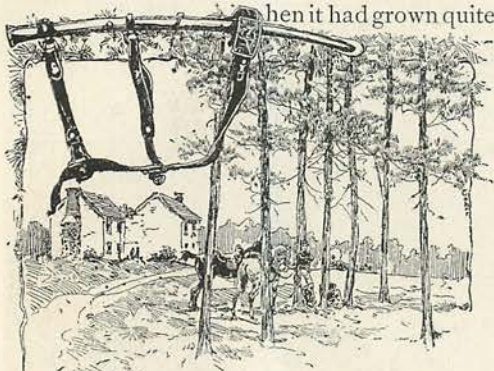


## THE SECOND DAY AT SEVEN PINES.

JUNE 1, 1862.



THE SEVEN PINES, LOOKING EAST.  
(AFTER A ROUGH SKETCH MADE DURING THE WAR.)

dark on Saturday, the 31st, and just after I had ordered the troops in the woods to reform in the open field behind the line they had held in close contact with the Federals, I left the extreme front and proceeded toward the Nine-mile road. On reaching the open field, I met an aide-de-camp who informed me that General Johnston had been seriously if not fatally wounded, and carried from the field about an hour before. I was second in rank in that army, and the casualty to General Johnston placed me in command. Within three minutes after receiving this information, I met President Davis and General Lee. They were on the Nine-mile road about three hundred yards west of Fair Oaks Station, near the eastern edge of the large wood.

In order to convey a fair idea of the circumstances which resulted in the condition of affairs on the field when the command of the army devolved upon me, brief allusion will be made here to preliminary operations.

On the 27th of May General Johnston received information that General McDowell was advancing from Fredericksburg to form a junction with General McClellan in front of Richmond. That afternoon my division was placed under the command of General Whiting, and he was ordered to move it from the ground then occupied, guarding the Williamsburg road east of Richmond, and take position north of the city, in the vicinity of Meadow Bridges. I was assigned to command the left wing of the army, of which my division, under Whiting, would form a part; and at my urgent solicitation I was relieved from commanding General Magruder. Early in the morning of the 31st of May General

Whiting received an order direct from General Johnston, to move the division under his command to the point on the Nine-mile road where the road to New Bridge turns off. This order was also sent to me by General Johnston. On its receipt I turned over the command of the left wing temporarily to General A. P. Hill, and proceeded to General Johnston's headquarters, near the Nine-mile road, in the north-east suburb of Richmond. I reached there before sunrise, informed him of the order I had given A. P. Hill, and stated that, in leaving the left wing, I did not purpose taking from General Whiting the command of my division, but desired to see how they would acquit themselves in case they went into action, and would assume command at any time or place in case it should be necessary. In leaving General A. P. Hill I had informed him that I would at once return rapidly to the left wing and resume command there if a movement by the enemy should be attempted in that direction.

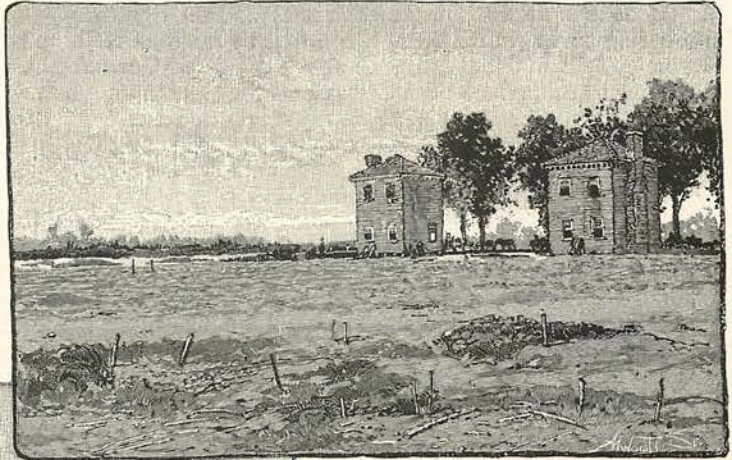
About 6 A. M. the head of my division, under Whiting, arrived in the vicinity of General Johnston's headquarters, but was prevented from reaching the Nine-mile road by troops of Longstreet's division, who were across Whiting's line of march. Having waited in vain for Longstreet's troops to clear the road for Whiting, about 8 A. M. I directed my aide-de-camp, Lieutenant R. F. Beckham, to report this state of things to General Longstreet, and ask that it be corrected as soon as possible. Lieutenant Beckham asked me where he would find General Longstreet. I referred him to General Johnston, who was present. General Johnston said General Longstreet's division was moving on the Nine-mile road, and he supposed General Longstreet was with it; if not, he would probably be found with General D. H. Hill's division on the Williamsburg road. About 9 A. M. I received a note from Lieutenant Beckham stating that Longstreet's division was not on the Nine-mile road, and that he (Beckham) would cross over to the Williamsburg road in search of General Longstreet. I showed the note to General Johnston at once. It was difficult to convince him that Lieutenant Beckham was not mistaken. But when I called his attention to the fact that Beckham was one of the best staff-officers in the army, and there could be no doubt of the correctness of the information, General Johnston sent one of his aides, Lieutenant

Washington, to General Longstreet, directing him to send at least three brigades of his division back to the Nine-mile road, if this would not cause serious loss of time. Lieutenant Washington, in execution of this order, went rapidly on the Nine-mile road in search of General Longstreet, passed the Confederate pickets, in advance of the New Bridge fork of that road, at full speed, and soon found himself within the Federal lines—a prisoner.

About 11 A. M. Lieutenant Beckham reported to me, at General Johnston's headquarters, that he had found General Longstreet's division on the Williamsburg road halted for the purpose of allowing General D. H. Hill's troops to file by; and that General Longstreet was making dispositions

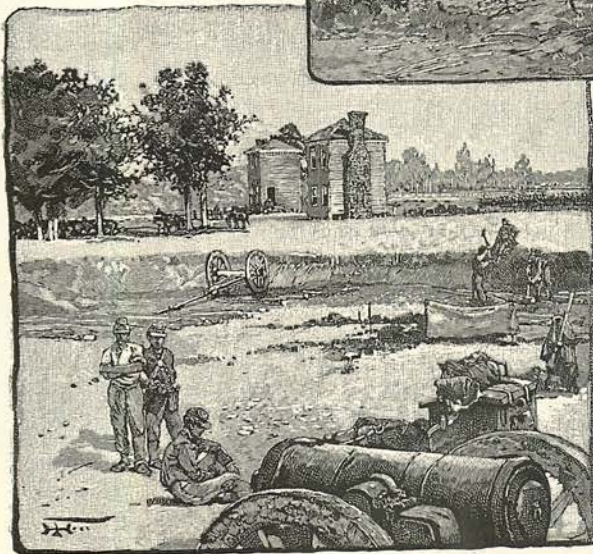
the road to New Bridge turns off, and remained there several hours, awaiting some indication or information that the attack had been commenced by the troops under General Longstreet on the Williamsburg road.

Returning now to my meeting with President Davis and General Lee on the Nine-mile road, just after the command of the army had devolved upon me, at dark on the 31st: I at once, in answer to inquiries made by the



TWO VIEWS OF FAIR OAKS STATION.  
(FROM PHOTOGRAPHS.)

The upper picture shows the east front of the station. Four hundred dead were buried in the foreground. The railway passed between the buildings.  
The lower picture shows the south side of the station and earthworks which on this side extended to the Williamsburg road.—ED.



to attack the enemy on that road, with D. H. Hill's division and his own. Lieutenant Beckham said, in reference to the troops of Longstreet's division, that he saw halted: What surprised me most was that they were "accompanied by wagons loaded with baggage and camp equipage."

In the mean time the head of the division under Whiting had remained near General Johnston's headquarters from 6 A. M. until about 11 A. M. It then moved forward on the Nine-mile road, accompanied by General Johnston, and halted near the point at which

that the three divisions under Longstreet would make a determined attack before 8 A. M. I explained the delays that had been caused by General Longstreet's misunderstanding in regard to the direction of his own division, and its consequent movement from the Nine-mile road to the Williamsburg road; and spoke of General Johnston's disappointment and anxiety because of the still further prolonged delay after Longstreet's division was transferred to the latter road. I told the President of the note received by General Johnston from General Longstreet at 4 P. M.,

President, explained fully what I knew of General Johnston's intentions and expectations at sunrise that morning, viz.: That Longstreet's division should move by the Nine-mile road, which it was already on and near; that D. H. Hill's division should move by the Williamsburg road and Huger's by the Charles City road. These three divisions constituted the right wing, which was under General Longstreet's command. General Johnston expected

asking for help; of the hurried movement of my division, under General Whiting, conducted by General Johnston in person, to the aid of Longstreet; and the sudden appearance of the enemy from the north side of the Chickahominy, which interrupted the movement in aid of Longstreet, and resulted in the contest north of Fair Oaks. I described the contest that had taken place on that part of the field, and then asked him, and others near, if anything had been heard on the Nine-mile road from the 30,000 men under Longstreet on the Williamsburg road, later than the note received by General Johnston about four o'clock P. M.

Nothing further had been heard, and the President then asked me what were my plans. I told him that I could not understandingly determine what was best to be done, until something was known of the condition of affairs in the right wing of the army, and some data obtained in regard to the position and strength of the enemy on that side; and added, it might be found expedient to withdraw to better ground covering Richmond, or it might not; all depended on what had occurred in the right wing. The President suggested that, if we remained, the enemy might withdraw during the night, which would give us the moral effect of a victory. I replied that I would not withdraw without good reason; all would depend upon the state of affairs on the Williamsburg road. Nothing had happened on our side to make it necessary to retire.

All I then knew of the actual battle was what had occurred north of Fair Oaks Station, where four brigades of my own division, which was commanded by General Whiting, and directed by General Johnston in person until he was wounded, engaged a strong Federal reënforcement from the north side of the river (which proved to be Sedgwick's division of Sumner's corps). Judging from the note received by General Johnston from General Longstreet at 4 P. M., there was good reason to believe that the delay of the latter in bringing on the attack had given time for Federal reënforcements to reach the field from the direction of Bottom's Bridge; and there was reason, too, for the belief that General Longstreet's troops were nearly, if not quite, all in action when he called for help. It was very clear that the sudden and, if possible, crushing blow which General Johnston expected to have made early in the morning by the right wing of the army against the Federal forces isolated in the vicinity of Seven Pines, had failed. Night found two-thirds of the Confederate army in the swamps eight miles east of Richmond, at the end of a bloody and indecisive engagement begun about the middle

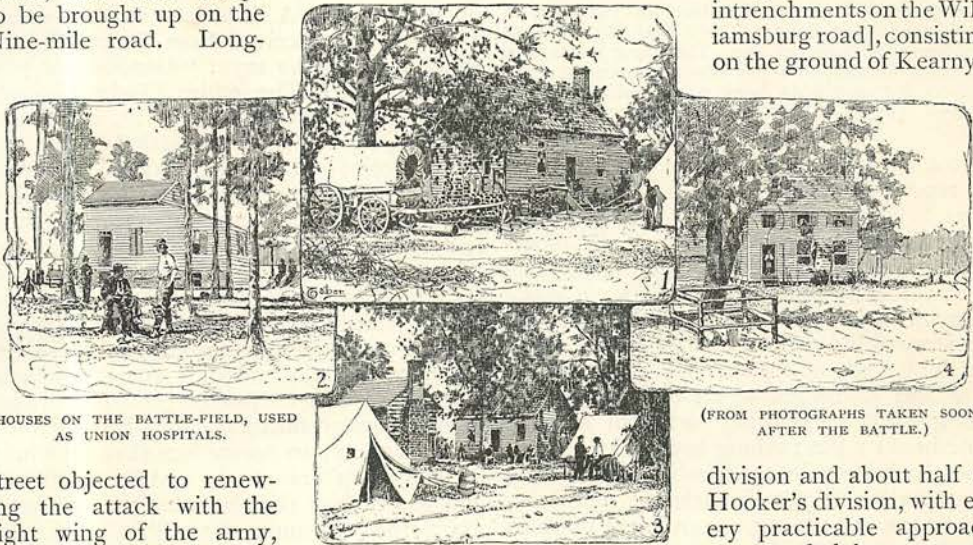
of the afternoon, whilst the right of the Federal army was in the vicinity of Mechanicsville, a good deal nearer Richmond than we were. I had no reason to believe that all the bridges over the Chickahominy were broken and that stream impassable. In short, the condition of affairs was not altogether rose-colored, in my view, when the command of the army devolved upon me. But I could determine nothing understandingly until information was received from the right wing.

About half an hour after dark the President and General Lee rode away. General J. E. B. Stuart, who had been, during the day, on the extreme right with a portion of the cavalry, picketing the Charles City road and the White Oak Swamp, reached the field near Fair Oaks at nearly the same time, and reported to me that the enemy had not advanced from their position at White Oak Bridge; that our troops had carried the intrenched position at Seven Pines some time before sunset, and had advanced on the Williamsburg road beyond that point, but he did not know how far. He had good guides with him, and he offered to go in person to General Longstreet, and have him piloted to the headquarters on the Nine-mile road. Several parties had been previously sent to communicate with General Longstreet and request him to come over to the Nine-mile road for conference and instructions.

A short time before midnight, after I had made my headquarters at Old Tavern, I received a note from General Stuart stating that at 10:30 P. M. he had failed to find General Longstreet. At 12:40 Sunday morning (June 1), having heard nothing from General Longstreet, I addressed him a note asking the position of his command at dark, the condition of his men, and requesting his views in regard to the operations to be undertaken in his front that morning. Soon after that note was written, General Longstreet, without having received it, arrived at my headquarters, having been found about midnight by one of the staff-officers sent to communicate with him. General Longstreet reported that only a portion of his own division had been seriously engaged in close action, and that Huger's division had scarcely been engaged at all; the principal fighting having been done by D. H. Hill's division; that the enemy's works at Seven Pines had been carried late in the afternoon; the Federals had been pressed back about a mile beyond that point, and the fighting had been continued until dark. On receipt of this information, I directed General Longstreet to send one brigade of Huger's division to support the troops on the Nine-mile road, and renew the fighting with

the remainder of the right wing as early as possible after daylight, directing his efforts north instead of any farther east, pivoting this movement on the position of Whiting, near Fair Oaks Station. General Longstreet was assured that when a determined attack by the right wing was well developed, it should be favored by a strong demonstration, and, if necessary, by a real attack, by Whiting's command, and other troops to be brought up on the Nine-mile road. Long-

front each, and four batteries. These two divisions constituted Sumner's corps. On the left, Keyes's corps [part of Couch's and Casey's divisions] held the strong works south of the Williamsburg road, called "the third line of defense," protected by sixty pieces of artillery. The interval between Keyes and Sumner was a little more than a mile, and was held by Heintzelman's corps [Hooker, during the night, being in bivouac near the intrenchments on the Williamsburg road], consisting on the ground of Kearny's



HOUSES ON THE BATTLE-FIELD, USED AS UNION HOSPITALS.

(FROM PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN SOON AFTER THE BATTLE.)

street objected to renewing the attack with the right wing of the army, and said it ought to be made by my division, which he thought had done little fighting on the 31st. After hearing all he chose to say on that subject, I gave the positive order, as above, and General Longstreet returned to the Williamsburg road.\*

I then wrote to General Lee,—who was in general charge in Richmond of all Confederate army operations,—telling him what had been determined on, what orders had been given, and asking that such reinforcements as were within reach should be sent. General Lee's reply is dated Richmond, 5 A. M. He says: "Ripley will be ordered, and such forces from General Holmes as can be got up will be sent. Your movements are judicious, and determination to strike the enemy right."

The following statement of the position of the Federal forces at daylight on the 1st of June is the substance of an account by General George W. Mindil, aide-de-camp to General Phil. Kearny. Sedgwick's division and the detachment from Couch's, and five batteries, were on the extreme right, facing west-northwest. On the left of Sedgwick, at nearly a right angle, and parallel with the railroad, was Richardson's division, in three lines of a brigade

division and about half of Hooker's division, with every practicable approach commanded by a numerous artillery. The troops outside the strong works south of the Williamsburg road were partly protected, a line of rifle-pits having been thrown up during the night. The pickets of the three corps were in communication throughout. General Mindil placed the outposts forming the connection between Sumner and Heintzelman.

On the Confederate side the troops under Longstreet had all been brought to the front. His extreme right was on the Williamsburg road, about half a mile east of Seven Pines; his left near two wood roads, about half a mile east of Fair Oaks Station. The troops forming his right faced east, those of his left faced north. Nearly if not all of his command was in the wood east of the Nine-mile road, and between the Williamsburg road and the railroad. My division under Whiting was on the Nine-mile road, a little west of Fair Oaks Station, near the ground on which it had fought the previous afternoon.

General Mindil says: "About five o'clock on Sunday morning [June 1], in the gray of dawn, the Confederate skirmishers in front of Richardson opened fire." These were Hood's

\* It appears that, "At 2 A. M., June 1st, a Federal council of war was held in General Sumner's tent, and it was resolved to attack the enemy as soon as disposition for that purpose could be made." See "The Peninsula," by General A. S. Webb, p. 114.—Ed.

enterprising Texans, near Fair Oaks Station, who were seeking the enemy in front of the gap between Whiting's right and Longstreet's left. They were immediately recalled, because it was intended that the attack should be made by the right wing under Longstreet.

Again, General Mindil says:

"At half-past six o'clock a determined assault was made against General French's line (of Richardson's division), the enemy pushing forward along the two wood roads that crossed this line heavy columns of attack, supporting them on both flanks by battalions of infantry in deployed line. The firing commenced within half-musket shot, and was maintained at closer quarters for nearly an hour and a half before the enemy's [the Confederate] column wavered and broke."

In a note, dated 6:30 A. M., General Whiting reported to me, "Heavy firing in advance of us." It now seemed that the right wing under Longstreet was beginning the movement ordered. Some time later, perhaps an hour, General Whiting wrote: "I am going to try a diversion for Longstreet; . . . the musketry firing in advance is tremendous." On the far side of the gap between Whiting's right and Longstreet's left our troops were falling back. The firing had been at times quite heavy; but nothing had been observed from the Nine-mile road indicating that any large portion of the Confederate right wing had begun in earnest the movement in which Whiting was ordered to cooperate.

"Hardly had fresh Federal regiments taken the places of those which had exhausted their ammunition in repulsing the Confederate attack at 8 A. M. [says General Mindil], when the enemy's [Confederate] column, strongly reinforced, gave a general yell, and again dashed forward to the attack. This renewed fight was of the most desperate and sanguinary character, lasting more than an hour, when the enemy were again driven back, without gaining a single point of the Union line. . . . So fierce was the fighting in Richardson's front that he sustained a loss of nearly 800 men in a division much smaller in numbers than Sedgwick's, and his men were partly protected by the railroad embankment. . . . As Hooker neared the clearing on Hyer's farm, he ordered his four regiments to charge; this cleared the woods, and the enemy were entirely broken. . . . Hooker was now on the right flank and rear of the forces engaged with Richardson, and he was not slow to improve his opportunity."

A few moments after 9 A. M., General Whiting wrote to me: "Some of Griffith's regiments might be sent down to the railroad in rear of the position occupied by Hood, which, with a heavy enemy's battery in his rear, has be-

come untenable." The Federals in pursuit of Longstreet's forces — that had probably withdrawn along the two wood roads previously mentioned — were getting nearly upon the prolongation of Hood's line, but not as yet in rear of it.

About 10:30 A. M. I received a note from General Longstreet, stating, "The brigade cannot be spared. Every man except a brigade is in action. . . . I am not able to do without it." A little later a note, dated 10 A. M., was received from General Longstreet, in which he says: "General, can you reinforce me? The entire [Federal] army seems to be opposed to me. . . . If I can't get help, I fear I must fall back."

On receipt of this note, I ordered five thousand men from the crest of the Chickahominy Bluffs, between the New Bridge and Mechanicsville roads, to move as soon as possible to the support of General Longstreet; and Ripley's brigade, which was expected to arrive by the Nine-mile road, was ordered to move to the front on the Williamsburg road as soon as it reached Richmond. General McLaws was sent to General Longstreet to inform him of the reinforcements that had been ordered to his support; to assure him that the whole of McClellan's army was not in his front; and to tell him that he must not fall back any farther, but must, if possible, regain the ground he had already lost. About 1 P. M. I received a note from General McLaws stating, "Longstreet says he can hold his position with five thousand more men. He has the same ground the enemy held yesterday."

In the mean time the right of Whiting's line had been drawn back because of the advance of the Federals, who were following up our withdrawing forces on the far side of the gap which existed between Longstreet's left and Whiting's right.

"After Richardson's and Hooker's divisions and Birney's brigade had driven the Confederates well back from the railroad in front of the position held by Richardson during the night, Sickles's brigade united with these forces [says General Mindil], and a general advance was made. No serious opposition was encountered, and Casey's camp was reoccupied before two o'clock P. M., the ground being covered with the rebel dead and wounded as well as our own."<sup>\*</sup>

About 1:30 P. M. President Davis rode up to my headquarters, and asked for General Lee. Upon being told that General Lee was

\* Those who think there was little fighting on the second day at Seven Pines, should compare the official revised returns of the Union losses of killed, wounded, and missing, on the first day, with those of the second day (see "War Records": series I, vol. XI; part I, pages 757 to 762). These show that the losses of the troops which were engaged only in the second day's fight aggregate 1199, viz.: Richardson's three brigades (loss, 838), Birney's four regiments of Kearny's division (207), Hooker's division (Sickles' brigade, and two regiments of Starr's brigade) (154). The losses of the troops engaged the first day, aggregate 3832, viz.: Casey (1429), Couch (1168), Sedgwick (347), two brigades of Kearny's division (884), and the unattached artillery (4). But some of the troops engaged the first day were also engaged the second day: it is impossible, however, to estimate their losses on the second day. As much as we positively know, therefore, is that the Union losses on the second day were, at least, 1199, or about one-fourth of the total loss in the two days' battle, which was 5031.

General Johnston (see pages 119-20, herewith) estimates the losses of Longstreet and Hill at about 3000; and G. W. Smith's at 1285—total, 4283.—Ed.

not there, he expressed so much surprise as to induce me to ask him if he had any special reason for supposing General Lee would be there at that time. To this he replied, Yes; and added he had early that morning directed General Lee to take command of the army at once. This was the first and only intimation I received in regard to the assignment of General Lee to the command. It was enough, however. The President chatted upon a variety of commonplace subjects, but made no allusion to anything pertaining to the state of affairs on the field.

General Lee came in about 2 P. M., and I at once turned over to him the command of the Army of Northern Virginia, and commenced explaining to him what had occurred during the day. To these explanations President Davis seemed to give some attention, particularly to General Longstreet's notes asking for help. Whilst I was still speaking to General Lee of the state of affairs upon the field of battle, I received a note from General Longstreet, dated 1:30 P. M., in which he said: "The next attack will be from Sumner's division. I think that if we can whip it we shall be comparatively safe from the advance of McClellan's army. I hope that those who were whipped yesterday will not appear again. The attack this morning was made at an unfortunate time. We had but little ammunition, but we have since replenished our supply, and I sincerely hope that we may succeed against them in their next effort. Oh that I had ten thousand men more!"

After reading General Longstreet's note, I handed it to General Lee, and requested him to read and hand it to the President. General Lee looked very serious whilst reading; and after the President had read it, the latter seemed to take a little more interest in what was going on, but said nothing.

I informed General Lee that Longstreet was mistaken in regard to the state of things; that the two corps of the Federal army on the north bank of the river that morning had not yet crossed to our side; that the force attacked north of Fair Oaks the previous afternoon still held that position; that 5000 men ordered from the Chickahominy Bluffs were already closely approaching Longstreet's position on the Williamsburg road; that Ripley's brigade, which was expected, had been ordered to move on that road; that this would still leave Longstreet more than 30,000 men, even if his losses had already reached 5000; that the ground he now occupied was favorable to us; and that the danger to Richmond, if any, was not then on the Williamsburg road.

Near 3 P. M. the President rode off, leaving

General Lee and myself in conference alone. General Lee made no adverse comment upon my management of the army, and gave no orders.

At 4 P. M. General Lee and I, with a courier as a guide, went over to the Williamsburg road, where we found the President and several members of his Cabinet talking with General Longstreet. They were at a point about half a mile nearer Richmond than the unfinished pentangular redoubt where our troops first struck the Federal main line the previous day. Everything was quiet; the reinforcements from the Chickahominy had reached Longstreet's position on the Williamsburg road. There were no further operations that day; the battle was ended.

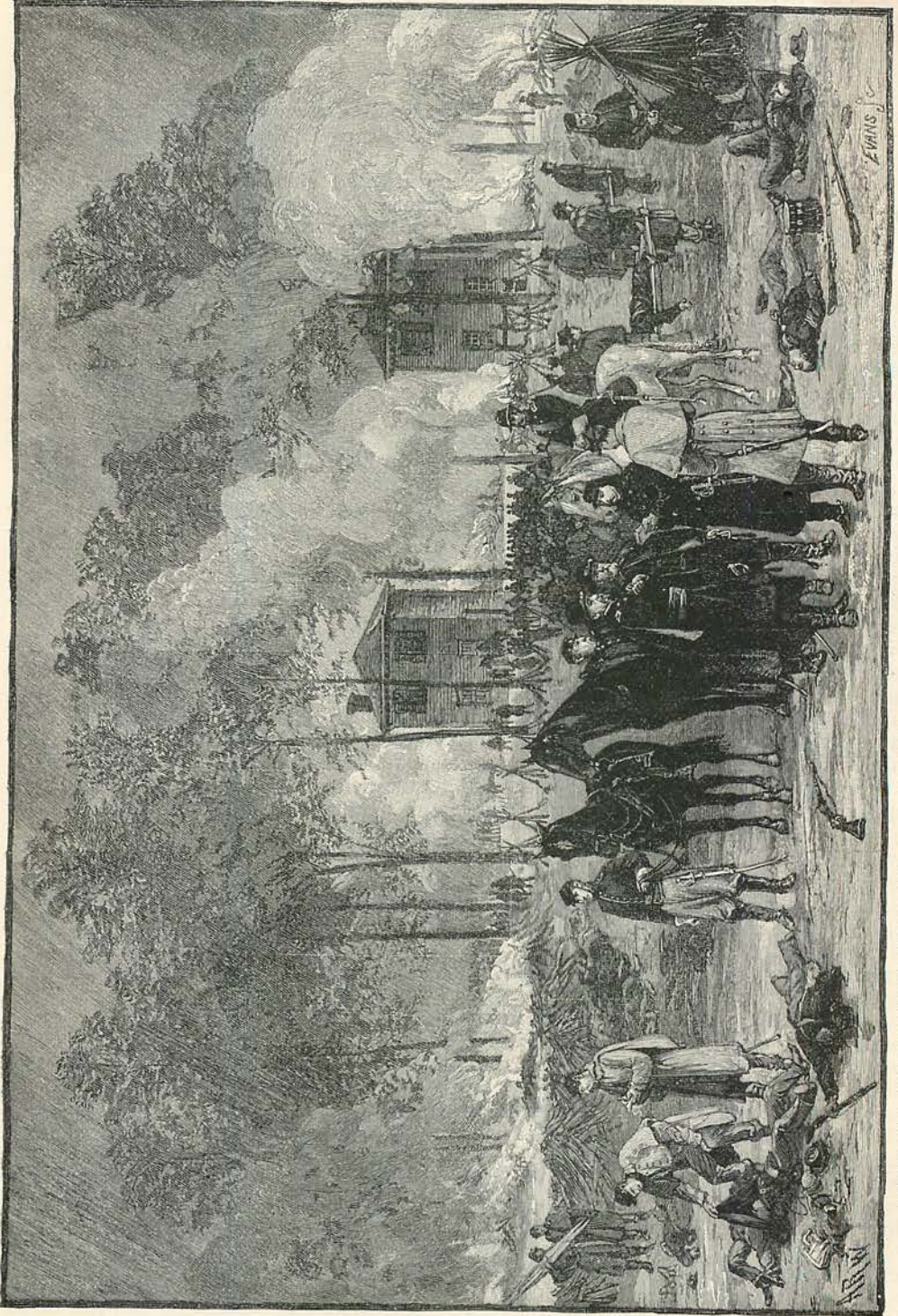
At daylight on the 1st of June there were three Federal corps on the battle-field in the vicinity of Seven Pines and Fair Oaks. On the morning of the 31st of May there was but one Federal corps on that ground. The Confederate troops on the field on the 1st of June were those that General Johnston had ordered, on the 30th of May, to move forward as soon as possible after daylight on the 31st. The result of the action on June 1st is sufficiently indicated in the foregoing battle-field notes of General Longstreet.

Conflicting accounts of Confederate operations in this battle call for further allusion to General Johnston's original plan, as well as to the occurrences of the 1st of June. In 1874 General Longstreet wrote two letters to General G. W. Mindil, in reference to the battle of Seven Pines. These letters were shown to me by General Mindil a few months since; and he authorized me to make any use I chose of the statements made by General Longstreet. It is believed that these letters have not heretofore been published. The first is dated July 17, 1874. In this General Longstreet, speaking of the movements on the 31st of May, says:

"It is proper to explain now the plan of battle, as I can speak from accurate knowledge. The plan was to turn your [the Federal] left at daylight, by throwing Huger's division, by a passable route for infantry, to your left and rear. As the head of his column passed the swamp, D. H. Hill was to be ready, and I was to advise him to make the attack vigorously. Huger did not reach the field. At one o'clock D. H. Hill proposed to bring on the battle, and it was agreed to under the impression that Huger would be there surely by the time we were warmed up into actual battle. The entire strength of the plan was in his movement."

On the 2d of December, 1874, General Longstreet wrote to General Mindil, saying:

"Our plan was, as you stated, to turn your left by moving Huger's command across the head of White Oak Swamp; that to be followed by the attack of General D. H. Hill, on the Williamsburg road, which



BURYING THE DEAD, AND BURNING HORSES AT FAIR OAKS STATION AFTER THE SECOND DAY'S FIGHT. (AFTER A SKETCH MADE AT THE TIME.)

was to be supported, if need be, by my command; the command on the Nine-mile road following Hill's movements. As you say in your article, Johnston's plan was faultless, and in my judgment at the time was the only plan that could be approved by a military mind. . . . Huger had to move over the same ground pretty much that I did. He was to precede me, and I believe that he did so over part of the route. My opinion is that he moved before me. That I waited until sunrise, so as to give him time to clear the road as far as the Charles City fork, and if my memory is correct I passed a part of his command resting on the side of the road. . . . The only reports that I remember to have heard from him were that he was moving on, and would soon be in position. General Johnston was on the Nine-mile road. This left me the senior—or at least nominally the senior—officer on the Williamsburg road, and exercising more or less command of Hill's and Huger's as well as of my own division. . . . Once the action was opened, we were drawn gradually into it, and of course the combat became more and more vigorous until night. . . . I was to support Hill, and being his senior, could have taken command on the Williamsburg road; but it would have been inexcusable had I done so, inasmuch as he had led his troops well and had been successful. I could not, therefore, do anything more than support and aid his able efforts."

Judging from the general character of what he writes to General Mindil, it appears that General Longstreet was not fully alive to the fact—then or later—that he was in command of one-half of General Johnston's army on that day. Much less does it seem that he realized the importance of prompt and decisive action. In view of what occurred late in the afternoon of the 31st, after time had been given for two Federal divisions to come to the assistance of the isolated corps in the vicinity of Seven Pines, it is not difficult to infer what would probably have been the result had Longstreet's own division, 14,000 strong, moved at daylight on the Nine-mile road, striking, on the right flank, the lines that D. H. Hill's division carried by assault in the afternoon.

In a letter addressed to me, General Johnston says:

"I refer to the mention of the misunderstanding between Longstreet and myself, in regard to the direction of his division. . . . I received information of Longstreet's misunderstanding—which may be my fault, as I told you at the time—whilst his troops were moving to the Williamsburg road, and sent to Longstreet to send three brigades by the Nine-mile road, if they had not marched so far as to make the change involve a serious loss of time."

The date of this letter, June 28, 1862, the circumstances under which it was written, and General Johnston's specific statements show not only that General Longstreet did misunderstand the direction in which Johnston intended Longstreet's division should move against the enemy, but make it certain that Johnston attempted, at least in part, to rectify Longstreet's mistake in regard to this matter. There is other positive evidence, not

necessary to be repeated here, which establishes the same facts. But it appears now that General Johnston, in his "Narrative" published in 1874, has conceded that it was his fault that caused the misunderstanding on the part of Longstreet, in regard to the movement of the division in question. It is believed, however, that he has not conceded—and never will concede—that it was his plan to keep D. H. Hill's, Longstreet's, and G. W. Smith's divisions out of action until Huger's division could get into position on the left flank and rear of the enemy. This would have required that the 35,500 men in the divisions of Hill, Longstreet, and Smith—men inured to marching and fighting—should be held back until Huger's 5000 inexperienced troops could, by a circuitous route across a difficult swamp, get into position where they were not needed; and this, too, when prompt action was essential to success, and delay was dangerous.

Neither is it believed that General Johnston will concede that his plan was that my division, under Whiting, on the Nine-mile road, placed there to guard against Federal reinforcements coming from the north side of the Chickahominy, should be put in action on Hill's left, whilst the 14,000 men in Longstreet's division were held back on the Williamsburg road only to support Hill "if need be." But all this must be conceded in order to make up "the faultless plan," which was, in General Longstreet's judgment at the time, "the only plan that could be approved by a military mind."

In reference to operations on the 1st of June, General Longstreet writes to General Mindil in part as follows:

"I do not remember to have heard of any fighting on the second day except a sharp skirmish reported by General Pickett as he was retiring, under the orders of General Lee, to resume our former position. . . . Attack was not renewed on the 1st of June, because Johnston had been wounded and had been obliged to leave the field. Smith, the next in rank, had been taken quite sick, but would not give up. He was therefore slow in organizing for renewed attack, and before he did so arrange General Lee was announced as the commander of the army. As he had not been with the army the previous day, he was not prepared to conduct the continuance of the battle; so the troops were withdrawn to their original positions in the afternoon and evening. . . . About 10 A. M. General Lee was assigned to command, and rode out on the Nine-mile road, saw General Smith, took command, and came with General Smith across to the Williamsburg road. There we discussed the matter of renewed attack. I favored another effort to turn your [Federal] left. Smith opposed it, and gave as his reason the strength of your lines, which he claimed to have examined, and I was forced to yield my opinions, in consequence of his knowledge of superior position on your side."

The foregoing extracts are some of General Longstreet's contributions to the "history" of



the battle of Seven Pines, furnished by him to General Mindil, "in hopes of making the Confederate side a little clearer."

As to my being "taken quite sick," I was not seriously ill until the 2d of June. General Longstreet's statement that General Smith was slow in organizing for renewed attack because he was taken sick is, therefore, a mistake. In fact, at that time there was no organizing requisite, except, perhaps, in the right wing under Longstreet, and this was intrusted to him. I turned the command of the army over to General Lee about 2 P. M. He certainly gave no orders to General Longstreet, or to any part of the army, before 4 P. M. General Longstreet seems to have forgotten his notes of that morning, as well as that dated 1:30 P. M., ending with the exclamation, "Oh that I had 10,000 men more!"

When General Lee and General Smith joined General Longstreet on the Williamsburg road, Longstreet had lost on the 1st of June much of the ground he had gained on the 31st of May. I have no knowledge of any proposition having been made by General Longstreet to General Lee for renewing the attack. I

had never seen the works in General Longstreet's front, over which the troops of the latter had fought forward on the 31st of May and back during the morning of the 1st of June. General Longstreet is in error when he says that he was forced to yield his opinions because of my superior knowledge of the position in his front.

During the night of the 1st of June the troops under Longstreet quietly fell back to resume their former positions in front of Richmond. The division under Whiting, on the Nine-mile road, remained for several days confronting the Federal position it had attacked, north of Fair Oaks Station.

The limited space allotted to this article would prevent much further comment on my part in reference to the incidents and previously published accounts of this battle, even if I felt disposed at this time to say more. I will therefore only add that in my opinion, then and since, General Johnston's "original plan" was entirely correct in principle, and promised assured success if carried into effect as he, at sunrise on the morning of the 31st of May, intended and expected.

*Gustavus W. Smith.*

#### RECOLLECTIONS OF A PRIVATE.—IV.\*

##### TO THE CHICKAHOMINY.—THE BATTLE OF SEVEN PINES.



CONFEDERATE SHARP-SHOOTER.

our trains were moved over them. A few miles west of the Pamunkey we found the country beautiful and undulating, with graceful, round-topped hills, here and there crowned with trees and clothed in the varied tints of early summer.

On our entire march up the Peninsula, we did not see a dozen white men left upon the soil. At last, on the twenty-third of May, we arrived upon the banks of the sluggish Chickahominy,—a small mill-stream, forty or fifty feet wide, with swampy lowland bordering on either side; the tops of the trees growing in the swamp being about on a level with the crests of the bluffs just beyond, on the Richmond side. Our first camp was pitched on the hills in the vicinity of Gaines's Farm.

The engineers soon began the construction of bridges for the passage of the troops, as it was very important to gain a foothold on the west bank, preparatory to our advance. While Duane's bridge was being constructed, we were ordered on duty along the banks; and upon approaching the river we found, in the thickets near it, one of our dead cavalrymen lying in the water, evidently having been killed while watering his horse. The bridges were thrown out with marvelous quickness, and the corduroy approaches were soon constructed. A small force was ordered to cross, to reconnoiter and to observe the condition of

THE roads were narrow and very muddy between the White House and the Chickahominy, and it was with great trouble that

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