

PREPARING FOR THE WILDERNESS CAMPAIGN.



HEADQUARTERS FLAG, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.*

MY commission as lieutenant-general was given to me on the 9th of March, 1864. On the following day I visited General Meade, commanding the Army of the Potomac, at his headquarters, Brandy Station, north of the Rapidan. I had known General Meade slightly in the Mexican war, but had not met him since until this visit. I was a stranger to most of the Army of the Potomac, I might say to all except the officers of the regular army who had served in the Mexican war. There had been some changes ordered in the organization of that army before my promotion. One was the consolidation of five corps into three, thus throwing some officers of rank out of important commands. Meade evidently thought that I might want to make still one more change not yet ordered. He said to me that I might want an officer who had served with me in the West, mentioning Sherman especially, to take his place. If so, he begged me not to hesitate about making the change. He urged that the work before us was of such vast importance to the whole nation that the feeling or wishes of no one person should stand in the way of selecting the right men for all positions. For himself, he would serve to the best of his ability wherever placed. I assured him that I had no thought of substituting any one for him. As to Sherman, he could not be spared from the West.

This incident gave me even a more favorable opinion of Meade than did his great victory at Gettysburg the July before. It is men who wait to be selected, and not those who seek, from whom we may always expect the most efficient service.

Meade's position afterwards proved embarrassing to me if not to him. He was commanding an army, and, for nearly a year previous to my taking command of all the armies,

was in supreme command of the Army of the Potomac—except from the authorities at Washington. All other general officers occupying similar positions were independent in their commands so far as any one present with them was concerned. I tried to make General Meade's position as nearly as possible what it would have been if I had been in Washington or any other place away from his command. I therefore gave all orders for the movements of the Army of the Potomac to Meade to have them executed. To avoid the necessity of having to give orders direct, I established my headquarters near his, unless there were reasons for locating them elsewhere. This sometimes happened, and I had no occasion to give orders direct to the troops affected.

On the 11th of March I returned to Washington, and on the day after orders were published by the War Department placing me in command of all the armies. I had left Washington the night before to return to my old command in the West and to meet Sherman, whom I had telegraphed to meet me in Nashville.

Sherman assumed command of the Military Division of the Mississippi on the 18th of March, and we left Nashville together for Cincinnati. I had Sherman accompany me that far on my way back to Washington, so that we could talk over the matters about which I wanted to see him, without losing any more time from my new command than was necessary. The first point which I wished to discuss was particularly about the coöperation of his command with others when the spring campaign should commence. There were also other and minor points,—minor as compared with the great importance of the question to be decided by sanguinary war,—the restoration to duty of officers who had been relieved from important commands; namely, McClellan, Burnside, and Frémont in the East, and Buell, McCook, Negley, and Crittenden in the West.

Some time in the winter of 1863-4, I had been invited by the general-in-chief to give my views of the campaign I thought advisable for the command under me—now Sherman's. General J. E. Johnston was defending Atlanta and the interior of Georgia with an army, the largest part of which was stationed at Dalton,

* General Meade adopted solferino as the color of his headquarters flag, and a golden eagle in a silver wreath as the emblem. The latter had already been in use as a badge for headquarters aides. It was a showy standard,

and A. R. Waud, the war artist, remembers that General Grant when he first saw it unfurled, as they broke camp for the Wilderness campaign, exclaimed: "What's this! —Is Imperial Cæsar anywhere about here?"—EDITOR.

about thirty-eight miles south of Chattanooga. Dalton is at the junction of the railroad from Cleveland with the one from Chattanooga to Atlanta.

There could have been no difference of opinion as to the first duty of the armies of the Military Division of the Mississippi. Johnston's army was the first objective, and that important railroad center, Atlanta, the second. At the time I wrote General Halleck giving my views of the approaching campaign, and at the time I met General Sherman, it was expected that General Banks would be through with the campaign which he had been ordered upon before my appointment to the command of all the armies, and would be ready to cooperate with the armies east of the Mississippi; his part in the programme being to move upon Mobile by land, while the navy would close the harbor and assist to the best of its ability. The plan, therefore, was for Sherman to attack Johnston and destroy his army if possible, to capture Atlanta and hold it, and with his troops and those of Banks to hold a line through to Mobile, or at least to hold Atlanta and command the railroad running east and west, and the troops from one or other of the armies to hold important points on the southern road, the only east and west road that would be left in the possession of the enemy. This would cut the Confederacy in two again, as our gaining possession of the Mississippi River had done before. Banks was not ready in time for the part assigned to him, and circumstances that could not be foreseen determined the campaign which was afterwards made, the success and grandeur of which has resounded throughout all lands.

In regard to restoring officers who had been relieved from important commands to duty again, I left Sherman to look after those who had been removed in the West, while I would look out for the rest. I directed, however, that he should make no assignment until I could speak to the Secretary of War about the matter. I shortly after recommended to the Secretary the assignment of General Buell to duty. I received the assurance that duty would be offered to him, and afterwards the Secretary told me that he had offered Buell an assignment and that the latter declined it, saying that it would be a degradation to accept the assignment offered. I understood afterwards that he refused to serve under either Sherman or Canby because he had ranked them both. Both graduated before him and ranked him in the old army. Sherman ranked him as brigadier-general. All of them ranked me in the old army, and Sherman and Buell did as brigadiers.

On the 23d of March I was back in Washington, and on the 26th took up my headquar-

ters at Culpeper Court House, a few miles south of the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac.

Although hailing from Illinois myself, the State of the President, I never met Mr. Lincoln until called to the capital to receive my commission as lieutenant-general. I knew him, however, very well and favorably from the accounts given by officers under me at the West, who had known him all their lives. I had also read the remarkable series of debates between Lincoln and Douglas a few years before, when they were rival candidates for the United States Senate. I was then a resident of Missouri, and by no means a "Lincoln man" in that contest; but I recognized then his great ability.

In my first interview with Mr. Lincoln alone he stated to me that he had never professed to be a military man or to know how campaigns should be conducted, and never wanted to interfere in them; but that procrastination on the part of commanders and the pressure from the people at the North and Congress, *which was always with him*, forced him into issuing his series of "Military Orders"—one, two, three, etc. He did not know but they were all wrong, and did know that some of them were. All he wanted, or had ever wanted, was some one who would take the responsibility and act, and call on him for all the assistance needed, pledging himself to use all the power of the Government in rendering such assistance. Assuring him that I would do the best I could with the means at hand, and avoid as far as possible annoying him or the War Department, our first interview ended.

The Secretary of War I had met once before only, but felt that I knew him better. While commanding in West Tennessee we had occasionally held conversations over the wires at night, when they were not being otherwise used. He and General Halleck both cautioned me against giving the President my plans of campaign, saying that he was so kind-hearted, so averse from refusing anything asked of him, that some friend would be sure to get from him all he knew. I should have said that in our interview the President told me that he did not want to know what I proposed to do. But he submitted a plan of campaign of his own which he wanted me to hear and then do as I pleased about. He brought out a map of Virginia on which he had evidently marked every position occupied by the Federal and Confederate armies up to that time. He pointed out on the map two streams which empty into the Potomac, and suggested that the army might be moved on boats and landed between the mouths of these streams. We would then have the Potomac

to bring our supplies, and the tributaries would protect our flanks while we moved out. I listened respectfully, but did not suggest that the same streams would protect Lee's flanks while he was shutting us up. I did not communicate my plans to the President, nor did I to the Secretary of War or to General Halleck.

March the 26th, with my headquarters at Culpeper, the work of preparing for an early campaign commenced.

When I assumed command of all the armies the situation was about this: The Mississippi was guarded from St. Louis to its mouth; the line of the Arkansas was held, thus giving us all the North-west north of that river. A few points in Louisiana, not remote from the river, were held by the Federal troops, and also the mouth of the Rio Grande. East of the Mississippi we held substantially all north of the Memphis and Charleston railroad as far east as Chattanooga, thence along the line of the Tennessee and Holston rivers, taking in nearly all of the State of Tennessee. West Virginia was in our hands; and that part of old Virginia north of the Rapidan and east of the Blue Ridge we also held. On the sea-coast we had Fort Monroe and Norfolk in Virginia; Plymouth, Washington, and New-Berne in North Carolina; Beaufort, Folly and Morris islands, Hilton Head, Port Royal, and Fort Pulaski in South Carolina and Georgia; Fernandina, St. Augustine, Key West, and Pensacola in Florida. The rest of the Southern territory, an empire in extent, was still in the hands of the enemy.

Sherman, who had succeeded me in the command of the Military Division of the Mississippi, commanded all the troops in the territory west of the Alleghanies and north of Natchez, with a large movable force about Chattanooga. His command was subdivided into four departments, but the commanders all reported to Sherman, and were subject to his orders. This arrangement, however, insured the better protection of all lines of communication through the acquired territory, for the reason that these different department commanders could act promptly in case of a sudden or unexpected raid within their respective jurisdiction, without waiting the orders of the division commander.

In the East the opposing forces stood in substantially the same relations toward each other as three years before; or when the war began: they were both between the Federal and Confederate capitals. It is true footholds had been secured by us on the sea-coast, in Virginia and North Carolina, but beyond that no substantial advantage had been gained by either side. Battles had been fought of as great severity as had ever been known in war,

over ground from the James River and the Chickahominy, near Richmond, to Gettysburg and Chambersburg, in Pennsylvania, with indecisive results, sometimes favorable to the National army, sometimes to the Confederate army, but in every instance, I believe, claimed as victories for the South, by the Southern press if not by the Southern generals. The Northern press, as a whole, did not discourage their claims; a portion of it always magnified rebel success and belittled ours, while another portion, most sincerely earnest in their desire for the preservation of the Union and the overwhelming success of the Federal arms, would nevertheless generally express dissatisfaction with whatever victories were gained because they were not more complete.

That portion of the Army of the Potomac not engaged in guarding lines of communication was on the northern bank of the Rapidan; the Army of Northern Virginia confronting it on the opposite bank of the same river, was strongly intrenched and commanded by the acknowledged ablest general in the Confederate army. The country back to the James River is cut up with many streams, generally narrow, deep, and difficult to cross except where bridged. The region is heavily timbered, and the roads narrow and very bad after the least rain. Such an enemy was not, of course, unprepared with adequate fortifications at convenient intervals all the way back to Richmond, so that when driven from one fortified position they would always have another farther to the rear to fall back into. To provision an army, campaigning against so formidable a foe through such a country, from wagons alone, seemed almost impossible. System and discipline were both essential to its accomplishment. (See map, page 607.)

The Union armies were now divided into nineteen departments, though four of them in the West had been concentrated into a single military division. The Army of the Potomac was a separate command, and had no territorial limits. There were thus seventeen district commanders. Before this time these various armies had acted separately and independently of each other, giving the enemy an opportunity, often, of depleting one command, not pressed, to reënforce another more actively engaged. I determined to stop this. To this end I regarded the Army of the Potomac as the center, and all west to Memphis, along the line described as our position at the time, and north of it, the right wing; the Army of the James, under General Butler, as the left wing, and all the troops south as a force in rear of the enemy. Some of these latter were occupying positions from which they could not render service proportionate

to their numerical strength. All such were depleted to the minimum necessary to hold their positions as a guard against blockade-runners; when they could not do this, their positions were abandoned altogether. In this way ten thousand men were added to the Army of the James from South Carolina alone, with General Gillmore in command. It was not contemplated that General Gillmore should leave his department. But as most of his troops were taken, presumably for active service, he asked to accompany them, and was permitted to do so. Officers and soldiers on furlough, of whom there were many thousands, were ordered to their proper commands; concentration was the order of the day, and to have it accomplished in time to advance at the earliest moment the roads would permit was the problem.

As a reinforcement to the Army of the Potomac, or to act in support of it, the Ninth Army Corps, over twenty thousand strong, under General Burnside, had been rendezvoused at Annapolis, Maryland. This was an admirable position for such a reinforcement. The corps could be brought at the last moment as a reinforcement to the Army of the Potomac, or it could be thrown on the sea-coast, south of Norfolk, in Virginia or North Carolina, to operate against Richmond from that direction. In fact Burnside and the War Department both thought the Ninth Corps was intended for such an expedition up to the last moment.

My general plan now was to concentrate all the force possible against the Confederate armies in the field. There were but two such, as we have seen, east of the Mississippi River and facing north. The Army of Northern Virginia, General Robert E. Lee commanding, was on the south bank of the Rapidan, confronting the Army of the Potomac; the second, under General Joseph E. Johnston, was at Dalton, Georgia, opposed to Sherman, who was still at Chattanooga. Besides these main armies the Confederates had to guard the Shenandoah Valley, a great storehouse to feed their armies from, and their line of communications from Richmond to Tennessee. Forrest, a brave and intrepid cavalry general, was in the West, with a large force, making a larger command necessary to hold what we had gained in Middle and West Tennessee. We could not abandon any territory north of the line held by the enemy, because it would lay the Northern States open to invasion. But as the Army of the Potomac was the principal garrison for the protection of Washington, even while it was moving on Lee, so all the forces in the West, and the Army of the James, guarded their special trusts when advancing

from them as well as when remaining at them. Better, indeed, for they forced the enemy to guard his own lines and resources, at a greater distance from ours and with a greater force. Little expeditions could not so well be sent out to destroy a bridge or tear up a few miles of railroad track, burn a storehouse, or inflict other little annoyances. Accordingly I arranged for a simultaneous movement all along the line.

Sherman was to move from Chattanooga, Johnston's army and Atlanta being his objective points. Crook, commanding in West Virginia, was to move from the mouth of the Gauley River with a cavalry force and some artillery, the Virginia and Tennessee railroad to be his objective. Either the enemy would have to keep a larger force to protect their communications or see them destroyed, and a large amount of forage and provisions, which they so much needed, fall into our hands. Sigel was in command in the valley of Virginia. He was to advance up the valley, covering the North from an invasion through that channel as well while advancing as by remaining near Harper's Ferry. Every mile he advanced also gave us possession of stores on which Lee relied. Butler was to advance by the James River, having Richmond and Petersburg as his objective. Before the advance commenced I visited Butler at Fort Monroe. This was the first time I had ever met him. Before giving him any order as to the part he was to play in the approaching campaign I invited his views. They were very much such as I intended to direct, and as I did direct, in writing, before leaving.

General W. F. Smith, who had been promoted to the rank of major-general shortly after the battle of Chattanooga, on my recommendation, had not yet been confirmed. I found a decided prejudice against his confirmation by a majority of the Senate, but I insisted that his services had been such that he should be rewarded. My wishes were now reluctantly complied with, and I assigned him to the command of one of the corps under General Butler. I was not long in finding out that the objections to Smith's promotion were well founded.

In one of my early interviews with the President I expressed my dissatisfaction with the little that had been accomplished by the cavalry so far in the war, and the belief that it was capable of accomplishing much more than it had done if under a thorough leader. I said I wanted the very best man in the army for that command. Halleck was present and spoke up, saying:

"How would Sheridan do?"

I replied: "The very man I want."

The President said I could have anybody I wanted. Sheridan was telegraphed for that day, and on his arrival was assigned to the command of the cavalry corps with the Army of the Potomac. This relieved General Alfred Pleasonton. It was not a reflection on that officer, however, for I did not know but that he had been as efficient as any other cavalry commander.

Banks in the Department of the Gulf was ordered to assemble all the troops he had at New Orleans in time to join in the general move, Mobile to be his objective.

At this time I was not entirely decided as to whether I should move the Army of the Potomac by the right flank of the enemy or by his left. Each plan presented advantages. If by his right — my left — the Potomac, Chesapeake Bay, and tributaries would furnish us an easy line over which to bring all supplies to within easy hauling distance of every position the army could occupy from the Rapidan to the James River. But Lee could, if he chose, detach, or move his whole army north on a line rather interior to the one I should have to take in following. A movement by his left — our right — would obviate this; but all that was done would have to be done with the supplies and ammunition we started with. All idea of adopting this latter plan was abandoned when the limited quantity of supplies possible to take with us was considered. The country over which we should have to pass was so exhausted of all food or forage, that we should be obliged to carry everything with us.

While these preparations were going on the enemy was not entirely idle. In the West, Forrest made a raid in West Tennessee up to the northern border, capturing the garrison of four or five hundred men at Union City, and followed it up by an attack on Paducah, Kentucky, on the banks of the Ohio. While he was able to enter the city, he failed to capture the forts or any part of the garrison. On the first intelligence of Forrest's raid I telegraphed Sherman to send all his cavalry against him, and not to let him get out of the trap he had put himself into. Sherman had anticipated me by sending troops against him before he got my order.

Forrest, however, fell back rapidly, and attacked the troops at Fort Pillow, a station for the protection of the navigation of the Mississippi River. The garrison consisted of a regiment of colored troops, infantry, and a detachment of Tennessee cavalry. These troops fought bravely, but were overpowered. I will leave Forrest in his dispatches to tell what he did with them.

"The river was dyed," he says, "with the

blood of the slaughtered for two hundred yards. The approximate loss was upward of five hundred killed; but few of the officers escaped. My loss was about twenty killed. It is hoped that these facts will demonstrate to the Northern people that negro soldiers cannot cope with Southerners." Subsequently Forrest made a report in which he left out the part which shocks humanity to read.

At the East, also, the rebels were busy. I had said to Halleck that Plymouth and Washington, North Carolina, were unnecessary to hold. It would be better to have the garrisons engaged there added to Butler's command. If success attended our arms both places, and others too, would fall into our hands naturally. These places had been occupied by Federal troops before I took command of the armies, and I knew that the Executive would be reluctant to abandon them, and therefore explained my views; but before my views were carried out, the rebels captured the garrison at Plymouth. I then ordered the abandonment of Washington, but directed the holding of New-Berne at all hazards. This was essential, because New-Berne was a port into which blockade-runners could enter.

General Banks had gone on an expedition up the Red River long before my promotion to general command. I had opposed the movement strenuously, but acquiesced because it was the order of my superior at the time. By direction of Halleck I had reinforced Banks with a corps of about ten thousand men from Sherman's command. This reinforcement was wanted back badly before the forward movement commenced. But Banks had got so far that it seemed best that he should take Shreveport, on the Red River, and turn over the line of that river to Steele, who commanded in Arkansas, to hold instead of the line of the Arkansas. Orders were given accordingly, and with the expectation that the campaign would be ended in time for Banks to return A. J. Smith's command to where it belonged, and get back to New Orleans himself in time to execute his part in the general plan. But the expedition was a failure. Banks did not get back in time to take part in the programme as laid down; nor was Smith returned until long after the movements of May, 1864, had been begun. The services of forty thousand veteran troops over and above the number required to hold all that was necessary in the Department of the Gulf were thus paralyzed. It is but just to Banks, however, to say that his expedition was ordered from Washington, and he was in no way responsible except for the conduct of it. I make no criticism on this point. He opposed the expedition.

By the 27th of April, spring had so far advanced as to justify me in fixing a day for the great move. On that day Burnside left Annapolis to occupy Meade's position between Bull Run and the Rappahannock. Meade was notified and directed to bring his troops forward to his advance; on the following day Butler was notified of my intended advance on the 4th of May, and he was directed to move the night of the same day, and get as far up the James River as possible by daylight, and push on from there to accomplish the task given him. He was also notified that reënforcements were being collected in Washington, which would be forwarded to him should the enemy fall back into the trenches at Richmond. The same day Sherman was directed to get his forces up ready to advance on the 5th. Sigel was in Winchester, and was notified to move in conjunction with the others.

The criticism has been made by writers on the campaign from the Rapidan to the James River that all the loss of life could have been obviated by moving the army there on transports. Richmond was fortified and intrenched so perfectly that one man inside to defend was more than equal to five outside besieging or assaulting. To get possession of Lee's army was the first great object. With the capture of his army Richmond would necessarily follow. It was better to fight him outside of his stronghold than in it. If the Army of the Potomac had been moved bodily to the James River by water, Lee could have moved a part of his forces back to Richmond, called Beauregard from the South to reënforce it, and with the remainder moved on to Washington. Then, too, I ordered a move simultaneous with that of the Army of the Potomac up the James River, by a formidable army already collected at the mouth of the river.

While my headquarters were at Culpeper, from the 26th of March to the 4th of May, I generally visited Washington once a week to confer with the Secretary of War and the President. On the last occasion, a few days before moving, a circumstance occurred which came near postponing my part in the campaign altogether. Colonel John S. Mosby had for a long time been commanding a partisan corps, or regiment, which operated in the rear of the Army of the Potomac. On my return to the field on this occasion, as the train approached Warrenton Junction, a heavy cloud of dust was seen to the east of the road, as if made by a body of cavalry on a charge. Arriving at the junction, the train was stopped and inquiries made as to the cause of the dust. There was but one man at the station, and he informed us that Mosby had crossed a few minutes before at full speed

in pursuit of Federal cavalry. Had he seen our train coming, no doubt he would have let his prisoners escape to capture the train. I was on a special train, if I remember correctly, without any guard. Since the close of the war I have come to know Colonel Mosby personally, and somewhat intimately. He is a different man entirely from what I had supposed. He is slender, not tall, wiry, and looks as if he could endure any amount of physical exercise. He is able, and thoroughly honest and truthful. There were probably but few men in the South who could have commanded successfully a separate detachment, in the rear of an opposing army and so near the border of hostilities, as long as he did without losing his entire command.

On this same visit to Washington I had my last interview with the President before reaching the James River. He had, of course, become acquainted with the fact that a general movement had been ordered all along the line, and seemed to think it a new feature in war. I explained to him that it was necessary to have a great number of troops to guard and to hold the territory we had captured, and to prevent incursions into the Northern States. These troops could perform this service just as well by advancing as by remaining still; and by advancing they would compel the enemy to keep detachments to hold them back or else lay his own territory open to invasion. His answer was: "Oh! yes, I see that. As we say out West, if a man can't skin he must hold a leg while somebody else does."

The following correspondence closed the first chapter of my personal acquaintance with President Lincoln:

"EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, April 30, 1864.

"LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT: Not expecting to see you again before the spring campaign opens, I wish to express in this way my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time, so far as I understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know or seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant; and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any constraints or restraints upon you. While I am very anxious that any great disaster or the capture of our men in great numbers shall be avoided, I know these points are less likely to escape your attention than they would be mine. If there is anything wanting which is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know it. And now with a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you. Yours, very truly,

"A. LINCOLN."

"HEAD-QUARTERS, ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES, CULPEPER COURT HOUSE, VIRGINIA, May 1, 1864.

"THE PRESIDENT: Your very kind letter of yesterday is just received. The confidence you express for the future and satisfaction for the past in my military administration is acknowledged with pride. It shall be my earnest endeavor that you and the country shall not be disappointed. From my first entrance into the volunteer service of the country to the present day, I have never had cause of complaint—have never ex-

pressed or implied a complaint against the Administration or the Secretary of War, for throwing any embarrassment in the way of my vigorously prosecuting what appeared to be my duty. And since the promotion which placed me in command of all the armies, and in view of the great responsibility and the importance of success, I have been astonished at the readiness with which everything asked for has been yielded, without even an explanation being asked. Should my success be less than I desire and expect, the least I can say is, the fault is not with you.

"Very truly, your obedient servant.

"U. S. GRANT, Lieutenant-General."

The armies were now all ready to move for the accomplishment of a single object. They were acting as a unit so far as such a thing was possible over such a vast field. Lee, with the capital of the Confederacy, was the main end to which all were working. Johnston, with Atlanta, was an important obstacle in the way of our accomplishing the result aimed at, and was therefore almost an independent objective. It was of less importance only because the capture of Johnston and his army would not produce so immediate and decisive a result in closing the rebellion as would the possession of Richmond, Lee and his army. All other troops were employed exclusively in support of these two movements. This was the plan; and I will now endeavor to give, as concisely as I can, the method of its execution, outlining first the operations of minor detached but coöperative columns.

As stated before, Banks failed to accomplish what he had been sent to do on the Red River, and eliminated the use of forty thousand veterans whose coöperation in the grand campaign had been expected—ten thousand with Sherman and thirty thousand against Mobile.

Sigel's record is almost equally brief. He moved out, it is true, according to programme; but just when I was hoping to hear of good work being done in the valley, I received instead the following announcement from Halleck: "Sigel is in full retreat on Strasburg. He will do nothing but run; never did anything else." The enemy had intercepted him about New Market and handled him roughly, leaving him short six guns and some nine hundred men out of six thousand.

The plan had been for an advance of Sigel's forces in two columns. Though the one under his immediate command failed ingloriously, the other proved more fortunate. Under Crook and Averell, his western column advanced from the Gauley in West Virginia at the appointed time, and with more happy results. They reached the Virginia and Tennessee railroad at Dublin, and destroyed a depot of supplies besides tearing up several miles of road and burning the bridge over New River. Having accomplished this, they

recrossed the Alleghanies to Meadow Bluffs, and there awaited further orders.

Butler embarked at Fort Monroe with all his command, except the cavalry and some artillery which moved up the south bank of the James River. His steamers moved first up Chesapeake Bay and York River as if threatening the rear of Lee's army. At midnight they turned back, and Butler by daylight was far up the James River. He seized City Point and Bermuda Hundred early in the day, without loss, and no doubt very much to the surprise of the enemy.

This was the accomplishment of the first step contemplated in my instructions to Butler. He was to act from here, looking to Richmond as his objective point. I had given him to understand that I should aim to fight Lee between the Rapidan and Richmond if he would stand; but should Lee fall back into Richmond, I would follow up and make a junction of the armies of the Potomac and the James on the James River. He was directed to secure a footing as far up the south side of the river as he could at as early a date as possible.

Butler was in position by the 6th of May and had begun intrenching, and on the 7th he sent out his cavalry from Suffolk to cut the Weldon railroad. He also sent out detachments to destroy the railroads between Petersburg and Richmond, but no great success attended these latter efforts. He made no great effort to establish himself on that road, and neglected to attack Petersburg, which was almost defenseless. About the 11th he advanced slowly until he reached the works at Drewry's Bluff, about half-way between Bermuda Hundred and Richmond. In the mean time Beauregard had been gathering reënforcements. On the 16th he attacked Butler with great vigor, and with such success as to limit very materially the further usefulness of the Army of the James as a distinct factor in the campaign. I afterwards ordered a portion of it to join the Army of the Potomac, leaving a sufficient force with Butler to man his works, hold securely the footing he had already gained, and maintain a threatening front toward the rear of the Confederate capital.

The position which General Butler had chosen between the two rivers, the James and Appomattox, was one of great natural strength, and where a large area of ground might be thoroughly inclosed by means of a single intrenched line, and that a very short one in comparison with the extent of territory which it thoroughly protected. His right was protected by the James River, his left by the Appomattox, and his rear by their junction—the two streams uniting near by. The bend of the two

streams shortened the line that had been chosen for intrenchment, while it increased the area which the line inclosed.

Previous to ordering any troops from Butler I sent my chief engineer, General Barnard, from the Army of the Potomac to that of the James, to inspect Butler's position and ascertain whether I could again safely make an order for General Butler's movement in co-operation with mine, now that I was getting so near Richmond; or, if I could not, whether his position was strong enough to justify me in withdrawing some of his troops and having them brought round by water to White House to join me, and reënforce the Army of the Potomac. General Barnard reported the position very strong for defensive purposes, and that I could do the latter with great security; but that General Butler could not move from where he was, in coöperation, to produce any effect. He said that the general occupied a place between the James and Appomattox rivers which was of great strength, and where with any inferior force he could hold it for an indefinite length of time against a superior; but that he could do nothing offensively. I then asked him why Butler could not move out from his lines and push across the Richmond and Petersburg railroad to the rear and on the south side of Richmond. He replied that it was impracticable because the enemy had substantially the same line across the neck of land that General Butler had. He then took out his pencil and drew a sketch of the locality, remarking that the position was like a bottle, and that Butler's line of intrenchments across the neck represented the cork; that the enemy had built an equally strong line immediately in front of him across the neck; and it was, therefore, as if Butler was in a bottle. He was perfectly safe against an attack; but, as Barnard expressed it, the enemy had corked the bottle, and with a small force could hold the cork in its place. This struck me as being very expressive of his position, particularly when I saw the hasty sketch which General Barnard had drawn; and in making my subsequent report I used that expression without adding quotation marks, never thinking that anything had been said that would attract attention, as this did, very much to the annoyance, no doubt, of General Butler, and I know very much to my own. I found afterwards that this was mentioned in the notes of General Badeau's book which, when they were shown to me, I asked to have stricken out; yet it was retained there, though against my wishes.

I make this statement here because, although I have often made it before, it has never been in my power until now to place it where it

will correct history; and I desire to rectify all injustice that I may have done to individuals, particularly to officers who were gallantly serving their country during the trying period of the war for the preservation of the Union. General Butler certainly gave his very earnest support to the war; and he gave his own best efforts personally toward the suppression of the rebellion.

The further operations of the Army of the James can best be treated of in connection with those of the Army of the Potomac, the two being so intimately associated and connected as to be substantially one body, in which the individuality of the supporting wing is merged.

I will briefly mention Sheridan's first raid upon Lee's communications which, though an incident of the operations on the main line and not specifically marked out in the original plan, attained in its brilliant execution and results all the proportions of an independent campaign. On the 8th of May, just after the battle of the Wilderness, and when we were moving on Spottsylvania, I directed Sheridan verbally to cut loose from the Army of the Potomac, pass around the left of Lee's army and attack his cavalry; to cut the two roads—one running west through Gordonsville, Charlottesville, and Lynchburg, the other to Richmond; and, when compelled to do so for want of forage and rations, to move on to the James River and draw these from Butler's supplies. This move took him past the entire rear of Lee's army. These orders were also given in writing through Meade.

The object of this move was threefold: 1. If successfully executed—and it was—he would annoy the enemy by cutting his lines of supplies and telegraphic communications, and destroy or get for his own use supplies in store in the rear and coming up; 2. He would draw the enemy's cavalry after him, and thus better protect our flanks, rear and trains, than by remaining with the army; 3. His absence would save the trains drawing his forage, and other supplies from Fredericksburg, which had now become our base. He started at daylight the next morning, and accomplished more than was expected. It was sixteen days before he got back to the Army of the Potomac.

Sheridan in this memorable raid passed entirely around Lee's army; encountered his cavalry in four engagements and defeated them in all; recaptured 400 Union prisoners and killed and captured many of the enemy; destroyed and used many supplies and munitions of war; destroyed miles of railroad and telegraph, and freed us from annoyance by the cavalry for more than two weeks.

I fixed the day for Sherman to start when

Executive Mansion
Washington, April 30. 1864

Lieutenant General Grant.

Not expecting to see you again before the spring campaign opens, I wish to express, in this way, my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time, so far as I understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know, or seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant; and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any constraints or restraints upon you. While I am very anxious that any great disaster, or the capture of our men in great numbers, shall be avoided, I know these points are less likely to escape your attention than they would be mine. If there is anything wanting which is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know it. And now with a brave Army, and a just cause, may God sustain you.

Yours very truly
A. Lincoln.

LINCOLN'S GOD-SPEED TO GRANT. (FAC-SIMILE OF THE ORIGINAL, SLIGHTLY REDUCED IN SCALE.)

[THIS remarkable letter was received by General Grant on the 1st of May, three days before the Wilderness campaign began. He was always careless about his papers, and private or semi-official ones were often thrust into his pockets, where they remained for months. In some such way Mr. Lincoln's beautiful God-speed was mislaid. General Grant had forgotten

its existence, until in 1866 I came across it in my researches for my history of his campaigns. He was so pleased at the discovery, or recovery, that he gave me the original letter at the time. It is my intention eventually to present it either to the Government or to the family of General Grant.

NEW YORK, November 10, 1885.

Adam Badeau.]

the season should be far enough advanced, it was hoped, for the roads to be in a condition for the troops to march. General Sherman at once set himself to work preparing for the task which was assigned him to accomplish in the spring campaign.

The campaign to Atlanta was managed with the most consummate skill, the enemy being flanked out of one position after another all the way there. It is true this was not accomplished without a good deal of fighting,

some of it very hard fighting, rising to the dignity of very important battles; neither were positions gained in a single day. On the contrary, weeks were spent at some; and about Atlanta more than a month was consumed.

Soon after midnight, May 3d-4th, the Army of the Potomac moved out from its position north of the Rapidan, to start upon that memorable campaign destined to result in the capture of the Confederate capital and the army defending it.

U. S. Grant.

AN INCIDENT OF THE WILDERNESS.

At the close of the first day's battle in the Wilderness, I was at General Grant's headquarters in the edge of the pine grove west of the Wilderness tavern. General Meade and his chief of staff, General Humphreys, Grant's staff, and Congressman E. B. Washburne were there.



Suddenly there came a yell from the direction of the Sixth Corps on our right; then quick, rapid volleys. We could see a sudden movement of teams to the rear. An officer rode up, much excited, exclaiming

that the right flank had been turned, that the enemy had massed their whole force to crush Sedgwick, and that Shaler's brigade had been captured. Grant was

sitting with his back to a pine-tree, whittling a stick (as shown in the picture drawn by Mr. C. W. Reed after a little pencil sketch made by him at the time). Grant said nothing, did not rise, and went on quietly with his whittling.

"Shall I order a diversion by the Ninth Corps in support of the Sixth?" asked Meade.

"If you think best," was Grant's reply.

Humphreys wrote the order, which was sent. The firing was increasing.

After several minutes, Grant turned to Washburne and said, "I don't believe that story. Warren has been fighting all day, and since mid-afternoon Hancock has been at it. Lee hasn't had time to mass his forces in front of Sedgwick. We shall hear a different story."

In the course of fifteen or twenty minutes an officer came in, and reported that a large part of Shaler's brigade had been captured, but that the enemy had been repulsed on the right. During the excitement Grant never rose from his seat.

Charles Carleton Coffin.

AN "ONFORTUNIT CREETUR."

MRS. UPCHURCH sat in the entry of her house knitting, while down on the step—a rough block of Georgia granite—Mr. Upchurch sat resting and smoking an after-dinner pipe. It was on a summer afternoon, and the hot glare of the sun made a shade gratefully welcome. The house had only the space of an ordinary yard between it and the public country road, but it was on a breezy hill and commanded a fine view of the surrounding country.

Far away above the green, wooded hills and valleys rose the North Georgia Mountains, veiled in misty blue. Those mountains were the boundary line of Mrs. Upchurch's world. She had never gone to them, she never dreamed of going beyond them. Still they were old friends, immovable, unchangeable, upon which she could look when perplexed, sorrowful, or glad. She worked slowly, and often glanced away toward those distant peaks, a very grave meditative light in her eyes.

She was a woman above medium height, and rather dignified in appearance and manner, with a kind, homely face, yellowed and

hardened by sun and wind, and honest, steadfast eyes. She had on a stout, plain cotton dress, and an old brown veil was drawn around her head and tied under her chin. Summer and winter she wore it, to ward off that greatest enemy of her peace—neuralgia.

"He always was an onfortunit creetur," she said abruptly, and with a sigh.

"Who now, Peggy?" inquired Mr. Upchurch in some surprise.

"Why, Ab," and laying her knitting down on her knee, she smoothed it out thoughtfully.

"That brother o' yourn?"

"Yes; I said he always was an onfortunit creetur."

"Yes, onfortunitly lazy," her husband dryly observed.

"He all but died wi' the measles when he was a sucklin' baby not mor'en three months old, an' then 'long came the whoopin'-cough on the heels er that, an' liked to 'a' tuk him off. Then you remember ther time he was snake-bit on his big toe, an' how the pizen flew all ovr him like lightenin', an' he would er died if we hadn't er happened ter have some dram in the house. Then he tuk cramp once