

MEMORANDA ON THE CIVIL WAR.

Was Chattanooga Fought as Planned?

EDITOR OF THE CENTURY MAGAZINE:

From the article entitled "General Grant," in your very interesting May edition, I make the following extracts having reference to the battle of Chattanooga:

"Chattanooga came next. This was the most elaborate of all Grant's battles, the most like a game between skillful players. Few battles in any war have ever been fought so strictly according to the plan. . . . This battle more closely resembled those of European commanders and European fields than any other great engagement of the American war. . . . And, while undoubtedly the contingencies that were unforeseen contributed to the result,—for Grant always knew how to avail himself of unexpected emergencies,—it still remains that this battle was fought as nearly according to the plan laid down in advance as any recorded in the schools."

Holding, at the time of the battle of Chattanooga, the position of chief engineer of the Army of the Cumberland under General Thomas, and being at the same time chief engineer of the Military Division of the Mississippi under General Grant, it was absolutely necessary that I should know the plan to be able to direct the engineering operations. I desire to give to your readers the original plan as "laid down in advance" and a sketch of the battle as fought, for comparison with the statements which I have quoted.

The original plan of the battle of Chattanooga was to turn Bragg's right flank on Missionary Ridge, thereby throwing his army away from its base and natural line of retreat. This, the first thing to be done, was confided to Sherman, and the plan was not adopted till after Sherman had carefully examined the situation and asserted that he could do the work assigned to him. Thomas was to hold the center and right of our front, to cooperate with Sherman, and attack when the proper time arrived.

The preliminary movements were simple and can be given in few words. Sherman was to effect a lodgment on the left bank of the Tennessee River, just below the mouth of the South Chickamauga Creek. This was to be done by landing a brigade of troops from the boats, which were to be used in the bridge to be thrown at that point across the Tennessee for the crossing of Sherman's army. One division of Sherman's army was to march up the Lookout valley, on the extreme right of our operations, and threaten a pass in Lookout Mountain, ostensibly to turn Bragg's left flank. The march was to be made in daylight, in sight of the enemy, and after dark the division was to retrace its steps, cross the Tennessee at Brown's Ferry, and join the main body of Sherman's force, which was to be massed during the night preceding the intended attack at the point where the bridge was to be laid. Hooker with his small force was to hold Lookout valley and threaten Lookout Mountain at the point where it strikes the Tennessee. This general plan was filled in with all necessary details, embracing all the initial movements of the whole force under

Grant. At the very outset began the changes in this plan. The division which made the threat against Bragg's left flank on returning found the bridge at Brown's Ferry impassable; and as it could not join Sherman, it was turned over to Hooker, who was ordered, with his command thus strengthened, to assault the works on his front on Lookout Mountain. This was a most decided change from the plan "laid down in advance."

On the evening of the first day the results could be summed up as follows: Sherman had crossed the Tennessee River at the point selected, but had not turned Bragg's right flank. Thomas had drawn out the Army of the Cumberland facing Missionary Ridge, had connected with Sherman, but had had no fighting other than skirmishing varied by some artillery practice. Hooker had carried Lookout Mountain after a fight which has been celebrated in song as "The battle above the clouds." This victory of Hooker's compelled Bragg to withdraw his troops from the Chattanooga Valley, and retreat or concentrate for a battle on Missionary Ridge. On the morning of the second day Hooker was ordered by Thomas to march for and carry the Rossville Gap in Missionary Ridge, and as soon as that was done to send an aide or courier to him, in order that he might then make the assault of the "Ridge" with the Army of the Cumberland. Sherman with severe fighting continued his efforts to reach the crest of Missionary Ridge. As the day wore on, and without news from Hooker, Thomas became anxious, but could give no order to assault the works on his front till one at least of the enemy's flanks had been turned.

Finally, in the afternoon General Grant sent orders directly to the division commanders of the Army of the Cumberland to move forward and carry the rifle-pits in their front at the base of Missionary Ridge. This was very easily done, and after capturing the rifle-pits the soldiers, seeing that they could not remain there under the fire from the crest of the ridge, and having no intention of giving up any ground won by them, demanded to be led up the hill to storm the works on the crest, which was successfully done, and Bragg's headquarters were in their possession just before the sun went down on the second day of the battle. This assault was, of course, the crisis of the whole battle, and the successful carrying of Missionary Ridge was doubtless due in a measure to the position of Sherman and the threatening movement of Hooker.

The battle was then ended and nothing left but a retreat by one and a pursuit by the other opposing general. A condensed statement of the history of the original plan and the battle of Chattanooga as fought is this: The original plan contemplated the turning of Bragg's right flank, which was *not done*. The secondary plan of Thomas looked toward following up the success of Hooker at Lookout Mountain by turning the left flank of Bragg, and then an attack by Thomas along his entire front. The Rossville Gap was not carried in time to be of more than secondary importance in the battle.

The assault on the center before either flank was turned was never seriously contemplated, and was done without plan, without orders, and as above stated.

General Grant won a great victory at Chattanooga which was of incalculable benefit to the country, and it is worse than useless to attempt to cover his reputation with pinchbeck by such statements as "Few battles in any war have ever been fought so strictly according to the plan," "It still remains that this battle was fought as nearly according to the plans laid down in advance as any recorded in the schools," and "This battle more

closely resembled those of European commanders and European fields than any other great engagement of the American war"; for, like plaster ornaments on a fine façade, they are easily knocked off, and are liable to mar the real beauty of the front in their fall.

There were, however, during our great war some battles which, so far as my information and knowledge go, were fought strictly in accordance with the original plans, and these should not have escaped the notice of one who desires to write history.

June 1, 1885.

Wm. Farrar Smith.

TRANSFORMATION.

"GIVE me the wine of happiness," I cried,
 "The bread of life!—Oh ye benign, unknown,
 Immortal powers!—I crave them for my own,
 I am athirst, I will not be denied
 Though Hell were up in arms!"—No sound replied,
 But turning back to my rude board and lone,
 My soul, confounded, there beheld—a stone,
 Pale water in a shallow cup beside!
 With gushing tears, in utter hopelessness,
 I stood and gazed. Then rose a voice that spoke,—
 "God gave this, too, and what He gives will bless!"
 And 'neath the hands that trembling took and broke,
 Lo, truly a sweet miracle divine,
 The stone turned bread, the water ruby wine!

Stuart Sterne.

THE CHAUTAUQUA LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC CIRCLE.

ONE hears of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle in all sorts of unexpected places. What is it? Can an old hack, used to condensation, tell in twenty-five hundred words? Let us try.

1. It is based on a plan of home-reading in regular system. At this moment it consists of about one hundred thousand readers, more or less, who are reading in the system proposed. Most of these are in America, some are in Japan, and the rest are elsewhere, in Europe, Asia, Africa, the islands of the ocean, or tossed upon the sea in ships.

2. The reading is selected and arranged for men and women, not boys and girls. The average age of the readers in the Circle is probably above thirty-five years.

3. The course of reading is in the English language.

4. It is arranged for four years,—supposing

at the least, say, five hours' reading a week. But it is so elastic, above this minimum, that a member of the Circle receives instructions and suggestions for a much wider range; and in fact, I think, most members read much more than five hours a week within the broad directions of the course.

5. It follows, to a certain extent, the outlines of an old-fashioned college course, omitting the mathematics entirely. Where it is followed with the supplementary reading, it gives a student much such a general knowledge of literature, physical and moral science, and mental philosophy, as in an old-fashioned college the average student received. But it makes no attempt to give the knowledge of ancient or foreign languages which he receives, or that of mathematics.

At this point the professors in old-fashioned colleges hold up their hands in holy horror,