

and connecting with the Excelsior Brigade. As the command came into position, it covered the nose or apex of the angle with the Rhode Island regiment, the 10th Massachusetts extending along the right face.

The brigade was scarcely in position when the Confederates advanced to the attack, the ground being extremely favorable for their purpose. On their side of the works it was wooded, and, in addition, scarcely forty yards to the rear of the fortifications was a hollow or a ravine which formed a natural siege approach. In that ravine, almost within pistol-shot of the Union lines, they were enabled to form columns of assault entirely screened from view, and the resulting attack had the appearance of lines of battle suddenly springing from the bosom of the earth. Three times in rapid succession their columns formed and rushed upon the angle held by Edwards and his nine hundred men, and as often did the deliberate fire of the Fourth Brigade repel the attack with terrible slaughter. To the right of Edwards's position, however, the defense was not so successful; the Union troops were driven back from the intrenchments, a force of Confederates crossing the works and taking position in a piece of woods, which gave them an enfilading fire on Edwards's right, so severe and well directed that it threw his 10th Regiment into confusion. It was at this time that Upton's brigade came upon the field and, in the words of that officer himself, encountered so severe a fire that he was unable to occupy the intrenchments, but resting his left upon them, near Edwards's right, his brigade lay down and opened fire.

Thus three assaults had been repulsed by Edwards's brigade before any other troops of the Sixth Corps came upon the field. As soon as the development of the Union line to the right relieved the flank fire somewhat, the 10th Regiment was returned to its place in the works, and throughout the remainder of that memorable day the brigade held its position with a fire so deadly and well directed that no hostile lines of battle could live to cross the few yards between the works and the ravine spoken of. Once, indeed, by the use of a white flag the Confederates came near accomplishing by stratagem what they had failed to do by force of arms. This emblem of peace being displayed in front of the Fourth Brigade, an officer ranking Edwards, but himself ranked by General Eustis, who was present, unjustifiably ordered the Fourth Brigade to cease firing. Instantly the purpose of the movement was shown by the dash of the Confederate line of battle for the coveted works. Fortunately, however, Edwards and his command were on the alert, and repulsed the attack, but not until the hostile colors were for a moment planted on the works,—the only instance during the day in which anything like a line of battle was enabled to advance so far at that point.

Near night the brigade was relieved, but the 37th Regiment was almost immediately ordered back to hold the works which had been unceremoniously vacated by a regiment of the Second Corps out of ammunition. The guns of the 37th also were empty, but the brave fellows pushed their bayonets under the head log, and thus held the works until a fresh supply of ammunition could be procured, when the firing was resumed and continued until 3 o'clock on the morning of the 13th.

This regiment was thus in action continually for more

than twenty hours, during which time it fired over four hundred rounds per man. At one time its guns became so foul that they could no longer be used, many of them bursting in the hands of the men. As it was impossible to relieve the line, a regiment from the Second Corps exchanged guns with the 37th, enabling the latter to continue their fire without interruption. It was in front of the right wing of this regiment and almost directly in the rear of the apex that the oak-tree, twenty-one inches in diameter, was cut down by bullets and fell within the Confederate lines.* I believe every regiment that fought anywhere in that part of the field claims to have shot down this particular tree; but in truth no single organization is entitled to all the credit. Certainly the Fourth Brigade, and especially its 37th Regiment, may claim the lion's share. Not only was this command engaged longer than any other, but all day the fire of the entire brigade was delivered under the head log, deliberately and well directed, and from the position of the troops a large portion of their fire concentrated at this point. Another fact, which would seem to settle the matter, was that the tree fell during the night, near midnight in fact, and hours after the firing had practically ceased on all parts of the line save at this vital point.

James L. Bowen.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

The Lost War Maps of the Confederates

IN several published articles, and in several books by Confederate generals and civilians, there have been severe criticisms (some just and some unjust) in regard to the want of suitable maps for the guidance of our commanders. General D. H. Hill in *THE CENTURY*, and General Dick Taylor and Mr. Jefferson Davis in their books, have made special mention of this want, and General Long in his recent "Memoirs of Robert E. Lee" comes to the defense of that distinguished general from this implied blame, and remarks that "the want of maps should be placed where it properly belongs,—with the war-directing authority at Richmond," and he further states that "the blunders complained of were more the result of inattention to orders and want of proper energy on the part of a few subordinate commanders than any lack of knowledge of the country." These remarks of General Long are substantially true. The writer has the best of reasons from personal knowledge and observation, and from an interview with General Lee a little after daybreak on Sunday morning, June 29th, 1862, for confirming the truth of the latter remarks as to "inattention to orders and want of proper energy," in this particular campaign up to that date. The escape of McClellan's army from White Oak Swamp was undoubtedly due to these short-comings, and I am persuaded that General Long and others have proved conclusively that the same cause prevented the concentration of Lee's army at the proper time before Gettysburg and occasioned its defeat there. It is one of the many failings of humanity to shift blame from one shoulder to another, as it is also to claim the merit of success where it is not due. Any simpleton can now untie a Gordian knot, knowing how Alexander did it.

* Several trees were cut down.—See foot-note, page 306, of *THE CENTURY* magazine for June, 1887.—EDITOR.

It is true that there were no maps of any account in existence at the time when General Lee assumed the command, that were of use to the Army of Northern Virginia, June 1st, 1862. Incomplete tracings or fragments of the old "Nine-Sheet" map of Virginia were probably all that our commanders had for guidance. General Long has, therefore, seemingly made an error in asserting in his note at the close of chapter ten of his book that the map accompanying that chapter was "used by General Lee during this campaign," as will be seen by reference to the indorsements on the map itself. The "Seven Days' Fight" occurred in June-July, 1862. This map was approved by me April 3d, and was "sent from the Engineer Bureau with letter of April 4th, 1863." It may, as alleged in the note, have been *filed* subsequent to these dates, but it was not in existence at the time stated by General Long, as will be seen further on.

Up to this period the blame, if any is due, must lie with the "war-directing power at Richmond." It is probable that weightier matters filled the minds of the higher authorities at this time, and that too much reliance was placed by commanders in the field in the efficiency of local guides and the insane and ridiculous notion that was affected that one Southern man could lick three Yankees under any and all circumstances; and besides, our armies as yet had not had sufficient battlings and unnecessary losses of men, to develop the indispensable necessity of a more intimate knowledge of topographical details of regions over which troops must be manœuvred. The march up the peninsula from Yorktown, the battle of Fair Oaks and Seven Pines, Jackson's collision with Hill's line of march from Mechanicsville to Gaines's Mill, and the whole seven days' campaign brought out this fact in strong colors, bloody colors, at Beaver Dam Creek.

One of the first things that engaged General Lee's attention on taking command of the army was the organization of some plan for procuring accurate maps for his own use and that of his commanders. A few days after this event, on the 3d or 4th of June, the writer was sought by Major Walter H. Stevens, Chief Engineer of the army at that time, and Major Jasper S. Whiting, his associate, and was informed that they had been sent from headquarters by General Lee to find a suitable person to take charge of a topographical organization which he was desirous of having formed as soon as possible, and proceed to the field, as he found no maps of consequence on taking command of the army; and as maps were indispensable, no means must be spared to procure them. I was asked if I would undertake the duty and on what terms. They were informed that I had an application for the appointment to a captaincy in the Engineer Corps, favorably indorsed by the President, which for several months had been conveniently pigeon-holed in the Engineer Bureau, and that if they would procure that appointment I would accept it and proceed immediately to work. It was done by order of General Lee on recommendation of those officers, and my commission was dated and received on June 6th. Two or three surveying parties furnished with the necessary instruments were immediately organized and started from Richmond as a center, to radiate thence to the picket-lines of the army, from Meadow Bridge around to James River, each party taking an allotted sector of that circumscribed

space. This work had not sufficiently far advanced to be of any use in June, for no part of the region beyond our lines was accessible to survey until June 30th, when orders were given to follow in the wake of our army and extend the surveys as fast and as far as possible. The field work was mapped as fast as practicable, but as the army soon changed its location, more immediate attention was given to other localities. Therefore, this map in question was dated 1862-3: it was not available as complete until the spring of 1863. Other parties, soon after these first ones were started, were sent into Hanover and Spotsylvania counties, and as fast as possible other parties, amounting in all to about thirteen, were formed and sent into other counties of northern and north-eastern portions of Virginia, until in the course of time detailed surveys were made and at the close of the contest nearly all the work was mapped, from the western part of Fauquier and Rappahannock counties to Wilmington, North Carolina; from the strategic lines on the eastward to the Piedmont region of Virginia; and down the valley of Virginia as far as the Potomac River in Jefferson and Berkeley counties; and into south-western Virginia as far as Smyth county; and nearly all the counties south of James River east of Lynchburg unoccupied by the Federal forces. The surveys in North Carolina embraced a considerable belt on each side of the Weldon and Wilmington R. R. The exact limits of these extensive surveys can not now be recalled, for these maps have all been lost.

The general plan of operations was adopted of placing full parties in each county, and maps of each county thus successively surveyed in detail were constructed on a comparatively large scale, giving full credit to heads of field corps in the titles; and also general maps, one north and one south of James River, were prepared on a smaller scale, preserving all the details. So great was the demand for maps occasioned by frequent changes in the situation of the armies, that it became impossible by the usual method of tracings to supply them. I conceived the plan of doing this work by photography, though expert photographers pronounced it impracticable, in fact impossible. To me it was an original idea, though I believe not a new one, but not in practical use. Traced copies were prepared on common tracing-paper in very black India ink, and from these sharp negatives by sun-printing were obtained, and from these negatives copies were multiplied by exposure to the sun in frames made for the purpose. The several sections, properly toned, were pasted together in their order, and formed the general map, or such portions of it as were desired; it being the policy, as a matter of prudence against capture, to furnish no one but the commanding general and corps commanders with the entire map of a given region.

From this statement it will be seen that to General Lee is due the credit of promptly originating methodical means for procuring accurate maps to supply the want that has been, by implication mainly, so unfavorably commented on. Many maps that grace various memoirs, and personal recollections, and descriptions of campaigns and battle-fields in Virginia have their basis in the maps made as above described, though accredited to others. "I could a tale unfold" in regard to some of these stolen maps, but *cui bono? Nil proprium ducas quod mutari potest.*

General Woodruff, United States Engineer, orally, and Generals Lee and Gilmer and several other persons have from time to time, by letter, inquired of me the fate of these maps. It may be of public interest to give all the information I have concerning them, for it does not seem to be known how extensive, how complete, and how valuable these surveys were. It was gratifying to my pride to learn that the United States Engineer Bureau was desirous of obtaining our maps, and to hear one of the distinguished officers attached thereto remark that our maps were better than their own. His expressed reasons in nowise reflected on his own service, but accounted for it from the fact that no regular system could be maintained in consequence of the frequent change of commanders of the Army of the Potomac. On Sunday, April 2d, the night of the evacuation of Richmond, about 10 o'clock P. M., I placed in charge of an engineer officer and a draughtsman, upon an *archive* train bound for Raleigh, North Carolina, a box or two containing all the original maps and other archives of my office, except the field notebooks, which were burned by order of my superior. This officer in charge never has reported to me the fate of this property, nor his own fate. It is supposed it was burned with the train, or pillaged, for fragments of some of the maps were reported to have been seen along that route in North Carolina. Nineteen years after the shipment of this property I received a package of worthless securities, personal property, from a son of General Gilmer in Savannah. He could give no information as to how this package came into his father's possession. I presume General Gilmer did not have them in 1867-8, when I saw him in Savannah, for he did not mention them. This package was in one of those boxes, my camp-desk. Who sent those papers to General Gilmer? and did the sender retain the maps and correspondence? There were many autograph letters from various generals acknowledging with thanks the receipt of maps, with commendations as to their completeness and accuracy. I should like to recover these letters. The *negatives* of the general maps, to divide the chances of capture, I gave to my private secretary. Some time after, he informed me that he had carried them with him in his flight as far as Macon, Georgia, and on his return, for greater security, had placed them in a lady's trunk, a fellow-passenger's. Hearing *en route* that all baggage of returning fugitives was to be examined at Augusta, Georgia (which proved to be a false rumor), he incontinently burned them *to save them*. This is the extent of my information concerning the fate of these valuable maps. On learning this sad fate

of all the evidences of our three years' labor, and that my modicum of glory was thus dissipated in thin air, my feelings were akin to those of Audubon when he learned that the rats had destroyed his labor of years in the wilderness of woods; or, more congenially, perhaps, to those of General Magruder on being informed in advance of written orders that he was to make preparations for evacuating his lines before Yorktown at an early hour. Raising himself on one elbow, when he was roused from his slumbers to hear the verbal order to that purport from General Johnston, he remarked with mingled astonishment and disgust, in that peculiar manner of speech which all who knew him will recognize: "Stevens (Stevens) *this tranthit gloria pe-nin-thu-le.*"

Albert H. Campbell.

CHARLESTON, W. VA., May 17th, 1887.

General Robert B. Potter and the Assault
at the Petersburg Crater.

IN THE CENTURY magazine for September (page 764), in an account of the Explosion of the Mine at Petersburg, it is stated that

"each of the three commanders of the white divisions presented reasons why his division should *not* lead the assault. General Burnside determined that they should 'pull straws,' and Ledlie was the (to him) unlucky victim. He, however, took it good-naturedly."

There are the best reasons for saying that this statement is incorrect, and among them is a letter written by General Robert B. Potter to one who especially enjoyed his confidence, in which he says:

"My division expected and was anxious to have the advance, because they knew the ground, had an interest in the work, were in the best condition, and known to be the best division in the corps."

That he did not have this task committed to him was well known by his friends to have been the one great disappointment of General Potter's army life, and there are those who have often heard him say that, so far from there having been reluctance on the part of any of the division commanders of the Ninth Corps to take the leading place in the charge, they were all desirous of that honor. The question was decided by General Burnside in order that in the choice there should not seem to be any favoritism, and, especially, to avoid that appearance of partiality for a very dear personal friend which would not improbably have been said to have influenced him had he chosen General Potter.

Henry C. Potter.

NEW YORK, Nov. 5th, 1887.



A CAVALRY ORDERLY. (FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.)