

CADETS ON DRESS PARADE.

THE WEST POINT OF THE CONFEDERACY.

BOYS IN BATTLE AT NEW MARKET, VIRGINIA, MAY 15, 1864.



LEXINGTON, Virginia, is a somewhat historic spot now, being the burial-place of Robert E. Lee and of "Stonewall" Jackson; and it is by no means inaccessible, having no fewer than three railroads. When I first knew it, nearly twenty-five years ago, it not only had little pretense to fame, but was one of the most out-of-the-way spots in the State.

In the year 1839 the State of Virginia, having an arsenal at Lexington, established there a military school and placed her property in charge of the officers and cadets of the Virginia Military Institute. Under the control of its superintendent, Colonel Francis H. Smith, a West Point graduate, the Virginia Military Institute prospered up to the period of the war of 1861.

It was conducted in many respects like the National Academy at West Point. Virginia was a wealthy State in those days and took great pride in her Military Institute. And while the appropriations were not so large or the appointments so complete as those provided by Congress, the Virginia academy was no mean imitator of West Point.

With the outbreak of the war came, of course, a new impetus to everything pertaining to military knowledge; and the Virginia Institute, being the largest and the best-equipped establishment of its kind in the South, at once became prominent as a training-school. At a later period of the war it had, I believe, the exceptional honor of having sent its corps of cadets, as a body, into battle. It is to chronicle that episode that I write; for the single mar-

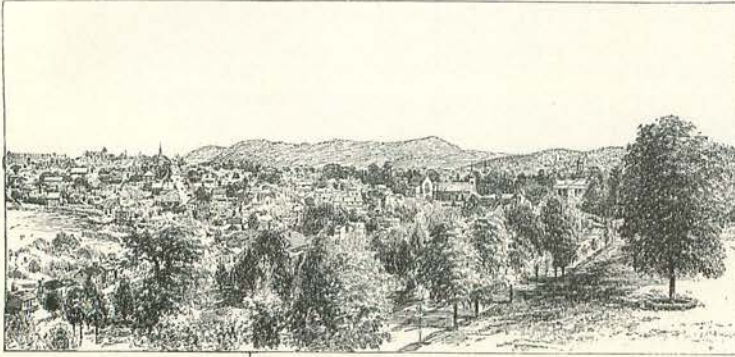
tial exploit of that young band of boys was as brave as the archery of the boy-marksman of the Iliad who launched forth death to the foe from behind the shield of Ajax Telamon.

In the autumn of 1862 the writer, then a lad under the regulation age of sixteen, but admitted as a special favor, reported as a cadet to the superintendent of the Institute. It was almost the only school then open in the State. Men had been killed in battle upon the campus of old William and Mary College at Williamsburg. Her lecture-rooms were filled with sick and wounded. Grass was growing upon the pavements of the Virginia university; the colonnades of Washington College were deserted. Teachers and scholars had marched away from all these to the great passion play. But never, in her whole history, had the Virginia Military Institute been so crowded to overflowing, or so aglow with life. Almost entirely depleted at the outbreak of hostilities by the draft of a splendid body of young officers from the corps, she had been replenished by the youngsters whom President Davis afterwards called "the seed corn of the Confederacy," and scarcely a historic family in the South was without its youthful representative there, preparing himself in the military art. The times were stirring. The boy who sought military education then did so, not with the vague idea that at some future day it *might* prove useful, but almost in hearing of the thunder of the guns. And at the period of my entering the Institute the impatience of boyhood had been taught that there was little danger the war would end before we had our chance. Big Bethel and Manassas had been fought; the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor*

had met; our armies had passed a winter in camp; the disasters of Roanoke Island, Forts Henry and Donelson, and bloody Shiloh; the seven days' fighting around Richmond—all these had tempered the arrogance and subdued the confidence of men. Predictions of peace

how to strut until, plucked from a rooster's tail, it was stuck on the top of a cadet's head. We were content with a simple forage cap, blue or gray, as we could procure it. The cadet of to-day disports himself in white cross-belts, shining plates, and patent-leather accouter-

ments. Then, we had a plain leather cartridge-box, and waist-belt with a harness buckle. The cadet of to-day handles a bronzed-barreled breech-loading rifle, of the latest Springfield pattern. Then,



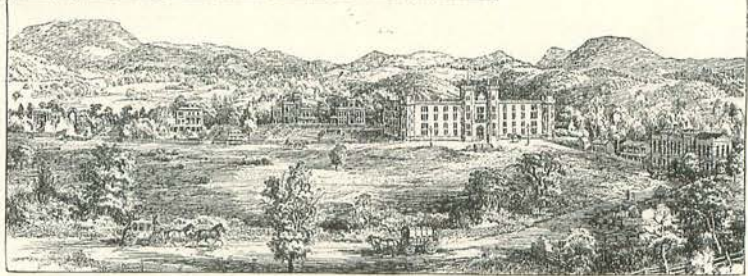
VIEW OF LEXINGTON, VA.

in ninety days had ceased, and too many hearts were already bleeding to make the hideous death grapple longer the subject of empty boast or trivial jest. Both North and South were settling down grimly to that agony

of war which God grant that you who have never known it may always be spared.

The ante-bellum equipment of the Virginia Cadet Corps had been very complete and striking. It was fully as handsome as the West Point outfit and very much the same. Several years before I had seen those wonderful coatees with their forty-four buttons of shining brass, those marvelous cross-belts, and the patent-leather hats with nodding plume or pompon; and since peace has come again they have bloomed afresh, in all their pristine glory. On my journey visions of all this finery had filled my youthful imagination; but when I arrived I found that the blockade and the growing scarcity of everything like luxury and adornment had wrought great changes in the dapper appearance of the corps.

In May, 1862, the cadets had been marched to Jackson's aid at McDowell in the Shenandoah Valley. They had arrived too late to take part in the battle, but the effect of the march had been to wear out the last vestige of the peace uniforms. Then we had resort to coarse sheep's-gray jacket and trousers, with seven buttons and a plain black tape stripe. The cadet of to-day appears with felt chapeau and a ten-inch cock-plume that never knew



THE VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE, LEXINGTON, VA.

we went into the battle of New Market with muzzle-loading Belgian rifles as clumsy as pickaxes.

As the war progressed, our uniforms ceased to be uniform; for as the difficulty of procuring cloth increased we were permitted to supply ourselves with whatever our parents could procure, and in time we appeared in every shade from Melton gray to Georgia butternut.

Cadet fare in those days was also very simple—so very simple, indeed, that I doubt whether any body of boys were ever so healthy as we were. What we did get was nutritious and palatable, save an ever-to-be-remembered lot of Nassau bacon that appeared to have been saturated with tar on its blockade-running cruise, and one apparently inexhaustible supply of pickled beef so old and tough that it glittered with prismatic splendor in the light.

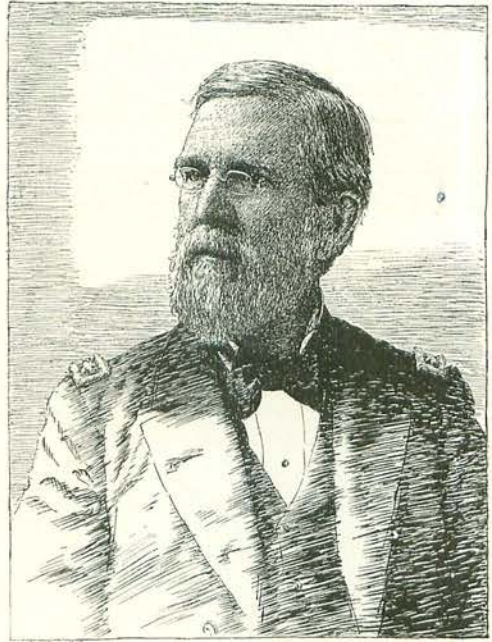
The course of studies was faithfully pursued. The full professors were nearly all too old for active service. General Smith, Colonel Gilham, Colonel Williamson, and Colonel Preston, after valuable services rendered at the outbreak in organizing forces, had returned to the Institute. Colonel Crutchfield returned once, wounded, and then went back to die most

gloriously. Stonewall Jackson, who had been professor, never, if I remember rightly, saw his class-room again; and after he went into the service never entered the building until, borne upon the shoulders of eight weeping boys, his pale face looked up from the casket on the spot where he had taught, and his voiceless lips filled his old precinct with a silent eloquence which made soldiers and heroes at a single lesson.

The Institute was an asylum for its wounded alumni, and many such, banished from home by invasion or distance, occupied the period of convalescence in teaching. One day Cutshaw, one of Lee's best artillerists, shot all to pieces at the front and sent home to die, would teach us mathematics until he could wear his wooden leg back to his battery; another day Preston with his empty sleeve would show us that none of his Latin was lost with his arm. At another time "Tige" Hardin, pale and broken, would come to teach until he could fight again, or Colonel Marshall McDonald, now famous as fish commissioner, would hobble in to point with crutch at problems on the blackboard until strong enough once more to point with sword toward the "looming bastion fringed with fire."

From such as these we learned with zest and zeal. They had our hearts to back their efforts. Their very appearance taught us lessons every hour which have been dropped from the curriculum in these tame days of peace.

The *esprit de corps* of the Institute was superb. When the command marched forth for any purpose it moved as one man. The drill was perfect. Obedience was instant and implicit. As the war wore on, the stirring



GENERAL F. H. SMITH.
SUPERINTENDENT OF THE VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE.

events following each other so rapidly and so near at hand bred a restlessness and discontent in every high-strung boy among us. Each battle seemed to infuse fresh impatience in the cadets, who would assemble at the sally-port for discussion; the mails were crowded with letters begging parents and guardians for permission to resign and go to the war. Good boys became bad ones to secure dismissal, and as the result of these conspiracies regular hegiras would occur. Many a night have I paced the sentry-beat, thinking now of the last gay party that had scrambled to the top of the departing stage, commissioned for active service; now envying the careless gayety of the veterans assembled in the officers' quarters, as from time to time their joyous laughter over campaigning yarns burst from the window of some tower room; then hoping against hope, as it seemed, for the day when, like them, I would be a soldier indeed.

The combat deepened. Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, and a hundred lesser battles were taking place around us. One day we buried poor Paxton; soon after Davidson was borne home to us; and a little later Stonewall Jackson, in the zenith of his brilliant career, was brought back by his comrades to his home. Who shall tell with what yearning our eyes followed those brave officers as they hurried back to battle from his grave? They left us there, as if we had been babes.



COLONEL MARSHALL McDONALD.
FORMERLY PROFESSOR AT THE VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE, NOW UNITED STATES FISH COMMISSIONER.

But our hour was to come at last. Gettysburg is often referred to as the turning-point in the war. It was, indeed, in many ways. Not only was it so in the fact that it baffled and disheartened the almost invincible army of Lee, but also in this, that for the first time it aroused the North to the dangers, the horrors, and the possibilities of fighting upon its



COMMANDER JOHN M. BROOKE,
PROFESSOR AT THE VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
AND FORMERLY OF THE CONFEDERATE NAVY.

own soil, and to the necessity of unprecedented effort if the recurrence of invasion was to be prevented. To such an extent were the Federal armies recruited that from the surplus troops a system of raids and incursions was begun by bodies operating independently of the grand armies; and while our diminishing forces were grappling with Grant and Sherman, raiding parties commanded by Sheridan, Stoneman, Wilson, Kautz, Averell, Hunter, Burbridge, and others rode on their flanks or in their rear with torch and sword. This policy was begun late in the summer of 1863. Averell, appearing in the neighborhood of Covington, gave the Cadet Corps a long and fruitless march. The winter of 1863-64 was gloomy enough in the Confederacy. Our soldiers no longer returned from the front exuberant with the joys of camp life and of victory. They were worn and ragged, and, if not actually dispirited, were at least sobered and reflective. The thoughtful, the wise, shook their heads sadly at the prospects of the opening spring campaign. But in one spot of the Confederacy, at least, the martial spirit still burned high, and the hope of battle flamed fresh as on the morning of Manassas. One little nest of fledglings yet remained, who, all untried, too young to reason, too buoyant to doubt, were longing to try their wings.

On the 10th of May, 1864, the Cadet Corps

was the very pink of drill and discipline, and mustered 350 strong. The plebes of the last fall had passed through squad and company drill, and the battalion was now proficient in the most intricate manœuvre. The broad parade ground lay spread out like a green carpet. The far-off ranges of the Blue Ridge seemed nearer in the clear light of spring. The old guard tree, once more luxuriantly green, sheltered its watching groups of admiring girls and prattling children.

The battalion wheeled, charged, and countermarched in mimicry of war, until at sunset we formed in line for dress parade. The band played up and down the line. The last rays faded upon the neighboring peak of House Mountain. The evening gun boomed out upon the stillness. The colors of the Institute dropped lazily from their staff. Never in all her history seemed Lexington and her surroundings more gently beautiful, more calmly peaceful. Such was the sunset hour of that lovely day on which we sought our cots, almost forgetful of the troubled world elsewhere. At midnight, save in the guard-room at the sally-port, every light had disappeared. Suddenly the barracks reverberated with the throbbing of drums; we awoke and recognized the long roll. Lights were up; the stoops resounded with the rush of footsteps seeking place in the ranks; the adjutant, by lantern-light, read our orders amid breathless silence. They told us that the enemy was in the valley, that Breckinridge needed help, and that we were ordered to march for Staunton at daybreak—a battalion of infantry and a section of artillery—with three days' rations. Not



PROFESSOR-CAPTAIN HENRY A. WISE, JR.,
SECOND IN COMMAND OF THE CADETS AT NEW MARKET.



CADET IN MARCHING OUTFIT.

a sound was uttered, not a man moved from the military posture of "parade rest." Our beating hearts told us that our hour had come at last.

"Parade's dismissed," piped the adjutant. Then came a wild halloo, as company after company broke ranks. Again in fancy I see the excited rush of that gay throng, eager as greyhounds in the leash, hurrying back and forth, preparing for the start, forgetful that it would be six hours before they should march.

Daybreak found us on the Staunton pike after a sleepless night and a breakfast by candle-light. We had jeered

the little boys who were left behind. We had tramped heavily upon the covered bridge that spans the river, until it rocked and swayed beneath our tread. Exuberant with the joyousness of boyhood, we had cheered the fading turrets of the Institute as they sank beneath the hills. And now, fairly started upon our journey, we were plodding on right merrily, our gallant little battery rumbling behind.

At midday on the 12th of May we marched into Staunton to the tune of "The girl I left behind me." We were not quite as fresh or as neat as at the outset, but still game and saucy. I fear it was not the girls we left behind us that occupied our thoughts just then. Staunton then, as now, was filled with girls' schools, and we were very much occupied with the fair faces around us. Our preparation had been simple. Being muddy to the knees, we had waded in a creek until our shoes and trousers were cleansed, and then, picking our way daintily upon the rocks until we reached the pavements, adjusted our locks in a fence corner by the aid of pocket-comb and glass, and hurried forward to society. The cadets were the favorites. Perhaps there was something of resentment for this that prompted a veteran regiment to sing "Rock-a-bye, baby," when we marched past them in the streets.

There was little time, however, for gayety. Breckinridge's army, which had hurried up from south-western Virginia to meet Sigel, soon filled the town and suburbs. Now and then a bespattered trooper came up wearily from Woodstock or Harrisonburg to report the steady advance of Sigel with an army thrice the size of our own. Ever and anon the serious shook their heads and predicted hot work in store for us. Even in the hour of levity the shadow of impending bloodshed hung over all but the

cadet. At evening parade the command came to move down the valley.

Morning found us promptly on the march. A few lame ducks had succumbed and were left behind, but the body of the corps was still elated and eager, although rain had overtaken us. The first day's march brought us to Harrisonburg; the second to Lacy's Springs, within ten miles of New Market. On this day evidences of the enemy's approach thickened on every hand. At short intervals upon the pike, the great artery of travel in the valley, carriages and vehicles of all sorts filled the way, laden with people and their household effects, fleeing from the hostile advance. Now and then a haggard trooper, dispirited by long skirmishing against overwhelming force, would gloomily suggest the power and numbers of the enemy. Towards nightfall, in a little grove by a church, we came upon a squad of Federal prisoners, the first that many of us had



COLONEL SCOTT SHIP.

IN COMMAND OF THE CADETS AT NEW MARKET.

ever seen. It was a stolid lot of Germans, who eyed us with curious inquiry as we passed. Laughter and badinage had somewhat subsided when we pitched camp that night in sight of our picket-fires twinkling in the gloaming but a few miles below us down the valley. We learned, beyond doubt, that Franz Sigel and his army were sleeping within ten miles of the spot on which we rested.

For a while the woodland resounded with the ax-stroke, or the cheery halloo of the men from camp-fire to camp-fire; for a while the firelight danced, and the air was savory with

the odor of cooking viands; for a while the boys grouped around the camp-fires for warmth and to dry their wet clothing. But soon the silence was broken only now and then by the fall of a passing shower, or the champing of the colonel's horse upon his provender.

I was corporal of the guard. A single sentinel stood post, while the guard and drummers lay stretched before the watch-fire in deep, refreshing sleep. It was an hour past midnight when I caught the sound of hoofs upon the pike advancing at a trot, and a moment later the call of the sentry brought me to him, where I found an aide bearing orders from the commanding general. On being aroused our commandant rubbed his eyes, muttered, "Move forward at once," and ordered me to rouse the camp. The rolls were rattled off; the short, crisp commands went forth, and soon the battalion debouched upon the pike, heading in the darkness and the mud for New Market.

Before we left our camp something occurred that even now may be a solace to those whose boys died so gloriously on that day. In the gloom of the night, Captain Frank Preston, neither afraid nor ashamed to pray, sent up an appeal to God for protection to our little band. It was a humble, earnest appeal that sunk into the heart of every hearer. Few were the dry eyes, little the frivolity, in the command, when he had ceased to speak of home, of father, of mother, of country, of victory and defeat, of life, of death, of eternity. Those who, but a few hours later, heard him commanding "B" company in the thickest of the fight, his already empty sleeve showing that he was no stranger to the perilous edge of battle, realized as few can how the same voice can at one time plead reverently and tenderly and at another pipe higher than the roar of battle.

The day, breaking gray and gloomy, found us plodding onward in the mud. The exceedingly sober cast of our reflections was relieved by the light-heartedness of the veterans. Wharton's brigade, with smiling "Old Gabe" at their head, cheered us heartily as we came up to the spot where they were cooking breakfast by the road-side. Many were the good-natured gibes with which they restored our confidence. The old soldiers were as merry, nonchalant, and indifferent to the coming fight as if it was a daily occupation.

One fellow came round with a pair of scissors and a package of cards, offering to cut off love-locks to be sent home after we were dead. They inquired if we wanted rosewood coffins, satin-lined, with name and age on plate. In a word, they made us ashamed of the solemnity of our last six miles of marching, and renewed

within our breasts the true dare-devil spirit of soldiery.

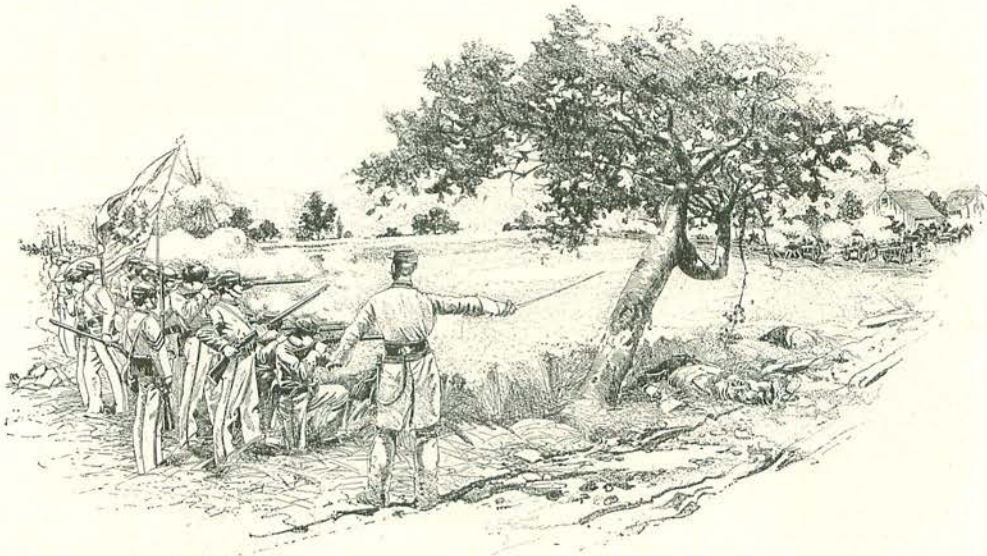
The mile-posts on the pike scored four miles, three miles, two miles, one mile to New Market. Then the mounted skirmishers crowded past us hurrying to the front. Cheering began in our rear and was caught up by the troops along the line of march. We learned its import as Breckinridge and his staff approached, and we joined in the huzza as that soldierly man, mounted magnificently, dashed past us, uncovered, bowing, and riding like the Cid. Along the crest of the elevation in our front we beheld our line of mounted pickets and the smoldering fires of their night's bivouac. We halted with the realization that one turn in the road would bring us in full view of the enemy's position. Echols's and Wharton's brigades hurried past us. There was not so much banter then. "Forward!" was the word once more, and New Market appeared in sight.

The turn of the road displayed the whole position. A bold range of hills parallel with the mountains divides the Shenandoah Valley into two smaller valleys, and in the eastern-most of these lies New Market.

The valley pike, on which we had advanced, passes through the town parallel with the Massanutten range on our right, and Smith's Creek running along its base. The range of hills on our left breaks as it nears the town and slopes down to it from the south and west, swelling up again beyond it to the north and west. On the right of the pike, looking towards New Market, and running over to the creek, a beautiful stretch of meadow-land spreads out down to and beyond the town. Orchards skirt the village in these meadows between our position and the town, and they are filled with the enemy's skirmishers. A heavy stone fence and a deep lane run westward from the town and parallel with our line of battle. Here the enemy's infantry was posted to receive our left flank, and behind it his artillery was posted on a slope, the ground rising gradually until, a short distance beyond the town, to the left of the pike, it spreads out in an elevated plateau. The hill-sides from this plateau to the pike are gradual and broken by several gullies heavily wooded by scrub-cedar.

It was Sunday morning, and 11 o'clock. In a picturesque little churchyard, right under the shadow of the village spire and among the white tombstones, a six-gun battery was posted in rear of the infantry line of the enemy. The moment we debouched it opened upon us.

Away off to the right, in the Luray Gap of the Massanutten range, our signal corps was telegraphing the position and numbers of the enemy. Our cavalry was moving at a gallop to the cover of the creek to attempt to flank



THE CADETS IN THE WHEAT-FIELD.

the town. Echols's brigade was moving from the pike at a double-quick by the right flank and went into line of battle across the meadow, its left resting on the pike. Simultaneously his skirmishers were thrown forward at a run and engaged the enemy. Out of the orchards and out on the meadows arose puff after puff of blue smoke as our sharpshooters advanced, the "pop, pop" of their rifles ringing forth excitingly. Thundering down the pike came McLaughlin with his artillery, and wheeling out into the meadows he swung into battery action left, and let fly with all his guns. The cadet section of artillery pressing a little farther forward wheeled to the left, toiled up the slope, and with a plunging fire replied to the Federal battery in the graveyard. At the first discharge of our guns a beautiful wreath of smoke shot upward and hovered over them.

The little town, which a moment before had seemed to sleep so peacefully upon that Sabbath morn, was now wreathed in battle-smoke and swarming with troops hurrying to their positions. We had their range beautifully, and every shell, striking some obstruction, exploded in the streets. Every man of our army was in sight. Every position of the enemy was plainly visible. His numbers were but too well known to us, for notwithstanding that his line of battle, already formed, was equal to our own, the reports still came that the pike was filled with his infantry.

Our left wing consisted of Wharton's brigade; the center of the 62d Virginia Infantry and the cadets; and our right of Echols's brigade and the cavalry.

Up to this time I was still corporal of the

guard, in charge of the baggage-wagon, with a detail of three men, Redwood, Stanard, and Woodlief. We had not been relieved, in the general bustle and confusion. My orders were to remain with the wagons at the bend in the pike, unless our forces were driven back; in which case we were to retire to a point of safety. When it became evident that a battle was imminent, a single thought took possession of me, and that was, that I would never be able to look my father in the face again if I sat on a baggage-wagon while my command was in its first, perhaps its only, engagement. He was a grim old fighter,¹ at that moment commanding at Petersburg, and a month later fighting at odds against "Baldy" Smith until Lee could come up. He had a tongue of satire and ridicule like a lash of scorpions. I had nearly worried him out of his life with applications to leave the Institute and enter the army. If, now that I had the opportunity, I should fail to take part in the fight I knew what was in store for me. Napoleon in Egypt pointed to the Pyramids and told his soldiers that from their heights forty centuries looked down upon them. My oration, delivered from the baggage-wagon, was not so elevated in tone, but equally emphatic. It ran about this wise: "Boys, the enemy is in our front. Our command is about to go into action. I like fighting no better than anybody else. But I have an enemy in my rear as dreadful as any before us. If I return home and tell my father that I was on the baggage guard when my comrades were fighting I know my fate. He will kill me with worse than bullets — ridicule. I shall join the

¹ Governor and General Henry A. Wise.— EDITOR.

command forthwith. Any one who chooses to remain may do so." All the guard followed. The wagon was left in charge of the black driver. Of the four who thus went, one was killed and two were wounded.

We rejoined the battalion as it marched by the left flank from the pike. Moving at double-quick we were in an instant in line of battle, our right near the turn-pike. Rising ground in our immediate front concealed us from the enemy. The command was given to strip for action. Knapsacks, blankets, everything but guns, canteens, and cartridge-boxes,



CADET CAPTAIN WM. H. CABELL.
KILLED AT NEW MARKET.

were thrown down upon the ground. Our boys were silent then. Every lip was tightly drawn, every cheek was pale; but not with fear. With a peculiar nervous jerk we pulled our cartridge-boxes round to the front and tightened our belts. Whistling rifled-shell screamed over us as, tipping the hill-crest in our own front, they bounded over our heads. Across the pike to our right Patton's brigade was lying down, abreast of us. "At-tention-n-n! Battalion Forward! Guide—Center-r-rr!" shouted Ship, and off we started. At that moment, from the left of the line, sprang Sergeant-Major Woodbridge, and posted himself forty paces in front of the colors as directing guide. Brave Evans, standing over six feet two, unfurled our colors that for days had hung limp and bedraggled about the staff, and every cadet in the Institute leaped forward, dressing to the ensign, elate and thrilling with the consciousness that "*This is war!*" We reached the hill-crest in our front, where we were abreast of our smoking battery and in full sight and range of the enemy. We were pressing towards him at "arms port" with the light tripping gait of the French infantry. The enemy had obtained our range, and began to drop his shell under our noses along the slope. Echols's brigade rose up and were charging on our right with the rebel yell.

Woodbridge, who was holding his position as directing sergeant, was ordered to resume his place in the line.

Down the green slope we went, answering the wild cry of our comrades as their musketry rattled out its opening volleys. In another moment we should expect a pelting rain of lead from the blue line crouching behind the stone wall at the lane. Then came a sound more stunning than thunder, that burst directly

in my face; lightnings leaped; fire flashed; the earth rocked; the sky whirled round, and I stumbled. My gun pitched forward, and I fell upon my knees. Sergeant Cabell looked back at me sternly, pityingly, and called out, "Close up, men," as he passed on.

I knew no more. When consciousness returned it was raining in torrents. I was lying on the ground, which all about was torn and plowed with shell which were still screeching in the air and bounding on the earth.

Poor little Captain Hill of "C" company was lying near, bathed in blood, with a fearful gash over the temple, and was gasping like a dying fish. Read, Merritt, and another, also badly shot, were near at hand.

The battalion was three hundred yards away clouded in smoke and hotly engaged. They had crossed the lane the enemy held, and the Federal battery in the graveyard had fallen back to the high ground beyond. "How came they there?" I thought, and, "Why am I here?" Then I saw that I was bleeding from a deep and ugly gash in my head. That villainous rifled-shell that burst in our faces brought five of us to the ground. "Hurrah!" I thought, "youth's dream is realized at last. *I've got a wound and am not dead yet!*" And so, realizing the savory truth, another moment found me on my feet trudging along to the hospital, almost whistling with delight at the thought that the next mail would bear the glorious news to the old folks at home, with a rather taunting suggestion that after all their trouble they had not been able to keep me from having my share in the fun.

From this time forth I may speak of the gallant behavior of the cadets without the imputation of vanity, for I was no longer a participant in their glory. The fighting around the town was fierce and bloody on our left wing. Patton's movements on our right were rapid and effective. He had pressed forward and gained the village, and our line was now concave with an angle just beyond the town.

The Federal infantry had fallen back to their second line, and our left had now before it the task of ascending the slope, on the crest of which they were posted. Pausing under the cover of the deep lane to breathe awhile and correct the alignment, our troops once more advanced, clambering up the bank and over the stone fence, and at once delivering and receiving a withering fire. At a point below the town where the turnpike curved the enemy's reserves were massed; in what numbers we could not yet descry. A momentary confusion on our right, as our troops passed through the streets of New Market, gave invitation for a charge of the enemy's cavalry, who were unable to see McLaughlin's battery which had

been moved up, unlimbered in the streets, and double-shotted with grape and canister. The cavalry dashed forward, squadron front, in full career. Our infantry scrambled over the fences, cleared the pike, and gave the artillery a fair opportunity to rake them. They saw the trap too late. They drew up and sought to wheel about. Heavens! What a blizzard McLaughlin gave them. They reeled, staggered, wheeled, and fled. The road was filled with fallen men and horses. A few riderless steeds galloped towards our lines, neighed, circled, and rejoined their comrades. One gallant fellow, whose horse became unmanageable, rode through the battery, and, at full speed, passed beyond, behind, and around our line, safely rejoining his comrades and cheered for his daring by his enemies. This was the end of the cavalry in that fight.

Our left had meanwhile performed its allotted task. Up the slope, right up to the second line of infantry, it went; and a second time the Federal infantry was forced to retire. The veteran troops had secured two guns of the battery, and the remaining four had galloped back to a new position in a farmyard on the plateau at the head of the cedar-skirted gully. Our boys had captured over a hundred prisoners. Charley Faulkner, now a grave senator from West Virginia, came back radiant, in charge of twenty-three Germans large enough to swallow him, and insisted that he captured every man of them himself. Bloody work had been done. The space between the enemy's old and new positions was dotted with their dead and wounded—shot as they fled across the open field. But this same exposed ground now lay before, and must be crossed by our own men, under a galling fire from a strong and protected position. The distance was not three hundred yards, but the ground to be traversed was a level green field of young wheat. Again the advance was ordered. Our men responded with a cheer. Poor fellows! they had already been put upon their mettle in two assaults. Exhausted, wet to the skin, muddled to their eyebrows with the stiff clay through which they had pulled,—some of them actually shoeless after their struggle across the plowed ground,—they nevertheless advanced with great grit and eagerness; for the shouting on their right meant victory. But the foe in our front was far from conquered. As our fellows came on with a dash the enemy stood his ground most courageously. That battery, now charged with canister and shrapnel, opened upon the cadets with a murderous hail the moment they uncovered. The infantry, lying behind fence-rails piled upon the ground, poured in a steady, deadly fire. At one discharge, poor Cabell, our first

sergeant, by whose side I had marched so long, fell dead, and by his side Crockett and Jones. A blanket would have covered the three. They were awfully mangled with the canister. A few steps beyond, McDowell, a mere child, sunk to his knees with a bullet through his heart. Atwill, Jefferson, Wheelwright, fell upon green-sward and expired; Shriver's sword-arm dropped helpless to his side, and "C" company thereby lost her cadet as well as her professor-captain. The men were falling right and left. The veterans on the right of the cadets seemed to waver. Ship, our commandant, fell wounded. For the first time the cadets seemed irresolute. Some one cried out, "Lie down," and all obeyed, firing from the knee—all but Evans, the ensign, who was standing bolt upright. Poor Stanard's limbs were torn asunder and he lay there bleeding to death. Some one cried out, "Fall back, and rally on Edgar's battalion." Several boys moved as if to obey; but Pizzini, orderly of "B" company, with his Italian blood at the boiling-point, cocked his gun and swore he would shoot the first man who ran. Preston, brave and inspiring, with a smile lay down upon his only arm, remarking that he would at least save that. Collona, captain of "D," was speaking words of encouragement and bidding the boys shoot close. The boys were being decimated; manifestly they must charge or retire; and charge it was. For at that moment, Henry A. Wise, our first captain, beloved of every boy in the command, sprung to his feet, shouted the charge, and led the Cadet Corps forward to the guns. The guns of the battery were served superbly; the musketry fairly rolled. The cadets reached the firm green-sward of the farmyard in which the battery was planted. The Federal infantry began to break and run behind the buildings. Before the order to "Limber up" could be obeyed our boys disabled the trails and were close upon the guns; the gunners dropped their sponges and sought safety in flight. Lieutenant Hanna hammered a burly gunner over the head with his cadet sword. Winder Garrett outran another and attacked him with his bayonet. The boys leaped on the guns, and the battery was theirs; while Evans was wildly waving the cadet colors from the top of a caisson.

A straggling fire of infantry was still kept up from the gully, now on our right flank, although the cadets could see the masses of blue retiring in confusion down the hill. Then came the command to re-form the battalion, to mark time, and to half-wheel to the right, when it advanced again, firing as it went, and did not pause until it gained the pike. The broken columns of the enemy hurried on towards

Mount Jackson, hotly pressed by our infantry and cavalry. Our artillery advanced to Rude's Hill, and shelled their confused ranks, until they passed beyond the burning bridge that spanned the Shenandoah at Mount Jackson.

We had won a victory,—not a Manassas or an Appomattox, but, for all that, a right comforting bit of news went up the pike that night to General Lee; for from where he lay, locked in the death grapple with Grant in the Wilderness, his thoughts were, doubtless, ever turning wearily and anxiously towards this flank movement in the valley.

The pursuit down the pike was more like a foot-race than a march. Our boys straggled badly, for all realized that the fight was over, and many were too exhausted to go farther. As evening fell the clouds burst away; the sun came forth; and, when night closed in, no sound of battle broke the Sabbath calm, save a solitary Napoleon gun, pounding away at the smoldering ruins of the bridge across the river. The picket-fires of the cadets were lit at beautiful Mount Airy, while the main body bivouacked upon the pike a mile below New Market.

Of a corps of 225 men we had lost 56 in killed and wounded.

Shortly before sundown, having had my head sewed up and bandaged, and having rendered such service as I could to wounded comrades, I sallied forth to procure a blanket. We had left our trappings unguarded when we stripped for action. Nobody would consent to be detailed. The result was that the camp-followers had made away with nearly all our haversacks and blankets. I entered the town and found it filled with soldiers laughing and carousing as light-heartedly as if it were a feast or holiday. A great throng of Federal prisoners was corraled in a side street, under guard. They were nearly all Germans. Every type of prisoner was there. Some affable, some defiant, some light-hearted and careless, some gloomy and dejected. One fellow in particular afforded great merriment in his quaint recital of the manner of his capture. Said he, "Dem leetle tevils mit der white vlag vas doo mutch fur us. Dey shoost smash mine head, ven I vos cry 'Zur-render' all der dime." A loud peal of laughter went up from the bystanders, among whom I recognized several cadets. His allusion to the white flag was to our colors. We had a handsome flag with a white and gilt ground and a picture of Washington. It puzzled our adversaries not a little. Several whom I have met since then tell me they could not make us out at all. Our strange colors, our diminutive size, and our unusual precision of movement made them think we were some foreign mercenary regulars.

The jeers and banter of the veterans had now ceased. We had fairly won our spurs. We could mingle with them fraternally and discuss the battle on equal terms, and we did so. Glorious fellows those veterans were. To them was due ninety-nine hundredths of the glory of the victory; yet they seemed to delight in giving all praise to "dem leetle tevils mit der white vlag." The ladies of the town also overwhelmed us with tenderness, and as for ourselves we drank in greedily the praise which made us the lions of the hour.

Leaving the village I sought the plateau where most of our losses had occurred. A little above the town, in the fatal wheat-field, I came upon the dead bodies of three cadets. One wore the chevrons of an orderly sergeant. Lying upon his face, stiff and stark, with outstretched arms, his hands had clutched and torn great tufts of soil and grass; his lips retracted; his teeth tightly locked; his face as hard as flint, with staring, bloodshot eyes. It was hard, indeed, to recognize all that remained of Cabell, who, but a few hours before, had stood first in his class as a scholar, second as a soldier, and the peer of any boy that ever lived in every trait of physical and moral manliness.

A little removed from the spot where Cabell fell, and nearer to the position of the enemy, lay McDowell. It was a sight to wring one's heart. That little boy was lying there asleep, more fit, indeed, for the cradle than the grave. He was barely sixteen, I judge, and by no means robust for his age. He was a North Carolinian. He had torn open his jacket and shirt, and, even in death, lay clutching them back, exposing a fair breast with its red wound. I had come too late. Stanard had breathed his last but a few moments before I reached the old farm-house where the battery had stood, now converted into a hospital. His body was still warm and his last messages had been words of love. Poor Jack! Playmate, roommate, friend—farewell.

Standing there, my mind sped back to the old scenes at Lexington when we were shooting together in the "Grassy Hills"; to our games and sports; to that day, one week ago, when he had knelt at the chancel and was confirmed; to the previous night at the guard-fire when he confessed to a presentiment that he would be killed; to his wistful, earnest farewell when we parted at the baggage-wagon, and my heart half reproached me for ordering him into the fight. The warm tears of youthful friendship came welling up for one I had learned to love as a brother; and now, twenty-four years later, I thank God that life's buffetings and the cold-heartedness of later struggles have not dammed the pure fountains of boyhood's friendship. A truer-hearted, braver,

better fellow never died than Jacquelin B. Stanard.

A few of us brought up a limber-chest, threw our poor boys across it, and bore their remains to a deserted storehouse in the village. The next day we buried them with the honors of war, bowed down with grief at a victory so dearly bought.

We started up the valley crestfallen and dejected. Our victory was almost forgotten in our distress for our friends and comrades dead and maimed. We were still young in the ghastly sport. But we proved apt scholars. As we moved up the valley we were not hailed as sorrowing friends, but greeted as heroes and victors. At Harrisonburg, at Staunton, at Charlottesville, everywhere, an ovation awaited us such as we did not dream of, and such as has seldom greeted any troops. The dead, and the poor fellows who were still tossing on cots of fever and delirium, were almost forgotten

by the selfish comrades whose fame their blood had bought.

We were ordered to Richmond. All our sadness disappeared. A week later the Cadet Corps, garlanded, cheered by ten thousand throats, intoxicated with praise unstinted, wheeled proudly beneath the shadow of the Washington Monument at Richmond to receive a stand of colors from the governor, the band playing lustily —

Oh! there's not a trade that's going
Worth showing, or knowing,
Like that from glory growing
For the bowld soldier boy.

The boys who formed the corps of the West Point of the Confederacy are no longer boys. Many are dead. Many fill high stations in mature manhood. Many are already gray with care. The Virginia Military Institute still survives the wreck of war. But it is not the hot-bed of war that it was in those days.

John S. Wise.

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

Annexation, or Federation ?

IT will not be difficult to array arguments against the article on "The Reorganization of the British Empire," which was published in the last number of THE CENTURY. Certain advocates of a different conclusion will prove conclusively that annexation to the United States offers Canada's only hope of coming into touch with a real national life and of becoming a part of the world's commerce and international relations, and that the American ought to be as intensely and continuously interested in this matter as in his own national politics. And the principal immediate result will be that such advocates will be stirred up to a new astonishment or perhaps indignation at the American's stolid indifference, and will be apt to attribute it to the American's ignorance of or contempt for the power and importance of the Dominion.

Nothing could be more unjust than this latter supposition, and yet it is doing very much to sap the cordial relations which ought to exist between two neighboring peoples. The anti-annexationist of Canada has a suspicion that too many Americans are engaged in contriving methods of putting an end to Canada's separate existence; the annexationist is indignant when he finds that Americans, as a rule, are not only disinterested but uninterested; and the only political friends of "the States" in the Dominion are the Gallios who care for none of these things. The American looks with dull eyes upon all schemes of annexation, not because he has any feeling of contempt for Canada, but because he cannot yet see in the schemes themselves anything that is absolutely necessary or self-developed. Place before him that which seems a natural scheme, that which is the result of natural conditions permitted to work freely, and in

ninety-nine cases out of a hundred he will take the warmest interest in it and give it his most cordial approval, even though it is quite lacking in those points of selfish advantage to the United States on which the annexationist relies so confidently.

What could be more natural than the "federation" scheme for British reconstruction, which has been before the British public for years and is now renewed in the article just mentioned? It offers to Great Britain the maintenance of every interest, legal, economic, political, and moral, which has grown up in the past and has shown itself worthy of conservation. It maintains all the ties which have held the different parts of the Empire together. It even strengthens them prodigiously by transforming the weak ties of colonialism into a true national life: so that the foreigner shall look upon Canada or Jamaica, not as temporary hangers-on of a distant island, but as component and fully recognized members of a magnificent ocean empire. It distributes the burdens of imperial taxation over the whole Empire, so that the Australian may look upon every imperial iron-clad which comes into his harbors as possibly the product of his own state's taxation, while Canadian regiments shall take their tour of duty in English or Irish cities, or at the Cape. It lessens the dangers of a new break-up of the Empire through colonial discontent; the Canada or the New South Wales of the "federation" could submit without a second thought to abandonment of its claims "by its own government," while there is now always something of a sting in such an abandonment by a home government on whose decision the colony has exercised no direct influence. It leaves to every square foot of the Empire that alternative of self-government in the present, or of the hope of self-government in the future, which is afforded by our State and Territorial