

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A PRIVATE.—III.\*

UP THE PENINSULA WITH MCCLELLAN.

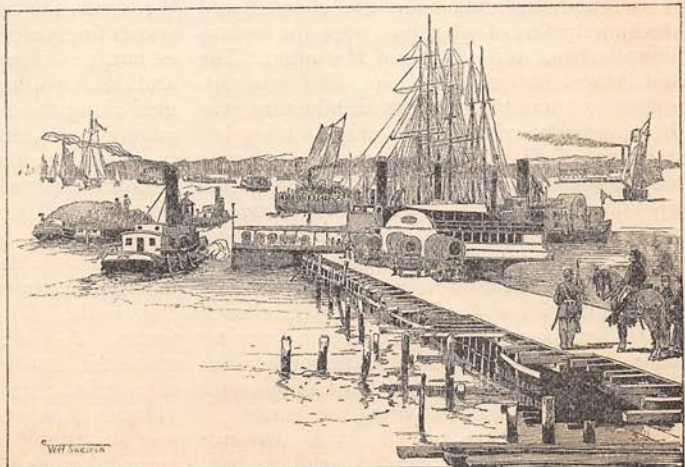


AN ORDERLY AT HEADQUARTERS.

THE manner in which orders are transmitted to the individual groups of an army might be compared to the motion that a boy gives to a row of bricks which he has set up on end within striking distance of each other. He pushes the first brick, and the impetus thus given is conveyed down the line in rapid succession, until each brick has responded to the movement. If the machine is well adjusted in all its parts, and the master mechanic, known as the commanding general, understands his business, he is able to run it so perfectly as to control the movements of brigades, divisions, and corps. In the early spring of 1862, when the Army of the Potomac was getting ready to move from Washington, the constant drill and discipline, the brightening of arms and polishing of buttons, and the exasperating fussiness on the part of company and regimental officers during inspections, conveyed to us a hint, as one of our comrades expressed it, that "some one higher in command was punching them to punch us." There was unusual activity upon the Potomac in front of our camp. Numerous steam

tugs were pulling huge sailing vessels here and there, and large transports, loaded with soldiers, horses, bales of hay, and munitions for an army, swept majestically down the broad river. Every description of water conveyance, from a canal-boat to a huge three-decked steamboat, seemed to have been pressed into the service of the army.

The troops south of the city broke camp, and came marching, in well-disciplined regiments, through the town. I remember that the Seventh Massachusetts seemed to be finely disciplined, as it halted on the river-banks before our camp. I imagined the men looked serious over leaving their comfortable winter-quarters at Brightwood for the uncertainties of the coming campaign. At last, when drills and inspections had made us almost frantic with neatness and cleanliness, we got marching orders. I shall not forget that last inspection. Our adjutant was a short old fellow, who had seen much service in the regular army. He gave his orders in an explosive manner, and previous to giving them his under lip would work in curious muscular contractions, so that the long imperial which decorated it would be worked up, under and over his nose, like the rammer of a musket in the act of loading. At that last inspection, previous to the opening campaign, he gave the order with a long roll to the r's: "Preparrrre to open rrrranks." The ranks were open, and he was twisting his mouth and elevating his imperial for another



TRANSPORTS ON THE POTOMAC.

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order, when an unlucky citizen, who was not conversant with military rules, passed between the ranks. The adjutant, pale with anger, hastily followed the citizen, who was very tall. The distance from the toe of our adjutant's boot to the citizen's flank was too great for the adjutant, who yet kept up a vigorous kicking into air, until at last, with a prodigious outlay of muscular force, his foot reached the enemy, but with such recoil as to land him on his back in the mud.

We formed in two ranks and marched on board a little steamer lying at the wharf near our quarters. "Anything for a change," said Wad Rider, really delighted to move. All heavy baggage was left behind. I had clung to the contents of my knapsack with dogged tenacity; but, notwithstanding my most earnest protest, I was required to disgorge about one-half of them, including a pair of heavy boots and my choice brick from the Harper's Ferry engine-house. To my mind I was now entirely destitute of comforts.

The general opinion among us was that at last we were on our way to make an end of the Confederacy. We gathered in little knots on the deck, here and there a party playing "penny ante"; others slept or dozed, but the majority smoked and discussed the probabilities of our destination, about which we really knew as little as the babes in the wood. That we were sailing down the Potomac was apparent.

The next day we arrived at Old Point Comfort, and looked with open-eyed wonder at Fortress Monroe, huge and frowning. Negroes were plentier than blackberries, and went about their work with an air of importance born of their new-found freedom. These were the "contrabands" for whom General Butler had recently invented that sobriquet. We pitched our tents amid the charred and blackened ruins of what had been the beautiful and aristocratic village of Hampton. The first thing I noticed about the ruins, unaccustomed as I was to Southern architecture, was the absence of cellars. The only building left standing of all the village was the massive old Episcopal church. Here Washington had worshiped, and its broad aisles had echoed to the footsteps of armed men during the Revolution. In the church-yard the tombs had been broken open. Many tombstones were broken and overthrown, and at the corner of the church a big hole showed that some one with a greater desire for possessing curiosities than reverence for ancient landmarks had been digging for the corner-stone and its buried mementos.

Along the shore which looks towards Fortress Monroe were landed artillery, baggage-wagons, pontoon trains and boats, and the level land back of this was crowded with

the tents of the soldiers. Here and there were groups frying hard-tack and bacon. Near at hand was the irrepressible army mule, hitched to and eating out of pontoon boats; those who had eaten their ration of grain and hay were trying their teeth, with promise of success, in eating the boats. An army mule was hungrier than a soldier, and would eat anything, especially a pontoon boat or rubber blanket. The scene was a busy one. The red cap, white leggins, and baggy trousers of the Zouaves mingled with the blue uniforms and dark trimmings of the regular infantrymen, the short jackets and yellow trimmings of the cavalry, the red stripes of the artillery, and the dark blue with orange trimmings of the engineers; together with the ragged, many-colored costumes of the black laborers and teamsters, all busy at something.

During our short stay here I made several excursions, extending two or three miles from the place, partly out of curiosity, and partly from the constant impression on a soldier's mind that his merits deserve something better to eat than the commissary furnishes. It seemed to me in all my army experience that nature delighted in creating wants and withholding supplies, and that rations were wanting in an inverse proportion to my capacity to consume them.

One morning we broke camp and went marching up the Peninsula. The roads were very poor and muddy with recent rains, and were crowded with the indescribable material of the vast army which was slowly creeping through the mud over the flat, wooded country. It was a bright day in April — a perfect Virginia day; the grass was green beneath our feet, the buds of the trees were just unrolling into leaves under the warming sun of spring, and in the woods the birds were singing. The march was at first orderly, but under the unaccustomed burden of heavy equipments and knapsacks, and the warmth of the weather, the men straggled along the roads, mingling with the baggage-wagons, ambulances, and pontoon trains, in seeming confusion.

During our second day's march it rained, and the muddy roads, cut up and kneaded, as it were, by the teams preceding us, left them in a state of semi-liquid filth hardly possible to describe or imagine. When we arrived at Big Bethel the rain was coming down in sheets. A dozen houses of very ordinary character, scattered over an area of a third of a mile, constituted what was called the village. Just outside and west of the town was an insignificant building from which the town takes its name. It did not seem large enough or of sufficient consequence to give name to a village as small as Big Bethel.



MAJOR THEODORE WINTHROP. (AFTER THE PORTRAIT BY ROUSE.)

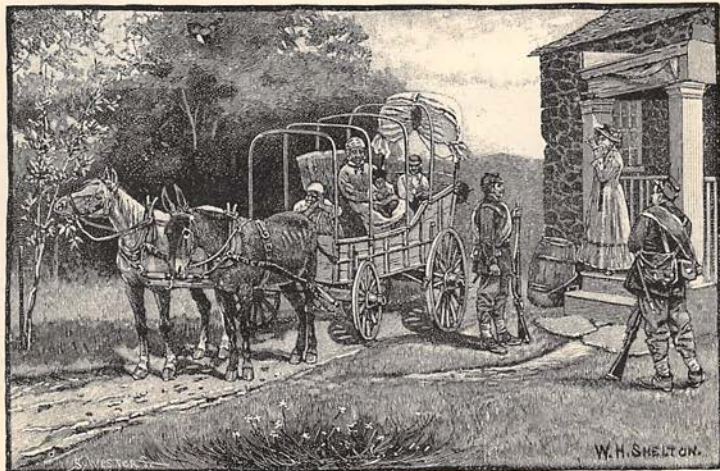
Before our arrival it had evidently been occupied as officers' barracks for the enemy, and looked very little like a church.

I visited one of the dwelling-houses just outside the fortifications (if the insignificant rifle-pits could be called such) for the purpose of obtaining something more palatable than hard-tack, salt beef, or pork, which, with coffee, were the marching rations. The woman of the house was communicative, and expressed her surprise at the great number of Yanks who had "come down to invade our soil." She said she had a son in the Confederate army, or, as she expressed it, "in our army," and then tearfully said she should tremble for her boy every time she heard of a battle. I expressed the opinion that we should go into Richmond without much fighting. "No!" said she, with the emphasis of conviction, "you uns will drink hot blood before you uns get thar!" I inquired if she knew anything about the skirmish which took place at Big Bethel. She replied by saying, "Why, Major Winthrop died right in yer!" pointing to a small sleeping-room which opened from the main room in which we were. She

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added, "When you uns were fighting, Major Winthrop was way ahead and was shot; he was a brave man, but we have brave men too." I asked her if she knew who shot him, and she replied that a colored boy belonging to one of the officers shot him. During the engagement, the colored boy, standing by his master, saw Winthrop in advance, and said, "See that officer! Can I take your rifle and shoot him?" The master assented, and the boy shot Major Winthrop. He was then brought to this house. One or two days after the fight, she said, the boy was "playing over yon, in that yer yard,"—pointing to the yard of a neighboring house,—with his mate, when the rifle they were playing with was accidentally discharged, and the colored boy who shot Winthrop was killed. "How old was the boy?" I asked. "About forty," she replied. At the right of the road was an open, marshy piece of land, and it was over this Major Winthrop was leading his men when shot. The woody intervale just beyond the marshy land was occupied by the enemy's works, which consisted of five rifle-pits, each a few rods in length, and one of them commanding the marshy opening mentioned. [NOTE.—The above is but one of several different accounts as to the manner of Winthrop's death. All the facts that can be vouched for by his family are given in the "Life," by his sister, Mrs. Laura Winthrop Johnson (N. Y.: Henry Holt & Co.)—ED.]

While wandering about, I came to the house of a Mrs. T——, whose husband was said to be a captain in the Confederate service and a "fire-eating" secessionist. Here some of our men were put on guard for a short time, until relieved by guards from other parts of the army as they came up, whereupon we went on.



MRS. T——'S EXODUS.

A large, good-looking woman, about forty years old, who, I learned, was Mrs. T——, was crying profusely, and I could not induce her to tell me what about. One of the soldiers said her grief was caused by the fact that some of our men had helped themselves to the contents of cupboard and cellar. She was superintending the loading of an old farm-wagon, into which she was putting a large family of colored people, with numerous bundles. The only white person on the load as it started away was the mistress, who sat amid her dark chattels in desolation and tears. Returning to the house after this exodus, I found letters, papers, and odds and ends of various kinds littering the floor, whether overturned in the haste of the mistress or by the visiting soldiers I could only guess. As I passed into what had evidently been the best room, or parlor, I found a fellow-soldier intently poring over the illustrations of a large book, which proved to be an elegantly bound and illustrated family Bible. Upon my approach he began tearing out the illustrations, but I arrested his hand and rebuked him. He resented my interference, saying, "Some one is going for these things before the army gets through here if I don't." It was impossible to keep out the vandal "Yanks"; they flowed through



FEDERAL MORTAR BATTERY BEFORE YORKTOWN.  
(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.)

the house, a constant stream, from cellar to garret, until there was no more any need of a guard, as there was no longer anything to guard. I felt so hopeless of protecting the family Bible, that at last it occurred to me that the only way to save it was to carry it off myself. I gave it to one of our colored teamsters to carry into camp for me. After our arrival at Yorktown I hunted him up, but he informed me that he had "drapped it." No other building at Big Bethel was so devastated, and I did not see another building so treated on our whole route. The men detailed to guard it declined to protect the property of one who was in arms fighting against us.



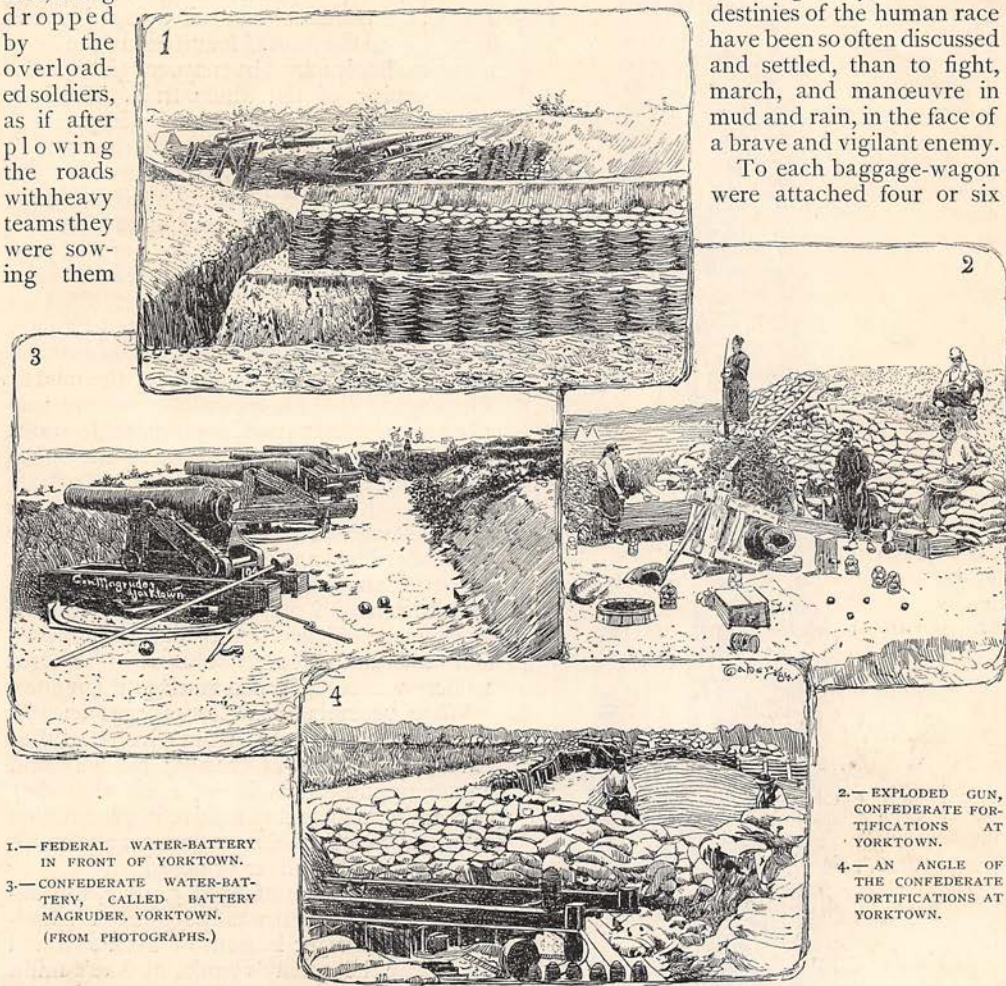
"GET THOSE MULES OUT OF THE MUD!"

W.H. SHELTON

After leaving Big Bethel we began to feel the weight of our knapsacks. Castaway overcoats, blankets, parade-coats, and shoes were scattered along the route in reckless profusion, being dropped by the overloaded soldiers, as if after plowing the roads with heavy teams they were sowing them

home over comfortable breakfast-tables, without impediments of any kind to circumscribe their fancied operations; it is so much easier to manœuvre and fight large armies around the corner grocery, where the destinies of the human race have been so often discussed and settled, than to fight, march, and manœuvre in mud and rain, in the face of a brave and vigilant enemy.

To each baggage-wagon were attached four or six



1.—FEDERAL WATER-BATTERY IN FRONT OF YORKTOWN.  
3.—CONFEDERATE WATER-BATTERY, CALLED BATTERY MAGRUDER, YORKTOWN.  
(FROM PHOTOGRAPHS.)

2.—EXPLODED GUN, CONFEDERATE FORTIFICATIONS AT YORKTOWN.

4.—AN ANGLE OF THE CONFEDERATE FORTIFICATIONS AT YORKTOWN.

for a harvest. I lightened my knapsack without much regret, for I could not see the sense of carrying a blanket or overcoat when I could pick one up almost anywhere along the march. Very likely the same philosophy actuated those who preceded me or came after. The colored people along our route occupied themselves in picking up this scattered property. They had on their faces a distrustful look, as if uncertain of the tenure of their harvest. The march up the Peninsula seemed very slow, yet it was impossible to increase our speed, owing to the bad condition of the roads. I learned in time that marching on paper and the actual march made two very different impressions. I can easily understand and excuse our fireside heroes, who fought their or our battles at

mules, driven usually by a colored man, with only one rein, or line, and that line attached to the bit of the near leading mule, while the driver rode in a saddle upon the near wheel mule. Each train was accompanied by a guard, and while the guard urged the drivers the drivers urged the mules. The drivers were usually expert and understood well the wayward, sportive natures of the creatures over whose destinies they presided. On our way to Yorktown our pontoon and baggage trains were sometimes blocked for miles, and the heaviest trains were often unloaded by the guard to facilitate their removal from the mud. Those wagons which were loaded with whisky were most lovingly guarded, and when unloaded the barrels were often



CAMP OF THE FEDERAL ARMY NEAR WHITE HOUSE ON THE PAMUNKEY RIVER — MCCLELLAN'S BASE OF OPERATIONS AGAINST RICHMOND. (FROM PHOTOGRAPHS.)

lightened before they were returned to the wagons. It did seem at times as if there were needless delays with the trains, partly due, no doubt, to fear of danger ahead. While I was guarding our pontoon trains after leaving Big Bethel, the teams stopped all along the line. Hurrying to the front, I found one of the leading teams badly mired, but not enough to justify the stopping of the whole train. The lazy colored driver was comfortably asleep in the saddle. "Get that team out of the mud!" I yelled, bringing him to his senses. He flourished his long whip, shouted his mule lingo at the team, and the mules pulled frantically, but not together. "Can't you make your mules pull together?" I inquired. "Dem mules pull right smart!" said the driver. Cocking and capping my unloaded musket, I brought it to the shoulder, and again commanded the driver, "Get that team out of the mud!" The negro rolled his eyes wildly and woke up all over. He first patted his saddle mule, spoke to each one, and then, flourishing his long whip with a crack like a pistol, shouted, "Go 'long dar! what I feed yo' fo'!" and the mule team left the slough in a very expeditious manner. Thereafter I had an unfailing argument, which, if but seldom used, was all the more potent. The teamsters of our army would have been much more efficient if they had been organized and uniformed as soldiers. Our light artillery was seldom seen stuck in the mud.

When procuring luxuries of eggs or milk we paid the people at first in silver, and they gave us local scrip in change; but we found on attempting to pay it out again that they were rather reluctant to receive it, even at that early stage in Confederate finance, and much preferred Yankee silver or notes.

On the afternoon of April 5, 1862, the advance of our column was brought to a standstill, with the right in front of Yorktown and the left by the enemy's works at Lee's mills. We pitched our camp on Wormly Creek, near the Moore house on the York River, in sight of the enemy's water battery and their defensive works at Gloucester Point. One of the impediments to an immediate attack on Yorktown was the difficulty of using light artillery in the muddy fields in our front, and at that time the topography of the country ahead was but little understood, and had to be learned by reconnoissance in force. We had settled down to the siege of Yorktown; began bridging the streams between us and the enemy, constructing and improving the roads for the rapid transit of supplies, and for the advance. The first parallel was opened about a mile from the enemy's fortifications, extending along the entire front of their works, which reached from the York River on the



FEDERAL CAMP AT CUMBERLAND LANDING, ON THE PAMUNKEY RIVER, FIVE MILES (BY LAND) BELOW WHITE HOUSE.

left to Warwick Creek on the right, along a line about four miles in length. Fourteen batteries and three redoubts were planted, heavily armed with ordnance.

We were near Battery No. 1, not far from the York River. On it were mounted several two-hundred-pound guns, which commanded the enemy's water batteries. One day I was in a redoubt on the left, and saw General McClellan with the Prince de Joinville, examining the enemy's works through their field-glasses. They very soon drew the fire of the observant enemy, who opened with one of their heavy guns on the group, sending the first shot howling and hissing over and very close to their heads; another, quickly following it, struck in the parapet of the redoubt. The French prince, seemingly quite startled, jumped and glanced nervously around, while McClellan quietly knocked the ashes from his cigar. When I afterwards heard McClellan accused of cowardice, I knew the accusation was false.

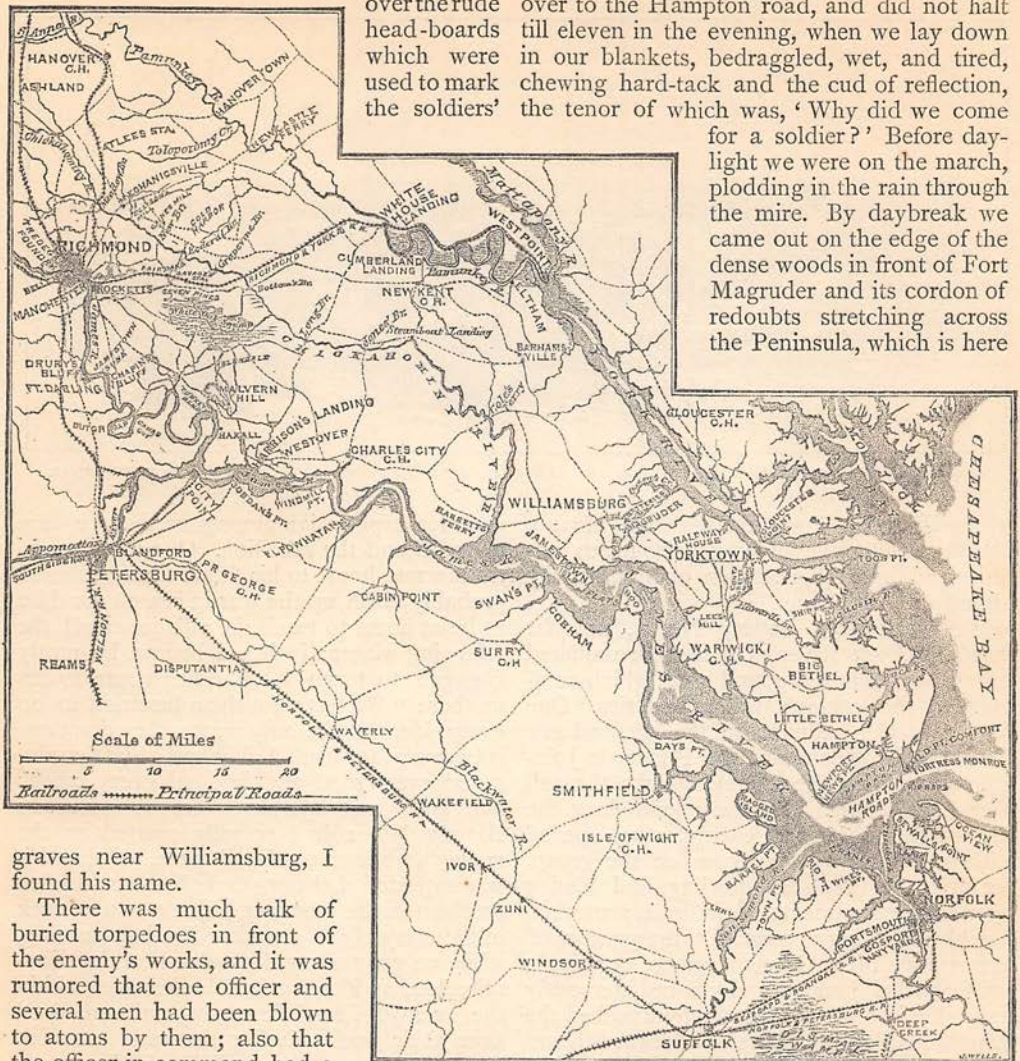
Several of our war-vessels made their appearance in the York River, and occasionally threw a shot at the enemy's works; but most of them were kept busy at Hampton Roads, watching for the iron-clad *Merrimac*, which was still afloat. The firing from the enemy's lines was of little consequence, not amounting to over ten or twelve shots each day, a number of these being directed at the huge balloon which went up daily on a tour of inspection, from near General Fitz John Porter's headquarters. One day the balloon broke from its mooring of ropes and sailed majestically over the enemy's works; but fortunately for its occupants, it soon met a counter-current of air which returned it safe to our lines. The month of April was a dreary one, much of the time rainy and uncomfortable. It was a

common expectation among us that we were about to end the rebellion. One of my comrades wrote home to his father that we should probably finish up the war in season for him to be at home to teach the village school the following winter; in fact, I believe he partly engaged to teach it. Another wrote to his mother: "We have got them hemmed in on every side, and the only reason they don't run is because they can't." We had at last corduroyed every road and bridged every creek; our guns and mortars were in position; Battery No. 1 had actually opened on the enemy's works, Saturday, May 4, 1862, and it was expected that our whole line would open on them in the morning. About two o'clock of Saturday night, or rather Sunday morning, while on guard duty, I observed a bright illumination, as if a fire had broken out within the enemy's lines. Several guns were fired from their works during the early morning hours, but soon after daylight of May 5th it was reported that they had abandoned their works in our front, and we very quickly found the report to be true. As soon as I was relieved from guard duty, I went over on "French leave" to view our enemy's fortifications. They were prodigiously strong. A few tumble-down tents and houses and seventy pieces of heavy ordnance had been abandoned as the price of the enemy's safe retreat.

Upon returning to camp I found rations being issued and preparations for pursuit being made, and that very afternoon we struck our tents and took up our lines of march, with our faces turned hopefully towards Richmond. A sergeant belonging to a neighboring regiment, whose acquaintance I had formed before Yorktown, jocosely remarked, as he passed me on the march, "I shall meet you on the road to glory!" Later, in looking

over the rude head-boards which were used to mark the soldiers'

over to the Hampton road, and did not halt till eleven in the evening, when we lay down in our blankets, bedraggled, wet, and tired, chewing hard-tack and the cud of reflection, the tenor of which was, 'Why did we come for a soldier?' Before daylight we were on the march, plodding in the rain through the mire. By daybreak we came out on the edge of the dense woods in front of Fort Magruder and its cordon of redoubts stretching across the Peninsula, which is here



OUTLINE MAP OF THE PENINSULA CAMPAIGN, BASED ON THE U. S. MILITARY MAP OF SOUTH-EASTERN VIRGINIA.

graves near Williamsburg, I found his name.

There was much talk of buried torpedoes in front of the enemy's works, and it was rumored that one officer and several men had been blown to atoms by them; also that the officer in command had a force of Confederate prisoners at work removing them. We saw a number of sticks stuck in the ground both inside and outside the earthworks, with white rags attached, which were said to indicate the location of the buried torpedoes already discovered.

Williamsburg is twelve miles from Yorktown, but the women and children, of whom we were continually inquiring the distance, gave us very indefinite but characteristic replies. A comrade in Hooker's division gave me an account of his experiences about as follows: "Marching over the muddy road late in the afternoon, we found our farther advance prevented by a force which had preceded us, and we halted in the mud by the roadside just as it began to rain. About five o'clock we resumed our march by crossing

narrowed by the head-waters of two streams which empty into the York on the one hand and the James River on the other. Here we had an opportunity of viewing the situation while waiting for orders to attack. The main fort, called Magruder, was a strong earthwork with a bastioned front and a wide ditch. In front of this muddy-looking heap of dirt was a level plain, sprinkled plentifully with smaller earthworks; while between us and the level plain the dense forest, for a distance of a quarter of a mile, had been felled, thus forming a labyrinth of tangled abatis difficult to penetrate. A mile away lay the village of Williamsburg.

"We were soon sent out as skirmishers, with orders to advance as near the enemy's rifle-



pits as possible. They immediately opened fire upon us with heavy guns from the fort, while from their rifle-pits came a hum of bullets and crackle of musketry. Their heavy shot came crushing among the tangled abatis of fallen timber, and plowed up the dirt in our front, rebounding and tearing through the branches of the woods in our rear. The constant hissing of the bullets, with their sharp *ping* or *bizz* whispering around and sometimes into us, gave me a sickening feeling and a cold perspiration. I felt weak around my knees—a sort of faintness and lack of strength in the joints of my legs, as if they would sink from under me. These symptoms did not decrease when several of my comrades were hit. The little rifle-pits in our front fairly blazed with musketry, and the continuous *snap, snap, crack, crack* was murderous. Seeing I was not killed at once, in spite of all the noise, my knees recovered from their unpleasant limpness, and my mind gradually regained its balance and composure. I never afterwards felt these disturbing influences to the same degree.

“We slowly retired from stump to stump and from log to log, finally regaining the edge of the wood, and took our position near Webber’s and Brumhall’s batteries, which had just got into position on the right of the road, not over seven hundred yards from the hostile fort. While getting into position, several of the battery men were killed, as they immediately drew the artillery fire of the enemy, which opened with a noise and violence that astonished me. Our two batteries were admirably handled, throwing a number of shot and shell into the enemy’s works, speedily silencing them, and by nine o’clock the field in our front, including the rifle-pits, was completely ‘cleaned out’ of artillery and infantry. Shortly afterwards we advanced along the edge of the wood to the left of Fort Magruder, and about eleven o’clock we saw emerging from the little ravine to the left of the fort a swarm of Confederates, who opened on us with a terrible and deadly fire. Then they charged upon us with their peculiar yell. We took all the advantage possible of the stumps and trees as we were pushed back, until we reached the edge of the wood again, where we halted and fired upon the enemy from behind all the cover the situation afforded. We were none of us too proud, not even those who had the dignity of shoulder-straps to support, to dodge behind a tree or stump. I called out to a comrade, ‘Why don’t you get behind a tree?’ ‘Confound it,’ said he, ‘there ain’t enough for the officers.’ I don’t mean to accuse officers of cowardice, but we had suddenly found out that they

showed the same general inclination not to get shot as privates did, and were anxious to avail themselves of the privilege of their rank by getting in our rear. I have always thought that pride was a good substitute for courage, if well backed by a conscientious sense of duty; and most of our men, officers as well as privates, were too proud to show the fear which I have no doubt they felt in common with myself. Occasionally a soldier would show symptoms which pride could not over-



A TEMPTING BREASTWORK.

come. One of our men, Spinney, ran into the woods and was not seen until after the engagement. Some time afterwards, when he had proved a good soldier, I asked him why he ran, and he replied that every bullet which went by his head said ‘Spinney,’ and he thought they were calling for him. In all the pictures of battles I had seen before I ever saw a battle, the officers were at the front on prancing steeds, or with uplifted swords were leading their followers to the charge. Of course, I was surprised to find that in a real battle the officer gets in the rear of his men, as is his right and duty,—that is, if his ideas of duty do not carry him so far to the rear as to make his sword useless.

“The ‘Rebs’ forced us back by their charge, and our central lines were almost broken. The forces withdrawn from our right had taken the infantry support from our batteries, one of which, consisting of four guns, was captured. We were tired, wet, and exhausted when supports came up, and we were allowed to fall back from under the enemy’s fire, but still in easy reach of the battle. I asked one of my comrades how he felt, and his reply was characteristic of the prevailing sentiment: ‘I should feel like a hero if I wasn’t so blank wet.’ The bullets had cut queer antics among our men. A private who had a canteen of whisky when he went into the engagement, on endeav-

oring to take a drink found the canteen quite empty, as a bullet had tapped it for him. Another had a part of his thumb-nail taken off. Another had a bullet pass into the toe of his boot, down between two toes, and out along the sole of his foot, without much injury. Another had a scalp wound from a bullet, which took off a strip of hair about three inches in length from the top of his head. Two of my regiment were killed outright and fourteen badly wounded, besides quite a number slightly injured. Thus I have chronicled my first day's fight, and I don't believe any of my regiment were ambitious to 'chase the enemy any farther' just at present. Refreshed with hot coffee and hard-tack, we rested from the fight, well satisfied that we had done our duty. When morning dawned, with it came the intelligence that the enemy had abandoned their works in our front, and were again in full retreat, leaving their wounded in our hands."

After the engagement I went over the field in front of the enemy's fort. Advancing through the tangled mass of logs and stumps, I saw one of our men aiming over the branch of a fallen tree, which lay among the tangled abatis. I called to him, but he did not turn or move. Advancing nearer, I put my hand on his shoulder, looked in his face, and started back. He was dead!—shot through the brain; and so suddenly had the end come that his rigid hand grasped his musket, and he still preserved the attitude of watchfulness—literally occupying his post after death. At another place we came upon one of our men who had evidently died from wounds. Near one of his hands was a Testament, and on his breast lay an ambrotype picture of a group of children and another of a young woman. We searched in vain for his name. It was neither in his book nor upon his clothing; and, unknown, this private hero was buried on what was doubtless his first battle-field. The pictures were afterwards put on exhibition for identification.

The sixth of May was a beautiful morning, with birds singing among the thickets in which lay the dead. The next morning we marched through quaint, old-fashioned Williamsburg. The most substantial buildings of the town were those of William and Mary College, which were of brick. In most of the houses there were no signs of life; blinds and shutters were closed, but a white hand was occasionally seen through the blinds, showing that a woman was gazing stealthily at us. Occasionally a family of black people stood in the doorway, the women and children greeting us with senseless giggles, and in one instance waving their red handkerchiefs. I asked one

of the black women where the white people were, and she replied, "Dey's done gone and run away." We kindled fires from that almost inexhaustible source of supply, the Virginia fences, cooked our coffee, sang our songs, and smoked our pipes, thoughtless of the morrow. And we quarreled with nothing, except the pigs that wandered at will in field and wood, and which we occasionally converted into pork.

On our tramp to White House Landing, on the Pamunkey River, we began to realize some of the more substantial discomforts of a march; the dust, rising in clouds, filled our nostrils and throats, and thoroughly impregnated our clothing, hair, and skin, producing intolerable choking and smothering sensations; our usual thirst was intensified, and made us ready to break ranks at sight of a brook, and swarm like bees around every well on the route. No one can imagine the intolerable thirst of a dusty march who has not had a live experience of it; canteens often replenished were speedily emptied, and, unless water was readily attainable, there was great suffering. During the frequent showers, which came down with the liberality common to the climate, it was not unusual to see men drinking from a puddle in the road; and at one place where water was scarce I saw men crowding round a mud-puddle drinking heartily, while in one edge of it lay a dead mule. There was little to choose between the mud and the dust, and we usually had one or the other in profusion.

Near New Kent Court-House, a little settlement of two or three houses, we came upon several Confederate sick. One of them was full of fighting talk. I asked him what he was fighting for. He said he didn't know, except it be "not to get licked!" "I reckon you uns have got a powerful spite against we uns, and that's what you uns all come down to fight we uns for, and invade our soil!" I could not argue with a prisoner, and a sick man at that, on equal terms; so I replenished his canteen, and induced one of my comrades to give him some of his rations. From the number of interviews held at different times with our Confederate prisoners, I gathered the general impression that their private soldiers knew but very little about the causes of the war, but were fighting "not to get licked," which is so strong a feeling in human nature that I may say it will account for much hard fighting on both sides. In one of the little cabins surrounding the principal residence were a mulatto woman and her children. She was quite comely, and, with her children, was pretty well dressed. She was a bitter Yankee-hater, and, we inferred, the domestic manager

of the household. She declared that "the colored people didn' want to be niggers for the Yanks!"

Our corps arrived at White House Landing, May 22, 1862, and here we found a large portion of our army, which was encamped on the wide, level plain between the wood-skirted road and the Pamunkey River, occupying tents of all descriptions. Another camp was located at Cumberland Landing, a few miles below White House. The first night of our arrival was a stormy and tempestuous one, and it was evident that an attack from the enemy was expected, as we received orders to lay upon our arms. The

Pamunkey is navigable to this point, having sufficient depth, but is very narrow,—in fact, so narrow that some of the larger steamers could not turn, for their stem and stern would reach either bank, except at selected places. The broad plain was crowded with tents, baggage-wagons, pontoon trains, and artillery,—all the accompaniments of a vast army. Here some of the regiments who came out from home in a Zouave uniform changed their bright clothes for the regular army blue, and, as marching orders came with the sunrise, moved off the field, leaving windrows of old clothes on the plain.

*Warren Lee Goss.*



## MEMORANDA ON THE CIVIL WAR.

### General R. S. Ewell at Bull Run.

WITH UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF GENERALS FITZHUGH LEE, EWELL, AND BEAUREGARD.

IN General Beauregard's article on Bull Run, on page 101 of the November CENTURY, is this severe criticism of one of his subordinates:

"The commander of the front line on my right, who failed to move because he received no immediate order, was instructed in the plan of attack, and should have gone forward the moment General Jones, upon whose right he was to form, exhibited his own order, which mentioned one as having been already sent to that commander. I exonerated him after the battle, as he was technically not in the wrong; but one could not help recalling Desaix, who even moved in a direction opposite to his technical orders when facts plainly showed him the service he ought to perform, whence the glorious result of Marengo, or help believing that if Jackson had been there, the movement would not have balked."

The officer referred to is the late Lieutenant-General R. S. Ewell, and the censure is based on the following statement on page 95:

"Meanwhile, in rear of Mitchell's Ford, I had been waiting with General Johnston for the sound of conflict to open in the quarter of Centreville upon the Federal left flank and rear (making allowance, however for the delays possible to commands unused to battle), when I was chagrined to hear from General D. R. Jones that, while he had been long ready for the movement upon Centreville, General Ewell had

not come up to form on his right, though he had sent him between seven and eight o'clock a copy of his own order, which recited that Ewell had been already ordered to begin the movement. I dispatched an immediate order to Ewell to advance; but within a quarter of an hour, just as I received a dispatch from him informing me that he had received no order to advance in the morning, the firing on the left began to increase so intensely as to indicate a severe attack, whereupon General Johnston said that he would go personally to that quarter."

These two short extracts contain at least three errors, so serious that they should not be allowed to pass uncorrected among the materials from which history will one day be constructed:

1. That Ewell failed to do what a good soldier of the type of Desaix or Stonewall Jackson would have done—namely, to move forward immediately on hearing from D. R. Jones.
2. That Beauregard was made aware of this supposed backwardness of Ewell by a message from D. R. Jones.
3. That on receiving this message he at once ordered Ewell to advance.

The subjoined correspondence, now first in print, took place four days after the battle. It shows that Ewell did exactly what Beauregard says he ought to have done—namely, move forward promptly; that his own staff-officer, sent to report this forward movement, carried also to headquarters the first intelligence of the failure of orders to reach him; that no