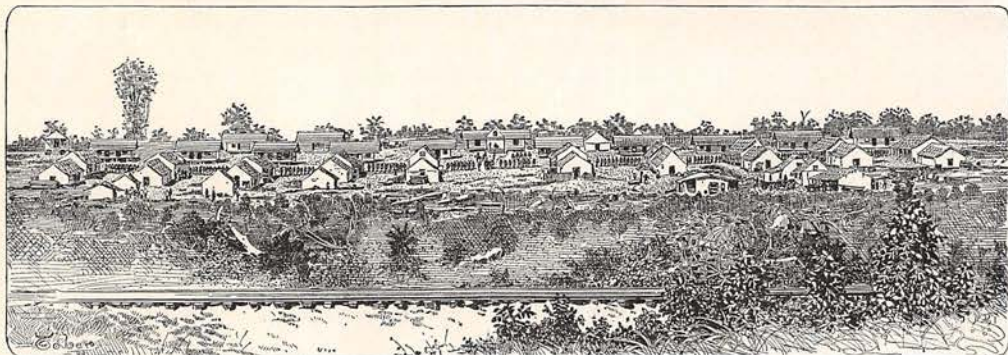


## CORINTH.



CAMP OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH ILLINOIS INFANTRY AT CORINTH.

THE battle of Corinth, Miss., which is often confounded in public memory with our advance under Halleck, from Pittsburg Landing in April and May, 1862, was fought on the 3d and 4th of October, of that year, between the combined forces of Major-Generals Earl Van Dorn and Sterling Price of the Confederacy, and the Union divisions of Brigadier-Generals David S. Stanley, Charles S. Hamilton, Thomas A. Davies, and Thomas J. McKean, under myself as commander of the Third Division of the District of West Tennessee.

In the early days of the summer, McClellan's campaign on the peninsula of the James ended in failure, and was followed by the aggressive movements of Lee, his victory of the Second Bull Run, the invasion of Maryland, and his defeat at Antietam.

While McClellan was advancing on Richmond, General Halleck, moving by steady steps upon Bragg and Beauregard, intrenched at Corinth, Mississippi, saw the latter place evacuated the last of May. Soon after, learning that Bragg with a large portion of his forces, had gone north-easterly through Alabama, intending from Chattanooga to pass northward, through the mountainous regions of Tennessee and Kentucky, and plant the Confederate flag on the banks of the Ohio, General Halleck ordered General D. C. Buell with the "Army of the Ohio" (a part of which was afterwards designated "of the Cumberland") to Middle Tennessee to counteract this movement. Halleck shortly after was called to Washington to discharge the duties of General-in-chief. He left the District of West Tennessee and the territory held in Northern Mississippi under the command of General Grant. In August, by Halleck's orders, General Grant sent Palmer's and Jeff. C. Davis's

divisions across the Tennessee to join Buell, who was moving northerly through Middle Tennessee, to meet Bragg, then rapidly entering Kentucky. These divisions arrived in time to garrison Nashville while Buell followed Bragg into Kentucky.

Many readers of this will remember the almost breathless anxiety with which, in the early days of September, the friends of the Union, after the disaster of the "Second Bull Run," watched the advance of Lee into Maryland, of Bragg into Kentucky, and the hurrying of the Army of the Potomac northward from Washington, to get between Lee and Washington, Baltimore and Philadelphia. Who remembers not the fearful suspense lest McClellan should not be in time to head off Lee; lest Buell should not arrive in time to prevent Bragg from taking Louisville or assaulting Cincinnati? To swell the mighty flood of anxieties which filled the popular heart, the Union forces in West Tennessee and Northern Mississippi were suddenly startled by the movements of General Sterling Price, who, with fifteen thousand to twenty thousand men, during July and August, had been on the Mobile and Ohio railway near Guntown and Baldwin, Miss.

Under the idea that I was to reinforce Buell, General Price moved up to Iuka about the 12th of September, intending to follow me; and as he reported, "Finding that General Rosecrans had not crossed the Tennessee River, concluded to withdraw from Iuka toward my old encampment." His "withdrawal" was after the hot battle of Iuka on the 19th of September, two days after the battle of Antietam which caused Lee's "withdrawal" from Maryland.

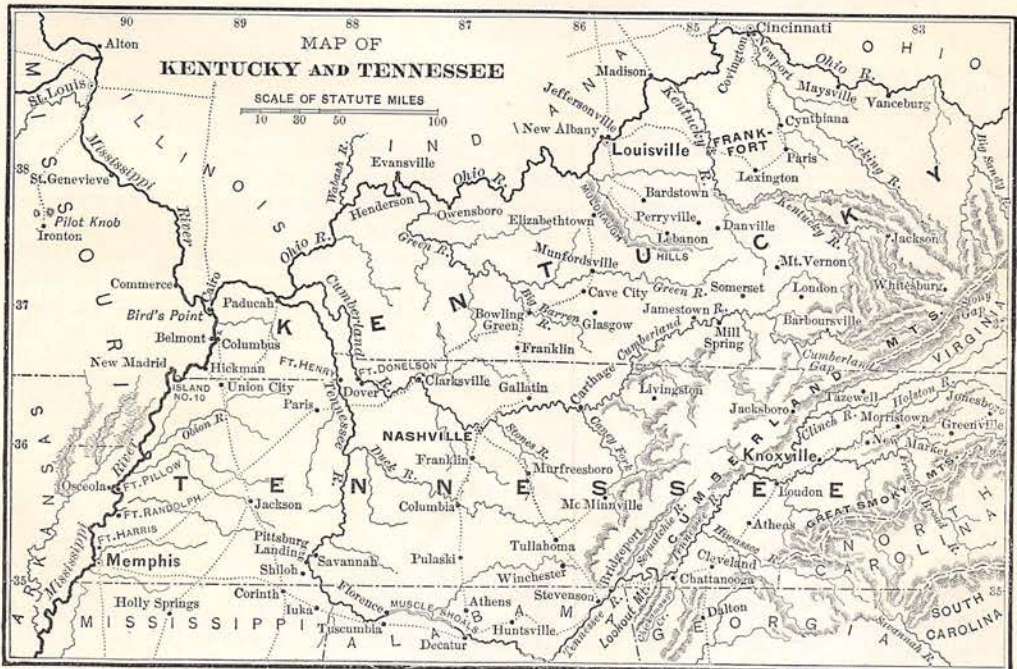
During the month of August General Price

had been conferring with General Van Dorn, commanding all the Confederate troops in Mississippi except Price's, to form a combined movement to expel the Union forces from Northern Mississippi and Western Tennessee, and to plant their flags on the banks of the Lower Ohio, while Bragg was to do the like on that river in Kentucky. General Earl Van Dorn, an able and enterprising commander, after disposing his forces to hold the Mississippi from Grand Gulf up toward Memphis, late in September, with Lovell's division, a little over 8,000 men, came up to Ripley, Mississippi, where, on the 28th of September, he was joined by General Price, with Hébert's and Maury's divisions, numbering 13,863 effective infantry, artillery, and cavalry.

This concentration, following the precipitate "withdrawal" of Price from Iuka, portended mischief to the Union forces in West Tennessee, numbering some forty to fifty thousand effectives, scattered over the district, occupying the vicinity of the Memphis and Charleston railway from Iuka to Memphis, a stretch of about a hundred and fifteen miles, and interior positions on the Ohio and Mississippi from Paducah to Columbus, and at Jackson, Bethel, and other places on the Mississippi Central, and Mobile and Ohio railways.

The military features of West Tennessee and Northern Mississippi will be readily comprehended by the reader who will examine a map of that region and notice: (1) That

the Memphis and Charleston railway runs not far from the dividing line between the States, with a southerly bend from Memphis eastward toward Corinth, whence it extends eastwardly through Iuka, crosses Bear River and follows the Tuscumbia Valley on the south side of that east and west reach of the Tennessee, to Decatur. Thence the road crosses to the north side of this river and unites with the Nashville and Chattanooga road at Stevenson *en route* for Chattanooga. (2) That the Mobile and Ohio railway, from Columbus on the Mississippi, runs considerably east of south, passes through Jackson, Bethel, Corinth, Tupelo, Baldwin, and thence to Mobile. (3) That the Mississippi Central, leaving the Mobile and Ohio at Jackson, runs nearly south, passing by Bolivar, Grand Junction, Holly Springs, Grenada, etc., to Jackson, Mississippi. Now all this region of West Tennessee and the adjoining counties of Mississippi, although here and there dotted with clearings, farms, settlements, and little villages, is heavily wooded. Its surface consists of low, rolling oak ridges of diluvial clays with intervening crooked drainages traversing narrow bushy and sometimes swampy bottoms. The streams are sluggish and not easily fordable, on account of their miry beds and steep, muddy clay banks. Water in dry seasons is never abundant, and in many places only reached by bore-wells of one hundred to three hundred feet in depth, whence it is hoisted by rope and pulley carrying water-buckets of

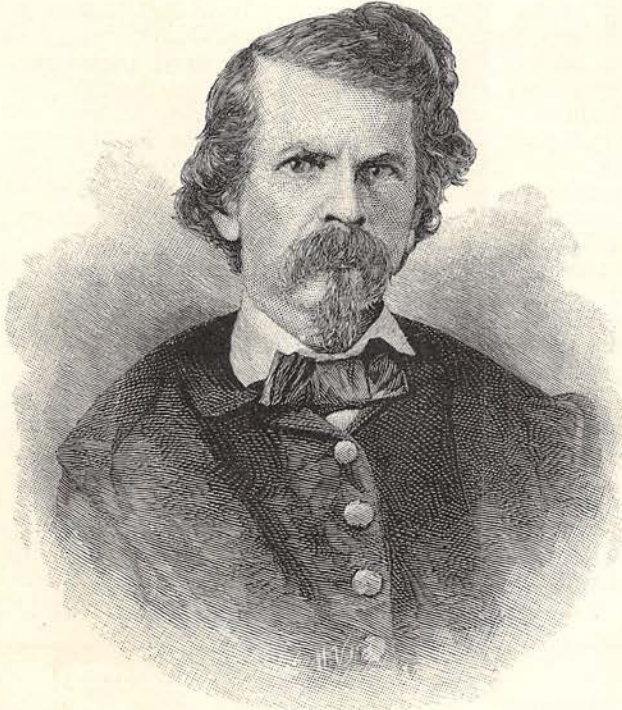


galvanized iron pipes from four to six inches in diameter, and four to five feet long, with valves at the lower end. These matters are of controlling importance in moving and handling troops in that region. Men and animals need hard ground to move on, and must have drinking-water.

The strategic importance of Corinth, ninety-three miles east of Memphis, where the Mo-

round by the north and east to the same railway east. When the Union forces took possession General Halleck ordered a defensive line to be constructed about a mile and a half from the town, extending from the Memphis and Charleston railway on the west around southerly to cover the Union front in that direction. After the departure of General Buell's command toward Chattanooga this

work was continued, although we had no forces adequately to man it, and it was too far away to afford protection to our stores at Corinth. During August I used to go over from Camp Clear Creek to General Grant's headquarters, and after the usual greetings would ask: "How are you getting along with the line?" He would say: "Well, pretty slowly, but they are doing good work." I said to him: "General, the line isn't worth much to us, because it is too long. We cannot occupy it." He answered, "What would you do?" I said, "I would have made the depots outside of the town north of the Memphis and Charleston road between the town and the brick church, and inclosed them by field works, running tracks in. Now, as the depot houses are at the cross-roads, the best thing we can do is to run a line of light works round in the neighborhood of the college up on the knoll." So, one day, after dining with General Grant, he proposed that we go up together and take

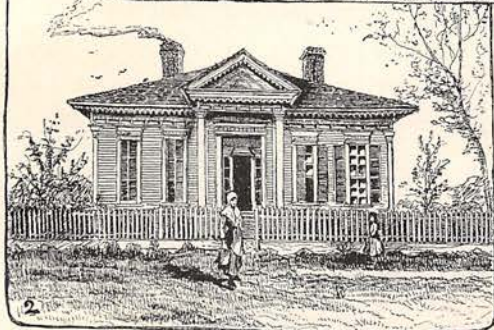
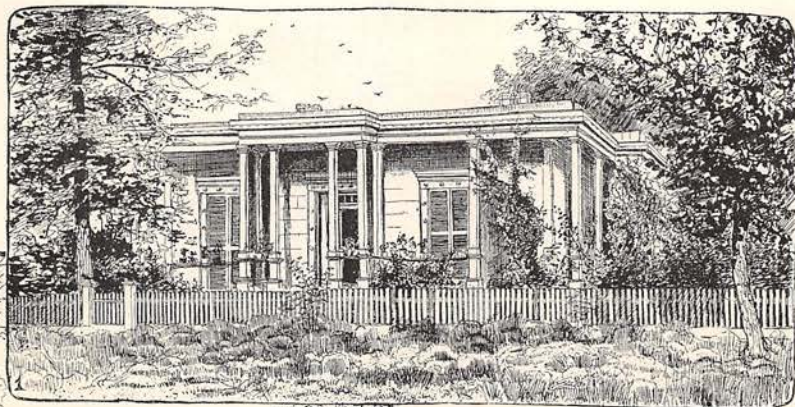


MAJOR-GENERAL EARL VAN DORN, C. S. A. (PHOTOGRAPH BY EARLE & SON.)

bile and Ohio crosses the Memphis and Charleston, results from its control of movements either way over these railways, and the fact that it is not far from Hamburg, Eastport, and Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River, to which good freight steamers can ascend at the lowest stages of water. Corinth is mainly on low, flat ground, along the Mobile and Ohio railway, and flanked by low, rolling ridges, covered, except the cleared patches, with oaks and undergrowth for miles in all directions. With few and rare clearings, outside of those made by the Confederate troops in obtaining fuel during their wintering in 1861-2, the country around Corinth, in all directions, was densely wooded.

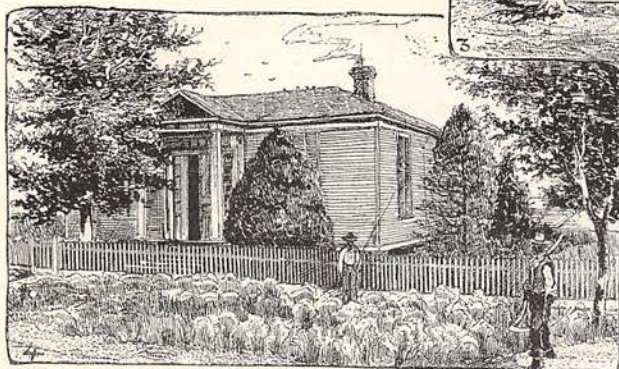
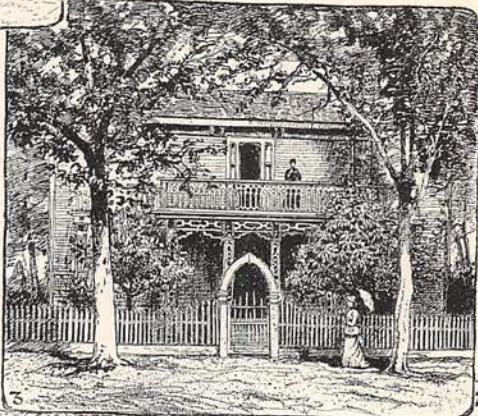
While General Halleck was advancing on Corinth, the Confederates had extended a line of defensive light works from the Memphis and Charleston road on the west, about two and a half miles from the town, all the way

Colonel Prime with us, and he gave orders to commence a line of breastworks that would include the college grounds. This was before the battle of Iuka. After Iuka I was ordered to command the district, and General Grant moved his headquarters to Jackson. Pursuant to this order, on the 26th of September, I repaired to Corinth, where I found the only defensive works available, consisted of the open batteries Robinett, Williams, Phillips, Tannrath, and Lothrop, established by Colonel Prime on the college hill line. I immediately ordered them to be connected by breastworks, and the front to the west and north to be covered by such an *abattis* as the remaining timber on the ground could furnish. I employed colored engineer troops organized into squads of twenty-five each, headed by a man detailed from the line or quartermaster's department, and commanded by Captain Gaw, a competent engineer. I also ordered



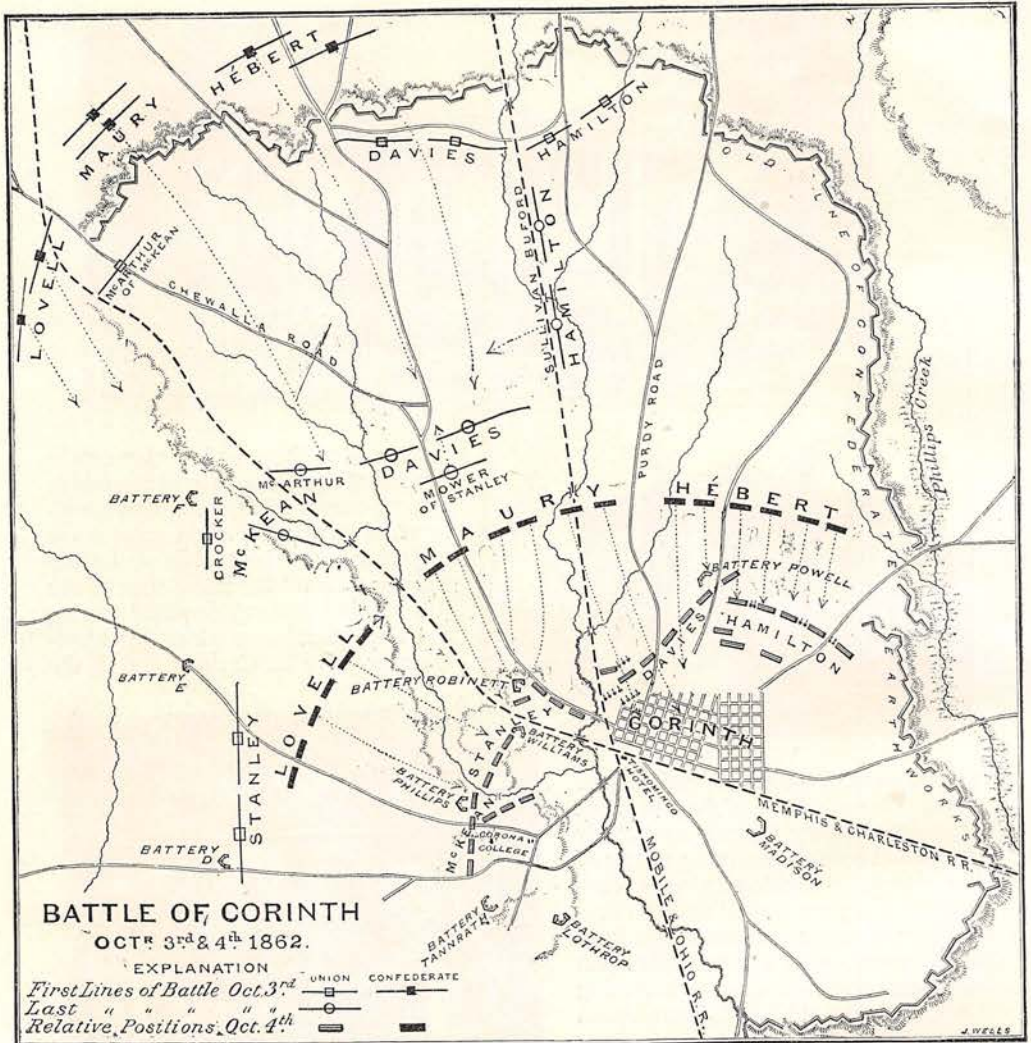
To add to these embarrassments in preparing the place to resist a sudden attack, Grant, the general commanding, had retired fifty-eight miles north to Jackson, on the Mobile and Ohio railway, with all the knowledge of the surrounding country acquired during the four months in which his headquarters were at Corinth, and I, the

an extension of the line of redoubts to cover the north front of the town, one of which, Battery Powell, was nearly completed before the stirring events of the attack. No rifle-pits were constructed between Powell and the central part covering the north-west front of the town which was perfectly open north-east and south-east, with nothing but the distant old Confederate works between it and the country.



CORINTH DWELLINGS.

1. Bragg's Headquarters, afterwards Halleck's, later Hood's.—  
2. Beauregard's Headquarters.—3. Grant's Headquarters.—4.  
Rosecrans's Headquarters.—5. Where Albert Sidney Johnston's  
body lay in state after the battle of Shiloh.



new commander, could not find even the vestige of a map of the surrounding country to guide me in these defensive preparations.

During the 27th, 28th, 29th, and 30th of September, the breastworks were completed joining the lunettes from College Hill on the left. A thin *abattis* made from the scattering trees, which had been left standing along the west and north fronts, covered the line between Robinett and the Mobile and Ohio; thence to Battery Powell the line was mostly open and without rifle-pits.

To meet emergencies Hamilton's and Stanley's divisions, which had been watching to the south and south-west from near Jacinto to Rienzi, were closed in toward Corinth to within short call.

On the 28th I telegraphed General Grant at Columbus, Kentucky, confirmation of my

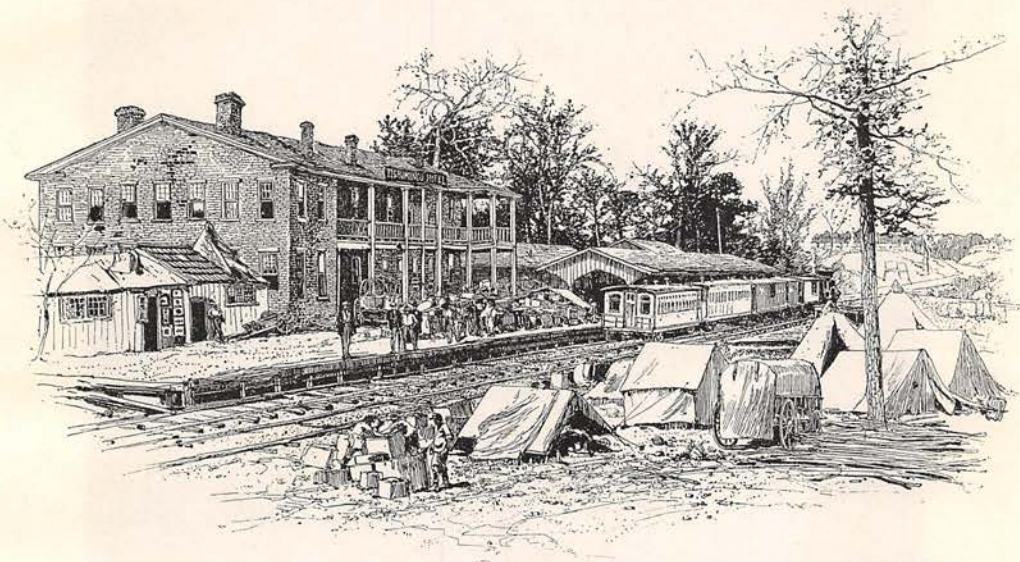
report of Price's movement to Ripley, and that I should move Stanley's division to Rienzi, and thence to Kossuth, unless he had other views. Two days later I again telegraphed General Grant that there were no signs of the enemy at Hatchie Crossing, and that my reason for proposing to put Stanley at or near Kossuth was that he would cover nearly all the Hatchie crossing, as far as Pocahontas, except against heavy forces, and that Hamilton would then move at least one brigade from Rienzi. I asked that a sharp lookout be kept in the direction of Bolivar. October 1st, I telegraphed General Grant we were satisfied there was no enemy for three miles beyond Hatchie; also that prisoners reported Breckinridge had gone to Kentucky with three Kentucky regiments, leaving his division under the command

of General Rust. The combined forces under Van Dorn and Price were reported to be encamped on the Pocahontas road, and to number forty thousand. [In fact about 22,000.]

Amid the numberless rumors and uncertainties besetting me at Corinth during the five days between the 26th, when I assumed command, and the 1st of October, how gratifying would have been knowledge of the fol-

"The troops were in fine spirits, and the whole army of West Tennessee seemed eager to emulate the armies of the Potomac and of Kentucky. No army ever marched to battle with prouder steps, more hopeful countenances, or with more courage than marched the Army of West Tennessee out of Ripley, on the morning of September 29, on its way to Corinth."

But of all this I knew nothing. With only McKean's and Davies's divisions, not ten



DEPOT AND TISHOMINGO HOTEL. (FROM A WAR-TIME PHOTOGRAPH.)

lowing facts, taken from General Van Dorn's report, dated Holly Springs, October 20, 1862:

"Surveying the whole field of operations before me, . . . the conclusion forced itself irresistibly upon my mind that the taking of Corinth was a condition precedent to the accomplishment of anything of importance in West Tennessee. To take Memphis would be to destroy an immense amount of property without any adequate military advantage, even admitting that it could be held without heavy guns against the enemy's gun and mortar boats. The line of fortifications around Bolivar is intersected by the Hatchie River, rendering it impossible to take the place by quick assault. . . . It was clear to my mind that if a successful attack could be made upon Corinth from the west and north-west, the forces there driven back on the Tennessee and cut off, Bolivar and Jackson would easily fall, and then, upon the arrival of the exchanged prisoners of war, West Tennessee would soon be in our possession, and communications with General Bragg effected through Middle Tennessee. . . .

"I determined to attempt Corinth. I had a reasonable hope of success. Field returns at Ripley showed my strength to be about twenty-two thousand men. Rosecrans at Corinth had about fifteen thousand, with about eight thousand additional men at outposts, from twelve to fifteen miles distant. I might surprise him and carry the place before these troops could be brought in. . . . It was necessary that this blow should be sudden and decisive. . . .

thousand men, at Corinth on the 26th of September, by the 1st of October I had gradually drawn in pretty closely Stanley's and Hamilton's divisions. They had been kept watching to the south and south-west of Corinth.

Our forces when concentrated would make about sixteen thousand effective infantry and artillery for defense, with twenty-five hundred cavalry for outposts and reconnoitering.

On October 2d, while Van Dorn was at Pocahontas, General Hurlbut telegraphed the information, from an intelligent Union man of Grand Junction, that "Price, Van Dorn, and Villepigue were at Pocahontas, and the talk was that they would attack Bolivar." Evidence thick and fast arriving, showed that the enemy was moving, but whether on Corinth, Bolivar, or passing between they would strike and capture Jackson, was not yet clear to any of us. I knew that the enemy intended a strong movement, and I thought they must have the impression that our defensive works at Corinth would be pretty formidable. I doubted if they would venture to bring their force against our command behind defensive



MAJOR-GENERAL STERLING PRICE, C. S. A. (FR M A PHOTOGRAPH BY COOK.)

works. I therefore said, The enemy may threaten us, and strike across our line entirely, get on the road between us and Jackson and advance upon that place, the capture of which would compel us to get out of our lines; or he may come in by the road from Tupelo so as to interpose his force between us and Danville. But all the time I inclined to the belief that it would not be for his interest to do that. I thought that perhaps he would cross the Memphis and Charleston road and, going over to the Mobile and Ohio road, force us to move out and fight him in the open country.

October 2d, I sent out a cavalry detachment to reconnoiter in the direction of Pocahontas. They found the enemy's infantry coming close in, and that night some of our

detachment were surprised. Some of their horses were captured, and a few of the men. The escaped reported to me that the enemy was there in force. This was still consistent with the theory that the enemy wished to cross the Memphis and Charleston road, go north of us, strike the Mobile and Ohio road and manœuvre us out of our position.

To be prepared for whatever they might do I sent Oliver's brigade of McKean's division out to Chewalla, ten miles north-west. On the morning of the 3d the enemy's advance came to Chewalla and Oliver's brigade fell back fighting. I sent out orders to the brigade commander to make a stiff resistance, and, to see what effect it would have, still thinking that the attack was likely to be a mask for

their movement for the north, I ordered Stanley to move in close toward town near the center line of works called the "Halleck line" and to wait for further developments.

An order dated 1:30 A. M. October 3d, had set all the troops in motion. The impression that the enemy *might* find it better to strike a weaker point on our line and compel us to get out of our works to fight him, or if he should attempt Corinth that he would do it if possible by the north and east, where the immediate vicinage was open and the place without defenses of any kind, governed these preliminary dispositions of my troops. The controlling idea was to prevent surprise, to test by adequate resistance any attacking force, and finding it formidable, to receive it behind that inner line which had been preparing from College Hill round by Robinett.

To meet all probable contingencies, nine o'clock on the morning of the 3d found my troops disposed as follows: Hamilton's division, about three thousand seven hundred strong, on the Purdy Road north of the town, to meet any attempt from the north; Davies's division, three thousand two hundred and four strong, between the Memphis and Charleston and Mobile and Ohio railways, north-west of the town; McKean's division, five thousand three hundred and fifteen strong, to the left of Davies's and in rear of the old Halleck line of batteries; and Stanley's division, three thousand five hundred strong, mainly in reserve on the extreme left, looking toward the Kossuth road.

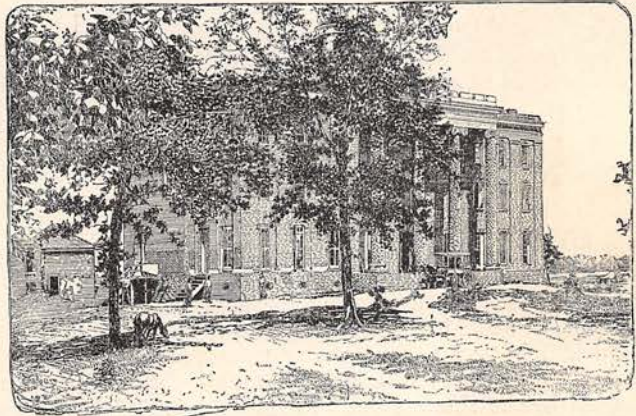
Thus in front of those wooded western approaches, the Union troops on the morning of October 3d waited for what might happen, wholly ignorant of what Van Dorn was doing at Chewalla, ten miles away through thick forests. Of this General Van Dorn says:

"At daybreak on the 3d, the march was resumed. . . Lovell's division, in front, kept the road on the south side of the Memphis and Charleston railroad. Price, after marching on the same road about five miles, turned to the left, crossing the railroad, and formed line of battle in front of the outer line of intrenchments and about three miles from Corinth."

These were the old Confederate works, which I had no idea of using except as a cover for a heavy skirmish line, to compel the enemy to develop his force, and to show whether he was making a demonstration to cover a movement of his force round to the north of Corinth. This work was well and gallantly accomplished by Davies's division during

the morning, aided by McArthur with his brigade, and by Crocker, who moved up toward what the Confederate commander deemed the main stand of the Union forces for the defense of Corinth, and upon which they moved, with three brigades of Lovell's division,—Villepigue's, Bowen's, and Rust's,—in line with reserves in rear of each; Jackson's cavalry on the right *en échelon*, the left flank on the Charleston railroad. Price's corps of two divisions was on the left of Lovell.

Thus the Confederate general proceeded, until "at ten o'clock the Union skirmishers were driven into these old intrenchments," and a part of the opposing forces were in line



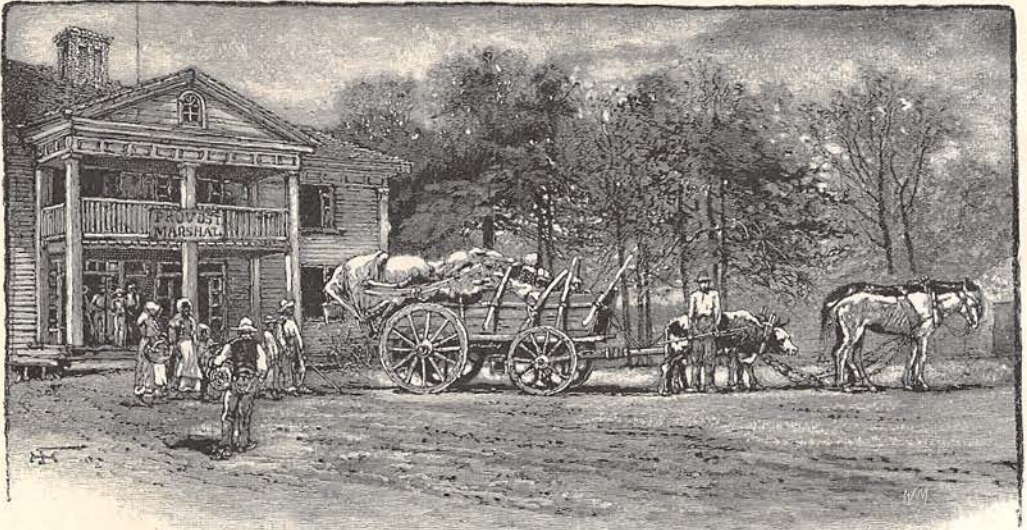
CORONA COLLEGE, CORINTH.

of battle confronting each other. There was a belt of fallen timber about four hundred yards wide between them, which must be crossed by the Confederate forces before they could drive this stubborn testing force of Davies's, sent by me to compel the enemy to show his hand. Van Dorn describes the movement: "The attack was commenced on the right by Lovell's division and gradually extended to the left, and by 1:30 P. M. the whole line of outer works was carried, several pieces [two] of artillery being taken."

Finding the resistance made by Oliver's little command on the Chewalla road early in the morning, was not stiff enough to demonstrate the enemy's object, I had ordered McArthur's brigade from McKean's division to go to Oliver's assistance. It was done with a will. McArthur's Scotch blood got up, and the enemy being in fighting force, he fought him with the stubborn ferocity of an action on the main line of battle, instead of the resistance of a developing force.

The same remark applies to the fighting of Davies's division, and as they were pushed and called for reinforcements, orders were sent to fall back slowly and stubbornly. The





PROVOST MARSHAL'S OFFICE, CORINTH. (FROM A WAR-TIME PHOTOGRAPH.)

Confederates, elated at securing these old outworks, pushed in toward our main line, in front of which the fighting in the afternoon was so hot that McKean was ordered to send further help over to the fighting troops, and Stanley to send "a brigade through the woods by the shortest cut" to help Davies, whose division covered itself with glory, having Brigadier-General Hackleman killed, Brigadier-General Oglesby desperately wounded, with nearly twenty-five per cent. of its strength put out of the fight. Watching with intense interest every event of the movement which would throw light on the enemy's intentions, soon after mid-day I decided that it was a main attack of the enemy. Hamilton's division had been sent up the railroad as far as the old Confederate works in the morning, and formed the right of our line. At one o'clock his division was still there, watching against attack from the north. When the enemy prepared to make the attack on our first real line of battle, word was sent up to Hamilton to advise us if any Confederate force had gotten through, on the Mobile and Ohio road. At three o'clock when the fighting began and became very heavy, Stanley was ordered to move up from his position and succor McKean's and Davies's divisions, that had been doing heavy fighting. When the enemy had displaced those two divisions, Colonel Ducat, acting chief of staff, was sent with an order to General Hamilton to file by fours to the left, and march down until the head of his column was opposite the right of Davies's. He was ordered then to

face his brigades to the west-south-west, and to move down in a south-westerly direction. The enemy's left did not much overpass our right, and but few of his troops were on the line of the old Confederate works. Hamilton's movement, the brigades advancing in échelon, would enable the right of Buford's brigade, which far out-lapped the enemy's left, to pass towards the enemy's rear with little or no opposition, while the other brigade could press back the enemy's left, and by its simple advance would drive them in, and attack their rear.

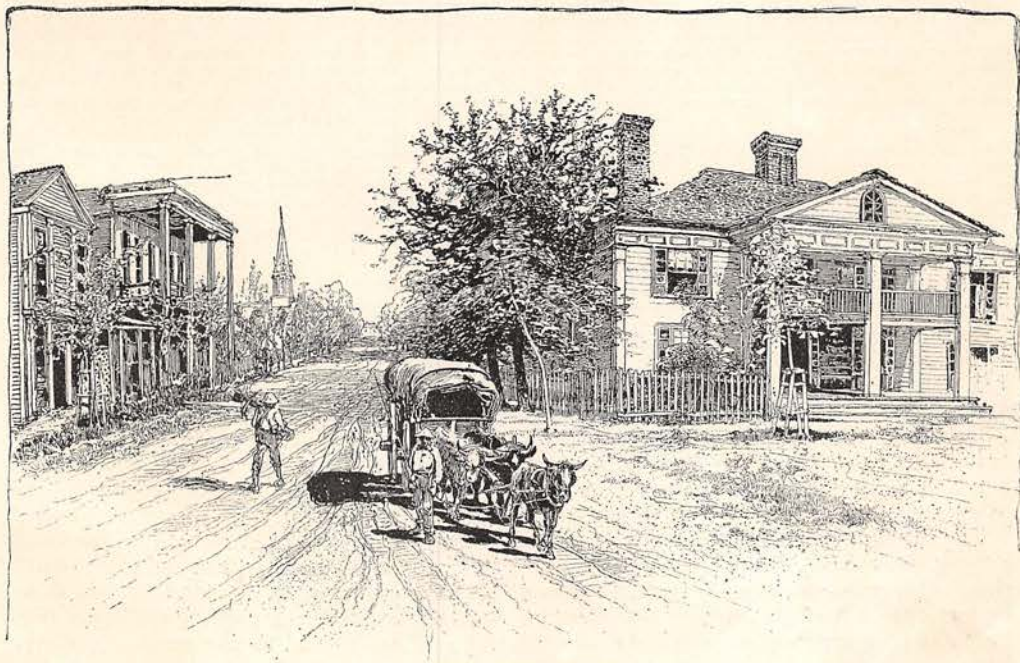
Hamilton told Colonel Ducat that he wanted a more positive and definite order before he made the attack. Ducat explained the condition of the battle and urged an immediate movement, but was obliged to return to me for an order fitted to the situation. While Ducat was returning he was fired on by the enemy's skirmishers who had reached open ground over the railway between Hamilton and Corinth. Two orderlies sent on the same errand afterwards were killed on the way. I sent Colonel Ducat back with further explanations of the most explicit kind, and a little sketch to show what was to be done. Upon the receipt of these Hamilton put his division in motion, and by sunset had reached a point opposite the enemy's left, and after moving down a short distance Sullivan's brigade facing to the west, crossed the narrow flats flanking the railway, and went over into the thickets where they had a fierce fight with the enemy's left and created great commotion. Buford's brigade had started in too far to the west and

had to rectify its position; so that the only effect produced by Hamilton's division was to bring a terrific scare on the enemy and a sharp fight with one brigade. Had the movement been executed promptly after three o'clock, we should have crushed the enemy's right and rear. Hamilton's excuse that he could not understand the order shows that even in the rush of battle it may be necessary to put orders in writing, or to have subordinate commanders who instinctively know or are anxious to seek the key of the battle and hasten to its roar.

At nightfall of the 3d it was evident that, unless the enemy should withdraw, he was where I wished him to be—between the two railroad lines and to the south of them—for the inevitable contest of the morrow. Van Dorn says:

"I had been in hopes that one day's operations would end the contest and decide who should be the victors on this bloody field. But a ten miles' march over a parched country on dusty roads without water, getting into line of battle in forests with undergrowth, and the more than equal activity and determined courage displayed by the enemy, commanded by one of the ablest generals of the United States army, who threw all possible obstacles in our way that an active mind could suggest, prolonged the battle until I saw with regret the sun sink behind the horizon as the last shot of our sharpshooters followed the retreating foe into their innermost lines. One hour more of daylight and victory would have soothed our grief for the loss of the gallant dead who sleep on that lost but not dishonored field. The army slept on its arms within six hundred yards of Corinth, victorious so far."

Alas, how uncertain are our best conclusions! General Van Dorn, in his subsequent report as above, bewails the lack of one hour of daylight at the close of October 3, 1862. I bewailed that lack of daylight, which would have brought Hamilton's fresh and gallant division on the Confederate left and rear. That hour of daylight was not to be had; and while the regretful Confederate general lay down in his bivouac, I assembled my four division commanders, McKean, Davies, Stanley, and Hamilton, at my headquarters and arranged the dispositions for the fight of the next day. McKean's division was to hold the left, the chief point being College Hill, keeping his troops well under cover. Stanley was to support the line near the middle of which was Battery Robinett, a little three-gun redan with a ditch five feet deep. Davies was to extend from Stanley's right north-easterly across the flat to Battery Powell, a similar redan on the ridge east of the Purdy road. Hamilton was to be on Davies's right with a brigade, and the rest in reserve on the common east of the low ridge and out of sight from the west. As the troops had been on the move since the night of October 2d, and fighting all day the third, which was so excessively hot that we were obliged to send water around in wagons, it became my duty to visit their lines and see that the weary troops were surely in position. This I did and returned to my tent at three o'clock in the



FILLMORE STREET, CORINTH.



CONFEDERATE ASSAULT ON BATTERY ROBINETT.

Captain George A. Williams, who commanded the siege artillery, says in his report:

"About 9.30 or 10 A. M. the enemy were observed in the woods north of the town forming in line, and they soon made their appearance, charging toward the town. As soon as our troops were out of the line of fire of my battery, we opened upon them with two 30-pounder Parrott guns and one 8-inch howitzer, which enfiladed their line (aided by Maurice's battery and one gun on the right of Battery Robinett, which bore on that part of the town), and continued our fire until the enemy were repulsed and had regained the woods.

"During the time the enemy were being repulsed from the town, my attention was drawn to the left side of the battery by the firing from Battery Robinett, where I saw a column advancing to storm it. After advancing a short distance they were repulsed, but immediately re-formed, and, storming the work, gained the ditch, but were repulsed. During this charge, eight of the enemy, having placed a handkerchief on a bayonet and

calling to the men in the battery not to shoot them, surrendered, and were allowed to come into the fort.

"They then re-formed, and, re-storming, carried the ditch and the outside of the work, the supports having fallen a short distance to the rear in slight disorder. The men of the First U. S. Infantry, after having been driven from their guns (they manned the siege guns), resorted to their muskets, and were firing from the inside of the embrasures at the enemy on the outside, a distance of about ten feet intervening; but the rebels having gained the top of the work, our men fell back into the angle of the fort, as they had been directed to do, in such an emergency. Two shells were thrown from Battery Williams into Battery Robinett, one bursting on the top of it and the other near the right edge. In the mean while the Eleventh Missouri Volunteers (in reserve) changed front, and, aided by the Forty-third and Sixty-third Ohio Volunteers, with the Twenty-seventh Ohio Volunteers on their right, gallantly stormed up to the right and left of the battery, driving the enemy before them."

morning after having seen everything accomplished and the new line in order. It was about a mile in extent and close to the edge of the north side of the town. By the time I laid down it was four o'clock. At half-past four the enemy opened with a six-gun battery. I had no time for breakfast. The troops got very little. They had not been allowed to build fires during the night, and were too tired to intrench.

The morning opened clear and grew to be hot; it must have been 94 degrees in the shade. Our people soon replied to the enemy's battery, which then quit firing. I visited the lines and gave orders to our skirmishers to fall back the moment it was seen that the enemy

was developing a line of battle. About eight o'clock his left crossed the Mobile and Ohio railroad and got into position behind a spur of table land to reach which they had moved by the flank for about half a mile. When they began to advance in line of battle they were not over three hundred yards distant.

I told McKean on the left to be very watchful of his front lest the enemy should get in on his left, and directed General Stanley to hold the reserve of his command ready to help either north of the town or aid McKean if required. I visited Battery Robinett and directed the chief of artillery, Colonel Lothrop, to see to the reserve artillery, some batteries of which were parked in the

public square of the town. I then visited the line of Davies's division in nearly open ground, with a few logs, here and there, for breast-works, while on his extreme right Sweeny's brigade had no cover save a slight ridge, on the south-west slope of which, near the crest, the men were lying down. Riding along this line, I observed the Confederate forces emerging from the woods west of the railroad and crossing the open ground toward the Purdy road. Our troops lying on the ground could see the flags of the enemy and the glint of the sunlight on their bayonets. It was about nine o'clock in the morning. The air was still and hot. The sun shone fiercely down. General Van Dorn says in substance:

The Confederate preparations for the morning were that Hébert on the left should mask part of his division, Cabell's brigade *en échelon* on the left, it having been detached from Maury's division for that purpose; Armstrong's cavalry brigade to be across the Mobile and Ohio road, and if possible to get some of his artillery in position across the road, swing his left flank, and follow down the Purdy Ridge. On the right Lovell, with two brigades in line of battle and one in reserve, with Jackson's cavalry to the right, was ordered to await the attack on his left, feeling his way with sharpshooters until Hébert was heavily engaged with the enemy. Maury was to move at the same time quickly to the front directly at Corinth; Jackson to burn the railroad bridge over the Tuscumbia during the night.

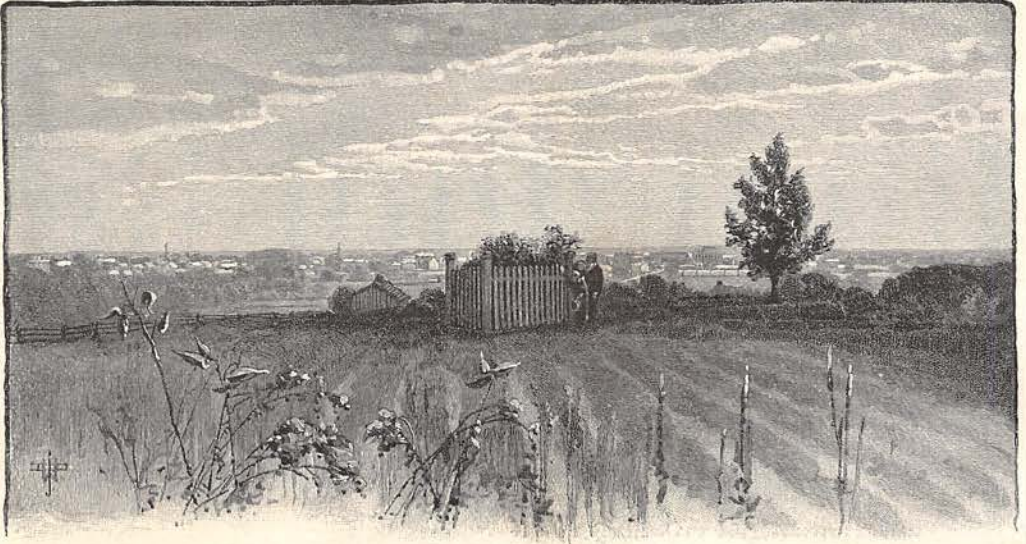
General Van Dorn's attack on the left was to have been earlier, but for the accident of Hébert's sickness, which prevented. The Confederates, from behind a spur of the Purdy

Ridge, advanced splendidly to the attack. The unfavorable line occupied by Davies's division made the resistance on that front inadequate. The troops gave way; the enemy pursued; but the firing from the batteries on the Union side crossing from our right soon thinned their ranks. Their front line was broken, and the heads of their columns melted away. Some of the enemy's scattered line made their way into the edge of the town; a few got into the reserve artillery, which led to the impression that they had captured forty pieces of artillery; but they were soon driven out by Stanley's reserve, and fled, taking nothing away. By one o'clock the enemy had returned across the railway into the edge of woods whence they had come.

While going to order Hamilton's division into action on the enemy's left, I saw the L-shaped porch of a large cottage packed full of Confederates. I ordered Lieutenant Immell, whom Loomis had sent with two field-pieces, to give them grape and canister. After one round, only the dead and dying were left on the porch. On reaching Hamilton's division I ordered him to send Sullivan's brigade forward. It moved in line of battle in open ground a little to the left of Battery Powell. Before its splendid advance the scattered enemy, which had withdrawn, was endeavoring to form a line of battle, but on the appearance of these new troops gave way and went back into the woods, from which they never again advanced.



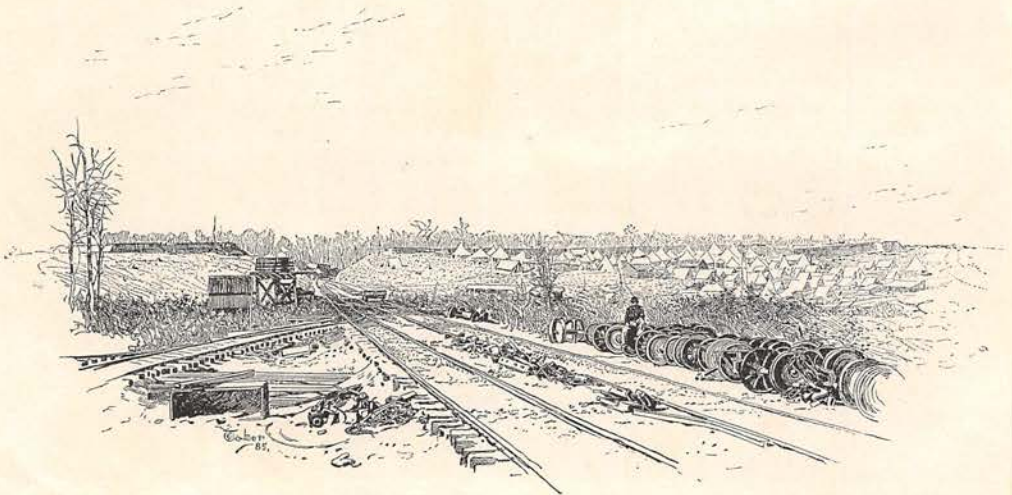
MEMPHIS AND CHARLESTON RAILROAD, LOOKING TOWARDS CORINTH.—REMAINS OF FORT WILLIAMS ON THE RIGHT. (FROM A RECENT PHOTOGRAPH.)



GRAVE OF COLONEL WILLIAM F. ROGERS, LOOKING TOWARDS CORINTH FROM THE EMBANKMENT OF FORT ROBINETT.

Meanwhile there had been terrific fighting at Battery Robinett. The roar of artillery and musketry for two or three hours was incessant. Clouds of smoke filled the air and obscured the sun. I witnessed the first charge of the enemy there before I went over to Hamilton. The first repulse I did not see because the contestants were clouded in smoke. It was an assault in column. There were three or four assaulting columns of regiments, probably a hundred yards apart. The enemy's left hand column had tried to make its way down into the low ground to the right of Robinett, but

did not make much progress. The other two assaulting columns fared better because they were on the ridge where the fallen timber was scarcer. I ordered the Twenty-seventh Ohio and Eleventh Missouri to kneel in rear of the right of Robinett, so as to get out of range of the enemy's fire, and the moment he had exhausted himself to charge with the bayonet. The third assault was made just as I was seeing Sullivan into the fight. I saw them come upon the ridge and Battery Robinett belching its fire at them. After the charge had failed I saw the Twenty-seventh Ohio



FORT WILLIAMS.—(FROM A WAR-TIME PHOTOGRAPH; LOOKING NORTH-WEST FROM THE DEPOT.)—FORT ROBINETT.

and the Eleventh Missouri chasing them with bayonets.

The head of the enemy's main column reached within a few feet of Battery Robinett, and Colonel Rogers, who was leading it, colors in hand, dismounted, planted a flag-staff on the bank of the ditch, and fell there, shot by one of our drummer-boys, who, with a pistol, was helping to defend Robinett. I was told he was the fifth standard-bearer who had fallen in that last desperate charge. It was about as good fighting on the part of the Confederates as I ever saw. The columns were plowed through and through by our shot, but steadily closed up and moved solidly till forced back.

Just after this last assault, for the first time I heard the word "ranch." Passing over the field on our left, among the dead and dying, I saw leaning against the root of a tree a wounded lieutenant of an Arkansas regiment who had been shot through the foot. I offered him some water. He said, "I thank you, General; one of your men just gave me some water." I said, "Whose troops are you?" He replied, "Cabell's." I said, "It was pretty hot fighting here." He answered, "Yes, General, you licked us good, *but we gave you the best we had in the ranch.*"

Before the enemy's first assault on Robinett, I inspected the woods towards our left where I knew Lovell's division to be. I said to Colonel Mower, afterwards commander of the Seventeenth Army Corps, and familiarly known as "Fighting Joe Mower": "Colonel, take the men now on the skirmish line, and find out what Lovell is doing." He replied, "Very well, General." As he was turning away I added, "Feel them but don't get into their fingers." He answered significantly: "*I'll feel them!*" Before I left my position Mower had entered the woods, and soon I heard a tremendous blast of musketry in that direction. His skirmishers fell back into the fallen timber and the adjutant reported to me. "General, I think the enemy have got Colonel Mower; I think he is killed." Five hours later when we captured the enemy's field hospitals, we found that Colonel Mower had been shot in the back of the neck and taken prisoner. Expressing my joy at his safety, he showed that he knew he had been unjustly reported to me the day before to be intoxicated, by saying: "Yes, General, but if they had reported me for being 'shot in the neck,' to-day instead of yesterday, it would have been correct."

About two o'clock we found that the enemy did not intend to make another attack. Falling sick from exhaustion I sought the shade of a tree, from which point I saw three

bursts of smoke and said to my staff, "They have blown up some ammunition wagons, and are going to retreat. We must push them." I was all the more certain of this, because, having failed, a good commander like Van Dorn would use the utmost dispatch in putting the woods and forests between him and his

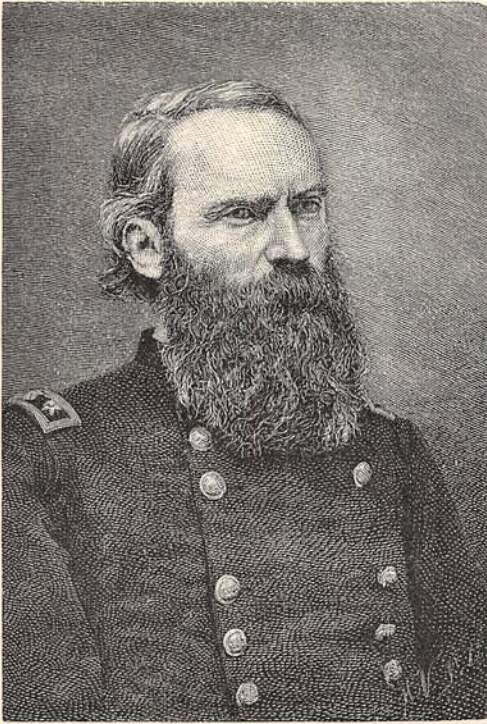


COLONEL WILLIAM P. ROGERS, C. S. A.,  
KILLED IN LEADING THE ASSAULT UPON FORT ROBINETT.  
(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.)

pursuing foe, as well as to escape the dangers to him which might arise from troops coming from Bolivar.

Even at this distant time memory lingers on the numerous incidents of distinguished bravery displayed by officers and men who fought splendidly on the first day, when we did not know what the enemy was going to do. Staff as well as line officers distinguished themselves while in action. The first day my presence was required on the main line, and the fighting in front of that did not so much come under my eye, but the second day I was everywhere on the line of battle. Temple Clark of my staff was shot through the breast. My sabretache strap was cut by a bullet, and my gloves were stained with the blood of a staff officer wounded at my side. An alarm spread that I was killed, but was soon stopped by my appearance on the field.

Satisfied that the enemy was retreating, I ordered Sullivan's command to push the enemy with a heavy skirmish line, and to keep



MAJOR-GENERAL DAVID S. STANLEY. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY BRADY.)

constantly feeling them. I rode along the lines of the commands, told them that, having been moving and fighting for three days and two nights, I knew they required rest, but that they could not rest longer than was absolutely necessary. I directed them to proceed to their camps, provide five days' rations, take some needed rest, and be ready early next morning for the pursuit.

So ended the battle of Corinth.

General McPherson, sent from Jackson with five good regiments to help us, arrived and bivouacked in the public square a little before sunset. I intended to make the pursuit immediate and vigorous, but the darkness of the night and the roughness of the country, covered with woods and thickets, made any movement by night impracticable and by day slow and difficult. General McPherson's brigade of fresh troops with a battery was ordered to start at daylight and follow the enemy over the Chewalla road; Stanley's and Davies's divisions to support him.

McArthur, with all of McKean's division except Crocker's brigade, and with a good battery and a battalion of cavalry, took the route south of the railroad toward Pocahontas; McKean followed on this route with the rest of his division and Ingersoll's cavalry; Hamilton followed McKean with his entire force.

The enemy took the road to Davis's Bridge on the Hatchie, by way of Pocahontas. Fortunately General Hurlbut, finding that he was not going to be attacked at Bolivar, had been looking in our direction with a view of succoring us and met the enemy at that point. General Ord arriving there from Jackson, assumed command and drove back the head of the enemy's column. This was a critical time for the Confederate forces; but the reader will note that a retreating force, knowing where it has to go and having to look for nothing except an attack on its rear, always moves with more freedom than a pursuing force. This is especially so where the country is covered with woods and thickets, and the roads narrow. Advancing forces always have to feel their way for fear of being ambushed.

The speed made by our forces, from Corinth, during the 5th, was not to my liking, but with such a commander as McPherson in the advance, I could not doubt that it was all that was possible. On the 6th better progress was made. From Jonesborough, on October 7th, I telegraphed General Grant:

"Do not, I entreat you, call Hurlbut back; let him send away his wounded. It surely is easier to move the sick and wounded than to remove both. I propose to push the enemy, so that we need but the most trifling guards behind us. Our advance is beyond Ruckersville. Hamilton will seize the Hatchie crossing on the Ripley road to-night. A very intelligent, honest young Irishman, an ambulance driver, deserted from the rebels, says that they wished to go together to railroad near Tupelo, where they will meet the nine thousand exchanged prisoners, but he says they are much scattered and demoralized. They have much artillery."

From the same place, at midnight, after learning from the front that McPherson was in Ripley, I telegraphed General Grant as follows:

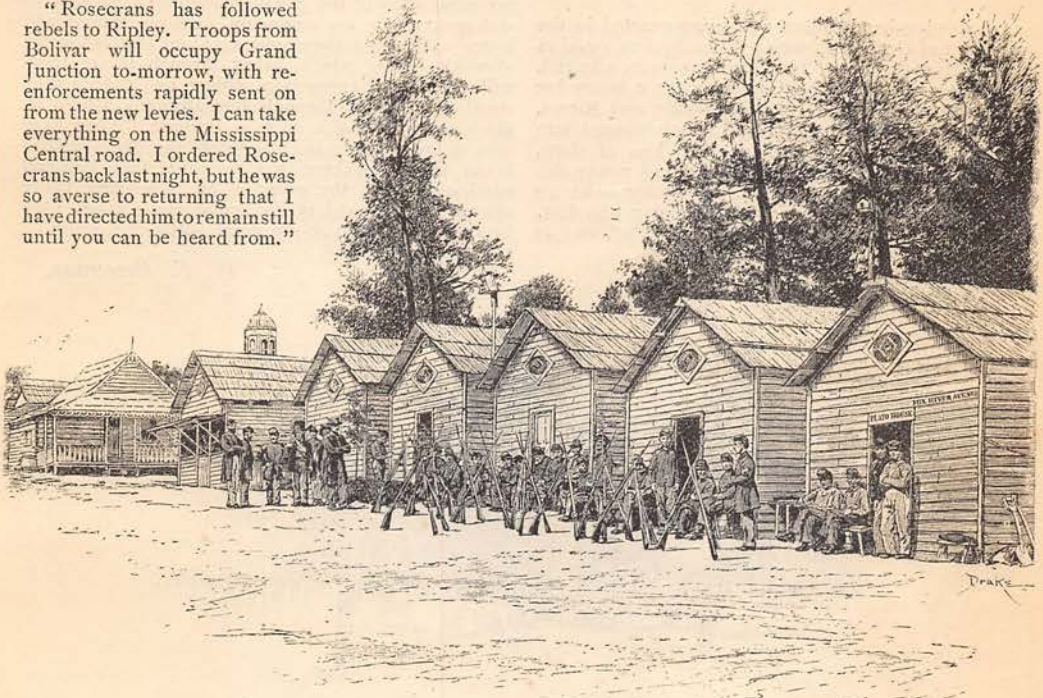
"GENERAL: Yours 8:30 P. M. received. Our troops occupy Ripley. I most deeply dissent from your views as to the manner of pursuing. We have defeated, routed, and demoralized the army which holds the Lower Mississippi Valley. We have the two railroads leading down toward the Gulf through the most productive parts of the State, into which we can now pursue them with safety. The effect of our return to old position will be to pen them up in the only corn country they have west of Alabama, including the Tuscumbia Valley, and to permit them to recruit their forces, advance and occupy their old ground, reducing us to the occupation of a defensive position, barren and worthless, with a long front, over which they can harass us until bad weather prevents an effectual advance except on the railroads, when time, fortifications, and rolling stock will again render them superior to us. Our force, including what you have with Hurlbut, will garrison Corinth and Jackson, and enable us to push them. Our advance will cover even Holly Springs, which would be ours when we want it. All that is needful is to continue pursuing and whip them. We have whipped, and should now push them to the wall and capture all the rolling stock of their railroads. Bragg's army alone, west of the Alabama

River, and occupying Mobile, could repair the damage we have it in our power to do them. If, after considering these matters, you still consider the order for my return to Corinth expedient, I will obey it and abandon the chief fruits of a victory, but I beseech you, bend everything to push them while they are broken and hungry, weary and ill-supplied. Draw everything possible from Memphis to help move on Holly Springs, and let us concentrate. Appeal to the governors of the States to rush down some twenty or thirty new regiments to hold our rear, and we can make a triumph of our start."

As it was, General Grant telegraphed to General Halleck at 9 A. M. the next day, October 8th:

"Rosecrans has followed rebels to Ripley. Troops from Bolivar will occupy Grand Junction to-morrow, with reinforcements rapidly sent on from the new levies. I can take everything on the Mississippi Central road. I ordered Rosecrans back last night, but he was so averse to returning that I have directed him to remain still until you can be heard from."

ment was to go on, and with the help suggested we could have done so. The enemy were retreating under the pressure of a victorious force and experiencing all the weakening effects of such an army whose means of supplies and munitions are always difficult to keep in order. We had Sherman at Memphis with two divisions, and we had Hurlbut at Bolivar with one division, and John A. Logan at Jackson with six regiments. With these there was nothing to save Mississippi from our grasp. We were about six days' march from Vicksburg,



UNION SOLDIERS IN THE OLD CONFEDERATE QUARTERS AT CORINTH. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.)

Again on the same day, October 8th, General Grant telegraphed to General Halleck:

"Before telegraphing you this morning for reinforcements to follow up our victories I ordered General Rosecrans to return. He showed such reluctance that I consented to allow him to remain until you could be heard from if further reinforcements could be had. On reflection I deem it idle to pursue further without more preparation, and have for the third time ordered his return."

This was early in October. The weather was cool, and the roads in prime order. The country along the Mississippi Central to Grenada, and especially below that place, was a corn country — a rich farming country and the corn ripe. If Grant had not stopped us, we could have gone to Vicksburg. My judg-

and Grant could have put his force through to it with my column as the center one of pursuit. Confederate officers told me afterwards that they never were so scared in their lives as they were after the defeat before Corinth.

We have thus given the facts of the fight at Corinth, the immediate pursuit, the causes of the return, and as well the differing views of the Federal commanders in regard to the situation. Let the judgments of the future be formed upon the words of impartial history.

In a general order announcing the results of the battle to my command I stated that we killed and buried 1423 officers and men of the enemy, including some of their most distinguished officers. Their wounded at the usual rate would exceed 5000. We took 2268 pris-



oners, among whom were 137 field-officers, captains, and subalterns. [The official Confederate reports make their loss 505 killed, 2150 wounded, 2183 missing — EDITOR.] We captured 3300 stand of small arms, fourteen stand of colors, two pieces of artillery, and a large quantity of equipments. We pursued his retreating column forty miles with all arms, and with cavalry sixty miles, and were ready to follow him to Vicksburg, had we received the orders.

Our loss was 355 killed, 1841 wounded, 324 captured or missing.

In closing his report Van Dorn said :

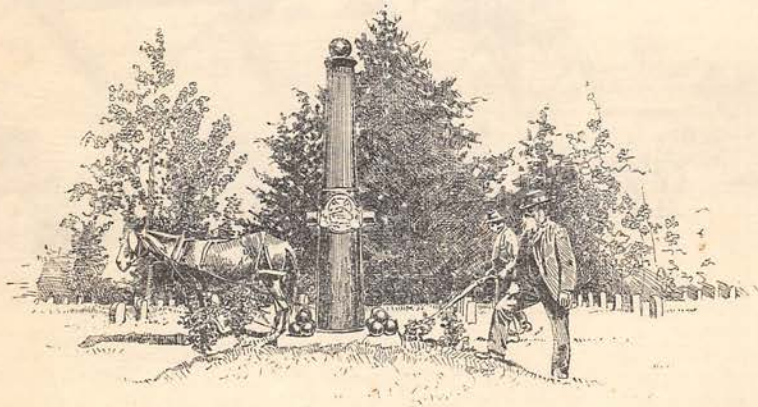
“A hand-to-hand contest was being enacted in the very yard of General Rosecrans’s headquarters and in the streets of the town. The heavy guns were silenced, and all seemed to be about ended when a heavy fire from fresh troops from Iuka, Burnsville, and Rienzi, who had succeeded in reaching Corinth, poured into our thinned ranks. Exhausted from loss of sleep, wearied from hard marching and fighting, companies and regiments without officers, our troops — let no one censure them — gave way. The day was lost. . . . The attempt at Corinth has failed, and in

consequence I am condemned and have been superseded in my command. In my zeal for my country I may have ventured too far without adequate means, and I bow to the opinion of the people whom I serve. Yet I feel that if the spirits of the gallant dead, who now lie beneath the batteries of Corinth, see and judge the motives of men, they do not rebuke me, for there is no sting in my conscience, nor does retrospection admonish me of error or of a reckless disregard of their valued lives.”

And General Price says in his report :

“The history of this war contains no bloodier page, perhaps, than that which will record this fiercely contested battle. The strongest expressions fall short of my admiration of the gallant conduct of the officers and men under my command. Words cannot add luster to the fame they have acquired through deeds of noble daring which, living through future time, will shed about every man, officer, and soldier who stood to his arms through this struggle, a halo of glory as imperishable as it is brilliant. They have won to their sisters and daughters the distinguished honor, set before them by a general of their love and admiration upon the event of an impending battle upon the same field, of the proud exclamation, ‘My brother, father, was at the great battle of Corinth.’”

*W. S. Rosecrans.*



MONUMENT IN THE NATIONAL CEMETERY, CORINTH.

## MEMORANDA ON THE CIVIL WAR.

### A Rumor from Shiloh.

“ENDURIN’ of the war” it was not safe in Kentucky for Southern sympathizers to rejoice over Southern successes. A certain old “secesh” from the hills of Tate’s Creek in Madison County had been frequently admonished by Judge Turner of Richmond, Kentucky, that if he was not more cautious he would land in Camp Chase or some other Northern prison. One day the Judge observed his old friend glancing anxiously into his office as he passed and repressed the door. Calling him in, the Judge asked him what was the matter. “Well,” said the old man, “Jedge, if you’ll lock yer door I’ll tell you.” After assuring himself that there were no listeners he proceeded :

“Jedge,— I hearn as the Rebils an’ the Yankees has had a master fight. As I hearn it, the Rebils and the

Yankees they met away down on the Mass-is-sippi River, an’ they fit three days in and three days out, an’ the een uv the third day cum John C. Brackenridge, Kentucky’s noble son, an’ axed fur the priverlige uv the fiel’ fur fifteen minits, an’ — Jedge — they *do* say he slew er hunderd thousand uv’m.”

X.

### When Stonewall Jackson Turned our Right.

ON the afternoon of May 2d there was an ominous calm at Chancellorsville. The cavalry with Pleasanton had been five days in the saddle, scouting or skirmishing all the time. We were now therefore enjoying a welcome rest in an open field near General Hooker’s headquarters. We had dismounted, and had slacked our saddle-girths. Some of the men were sleeping



MAJOR-GENERAL W. S. ROSECRANS. (FROM A WAR-TIME PHOTOGRAPH BY BOGARDUS.)