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*Mary Jones*

*from*

THE

# SEVEN DAYS' BATTLES

IN FRONT OF RICHMOND.

AN OUTLINE NARRATIVE OF THE SERIES OF ENGAGEMENTS WHICH  
OPENED AT MECHANICSVILLE, NEAR RICHMOND, ON THURS-  
DAY, JUNE 26, 1862, AND RESULTED IN THE DEFEAT  
AND RETREAT OF THE NORTHERN ARMY UNDER  
MAJOR-GENERAL M'CLELLAN.

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COMPILED FROM THE DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF THE NEWSPAPER PRESS.

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1862.

SEVEN DAYS BATTERY

THE SEVEN DAYS BATTERY  
OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC  
WAS ORGANIZED AT  
FREDERICKSBURG, VA.  
ON THE 15TH OF  
MAY 1862  
UNDER THE  
COMMAND OF  
CAPTAIN  
JAMES  
M. HARRIS  
AND  
WAS  
REORGANIZED  
ON THE 15TH OF  
JUNE 1862  
AS THE  
SEVEN DAYS BATTERY  
OF THE  
ARTILLERY  
OF THE  
ARMY OF THE  
POTOMAC  
UNDER THE  
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CAPTAIN  
JAMES  
M. HARRIS

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTICE.

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After the most bloody and important struggle that has ever taken place upon the Continent of America, the people of the Confederate States, whose sons and kindred were the victors, have marked, with some surprise and disappointment, that no full and accurate account of the battles has been published in the South. The lack of so desirable a record is due to the exclusion from the lines of our armies of those whose province it has hitherto been to chronicle the events of the war. Yet many detached and interesting narratives of the several engagements have, from time to time, found their way into the Southern newspapers. To group together these fragmentary accounts, so as to present, as nearly as possible, under the circumstances, a complete and connected narrative of the successive actions, is the object of this pamphlet. It has been suggested to the publishers, that, in the absence of a more detailed and pretentious history of the fighting, such a compilation would be acceptable to the public.

1231

THE  
SEVEN DAYS' BATTLES  
IN FRONT OF RICHMOND.

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The bloody checks which the Northern army, in its memorable advance up the Peninsula toward Richmond, had received at Williamsburg and the Seven Pines, had taught General McClellan the desperate character of the conflict, without which he could never hope to reach, in triumph, the capital of the Confederate States. Accordingly, after the battle of the Seven Pines his movements became exceedingly circumspect, and, although his army already largely outnumbered that which defended the beleaguered city, he kept calling constantly and urgently on his government for reinforcements. On Wednesday, June 25, his army numbered, judging from the most authentic statements that are available, between one hundred and twenty-five thousand and one hundred and thirty thousand effective men. With this immense force he was cautiously pushing forward his lines. Meantime it had been determined by the Confederate generals to attack the invading host in their fortified positions, and, to co-operate in this grand movement, the bulk of the Confederate forces which had recently cleared the invaders out of the Valley of Virginia, were rapidly and quietly drawn toward Richmond, in order to flank McClellan's left.

A brief reference to the situation of the opposing armies will here be necessary to enable the reader to understand the subsequent movements. If you will take a map of Virginia, and run your eye along the line of the Virginia Central railroad until it crosses the Chickahominy at the point designated as the Meadow bridge, you will be in the vicinity of the position occupied by the extreme right of the Federal army.

Tracing from this position a semicircular line, which crosses the Chickahominy in the neighborhood of the "New bridge," and then the York River railroad farther on, you arrive at a point southeast of Richmond, but a comparatively short distance from the James river, where rests the Federal left. To

be a little more explicit, spread your fingers so that their tips will form as near as possible the arc of a circle. Imagine Richmond as situated upon your wrist; the outer edge of the thumb as the Central railroad; the inner edge as the Mechanicsville turnpike; the first finger as the Nine Mile or New Bridge road; the second as the Williamsburg turnpike, running nearly parallel with the York River railroad; the third as the Charles City turnpike (which runs to the southward of the White Oak swamp), and the fourth as the Darbytown road. Commanding these several avenues were the forces of McClellan. Our own troops, with the exception of Jackson's corps, occupied a similar, but, of course, smaller circle, immediately around Richmond, the heaviest body being on the centre, south of the York River railroad.

Such was the situation previous to Thursday, the 26th of June. The plan of battle then developed was: first, to make a vigorous flank movement upon the enemy's extreme right, which was within a mile or two of the Central railroad; secondly, as soon as they fell back to the next road below, our divisions there posted were to advance across the Chickahominy, change front, and, in co-operation with Jackson, who was to make a *detour*, and attack the Federals in flank and rear, drive them still farther on; and, finally, when they had reached a certain point, now known as "the triangle," embraced between the Charles City, New Market and Quaker roads, all of which intersect, these several approaches were to be possessed by our forces—the enemy to be thus hemmed in, and compelled either to starve, capitulate, or fight his way out with tremendous odds, and topographical advantages against him. How so excellent a plan eventually happened to fail, at least partially, in the execution, will presently appear.

#### THURSDAY, JUNE TWENTY-SIXTH—OPENING OF THE BATTLE—THE CAPTURE OF MECHANICSVILLE.

Thursday came, clear but warm. At three o'clock, A. M., Major-General Jackson took up his line of march from Ashland, and proceeding down the country between the Chickahominy and Pamunkey rivers, he uncovered the front of Brigadier-General Branch by driving off the enemy collected on the north bank of the Chickahominy river, at the point where it is crossed by the Brook turnpike; General Branch, who was on the south bank, then crossed the river and wheeled to the right, down its northern bank. Proceeding in that direction, General Branch, in like manner, uncovered, at Meadow bridge, the front of Major-General A. P. Hill, who immediately crossed. The three columns now proceeded *en echelon*—General Jackson in advance and on the extreme left, Brigadier-General Branch (who was now merged with General A. P. Hill) in the centre, and Gen-

eral A. P. Hill on the right, immediately on the river. Jackson bearing away from the Chickahominy in this part of the march, so as to gain ground toward the Pamunkey, marched to the left of Mechanicsville, while General Hill, keeping well to the Chickahominy, approached that village and engaged the enemy there. The road was narrow, uneven, muddy and impeded, and when the bridge had been crossed, it became necessary to ascend a hill bare of trees or other obstructions, and all the while our gallant fellows were exposed to a plunging fire of shell, grape, round shot and canister from the Federal batteries; yet the column moved on steadily, in files of fours, closing up their ranks as soon as they were thinned, with a sublime resolution, toward the fortifications, which, after an obstinate fight of two hours and a half, were carried in magnificent style, and their guns immediately turned upon the retreating foe. This occurred about half-past seven or eight in the evening. The cannonade was, perhaps, the most furious and incessant that had been kept up for so long a time since the beginning of the war. But the Mechanicsville entrenchments were ours, and, though with heavy loss, at a smaller sacrifice of life than had been feared, and the enemy had fallen back to Ellyson's mills, farther down the Chickahominy.

#### THE ASSAULT UPON ELLYSON'S MILLS.

The enemy's battery of sixteen guns was to the right, or southeast of the Mechanicsville road, about a mile and a half distant, and was situated on a rise of ground in the vicinity of Ellyson's mills, defended by epaulments supported by rifle pits. Beaver creek, about twelve feet wide and waist deep, ran along the front and left flank of the enemy's position, while from the creek to the battery was covered with abattis. The position was most formidable.

The assault was made by Pender's brigade, of A. P. Hill's division, on the right, and by Ripley's brigade on the right in front. General Pender's brigade had been thrown out in advance in observation of the enemy's left, when Ripley's brigade coming up, General D. H. Hill ordered two of General Ripley's regiments—the Forty-fourth Georgia and the First North Carolina—to operate on the right with General Pender, while the Forty-eighth Georgia and the Third North Carolina remained in front. General Lee then ordered the battery to be charged. The attempt was made. They all moved forward to the attack together. They cleared the rifle pits and gained the creek, within one hundred yards of the battery; but there was still the creek and abattis to cross. The fire of shot, shell, canister and musketry from the enemy's works was, meanwhile, murderous. The Forty-fourth Georgia and First North Carolina were heavily cut up and thrown into confusion, owing to the heavy



loss of officers. General Pender's brigade was likewise repulsed from the batteries with severe loss.

At this juncture, while the troops were holding this position, Rhett's battery, of D. H. Hill's division, succeeded in crossing the broken bridge over the Chickahominy, and took position on the high ground immediately in front of the enemy's batteries, and opened a steady and destructive fire over the heads of our troops, with telling effect upon the enemy's infantry, almost silencing their fire, and drawing the fire of their batteries from our own infantry upon themselves, with the loss of a number of men and horses. Reinforced then by Bondurant's battery and one of General A. P. Hill's batteries, a steady fire was continued, while our infantry held their position about three hundred yards from the enemy's batteries, until half-past nine o'clock, P. M., when the enemy's batteries ceased firing. At ten o'clock, P. M., our batteries ceased also. During the night, at about twelve o'clock, the enemy abandoned some of his batteries, burning platforms, etc.

#### FRIDAY, JUNE TWENTY-SEVENTH—STORMING OF GAINES' MILL.

Early the next morning, being Friday, Generals Gregg and Pryor, of Longstreet's corps, turned the enemy's left flank, and carried, with the bayonet, what guns still remained in their batteries, in the front and to the right of Mechanicsville. It is said by many that this was the proper movement to have been made on the evening previous. And blame is attached to the order given to storm the work in front with an entirely inadequate force.

In the meantime the grand advance *en echelon* again began. The troops of D. H. Hill, having all joined their proper divisions, marched by the Mechanicsville road to join Jackson. The junction was made at Bethesda church—Jackson coming from Ashland. Both corps then proceeded to Cold Harbor—Hill in front. Longstreet proceeded by the right of Ellyson's mills toward Dr. Gaines' farm, and A. P. Hill in the same direction, on the left of Longstreet. At this point they came upon the enemy, strongly posted on high and advantageous ground. The line of battle formed was as follows: Longstreet on the right, resting on the Chickahominy swamp; A. P. Hill on his left; then Whiting, then Ewell, then Jackson (the two latter under Jackson's command), then D. H. Hill on the left of the line—the line extending in the form of a crescent beyond New Cold Harbor, south toward Baker's mills.

At about twelve o'clock, M., the batteries of D. H. Hill, consisting of Hardaway's, Carter's, Bondurant's, Rhett's, Peyton's and Clarke's, under command of Majors Pierson and Jones, were massed on our left. Captain Bondurant advanced to the front, and took position near the powerful batteries of the ene-

my's artillery. But it was soon found impossible to hold the position. He was overpowered and silenced. Other batteries soon, however, came forward successively to the front of the infantry, about three hundred yards in rear of Bondurant's position. Hardaway took up the fight with rifled guns. The object was to draw the attention of the enemy from Longstreet's contemplated attack. At about half-past three o'clock, P. M., Longstreet commenced firing and driving the enemy down the Chickahominy. Hardaway then ceased firing, and the other divisions on the left of Longstreet successively took up the fight: the enemy retreating, and being driven back toward D. H. Hill's artillery, on our left. The artillery being reinforced by a section of a Baltimore battery, from Jackson's division, with English Blakely guns, opened a furious fire on the enemy at about five o'clock, P. M. At four o'clock, P. M., of Friday, the enemy had reached Gaines' mill, one of their strongest defences, and here, an hour later, the bloodiest contest occurred that had been witnessed during the campaign. Men who had gone through Manassas, Williamsburg, and the Seven Pines, declared they had never seen war before. Without a knowledge of the ground, but little conception can be formed of the difficulties of the attack upon Gaines' mill. Emerging from the woods, the road leads to the left and then to the right round Gaines' house, when the whole country, for the area of some two miles, is an open, unbroken succession of undulating hills. Standing at the north door of Gaines' house, the whole country to the right, for the distance of one mile, is a gradual slope toward a creek, through which the main road runs up an open hill and then winds to the right. In front, to the left, are orchards and gulleys, running gradually to a deep creek. Directly in front, for the distance of a mile, the ground is almost table land, suddenly dipping to the deep creek mentioned above, being faced by a timber-covered hill fronting all the table land. Beyond this timber-covered hill, the country is again open, and a perfect plateau, a farm-house and outhouses occupying the centre, the main road mentioned winding to the right and through all the Federal camps. To the left and rear of the second mentioned farm, a road comes in upon the flat lands, joining the main road mentioned. Thus, to recapitulate, except the deep creek and timber-covered hill beyond it, the whole country, as seen from the north door of Gaines' house, is unbroken, open, undulating, and table land, the right forming a descent to the wood-covered creek, the left being dips and gullies, with dense timber still farther to the left; the front being for the most part table land. But to the southeast of Gaines' house is a large tract of timber, commanding all advances upon the main road, and in this McClellan and McCall had posted a strong body of skirmishers, with artillery, to annoy our flank and rear when advancing on their camps on

the high grounds, if we did so by the main road or over the table lands to the north.

It now being three o'clock, p. m., and the head of our column in view of the Federal camps, General Pryor was sent forward with his brigade to drive away the heavy mass of skirmishers posted to our rear to annoy the advance. This being accomplished with great success, and with little loss to us, Pryor returned and awaited orders. Meanwhile the Federals, from their camps and several positions on the high grounds, swept the whole face of the country with their numerous artillery, which would have annihilated our entire force if not screened in the dips of the land and in gullies to our left. Advancing cautiously but rapidly in the skirt of woods, and in the dips to the left, Wilcox and Pryor deployed their men into line of battle—Featherstone being in the rear—and suddenly appearing on the plateau facing the timber-covered hill, rushed down into the wide gully, crossed it, clambered over all the felled timber, stormed the timber breastworks beyond it, and began the ascent of the hill, under a terrific fire of sharpshooters, and an incessant discharge of grape and canister, from pieces posted on the brow of the hill and from batteries in their camps to the right on the high flat lands. Such a position was never stormed before. In descending into the deep creek, the infantry and artillery fire that assailed the three brigades was most terrific. Twenty-six pieces were thundering at them, and a perfect hailstorm of lead fell thick and fast around them. One of Wilcox's regiments wavered—down the General rushed, furiously, sword in hand, and threatened to behead the first man that hesitated. Pryor steadily advanced, but slowly; and by the time that the three brigades had stormed the position, passed up the hill through timber and over felled trees, Featherstone was far in advance. Quickly the Federals withdrew their pieces, and took up a fresh position to assail the three brigades, advancing in perfect line of battle from the woods and upon the plateau. Officers had no horses, all were shot—brigadiers marched on foot, sword in hand—regiments were commanded by captains, and companies by sergeants, yet onward they rushed, with yells and colors flying, and backward, still backward, fell the Federals, their men tumbling every moment in scores. But what a sight met the eyes of these three gallant brigades! In front stood Federal camps, stretching to the northeast for miles! Drawn up in line of battle were more than three full divisions, commanded by McCall, Porter, Sedgwick, etc.—banners darkened the air—artillery vomited forth incessant volleys of grape, canister and shell—heavy masses were moving on our left through the woods to flank us! Yet onward came Wilcox to the right, Pryor to the left, and Featherstone in the centre—one grand, matchless line of battle—almost consumed by exploits of the day—yet onward

they advanced to the heart of the Federal position, and when the enemy had fairly succeeded in almost flanking us on the left, great commotion is heard in the woods! volleys upon volleys are heard in rapid succession, which are recognized and cheered by our men—"It is Jackson!" they shout, "on their right and rear!" Yes; two or three brigades of Jackson's army have flanked the enemy, and are getting in the rear! Now the fighting was bitter and terrific. Worked up to madness, Wilcox, Featherstone and Pryor dash forward at a run, and drive the enemy with irresistible fury—to our left emerge Hood's Texan brigade, Whiting's comes after, and Pender follows! The line is now complete, and "forward" rings from one end of the line to the other, and the Yankees, over thirty thousand strong, begin to retreat! Wheeling their artillery from the front, the Federals turn part of it to break our left, and save their retreat. The very earth shakes at the roar! *Not one piece of ours has yet opened! all has been done with the bullet and bayonet*, and onward press our troops through camps upon camps, capturing guns, stores, arms, clothing, etc. Yet, like bloodhounds on the trail, the six brigades sweep everything before them, presenting an unbroken, solid front, and closing in upon the enemy, keep up an incessant succession of volleys upon their confused masses, and unerringly slaughtering them by hundreds and thousands! There was but one "charge," and from the moment the word of command was given—"fix bayonets; forward!"—our advance was never stopped, despite the awful reception which met it. It is true that one or two regiments became confused in passing over the deep ditch, abattis and timber earthwork—it is also true that several slipped from the ranks and ran to the rear, but in many cases these were wounded men; but the total number of "stragglers" would not amount to more than one hundred. This is strictly true, and redounds to our immortal honor. These facts are true of Wilcox's, Pryor's and Featherstone's brigades, who formed our right, and we are positive that, from the composition of Whiting's, Hood's and Pender's brigades, who flanked the enemy and formed our left, they never could be made to falter, for Whiting had the Eleventh, Sixteenth and Second Mississippi, and two other regiments. Hood had four Texan and one Georgia regiment, and the material of Pender's command was equally as good as any, and greatly distinguished itself. These were the troops mostly engaged and that suffered most.

But "where is Jackson?" ask all. He has travelled fast, and is heading the retreating foe, and as night closes in, all is anxiety for intelligence from him. It is now about seven o'clock, p. m., and just as the rout of the enemy is complete—just as the last volleys are sounding in the enemy's rear, the distant and rapid discharges of cannon tell that Jackson has

fallen upon the retreating column. Far in the night his troops hang upon the enemy, and for miles upon miles are dead, wounded, prisoners, wagons, cannon, etc., scattered in inextricable confusion upon the road. Thus, for four hours, did our inferior force, *unaided by a single piece of artillery*, withstand over thirty thousand of the enemy, assisted by twenty-six pieces of artillery!

Every arm of the service was well represented in the Federal line—cavalry were there in force, and, when our men emerged from the woods, attempted to charge, but the three brigades on the right, and Jackson's three brigades on the left, closed up ranks and poured such deadly volleys upon the horsemen, that they left the ground in confusion and entirely for their infantry to decide the day. McCall's, Porter's and Sedgwick's "crack" divisions melted away before our advance. McClellan, prisoners say, repeatedly was present, and directed movements; but, when the three brigades to our left emerged from the woods, such confusion and havoc ensued that he gave orders to retreat, and escaped as best he could.

The cannon and arms captured in this battle were numerous, and of very superior workmanship. The twenty-six pieces were most beautiful, while immense piles of guns could be seen on every hand—many scarcely having the manufacturer's "finish" even tarnished. The enemy seemed quite willing to throw them away on the slightest pretext—dozens being found with loads still undischarged. The number of small arms captured was not less than fifteen thousand, of every calibre and every make. The field pieces taken were principally Napoleon, Parrot and Blakely (English) guns. We have captured large quantities of army wagons, tents, equipments, shoes. Clothing in abundance was scattered about, and immense piles of new uniforms were found untouched. Every conceivable article of clothing was found in these divisional camps, and came quite apropos to our needy soldiery, scores of whom took a cool bath, and changed old for new under-clothing, many articles being of costly material, and quite unique. The amount of ammunition found was considerable, and proved of very superior quality and manufacture.

While the storming of Gaines' mill was in progress, a fight was raging at Cold Harbor, a short distance to the left, in which the enemy were driven off with great carnage. At this point, the gay, dashing, intrepid General Wheat was instantly killed by a ball through the brain. At a later hour of the evening one of his compatriots, General Hood, of the Texas brigade, dashed into a Yankee camp and took a thousand prisoners. And so, with Jackson and Stuart pushing on toward the Pamunkey to intercept the enemy's retreat to West Point, should it be attempted, and McClellan with his main body retiring toward the south (or Richmond) side of the Chickahominy

before our victorious troops, the second day was brought to an end.

All of the enemy's dead and wounded on the previous day, with few exceptions, had been carried off; and they managed also to remove a large number from the field in this running engagement. As they retired, they set fire to immense quantities of their commissary stores, spiked their cannon, destroyed tents and smashed up all of the wagons they could not run off. Our forces captured several fine batteries, consisting in all of eighteen rifled cannon, and several minor pieces of artillery.

The enemy now occupied a singular position: one portion of his army on the south side of the Chickahominy, fronted Richmond, and was confronted by General Magruder—the other portion on the north side, had turned their backs on Richmond, and fronted destruction in the persons of Lee, Longstreet, Jackson and the Hills. These last were, therefore, advancing on Richmond with their backs to the city; such was the position into which General Lee had forced McClellan. The position which the latter here occupied, however, was one of great strength.

#### THE FIGHTING ON SATURDAY, JUNE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

The right wing of McClellan's army, after crossing the Chickahominy on Friday night at the Grapevine bridge, fell back down the Williamsburg road, toward the White Oak swamp.

On Saturday, the 28th, General Toombs attacked a portion of the enemy's left wing, strongly posted on a hill, and supported with artillery, near the Chickahominy, about a mile east of the New Bridge road. About eleven o'clock, Moody's battery opened fire upon the entrenchments of the enemy, located just beyond Garnett's farm. The battery fired some ten or fifteen minutes, and meanwhile a body of infantry, consisting of the Seventh and Eighth Georgia regiments, moved up under cover of the fire from the field pieces. The Eighth, in advance, charged across a ravine and up a hill, beyond which the Yankee entrenchments lay. They gained the first line of works and took possession of them; but, it is proper to state, this was unoccupied at the time by the Yankees. The fire of the enemy was murderous, and as soon as our men reached the brow of the hill, rapid volleys of grape, canister, and musketry were poured into them. It was found almost impossible to proceed farther, but the attempt would have been made had not orders been received to fall back, which was done in good order, still under fire. The loss in the Seventh is reported at seventy odd men killed, wounded and missing. In the Eighth, upward of eighty. Colonel Lamar, of the Eighth, was severely wounded in the groin, and fell into the hands of the enemy. Lieutenant-

Colonel Towers was captured, but uninjured. The Yankees were completely hidden behind their works, and did not suffer much, apparently. We took a captain, lieutenant, and some five or six privates—the Yankee picket force at the point. Later a flag of truce was granted to take away our dead and wounded.

The remainder of Saturday was marked by the capture of the Fourth New Jersey (Stockton's) regiment, the Eleventh Pennsylvania, and the famous "Bucktails," with their regimental standards; by rapid and wholly successful movements of Jackson and Stuart, between the Chickahominy and the Pamunkey, taking the York River railroad, and cutting off McClellan's communication with his transports and destroying his line of telegraph. At this time high hopes were entertained of speedily destroying or capturing the entire army of McClellan. The York River railroad, it will be remembered, runs in an easterly direction, intersecting the Chickahominy about ten miles from the city. South of the railroad is the Williamsburg road, connecting with the Nine Mile road at Seven Pines. The former road connects with the New Bridge road, which turns off and crosses the Chickahominy. From Seven Pines, where the Nine Mile road joins the upper one, the road is known as the old Williamsburg road, and crosses the Chickahominy at Bottom's bridge.

With the bearing of these localities in his mind, the reader will readily understand how it was that the enemy was driven from his original strongholds on the north side of the Chickahominy, and how, at the time of Friday's battle, he had been compelled to surrender the possession of the Fredericksburg and Central railroads, and had been pressed to a position where he was cut off from the principal avenues of supply and escape. The disposition of our forces was such as to cut off all communication between McClellan's army and the White House, on the Pamunkey river; he had been driven completely from his northern lines of defences; and it was supposed that he would be unable to extricate himself from his position without a victory or a capitulation. In front of him, with the Chickahominy, which he had crossed, in his rear, were the divisions of Generals Longstreet, Magruder and Huger, and, in the situation as it existed Saturday night, all hopes of his escape were thought to be impossible.

#### THE RATTLE OF SAVAGE STATION, SUNDAY, JUNE TWENTY-NINE.

Six miles from Richmond, on the York River road, the enemy were in force on Saturday night. During the night our pickets heard them busily at work hammering, sawing, etc. The rumble of cannon carriages was also constantly audible. Sunday, about noon, our troops advanced in the direction of the

works, which were found deserted. Their entrenchments were found to be formidable and elaborate. That immediately across the railroad, at the six mile post, which had been supposed to be a light earthwork, designed to sweep the railroad, turned out to be an immense embrasured fortification, extending for hundreds of yards on either side of the track, and capable of protecting ten thousand men. Within this work were found great quantities of fixed ammunition, which had apparently been prepared for removal, and then deserted. All the cannon, as at other entrenchments, had been carried off.

After passing this battery, our forces cautiously pushed their way down the railroad and to the right, in the direction of the Seven Pines. At three o'clock a dense column of smoke was sent to issue from the woods, two miles in advance of the battery and half a mile to the right of the railroad. The smoke was found to proceed from a perfect mountain of the enemy's commissary stores, which they had fired and deserted. The pile was at least thirty feet high, with a base sixty feet in breadth, consisting of sugar, coffee and bacon, butter, prepared meat, vegetables, etc. The fire had so far enveloped the heap as to destroy the value of its contents. The field and woods around this spot was covered with every description of clothing and camp equipage. Blue greatcoats lined the earth like leaves in Valambrosa. No indication was wanting that the enemy had left this encampment in haste and disorder.

About one o'clock, A. M., Sunday morning, our pickets down the Nine Mile road were fiercely attacked by the enemy, and a severe and lively fight ensued. The enemy was easily driven back with loss—many prisoners falling in our hands. Many of the Federals threw down their arms and surrendered voluntarily. Sunday morning, about six or seven o'clock, another fierce picket fight occurred.

Later in the day the enemy were again encountered upon the York River railroad, near a place called Savage's Station; the troops engaged on our side being the division of General McLaws, consisting of Generals Kershaw and Semmes' brigades, supported by General Griffith's brigade from Magruder's division. The Federals were found to be strongly entrenched, and as soon as our skirmishers came in view, they were opened upon with a furious cannonade from a park of field pieces. Kemper's battery now went to the front, and for three hours the battle raged hotly, when the discomfited Yankees again resumed their back track. It was during this fight that General Griffith, of Mississippi, one of the heroes of Leesburg (where he commanded the Eighteenth Mississippi on the fall of Colonel Burt), was killed by the fragment of a shell, which mangled one of his legs. He was the only general officer killed on our side during the whole of that bloody week. Owing to a most unfortunate accident, much of our success



was marred. Our own troops, being mistaken for the enemy, were fired into by the Twenty-first Mississippi regiment, as was Jenkins' South Carolina regiment at Manassas, by reinforcements in the rear. During the pursuit the railroad Merriam was far in advance of our men, and was vigorously shelling the enemy at every turn.

About sundown, Sunday, General Magruder's division came up with the rear of the enemy, and engaged a portion of his forces for about an hour and a half. After passing the enemy's camp, on the York River railroad, our troops pushed after the enemy, and came up with him on the Williamsburg road, a mile east of the Seven Pines, opposite Mr. William Sedgwick's farm. The enemy were posted in a thick piece of pines north of the Williamsburg road, behind entrenchments of great strength and elaborate finish. The Richmond Howitzer battalion began the fight by shelling the woods. From the direction of the railroad, Kershaw's brigade and other troops marched down the Williamsburg road, and dashed into the woods by a flank movement to the left. Here the fight raged furiously, until darkness put an end to the contest. Our men laid on their arms, with the design of renewing the battle with the return of daylight.

While Magruder was thus successfully "pushing the enemy to the wall" on the south side of the Chickahominy, the redoubtable Stuart was not less successful on the north side. Dashing down to the White House on the Pamunkey, he succeeded in capturing an immense quantity of supplies, fixed ammunition, rifled ordnance, railway machinery and locomotives, wagon trains, a balloon and its apparatus of inflation, quartermaster's stores, etc., with one thousand five hundred prisoners, besides burning seventeen large transports at the wharves.

During Sunday, the mortifying fact became known to our generals that McClellan had in a measure succeeded in eluding us, and that, having massed his entire force on the Richmond side of the Chickahominy, he was retreating toward the James river—having stolen a march of twelve hours on General Huger, who had been placed in a position on his flank, to watch his movements.

#### THE BATTLE ON MONDAY, JUNE THIRTIETH.

By daybreak on Monday morning, the pursuit was actively resumed. D. H. Hill, Whiting and Ewell, under command of Jackson, crossed the Chickahominy by the Grapevine bridge, and followed the enemy on their track by the Williamsburg road and Savage Station. Longstreet, A. P. Hill, Huger and Magruder pursued the enemy by the Charles City road, with the intention of cutting them off. At the White Oak swamp, our left wing came upon the Yankee forces at about eleven

o'clock, A. M. But they had crossed the stream, and burnt the bridge behind them. Their artillery was also posted in immense numbers, commanding both the bridge and the road. General Jackson, with Major Crutchfield, chief of his artillery, and the several captains of D. H. Hill's artillery, having reconnoitred the position of the enemy, ordered forward the whole of D. H. Hill's artillery, under Colonel Crutchfield. Under cover of the hill on the left, or north bank of the White Oak swamp, our artillery was brought forward, thrown rapidly upon the crest of the hill, and suddenly opened fire upon the enemy's batteries, with twenty-six field pieces in seven batteries. This was at about twelve o'clock, M. A tremendous fire was kept up from the batteries on both sides—the enemy having in position near fifty pieces. During this time, one or more of the enemy's caissons was exploded, while they suffered with a heavy loss of men and horses. The enemy then fell back some distance behind a skirt of woods, abandoning three of their guns on the field, and there, hidden from sight, renewed the fight at long range, which, with their Parrot guns, gave them great advantage. The fight of artillery, nevertheless, continued with great spirit and determination, until night closed the scene. The casualties on both sides in this fight were very heavy. Indeed, this is said to have been probably the heaviest fight of field artillery which has taken place during the war.

About four o'clock Monday afternoon, General Longstreet having been called away, the command of his division was assumed by General A. P. Hill, who, with both divisions—that of Longstreet and his own—engaged the enemy at a later hour in the evening. The battle was thus fought under the immediate and sole command of General A. P. Hill, in charge of both divisions. The position of the enemy was about five miles north-east of Darbytown, on the New Market road. The immediate scene of the battle was a plain of sedge pines, in the cover of which the enemy's forces were skilfully disposed.

In advancing upon the enemy, batteries of sixteen heavy guns were opened upon the advance columns of General Hill. Our troops, pressing heroically forward, had no sooner got within musket range, than the enemy, forming several lines of battle, poured upon them from his heavy masses a devouring fire of musketry. The conflict became terrible; the air being filled with missiles of death, every moment having its peculiar sound of terror, and every spot its sight of ghastly destruction and horror. Never was a more glorious victory plucked from more desperate and threatening circumstances. While exposed to the double fire of the enemy's batteries and his musketry, we were unable to contend with him with artillery. But, although thus unmatched, the heroic command of General Hill pressed on with unquailing vigor and a resistless courage, driving the

enemy before them. This was accomplished without artillery, there being but one battery in General Hill's command on the spot, and that belonged to Longstreet's division, and could not be got into position. Thus the fight continued with an ardor and devotion that few battle-fields have ever illustrated. Step by step the enemy were driven back, his guns taken, and the ground he abandoned strewn with his dead. By half-past eight o'clock we had taken all his cannon, and, continuing to advance, had driven him a mile and a half from his ground of battle. Our forces were still advancing upon the retreating lines of the enemy. It was now about half-past nine o'clock, and very dark. Suddenly, as if it had burst from the heavens, a sheet of fire enveloped the front of our advance. The enemy had made another stand to receive us, and from the black masses of his forces, it was evident that it had been heavily reinforced, and that another whole *corps d'armée* had been brought up to contest the fortunes of the night. Line after line of battle was formed. It was evident that his heaviest columns were now being thrown against Hill's small command, and it might have been supposed that he would only be satisfied with its annihilation. The loss here on our side was terrible.

The situation being evidently hopeless for any further pursuit of the fugitive enemy, who had now brought up such overwhelming forces, General Hill retired slowly. At this moment, seeing their adversary retire, the most vociferous cheers arose along the whole Yankee line. They were taken up in the distance by the masses which for miles and miles beyond were supporting McClellan's front. It was a moment when the heart of the stoutest commander might have been appalled. General Hill's situation was now as desperate as it well could be, and required a courage and presence of mind to retrieve it, which the circumstances which surrounded him were not well calculated to inspire. His command had fought for five or six hours without reinforcements. All his reserves had been brought up in the action. Wilcox's brigade, which had been almost annihilated, was reforming in the rear. Riding rapidly to the position of this brigade, General Hill brought them, by great exertions, up to the front to check the advance of this now confident, cheering enemy. Catching the spirit of their commander, the brave but jaded men moved up to the front, replying to the enemy's cheers with shouts and yells. At this demonstration, which the enemy, no doubt, supposed signified heavy reinforcements, he stopped his advance. It was now about half-past ten o'clock in the night. The enemy had been arrested; and the fight—one of the most remarkable, long-contested and gallant ones that has yet occurred on our lines—was concluded with the achievement of the field under the most trying circumstances, which the enemy, with the most over-

powering numbers brought up to reinforce him, had not succeeded in reclaiming.

The battle of Monday night was fought exclusively by General A. P. Hill and the forces under his command. General Magruder's division did not come up until eleven o'clock at night, after the fight had been concluded. By orders from General Lee, Magruder moved upon and occupied the battle ground; General Hill's command being in a condition of prostration from their long and toilsome fight, and suffering in killed and wounded, that it was proper they should be relieved by the occupation of the battle ground by a fresh *corps d'armée*. In the long and bitter conflict which General Hill had sustained with the enemy, he had driven him about a mile and a half; and, at the conclusion of the battle, although he had retired somewhat, he still held the ground from which, in the early part of the action, he had driven the enemy.

President Davis was on the field during the day, and made a narrow escape from injury, which might possibly have proven fatal. He had taken position in a house near the scene, when word was sent him by General Lee to leave it at once, as it was threatened with danger. He had scarcely complied with the advice before the house was literally riddled with shell from the enemy's batteries.

Prisoners state that on Monday evening McClellan addressed his troops in an animated strain, conjuring them "for God's sake, and the sake of their country, and the old flag around which so many fond recollections cluster, to join in one more last struggle to reach our gunboats on the James river. I have been frustrated in all my plans against Richmond. We must cut our way to the river, and then I shall await reinforcements. I do not give up the hope of yet capturing Richmond." Their fighting subsequently showed that his words were not without effect. During the night the enemy retreated again down the Quaker road toward Malvern hill, about a half mile within the intersection of the New Market, or River road, and the Quaker road. Here he took strong position on this hill, about two miles and a half from his gunboats on the James river. This closed the scene of Monday.

#### THE BATTLE OF TUESDAY, JULY FIRST.

The army of McClellan was now getting into the triangle formed by the three roads already alluded to, and in which it was hoped that he would be entrapped. It was in this area that the great battle of Tuesday took place. All of our forces, however, failed to be in position in the right time, and those in the rear, who were to cut him off and hem him in, allowed the game to slip from their hands and quietly make his escape, which he subsequently did by roads easily traceable on the map.

McClellan, in making his way in all haste, but in good order, to the waters of James river, had reached on Tuesday, July 1, a point about sixteen miles below Richmond, and two miles above Turkey island, where it was determined to make a stand, with the purpose of effectually covering the retreat of the main body to their gunboats. The ground was admirably chosen. An elevated plateau of twelve hundred yards in length and three hundred and fifty yards width, lay between a skirt of woods, dark and dense, and a plantation dwelling, which will be known in the official reports as "Crew's house," with its surrounding buildings. Upon the crest of a gentle slope in front of this country seat the Yankees planted four heavy batteries, commanding the plateau, and every square yard of it, to the woods.

On Tuesday morning D. H. Hill's division, on the right of Jackson, Whiting, Ewell and Jackson's own division on the left (Jackson commanding the three latter divisions), crossed the White Oak bridge, and took up their position in this order on the left of our line, at about three o'clock, p. m. D. H. Hill's artillery was sent to the rear to rest. Longstreet, A. P. Hill, Magruder and Huger, on our right wing, pushed down the Long Bridge road in pursuit, and took position on the left and front of the enemy, under fire of all his artillery on land and water.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, the skirmishers of our pursuing column, on emerging from the wood, were met by the fire of the enemy, and fell back to report to the commanding general, Magruder, whose division, embracing the brigades of Howell Cobb, Toombs, Wright and Armistead, was in the advance. Two batteries of light artillery, Grimes' and the Second Richmond Howitzers, were immediately ordered to take position in the cleared field, some fifty yards from the edge of the forest, and to open fire upon the enemy's batteries, while the infantry were drawn up under cover of the woods, to be pushed across the field at the proper moment. Grimes' battery was thrown into hopeless disorder by the killing of three of its horses and the wounding of several others in the act of taking its ground, and never did get into position; whereupon, the Purcell battery, Captain Pegram, was ordered to replace it. The Howitzers and Captain Pegram's veterans at once opened a furious cannonade on the Yankees, firing with great steadiness and effect, but so desolating was the rain of shot, shell and spherical-case showered upon them by the enemy's guns, which had obtained the exact range, that they were greatly cut up in a short time and had to be withdrawn. At the same moment, a column of not more than six hundred Confederate troops, which had moved with wonderful precision and celerity across the plateau, to a point within one hundred and fifty yards of the Yankee batteries, were compelled to retire with heavy loss and

in some disorder. The Letcher Artillery, of six pieces, under command of Captain Davidson, was now ordered to the spot till then occupied by the Purcell battery, and getting their guns quickly in place, despite the withering tempest of flame and iron, commenced to serve them with the utmost efficiency, firing twelve or fifteen discharges to the minute, while a second column of infantry advanced through the cleared space at double-quick to storm the terrible batteries of the foe. The fire was now appalling, and to add to the horrors of the scene, the gunboats of the enemy in the river began to throw the most tremendous projectiles into the field. The column moved on nearer and yet nearer, its ranks thinned at every moment, and lost to sight in the thick curtain of smoke which overspread the crimsoned battle-ground. But once again the whirlwind of death threw the advancing mass of gallant men into inextricable disorder, and they retired. Still the Letcher Artillery held its ground. A brave lieutenant and two of the men had been killed at their pieces, nineteen others had fallen wounded by their side, and the horses were piled around them in heaps, a caisson had exploded, yet their fire was kept up as steadily as if they had been firing a holiday salute. An hour and a half or more had now passed since the opening of the battle, and a third column upon the centre moved onward to the Yankee guns. The dark mass soon disappeared in the cloud which enveloped all objects, and though it lost strength and solidity at every step, in the brave fellows who fell struck by the hurtling missiles that strewed the air, it still gained the slope where stood the enemy's batteries, but only to be driven back, as had been their comrades before them. Meanwhile the indomitable Jackson had assailed the enemy with great energy on the right of their position, and soon drove them from the field. The dusk of evening, deepening into darkness, favored the retreat of the Yankees, who succeeded in carrying off their pieces, though with a loss in killed and wounded equal to, if not greater than our own.

Thus closed the terrible battle of the 1st of July. The battlefield and the region round about, seemed as if the lightnings of heaven had scathed and blasted it. The forest shows in the splintered branches of a thousand trees, the fearful havoc of the artillery; the houses are riddled, the fences utterly demolished, the earth itself plowed up in many places for yards; here stands a dismantled caisson, there a broken gun-carriage; thick and many are the graves, the sods over which yet bear the marks of the blood of their occupants; on the plateau, across whose surface for hours the utmost fury of the battle raged, the tender corn that had grown up as high as the knee betrays no sign of having ever "laughed and sung" in the breeze of early summer; everything, in short, but the blue heaven above, speaks of the carnival of death which was there

so frightfully celebrated. About a quarter of a mile from the field stands on the roadside the house occupied by General Lee as his head-quarters during the battle. The weather-boarding and the shingled roof exhibit abundant evidences of the terrible nature of the cannonade. The elongated shells thrown by the gunboats were most fearful projectiles, measuring twenty-two inches in length by eight in diameter. It is remarkable that, as far as we know, the only damage done by them was to the enemy. Not having the proper range, the gunners so elevated their pieces as to let these messengers of death fall mostly among the ranks of their own men. The effect of one which burst near Crew's house was indescribably fatal. It struck a gun of one of the batteries, shattering it into fragments, and by the explosion, which followed instantaneously, seven men standing near the piece were killed in the twinkling of an eye. They fell without the movement of a muscle, in the very attitudes they occupied the moment before, stiffening at once into the stony fixedness of death. One, indeed, was almost blown into annihilation; but another was seen still grasping the lanyard of the gun; yet another, belonging to an infantry regiment, held in his hand the ramrod with which he was driving home the load in his Belgian rifle; while a fourth, with clenched lips, retained in his mouth the little portion of the cartridge he had just bitten off. The faces of the victims even still expressed the emotions which animated them in battle — indifference, hope, terror, triumph, rage, were there depicted, but no trace of the suffering which should be caused by the death-pang. They had passed into eternity unconscious of the shaft that sent them there!

#### WEDNESDAY, JULY SECOND.

The severe struggle of Tuesday had given the main body of McClellan's army ample time to reach the much-coveted positions in the neighborhood of Berkeley and Westover, on the James river, where, availing themselves of the strong natural defences of the place, and under cover of their gunboats, they were relieved from the apprehension of an immediate attack. In this situation of affairs, a description of the locality and topographical features of the enemy's selected place of refuge, will be matter of interest.

Berkeley, now the residence of Dr. Starke, lies on the north side of James river, five miles below City Point, and by the course of the river sixty-five miles, but by the Charles City road not more than twenty-five miles from Richmond. The building, an old-fashioned brick edifice, stands upon an eminence a few hundred yards from the river, in a grove of Lombardy poplars and other trees. President Harrison was born here in 1773.

The Westover plantation, long the seat of the distinguished family of Byrds, and at present owned by Mr. John Selden, adjoins Berkeley on the east, the dwelling-houses being some four miles apart. Charles City Court-house is between eight and ten miles east of the latter place. It is not to be supposed the enemy selected these plantations as the scene of his last great stand without good reasons. The first and most apparent of these is, that the Westover landing is, perhaps, the very best on James river; and the stream, for miles up and down, being broad and deep, affords both excellent sea room and anchorage for his gunboats and transports. But this is by no means the only advantage of the position. On the west of Berkeley are innumerable impassable ravines, running from near the Charles City road, on the north, to James river, making a successful attack from that quarter next to impossible. Within a quarter of a mile of where these ravines begin, Herring Run creek crosses the Charles City road, and running in a southeasterly direction, skirts, on the north and east, the plantations of Berkeley and Westover, and empties into James river at the extreme eastern boundary of the latter. The whole course of this creek is one impassable morass, while along its northern and eastern banks extend the heights of Evelinton — a long range of hills that overlook the Westover and Berkeley estates, and which offer eligible positions for heavy guns. It will be seen that, protected on the south by the river and his gunboats, on the west by impassable ravines, and on the north and east by Herring creek and the heights of Evelinton, the enemy's position presents but one pregnable point — the piece of level country northwest of Westover, from a quarter to a half mile in width, lying between the head of the ravines and the point where Herring creek crosses the Charles City road. But it required only a very brief period for the enemy, with his immense resources of men and machinery, to obstruct by art this only natural entrance to his stronghold. Already it was within range of his gunboats, and of his siege guns planted on the Evelinton hills; another day saw it strewn with felled timber and bristling with field batteries.

The James river was soon covered with the transports and gunboats of the enemy, and McClellan, secure in his "new base of operations," vigorously began the work of infusing courage and confidence among his beaten and demoralized troops. On the 4th of July he issued the following address, which, considering the events immediately preceding, is certainly a rather remarkable document:

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,  
Camp near Harrison's Landing, July 4, 1862.

*Soldiers of the Army of the Potomac!* Your achievements of the past ten days have illustrated the valor and endurance of



the American soldier. Attacked by superior forces, and without hopes of reinforcements, you have succeeded in changing your base of operations by a flank movement, always regarded as the most hazardous of military operations. You have saved all your guns except a few lost in battle, taking in return guns and colors from the enemy.

Upon your march you have been assailed, day after day, with desperate fury, by men of the same race and nation skillfully massed and led. Under every disadvantage of number, and necessarily of position also, you have in every conflict beaten back your foes with enormous slaughter.

Your conduct ranks you among the celebrated armies of history. None will now question what each of you may always, with pride, say: "*I belonged to the Army of the Potomac.*" You have reached this new base complete in organization and unimpaired in spirit. The enemy may at any time attack you—we are prepared to meet them. I have personally established your lines. Let them come, and we will convert their repulse into a final defeat.

Your government is strengthening you with the resources of a great people. On this, our nation's birthday, we declare to our foes, who are rebels against the best interests of mankind, that this army shall enter the capital of the so-called Confederacy; that our National Constitution shall prevail, and that the Union, which can alone insure internal peace and external security to each state, must and shall be preserved, cost what it may, in time, treasure and blood.

GEO. B. McCLELLAN,  
*Major-General Commanding.*

This narrative cannot be better concluded than by the reproduction of the following general orders of General Lee, in reference to the battle. These orders give an official and probably the most trustworthy summary of the results that can now be had, and afford a striking contrast to the address of General McClellan:

HEAD-QUARTERS IN THE FIELD,

[*General Orders, No. 75.*]

July 7, 1862.

The General commanding, profoundly grateful to the only Giver of all victory for the signal success with which he has blessed our arms, tenders his warmest thanks and congratulations to the army by whose valor such splendid results have been achieved.

On Thursday, June 26, the powerful and thoroughly equipped army of the enemy was entrenched in works vast in extent and most formidable in character, within sight of our capital.

To-day the remains of that confident and threatening host lie upon the banks of James river, thirty miles from Richmond,

seeking to recover, under the protection of his gunboats, from the effects of a series of disastrous defeats.

The battle beginning on the afternoon of the 26th June, above Mechanicsville, continued until the night of July 1, with only such intervals as were necessary to pursue and overtake the flying foe. His strong entrenchments and obstinate resistance were overcome, and our army swept resistlessly down the north side of the Chickahominy, until it reached the rear of the enemy, and broke his communication with the York, capturing or causing the destruction of many valuable stores, and, by the decisive battle of Friday, forcing the enemy from his line of powerful fortifications on the south side of the Chickahominy, and driving him to a precipitate retreat. This victorious army pursued, as rapidly as the obstructions placed by the enemy in his rear would permit, three times overtaking his flying column, and as often driving him with slaughter from the field, leaving his numerous dead and wounded in our hands in every conflict.

The immediate fruits of our success are the relief of Richmond from a state of siege, the rout of the great army that so long menaced its safety, many thousand prisoners, including officers of high rank, the capture or destruction of stores to the value of millions, and the acquisition of thousands of arms, and fifty-one pieces of superior artillery.

The service rendered to the country in this short but eventful period can scarcely be estimated, and the general commanding cannot adequately express his admiration of the courage, endurance and soldierly conduct of the officers and men engaged.

These brilliant results have cost us many brave men; but while we mourn the loss of our gallant dead, let us not forget that they died nobly in defence of their country's freedom, and have linked their memory with an event that will live for ever in the hearts of a grateful people.

Soldiers! Your country will thank you for the heroic conduct you have displayed—conduct worthy of men engaged in a cause so just and sacred, and deserving a nation's gratitude and praise.

By command of General Lee.

R. H. CHILTON, *A. A. General.*

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#### A REVIEW OF THE BATTLE, AND ITS RESULTS.

The following clear and impartial review of the conduct and results of the battles is taken from the columns of the Richmond Examiner of Tuesday, July 8:

We have now reached a period at which we may calculate

the value of the result of the great battle of Richmond, and make a summary review of the grand diorama of events that have so recently passed before our eyes. We propose to do this in a historical spirit, without reference to the mean objects of personal compliment or personal detraction, anxious only to interpret with justice and intelligence the events of the past week, and to define the result of one of the gravest incidents that has yet occurred in the history of the war.

The general estimation of the battle of Richmond, expressed in a spirit of candor, would be that it was a most excellent plan, indifferently executed in the field. The work of the closet was good. The design was comprehensive and sagacious; and calculations upon which it was based were nicely arranged; but its execution, unfortunately, was full of flaws, which, to some degree, have marred the results of our victory, or reduced them below public expectation. Reviewing the situation of the two armies at the commencement of the action, the advantage was entirely our own, the fact being that the plan of McClellan was as defective as our own was excellent. He had divided his army on the two sides of the Chickahominy, and operating apparently with the design of half circumvallating Richmond—which was exceedingly foolish, considering the size and situation of this city—he had spread out his forces to an extent that impaired the faculty of concentration, and had made a weak and dangerous extension of his lines.

It will be observed that the attack was made on our side by a rear and flank movement at the same time, intending to crush the enemy successively along the whole extent of his lines, from Mechanicsville to his batteries on the south side of the Chickahominy, and on that side of the river to fall upon him with the whole weight of our forces, with the expectation of putting him to a general rout.

A most remarkable feature of all the battles which attended the general line of movement we have described is, that at no time were more than twenty thousand Confederates actually engaged with the enemy. After the first demonstration in force on the enemy's extreme right, he retired from Mechanicsville and we pursued. When, by this retiring movement, he had concentrated, as he supposed, sufficient troops to contest a decisive field with us, we fell upon him with one division at a time. The consequence of imperfect attacks was that the enemy was never crushed, though he was always defeated. It is not unreasonable to suppose, in view of what was accomplished by piecemeal, that if, at any critical time, several divisions had been thrown upon the enemy, he would have been routed, demoralization would have ensued, and the result of our victory been fully and summarily accomplished.

By the desperate valor of our troops and the conspicuous exertions of General Ambrose P. Hill, whose division was in

the extreme advance, and was engaged successively at Ellyson's mills, Cold Harbor, and Frazier's farm, each of the fields was signalized by the success of our arms. But, with the remarkable and hard-fought field at Frazier's farm, our congratulations must stop. The brilliant chain of victories is broken here. After all that had been achieved, and all that had been expended in the toil and blood of three days' fighting, we had failed to cut off the enemy's retreat to the river, and to accomplish the most important condition for the completion of our victory. The whole army of McClellan had passed along our right wing, and had been permitted, as it were, to slip through our fingers. There is nothing in the subsequent operations of our forces to repair the effects of this fatal blunder. At Malvern hill the result to us was deplorable in the amount of our loss, and negative as to any advantages gained over the enemy.

We are unwilling, however, to dwell with any pertinacity upon errors which have diminished the fruits of our victory, or even upon such staring and enormous blunders as gave to a defeated enemy open egress to the strongest places of refuge he could have desired, as long as we may congratulate ourselves that the result of the battle of Richmond, as a whole, is a success to the Confederacy, and a most grateful relief to the long-pent up anxieties of the people of the South. We have raised; at least for a time, the siege of Richmond; we have the moral effect of, at least, three distinct victories; and we have taken from the defeated enemy a rich and splendid prize, in stores, artillery and prisoners. So far, the result of the battle of Richmond is pleasing and grateful to the country. The mixture of disappointment is in the undeniable fact that McClellan and his army still exist, when we might easily have destroyed both.

The Northern newspapers claim that the movements of McClellan from the Chickahominy river were purely strategic. Up to the first decisive stage in the series of engagements—Cold Harbor—there were certainly plain strategic designs in his backward movement. His retirement from Mechanicsville was probably voluntary, and intended to concentrate his troops lower down, where he might fight with the advantages of numbers and his own selection of position. At Ellyson's mills he had a strong position, which was contested with desperate obstinacy and taken by desperate valor. Continuing his retreat, however, he fixed the decisive field at Cold Harbor, where he had massed his troops and brought up to action his trusted regiments of old United States regulars. He was attacked by General Hill's division in advance, and at this critical juncture is to be found the most doubtful predicament in which the fortunes of the long and elaborate contest around Richmond ever stood. Had McClellan won the day here, his right

wing would have been in advance upon Richmond, and his strategy would have been brilliantly successful. The turning point of the battle was when Ewell's division appeared among the trees back of the fork of the roads and the house which constitute the locality of Cold Harbor. The rest of Jackson's army, and a part, we believe, of General Longstreet's division, appeared on the field some time after this, and the battle was gained.

Having been pushed from his strongholds north of the Chickahominy, the enemy made a strong attempt to retrieve his disasters by renewing a concentration of his troops at Frazier's farm. Here, however, the result was less doubtful than at Cold Harbor, for here it was that General Ambrose P. Hill, commanding his own division and that of Longstreet, achieved the most remarkable victory over the enemy that had yet been won—capturing all the artillery that he had engaged, and breaking the last hope of a change of fortune which had attended him on his retreat. In the fight at Frazier's farm we detect the same error that seems to have imperilled our fortunes in every stage of the contest, and to have detracted from all the results gained by us, to wit: the plan of attacking the enemy in imperfect force, and putting him off by defeating him with one or two divisions, when he might have been crushed by a fearless and decisive concentration of many divisions. At Frazier's farm two divisions were thrown against the whole Yankee army; and, indeed, the error might have been fatal had the commander on the spot been less energetic, the troops in his small command less devoted, or had the darkness of night not obscured their numbers.

From the time of the two principal battles—that at Cold Harbor and that at Frazier's farm—all pretensions of the enemy's resort to strategy must cease. His retreat was now unmistakable; it was no longer a falling back to concentrate troops for action; it is, in fact, impossible to disguise that it was the retreat of an enemy who was discomfited and whipped, although not routed. He had abandoned the railroads; he had given up the strongholds which he had provided to secure him in case of a check; he had destroyed from eight to ten million dollars worth of stores; he had deserted his hospitals, his sick and wounded, and he had left in our hands thousands of prisoners and innumerable stragglers.

Regarding all that had been accomplished in these battles; the displays of the valor and devotion of our troops; the expenditure of blood, and the helpless and fugitive condition to which the enemy had at last been reduced, history will record it as a burning shame that an enemy in this condition was permitted to secure his retreat. The result of the fight at Malvern hill was to secure to the enemy full protection for a retreat, which should have been made a rout long before he ever

reached there. The enemy had made no effort for a victory there; it was a stand, not a battle; if he had been let alone, he would have gone away the next day of his own accord; the two wings of our army were in a position to cut off his retreat to the river; and yet nothing was done but to make an attack, in which we sustained a great loss, in which the enemy was not driven, and by which, in fact, he effected exactly what he desired—a cover for his retreat.

All that has been said of the “masterly retreat” of McClellan, and his displays of generalship, sound very well; but the compliments, we believe, are but little deserved and can scarcely serve as excuses to be made to public disappointment over the result of the battle of Richmond, when we come to examine the circumstances in which they have been displayed. His “masterly retreat” consists in our own blunders. He was permitted to get through our fingers when everybody thought we had only to close the hand to crush him. He has secured a strong position on James river, where he hopes to establish a new base of operations. But the position he now holds was notorious in the military history of the country; it was twice occupied by the British when they invaded Virginia, and was pointed out as a commanding position for a power that was strong on the water, long anterior to the date of McClellan’s generalship.

We repeat, that we are not inclined to diminish the actual results because they have fallen below expectation; and it has been unwillingly that we have referred to that part of the history of the battle of Richmond which casts a dark shadow over the track of our victories. The result of the conflict is sufficiently fortunate to excite joy, and grave enough to engage the most serious speculations as to the future. In the North, and in Europe, its moral effects must be immense. It is absolutely certain that Richmond cannot be taken this year, or by this army of McClellan. The mouth of the Yankee government is shut from any more promises of a speedy termination of the war; the powers of Europe see that the Southern Confederacy is not yet crushed, or likely to be crushed by its insolent foe; and we have again challenged the confidence of the world in the elasticity of our fortunes, and the invincible destiny of our independence. The results of the battle of Richmond are worthy of congratulation, although attended with unavailing regrets that the valor of our troops and the talents of some of our generals in the field were not rewarded with greater prizes. Although the painful fact exists that McClellan has secured a position where he can receive reinforcements, and where he cannot be well attacked, there are yet abundant reasons for congratulating the country and the army on the events which have gone so far to secure the safety of our capital and to illuminate the fortunes of the Confederacy.

## INCIDENTS.

The farmers residing in the neighborhood of the battle-fields, with great unanimity and patriotic devotion, responded to the demand for hospital accommodations, and opened their dwellings and outhouses for the use and occupation of the wounded.

Throughout the whole country the houses are shattered, and nearly shot into pieces by the cannon balls of the opposing armies. At Mechanicsville, the explosion of a shell knocked a large house into fragments, and killed six men who were resting there.

Three Texans came upon a body of two hundred Yankee stragglers, and took them all prisoners by frightening them with the story that Jackson, with a "black flag," had cut off their retreat, and that if they would submit their captors would take them into Richmond without the risk of losing their heads.

The Pennsylvania Eleventh (Reserves) and the Fourth New Jersey were taken entire, every commissioned officer—colonels, majors, captains, lieutenants, surgeons and assistant surgeons—falling into our hands. Beyond these two regiments, the prisoners were mostly United States regulars, with a slight sprinkling of Connecticut Yankees.

Major-General McCall, of Pennsylvania, was captured in Friday's fight, by a private in General Hill's division, of the name of Rawlings. The general insisted upon receiving the prisoner from the hands of his captor, who had modestly retired and was doing his duty in the ranks when the distinguished prisoner was escorted to the presence of General Hill by an officer.

In the possession of a great many of the prisoners brought to Richmond were found bogus Confederate bills of small denomination, which they attempted to palm upon boys on the streets for bread, confectionary, etc. The notes were evidently prepared in the North and circulated in McClellan's army, with a view to putting them in circulation when the Yankees got into the City of Richmond, and thus injure the Confederate currency.

The Federal flag made by the Yankees to float over our capitol was captured in the Federal camps, and was exhibited, with great applause, to our troops. It is an immense piece of work, fully twenty feet long, having thirteen stripes and thirty-

two stars thereon. We understand McClellan received it as a present from the ladies of the City of Boston, and promised to plant it on the veritable "last ditch" to which the rebels should be run, and afterward would elevate it, with all military honors, on our capitol at Richmond.

An interesting incident occurred in the Pamunkey on Thursday. A raft battery, protected with iron sides, was annoying our troops in that direction, when a regiment of sharpshooters was detailed to capture it. They proceeded to the brow of a hill immediately commanding the battery, and opened fire down into it. About a dozen Yankees were killed and wounded by the volley—a shock which took them so much by surprise that they concluded to give up; so, hoisting a shirt out upon a pole, the survivors sung out, "We surrender!" Our sharpshooters immediately went down, took possession, and sent the craft to the bottom of the river.



## THE NORTHERN ACCOUNT OF THE SEVEN DAYS' BATTLES.

[Perhaps the most complete and connected of the many accounts of the seven days' battles, which have appeared in the Northern prints, is that given by the correspondent of the Cincinnati *Commercial*. The following extracts will be found interesting, and will furnish a brief and comprehensive review of the whole terrible conflict. The narrative, which, like all other accounts published by the public journals of the enemy, is tinged throughout with misrepresentation, embraces the battle of Mechanicsville, the battle of Gaines' mills, the battle of Savage Station, and the battle of White Oak swamp.]

### THE SITUATION OF M'CLELLAN'S ARMY.

You will remember that the army was pressing hard upon Richmond. The right wing, consisting of McCall's, Morell's and Sykes' divisions, less than twenty-five thousand strong, was well posted on the left bank of the Chickahominy, from Beaver Dam creek to a point below New bridge. Several military bridges formed the avenues of communication between the two portions of the army separated by the river. The centre, consisting of Smith's, Sedgewick's and Richardson's divisions, stretched in line of battle from Golding's, on the banks of the river, to a point south of the Yorktown railroad. The left wing, consisting of Hooker's, Kearney's and Gouch's divisions, stretched from Richardson's left to a point considerably south of the Williamsburg stage road, on the borders of White Oak swamp. The whole line was protected by strong breastworks and redoubts. Casey's (now Peck's) sadly reduced division guarded Bottom bridge, the railway bridge, and were assigned to other similar duty. Our line of battle on the right bank of the Chickahominy, as I have informed you, pressed so close to the rebel lines that neither could advance a regiment outside of their respective breastworks without provoking battle.

On Wednesday, June 25, General McClellan made the first distinctly offensive movement, by directing General Hooker to take up an advanced position on Fair Oaks farm, near the Williamsburg road. It provoked a sharp resistance, which we overcame, and accomplished our object. It was pronounced an important achievement by General McClellan himself, because

it gave him advantages over the rebel position which he had not enjoyed before. Some time during the night, however, tidings were received of a movement of Stonewall Jackson on our right wing. It was deemed hazardous to maintain the advantage of the previous day, and the line was ordered to resume its old position. Thursday afternoon the anticipated attack upon our right wing was made, and handsomely repulsed; but it was discovered that it had not been made by Jackson's command. Information was received that Jackson was sweeping down the Pamunkey, probably to capture military stores at the White House, to cut off our communication with our water base, and menace our rear. Orders were given at once to destroy all public property at the White House, and evacuate that point. Matters began to assume a critical appearance, and danger culminated in the disaster of Friday. It was then fully determined to "change the base of operations to James river." The great retrograde movement was really begun Friday evening, by the transfer of head-quarters from Trent's bluff to Savage Station, but the grand exodus did not commence until Saturday, and did not swell into full proportions till nightfall of that day. In order to preserve the *morale* of the army as far as possible, and obtain supplies of ammunition and subsistence, it was determined to carry through all the wagons loaded, and the ambulance train—making a mighty caravan—vastly increased by artillery trains. There was but one narrow road to pursue. It struck almost due south from the Williamsburg road, through White Oak swamp, to the Charles City road, into which it debouched about eight miles from Turkey bend, on James river. The course then lay up the latter road toward Richmond, where it struck a little southwest by the Quaker road, which terminated in New Market road, leading from Richmond. The river was but a short distance south, and Malvern hill—a beautiful, lofty bluff, overlooking the river and commanding the surrounding country, being our goal. Although there was but a single road—with slight exception—it had the advantage of coursing through White Oak swamp, upon which we might rely, in some degree, for the protection of our flanks. There was great danger that the enemy might cut us off by moving columns down the Charles City, Central or New Market roads, or all three, but these chances were necessarily accepted. General McClellan acted upon the supposition that the enemy would not guess his determination until he was able to defeat their movements. At all events, it was the only hopeful course, because the enemy was watching for him on the left bank of the Chickahominy. The events will now be recorded in their order. The affair at Fair Oaks farm was the real beginning of the dreary drama. The Mechanicsville battle was the second act, which you will now read.

## BATTLE OF MECHANICSVILLE.

On the 26th a fierce battle was raging on the left bank of the Chickahominy, on the east side of Beaver Dam creek. Our extreme right wing, consisting of McCall's Pennsylvania reserves, eight thousand five hundred strong, with five batteries, were strongly entrenched there in admirable position for defence. Information, leading General McClellan to expect an attempt upon his right, had been received Wednesday night, and we were well prepared for resistance. General Fitz John Porter's corps, consisting of Morell's division of volunteers, and Sykes' regulars, some 5,000 strong, increased by Duryea's Zouaves, was posted near New bridge, within supporting distance. General Stoneman had also been sent to Old Church with a regiment of cavalry and two of infantry, as a corps of observation, and to check flanking movements; or, if possible, to decoy the enemy down the Pamunkey. At about noon, a powerful corps of the enemy, consisting of General A. P. Hill's, D. H. Hill's, Longstreet's and Anderson's divisions—then supposed to be Jackson's force—under command of General Robert E. Lee, crossed the river at Mechanicsville bridge, Meadow bridge, and at Atlee's, and, between one and two o'clock, attacked our flank. Two regiments of Meade's brigade (McCall's division) were in reserve, and one on picket duty. They did not, at any time, fully engage the enemy. General Reynolds' brigade held the right and Seymour's the left. The fight was opened with artillery, at long range, but the enemy, finally discovering our superiority in this arm, foreshortened the range and came into close conflict. He was evidently provoked at his own inefficiency, since his shells were not destructive in our entrenchments, while our gunners played upon his exposed ranks with fearful effect. The fight seemed to increase in fury as it progressed, and it finally became the most terrific artillery combat of the war. I had been accustomed for months to the incessant roar of heavy guns, but until that period I had failed to comprehend the terrible sublimity of a great battle with field pieces. The uproar was incessant and deafening for hours. At times it seemed as if fifty guns exploded simultaneously, and then ran off at intervals into splendid file firing—if I may apply infantry descriptive terms to cannonading. But no language can describe its awful grandeur. The enemy at last essayed a combined movement. Meantime our force had been strengthened by Griffith's brigade, which increased the volume of infantry fire, and Martindale's brigade came up to be ready for emergencies. Their infantry fire had entirely subsided, and it was obvious that they were withdrawing under cover of their artillery. Our own batteries, which had opened in full cry at the start, had not slackened an instant. Comprehending the situation fully now, the cannoners plied themselves with

tremendous energy to punish the retreating foe. We have no sure means to determine how many were slaughtered. Our loss was eighty killed, and less than one hundred and fifty wounded. General McClellan was not in the battle, but was at General Porter's head-quarters until it terminated.

It was now ascertained from prisoners that Stonewall Jackson had not joined Lee. Hence it was inferred that he was sweeping down the banks of the Pamunkey, to seize the public property and to cut off our retreat in that direction. General Stoneman's command was moved swiftly down to watch operations there, and orders were issued for the removal or destruction of all public stores at the White House. The situation, apparently placid on the surface, developed a troubled undercurrent. General McClellan directed General McCall to fall back and take up a new position in front of our military bridges, to resist an attack which was anticipated next day (Friday). It was thought if the enemy was not successfully repulsed, he could be drawn across our bridges upon our own terms, where he could be roughly handled. The command was given to General Fitz John Porter, who controlled the troops already mentioned, supported by a powerful train of artillery—regular and volunteer. Meantime all the trains and equipage of the right wing were withdrawn to Trent's bluff, on the right bank of the river, during the night, and our wounded were conveyed to the hospital at Savage Station—to be deserted, alas! to the enemy. All these facts indicated danger. But other evidences of it were not wanting.

By daylight Friday morning General McCall had fallen back to the rear of Gaines' mill, and in front of Woodbury's bridge, where he was posted—his left joining the right of Butterfield's brigade, resting in the woods and near the swamps of Chickahominy. Morell was on his right, in the centre, and General Sykes, commanding five thousand regulars, and Duryea's Zouaves, held the extreme right—the line occupying crests of hills near the New Kent road, some distance east by south of Gaines' mill. A portion of the position was good, but judicious generalship might have found a better, and especially it might have been amended by posting the left flank upon a swamp, which was impassable beyond peradventure. Besides, the line was so disposed that it was next to impossible to use our artillery. Nothing definite had yet been heard of the enemy, but it was assumed that he would appear stronger than yesterday. Accordingly, General Slocum's division, about eight thousand strong, was moved across the river to support Porter, although it was deemed hazardous in consequence of a pending attack along our whole front. But there was no alternative; General McClellan had only so much material, and it was imperative that he should use it according to unavoidable necessity.

## BATTLE OF GAINES' MILL, FRIDAY, JUNE TWENTY-SEVENTH.

The battle opened about one o'clock by skirmishing, particularly in front of Griffith's brigade, near the mill, and by an artillery attack from the battery planted in the orchard near the Gaines' house. The enemy felt our position rapidly, and along the whole line at the same time, showing that he was in full force. By two o'clock there had been several conflicts between opposing regiments, without any particular result, save that our men steadily maintained their line. About this time General Griffith's brigade, whose front was covered by Berden's sharpshooters, advanced through to the edge of the woods toward Gaines' mill, and made the first important opening of the battle. The enemy at once replied. The Ninth Massachusetts, Colonel Cass, a strong and brave regiment, with the Fourth Michigan and Fourteenth New York, had the principal position. The Sixty-second Pennsylvania took position on the extreme right, where the enemy appeared very strong. Weed's Rhode Island battery, from position in rear of the woods, plied shell and solid shot with accuracy and effect. This was the earliest collision between our forces and the enemy.

The action immediately began with vigor on the extreme right, held by General Sykes' division, composed of General Warner's, Colonel Buchanan's and Colonel Chapman's brigades. These brigades supported Weed's, Edwards' and Tidball's batteries—all regulars. The enemy attacked very fiercely, charging repeatedly, but were as often repulsed. The enemy delayed their assault upon our left for some time. A brilliant episode occurred on the left of Martindale's brigade, where the Thirteenth New York, and the fire proof and scarred veterans of the Second Maine were posted. A brigade of Alabamians moved up over the crest of a hill in splendid style; even, ready and resolute, with arms at right shoulder shift, ready for a charge. "Up and at them," was the word along our line, and the two regiments which had lain concealed in the low growth of timber in the valley sprang to their feet, and one piercing, terrible volley of death-dealing Minnies was poured into the ranks of the confident enemy. The hill was cleared as though swept by a hurricane. One of the regiments left their colors and battle flag upon the field. The regimental color was secured by Colonel Roberts, of the Second Maine, and the battle flag by Captain Sullivan, of the Thirteenth New York, who followed the retreating enemy and secured it. Captain Sullivan found the field literally covered with the rebel dead; there being over eighty near the spot where the colors fell. At three o'clock the action had become general along the whole line. Stonewall Jackson's column had formed a junction with Lee, and soon attacked our right with great vigor and pertinacity, but he met a galling fire from Edwards', Martin's and Weed's

batteries, which sent him reeling back in disorder. Again he gathered his columns, supported them by fresh troops, again advanced, extending his lines as if to flank our right, and renewed the attack with greater ferocity than ever, to be again repulsed with terrible slaughter. Sykes' regulars and Warren's brigade, in which are the Duryea Zouaves and Bendix's Tenth New York regiment, played a brilliant part in this portion of the engagement—the Zouaves especially fighting with a desperation and tenacity only to be expected from such superior men. They suffered largely, their peculiar uniform being the especial mark of ten thousand rebel soldiers.

The tactics of the enemy were soon made apparent. It was in massing troops and making sudden onslaughts on this and then on that portion of our columns, by which he expected to break them somewhere, and defeat if not rout us. His next movement was against our centre. Part of Jackson's column, reinforced by a large body from Hill's division, now made a desperate onset against the centre. Here the conflict was long and bloody, and raged for nearly two hours with great violence. The columns surged backward and forward, first one yielding and then the other. An idea of the great magnitude of this portion of the fight may be obtained, when I say that this part of the line was successively reinforced by McCall's reserves—the brigades of General Newton, Colonel Bartlett and Colonel Taylor, of Slocum's division—and it was not until the last fresh brigade was hurled against them that they were beaten back. In this part of the engagement we took about fifty prisoners, who said that in just that part of the engagement the entire force of Lonstreet's and Hill's divisions and a part of Jackson's column participated. Probably the most desperate fighting of the day took place upon this part of our lines and at this time. Here it was that we suffered our heaviest losses, and the field presented a most sanguinary hue. The fighting was done principally by musketry—a thick pine woods intervening between our batteries and the enemy, preventing the former getting the range of the latter. Many of our regiments suffered here to the extent of one-third of their men. The Sixty-second Pennsylvania, of Griffin's brigade, met an overwhelming force of the enemy, who took them on the flank, and, after a desperate resistance, they succeeded in repulsing the regiment, killing the colonel, Samuel W. Black, and wounding Lieutenant-Colonel Sweitzer. The regiment broke and retreated, and was the first to come off the field in disorder—the men frightened and panic-stricken at the death of their beloved colonel. The regiment was not reformed.

Finding he could not force our centre, the enemy gradually threw his columns against our left, pressing Martindale's right wing very hard, where he met a gallant resistance from the

Twenty-second Massachusetts and Second Maine regiments—as brave veterans as ever shouldered a musket. Suddenly, the everlasting roar of musketry increased in volume toward the extreme left, and the conflict seemed to grow fiercer than at any previous time. This was about six o'clock; and as I galloped over the field I looked back and around upon the most sublime scene that the fierce grandeur and terrible reality of war ever portrayed. The thousand continuous volleys of musketry seemed mingled in the grand roar of a great cataract, while the louder and deeper discharge of artillery bounded forth over those hills and down the valley with a volume that seemed to shake the earth beneath us. The canopy of smoke was so thick that the sun was gloomily red in the heavens, while the clouds of dust in the rear, caused by the commotion of advancing and retreating squadrons of cavalry, was stifling and blinding to a distressing degree. One hour and a half our left line withstood this terrible shock of battle. Though decimated at every discharge, losing heavily in officers, and with an overwhelming force in front, they still continued to fight. Line officers were stricken down by scores and men by the hundred. They thus saw it was in vain to longer continue. The right was giving away rapidly, and black crowds of retreating men could be seen making their way toward the river, they having cut their way through the opposing host which assailed them in front, in flank and in rear, and fell back upon the river, crossing upon the remains of Emerson's bridge, which had been blown up by our forces during the fight, and gathered together their scattered columns in the camp of Smith's division. A part of the brigade had been withdrawn by the right flank, and with them General Butler, who, notwithstanding the thousand dangers that he risked, escaped unharmed—one bullet having passed through the rim of his hat and another bent his sword double. When the left gave way, the centre, and finally the right, was also pressed back, and the retreating columns soon became mingled into one black mass of troops. The infantry supports having fallen back, Allen's, Weedon's, Hart's and Edwards' batteries were left exposed. When the order to fall back reached the middle hospital, one of the three houses, about equidistant from each other, on the road to Woodbury's bridge, quite a stampede took place among the stragglers who had there congregated, most of them being men who had been detailed to bring in the wounded from their regiments and who had failed to return. They made a rush for the bridge, followed by some of the troops, but before they reached the last hospital near the end of the bridge, they were speedily and summarily checked. About seven o'clock Meagher's and French's brigades crossed the bridge and advanced at double-quick up the hill, forming in line of battle beyond the hospital, and swooping up the stragglers with a round turn. In almost

less time than it takes to write it, a scene of indescribable excitement, of mingled confusion and direful disorder, had been obliterated; yes, literally crushed, and comparative order restored out of almost chaos by the prompt, energetic and fearless action of brave officers. As the rushing and retreating tide began to pour precipitately toward the bridge, a dozen officers in my own sight drew their sabres and pistols, placed themselves in front of the straggling crowd, and every device that physical and mental nature could invent, rallied and formed column after column of men from the broken mass that swept over the plain. Probably the greatest carnage of this bloody day was produced by the incessant discharges of double-shotted canister from the bronze Napoleons of Martin's battery. He had taken up a position in the hollow between two small hills. The enemy advanced from the opposite side in solid column, on double-quick, with arms at right shoulder shift, not being able to see the battery until they reached the crest of the hill, within one hundred yards of it, when Martin opened a bitter surprise upon them, sweeping them from the field like chaff before a storm. Twice again they formed and advanced, their officers behaving splendidly, but it was useless; Martin's fierce leaden rain being too terrible to withstand. The advance of the fresh troops having checked the enemy, and night coming on, the conflict ceased, and both parties quietly lay on their arms.

Calamity brooded over all. Few had opportunity to rest, not many could find wherewith to appease hunger, and mind as well as body was afflicted. Both were jaded and reduced. Losses we were obliged to estimate. Official reports, there were none. Of material, Fitz John Porter's command lost twenty pieces of artillery, and the arms, with accoutrements, which belonged to men who were lost. Of dead, wounded and missing there were seven thousand or upward.

It is claimed that the battle was badly managed. This is no time for criticism; besides, the data is not absolutely reliable. It is certain that we were *beaten in strategy and grand tactics*. We were beaten. It was a melancholy satisfaction to know that we occupied the field of battle after the conflict was ended. We had about thirty thousand men engaged—perhaps thirty-five thousand. The enemy had four divisions employed, besides Jackson's admirable army of forty thousand or thirty-five thousand disciplined troops.

#### THE RETREAT TO THE RIVER.

There was but one extremely perilous alternative. The army must fall back on James river. A hope was entertained that the enemy would be deceived into the belief that we designed to fall back to the White House. Preparations were



accordingly begun. Porter's command crossed the river without opposition.

During the night our bridges were blown up, and the crossings were barricaded and defended. Keyes' line, which was on the extreme left, resting upon White Oak swamp, was prolonged, and our artillery and transportation trains were ordered to prepare to move forward. That night General Casey was also directed to destroy all public property at the White House that could not be removed, and to transport the sick and wounded to a place of safety; to retire himself, and rejoin the army on James river. Friday night was thus actively and mournfully passed, but it was felicity itself compared with those of Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

Saturday morning loomed upon us hotly and cheerlessly. Until nine o'clock not the sound of a hostile gun disturbed the dread silence. About nine o'clock this anxiety was relieved by an awful cannonade opened upon Smith's position from two forts in Garnett's field, a battery at Fitz John Porter's old position, and another below it on the left bank of the Chickahominy, raking his entrenchments and compelling him to abandon the strongest natural position on our whole line. The fire was terrible. I can describe its lines fairly by comparing it with the right lines and angles of a chess board. Smith fell back to the woods, a few hundred yards, and threw up breastworks out of range. The enemy, content with his success, ceased firing, and quiet was not disturbed again that day. The silence of the enemy was explained to me that night; a dispatch had been sent by Jackson to Magruder, who remained in command in front of Richmond, expressed thus: "Be quiet. Everything is working as well as we could desire!" Ominous words!

I now proceed to Savage Station. I shall not attempt to describe the sombre picture of gloom, confusion and distress which oppressed me there. I found officers endeavoring to fight off the true meaning. Anxiety at head-quarters was too apparent to one who had studied that branch of the army too sharply to be deluded by thin masks. The wretched spectacle of mangled men from yesterday's battle, the wearied, haggard and smoke-begrimed faces of men who had fought yesterday, were concomitants of every field, yet they formed the sombre coloring of the ominous picture before me. Then there were hundreds who had straggled from the field, sprawled upon every space where there was a shadow of a leaf to protect them from a broiling sun; a hurry and tumult of wagons and artillery trains, endless almost, rushing down the roads toward the new base, moving with a sort of orderly confusion almost as distressing as panic itself. But I venture that few of all that hastening throng, excepting old officers, understood the misfortune. Endless streams of artillery trains, wagons and

funeral ambulances poured down the roads from all the camps, and plunged into the narrow funnel which was our only hope of escape. And now the exquisite truth flashed upon me. It was absolutely necessary for the salvation of the army and the cause that our wounded and mangled braves, who lay moaning in physical agony in our hospitals, should be deserted and left in the hands of the enemy.

At daylight General McClellan was on the road. Thousands of cattle, of wagons, and our immense train of artillery, intermingled with infantry, and great troops of cavalry, choked up the narrow road already. General Sumner's, Heintzelman's and Franklin's corps, under Sumner's command, had been left to guard the rear, with orders to fall back at daylight and hold the enemy in check till night. A noble army for sacrifice, and some, oh, how many, must fall to save the rest. The very slightest movement from the front was critical. At no point along the line were we more than three-fourths of a mile from the enemy, and in front of Sedgewick's line they were not over six hundred yards distant. The slightest vibration at any point was apt to thrill the rebel lines from centre to wings; but, fortunately, by skilful secrecy, column after column was marched to the rear. Toward noon the line had retired several miles, and rested behind Savage Station, to destroy the public property which had accumulated there. A locomotive on the railway was started swiftly down the road, with a train of cars, and soon plunged madly into the Chickahominy, a mangled wreck. The match was applied to stores of every description, and ammunition was exploded, until nothing was left to appease the rebel appetite for prey. Destruction was complete, and the ruins were more touchingly desolate amid the mangled victims of war's ruthlessness, who laid on the hillside mourning the departure of friends with whom they had bravely fought.

The advance column and all the mighty train had now been swallowed in the maw of the dreary forest. It swept onward, onward, fast and furious, like an avalanche. Every hour of silence behind was ominous, but hours were precious to us. Pioneer bands were rushing along in front, clearing and repairing our single road; reconnoissance officers were seeking new routes for a haven of rest and safety. The enemy was in the rear, pressing on with fearful power. He could press down, flankward, to our front, cutting off our retreat. Would such be our fate? The vanguard had passed White Oak bridge, and had risen to a fine defensive post flanked by White Oak swamp, where part of the train at least could rest. Head-quarters, which had tarried near the bridge, were now moved two miles beyond. Keyes' corps was forward. Sykes was guarding our flanks; Morell was moving behind Keyes; Fitz John Porter stood guard around the camp. Day was wearing away. An awful tumult in rear, as if the elements were contending, had

been moving the senses with exquisite power. Foaming steeds and flushed riders dashed into camp. You could see the baleful firings of cannon flashing against the dusky horizon, playing on the surface of the evening clouds like sharp magnetic lights. Long lines of musketry vomited their furious volleys of pestilential lead through the forests, sweeping scores of brave soldiers into the valley of the shadow of death.

Nothing struck me so keenly during all that gloomy day and more desolate night as the thinly-disguised uneasiness of those to whom the country had entrusted its fate. It was well that soldiers who carry muskets did not read the agony traced upon the face of that leader whom they had learned to love. A few in that gloomy bivouac folded their arms to sleep, but most were too exhausted to enjoy that blessed relief. That dreadful tumult, but a few short miles in the distance, raged till long after the whippoorwill had commenced his plaintive song.

#### THE BATTLE OF SAVAGE STATION.

Morning beamed upon us again brilliantly, but hotly. The enemy had not yet appeared in our front. Sumner had brought off his splendid command. Franklin was posted strongly on the south bank of White Oak creek, Heintzelman was on his left, Keyes' corps was moving swiftly to James river, down the Charles City and Quaker roads, Porter and part of Sumner's corps were following rapidly. The enemy first attacked at Orchard Station, near Fair Oaks, in the morning, but were soon driven off. At about noon they returned in heavy force from the front of Richmond, while a strong column was thrown across the Chickahominy, at Alexander's bridge, near the railway crossing. They first appeared in the edge of the woods south of Trent's, and opened on our column on the Williamsburg road with shell. At the same time they trained a heavy gun upon our line from the bridge they had just crossed. They still seemed deluded with the belief that General McClellan intended to retreat to the Pamunkey, and all day long they had marched heavy columns from their camps in front of Richmond, across New bridge, to strengthen Jackson still more. Happy delusion.

The first shells exploded around and over the hospitals at Savage Station, but it is just to say it was not intentional. They next opened upon a cluster of officers, including Sumner, Sedgewick, Richardson, Burns, and their staffs, missing them fortunately, but covering them with dust. Our own batteries were now in full clamor, and both sides handled their guns skilfully. The object of the enemy seemed to be to break our right centre, and consequently Burns' brigade was the recipient of the principal share of their favor. As the afternoon wore away the combatants drew closer together, and the conflict be-

came one of the sharpest of the battles on Virginia soil. Two companies of one regiment stampeded. General Burns flung himself across their track, waved his bullet-shattered hat, expostulated, exhorted, entreated, threatened, imprecated, under a storm of lead, and at last, throwing his hat, in agony and despair, upon the ground, begged them to rally once more, and preserve them and him from disgrace. The last appeal touched them. The men wheeled with alacrity, and fought like heroes until the carnage ceased.

Our trains had now passed White Oak bridge. Such an achievement, in such order, under the circumstances, might well be regarded wonderful. The retreat was most ably conducted. Until this day (Monday) the enemy seems constantly to have operated upon the supposition that our army was intending to retire to the Pamunkey. They had been deluded into this belief by the Seventeenth New York and Eighteenth Massachusetts regiments, together with part of the First, Second and Sixth regular cavalry, which had been sent out to Old Church on Thursday morning to impress the enemy with that notion. (*Par parenthese*—they retired safely to Yorktown, and are now at Malvern hill.) But our true object must now have become apparent, and it was vitally necessary to get the trains through before the enemy could push columns down the Charles City, Central and New Market roads. But until eight o'clock in the morning we had no knowledge of any but the Quaker road to the point at which we now aimed—Hardin's landing and Malvern hill, in Turkey bend. Sharp reconnoissance, however, had found another, and soon our tremendous land fleet was sailing down two roads, and our long artillery train of two hundred and fifty guns, and equipments, were lumbering after them with furious but orderly speed.

#### BATTLE OF WHITE OAK SWAMP.

About ten o'clock General McClellan pushed to the river, communicating with Commodore Rodgers, and had the gunboat fleet posted to aid us against the enemy. The cause was desperate, but it was a relief to reach the river where we could turn at bay, with our rear protected by the James and flanks partially covered by gunboats. Tidings, however, had been received that the enemy was pushing rapidly upon us in several columns of immense numbers, apparently determined to crush us or drive us into the river that night. They opened fiercely with shell upon Smith's division at White Oak bridge.

Long before this our vanguard had debouched from the road into the field before Turkey bend, and our reserve artillery was powerfully posted on Malvern hill—a magnificent bluff, covering Hardin's landing, where our gunboats were cruising. Here was a glorious prospect. Though our gallant fellows were

bravely holding the fierce enemy at bay to cover the swiftly escaping trains, it was clear our troubles were not ended. We had again deceived the enemy by going to Turkey bend. He had imagined we were marching to New Market, destined to a point on Cliff Bottom road, near Fort Darling. It was not far away, and the enemy was massing his troops upon us on the left and on our new front—for when we arrived at Malvern hill the wings of the army, as organized, were reversed—Keyes taking the right, Porter's corps the left—as we faced Richmond. Our line now described a great arc, and there was fighting around three-fourths of the perimeter. Gen. McClellan, who had already communicated with the gunboats, returned from the front to Malvern hill, which was made his battle head-quarters, and dispositions for a final emergency were made. Fitz John Porter was marched from the valley under the hill to his position on the western crest of the hill, where he could rake the plains toward Richmond. Our splendid artillery was picturesquely poised in fan shape at salient points, and its supports were disposed in admirable cover in hollows between undulations of the bluff. Powerful concentrating batteries were also posted in the centre, so that, to use the language of Colonel Switzer, "we'll clothe this hill in sheets of flame before they take it." It was a magnificent spectacle. The roar of combat grew tremendous as the afternoon wore away. There was no time then nor afterward to ascertain dispositions of particular organizations. They were thrown together wherever emergency demanded. White Oak bridge, the Quaker road, Charles City road and the banks of Turkey-creek were enveloped in flame; iron and lead crushing through forests and men like a destroying pestilence. A masked battery, which had opened from the swamp under Malvern hill, began to prove inconvenient to Porter. It plowed and crashed through some of our wagons, and disturbed groups of officers in the splendid groves of Malvern mansion.

The gunboat Galena, anchored on the opposite side of Turkey island, and the Arostook, cruising at the head of the island, opened their ports, and plunged their awful metal into the rebel cover with Titanic force. Toward sunset the earth quivered with the terrific concussion of artillery and huge explosions. The vast aerial auditorium seemed convulsed with the commotion of frightful sounds. Shells raced, like dark meteors athwart the horizon, crossing each other at eccentric angles, exploding into deadly iron hail. The forms of smoke-masked warriors; the gleam of muskets on the plains where soldiers were disengaged; the artistic order of battle on Malvern hill; the wild career of wilder horsemen plunging to and fro and across the field, formed a scene of exciting grandeur. In the forest, where eyes did not penetrate, there was nothing but the exhilarating and exhausting spasm of battle. Baleful fires

blazed among the trees, and death struck many shining marks. Our haggard men stood there with grand courage. Wearied and jaded and hungry and thirsty, beset by almost countless foes, they cheered and fought, and charged into the very jaws of death, until veteran soldiers fairly wept at their devotion.

Oh! friends, could you realize the afflictions of the past five days, you could almost shed tears of blood. Oh! my friends, it is horrible! horrible! to see this proud army so wretchedly pressed upon every side, destruction threatening wherever we turn; scarce a hope of extrication save that which is born of despair. Would to God such days had passed away for ever. Oh, my countrymen, you cannot comprehend the toils and trials of your devoted soldiers—conflict not simply with soldiery—but contention against insidious thirst, craving appetite, enfeebling heat, overpowering fatigue—and after fighting and marching, and privations by day and suffering by night, and fighting by days succeeding nights of fighting and harrassing vigils, against fresh forces hurled upon them in overpowering masses, till exhausted nature almost sank beneath such fearful visitations, to be pressed to the imminent verge of despair, was almost too much for human nature to endure.

The soil of Virginia is now sacred. It is bathed with the reddest blood of this broad land. Every rood of it, from upper Chickahominy to the base of Malvern hill, is crimsoned with blood. The dark forests—fitting canopy for such woful sacrifice—echo with the wails of wounded and dying men. There is a bloody corpse in every copse, and mangled soldiers in every thicket of that ensanguined field.







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