burning sun and no breeze, but at about eleven the sun became overcast, and a little air stirred from time to time. It was a day of mere idleness throughout, for a large part of the army,<sup>1</sup> and no one but the gunners had anything

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<sup>1</sup> The Second Corps, at any rate, did not move that day, but remained massed near Fry's house.

to do in the forenoon. We lay about on the eastern slope of the ridge which interposed between us and the valley of the Antietam, and occasionally we would go to the crest of the ridge to see what we could see. There was plenty to see, but unfortunately that was not all of it. The Confederate batteries were wide awake, and their practice was extremely good, and projectiles flew over the crest so thickly that mere curiosity was not sufficient to keep any one there long.

On the morning of this day Jackson arrived at Sharpsburg with his own division, under J. R. Jones, and Ewell's division, under Lawton. His troops were allowed some rest, and then his own division was placed on the left of Hood, who, being himself on the left of D. H. Hill, prolonged the Confederate line northward and westward to the Hagerstown pike. Jackson's right rested on the pike. Winder's and Jones's brigades formed his front line, and Taliaferro's and Starke's his second. Early's brigade of Ewell's division was formed on his left, to guard his flank, and Hays's brigade was formed in his rear. Stuart, with the cavalry, was still further to the left, near the Potomac. Lawton's and Trimble's brigades, of Ewell's division, were left to rest near the Dunker Church. Walker, also, early this day, crossed the Potomac on his return from Harper's Ferry, but he also seems to have rested till daylight the next morning, when he placed his two brigades on the extreme right of the Confederate position, about a mile and a half south of Sharpsburg, and in support to General Toombs, whose brigade was guarding the approach by the "Burnside Bridge." These were all the troops which Lee had with him all day on the 16th, for McLaws did not come on the ground till sunrise the next morning, Anderson's division followed him, and A. P. Hill did not arrive till half-past two P.M. Artillery seems to have been singularly plenty among the Confederates, for

D. H. Hill, after stating that on the morning of the 17th he had but 3,000 infantry, proceeds as follows: "I had, however, twenty-six pieces of artillery of my own, and near sixty pieces of Cutts's battalion temporarily under my command."<sup>1</sup> As twenty-six pieces is a liberal allowance for 9,000 infantry, this statement excites some surprise.

The ground occupied by the Confederates near the "Burnside Bridge" was favorable for their defence. It consisted of undulating hills, their crests commanded in turn by others in their rear. The bridge itself is a stone structure of three arches, with a stone parapet above. This parapet to some extent flanks the approach to the bridge at each end. The stream runs through a narrow valley. On the right bank (held by the Confederates), a steep slope comes very near the edge. In this slope the roadway is scarped, running both ways from the bridge, and passing to the higher land above by ascending through ravines. On the hill-side immediately above the bridge was a strong stone fence, running nearly parallel to the stream. The turns of the roadway were covered by rifle-pits and breastworks made of rails and stone. The slope was wooded to a considerable extent.

For some reason which has never been made public, the right division of the army, Burnside's command, was divided at Sharpsburg. Hooker's corps was made the extreme right of the army, and the other corps, the Ninth, now under Cox, with whom Burnside went, was made the extreme left. It was the understanding of the time at Burnside's headquarters that Hooker had in some way procured this separate duty, with a view to giving himself more importance. Burnside declined to assume personal command of the Ninth

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<sup>1</sup> A. N. Va., ii., 114.

Corps when this separation took place, intimating that if he should so assume command, it would look like acquiescence on his part with the arrangement, and might tend to make it permanent. Thus Burnside's position became somewhat anomalous. It is possible that this division of his command may have been the commencement of the estrangement between him and McClellan, of the existence of which at a later date there is strong evidence.

General McClellan went to the left of his line himself, to see that the Ninth Corps was properly posted, his idea being that that force must be prepared both to resist an attack by the left bank of the stream, and to carry the bridge at the proper time. It is believed in some quarters<sup>1</sup> that Burnside was very slow in moving to the position assigned him, but McClellan simply says that he found it necessary to make considerable changes in his position, and that he directed him to advance to a strong position in the immediate vicinity of the bridge, and to carefully reconnoitre the approaches to the bridge.

By this time McClellan's plan for the battle seems to have taken definite shape in his mind. It was extremely simple, and ought to have been successful. It was in brief to attack the Confederate left with the corps of Hooker and Mansfield, supported by Sumner's, and if necessary by Franklin's, and, as soon as matters looked favorably there, to move the Ninth Corps against their extreme right, and whenever either of these movements should be successful, to advance

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<sup>1</sup> It is even asserted that on coming up to the line formed at the Antietam, on the 15th, Burnside placed his command behind some of the troops already in position, instead of moving at once to the ground assigned to him on the left, and that he stayed there till a late hour, in spite of repeated orders to move; that again on the 16th he did not move to his assigned position till after the receipt of repeated urgent orders from McClellan. This is given for what it is worth. The success of our army was undoubtedly greatly lessened by jealousy, distrust, and general want of the *entente cordiale*.

his centre with all the force disposable. With what McClellan knew then, with all we know now, nearly twenty years after the battle, the plan seems to have been well suited to the position of affairs. There is no censure too strong for his delay, but, having determined or permitted himself to delay, he shaped his programme well enough.

But for the success of this as well as every other military enterprise, two things were important, if not indispensable—first, that he should not tell his opponent what he was going to do; and second, that he should do well the thing he proposed to do. Able commanders seek to delude their opponents. They use all the craft which they possess to induce the enemy to believe that the blow is to fall at some place other than the place which they have chosen. If possible, they lead the enemy to strengthen the point where the feigned attack is to be made, and to weaken the point where the real attack is to be made. Thus Marlborough carried the line of the Mehaigne at Ramillies. Thus Thomas deluded Hood at Nashville. Military history is full of such examples. But McClellan resorted to no such artifices; on the contrary, he informed Lee that he proposed to make his main attack with his right, and not only that, but almost certainly told him that he had greatly strengthened it for the purpose. With Maryland's so full of Confederate sympathizers as it was, we cannot doubt that Lee knew by this time the general division of McClellan's army, and we can hardly doubt that he knew that he had departed from it to fight this battle. However this may have been, it seems undeniable that McClellan's dispositions on the 16th were exactly appropriate to a plan of battle which contemplated a main attack to be made by his left, strengthened by troops to be moved there under cover of the night, and that they were extremely inappropriate to the plan which he had formed and to which he adhered.

On the high ground in the centre of his position, between the Keedysville road on the left and Fry's house on the right, McClellan placed several batteries of long range guns. Standing among those guns, one could look down upon nearly the whole field of the coming battle, while the view was perhaps more complete from the high ground on the left of the road, where some of the Fifth Corps batteries were placed. From this point one could look to the right through the open space between the "East and West Woods." From the further bank of the stream in front, the land rose gently toward the ridge occupied by the Confederates, checkered with cleared fields and corn-fields, and traversed by many fences. The famous "sunken road" was almost in front of the spectator looking west. It branched off from the northern side of the Keedysville pike, about half way from the river to Sharpsburg, and ran in broken lines to the Hagerstown pike, which it entered about half-way between Sharpsburg and the Dunker Church, but nearer the latter.

The conformation of the ground was such that these central Federal batteries could sweep almost the whole extent of the hostile front. Some of them had a direct fire through the space between the East and West Woods, and others of them could enfilade the refused left wing of the Confederate army.

About 2 p.m. McClellan ordered Hooker to cross the Antietam at the upper bridge and a ford near by, to attack and, if possible, turn the enemy's left. He also ordered Sumner to cross Mansfield's Twelfth Corps during the night, and to hold the Second in readiness to cross early the next morning. He seems to have devoted the rest of the day to examinations of the ground, finding fords, clearing approaches, and hastening the arrival of the ammunition and supply trains.

It is an ungrateful task to be always finding fault, but an important battle is to be described, and the reasons why its results were what they were, and only what they were, must be fully given. The perniciousness of the mistake which McClellan made in delaying his attack cannot be too strongly insisted upon. The reasons which he gives for his delay are entirely inadequate, and part of the use which he made of the time thus placed at his command was positively damaging. But having delayed his attack till the enemy was largely or completely concentrated, and having informed him, by the language of acts which it was difficult to misinterpret, where he meant to strike, it yet remained possible to strike with vigor and with concert. Instead of doing so, he issued such orders to his corps commanders on the right as made it impossible that they should act with concert early on the 17th, and improbable that they would act with concert at all. Under such orders, the attacks were far more likely to be successive than to be simultaneous.

On Tuesday the 16th, at 4 P.M., Hooker moved. He crossed the Antietam without opposition, at the points indicated. Circling around until he faced southward, he presently came upon the Confederate pickets. His troops were deployed at once, with Meade in the centre, Doubleday on his right, and Ricketts on the left. The attack, such as it was, fell upon Hood's two brigades, Meade's division of Federals being principally engaged. The advantage seems to have been slightly upon the side of the Federals, though each side claims to have forced back the other. Longstreet says "Hood drove him back, but not without severe loss," and Hood admits that he was relieved by Lawton, with two brigades, at the close of the fighting, though he claims that this was to enable his half-starved men to cook. The relieving brigades were those of Trimble, which formed up

next to the division of D. H. Hill, and Lawton's, which took position on its left.

During the night Mansfield crossed the Twelfth Corps, following in the track of Hooker, and passed what was left of the night about a mile in rear of Hooker. The Federal and Confederate pickets on Hooker's front were exceedingly close together. Sumner's Second Corps, Burnside's Ninth Corps, and all of Porter's Fifth Corps that had arrived, remained in bivouac. Morell's division of the Fifth Corps arrived in the evening of the 16th.<sup>1</sup> Franklin's Sixth Corps and Couch's division of the Fourth Corps were still at a distance, in the neighborhood of Crampton's Gap. Of the Confederate army, all the divisions were now in position excepting those of McLaws and Anderson, which, as has been said, arrived very early on the morning of the 17th, and A. P. Hill's, which arrived after noon of that day.

As the Federal and Confederate armies have now been brought face to face, it may be well to say what there is to be said about the strength of each army. The Confederates have always claimed that they fought this battle with such vastly inferior numbers that it deserved to be considered a glorious victory for them. Jackson's soldierly report of this battle contains no boastful assertions upon this point, and Early, contrary to his later habit, is equally temperate, but A. P. Hill declares that three brigades of his division, not numbering over two thousand men, with the help of his "splendid batteries," drove back Burnside's corps of 15,000 men. D. H. Hill, whose writing in his report is especially offensive, declares that he opened upon an "imposing force of Yankees" with five guns at twelve hundred yards distance,

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<sup>1</sup> Statement of a colonel. But Porter's Report says, at about noon. Morell relieved Richardson on the 17th, when he went into action with the other divisions of the Second Corps.

and routed them by artillery fire alone, unaided by musketry. He also declares that the battle was fought with less than thirty thousand men, and that if all their stragglers had been up, McClellan's army would have been completely crushed or annihilated. It is but fair to him to say that his compliments are not paid to his opponents alone. He declares that "thousands of thieving poltroons" had kept away from the battle on his side "from sheer cowardice." Hood declares that his "two little giant brigades" became engaged with "not less than two corps" of the Federal army, "wrestled with this mighty force," and drove it from its position and forced it to abandon its guns. McLaws considered the battle of Sharpsburg a very great success, regard being had to the "enormous disparity" between the opposing forces. D. R. Jones uses the same phrase of enormous disparity. Longstreet says that the Confederate forces seemed but a handful when compared with the hosts thrown against them, and permits himself the following assertion: "Before it was entirely dark, the hundred thousand men that had been threatening our destruction for twelve hours, had melted away into a few stragglers."<sup>1</sup> Lee declares that this great battle was fought by less than forty thousand men on his side. Finally, Colonel Taylor, in his "Four Years with General Lee," makes Lee's entire strength at Sharpsburg 35,255.<sup>2</sup>

Apropos of Southern statements as to the forces present on their side in the battles of the War of Secession, a New England man who had served in the Army of the Potomac said: "A few more years, a few more books, and it will

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<sup>1</sup> A. N. Va., ii., 86.

<sup>2</sup> The Richmond Enquirer account, dated September 23, gives Lee about sixty thousand, and McClellan from a hundred to a hundred and fifty thousand. V. Reb. Rec., 476.

appear that Lee and Longstreet, and a one-armed orderly, and a casual with a shot-gun, fought all the battles of the rebellion, and killed all the Union soldiers except those who ran away." The wit of this speech will be most enjoyed, and its point most clearly seen, by those who are familiar with Southern military writings, but it is no more than simple justice to Colonel Taylor to say, that in estimating the force of the Federal and Confederate troops present at Sharpsburg, he has gone to sources which he had a right to consider original, and that he has used his material fairly. His total of 35,255 Confederates was arrived at by using the official reports of the Maryland Campaign, published by authority of the Confederate Congress, and as these reports are for the most part dated within a very short time after the battle, they are entitled to the credit which attaches to evidence which is substantially contemporaneous. He next asserts that McClellan states in his official report that he had in action, at the battle of the Antietam, 87,164 of all arms, and this is true, though it was undoubtedly a careless utterance of McClellan. His comments, however, are unfair, and this must be put in a clear light. He says, for instance: "As a wall of adamant the 14,000 received the shock of the 40,000, and the latter, staggered by the blow, reeled and recoiled in great disorder." This he says in speaking of the fighting on the Confederate left, and then he says: "The disproportion in the centre and on our right was as great as, or even more decided than, on our left." And in summing up he says: "These 35,000 Confederates were the very flower of the Army of Northern Virginia, who, with indomitable courage and inflexible tenacity, wrestled for the mastery in the ratio of one to three of their adversaries." This is calculated to give not only an erroneous but a false impression. The battle was very creditable to the Confed-

erates, but in no just sense, nor in any sense at all, could they be said to wrestle for the mastery in the ratio of one to three. So far is this from being true, that it is highly probable that all the wrestling that was done was done by nearly equal forces, and reasonably certain that there was not an hour, nor a quarter of an hour, when Lee's lines were simultaneously pressed by 15,000 Union soldiers. If this be shown, it will detract from the credit of the Federal commander, but it will dispose of the extravagant claims made for the Confederate soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

Colonel Taylor says explicitly: "Every man was engaged. We had no reserve." The first thing to be done, therefore, is to test the accuracy of his estimate of the Confederate strength. Without undertaking to reject the statements of other Confederate commanders as to their strength, we cannot accept D. R. Jones's statement, which Colonel Taylor adopts, that "on that morning (September 17th), my entire command of six brigades comprised only two thousand four hundred and thirty men." There were twenty-seven regiments in these brigades, they had been on the ground since the morning of the 15th, and so their stragglers had had plenty of time to come up, and were sure to have done so, as the Federal army had been following them all the way from Turner's Gap. General Jones himself says that two of his regiments, the Second and Twentieth Georgia, numbered 403 men. Therefore he must be understood as asserting that twenty-five regiments numbered only 2,027, or about 81 men each. The summer had been a hard one for the Army of Northern Virginia, it is true, but the Confederate

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<sup>1</sup> One does not look for humor in a stern story like this, but the Charleston Courier account of the battle contains the following statement: "They fought until they were cut to pieces, and then retreated only because they had fired their last round." V. Reb. Rec., 474.

brigades, which General Johnston said averaged 2,500 before Seven Pines, could not have been so nearly annihilated as this would indicate, especially when it is remembered that a very large part of the men who were wounded at Seven Pines on the 31st of May and 1st of June, and in the Seven Days at the end of June, had had time to recover and to re-join their colors. Moreover, the other Confederate brigades, thirty-three in number, present on the 17th September, averaged over 700 men, without counting their artillery. We conclude, therefore, that D. R. Jones's estimate of his force is at least 2,000 too low.

It is further to be remarked that it is highly probable that Colonel Taylor's figures do not include all the officers present. Thus D. H. Hill speaks of having, by reason of straggling, but 3,000 infantry. As officers are not wont to straggle, "infantry" probably means muskets. Rodes speaks of having less than eight hundred effective men. This language, again, is more appropriate to musket-bearers than to a total of officers and men. McLaws reports the number of men in his four brigades, and of the officers in three, but says that the number of officers in Cobb's brigade was not known. D. R. Jones says that his entire command of six brigades comprised only 2,430 *men*. McLaws's report shows that in three of his brigades the officers numbered over eleven per cent. of the men. If we suppose that not all, but half of the Confederate officers, in reporting their totals, gave the number of muskets only, and add eleven per cent. for officers to half their infantry as given by Colonel Taylor, it will add 1,500 to their total present in the battle. Moreover, the report of the officer commanding the Hampton Legion of Wofford's brigade, at the Antietam, shows that he does not include in his total present, "skirmishers, scouts, cooks, and men barefooted, unfit for duty." If skir-

mishers and scouts alone were habitually omitted, this would make a great difference, as the Confederates were accustomed to use skirmishers very freely.

Finally, many of the reports contain such phrases as so many "at the beginning of the fight," "on the morning of the 17th," "when we went into action." It is probable that this means that their numbers were increased during the action by the arrival of gallant men who had been delayed by fatigue or by being footsore, but who got into the fight as soon as they could. This would be likely to be the case with many of the commands, but particularly with those which arrived on the very day of the battle. (Taking all these things into consideration, it seems to be fair to conclude that Lee's total at the battle of the Antietam was not less than forty thousand men, which is certainly not a large total for thirty-nine brigades of infantry and 8,000 cavalry and artillery. It gives a little over eight hundred officers and men to an infantry brigade, and the infantry brigades seem to have averaged something over four regiments to a brigade. One or two had only three, but many had five. Those who believe that the Confederate officers habitually and designedly understated their forces, will think 40,000 a low estimate,<sup>1</sup> but it is offered for the acceptance of those who are contented to accept the result of the best evidence accessible, with entire confidence that it is not too high.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Estimate of chief clerk in office of the Adjutant-General of the Army of Northern Virginia, made from recollection, in 1865: Sharpsburg, total effective of all arms, 41,500. Taylor's *Four Years*, etc., p. 158. Field Return of Army of Northern Virginia, September 22, 1862. Present for duty, 36,187. *Ib.*, p. 165. This return seems to include no cavalry or artillery, and of course excluded the loss at Sharpsburg, and included such stragglers as may have come up.

<sup>2</sup> At about 10 A.M. of the 17th, the writer, having just received a severe wound from a canister shot fired by one of Stuart's batteries, fell into the hands of Colonel (now Senator) Ransom, then commanding the Thirty-fifth North Carolina Regiment of R. Ransom's brigade. As he was taken to the Confederate rear, he

The next thing to be considered is the number of the Federal troops which the Confederates encountered. It must be carefully borne in mind that this is the precise question. No matter how many men McClellan had, we are to determine how many men he *used*. The credit of Lee may be increased, and the credit of McClellan diminished, by proving that there were on either side of the Antietam, on September 17th, two Federal soldiers to one Confederate, but the question under discussion is different. It is whether "the Army of Northern Virginia . . . wrestled for the mastery in the ratio of one to three." Fortunately for the patience of those who are intolerant of statistics, the answer is simple and the proof is easy. The answer is that the Army of Northern Virginia did nothing of the kind. It wrestled gallantly, but it did not wrestle in the ratio of one to three, or anything like it. The proof is taken from McClellan's Report.<sup>1</sup> He says:

Our own forces at the battle of Antietam were as follows:

	Men.
First Corps.....	14,856
Second " .....	18,813
Fifth " (one division not arrived).....	12,930
Sixth " .....	12,300
Ninth " .....	13,819
Twelfth " .....	10,126
Cavalry Division .....	4,320
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Total in action .....	87,164

saw a small body of men marching by the flank, and carrying four battle flags. He inquired whether it was the custom in the Confederate army for a regiment to carry more than one set of colors, and was informed that the body of men was a brigade. It is to be remarked, however, that most of the sharp fighting on that part of the ground had then been done, and that the brigade he then saw may well have been two or three times as large three or four hours before.

<sup>1</sup> P. 214. Washington: Government Printing Office. 1861.