

that Burnside's move might have been made stronger by throwing two of his grand divisions across at the mouth of Deep Run, where Franklin crossed with his grand division and six brigades of Hooker's. Had he thus placed Hooker and Sumner, his sturdiest fighters, and made resolute assault with them in his attack on our right, he would in all probability have given us trouble. The partial success he had at that point might have been pushed vigorously by such a force and might have thrown our right entirely from position, in which event the result would have depended on the skillful handling of the forces. Franklin's grand division could have made sufficient sacrifice at Marye's Hill and come as near success as did Sumner's and two-thirds of Hooker's, combined. I think, however, that the success would have been on our side, and it might have been followed by greater disaster on the side of the Federals; still they would have had the chance of a possible success in their favor, while in the battle as fought it can hardly be claimed that there was a chance.

Burnside made a mistake from the first. He should have gone from Warrenton to Chester

Gap. He might then have held Jackson and fought me, or have held me and fought Jackson, thus taking us in detail. The doubt about the matter was whether or not he could have caught me in that trap before we could concentrate. At any rate, that was the only move on the board that could have benefited him at the time he was assigned to the command of the Army of the Potomac. By interposing between the corps of Lee's army, he would have secured strong ground and advantage of position. With skill equal to the occasion, he should have had success. This was the move about which we felt serious apprehension, and were occupying our minds with plans to meet it, when the move towards Fredericksburg was reported.

General McClellan, in an account recently published, speaks of this move as that upon which he was studying when the order for Burnside's assignment to command reached him.

When Burnside determined to move by Fredericksburg, he should have moved rapidly and occupied the city at once, but this would only have forced us back to the plan preferred by General Jackson.

James Longstreet.

SUMNER'S "RIGHT GRAND DIVISION."*



ON the evening of October 15th, 1862, which was a few days after McClellan had placed me in command of the Second Corps, at Harper's Ferry, the commanding general sent an order for Hancock to take his division the next morning on a reconnaissance toward Charlestown, about ten

miles distant. The division started in good season, as directed. About ten in the morning, General McClellan reined up at my headquarters and asked me to go out with him to see what the troops were doing. Our people had met the enemy's outpost five miles from the Ferry, and while artillery shots were being exchanged, both of us dismounted, walked away by our-

* It is due to General Couch to state that with limited time in which to prepare this paper, he dictated it to a

stenographer in answer to questions by us bearing chiefly on his personal recollections.—EDITOR.

selves, and took seats on a ledge of rocks. After a little while, McClellan sent to an aide for a map of Virginia. Spreading it before us, he pointed to the strategic features of the valley of the Shenandoah, and indicated the movements he intended to make, which would have the effect of compelling Lee to concentrate in the vicinity, I think, of Gordonsville or Charlottesville, where a great battle would be fought. Continuing the conversation, he said, "But I may not have command of the army much longer. Lincoln is down on me," and, taking a paper from his pocket, he gave me my first intimation of Lincoln's famous letter.* He read it aloud very carefully, and when it was finished I told him I thought there was no ill-feeling in the tone of it. He thought there was, and quickly added, "Yes, Couch, I expect to be relieved from the Army of the Potomac, and to have a command in

the West; and I am going to take three or four with me," calling off by their names four prominent officers. I queried if so and so would be taken along, naming one who was generally thought to be a great favorite with McClellan. His curt reply was, "No, I sha'n't have him."

This brief conversation opened a new world to me. I had never before been to any extent his confidant, and I pondered whether on a change of the commanders of the Army of the Potomac the War Department would allow him to choose the generals whose names had been mentioned. I wondered what would be the future of himself and those who followed his fortunes in that untried field. These and a crowd of other kindred thoughts quite oppressed me for several days. But as the time wore on, and preparations for the invasion of Virginia were allowed to be continued without let or hindrance from Washington, I naturally and gladly inferred that McClellan's fears of hostile working against him were groundless. However, the blow came, and soon enough.

* The letter is dated October 13, 1862, and begins: "My Dear Sir:—You remember my speaking to you of what I called your over-cautiousness. Are you not over-cautious when you assume that you cannot do what the enemy is constantly doing? Should you not claim to be at least his equal in prowess, and act upon the claim?" Further on the President says: "Change positions with the enemy, and think you not he would break your communication with Richmond within the next twenty-four hours? You dread his going into Pennsylvania; but if he does so in full force, he gives up his communication to you absolutely, and you have

Toward evening, on the 8th of November, 1862, at Warrenton, McClellan rode up to Burnside's headquarters to say that he had been relieved of the command of the army. Burnside replied:

"I am afraid it is bad policy; very, very, very!"

It was just at dark. I had dismounted, and, standing there in the snow, was superin-



THE PHILLIPS HOUSE, BURNSIDE'S HEADQUARTERS.
(FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN WHILE THE HOUSE WAS BURNING.)

tending the camp arrangements of my troops, when McClellan came up with his staff, accompanied by General Burnside. McClellan drew in his horse, and the first thing he said was:

"Couch, I am relieved from the command of the army, and Burnside is my successor."

I stepped up to him and took hold of his hand, and said, "General McClellan, I am sorry for it." Then, going around the head of his horse to Burnside, I said, "General Burnside, I congratulate you."

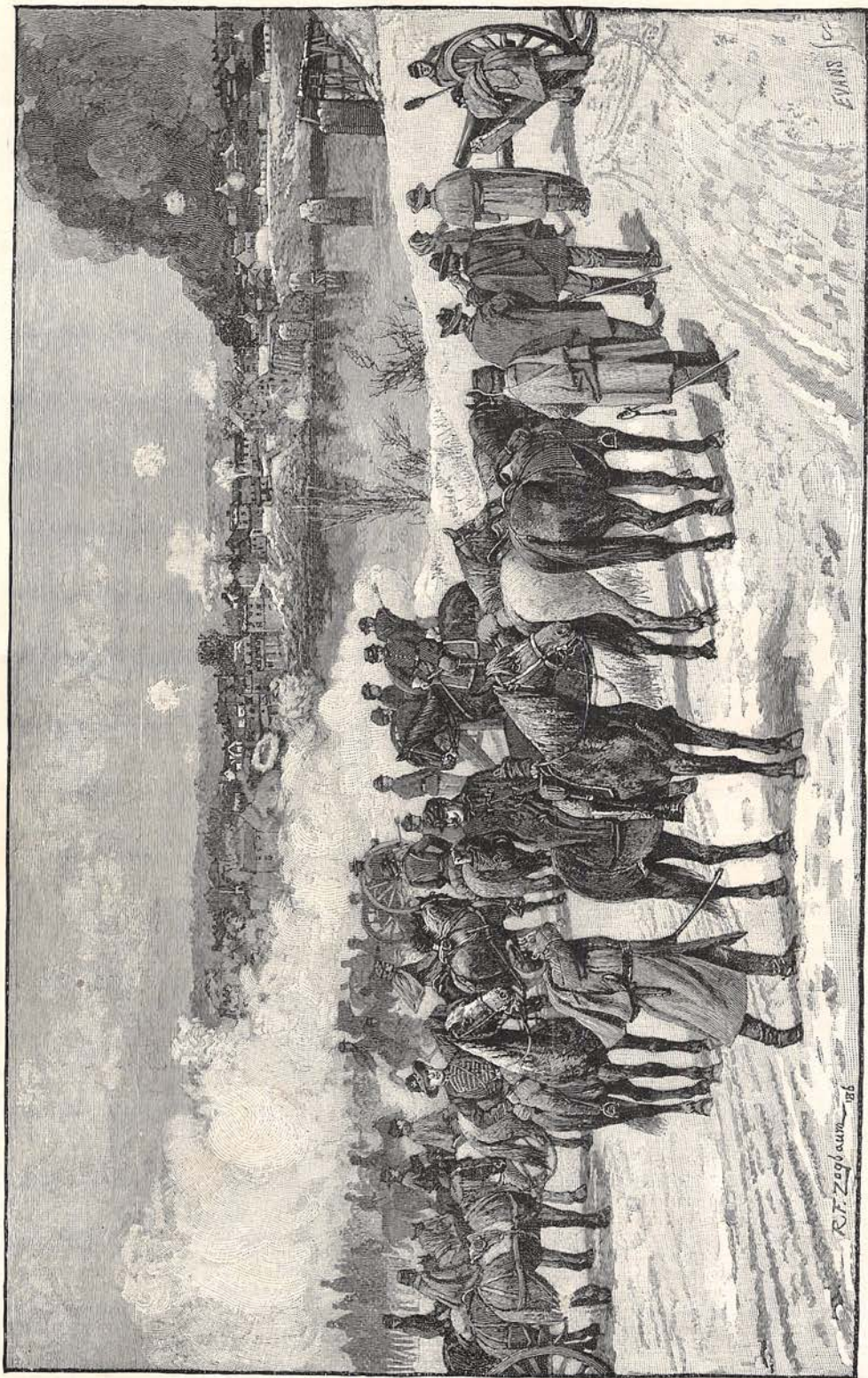
Burnside heard what I said to General McClellan; he turned away his head, and made a broad gesture as he exclaimed:

"Couch, don't say a word about it."

His manner indicated that he did not wish to talk about the change; that he thought it wasn't good policy to do so, nor the place to do it. He told me afterwards that he did not like to take the command, but that he did so to keep it from going to somebody manifestly unfit for it. I assumed that he meant Hooker. Those of us who were well acquainted with

nothing to do but to follow and ruin him. . . . Exclusive of the water-line, you are now nearer Richmond than the enemy is, by the route that you *can* and he *must* take." And in conclusion: "It is all easy if our troops march as well as the enemy, and it is unmanly to say they cannot do it. This letter is in no sense an order. Yours truly, A. LINCOLN."

In his "Life of Lincoln," Isaac N. Arnold makes President Lincoln say: "With all his failings as a soldier, McClellan is a pleasant and scholarly gentleman. He is an admirable engineer, but he seems to have a special talent for a *stationary engine*."—EDITOR.



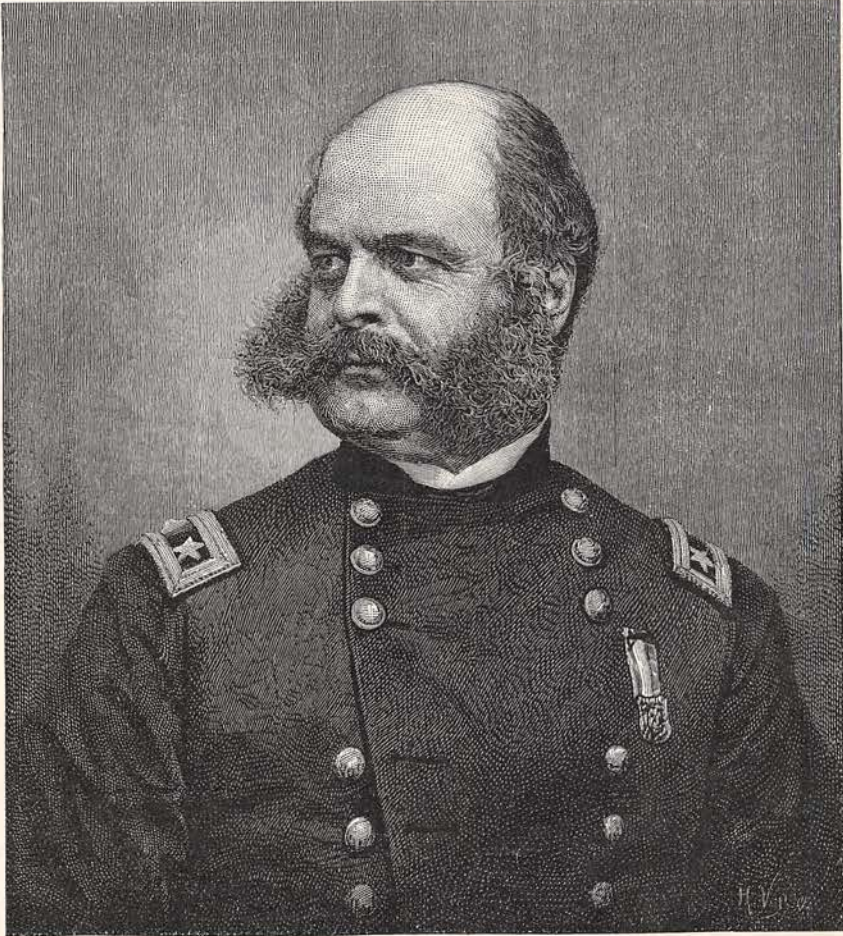
THE BOMBARDMENT OF FREDERICKSBURG, DECEMBER 11TH, 1862.

Burnside knew that he was a brave, loyal man, but we did not think he had the military ability to command the Army of the Potomac.

McClellan took leave on the 10th. Fitz John Porter sent notes to the corps commanders, informing them that McClellan was going away,

necessarily cut up; and if a general has the confidence of his men he is pretty strong. But officers and men were determined to serve Burnside loyally.

A day or two afterwards Burnside called the corps commanders together, and mapped out a



Ambrose Burnside

and suggesting that we ride around with him. Such a scene as that leave-taking had never been known in our army. Men shed tears and there was great excitement among the troops.

I think the soldiers had an idea that McClellan would take care of them; wouldn't put them in places where they would be un-

course that he intended to pursue; and, among other things, he said that he intended to double the army corps, and he proposed to call the three new commands—or doubles—"grand divisions." I thought it would be better to make them *grand* by their acts. Under this arrangement my corps, the Second, and Willcox's, the Ninth, which had been Burnside's,



CROSSING THE RIVER IN PONTOONS TO DISLodge THE SHARP-SHOOTERS OPPOSING THE LAYING OF THE UPPER BRIDGES.

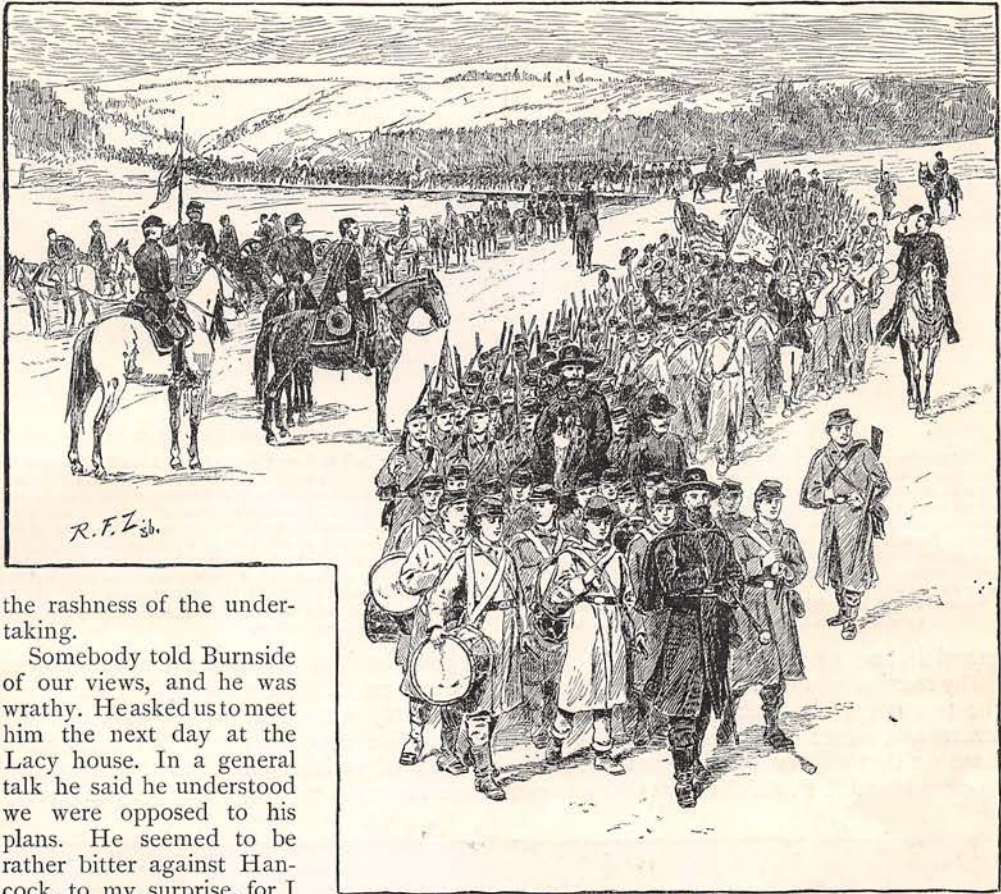
formed the
Right Grand
Division under
General Sumner.

When Sumner and I arrived near Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg, we found the enemy ready to oppose us. Everybody knew that Lee would rush right in; we could see it. If the pontoons had been there, we might have crossed at once. Yet we lay there nearly a month, while they were fortifying before our eyes; besides, the weather was against us. Under date of December 7th, my diary contains this entry: "Very cold; plenty of snow. Men suffering; cold outdoors, ice indoors in my room."

Sumner's headquarters were at the Lacy house, while the Second Corps lay back of the brow of the hill to the rear of Falmouth.

On the night of the 9th, two nights before the crossing, Sumner called a council to discuss what we were to do. There was a free talk with his two corps commanders and, I believe, with all his division and brigade commanders. There was a general talk about the propriety of crossing there. It drifted into that, though I think General Sumner did not wish it. I suppose he intended to give us General Burnside's plans; but the talk drifted into universal opposition to crossing the river under the enemy's batteries.

Sumner seemed to feel badly that the officers did not agree to Burnside's mode of advance. That noble old hero was so faithful and loyal that he wanted, against impossibilities, to carry out everything Burnside suggested. I should doubt if his judgment concurred. It was only chivalrous attachment to Burnside, or to any commander. But there were not two opinions among the subordinate officers as to



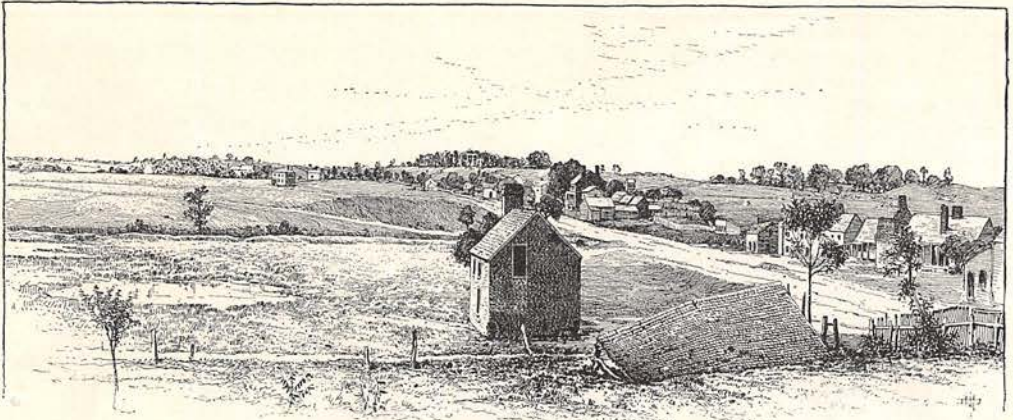
THE NINTH CORPS CROSSING BY THE PONTOON BRIDGE TO THE STEAMBOAT LANDING AT THE LOWER END OF TOWN.

the rashness of the undertaking.

Somebody told Burnside of our views, and he was wrathful. He asked us to meet him the next day at the Lacy house. In a general talk he said he understood we were opposed to his plans. He seemed to be rather bitter against Hancock, to my surprise, for I did not think that officer had said as much as myself. Burnside stated that he had formed his plans, and all he wanted was the devotion of his men. Hancock made a reply in which he disclaimed any personal discourtesy, only he thought there was a fortified hill on the opposite side, and that it would be pretty difficult for us to go over and take it. I rose after him, knowing that I was the more guilty, and expressed a desire to serve Burnside, saying, among other things, that if I had ever done anything in any battle, in this one I intended to do twice as much. French came in while I was talking. He was rather late, and in his bluff way exclaimed: "Is this a Methodist camp meeting?"

The heights on the morning of the 11th, before the bridges were thrown, did not offer a very animated scene, because the troops were mostly hidden. The bombardment for the purpose of dislodging the sharpshooters who under cover of the houses were delaying the bridge-making, was terrific, and the smoke settled down and veiled the scene. After

the bombardment had failed to dislodge the enemy, the Seventh Michigan and Twentieth Massachusetts of Howard's division sprang into the pontoons, and, rowing themselves over, drove away Barksdale's sharpshooters. This gallant action enabled the engineers to complete the bridges. Howard's division was the first to cross by the upper bridge, his advance having a lively fight in the streets of Fredericksburg. Hawkins's brigade of Willcox's corps occupied the lower part of the town on the same evening, and the town was not secured without desperate fighting. I went over the next morning, Friday the 12th, with Hancock's and French's divisions. The remainder of Willcox's corps crossed and occupied the lower part of the town. There was considerable looting. I placed a provost guard at the bridges, with orders that nobody should go back with plunder. An enormous pile of booty was collected there by evening. But there came a time when we were too busy to



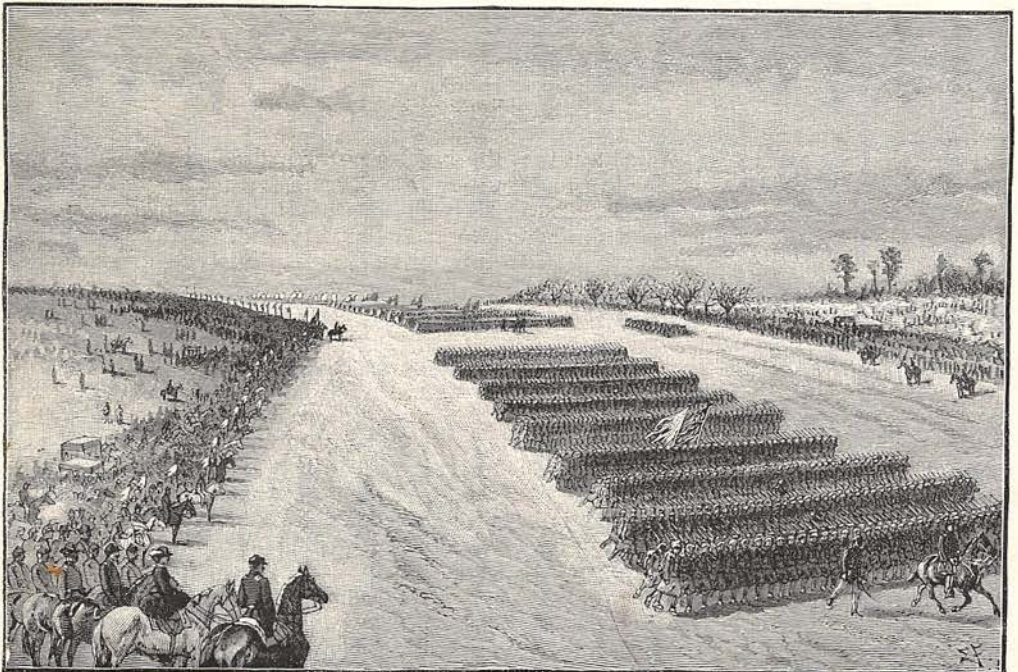
WHERE FOURTEEN BRIGADES CHARGED AT MARVE'S HILL. (FROM A WAR-TIME PHOTOGRAPH.)

The portico of the Marye mansion is faintly marked among the trees of the hill in the middle background. The road on the right is the end of Hanover street and the beginning of the Telegraph road, by which most of the attacking troops crossed the canal or ditch, and, filing to the left, formed line under the low bank. In the middle ground, to the left of the road, is seen the square brick house mentioned by General Couch. Part of the troops crossed the canal by a street on the left parallel with Hanover street, and a few waded. Most of the dead lay a short distance beyond the brick house. Colonel John R. Brooke, of Hancock's division, was sent on the fourth day after the battle

with a large detail to bury the dead. In his official report he says: "Those bodies nearest the enemy's works were recognized as belonging to Kimball's brigade of French's division and to the different regiments of Hancock's division." In the two days occupied by the burial he says he "found and buried 913 of our soldiers, and brought to this side of the river the bodies of 5 officers, making a total of 918. Nearly all the dead were stripped entirely naked by the enemy." A woman who lived in one of the houses near the stone wall said: "The morning after the battle the field was blue; but the morning after the Federals withdrew the field was white."—EDITOR.

guard it, and I suppose it was finally carried off by another set of plunderers. The troops of the two corps bivouacked that night in the streets and were not permitted to make fires. Late on that day we had orders to be ready to cross Hazel Run, which meant that we were

to join Franklin. That was the only proper move to make, since we had done just what the enemy wanted us to do,—divided our army. The conditions were favorable for a change of position unknown to the enemy, since the night was dark and the next morn-



THE GRAND REVIEW AT FALMOUTH DURING PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S VISIT.—SEE PAGE 636.
(BY EDWIN FORBES, AFTER HIS SKETCH MADE AT THE TIME.)

ing was foggy. But it would have been very difficult to make the movement. I was much worried in regard to the bridges over Hazel Run, and the dangers attending a flank movement at night in the face of the enemy. But the order to march never came. The orders that were given by Burnside showed that he hadn't a fixed plan of battle. After getting in the face of the enemy, his intentions seemed continually to be changing.

Early the next morning, Saturday the 13th, I received orders to make an assault in front. My orders came from General Sumner, who did not cross the river during the fight, owing to a special understanding with which I had nothing to do, and which related to his supposed rashness. At Fair Oaks and Antietam he had shown that he was a hard fighter. He was looked upon as a grand soldier, full of honor and gallantry, and a man of great determination too—there was no doubt about that.

As I have said, on that Saturday morning we were enveloped in a heavy fog. At 8:15 o'clock, when we were still holding ourselves in readiness to move to the left, I received the following order:

"HEADQUARTERS RIGHT GRAND DIVISION,
NEAR FALMOUTH, VA., December 12, 1862.

"MAJOR-GENERAL COUCH, Commanding Second
Corps d'Armée.

"GENERAL: The major-general commanding directs me to say to you that General Willcox has been ordered to extend to the left, so as to connect with Franklin's right. You will extend your right so far as to prevent the possibility of the enemy occupying the upper part of the town. You will then form a column of a division for the purpose of pushing in the direction of the Plank and Telegraph roads, for the purpose of seizing the heights in rear of the town. This column will advance in three lines, with such intervals as you may judge proper, this movement to be covered by a heavy line of skirmishers in front and on both flanks. You will hold another division in readiness to advance in support of this movement, to be formed in the same manner as the leading division. Particular care and precaution must be taken to prevent collision with our own troops in the fog. The movement will not commence until you receive orders. The watchword will be, 'Scott!' Very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

"J. H. TAYLOR,

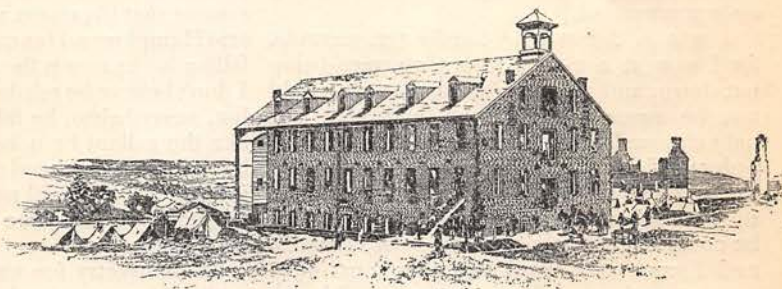
"Chief of Staff and Assistant Adjutant-General."

"P. S. The major-general thinks that, as Howard's division led into the town, it is proper that one of the others take the advance."

General French was at once directed to prepare his division in three brigade lines for the advance, and General Hancock was to

follow with his division in the same order. The distance between the successive brigade lines was to be about two hundred yards.

Toward ten o'clock the fog began to lift; French reported that he was ready, I signaled to Sumner, and about eleven o'clock the movement was ordered to begin. French threw out a strong body of skirmishers, and his brigades filed out of town as rapidly as possible by two parallel streets, the one on the right, which was Hanover street, running into the Telegraph road, and both leading direct to Marye's Hill, the stronghold of the enemy. On the outskirts of the town the troops encountered a ditch, or canal, so deep as to be almost impassable except at the street bridges, and, one of the latter being partly torn up, the troops had to cross single file on the stringers. Once across the canal, the troops deployed under the bank bordering the plain over which they were to charge. This plain was obstructed here and there by houses and fences, notably at a fork of the Telegraph road, in the narrow angle of which was a cluster of houses and gardens; and also on the parallel road just south of it, where stood a large square brick house. This cluster of houses and the brick house were the rallying-points for parts of our demolished lines of attack. The fork in the road and the brick house were less than one hundred and



WAREHOUSE IN FREDERICKSBURG USED AS A HOSPITAL.

fifty yards from the stone wall, which covered also as much more of the plain to the left of the brick house. A little in advance of the brick house a slight rise in the ground afforded protection to men lying down, against the musketry behind the stone wall, but not against the converging fire of the artillery on the heights. My headquarters were in the field on the edge of the town, overlooking the plain.

A few minutes after twelve French's division charged in the order of Kimball's, Andrews's, and Palmer's brigades, a part of Kimball's men getting into the cluster of houses in the fork of the road. Hancock followed them in the order of Zook's, Meagher's, and Caldwell's brigades, the two former getting

nearer to the stone wall than any who had gone before, except a few of Kimball's men, and nearer than any brigade which followed them.

Without a clear idea of the state of affairs at the front, since the smoke and light fog veiled everything, I sent word to French and Hancock to carry the enemy's works by storm. Then I climbed the steeple of the courthouse, and from above the haze and smoke got a clear view of the field. Howard, who was with me, says I exclaimed, "Oh, great God, see how our men, our poor fellows, are falling!" I remember that the whole plain was covered with men, prostrate and falling, the live men running here and there, and in front closing upon each other, and the wounded coming back. The commands seemed to be mixed up. I had never before seen fighting like that, nothing approaching it in terrible uproar and destruction. There was no cheering on the part of the men, but a stubborn determination to obey orders and do their duty. I don't think there was much feeling of success. As they charged, the artillery fire would break their formation, and they would get mixed; then they would close up, go forward, receive the withering infantry fire, and those who were able would run to those houses and do all they could; and then the next brigade coming up in succession would do their duty and melt. It was like the snow coming down and melting on warm ground.

I was in the steeple hardly ten seconds, for I saw at a glance how they were being cut down, and was convinced that we could not be successful in front, and that our only chance lay by the right. I immediately ordered Howard to work in on the right with the brigades of Owen and Hall, and attack the men behind the stone wall in flank; before he could begin this movement both Hancock and French sent word that they must have support or they would not be responsible for the maintenance of their position. Sturgis, of Willcox's corps, who had been supporting my left, sent the brigades of Ferrero and Nagle to the fruitless charge.

About two o'clock General Hooker, who was in command of the Center Grand Division (Stoneman's and Butterfield's corps), came upon the field. At an earlier hour Whipple's division of Stoneman's corps had crossed the river and relieved Howard on the right, so that the latter might join in the attack in the center, and Griffin's division of Butterfield's corps had come over to the support of Sturgis. Humphreys and Sykes, of the latter corps, came to my support. Toward three o'clock I received the following dispatch:

"HEADQUARTERS RIGHT GRAND DIVISION, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, December 13, 1862—2:40 P. M.
 "GENERAL COUCH: Hooker has been ordered to put in everything. You must hold on until he comes in. By command of Brevet Major-General Sumner:
 "W. G. JONES, Lieutenant, Aide-de-Camp, etc."

Hooker was the ranking general, and as I understood that he was to take command of the whole fighting line, his very coming was to me like the breaking out of the sun in a storm. I rode back to meet him, told him what had been done, and said, "I can't carry that hill by a front assault; the only chance we have is to try to get in on the right." Hooker said, "I will talk with Hancock." He talked with Hancock, and after a few minutes said, "Well, Couch, things are in such a state I must go over and tell Burnside it is no use trying to carry this line here,"—or words to that effect,—and then he went off. His going away left me again in command. Burnside was nearly two miles distant. It was not much after two o'clock when he went away, and it was about four when he returned.

He left word that Humphreys, whose division was ready to advance, should take his cue from me. Butterfield also gave Humphreys orders to that effect. After a lull in the battle General Caldwell, a brigade commander under Hancock, sent word to the latter that the enemy were retreating from Marye's house. It was probably only a shifting of the enemy's troops for the relief of the front line. But assuming that the report was true, I said, "General Humphreys, Hancock reports the enemy is falling back; now is the time for you to go in!" I don't believe he relished the duty before him, but, nevertheless, he fairly sprang to the work like the gallant hero he was, and led his two brigades, who charged over precisely the same ground, but who did not get quite so near to the stone wall as some of French's and Hancock's men.

The musketry fire was very heavy, and the artillery fire was simply terrible. I sent word several times to our artillery on the right of Falmouth that they were firing into us; that they were tearing our own men to pieces. I thought they had made a mistake in the range. But I learned later that the fire came from the guns of the enemy on their extreme left.

Soon after four o'clock, or about sunset, while Humphreys was at work, Getty's division of Willcox's corps was ordered to the charge on our left by the unfinished railroad. I could see them being dreadfully cut up, although they had not advanced as far as our men. I determined to send a battery upon the plain to shell the line that was doing them so much harm; so I ordered an aide to tell Colonel Morgan to send a battery across the canal and plant it near the brick house. Mor-

gan came to me and said: "General, a battery can't live there."

I replied, "Then it must die there!"

Hazard took his battery out in gallant style and opened fire on the enemy's lines to the left of the Marye house. Men never fought more gallantly, and he lost a great many men and horses. When Hooker came he ordered Frank's battery to join Hazard. But this last effort did not last long. In the midst of it I rode to the brick house, accompanied by Colonel Francis A. Walker, Lieutenant Cushing, and my orderly, Long. The smoke lay so thick that we could not see the enemy, and I think they could not see us, but we were aware of the fact that somebody in our front was doing a great deal of shooting. I found the brick house packed with men; and behind it the dead and alive were as thick as they could be crowded together. The dead were rolled out for shelter, and the dead horses were used for breastworks. I know I tried to shelter myself behind the brick house, but found I could not, on account of the men already there. The plain thereabouts was dotted with our fallen. I started to cross to the fork of the road where our men were holding the cluster of houses under Colonel John R. Brooke.

When it came dark the wounded were being brought off the plain, and Hooker was talking about relieving my men in front by putting in Sykes's division, and I said, "No! No men shall take the place of the Second Corps unless General Sumner gives the orders. It has fought and gained that ground and it shall hold it." Later the order came for Sykes to relieve the Second Corps, which was done about eleven o'clock.

That night was bitter cold and a fearful one for the front line hugging the hollows in the ground, and for the wounded who could not be reached. It was a night of dreadful suffering. Many died of wounds and exposure, and as fast as men died they stiffened in the wintry air, and on the front line were rolled forward for protection to the living. Frozen men were placed for dumb sentries.

Again my corps bivouacked in the town, and were not allowed fires lest they should draw the fire of the enemy's artillery.

At two o'clock in the morning Burnside came to my headquarters near the center of the town. I was lying down at the time. He asked me to tell him about the battle, and we talked for about an hour. I told him everything that had occurred. "And now," I said, "General Burnside, you must know that everything that could be done by troops was done by the Second Corps." He said, "Couch, I know that; I am perfectly satisfied that you

did your best." He gave no intimation of his plans for the next day. He was friendly in his tone and he did not seem greatly oppressed, but it was plain that he felt he had led us to a great disaster. I never felt so badly for a man in my life.*

The next day, Sunday the 14th, our men began digging trenches along the edge of the town. We were on the alert, for there was some fear of an assault. Of course there is no need of denying that after the battle the men became strained. The pressure of a fight carries you through, but after it is all over and you have been whipped, you do not feel very pugnacious. The men, knowing that they had been unsuccessful, were in a nervous state, and officers suffered also from the reaction, the worst of it being that the mass of the army had lost confidence in its commander.

About midday of the 14th Burnside called a council of war, in which it was decided to fall back, but to hold Fredericksburg. No attack was made by us that day, though Burnside had said that he should renew the assault on Marye's Hill, with his old Ninth Corps, and that he would place himself at its head. General Getty of that corps, a very gallant officer, touched me as I passed him and said: "I understand that Burnside has given out that he intends to lead seventeen regiments to the attack." He urged me strongly to dissuade him if possible, as it would be a perfect slaughter of men.

At the council Hooker expressed himself as against the movement of retreat, saying, "We must fight those people. We are over there and we must fight them." But, as I remember, he did not advocate the plan of holding Fredericksburg if we were not to renew the fight. I urged that the army was not in a condition, after our repulse, to renew the assault, but that we ought to hold Fredericksburg at all hazards. I had an argument

* LOSSES AT FREDERICKSBURG, DEC. 11 TO 15, 1862.

UNION ARMY.	Killed.	Wounded.	Captured or Missing.	Total.
Right Grand Division (Sumner)	523	4281	640	5444
Center Grand Division (Hooker)	352	2501	502	3355
Left Grand Division (Franklin)	401	2761	625	3787
Engineers	8	49	2	59
Artillery Reserve		8		8
Aggregate	1284	9600	1769	12,653
CONFEDERATE ARMY.				
First Army Corps (Longstreet)	251	1516	127	1894
Second Army Corps (Jackson)	344	2545	526	3415
Stuart's Cavalry		13		13
Aggregate	595	4074	653	5322

According to the reports published in Vol. XXI. of the "Official Records."—EDITOR.

with General Burnside upon that point, telling him that I was willing to have him throw all the responsibility upon me; that if we held the town we should have a little something to show for the sacrifice of the day before; that the people would feel we had not failed utterly. It was agreed that Fredericksburg should be held. Then Burnside dismissed us and sent Hooker and myself to Fredericksburg to arrange for the defense. We had a council at the corner of Hanover street.

It was decided that Hooker's troops should hold the town. The question was how many men would he leave for that purpose, opinions varying from ten to eighteen thousand. My limit was ten thousand men. General Tyler turned to me and said: "Make it higher, General." We compromised on twelve thousand. We remained in the town on the 15th, and that evening my corps and the Ninth Corps recrossed the river. Next morning we found that Fredericksburg had been evacuated. When Willcox and I left, we thought, of course, it would be held. The talk was that during the night Hooker prevailed upon Burnside to evacuate the town.

Our wing of the army thought the failure of the campaign was due in part to the fact that we were put in where we ought not to have been. We were asked to conquer an impossibility. We had something to do which it was not possible for us to do. After the battle Burnside tried to regain the confidence of the army, and there is no doubt that Sumner did a good deal to help him. Burnside conceived the plan of crossing the Rappahannock a few miles above Fredericksburg, where the enemy were unprepared to receive us. The result was the "mud march" (January 20th-21st). It was Burnside's effort to redeem himself. To start off in the mud as we did with the army in its discouraged state was perfect folly. There did not seem to be anything in the move to recommend itself. If the weather had happened to turn hard, possibly he might have surprised Lee and gotten across the river, above Fredericksburg, but it was a hazardous move, with the army out of confidence with its commander and the enemy elated with brilliant success. The general

demoralization that had come upon us made two or three months of rest a necessity.*

When Hooker, on January 25th, was placed in command of the army, many of us were very much surprised; I think the superior officers did not regard him competent for the task. He had fine qualities as an officer, but not the weight of character to take charge of that army. Nevertheless, under his administration the army assumed wonderful vigor. I have never known men to change from a condition of the lowest depression to that of a healthy fighting state in so short a time. President Lincoln with his wife came down to spend a few days with General Hooker, and to see the different officers and talk with them. To further that, General Hooker gave a dinner party at which all the corps commanders were present, and also Mrs. Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln would talk to the officers on the subject that was uppermost in our minds—how we were to get the better of the enemy on the opposite hills. Before he went away he sent for Hooker and for me, I being second in command, and almost his last injunction was: "Gentlemen, in your next battle *put in all your men.*" Yet that is exactly what we did not do at Chancellorsville.

We had a grand review of the army in honor of the President. The Second Corps paraded, I think, with Howard's Eleventh Corps, for after I had saluted at the head of my corps I rode to the side of the President, who was on horseback, and while near him General Schurz approached at the head of his division. I said: "Mr. Lincoln, that is General Schurz," pronouncing it *Shurz*, after the American fashion. Mr. Lincoln turned to me and said: "Not *Shurz*, General Couch, but *Schoortz.*" But he did it very pleasantly, and I was just a little surprised that our Western President should have the advantage of me. It was a beautiful day, and the review was a stirring sight. Mr. Lincoln, sitting there with his hat off, head bent, and seemingly meditating, suddenly turned to me and said: "General Couch, what do you suppose will become of all these men when the war is over?" And it struck me as very pleasant that somebody had an idea that the war would sometime end.

Darius N. Couch.

* In the course of a correspondence between Generals Franklin and Halleck, relating to their several controversies with General Burnside, General Franklin wrote to Halleck, under date of June 1, 1863: "I was of your opinion with regard to the honesty and integrity of purpose of General Burnside, until after his relief from the command of the Army of the Potomac. I lost all confidence in his ability at the first Fredericksburg battle. There was not a man in my command who did not believe that everything he

would undertake would fail, and General Hooker informed me that that was the general feeling in his command. General Sumner's feelings were not so decided, but they were nearly so. You can imagine that the beds of the Grand Division commanders were not of roses, and I came to the conclusion that Burnside was fast losing his mind. So I looked upon the rain which stopped his second attempt to cross the river [the 'mud march'] as almost a providential interference in our behalf."—EDITOR.