

with entire confidence, to meet their worthy antagonists in other battles. It was, however, decided by the authorities at Washington, against my earnest remonstrances, to abandon the position on the James, and the campaign. The Army of the Potomac was accordingly withdrawn, and it was not until two years

later that it again found itself under its last commander at substantially the same point on the bank of the James. It was as evident in 1862 as in 1865 that there was the true defense of Washington, and that it was on the banks of the James that the fate of the Union was to be decided.

George B. McClellan.

NOTE: The foregoing outline of the Peninsular Campaign will be supplemented in succeeding numbers by papers dealing more directly with the engagements, including contributions from Generals Fitz-John Porter, D. H. Hill, Franklin, and Longstreet. The "Recollections of a Private" will also cover the ground of the Seven Days' Battles.—ED.

MEMORANDA ON THE CIVIL WAR.

Effect of the Wind upon the Sound of Battle.

THE incident connected with the fight between the iron-clads in Hampton Roads related by Gen. R. E. Colston, where the power of the wind was sufficient to carry all sounds of the conflict away from people standing within plain sight of it, recalls several similar instances that came within my own experience while serving with the army operating along the sea-coast of the Southern States during the war. At the bombardment of the Confederate works at Port Royal, South Carolina, in November, 1861, the transport my regiment was on lay near enough in shore to give us a fine view of the whole battle; but only in some temporary lull of the wind could we hear the faintest sound of the firing. The day was a pleasant one, and the wind did not appear to be unusually strong; but I noticed then and afterward that a breeze on the coast down that way was very different from the erratic gusts and flaws I had been used to in the New England States, the whole atmosphere seeming to move in a body, giving sound no chance to travel against it, but carrying it immense distances to the leeward. People living at St. Augustine, Florida, told me afterward that the Port Royal cannonade was heard at that place, 150 miles from where the fight took place.

A portion of the siege batteries at Morris Island, South Carolina, were not more than two miles from our camp; but at times the firing from them and the enemy's replies could only be heard very faintly even at that short distance, while at others, when the wind blew from the opposite direction, the sounds were as sharp and distinct as if the battle were taking place within a few rods of us.

S. H. Prescott.

CONCORD, N. H.

The Gun-boat "Taylor" or "Tyler."

WE are permitted to print the following note bearing on a recent criticism of Rear-Admiral Walke's designation of the gun-boat under his command on the Mississippi river as the *Taylor*:

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON, February 11, 1885.

SIR: In reply to your letter of the 30th ultimo, and referring to previous correspondence, you are informed that at the time Commander John Rodgers purchased the gun-boats *A. O. Tyler* and others, he was acting under the orders of the War Department. In a com-

munication to this Department, dated June 8, 1861, he states as follows:

"I have, after consideration with General McClellan, and after inspection by Mr. Pook, the naval constructor, bought three steamboats for naval service in these waters. They were called the *A. O. Tyler*, the *Lexington*, and the *Conestoga*. The name of the first of these I will, with your permission, change to *Taylor*, a name of better augury than *Tyler*."

No action was taken by this Department concerning the changing of the name of the *A. O. Tyler*.

The Mississippi flotilla was not turned over to the Navy Department until the 1st of October, 1862. Prior to that date the officers and enlisted men, except the regular officers of the navy detailed for duty therein, were paid by Quartermaster Wise, under authority of the War Department.

I am unable to inform you what name the accounting officers of the Treasury recognized in settling the accounts of the vessel referred to. Very respectfully,

W. E. CHANDLER,
Secretary of the Navy.

Colonel A. H. MARKLAND, Washington, D. C.

Col. Markland has ascertained that on the records of the Quartermaster-General's Department the name of the vessel is sometimes written *Taylor*, but more generally *Tylor* or *Tyler*. He claims that as no authorization of the change of name by Admiral Rodgers has been found the boat should go down to history as the *Tyler*.—EDITOR.

Errata.

THE captain who, with his men, volunteered to go on the *Carondelet's* perilous passage of Island Number Ten (as described by Admiral Walke on p. 442 of the January number), was not Hollenstein but Hottenstein.—In the papers on "Shiloh" in the February number, the name of General John C. Breckinridge (*sic* in his autograph) was misprinted Breckenridge, which, however, is not without the apparent sanction of Dr. Thomas's "Dictionary of Biography" (Lippincott). The Breckenridge branch of this eminent Kentucky family (including the Reverend Doctor Robert J. Breckenridge, uncle of the General) were, we believe, staunch supporters of the Union.—A manifest error occurs on page 739 of the March number, in Colonel Wood's article on "The First Fight of Iron-clads," where Norfolk is said to be "within two miles" of Fortress Monroe. The distance, as shown by the map in the same number, is twelve to fifteen miles.—EDITOR.

MEMORANDA ON THE CIVIL WAR.

General Donaldson's Fortunate Mistake.

PRIOR to the battle of Nashville, Major-General James L. Donaldson (who won honors in the Mexican war, and who died in the spring of 1886) was quartermaster under General Thomas. He once told me the following incident.

Having occasion to purchase mules for the army, he ordered a person in whom he had confidence to visit the contiguous Northern States, inadvertently saying to him, "Buy as many as you can"—not supposing he would be able to secure more than a few thousand at the most. Some weeks afterward, just before the attack upon Hood's army, General Donaldson, on meeting his agent, inquired how many mules he had been able to secure. To the amazement of the general, he was informed that *twenty thousand* or more had been obtained. Upon which the astonished general exclaimed, "I am a ruined man! I shall be court-martialed and driven from the army for not limiting you in the purchase. You have procured many times more than I had any idea or intention of purchasing; but the fault is mine, not yours. I ought to have been particular in my orders." In an extremely disheartened state he went to his home, believing that such a thoughtless act on his part could not be overlooked by the commanding general.

He had scarcely reached his house before a messenger came from General Thomas with an order for General Donaldson to come immediately to headquarters. This seemed to be the sealing of his fate, and in a state of trepidation bordering on frenzy he appeared before General Thomas, whom he found in a mood, apparently, of great depression. Soon after Donaldson had entered his presence General Thomas said, "Donaldson, how many mules have you?" With some perturbation he replied, "Upwards of twenty-five thousand." "Twenty-five thousand, did you say?" repeated the general. "Is it possible that you have this number? Donaldson, accept my most heartfelt thanks; *you have saved this army!* I can now have transportation, and can fight Hood, and will do so at once."

R. H. Eddy.

General Grant on the Terms at Vicksburg.

THE following letter, dated New York, November 30, 1884, not hitherto printed, was addressed to General Marcus J. Wright, Agent of the War Department for the collection of Confederate Records, by whose permission it is here printed from the original manuscript:

DEAR GENERAL: Herewith I send you General Pemberton's account of the surrender of Vicksburg. As the written matter is "Copy," and supposing you have what it has been copied from, I do not return it, though I will if you inform me that you want it.

A gentleman from Philadelphia sent me the same matter I return herewith, last summer. I probably left the paper at Long Branch, but do not know certainly. All there is of importance in the matter of the

surrender of Vicksburg is contained in the correspondence between General Pemberton and myself. The fact is, General Pemberton, being a Northern man commanding a Southern army, was not at the same liberty to surrender an army that a man of Southern birth would be. In adversity or defeat he became an object of suspicion, and felt it. Bowen was a Southern man all over, and knew the garrison of Vicksburg had to surrender or be captured, and knew it was best to stop further effusion of blood by surrendering. He did all he could to bring about that result.

Pemberton is mistaken in several points. It was Bowen that proposed that he and A. J. Smith should talk over the matter of the surrender and submit their views. Neither Pemberton nor I objected; but we were not willing to commit ourselves to accepting such terms as they might propose. In a short time those officers returned. Bowen acted as spokesman. What he said was substantially this: the Confederate Army was to be permitted to march out with the honors of war, carrying with them their arms, colors, and field batteries. The National troops were then to march in and occupy the city, and retain the siege guns, small arms not in the hands of the men, all public property remaining. Of course I rejected the terms at once. I did agree, however, before we separated, to write Pemberton what terms I would give. The correspondence is public and speaks for itself. I held no council of war. Hostilities having ceased, officers and men soon became acquainted with the reason why. Curiosity led officers of rank—most all the general officers—to visit my headquarters with the hope of getting some news. I talked with them very freely about the meeting between General Pemberton and myself, our correspondence, etc. But in no sense was it a council of war. I was very glad to give the garrison of Vicksburg the terms I did. There was a cartel in existence at that time which required either party to exchange or parole all prisoners either at Vicksburg or at a point on the James river within ten days after captures or as soon thereafter as practicable. This would have used all the transportation we had for a month. *The men had behaved so well that I did not want to humiliate them. I believed that consideration for their feelings would make them less dangerous foes during the continuance of hostilities, and better citizens after the war was over.*

I am very much obliged to you, General, for your courtesy in sending me these papers. Very truly yours,

U. S. Grant.

The Cause of a Silent Battle.

IN the interesting articles upon the Civil War which have appeared in *THE CENTURY*, reference has been made (page 764, March, and page 150, May, 1885) to the supposed effect of the wind in preventing, as in the case of the heavy cannonading between the *Merrimac* and *Congress*, the transference of sound-waves a distance of not over three and one-half miles over water; and

at another time, during the bombardments of the Confederate works at Port Royal, a distance of not more than two miles. "The day was pleasant," says the observer, "and the wind did not appear unusually strong." Yet "people living in St. Augustine, Florida, told me afterward that the Port Royal cannonade was heard at that place, 150 miles from the fight."

It occurs to me that the effect of the wind is greatly exaggerated in these instances. How an ordinary breeze could "carry all sounds of the conflict away from people standing within plain sight of it" and yet carry the same sound 150 miles in the opposite direction, is rather too strongly opposed to scientific fact to remain on record undisputed.

In all of these cases, is it not probable that the varying density of the air had much more to do with this strange acoustic opacity than the wind?

These statements call to mind the prevalent belief that fog, snow, hail, and rain, indeed any conditions of the atmosphere that render it optically opaque, render it also acoustically opaque; which up to the time of Mr. Tyndall's experiments in the English Channel, off Dover, had scarcely been questioned. His tests made in 1873-74 proved conclusively, as is now well known, that on clear days the air may be composed of differently heated masses, saturated in different degrees with aqueous vapors, which produce exactly the deadening effects described above.

I submit as a case in point a similar effect, and its explanation as furnished by Mr. R. G. H. Kean to Professor Tyndall, and considered by the latter of sufficient value to find a place in his published works:

"On the afternoon of June 28, 1862, I rode, in company with General G. W. Randolph, then Secretary of War of the Confederate States, to Price's house, about nine miles from Richmond, the evening before General Lee had begun his attack on McClellan's army, by crossing the Chickahominy about four miles above Price's, and driving in McClellan's right wing.

"The battle of Gaines's Mill was fought the afternoon to which I refer. The valley of the Chickahominy is about one and a half miles wide from hill-top to hill-top. Price's is on one hill-top, that nearest to Richmond; Gaines's farm, just opposite, is on the other, reaching back in a plateau to Cold Harbor.

"Looking across the valley I saw a good deal of the battle, Lee's right resting in the valley, the Federal left wing the same. My line of vision was nearly in the line of the lines of battle. I saw the advance of the Confederates, their repulse two or three times, and in the gray of the evening the final retreat of the Federal forces. I distinctly saw the musket-fire of both lines, the smoke, individual discharges, the flash of the guns. I saw batteries of artillery on both sides come into action and fire rapidly. Several field-batteries on each side were plainly in sight. Many more were hid by the timber which bounded the range of vision.

"Yet looking for nearly two hours, from about five to seven P. M. on a midsummer afternoon, at a battle in which at least fifty thousand men were actually engaged, and doubtless at least one hundred pieces of field-artillery, through an atmosphere optically as limpid as possible, not a single sound of the battle was audible to General Randolph and myself. I remarked it to him at the time as astonishing.

"Between me and the battle was the deep, broad valley of the Chickahominy, partly a swamp shaded from the declining sun by the hills and forest in the west (my side). Part of the valley on each side of the swamp was cleared: some in cultivation, some not. Here were conditions capable of providing several belts of air, varying in the amount of watery vapor (and probably in temperature), arranged like laminæ at right angles to the acoustic waves as they came from the battle-field to me."

John B. De Motte.

DE PAUW UNIVERSITY, INDIANA.

A Reply to Colonel Mosby by General Robertson.

IN THE May number of THE CENTURY Colonel John S. Mosby has seen proper to make mention of my command in the cavalry of the Army of Northern Vir-

ginia during the Gettysburg campaign; and as a means of defending General J. E. B. Stuart from an imaginary attack has misrepresented a portion of General Stuart's cavalry. Colonel Mosby knows very little of Stuart's character if he supposes that so true a soldier would have silently passed over such disobedience of orders as Colonel Mosby imputes to me. The fact that Colonel Mosby has "lately discovered documents in the archives" at Washington, which are to "set at rest" something that has not been set in motion, will not excuse him for attempting in 1887 to prove by argument that Stuart in 1863 did not know whether I had obeyed his orders in the Gettysburg campaign.

The orders left with me by General Stuart, dated June 24th, were exactly obeyed by me, to his entire satisfaction as well as to that of General R. E. Lee. These orders embraced the duty of holding Ashby's and Snicker's gaps, to prevent Hooker from interrupting the march of Lee's army; and "in case of a move by the enemy on Warrenton," to counteract it if possible. I was also ordered when I withdrew from the gaps to "withdraw to the west side of the Shenandoah," to cross the Potomac where Lee crossed, and to "follow the army, keeping on its right and rear."

The only road by which the orders (which particularly specified the avoidance of "turnpikes" on account of the difficulty and delay of shoeing horses) could be complied with, carried my command to Martinsburg; at which place, and not in the gaps of the mountains, as Colonel Mosby insinuates, a courier from General Lee met me. My command was hurried from there to Chambersburg and thence by forced march, on the night of July 2d, to Cashtown, where it arrived at about 10 A. M. on July 3d. Ascertaining at Cashtown that General Pleasonton was moving from Emmetsburg directly on the baggage and ammunition trains of General Lee's army, which were exposed to his attack without defense of any kind, I pressed forward with my command and intercepted the advance of General Pleasonton, under the command of Major Samuel H. Starr. A severe and gallant fight was made at Fairfield, in which Major Starr of the 6th United States Regular Cavalry was wounded and captured with a large portion of his staff, while his regiment was severely damaged. Adjutant John Allan and three others of the 6th Virginia Cavalry were killed, 19 were wounded, and 5 were reported missing.

That fight at Fairfield, on the last day of the fighting at Gettysburg, refutes the imputation intended by Colonel Mosby to be conveyed in his remark that my command "did not reach the battle-field."

From that fight at Fairfield I was ordered by General R. E. Lee to cover his wagon trains, and in obeying the same, my command was engaged in repeated skirmishes, particularly at Funkstown and Hagerstown, after which it returned to Virginia,—the last command that recrossed the Potomac.

If there existed the least ground for Colonel Mosby's statements, there would be found among the reports of general officers some reference to the imputed dereliction of duty on my part. As no such reference is made, and no imputation of disobedience of orders intimated, it may be assumed that neither Stuart nor Lee had any reason to complain of my command.

B. H. Robertson.