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MAJOR GENERAL

ANDREW ATKINSON HUMPHREYS

UNITED STATES VOLUNTEERS

AT

FREDERICKSBURG, VA., DECEMBER 13TH, 1862

AND

FARMVILLE, VA., APRIL 7TH, 1865

BY

HENRY H. HUMPHREYS

Press of
R. R. McCABE & CO.
CHICAGO.



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HENRY H. HUMPHREYS,
Fort Sheridan, Illinois.

TO THE
ASSOCIATION

OF
ANDREW ATKINSON HUMPHREYS,
SCHOLAR, SAVANT AND SOLDIER. A MAN TO BE LOVED,
ADMIRER AND FEARED. KIND, COURTEOUS
TO AND CONSIDERATE OF ALL
MEN.



Prefatory.

SOME explanation is due to those who will read these pages why the writer has written of one, who, though well known in his official capacity as an expert, is to many Americans comparatively unknown. Although untoward circumstances have prevented its appearance before, it at last takes form. It arose from some reflections cast (by the author of the History of the 2d Corps, Army of the Potomac) upon General Humphreys' Official Report of the part taken by the Division commanded by him at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia, December 13, 1862. All correspondence with those having knowledge of the subject, was, in every case, submitted to the Historian of the 2d Corps. It is assumed that General Humphreys' abilities as a soldier would best be illustrated by their display on the field of battle, when in command of troops.

Fredericksburg was his first opportunity, and it is deemed fitting to bring forward in connection with that, his last one also, at Farmville, Virginia, April 7, 1865.

General Humphreys saw service as Chief of Topographical Engineers, Army of the Potomac, from March, 1862, until August of same year, under General G. B. McClellan. He was then given command of a Division of Pennsylvania Volunteers. This command was mustered out in May, 1863. He was then assigned to the command of a Division of the 3d Corps, formerly General Hooker's. He commanded this Divi-

sion at Gettysburg with consummate ability, and exhibited on that field the same characteristics which were so conspicuously displayed at Fredericksburg, Virginia.

On July 8, 1863, he accepted the position of Chief of Staff to General G. G. Meade, Commanding Army of the Potomac, which position he held until relieved at his own request. General Humphreys was, by direction of the President of the United States, then assigned to the 2d Corps, in November, 1864. He commanded this gallant Corps until it was mustered out of service, in June, 1865. Subsequently he resumed study of the intricate problems of his profession as an Engineer, which had been interfered with by the war. At his request he was retired from active duty on June 30, 1879, and died at a ripe age at his home in Washington City, D. C., December 27, 1883.

The writer leaves it to those who read this paper to draw their own conclusion, feeling there can be but one deduction drawn from its perusal, and that the result, when reached, will redound to the credit of Andrew Atkinson Humphreys. The task of the writer has been attended by many difficulties. It is admitted that, by reason of kinship, he may not have been wholly free from bias. To what extent he has been successful in keeping all feeling in subjection, the reader will judge. The writer makes no pretense at literary effort and accepts responsibility for all statements.

Fredericksburg, Virginia,

DECEMBER 13TH, 1862.

“PRINCIPIA, NON HOMINES.”

DURING the last days of the year 1862, the writer was called to Washington City by the death of General Humphreys. Whilst there he received a communication from General Francis A. Walker, Historian of the 2d Corps, Army of the Potomac, requesting a copy of General Humphreys' Official Report of the part taken in it by the division which he commanded at the battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia. The report was furnished, and afterwards a copy of the work upon which General Walker had been engaged was received. The writer naturally turned to that part devoted to the battle of Fredericksburg, and found therein certain adverse reflections or comments upon Humphreys' Division in that bloody engagement. One of these comments or aspersions is found on page 186 of the history and reads:

“It is very likely true that among the thousands a few may have called out to Allabach's and Tyler's men that it was useless to go forward, but their own situation on that field swept by fire, is proof enough that such men were very few, if, indeed, the story is not the tale of some colonel or captain to excuse the breaking of his own command.”

It would have been far better when writing of past events to have left out all controversies and consigned them to oblivion. But since General Walker has seen fit to notice them he must assume all responsibility for their correctness, and must stand or fall by them. His history probably has been widely read, for he occupies a high position in the world

of letters, and wields no small influence in the realms of thought.

A story like the above after adoption and circulation by a gentleman of credit is hard to disprove, but, the writer observes, such flings as the above lead a careful and thoughtful reader to suspect the "history" in these matters in dispute savors somewhat of romance. The writer is of a generous nature and believes all men are actuated by honesty of purpose. This standard he has set up for his guidance in all dealings with mankind, and this without reflecting upon General Walker, and acting in accordance with this motive, he wrote requesting these comments be removed, giving reasons for such request and his version of what he had seen and heard during that action. The writer did not retain a copy of his letter, but the reply of General Walker will show in terms its purport.

[COPY]

BOSTON, *December 24, 1886.*

MY DEAR COLONEL HUMPHREYS:—Many thanks for your letter of the 14th instant. Your statement that you personally heard some of the men lying on the ground at Fredericksburg, try to dissuade men of General Humphreys' Division from going forward against the stone wall, is conclusive on that point. This may have occurred at the spot where you were, without being at all general. I say in my History, "it is very likely true, that among these thousands, a few may have called out to Allabach's and Tyler's men that it was useless to go forward," etc.

There is therefore no necessary antagonism between us on that subject. I do not understand your statement that "General Humphreys never in his official papers places anything there that is not known to him personally." I confess that my own experience and observation as a Staff Officer, do not allow me to comprehend how a Commanding Officer could possibly report in adequate detail the operations of a Corps, a Division, a Brigade or a Regiment even, without putting down a great deal which he did not personally see, and for the truth of which he would be obliged to depend on the testimony or reports of his Staff and his subordinates, although the good commander will always subject such testimony and reports to a severe scrutiny, and will sift all statements

carefully, before incorporating any matter in his own official report which did not fall within his personal observation.

As to the question whether any men of Humphreys' Division went nearer the stone wall than did men of the 2d Corps, it is not likely we shall come to an agreement. You have your opinion formed from your own observation of Humphreys' charges, in which you participated as I can personally testify, with great gallantry. I was at one time not fifty yards from your Staff and was struck with admiration at the heroic bravery of the General and his young friends. The fact that at the time the 2d Brigade, Humphreys' Division, reached its most advanced position there were then no troops further to the front at the point where you personally were, is, however, not evidence that there may not have been troops two (2) hours or more presumably, or that other troops may not have advanced nearer to the stone wall at some other point of the Confederate line. My opinion was formed from a personal observation of the fight from the moment French's skirmishers went forward until the last shot was fired after dark, confirmed by the testimony of scores of Commanding and Staff Officers. I have no doubt as to the truth of my representation but I cannot claim that those who think otherwise shall yield their opinion to mine. I fear we must agree to disagree on this point.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed), FRANCIS A. WALKER.

COLONEL H. H. HUMPHREYS,
U. S. A.

Men have rarely enjoyed such close relationship with Humphreys as the writer. No one knew this man's moods and tenses, mode of action, or thought, better than his son, who was with him at home, in his office, and in the field. General Walker's failure to appreciate what has been stated of Humphreys (see Walker's letter), was therefore from lack of association. Association affords opportunity for concise judgment of character. We then see the foibles and virtues possessed of by the individuals, who, under simple or complex environments, emit light or remain in darkness. We readily perceive generosity, fear, envy, courage, and the ability to master the problem or problems set before us, or the reverse. Association is

therefore the micrometer, by which we correctly measure and value the many characteristics which makes man great or small. Association is the crucible which reduces the baser qualities to a film, and cognizes the nobler ones, pure and undefiled. Judgment of character, based upon sources of information other than association, is liable, nay sure to be warped, dwarfed or distorted, simply from the lack of opportunities for proper observation.

Humphreys relied upon what he himself saw, and wrote accordingly. Nothing escaped his analytical brain. But Humphreys was upon the actual field. Undaunted by the horrible sights then present, or the groans and shrieks of the wounded; unheeding the sharp whistles of the bullets as they speeded on to their billets, or the crash of bursting shells; he, calm, deliberate, with those grey eyes missing nothing, erect in saddle, gave orders for the two charges, in person superintended their formation, and personally led them against the stone wall. No wonder the Brigades were defeated in their two attempts to carry the wall (led on by one who thoroughly impersonated the God of War). When retiring from off this bloody field, one of them (a brigade) caught up from the lips of their commander the words of the song "I will be fat and greasy still," and repeated it in thundering tones as they moved off the ground with orderly step. (See testimony of the Confederate General Ransom. "Antietam and Fredericksburg.")

As to what his division did he could speak from absolute knowledge and personal contact with the troops engaged. This was his line of conduct throughout the war, either as a staff officer, chief of staff, or commander of troops. In all cases he was ever to the front, and as near to the enemy as the nearest troops. The accomplishments of General Humphreys as a soldier and commander of troops engaged in warfare has frequently been commented upon by officers of high rank in the army with which he served. Their opinions are well known. Furthermore, all commended and recognized him as a man of superior attainments, and well fitted for any emergency requiring the display of the peculiar qualities with which

he was gifted. Those who do not wish to accept this as a truth are referred for confirmation to a work edited by Dr. Fred. Humphreys, of New York City, or by communicating with Major General J. Watts De Peyster, of that city, or at Tivoli, New York State, his county seat.

In the work of General Longstreet, recently published, it is noticed in writing of the charges of Humphreys' Division, he uses the adjective "desperate." When relating what was seen of the other charges of that day preceding those of Humphreys, this essential word does not appear in its qualifying sense. General Walker defends his work, claiming authority to write for those of whom it is his duty or right to speak of. Surely he does not deny it to me; I come properly to mine by inheritance, and his is either by request, vote or detail. With the writer there is no juggling with words.

On page 187, same work, the author of the "History of the 2d Corps," speaks of Humphreys' "superb leadership," and remarks, "and yet there was something in the way that studious, scholarly officer of engineers, led his troops, especially the brigade of Tyler, up against the stone wall, which filled all beholders with admiration."

It is suspected this "superb" rhetorical display, this sugar-coated pill, was put in there to appease or soothe the feelings of those, who, reading this work (General Walker's History), have ever denied there was on that blood-stained field, any officer who was or could be the peer of Humphreys.

The writer will gladly admit, on presentation by General Walker, any officer as the peer of Humphreys, who behaved as Humphreys did, and under like conditions and circumstances, and by this is meant an exact counterpart in all its details. The writer challenges comparison.

Having succeeded in obtaining from General Walker a partial correction, to be made in all future editions of his work (see his letter), the writer has from that time forward, been collecting evidence to adduce other troops than those of the 2d Corps, went nearer the stone wall that day. He now presents his side.

[COPY.]

We, the undersigned Officers of the first and second Brigades, 3d Division, 5th Army Corps, when on the battlefield of Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862, after reaching our farthest point forward, upon making the charge upon the stone wall at foot of Mayre's Heights, recollect that the ground between our front line and foot of stone wall was not encumbered by the bodies of soldiers lying thereon, either dead or wounded, and it is our belief that we, as a unit, went nearer to that stone wall (on that day) than any other troops.

(Signed), EDWARD JAY ALLEN,
Colonel 155 Pa. Vols.

(Signed), P. H. ALLABACH,
Colonel 131 Pa. Vols., Commanding 2d
Brigade, 3d Division, 5th Corps.

(Signed), HENRY H. HUMPHREYS,
Captain 15th Infantry, U. S. A., late
1st Lieut. 112th Reg't, Penn. Vols.,
A. D. C. to General Humphreys, who
was present on the field and saw with
his own eyes, being near General
Humphreys, who was in advance
some ten yards of the line of troops
commanded by General Humphreys.

(Signed), B. F. KIEFER,
Captain Company "H," 131st Reg't
Penn. Vols., late 2d Brigade, 3d
Division, 5th Army Corps, Sunbury,
Penn.

[COPY.]

We, the undersigned officers of the 1st and 2d Brigades, 3d Division, 5th Army Corps, when on the battlefield of Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862, and making the charge upon the stone wall, led by General A. A. Humphreys in person, while passing over the troops of the 2d Corps lying on the ground, heard the following expressions used by them to us: "Don't go forward, it is useless, you will be killed," or words to same effect, and saw the men, who, lying on the ground, put forth their hands, catching hold of our men by the trousers, blouses, canteens, and haversacks.

(Signed), R. W. PATTEN,
Major, 131st Reg't Penn. Vols.

- (Signed), C. S. MARKS,
Private, Company "D," 131st Penn. Vols.
I was so close to the stone wall that there was not a dead body on the field in front of me. I was wounded about twilight within about eighty feet of the wall.
- (Signed), W. H. FELIX,
Private, Company "K," 131st Penn. Vols.
The above is correct. *I was there,*
- (Signed), W. H. KITTING,
Private, Company "K," 131st Pa. Vols.
I was wounded near the stone fence.
- (Signed), Lieut. DANIEL B. WEBER,
Company "K," 131st Pa. Vols.
- (Signed), GABRIEL CARPENTER,
Company
- (Signed), H. R. KORNIG,
Company "D," 131st.
- (Signed), ROB'T H. JUNKINS,
Col. Guard, Company "K," 131st Reg't Pa. Vols.
- (Signed), PETER LAUDUNSTAGOR,
Company "K," 131st Reg't Pa. Vols.
- (Signed), GEO. MEYERS,
Company "K," 131st Reg't Pa. Vols.

[COPY.]

LEWISTOWN, MIFFLIN CO., PA., *March 4th, 1887.*

MY DEAR COLONEL: I have gotten some of the privates to sign the enclosed statements. All the men that have signed it are men of standing in this community and their testimony is of the very highest character. You can attach this letter to the statement.

Very respectfully,
(Signed), ROBERT W. PATTEN,
Major 131st Penn. Vols.

[EXTRACT.]

WASHINGTON, D. C., *June 25, 1887.*

MY DEAR MAJOR: "I find with them, as with me, a great reluctance to reflect upon the men of the 2d Corps, although your printed

statement, enclosed, is perfectly correct. The expressions used were not only as you state, but also the cry 'halt' was made so vigorously that the 155th actually did halt and drop down."

Yours truly,
P. H. ALLABACH.

COLONEL H. H. HUMPHREYS, U. S. A.
FORT BUFORD, D. T.

MY DEAR COLONEL: In the brochure concerning your father at Malvern Hill and Fredericksburg, Va., in 1862, recently printed for private distribution, and copies of which were, of course, sent by me to Generals Couch and Walker, I did not care to do more than indicate what appeared to me to be weakness and fallacy in the special argument attempted by General Walker against the reports of General Humphreys. Probably, however, it would have been better had I gone one step further. In view of the evidence, there cannot, I think, be any candid doubt as to the correctness and the moderation of General Humphreys' reports of the effect of the prostrate 2d Corps line upon his charges. Neither do I think that his statement that our division reached the point of honor nearest to the stone wall will be doubted by disinterested minds, in view of the arguments adduced by General Walker. What insurance company would ever pay out a dollar on such a general and indefinite identification as that presented as conclusive by General Walker, even if the evidence were proffered by George Washington himself? But, even if the identification claimed was complete and positive, and every name could be given it would not be *absolute* proof that no one had advanced beyond where the bodies were found. There is seldom wanting aid to help a wounded, dying, or dead comrade at least part way to the rear. *L'Audace* is not *always* or *necessarily* fatal. Witness your father, pre-eminently, and Colonels Allabach, Clarke, Gregory, Allen, O'Brien, Rowe, yourself, and many others on that day. It needs not to cite instances from Cressy or Malplaquet, from Leuthen or Jena, from Balaclava or Gettysburg, or from any other field.

But General Walker has set the matter at rest, though not exactly as he had evidently intended. On page 173 of 2d Corps History he says:

"Caldwell's men gain *the farthest point* to which any of *our* troops have advanced; a few of them, joined by some choice spirits of Kimball, Zook and Meagher, actually push their way through the few gaps that have been torn by dying hands *in the last fence*, and, a mere handful, struggle on to take the stone wall held by its four ranks of defenders. When the dead of that bloody field were buried, all the way from *the last fence*, which no regiment or company ever passed in line, up to within twenty and even fifteen yards of the stone wall, lay soldiers of those four brigades."

My impression is that, if General Walker had examined the Official Records a little more carefully, he would have modified this statement which, of course, *definitely and undeniably fixes the advance of the 2d Corps troops at the last fence.* On pages 440 and 441, Vol. XXI, O. R., you will find the report of Lieut. Col. David W. Rowe, One hundred and twenty-sixth Pennsylvania Volunteers. Colonel Rowe says: "The One hundred and twenty-sixth formed *behind* the One hundred and thirty-fourth, and in the charge *followed* that regiment. Colonel Elder led, on horseback. The line advanced, in as good order as the mud would permit, at double quick, until they unexpectedly came upon a line of men lying on the ground, who, by gestures and words, endeavored to warn them back. This, and the difficulty of passing over these men, created some confusion in the ranks, which was increased by the necessity of *pulling down, or scrambling over two fences* to the right of the brick house, which stood in front of the rebel battery, Colonel Elder, *who had dismounted on account of the fences*, fell, wounded in the thigh, just as the regiment reached its farthest place in advance. He was leading his horse in front of his own regiment, and close to the first line, when he fell."

You will note of course, that the line of this regiment was disordered by "pulling down or scrambling over" the two fences, and that Colonel Elder, after dismounting *at* the fences, was *leading* (not holding) his horse in front of his regiment, having *advanced* beyond the fences, and was in rear of *the first line* which was, of course, *still farther advanced*, and between him and the stone wall. Now, in view of General Walker's statement that "Caldwell men gain the farthest point to which any of *our* troops have advanced," and that—to his knowledge of course—"no regiment or company ever passed in line" the last fence, it seems to me that this report of Colonel Rowe is conclusive, and fully bears out the report of Colonel Edward O'Brien, commanding the One hundred and thirty-fourth Penn. Vols. (Official Records, Vol. XXI, p. 443) which formed the "first line" referred to by Colonel Rowe. Colonel O'Brien says: "Although the attack was unsuccessful, my regiment *reached a point nearer the enemy's works than any other, as our dead lying close by, fully show.*"

Colonel Edgar M. Gregory, commanding the Ninety-first Penn. Vols. and in *the second line* of the brigade formation—in rear of the One Hundred and twenty-ninth regiment, and on the left of the brick house—states in his report (O. R. Vol. XXI, p. 439), that "The advance continued beyond the brick house, about 30 or 40 yards, when we retired," and, if I remember correctly, you, yourself were a witness to the fact that Colonel Gregory's horse was shot from under him, and that he, himself was wounded when *in front of the then dismantled fence.* The reports from the 2d Brigade are not definite as to points reached by that

command, but *we know that they passed beyond all fences in their way*. I do not see what further evidence is needed. Gallant Corps as it was, the 2d Corps troops cannot be allowed to hold the laurels won by our green nine months Division of the 5th Army Corps.

Very truly yours,
(Signed), CARSWELL McCLELLAN.

218 Virginia Avenue,
St. Paul, Minn.,
December 6, 1886.

BOSTON, January 5th, 1886.

CAPTAIN H. H. HUMPHREYS,
15th Infantry, Fort Buford.

DEAR SIR:—Your letter of October 21st, with enclosures, was duly received, and I immediately set about a reply to it; but the very great labors connected with preparing my eulogy on General Sheridan rendered it impossible to take the time for certain correspondence which I desired to have before answering your letter. No sooner was the eulogy on Sheridan delivered than I was obliged to prepare my address as President of the American Economic Association, in Philadelphia, from which I have but this week returned.

I regret that there should have been so much delay in replying to your communication; yet there is, after all, not much to be said concerning its subject matter.

I never asserted that no man of the 2d Corps called out to the troops of Humphreys' Division, on the 13th of December, 1862, that it was useless to go forward against the stone wall. What I did say was as follows: "It is very likely true that among those thousands, a few may have called out to Allabach's and Tyler's men that it was useless to go forward; but their own situation, on that plain, swept by fire, is proof enough that such men were very few, if indeed, the story is not the tale of some colonel or captain to excuse the breaking of his own command." Shortly after the issue of my work you wrote me that you yourself had heard these expressions on the occasion in question, and that you would collect further testimony on the subject.

To this I replied that your assurance was sufficient, and that my publishers would be instructed to omit the last twenty-one words in future editions.

The remainder of the sentence quoted above I see no reason to change. The opinion expressed therein is entirely compatible with the statement of officers and men of the 131st Penn., which you enclose in your letter. All of these might have possibly heard the same outcry from a single individual, though, if each of them had heard a different

member of the 2d Corps say the same thing, my remark would still be true, so far as this body of testimony goes. A dozen, or, for that matter, a hundred, would be "very few" among the thousands of officers and men of the 2d Corps who lay on the ground before the stone wall, that bloody afternoon.

But, after all, it is a matter of very little consequence whether more or fewer of the men of the 2d Corps did use such expressions as you have cited. The essential question is whether the charge of Humphreys' Division failed because of the presence of Couch's troops, or because of the four ranks of veteran riflemen who, in the words of your honored father, made the stone wall "a sheet of flame that enveloped the head and flanks of the column." To me, certainly, it would appear more creditable to the discipline and courage of Humphreys' men to attribute their failure to the latter than the former cause; and, since to assign the former cause is to reflect upon a body of troops for whom it is my duty to speak, and who, as I believe, were never surpassed in loyal and heroic devotion by any corps ever mustered upon the face of the earth, I must take the liberty to retain and repeat my belief that Humphreys' Division failed to carry the Confederate position for the same reason which had defeated the supreme efforts of the magnificent divisions of French, Hancock and Howard.

One thing remains to be said on this point. General Humphreys knew of the presence of the troops of the 2d Corps upon the ground over which he was to charge before his advance had been ordered; yet he did not, as I am informed by General Couch, intimate any desire that they should be withdrawn. This appears to me to have constituted an acceptance of the situation which should preclude any adverse reflections, in the interest of Humphreys' Division, upon the gallant men who were lying upon that blood-stained ground, at an instant peril of the life of every one of them and at the actual sacrifice of the lives of hundreds.

2d. As to the remaining question, whether the men of Humphreys' Division went that day nearer to the stone wall than the men of the 2d Corps, you must excuse me for saying that the evidence you present does not, in my humble opinion, create even a presumption in favor of your position.

In the first place the question is not, whether on the immediate lines of Allabach's or Tyler's advance, the troops of the 2d Corps went nearer the stone wall than those brigades did. The ground over which the divisions of French, Hancock and Howard charged, first or last, was far wider than that covered by the charges of Allabach and Tyler. It might, therefore, be true that no troops went further forward than the latter brigades upon their own ground, and yet it might be true that at other points some of the men of the 2d Corps went even nearer still to the stone wall.

In the second place, the evidence offered to prove that no troops had gone in advance of Allabach's and Tyler's men, along their lines of advance is altogether inconclusive. It is proverbially hard to prove a negative; yet the only testimony offered in this case is that of certain officers and men who did not see any dead bodies over the ground over which they advanced in the latter part of their charge. Had these witnesses gone upon a peaceful field, searching undisturbed for dead bodies their report might have been of some value on the subject. In the case, however, of men rushing forward in all the fury and excitement of a most desperate charge, against a hostile position which was one sheet of flame from end to end, a failure to note the presence of dead bodies, had they lain there in considerable numbers, would have been the most natural thing in the world. When men's attention is strongly fixed in a certain direction, almost anything else may occur without their noticing it. This is the entire secret of the art of the sleight-of-hand performer. In the presence of a thousand persons he will do things which not one of them observes, because he has first concentrated their attention and fixed it upon something else. I have myself rode for hours in the midst of a bloody battle without seeing a man fall from the ranks, or a body lying upon the ground, simply because my attention was fixed upon the general movements in progress and my faculties utterly engrossed by important duties. If this might be the case in a protracted action, during portions of which the hostile lines were at a considerable distance from each other, how much more might it be true of any soldier, even the bravest and the coolest, during such a furious rush as that which was so gallantly but ineffectually made by Humphreys' Brigades on the afternoon of the 13th of December.

3d. So much for the negative testimony on the subject. The positive evidence stands in this way. Neither General Humphreys nor yourself nor any officer or soldier of that division, so far as it appears by the records, witnessed any one of the charges made by the 2d Corps against the stone wall. On the other hand, thousands of officers and men witnessed alike the charges of Humphreys' Division and those made from the divisions of French, Hancock and Howard. I have yet to learn of a single person who enjoyed those opportunities who holds with you.

Such is my case. This is all I have to say on the subject. If your mind is not satisfied, I do not see but what we shall have to agree to disagree regarding this matter as men have to do respecting many other points, in this and every other war in human history. I venture respectfully to suggest, however, that the least effectual way of exalting the honor of any one body of gallant troops is through disparaging others, which have proven, through two score of desperate battles, their claim to consideration and respect. Whatever may be written, I, for one, entertain no fear that any intelligent and disinterested American will believe the

divisions of French, Hancock and Howard to have been inferior in courage, discipline and efficiency to the gallant regiments that composed the brigades of Allabach and Tyler.

I will only ask that should you feel it your duty to publish anything on this subject you will do me the great courtesy and favor to call my attention thereto.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed), FRANCIS A. WALKER.

1616 21ST STREET,

WASHINGTON, D. C., *April 16, 1890.*

GENERAL F. A. WALKER,
BOSTON, MASS.

DEAR SIR:—Your letter of January 5th, 1889, it is believed was acknowledged soon after its receipt. From that time on the published official reports of those engaged on both sides in the battle of Fredericksburg have been consulted, the battleground visited and carefully gone over, memory refreshed by conversation with individuals of both sides, who gave and received blows in that memorable action. You are right in stating “The essential question is whether the charge of Humphreys’ Division failed because of the presence of Couchs’ troops, or because of the four ranks of veteran riflemen who, in the words of your honored father made the stone wall a sheet of flame that enveloped the head and flanks of the column.” In reply, I submit the reflections, as you style my communication to you, came first from yourself and not from me. Far be it I should detract one iota from the noble deeds performed by the 2d Corps, whose actions have been written in blood.

It is to you I address myself who, dwelling on the deeds of this noble band, have been led to believe such sayings essentially as follows, we got to within 25 and 20 yards of the stone wall, no troops went farther to the front than we, and accepting them without contradiction, have overlooked the claims of others equally as brave, I will not say braver.

How can I remain silent when such assertions coming from one holding the position you do, carries with it for a class of persons a weight who, allowing others to do their thinking, fail to search for themselves.

The 3d Division, 5th Corps, were green troops, never before under fire as a Division. Such troops led by a gallant General go farther than veterans. They do not know the peril of their position, neither has the value of a cross fire of artillery, accentuated by that of infantry terrors for them; onward they press after their leader. History contains many examples of such deeds. It is needless to refer to them.

As to the removal of Couchs' troops who, occupying the ground, were an impediment to a successful home thrust by the 3d Division, 5th Corps, permit me to remark it was essential to the success of the attack to be delivered by this Division, that the ground should have been cleared of all retarders.

The orders under which General Humphreys acted, did not permit making a survey of the ground over which the charges was made, neither did time permit of his so doing. Had circumstances permitted such survey, General Humphreys would have demanded as of primary importance to the success of his charges, the removal from the ground of all troops then occupying that portion over which the division moved. Possibly had time permitted for granting such a demand, it would not have been complied with by General Couch, who, fearing such a withdrawal would cause the Confederate troops to leave their position, and deliver a counter stroke, forgot Union troops posted to right and left could and would have poured on them a flanking fire; granting such a contingency to have taken place it would have given us the victory. The Confederate troops knew full well the value of their position.

A few more men (relatively speaking), would have been killed and wounded in the withdrawal; what did that matter, if by so doing the stone wall was carried, as it would have been by the green division of the 5th Corps led by General Humphreys. The demand "the carrying of the stone wall before dark" was imperative, the response well known. Let me be understood; General Humphreys was not aware, did not know when orders were received by him to make this charge, of the ground being encumbered by troops, neither did his order permit him of doing aught but form and charge. General Couch had been on the ground a long time, knew another charge was to be made, and should have assisted by all means in his power to render this attack a success. What did he do? All entreaties on the part of the men of the 3d Division, 5th Corps, to those of the 2d Corps lying on the ground to rise and go forward with them, were of no avail. Had they done so, the stone wall would have been carried, and this success shared by both commands. I believe one Officer of the 2d Corps, seeing this advantage, called on his men to go forward, set the example, but they remained immovable.

Your second reply begs the question as to nearness of the men of 2d Corps to the stone wall. Your history of same asserts for them that fact. A careful reading of the Rebellion records, confirms my opinion, the 3d Division, 5th Corps, was formed in rear of ground held by Caldwell, Zook, and others of the 2d Corps. Muskets were rung unloaded, bayonets fixed, and the Division charged over them. Wherein does the Clio of this war make mention of such small things, their very nature showing grim determination, wherein does she speak of a division led by its commander into the jaws of death. Sir, the North, the whole army,

moved with admiration by this act of heroism, rang with applause. It is unparalleled, unprecedented, unexcelled, and to this day stands a shining example of what one man can do, has done; a man so modest, so generous, so careful of the feelings of others, never speaking of himself.

Thus we have narrowed somewhat the front, and bring the Division on the same ground held by the gentlemen who claim no troops passed beyond their lines or approached nearer the stone wall.

I bring this forward to prove my assertions, and here I stand not alone, no men dead or wounded belonging to the 2d Corps were seen by me lying on the ground in front of the line of the 3d Division, 5th Corps, when at its farthest point forward.

General Humphreys and myself, mounted, were in front of this line. To this day this ground, bare of men, has remained indelibly fixed on my mind, as I, with others at that time, occupied a point of vantage not enjoyed by others, save those whom I accompanied. Your reference to the sleight-of-hand performer is very true of jugglery, but incompatible with our present subject.

To your third reply. The official report of Brigadier General B. Kershaw, commanding troops of Confederate Army at stone wall, states: "At 5 P. M., the most formidable column of attack was formed, some few, chiefly officers, got within thirty yards or less of the stone wall."

Major-General L. McLaws, Confederate Army, commanding at same place, official report, states as follows: "At about 4:30 P.M. the enemy in the meanwhile formed a strong column of attack, and advancing under cover of the artillery fire, came forward along our whole front in the most determined manner."

You will not deny these officers being good judges of what they saw and described. They witnessed all the charges made upon their position by the 2d Corps, yet nowhere do they employ such emphatic language when speaking of previous charges on their position, except of the last one, that delivered by General Humphreys. An officer, then holding high* rank in the Confederate Army, occupying a position from which a good view was obtained of the ground struggled over, gives as his decided opinion, the troops of the 3d division, 5th Corps, advanced farther and nearer the stone wall than any other. At no late date I trust to submit for your information a copy of the letter embodying his views.

General de Trobriand, in his four years with the Army of the Potomac, states: "The head of General Humphreys' column reached a point about fifteen or twenty paces from the stone wall."

I quote from Major General de Peyster, of New York City, one well versed in all matters pertaining to this war: "The experienced French General of Brigade, V. de Chanél, in reporting to the Emperor Napoleon III., remarks as follows of Humphreys at Fredericksburg": "These poor

*The writer was mistaken as to the rank.

fellows disheartened by several charges, and thinking perhaps as well of their liberation so near at hand, have laid down and continued deaf to the threats, as well as to the entreaties of their Commander. Then Humphreys dismounted and accompanied by his son, a youth of sixteen, who never left his father's side, advanced slowly toward the enemy. The Pennsylvanians, shamed by this example, started to their feet and rushed to the attack. The first surge up the slippery slope was made by French, 3d Division, 2d Corps, with a boldness and backbone that carried his first line to within thirty or forty paces of the never to be forgotten Ha! Ha! stone wall. The second surge forward was made by Hancock, 1st Division, 2d Corps. It broke within twenty-five paces of the stone wall. As to Humphreys' Division. As it was, despite his utmost endeavors, in which two horses were shot under him, and another badly wounded, he could not get his division across that stone wall, indeed not nearer than fifteen or twenty paces to it. Although they reached *the point nearest to it which had been obtained* they were compelled to retire.'"

* * * * *

"His division, like the third breaker upon the beach, left traces of blood and wrecks, a few paces farther on and *nearer to the enemy* than the preceding two, lingered longer, strove harder to maintain itself so far and to accomplish the impossible."

Again I quote from the same authority: "Indeed so near was he to carrying the wall and heights that the enemy were actually moving their guns out of the batteries, and on the right they were beginning to quit the wall."

See letter of Humphreys to William Swinton, May 10th, 1886: "A gentleman of this city, Mr. Kirby, 'The boy scout,' with whom I have conversed, gives, as his opinion, based upon what survivors of the Confederate Army (some residents of Fredericksburg, Va.) have said to him. They (the Confederates) concede to Humphreys the nearest approach to the stone wall."

It is inferred, the "History of the 2d Corps" strengthens its case upon what was said by an officer of that corps who went over under a flag of truce with detail to bury the dead. It has been affirmed by Martha Stevens, since dead (in front of whose house General Cobb, commanding at stone wall, was mortally wounded), in language nearly as follows: "The field was blue in color before the Union troops left; next morning it was white." Here the dead lay for some days before burial, stripped of all clothing and exposed to the vicissitudes of climate. How was recognition effected when everything tending towards that had been removed? Were the bodies of the Union soldiers, then lying there, so well known to the detail, that the changes wrought upon their features by weather made no difference? I doubt it. The Maltese Cross, the

Trefoil, and other symbols marking the several corps, were of subsequent origin to this action, excepting in one division (Kearney) the red diamond of the 3d Corps.

Still further, when the brigade of Allabach (2d of 3d Division, 5th Corps) was broken by the fire from the stone wall, many men of this command ran forward to this house (Martha Stevens) and remained there until night fall. This house is less than twenty yards from the stone wall by actual measurement.

Colonel Allabach, commanding 2d Brigade, 3d Division, 5th Corps, official report is as follows: "My troops reached within twelve yards of the stone wall." This officer is a veteran of two wars.

Your "History of 2d Corps" claims the last fence, official reports of officers commanding regiments in 3d Division, 5th Corps, state: The line advanced in as good order as the mud would permit at double quick, until they unexpectedly came upon a line of men lying on the ground, who by gestures and words endeavored to keep them back. This, and the difficulty of passing over the men created some confusion in the ranks, which was increased by the necessity of pulling down and scrambling over *two fences*." These fences were to the right and front of brick house standing in the field, used as a hospital. It is there yet.

Lastly, were General Humphreys living, he would have pointed out wherein you were wrong, and on his statements you would have corrected the errors committed. Due regard for those whose lips are sealed by death, coupled with admiration for the green division, has called forth this letter.

With these official statements, coupled with my own recollections, the extracts and statements from others, together with the official report of General Humphreys, I claim for the 3d Division, 5th Corps, the nearest approach to the stone wall, and shall so maintain, reserving to myself the right to publish as you have done, my views on this disputed matter.

Thanking you for the correction to be made in any future edition of the "History of the 2d Corps."

I am, Sir, respectfully,

(Signed), HENRY H. HUMPHREYS,
Captain 15th Infantry, U. S. A.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *June 16, 1891.*

DEAR CAPT. HUMPHREYS:—Pardon my delay in not replying to your letter until to-day.

My recollection of the battle of Fredericksburg, in which I was an humble participant, is as follows:

The Richmond Fayette Artillery (a six gun battery), of which I was an officer, was attached to General McLaws' Division during the fall and winter of 1862, and which was one of the first divisions to reach the hills in rear of Fredericksburg, on or about the 17th of November, 1862. I believe about one day ahead of the Federal troops. On the 11th day of December, 1862, we were placed in position in General Lee's line of battle, near the telegraph road, on a commanding hill which overlooked the whole town and the plains below and along the Rappahannock river; we were also in close proximity to Marye's Heights. Generals Lee and Longstreet, with their Staffs occupied a position near our battery to watch the progress of the battle. Our guns were intended to rake the fields and the old sunken railroad cut in our front. On our left and down in front of Marye's Hill ran the telegraph road; this road was about four feet below the level of the land on the side near the town, while on the other side arose Marye's Heights, a splendid natural fortification for any body of troops to resist the advance of an approaching enemy. In this sunken road were placed General Tom Cobb's and one other Brigade of McLaws' Division.

On this day, 11th of December, 1862, the town of Fredericksburg was shelled, driving out all the inhabitants. On December 15, 1862, the great battle was fought; from our position we could plainly see the whole line of battle. I saw the three grand but desperate and unsuccessful assaults that were made upon the sunken road in front and at the foot of Marye's Heights. The first attack was made just after the repulse of General Franklin on our right, and which, I believe, was General French's Division, after a fierce struggle over many obstacles this division retreated with heavy loss. The second charge was made almost immediately after the repulse of the first; the troops in this charge were of General Hancock's Division. Both of these assaults were made more to our left and immediately in front of Marye's Heights, and in consequence were farther from our position, so that we took little or no part in these two assaults.

The third or last assault was made near sunset and came closer and nearer to our works than the first two. The troops in this charge were of Gen. A. A. Humphreys' Division; they were handled in a most masterly manner and were pressed forward with vigor and determination to capture the works at the foot of Marye's Heights and the telegraph road; as the troops of this last assault emerged from the railroad cut and formed line for the charge our guns opened upon them with good effect, but with this galling and disastrous fire in their front they came forward in a rush, nearly reaching the telegraph road and the walks under the hill; it was with difficulty that Cobb's and Cook's Brigades could hold their positions during this assault.

General Humphreys' Division was repulsed with heavy loss, perhaps more so than the other two divisions from the fact that he pressed his troops closer and harder in the attack. We lost many valuable officers and men in the assault.

I do not hesitate to say that if General Humphreys' Division had attacked our line a little more to our right (your left) he would undoubtedly have avoided a greater portion of the sunken road and the fire from our batteries on Marye's Heights, and no doubt would have captured a part of the telegraph road, there being but two brigades behind the stone wall, but it would not have been possible for any body of troops to have gone any farther, no matter how brave they may have been, or how skillfully handled. A day or two after the battle I went out with the flag of truce between the lines to see about burying the dead, but more especially to find the body of Captain King, who was on General McLaws' Staff, and was killed during the last assault. I saw the dead as they had fallen in these charges, and while I do not wish to detract anything from the hard fought but bloody battle in which they had been repulsed, yet, I must in justice say that the dead bodies that I saw close to our works belonged to General Humphreys' Division.

I have written this letter hastily and without much thought, endeavoring to give you my recollection in as brief a form as possible (without referring to documents) of what occurred at the Battle of Fredericksburg, December 15, 1862.

Very truly yours,

(Signed), ROB'T I. FLEMING.



Humphreys' Charge at Marye's Heights.

THE circumstances of Humphreys' assault deserves fuller mention that I have made, for the charge was marked by a gallantry unsurpassed by anything in the history of the war. General Palfrey in his admirable monograph on Fredericksburg (in Scribner's "Campaigns of the Civil War" series) says:—"Some of the very best fighting that was done at Fredericksburg was done by the 3d Division of the 5th Corps. The Division was commanded by General Humphreys, who was probably the best Officer in the Army of the Potomac that day. He was a thoroughly educated soldier, possessed of a quick eye and a clear head, and a man of fiery energy. That the fighting his division did was so good was due to him.

I venture to extract from a private letter from General Humphreys to the present writer dated May 10, 1866, the following particulars, which give an even more vivid picture of his assault than is found in his official report:

"I had just reached the edge of the town facing Marye's Heights with my division, when, at the earnest request of General Couch, I was authorized or ordered to support his troops in front of the stone wall, who, he said, were nearly out of ammunition and would, if not supported, be forced back.

"This was a very great mistake. Had the enemy come out from the stone wall, we should have carried the position. I moved forward at once with my division down the hill and across the ditch or canal, formed the leading brigade in the ravine beyond the ditch about three or four hundred yards from the stone wall and advanced in line of battle to where Couch's men were lying behind a small fold in the ground about one hundred and fifty yards or less from the stone

wall, the existence of which I knew nothing of until I got there. I saw at once that there was nothing to be done but to try the bayonet, which I attempted with this brigade, but could not carry the wall chiefly because my troops were thrown into disorder by the men lying, several ranks deep, behind the little fold in the ground I have already mentioned. I had ordered my other brigade to form in the same ravine as it came up, and move up to me, and now rode back towards it. It was at this time I found the artillery Hooker had put on the edge of the ravine, just in the very ground my troops must pass over. I was obliged to go to every gun myself to put a stop to their firing.* I then led forward my other brigade, which was thrown into confusion by the masses of men lying down at the place I have already mentioned, the little fold in the ground. I had cautioned my troops about these men, and told them not to mind them, but to run over them. But the brigade was thrown into an unwieldy mass in going over or through them, and the officers and men were mixed up so that the former lost all control of the latter. Notwithstanding this, the impetus with which they were moving carried them close up to the wall, † the right being actually on it, and the left nearer to the wall than any other troops had reached, when some firing began in the column or mass, which halted and turned slowly back. One minute more and we should have been over the wall, which I am confident I should have carried but for the disorder occasioned by the troops lying down whom I was sent to support. If they had been withdrawn before I moved forward a different result would have followed. I tried to get them up to make them charge with me, but could not stir them. I stopped their firing, however. Every officer of my Staff but one was dismounted, and his horse was badly wounded. Four of my Staff were wounded. I lost two horses. So near was I to carrying the wall and heights that the enemy were actually moving the guns out of the

*In the book from which I copy this letter there is a foot note at this place, which however, I have not copied, as it is rather long and seems to be unimportant.

†On the printed page from which I copy this, there is no comma in this sentence until this place. I have copied throughout the punctuation of the printed page.

batteries, and near our right they were beginning to quit the wall. It was getting to be dark when the charge was over. It was when I was returning to lead my last brigade to the charge that I received messages for the first time from General Hooker and from General Butterfield saying that General Burnside said the heights must be taken before night. I sent them word I had tried the bayonet with one brigade, and was now going to try it with the other. General Hooker and General Butterfield had returned from General Burnside while I was occupied with my leading brigade and the former mistook the charge of the second brigade for the charge of my division, hence the error of his testimony. I went over the ground on my march to Washington in May of last year, and found that the distances were even less than those I gave in my official report of the part taken in the battle by my division. The first brigade that charged was commanded by Colonel Allabach. The second was commanded by Brigadier General E. B. Tyler."

Copied from William Swinton's "Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac." (Scribner's, 1882). Appendix, page 633. (Signed), H. E. B.

Received at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, March 8, 1894. (Signed), Henry H. Humphreys, U. S. A.

1018 12TH STREET,

N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.,

March 17th, 1896.

CAPTAIN HENRY H. HUMPHREYS,

U. S. ARMY,

FORT SHERIDAN ILLINOIS.

DEAR SIR: Business matters have prevented me from replying to your letter of February 20th, 1896, until now.

In answer to your question in relation to the dead in front of Marye's Heights at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Va., on December 13th, 1862, you ask: "How you determined that fact, or in other words, how you recognized the dead nearest to our (your) works were those of General Humphreys' Division," will state that by conversing with the wounded found on the field of battle in front of Marye's Heights when I went out with the flag of truce, etc., and was informed by them that they belonged to General Humphreys' Division, and as was quite natural we talked

with wounded of other commands in order to find out what troops made the charges, etc. I notice one error in my letter to you of June 16th, 1891, that of the date December 15th, 1862, should have been December 13th, 1862. The battles were fought December 11th, 12th and 13th, 1862, according to my recollection.

Very truly yours,

(Signed), ROB'T I. FLEMING.

Some opinions well known to General Walker, expressed by officers of the Army of the Potomac of the abilities possessed by Andrew Atkinson Humphreys.

Campaigns of the Civil War.

(SCRIBNER'S.)

CHANCELLORSVILLE AND GETTYSBURG.

PAGES 174 AND 175

“Humphreys was ordered to move his left wing back to form a new oblique line to the ridge in connection with Birney's Division” and again, “but now he was obliged, while executing this difficult manœuvre of a change of front to rear, to contend with Barksdale's brigade of McLaws' Division on his left at the Peach Orchard and enfilading batteries there also, while his entire front was called upon to repel a most determined assault from Anderson's Division which hitherto had not been engaged and which now pressed with great force on his right which still clung to the road.”

“Humphreys received orders to give up his advanced position and fall back to the ridge itself. There he turned at bay.”

“Humphreys' was followed up by the Brigades of Wilcox, Perry and Wright, about the best fighting material in the rebel army.”

Those who have been required to execute such an evolution know well what it is and how hard to perform, especially under fire. The division were seasoned troops and worked it out to perfection, losing heavily, some two thousand men.

Same Series.

ANTIETAM AND FREDERICKSBURG.

PAGE 126

AS TO LOVE OF FIGHTING.

“With officers and men it was the same. They did not like fighting. Sheridan, Hancock, Humphreys, Kearney, Custer, Barlow, and such as they were exceptions, but the rule was otherwise.”

PAGE 170

“Some of the very best fighting that was done at Fredericksburg was done by the 3d Division of the 5th Corps. This division was commanded by General Humphreys, who was probably the best officer in the Army of the Potomac that day. He was a thoroughly educated soldier, possessed of a quick eye and a clear head, and a man of fiery energy. That the fighting his division did was so good was due to him.”

“As soon as Humphreys had ascertained the nature of the enemy's position, which the urgency of the case had put out of his power to do before arriving with his men, he became satisfied that his fire could have little effect upon them, and he perceived that the only mode of attacking him successfully was with the bayonet.”

“Having learned from experience (his first charge) what a serious obstacle they would encounter from the presence of the mass of men lying behind the natural embankment in front, he directed them to disregard these men entirely and pass over them.”

The scene which followed was most singular, and it is well to describe it in General Humphreys' own words:

“As the brigades reached the masses of men referred to every effort was made by the latter to prevent our advance. They called to our men not to go forward and some attempted to prevent by force their doing so. The effect upon my command was what I apprehended, the line was somewhat disordered, and in part was forced to form into a column, but still

advanced rapidly. The fire of the enemy's musketry and artillery, furious as it was before, now became still hotter. The stone wall was a sheet of flame that enveloped the head and flanks of the column. Officers and men were falling rapidly and the head of the column was at length brought to a stand when close up to the wall. Up to this time not a shot had been fired by the column, but now some firing began, it lasted but a minute, when in spite of all our efforts, the column turned and began to retire slowly."

The Confederate General Ransom is stated to have reported as follows: "This last desperate and maddened attack met the same fate which had befallen those which had preceded and his troops were sent actually howling (singing!) back to their beaten comrades in the town."

Same Series.

PENINSULAR. PAGE 22.

"One of the best military authorities we have now living, General A. A. Humphreys, late Chief of Engineers, former Chief of Staff to General Meade, late Commander of the 2d Corps in front of Richmond, was in favor of this movement." "Urbana route." And again (page 154): "General McClellan had given orders for placing the troops before they had all arrived upon the spot, and had assigned position to Porter's Corps and Couch's Division of Keys, the other corps as they came on the ground were put in position by General A. A. Humphreys, who had examined the ground thoroughly the day before."

GRANT VERSUS THE RECORD.

PAGE 128.

"When General Andrew A. Humphreys decided that an assault by the 5th Army Corps could not succeed, few experienced military men would wish to disregard his judgment, and small reason was left for criticism of defeated effort."

COMTE DE PARIS. CIVIL WAR.

PAGE 595, VOLUME II.

Writing of the charges on Marye's Hill, at Fredericksburg, by the Divisions of French, Hancock, Howard, also Humphreys, uses the following language as to the charges of the latter's Division: "They rushed forward with such eagerness that they nearly reached the foot of the wall" (stone). This historian fails to record such language for the divisions of the 2d Corps.

In this particular, General Walker's History exalting the 2d Corps above all others, is another example of the old saying: "The page killed the boar, but the king obtained the glory."—QUINTON DURWARD.

Petersburg, Virginia,

APRIL 2D, 1865.

“FIDUS ET AUDAX.”

IT is not the purpose of this paper to detail at length how the Armies of the Potomac and James obtained and held the position from which their final assault was delivered upon the Confederate lines at Petersburg, Virginia, on the 2d of April, 1865, and their capture. The positions held by the several armies confronting each other will be described in general terms, for most, if not all of you, are acquainted with the topography of that country, and what was done by both sides to cover themselves by means of earthworks, and render all approach, if not impossible and impracticable, at least dangerous and difficult, except at a heavy expense of life and limb. The works erected for the protection of the city (Petersburg), from the Appomattox to “Battery No. 10,” had been carried by the Union troops on June 17th and 18th, 1864, the Confederates retiring to the hills in rear, and thereupon erecting new lines of defense, which are held, until carried, and Petersburg evacuated April 2d, 1865. Their lines of defense were prolonged to meet all subsequent extensions of ours to our left, whereby we hoped to cut off from them some of their lines of subsistence, namely, The Weldon and South Side Railroad, compel evacuation or surrender. Whenever these extensions took place both sides seized upon the natural features of the ground, converting them to their benefit, first by felling all trees in their front for some distance out, dropping the tops outward, thereby making it almost impossible for any line of troops to get through, introducing near their

inner sides several lines of wire which ran in and out and through the branches, damming up Hatcher's run in many places, rendering it non-fordable, placing in front of their rifle pits several lines of "Abattis," there again using wire; protecting all natural crossings of the run by dams and bridge heads, in fact all measures used were calculated to hinder and prolong the stay of the attacking troops in their front, and while so exposed inflicting upon them heavy losses. These lines ran through woods, up and down hills, crossed open places, small streams, with first, nothing but the rough rifle pit. These in time are improved, becoming regular intrenchments. The ground held by the Armies of the Potomac and James began near the Appomattox river, and extending to the left, ended about one mile west of Burges' Mill (which was upon Boydtown plank road), a line, according to recollection, something like twenty miles in length, if not more. The Confederate lines naturally followed this extension. These works were not held by a continuous line of troops, but in and upon them were constructed many enclosed forts with garrisons, mutually supporting each other by their fire. By these means the armies were enabled to cut loose from their lines and meet each other on new fields but with less numbers.

On the 2d of April, 1865, the positions of the corps of the Armies of the Potomac and James, were as follows: Commencing on right, first the 9th Corps, then the 6th, the Army of the James, then the 2d Corps, which held the extreme left of the Army of the Potomac. Beyond this, with an interval of some four miles, more or less, was Sheridan at Five Forks with his Cavalry and the 5th Corps. How the Confederate Corps were placed behind their line is not definitely known to the writer, hence their positions are not given.

To arrive at some idea of the strength of the Armies of the Potomac and James and its opponent the Army of Northern Virginia, research must be had of the most reliable data. Unfortunately, the Rebellion Records for the year 1865 have not reached those for whom they are intended, and the writer has been compelled to resort to such works (written by the

principal actors in that struggle as are now in the hands of almost everyone, who has taken, or still takes, interest in the late war. By reference to the Morning Reports of the Army of the Potomac, of March 31st, 1865, we find its strength to be: Officers and enlisted men of all arms of the service, 74,871 men, with 243 guns; of the cavalry under Sheridan, 13,820; of the Army of the James under Ord, 22,714 men, with 56 guns; a total of 111,405 of all arms, with 299 guns (field and siege.)

Facing Richmond and Bermuda Hundreds was the 25th Corps, with an effective force of 13,630 men and 56 guns. Of the strength of the army of Northern Virginia, we find by consulting their Morning Reports of February 20th, 1865 (the only report so far known), to be of all arms, 55,500 men. Lee's army was divided into three parts; first, that defending Richmond and Bermuda Hundreds about 10,000; that confronting the Armies of the Potomac and the James, say 35,000; lastly, those defeated by Sheridan at Five Forks, about 10,000. The Armies of the Potomac and James naturally had assumed three grand sub-divisions, that facing Richmond, whose strength has been stated, while Sheridan's Cavalry had meanwhile been strengthened by the addition of the 5th Corps, bringing its effective force to 30,893 men with 36 guns. While the Army of Potomac had lost by this addition to Sheridan, it gained that of the Army of the James, bringing its total effective force to 80,512 officers and men, facing Petersburg.

By 8 A.M. on April 2d, 1865, the Confederate outer-lines, defending Petersburg, had been carried from one end to the other, and Lee is busily fighting with what is left to him of his army until nightfall, when he will evacuate Petersburg and Richmond, concentrate at the "Amelia Court House," march from thence on Danville, N. C., unite with Johnson, beat back Sherman, who is pushing northward to assist Grant in his attack on Petersburg and Richmond. During the day Lee perfected his plan of retreat, and at nightfall his army crosses to the left bank of the Appomattox river by means of a pontoon bridge, the Pocahontas and R. R. bridge. That part

of his army defeated by Sheridan at Five Forks retreats by a road called the River road, up the Appomattox river on its right bank. Of the army which crossed by the pontoon bridge and others, Longstreet leads with Field Division, Heth's and Wilcox's Division of Hill's Corps, marching by the River road left bank, up the Appomattox, intending to cross this stream at Bevel's Bridge, but finding it out of order uses the pontoon bridge laid at Goodes' Bridge. Gordon follows the Hickory road, crossing the river at Goodes' Bridge, follows Longstreet. Mahones' Division passing through Chesterfield Court House, used the bridge at Goodes', follows Gordon. Ewell's command composed of Kershaw's and Custis Lee's Divisions, crosses the James river at and below Richmond; takes the Genito road, followed by Geary's Cavalry as rear guard, and crosses the Appomattox by the Danville R. R. bridge. The Armies of the Potomac and James slept quietly the night of April 2d, 1865, inside of the lines captured by them that day, intending on the next morning, April 3d, 1865, to assault the inner works, which at nightfall of that day still defended Petersburg, but on awakening find their prey had escaped. Pursuit is immediately given, our cavalry overtaking the Confederate rear guard, near Namozine Church, which was defeated. At Deep Creek another engagement near dark took place. Here our cavalry halted with the 2d, 5th and 6th Corps well closed up. Let us turn back to the force defeated at Five Forks by Sheridan, and those by the 2d Corps, which I have stated retreated by the River road, south bank of the Appomattox river, on April 2d, 1865. This force fell back from Sheridan and the 2d Corps, by way of the Ford and Clayborne roads, to Sutherland Station, on the South Side Railroad, where it made a stand for some time, until driven from the field by General Miles, commanding the 1st Division 2d Corps. This division (Miles) returned by Sheridan on the morning of April 2d, 1865, was on its way back to the 2d Corps, but turned down the Clayborne road (under orders of the commander of the 2d Corps) and struck the enemy at the beforementioned station. This division was followed by the

other two divisions of the 2d Corps on the same road, but before Miles' first engagement were deflected towards Petersburg, the Lieutenant-General intending this part of the field for Sheridan's exclusive use (see "Personal Memoirs of Lieut.-General P. H. Sheridan," page 173, Vol. 2). During April 3d, nothing was accomplished by the Cavalry and the 5th Corps, except the rear guard fights at Namozine Church and Deep Creek, Virginia. Precept No. 1, with two others, which follow naturally on the application of the first, governed Napoleon in all his campaigns, is here lost sight of. Sheridan's Cavalry with the 5th Corps, together with the 2d Corps, in all 52,060 men and many guns, are more than a match for the enemy probably not over 10,000 strong? Had General Grant permitted the 2d Corps to follow and engage the enemy at Sutherland Station Sheridan would probably have closed in on their right flank and rear. Not one would have been left to retreat up the River road on the south bank of the Appomattox. Precept No. 1 reads: "Engage your masses with the fractions of the enemy's forces, or your large fractions with his small ones." We have now reached a point where, had "the three precepts" been applied, there would have been no Appomattox, and the surrender of Lee would have taken place sooner. A glance at the map reveals two rivers, the James and the Appomattox, which unite but a few miles below Petersburg, Va. It was well known to Grant Lee, would push south as fast as possible. To prevent this a strong column of troops, say those under Sheridan, to which could have been added the 2d Corps, in all 52,060 men (leaving with Grant at Petersburg, 57,200 men to carry on the siege), should have been organized, with orders to push up the Appomattox on the 2d of April, 1865, as fast as possible, and hold all probable and possible crossings of the river. The points which would have been held, in all probability, had this column been formed, would undoubtedly have been those used by the Confederate troops in their retreat, besides, this column would have cut off from Lee his only road by which supplies could reach him, namely, the Richmond and Danville R. R. This operation

would have cooped Lee between two rivers with no means of living, except upon the county and that almost exhausted, and forced him to fight a battle under disadvantageous circumstances, forming front to a flank. This manœuvre is in accordance with Precept No 2, "Always operate upon interior lines"; and with Precept No. 3, "Operate as far as possible upon the communications of the enemy without exposing your own."

Reflections.

Have the heavy blows, administered by Lee, on the Army of the Potomac, from the Wilderness, 1864, and including Dinwiddie Court House, 1865, made some impression on General Grant. Our forces, collectively speaking, Cavalry, 5th and 2d Corps, had the preponderance of numbers and held the shortest line to the various crossings of the Appomattox above Petersburg. From Petersburg by the North River road to Goodes' Bridge, it is about 35 miles, by the South River road, from Sutherland Station to the same point, it is about 25 miles. Grant must have been aware of the topography of the country, by means of his spies, and his stay at City Point, Va., from June 19th, 1864, up to and including April 2d, 1865. Much information must have been gathered of the topography of the country, fording of streams, the means of crossing the Appomattox river, their distance each from the other and from Petersburg, Virginia.

Farmville, Virginia,

APRIL 7TH, 1865.

“AMICUS PLATO, AMICUS SOCRATES, SED MAGIS
AMICUS VERITAS.”

WE resume our narrative of last year, having on April 3d, 1865, left the opposing forces (Union and Confederate) on the right bank of the Appomattox river, at Deep Creek, whilst the balance of Lee's Army is marching forward to Amelia Court House, concentrating there. General Grant in his memoirs, volume 2, page 466, states, “we had now no other objective than the Confederate Armies and I was anxious to close the thing up at once.”

This language of the Lieutenant General carries great weight and will be referred to later on. It is now advanced, and attention called to its purport and it should not be forgotten. It will be brought to your attention, when a part of the Army of the Potomac and that of Northern Virginia, Commanded by General Lee, face each other at Farmville as we style that fight, or the so-called encounter at Cumberland Church of the Confederates.

Sheridan pushes forward on the 4th of April 1865, arriving at Jetersville, Va., late that afternoon, with the Cavalry of Crook's and most of his own mounted troops. He intrenches at once, but sends out to his left and front, some cavalry, with directions to ascertain, if possible, the disposition of Lee's forces, what points are held and what roads are occupied, what are or will be his intentions; presuming he (Lee) still holds to his original plan of uniting with Johnston in North Carolina.

The 2d and 6th Corps follow upon the same route as that used by the Cavalry and 5th Corps, but were impeded by our Cavalry coming from our right flank.

This arm having precedence, the two Corps give way to them. The Corps also are required to furnish large working parties to repair the roads, as they were nearly impassable for wagons. At one o'clock A. M. of the 5th of April, 1865, the march was resumed by the 2d and 6th Corps, but proceeding only a short distance forward, were again delayed by the Cavalry, coming in from our right, on their way to Jetersville, and it was not till near 3 P. M. of that day that the 2d Corps began to arrive at Jetersville, followed by the 6th Corps. Our Infantry are placed in the following positions, the 6th Corps on the right of the 5th Corps, the 2d on the left of the 5th Corps, which latter Corps held the centre. All faced north, or in the direction of Amelia Court House, where was then Lee's Army.

Here Lee was concentrating, but this concentration was not effected until some time in the afternoon of April 5th, 1865. Lee expected by a well conducted night march westward, to get so far in advance, that he might reach Lynchburgh by passing through Deatonsville, Rice's Station and Farmville, and possibly might reach Danville (see page 376, "Virginia Campaigns, 1864-65"). His Army at nightfall began its retreat, by roads passing to our left flank and rear—Longstreet reaching Rice's Station at sunrise April 6th, 1865, where he waited for the coming up of the rest of the Confederate forces—Ewell was at Amelia Springs about 8 A. M. of April 6th, 1865—Gordon's Corps was the rear guard.

The Confederate wagon trains pushed forward on their right flank on roads which were covered by their forces. All were to cross Sailor's creek, at or near Perkinson Mills, near its mouth in the Appomattox River. The Confederate troops were to cross this stream (Sailor's creek) two or three miles further up and on the road to Rice's Station, and all bridges which had been used by them were then to be destroyed, as well as the one at Amelia Springs. A part of Sheridan's

mounted force, during the 4th and 5th of April, 1865, struck the Danville railroad between Burkes Station and Jetersville, and then moved upon the latter place, arriving there April 5th, 1865. The 5th Corps marched direct on Jetersville. Davies' Brigade of Crook's Division of Cavalry made a reconnaissance to Paines Cross Roads, about five miles north of Amelia Springs, to ascertain if Lee was making any attempt to escape by that flank.

On the morning of the 6th of April, 1865, the Army of the Potomac, with deploying intervals, moved towards Amelia Court House for the purpose of engaging Lee's force if still there. At 8:30 A.M. of this day, when about four miles out, a strong column of the Confederates was discovered by the 2d Corps moving westward on the north bank of Flat creek. The Corps was halted, dispositions were made for attack, and this information (discovery of the enemy) immediately communicated to General Meade. A short time before this discovery of the 2d Corps, General Meade's signal officers discovered the enemy's trains several miles distant moving westward and escorted by cavalry. General Griffin, at Hill's Shop, received undoubted information Lee had left Amelia Court House, moving west. At 9:30 A.M., same day, General Meade's signal officers reported an infantry column, some three or four miles distant, moving in a north-westerly direction, and again another column, some six or seven miles distant, both moving quickly. All this information left no doubt General Lee had during the night been passing to our left and rear.

Upon the receipt of this information General Meade at once faced his army to the rear (ours) and directed the 2d Corps to move on Deatonville, the 5th Corps to move to the right of the 2d and through Painsville, the 6th Corps through Jetersville and take position on the left of the 2d Corps. A brigade of the 2d Corps at once forded Flat creek, the water reaching nearly to their armpits. This stream is not less than 100 feet wide. Bridges were built in short time (material being handy) for the passage of the Corps with its artillery and ambulances.

"A sharp running fight commenced at once with Gordon's

Corps, which was continued over a distance of fourteen (14) miles, during which several partially-intrenched positions were carried. The country was broken, consisting of woods with dense undergrowth and swamps, alternating with open fields, through and over which the line of battle followed closely on the skirmish line with a rapidity and good order that is believed to be unexampled. Artillery moved with the skirmish line. (See page 379, "Virginia Campaigns, 1864-65.")

Histories have been searched to discover if a corps of 20,000 men or less have ever before executed such a manœuvre, but I have failed to find anything which approaches it. All text books instruct in the pursuit of a rear guard, the pursuer loses time in changing from the order of march to the order of battle. The pursued then draws off and resumes the march. The pursuer must then change from the order of battle to that of march. This is obligatory. Here is an advance on what is taught. No soldier will be guided by these rules, unless he be pedantic. The true commander will change his formation for pursuit to suit himself, adapting himself to the topography of the country.

The result of this relentless chase gave the Confederates no rest and jammed their rear guard (and a good one too) up, and into the forces which they were endeavoring to protect; and the result of this energetic action on the part of this soldier was to assist materially in the subsequent capture of a large Confederate force at Sailor's Creek that afternoon.

Has any one ever heard of artillery being on the skirmish line before this? The Germans advocate the use of artillery well advanced. They are students in all things and lead the world. But who before ever heard of artillery on the skirmish line until this example is brought to your notice?

Anderson halted some time in the morning at the forks of the road near J. Hott's house. The right-hand road leads to Perkinsen Mills, some three or four miles down Sailor's Creek, the left-hand road leads direct to Rice's Station.

General Sheridan, early on the 6th of April, directed Crook to move to Deatonsville; Merritt to follow. About midday

Crook made a dash at the trains Anderson was guarding but was repulsed. Merritt joining Crook soon after this repulse, a second attempt was made upon them, but Anderson being reinforced by Ewell, whose troops were then arriving, this second attempt was defeated. When the head of Gordon's Corps reached Hotts, Anderson crossed Sailor's Creek, followed by Ewell, and line of battle was formed across the Rice Station road. The command partially intrenched. Gordon after the passage of the main trains of Lee's army, which moved on and down the right-hand fork, followed after them to Perkinsen's mills, the 2d Corps close upon him. When General Humphreys arrived at the aforementioned forks of the road he perceived Ewell's troops, or part of them, forming line of battle along the north side of Sailor's Creek. He was aware Sheridan was close upon Ewell, but "not aware Anderson's command was across that road on the crest beyond Ewell," and seeing the whole of the 6th Corps near at hand he continued his pursuit of Gordon's Corps on the right hand forks down Sailor's Creek. "This running fight with Gordon's Corps continued for three miles further, the road for many miles being strewn with tents, camp equipage, baggage, battery forges, limbers and wagons. The last attempted stand was near Perkinsen's Mills (Sailor's Creek) when just before dark a short, sharp conflict gave us many flags, three guns, several hundred prisoners, and a large part of the main trains of Lee's Army, which were huddled together in a confused mass at the crossing of the creek. Gordon attempted to form on the high ground on the opposite side of the creek, but fell back quickly from it as our troops crossed. Darkness put a stop to the pursuit until next morning, for the country and roads were unknown to us. Gordon reached High Bridge that night. (See page 381, "Virginia Campaigns, 1864-65.") "The 5th Corps, right of the Army of the Potomac, moved on the Paineville road to Ligonton Ferry, a distance of thirty-two (32) miles, but encountered none of the Confederate forces." (See page 382, "Virginia Campaigns, 1864-1865.")

"General Ord being notified on the 6th of April that Lee

was apparently moving towards Burke's Junction at first prepared to meet him there, but subsequently, with a view of intercepting him, moved along the Lynchburg R. R., and after marching some eight (8) or ten (10) miles came upon Longstreet intrenched at Rice's Station. It was night before his troops were in position." (See page 381, "Virginia Campaigns, 1864-65.") Longstreet remained all day at this place waiting for Anderson, Ewell and Gordon to unite with him. The troops of these gentlemen were covering their trains, but notwithstanding their united efforts the greater part of them (the trains) were destroyed or captured. Had Lee cut down his transportation, reserving only a sufficient number to carry ammunition, very little baggage and hospital stores, and his ambulances, and abandoning the rest he undoubtedly would have succeeded in his undertaking, eluded the pursuing army and joined Johnston, but by his holding on to them he clogged his marches. All his movements were subservient to their protection, and they eventually compelled the surrender of his army.

The captures of the 2d Corps this day amounted to thirteen (13) flags, four (4) guns, and seventeen hundred (1700) prisoners, without counting the killed and wounded, which must have been considerable. On the night of the 6th of April, General Longstreet moved to Farmville, crossed the Appomattox early on the morning of April 7th, and moved out on the road to Lynchburg. Rations for the army of Northern Virginia were here distributed. General Gordon crossed to the north bank of the Appomattox river at High Bridge. He used also, near the former, a wagon road bridge. General Ord finding the enemy had left their position in his front followed on to Farmville. General Sheridan sent General Merritt's cavalry towards Prince Edward Court House to intercept any movement of the enemy towards Danville, and Crook was ordered to Farmville. The 5th Corps moved to Prince Edward Court House, the 2d and 6th Corps took up the direct pursuit of the enemy, the latter Corps moving to Farmville following General Ord. The 2d Corps resumed the pursuit at 5:30 A. M.,

April 7th, 1865, by roads nearest the river, following those which appeared to have been in use by the Confederates, and came upon them at High Bridge just as they blew up a bridge head on the south bank of the river. The enemy had set fire to the railroad bridge on the North side and attempted to burn the wagon bridge, but General Barlow's Division, leading that day, were too quick for them and this bridge was saved to us. Had it been burnt, we should have been unable to cross, the river being non-fordable. Four spans of the railroad bridge were burnt, the rest saved by the exertion of some men of the 2d Corps, the pioneers of the corps. Whilst this body of men were engaged in saving the bridge a lively fight was in progress beneath them, the Confederates endeavoring to drive off our men and burn the wagon bridge, and we to drive them away and prevent the accomplishment of their object. Our efforts to this end were successful and the 2d Corps crossed. The brick piers of the railroad bridge, some twenty in number, are sixty feet high.

Mahone's Division, Confederate, moved off in a northwesterly direction, and Gordon moved up the river along the railroad bed in the direction of Farmville. The 2d Corps (two divisions) marched on the road mentioned as running in a northwesterly direction, which road intersects the stage road, four miles north of Farmville—Mahone used this road. The division sent up the railroad bed, on nearing Farmville, finds this town still held by the enemy in strong force. They had set fire to the bridges and were covering a wagon train on the north bank of the river running to Lynchburg. Here Barlow's Division (2d Corps) caused the Confederates by his dispositions to burn 150 wagons to prevent them from falling into his hands, which they otherwise would. Our troops concentrated about Farmville that day but were prevented from crossing the river as it was not fordable there for infantry, besides no pontoon train was then available. The two divisions of the 2d Corps arrived near the stage road about 1 P. M. and came in contact with the enemy, who opened with artillery. Disposition was at once made for an attack. A heavy skirmish line

was pressed forward at once for the purpose of developing his position.

“From prisoners taken it was found Lee’s whole army was present in a strong position, covering the Stage and Plank roads, which position was sufficiently intrenched for cover—artillery was in place.” (See page 388, “Virginia Campaigns, 1864-65.”) The heavy skirmish line was pressed against General Lee and an attack threatened by the two divisions, and an unsuccessful attack was made to take General Lee in flank. The division which had marched against Farmville by the railroad bed was sent for, and General Meade informed; Lee with what was left of his army, probably 18,000 strong, had been come up with. General Meade on the receipt of this information directed General Gibbon with the 24th Corps, and General Wright with the 6th Corps, both of which were at or near Farmville, to cross the river and attack Lee in rear, whilst the 2d Corps attacked in front.

The position occupied by General Lee, at Farmville, resembles that held by us at Gettysburg, “in petto.” All that was required to carry it was that it should be punched. But this punching does not take place, for the reason neither General Meade nor the Commander of the 2d Corps were aware that there was no available pontoon bridge. Here was the “objective” so ardently desired by General Grant, and the opportunity offered to his anxiety, “to close the thing up at once.” Lee’s army had been brought to bay and by a so-called “laggard.” The troops, excepting one corps (that engaged) are too widely scattered to permit of rapid concentration at the one point, and are principally engaged in marching on parallel roads south of those in use by the enemy, to prevent his moving down into North Carolina, besides, I venture to say the coming up with the enemy that day at Farmville was not on the calendar, and in consequence our combinations were upset. The tactics used by us in the pursuit of Lee resemble those of the summer of 1864. No provision is made whereby rivers can be crossed. What if the pontoon bridge train had been at Farmville when troops arrived there, a bridge con-

structed and troops crossed? Farmville would have been written and Appomattox unknown.

Some firing being heard in the direction of Farmville, which was thought to be the 6th Corps advancing, the left flank of the 2d Corps was shortened and the right flank extended, with a view of enveloping Lee's left flank. An attack was delivered on our part but repulsed with heavy loss. The firing heard proceeded from a part of General Crook's cavalry, which had forded the river. This force was defeated with the loss of many killed and wounded and prisoners. General Crook was recalled and directed to move to Prospect Station on the Lynchburg Railroad, ten or twelve miles from Farmville. This was reached about midnight.

Pardon me if I, like Badeau, who, when some orders were given for the execution of a movement by the Army of the Potomac, remarks "after percolating through the brains of the several commanders one would fail to recognize them, as all strength and decision had vanished, died of inanition." Yet it is strange the news of Lee's army held fast at Farmville, Va., during the day of April 7th, 1865, if peradventure the news suffered the same attenuation going up which he (Badeau) claims had befallen these mentioned beforehand going down, this, if true, yet retained sufficient vitality, when reaching Sheridan at Prince Edward Court House, for him to see what was to be gained by such an unfortunate mishap as befell Lee's army on that day.* General Griffin reported at 7:30 P. M., of April 7th, 1865, when he arrived at Prince Edward Court House the rear of the cavalry was then leaving the town. This place by map is distant from Farmville some six miles, and from Appomattox Station about 24 miles. (See R. R., page 628, Vol. 46.)

As to the kind of fighting by the 2d Corps that day the following is quoted from McGowen, South Carolina Brigade. (See foot note page 390, "Virginia Campaigns, 1864-65.")

"The enemy seems to be ubiquitous. We were instructed

*But see pages 188 and 189, Vol. II., of "Gen. P. H. Sheridan Memoirs," and pages 396 and 397 "Virginia Campaign, 1864-65."

to be prepared to fight on either flank; on our right flank firing was pretty steadily kept up, in our front a regular battle was going on. Mahone's Division was engaged and a portion of Field's. The firing increased in rapidity and extent until three sides were at once set upon by the enemy. I never was so bewildered as on this occasion."

In Volume II., "Memoirs of General Grant," page 476, speaking of the enemy who burnt the railroad bridge at High Bridge, April 7th, 1865, we find him saying, "Humphreys forced his way across with some loss, and followed Lee to the intersection of the road, crossing at Farmville with the one from Petersburg. Here Lee held a position, which was very strong naturally, besides being intrenched. Humphreys was alone confronting him all through the day, and in a very hazardous position. He put on a bold face however, and assaulted with some loss, but was not assaulted in return."

And again on page 478, same volume, speaking of April 7th, 1865: "Sheridan and Ord were pushing through away to the south (and Humphreys confronting Lee as before stated). After having gone into bivouack at Prince Edward Court House, Sheridan learning that seven (7) trains of provisions and forage were at Appomattox determined to start at once and capture them, and a forced march was necessary to get there before Lee's army could secure them."

From the "Virginia Campaign, 1864-65," page 391, I quote: "By the detention until night at this place (Farmville) General Lee lost invaluable time, which he could not regain by night marching; lost the supplies awaiting him at Appomattox Station, and gave time to Sheridan with his cavalry, and Ord with the 5th and 24th Corps, to put themselves across his path at Appomattox Court House.

"If no infantry had crossed the Appomattox on the 7th of April he could have reached New Store that night, Appomattox Station on the afternoon of the 8th of April, 1865, obtained rations there and moved that evening towards Lynchburg. A march the next day, the 9th of April, would have brought him to Lynchburg. Ord's two (2) infantry corps did not reach

Appomattox Court House until 10 o'clock on the morning of the 9th April, 1865."

Let us turn to the other side (Confederate) and see what their views are regarding the events of this day, April 7th, 1865. On pages 386 and 387, "Great Commander Series," General Lee by his nephew, Fitzhugh Lee, says:

"The once great army of Northern Virginia, was now composed of two (2) small corps of infantry, and the cavalry corps, resumed the march towards Lynchburg on the Stage road, but after going four miles stopped and was formed into line of battle in a well chosen position, to give the trains time to get through. It was attacked by two divisions of Humphreys' 2d Corps, which had been long hanging on its rear, but repulsed them. Mahone handled Miles roughly. Had Lee not stopped to fight he could have reached Appomattox Station the afternoon of the 8th April, obtained rations, and moved that evening to Lynchburg. The delay allowed Sheridan, with two divisions of Cavalry, followed by Ord's Infantry and 5th Corps, marching by Prince Edward Court House to reach Appomattox Station on the evening of the 8th of April, where he captured trains with Lee's supplies and obstructed his march. Ord's Infantry did not arrive in front of Appomattox Court House until 10 A. M. of the 9th of April, 1865."

The 2d and 6th Corps resumed the direct pursuit at 5:30 A. M. on the morning of the 8th, and that night went into camp three (3) miles in rear of Longstreet—a march of twenty-six miles for that day.

As to the operations performed by the 2d Corps, on April 6th, 1865, we find on page 600, Vol. 46, R. R., the following despatch from the Commander of the 2d Corps, which reads:

7-30 P. M.

HEADQUARTERS 2D CORPS, *April 6th, 1865.*

TO BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL A. S. WEBB,

CHIEF OF STAFF.

Our last fight just before dark, at Sailor's Creek, gave us two (2) guns, three (3) flags and considerable number of prisoners, two hundred (200) wagons, seventy ambulances, with mules and horses to about one

half of the wagons and ambulances. There are between thirty (30) and fifty (50) wagons, in addition, abandoned and destroyed along the road, some battery wagons, forges and limbers. I have already reported to you the capture of one (1) gun, two (2) flags and some prisoners, and the fact that the road, for over two (2) miles, is strewn with baggage, cooking utensils, some ammunition, and materials of all kinds.

The wagons are in a great mass across the approach to the bridge, and will take some time to clear it.

(Signed), A. A. HUMPHREYS,
Major-General, Commanding.

And on page 596, same Vol. of R. R., is found the following despatch from Major-General Meade, Commanding the Army of the Potomac:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,
April 6th, 1865, 10 p. m.

Received 3:20 A. M., April 7th, 1865.

TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT.

* * * * *

The 6th Corps came up with the enemy about 4 P. M., in conjunction with the 2d Corps on the right, and the Cavalry on the left. Attacked and routed the enemy, captured many prisoners; among them Lieut. General Ewell, General Custis Lee. I transmit despatches both from General Humphreys and General Wright, which in justice to these distinguished officers and the gallant corps they commanded, I beg may be sent to the War Department for immediate publication.

(Signed), G. G. MEADE,
Major-General, Commanding.

Your attention is called to this request of General Meade for the immediate publication of what had been accomplished by the 2d and 6th Corps on April 6th, 1865; and I crave your indulgence to the following: This despatch and the preceding one need to be read together, for on them and a subsequent letter to be introduced later on, hangs the whole story.

On page 624, same volume, R. R., you will find the following:

HEADQUARTERS 2D ARMY CORPS,
April 7th, 1865, 3:20 p. m.

TO BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL WEBB,
CHIEF OF STAFF.

We have Heth, Mahone, and I believe the rest of Lee's Army, here in my front, moving towards Lynchburg. They are entrenched in a too

strong position for me to attack them in front, and their flanks extend further than mine. They are extending their flank to my right. I have sent for Barlow but I do not know at what time he will be up. I have just seen a despatch dated 1:20 P.M., saying that Farmville is in our possession, that the cavalry were moving through it.

(Signed), A. A. HUMPHREYS,
Major-General, Commanding.

This despatch and one other, it is believed written later in the day, or rather evening, confirmed more in detail the information conveyed in the despatch of 3:20 P. M. of April 7th, 1865, were suppressed, and it is assumed, in fact believed, these despatches were not published to the North when it was informed of what had been done by others.

Three letters from General Grant to General Lee, and the replies thereto from General Lee passed through the picket lines of the 2d corps. The first one from Grant, brought by General Seth Williams, A.G., Army of the Potomac, was sent through our lines about 6 or 7 P. M., April 7th, and General Lee's reply was delivered to us within one hour. (See appendix "M" "Virginia Campaigns, 1864-65," pages 439 and 440.)

When General Lee sought, on April 9th, 1865, an interview with General Grant with a view of surrendering his army, this letter of General Lee's marked No. 6 in the correspondence, passed through our lines, 2d Corps, but General Grant had then left the route pursued by the 2d Corps, and had gone over to that of Sheridan and Ord's. (See appendix "M" as before referred to.) The telegraph was freely used, keeping the North fully advised of the success which attended the Army of the Potomac in this campaign. A despatch from the Honorable Secretary of War, E. M. Stanton, mentioned Sheridan's name only, and the inference naturally drawn from it by the public was the generals of the Army of the Potomac were "laggards." Webster defines the word "laggard" to mean "slow, sluggish and awkward, one who lags or loiters." The writer whilst hunting for evidence on which to base an application for membership to the Societies of the "Sons of the American Revolution" and that of "Colonial Wars," came across,

eighteen months ago, a letter which is printed in a volume edited by Dr. Fred Humphreys, of New York City, called "The Humphreys' Family." It will be found on page 1005, and reads: "You would not think that I had lost interest in the subject of your letter had you heard me talk to some Philadelphians about the pursuit of Lee. I learned only this summer of the effect of Stanton's telegram of the 6th or 7th of April, giving the whole credit of overtaking and attacking Lee on the 6th of April to Sheridan. There they said in Philadelphia (I am told) the generals of the Army of Potomac are laggards, it requires Sheridan and Grant to overtake Lee. What an outrage on Wright and myself that telegram was. *We, laggards!* The impression thus made on the public, in this moment of success, has never been effaced; it remains to this day. To you, I am indebted, my dear General, for the first presentation of the subject to the public that will tend to efface this impression." This letter is dated September 29th, 1872. Here is the despatch referred to:

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, D. C.,

April 7th, 1865, 10:00 a.m.

MAJOR-GENERAL DIX, NEW YORK.

General Sheridan attacked and routed Lee's Army yesterday, captured Generals Ewell, Kershaw, Barton, Corse and many other general officers, several thousand prisoners and a large number of cannon, and expects to force Lee to surrender all that is left of his army. Details will be given speedily as possible but the telegraph is working badly.

(Signed), EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War.

I have in this sketch dwelt somewhat on the doings of the 2d Corps; have detailed the several manœuvres of the forces which were pursuing Lee. I believe I have in this done nothing to disparage the glory gained by other troops in this memorable campaign.

Men are judged of either by their actions or speech or by what they have written, or by what is written of them by another as their views. Surely the reproachful word "laggard," as applied to these distinguished soldiers, could not

with justice be affixed to either Generals Humphreys or Wright, in view of what has been accomplished by them and their corps.

The despatch of the then Honorable Secretary of War must have been written either under a false impression, derived from the despatches read by him, or else all the facts had not been laid before him; or else there had been a wilful suppression of the news by some one.

Yet this ugly fact remains, the despatches referred to were at that time suppressed, as also one other, giving more in detail Lee's force and position at Cumberland Church or Farmville.

General Grant knew where Lee's army was and what troops of his were nearest to Lee, and in consequence of this proximity used the 2d Corps as a means of communicating with Lee, yet one of the so-called "laggards" commands the only troops near enough to permit of such correspondence. General Grant further recognizes one of the so-styled "laggards" as occupying all day, in front of General Lee, "a very hazardous position." A peculiar condition of affairs for one who has been called a "laggard." Generally this style of man is found well to the rear and out of danger, yet he is there in front and holds on with a grip which cannot be shaken off.

It is needless for me to refer further to the detention of Lee at Farmville, whereby Sheridan in his brilliant operations has placed himself across Lee's line of retreat, and captured his supplies; for the cause of this detention has been, I think, established beyond a doubt by what has already been placed before you; but least I have not done so, to your satisfaction, I beg leave to call your attention to the following:

In a work entitled "Some Federal and Confederate Commanders," on pages 94, 95 and 96, will be found the following: "Following the narration of General Walker in the "History of the 2d Army Corps," it may fairly be contended that Humphreys compelled Lee to lose time at Farmville Heights, which he could not regain by night marches, kept him from obtaining

the much needed supplies waiting for him at Appomattox Station and gave to Sheridan and Ord the opportunity to put themselves across his path at Appomattox Court House. It is worthy of note that General Grant's first note to Lee, demanding the surrender of his army was delivered from Humphreys front, about half-past 7 P. M., on the 7th of April, and that Lee returned his answer within an hour by the same route.

“Generals Grant, Ord, and Wright rested that night at Farmville, about eight miles in rear of Humphreys' position.

“The end came next day, Humphreys' foot Cavalry was in at the death. His unerring instinct for the chase, his terrible persistency and aggressive temper, together with the astounding celerity of his movements had enabled him to outstrip everything but the cavalry, and to keep fully abreast even with that.

“If Sheridan was the hero of the cavalry, in this splendid operation, Humphreys was beyond all doubt the hero of the infantry. Certain it is that, like the impatient runner in the Olympian games he would never have merited the lash for starting up too soon, nor like the laggard, have failed to deserve his crown by being left at the beginning of the race.”

It is also pertinent to this subject to remark (this officer who had been styled by the public a “laggard”) received from the hands of the party (who had written this unfortunate telegram) one of the best gifts at the disposal of the nation, that of Chief of Engineers U. S. Army, and this commission bears date August 8th, 1866.

Supplemental.

HEADQUARTERS, CORPS OF ENGINEERS,
UNITED STATES ARMY,
WASHINGTON, D. C., *December 29th, 1883.*

GENERAL ORDERS, NO. 10.

Again the painful duty devolves upon the Brigadier-General Commanding of announcing to the Corps of Engineers, the death of a brother officer.

Brigadier-General Andrew A. Humphreys, Corps of Engineers (retired), Brevet Major-General, United States Army, died in this city on December 27, 1883.

General Humphreys was graduated from the Military Academy and promoted to the rank of Brevet Second Lieutenant, Second Artillery, July 1, 1831. He served in garrison at Fort Moultrie, S. C., in 1831; on temporary duty at the United States Military Academy, in 1832; in the Cherokee Nation, 1832-33; at Augusta Arsenal, Ga., and Fort Marion, Fla., 1833-34; on topographical duty, making surveys in West Florida and at Cape Cod, Mass., 1834-35; and in the Florida War against the Seminole Indians in 1836; being engaged in the action of Oloklikaha, March 31, 1836, and action near Micanopy, June 9, 1836. On September 30, 1836, he resigned his commission as an officer of the United States Army, and during the years 1836-38, as Civil Engineer, assisted the late General Hartman Bache on the plans of Brandywine Shoal Lighthouse and Crow Shoal Breakwater, Delaware Bay. Upon the re-organization of the Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1838, General Humphreys was re-appointed in the army with the rank of first lieutenant in that corps. He served in charge of the works for the improvement of Chicago Harbor, Ills.; as assistant topographical engineer of survey of Oswego Harbor defenses, N. Y., and in charge of survey of Whitehall Harbor, N. Y., in 1839; as assistant in the Topographical Bureau, at Washington, D. C., 1840-41; in the Florida War, 1842; on construction of bridge at Washington, D. C., 1842; as assistant in Topographical Bureau at Washington, D. C., 1842-43-44; as assistant in charge of the Coast Survey Office, at Washington, D. C., 1844-49; and on surveys in the field 1849-50.

He was engaged in making a topographic and hydrographic survey of the Delta of the Mississippi River with a view to its protection from

inundation, and deepening the channels at its mouth, 1850-51, continuing in general charge of the work and preparing his able and voluminous report thereon, till 1861; in Europe examining means for protecting Delta rivers from inundation, 1853-54; in general charge, under the War Department, of the office duties at Washington, D. C.; connected with the explorations and surveys for railroads from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, and geographical explorations west of the Mississippi River, 1854-61; as member of the Lighthouse Board, 1856-62; of the Board "to revise programme of instruction at the United States Military Academy, and of the Commission created by Act of Congress to examine into the organization, system of discipline, and course of instruction at the United States Military Academy, 1860."

He served during the rebellion of the seceding States, 1861-66, on the staff of Major-General McClellan, General in Chief, at Washington, D. C., December 1861, to March 1862; in the Virginia Peninsula campaign, as chief topographical engineer, Army of the Potomac, March to August, 1862; being engaged in the siege of Yorktown, April 5-May 4, 1862; battle of Williamsburg, May 6, 1862; in movements and operations before Richmond and to the James River, May-June, 1862; and battle of Malvern Hill, July 1, 1862.

Appointed brigadier-general, United States Volunteers, April 28, 1862, he was placed in command of a division of new troops at Washington, D. C., September, 1862, and served in the Maryland campaign (Army of the Potomac), September-November, 1862, being engaged in covering Frederick Maryland, September 16, 1862; pursuit of enemy from Antietam, September 18, 1862; reconnaissance in Shenandoah Valley, October 16-17, 1862, and march to Falmouth, Va., October-November, 1862; in the Rappahannock campaign (Army of the Potomac), December, 1862-June 1863, being engaged in the battle of Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862, and battle of Chancellorsville, May 2-4, 1863; in the Pennsylvania campaign (Army of the Potomac), June-July, 1863, being engaged in the battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863.

He was appointed Major-General of Volunteers, July 8, 1863, and served as chief of staff to Major General Meade, commanding Army of the Potomac, from that date until November, 25, 1864, being engaged in the action of Manassas Gap, July 23, 1863; the Rapidan operations, October-November, 1863, including the actions of October 12 and November 7, 1863, on the Rappahannock, and Combat at Bristoe Station, October 14, 1863; operations of Mine Run, November 29-December 3d, 1863; action of the Rapidan, February 6, 1864; battle of the Wilderness, May 5-6, 1864; battles around Spotsylvania, May 9-20, 1864; battles of North Anna, May 23-26; Topotomy, May 28-30; Cold Harbor, June 1-3, 1864; assaults at Petersburg, June 16-18, and July 30 (mine), 1864; battles of Weldon Railroad, August 18-25, 1864; action of Peeble's

Farm, September 30, 1864, and action of Boydton Plankroad, October 27, 1864; in command of 2d Army Corps, November 25, 1864, to June 27, 1865, being engaged in the siege of Petersburg till its fall, April 3, 1865, including the action of Hatcher's Run, February 4-6, 1865, and the almost daily attacks on the enemy's works, March 24, to April 3, 1865, and pursuit of General Lee's Rebel Army (including the several actions of the 2d Corps April 6, 1865, terminating at Sailor's Creek, and actions at High Bridge and Farmville, April 7, 1865), till its surrender, April 9, 1865, at Appomattox Court House, and in command of District of Pennsylvania in Middle Department, July 28-December 9, 1865.

From December 9, 1865, to August 8, 1866, he was in charge of the examination of the Mississippi Levees. On August 8, 1866, he was appointed to the command of the Corps of Engineers, with the rank of Brigadier-General, and Chief of Engineers, serving in this capacity until his retirement from active service at his own request on June 30, 1879. He served as member of the Lighthouse Board, February 20, 1870, to January 1874; of commission to examine into canal routes across the isthmus connecting North and South America, 1872-1877; of Board on Washington and Georgetown Harbor improvements, 1872-'73; of Revising Board of Bulkhead and Pier Line of Brooklyn from May, 1872, to June, 1879, of Staten Island from August, 1878, to June, 1879, and of Hudson River (Troy to Hudson), June 1877, to June, 1879; of Board for survey of Baltimore Harbor and adjacent waters from May, 1876, to June, 1879; of Washington Monument Commission from January, 1877, to June, 1879; of Advisory Board to Massachusetts Harbor Commissioners from January, 1877, to June 1879; and of Examining Board of Moline Water Power Company contracts, April-June, 1877.

General Humphreys was promoted to the grade of Major, Corps of Topographical Engineers, United States Army, August 6, 1861; additional Aide-de-camp, with the rank of Colonel, March 5, 1862; Brigadier-General of Volunteers, April 28, 1862; Lieutenant-Colonel, Corps of Engineers, United States Army, March 3, 1863; Major-General, United States Volunteers, July 8, 1863, and Brigadier-General, and Chief of Engineers, United States Army, August 8, 1866.

He received the brevets of Colonel, United States Army, for gallant and meritorious services in the battle of Fredericksburg, Va., of Brigadier-General, United States Army, for gallant and meritorious services in the battle of Gettysburg, Pa., and of Major-General, United States Army, for gallant and meritorious services in the battle of Sailor's Creek, Va.

In the civil duties appertaining to his profession he was as eminent as in his military duties in the field. He was a member of the American Philosophical Society, of Philadelphia, Pa., and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, of Boston, Mass.; a corporator of the National

Academy of Science; and honorary member of the Imperial Royal Geological Institute of Vienna, and of the Royal Institute of Science and Art of Lombardy, Milan, Italy; and corresponding member of the Geographical Society of Paris, and of the Austrian Society of Engineer Architects.

Noble in all the attributes of manhood, interesting as an author, able and scientific as an engineer, brave and resolute as a soldier, courteous and considerate in his relations with his associates, the Corps of Engineers to-day mourns the death of one who stood in the front rank of the ablest and best of its officers.

No words of the Chief of Engineers can add to his well-earned fame or the distinction that attaches to his name; these are, and ever will remain a part of the history of the Corps and of the service.

As a testimonial of respect for the deceased, the officers of the Corps of Engineers will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days.

By command of Brigadier-General Wright.

(Signed), JOHN M. WILSON,

Major of Engineers,

Brevet-Colonel, U. S. A.

[NOTE.]

Degree of LL.D., conferred by Harvard College, July 15, 1868.

Honorary Member, Italian Geographical Society, 1880.

Corresponding Member, Maryland Historical Society, December 10, 1877.

Member of the Hungarian Society of Engineers, January, 1885.





