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Military Order



of the

Loyal Legion

of the



United States



COMMANDERY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.



WAR PAPER 57.

The East Tennessee Campaign,
September, 1863.





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WAR PAPERS.

57

The East Tennessee Campaign, September, 1863.

PREPARED BY COMPANION

Lieutenant-Colonel

GILBERT C. KNIFFIN,

U. S. Volunteers,

AND

READ AT THE STATED MEETING OF JANUARY 4, 1905.

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The East Tennessee Campaign, September, 1863.

On September 19th and 20th, 1863, the battle of Chickamauga was fought.

It was in many respects the wildest, fiercest conflict of the war.

It was to the West what Gettysburg was to the East. It extinguished the last hope of the Confederates of overthrowing and destroying the Union Army which was being driven into the heart of the Confederacy, even as Gettysburg dispelled the rebel dream of Northern conquest and plunder, when with a mighty effort the Army of the Potomac hurled back to the line of the Rappahannock the Army of Northern Virginia.

Chattanooga, the objective point of the campaign, was, in strategic importance, of more value to the Confederates than any other point that had surrendered to our victorious arms, with the possible exception of Vicksburg, for it was the key to the interior of the Confederacy, the converging point of the two greatest lines of railway that bore the Confederate supply trains to its armies in the East. It was the citadel of Georgia, the gateway to the South, thrown open by the prowess of the Army of the Cumberland, and held open by the courage and brawn of its stalwart soldiers until the leisurely march of reinforcements enabled them to beat back the envious spectators of their occupancy of the stronghold, from the heights of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge.

But it is not with the battle of Chickamauga that this paper has to deal.

General Rosecrans, moving forward from Middle Tennessee, whence he had expelled the Confederates in July, under imperative orders from the War Department, to the capture of Chattanooga, found at the outset of the campaign that it could only succeed by threatening the enemy's communications southward. To accomplish this purpose so thoroughly as to compel the evacuation of Chattanooga it would be necessary for him to cross the Tennessee river below the city with his entire army and supply trains and construct roads over two mountain ranges, thus virtually cutting loose from his base of supplies at Nashville and Murfreesboro. In this condition it is not, of course, surprising that he felt apprehensive as to the support afforded to his flanks, as well as to his rear in case the enemy, declining battle, should move via Gunter's Landing or Whitesburg, on Nashville. He therefore called upon the War Department to direct General Burnside to close down upon his left and General Grant to protect his right and rear. As time passed and information reached him that Bragg's Army was being heavily reinforced, General Halleck appears to have used every effort to secure co-operation from the Armies of the Ohio and the Tennessee, with what success it is the object of this paper to show.

The battle was fought south of Chattanooga. If, in spite of the valor of the Union Army, it had been defeated by the overwhelming odds that were arrayed against it, its regiments disorganized and captured, or driven into the mountains, Chattanooga retaken and the Army of the Cumberland eliminated from the arena of war, the fault would not have justly lain at the door of its heroic commander, but the candid historian, studying, with no political bias, the records of

that campaign, would have attributed the disaster to the absence of a common commander of all the forces in the field in Tennessee and northern Mississippi from the field of conflict. There is no doubt that had General Halleck's headquarters been at Chattanooga instead of at Washington, Hurlbutt's Corps from the Army of the Tennessee and Hartsuff's Corps from the Army of the Ohio would have been on the field of Chickamauga.

General Boynton, in his masterly description of the Chattanooga campaign and its attendant battles, says: "There had been time enough after General Rosecrans' explanation of his proposed plan of campaign to force General Burnside with twenty thousand men down from East Tennessee and to have brought all needed strength for the other flank from the Army of the Tennessee on the Mississippi." I leave to the survivors of the latter army, who have usually been found equal to any emergency, to explain why, in disobedience of orders from General Halleck, one hundred thousand men were permitted to lie idle on the banks of the Mississippi while the Army of the Cumberland was engaged in a death grapple on Chickamauga Creek, with not only its old antagonist, but with Confederate troops withdrawn from the front of Meade in Virginia and others paroled by Grant at Vicksburg, and when the appearance of even one army corps at Rome, Georgia, would have held back reinforcements to Bragg's army from the south and east via Atlanta. The failure of General Burnside to reinforce General Rosecrans is a theme that may interest the student of the joint campaign which resulted in the permanent occupation of Cumberland Gap, Knoxville and Chattanooga.

The East Tennessee campaign of August and September, 1863, under the light of the record, embraces not only the

movements of General Rosecrans, but to an equal extent those of General Burnside. The Army of the Ohio on duty in Kentucky consisted of the Ninth Corps, commanded by Maj.-Gen. J. G. Parke, and the Twenty-third Corps, under command of Maj.-Gen. George I. Hartsuff. The first of these corps numbered on August 30th, "present for duty, equipped": Infantry, 5,965; artillery, 208; total, 6,173. The Twenty-third Corps, composed of three divisions, numbered: Infantry, 14,279; cavalry, 6,073; artillery, 1,462; total, 21,814. The first division of this corps, under command of General Boyle, 6,357 men of all arms, was required for duty in guarding various military posts in Kentucky, leaving the remainder, 15,457, for offensive operations. The total effective strength of both corps was 21,630. The advance into East Tennessee commenced August 20th. General Hascall's division moved from Crab Orchard, crossing the Cumberland at Smith's Ford; General White's division crossed at Jamestown, the cavalry and mounted infantry, Generals Carter and Shackelford and Colonels Foster and Woolford, moving in advance of each column. The two columns were ordered to concentrate after crossing the Cumberland Mountains near Huntsville, and move upon Montgomery in East Tennessee. From there the movements, as Burnside telegraphed Halleck, would be "according to circumstances, but probably upon Kingston and Loudon, as these seem to be the places to which General Rosecrans desires us to go in order to co-operate fully with him. At all events, our final destination will be Knoxville. We have had very serious difficulty to contend with in bad roads and short forage; in fact, the country is about destitute. We shall have still greater difficulties in that way to overcome, but *if Rosecrans occupies the enemy fully* and no troops are allowed to come down the road from Richmond, from the

eastern army, I think we will be successful." The army arrived at Montgomery on the 1st of September, having encountered no opposition. There was nothing there to oppose it. General Carter's cavalry division moved thence in three columns, one under General Shackelford on Loudon bridge, one under Colonel Byrd on Kingston, and one under Colonel Foster on Knoxville.

Major-General Simon Bolivar Buckner, in command of the department of East Tennessee, had, in obedience to orders from the Confederate war department, gathered up all his available force, with the exception of 2,000 men under command of Brig.-Gen. John B. Frazer, who was left in defense of Cumberland Gap, and a few isolated detachments at Knoxville and other places under command of Brigadier-General Jackson, and formed a junction with Bragg's army at Chattanooga. Previous to leaving Knoxville General Buckner wrote Maj.-Gen. Sam Jones, in command of the department of Western Virginia, requesting him to look after his department during his absence. Jones's headquarters were at Dublin, Virginia. He had his hands full taking care of Generals Averill and Scammon, who had on several occasions pushed their commands across the mountains from the north and Kanawha Valley, and he was unable with troops at his command to do much besides look after his own department. In compliance with Buckner's request, however, he came down the road as far as Abington, when on the 6th of September he wrote General Frazer, directing him to hold Cumberland Gap as long as possible, as reinforcements were then on the way from the east. The long line, extending from Staunton, Virginia, to the Salt Works, over 200 miles, comprised in the department of West Virginia, rendered it out of the power of General Jones to reinforce him with his own troops. In compliance with the request of General Jones, General Lee returned to

him one of his own brigades, commanded by Brigadier-General Wharton, which had been for several months on duty in the Army of Northern Virginia, and later another under command of Brigadier-General Corse. General Jones's messenger reached General Frazer too late to prevent his surrender, and 2,000 men were thus subtracted from the little force left to oppose the occupation of East Tennessee by the troops under General Burnside.

The following extract from the returns of the Army of Western Virginia and East Tennessee will show the troops actually on duty in East Tennessee from the 16th of September, at which date the brigade last mentioned arrived.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMAND OF MAJ.-GEN. SAM JONES
IN EAST TENNESSEE AND WESTERN VIRGINIA IN
SEPTEMBER, 1863.

Infantry Brigades.

Brigadier-General Corse (sent by General Lee)—15th, 29th, and 30th Virginia.

Brigadier-General Jackson (Buckner's Corps)—Thomas's Legion, Walker's battalion.

Brigadier-General Wharton (at Salt Works)—51st Virginia; 30th Virginia battalion; 45th Virginia.

Cavalry Brigades.

Brigadier-General W. E. Jones (made up from fragmentary commands)—21st Virginia cavalry; 27th, 34th, 36th, and 37th Virginia cavalry battalions.

Brigadier-General John S. Williams (one-half of them mounted)—64th Virginia detached cavalry; 1st Tennessee cavalry; 4th Kentucky cavalry; May's Kentucky cavalry battalion; 10th Kentucky cavalry battalion; 16th Georgia cavalry battalion.

Artillery.

J. Floyd King—Otey's Battery; Lowry's Battery; Ringgold's Battery; Davidson's Battery.

The effective total of the above command was, up to the 16th of September, about 4,000. Corse's brigade increased it to 5,180, and Wharton's brigade, 1,852 strong, was stationed at the Salt Works.

The force with which General Burnside confronted that of General Jones, above mentioned, was as follows:

ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY OF THE OHIO IN EAST TENNESSEE,
SEPTEMBER 10, 1863, UNDER MAJOR-GENERAL BURNSIDE.

Twenty-third Army Corps, Major-General Hartsuff.

Second Division, General White—Infantry: 1st Brigade, Col. O. H. Moore, 4 regiments; 2d Brigade, Col. M. W. Chapin, 4 regiments. Artillery: two batteries.

Third Division, General Hascall—Infantry: 1st Brigade, Col. S. A. Gilbert, 4 regiments; 2d Brigade, Col. D. Cameron, 4 regiments. Artillery: two batteries.

Fourth Division, Gen. S. P. Carter—Cavalry and mounted infantry: 1st Brigade, Col. R. K. Byrd, 4 regiments; 2d Brigade, General Shackelford, 5 regiments; 3d Brigade, Col. J. P. Carter, 4 regiments; Independent Brigade, Col. Frank Woolford, 3 regiments. Artillery: five batteries.

Present for duty (equipped):

Twenty-third Army Corps.

Infantry	6,559
Mounted Infantry	3,123
Cavalry	3,436
Artillery.....	1,341
	<hr/>
	14,459

Ninth Army Corps.

Infantry.....	6,222
Artillery.....	111
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Total U. S. troops in East Tennessee	21,792

The cavalry expeditions from Montgomery were all successful. Kingston and Knoxville were taken without opposition, but at Loudon Bridge Buckner's rear-guard was strongly posted. After a brisk skirmish they were driven back by Shackelford's command. The railroad bridge over the Holston, a fine structure, had been saturated with turpentine, and the guard no sooner retreated across it than it was committed to the flames. Colonel Byrd captured at Kingston a steamboat in process of construction, and communicated with Colonel Minty's pickets, who formed the extreme left flank of General Rosecrans's army.

Leaving Byrd's brigade, 3,000 strong, at Loudon and Athens, General Burnside pushed the remainder of the Twenty-third Corps on to Knoxville. Buckner had left Knoxville the day before Colonel Foster's arrival, leaving behind him a small force to guard a considerable quantity of quartermaster's stores, the Government work-shops, and a large quantity of salt, which fell into Foster's hands. General Burnside reached the city on the 3d. The East Tennessee troops, separated for many weary months from their families, were greeted with expressions of the tenderest affection by the people all along the line of march. National flags were brought out from their hiding places and flung to the breeze from nearly every house. There was little use for army rations—a feast awaited the troops at every village. Women stood by the roadside with buckets of water, fruit, and cakes, which they gave

freely, refusing all offers of pay. As they drew near Knoxville the city was radiant with flags. Sixty young ladies took their places by the roadside, waving flags, and shouting "Hurrah for the Union." Ladies came out of their houses to greet Generals Burnside and Carter. Seizing their hands, they wept for joy, crying, "Welcome to East Tennessee." Hundreds of people of both sexes and all ages collected in a few minutes, and both General Burnside and General Carter addressed them, promising that they should not again be deserted to their enemies. The demonstrations were not boisterous, but the intense joy imparted by these tidings was exhibited in quiet rejoicing. Men who for months had been hidden in caves in the hills and in mountain fastnesses came in and were overjoyed at their deliverance. The halt at Knoxville was very brief. On the 5th General Shackelford with his brigade, 1,434 strong, was sent in the direction of Cumberland Gap to cut off escape by the force in occupation of that stronghold, and on the 7th General Burnside left Knoxville with two regiments of cavalry, two of mounted infantry, and Konkle's battery, and joined Shackelford on the 9th. Colonel de Courcey, who had advanced with his brigade of the Ninth Corps, two infantry regiments, two of cavalry and a battery of artillery via Loudon, Kentucky, 1,834 strong, had by this time taken position on the north, and summoned the garrison to surrender, which demand was refused. The garrison was composed of four regiments of infantry from North Carolina, one from Virginia, and one from Georgia, one regiment of East Tennessee cavalry, two field batteries, and three guns in position. General Buckner stopped long enough on his way to Chattanooga to telegraph General Frazer from Loudon on the 30th of August to evacuate the Gap with all speed, to burn and destroy everything that could not be trans-

ported, and to report to General Sam Jones at Abingdon, Virginia, 125 miles distant. As General Frazer had been led to believe that East Tennessee was to be held by the Confederates, and knowing the importance of the Gap in this event, he at once construed the telegram of the 30th to be a trick of the Yankees and replied to it in cipher, stating his condition for defense. He had over 2,000 men and forty days' rations, and believed he could hold the position, but asked to be informed if he should still evacuate. The response to this dispatch came on the following day ordering him to hold his position. This order was countermanded by General Bragg at Chattanooga, but as telegraphic communication with Frazer had been cut off in the meantime no order to evacuate the Gap reached him before the investment of the place on the 6th of September. The defenses, about two miles in extent, required a reliable force of about 6,000 men and appropriate artillery to properly man. Batteries of light guns were placed in position to command the three roads converging at the Gap, but owing to the tortuous course of the roads they had range of not over four hundred yards, except on the south, where they had full sweep to the extent of their range. The guns were 6-pounder smooth-bores and 12-pounder howitzers. The First Tennessee Confederate cavalry, under command of Colonel J. B. Carter, an active and efficient regiment about 600 strong, was sent out to reconnoitre in the direction of Knoxville, where it encountered General Shackelford's advance and was driven into Powell's Valley, when by Frazer's order it continued up the valley on the Virginia road and reported to General Williams. The Sixty-second and Sixty-fourth North Carolina were conscripts, and were thoroughly imbued with Union sentiments. The colonel of the Sixty-second was absent. He soon after resigned and became an open advocate

of the Union. His men were accustomed to declare that they had never fired agun at a Union man and they never would. Three hundred of the Sixty-fourth North Carolina had already deserted in a body, and the regiment was small, but under better discipline than the Sixty-second. The Fifty-fifth Georgia had about 500 men for duty. It had been on provost-marshal duty at Knoxville, and was regarded as tolerably good, although their men rode their colonel on a rail and only allowed him to resume command on promise of better behavior. He and the lieutenant-colonel were both absent and Major Printup was in command. Colonel Slem's Virginia regiment and Burnes's battalion joined Frazer from Marshall's command on the last of August. For insubordination and inefficiency this regiment had no equal in either army. To add, if possible, to the difficulties with which General Frazer had to contend, his predecessor in command had allowed the roof of the powder magazine to go to decay, and on examination most of it was found to be saturated with rain water. A requisition had been made for an additional supply, which the ordnance office at Knoxville had duly pigeon-holed and failed to fill. The only drinking water upon which the garrison had to rely was obtained at a spring in the valley on the south side of the Gap near a mill, which latter, when run to its full capacity, ground wheat about as fast as the men could eat the flour. News of the capture of Loudon and the burning of the railroad bridge was followed by the intelligence of the capture of Knoxville, and rightly surmising that the next move would be upon Cumberland Gap, the commander at once made arrangements for defense. A device for conveying water to the top of the hill by means of telegraph wires was designed, but failed in construction for lack of material. Oxen were put to hauling it up in barrels, but broke down on the second

trip. It was then determined that the spring and mill must be guarded, and 150 men of the Sixty-second North Carolina were detailed for this duty, but were put to flight by 100 of Shackelford's cavalry, who dashed down upon the mill and burned it on the night of their arrival. The condition of the beleagured garrison was now critical in the extreme, and it was only necessary for the two brigades, one on the north and the other on the south, to put on a bold front, concealing their real strength, to insure the surrender of the stronghold. On the 6th Colonel Carter had reported that the force advancing from Knoxville had steadily driven him in, and that he had reason to believe it to be very strong.

On the 7th General Shackelford sent the following communication to General Frazer:

"HEADQUARTERS U. S. FORCES IN FRONT OF CUMBERLAND GAP.

"September 7, 1863.

"To General Frazer, Commanding Confederate forces, Cumberland Gap:

"You are surrounded by my forces. In order to save the effusion of blood and the unnecessary loss of life, I demand the unconditional surrender of yourself and command by 3 o'clock, inst.

"I am, General, very respectfully,

"J. M. SHACKELFORD,

"Brigadier-General Commanding."

To which General Frazer made answer, as follows:

"HEADQUARTERS, CUMBERLAND GAP,

"September 7, 1863.

"To Brigadier-General Shackelford, Commanding U. S. Forces:

"I have just received your note of to-day demanding the

unconditional surrender of myself and forces. In reply, I have simply to state that I must decline acceding thereto.

"I am, General, very respectfully,

"J. W. FRAZER,

"*Brigadier-General.*"

Similar proposals were made on the following day, both by Shackelford on the south, and de Courcey on the north, which were met by a polite refusal to comply. General Burnside arrived at General Shackelford's headquarters on the night of the 8th, and on the morning of the 9th sent the following note to General Frazer:

"HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE OHIO,

"September 9, 1863.

"*Brigadier-General Frazer, Commanding Confederate Forces, Cumberland Gap.*

"GENERAL: As ample time has been given for negotiation, you will be kind enough to dismiss at once from your lines our flags of truce, from both sides of the Gap, and cease communication with any of the United States forces, excepting through myself, as none other will be considered valid. At the same time, with the view of avoiding the effusion of blood, I beg to state that I have a force present with me sufficient in all human probability, to carry your position, and should your reply not be satisfactory, shall commence operations, with the view of assaulting your position at such points and with such forces as I may deem proper, immediately on the return of the officer carrying this note, who has permission to remain one hour at your pickets.

"I am, General, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"A. E. BURNSIDE,

"*Major-General.*"

"Major Van Buren, Aide-de-Camp on my staff, will be the bearer hereof."

On receipt of this peremptory demand from the major general commanding the department, whose presence at that remote point indicated that he had nothing to fear from the Confederate forces in East Tennessee, General Frazer wisely concluded that all hope of succor was cut off. To General Burnside's demand for immediate surrender he returned the following note:

"HEADQUARTERS CUMBERLAND GAP,

"September 9, 1863.

"To General A. E. Burnside, Commanding U. S. Forces.

"GENERAL: As my communications with General Shackelford and Colonel de Courcey will show, I intended holding the position, but will surrender on condition that the officers and men of my command be released on parole.

"I am, General, very respectfully,

"J. W. FRAZER,

"Brigadier-General."

This proposal was refused by General Burnside, and the result was the unconditional surrender of the Gap with all its garrison and munitions.

Thus was Cumberland Gap, one of the strongest positions on the continent, the natural gateway to the Confederacy, capable of being made impregnable against any force that could be sent against it, twice abandoned and once surrendered without firing a gun in its defense.

Major-General Sam Jones was directed by the Confederate war department to extend a protectorate over the district of East Tennessee. Arriving upon the scene of operations too late to prevent the surrender of Frazer at Cumberland Gap,

he turned his attention to the formation of a command which should prevent the advance of Burnside's troops eastward, while by a show of force he should be able to hold his antagonist from participation in the struggle then impending near Chattanooga.

The value of the Salt Works at Saltville, fourteen miles east of Abingdon, was inestimable to the southern army. Their destruction would inflict an irreparable loss upon the Confederacy. Although the capture and destruction of these works seemed never to have entered into the calculations of General Burnside or the War Department, the head of General Burnside's column had no sooner turned in that direction from Cumberland Gap, than General Jones at once conjectured the objective point to be the precious Salt Works, which it had been his especial duty to guard.

On the 14th the Union troops were reported to be moving from Cumberland Gap on the Salt Works. General Wharton was placed in command of the defenses and Otey's battery ordered to report to him. Majors Chenoweth and Prentice were ordered to send scouts out and ascertain the truth of the report. Col. J. E. Carter, in command of the First Tennessee cavalry brigade, was directed to move via Reedy Creek and Moccasin Gap, and "if the enemy moves toward Saltville, get in his rear and harass him."

Inquiries were next ordered to be made to what extent he could rely upon the home guards to protect the Salt Works, with the intention of removing Wharton to the front. It will be observed that the mind of General Jones had become impressed with two ideas, both of which were erroneous. One, that Burnside had but a portion of his force in East Tennessee, having sent the greater portion of his troops to co-operate with Rosecrans below Chattanooga; the other, that

General Burnside had designs upon the Salt Works. Both ideas were precisely those which would naturally occur to the mind of an intelligent antagonist, conversant with the importance of both movements, and that he was wrong in his surmise reflects less credit upon his antagonist than upon himself. General Lee, whose mind embraced in its comprehensive grasp the operations of the Confederate army throughout the whole arena of war, had already responded to the call of General Bragg for reinforcements by detaching one of his strongest corps, under Longstreet, for service at Chattanooga, and now finding the Salt Works, upon which his army depended, threatened, he had promptly supplied to General Jones an additional brigade under command of Brigadier-General Corse. Wharton's brigade was encamped at Glade Springs, within supporting distance of the artillery in defense of the Salt Works. Corse was brought to the front and preparations made to defend the line of road leading into the valley of the Upper Tennessee, and, if possible, prevent Burnside from advancing upon the Salt Works and also from detaching any considerable portion of his force to reinforce Rosecrans. In response to a telegram from President Davis, asking the strength and position of his forces, General Jones replied as follows:

"JONESBORO, *September 15, 1863.*

"His Excellency, Jefferson Davis,

"Richmond, Va.

"Your telegram of yesterday received last night. I shall withdraw the troops from this to the Watauga and Holston to await the reinforcements and be in better position to meet an advance on Saltville. No reliable information of the movements of the enemy from Cumberland Gap. Pickett skirmishing in front every day. Our pickets behaving well.

"SAM JONES,

"Major-General."

General Jones says in his report: "Under all the circumstances of the case I thought the best service I could render with the small force under my command would be to check and detain the superior force in my front until the battle which I supposed was impending near Chattanooga should be decided."

On the 9th of September General Burnside reported the capture of Cumberland Gap and 2,000 prisoners and the occupation of East Tennessee from Jonesboro on the northeast to Athens in the southwest. To this report Halleck responded on the 11th congratulating him upon his success, directing him to hold the Gaps in the North Carolina mountains and to connect with General Rosecrans, at least with his cavalry, notifying him that the latter would occupy Dalton or some point on the railroad, to close all access from Atlanta. On the 13th Halleck telegraphed Burnside as follows: "It is important that all the available force of your command be pushed into East Tennessee. All your scattered forces should be concentrated there. So long as we hold Tennessee Kentucky is perfectly safe. *Move down your infantry as rapidly as possible towards Chattanooga to connect with Rosecrans.* Bragg may merely hold the passes in the mountains to cover Atlanta and move his main army through northern Alabama to reach the Tennessee river and turn Rosecrans's right, cutting off his supplies. In that case he will turn Chattanooga over to you and move to interrupt Bragg."

Here is a positive order, as explicit as any given to Rosecrans, for Burnside to move his infantry down towards Chattanooga to connect with Rosecrans. The same order had been given on the 5th of August, and had formed a part of the plan of the expedition. It was reiterated on the 5th of September, when he was directed to keep Rosecrans informed of his move-

ments and arrange with him for co-operation. On September 11th, when he was notified of Rosecrans's position and need of reinforcements, and again on the 13th, as seen in the above dispatch, he had in Tennessee a division of cavalry and mounted infantry whose effective strength, as shown by the field returns of September 20th, was: "Present for duty, equipped, 6,700, with 34 pieces of artillery." His infantry and artillery, under Hartsuff, numbered: "Present for duty, equipped, 6,586, with 32 pieces of artillery." One has but to imagine the grand results of the Chattanooga campaign if these orders had been obeyed. Burnside entered Knoxville with an army of 10,000 men on the 6th of September, leaving a division of infantry and a brigade of cavalry and mounted infantry at Loudon and Athens. He found supplies abundant, besides which he had crossed the mountains with 2,000 beef cattle. His advance, under Foster, captured at Knoxville, five locomotives, over twenty cars, and a large quantity of provisions. After capturing the force and subsistence stores at Cumberland Gap and opening the route to and from Kentucky, and arming the loyal East Tennesseans with 5,000 stand of arms brought with him for that purpose, he had ample time and opportunity in which to have dispatched at least 10,000 infantry to co-operate with Rosecrans. On the 18th he acknowledged the receipt of Halleck's dispatch of the 13th, above quoted, and also of one dated on the 14th, which read as follows: "There are reasons why you should reinforce General Rosecrans with all possible dispatch. It is believed that the enemy will concentrate to give him battle. You must be there to help him." To this urgent appeal he replied on the 18th from Knoxville: "Orders to go below will be obeyed as soon as possible. I go to Greenville to-night—(in the opposite direction). Dispositions for attacking the

enemy at Jonesboro made. I will lose no time in doing as you order. No direct telegraphic communication as yet. Hope to get it to-morrow." The next day, while Rosecrans, after the brilliant flank movement which compelled the evacuation of Chattanooga, found his army on the eve of a terrible battle, Burnside telegraphed from Greenville: "Will obey your instructions in reference to Rosecrans. Our troops occupy Jonesboro. Enemy retiring to Abingdon. Our cavalry in pursuit. Am now sending every man that can be spared to aid Rosecrans. *I shall go on to Jonesboro.* As soon as I learn the result of our movements to the east, will go down by railroad and direct the movements of reinforcements for Rosecrans. I have directed every available man in Kentucky to be sent here." On the 20th he received a dispatch from Halleck stating that General Meade did not believe that any of Ewell's troops had gone west, as Burnside had feared; that Longstreet, Johnston, and Bragg had concentrated against Rosecrans, who was on the Chickamauga river, twenty miles south of Chattanooga, closing thus: "He is expecting a battle and wants you to sustain his left. Every possible effort must be made to assist him." To this Burnside replied from Knoxville on the 20th: "You may be sure I will do all I can for Rosecrans. Arrived here last night, and am hurrying troops in his direction. *I go up the road to-night for a day.*"

The following dispatch received by Rosecrans on the battle field on the 19th, and that which follows on the 20th, shows that Halleck fully expected a junction of the two armies: "I have no direct communication with Burnside or Halleck. On the 15th Hurlbut says he is moving towards Decatur. I hear nothing of Sherman's troops ordered from Vicksburg. A telegram from Burnside on the 17th, just received, says my orders to move down to reinforce you will be obeyed as soon

as possible. Burnside's cavalry ought to be near you by this time." That on the 20th is as follows: "General Burnside's instructions before he left Kentucky were to connect with your left. These instructions have been repeated five or six times, and he has answered that he was moving with that object. I think his advance cannot be far from you." On the 21st: "Nothing heard from Burnside since the 19th. He was then sending to your aid all his available force. It is hoped that you will hold out until he reaches you. He was directed to connect with you ten days ago. I can get no reply from Hurlbut or Sherman."

So the correspondence went on from day to day, and not a man was sent to Rosecrans. The battle of Chickamauga was fought on the 19th and 20th. The noble Army of the Cumberland, struggling against terrible odds, held its position even after the fatal blunder which opened its lines and admitted Longstreet's victorious legions upon its flanks. Obedience to the positive orders of General Halleck would have brought the infantry of the Twenty-third Corps upon the field in ample time to retrieve the disaster if not to have prevented it. The force that required only a small portion of Burnside's troops to drive back from Knoxville to Jonesboro and which virtually prevented the co-operation of Burnside with Rosecrans, has been already stated. This is how Burnside states it in his dispatch to Halleck of the 21st of September: "Before I knew of the necessity of sending immediate assistance to General Rosecrans I had sent a considerable portion of my force to capture and drive out a large force of the enemy under General Sam Jones, stationed on the road from Bristol to Jonesboro, which amounts to at least *six thousand men.*"

The student of these campaigns cannot fail to be impressed with the folly of the War Department in attempting to direct

the management of two separate armies operating upon parallel lines, eastward from their respective bases, by telegraph from a point a thousand miles distant, without giving to one commander extraordinary powers in case of emergency. The misfortunes that attended the Army of the Cumberland could have been arrested if Burnside had remained in Cincinnati, sending Hartsuff into East Tennessee. Burnside's commission antedated that of Rosecrans as Major-General, *three days*, and for this reason the latter could not order the Army of the Ohio to his assistance. General Burnside told Hartsuff that he could not go to Chattanooga, as he ranked Rosecrans, and confusion might rise; to which Hartsuff responded: "Let me go; I don't rank him."

General Burnside, however, explains his action in the same report, as follows: "It should be remembered that up to the night of the 16th I was acting under instructions to occupy the upper country of East Tennessee, and all of my available forces were well up the valley above Knoxville. All that could be turned back were started at once, and as soon as possible the remainder were withdrawn from the presence of the enemy and turned back for the purpose of proceeding to the relief of General Rosecrans. The point where the troops were turned back on the 17th was 140 miles from Chickamauga, where General Rosecrans was fighting on the 19th, and the advance of our forces was over 200 miles distant therefrom. It will be readily seen that under no circumstances could we have reached even the neighborhood of General Rosecrans's forces during that battle. The troops were moved in that direction as rapidly as possible. Many dispatches passed between General Halleck and myself after this, in reference to going to Rosecrans's assistance after he had established himself at Chattanooga, and some misunderstanding occurred in

regard to the purport of these dispatches. I was averse to doing what would in any way weaken our hold in East Tennessee and he was anxious lest Rosecrans should not be able to hold Chattanooga. He was not disturbed at Chattanooga, and we held our ground in East Tennessee, so that what occurred in no way affected the result."

Regarding the two campaigns as one in their objects and the two armies as but the right and left wings of a grand army of invasion of Confederate territory moving on parallel lines, under a common commander, it is reasonable to suppose that reinforcements would have been made as occasion demanded. The Confederates regarded the destruction of the Army of the Cumberland as of paramount importance, and boldly massed an army in its front of sufficient magnitude, in their opinion, to accomplish that object. The temporary evacuation of Chattanooga southward was rendered necessary by the strategical movement of a large portion of General Rosecrans's army upon Bragg's communications, but the feeling in the Confederate army was an unwavering faith in their success. This feeling was shared by the people at large. Hundreds of families who had left their homes in Middle Tennessee and Kentucky, and kept in the rear of the Confederate army in its retrograde movement, were congregated at Rome, Georgia. They had led a nomadic life, moving from Murfreesboro to Winchester, thence to Chattanooga and Rome, and, inspired with the hope of returning to their homes as the result of the defeat and pursuit of the Army of the Cumberland, they had their goods and baggage packed in wagons ready to follow the victorious flag of the Confederacy northward to the Cumberland. The fancy of many took a wilder flight. Knowing that Rosecrans's army alone stood between the powerful host of veteran troops concentrating at Lafayette,

and the Ohio River, it was not too much to hope that a vigorous pursuit of a disorganized army, demoralized by defeat, would carry the war into the Northern States.

The arrival of Longstreet's advance gave promise of an easy victory. Whatever may have been the overweening confidence of General Rosecrans in the strength of his army, and however much he may have underestimated that of his antagonist, as indicated by the speedy evacuation of Chattanooga, he no sooner became satisfied of the approach of reinforcements to Bragg from the Army of the Potomac than he saw the necessity of a corresponding increase of his own strength. A commanding-general, controlling the movements of both Rosecrans and Burnside, should, at this supreme moment, have had his headquarters at Chattanooga. The simultaneous capture of that city and Cumberland Gap took place on the 9th of September, and within three days thereafter two facts were well known to Burnside and Rosecrans. The former knew that no considerable force confronted him from the eastward, and that none was likely to advance from that direction, as Buckner had, in obedience to orders, evacuated the valley of the Tennessee—a thing which would not be likely to occur if the Confederate war department designed to attempt holding that territory. General Rosecrans had ample evidence that a large army was being concentrated to give him battle. Both these facts would have been at once communicated to the commanding general.

General White's division of infantry, 3,000 strong, and Byrd's division of cavalry and mounted infantry, 2,000 strong, remained in the vicinity of Loudon and Athens, within three days' march of Chattanooga, until the 15th of September, four days before the battle of Chickamauga, when White was ordered to Knoxville. The Ninth Army Corps was moving

by easy marches from Crab Orchard, Kentucky, via Cumberland Gap to Knoxville. There was no reason why all Burnside's infantry could not have been sent to reinforce Rosecrans, leaving the cavalry and artillery to defend Knoxville. Cumberland Gap was amply defended by de Courcey's brigade, and the advance of the Ninth Army Corps reached its vicinity on the 17th, thus providing against any possibility of its recapture.

That a reinforcement of 10,000 effectives would have been ordered by forced marches to Chattanooga from Burnside's army by a commanding general, stationed where he should have been, as early as the 13th, is as probable as any supposition that could be made with regard to the movements of troops at any juncture during the war. That the order was not given is due solely to the absence of a common commander, and his absence was what Napoleon termed "worse than a crime—a blunder."*

* Commonly attributed to Talleyrand.



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