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Lincoln and Reconstruction

Title: Lincoln and Reconstruction

Author: General John B. Gordon

Date: 1861

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.9, pp.3-7

Gordon, Lincoln and Reconstruction, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.3

The Confederates who clung to those pieces of battered bunting knew they would never again wave as martial ensigns above embattled hosts; but they wanted to keep them, just as they wanted to keep the old canteen with a bullet-hole through it, or the rusty gray jackets that had been torn by canister. They loved those flags, and will love them forever, as mementoes of the unparalleled struggle. They cherish them because they represent the consecration and courage not only of Lee's army, but of all the Southern armies, because they symbolize the bloodshed and the glory of nearly a thousand battles….

Gordon, Lincoln and Reconstruction, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.3

During these last scenes at Appomattox some of the Confederates were so deprest in spirit, so filled with apprehensions as to the policy to be adopted by the civil authorities at Washington, that the future seemed to them shrouded in gloom. They knew that burnt homes and fenceless farms, poverty and ashes, would greet them on their return from the war. Even if the administration at Washington should be friendly, they did not believe that the Southern States could recover in half a century from the chaotic condition in which the war had left them. The situation was enough to daunt the most hopeful and appal the stoutest hearts….

Gordon, Lincoln and Reconstruction, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.4

The arms were stacked and the battle-flags were folded. Those sad and suffering men, many of them weeping as they saw the old banners laid upon the stacked guns like trappings on the coffin of their dead hopes, at once gathered in compact mass around me. Sitting on my horse in the midst of them, I spoke to them for the last time as their commander. In all my past life I had never undertaken to speak where my own emotions were so literally overwhelming. I counselled such course of action as I believed most conducive to the welfare of the South and of the whole country. I told them of my own grief, which almost stifled utterance, and that I realized most keenly the sorrow that was breaking their hearts, and appreciated fully the countless and stupendous barriers across the paths they were to tread.

Gordon, Lincoln and Reconstruction, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.4

Reminding them of the benign Southern climate, of the fertility of their lands, of the vastly increased demand for the South's great staple and the high prices paid for it, I offered these facts as legitimate bases of hope and encouragement. I said to them that through the rifts in the clouds then above us I could see the hand of Almighty God stretched out to help us in the impending battle with adversity; that He would guide us in the gloom, and bless every manly effort to bringback to desolated homes the sunshine and comforts of former years….

Gordon, Lincoln and Reconstruction, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.5

As I began to speak from my horse, large numbers of Union soldiers came near to hear what I had to say, giving me a rather queerly mixed audience. The Hon. Elihu Washburne, afterward United States Minister to France, the close friend of both president Lincoln and General Grant, was present at the surrender, as the guest of the Union commander. He either heard this parting speech or else its substance was reported to him. As soon as the formalities were ended, he made himself known to me, and in a most gracious manner exprest his pleasure at the general trend of my remarks. He assured me that the South would receive generous treatment at the hands of the general Government. My special object in referring to Mr. Washburne in this connection is to leave on record an emphatic statement made by him which greatly encouraged me. I can never forget his laconic answer to my inquiry: "Why do you think, Mr. Washburne, that the South will be generously dealt with by the Government?" "Because Abraham Lincoln is at its head," was his reply.

Gordon, Lincoln and Reconstruction, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.5

I knew something of Mr. Lincoln's past history, of his lifelong hostility to slavery, of his Emancipation Proclamation and vigorous prosecution of the war; but I had no knowledge whatever of any kindly sentiment entertained by him toward the Southern people. The emphatic words of Mr. Washburne, his intimate friend and counselor, greatly interested me. I was with Mr. Washburne for several succeeding days—we rode on horseback together from Appomattox backtoward Petersburg; and his description of Mr. Lincoln's character, of his genial and philanthropic nature, accompanied with illustrative anecdotes, was not only extremely entertaining, but was to me a revelation. He supported his declaration as to Mr. Lincoln's kindly sentiments by giving an elaborate and detailed account of his meeting with the fixt purpose of ending the war by granting the most liberal terms, provided the Southern commissioners acquiesced in the sine qua non—the restoration of the Union.

Gordon, Lincoln and Reconstruction, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.6

We parted at Petersburg, and among the last things he enjoined was faith in the kindly purposes of Abraham Lincoln in reference to the Southern people. Mr. Washburne said that the President would recommend to Congress such legislation as in his opinion would promote the prosperity of the South. He was emphatic in his declaration that Mr. Lincoln desired only the restoration of the Union—that even the abolition of slavery was secondary to this prime object. He stated that the President had declared that if he could restore the Union without abolition, he would gladly do it; if he could save the Union by partial abolition of slavery, he would do it that way; but that if it became necessary to abolish slavery entirely in order to save the Union, then slavery would be abolished; that as his great object had been achieved by the surrender of Lee's army, it would speedily be known to the Southern people that the President was deeply concerned for their welfare, that there would be no prosecutions and no discrimination, but that the States' governmentswould be promptly recognized, and every effort made to help the Southern people. These impressive assurances were adding strength to my hopes when the whole country was shocked by the assassination of the President….

Gordon, Lincoln and Reconstruction, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.7

The magnanimity exhibited at Appomattox justifies me in recording here my conviction that, had it been possible for General Grant and his soldiers to foresee the bloody sweat which through ten successive years was to be wrung from Southern brows, the whole Union army would then and there have resolved to combat all unfriendly legislation. Or, later, if Booth's bullet had not terminated the life filled with "charity to all and malice toward none," President Lincoln's benign purposes, seconded by the great-hearted among our Northern countrymen, would have saved the South from those caricatures of government which cursed and crushed her.

Gordon, Lincoln and Reconstruction, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.7

In looking back now over that valley of death—the period of reconstruction—its waste and its woe, it is hard to realize that the worn and impoverished Confederates were able to go through it. The risen South of to-day is a memorial of the same patience, endurance, and valor which immortalized the four years' struggle for Southern independence.

Edward Baker's Reply to Breckenridge, Edward D. Baker, 1861

Edward Baker's Reply to Breckenridge

Title: Edward Baker's Reply to Breckenridge

Author: Edward D. Baker

Date: 1861

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.10, pp.3-8

Born in London in 1811, died in 1861; came to America in 1816; elected to Congress from Illinois in 1845; Colonel and Brigade Commander in the Mexican War, 1847-48; again elected to Congress from Illinois in 1849; removing to Oregon, elected a United States Senator in 1860; raised a regiment in New York and Philadelphia in 1861; commanded a brigade at the Battle of Ball's Bluff on October 21, 1861; killed at Ball's Bluff while leading a desperate charge.

From a speech in the United States Senate on August 1, 1861, eleven days after the Battle of Bull Run. Breckenridge was then a senator from Kentucky and had been defeated as the candidate of the Southern Democrats for the presidency in the election of November, 1860. On being expelled from the Senate, December 4, 1861, he entered the Confederate army, where he served as a major-general and finally as secretary of war.

Baker's speech is remembered as one of the most dramatic ever delivered in the United States Senate. Breckenridge, whose speech, strongly Southern in tone, had provoked it, was already on his feet when Baker, a colonel in the army as well as a senator, alternating in his services between his seat in the Senate and his tent in the field, entered the Senate-chamber at the eastern door, wearing his blue army coat and fatigue cap, a riding whip in his hand and his sword in its scabbard. Blaine, in his "Twenty Years of Congress," describes how Baker "laid his sword upon his desk" and sat down, listening to Breckenridge. When Breckenridge had finished, Baker, "his face aglow with excitement, sprang to the floor. No more thrilling speech was ever delivered. The striking appearance of the speaker in the uniform of a soldier, his superb voice, his graceful manner, all united to give the occasion an extraordinary interest." Eleven weeks later Baker lay dead on the field of Ball's Bluff.

Baker's Reply to Breckenridge, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.3

THE senator from Kentucky stands up here in a manly way in opposition to what he sees is the overwhelming sentiment of the Senate, and utters reproof, malediction, and prediction combined. Well, sir, it is not every prediction that is prophecy. It is the easiest thing in the world to do; there is nothing easier, except to be mistaken when we have predicted. I confess, Mr. President, that I would not have predicted three weeks ago the disasters which have overtaken our arms; and I do not think (if I were to predict now) that six months hence the senator will indulge in the same tone of prediction which is his favorite key now. I would ask him what would you have us do now—a Confederate army within twenty miles of us, advancing, or threatening to advance, to overwhelm your government; to shake the pillars of the Union; to bring it around your head in ruins if you stay here?

Baker's Reply to Breckenridge, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.4

Are we to stop and talk about an uprising sentiment in the North against the war? Are we to predict evil, and retire from what we predict? Is it not the manly part to go on as we have begun, to raise money, and levy armies, to organize them, to prepare to advance; when we do advance, to regulate that advance by all the laws and regulations that civilization and humanity will allow in time of battle? Can we do anything more? To talk to us about stopping is idle; we will never stop. Will the senator yield to rebellion? Will he shrink from armed insurrection? Will his State justify it? Will its better public opinion allow it? Shall we send a flag of truce? What would he have? Or would he conduct this war so feebly, that the whole world would smile at us in derision? What would he have?

Baker's Reply to Breckenridge, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.5

These speeches of his, sown broadcast over the land, what clear distinct meaning have they? Are they not intended for disorganization in our very midst? Are they not intended to dull our weapons? Are they not intended to destroy our zeal? Are they not intended to animate our enemies? Sir, are they not words of brilliant polished treason?

Baker's Reply to Breckenridge, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.5

What would have been thought if, in another capitol, in another republic, in a yet more martial age, a senator as grave, not more eloquent or dignified than the senator from Kentucky, yet with the Roman purple flowing over his shoulders, had risen in his place, surrounded by all the illustrations of Roman glory, and declared that advancing Hannibal was just, and that Carthage ought to be dealt with in terms of peace? What would have been thought if, after the Battle of Cannae, a senator there had risen in his place and denounced every levy of the Roman people, every expenditure of its treasure, and every appeal to the old recollections and the old glories? Sir, a senator, himself learned far more than myself in such lore [Mr. Fessenden], tells me, in a voice that I am glad is audible, that he would have been hurled from the Tarpeian rock.

Baker's Reply to Breckenridge, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.6

When we subjugate South Carolina, what shall we do? We shall compel its obedience to the Constitution of the United States; that is all. Why play upon words? We do not mean, we never have said, any more. If it be slavery that men should obey the Constitution their fathers fought for, let it be so. If it be freedom, it is freedom equally for them and for us. We propose to subjugate rebellion into loyalty; we propose to subjugate insurrection into peace; we propose to subjugate Confederate anarchy into constitutional Union liberty. The senator well knows that we propose no more. I ask him—I appeal to his better judgment now—what does he imagine we intended to do, if fortunately we conquer Tennessee or South Carolina—call it "conquer," if you will, sir—what do we propose to do?

Baker's Reply to Breckenridge, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.7

They will have their courts still; they will have their ballot-boxes still; they will have their elections still; they will have their representatives upon this floor still; they will have taxation and representation still; they will have the writ of habeas corpus still; they will have every privilege they ever had and all we desire. When the Confederate armies are scattered; when their leaders are banished from power; when the people return to a late repentant sense of the wrong they have done to a government they never felt but in benignancy and blessing,—then the Constitution made for all will be felt by all, like the descending rains from heaven which bless all alike. Is that subjugation? To restore what was, as it was, for the benefit of the whole country and of the whole human race, is all we desire and all we can have.

Baker's Reply to Breckenridge, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.7

Sir, how can we retreat? Sir, how can we make peace? Who shall treat? What commissioners? Who would go? Upon what terms? Where is to be your boundary line? Where the end of the principles we shall have to give up? What will become of constitutional government? What will become of public liberty? What of past glories? What of future hopes? Shall we sink into the insignificance of the grave—a degraded, defeated, emasculated people, frightened by the results of one battle, and scared at the visions raised by the imagination of the senator from Kentucky upon this floor? No, sir; a thousand times no, sir! We will rally—if, indeed, our words be necessary—we will rally the people, the loyal people, of the whole country. They will pour forth their treasure, their money, their men, without stint, without measure. The most peaceable man in this body may stamp his foot upon this body may stamp his foot upon this Senate-chamber floor, as of old a warrior and a senator did, and from that single stamp there will spring forth armed legions.

Baker's Reply to Breckenridge, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.8

Shall one battle determine the fate of an empire? or the loss of one thousand men, or twenty thousand; or one hundred million dollars, or five hundred million dollars? In a year's peace, in ten years, at most, of peaceful progress, we can restore them all. There will be some graves reeking with blood, watered by the tears of affection. There will be some privation; there will be some loss of luxury; there will be somewhat more need for labor to procure the necessaries of life. When that is said, all is said. If we have the country, the whole country, the Union, the Constitution, free government—with these there will return all the blessings of well-ordered civilization; the path of the country will be a career of greatness and of glory such as, in the olden time, our fathers saw in the dim visions of years yet to come, and such as would have been ours now, to-day, if it had not been for the treason for which the senator too often seeks to apologize!

Lincoln's Inauguration

Title: Lincoln's Inauguration

Author: William H. Herndon

Date: 1861

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.13-20

Herndon's "Life of Lincoln," from which this account is taken, by permission of D. Appleton & Company, is highly regarded for its fidelity in portraying the "Great Emancipator," and for its exposition of certain elemental points in his character.

Herndon and Lincoln had been law partners for sixteen years in Springfield, Illinois, when the latter became President of the United States. It did not terminate their partnership, for, as the biographer says, before leaving Springfield for Washington, Lincoln "made the strange request that the sign-board (Line coin & Herndon), which swung on its rusty hinges at the foot of the stairway, should remain.'

It is curious that Herndon, partner and biographer of Lincoln, should have been removed from college by his father in consequence of the abolition sentiments of the faculty." The famous partnership was formed in 1844 and lasted until Lincoln's death.

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.13–p.14

LATE in January Mr. Lincoln informed me that he was ready to begin the preparation of his inaugural address. He had, aside from his law books and the few gilded volumes that ornamented the center-table in his parlor at home, comparatively no library. He never seemed to care to own or collect books. On the other hand I had a very respectable collection, and was adding to it every day. To my library Lincoln very frequently had access. When, therefore, he began on his inaugural speech he told me what works he intended to consult. I looked for a long list, but when he went over it I was greatly surprised. He asked me to furnish him with Henry Clay's great speech delivered in 1850; Andrew Jackson's proclamation against nullification; and a copy of the Constitution. He afterward called for Webster's reply to Hayne, a speech which he read when he lived at New Salem, and which he always regarded as the grandest specimen of American oratory. With these few "volumes," and no further source of reference, he locked himself up in a room upstairs over a store across the street from the State House, and there, cut off from all communication and intrusion, he prepared the address. Though composed amid the unromantic surroundings of a dingy, dusty and neglected back room, the speech has become a memorable document. Posterity will assign it to a high rank among historical utterances; and it will ever bear comparison with the efforts of Washington, Jefferson, Adams, or any that preceded its delivery from the steps of the national Capitol….

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.14–p.15

Early in February the last item of preparation for the journey to Washington had been made. Mr. Lincoln had disposed of his household goods and furniture to a neighbor, had rented his house; and as these constituted all the property he owned in Illinois, there was no further occasion for concern on that score. In the afternoon of his last day in Springfield he came down to our office to examine some papers and confer with me about certain legal matters in which he still felt some interest. On several previous occasions he had told me he was coming over to the office "to have a long talk with me," as he expressed it. We ran over the books and arranged for the completion of all unsettled and unfinished matters. In some cases he had certain requests to make certain lines of procedure he wished me to observe.

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.15

After these things were all disposed of he crossed to the opposite side of the room and threw himself down on the old office sofa, which, after many years of service, had been moved against the wall for support. He lay for some moments, his face toward the ceiling, without either of us speaking. Presently he inquired, "Billy,"—he always called me by that name—"how long have we been together?" "Over sixteen years," I answered. "We've never had a cross word during all that time, have we?" to which I returned a vehement, "No, indeed we have not." He then recalled some incidents of his early practice and took great pleasure in delineating the ludicrous features of many a lawsuit on the circuit.

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.15–p.16

It was at this last interview in Springfield that he told me of the efforts that had been made by other lawyers to supplant me in the partnership with him. He insisted that such men were weak creatures, who, to use his own language, "hoped to secure a law practice by hanging to his coat-tail." I never saw him in a more cheerful mood. He gathered a bundle of books and papers he wished to take with him and started to go; but before leaving he made the strange request that the sign-board which swung on its rusty hinges at the foot of the stairway, should remain. "Let it hang there undisturbed," he said, with a significant lowering of his voice. "Give our clients to understand that the election of a President makes no change in the firm of Lincoln and Herndon. If I live, I'm coming back some time, and then we'll go right on practicing law as if nothing had ever happened."

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.16

He lingered for a moment as if to take a last look at the old quarters, and then passed through the door into the narrow hallway. I accompanied him downstairs. On the way he spoke of the unpleasant features surrounding the Presidential office. "I am sick of office-holding already," he complained, "and I shudder when I think of the tasks that are still ahead." He said the sorrow of parting from his old associations was deeper than most persons would imagine, but it was more marked in his case because of the feeling which had become irrepressible that he would never return alive. I argued against the thought, characterizing it as an illusory notion not in harmony or keeping with the popular ideal of a President. "But it is in keeping with my philosophy," was his quick retort. Our conversation was frequently broken in upon by the interruptions of passers-by, who, each in succession, seemed desirous of claiming his attention. At length he broke away from them all. Grasping my hand warmly and with a fervent "Good-by," he disappeared down the street, and never came back to the office again.

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.16–p.17

On the morning following this last interview, the 11th day of February, the Presidential party repaired to the railway station, where the train which was to convey them to Washington awaited the ceremony of departure…. The day was a stormy one, with dense clouds hanging heavily overhead. A goodly throng of Springfield people had gathered to see the distinguished party safely off…. The train rolled slowly out, and Mr. Lincoln, still standing in the doorway of the rear car, took his last view of Springfield. The journey had been as well advertised as it had been carefully planned, and, therefore, at every town along the route, and at every stop, great crowds were gathered to catch a glimpse of the President-elect. Mr. Lincoln usually gratified the wishes of the crowds, who called him out for a speech whether it was down on the regular program of movements or not. In all cases his remarks were well-timed and sensibly uttered….

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.17–p.18

Having at last reached his destination in safety, Mr. Lincoln spent the few days preceding his inauguration at Willard's Hotel, receiving an uninterrupted stream of visitors and friends. In the few unoccupied moments allotted him, he was carefully revising his inaugural address. On the morning of the 4th of March he rode from his hotel with Mr. Buchanan in an open barouche to the Capitol. There, slightly pale and nervous, he was introduced to the assembled multitude by his old friend, Edward D. Baker, and in a fervid and impressive manner delivered his address. At its conclusion the customary oath was administered by the venerable Chief Justice Taney, and he was now clothed with all the powers and privileges of Chief Magistrate of the nation. He accompanied Mr. Buchanan to the White House, and here the historic bachelor of Lancaster bade him farewell, bespeaking for him a peaceful, prosperous, and successful administration. One who witnessed the impressive scene left the following graphic description of the inauguration and its principal incidents:

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.18

"Near noon I found myself a member of the motley crowd gathered about the side-entrance to Willard's Hotel. Soon an open barouche drove up, and the only occupant stepped out. A large, heavy, awkward-moving man, far advanced in years, short and thin gray hair, full face, plentifully seamed and wrinkled, head curiously inclined to the left shoulder, a low-crowned, broad-brimmed silk hat, an immense white cravat like a poultice, thrusting the old-fashioned standing collar up to the ears, dressed in black throughout, with swallowtail coat not of the newest style. It was President Buchanan, calling to take his successor to the Capitol.

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.18–p.19

"In a few minutes he reappeared, with Mr. Lincoln on his arm; the two took seats side by side, and the carriage rolled away, followed by a rather disorderly and certainly not very imposing procession. I had ample time to walk to the Capitol, and no difficulty in securing a place where everything could be seen and heard to the best advantage. The attendance at the inauguration was, they told me, unusually small, many being kept away by anticipated disturbance, as it had been rumored—truly, too—that General Scott himself was fearful of an outbreak, and had made all possible military preparations to meet the emergency. A square platform had been built out from the steps to the eastern portico, with benches for distinguished spectators on three sides. Douglas, the only one I recognized, sat at the extreme end of the seat on the right of the narrow passage leading from the steps.

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.19

"There was no delay, and the gaunt form of the President-elect was soon visible, slowly making his way to the front. To me, at least, he was completely metamorphosed—partly by his own fault, and partly through the efforts of injudicious friends and ambitious tailors. He was raising (to gratify a very young lady, it is said), a crop of whiskers, of the blackingbrush variety, coarse, stiff, and ungraceful; and in so doing spoiled, or at least seriously impaired, a face which, though never handsome, had in its original state a peculiar power and pathos. On the present occasion the whiskers were reinforced by brand new clothes from top to toe; black dress coat instead of the usual frock, black cloth or satin vest, black pantaloons, and a glossy hat evidently just out of the box. To cap the climax of novelty, he carried a huge ebony cane, with a gold head the size of an egg. In these, to him, strange habiliments, he looked so miserably uncomfortable that I could not help pitying him.

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.19–p.20

"Reaching the platform, his discomfort was visibly increased by not knowing what to do with hat and cane; and so he stood there, the target for ten thousand eyes, holding cane in one hand and hat in the other, the very picture of helpless embarrassment. After some hesitation he pushed the cane into a corner of the railing, but could not find a place for the hat except on the floor, where I could see he did not like to risk it. Douglas, who fully took in the situation, came to the rescue of his old friend and rival, and held the precious hat until the owner needed it again; a service which, if predicted two years before, would probably have astonished him.

Herndon, Lincoln's Inauguration, America, Vol.8, p.20

"The oath of office was administered by Chief Justice Taney, whose black robes, attenuated figure, and cadaverous countenance reminded me of a galvanized corpse. Then the President came forward and read his inaugural address in a clear and distinct voice. It was attentively listened to by all, but the closest listener was Douglas, who leaned forward as if to catch every word, nodding his head emphatically at those passages which most pleased him. There was some applause, not very much nor very enthusiastic. I must not forget to mention the presence of a Mephistopheles in the person of Senator Wigfall, of Texas, who stood with folded arms leaning against the doorway of the Capitol, looking down upon the crowd and the ceremony with a contemptuous air, which sufficiently indicated his opinion of the whole performance. To him, the Southern Confederacy was already an accomplished fact. He lived to see it the saddest of fictions."

Secession as a Constitutional Right

Title: Secession as a Constitutional Right

Author: Robert Toombs

Date: 1861

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.46-49

Toombs, a Georgian, made this speech in the Senate in 1861, shortly before he withdrew from Congress to espouse the Southern cause and become Confederate Secretary of State. As an old-time Whig, he was disposed to be loyal to the Union, and as an able lawyer he understood the advantages of it; but as an advocate of States' Rights, he saw in secession the only hope of the South to remain free and independent.

Some of his arguments in this typical "fire-eating" oration are unassailable as statements of fact. Resigning from the Jefferson Davis Cabinet after a short term, he was commissioned a brigadier-general, and served in the second battle of Bull Run and at Sharpsburg.

After the war Toombs was a power at the Georgia bar, and never took the oath of allegiance to the United States.

Toombs, Secession as a Constitutional Right, America, Vol.8, p.46

THESE thirteen colonies originally had no bond of union whatever; no more than Jamaica and Australia have to-day. They were wholly separate communities, independent of each other, and dependent on the Crown of Great Britain. All the union between them that was ever made is in writing. They made two written compacts.

Toombs, Secession as a Constitutional Right, America, Vol.8, p.46–p.47

Senators, the Constitution is a compact. It contains all our obligations and duties of the Federal Government…. All the obligations, all the chains that fetter the limbs of my people, are nominated in the bond, and they wisely excluded any conclusion against them, by declaring that the powers not granted by the Constitution to the United States, or forbidden by it to the States, belonged to the States respectively or the people. Now I will try it by that standard; I will subject it to that test. The law of nature, the law of justice, would say—and it is so expounded by the publicists—that equal rights in the common property shall be enjoyed…. This right of equality being, then, according to justice and natural equity, a right belonging to all States, when did we give it up? You say Congress has a right to pass rules and regulations concerning the Territory and other property of the United States. Very well. Does that exclude those whose blood and money paid for it? Does "dispose of" mean to rob the rightful owners? You must show a better title than that, or a better sword than we have.

Toombs, Secession as a Constitutional Right, America, Vol.8, p.47–p.48

But, you say, try the right. I agree to it. But how? By your judgment? No, not until the last resort. What then; by yours? No, not until the same time. How then try it? The South has always said it, by the Supreme Court. But that is in our favor, and Lincoln says he will not stand that judgment. Then each must judge for himself of the mode and manner of redress. But you deny us that privilege, and finally reduce us to accepting your judgment. We decline it. You say you will enforce it by executing laws; that means your judgment of what the laws ought to be. Perhaps you will have a good time of executing your judgment. The Senator from Kentucky comes to your aid, and says he can find no constitutional right of secession. Perhaps not; but the Constitution is not the place to look for State rights. If that right belongs to independent States, and they did not cede it to the Federal Government, it is reserved to the States, or to the people. Ask your new commentator where he gets your right to judge for us. Is it in the bond?….

Toombs, Secession as a Constitutional Right, America, Vol.8, p.48

…. In a compact where there is no common arbiter, where the parties finally decide for themselves, the sword alone at last becomes the real, if not the constitutional, arbiter. Your party says that you will not take the decision of the Supreme Court. You said so at Chicago; you said so in committee; every man of you in both Houses says so. What are you going to do? You say we shall submit to your construction. We shall do it, if you can make us; but not otherwise, or in any other manner. That is settled. You may call it secession, or you may call it revolution; but there is a big fact standing before you, ready to oppose you—that fact is, freemen with arms in their hands. The cry of the Union will not disperse them; we have passed that point; they demand equal rights: you had better heed the demand….

Toombs, Secession as a Constitutional Right, America, Vol.8, p.48–p.49

I have, then, established the proposition—it is admitted—that you seek to outlaw $4,000,000,000 of property of our people in the Territories of the United States. Is not that a cause of war? Is it a grievance that $4,000,000,000 of the property of the people should be outlawed in the Territories of the United States by the common Government?…. Then you have declared, Lincoln declares, your platform declares, your people declare, your Legislatures declare—there is one voice running through your entire phalanx—that we shall be outlawed in the Territories of the United States. I say we will not be; and we are willing to meet the issue; and rather than submit to such an outlawry, we will defend our territorial rights as we would our household goods….

Toombs, Secession as a Constitutional Right, America, Vol.8, p.49

You will not regard Confederate obligations; you will not regard constitutional obligations; you will not regard your oaths. What, then, am I to do? Am I a freeman? Is my State, a free State, to lie down and submit because political fossils raise the cry of the glorious Union? Too long already have we listened to this delusive song. We are freemen. We have rights; I have stated them. We have wrongs; I have recounted them. I have demonstrated that the party now coming into power has declared us outlaws, and is determined to exclude four thousand million of our property from the common Territories; that it has declared us under the ban of the Empire, and out of the protection of the laws of the United States everywhere. They have refused to protect us from invasion and insurrection by the Federal Power, and the Constitution denies to us in the Union the right either to raise fleets or armies for our own defense. All these charges I have proven by the record; and I put them before the civilized world, and demand the judgment of to-day, of to-morrow, of distant ages, and of Heaven itself, upon the justice of these causes.

Beauregard Reports the Fall of Fort Sumter

Title: Beauregard Reports the Fall of Fort Sumter

Author: G. T. Beauregard

Date: 1861

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.58-60

General Beauregard, who made this official report to President Jefferson Davis, had taken command of the Confederate forces at Charleston, South Carolina, on resigning from the superintendency of West Point, February 20, 1861. His was the distinction of having thus begun the Civil War. Beauregard had graduated at West Point in 1838. He distinguished himself in the Mexican War, and prior to the Civil War had been captain of engineers in fortifying Mobile and New Orleans.

There is some discrepancy between Beauregard's statement, in this report, that Major Anderson had refused "to designate the time when he would evacuate Fort Sumter, and to agree meanwhile not to use his guns against us," and Anderson's, pledge to "evacuate Fort Sumter by noon on the 15th instant (April, 1861), and I will not in the meantime open my fires upon your forces, unless compelled to do so by some hostile act…."

His Official Communication to Jefferson Davis

Beauregard, Fall of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.58

SIR: I have the honor submit the following summary statement of the circumstances of the surrender of Fort Sumter:

Beauregard, Fall of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.58–p.59

On the refusal of Major Anderson to engage, in compliance with my demand, to designate the time when he would evacuate Fort Sumter, and to agree meanwhile not to use his guns against us, at 3:20 o'clock in the morning of the 12th instant I gave him formal notice that within one hour my batteries would open on him. In consequence of some circumstance of delay the bombardment was not begun precisely at the appointed moment, but at 4:30 o'clock the signal gun was fired, and within twenty minutes all our batteries were in full play. There was no response from Fort Sumter until about 7 o'clock, when the first shot from the enemy was discharged against our batteries on Cummings Point.

Beauregard, Fall of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.59

By 8 o'clock the action became general, and throughout the day was maintained by spirit on both sides. Our guns were served with skill and energy. The effect was visible in the impressions made on the walls of Fort Sumter. From our mortar batteries shells were thrown with such precision and rapidity that it soon became impossible for the enemy to employ his gun "en barbette," of which several were dismounted. The engagement was continued without any circumstance of special note until nightfall before which time the fire from Sumter had evidently slackened. Operations on our side were sustained through' out the night, provoking, however, only a feeble response.

Beauregard, Fall of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.59–p.60

On the morning of the 13th the action was prosecuted with renewed vigor, and about 7:30 o'clock it was discovered our shells had set fire to the barracks in the fort. Speedily volumes of smoke indicated an extensive conflagration, and apprehending some terrible calamity to the garrison, I immediately dispatched an offer of assistance to Major Anderson which, however, with grateful acknowledgments, he declined. Meanwhile, being informed about 2 o'clock that a white flag was displayed from Sumter, I dispatched two of my aides to Major Anderson with terms of evacuation. In recognition of the gallantry exhibited by the garrison I cheerfully agreed that on surrendering the fort the commanding officer might salute his flag.

Beauregard, Fall of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.60

By 8 o'clock the terms of evacuation were definitely accepted. Major Anderson having expressed a desire to communicate with the United States vessels lying off the harbor, with a view to arranging for the transportation of his command to some port in the United States, one of his officers, accompanied by Captain Hartstene and three of my aides, was permitted to visit the officer in command of the squadron to make provision for that object. Because of an unavoidable delay the formal transfer of the fort to our possession did not take place until 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the 14th instant. At that hour, the place having been evacuated by the United States garrison, our troops occupied it, and the Confederate flag was hoisted on the ramparts of Sumter with a salute from the various batteries.

Beauregard, Fall of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.60

The steamer "Isabel" having been placed at the service of Major Anderson, he and his command were transferred to the United States vessels off the harbor….

Beauregard, Fall of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.60

I remain, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

G. T. BEAUREGARD,

Brigadier-General, Commanding,

Headquarters Provisional Army, C. S. A.,

Charleston, S. C.,

April 16, 1861.

Grant Asks for a Commission in the Army

Title: Grant Asks for a Commission in the Army

Author: Ulysses S. Grant

Date: 1861

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.61-62

Grant wrote this letter to Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas from Galena, Illinois, May 24, 1861, six weeks after Civil War hostilities began at Fort Sumter. Strange to say, it was never answered, although Grant and Thomas were both graduates of West Point and had been fellow officers in the Mexican War.

Grant had retired from military service with the rank of captain, in 1854, and for five years had struggled at farming and as a real estate operator in the neighborhood of St. Louis, Missouri. Heavily in debt, owing to his ignorance of business methods, he had removed to Galena, Illinois, where this letter was written, and was there employed in his father's store at a salary of $800 a year.

Receiving no reply from the War Department at Washington, Grant accepted the colonelcy of the Twenty-first Illinois Volunteer Infantry, and served under General Pope in Missouri until August, 1861.

His Unanswered Letter to Colonel Lorenzo Thomas

Grant Asks for a Commission in the Army, America, Vol.8, p.61–p.62

SIR: Having served for fifteen years in the regular army, including four years at West Point, and feeling it the duty of every one who has been educated at the governernment expense to offer their services for the support of that government, I have the honor, very respectfully, to tender my services until the close of the war in such capacity as may be offered. I would say, in view of my present age and length of service, I feel myself competent to command a regiment, if the President, in his judgment, should see fit to intrust one to me. Since the first call of the President, I have been serving on the staff of the Governor of this State, rendering such aid as I could in the organization of our State militia, and am still engaged in that capacity. A letter addressed to me at Springfield, Illinois, will reach me.

Grant Asks for a Commission in the Army, America, Vol.8, p.62

I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT.

Col. L. Thomas,

Adjt.-Gen., U. S. A., Washington, D.C.

The First Battle of Bull Run

Title: The First Battle of Bull Run

Author: Alexander H. Stephens and General Joseph E. Johnston

Date: 1861

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.63-71

In this account which is taken from his review of the "War Between the States," Stephens incorporates General Johnston's official Confederate report of what has always been known in the South as the first Battle of Manassas. It was fought on July 21, 1861. Johnston, who shared credit for the victory with General Beauregard, was the senior in Confederate command. It was at Bull Run that the stubborn fighting power of a brigade under General Thomas Jonathan Jackson earned him the sobriquet of "Stonewall."

Contrary to the figures given by Johnston, historians generally are agreed that the Union forces under McDowell numbered about 29,000 men, or a thousand more than the Confederates, though the number actually engaged was only about 18,000 on each side. Also that the Federals lost 2,952, the Confederates 1,752. This battle changed the status of the conflict from that of a rebellion to that of a civil war.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.63–p.64

GENERAL JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON, who had an army of about 8,000 men in the valley of the Shenandoah, beyond the mountains of the Blue Ridge—was immediately informed by telegraph from the War Department, at Richmond, of the situation; and directed to pursue such course as he might think best under the circumstances. He, by a movement with hardly a parallel in the annals of war, joined General Beauregard with his command in time to meet and drive back the advancing, threatening and formidable hosts! It was on this occasion that he displayed those qualities which so distinguished him throughout the war, and which so endeared him to the soldiers and people of the Confederate States. Of this first great battle between the opposing sides, which may very properly be noticed here somewhat in detail, I will let him give the account himself. He being the senior in command, the control of all subsequent operations devolved on him as soon as he reached the field. This was on the evening of Saturday, the 20th. The bloody conflict came off on Sunday, the 21st. In his rapid movement to Manassas, he had pushed forward at the head of only a part of his forces, leaving the others to follow as quickly as possible. Here is his report of what ensued. I will print such parts as will give a clear and accurate account of the whole.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.64

"In the exercise of the discretion conferred by the terms of the order, I at once determined to march to join General Beauregard. The best service which the Army of the Shenandoah could render was to prevent the defeat of that of the Potomac. To be able to do this, it was necessary in the first instance to defeat General Patterson, or to elude him. The latter course was the most speedy and certain, and was therefore adopted.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.64

"I found General Beauregard's position too extensive, and the ground too densely wooded and intricate, to be learned in the brief time at my disposal, and therefore determined to rely upon his knowledge of it, and of the enemy's positions. This I did readily, from full confidence in his capacity….

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.64–p.65

"Near nine o'clock the signal officer, Captain Alexander, reported that a large body of troops was crossing the Valley of Bull Run, some two miles above the bridge. General Bee, who had been placed near Colonel Cocke's position; Colonel Hampton, with his Legion, and Colonel Jackson, from a point near General Bonham's left, were ordered to hasten to the left flank….

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.65

"The enemy, under cover of a strong demonstration on our right, made a long detour through the woods on his right, crossed Bull Run two miles above our left, and threw himself upon the flank and rear of our position. This movement was fortunately discovered in time for us to check its progress, and ultimately to form a new line of battle nearly at right angles with the defensive line of Bull Run.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.65–p.66

"On discovering that the enemy had crossed the stream above him, Colonel Evans moved to his left with eleven companies and two field pieces, to oppose his advance, and disposed his little force under cover of the wood, near the intersection of the Warrenton Turnpike and the Sudley Road. Here he was attacked by the enemy in immensely superior numbers, against which he maintained himself with skill and unshrinking courage. General Bee, moving toward the enemy, guided by the firing, had, with a soldier's eye, selected the position near the Henry House, and formed his troops upon it. They were the 7th and 8th Georgia, 4th Alabama, 2d Mississippi, and two companies of the 11th Mississippi Regiments, with Imboden's battery. Being compelled, however, to sustain Colonel Evans, he crossed the valley and formed on the right and somewhat in advance of his position. Here the joint force, little exceeding five regiments, with six field-pieces, held the ground against about 15,000 United States troops for an hour, until, finding themselves outflanked by the continually arriving troops of the enemy, they fell back to General Bee's first position, upon the line of which Jackson, just arriving, formed his brigade and Stanard's battery. Colonel Hampton, who had by this time advanced with his legion as far as the turnpike, rendered efficient service in maintaining the orderly character of the retreat from that point; and here fell the gallant Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson, his second in command.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.66–p.67

"In the meantime I awaited with General Beauregard near the center, the full development of the enemy's designs. About 11 o'clock the violence of the firing on the left indicated a battle, and the march of a large body of troops from the enemy's center toward the conflict was shown by clouds of dust. I was thus convinced that his great effort was to be made with his right. I stated that conviction to General Beauregard, and the absolute necessity of immediately strengthening our left as much as possible. Orders were accordingly at once sent to General Holmes and Colonel Early, to move with all speed to the sound of the firing, and to General Bonham to send up two of his regiments and a battery. General Beauregard and I then hurried at a rapid gallop to the scene of action, about four miles off. On the way I directed my chief of artillery, Colonel Pendleton, to follow with his own and Alburtis's batteries. We came not a moment too soon. The long contest against fivefold odds and heavy losses, especially of field-officers, had greatly discouraged the troops of General Bee and Colonel Evans. Our presence with them under fire, and some example, had the happiest effect on the spirit of the troops. Order was soon restored, and the battle reestablished, to which the firmness of Jackson's brigade greatly contributed.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.67–p.68

"Then, in a brief and rapid conference, General Beauregard was assigned to the command of the left, which, as the younger officer, he claimed, while I returned to that of the whole field. The aspect of affairs was critical, but I had full confidence in the skill and indomitable courage of General Beauregard, the high soldierly qualities of Generals Bee and Jackson, and Colonel Evans, and the devoted patriotism of their troops. Orders were first despatched to hasten the march of General Holmes's, Colonel Early's, and General Bonham's regiments. General Ewell was also directed to follow with all speed. Many of the broken troops, fragments of companies, and individual stragglers, were reformed and brought into action with the aid of my staff and a portion of General Beauregard's. Colonel (Governor) Smith, with his battalion, and Colonel Hunton, with his regiment, were ordered up to reenforce the right. I have since learned that General Beauregard had previously ordered them into the battle. They belonged to his corps. Colonel Smith's cheerful courage had a fine influence, not only upon the spirit of his own men, but upon the stragglers from the troops engaged.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.68

"The largest body of these, equal to about four companies, having no competent field-officer, I placed under command of one of my staff, Colonel F. J. Thomas, who fell while gallantly leading it against the enemy. These reenforcements were all sent to the right to reestablish more perfectly that part of our line. Having attended to these pressing duties at the immediate scene of conflict, my eye was next directed to Colonel Cocke's brigade, the nearest at hand. Hastening to his position, I desired him to lead his troops into action. He informed me, however, that a large body of the enemy's troops, beyond the stream and below the bridge, threatened us from that quarter. He was, therefore, left in his position.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.68

"My headquarters were now established near the Lewis house. From this commanding elevation my view embraced the position of the enemy beyond the stream, and the approach to the Stone Bridge, a point of especial importance. I could also see the advances of our troops, far down the valley, in the direction of Manassas, and observe the progress of the action and the maneuvers of the enemy.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.68–p.69

"We had now sixteen guns and 260 cavalry, and a little above nine regiments of the Army of the Shenandoah, and six guns, and less than the strength of three regiments of that of the Potomac, engaged with about 35,000 United States troops, among whom were full 3,000 men of the old regular army. Yet this admirable artillery and brave infantry and cavalry lost no foot of ground. For nearly three hours they maintained their position, repelling five successive assaults by the heavy masses of the enemy, whose numbers enabled him continually to bring up fresh troops as their preceding columns were driven back. Colonel Stuart contributed to one of these repulses by a well-timed and vigorous charge on the enemy's right flank, with two companies of his cavalry. The efficiency of our infantry and cavalry might have been expected from a patriotic people, accustomed, like ours, to the management of arms and horses, but that of the artillery was little less than wonderful. They were opposed to batteries far superior in the number, range and equipment of their guns, with educated officers, and thoroughly instructed soldiers. We had but one educated artillerist, Colonel Pendleton—that model of a Christian soldier—yet they exhibited as much superiority to the enemy in skill as in courage. Their fire was superior, both in rapidity and precision.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.69–p.70

"The expected reenforcements appeared soon after. Colonel Cocke was then desired to lead his brigade into action, to support the right of the troops engaged, which he did with alacrity and effect. Within a half hour the two regiments of General Bonham's brigade (Cash's and Kershaw's), came up, and were directed against the enemy's right, which he seemed to be strengthening. Fisher's North Carolina regiment was soon after sent in the same direction. About 3 o'clock, while the enemy seemed to be striving to outflank and drive back our left, and thus separate us from Manassas, General E. K. Smith arrived with three regiments of Elzey's brigade. He was instructed to attack the right flank of the enemy now exposed to us. Before the movement was completed he fell, severely wounded. Colonel Elzey at once taking command, executed it with great promptitude and vigor. General Beauregard rapidly seized the opportunity thus afforded him, and threw forward his whole line. The enemy was driven back from the long-contested hill, and victory was no longer doubtful. He made yet another attempt to retrieve the day. He again extended 'iris right, with a still wider sweep, to turn our left. Just as he reformed to renew the battle, Colonel Early's three regiments came upon the field. The enemy's new formation exposed his right flank more even than the previous one. Colonel Early was, therefore, ordered to throw himself directly upon it, supported by Colonel Stuart's cavalry and Beckham's battery. He executed this attack bravely and well, while a simultaneous charge was made by General Beauregard in front. The enemy was broken by this combined attack. He lost all the artillery which he had advanced to the scene of the conflict. He had no more fresh troops to rally on, and a general rout ensued.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.70

"Our victory was as complete as one gained by infantry and artillery can be. An adequate force of cavalry would have made it decisive….

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.71

"The admirable character of our troops is incontestably proved by the result of this battle; especially when it is remembered that little more than six thousand men of the army of the Shenandoah, with sixteen guns, and less than two thousand of that of the Potomac, with six guns, for full five hours successfully resisted thirty-five thousand United States troops, with a powerful artillery, and a superior force of regular cavalry. The brunt of this hard fought engagement fell upon the troops who held their ground so long, with such heroic resolution. The unfading honor which they won was dearly bought with the blood of many of our best and bravest. Theirs was far heavier, in proportion, than that of the troops coming later into action.—

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.71

"The loss of the Army of the Potomac was 108 killed, 510 wounded, 12 missing. That of the Army of the Shenandoah was 270 killed, 979 wounded, 18 missing. Total killed, 378; total wounded, 1,489; total missing, 30.

Stephens, First Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.71

"That of the enemy could not be ascertained. It must have been between four and five thousand. Twenty-eight pieces of artillery, about 5,000 muskets, and nearly 500,000 cartridges; a garrison flag and ten colors were captured on the field or in the pursuit. Besides these, we captured 64 artillery horses with their harness, 26 wagons, and much camp equipage, clothing, and other property, abandoned in their flight."

Bull Run as Seen Through Critical English Eyes

Title: Bull Run as Seen Through Critical English Eyes

Author: William Howard Russell

Date: 1861

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.72-78

This account of the first Battle of Bull Run appeared in the London Times of August 6, 1861. It secured for its author the title of "Bull Run Russell" and occasioned his recall to England at the request of the Union leaders. Defeated in this first important battle of the war, the North was angered by criticisms of a veteran foreign war correspondent.

On July 21, 1861, was fought this battle, in which the Confederates, under Generals Johnston and Beauregard, routed the Federals, under General McDowell, and threatened the capital, thirty miles away. Its effect was to rouse both sides to what now promised to be a long and bloody struggle. Writing the day after the battle, Russell declares "The North must put its best men into the battle, or she will inevitably fail before the energy, the personal hatred, and the superior fighting powers of her antagonist."

Russell, Bull Run Through Critical English Eyes, America, Vol.8, p.72–p.73

I SIT down to give an account—not of the action yesterday, but of what I saw with my own eyes, hitherto not often deceived, and of what I heard with my own ears, which in this country are not so much to be trusted. Let me, however, express an opinion as to the affair of yesterday. In the first place, the repulse of the Federalists, decided as it was, might have had no serious effects whatever beyond the mere failure—which politically was of greater consequence than it was in a military sense—but for the disgraceful conduct of the troops. The retreat on their lines at Centreville seems to have ended in a cowardly route—a miserable, causeless panic. Such scandalous behavior on the part of soldiers I should have considered impossible, as with some experience of camps and armies I have never even in alarms among camp followers seen the like of it….

Russell, Bull Run Through Critical English Eyes, America, Vol.8, p.73

The North will, no doubt, recover [from] the shock. Hitherto she has only said, "Go and fight for the Union." The South has exclaimed, "Let us fight for our rights." The North must put its best men into the battle, or she will inevitably fail before the energy, the personal hatred, and the superior fighting powers of her antagonist. In my letters, as in my conversation, I have endeavored to show that the task which the Unionists have set themselves is one of no ordinary difficulty, but in the state of arrogance and supercilious confidence, either real or affected to conceal a sense of weakness, one might as well have preached to the Pyramid of Cheops. Indeed, one may form some notion of the condition of the public mind by observing that journals conducted avowedly by men of disgraceful personal character—the be-whipped and be-kicked and unrecognized pariahs of society in New York—are, nevertheless, in the very midst of repulse and defeat, permitted to indulge in ridiculous rhodomontade towards the nations of Europe, and to move our laughter by impotently malignant attacks on our rotten old monarchy," while the stones of their bran new Republic are tumbling about their ears. It will be amusing to observe the change of tone, for we can afford to observe and to be amused at the same time….

Russell, Bull Run Through Critical English Eyes, America, Vol.8, p.74

…. At last Centreville appeared in sight—a few houses on our front, beyond which rose a bald hill, the slopes covered with bivouac huts, commissariat carts and horses, and the top crested with spectators of the fight….

Russell, Bull Run Through Critical English Eyes, America, Vol.8, p.74–p.75–p.76

…. The scene was so peaceful a man might well doubt the evidence of one sense that a great contest was being played out below in bloodshed…. But the cannon spoke out loudly from the green bushes, and the plains below were mottled, so to speak, by puffs of smoke and by white rings from bursting shells and capricious howitzers…. With the glass I could detect now and then the flash of arms through the dust clouds in the open, but no one could tell to which side the troops who were moving belonged, and I could only judge from the smoke whether the guns were fired towards or away from the hill…. In the midst of our little reconnaissance Mr. Vizetelly, who has been living and, indeed, marching with one of the regiments as artist of the "Illustrated London News," came up and told us the action had been commenced in splendid style by the Federalists, who had advanced steadily, driving the Confederates before them—a part of the plan, as I firmly believe, to bring them under the range of their guns. He believed the advantages on the Federalist side were decided, though won with hard fighting…. As I turned down into the narrow road, or lane…. there was a forward movement among the large four-wheeled tilt wagons…. when suddenly there arose a tumult in front of me at a small bridge across the road, and then I perceived the drivers of a set of wagons with the horses turned towards me, who were endeavoring to force their way against the stream of vehicles setting in the other direction. By the side of the new set of wagons there were a number of commissariat men and soldiers, whom at first sight I took to be the baggage guard. They looked excited and alarmed, and were running by the side of the horses—in front the dust quite obscured the view. At the bridge the currents met in wild disorder. "Turn back! Retreat!" shouted the men from the front, "We're whipped, we're whipped!" They cursed and tugged at the horses' heads, and struggled with frenzy to get past…. I got my horse up into the field out of the road, and went on rapidly towards the front. Soon I met soldiers who were coming through the corn, mostly without arms; and presently I saw firelocks, cooking tins, knapsacks, and great coats on the ground, and observed that the confusion and speed of the baggagecarts became greater, and that many of them were crowded with men, or were followed by others, who clung to them. The ambulances were crowded with soldiers, but it did not look as if there were many wounded. Negro servants on led horses dashed frantically past; men in uniform, whom it were a disgrace to the profession of arms to call "soldiers," swarmed by on mules, charges, and even draught horses, which had been cut out of carts or wagons, and went on with harness clinging to their heels, as frightened as their riders. Men literally screamed with rage and fright when their way was blocked up. On I rode, asking all "What is all this about?" and now and then, but rarely, receiving the answer, "We're whipped"; or, "We're repulsed." Faces black and dusty, tongues out in the heat, eyes staring—it was a most wonderful sight. On they came like him—

Russell, Bull Run Through Critical English Eyes, America, Vol.8, p.76

"—who having once turned round goes on,

And turns no more his head,

For he knoweth that a fearful fiend

Doth close behind him tread."

Russell, Bull Run Through Critical English Eyes, America, Vol.8, p.76

But where was the fiend? I looked in vain. There was, indeed, some cannonading in front of me and in their rear, but still the firing was comparatively distant, and the runaways were far out of range. As I advanced the number of carts diminished, but the mounted men increased, and the column of fugitives became denser…. I had ridden, I suppose, about three or three and a-half miles from the hill, though it is not possible to be sure of the distance, when…. I came out on an open piece of ground, beyond and circling which was forest. Two field pieces were unlimbered and guarding the road; the panting and jaded horses in the rear looked as though they had been hard worked, and the gunners and drivers looked worn and dejected. Dropping shots sounded close in front through the woods; but the guns on the left no longer maintained their fire. I was just about to ask one of the men for a light, when a sputtering fire on my right attracted my attention, and out of the forest or along the road rushed a number of men. The gunners seized the trail of the nearest piece to wheel it round upon them; others made for the tumbrils and horses as if to fly, when a shout was raised, "Don't fire; they're our own men;" and in a few minutes on came pell-mell a whole regiment in disorder. I rode across one and stopped him. "We're pursued by cavalry," he gasped; "They've cut us all to pieces."

Russell, Bull Run Through Critical English Eyes, America, Vol.8, p.77–p.78

As he spoke a shell burst over the column; another dropped on the road, and out streamed another column of men, keeping together with their arms, and closing up the stragglers of the first regiment. I turned, and to my surprise saw the artillerymen had gone off, leaving one gun standing by itself…. No one seemed to know anything for certain. Even the cavalry charge was a rumor. Several officers said they had carried guns and lines, but then they drifted into the nonsense which one reads and hears everywhere about "masked batteries." One or two talked more sensibly about the strong positions of the enemy, the fatigue of their men, the want of a reserve, severe losses, and the bad conduct of certain regiments. Not one spoke as if he thought of retiring beyond Centreville. The clouds of dust rising above the woods marked the retreat of the whole army, and the crowds of fugitives continued to steal away along the road…. There was no choice for me but to resign any further researches…. On approaching Centreville…. I turned up on the hill half a mile beyond…. I swept the field once more. The clouds of dust were denser and nearer. That was all. There was no firing—no musketry. I turned my horse's head, and rode away through the village, and after I got out upon the road the same confusion seemed to prevail. Suddenly the guns on the hill opened, and at the same time came the thuds of artillery from the wood on the right rear. The stampede then became general. What occurred at the hill I cannot say, but all the road from Centreville for miles presented such a sight as can only be witnessed in the track of the runaways of an utterly demoralized army. Drivers flogged, lashed, spurred, and beat their horses, or leaped down and abandoned their teams, and ran by the side of the road; mounted men, servants, and men in uniform, vehicles of all sorts, commissariat wagons thronged the narrow ways. At every shot a convulsion as it were seized upon the morbid mass of bones, sinew, wood, and iron, and thrilled through it, giving new energy and action to its desperate efforts to get free from itself. Again the cry of "Cavalry" arose…. In silence I passed over the Long-bridge. Some few hours later it quivered under the steps of a rabble of unarmed men…. the Federalists, utterly routed, had fallen back upon Arlington to defend the capital, leaving nearly five batteries of artillery, 8,000 muskets, immense quantity of stores and baggage, and their wounded and prisoners in the hands of the enemy!

The Trent Affair

Title: The Trent Affair

Author: John Bigelow

Date: 1861

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.79-88

At the time of "The Trent Affair"—a diplomatic episode growing out of the seizure by the Union frigate San Jacinto, November 8, 1861, of two Confederate commissioners on board the British mail steamer Trent—John Bigelow was the United States Consul in Paris. As here related, it was largely due to his prompt action in securing the publication of a statement declaring the seizure of the commissioners, Mason and Slidell, to have been unauthorized by the United States government, that a serious rupture with Great Britain was avoided.

The first ship from America carried word to Europe that Lincoln and Seward recognized the impropriety of the act; and when a formal demand was made by the British Minister for the surrender of the commissioners, it was complied with and an apology tendered. Bigelow thus reviews the affair in his "Retrospections of an Active Life," published by Doubleday, Page & company, by whose permission it is given.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.79

A LITTLE before midnight of Friday, the 11th of October, 1861, a dozen or more ladies and gentlemen were gathered together upon the wharf in Charleston Harbor. The night was pitchy dark, and it was raining violently. In a few minutes only after their arrival, the party were seated in a ship's pinnace, till then invisible, that had apparently been waiting for them at a few oars' length from the landing. Two or three strokes of the oars were heard, and the boat with its new burden was swallowed up in the darkness again.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.79–p.80

The party in the boat, who were embarking upon a voyage which was destined to make some of them more famous than any other event or their lives, consisted of James M. Mason, of Virginia, and John Slidell, of Louisiana, commissioners from the "Confederate States," the first to England and the second to France; Mr. McFarland, secretary to Mr. Mason; Mrs. Slidell, Miss Matilda Slidell, Miss Rosia Slidell, Mr. Eustis, who was Mr. Slidell's secretary; Mrs. Eustis, a daughter of Mr. Corcoran, the head of a leading banking-house in Washington, but at that moment a prisoner in Fort Lafayette; Colonel Le Mat, of Louisiana, and two or three others of less political importance, who were profiting by the opportunity to find a refuge in foreign lands.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.80

In a few minutes after leaving the wharf, the party were on board the small steamer "Theodora," lying in wait for them inside the bar. By 1 o'clock her cables were slipped, and she was gliding as noiselessly and as invisibly as possible down the bay. As she passed Fort Sumter the lights on board were darkened, the engine slowed, and other precautions were taken to escape notice, and with entire success. She was soon beyond the reach of the glasses or the guns from the fort, and on the open sea.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.80–p.81

On the 16th she arrived at Cardenas, on the island of Cuba, where the commissioners disembarked. On the 7th of November, with their families and secretaries, they sailed from Havana for Southampton in the British royal mail-steamer "Trent." About noon of the following day, while running the narrow passage of the old Bahama Channel, a steamer was sighted from the "Trent," directly in her course, and apparently waiting for her, but showing no colors. On approaching her, Captain Moir of the "Trent" hoisted the British ensign, which, however, received no attention. When the two ships were within about a quarter of a mile or something less, the strange vessel fired a shot across the "Trent's" bow, and ran up the American flag. The "Trent," declining to receive orders from the stranger with or without the American flag, held on her course, and paid no attention to the summons.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.81

As soon as time enough had elapsed to leave no doubt of her purpose, a shell from the American's forward deck burst about one hundred yards in front of the "Trent." This was a summons Captain Moir could not disregard, and the "Trent" was slowed. Presently a boat put out from the American vessel and boarded the "Trent." The officer in command, Lieutenant Fairfax, asked for a list of her passengers. The captain refused to give it or to recognize the right of the officer to ask for it. Lieutenant Fairfax then called out the names of the rebel commissioners and their secretaries, and said those were the persons he was in quest of: that he knew they were on board, and his orders were to bring them away with him at all hazards. Captain Moir declined to recognize the authority of the intruder to meddle with his ship or passengers, and refused to give up the commissioners.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.81–p.82

Lieutenant Fairfax then said he would be obliged to take possession of the ship, and thereupon made the appropriate signal to his commander. Without delay three boats, containing thirty marines, and about sixty sailors heavily armed, put out from the American ship and rowed alongside. Seeing that further resistance would be worse than fruitless, Messrs. Slidell, Mason, Eustis and McFarland, who meantime had come on deck, proceeded to get their personal baggage and descended with it into the boats, the ladies of the party deciding to remain on board the "Trent" and go on to Liverpool. The commissioners were taken to the frigate, which proved to be the "San Jacinto" under the command of Captain Wilkes, which had just arrived from the coast of Africa and was on her way to New York. The commissioners were brought to New York, and, by orders from Washington, placed in confinement in Fort Lafayette….

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.82–p.83

The effect of this "outrage upon the British flag," as it was the fashion to term it, was startling. It absorbed the conversation of the drawing-room and the council-chamber, and was a subject of fierce debate in every college club and palace of several continents. Immediately upon the receipt of the news at the admiralty, a cabinet council was summoned by Lord Palmerston to determine whether Mr. Adams's passport should not be sent to him. To the rebels and their sympathizing partisans in Europe the news gave infinite delight, for they assumed that Captain Wilkes had not acted without the sanction of his Government. They hoped and believed England had received an insult to which she could not submit; that the United States would never make the only reparation possible that would be satisfactory—the surrender of the commissioners; and, finally, that a war between the two countries must ensue, that England would be obliged to help fight the battle and thus help establish the independence of the Confederate States.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.83

The loyal Americans in Europe were filled with concern, for this event seemed to have deprived them of the few friends in the press and in public life that had not already abandoned the Union cause. The Tory press of London were, of course, anxious to make the most of their grievance. The "Morning Herald" [London] trusted there would be no delay in avenging an outrage unprecedented, even in American lawlessness." The "Post," which was reputed to reflect the policies of Lord Palmerston said: "The insult was most gratuitous; was unwarranted by the code of nations; was not only to be duly felt, but deeply resented." The London "Daily News," which had been neutral at least, if not friendly to the Unionists, for a few days lost its balance and scolded us very sharply.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.83–p.84

The only journals in England that refused to join in this cry were two papers established by the political friends of Mr. Bright, one in London and one in Manchester, and which the "Morning Herald" signalized for public execration in an editorial article commencing as follows: "With two exceptions, which together constitute but one, all the morning journals of London and of the country are unanimous in their expression of disgust and indignation at the American outrage. Mr. Bright, by his London and Manchester organs, stands forth in opposition to the honor and the universal feeling of his country; now, as ever, hateful in the eyes of all educated and thoughtful men; now, as ever before, the object of the scorn and reprobation of all Englishmen."

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.84

The French press naturally took a somewhat more dispassionate view of the seizure, not being directly interested. Besides, the French people are wont to contemplate with Christian composure any event which promises to embroil their insular neighbors with foreign powers, and at this time especially with America. Besides, in Paris, as in London, those who for any one of manifold reasons desired the success of the Confederates rejoiced over the seizure of the commissioners, and sought to give the grievance great international importance.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.84–p.85

Our political friends among the French people were thoroughly demoralized. They took it for granted that Captain Wilkes had acted under orders; that we could not recede; and that England would become the active, instead of what she had till then seemed, to some of us at least, to have been, the passive ally of the Confederates. They did not see how it was possible for them to defend the act in the press or in the chambers. There was a time within the three days which immediately followed the news of the seizure when one could have counted on his fingers about all the people in Europe not Americans who still retained any hope or expectation of the perpetuity of our Union. They took it for granted that we would fight until we were satisfied that there was no use of fighting longer, and then we would agree to some terms of separation. All faith in our final success was practically extinguished.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.85

It was all the more trying a moment for loyal Americans, and especially for Federal officials in Europe, that we had no transatlantic telegraph in those days, nor had we any official information as yet of the relations which the Washington Government sustained to Commander Wilkes's adventure. And yet we were expected to encourage and strengthen our friends to the best of our ability until we could be reenforced from home.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.85–p.86

A day or two after the news reached Paris, I called upon the venerable Garnier-Pages about 10 o'clock in the morning. M. Pages had been a member of the provisional government under Lamartine in 1848, and was now again one of the half-dozen Republican members of the Corps Legislatif under the Second Empire. I had known him since 1859, when I was presented to him by the late Robert Walsh, of Philadelphia, our consul in Paris. He was now, as then, an ardent Republican, and a stalwart friend of the Union cause, partly because of his aversion to slavery, partly because of his aversion to the Imperial Government, which was suspected of inclining to the rebels, and partly because he believed that the future of republicanism in Europe depended upon the success of republicanism in America.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.86

I found him very much disturbed, and already looking upon disunion and its consequences as inevitable in the near future. I felt that it would never do for a person of his age, activity and zeal to be allowed to go up and down among the Republicans of Paris in the frame of mind in which I found him. I immediately proceeded to state as well as I could all the reasons that occurred to me for refusing to regard the seizure of the commissioners as an event likely to have a serious or permanent influence upon the war.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.86

My talk occupied about twenty minutes. When I had done, he said: "Why won't you sit down and write out just what you have said to me, and publish it over your own signature to-morrow morning? It would have a very reassuring effect and would afford as substantial comfort to others as" (he was pleased to say) "it has afforded to myself."

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.86–p.87

I replied to him that, by the rules of our service, I was not allowed to correspond with the public through the newspapers; but as he attached so much importance to an authoritative statement of the kind I had made to him, I promised to lose no time in finding some suitable person to make it. General Winfield Scott, who had just been relieved from the duties of Commander-in-Chief of the Union armies, had arrived in Paris only the day before. It occurred to me at once that Scott was the person to make the statement, and Mr. Thurlow Weed, who was also then in Paris, and an intimate friend of the General, was the most immediately available person to prepare the General's mind for it. I immediately repaired to Mr. Weed's hotel, a few blocks off, related to him briefly what had occurred, and asked him if he thought General Scott would be willing to publish such a statement as was called for. Mr. Weed said he did not doubt but he would not only be willing, but well pleased to do it.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.87

It was then arranged between us that he should go to the General's hotel and secure his consent, while I should repair to my office and prepare the statement he was to sign, in case he might shrink from the task of preparing such a statement himself. In the course of an hour or so Mr. Weed rejoined me at my office, and said the General thought well of my suggestion, and would receive me at his rooms at 2 P. M. At the hour appointed I repaired to General Scott's apartment in the Hotel Westminster, and read to him the letter which in the meantime I had prepared. Knowing as I did that the General had no mean opinion of his skill in the use of the English language, I felt some hesitation in reading it to him, and was immensely relieved when he signed it without altering a word or suggesting a modification….

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.87–p.88

I had the letter of General Scott immediately translated and copies despatched to the principal morning and evening papers in Paris, and copies in English to the London papers in time for their respective editions of the day following its publication. The expediency of making this statement was more than justified by the result. It was copied in whole or in part pretty universally by the European press. Coming, as it did, from General Scott, who till within a fortnight, had been practically a member of the Federal Cabinet; the assurance it contained that Commander Wilkes could not have acted under orders from his Government, and that if Mr. Seward could not persuade Earl Russell that his Government had a right to stop the "Trent" and seize the rebel commissioners, Earl Russell would unquestionably be able to persuade Mr. Seward that it had not, and that in either case the friendly relations of the two governments were not imperiled—all together, these considerations had an immediate and reassuring effect.

Bigelow, Trent Affair, America, Vol.8, p.88

Our friends in Europe took courage from General Scott's letter, and began to wonder how they ever suspected that the Federal Government had authorized the seizure of the commissioners, or doubted that the proceeding would be peacefully arranged. A complimentary dinner was given by his fellow townspeople at Rochdale to Mr. Bright, whom the "Trent" affair had for a time placed between the upper and the nether millstones, to afford him an opportunity of giving impulse to the reaction, of which he most effectively availed himself. At this dinner he made one of his most memorable speeches on American affairs. Mr. Cobden also, who was invited to speak at this meeting, sent a letter which was a skillful amplification of the letter of General Scott.

Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address to the Senate

Title: Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address to the Senate

Author: Jefferson Davis

Date: 1861

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.304-310

Jefferson Davis was graduated from West Point in 1828 and won distinction in the Mexican War as Colonel of the First Mississippi volunteers. Elected to Congress in 1845, he was appointed two years later to fill a vacancy in the Senate. For a time he was Secretary of War. Later he reentered the Senate and became the acknowledged leader of the Southerners.

His defense of the cause of slavery and States Rights was marked by such consistency and moderation that he was the logical candidate for the Confederate Presidency. He was elected to this office, February 9, 1861. About three weeks later he delivered the address of farewell given here.

Soon after Lee's surrender, President Davis was captured at Irwinville, Georgia. He was imprisoned and subjected to the needless degradation of manacles, but was released on bail furnished by Horace Greeley and other indignant Northerners.

Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address, America, Vol.7, p.304

I RISE, Mr. President, for the purpose of announcing to the Senate that I have satisfactory evidence that the State of Mississippi, by a solemn ordinance of her people, in convention assembled, has declared her separation from the United States. Under these circumstances, of course, my functions are terminated here. It has seemed to me proper, however, that I should appear in the Senate to announce that fact to my associates, and I will say but very little more. The occasion does not invite me to go into argument; and my physical condition would not permit me to do so, if it were otherwise; and yet it seems to become me to say something on the part of the State I here represent to an occasion so solemn as this.

Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address, America, Vol.7, p.305

It is known to Senators who have served with me here that I have for many years advocated, as an essential attribute of State sovereignty, the right of a State to secede from the Union. Therefore, if I had not believed there was justifiable cause, if I had thought that Mississippi was acting without sufficient provocation, or without an existing necessity, I should still, under my theory of the government, because of my allegiance to the State of which I am a citizen, have been bound by her action. I, however, may be permitted to say that I do think she has justifiable cause, and I approve of her act. I conferred with her people before that act was taken, counseled them then that, if the state of things which they apprehended should exist when their Convention met, they should take the action which they have now adopted.

Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address, America, Vol.7, p.305–p.306

I hope none who hear me will confound this expression of mine with the advocacy of the right of a State to remain in the Union, and to disregard its constitutional obligations by the nullification of the law. Such is not my theory. Nullification and secession, so often confounded, are, indeed, antagonistic principles. Nullification is a remedy which it is sought to apply within the Union, and against the agent of the States. It is only to be justified when the agent has violated his constitutional obligations, and a State, assuming to judge for itself, denies the right of the agent thus to act, and appeals to the other States of the Union for a decision; but, when the States themselves and when the people of the States have so acted as to convince us that they will not regard our constitutional rights, then and then for the first time, arises the doctrine of secession in its practical application….

Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address, America, Vol.7, p.306

Secession belongs to a different class of remedies. It is to be justified upon the basis that the States are sovereign. There was a time when none denied it. I hope the time may come again when a better comprehension of the theory of our Government, and the inalienable rights of the people of the States, will prevent any one from denying that each State is a sovereign, and thus may reclaim the grants which it has made to any agent whomsoever.

Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address, America, Vol.7, p.306–p.307

I, therefore, say I concur in the action of the people of Mississippi, believing it to be necessary and proper, and should have been bound by their action if my belief had been otherwise; and this brings me to the important point which I wish, on this last occasion, to present to the Senate. It is by this confounding of nullification and secession that the name of a great man whose ashes now mingle with his mother earth has been evoked to justify coercion against a seceded State. The phrase, "to execute the laws," was an expression which General Jackson applied to the case of a State refusing to obey the laws while yet a member of the Union. That is not the case which is now presented. The laws are to be executed over the United States, and upon the people of the United States. They have no relation to any foreign country. It is a perversion of terms—at least, it is a great misapprehension of the case—which cites that expression for application to a State which has withdrawn from the Union. You may make war on a foreign State. If it be the purpose of gentlemen, they may make war against a State which has withdrawn from the Union; but there are no laws of the United States to be executed within the limits of a seceded State. A State, finding herself in the condition in which Mississippi has judged she is—in which her safety requires that she should provide for the maintenance of her rights out of the Union—surrenders all the benefits (and they are known to be many), deprives herself of the advantages (and they are known to be great), severs all the ties of affection (and they are close and enduring), which have bound her to the Union; and thus divesting herself of every benefit—taking upon herself every burden—she claims to be exempt from any power to execute the laws of the United States within her limits….

Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address, America, Vol.7, p.307–p.308–p.309

It has been a conviction of pressing necessity—it has been a belief that we are to be deprived in the Union of the rights which our fathers bequeathed to us—which has brought Mississippi to her present decision. She has heard proclaimed the theory that all men are created free and equal, and this made the basis of an attack upon her social institutions; and the sacred Declaration of Independence has been invoked to maintain the position of the equality of the races. That Declaration of Independence is to be construed by the circumstances and purposes for which it was made. The communities were declaring their independence; the people of those communities were asserting that no man was born—to use the language of Mr. Jefferson—booted and spurred, to ride over the rest of mankind; that men were created equal—meaning the men of the political community; that there was no divine right to rule; that no man inherited the right to govern; that there were no classes by which power and place descended to families; but that all stations were equally within the grasp of each member of the body politic. These were the great principles they announced; these were the purposes for which they made their declaration; these were the ends to which their enunciation was directed. They have no reference to the slave; else, how happened it that among the items of arraignment against George III was that he endeavored to do just what the North has been endeavoring of late to do, to stir up insurrection among our slaves? Had the Declaration announced that the negroes were free and equal, how was the prince to be arraigned for raising up insurrection among them? And how was this to be enumerated among the high crimes which caused the colonies to sever their connection with the mother country? When our Constitution was formed, the same idea was rendered more palpable; for there we find provision made for that very class of persons as property; they were not put upon the footing of equality with white men—not even upon that of paupers and convicts; but, so far as representation was concerned, were discriminated against as a lower caste, only to be represented in the numerical proportion of three-fifths. So stands the compact which binds us together.

Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address, America, Vol.7, p.309

Then, Senators, we recur to the principles upon which our Government was founded; and when you deny them, and when you deny to us the right to withdraw from a Government which, thus perverted, threatens to be destructive of our rights, we but tread in the path of our fathers when we proclaim our independence and take the hazard. This is done, not in hostility to others, not to injure any section of the country, not even for our own pecuniary benefit, but from the high and solemn motive of defending and protecting the rights we inherited, and which it is our duty to transmit unshorn to our children.

Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address, America, Vol.7, p.309–p.310

I find in myself perhaps a type of the general feeling of my constituents toward yours. I am sure I feel no hostility toward you, Senators from the North. I am sure there is not one of you, whatever sharp discussion there may have been between us, to whom I cannot now say, in the presence of my God, I wish you well; and such, I am sure, is the feeling of the people whom I represent toward those whom you represent. I, therefore, feel that I but express their desire when I say I hope, and they hope, for peaceable relations with you, though we must part. They may be mutually beneficial to us in the future, as they have been in the past, if you so will it. The reverse may bring disaster on every portion of the country, and, if you will have it thus, we will invoke the God of our fathers, who delivered them from the power of the lion, to protect us from the ravages of the bear; and thus, putting our trust in God and in our firm hearts and strong arms, we will vindicate the right as best we may.

Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address, America, Vol.7, p.310

In the course of my service here, associated at different times with a great variety of Senators, I see now around me some with whom I have served long; there have been points of collision, but, whatever of offense there has been to me, I leave here. I carry with me no hostile remembrance. Whatever offense I have given which has not been redressed, or for which satisfaction has not been demanded, I have, Senators, in this hour of our parting, to offer you my apology for any pain, which, in the heat of discussion, I have inflicted. I go hence unencumbered by the remembrance of any injury received, and having discharged the duty of making the only reparation in my power for any injury offered.

Jefferson Davis' Farewell Address, America, Vol.7, p.310

Mr. President and Senators, having made the announcement which the occasion seemed to me to require, it only remains for me to bid you a final adieu.

Inaugural Address of Jefferson Davis

Title: Inaugural Address of Jefferson Davis

Author: Jefferson Davis

Date: 1861

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.311-318

Elected President of the Provisional Government of Confederacy on February 9, 1861, by the Congress assembled at Montgomery, Alabama, Davis delivered his first inaugural address nine days later. He was chosen to head the Confederate Government because his course through the stormy days just before the Civil War had been marked by consistency and moderation in comparison with the other secession leaders. The choice was eminently popular.

At the expiration of the first year of the Provisional Government, a new Congress was elected, and on February 22, 1862, Davis was again inaugurated, entering upon his term which was set for six years by the Confederate Constitution. His career as President takes in nearly all of Confederate history, his side of the matter being given ably and fully in his "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government," in which this inaugural address is incorporated.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.311

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONGRESS OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, FRIENDS, AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.311–p.312

Called to the difficult and responsible station of Chief Magistrate of the Provisional Government which you have instituted, I approach the discharge of the duties assigned to me with humble distrust of my abilities, but with a sustaining confidence in the wisdom of those who are to guide and aid me in the administration of public affairs, and an abiding faith in the virtue and patriotism of the people. Looking forward to the speedy establishment of a permanent government to take the place of this, which by its greater moral and physical power will be better able to combat with many difficulties that arise from the conflicting interests of separate nations, I enter upon the duties of the office to which I have been chosen with the hope that the beginning of our career, as a Confederacy, may not be obstructed by hostile opposition to our enjoyment of the separate existence and independence we have asserted, and which, with the blessing of Providence, we intend to maintain.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.312–p.313

Our present political position has been achieved in a manner unprecedented in the history of nations. It illustrates the American idea that governments rest on the consent of the governed, and that it is the right of the people to alter or abolish them at will whenever they become destructive of the ends for which they were established. The declared purpose of the compact of the Union from which we have withdrawn was to 'establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity;' and when, in the judgment of the sovereign States composing this Confederacy, it has been perverted from the purposes for which it was ordained, and ceased to answer the ends for which it was established, a peaceful appeal to the ballot-box declared that, so far as they were concerned, the Government created by that compact should cease to exist. In this they merely asserted the right which the Declaration of Independence of July 4th, 1776, defined to be inalienable. Of the time and occasion of its exercise they as sovereigns were the final judges, each for itself. The impartial and enlightened verdict of mankind will vindicate the rectitude of our conduct; and He who knows the hearts of men will judge of the sincerity with which we have labored to preserve the Government of our fathers in its spirit.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.313–p.314

The right solemnly proclaimed at the birth of the United States, and which has been solemnly affirmed and reaffirmed in the Bills of Rights of the States subsequently admitted into the Union of 1789, undeniably recognizes in the people the power to resume the authority delegated for the purposes of government. Thus the sovereign States here represented have proceeded to form this Confederacy; and it is by abuse of language that their act has been denominated a revolution. They formed a new alliance, but within each State its government has remained; so that the rights of person and property have not been disturbed. The agent through which they communicated with foreign nations is changed, but this does not necessarily interrupt their international relations. Sustained by the consciousness that the transition from the former Union to the present Confederacy has not proceeded from a disregard on our part of just obligations or any failure to perform every constitutional duty, moved by no interest or passion to invade the rights of others, anxious to cultivate peace and commerce with all nations, if we may not hope to avoid war, we may at least expect that posterity will acquit us of having needlessly engaged in it. Doubly justified by the absence of wrong on our part, and by wanton aggression on the part of others, there can be no cause to doubt that the courage and patriotism of the people of the Confederate States will be found equal to any measure of defense which their honor and security may require.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.314

An agricultural people, whose chief interest is the export of commodities required in every manufacturing country, our true policy is peace, and the freest trade which our necessities will permit. It is alike our interest and that of all those to whom we would sell, and from whom we would buy, that there should be the fewest practicable restrictions upon the interchange of these commodities. There can however, be but little rivalry between ours and any manufacturing or navigating community, such as the Northeastern States of the American Union. It must follow therefore, that mutual interest will invite to good-will and kind offices on both parts. If, however, passion or lust of dominion should cloud the judgment or inflame the ambition of those States, we must prepare to meet the emergency and maintain, by the final arbitrament of the sword, the position which we have assumed among the nations of the earth.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.314–p.315

We have entered upon the career of independence and it must be inflexibly pursued. Through many years of controversy with our late associates of the Northern States, we have vainly endeavored to secure tranquillity and obtain respect for the rights to which we were entitled. As a necessity, not a choice, we have resorted to the remedy of separation, and henceforth our energies must be directed to the conduct of our own affairs, and the perpetuity of the Confederacy which we have formed. If a just perception of mutual interest shall permit us peaceably to pursue our separate political career, my most earnest desire will have been fulfilled. But if this be denied to us, and the integrity of our territory and jurisdiction be assailed, it will but remain for us with firm resolve to appeal to arms and invoke the blessing of Providence on a just cause.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.315

As a consequence of our new condition and relations, and with a view to meeting anticipated wants, it will be necessary to provide for the speedy and efficient organization of branches of the Executive department having special charge of foreign intercourse, finance, military affairs, and the postal service. For purpose of defense, the Confederate States may, under ordinary circumstances, rely mainly upon the militia; but it is deemed advisable, in the present condition of affairs, that there should be a well-instructed and disciplined army, more numerous than would usually be required on a peace establishment. I also suggest that, for protection of our harbors and commerce on the high seas, a navy adapted to these objects will be required. But this, as well as other subjects appropriate to our necessities, have doubtless engaged the attention of Congress.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.315–p.316

With a Constitution differing only from that of our fathers in so far as it is explanatory of their well-known intent, freed from sectional conflicts, which have interfered with the pursuit of the general welfare, it is not unreasonable to expect that States from which we have recently parted may seek to unite their fortunes to ours under the Government which we have instituted. For this your Constitution makes adequate provision; but beyond this, if I mistake not the judgment and will of the people, a reunion with the States from which we have separated is neither practicable nor desirable. To increase the power, develop the resources, and promote the happiness of the Confederacy, it is requisite that there should be so much homogeneity that the welfare of every portion shall be the aim of the whole. When this does not exist, antagonisms are engendered which must and should result in separation.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.316

Actuated solely by the desire to preserve our own rights, and promote our own welfare, the separation by the Confederate States has been marked by no aggression upon others, and followed by no domestic convulsion. Our industrial pursuits have received no check, the cultivation of our fields has progressed as heretofore, and, even should we be involved in war, there would be no considerable diminution in the production of the staples which have constituted our exports, and in which the commercial world has an interest scarcely less than our own. This common interest of the producer and consumer can only be interrupted by exterior force which would obstruct the transmission of our staples to foreign markets—a course of conduct which would be as unjust, as it would be detrimental, to manufacturing and commercial interests abroad.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.317

Should reason guide the action of the Government from which we have separated, a policy so detrimental to the civilized world, the Northern States included, could not be dictated by even the strongest desire to inflict injury upon us; but, if the contrary should prove true, a terrible responsibility will rest upon it, and the suffering of millions will bear testimony to the folly and wickedness of our aggressors. In the meantime there will remain to us, besides the ordinary means before suggested, the well-known resources for retaliation upon the commerce of an enemy.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.317

Experience in public stations, of subordinate grade to this which your kindness has conferred, has taught me that toil and care and disappointment are the price of official elevation. You will see many errors to forgive, many deficiencies to tolerate; but you shall not find in me either want of zeal or fidelity to the cause that is to me the highest in hope, and of most enduring affection. Your generosity has bestowed upon me an undeserved distinction, one which I neither sought nor desired. Upon the continuance of that sentiment, and upon your wisdom and patriotism, I rely to direct and support me in the performance of the duties required at my hands.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.317

We have changed the constituent parts, but not the system of government. The Constitution framed by our fathers is that of these Confederate States. In their exposition of it, and in the judicial construction it has received, we have a light which reveals its true meaning.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.318

Thus instructed as to the true meaning and just interpretation of that instrument, and ever remembering that all offices are but trusts held for the people, and that powers delegated are to be strictly construed, I will hope by due diligence in the performance of my duties, though I may disappoint your expectations, yet to retain, when retiring, something of the good-will and confidence which welcome my entrance into office.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, America, Vol.7, p.318

It is joyous in the midst of perilous times to look around upon a people united in heart, where one purpose of high resolve animates and actuates the whole, where the sacrifices to be made are not weighed in the balance against honor and right and liberty and equality. Obstacles may retard, but they cannot long prevent, the progress of a movement sanctified by its justice and sustained by a virtuous people. Reverently let us invoke the God of our Fathers to guide and protect us in our efforts to perpetuate the principles which by His blessing they were able to vindicate, establish, and transmit to their posterity. With the continuance of His favor ever gratefully acknowledged, we may hopefully look forward to success, to peace and to prosperity.

Toombs on Resigning from the Senate, Toombs, 1861

Toombs on Resigning from the Senate

Title: Toombs on Resigning from the Senate

Author: Toombs

Date: 1861

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.211-221

Delivered in the United States Senate on January 7, 1861.

Born in 1810, died in 1885; elected to Congress in 1845; United States Senator in 1853; resigned in 1861; Member of the Confederate Congress in 1861; Secretary of State in 1861; a Brigadier-General, serving at the second battle of Bull Run and at Antietam; refused to take the oath of allegiance to the United States Government.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.211

THE success of the Abolitionists and their allies, under the name of the Republican party, has produced its logical results already. They have for long years been sowing dragons' teeth and have finally got a crop of armed men. The Union, sir, is dissolved. That is an accomplished fact in the path of this discussion that men may as well heed. One of your confederates has already, wisely, bravely, boldly confronted public danger, and she is only ahead of many of her sisters because of her greater facility for speedy action. The greater majority of those sister States, under like circumstances, consider her cause as their cause; and I charge you in their name to-day: "touch not Saguntum." It is not only their cause, but it is a cause which receives the sympathy and will receive the support of tens and hundreds of thousands of honest patriot men in the nonslaveholding States, who have hitherto maintained constitutional rights, and who respect their oaths, abide by compacts, and love justice.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.212

And while this Congress, this Senate, and this House of Representatives are debating the constitutionality and the expediency of seceding from the Union, and while the perfidious authors of this mischief are showering down denunciations upon a large portion of the patriotic men of this country, those brave men are coolly and calmly voting what you call revolution—ay, sir, doing better than that: arming to defend it. They appealed to the Constitution, they appealed to justice, they appealed to fraternity, until the Constitution, justice, and fraternity were no longer listened to in the legislative halls of their country, and then, sir, they prepared for the arbitrament of the sword; and now you see the glittering bayonet, and you her the tramp of armed men from your capitol to the Rio Grande. It is a sight that gladdens the eyes and cheers the hearts of other millions ready to second them. Inasmuch, sir, as I have labored earnestly, honestly, sincerely, with these men to avert this necessity so long as I deemed it possible, and inasmuch as I heartily approve their present conduct of resistance, I deem it my duty to state their case to the Senate, to the country, and to the civilized world.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.213

Senators, my countrymen have demanded no new government; they have demanded no new Constitution. Look to their records at home and here from the beginning of this national strife until its consummation in the disruption of the empire, and they have not demanded a single thing except that you shall abide by the Constitution of the United States; that constitutional rights shall be respected, and that justice shall be done. Sirs, they have stood by your Constitution; they have stood by all its requirements, they have performed all its duties unselfishly, uncalculatingly, disinterestedly, until a party sprang up in this country which endangered their social system—a party which they arraign, and which they charge before the American people and all mankind with having made proclamation of outlawry against four thousand millions of their property in the Territories of the United States; with having put them under the ban of the empire in all the States in which their institutions exist outside the protection of federal laws; with having aided and abetted insurrection from within and invasion from without with the view of subverting those institutions, and desolating their homes and their firesides. For these causes they have taken up arms.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.213

I have stated that the discontented States of this Union have demanded nothing but clear, distinct, unequivocal, well-acknowledged constitutional rights—rights affirmed by the highest judicial tribunals of their country; rights older than the Constitution; rights which are planted upon the immutable principles of natural justice; rights which have been affirmed by the good and the wise of all countries, and of all centuries. We demand no power to injure any man. We demand no right to injure our confederate States. We demand no right to interfere with their institutions, either by word or deed. We have no right to disturb their peace, their tranquillity, their security. We have demanded of them simply, solely—nothing else—to give us equality, security and tranquillity. Give us these, and peace restores itself. Refuse them, and take what you can get.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.214

What do the rebels demand? First, "that the people of the United States shall have an equal right to emigrate and settle in the present or any future acquired Territories, with whatever property they may possess (including slaves), and be securely protected in its peaceable enjoyment until such Territory may be admitted as a State into the Union, with or without slavery, as she may determine, on an equality with all existing States." That is our Territorial demand. We have fought for this Territory when blood was its price. We have paid for it when gold was its price. We have not proposed to exclude you, tho you have contributed very little of blood or money. I refer especially to New England. We demand only to go into those Territories upon terms of equality with you, as equals in this great Confederacy, to enjoy the common property of the whole Union, and receive the protection of the common government, until the Territory is capable of coming into the Union as a sovereign State, when it may fix its own institutions to suit itself.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.215

The second proposition is, "that property in slaves shall be entitled to the same protection from the government of the United States, in all of its departments, everywhere, which the Constitution confers the power upon it to extend to any other property, provided nothing herein contained shall be construed to limit or restrain the right now belonging to every State to prohibit, abolish, or establish and protect slavery within its limits." We demand of the common government to use its granted powers to protect our property as well as yours. For this protection we pay as much as you do. This very property is subject to taxation. It has been taxed by you and sold by you for taxes.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.215

The title to thousands and tens of thousands of slaves is derived from the United States. We claim that the government, while the Constitution recognizes our property for the purposes of taxation, shall give it the same protection that it gives yours.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.215

Ought it not to be so? You say no. Every one of you upon the committee said no. Your senators say no. Throughout the length and breadth of your conspiracy against the Constitution there is but one shout of no! This recognition of this right is the price of my allegiance. Withhold it, and you do not get my obedience. This is the philosophy of the armed men who have sprung up in this country. Do you ask me to support a government that will tax my property; that will plunder me; that will demand my blood, and will not protect me? I would rather see the population of my native State laid six feet beneath her sod than they should support for one hour such a government. Protection is the price of obedience everywhere, in all countries. It is the only thing that makes government respectable. Deny it and you can not have free subjects or citizens; you may have slaves.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.216

We demand, in the next place, "that persons committing crimes against slave property in one State, and fleeing to another, shall be delivered up in the same manner as persons committing crimes against other property, and that the laws of the State from which such persons flee shall be the test of criminality." That is another one of the demands of an extremist and rebel.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.216

But the nonslaveholding States, treacherous to their oaths and compacts, have steadily refused, if the criminal only stole a negro and that negro was a slave, to deliver him up. It was refused twice on the requisition of my own State as long as twenty-two years ago. It was refused by Kent and by Fairfield, governors of Maine, and representing, I believe, each of the then federal parties. We appealed then to fraternity, but we submitted; and this constitutional right has been practically a dead letter from that day to this. The next case came up between us and the State of New York, when the present senior senator [Mr. Seward] was the governor of that State; and he refused it. Why? He said it was not against the laws of New York to steal a negro, and therefore he would not comply with the demand. He made a similar refusal to Virginia. Yet these are our confederates; these are our sister States! There is the bargain; there is the compact. You have sworn to it. Both these governors swore to it. The senator from New York swore to it. The governor of Ohio swore to it when he was inaugurated. You can not bind them by oaths. Yet they talk to us of treason; and I suppose they expect to whip freemen into loving such brethren! They will have a good time in doing it!

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.217

It is natural we should want this provision of the Constitution carried out. The Constitution says slaves are property; the Supreme Court says so; the Constitution says so. The theft of slaves is a crime; they are a subject-matter of felonious asportation. By the text and letter of the Constitution you agreed to give them up. You have sworn to do it, and you have broken your oaths. Of course, those who have done so look out for pretexts. Nobody expected them to do otherwise. I do not think I ever saw a perjurer, however bald and naked, who could not invent some pretext to palliate his crime, or who could not, for fifteen shillings, hire an Old Bailey lawyer to invent some for him. Yet this requirement of the Constitution is another one of the extreme demands of an extremist and a rebel.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.218

The next stipulation is that fugitive slaves shall be surrendered under the provisions of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, without being entitled either to a writ of habeas corpus, or trial by jury, or other similar obstructions of legislation, in the State to which he may flee. Here is the Constitution:

"No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due."

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.218

This language is plain, and everybody understood it the same way for the first forty years of your government. In 1793, in Washington's time, an act was passed to carry out this provision. It was adopted unanimously in the Senate of the United States, and nearly so in the House of Representatives. Nobody then had invented pretexts to show that the Constitution did not mean a negro slave. It was clear; it was plain. Not only the federal courts, but all the local courts in all the States, decided that this was a constitutional obligation. How is it now? The North sought to evade it; following the instincts of their natural character, they commenced with the fraudulent fiction that fugitives were entitled to habeas corpus, entitled to trial by jury in the State to which they fled. They pretended to believe that our fugitive slaves were entitled to more rights than their white citizens; perhaps they were right, they know one another better than I do. You may charge a white man with treason, or felony, or other crime, and you do not require any trial by jury before he is given up; there is nothing to determine but that he is legally charged with a crime and that he fled, and then he is to be delivered up upon demand. White people are delivered up every day in this way; but not slaves. Slaves, black people, you say, are entitled to trial by jury: and in this way schemes have been invented to defeat your plain constitutional obligations.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.219

Senators, the Constitution is a compact. It contains all our obligations and the duties of the federal government. I am content and have ever been content to sustain it. While I doubt its perfection, while I do not believe it was a good compact, and while I never saw the day that I would have voted for it as a proposition de novo, yet I am bound to it by oath and by that common prudence which would induce men to abide by established forms rather than to rush into unknown dangers. I have given to it, and intend to give to it, unfaltering support and allegiance, but I choose to put that allegiance on the true ground, not on the false idea that anybody's blood was shed for it. I say that the Constitution is the whole compact. All the obligations, all the chains that fetter the limbs of my people, are nominated in the bond, and they wisely excluded any conclusion against them, by declaring that "the powers not granted by the Constitution to the United States, or forbidden by it to the States, belonged to the States respectively or the people."

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.220

Now I will try it by that standard; I will subject it to that test. The law of nature, the law of justice, would say—and it is so expounded by the publicists—that equal rights in the common property shall be enjoyed. Even in a monarchy the king can not prevent the subjects from enjoying equality in the disposition of the public property. Even in a despotic government this principle is recognized. It was the blood and the money of the whole people (says the learned Grotius, and say all the publicists) which acquired the public property, and therefore it is not the property of the sovereign. This right of equality being, then, according to justice and natural equity, a right belonging to all States, when did we give it up? You say Congress has a right to pass rules and regulations concerning the Territory and other property of the United States. Very well. Does that exclude those whose blood and money paid for it? Does "dispose of" mean to rob the rightful owners? You must show a better title than that, or a better sword than we have.

Jefferson Davis' Inaugural Address, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.221

What, then, will you take? You will take nothing but your own judgment; that is, you will not only judge for yourselves, not only discard the court, discard our construction, discard the practise of the government, but you will drive us out, simply because you will it. Come and do it! You have sapped the foundations of society; you have destroyed almost all hope of peace. In a compact where there is no common arbiter, where the parties finally decide for themselves, the sword alone at last becomes the real, if not the constitutional, arbiter. Your party says that you will not take the decision of the Supreme Court. You said so at Chicago; you said so in committee; every man of you in both Houses says so. What are you going to do? You say we shall submit to your construction. We shall do it, if you can make us; but not otherwise, or in any other manner. That is settled. You may call it secession, or you may call it revolution; but there is a big fact standing before you, ready to oppose you—that fact is, freemen with arms in their hands.

Lincoln's Farewell Words in Springfield, Abraham Lincoln, 1861

Lincoln's Farewell Words in Springfield

Title: Lincoln's Farewell Words in Springfield

Author: Abraham Lincoln

Date: 1861

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.9, pp.238-239

Delivered on February 11, 1861, and here given as printed by Nicolay and Hay "from the original manuscript, having been wirtten down immediately after the train started, partly by mr. Lincoln's own hand and partly by that of his private secretary at his dictation." Herndon gives a somewhat longer and textually different version of the speech, as printed at the time in a Springfield newspaper:

"Friends, no one who has never been placed in a like position can understand my feelings at this hour, nor the oppressive sadness I feel at this parting. For more than a quarter of a century I hve lived among you, and during all that time I have received nothing but kindness at your hands. Here I have lived from my youth until now I am an old man. Here the most cherished ties of earth were assumed. Here all my children were born and here one of them lies buried. To you, dear friends, I owe all that I have, all that I am. All the strange checkered past seems to crowd now upon my mind.

"To-day I leave you. I go to assume a task more difficult than that which devolved upon Washington. Unless the great God who assisted him shall be with andaid me I must fail; but if the same omniscient mind and mighty arm that directed and protected him shall guide and support me I shall not fail—I shall succeed. Let us all pray that the God of our fathers may not forsake us now. To Him I commend you all. Permit me to ask that with equal sincerity and faith you will invoke His wisdom and guidance for me. With these words I must leave you—for how long I know not. Friends, one and all, I must now bid you an affectionate farewell."

Nicolay and Hay, both of whom were with Lincoln at the time, describe the circumstances in which Lincoln made the speech:

"Early Monday morning (the 11th) found Mr. Lincoln, his family and suite at the rather dingy little railway station at Sprinfield, with a throng of at least one thousand of his neighbors who had come to bid him good-by. It was a stormy morning which served to add gloom and depression to their spirits. The leave-taking presented a scene of subdued anxiety, almost of solemnity. Mr. Lincoln took a position in the waiting-room where his friends filed past him, merely pressing his hand in silent emotion. The half-finished ceremony was broken in upon by the ringing bells and rushing train. The crowd closed about the railroad car into which the president-elect and his party made their way. Then came the central incident of the morning. The bell gave notice of starting, but as the conductor paused, with his hand lifted to the bell-rope, Mr. Lincoln appeared on the platform of the car and raised his hand to command attention. The bystanders bared their heads to the falling snowflakes, and standing thus his neighbors heard his voice for the last time, in the city of his home, in a farewell address, so chaste and pathetic, that it reads as if he already felt the tragic shadow of forecasting fate."

Lincolns' Farewell Words in Springfield, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.238

MY friends, no one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place and the kindness of this people I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born and one is buried.

Lincolns' Farewell Words in Springfield, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.238

I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him I can not succeed. With that assistance I can not fail.

Lincolns' Farewell Words in Springfield, Famous Orations, Vol.9, p.239

Trusting in Him who can go with me and remain with you and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

The Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter

Title: The Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter

Author: John Gray Foster

Date: 1861

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.50-57

Major Foster (later brevetted major-general) assisted Major Robert Anderson in the defense of Fort Sumter, April 12-13, 1861, when it was bombarded and reduced by the Confederate batteries in Charleston Harbor. As director of engineering operations of the United States troops at Charleston, Foster had superintended the construction of Fort Sumter and the repairing of Fort Moultrie, from which he had helped transfer the Federal garrison to Fort Sumter. He was a graduate of West Point.

On April 11, 1861, acting under orders from President Jefferson Davis, General Beauregard, commanding the Confederate forces at Charleston, had demanded the evacuation of the fort. Anderson refused to withdraw. The historic bombardment followed, as here recounted. The garrison of 128 men left the fort on April thirteenth with the honors of war. There was no one wounded or killed on either side during the action.

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.50

APRIL 12th—At one four aides of General Beauregard…. came with a second letter, stating that as Major Anderson had been understood to make a remark to the bearers of the first letter, in taking leave, that he would "await the first shot, and if not battered to pieces, would be starved out in a few days," it was desired to know what importance might be attached to it. The reply of Major Anderson did not satisfy the aides, who were authorized in that case to give notice that the fire would open. Accordingly, on leaving at 3:30 a.m., they gave notice that their batteries would open in one hour.

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.51

At 4:30 a.m. a signal shell was thrown from the mortar battery on James Island; after which the fire soon became general from all the hostile batteries….

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.51

At 7 a.m. the guns of Fort Sumter replied, the first shot being fired from the battery at the right gorge angle, in charge of Captain Doubleday….

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.51

The supply of cartridges, 700 in number, with which the engagement commenced, became so much reduced by the middle of the day, although the six needles in the fort were kept steadily employed, that the firing was forced to slacken, and to be confined to six guns—two firing towards Morris Island, two towards Fort Moultrie, and two towards the batteries on the west end of Sullivan's Island.

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.51

At 1 o'clock two United States men-of-war were seen off the bar, and soon after a third appeared.

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.51

The fire of our batteries continued steadily until dark. The effect of the fire was not very good, owing to the insufficient caliber of the guns for the long range, and not much damage appeared to be done to any of the batteries, except those of Fort Moultrie, where our two 42-pounders appeared to have silenced one gun for a time, to have injured the embrasures considerably, riddled the barracks and quarters, and torn three holes through their nag….

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.51–p.52

The effect of the enemy's fire upon Fort Sumter during the day was very marked in respect to the vertical fire. This was so well directed and so well sustained that from the seventeen mortars engaged in firing 10-inch shells, one-half of the shells came within or exploded above the parapet of the fort, and only about ten buried themselves in the soft earth of the parade without exploding. In consequence of this precision of vertical fire, Major Anderson decided not to man the upper tier of guns, as by doing so the loss of men, notwithstanding the traverses and bomb-proof shelters that I had constructed, must have been great….

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.52

…. The effect of the direct fire from the enemy's guns was not so marked as the vertical. For several hours firing from the commencement a large proportion of their shot missed the fort. Subsequently it improved, and did considerable damage to the roof and upper story of the barracks and quarters, and to the tops of the chimneys on the gorge….

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.52

The night was very stormy, with high wind and tide. I found out, however, by personal inspection, that the exterior of the work was not damaged to any considerable extent, and that all the facilities for taking in supplies, in case they arrived, were as complete as circumstances would admit. The enemy threw shells every ten or fifteen minutes during the night. The making of cartridge bags was continued by the men, under Lieutenant Meade's directions, until 12 o'clock, when they were ordered to stop by Major Anderson. To obtain materials for the bags all the extra clothing of the companies was cut up, and all coarse paper and extra hospital sheets used.

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.52–p.53

April 13.—At daybreak no material alteration was observed in the enemy's batteries. The three U. S. men-of-war were still off the bar. The last of the rice was cooked this morning, and served with the pork—the only other article of food left in the engineer mess-room, where the whole command has messed since the opening of the fire. After this the fire was reopened, and continued very briskly as long as the increased supply of cartridges lasted. The enemy reopened fire at daylight, and continued it with rapidity. The aim of the enemy's gunners was better than yesterday….

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.53–p.54

It soon became evident that they were firing hot shot from a large number of their guns, especially from those in Fort Moultrie, and at nine o'clock I saw volumes of smoke issuing from the roof of the officers' quarters, where a shot had just penetrated. From the exposed position it was utterly impossible to extinguish the flames, and I therefore immediately notified the commanding officer of the fact, and obtained his permission to remove as much powder from the magazine as was possible before the flames, which were only one set of quarters distant, should encircle the magazine and make it necessary to close it. All the men and officers not engaged at the guns worked rapidly and zealously at this, but so rapid was the spread of the flames that only fifty barrels of powder could be taken out and distributed around in the casemates before the fire and heat made it necessary to close the magazine doors and pack earth against them. The men then withdrew to the casemates on the faces of the fort. As soon as the flames and smoke burst from the roof of the quarters the enemy's batteries red doubled the rapidity of their firing, firing red-hot shot from most of their guns. The whole range of officers' quarters was soon in flames. The wind being from the southward, communicated fire to the roof of the barracks, and this being aided by the hot shot constantly lodging there, spread to the entire roofs of both barracks, so that by twelve o'clock all the woodwork of quarters and of upper story of barracks was in flames. Although the floors of the barracks were fire-proof, the utmost exertions of the officers and men were often required to prevent the fire communicating down the stairways, and from the exterior, to the doors, window frames, and other woodwork of the east barrack, in which the officers and men had taken their quarters. All the woodwork in the west barrack was burned. The clouds of smoke and cinders which were sent into the casemates by the wind set on fire many boxes, beds, and other articles belonging to the men, and made it dangerous to retain the powder which had been saved from the magazine. The commanding officer accordingly gave orders to have all but five barrels thrown out of the embrasures into the water, which was done.

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.54

The small stock of cartridges now only allowed a gun to be fired at intervals of ten minutes….

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.54–p.55

At 1 o'clock the flagstaff, having been struck twice before this morning, fell. The flag was immediately secured by Lieutenant Hall, and as soon as it could be attached to a temporary staff, hoisted again upon the parapet at the middle of the right face by Lieutenant Snyder, Corps of Engineers, assisted by Hart, and Davey, a laborer.

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.55–p.56

About this time information was brought to the commanding officer that Mr. Wigfall, bearing a white flag, was on the outside, and wished to see him. He accordingly went out to meet Mr. Wigfall, passing through the blazing gateway, accompanied by Lieutenant Snyder. In the meantime, however, Mr. Wigfall had passed to an embrasure on the left flank, where, upon showing the white flag upon his sword, he was permitted to enter, and Lieutenant Snyder entering immediately after, accompanied him down the batteries to where some other officers were posted, to whom Mr. Wigfall commenced to address himself, to the effect that he came from General Beauregard to desire that, inasmuch as the flag of the fort was shot down, a fire raging in the quarters, and the garrison in a great strait, hostilities be suspended, and the white flag raised for this object. He was replied to that our flag was again hoisted on the parapet, that the white flag would not be hoisted except by order of the commanding officer, and that his own batteries should set the example of suspending fire. He then referred to the fact of the batteries on Cummings Point, from which he came, having stopped firing, and asked that his own white flag might be waved to indicate to the batteries on Sullivan's Island to cease also. This was refused; but he was permitted to wave the white flag himself, getting into an embrasure for this purpose. Having done this for a few moments, Lieutenant Davis, First Artillery, permitted a corporal to relieve him. Very soon, however, a shot striking very near to the embrasure, the corporal jumped inside, and declared to Mr. Wigfall that "he would not hold his flag, for it was not respected."

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.56

At this moment the commanding officer, having reentered through an embrasure, came up. To him Mr. Wigfall addressed nearly the same remarks that he had used on entering, adding some complimentary things about the manner in which the defense had been made, and ending by renewing the request to suspend hostilities in order to arrange terms of evacuation. The commanding officer desiring to know what terms he came to offer, Mr. Wigfall replied, "Any terms that you may desire—your own terms—the precise nature of which General Beauregard will arrange with you."

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.56

The commanding officer then accepted the conditions, saying that the terms he accepted were those proposed by General Beauregard on the 11th, namely: To evacuate the fort with his command, taking arms and all private and company property, saluting the United States flag as it was lowered, and being conveyed, if he desired it, to any Northern port. With this understanding Mr. Wigfall left, and the white flag was raised and the United States flag lowered by order of the commanding officer.

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.56–p.57

Very soon after a boat arrived from the city, containing three aides of General Beauregard, with a message to the effect that, observing the white flag hoisted, General B. sent to inquire what aid he could lend in extinguishing the flames, &c. Being made acquainted with the condition of affairs and Mr. Wigfall's visit, they stated that the latter, although an aid of General Beauregard, had not seen him for two days.

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.57

The commanding officer then stated that the United States flag would be raised again, but yielded to the request of the aides for time to report to their chief and obtain his instructions. They soon returned, with the approval of all the conditions desired except the saluting of the flag as it was lowered, and this exception was subsequently removed after correspondence. In the morning communication was had with the fleet, and Captain Gillis paid a visit to the fort.

Foster, Siege and Capture of Fort Sumter, America, Vol.8, p.57

The evacuation was completed after saluting the flag, in doing which one man was instantly killed, one mortally and four severely wounded, by the premature discharge of a gun and explosion of a pile of cartridges….

Lincoln and His Cabinet

Title: Lincoln and His Cabinet

Author: Charles A. Dana

Date: 1862

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.36-45

Dana, who thus depicts Lincoln and the members of his Cabinet—Seward, Stanton, Chase and Welles—in his "Recollections of the Civil War," was Assistant Secretary of War under Stanton. Before the war he had long been managing editor of the New York "Tribune," but in 1862 he disagreed with Horace Greeley in war politics as enunciated by Greeley in a memorable editorial, "On to Richmond," and resigned. He was a war correspondent at the time Stanton secured his assistance during 1863-4.

After the war Dana edited the Chicago "Republican," which failed. He then founded the New York "Sun," and edited it with conspicuous success from 1868 until his death in 1897. This article is taken from his "Recollections," by permission of the publishers, D. Appleton & Company.

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.36

DURING the first winter I spent in Washington in the War Department I had constant opportunities of seeing Mr. Lincoln, and of conversing with him in the cordial and unofficial manner which he always preferred. Not that there was ever any lack of dignity in the man. Even in his freest moments one always felt the presence of a will and of an intellectual power which maintained the ascendancy of his position. He never posed, or put on airs, or attempted to make any particular impression; but he was always conscious of his own ideas and purposes, even in his most unreserved moments.

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.36–p.37

I knew, too, and saw frequently, all the members of his Cabinet. When Mr. Lincoln was inaugurated as President, his first act was to name his Cabinet; and it was a common remark at the time that he had put into it every man who had competed with him for the nomination. The first in importance was William H. Seward, of New York, Mr. Lincoln's most prominent competitor. Mr. Seward was made Secretary of State. He was an interesting man, of an optimistic temperament, and he probably had the most cultivated and comprehensive intellect in the administration. He was a man who was all his life in controversies, yet he was singular in this, that, though forever in fights, he had almost no personal enemies. Seward had great ability as a writer, and he had what is very rare in a lawyer, a politician, or a statesman—imagination. A fine illustration of his genius was the acquisition of Alaska. That was one of the last things that he did before he went out of office, and it demonstrated more than anything else his fixed and never-changing idea that all North America should be united under one government.

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.37

Mr. Seward was an admirable writer and an impressive, though entirely unpretentious speaker. He stood up and talked as though he were engaged in conversation, and the effect was always great. It gave the impression of a man deliberating "out loud" with himself.

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.37–p.38

The second man in importance and ability to be put into the Cabinet was Mr. Chase, of Ohio. He was an able, noble, spotless statesman, a man who would have been worthy of the best days of the old Roman Republic. He had been a candidate for the Presidency, though a less conspicuous one than Seward. Mr. Chase was a portly man; tall, and of an impressive appearance, with a very handsome, large head. He was genial, though very decided, and occasionally he would criticize the President, a thing I never heard Mr. Seward do. Chase had been successful in Ohio politics, and in the Treasury Department his administration was satisfactory to the public. He was the author of the national banking law….

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.38

Mr. Stanton was a short, thick, dark man, with a very large head and a mass of black hair. His nature was intense, and he was one of the most eloquent men that I ever met. Stanton was entirely absorbed in his duties, and his energy in prosecuting them was something almost superhuman. When he took hold of the War Department the armies seemed to grow, and they certainly gained in force and vim and thoroughness.

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.38

One of the first things which struck me in Mr. Stanton was his deep religious feeling and his familiarity with the Bible. He must have studied the Bible a great deal when he was a boy. He had the firmest conviction that the Lord directed our armies. There was never any cant in Stanton's religious feeling. It was the straightforward expression of what he believed and lived, and was as simple and genuine and real to him as the principles of his business.

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.38–p.39

Stanton was a serious student of history. He had read many books on the subject—more than on any other, I should say—and he was fond of discussing historical characters with his associates; not that he made a show of his learning. He was fond, too, of discussing legal questions, and would listen with eagerness to the statement of cases in which friends had been interested. He was a man who was devoted to his friends, and he had a good many with whom he liked to sit down and talk. In conversation he was witty and satirical; he told a story well, and was very companionable….

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.39

There were certain men in whom he had little faith, and I have heard him speak of some of these in a tone of severity. He was a man of the quickest intelligence, and understood a thing before half of it was told him. His judgment was just as swift, and when he got hold of a man who did not understand, who did not state his case clearly, he was very impatient. If Stanton liked a man, he was always pleasant. I was with him for several years in the most confidential relations, and I can now recall only one instance of his speaking to me in a harsh tone….

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.39–p.40

The Secretary of the Navy throughout the war, was Gideon Welles, of Connecticut. Welles was a curious-looking man: he wore a wig which was parted in the middle, the hair falling down on each side; and it was from his peculiar appearance, I have always thought, that the idea that he was an old fogy originated. I remember Governor Andrew, of Massachusetts, coming into my office at the War Department one day, and asking where he could find "that old Mormon deacon, the Secretary of the Navy." In spite of his peculiarities, I think Mr. Welles was a very wise, strong man. There was nothing decorative about him; there was no noise in the street when he went along; but he understood his duty, and did it efficiently, continually, and unvaryingly. There was a good deal of opposition to him, for we had no navy when the war began, and he had to create one without much deliberation; but he was patient, laborious, and intelligent at his task….

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.40–p.41

The relations between Mr. Lincoln and the members of his Cabinet were always friendly and sincere on his part. He treated every one of them with unvarying candor, respect, and kindness; but though several of them were men of extraordinary force and self-assertion—this was true especially of Mr. Seward, Mr. Chase, and Mr. Stanton—and though there was nothing of self-hood or domination in his manner toward them, it was always plain that he was the master and they the subordinates. They constantly had to yield to his will in questions where responsibility fell upon him. If he ever yielded to theirs, it was because they convinced him that the course they advised was judicious and appropriate. I fancied during the whole time of my intimate intercourse with him and with them, that he was always prepared to receive the resignation of any one of them. At the same time I do not recollect a single occasion when any member of the Cabinet had got his mind ready to quit his post from any feeling of dissatisfaction with the policy or conduct of the President. Not that they were always satisfied with his actions; the members of the Cabinet, like human beings in general, were not pleased with everything. In their judgment much was imperfect in the administration; much, they felt, would have been done better if their views had been adopted and they individually had had charge of it. Not so with the President.

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.41

He was calm, equable, uncomplaining. In the discussion of important questions, whatever he said showed the profoundest thought, even when he was joking. He seemed to see every side of every question. He never was impatient, he never was in a hurry, and he never tried to hurry anybody else. To every one he was pleasant and cordial. Yet they all felt it was his word that went at last; that every case was open until he gave his decision.

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.41–p.42

This impression of authority, of reserve force, Mr. Lincoln always gave to those about him. Even physically he was impressive. According to the record measurements, he was six feet four inches in height. That is, he was at least four inches taller than the tall, ordinary man. When he rode out on horseback to review an army, as I have frequently seen him do, he wore usually a high hat, and then he looked like a giant. There was no waste or excess of material about his frame; nevertheless, he was very strong and muscular. I remember that the last time I went to see him at the White House—the afternoon before he was killed—I found him in a side-room with coat off and sleeves rolled up, washing his hands. He had finished his work for the day, and was going away. I noticed then the thinness of his arms, and how well developed, strong, and active his muscles seemed to be. In fact, there was nothing flabby or feeble about Mr. Lincoln physically. He was a very quick man in his movements when he chose to be, and he had immense physical endurance. Night after night he would work late and hard without being wilted by it, and he always seemed as ready for the next day's work as though he had done nothing the day before.

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.42–p.43

Mr. Lincoln's face was thin, and his features were large. His hair was black, his eyebrows heavy, his forehead square and well developed. His complexion was dark and quite sallow. His smile was something most lovely. I have never seen a woman's smile that approached it in its engaging quality, nor have I ever seen another face which would light up as Mr. Lincoln's did when something touched his heart or amused him. I have heard it said that he was ungainly, that his step was awkward. He never impressed me as being awkward. In the first place, there was such a charm and beauty about his expression, such good humor and friendly spirit looking from his eyes, that when you were near him you never thought whether he was awkward or graceful; you thought of nothing except, What a kindly character this man has! Then, too, there was such shrewdness in his kindly features that one did not care to criticize him. His manner was always dignified, and even if he had done an awkward thing, the dignity of his character and manner would have made it seem graceful and becoming.

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.43

The great quality of his appearance was benevolence and benignity; the wish to do somebody some good if he could; and yet there was no flabby philanthropy about Abraham Lincoln. He was all solid, hard, keen intelligence, combined with goodness. Indeed, the expression of his face and of his bearing which impressed one most, after his benevolence and benignity, was his intelligent understanding. You felt that here was a man who saw through things, who understood, and you respected him accordingly….

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.43–p.44

Lincoln had the most comprehensive, the most judicious mind; he was the least faulty in his conclusions of any man I have ever known. He never stepped too soon, and he never stepped too late. When the whole Northern country seemed clamoring for him to issue a proclamation abolishing slavery, he didn't do it. Deputation after deputation went to Washington. I remember once a hundred gentlemen, dressed in black coats, mostly clergymen from Massachusetts, came to Washington to appeal to him to proclaim the abolition of slavery. But he did not do it. He allowed Mr. Cameron and General Butler to execute their great idea of treating slaves as contraband of war and protecting those who had got into our lines against being recaptured by their Southern owners; but he would not prematurely make the proclamation that was so much desired. Finally the time came, and of that he was the judge. Nobody else decided it.; nobody commanded it; the proclamation was issued as he thought best, and it was efficacious….

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.44

This unerring judgment, this patience which waited and which knew when the right time had arrived, is an intellectual quality that I do not find exercised upon any such scale and with such absolute precision by any other man in history. It proves Abraham Lincoln to have been intellectually one of the greatest of rulers. If we look through the record of great men, where is there one to be placed beside him? I do not know.

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.44

Another interesting fact about Abraham Lincoln is that he developed into a great military man; that is to say, a man of supreme military judgment. I do not risk anything in saying that if one will study the records of the war, and study the writings relating to it, he will agree with me that the greatest general we had, greater than Grant or Thomas, was Abraham Lincoln. It was not so at the beginning; but after three or four years of constant practice in the science and art of war, he arrived at this extraordinary knowledge of it, so that Von Moltke was not a better general, or an abler planner or expounder of a campaign, than was President Lincoln. To sum it up, he was a born leader of men. He knew human nature; he knew what chord to strike, and was never afraid to strike it when he believed that the time had arrived….

Lincoln and His Cabinet, America, Vol.8, p.44–p.45

Another remarkable peculiarity of Mr. Lincoln's was that he seemed to have no illusions. He had no freakish notions that things were so, or might be so, when they were not so. All his thinking and reasoning, all his mind, in short, was based continually upon actual facts, and upon facts of which, as I said, he saw the essence. I never heard him say anything that was not so. I never heard him foretell things; he told what they were, but I never heard him intimate that such and such consequences were likely to happen without the consequences following. I should say, perhaps, that his greatest quality was wisdom. And this is something superior to talent, superior to education. It is again genius; I do not think it can be acquired. All the advice that he gave was wise, and it was always timely. This wisdom, it is scarcely necessary to add, had its animating philosophy in his own famous words, "With malice toward none, with charity for all."

The Capture of Fort Donelson

Title: The Capture of Fort Donelson

Author: Chicago Tribune

Date: 1862

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.89-96

Under the editorship of Joseph Me dill, the Chicago Tribune became a leading Republican newspaper in the West, and its correspondence from the front constituted notable Civil War journalism. This account of the capture of Fort Donelson which, with Fort Henry, was the most important Confederate fortification in the first line of defense in the West, is deficient in not stating that General Charles Ferguson Smith led the decisive charge on the Union left which turned the tide of battle.

The engagement here recounted took place February 14-17, 1862, and was reported in the Chicago Weekly Tribune, of February 20. It was at this battle that the Confederate General, Buckner, proposed an armistice to the Union General, Grant, and the appointment of a commission to settle upon terms of capitulation. Grant made his famous reply, "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works."

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.89

AFTER the capture of Fort Henry, General Grant as soon as possible moved across the twelve mile strip of land between the rivers and invested the place by throwing McClernand's division upon the right, at the creek—extending his pickets down to the river beyond. General Wallace occupied the center, while General Smith closed up all communication with the outside world on the North. Our forces occupied a range of hills almost one mile distant from the enemy's outer works….

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.89–p.90

The army made no movement on Friday [February 14] of consequence, but waited any demonstration the rebels might make. They were elated with the repulse of the gunboats, and undoubtedly concluded that, they would either repulse the army, or if not that they would cut their way through and escape to Clarksville.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.90

Prepared to do either, as circumstances might decide, at six o'clock on Saturday morning they appeared in solid column upon the road, which seems partly parallel to the creek, at McClernand's right. It was a few minutes past six when our pickets exchanged shots with their skirmishers.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.90

Immediately the whole division was astir, waiting for what might turn up. As the rebels neared our forces they deployed and formed in line of battle, making the most furious attack upon the right; also sending their Mississippi sharp shooters, as one of the captains, now a prisoner, informed me, to the left to throw the 11th and 20th regiments into confusion.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.90–p.91

It was about seven o'clock when the firing began on the right, and in a few minutes it was running like a train of powder on a floor, along the entire line. The rebels advanced with determination—not in a regular line, but in the guerilla mode—availing themselves of the trees and the undulations of the ground. Their design was to cut the division at the center, turn the regiments on the right composing Oglesby's brigade up against the creek and capture them. But their movements to that end were foiled. The regiments at the center being pressed, after standing a hot fire, begun gradually to fall back, which rendered it necessary for Oglesby to do the same as he separated, from the division, and the entire right wing of the division accordingly swung back, slowly at first….

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.91

And now occurred one of those wonders common in warfare. The enemy pressing hard upon our forces, General McClernand sent Major Brayman for reenforcements. He rode rapidly to the rear and came upon Colonel Cruft's brigade, who moved forward, crossed the road, and came up in rear of the 30th and 31st. These regiments were lying down and firing over the crest of a ridge. As Colonel Cruft came in rear of them they rose to their feet, not knowing whether the force in their rear was friend or foe. The 25th Kentucky supposing them to be rebels, poured in a volley, which did terrible execution. It is not possible to ascertain how many fell under the fire, but it was sufficient to throw the entire division into disorder, and at once there was almost a panic….

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.91

The enemy improved the opportunity, and advanced upon Dresser's and Schwartz's batteries, capturing five guns, taking possession of General McClernand's headquarters, and driving our forces nearly a mile and a half. They had opened the gap; and not only that, but had in the joust driven us, captured five guns, and had reason to feel that the day was theirs.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.91

But now they committed a fatal mistake. Instead of adhering to the original plan to escape, they resolved to follow up their advantage by pursuit, cut us up and capture the entire army.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.92

The fight had lasted nearly four hours, and McClernand's division was exhausted; besides they were out of ammunition.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.92

At this juncture General Wallace's division was thrown in front. They took up a position on a ridge, with Captain Taylor's battery in the center at the road, commanding it down the ridge to the bottom of a ravine. McClernand's division was making up its scattered ranks, ready to support Wallace. It was now just noon—nearly one o'clock. The rebels formed upon the ridge which General McClernand had occupied through the night. They were flushed with success and descended the ridge with the expectation of routing the Yankees. As they came in range, Taylor opened upon them with shell, grape and canister. They quailed before it, advanced at a slow pace, came to a halt, and as the infantry opened, began to fall back. Wallace improved the moment, moved on, drove them before him, regained the lost ground, recovered McClernand's tent and occupied the old ground….

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.92

The rebels might have escaped when Wallace was driving them back, but by some fatuity neglected the opportunity and were again boxed up. This made two distinct fights, but the day was not thus to close. There was to be a second display of coolness, daring and determined bravery of Union troops, fighting under the Stars and Stripes, resulting in a signal victory.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.93

The Iowa and Indiana boys composing Lauman's brigade of Smith's division, were ready to do their part in crushing out rebellion, and General Grant decided that they should have an opportunity to show their valor. Directly west of Fort Donelson, and beyond the breastworks there was a second ridge of land running parallel to that on which the breastworks were erected. The distance across from ridge to ridge, as near as I could judge by a somewhat minute survey, is about forty rods. On this outer ridge were ten rifle pits, made of logs, with a shallow ditch behind and the excavated earth thrown up in front. The western slope of the ridge was quite steep. The distance to the base was thirty rods as I judged, opening upon a meadow and cornfield. The slope had been forest, but the rebels had used their axes and cut down the trees, forming an abbatis not impassable because the forest was not dead, but a serious obstruction to the advance of an army. It was desirable that the rebels should be driven out of their pits, for they in part commanded Fort Donelson, lying about sixty rods farther east….

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.93–p.94

Colonel Lauman gave the 2d Iowa the honor of leading the charge. They moved across the meadow through a little belt of woods, came to the base of the hill, and met the leaden rain. But they paused not a moment. Then they encountered the fallen trees, but instead of being disheartened, they seemed to feel new life and energy. Without firing a shot, without flinching a moment or faltering as their ranks were thinned, they rushed up the hill, regardless of the fire in front or on their flank, jumped upon the rifle pits and drove the rebels down the eastern slope. They escaped into their inner line of defenses. Colonel Lauman did not deem it prudent to follow, but halted his men and poured a deadly fire upon the foe, in force, with four cannon behind the works.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.94

Then for ten minutes the fire was exceedingly severe. I visited the spot on Sunday afternoon and found the ground thick with bullets fired by the rebels. The trees were scarred but bore evidence on their limbs that the aim of the rebels had been much too high. Colonel Lauman called his men back to their rifle pits, and there they lay down upon their arms, holding the position through the night, ready with the first flash of dawn to make a breach into the line beyond….

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.94

Colonel Lauman was apprised during the night that the rebels were about to surrender, by a negro who escaped to his lines. Soon after daylight an officer, Major Calsbry, appeared, bearing a white flag and a note from General Buckner to General Grant, proposing a cessation of hostilities and the appointment of commissioners….

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.94

The victory was won, and Fort Donelson was ours, with its seventeen heavy size guns, its forty-eight field pieces, its fifteen thousand soldiers, its twenty thousand stand of arms, its tents and ammunition—all were unconditionally ours.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.95

Wild were the cheers, loud were the salutes from the fleet and from Taylor's batteries when the Stars and Stripes, the glorious old flag, was flung to the breeze upon the ramparts of Fort Donelson.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.95

I cannot give you the sights or the incidents. You must imagine them. Neither have I time to tell of the appearance of the rebels in their snuff-colored, shabby clothes—their bedquilts, pieces of carpeting, coverlids, sacking—but there they were, gloomy, downcast, humbled, apprehensive for the future; and yet I think that many of them were not sorry that there was to be no more fighting. I made myself at home among them, talked with them freely, heard their indignant utterances against Floyd, who had sneaked away with his Virginia regiments, the 36th, 50th and 51st, and a host of stragglers—officers many of them—who did not hesitate to desert their men in the hour of adversity. They went away at midnight after an angry altercation, as I was informed by a secession officer, between Pillow, Floyd and Buckner. I am also informed that about five thousand rebels escaped, the boats being loaded to the guards. Forest's Louisiana cavalry escaped on their horses along the creek. But the great bulk of the army is ours. Fifteen thousand prisoners! What shall we do with them? We have indeed drawn an elephant….

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.95

The following correspondence passed between General Grant, commanding the Federal forces, and General S. B. Buckner, commanding the Confederates:

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.96

Headquarters Fort Donelson, February 16, 1862.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.96

Sir: In consideration of all the circumstances governing the present situation of affairs at this station, I propose to the commanding officer of the Federal forces, the appointment of Commissioners to agree upon terms of capitulation of the forces and post under my command, and in that view suggest an armistice until 2 o'clock to-day.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.96

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

S. B. Buckner, Brig. Gen. C.S.A.

To Brig Gen. U. S. Grant, Con'g U. S. forces near

Fort Donelson….

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.96

Headquarters Army in the Field, near Donelson, Feb. 16, 1862.

To Gen. S. B. Buckner, Confederate Army—

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.96

No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obd't serv't,

U. S. Grant, Brig. Gen. Commanding.

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.96

Headquarters, Dover, Tenn., Feb. 16, 1862.

To Brig. Gen. U. S. Grant, U. S. A.:

Capture of Fort Donelson, America, Vol.8, p.96

Sir: The distribution of the forces under my command, incident to an unexpected change of commanders and the overwhelming force under your command, compel me, notwithstanding the brilliant success of the Confederate arms yesterday, to accept the ungenerous and unchivalrous terms which you propose. I am, dear sir,

Your very obedient servant,

S. B. Buckner, Brig. Con. C.S.A.

The Monitor and the Merrimac in Action

Title: The Monitor and the Merrimac in Action

Author: Charles Martin

Date: 1862

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.97-102

Dr. Martin, an eye-witness of the historic encounter between the Union ironclad Monitor and the Confederate ironclad Merrimac, in Hampton Roads, was a surgeon in the United States Navy, and rose to the rank of medical director. This account was given by him in an address delivered before the New York Commandery of the Loyal Legion in 1886.

The fight, which occurred Sunday, March 9, 1862, was one of the most important and significant in naval history, demonstrating as it did the value of armored vessels and the relative uselessness of the old-style wooden warships. Nevertheless it was indecisive, neither vessel being seriously injured and only a few men wounded on either side.

The Monitor was the first ironclad with a revolving turret, and was built under the direction of John Ericsson. On December 31, 1862, the Monitor sank in a storm off the Virginia capes.

Martin, Monitor and Merrimac in Action, America, Vol.8, p.97

COMPANIONS: I will tell you what I saw at Newport News when the "Merrimac" destroyed the "Congress" and the "Cumberland," and fought with the "Monitor." It was a drama in three acts, and twelve hours will elapse between the second and third acts.

Martin, Monitor and Merrimac in Action, America, Vol.8, p.97

"Let us begin at the beginning"—1861. The North Atlantic squadron is at Hampton Roads, except the frigate "Congress" and the razee "Cumberland"; they are anchored at Newport News, blockading the James River and Norfolk The "Merrimac," the Rebel ram, is in the dry dock of the Norfolk navy yard….

Martin, Monitor and Merrimac in Action, America, Vol.8, p.98–p.99

The "Monitor" is building in New York City…. It is determined to keep the "Merrimac" in the dry dock, wait the arrival of the "Monitor," send her out to meet her, and in the action it is positive that an opportunity will offer to pierce and sink her. The ram is a terror, and both sides say, "When the 'Merrimac' comes out!" The last of February, 1862, the "Monitor" is ready for sea; she will sail for Hampton Roads in charge of a steamer. There is a rumor that she has broken her steering gear before reaching Sandy Hook. She will be towed to Washington for repairs. The rebel spies report her a failure—steering defective, turret revolves with difficulty, and when the smoke of her guns in action is added to the defects of ventilation, it will be impossible for human beings to live aboard of her. No "Monitor" to fight, the Southern press and people grumble; they pitch into the "Merrimac." Why does she lie idle? Send her out to destroy the "Congress" and the "Cumberland," that have so long bullied Norfolk, then sweep away the fleet at Hampton Roads, starve out Fortress Monroe, go north to Baltimore and New York and Boston, and destroy and plunder; and the voice of the people, not always an inspiration, prevails, and the ram is floated and manned and armed, and March 8th is bright and sunny when she steams down the Elizabeth River to carry out the first part of her program. And all Norfolk and Portsmouth ride and run to the bank of the James, to have a picnic, and assist at a naval battle and victory. The cry of "wolf!" has so often been heard aboard the ships that the "Merrimac" has lost much of her terrors. They argue: "If she is a success, why don't she come out and destroy us?" And when seen this morning at the mouth of the river: "It is only a trial trip or a demonstration." But she creeps along the opposite shore, and both ships beat to quarters and get ready for action. The boats of the "Cumberland" are lowered, made fast to each other in line, anchored between the ship and the shore, about an eighth of a mile distant.

Martin, Monitor and Merrimac in Action, America, Vol.8, p.99–p.100

Here are two large sailing frigates, on a calm day, at slack water, anchored in a narrow channel, impossible to get under way and maneuver, and must lie and hammer, and be hammered, so long as they hold together, or until they sink at their anchors. To help them is a tug, the "Zouave," once used in the basin at Albany to tow canal boats under the grain elevator. The "Congress" is the senior ship; the tug makes fast to her. The "Congress" slips her cable and tries to get under way. The tug does her best and breaks her engine. The "Congress goes aground in line with the shore. The "Zouave" floats down the river, firing her popguns at the "Merrimac" as she drifts by her. The captain of the "Congress" was detached on the 7th. He is waiting a chance to go North. He serves as a volunteer in the action, refusing to resume command and deprive the first lieutenant of a chance for glory. The captain of the "Cumberland" has been absent since the 3d. He is president of a court-martial at this moment in session on board the "Roanoke" at Hampton Roads, so the command of both the ships devolves on the first lieutenants. On board the "Cumberland" all hands are allowed to remain on deck, watching the slow approach of the "Merrimac," and she comes on so slowly, the pilot declares she has missed the channel; she draws too much water to use her ram. She continues to advance, and two gunboats, the "Yorktown" and the "Teaser," accompany her. Again they beat to quarters, and every one goes to his station.

Martin, Monitor and Merrimac in Action, America, Vol.8, p.100–p.101

There is a platform on the roof of the "Merrimac." Her captain is standing on it. When she is near enough, he hails, "Do you surrender?" "Never!" is the reply. The order to fire is given; the shot of the starboard battery rattles on the iron roof of the "Merrimac." She answers with a shell; it sweeps the forward pivot gun, it kills and wounds ten of the gun's crew. A second slaughters the marines at the after pivot gun. The "Yorktown" and the "Teaser" keep up a constant fire. She bears down on the "Cumberland." She rams her just aft the starboard bow. The ram goes into the sides of the ship as a knife goes into a cheese. The "Merrimac" tries to back out; the tide is making; it catches against her great length at a right angle with the "Cumberland"; it slews her around; the weakened, lengthened ram breaks off; she leaves it in the "Cumberland." The battle rages, broadside answers broadside, and the sanded deck is red and slippery with the blood of the wounded and dying; they are dragged amidships out of the way of the guns; there is no one and no time to take them below. Delirium seizes the crew; they strip to their trousers, tie their handkerchiefs round their heads, kick off their shoes, fight and yell like demons, load and fire at will, keep it up for the rest of the forty-two minutes the ship is sinking, and fire a last gun as the water rushes into her ports….

Martin, Monitor and Merrimac in Action, America, Vol.8, p.101

The "Merrimac" turns to the "Congress." She is aground, but she fires her guns till the red-hot shot from the enemy sets her on fire, and the flames drive the men away from the battery. She has forty years of seasoning; she burns like a torch. Her commanding officer is killed, and her deck strewn with killed and wounded. The wind is off shore; they drag the wounded under the windward bulwark, where all hands take refuge from the flames. The sharpshooters on shore drive away a tug from the enemy. The crew and wounded of the "Congress are safely landed. She burns the rest of the afternoon and evening, discharging her loaded guns over the camp. At midnight the fire has reached her magazines—the "Congress" disappears.

Martin, Monitor and Merrimac in Action, America, Vol.8, p.101–p.102

When it is signaled to the fleet at Hampton Roads that the "Merrimac" has come out, the "Minnesota" leaves her anchorage and hastens to join the battle. Her pilot puts her aground off the Elizabeth River, and she lies there helpless. The "Merrimac" has turned back for Norfolk. She has suffered from the shot of the "Congress" and the "Cumberland," or she would stop and destroy the "Minnesota"; instead, with the "Yorktown" and "Teazer," she goes back into the river. Sunday morning, March 9th, the "Merrimac" is coming out to finish her work. She will destroy the "Minnesota." As she nears her, the "Monitor" appears from behind the helpless ship; she has slipped in during the night, and so quietly, her presence is unknown in the camp. And David goes out to meet Goliath, and every man who can walk to the beach sits down there, spectators of the first iron-clad battle in the world.

Martin, Monitor and Merrimac in Action, America, Vol.8, p.102

The day is calm, the smoke hangs thick on the water, the low vessels are hidden by the smoke. They are so sure of their invulnerability, they fight at arms' length. They fight so near the shore, the flash of their guns is seen, and the noise is heard of the heavy shot pounding the armor. They haul out for breath, and again disappear in the smoke. The "Merrimac" stops firing, the smoke lifts, she is running down the "Monitor," but she has left her ram in the "Cumberland." The "Monitor" slips away, turns, and renews the action. One P. M.—they have fought since 8:30 A. M.: The crews of both ships are suffocating under the armor. The frames supporting the iron roof of the "Merrimac are sprung and shattered. The turret of the "Monitor" is dented with shot, and is revolved with difficulty. The captain of the "Merrimac" is wounded in the leg; the captain of the "Monitor" is blinded with powder. It is a drawn game. The "Merrimac," leaking badly, goes back to Norfolk; the "Monitor" returns to Hampton Roads.

The Battle of Shiloh

Title: The Battle of Shiloh

Author: Benjamin Mayberry Prentiss

Date: 1862

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.103-106

Prentiss was a volunteer officer under General Grant, and commanded the Sixth Division, composed of raw troops, at the Battle of Shiloh, or Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, April 6-7, 1862. This account is from his official report, among the war records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Grant had at his command about 62,500 men, as opposed to about 40,500 Confederates under General A. S. Johnston, who fell in the action, and Beauregard.

Of the Union loss of about 13,000 in killed, wounded and prisoners at Shiloh, 2,280 surrendered with Brigadier-General Prentiss. The Confederate loss was about 10,500. Despite his surrender, the valiant and stubborn defense made by General Prentiss was a factor in preventing a decisive Confederate victory on the first days of the battle. Reenforced by a division under General Lew Wallace, and by a large part of General Buell's command, the Union Army scored a tactical victory in this battle.

Prentiss, Battle of Shiloh, America, Vol.8, p.103–p.104

AT three o'clock on the morning of Sunday, April 6, 1862, Colonel David Moore, Twenty-first Missouri, with five companies of his infantry regiment, proceeded to the front, and at break of day the advance pickets were driven in. Whereupon Colonel Moore pushed forward and engaged the enemy's advance, commanded by General Hardee. At this stage a messenger was sent to my headquarters, calling for the balance of the Twenty-fifth Missouri, which was promptly sent forward. This information received, I at once ordered the entire force into line, and the remaining regiments of the First Brigade, commanded by Colonel Everett Peabody, consisting of the Twenty-fifth Missouri, Sixteenth Wisconsin, and Twelfth Michigan Infantry, were advanced well to the front. I forthwith at this juncture communicated the fact of the attack in force to Major-General Smith and Brigadier-General S. A. Hurlbut.

Prentiss, Battle of Shiloh, America, Vol.8, p.104

Shortly before six o'clock, Colonel Moore having been severely wounded, his regiment commenced falling back, reaching our front line about six o'clock, the enemy being close upon his rear. Hereupon the entire force, excepting only the Sixteenth Iowa, which had been sent to the field the day before without ammunition, and the cavalry, which was held in readiness to the rear, was advanced to the extreme front, and thrown out alternately to the right and left.

Prentiss, Battle of Shiloh, America, Vol.8, p.104

Shortly after six o'clock the entire line was under fire, receiving the assault made by the entire force of the enemy, advancing in three columns simultaneously upon our left, center and right. This position was held until the enemy had passed our right flank, this movement being effected by reason of the falling back of some regiment to our right not belonging to the division.

Prentiss, Battle of Shiloh, America, Vol.8, p.104

Perceiving the enemy was flanking me, I ordered the division to retire in line of battle to the color line of our encampment, at the same time communicating to Generals Smith and Hurlbut the fact of the falling back, and asking for reenforcements.

Prentiss, Battle of Shiloh, America, Vol.8, p.104–p.105

Being again assailed, in position described, by an overwhelming force, and not being able longer to hold the ground against the enemy, I ordered the division to fall back to the line occupied by General Hurlbut, and at 9:05 a.m. reformed to the right of General Hurlbut, and to the left of Brigadier-General W. H. L. Wallace, who I found in command of the division assigned to Major-General Smith. At this point the Twenty-third Missouri Infantry, commanded by Colonel Tindall, which had just disembarked from a transport, and had been ordered to report to me as a part of the Sixth Division, joined me. This regiment I immediately assigned to position on the left. My battery (Fifth Ohio) was posted to the right on the road.

Prentiss, Battle of Shiloh, America, Vol.8, p.105

At about 10 o'clock my line was again assailed, and finding my command greatly reduced by reason of casualties and because of the falling back of many of the men to the river, they being panic-stricken—a majority of them having now for the first time been exposed to fire—I communicated with General W. H. L. Wallace, who sent to my assistance the Eighth Iowa Infantry, commanded by Colonel J. L. Geddes.

Prentiss, Battle of Shiloh, America, Vol.8, p.105–p.106

After having once driven the enemy back from this position Major-General U. S. Grant appeared upon the field. I exhibited to him the disposition of my entire force, which disposition received his commendation, and I received my final orders, which were to maintain that position at all hazards. This position I did maintain until 4 o'clock p.m., when General Hurlbut, being overpowered, was forced to retire. I was then compelled to change front with the Twenty-third Missouri, Twenty-first Missouri, Eighteenth Wisconsin, Eighteenth Missouri, and part of the Twelfth Michigan, occupying a portion of the ground vacated by General Hurlbut. I was in constant communication with Generals Hurlbut and Wallace during the day, and both of them were aware of the importance of holding our position until night. When the gallant Hurlbut was forced to retire General Wallace and myself consulted, and agreed to hold our positions at all hazards, believing that we could thus save the army from destruction; we having been now informed for the first time that all others had fallen back to the vicinity of the river. A few minutes after General W. H. L. Wallace received the wound of which he shortly afterwards died. Upon the fall of General Wallace, his division, excepting the Eighth Iowa, Colonel Geddes, acting with me, and the Fourteenth Iowa, Colonel Shaw; Twelfth Iowa, Colonel Woods, and Fifty-eighth Illinois, Colonel Lynch, retired from the field.

Prentiss, Battle of Shiloh, America, Vol.8, p.106

Perceiving that I was about to be surrounded, and having dispatched my aide, Lieutenant Edwin Moore, for reenforcements, I determined to assail the enemy, which had passed between me and the river, charging upon him with my entire force. I found him advancing in mass, completely encircling my command, and nothing was left but to harass him and retard his progress so long as might be possible. This I did until 5:30 p.m., when, finding that further resistance must result in the slaughter of every man in the command, I had to yield the fight. The enemy succeeded in capturing myself and 2,200 rank and file, many of them being wounded.

The Capture of New Orleans

Title: The Capture of New Orleans

Author: David G. Farragut

Date: 1862

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.107-116

With characteristic modesty Captain, later Admiral, Farragut, reports to Gideon Welles, Secretary of the United States Navy, the capture of New Orleans by a Union squadron on April 27, 1862. His report, given here, was dated May 6 on board the flagship Hartford, anchored off New Orleans. Farragut, commanding a blockading fleet of 17 vessels, cooperated with a mortar flotilla of 25 vessels under Commander David G. Porter in running by Forts Jackson and St. Philip, which, facing each other across the Mississippi, guarded the approach to the city. The feat was accomplished under a terrific fire, in which Farragut's flagship, the Hartford, was badly damaged. With the loss of only one vessel, as here recounted the Union fleet annihilated a Confederate flotilla of 13 gunboats and 2 ironclads. Immediately after Farragut took formal command of New Orleans, the city was occupied by Federal troops under General B. F. Butler.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.107

SIR: I have the honor herewith to forward my report, in detail, of the battle of New Orleans. On the 23d of April I made all my arrangements for the attack on, and passage of, Forts Jackson and St. Philip.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.107–p.108

Every vessel was as well prepared as the ingenuity of her commander and officers could suggest, both for the preservation of life and of the vessel, and perhaps there is not on record such a display of ingenuity as has been evinced in this little squadron. The first was by the engineer of the "Richmond," Mr. Moore, by suggesting that the sheet cables be stopped up and down on the sides in the line of the engines, which was immediately adopted by all the vessels. Then each commander made his own arrangements for stopping the shot from penetrating the boilers or machinery, that might come in forward or abaft, by hammocks, coal, bags of ashes, bags of sand, clothes-bags, and, in fact, every device imaginable. The bulwarks were lined with hammocks by some, with splinter nettings made of ropes by others. Some rubbed their vessels over with mud, to make their ships less visible, and some whitewashed their decks, to make things more visible by night during the fight, all of which you will find mentioned in the reports of the commanders. In the afternoon I visited each ship, in order to know positively that each commander understood my orders for the attack, and to see that all was in readiness. I had looked to their efficiency before. Every one appeared to understand his orders well, and looked forward to the conflict with firmness, but with anxiety, as it was to be in the night, or at two o'clock A. M.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.108

I had previously sent Captain Bell, with the petard man, with Lieutenant Commanding Crosby, in the "Pinola," and Lieutenant Commanding Caldwell, in the "Itasca," to break the chain which crossed the river and was supported by eight hulks, which were strongly moored. This duty was not thoroughly performed, in consequence of the failure to ignite the petards with the galvanic battery, and the great strength of the current. Still it was a success, and, under the circumstances, a highly meritorious one.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.109–p.110–p.111

The vessel boarded by Lieutenant Commanding Caldwell appears to have had her chains so secured that they could be cast loose, which was done by that officer, thereby making an opening sufficiently large for the ships to pass through. It was all done under a heavy fire and at a great hazard to the vessel, for the particulars of which I refer you to Captain Bell's report. Upon the night preceding the attack, however, I dispatched Lieutenant Commanding Caldwell to make an examination, and to see that the passage was still clear, and to make me a signal to that effect, which he did at an early hour. The enemy commenced sending down fire-rafts and lighting their fires on the shore opposite the chain about the same time, which drew their fire on Lieutenant Commanding Caldwell, but without injury. At about five minutes of two o'clock A. M., April 24th, signal was made to get under way (two ordinary red lights, so as not to attract the attention of the enemy), but owing to the great difficulty in purchasing their anchors, the "Pensacola" and some of the other vessels were not under way until half-past three. The enemy's lights, while they discovered us to them, were, at the same time, guides to us. We soon passed the barrier chains, the right column taking Fort St. Philip, and the left Fort Jackson. The fire became general, the smoke dense, and we had nothing to aim at but the flash of their guns; it was very difficult to distinguish friends from foes. Captain Porter had, by arrangement, moved up to a certain point on the Fort Jackson side with his gunboats, and I had assigned the same post to Captain Swartwout, in the "Portsmouth," to engage the water batteries to the southward and eastward of Fort Jackson, while his mortar vessels poured a terrific fire of shells into it. I discovered a fire-raft coming down upon us, and in attempting to avoid it ran the ship on shore, and the ram "Manassas," which I had not seen, lay on the opposite side of it, and pushed it down upon us. Our ship was soon on fire half-way up to her tops, but we backed off, and, through the good organization of our fire department, and the great exertions of Captain Wainwright and his first lieutenant, officers, and crew, the fire was extinguished. In the meantime our battery was never silent, but poured its missiles of death into Fort St. Philip, opposite to which we had got by this time, and it was silenced, with the exception of a gun now and then. By this time the enemy's gunboats, some thirteen in number, besides two iron-clad rams, the "Manassas" and "Louisiana," had become more visible. We took them in hand, and, in the course of a short time, destroyed eleven of them. We were now fairly past the forts, and the victory was ours, but still here and there a gunboat made resistance. Two of them had attacked the "Varuna," which vessel, by her greater speed, was much in advance of us; they ran into her and caused her to sink, but not before she had destroyed her adversaries, and their wrecks now lie side by side, a monument to the gallantry of Captain Boggs, his officers, and crew. It was a kind of guerilla; they were fighting in all directions. Captains Bailey and Bell, who were in command of the first and second divisions of gunboats, were as active in rendering assistance in every direction as lay in their power. Just as the scene appeared to be closing, the ram "Manassas" was seen coming up under full speed to attack us. I directed Captain Smith, in the "Mississippi," to turn and run her down; the order was instantly obeyed, by the "Mississippi" turning and going at her at full speed. Just as we expected to see the ram annihilated, when within fifty yards of each other, she put her helm hard aport, dodged the "Mississippi," and ran ashore. The "Mississippi" poured two broadsides into her, and sent her drifting down the river a total wreck. Thus closed our morning's fight.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.111

The Department will perceive that after the organization and arrangements had been made, and we had fairly entered into the fight, the density of the smoke from guns and fire-rafts, and the scenes passing on board our own ship and around us (for it was as if the artillery of heaven were playing upon the earth), it was impossible for the Flag-Officer to see how each vessel was conducting itself, and can only judge by the final results and their special reports, which are herewith enclosed; but I feel that I can say with truth that it has rarely been the lot of a commander to be supported by officers of more indomitable courage or higher professional merit.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.112

It now became me to look around for my little fleet, and to my regret I found that three were missing—the "Itasca," "Winona," and "Kennebec." Various were the speculations as to their fate, whether they had been sunk on the passage or had put back. I therefore determined immediately to send Captain Boggs, whose vessel was now sunk, through the Quarantine bayou, around to Commander Porter, telling him of our safe arrival, and to demand the surrender of the forts, and endeavor to get some tidings of the missing vessels. I also sent a dispatch by him to General Butler, informing him that the way was clear for him to land his forces through the Quarantine bayou, in accordance with previous arrangements, and that I should leave gunboats there to protect him against the enemy, who, I now perceived, had three or four gunboats left at the forts—the "Louisiana," an iron-clad battery of sixteen guns; the "McCrea," very similar in appearance to one of our gunboats, and armed very much in the same way; the "Defiance," and a river steamer transport.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.112–p.113–p.114

We then proceeded up to New Orleans, leaving the "Wissahickon" and "Kineo" to protect the landing of the General's troops. Owing to the slowness of some of the vessels, and our want of knowledge of the river, we did not reach the English Turn until about 10:30 A.M. on the 25th; but all the morning I had seen abundant evidence of the panic which had seized the people in New Orleans. Cotton-loaded ships on fire came floating down, and working implements of every kind, such as are used in ship-yards. The destruction of property was awful. We soon descried the new earthwork forts on the old lines on both shores. We now formed and advanced in the same order, two lines, each line taking its respective work. Captain Bailey was still far in advance, not having noticed my signal for close order, which was to enable the slow vessels to come up. They opened on him a galling fire, which caused us to run up to his rescue; this gave them the advantage of a raking fire on us for upward of a mile with some twenty guns, while we had but two nine-inch guns on our forecastle to reply to them. It was not long, however, before we were enabled to bear away and give the forts a broadside of shells, shrapnel, and grape, the "Pensacola" at the same time passing up and giving a tremendous broadside of the same kind to the starboard fort; and, by the time we could reload, the "Brooklyn," Captain Craven, passed handsomely between us and the battery and delivered her broadside, and shut us out. By this time the other vessels had gotten up, and ranged in one after another, delivering their broadsides in spiteful revenge for their ill treatment of the little "Cayuga." The forts were silenced, and those who could run were running in every direction. We now passed up to the city and anchored immediately in front of it, and I sent Captain Bailey on shore to demand the surrender of it from the authorities, to which the Mayor replied that the city was under martial law, and that he had no authority. General Lovell, who was present, stated that he should deliver up nothing, but in order to free the city from embarrassment he would restore the city authorities, and retire with his troops, which he did. The correspondence with the city authorities and myself is herewith annexed. I then seized all the steamboats and sent them down to Quarantine for General Butler's forces. Among the number of these boats is the famous "Tennessee," which our blockaders have been so long watching, but which, you will perceive, never get out.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.114

The levee of New Orleans was one scene of desolation. Ships, steamers, cotton, coal, etc., were all in one common blaze, and our ingenuity was much taxed to avoid the floating conflagration.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.114

I neglected to mention my having good information respecting the iron-clad rams which they were building. I sent Captain Lee up to seize the principal one, the "Mississippi," which was to be the terror of these seas, and no doubt would have been to a great extent; but she soon came floating by us all in flames, and passed down the river. Another was sunk immediately in front of the Custom-House; others were building in Algiers, just begun.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.114–p.115

I next went above the city eight miles, to Carrollton, where I learned there were two other forts, but the panic had gone before me. I found the guns spiked, and the gun-carriages in flames. The first work, on the right, reaches from the Mississippi nearly over to Pontchartrain, and has twenty-nine guns; the one on the left had six guns, from which Commander Lee took some fifty barrels of powder, and completed the destruction of the gun-carriages, etc. A mile higher up there were two other earthworks, but not yet armed.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.115

We discovered here, fastened to the right bank of the river, one of the most herculean labors I have ever seen—a raft and chain to extend across the river to prevent Foote's gunboats from descending. It is formed by placing three immense logs of not less than three or four feet in diameter and some thirty feet long; to the center one a two-inch chain is attached, running lengthwise the raft, and the three logs and chain are then trapped together by chains from one half to one inch, three or four layers, and there are ninety-six of these lengths composing the raft; it is at least three quarters of a mile long.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.115

On the evening of the 29th Captain Bailey arrived from below with the gratifying intelligence that the forts had surrendered to Commander Porter, and had delivered up all public property, and were being paroled, and that the navy had been made to surrender unconditionally, as they had conducted themselves with bad faith, burning and sinking their vessels while a flag of truce was flying and the forts negotiating for their surrender, and the "Louisiana," their great iron-clad battery, blown up almost alongside of the vessel where they were negotiating; hence their officers were not paroled, but sent home to be treated according to the judgment of the Government.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.115

General Butler came up the same day, and arrangements were made for bringing up his troops.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.115–p.116

I sent on shore and hoisted the American flag on the Custom-House, and hauled down the Louisiana State flag from the City Hall, as the Mayor had avowed that there was no man in New Orleans who dared to haul it down; and my own convictions are that if such an individual could have been found he would have been assassinated.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.116

Thus, sir, I have endeavored to give you an account of my attack upon New Orleans, from our first movement to the surrender of the city to General Butler, whose troops are now in full occupation, protected, however, by the "Pensacola," "Portsmouth," and one gunboat, while I have sent a force of seven vessels, under command of Captain Craven, up the river, to keep up the panic as far as possible. The large ships, I fear, will not be able to go higher than Baton Rouge, while I have sent the smaller vessels, under Commander Lee, as high as Vicksburg, in the rear of Jackson, to cut off their supplies from the West.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.116

I trust, therefore, that it will be found by the Government that I have carried out my instructions to the letter and to the best of my abilities, so far as this city is concerned. All of which is respectfully submitted.

Farragut, Capture of New Orleans, America, Vol.8, p.116

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,

Flag-Officer, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.

Hon. Gideon Welles,

Secretary of the Navy,

Washington, D. C.

The Peninsular Campaign

Title: The Peninsular Campaign

Author: George B. McClellan

Date: 1862

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.117-131

Succeeding Winfield Scott as commander of the Union armies, in November, 1861, McClellan spent the winter reorganizing and drilling his forces preparatory to conducting the Peninsular Campaign and the taking of Richmond. Instead of heeding Lincoln, however, and moving steadily on Richmond, McClellan began a scientific siege of Yorktown, as the first step in the campaign he here outlines to Secretary Stanton.

The differences between Lincoln and McClellan are clearly shown in the letter that follows from the President to the General, McClellan having protested Lincoln's action in holding back 40,000 men under McDowell for the protection of Washington City. Although Lee regarded McClellan as the ablest commander whom he met in the war, his faults as a commander in the field were flagrant. His ability to plan was greater than it was to strike. As a result he was superseded in the chief command of the Union armies by General Halleck, in July, 1862.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.117

HON. E. M. STANTON, Secretary of War:

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.117

Sir,—I have the honor to submit the following notes on the proposed operations of the active portion of the Army of the Potomac.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.117–p.118

The proposed plan of campaign is to assume Fort Monroe as the first base of operations, taking the line by Yorktown and West Point upon Richmond as the line of operations, Richmond being the objective point. It is assumed that the fall of Richmond involves that of Norfolk and the whole of Virginia; also that we shall fight a decisive battle between West Point and Richmond, to give which battle the rebels will concentrate all their available forces, understanding, as they will, that it involves the fate of their cause. It therefore follows:

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.118

1st. That we should collect all our available forces and operate upon adjacent lines, maintaining perfect communication between our lines.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.118

2d. That no time should be lost in reaching the field of battle.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.118

The advantages of the Peninsula between the York and James Rivers are too obvious to need explanation. It is also clear that West Point should as soon as possible be reached and be our main depot, that we may have the shortest line of land transportation for our supplies and the use of the York River.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.118

There are two methods of reaching this point.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.118

1st. By moving directly from Fort Monroe as a base, and trusting to the roads for our supplies, at the same time landing a strong corps as near Yorktown as possible, in order to turn the rebel lines of defense south of Yorktown, then to reduce Yorktown and Gloucester, by a siege in all probability, involving a delay of weeks perhaps.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.118–p.119

2d. To make a combined naval and land attack upon Yorktown, the first object of the campaign. This leads to the most rapid and decisive results. To accomplish this the navy should at once concentrate upon the York River all their available and most powerful batteries. Its reduction should not, in that case, require many hours. A strong corps would be pushed up the York, under cover of the navy, directly upon West Point, immediately upon the fall of Yorktown, and we could at once establish our new base of operations at a distance of some twenty-five miles from Richmond, with every facility for developing and bringing into play the whole of our available force on either or both banks of the James.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.119

It is impossible to urge too strongly the absolute necessity of the cooperation of the navy, as a part of this programme; without it the operations may be prolonged for many weeks, and we may be forced to carry in front several strong positions, which, by their aid, could be turned without serious loss of either time or men.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.119

It is also of first importance to bear in mind the fact already alluded to, that the capture of Richmond necessarily involves the prompt fall of Norfolk; while an operation against Norfolk, if successful, as the beginning of the campaign, facilitates the reduction of Richmond merely by the demoralization of the rebel troops involved, and that after the fall of Norfolk we should be obliged to undertake the capture of Richmond by the same means which would have accomplished it in the beginning, having meanwhile afforded the rebels ample time to perfect their defensive arrangements, for they could well know from the moment the Army of the Potomac changed its base to Fort Monroe that Richmond must be its ultimate object.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.119–p.120

It may be summed up in few words, that, for the prompt success of this campaign, it is absolutely necessary that the navy should at once throw its whole available force, its most powerful vessels, against Yorktown. There is the most important point—there the knot to be cut. An immediate decision upon the subject matter of this communication is highly desirable, and seems called for by the exigencies of the occasion.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.120

I am, sir, very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

CEO. B. McCLELLAN. Major General.

Headquarters, Army of the Potomac, Theological

Seminary, Va., March 19, 1862.

THE MOVEMENT TO THE PENINSULA

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.120

THE council, composed of four corps commanders, organized by the President of the United States, at its meeting on the 13th of March, adopted Fort Monroe as the base of operations for the movement of the Army of the Potomac upon Richmond.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.120

For the prompt and successful execution of the projected operation, it was regarded by all as necessary that the whole of the four corps should be employed, with at least the addition of ten thousand men drawn from the forces in the vicinity of Fortress Monroe: that position and its dependencies being regarded as amply protected by the naval force in its neighborhood, and the advance of the main army up the Peninsula, so that it could be safely left with a small garrison.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.120–p.121

In addition to the land forces, the cooperation of the navy was desired in the projected attack upon the batteries at Yorktown and Gloucester, as well as in controlling the York and James Rivers for the protection of our flanks, and the use of transports, bringing supplies to the army. With these expectations, and for reasons stated elsewhere in this report, my original plan of moving by Urbana and West Point was abandoned, and the line with Fortress Monroe as a base adopted. In the arrangements for the transportation of the army to the Peninsula by water, the vessels were originally ordered to rendezvous mainly at Annapolis, but upon the evacuation of Manassas and the batteries of the lower Potomac by the enemy, it became more convenient to embark the troops and material at Alexandria, and orders to that effect were at once given.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.121

In making the preliminary arrangements for the movement, it was determined that the First Corps (Gen. McDowell's) should move as a unit, first, and effect a landing either at the Sand-Box, some four miles south of Yorktown, in order to turn all the enemy's defenses at Ship Point, Howard's Bridge, Big Bethel, etc., or else, should existing circumstances render it preferable, land on the Gloucester side of York River, and move on West Point.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.121–p.122

The transports, however, arrived slowly and few at a time. In order, therefore, to expedite matters, I decided to embark the army by divisions as transports arrived, keeping army corps together as much as possible, and to collect the troops at Fortress Monroe. In determining the order of embarkation, convenience and expedition were especially consulted, except that the First Corps was to embark last, as I intended to move it in mass to its point of disembarkation, and to land it on either bank of the York, as might then be determined….

Washington, April 9th, 1862.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.122

Major-General McClellan:—

My Dear Sir,—Your dispatches, complaining that you are not properly sustained, while they do not offend me, do pain me very much.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.122

Blenker's division was withdrawn from you before you left here, and you know the pressure under which I did it, and, as I thought, acquiesced in it, certainly without reluctance.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.122–p.123

After you left I ascertained that less than twenty thousand unorganized men, without a single battery, were all you designed to be left for the defense of Washington and Manassas Junction; and part of this even was to go to General Hooker's old position. General Banks' old corps, once designed for Manassas Junction, was diverted and tied up on the line of Winchester and Strasburg, and could not leave it without again exposing the upper Potomac, and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. This presented (or would present, when McDowell and Sumner should be gone) a great temptation to the enemy to turn back from the Rappahannock and sack Washington. My explicit order that Washington should, by the judgment of all the commanders of army corps, be left entirely secure, had been neglected. It was precisely this that drove me to detain McDowell.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.123

I do not forget that I was satisfied with your arrangement to leave Banks at Manassas Junction; but when that arrangement was broken up and nothing was substituted for it, of course I was constrained to substitute something for it myself. And allow me to ask, "Do you really think I should permit the line from Richmond via Manassas Junction to this city to be entirely open, except what resistance could be presented by twenty thousand unorganized troops?" This is a question which the country will not allow me to evade.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.123

There is a curious mystery about the numbers of the troops now with you. When I telegraphed you on the 6th, saying you had over a hundred thousand with you, I had just obtained from the Secretary of War a statement, taken, as he said, from your own returns, making 108,000 then with you and en route to you. You now say you will have but 85,000 when all en route to you shall have reached you. How can the discrepancy of 23,000 be accounted for?

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.123

As to General Wood's command, I understand it is doing for you precisely what a like number of your own would have to do, if that command was away.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.123–p.124

I suppose the whole force which has gone forward for you is with you by this time, and if so, I think it is the precise time to strike a blow. By delay the enemy will relatively gain upon you—that is, he will gain faster, by fortifications and reenforcements, than you can by reenforcements alone.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.124

And once more, let me tell you, it is indispensable to you that you strike a blow. I am powerless to help this. You will do me the justice to remember. I always insisted that going down the bay in search of a field, instead of fighting at or near Manassas, was only shifting and not surmounting a difficulty; that we would find the same enemy, and the same or equal intrenchments, at either place. The country will not fail to note—is now noting—that the present hesitation to move upon an intrenched enemy, is but the story of Manassas repeated.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.124

I beg to assure you that I have never written you, or spoken to you, in greater kindness of feeling than now, nor with a fuller purpose to sustain you, so far as in my most anxious judgment I consistently can. But you must act.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.124

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN….

CONCLUSION OF MCCLELLAN'S REPORT TO THE WAR DEPARTMENT

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.124

IN this report I have confined myself to a plain narrative of such facts as are necessary for the purposes of history. Where it was possible I have preferred to give these facts in the language of dispatches, written at the time of their occurrence, rather than to attempt a new relation….

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.125

This report is, in fact, the history of the Army of the Potomac. During the period occupied in the organization of that army, it served as a barrier against the advance of a lately victorious enemy, while the fortification of the capital was in progress, and under the discipline which it then received it acquired strength, education, and some of that experience which is necessary to success in active operations, and which enabled it afterward to sustain itself under circumstances trying to the most heroic men. Frequent skirmishes occurred along the lines, conducted with great gallantry, which inured our troops to the realities of war.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.125

The army grew into shape but slowly, and the delays which attended on the obtaining of arms, continued late into the winter of 1861-2, were no less trying to the soldiers than to the people of the country. Even at the time of the organization of the Peninsular campaign, some of the finest regiments were without rifles, nor were the utmost exertions on the part of the military authorities adequate to overcome the obstacles to active service.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.125–p.126

When at length the army was in condition to take the field, the Peninsular campaign was planned, and entered upon with enthusiasm by officers and men. Had this campaign been followed up as it was designed, I cannot doubt that it would have resulted in a glorious triumph to our arms, and the permanent restoration of the power of the government in Virginia and North Carolina, if not throughout the revolting States. It was, however, otherwise ordered, and instead of reporting a victorious campaign, it has been my duty to relate the heroism of a reduced army, sent upon an expedition into an enemy's country, there to abandon one, and originate another new campaign, which might and would have been successful if supported with appreciation of its necessities, but which failed because of the repeated failure of promised support, at the most critical, and, as it proved, the most fatal moments.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.126

That heroism surpasses ordinary description. Its illustration must be left for the pen of the historian in times of calm reflection, when the nation shall be looking back to the past from the midst of peaceful days.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.126

For me, now, it is sufficient to say, that my comrades were victors on every field save one, and there the endurance of a single corps accomplished the object of its fighting, and by securing to the army its transit to the James, left to the enemy a ruinous and barren victory.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.126–p.127–p.128

The Army of the Potomac was first reduced by the withdrawal from my command of the division of General Blenker, which was ordered to the Mountain Department, under General Fremont. We had scarcely landed on the Peninsula, when it was further reduced by a dispatch, revoking a previous order giving me command of Fortress Monroe, and under which I had expected to take ten thousand men from that point, to aid in our operations. Then, when under fire before the defenses of Yorktown, we received the news of the withdrawal of General McDowell's corps, of about 35,000 men. This completed the overthrow of the original plan of the campaign. About one-third of my entire army, (five divisions of out of fourteen, one of the nine remaining being little larger than a brigade), was thus taken from me. Instead of a rapid advance which I had planned, aided by a flank movement up the York River, it was only left to besiege Yorktown. That siege was successfully conducted by the army, and when these strong works at length yielded to our approaches, the troops rushed forward to the sanguinary but successful battle of Williamsburg, and thus opened an almost unresisted advance to the banks of the Chickahominy. Richmond lay before them, surrounded with fortifications and guarded by an army larger than our own; but the prospect did not shake the courage of the brave men who composed my command. Relying still on the support which the vastness of our undertaking, and the grand results depending on our success seemed to insure us, we pressed forward. The weather was stormy beyond precedent, the deep soil of the Peninsula was at times one vast morass. The Chickahominy rose to a higher stage than had been known for years before. Pursuing the advance, the crossings were seized, and the right wing extended to effect a junction with reenforcements now promised and earnestly desired, and upon the arrival of which the complete success of the campaign seemed clear, The brilliant Battle of Hanover Court House was fought, which opened the way for the first corps, with the aid of which, had it come, we should then have gone into the enemy's capital. It never came. The bravest army could not do more, under such overwhelming disappointment, than the Army of the Potomac then did. Fair Oaks attests their courage and endurance, when they hurled back again and again the vastly superior forces of the enemy. But mortal men could not accomplish the miracles that seem to have been expected of them. But one course was left; a flank march in the face of a powerful enemy, to another and better base, one of the most hazardous movements in war. The Army of the Potomac holding its own safety, and almost the safety of our cause, in its hands, was equal to the occasion. The Seven Days are classical in American history; those days in which the noble soldiers of the Union and the Constitution fought an overwhelming enemy by day, and retreated from successive victories by night, through a week of battle, closing the terrible scenes of conflict with the ever memorable victory at Malvern, where they drove back, beaten and shattered, the entire eastern army of the Confederacy, and thus secured for themselves a place of rest, and a point for a new advance upon the capital from the banks of the James.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.128–p.129–p.130

Richmond was still within our grasp, had the Army of the Potomac been reenforced and permitted to advance. But counsels, which I cannot but think subsequent events proved unwise, prevailed in Washington, and we were ordered to abandon the campaign. Never did soldiers better deserve the thanks of a nation than the Army of the Potomac for the deeds of the Peninsular campaign, and although that meed was withheld from them by the authorities, I am persuaded they have received the applause of the American people. The Army of the Potomac was recalled from within sight of Richmond, and incorporated with the Army of Virginia. The disappointments of the campaign on the Peninsula, had not dampened their ardor or diminished their patriotism. They fought well, faithfully, gallantly under General Pope; yet were compelled to fall back on Washington, defeated and almost demoralized. The enemy no longer occupied in guarding his own capital, poured his troops northward, entered Maryland, threatened Pennsylvania, and even Washington itself. Elated by his recent victories, and assured that our troops were disorganized and dispirited, he was confident that the seat of war was now permanently transferred to the loyal States, and that his own exhausted soil was to be relieved from the burden of supporting two hostile armies. But he did not understand the spirit which animated the soldiers of the Union. I shall not, nor can I living forget that, when I was ordered to the command of the troops for the defense of the capital, the soldiers with whom I had shared so much of the anxiety and pain and suffering of the war, had not lost their confidence in me as their commander. They sprang to my call with all their ancient vigor, discipline and courage. I led them into Maryland. Fifteen days after they had fallen back defeated, before Washington, they vanquished the enemy on the rugged heights of South Mountain, pursued him to the hard fought field of Antietam, and drove him, broken and disappointed, across the Potomac into Virginia.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.130

The army had need of rest. After the terrible experiences of battles and marches, with scarcely an interval of repose, which they had gone through from the time of leaving for the Peninsula, the return to Washington, the defeat in Virginia, the victory at South Mountain, and again at Antietam, it was not surprising that they were, in a large degree, destitute of the absolute necessaries to effective duty. Shoes were worn out, blankets were lost, clothing was in rags; in short the army was unfit for active service, and an interval for rest and equipment was necessary.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.130

When the slowly forwarded supplies came to us, I led the army across the river renovated and refreshed, in good order and discipline, and followed the retreating foe to a position where I was confident of decisive victory, when in the midst of the movement, while my advanced guard was actually in contact with the enemy, I was removed from the command.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.130

I am devoutly grateful to God that my last campaign with this brave army was crowned with a victory which saved the nation from the greatest peril it had then undergone.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.131

I have not accomplished my purpose, if, by this report, the Army of the Potomac is not placed high on the roll of the historic armies of the world.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.131

Its deeds ennoble the nation to which it belongs. Always ready for battle, always firm, steadfast and trustworthy, I never called on it in vain; nor will the nation never have cause to attribute its want of success, as under other commanders, to any failure of patriotism or bravery in that noble body of American soldiers.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.131

No man can justly charge upon any portion of that army, from the commanding general to the private, any lack of devotion to the service of the United States government, and to the cause of the Constitution and the Union. They have proved their fealty in much sorrow, suffering, danger, and through the very shadow of death. Their comrades dead on all the fields where we fought, have scarcely more claim to the honor of a nation's reverence than the survivors to the justice of a nation's gratitude.

McClellan, The Peninsular Campaign, America, Vol.8, p.131

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE B. McCLELLAN, Maj.-Gen. U. S. A.

The Second Battle of Bull Run

Title: The Second Battle of Bull Run

Author: Thomas Jonathan Jackson

Date: 1862

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.132-138

Jackson, who played an Important part in the Confederate victory at the second Battle of Bull Run (August 29-30, 1862), had earned his sobriquet, "Stonewall," at the first Battle of Bull Run, when the stubborn resistance of his brigade moved General Bee to cry out to his own hard-pressed North Carolinians, "Look at Jackson—there he stands like a stone wall." This, Jackson's own account of the second battle, is among the official records in the War Department.

In this engagement were about 50,000 Confederates under Lee, and a Federal army of about 70,000 under General Pope. Preceding it, Jackson with 25,000 men, made a forced march and destroyed the Federal supplies and war munitions at Manassas and Bristow stations. In defeat, Pope withdrew to defenses about Washington, having lost 14,500 men. The Confederate loss was about 5000 less. As a result of this battle Jackson was made a major-general.

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.132

PURSUING the instructions of the commanding general, I left Jeffersonton on the morning of the 25th [August, 1862] to throw my command between Washington City and the army of General Pope and to break up his railroad communication with the Federal capital….

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.132

On the next day (26th) the march was continued, diverging to the right at Salem, crossing the Bull Run Mountain through Thoroughfare Gap, and passing Gainesville, reached Bristoe Station, on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, after sunset…. My command was now in the rear of General Pope's army, separating it from the Federal capital and its base of supply….

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.133

Learning that the enemy had collected at Manassas Junction, a station about 7 miles distant, stores of great value, I deemed it important that no time should be lost in securing them…. The duty was cheerfully undertaken by all who were assigned to it and most promptly and successfully executed….

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.133

The next morning the divisions under command of Generals Hill and Taliaferro moved to Manassas Junction, the division of General Ewell remaining at Bristoe Station….

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.133

…. Orders were given to supply the troops with rations and other articles which they could properly make subservient to their use from the captured property. It was vast in quantity and of great value, comprising 50,000 pounds of bacon, 1,000 barrels of corned beef, 2,000 barrels of salt pork, 2,000 barrels of flour, quartermaster's, ordnance, and sutler's stores deposited in buildings and filling two trains of cars. Having appropriated all that we could use, and unwilling that the residue should again fall into the hands of the enemy, who took possession of the place next day, orders were given to destroy all that remained after supplying the immediate wants of the army. This was done during the night. General Taliaferro moved his division that night across to the Warrenton and Alexandria turnpike, pursuing the road to Sudley's Mill, and crossing the turnpike in the vicinity of Groveton, halted near the battle-field of July 21, 1861. Ewell's and Hill's divisions joined Jackson's on the 28th.

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.134–p.135

My command had hardly concentrated north of the turnpike before the enemy's advance reached the vicinity of Groveton from the direction of Warrenton. General Stuart kept me advised of the general movements of the enemy, while Colonel Rosser, of the cavalry, with his command, and Colonel Bradley T. Johnson, commanding Campbell's brigade, remained in front of the Federals and operated against their advance. Dispositions were promptly made to attack the enemy, based upon the idea that he would continue to press forward upon the turnpike toward Alexandria; but as he did not appear to advance in force, and there was reason to believe that his main body was leaving the road and inclining toward Manassas Junction, my command was advanced through the woods, leaving Groveton on the left, until it reached a commanding position near Brawner's house. By this time it was sunset; but as his column appeared to be moving by, with its flank exposed, I determined to attack at once, which was vigorously done by the divisions of Taliaferro and Ewell. The batteries of Wooding, Poague, and Carpenter were placed in position in front of Starke's brigade and above the village of Groveton, and, firing over the heads of our skirmishers, poured a heavy fire of shot and shell upon the enemy. This was responded to by a very heavy fire from the enemy, forcing our batteries to select another position. By this time Taliaferro's command, with Lawton's and Trimble's brigades on his left, was advanced from the woods to the open field, and was now moving in gallant style until it reached an orchard on the right of our line and was less than 100 yards from a large force of the enemy. The conflict here was fierce and sanguinary. Although largely reenforced, the Federals did not attempt to advance, but maintained their ground with obstinate determination.

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.135

Both lines stood exposed to the discharges of musketry and artillery until about 9 o'clock, when the enemy slowly fell back, yielding the field to our troops….

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.135

Although the enemy moved off under cover of the night and left us in quiet possession of the field, he did not long permit us to remain inactive or in doubt as to his intention to renew the conflict.

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.135

The next morning (29th) I found that he had abandoned the ground occupied as the battle-field the evening before and had moved farther to the east and to my left, placing himself between my command and the Federal capital.—

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.135

In the morning, about 10 o'clock, the Federal artillery opened with spirit and animation upon our right, which was soon replied to by the batteries of Poague, Carpenter, Dement, Brockenbrough and Latimer, under Major (L. M.) Shumaker. This lasted for some time, when the enemy moved around more to our left to another point of attack. His next effort was directed against our left. This was vigorously repulsed by the batteries of Braxton, Crenshaw and Pegram.

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.136

About 2 p.m. the Federal infantry in large force advanced to the attack of our left, occupied by the division of General Hill. It pressed forward, in defiance of our fatal and destructive fire, with great determination, a portion of it crossing a deep cut in the railroad track and penetrating in heavy force an interval of nearly 175 yards, which separated the right of Gregg's from the left of Thomas' brigade. For a short time Gregg's brigade, on the extreme left, was isolated from the main body of the command; but the Fourteenth South Carolina Regiment, then in reserve, with the Forty-ninth Georgia, left of Colonel Thomas, attacked the exultant enemy with vigor, and drove them back across the railroad track with great slaughter. General McGowan reports that the opposing forces at one time delivered their volleys into each other at the distance of 10 paces. Assault after assault was made on the left, exhibiting on the part of the enemy great pertinacity and determination, but every advance was most successfully and gallantly driven back.

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.136

General Hill reports that six separate and distinct assaults were thus met and repulsed by his division, assisted by Hays' brigade, Colonel Forno commanding.

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.136–p.137

By this time the brigade of General Gregg, which from its position on the extreme left was most exposed to the enemy's attack, had nearly expended its ammunition…. It was now retired to the rear to take some repose after seven hours of severe service, and General Early's brigade, of Ewell's division, with the Eighth Louisiana Regiment, took its place. On reaching his position General Early found that the enemy had obtained possession of the railroad and a piece of wood in front, there being at this point a deep cut, which furnished a strong defense. Moving through a field he advanced upon the enemy, drove them from the wood and railroad cut with great slaughter, and followed in pursuit some 200 yards…. As it was not desirable to bring on a general engagement that evening General Early was recalled to the railroad, where Thomas, Pender, and Archer had firmly maintained their positions during the day. Early kept his position there until the following morning….

Jackson, Second Battle of Bull Run, America, Vol.8, p.137–p.138

On the following day (30th) my command occupied the ground and the divisions the same relative position to each other and to the field which they held the day before, forming the left wing of the army, General Longstreet's command forming the right wing…. the Federal infantry, about 4 o'clock in the evening, moved from under cover of the wood and advanced in several lines, first engaging the right, but soon extending its attack to the center and left. In a few moments our entire line was engaged in a fierce and sanguinary struggle with the enemy. As one line was repulsed another took its place and pressed forward as if determined by force of numbers and fury of assault to drive us from our positions. So impetuous and well sustained were these onsets as to induce me to send to the commanding general for reen forcements, but the timely and gallant advance of General Longstreet on the right relieved my troops from the pressure of overwhelming numbers and gave to those brave men the chances of a more equal conflict. As Longstreet pressed upon the right the Federal advance was checked, and soon a general advance of my whole line was ordered. Eagerly and fiercely did each brigade press forward, exhibiting in parts of the field scenes of close encounter and murderous strife not witnessed often in the turmoil of battle. The Federals gave way before our troops, fell back in disorder, and fled precipitately, leaving their dead and wounded on the field. During their retreat the artillery opened with destructive power upon the fugitive masses. The infantry followed until darkness put an end to the pursuit.

Antietam

Title: Antietam

Author: George B. McClellan

Date: 1862

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.139-149

In this official report to the War Department of the Battle of Antietam, fought September 16-17, 1862, General McClellan states that nearly 209,000 men were engaged, whereas Civil War historians are generally agreed that McClellan commanded a Federal force of about 75,000 against 40,000 Confederates under Lee. This was one of the bloodiest battles of the war, more men being killed on the second day than on any other one day between 1861 and 1865.

Tactically, it was a drawn battle, though the military verdict is that McClellan, who brought only a part of his force into action, made grave blunders, while the generalship of Lee, who utilized nearly every man, was almost faultless. Strategically, however, it was an important Federal victory, since Lee was forced to abandon his aggressive campaign and retire into Virginia. "Without McClellan's victory," says Rhodes, "the emancipation proclamation might never have been issued."

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.139

THE enemy occupied a strong position on the heights, on the West side of Antietam Creek, displaying a large force of infantry and cavalry, with numerous batteries of artillery, which opened on our columns as they appeared in sight on the Keadysville and Sharpsburg turnpike, which fire was returned by Captain Tidball's light battery, 2d United States Artillery, and Pettit's battery, 1st New York Artillery….

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.139–p.140

Antietam Creek, in this vicinity, is crossed by four stone bridges, the upper one on the Keadysville and Williamsport road; the 2d on the Keadysville and Sharpsburg turnpike, some two and a half miles below; the third about a mile below the second, on the Rohrersville and Sharpsburg road; and the fourth near the mouth of Antietam Creek, on the road leading from Harper's Ferry to Sharpsburg, some three miles below the third. The stream is sluggish, with few and difficult fords.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.140

After a rapid examination of the position, I found that it was too late to attack that day, and at once directed the placing of the batteries of position of the center, and indicated the bivouacs for the different corps, massing them near and on both sides of the Sharpsburg turnpike. The corps were not all in their positions until the next morning after sunrise.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.140

On the morning of the 16th it was discovered that the enemy had changed the position of his batteries. The masses of his troops were, however, still concealed behind the opposite heights. Their left and center were upon and in front of the Sharpsburg and Hagerstown turnpike, hidden by woods and irregularities of the ground; their extreme left resting upon a wooded eminence near the cross roads to the north of J. Miller's farm, their left resting upon the Potomac. Their line extended south, the right resting upon the hills to the south of Sharpsburg, near Snavoley's farm….

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.140–p.141

It was afternoon before I could move the troops to their positions for attack, being compelled to spend the morning in reconnoitering the new position taken up by the enemy, examining the ground, finding fords and clearing their approaches, and hurrying up the ammunition and supply trains, which had been delayed by the rapid march of the troops over the few practicable approaches from Frederick. These had been crowded by the masses of infantry, cavalry and artillery, pressing on with the hope of overtaking the enemy before he could form to resist an attack; many of the troops were out of rations on the previous day, and a good deal of their ammunition had been expended in the severe action of the 14th….

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.141

About 2 P. M. General Hooker, with his corps…. was ordered to cross the Antietam at a ford, and at bridge No. 1 a short distance above, to attack, and if possible turn the enemy's left…. On reaching the vicinity of the enemy's left, a sharp contest commenced with the Pennsylvania Reserves, the advance of General Hooker's corps, near the house of Dr. Miller. The enemy was driven from the strip of woods where he was first met, the firing lasted until after dark, when General Hooker's corps rested on their arms, on ground won from the enemy….

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.141

…. At daylight, on the 17th, the action was commenced by the skirmishers of the Pennsylvania Reserves. The whole of General Hooker's corps was soon engaged, and drove the enemy from the open field in front of the first line of woods, into a second line of woods beyond, which runs to the eastward of and nearly parallel to the Sharpsburg and Hagerstown turnpike….

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.141–p.142

For about two hours the battle raged with varied success, the enemy endeavoring to drive our troops into the second line of wood, and ours in turn to get possession of the line in front. Our troops ultimately succeeded in forcing the enemy back into the woods near the turnpike….

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.142

At the time of General Sedgwick's advance, General Hooker, while urging on his command, was seriously wounded in the foot and taken from the field. The repulse of the enemy offered opportunity to rearrange the lines and reorganize the commands on the right, now more or less in confusion. The batteries of the Pennsylvania Reserve, on high ground near I. Poffenburger's house, opened fire and checked several attempts of the enemy to establish batteries in front of our right, to turn that flank and enfilade the lines.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.142

While this conflict was so obstinately raging on the right, General French was pushing his division against the enemy still further to the left. This division crossed the Antietam at the same ford as General Sedgwick, and immediately in his rear. Passing over the stream in three columns, the division marched about a mile from the ford, then facing to the left, moved in three lines towards the enemy…. The division was first assailed by a fire of artillery, but steadily advanced, driving the enemy's skirmishers, and encountered the infantry in some force at the group of houses on Roulette's farm. General Weber's brigade gallantly advanced with an unwavering front, and drove the enemy from their position about the houses.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.143

While General Weber was hotly engaged with the first line of the enemy, General French received orders from General Sumner, his corps commander, to push on with renewed vigor to make a diversion in favor of the attack on the right. As the line reached the crest of the hill, a gallant fire was opened on it from the sunken road and corn-field. Here a terrific fire of musketry burst from both lines, and the battle raged along the whole line with great slaughter. The enemy attempted to turn the left of the line, but were met by the 7th Virginia and 1 32d Pennsylvania Volunteers, and repulsed.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.143

Foiled in this, the enemy made a determined assault on the front, but was met by a charge from our lines, which drove him back with severe loss, leaving in our hands some 300 prisoners, and several stands of colors. The enemy having been repulsed by the terrible execution of the batteries and the musketry fire on the extreme right, now attempted to assist the attack on General French's division, by assaulting him on his right, and endeavoring to turn his flank, but this attack was met and checked by the 14th Indiana and 8th Ohio volunteers, and by canister from Captain Tomkins's battery, 1st Rhode Island artillery. Having been under an almost continuous fire for nearly four hours, and their ammunition being nearly exhausted, the division now took position immediately below the crest of the heights on which they had so gallantly fought, the enemy making no attempt to regain their lost ground….

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.144

Our troops on the left of this part of the line, having driven the enemy far back, they, with reenforced numbers, made a determined attack directly in front. To meet this, Colonel Barlow brought his two regiments to their position in line, and drove the enemy through the cornfield into the orchard beyond, under a heavy fire of musketry, and a fire of canister from two pieces of artillery in the orchard and a battery further to the right, throwing shell and case-shot. This advance gave us possession of Piper's house, the strong point contended for by the enemy at this part of the line, it being a defensible building, several hundred yards in advance of the sunken road….

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.144

Between 12 and 1 p.m., General Franklin's corps arrived on the field of battle, having left their camp near Crampton's Pass at 6 a.m., leaving General Couch with orders to move with his division to occupy Maryland heights.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.144

General Smith's division led the column, followed by General Slocum's.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.144–p.145

It was first intended to keep this corps in reserve on the east side of the Antietam, to operate on either flank or on the center, as circumstances might require. But, on nearing Keadysville, the strong opposition on the right, developed by the attacks of Hooker and Sumner, rendered it necessary to send this corps at once to the assistance of the right wing. On nearing the field, hearing that one of our batteries ("A," 4th U. S. Artillery), commanded by Lieutenant Thomas, who occupied the same position as Lieutenant Woodruff's battery in the morning, was hotly engaged, without supports, General Smith sent two regiments to its relief from General Hancock's brigade. On inspecting the ground, General Smith ordered the other regiment of Hancock's brigade, with Frank's and Cowen's batteries, 1st New York Artillery, to the threatened position; Lieutenant Thomas and Captain Cothran, commanding batteries, bravely held their positions against the advancing enemy, handling their batteries with skill….

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.145

Towards the middle of the afternoon, proceeding to the right, I found that Sumner's, Hooker's, and Mansfield's corps had met with serious losses. Several general officers had been carried from the field severely wounded, and the aspect of affairs was anything but promising. At the risk of greatly exposing our center, I ordered two brigades from Porter's corps, the only available troops, to reenforce the right. Six battalions of Sykes's regulars had been thrown across the Antietam bridge on the main road, to attack and drive back the enemy's sharpshooters, who were annoying Pleasonton's horse batteries in advance of the bridge. Warren's brigade of Porter's corps was detached to hold a position on Burnside's right and rear, so that Porter was left at one time with only a portion of Sykes's division, and one small brigade of Morell's division (but little over three thousand men) to hold his important position.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.145–p.146

General Sumner expressed the most decided opinion against another attempt during that day to assault the enemy's position in front, as portions of our troops were so much scattered and demoralized. In view of these circumstances, after making changes in the positions of some of the troops, I directed the different commanders to hold their positions, and, being satisfied that this could be done without the assistance of the two brigades from the center, I countermanded the order which was in course of execution.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.146

On the morning of the 17th the troops of General Burnside held the left of the line opposite bridge No. 3. The attack on the right was to have been supported by an attack on the left. Preparatory to this attack, on the evening of the 16th, General Burnside's corps was moved forward and to the left, and took up a position nearer the bridge.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.146

I visited General Burnside's position on the 16th, and after pointing out to him the proper dispositions to be made of his troops during the day and night, informed him that he would probably be required to attack the enemy's right on the following morning, and directed him to make careful reconnoissances….

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.146

Early on the morning of the 17th, I ordered General Burnside to form his troops, and hold them in readiness to assault the bridge in his front, and to await further orders.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.146

At eight o'clock an order was sent to him by Lieutenant Wilson, Topographical Engineers to carry the bridge, then to gain possession of the heights beyond, and to advance along their crest upon Sharpsburg and its rear.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.147

After some time had elapsed, not hearing from him, I despatched an aide to ascertain what had been done. The aide returned with the information that but little progress had been made. I then sent him back with an order to General Burnside, to assault the bridge at once, and carry it at all hazards. The aide returned to me a second time, with the report that the bridge was still in the possession of the enemy. Whereupon I directed Colonel Sackett, Inspector General, to deliver to General Burnside my positive order to push forward his troops without a moment's delay, and, if necessary, to carry the bridge at the point of the bayonet, and I ordered Colonel Sackett to remain with General Burnside and see that the order was executed promptly.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.147

After these three hours' delay, the bridge was carried at 1 o'clock by a brilliant charge of the 51st New York and 51st Pennsylvania Volunteers. Other troops were then thrown over and the opposite bank occupied, the enemy retreating to the heights beyond.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.147–p.148

A halt was then made by General Burnside's advance until 3 p.m., upon hearing which I directed one of my aides—Colonel Key—to inform General Burnside that I desired him to push forward his troops with the utmost vigor and carry the enemy's position on the heights; that the movement was vital to our success; that this was a time when we must not stop for loss of life if a great object could be thereby accomplished. That if, in his judgment, his attack would fail, to inform me so at once, that his troops might be withdrawn and used elsewhere on the field. He replied that he would soon advance, and would go up the hill as far as a battery of the enemy on the left would permit. Upon this report I again immediately sent Colonel Key to General Burnside, with orders to advance at once, if possible, to flank the battery or storm it and carry the heights, repeating that if he considered the movement impracticable to inform me so, that his troops might be recalled. The advance was then gallantly resumed, the enemy driven from their guns, the heights handsomely carried, and a portion of the troops even reached the outskirts of Sharpsburg. By this time it was nearly dark, and strong reenforcements just then reaching the enemy from Harper's Ferry, attacked General Burnside's troops on their left flank, and forced them to retire to a lower line of hills nearer the bridge.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.148

If this important movement had been consummated two hours earlier, a position would have been secured upon the heights from which our batteries might have enfiladed the greater part of the enemy's line, and turned their right and rear. Our victory might have been much more decisive….

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.148

It was now nearly dark. General Sturgis was ordered forward to support the left. Notwithstanding the hard work in the early part of the day, his division moved forward with spirit. With its assistance, the enemy were checked and held at bay.

McClellan, Antietam, America, Vol.8, p.148–p.149

The command was ordered to fall back by General Cox, who commanded, on the field, the troops engaged in this attack beyond the Antietam. The artillery had been well served during the day. Night closed the long and desperately contested battle of the 17th. Nearly 209,000 men, and 500 pieces of artillery, were for fourteen hours engaged in this memorable battle. We had attacked the enemy in a position selected by the experienced engineer then in person directing their operations. We had driven them from their line on one flank, and secured a footing within it on the other. The Army of the Potomac, notwithstanding the moral effect incident to previous reverses, had achieved a victory over an adversary invested with the prestige of recent success. Our soldiers slept that night, conquerors, on a field won by their valor, and covered with the dead and wounded of the enemy.

How the Emancipation Proclamation was Drafted

Title: How the Emancipation Proclamation was Drafted

Author: Francis C. Carpenter

Date: 1862

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.159-163

In his "Six Months in the White House with Abraham Lincoln," Carpenter, a Civil War portrait painter, gives this account of the manner in which the emancipation proclamation was drafted. Carpenter was a guest in the White House for the purpose of painting his celebrated "Signing of the Emancipation Proclamation."

Following the Battle of Antietam, September 22, 1862, Lincoln issued a preliminary proclamation, decreeing the emancipation, on January 1, 1863, of all slaves in the States which should till then continue in rebellion. Before signing the final draft Lincoln had been shaking hands with a procession of visitors, and his hand was trembling. He remarked to Seward that if his signature wavered, "They will say I was afraid to sign it." Directly, however, he took up a pen and wrote his name firmly and clearly, observing quizzically, "Seward, if I am to be remembered in history at all, it will probably be in connection with this piece of paper.

Carpenter, How the Emancipation Proclamation was Drafted, America, Vol.8, p.159–p.160

THE appointed hour found me at the well-remembered door of the official chamber—that door watched daily, with so many conflicting emotions of hope and fear, by the anxious throng regularly gathered there. The President had preceded me, and was already deep in Acts of Congress, with which the writing-desk was strewed, awaiting his signature. He received me pleasantly, giving me a seat near his own armchair; and after having read Mr. Lovejoy's note [of introduction], he took off his spectacles, and said, "Well, Mr. C——, we will turn you in loose here, and try to give you a good chance to work out your idea." Then, without paying much attention to the enthusiastic expression of my ambitious desire and purpose he proceeded to give me a detailed account of the history and issue of the great proclamation.

Carpenter, How the Emancipation Proclamation was Drafted, America, Vol.8, p.160

"It had got to be," said he, "midsummer, 1862. Things had gone on from bad to worse, until I felt that we had reached the end of our rope on the plan of operations we had been pursuing; that we had about played our last card, and must change our tactics, or lose the game! I now determined upon the adoption of the emancipation policy; and, without consultation with, or the knowledge of the Cabinet, I prepared the original draft of the proclamation, and, after much anxious thought, called a Cabinet meeting upon the subject. This was the last of July, or the first part of the month of August, 1862." (The exact date he did not remember.) "This Cabinet meeting took place, I think, upon a Saturday. All were present, excepting Mr. Blair, the Postmaster-General, who was absent at the opening of the discussion, but came in subsequently. I said to the Cabinet that I had resolved upon this step, and had not called them together to ask their advice, but to lay the subject-matter of a proclamation before them; suggestions as to which would be in order, after they had heard it read.

Carpenter, How the Emancipation Proclamation was Drafted, America, Vol.8, p.160–p.161

"Mr. Lovejoy," said he, "was in error when he informed you that it excited no comment, excepting on the part of Secretary Seward. Various suggestions were offered. Secretary Chase wished the language stronger in reference to the arming of the blacks. Mr. Blair, after he came in, deprecated the policy on the ground that it would cost the Administration the fall elections. Nothing, however, was offered that I had not already fully anticipated and settled in my own mind, until Secretary Seward spoke. He said in substance: 'Mr. President, I approve of the proclamation, but I question the expediency of its issue at this juncture. The depression of the public mind, consequent upon our repeated reverses, is so great that I fear the effect of so important a step. It may be viewed as the last measure of an exhausted government, a cry for help; the government stretching forth its hands to Ethiopia, instead of Ethiopia stretching forth her hands to the government.' His idea," said the President, "was that it would be considered our last shriek, on the retreat. (This was his precise expression.) "'Now,' continued Mr. Seward, 'while I approve the measure, I suggest, sir, that you postpone its issue, until you can give it to the country supported by military success, instead of issuing it, as would be the case now, upon the greatest disasters of the war!' "

Carpenter, How the Emancipation Proclamation was Drafted, America, Vol.8, p.161–p.162

Mr. Lincoln continued: "The wisdom of the view of the Secretary of State struck me with very great force. It was an aspect of the case that, in all my thought upon the subject, I had entirely overlooked. The result was that I put the draft of the proclamation aside, as you do your sketch for a picture, waiting for a victory. From time to time I added or changed a line, touching it up here and there, anxiously watching the progress of events. Well, the next news we had was of Pope's disaster, at Bull Run. Things looked darker than ever. Finally, came the week of the Battle of Antietam. I determined to wait no longer. The news came, I think, on Wednesday, that the advantage was on our side. I was then staying at the Soldiers' Home (three miles out of Washington). Here I finished writing the second draft of the preliminary proclamation; came up on Saturday; called the Cabinet together to hear it, and it was published the following Monday."

Carpenter, How the Emancipation Proclamation was Drafted, America, Vol.8, p.162

At the final meeting of September 20th, another interesting incident occurred in connection with Secretary Seward. The President had written the important part of the proclamation in these words:

Carpenter, How the Emancipation Proclamation was Drafted, America, Vol.8, p.162–p.163

"That, on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize the freedom of such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom." "When I finished reading this paragraph," resumed Mr. Lincoln, "Mr. Seward stopped me, and said, 'I think, Mr. President, that you should insert after the word "recognize," in that sentence, the words "and maintain."' I replied that I had already fully considered the import of that expression in this connection, but I had not introduced it, because it was not my way to promise what I was not entirely sure that I could perform, and I was not prepared to say that I thought we were exactly able to 'maintain' this.

Carpenter, How the Emancipation Proclamation was Drafted, America, Vol.8, p.163

"But," said he, "Seward insisted that we ought to take this ground; and the words finally went in!"

Carpenter, How the Emancipation Proclamation was Drafted, America, Vol.8, p.163

"It is a somewhat remarkable fact," he subsequently remarked, "that there were just one hundred days between the dates of the two proclamations issued upon the 22d of September and the 1st of January. I had not made the calculation at the time."

Carpenter, How the Emancipation Proclamation was Drafted, America, Vol.8, p.163

Having concluded this interesting statement, the President then proceeded to show me the various positions occupied by himself and the different members of the Cabinet, on the occasion of the first meeting. "As nearly as I remember," said he, "I sat near the head of the table; the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of War were here, at my right hand; the others were grouped at the left."

Hooker Placed in Command of the Army of the Potomac

Title: Hooker Placed In Command of the Army of the Potomac

Author: Abraham Lincoln

Date: 1863

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.164-165

Joseph Hooker, like so many Civil War commanders, was a West Point graduate and served with distinction through the Mexican War. Preceding his appointment to succeed Burnside in command of the Army of the Potomac, Hooker was conspicuous at the Battles of Bristoe Station, the second Battle of Bull Run, and at Chantilly. He was wounded at Antietam.

His energy and success in reorganizing and reinvigorating the Army of the Potomac were, as President Lincoln apprehended, not borne out on the battlefield. He failed to show those qualities which had distinguished him as a corps and division commander, and was presently to be succeeded by General Meade. Later on, however, he was brevetted major-general in the Regular Army for his conduct at the Battle of Lookout Mountain.

Lincoln's Letter to Hooker

Lincoln, Hooker Placed in Command of the Army, America, Vol.8, p.164

GENERAL:—I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appears to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skillful soldier, which of course I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable, if not indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which within reasonable bounds does good rather than harm; but I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit that you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticizing their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it. And now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

Lincoln, Hooker Placed in Command of the Army, America, Vol.8, p.165

Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

To General J. Hooker

Executive Mansion, Washington, D. C.

January 26, 1863.

The Battle of Chancellorsville

Title: The Battle of Chancellorsville

Author: Robert E. Lee

Date: 1863

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.166-174

In no battle of the Civil War was the military genius of General Lee more brilliantly displayed than at Chancellorsville, May 2-4, 1863. General Joseph Hooker had succeeded Burnside in command of the Federal Army of the Potomac, numbering 130.000 men, while Lee had less than half as many Confederates in his Army of Northern Virginia. As Lee here recounts in his official report of the battle, "Stonewall" Jackson was ordered, with 30,000 men, to make a wide detour and assault the enemy's flank. This he did, taking the Federal army by surprise, and stampeding It. However, Jackson, while in advance of his troops, was fired upon and mortally wounded by his own men, who mistook his escort for a Federal detachment. The Union loss was about 17,300, the Confederate about 12,465. Lee clearly out-generaled Hooker, and won an important victory with greatly inferior forces; but his success was clouded by the loss of Jackson.

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.166

GENERAL: After the Battle of Fredericksburg, the army remained encamped on the south side of the Rappahannock until the latter part of April. The Federal army occupied the north side of the river opposite Fredericksburg, extending to the Potomac….

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.166–p.167

At 5.30 a.m. on April 28, the enemy crossed the Rappahannock in boats near Fredericksburg and driving off the pickets on the river, proceeded to lay down a pontoon bridge a short distance below the mouth of Deep Run. Later in the forenoon another bridge was constructed about a mile below the first. A considerable force crossed on these bridges during the day, and was massed out of view under the high banks of the river….

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.167

No demonstration was made opposite any other part of our lines at Fredericksburg, and the strength of the force that had crossed and its apparent indisposition to attack indicated that the principal effort of the enemy would be made in some other quarter. This impression was confirmed by intelligence received from General Stuart that a large body of infantry and artillery was passing up the river. During the forenoon of the 29th, that officer reported that the enemy crossed in force near Kelly's Ford on the preceding evening. Later in the day he announced that a heavy column was moving from Kelly's toward Germanna Ford, on the Rapidan, and another toward Ely's Ford on that river. The routes they were pursuing after crossing the Rapidan converge near Chancellorsville, whence several roads lead to the rear of our position at Fredericksburg.

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.167

On the night of the 29th, General Anderson was directed to proceed toward Chancellorsville….

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.167–p.168

The enemy in our front near Fredericksburg continued inactive, and it was now apparent that the main attack would be made upon our flank and rear. It was, therefore, determined to leave sufficient troops to hold our lines, and with the main body of the army to give battle to the approaching column. Early's division, of Jackson's corps, and Barksdale's brigade, of McLaws' division, with part of the Reserve Artillery, under General (W. N.) Pendleton, were intrusted with the defense of our position at Fredericksburg, and, at midnight on the 30th, General McLaws marched with the rest of his command toward Chancellorsville. General Jackson followed at dawn next morning with the remaining divisions of his corps. He reached the position occupied by General Anderson at 8 a.m., and immediately began prep arations to advance.

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.168

At 11 a.m. the troops moved forward upon the Plank and old Turnpike roads…. The enemy was soon encountered on both roads, and heavy skirmishing with infantry and artillery ensued, our troops pressing steadily forward. A strong attack upon General McLaws was repulsed with spirit by Semmes' brigade, and General Wright, by direction of General Anderson, diverging to the left of the Plank road, marched by way of the unfinished railroad from Fredericksburg to Gordonsville, and turned the enemy's right. His whole line thereupon retreated rapidly, vigorously pursued by our troops until they arrived within about 1 mile of Chancellorsville. Here the enemy had assumed a position of great natural strength, surrounded on all sides by a dense forest filled with a tangled undergrowth, in the midst of which breastworks of logs had been constructed, with trees felled in front, so as to form an almost impenetrable abatis….

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.168–p.169

It was evident that a direct attack upon the enemy would be attended with great difficulty and loss, in view of the strength of his position and his superiority of numbers. It was, therefore, resolved to endeavor to turn his right flank and gain his rear, leaving a force in front to hold him in check and conceal the movement. The execution of this plan was intrusted to Lieutenant-General Jackson with his three divisions. The commands of Generals McLaws and Anderson with the exception of Wilcox's brigade, which during the night had been ordered back to Banks' Ford, remained in front of the enemy.

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.169

Early on the morning of the 2d, General Jackson marched by the Furnace and Brock roads, his movement being effectually covered by Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry, under General Stuart in person….

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.169

After a long and fatiguing march, General Jackson's leading division, under General Rodes, reached the old turnpike, about 3 miles in rear of Chancellorsville, at 4 p.m. As the different divisions arrived, they were formed at right angles to the road—Rodes in front, Trimble's division, under Brigadier-General Colston, in the second, and A. P. Hill's in the third, line.

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.169–p.170

At 6 p.m. the advance was ordered. The enemy were taken by surprise, and fled after a brief resistance. General Rodes' men pushed forward with great vigor and enthusiasm, followed closely by the second and third lines. Position after position was carried, the guns captured, and every effort of the enemy to rally defeated by the impetuous rush of our troops. In the ardor of pursuit through the thick and tangled woods, the first and second lines at last became mingled, and moved on together as one…. It was now dark, and General Jackson ordered the third line, under General Hill, to advance to the front, and relieve the troops of Rodes and Colston, who were completely blended and in such disorder, from their rapid advance through intricate woods and over broken ground, that it was necessary to reform them. As Hill's men moved forward, General Jackson, with his staff and escort, returning from the extreme front, met his skirmishers advancing, and in the obscurity of the night were mistaken for the enemy and fired upon…. General Jackson himself received a severe injury, and was borne from the field. The command devolved upon Major-General Hill…. General Hill was soon afterward disabled, and Major-General Stuart…. was sent for to take command….

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.170

Upon General Stuart's arrival, soon afterward, the command was turned over to him by General Hill. He immediately proceeded to reconnoiter the ground and make himself acquainted with the disposition of the troops. The darkness of the night and the difficulty of moving through the woods and undergrowth rendered it advisable to defer further operations until morning, and the troops rested on their arms in line of battle….

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.170–p.171

Early on the morning of the 3d, General Stuart renewed the attack upon the enemy…. Anderson, in the meantime, pressed gallantly forward directly upon Chancellorsville, his right resting upon the Plank road and his left extending around toward the Furnace, while McLaws made a strong demonstration to the right of the road. As the troops advancing upon the enemy's front and right converged upon his central position, Anderson effected a junction with Jackson's corps, and the whole line pressed irresistibly on. The enemy was driven from all his fortified positions, with heavy loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners, and retreated toward the Rappahannock. By 10 a.m. we were in full possession of the field.

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.171

The troops, having become somewhat scattered by the difficulties of the ground and the ardor of the contest, were immediately reformed preparatory to renewing the attack…. Our preparations were just completed when further operations were arrested by intelligence received from Fredericksburg….

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.171

Before dawn on the morning of the 3d, General Barksdale reported to General Early that the enemy had occupied Fredericksburg in large force and laid down a bridge at the town….

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.171

…. The success of the enemy enabled him to threaten our communications by moving down the Telegraph road, or to come upon our rear at Chancellorsville by the Plank road…. The enemy then began to advance up the Plank road, his progress being gallantly disputed by the brigade of General Wilcox, who had moved from Banks' Ford as rapidly as possible to the assistance of General Barksdale, but arrived too late to take part in the action. General Wilcox fell back slowly until he reached Salem Church, on the Plank road, about 5 miles from Fredericksburg.

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.172

Information of the state of affairs in our rear having reached Chancellorsville, as already stated, General McLaws, with his three brigades and one of General Anderson's, was ordered to reenforce General Wilcox. He arrived at Salem Church early in the afternoon, where he found General Wilcox in line of battle, with a large force of the enemy—consisting, as was reported, of one army corps and part of another, under Major-General Sedgwick—in his front…. The enemy's artillery played vigorously upon our position for some time, when his infantry advanced in three strong lines, the attack being directed mainly against General Wilcox, but partially involving the brigades on his left. The assault was met with the utmost firmness, and after a fierce struggle the first line was repulsed with great slaughter. The second then came forward, but immediately broke under the close and deadly fire which it encountered, and the whole mass fled in confusion to the rear….

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.172

The next morning General Early advanced along the Telegraph road, and recaptured Marye's and the adjacent hills without difficulty, thus gaining the rear of the enemy's left. He then proposed to General McLaws that a simultaneous attack be made on their respective commands, but the latter officer not deeming his force adequate to assail the enemy in front, the proposition was not carried into effect.

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.172–p.173

In the meantime the enemy had so strengthened his position near Chancellorsville that it was deemed inexpedient to assail it with less than our whole force, which could not be concentrated until we were relieved from the danger that menaced our rear. It was accordingly resolved still further to reenforce the troops in front of General Sedgwick, in order, if possible, to drive him across the Rappahannock.

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.173

Accordingly, on the 4th, General Anderson was directed to proceed with his remaining three brigades to join General McLaws, the three divisions of Jackson's corps holding our position at Chancellorsville. Anderson reached Salem Church about noon, and was directed to gain the left flank of the enemy and effect a junction with Early. McLaws' troops were disposed as on the previous day, with orders to hold the enemy in front, and to push forward his right brigades as soon as the advance of Anderson and Early should be perceived, so as to connect with them and complete the continuity of our line…. The attack did not begin until 6 p.m., when Anderson and Early moved forward and drove General Sedgwick's troops rapidly before them across the Plank road in the direction of the Rappahannock….

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.173–p.174

The next morning it was found that General Sedgwick had made good his escape and removed his bridges. Fredericksburg was also evacuated, and our rear no longer threatened; but as General Sedgwick had it in his power to recross, it was deemed best to leave General Early, with his division and Barksdale's brigade, to hold our lines as before, McLaws and Anderson being directed to return to Chancellorsville. They reached their destination during the afternoon, in the midst of a violent storm, which continued throughout the night and most of the following day.

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.174

Preparations were made to assail the enemy's works at daylight on the 6th, but, on advancing our skirmishers, it was found that under cover of the storm and darkness of the night he had retreated over the river.

Lee, Battle of Chancellorsville, America, Vol.8, p.174

The movement by which the enemy's position was turned and the fortune of the day decided was conducted by the lamented Lieutenant-General Jackson, who, as has already been stated, was severely wounded near the close of the engagement on Saturday evening. I do not propose here to speak of the character of this illustrious man, since removed from the scene of his eminent usefulness by the hand of an inscrutable but all-wise Providence. I nevertheless desire to pay the tribute of my admiration to the matchless energy and skill that marked this last act of his life, forming, as it did, a worthy conclusion of that long series of splendid achievements which won for him the lasting love and gratitude of his country.

The Death of Stonewall Jackson

Title: The Death of Stonewall Jackson

Author: Mary Anna Jackson

Date: 1863

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.175-182

It was while he was performing a brilliant military maneuver, on the evening of May 2, 1863, at the Battle of Chancellorsville that Jackson, with a small reconnoitering escort, advanced in front of his own lines and, being mistaken for a Federal officer, was fired upon by the Confederates. He was severely wounded in his left arm, which had to be amputated. To the stricken general Lee said in a message sent through a friend, "He has lost his left arm, but I have lost my right arm." Jackson seemed in a fair way to recover, but pneumonia set in, from which he died eight days later, as told here by his widow, in "The Life and Letters of 'Stonewall' Jackson," published by Harper & Brothers.

Jackson was conspicuous not only for his military genius, but for his personal character. Like Cromwell, he blended the devoutness of the Puritan with the severity of the soldier. He never began a battle without a prayer, and after a victory publicly gave thanks to God.

Death of Stonewall Jackson, America, Vol.8, p.175–p.176

GENERAL JACKSON, accompanied by a part of his staff and several couriers, advanced on the turnpike in the direction of the enemy about a hundred yards, when he was fired upon by a volley of musketry from his right front. The bullets whistled among the party, and struck several horses. This fire was evidently from the enemy, and one of his men caught his bridle-rein and said to him: "General Jackson, you should not expose yourself so much." "There is no danger," he replied, "the enemy is routed. Go back and tell General Hill to press on." But in order to screen himself from the flying bullets, he rode from the road to the left and rear. The small trees and brushwood being very dense, it was difficult to effect a passage on horseback. While riding as rapidly as possible to the rear, he came in front of his own line of battle, who, having no idea that he, or any one but the enemy, was in their front, and mistaking the party for a body of Federal cavalry, opened a sharp fire upon them. From this volley General Jackson received his mortal wounds. His right hand was pierced by a bullet, his left arm was shattered by two balls, one above and one below the elbow, breaking the bones and severing the main artery. His horse, "Little Sorrel," terrified by the nearness and suddenness of the fire, dashed off in the direction of the enemy, and it was with great difficulty that he could control him—his bridle hand being helpless, and the tangled brushwood, through which he was borne, almost dragging him from his seat. But he seized the reins with his right hand, and, arresting the flight of his horse, brought him back into his own lines, where, almost fainting, he was assisted to the ground by Captain Wilbourne, his signal officer. By this fire several of his escort were killed and wounded…. and every horse which was not shot down wheeled back in terror, bearing his rider towards the advancing enemy. The firing was arrested by Lieutenant Morrison, who, after his horse was killed under him, ran to the front of the firing line, and with much difficulty in making himself heard, told them they were firing into their own men….

Death of Stonewall Jackson, America, Vol.8, p.177

The enemy soon changed from canister to shell and elevated their range, when the young men renewed their efforts to get General Jackson to the rear, supporting him with their strong arms, as he slowly and painfully dragged himself along. As the Confederate troops were hurrying to the front, they met the party, and the question came from the lips of almost every passer-by, "Whom have you there?" The general, not wishing his troops to recognize him, gave orders to leave the road and diverge into the woods. He said to his attendants: "Don't tell them who it is, but simply say it is a Confederate officer." Despite these precautions, he did not escape recognition by some of his men, who exclaimed with grief and dismay: "Great God! it is General Jackson!" General Pender, of North Carolina, was one of those who recognized him, and after approaching and expressing his deep regret at his wounding, said to him: "The troops have suffered severely from the enemy's artillery, and are somewhat disorganized; I fear we cannot maintain our position." Faint and exhausted as he was, a gleam of the old battle-fire flashed from his eyes, and instantly he replied: "You must hold your ground, General Pender; you must hold your ground, sir." This was the last order given by the hero of so many battle-fields….

Death of Stonewall Jackson, America, Vol.8, p.177–p.178

On meeting the wounded general, says Dr. McGuire: "I knelt by him and said, 'I hope you are not badly hurt, general?' He replied very calmly, but feebly, 'I am badly injured, doctor; I fear I am dying.'….

Death of Stonewall Jackson, America, Vol.8, p.178

"After reaching the hospital he was placed in bed, covered with blankets, and a drink of whiskey and water given him. Two hours and a half elapsed before sufficient action took place to warrant an examination.

Death of Stonewall Jackson, America, Vol.8, p.178

"At two o'clock Sunday morning, Surgeons Black, Walls and Coleman being present, I informed him that chloroform would be given him, and his wounds examined. I told him that amputation would probably be required, and asked, if it was found necessary, whether it should be done at once. He replied promptly, 'Yes, certainly, Dr. McGuire, do for me whatever you think best.'…. The round ball…. which had lodged under the skin, upon the back of the right hand, was first extracted. It had entered the palm about the middle of the hand, and fractured two bones. The left arm was then amputated about two inches below the shoulder…. Throughout the whole of the operation, and until all the dressings were applied, he continued insensible….

Death of Stonewall Jackson, America, Vol.8, p.178–p.179

"The next morning he was free from pain, and expressed himself sanguine of recovery. He sent his aide-de-camp, Morrison, to inform his wife of his injuries, and to bring her at once to him. The following note from General Lee was read to him that morning by Lieutenant Smith: 'I have just received your note, informing me that you were wounded. I cannot express my regret at the occurrence. Could I have directed events, I should have chosen, for the good of the country, to have been disabled in your stead. I congratulate you upon the victory which is due to your skill and energy.' He replied, 'General Lee should give the praise to God.' About ten o'clock his right side began to pain him so much that he asked me to examine it. He said he had injured it in falling from the litter the night before, and believed he had struck it against a stump or a stone or a sapling. No evidence of injury could be discovered by examination; the skin was not broken or bruised, and the lung performed, so far as I could tell, its proper function. Some simple application was recommended in the belief that the pain would soon disappear.

Death of Stonewall Jackson, America, Vol.8, p.179–p.180–p.181

"At this time the battle was raging fearfully, and the sound of the cannon and musketry could be distinctly heard at the hospital. The general's attention was attracted to it from the first, and when the noise was at its height, and indicated how fiercely the conflict was being carried on, he directed all of his attendants, except Lieutenant Smith to return to the battlefield, and attend to their different duties. By eight o;clock, Sunday night, the pain in his side had disappeared, and in all respects he seemed to be doing well. He inquired minutely about the battle and the different troops engaged, and his face would light up with enthusiasm and interest when told how this brigade acted, or that officer displayed conspicuous courage, and his head gave the peculiar shake from side to side, and he uttered his usual 'Good, good!' with unwonted energy when the gallant behavior of the Stonewall Brigade was alluded to. He said: 'The men of the brigade will be, some day, proud to say to their children, "I was one of the Stonewall Brigade."' He disclaimed any right of his own to the name Stonewall. 'It belongs to the brigade, and not to me, for it was their steadfast heroism which earned it at First Manassas. They are a noble body of men.' This night he slept well, and was free from pain. A message was received from General Lee the next morning, directing me to remove the general to Guiney's Station as soon as his condition should justify it, as there was danger of capture by the Federals, who were threatening to cross Ely's Ford. In the meantime, to protect the hospital, some troops were sent to this point. The general objected to being moved, if, in my opinion, it would do him any injury. He said he had no objection to staying in the tent, and would prefer it, if his wife, when she came, could find lodging in a neighboring house. 'And if the enemy does come,' he added, 'I am not afraid of them; I have always been kind to their wounded, and I am sure they will be kind to me.' General Lee sent word again, late that evening, that he must be moved, if possible, and preparations were made to leave the next morning. I was directed to accompany and remain with him, and my duties with the corps, as medical director, were turned over to the surgeon next in rank…. Very early Tuesday morning he was placed in the ambulance, and started for Guiney's Station, and about eight o'clock that evening we arrived at the Chandler House, where we remained till he died."….

Death of Stonewall Jackson, America, Vol.8, p.181

Shortly after the general's fall, and before his situation had grown so critical, General Lee sent him, by a friend, the following message: "Give him my affectionate regards, and tell him to make haste and get well, and come back to me as soon as he can. He has lost his left arm, but I have lost my right arm."….

Death of Stonewall Jackson, America, Vol.8, p.181–p.182

In order to stimulate his fast-failing powers, he was offered some brandy and water, but he showed great repugnance to it, saying excitedly, "It tastes like fire, and cannot do me any good." Early on Sunday morning, the 10th of May, I was called out of the sick-room by Dr. Morrison, who told me that the doctors, having done everything that human skill could devise to stay the hand of death, had lost all hope, and that my precious, brave, noble husband could not live! Indeed, life was fast ebbing away, and they felt that they must prepare me for the inevitable event, which was now a question of only a few short hours…. When I told him the doctors thought he would soon be in heaven, he did not seem to comprehend it, and showed no surprise or concern. But' upon repeating it, and asking him if he was willing for God to do with him according to His own will, he looked at me calmly and intelligently, and said, "Yes, I prefer it, I prefer it." I then told him that before that day was over he would be with the blessed Saviour in His glory. With perfect distinctness and intelligence, he said, "I will be an infinite gainer to be translated." I then asked him if it was his wish that I should return, with our infant, to my father's home in North Carolina. He answered, "Yes, you have a kind, good father; but no one is so kind and good as your Heavenly Father." He said he had many things to say to me, but he was then too weak. Preferring to know his own desire as to the place of his burial, I asked him the question, but his mind was now growing clouded again, and at first he replied, "Charlotte," and afterwards "Charlottesville." I then asked him if he did not wish to be buried in Lexington, and he answered at once, "Yes, Lexington, and in my own plot." He had bought this plot himself, when our first child died, as a burial place for his family…. Tears were shed over that dying bed by strong men who were unused to weep, and it was touching to see the genuine grief of his servant, Jim, who nursed him faithfully to the end.

Death of Stonewall Jackson, America, Vol.8, p.182

He now sank rapidly into unconsciousness, murmuring disconnected words occasionally, but all at once he spoke out very cheerfully and distinctly the beautiful sentence which has become immortal as his last: "Let us cross over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees."

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg

Title: Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg

Author: La Salle Corbell Pickett

Date: 1863

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.183-194

Special interest attaches to this account of Pickett's famous charge at Gettysburg, in that its author was the wife of the Confederate commander who led the heroic but unsuccessful assault on Cemetery Ridge, July 3, 1863, the third and last day of the most important and hotly contested battle of the Civil War. It marked the turning point.

Lee had ordered Longstreet to send Pickett's division of 5,000 Confederates against the Federal center, as the climax of a terrific artillery duel between the Confederates, with 150 guns, attacking the Federals, with about 70 guns, on Cemetery Ridge. In order to save ammunition, in anticipation of the attack, the Federals stopped firing, thereby deceiving the enemy as to their ammunition supply. In the magnificent charge that followed, two-thirds of Pickett's men were killed, wounded or captured. This spirited account is from "Pickett and His Men," by permission of the publishers, J. B. Lippincott Company.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.183

PICKETT'S division—reserved for the last great scene in the tragedy of Gettysburg—had not yet entered the circle of fire which environed the mountains, filled the valleys with death, and turned the silvery streams into rivers of blood.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.183

Until the night of July 1, the three brigades under Pickett's command, Corse and Jenkins having been left behind, remained on guard at Chambersburg. Being then relieved by Imboden, at two o'clock on the morning of the 2d, they were under marching orders and moving along the Gettysburg road. In the pass of the South Mountain a fire flashed upon them from sharpshooters stationed in the gorges of the crags.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.184

On the east side of the range the air trembled with the battle-rage of Gettysburg. The ardor of the men kindled into flame, and with eager, impatient feet they pressed forward to answer the call. Through the intense heat of one of the most fiery days with which July ever scorched the earth Pickett's men marched twenty-four miles and at two o'clock in the afternoon halted three miles from Gettysburg….

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.184

As early as three o'clock on the morning of the 3d of July Pickett's division was under arms and moving to the right and southeast of the Cashtown and Gettysburg road. Line of battle was formed facing Cemetery Ridge, Kemper's brigade on the right, Garnett's on the left, and Armistead immediately in rear of Kemper and Garnett, there not being room for all in extended line of battle….

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.184

Pickett's three brigades were to attack in front where there was a bristling hedge of artillery and infantry. Heth's and Pender's divisions, under Pettigrew and Trimble, their leaders having been wounded the day before, were to charge in second and third lines of battle, supporting Pickett's advance. As Heth's division passed on it was to be joined by Wilcox's brigade, then about two hundred yards in front. Anderson was behind the two supporting divisions ready to take Trimble's place when he should leave it.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.184

Pickett rode up to Longstreet for orders. The latter seemed greatly depressed and said:

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.184–p.185

"I do not want to have your men sacrificed, Pickett, so I have sent a note to Alexander, telling him to watch carefully the effect of our fire upon the enemy, and that when it begins to tell he must take the responsibility and notify you himself when to make the attack. He has been directed to charge with you at the head of your line with a battery of nine eleven-pound howitzers, fresh horses and full caissons."

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.185

Just as Longstreet finished this statement a courier rode up and handed Pickett a note from Alexander, which read:

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.185

If you are coming, come at once or I cannot give you proper support, but the enemy's fire has not slackened at all. At least eighteen guns are still firing from the cemetery itself.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.185

After Pickett had read the note he handed it to Longstreet.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.185

"General Longstreet, shall I go forward?" he asked.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.185

Longstreet looked at him with an expression which seldom comes to any face. In that solemn silence memories of the long friendship may have flooded his soul. Possibly there came to his thought the time away back in history when he had fallen on the stormy slope of Chapultepec, and the boy lieutenant had taken his place and borne the battle-flag in triumph to the flame-crowned height. He held out his hand and bowed his head in assent. Not a word did he speak.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.185

"Then I shall lead my division forward, sir," said Pickett, and galloped off.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.185–p.186

He had gone only a few yards when he came back and took a letter from his pocket. On it he wrote in pencil, "If Old Peter's nod means death, good-by, and God bless you, little one!" He gave the letter to Longstreet and rode back. That letter reached its destination in safety and, with its faint penciled words, is now one of my most treasured possessions. It was transmitted with one from Longstreet:

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.186

Gettysburg, Penn., July 3d.

My Dear Lady: General Pickett has just intrusted to me the safe conveyance of the inclosed letter. If it should turn out to be his farewell the penciled note on the outside will show you that I could not speak the words which would send so gallant a soldier into the jaws of a useless death. As I watched him, gallant and fearless as any knight of old, riding to certain doom, I said a prayer for his safety and made a vow to the Holy Father that my friendship for him, poor as it is, should be your heritance. We shall meet. I am, dear lady, with great respect,

Yours to command,

JAMES LONGSTREET.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.186

Pickett gave orders to his brigade commanders and rode along down the line, his men springing to their feet with a shout of delight as he told them what was expected of them.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.186

He was sitting on his horse when Wilcox rode up. Taking a flask from his pocket, Wilcox said:

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.186

"Pickett, take a drink with me. In an hour you'll be in hell or glory."

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.187

Pickett declined to drink, saying:

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.187

"I promised the little girl who is waiting and praying for me down in Virginia that I would keep fresh upon my lips until we should meet again the breath of the violets she gave me when we parted. Whatever my fate, Wilcox, I shall try to do my duty like a man, and I hope that, by that little girl's prayers, I shall to-day reach either defeat or glory."

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.187

At a quarter past three on that bright afternoon the order "Forward!" rang along the lines. The supreme moment had come. As far as the eye could reach, up and down on each side, the gaze of thousands of men of both armies was riveted on a long line of soldiers moving with all the precision of a grand review. The five thousand Virginians had begun their march to death.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.187

Longstreet joined Alexander, and they stood together by the batteries when that magnificent column went by, the officers saluting as they passed.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.187

Pickett led, mounted on his spirited charger, gallant and graceful as a knight of chivalry riding to a tournament. His long dark, auburn-tinted hair floated backward in the wind like a soft veil as he went on down the slope of death.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.187

Then came Trimble, riding lightly as he might have ridden in the golden glow through the rose-scented air of some brilliant festal morning.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.187–p.188

It was no holiday work to which they went as they gracefully saluted in passing their commanding general, who acknowledged it in silent sadness. "Morituri, salutamus!"

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.188

So they filed by, and went down into the heavy sea of smoke which hid them from view. As it lifted they were seen moving in solid ranks with steady step and with the harmonious rhythm of some grand symphony. The sun caught the gleam of their guns and flashed it back in myriads of sparkling rays. Behind them was a wall of light against which their dark forms were outlined in distinct silhouette.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.188

Pickett's Virginians were less than five thousand, but every one was a soldier in the fullest sense of the word. As they pressed onward in majestic order over the plain, like a moving wall of granite, the battle-flag of the South waved over them, its stars shining as if in promise of victory.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.188

Garnett was on the right; Armistead center. Garnett had been ill for many days, traveling in the ambulance, but no persuasion could keep him from the post of danger. Too weak to mount his horse, he had insisted upon being placed in the saddle that he might lead his brigade in the charge.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.188–p.189

The battle-smoke drifted away over the hills and into the clouds, where it arched itself above the field as if it would even yet spread a protecting mantle around those devoted men. The long Federal array with its double line of supports was revealed to view. As the advancing column came in sight Meade's guns opened upon it, but it neither paused nor faltered. Round shot, bounding along, tore through its ranks and ricochetted around it. Shells exploded, darting flashes before—behind—overhead.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.189

A long line of skirmishers, prostrate on the grass, suddenly arose within fifty yards, firing at them as they came within view, then running on ahead, turning and firing back as fast as they could reload. The column took no heed of them, but moved on at a quickstep, not returning their fire.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.189

Past the batteries and half-way over the field, amidst a terrific fire of shot and shell, Pickett gave the order, "Left oblique!" Coolly and beautifully the movement was made, changing the direction fortyfive degrees from the front to the left.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.189

From Cemetery Hill burst the fire of forty cannon against the right flank. Pickett's men fell like grain before the sweep of the scythe. There was no pause. The survivors pressed on with a force which seemed to have grown stronger with the concentration of all the lives which had been freed from the fallen brave.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.189

Presently came the command, "Front forward!" and the column resumed its direction, straight down upon the center of the enemy's position—on, on it moved with iron nerve.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.189

One hundred Federal guns now concentrated their whole fury of shot and shell upon the advancing line. Every inch of air seemed to be filled with some death-dealing missile. The men and officers were fast being slaughtered. Kemper went down, mangled and bleeding, never again to lead his valiant Virginians in battle.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.190

Up and down the line of his brigade rode Garnett, calling out in his strong voice:

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.190

"Faster, men, faster! Close up and step out, but don't double-quick!"

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.190

A long blue line of infantry arose from behind the stone fence, and as the column advanced poured into it a heavy fire of musketry. At once a scattering fire was opened all along the line, when Garnett galloped up and called out: "Cease firing! Save your strength and ammunition!" Under such perfect discipline were these veterans that without slackening their pace they reloaded their guns, shouldered arms, and went on at a quickstep.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.190

The artillery made an effort to support the assault, but the ammunition was almost exhausted. The light pieces which were to have guarded the infantry had been removed to some other part of the field, and none could be found to take their place.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.190

Pettigrew was trying to reach the post of death and honor, but he was far away, and valor could not quite annihilate space. His troops had suffered severely in the battle of the day before and their commander, Heth, had been wounded. They were now led by an officer ardent and brave, but to them unknown.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.190–p.191

The four brigades of Archer, Pettigrew, Davis and Brockenbrough deployed from right to left on a single line, a line of battle very difficult to maintain. The left lagged a little; the right, following the gallant Trimble, made heroic efforts to join Pickett whose oblique movement had brought him nearer. Scales and Lane followed Pettigrew.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.191

Dauntlessly Pickett's men pressed forward, the grandest column of heroes that ever made a battlefield glorious. They reached the post-and-rail fence, upon the other side of which, and parallel to it, an ordinary dirt road ran straight through the field across which they were advancing. The fence was but a momentary obstruction. It was but the work of a few seconds to climb over it and into the road, while a hundred blazing cannon poured death-dealing missiles into their devoted ranks. Now and here was given to the world the grandest exhibition of discipline and endurance, of coolness and courage under a withering fire, ever recorded in military history; a scene which has made the story of Pickett's charge the glory of American arms. There in the road, with the deafening explosion of unnumbered shells filling the air, their ranks plowed through and through again and again by the fiery hail which the batteries from the heights beyond were pouring into them, amid all this terrific roar and the not less disconcerting cries of the wounded and dying, they heard the command of their company officers: "Halt, men! Form line! Fall in! Right dress!"

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.191–p.192

Imagine, if you can, these heroes reforming and aligning their ranks while their comrades dropped in death—agony about them, the shells bursting above their heads, and an iron storm beating them to the earth. Yet the line was formed, and coolly they awaited the command, "Forward!" At last it came: "Forward! Quick march!" With perfect precision, with all the grace and accuracy of the parade-ground instead of the bloodiest of battle-fields, Pickett's division took up its death-march, each man with "the red badge of courage" pinned over his heart. The like was never seen before, and the change in military tactics will prevent its ever being seen again.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.192

Friend and foe looked on in wondering awe. A thrill of admiration held the waiting enemy silent and motionless as they watched this grand and unsurpassable display of Virginia's valor.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.192

As they advanced toward Cemetery Hill there was seen in the open field to the right a long, dark line of men, half a mile distant and at right angles with their line. They were coming at double-quick upon that unprotected right flank, their muskets at right shoulder shift, their banners fluttering in the breeze, their burnished bayonets glistening in the sun. The enemy were strengthening their position, hurrying up reserves from right to left and from opposite directions doubling along the Confederate front.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.192

A heavy rain of shell and shrapnel poured down from the height. In the fiery storm the thin ranks became yet thinner. Not an instant's disorder prevailed, but under the withering fire they marched steadily forward.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.192–p.193

"Faster, men, faster! We are almost there!" cried Garnett's clarion voice above the roar of battle. Then he went down among the dead, with the faith of a little child in his hero heart.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.193

There was a muffled tread of armed men from behind, then a rush of trampling feet, and Armistead's brigade from the rear closed up behind the front line. Their gallant leader, with his hat on the point of his sword, took Garnett's place. The division was now four ranks deep. As often as the iron storm made gaps through it the cheer would come from private, corporal, sergeant, lieutenant and captain alike: "Close up! Close up!" and "Forward!" The lines shortened, but never wavered, never halted. Closer and closer they drew to the foe till there remained only a bleeding remnant.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.193

Now they broke forward into a double-quick, while canister and grape whirred and whizzed through the air. On, on, they rushed toward the stone wall where the Federal batteries were pouring forth their deadly missiles. A hundred yards away a flanking force came down on a run, halted suddenly, and fired into the line a deadly storm of musketry. Under this cross-fire they reeled and staggered between falling comrades and the right came pressing down upon the center, making the line at this point twenty to thirty deep. A few, unable to resist temptation, without orders, faced the enemy on their right, though the latter were sixty to one. The fighting was terrific. Muskets seemed to cross. Men fired to the right and to the front. The fighting was hand-to-hand. The firing was into the enemy's faces.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.194

The Federals in front fell behind their guns to let, them belch their grape and canister into the oncoming ranks, piling up the dead and wounded almost in touch of them. When within a few feet of the stone wall the artillery delivered their last fire from the guns shotted to the muzzle.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.194

The division was now in the shape of an inverted V with the point flattened. On it swept over the ground covered with the dead and dying.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.194

Armistead, sword in hand, sprang over the stone wall, crying:

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.194

"Come on, boys, come on! We'll give them the cold steel! Come on! Who will follow me? Who will follow me?"

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.194

He reached the battery, his hand touched one of Cushing's guns. Then he and Cushing fell together, and a crimson river washed the base of the copse of trees which marked the high tide of the Confederacy.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.194

Victory was within their grasp. Alas, where were the promised supports? Worn and exhausted by the tension of the bloody fighting of the day before, in which they had suffered terribly, their leaders dead or wounded, they had crumbled away under the deadly hail of the artillery fire.

Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, America, Vol.8, p.194

Back from the flaming crest fell only a remnant of the division which had performed such deeds of valor as made the whole world wonder. The flags which had floated over Cemetery Hill, lay on the ground among the prostrate forms of the men who had so bravely borne them to the very verge of victory….

The Siege of Vicksburg

Title: The Siege of Vicksburg

Author: Ulysses S. Grant

Date: 1863

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.195-201

General Sherman, who cooperated with Grant in conducting the siege of Vicksburg, which the Confederate General, Pemberton, surrendered to the Union Army, July 4, 1863, pronounced the series of operations which resulted in the capture of the Mississippi stronghold, "one of the greatest campaigns in history." It was a much-needed and timely Federal victory, the year 1862 having been one of Union disasters, and, coinciding with the defeat of Lee at Gettysburg, marked the turning point of the Civil War.

In his Memoirs, published by the Century Company, General Grant thus recounts the victorious conclusion of the campaign. His army numbered 50,000. Twelve miles of Union trenches were mounted with 220 guns, and the capitulation followed a twelve-day bombardment from land forces and gunboats. 29,391 Confederate officers and men were paroled; 790 refused paroles. The garrison was reduced to the verge of starvation.

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.195

I NOW determined upon a regular siege—to "outcamp the enemy," as it were, and to incur no more losses. The experience of the 22d convinced officers and men that this was best, and they went to work on the defenses and approaches with a will. With the navy holding the river, the investment of Vicksburg was complete. As long as we could hold our position the enemy was limited in supplies of food, men and munitions of war to what they had on hand. These could not last always.

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.195–p.196

The crossing of troops at Bruinsburg commenced April 30th. On the 18th of May the army was in rear of Vicksburg. On the 19th, just twenty days after the crossing, the city was completely in vested and an assault had been made; five distinct battles (besides continuous skirmishing) had been fought and won by the Union forces; the capital of the State had fallen, and its arsenals, military manufactories, and everything useful for military purposes had been destroyed; an average of about one hundred and eighty miles had been marched by the troops engaged; but five days' rations had been issued, and no forage; over six thousand prisoners had been captured, and as many more of the enemy had been killed or wounded; twenty-seven heavy cannon and sixty-one field-pieces had fallen into our hands; and four hundred miles of the river, from Vicksburg to Port Hudson, had become ours….

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.196

After the unsuccessful assault of the 22d the work of the regular siege began. Sherman occupied the right starting from the river above Vicksburg, McPherson the center (McArthur's division now with him), and McClernand the left, holding the road south to Warrenton. Lauman's division arrived at this time and was placed on the extreme left of the line.

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.196–p.197

In the interval between the assaults of the 19th and 22d roads had been completed from the Yazoo River and Chickasaw Bayou, around the rear of the army, to enable us to bring up supplies of food and ammunition; ground had been selected and cleared on which the troops were to be encamped, and tents and cooking-utensils were brought up. The troops had been without these from the time of crossing the Mississippi up to this time. All was now ready for the pick and spade. Prentiss and Hurlbut were ordered to send forward every man that could be spared. Cavalry especially was wanted to watch the fords along the Big Black, and to observe Johnston. I knew that Johnston was receiving reinforcements from Bragg, who was confronting Rosecrans in Tennessee. Vicksburg was so important to the enemy that I believed he would make the most strenuous efforts to raise the siege, even at the risk of losing ground elsewhere….

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.197–p.198

The ground about Vicksburg is admirable for defense. On the north it is about two hundred feet above the Mississippi River at the highest point, and very much cut up by the washing rains; the ravines were grown up with cane and underbrush, while the sides and tops were covered with a dense forest. Farther south the ground flattens out somewhat, and was in cultivation. But here, too, it was cut up by ravines and small streams. The enemy's line of defense followed the crest of a ridge from the river north of the city eastward, then southerly around to the Jackson road, full three miles back of the city; thence in a southwesterly direction to the river. Deep ravines of the description given lay in front of these defenses. As there is a succession of gullies cut out by rains along the side of the ridge, the line was necessarily very irregular. To follow each of these spurs with intrenchments, so as to command the slopes on either side, would have lengthened their line very much. Generally, therefore, or in many places, their line would run from near the head of one gully nearly straight to the head of another, and an outer work triangular in shape, generally open in the rear, was thrown up on the point; with a few men in this outer work they commanded the approaches to the main line completely.

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.198

The work to be done to make our position as strong against the enemy as his was against us was very great. The problem was also complicated by our wanting our line as near that of the enemy as possible….

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.198

By the 1st of July our approaches had reached the enemy's ditch at a number of places. At ten points we could move under cover to within from five to one hundred yards of the enemy. Orders were given to make all preparations for assault on the 6th of July. The debouches were ordered widened to afford easy egress, while the approaches were also to be widened to admit the troops to pass through four abreast. Plank, and bags filled with cotton packed in tightly, were ordered prepared to enable the troops to cross the ditches.

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.198

On the night of the 1st of July Johnston was between Brownsville and the Big Black, and wrote Pemberton from there that about the 7th of the month an attempt would be made to create a diversion to enable him to cut his way out. Pemberton was a prisoner before this message reached him.

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.198

On July 1st, Pemberton, seeing no hope of outside relief, addressed the following letter to each of his four division commanders:

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.199

Unless the siege of Vicksburg is raised or supplies are thrown in, it will become necessary very shortly to evacuate the place. I see no prospect of the former, and there are many great, if not insuperable, obstacles in the way of the latter. You are therefore requested to inform me, with as little delay as possible, as to the condition of your troops and their ability to make the marches and undergo the fatigues necessary to accomplish a successful evacuation.

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.199

Two of his generals suggested surrender, and the other two practically did the same. They expressed the opinion that an attempt to evacuate would fail. Pemberton had previously got a message to Johnston suggesting that he should try to negotiate with me for a release of the garrison with their arms. Johnston replied that it would be a confession of weakness for him to do so; but he authorized Pemberton to use his name in making such an arrangement.

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.199

On the 3d, about 10 o'clock A. M., white flags appeared on a portion of the rebel works. Hostilities along that part of the line ceased at once. Soon two persons were seen coming toward our lines bearing a white flag. They proved to be General Bowen, a division commander, and Colonel Montgomery, aide-de-camp to Pemberton, bearing the following letter tome:

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.200

I have the honor to propose to you an armistice for—— hours with a view to arranging terms for the capitulation of Vicksburg. To this end, if agreeable to you, I will appoint three commissioners to meet a like number, to be named by yourself, at such place and hour to-day as you may find convenient. I make this proposition to save the further effusion of blood, which must otherwise be shed to a frightful extent, feeling myself fully able to maintain my position for a yet indefinite period. This communication will be handed you under flag of truce by Major-General John S. Bowen….

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.200–p.201

At the appointed hour the garrison of Vicksburg marched out of their works and formed line in front, stacked arms, and marched back in good order. Our whole army present witnessed this scene without cheering. Logan's division, which had approached nearest the rebel works, was the first to march in; and the flag of one of the regiments of his division was soon floating over the court-house. Our soldiers were no sooner inside the lines than the two armies began to fraternize. Our men had had full rations from the time the siege commenced to the close. The enemy had been suffering, particularly toward the last. I myself saw our men taking bread from their haversacks and giving it to the enemy they had so recently been engaged in starving out. It was accepted with avidity and with thanks Pemberton says in his report:

Grant, Siege of Vicksburg, America, Vol.8, p.201

If it should be asked why July 4th was selected as the day for the surrender, the answer is obvious. I believed that upon that day I should obtain better terms. Well aware of the vanity of our foes, I knew they would attach vast importance to the entrance on July 4th into the stronghold of the great river, and that, to gratify their national vanity, they would yield then what could not be extorted from them at any other time.

The Battle of Chickamauga

Title: The Battle of Chickamauga

Author: George H. Thomas

Date: 1863

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.202-213

It was as commander of the left wing of the Union army at Chickamauga, Tennessee (September 19-20, 1863), that Brigadier-General Thomas, who made this official report to the War Department, displayed such courage and military genius as to save the Union army from overwhelming defeat, and earn for himself the title of "The Rock of Chickamauga." In this sanguinary engagement the Union and Confederate losses were about 34,000 in killed, wounded and missing, about equally divided. Opposing 55,000 Federal troops was a Confederate army of about 70,000. Though the battle was won by the Confederates, under General Bragg, the prize for which it was fought, the city of Chattanooga, remained in possession of the Federals, under Rosecrans.

This account begins on September 18, and pictures the eventful September 20, when the Federals were routed, leaving Thomas to stand firm against tremendous odds, before retiring under cover of darkness.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.202–p.203

AT 4 p.m. the whole corps moved to the left along Chickamauga Creek to Crawfish Spring. On arriving at that place received orders to march on the cross-road leading by Widow Glenn's house to the Chattanooga and La Fayette road, and take up a position near Kelly's farm, on the La Fayette road, connecting with Crittenden on my right at Gordon's Mills. The head of the column reached Kelly's farm about daylight on the 19th [September, 1863] Baird's division in front, and took up a position at the forks of the road, facing toward Reed's and Alexander's Bridges over the Chickamauga. Colonel Wilder, commanding the mounted brigade of Reynolds' division, informed me that the enemy had crossed the Chickamauga in force at those two bridges the evening before and drove his brigade across the State road, or Chattanooga and La Fayette road, to the heights east of Widow Glenn s house.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.203–p.204

Kelly's house is situated in an opening about three fourths of a mile long and one-fourth of a mile wide, on the east side of the State road, and stretches along that road in a northerly direction, with a small field of perhaps 20 acres on the west side of the road, directly opposite to the house. From thence to the Chickamauga the surface of the country is undulating and covered with original forest timber, interspersed with undergrowth, in many places so dense that it is difficult to see 50 paces ahead. There is a cleared field near Jay's Mill, and cleared land in the vicinity of Reed's and Alexander's Bridges. A narrow field commences at a point about a fourth of a mile south of Kelly's house, on the east side of the State road, and extends, perhaps, for half a mile along the road toward Gordon's Mills. Between the State road and the foot of Missionary Ridge there is a skirt of timber stretching from the vicinity of Widow Glenn's house, south of the forks of the road to McDonald's house, three-fourths of a mile north of Kelly's. The eastern slope of the Missionary Ridge, between Glenn's and McDonald's, is cleared and mostly under cultivation. This position of Baird's threw my right in close proximity to Wilder's brigade; the interval I intended to fill up with the two remaining brigades of Reynolds' division on their arrival. General Brannan, closely following Baird's division, was placed in position on his left, on the two roads leading from the State road to Reed's and Alexander's Bridges.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.204

Colonel Dan. McCook, commanding a brigade of the Reserve Corps, met me at General Baird's headquarters, and reported to me that he had been stationed the previous night on the road leading to Reed's Bridge, and that he could discover no force of the enemy except one brigade, which had crossed to the west side of the Chickamauga at Reed's Bridge the day before; and he believed it could be cut off, because, after it had crossed, he had destroyed the bridge, the enemy having retired toward Alexander's Bridge. Upon this information I directed General Brannan to post a brigade, within supporting distance of Baird, on the road to Alexander's Bridge, and with his other two brigades to reconnoiter the road leading to Reed's Bridge to see if he could locate the brigade reported by Colonel McCook, and, if a favorable opportunity occurred, to capture it. His dispositions were made according to instructions by 9 a.m.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.204–p.205

General Baird was directed to throw forward his right wing, so as to get more nearly in line with Brannan, but to watch well on his right flank. Soon after this disposition of those two divisions, a portion of Palmer's division, of Crittenden's corps, took position to the right of General Baird's division. About 10 o'clock Croxton's brigade of Brannan's division, posted on the road leading to Alexander's Bridge, became engaged with the enemy, and I rode forward to his position to ascertain the character of the attack. Colonel Croxton reported to me that he had driven the enemy nearly half a mile, but that he was then meeting with obstinate resistance. I then rode back to Baird's position, and directed him to advance to Croxton's support, which he did with his whole division, Starkweather's brigade in reserve, and drove the enemy steadily before him for some distance, taking many prisoners. Croxton's brigade, which had been heavily engaged for over an hour with greatly superior numbers of the enemy, and being nearly exhausted of ammunition, was then moved to the rear to enable the men to fill up their boxes; and Baird and Brannan, having united their forces, drove the enemy from their immediate front. General Baird then halted for the purpose of readjusting his line; and hearing from prisoners that the enemy were in heavy force on his immediate right, he threw back his right wing in order to be ready for an attack from that quarter.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.205–p.206

Before his dispositions could be completed, the enemy, in overwhelming numbers, furiously assaulted Scribner's and King's brigades, and drove them in disorder. Fortunately, at this time Johnson's division, of McCook's corps, and Reynolds' division, of my corps, arrived, and were immediately placed in position. Johnson preceded Reynolds, his left connecting with Baird's right, and Palmer being immediately on Johnson's right, Reynolds was placed on the right of Palmer, with one brigade of his division in reserve. As soon as formed they advanced upon the enemy, attacking him in flank and driving him in great disorder for a mile and a half, while Brannan's troops met him in front as he was pursuing Baird's retiring brigades, driving the head of his column back and retaking the artillery, which had been temporarily lost by Baird's brigades, the Ninth Ohio recovering Battery H, Fifth U. S. Artillery, at the point of the bayonet. The enemy, at this time being hardly pressed by Johnson, Palmer, and Reynolds in flank, fell back in confusion upon his reserves, posted in a strong position on the west side of Chickamauga Creek between Reed's and Alexander's Bridges.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.206

Brannan and Baird were then ordered to reorganize their commands and take position on commanding ground on the road from McDonald's to Reed's Bridge, and hold it to the last extremity, as I expected the next effort of the enemy would be to gain that road and our rear. This was about 2 p.m. After a lull of about one hour, a furious attack was made upon Reynolds' right, and he having called upon me for re-enforcements, I directed Brannan's division to move to his support, leaving King's brigade, of Baird's division, to hold the position at which Baird and Brannan had been posted, the balance of Baird's division closing up to the right on Johnson's division….

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.207

Before adjusting the line satisfactorily, I received an order to report to department headquarters immediately, and was absent from my command until near midnight. After my return from department headquarters, about 2 a.m. on the 20th, I received a report from General Baird that the left of his division did not rest on the Reed's Bridge road, as I had intended, and that he could not reach it without weakening his line too much. I immediately addressed a note to the general commanding requesting that General Negley be sent me to take position on Baird's left and rear, and thus secure our left from assault. During the night the troops threw up temporary breastworks of logs, and prepared for the encounter which all anticipated would come off the next day.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.207–p.208

Although informed by note, from General Rosecrans' headquarters, that Negley's division would be sent immediately to take post on my left, it had not arrived at 7 a.m. on the 20th, and I sent Captain Willard, of my staff, to General Negley to urge him forward as rapidly as possible, and to point out his position to him. General Negley, in his official report, mentions that he received this order through Captain Willard at 8 a.m. on the 20th, and that he immediately commenced withdrawing his division for that purpose, when the enemy was reported to be massing a heavy force in his front, sharply engaging his skirmishers, and that he was directed by General Rosencrans to hold his position until relieved by some other command. General Beatty's brigade, however, was sent under the guidance of Captain Willard, who took it to its position, and it went into action immediately. The enemy at that time commenced a furious assault on Baird's left, and partially succeeded in gaining his rear….

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.208

To prevent a repetition of this attack of the enemy on our left I directed Captain Gaw, chief topographical officer on my staff, to go to the commanding officer of the troops on the left and rear of Baird, and direct him to mass as much artillery on the slopes of Missionary Ridge, west of the State road, as he could conveniently spare from his lines, supported strongly by infantry, so as to sweep the ground to the left and rear of Baird's position….

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.208–p.209

General Wood barely had time to dispose his troops on the left of Brannan before another of those fierce assaults, similar to those made in the morning on my lines, was made on him and Brannan combined, and kept up by the enemy throwing in fresh troops as fast as those in their front were driven back, until near nightfall. About the time that Wood took up his position, General Gordon Granger appeared on my left flank at the head of Steedman's division of his corps. I immediately dispatched a staff officer, Captain Johnson, Second Indiana Cavalry, of Negley's division, to him with orders to push forward and take position on Brannan's right, which order was complied with with the greatest promptness and alacrity. Steedman, moving his division into position with almost as much precision as if on drill, and fighting his way to the crest of the hill on Brannan's right, moved forward his artillery and drove the enemy down the southern slope, inflicting on him a most terrible loss in killed and wounded. This opportune arrival of fresh troops revived the flagging spirits of our men on the right, and inspired them with new ardor for the contest. Every assault of the enemy from that time until nightfall' was repulsed in the most gallant style by the whole line.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.209

By this time the ammunition in the boxes of the men was reduced, on an average, to 2 or 3 rounds per man, and my ammunition trains having been unfortunately ordered to the rear by some unauthorized person, we should have been entirely without ammunition in a very short time had not a small supply come up with General Steedman's command. This, being distributed among the troops, gave them about 10 rounds per man.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.209–p.210

General Garfield, chief of staff of General Rosecrans, reached this position about 4 p.m., in company with Lieutenant-Colonel Thruston, of McCook's staff, and Captains Gaw and Barker, of my staff, who had been sent to the rear to bring back the ammunition, if possible. General Garfield gave me the first reliable information that the right and center of our army had been driven, and of its condition at that time. I soon after received a dispatch from General Rosecrans, directing me to assume command of all the forces, and, with Crittenden and McCook, take a strong position and assume a threatening attitude at Rossville, sending the unorganized forces to Chattanooga for reorganization, stating that he would examine the ground at Chattanooga, and then join me; also that he had sent out rations and ammunition to meet me at Rossville.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.210

I determined to hold the position until nightfall, if possible, in the meantime sending Captains Barker and Kellogg to distribute the ammunition, Major Lawrence, my chief of artillery, having been previously sent to notify the different commanders that ammunition would be supplied them shortly. As soon as they reported the distribution of the ammunition, I directed Captain Willard to inform the division commanders to prepare to withdraw their commands as soon as they received orders. At 5.30 pm. Captain Barker, commanding my escort, was sent to notify General Reynolds to commence the movement, and I left the position behind General Wood's command to meet Reynolds and point out to him the position where I wished him to form line to cover the retirement of the other troops on the left.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.210–p.211

In passing through an open woods bordering the State road, and between my last and Reynolds' position, I was cautioned by a couple of soldiers, who had been to hunt water, that there was a large force of the rebels in these woods, drawn up in line and advancing toward me. Just at this time I saw the head of Reynolds' column approaching, and calling to the general himself, directed him to form line perpendicular to the State road, changing the head of his column to the left, with his right resting on that road, and to charge the enemy, who were then in his immediate front. This movement was made with the utmost promptitude, and facing to the right while on the march, Turchin threw his brigade upon the rebel force, routing them and driving them in utter confusion entirely beyond Baird's left. In this splendid advance more than 200 prisoners were captured and sent to the rear…. I then proceeded to Rossville, accompanied by Generals Garfield and Gordon Granger, and immediately prepared to place the troops in position at that point. One brigade of Negley's division was posted in the gap, on the Ringgold road, and two brigades on the top of the ridge to the right of the road, adjoining the brigade in the road; Reynolds' division on the right of Negley's and reaching to the Dry Valley road; Brannan's division in the rear of Reynolds' right, as a reserve; McCook's corps on the right of the Dry Valley road, and stretching toward the west, his right reaching nearly to Chattanooga Creek; Crittenden's entire corps was posted on the heights to the left of the Ringgold road, with Steedman's division of Granger's corps in reserve behind his left; Baird's division in reserve, and in supporting distance of the brigade in the gap; McCook's brigade of Granger's corps was also posted as a reserve to the brigade of Negley on the top of the ridge, to the right of the road; Minty's brigade of cavalry was on the Ringgold road, about a mile and a half in advance of the gap.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.212

About 10 a.m. of the 21st, receiving a message from Minty that the enemy were advancing on him with a strong force of cavalry and infantry, I directed him to retire through the gap and post his command on our left flank, and throw out strong reconnoitering parties across the ridge to observe and report any movements of the enemy on our left front. From information received from citizens, I was convinced that the position was untenable in the face of the odds we had opposed to us, as the enemy could easily concentrate upon our right flank, which, if driven, would expose our center and left to be entirely cut off from our communications. I therefore advised the commanding general to concentrate the troops at Chattanooga. About the time I made the suggestion to withdraw, the enemy made a demonstration on the direct road, but were soon repulsed. In anticipation of this order to concentrate at Chattanoga, I sent for the corps commanders, and gave such general instructions as would enable them to prepare their commands for making the movement without confusion. All wagons, ambulances, and surplus artillery carriages were sent to the rear before night.

Thomas, Battle of Chickamauga, America, Vol.8, p.212–p.213

The order for the withdrawal being received about 6 p.m. the movement commenced at 9 p.m., in the following order: Strong skirmish lines, under the direction of judicious officers, were thrown out to the front of each division to cover this movement, with directions to retire at daylight, deployed and in supporting distance, the whole to be supported by the First Division, Fourteenth Army Corps, under the superintendence of Major-General Rousseau, assisted by Minty's brigade of cavalry, which was to follow after the skirmishers. Crittenden's corps was to move from the hill to the left of the road at 9 p.m., followed by Steedman's division. Next Negley's division was to withdraw at 10 p.m.; then Reynolds, McCook's corps, by divisions from left to right, moving within supporting distance one after the other; Brannan's division was posted at 6 p.m. on the road about half way between Rossville and Chattanooga to cover the movement. The troops were withdrawn in a quiet, orderly manner, without the loss of a single man, and by 7 a.m. on the 22d were in their positions in front of Chattanooga, which had been assigned to them previous to their arrival, and which they now occupy, covered by strong intrenchments thrown up on the day of our arrival, and strengthened from day to day until they were considered sufficiently strong for all defensive purposes.

Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge

Title: Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge

Author: George H. Thomas

Date: 1863

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.214-220

Brigadier-General Thomas, one of the most modest as well as capable generals of the Civil War, had been appointed, in 1862, to supersede Ruell as commander of the Federal Army of the Cumberland, but preferred to remain in a subordinate position. After the Battle of Chickamauga, however, he succeeded Rosecrans, and commanded the main body of the Federal army at the Battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, November 23-25, 1863.

His official report of the famous "battle above the clouds," from which this account is taken, reviews only the operations of his own army; but it was the dominant factor in the victory. Credit for the plan of this campaign belongs to Grant, who, on October 23, had assumed command of Federal military operations in the West. Subsequently Thomas defeated Hood at the Battle of Nashville (December 15-16, 1864), for which he was appointed a major-general and voted the thanks of Congress.

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.214–p.215

As soon as communications with Bridgeport had been made secure, and the question of supplying the army at this point rendered certain, preparations were at once commenced for driving the enemy from his position in our immediate front on Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge…. Major-General Sherman, commanding the Army of the Tennessee, having been ordered with the Fifteenth Corps to this point to participate in the operations against the enemy, reached Bridgeport with two divisions on the 15th [November]. He came to the front himself, and having examined the ground, expressed himself confident of his ability to execute his share of the work. The plan of operations was then written out substantially as follows: Sherman, with the Fifteenth Corps, strengthened with one division from my command, was to effect a crossing of the Tennessee River just below the mouth of the South Chickamauga, on Saturday, November 21, at daylight; his crossing to be protected by artillery planted on the heights on the north bank of the river. After crossing his force, he was to carry the heights of Missionary Ridge from their northern extremity to about the railroad tunnel before the enemy could concentrate a force against him. I was to co-operate with Sherman by concentrating my troops in Chattanooga Valley, on my left flank…. I was then to effect a junction with Sherman, making my advance from the left, well toward the north end of Mission Ridge, and moving as near simultaneously with Sherman as possible….

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.215–p.216

…. In consequence of the bad condition of the roads General Sherman's troops were occupied all of Sunday in getting into position. In the meantime, the river having risen, both pontoon bridges were broken by rafts sent down the river by the enemy, cutting off Osterhaus' division from the balance of Sherman s troops. It was thought this would delay us another day, but during the night of the 22d, two deserters reported Bragg had fallen back, and that there was only a strong picket line in our front. Early on the morning of the 23d, I received a note from Major-General Grant, directing me to ascertain by a demonstration the truth or falsity of this report.

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.216–p.217

Orders were accordingly given to General Granger, commanding the Fourth Corps, to form his troops and to advance directly in front of Fort Wood, and thus develop the strength of the enemy. General Palmer, commanding the Fourteenth Corps, was directed to support General Granger's right, with Baird's division refused and "en echelon."…. The two divisions of Granger's corps (Sheridan's and Wood's) were formed in front of Fort Wood; Sheridan on the right, Wood on the left, with his left extending nearly to Citico Creek. The formation being completed about 2 p.m. the troops were advanced steadily and with rapidity directly to the front, driving before them first the rebel pickets, then their reserves, and falling upon their grand guards stationed in their first line of rifle-pits, captured something over 200 men, and secured themselves in their new positions before the enemy had sufficiently recovered from his surprise to attempt to send re-enforcements from his main camp. Orders were then given to General Granger to make his position secure by constructing temporary breastworks and throwing out strong pickets to his front…. The troops remained in that position for the night. The Tennessee River having risen considerably from the effect of the previous heavy rainstorm, it was found difficult to rebuild the pontoon bridge at Brown's Ferry. Therefore it was determined that General Hooker should take Osterhaus' division, which was still in Lookout Valley, and Geary's division, Whitaker's and Grose's brigades, of the First Division, Fourth Corps, under Brigadier-General Cruft, and make a strong demonstration on the western slope of Lookout Mountain, for the purpose of attracting the enemy's attention in that direction and thus withdrawing him from Sherman while crossing the river at the mouth of the South Chickamauga.

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.217

General Hooker was instructed that in making this demonstration, if he discovered the position and strength of the enemy would justify him in attempting to carry the point of the mountain, to do so. By 4 a.m. on the morning of the 24th, General Hooker reported his troops in position and ready to advance.

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.217

Finding Lookout Creek so much swollen as to be impassable, he sent Geary's division, supported by Cruft's two brigades, to cross the creek at Wauhatchie, and work down on the right bank, while he employed the remainder of his force in constructing temporary bridges across the creek on the main road. The enemy, being attracted by the force on the road, did not observe the movements of Geary until his column was directly on their left and threatened their rear. Hooker's movements were facilitated by the heavy mist which overhung the mountain, enabling Geary to get into position without attracting attention.

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.217–p.218

Finding himself vigorously pushed by a strong column on his left and rear, the enemy began to fall back with rapidity, but his resistance was obstinate, and the entire point of the mountain was not gained until about 2 p.m., when General Hooker reported by telegraph that he had carried the mountain as far as the road from Chattanooga Valley to the white house. Soon after, his main column coming up, his line was extended to the foot of the mountain, near the mouth of Chattanooga Creek….

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.218

With the aid of the steamer "Dunbar," which had been put in condition and sent up the river at daylight of the 24th, General Sherman by 11 a.m. had crossed three divisions of the Fifteenth Corps, and was ready to advance….

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.218

Howard's corps moved to the left about 9 a.m., and communicated with Sherman about noon. Instructions were sent to General Hooker to be ready to advance on the morning of the 25th from his position on the point of Lookout Mountain to the Summertown road, and endeavor to intercept the enemy's retreat, if he had not already withdrawn, which he was to ascertain by pushing a reconnaissance to the top of Lookout Mountain.

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.218–p.219

The reconnaissance was made as directed, and having ascertained that the enemy had evacuated during the night, General Hooker was then directed to move on the Rossville road with the troops under his command…. carry the pass at Rossville, and operate upon the enemy's left and rear. Palmer's and Granger's troops were held in readiness to advance directly on the rifle-pits in their front as soon as Hooker could get into position at Rossville. In retiring on the night of the 24th, the enemy had destroyed the bridges over Chattanooga Creek on the road leading from Lookout Mountain to Rossville, and, in consequence, General Hooker was delayed until after 2 p.m. in effecting the crossing. About noon, General Sherman becoming heavily engaged by the enemy, they having massed a strong force in his front, orders were given for General Baird to march his division within supporting distance of General Sherman. Moving his command promptly in the direction indicated, he was placed in position to the left of Wood's division of Granger's corps.

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.219

…. The whole line then advanced against the breastworks, and soon became warmly engaged with the enemy's skirmishers; these, giving way, retired upon their reserves, posted within their works. Our troops advancing steadily in a continuous line, the enemy, seized with panic, abandoned the works at the foot of the hill and retreated precipitately to the crest, where they were closely followed by our troops, who, apparently inspired by the impulse of victory, carried the hill simultaneously at six different points, and so closely upon the heels of the enemy that many of them were taken prisoners in the trenches. We captured all their cannon and ammunition before they could be removed or destroyed.

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.219–p.220

After halting for a few moments to reorganize the troops, who had become somewhat scattered in the assault of the hill, General Sheridan pushed forward in pursuit, and drove those in his front who escaped capture across Chickamauga Creek. Generals Wood and Baird, being obstinately resisted by re-enforcements from the enemy's extreme right, continued fighting until darkness set in, slowly but steadily driving the enemy before them. In moving upon Rossville, General Hooker encountered Stewart's division and other troops. Finding his left flank threatened, Stewart attempted to escape by retreating toward Graysville, but some of his force, finding their retreat threatened from that quarter, retired in disorder toward their right, along the crest of the ridge, when they were met by another portion of General Hooker's command, and were driven by these troops in the face of Johnson's division of Palmer's corps, by whom they were nearly all made prisoners.

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.220

…. On the 26th, the enemy were pursued by Hooker's and Palmer's commands, surprising a portion of their rear guard near Graysville after nightfall, capturing three pieces of artillery and several hundred prisoners. The pursuit was continued on the 27th….

Thomas, Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, America, Vol.8, p.220

On the 28th, General Hooker was ordered by General Grant to remain at Ringgold until the 30th, and so employ his troops as to cover the movements of General Sherman, who had received orders to march his force to the relief of Burnside by way of Cleveland and Louden. Palmer's corps was detached from the force under General Hooker and returned to Chattanooga.

The Emancipation Proclamation, 1863

Title: The Emancipation Proclamation

Author: Abraham Lincoln

Date: 1863

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, pp.344-346

The war for the maintenance of the Union had been going on for a year and & half before Lincoln issued the preliminary proclamation quoted in the beginning of the present document. The emancipation proclamation of January 1, 2863, enlarged the basis of the conflict, and from the point of view of foreign nations gave the North the advantage of a moral as well as a political issue.

Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.344

WHEREAS, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.344

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.344

"That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.345

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:

Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.345

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are, for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.345

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.345

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.346

And I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.346

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.346

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.346

Done at the city of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

L. S.

By the President:

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,

Secretary of State

The Battle of Gettysburg

Title: The Battle of Gettysburg

Author: Frank Aretas Haskell

Date: 1863

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, pp.347-440

Frank Aretas Haskell was born at Tunbridge, Vermont, on July 13, 1828. He graduated at Dartmouth College in 1854, and went to Madison, Wisconsin, to practice law. On the outbreak of the War, he received a commission as First Lieutenant of Company I, of the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, and served as Adjutant of his regiment until April 14, 1862, when he became aide-de-camp to General John Gibbon, commander of the Iron Brigade. This was his rank in the battle of Gettysburg. On Feb. 9, 1864, Haskell was appointed Colonel of the Thirty-sixth Wisconsin; and on June 3, of the same year, he fell when leading a charge at the battle of Cold Harbor, one of the most distinguished soldiers of the Army of the Potomac.

This account of Gettysburg was written by Haskell to his brother, shortly after the battle, and was not intended for publication. This fact ought to be borne in mind in connection with some severe reflections cast by the author upon certain officers and soldiers of the Union army. The present text follows the unabridged reprint of the Wisconsin Historical Commission; and the notes on Haskell's estimates of numbers and losses have been supplied by Colonel Thomas Livermore, the well-known authority on this subject.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.347

THE great battle of Gettysburg is now an event of the past. The composition and strength of the armies, their leaders, the strategy, the tactics, the result, of that field are today by the side of those of Waterloo—matters of history. A few days ago these things were otherwise. This great event did not so "cast its shadow before," as to moderate the hot sunshine that streamed upon our preceding march, or to relieve our minds of all apprehension of the result of the second great Rebel invasion of the soil North of the Potomac.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.347

No, not many days since, at times we were filled with fears and forebodings. The people of the country, I suppose, shared the anxieties of the army, somewhat in common with us, but they could not have felt them as keenly as we did. We were upon the immediate theatre of events, as they occurred from day to day, and were of them. We were the army whose province it should be to meet this invasion and repel it; on us was the immediate responsibility for results, most momentous for good or ill, as yet in the future. And so in addition to the solicitude of all good patriots, we felt that our own honor as men and as an army, as well as the safety of the Capitol and the country, were at stake.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.348

And what if that invasion should be successful, and in the coming battle, the Army of the Potomac should be overpowered? Would it not be? When our army was much larger than at present—had rested all winter—and, nearly perfect in all its departments and arrangements, was the most splendid army this continent ever saw, only a part of the Rebel force, which it now had to contend with, had defeated it—its leader, rather—at Chancellorsville! Now the Rebel had his whole force assembled, he was flushed with recent victory, was arrogant in his career of unopposed invasion, at a favorable season of the year. His daring plans, made by no unskilled head, to transfer the war from his own to his enemies' ground, were being successful. He had gone a day's march from his front before Hooker moved, or was aware of his departure. Then, I believe, the army in general, both officers and men, had no confidence in Hooker, in either his honesty or ability.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.348

Did they not charge him, personally, with the defeat at Chancellorsville? Were they not still burning with indignation against him for that disgrace? And now, again under his leadership, they were marching against the enemy! And they knew of nothing, short of the providence of God, that could, or would, remove him. For many reasons, during the marches prior to the battle, we were anxious, and at times heavy at heart.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.348

But the Army of the Potomac was no band of school girls. They were not the men likely to be crushed or utterly discouraged by any new circumstances in which they might find themselves placed. They had lost some battles, they had gained some. They knew what defeat was, and what was victory. But here is the greatest praise that I can bestow upon them, or upon any army: With the elation of victory, or the depression of defeat, amidst the hardest toils of the campaign, under unwelcome leadership, at all times, and under all circumstances, they were a reliable army still. The Army of the Potomac would do as it was told, always.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.349

Well clothed, and well fed—there never could be any ground for complaint on these heads—but a mighty work was before them. Onward they moved—night and day were blended—over many a weary mile, through dust, and through mud, in the broiling sunshine, in the flooding rain, over steeps, through defiles, across rivers, over last year's battle fields, where the skeletons of our dead brethren, by hundreds, lay bare and bleaching, weary, without sleep for days, tormented with the newspapers, and their rumors, that the enemy was in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, in all places where he was nut, yet these men could still be relied upon, I believe, when the day of conflict should come. "Haec olim meminisse juvabit." We did not then know this. I mention them now, that you may see that in those times we had several matters to think about, and to do, that were not as pleasant as sleeping upon a bank of violets in the shade.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.349

In moving from near Falmouth, Va., the army was formed in several columns, and took several roads. The Second Corps, the rear of the whole, was the last to move, and left Falmouth at daybreak, on the 25th of June, and pursued its march through Aquia, Dumfries, Wolf Run Shoales, Centerville, Gainesville, Thoroughfare Gap—this last we left on the 25th, marching back to Haymarket, where we had a skirmish with the cavalry and horse artillery of the enemy—Gum Spring, crossing the Potomac at Edward's Ferry, thence through Poolesville, Frederick, Liberty, and Union Town. We marched from near Frederick to Union Town, a distance of thirty-two miles, from eight o'clock A. M. to nine P. M., on the 28th, and I think this is the longest march, accomplished in so short a time, by a corps during the war. On the 28th, while we were near this latter place, we breathed a full breath of joy, and of hope. The Providence of God had been with us—we ought not to have doubted it—General Meade commanded the Army of the Potomac.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.350

Not a favorable time, one would be apt to suppose, to change the General of a large army, on the eve of battle, the result of which might be to destroy the Government and country! But it should have been done long before. At all events, any change could not have been for the worse, and the Administration, therefore, hazarded little, in making it now. From this moment my own mind was easy concerning results. I now felt that we had a clear-headed, honest soldier, to command the army, who would do his best always—that there would be no repetition of Chancellorsville. Meade was not as much known in the Army as many of the other corps commanders, but the officers who knew, all thought highly of him, a man of great modesty, with none of those qualities which are noisy and assuming, and hankering for cheap newspaper fame, not at all of the "gallant" Sickles stamp. I happened to know much of General Meade—he and General Gibbon had always been very intimate, and I had seen much of him—I think my own notions concerning General Meade at this time, were shared quite generally by the army; at all events, all who knew him shared them.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.350

By this time, by reports that were not mere rumors, we began to hear frequently of the enemy, and of his proximity. His cavalry was all about us, making little raids here and there, capturing now and then a few of our wagons, and stealing a good many horses, but doing us really the least amount possible of harm, for we were not by these means impeded at all, and his cavalry gave no information at all to Lee, that he could rely upon, of the movements of the Army of the Potomac. The Infantry of the enemy was at this time in the neighborhood of Hagerstown, Chambersburg, and some had been at Gettysburg, possibly were there now. Gettysburg was a point of strategic importance, a great many roads, some ten or twelve at least concentrating there, so the army could easily converge to, or, should a further march be necessary, diverge from this point. General Meade, therefore, resolved to try to seize Gettysburg, and accordingly gave the necessary orders for the concentration of his different columns there. Under the new auspices the army brightened, and moved on with a more elastic step towards the yet undefined field of conflict.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.351

The 1st Corps, General Reynolds, already having the advance, was ordered to push forward rapidly, and take and hold the town, if he could. The rest of the Army would assemble to his support. Buford's Cavalry cooperated with this corps, and on the morning of the 1st of July found the enemy near Gettysburg and to the West, and promptly engaged him. The First Corps having bivouacked the night before, South of the town, came up rapidly to Buford's support, and immediately a sharp battle was opened with the advance of the enemy. The First Division (Gen. Wadsworth) was the first of the infantry to become engaged, but the other two, commanded respectively by Generals Robinson and Doubleday, were close at hand, and forming the line of battle to the West and North-west of the town, at a mean distance of about a mile away, the battle continued for some hours, with various success, which was on the whole with us until near noon. At this time a lull occurred, which was occupied, by both sides, in supervising and reestablishing the hastily formed lines of the morning. New Divisions of the enemy were constantly arriving and taking up positions, for this purpose marching in upon the various roads that terminate at the town, from the West and North. The position of the First Corps was then becoming perilous in the extreme, but it was improved a little before noon by the arrival upon the field of two Divisions of the Eleventh Corps (Gen. Howard), these Divisions commanded respectively by Generals Schurz and Barlow, who by order posted their commands to the right of the First Corps, with their right retired, forming an angle with the line of the First Corps. Between three and four o'clock in the afternoon the enemy, now in overwhelming force, resumed the battle, with spirit. The portion of the Eleventh Corps making but feeble opposition to the advancing enemy, soon began to fall back.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.352

Back in disorganized masses they fled into the town, hotly pursued, and in lanes, in barns, in yards and cellars, throwing away their arms, they sought to hide like rabbits, and were there captured, unresisting, by hundreds.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.352

The First Corps, deprived of this support, if support it could be called, outflanked upon either hand, and engaged in front, was compelled to yield the field. Making its last stand upon what is called "Seminary Ridge," not far from the town, it fell back in considerable confusion, through the South-west part of the town, making brave resistance, however, but with considerable loss. The enemy did not see fit to follow, or to attempt to, further than the town, and so the fight of the 1st of July closed here. I suppose our losses during the day would exceed four thousand, of whom a large number were prisoners. Such usually is the kind of loss sustained by the Eleventh Corps. You will remember that the old "Iron Brigade" is in the First Corps, and consequently shared this fight, and I hear their conduct praised on all hands.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.352

In the and Wis., Col. Fairchild lost his left arm; Lieut. Col. Stevens was mortally wounded, and Major Mansfield was wounded; Lieut. Col. Callis, of the 7th Wis., and Lieut. Col. Dudley, of the 19th Ind., were badly, dangerously, wounded, the latter by the loss of his right leg above the knee.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.352

I saw "John Burns," the only citizen of Gettysburg who fought in the battle, and I asked him what troops he fought with. He said: "O, I pitched in with them Wisconsin fellers." I asked what sort of men they were, and he answered: "They fit terribly. The Rebs couldn't make anything of them fellers."

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.352

And so the brave compliment the brave. This man was touched by three bullets from the enemy, but not seriously wounded.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.352

But the loss of the enemy to-day was severe also, probably in killed and wounded, as heavy as our own, but not so great in prisoners.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.352

Of these latter, the "Iron Brigade" captured almost an entire Mississippi Brigade, however.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.352

Of the events so far, of the 1st of July, I do not speak from personal knowledge. I shall now tell my introduction to these events.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.353

At eleven o'clock A. M., on that day, the Second Corps was halted at Taneytown, which is thirteen miles from Gettysburg, South, and there awaiting orders, the men were allowed to make coffee and rest. At between one and two o'clock in the afternoon, a message was brought to Gen. Gibbon, requiring his immediate presence at the headquarters of Gen. Hancock, who commanded the Corps. I went with Gen. Gibbon, and we rode at a rapid gallop, to Gen. Hancock.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.353

At Gen. Hancock's headquarters the following was learned: The First Corps had met the enemy at Gettysburg, and had possession of the town. Gen. Reynolds was badly, it was feared mortally, wounded; the fight of the First Corps still continued. By Gen. Meade's order, Gen. Hancock was to hurry forward &nd take command upon the field, of all troops there, or which should arrive there. The Eleventh Corps was near Gettysburg when the messenger who told of the fight left there, and the Third Corps was marching up, by order, on the Emmetsburg Road—en. Gibbon—he was not the ranking officer of the Second Corps after Hancock—was ordered to assume the command of the Second Corps.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.353

All this was sudden, and for that reason at least, exciting; but there were other elements in this information, that aroused our profoundest interest. The great battle that we had so anxiously looked for during so many days, had at length opened, and it was a relief, in some sense, to have these accidents of time and place established. What would be the result? Might not the enemy fall upon and destroy the First Corps before succor could arrive?

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Gen. Hancock, with his personal staff, at about two o'clock P. M. galloped off towards Gettysburg; Gen. Gibbon took his place in command of the Corps, appointing me his acting Assistant Adjutant General. The Second Corps took arms at once, and moved rapidly towards the field. It was not long before we began to hear the dull booming of the guns, and as we advanced, from many an eminence or opening among the trees, we could look out upon the white battery smoke, puffing up from the distant field of blood, and drifting up to the clouds. At these sights and sounds, the men looked more serious than before and were more silent, but they marched faster, and straggled less. At about five o'clock P. M., as we were riding along at the head of the column, we met an ambulance, accompanied by two or three mounted officers—we knew them to be staff officers of Gen. Reynolds—their faces told plainly enough what load the vehicle carried—it was the dead body of Gen. Reynolds. Very early in the action, while seeing personally to the formation of his lines under fire, he was shot through the head by a musket or rifle bullet, and killed almost instantly. His death at this time affected us much, for he was one of the soldier Generals of the army, a man whose soul was in his country's work, which he did with a soldier's high honor and fidelity.

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I remember seeing him often at the first battle of Fredericksburg—he then commanded the First Corps—and while Meade's and Gibbon's Divisions were assaulting the enemy's works, he was the very beau ideal of the gallant general. Mounted upon a superb black horse, with his head thrown back and his great black eyes flashing fire, he was every where upon the field, seeing all things and giving commands in person. He died as many a friend, and many a foe to the country have died in this war.

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Just as the dusk of evening fell, from Gen. Meade, the Second Corps had orders to halt, where the head of the column then was, and to go into position for the night. The Second Division (Gibbon's) was accordingly put in position, upon the left of the (Taneytown) road, its left near the South-eastern base of "Round Top"—of "which mountain more anon—and the right near the road; the Third D: vision was posted upon the right of the road, abreast of the Second, and the first Division in the rear of these two—all facing towards Gettysburg.

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Arms were stacked, and the men lay down to sleep, alas! many of them their last but the great final sleep upon the earth.

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Late in the afternoon as we came near the field, from some slightly wounded men we met, and occasional stragglers from the scene of operations in front, we got many rumors, and much disjointed information of battle, of lakes of blood, of rout and panic and undescribable disaster, from all of which the narrators were just fortunate enough to have barely escaped, the sole survivors. These stragglers are always terrible liars!

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About nine o'clock in the evening, while I was yet engaged in showing the troops their positions, I met Gen. Hancock, then on his way from the front, to Gen. Meade, who was back toward Taneytown; and he, for the purpose of having me advise Gen. Gibbon, for his information, gave me quite a detailed account of the situation of matters at Gettysburg, and of what had transpired subsequently to his arrival.

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He had arrived and assumed command there, just when the troops of the First and Eleventh Corps, after their repulse, were coming in confusion through the town. Hancock is just the man for such an emergency as this. Upon horseback I think he was the most magnificent looking General in the whole Army of the Potomac at that time. With a large, well shaped person, always dressed with elegance, even upon that field of confusion, he would look as if he was "monarch of all he surveyed," and few of his subjects would dare to question his right to command, or do aught else but to obey. His quick eye, in a flash, saw what was to be done, and his voice and his royal right hand at once commenced to do it. Gen. Howard had put one of his Divisions—Steinwehr—with some batteries, in position, upon a commanding eminence, at the "Cemetery," which, as a reserve, had not participated in the fight of the day, and this Division was now of course steady. Around this Division the fugitives were stopped, and the shattered Brigades and Regiments, as they returned, were formed upon either flank, and faced toward the enemy again. A show of order at least, speedily came from chaos—the rout was at an end—the First and Eleventh Corps were in line of battle again—not very systematically formed perhaps—in a splendid position, and in a condition to offer resistance, should the enemy be willing to try them. These formations were all accomplished long before night. Then some considerable portion of the Third Corps—Gen. Sickles—came up by the Emmetsburg road, and was formed to the left of the Taneytown road, on an extension of the line that I have mentioned; and all the Twelfth Corps—Gen. Slocum—arriving before night, the Divisions were put in position, to the right of the troops already there, to the East of the Baltimore Pike. The enemy was in town, and behind it, and to the East and West, and appeared to be in strong force, and was jubilant over his day's success. Such was the posture of affairs as evening came on of the first of July. Gen. Hancock was hopeful, and in the best of spirits; and from him I also learned that the reason for halting the Second Corps in its present position, was that it was not then known where, in the coming fight, the line of battle would be formed, up near the town, where the troops then were, or further back towards Taneytown. He would give his views upon this subject to Gen. Meade, which were in favor of the line near the town—the one that was subsequently adopted—and Gen. Meade would determine.

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The night before a great pitched battle would not ordinarily, I suppose, be a time for much sleep for Generals and their staff officers. We needed it enough, but there was work to be done. This war makes strange confusion of night and day! I did not sleep at all that night. It would, perhaps, be expected, on the eve of such great events, that one should have some peculiar sort of feeling, something extraordinary, some great arousing and excitement of the sensibilities and faculties, commensurate with the event itself; this certainly would be very poetical and pretty, but so far as I was concerned, and I think I can speak for the army in this matter, there was nothing of the kind. Men who had volunteered to fight the battles of the country, had met the enemy in many battles, and had been constantly before them, as had the Army of the Potomac, were too old soldiers and long ago too well had weighed chances and probabilities, to be so disturbed now. No, I believe, the army slept soundly that night, and well, and I am glad the men did, for they needed it.

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At midnight Gen. Meade and staff rode by Gen. Gibbon's Head Quarters, on their way to the field; and in conversation with Gen. Gibbon, Gen. Meade announced that he had decided to assemble the whole army before Gettysburg, and offer the enemy battle there. The Second Corps would move at the earliest daylight, to take up its position.

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At three o'clock, A. M., of the second of July, the sleepy soldiers of the Corps were aroused; before six the Corps was up to the field, and halted temporarily by the side of the Taneytown road, upon which it had marched, while some movements of the other troops were being made, to enable it to take position in the order of battle. The morning was thick and sultry, the sky overcast with low, vapory clouds. As we approached all was astir upon the crests near the Cemetery, and the work of preparation was speedily going on. Men looked like giants there in the mist, and the guns of the frowning batteries so big, that it was a relief to know that they were our friends.

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Without a topographical map, some description of the ground and location is necessary to a clear understanding of the battle. With the sketch I have rudely drawn, without scale or compass, I hope you may understand my description. The line of battle as it was established, on the evening of the first, and morning of the second of July was in the form of the letter "U," the troops facing outwards. And the "Cemetery," which is at the point of the sharpest curvature of the line, being due South of the town of Gettysburg. "Round Top," the extreme left of the line, is a small, woody, rocky elevation, a very little West of South of the town, and nearly two miles from it.

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The sides of this are in places very steep, and its rocky summit is almost inaccessible. A short distance North of this is a smaller elevation called "Little Round Top." On the very top of "Little Round Top," we had heavy rifled guns in position during the battle. Near the right of the line is a small, woody eminence, named "Culp's Hill." Three roads come up to the town from the South, which near the town are quite straight, and at the town the external ones unite, forming an angle of about sixty, or more degrees. Of these, the farthest to the East is the "Baltimore Pike," which passes by the East entrance to the Cemetery; the farthest to the West is the "Emmetsburg road," which is wholly outside of our line of battle, but near the Cemetery, is within a hundred yards of it; the "Taneytown road" is between these, running nearly due North and South, by the Eastern base of "Round Top," by the Western side of the Cemetery, and uniting with the Emmetsburg road between the Cemetery and the town. High ground near the Cemetery, is named "Cemetery Ridge."

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The Eleventh Corps—Gen. Howard—was posted at the Cemetery, some of its batteries and troops, actually among the graves and monuments, which they used for shelter from the enemy's fire, its left resting upon the Taneytown road, extending thence to the East, crossing the Baltimore Pike, and thence bending backwards towards the South-east; on the right of the Eleventh came the First Corps, now, since the death of Gen. Reynolds, commanded by Gen. Newton, formed in a line curving still more towards the South. The troops of these two Corps, were reformed on the morning of the second, in order that each might be by itself, and to correct some things not done well during the hasty formations here the day before.

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To the right of the First Corps, and on an extension of the same line, along the crest and down the Southeastern slope of Culp's Hill, was posted the Twelfth Corps—Gen. Slocum—its right, which was the extreme right of the line of the army, resting near a small stream called "Rock Run." No changes, that I am aware of, occurred in the formation of this Corps, on the morning of the Second. The Second Corps, after the brief halt that I have mentioned, moved up and took position, its right resting upon the Taneytown road, at the left of the Eleventh Corps, and extending the line thence, nearly a half mile, almost due South, towards Round Top, with its Divisions in the following order, from right to left: The Third, Gen. Alex Hays; the Second (Gibbon's), Gen. Harrow, (temporarily); the First, Gen. Caldwell. The formation was in line by brigade in column, the brigade being in column by regiment, with forty paces interval between regimental lines, the Second and Third Divisions having each one, and the First Division, two brigades—there were four brigades in the First—similarly formed, in reserve, one hundred and fifty paces in the rear of the line of their respective Divisions. That is, the line of the Corps, exclusive of its reserves, was the length of six regiments, deployed, and the intervals between them, some of which were left wide for the posting of the batteries, and consisted of four common deployed lines, each of two ranks of men, and a little more than one-third over in reserve.

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The five batteries, in all twenty-eight guns, were posted as follows: Woodruff's regular, six twelve-pound Napoleon's, brass, between the two brigades, in line of the Third Division; Arnold's "A" first R. I., six three-inch Parrotts, rifled, and Cushing's Regular, four three-inch Ordnance, rifled, between the Third and Second Division; Hazard's, (commanded during the battle by Lieut. Brown,) "B" first R. I., and Rhorty's N. G. each, six twelve-pound Napoleon's, brass, between the Second and First Division.

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I have been thus specific in the description of the posting and formation of the Second Corps, because they were works that I assisted to perform; and also that the other Corps were similarly posted, with reference to the strength of the lines, and the intermixing of infantry and artillery. From this, you may get a notion of the whole.

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The Third Corps—Gen. Sickles—the remainder of it arriving upon the field this morning, was posted upon the left of the Second extending the line still in the direction of Round Top, with its left resting near "Little Round Top." The left of the Third Corps was the extreme left of the line of battle, until changes occurred, which will be mentioned in the proper place. The Fifth Corps—en. Sykes—coming on the Baltimore Pike about this time, was massed there, near the line of battle, and held in reserve until some time in the afternoon, when it changed position, as I shall describe.

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I cannot give a detailed account of the cavalry, for I saw but little of it. It was posted near the wings, and watched the roads and the movements of the enemy upon the flanks of the enemy, but further than this participated but little in the battle. Some of it was also used for guarding the trains, which were far to the rear. The artillery reserve, which consisted of a good many batteries, were posted between the Baltimore Pike and the Taneytown road, on very nearly the center of a direct line passing through the extremities of the wings. Thus it could be readily sent to any part of the line. The Sixth Corps—Gen. Sedgwick did not arrive upon the field until some time in the afternoon, but it was now not very far away, and was coming up rapidly on the Baltimore Pike. No fears were entertained that "Uncle John," as his men call Gen. Sedgwick, would not be in the right place at the right time.

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These dispositions were all made early, I think before eight o'clock in the morning. Skirmishers were posted well out all around the line, and all put in readiness for battle. The enemy did not yet demonstrate himself. With a look at the ground now, I think you may understand the movements of the battle. From Round Top, by the line of battle, round to the extreme right, I suppose is about three miles. From this same eminence to the Cemetery, extends a long ridge or hill—more resembling a great wave than a hill, however—with its crest, which was the line of battle, quite direct, between the points mentioned. To the West of this, that is towards the enemy, the ground falls away by a very gradual descent, across the Emmetsburg road, and then rises again, forming another ridge, nearly parallel to the first, but inferior in altitude, and something over a thou' sand yards away. A belt of woods extends partly along this second ridge, and partly farther to the West, at distances of from one thousand to thirteen hundred yards away from our line. Between these ridges, and along their slopes, that is, in front of the Second and Third Corps, the ground is cultivated, and is covered with fields of wheat, now nearly ripe, with grass and pastures, with some peach orchards, with fields of waving corn, and some farm houses, and their out buildings along the Emmetsburg road. There are very few places within the limits mentioned where troops and guns could move concealed. There are some oaks of considerable growth, along the position of the right of the Second Corps, a group of small trees, sassafras and oak, in front of the right of the Second Division of this Corps also; and considerable woods immediately in front of the left of the Third Corps, and also to the West of, and near Round Top. At the Cemetery, where is Cemetery Ridge, to which the line of the Eleventh Corps conforms, is the highest point in our line, except Round Top. From this the ground falls quite abruptly to the town, the nearest point of which is some five hundred yards away from the line, and is cultivated, and checkered with stone fences.

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The same is the character of the ground occupied by, and in front of the left of the First Corps, which is also on a part of Cemetery Ridge. The right of this Corps, and the whole of the Twelfth, are along Culp's Hill, and in woods, and the ground is very rocky, and in places in front precipitous—a most admirable position for defense from an attack in front, where, on account of the woods, no artillery could be used with effect by the enemy. Then these last three mentioned Corps, had, by taking rails, by appropriating stone fences, by felling trees, and digging the earth, during the night of the first of July, made for themselves excellent breast works, which were a very good thing indeed. The position of the First and Twelfth Corps was admirably strong, therefore. Within the line of battle is an irregular basin, somewhat woody and rocky in places, but presenting few obstacles to the moving of troops and guns, from place to place along the lines, and also affording the advantage that all such movements, by reason of the surrounding crests, were out of view of the enemy. On the whole this was an admirable position to fight a defensive battle, good enough, I thought, when I saw it first, and better I believe than could be found elsewhere in a circle of many miles. Evils, sometimes at least, are blessings in disguise, for the repulse of our forces, and the death of Reynolds, on the first of July, with the opportune arrival of Hancock to arrest the tide of fugitives and fix it on these heights, gave us this position—perhaps the position gave us the victory. On arriving upon the field, Gen. Meade established his headquarters at a shabby little farm house on the left of the Taneytown road, the house nearest the line, and a little more than five hundred yards in the rear of what became the center of the position of the Second Corps, a point where he could communicate readily and rapidly with all parts of the army. The advantages of the position, briefly, were these: the flanks were quite well protected by the natural defences there, Round Top up the left, and a rocky, steep, untraversable ground up the right. Our line was more elevated than that of the enemy, consequently our artillery had a greater range and power than theirs. On account of the convexity of our line, every part of the line could be reinforced by troops having to move a shorter distance than if the line were straight; further, for the same reason, the line of the enemy must be concave, and, consequently, longer, and with an equal force, thinner, and so weaker than ours. Upon those parts of our line which were wooded, neither we nor the enemy could use artillery; but they were so strong by nature, aided by art, as to be readily defended by a small, against a very large, body of infantry. When the line was open, it had the advantage of having open country in front, consequently, the enemy here could not surprise, as we were on a crest, which besides the other advantages that I have mentioned, had this: the enemy must advance to the attack up an ascent, and must therefore move slower, and be, before coming upon us, longer under our fire, as well as more exhausted. These, and some other things, rendered our position admirable—for a defensive battle.

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So, before a great battle, was ranged the Army of the Potomac. The day wore on, the weather still sultry, and the sky overcast, with a mizzling effort at rain. When the audience has all assembled, time seems long until the curtain rises; so today. "Will there be a battle to-day?" "Shall we attack the Rebel?" "Will he attack us?" These and similar questions, later in the morning, were thought or asked a million times.

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Meanwhile, on our part, all was put in the last state of readiness for battle. Surgeons were busy riding about selecting eligible places for Hospitals, and hunting streams, and springs, and wells. Ambulances, and ambulance men, were brought up near the lines, and stretchers gotten ready for use. Who of us could tell but that he would be the first to need them? The Provost Guards were busy driving up all stragglers, and causing them to join their regiments. Ammunition wagons were driven to suitable places, and pack mules bearing boxes of cartridges; and the commands were informed where they might be found. Officers were sent to see that the men had each his hundred rounds of ammunition. Generals and their Staffs were riding here and there among their commands to see that all was right. A staff officer, or an orderly might be seen galloping furiously in the transmission of some order or message.—All, all was ready—and yet the sound of no gun had disturbed the air or ear today.

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And so the men stacked their arms—in long bristling rows they stood along the crests—and were at ease. Some men of the Second and Third Corps pulled down the rail fences near and piled them up for breastworks in their front. Some loitered, some went to sleep upon the ground, some, a single man, carrying twenty canteens slung over his shoulder, went for water. Some made them a fire and boiled a dipper of coffee. Some with knees cocked up, enjoyed the soldier's peculiar solace, a pipe of tobacco. Some were mirthful and chatty, and some were serious and silent. Leaving them thus—I suppose of all arms and grades there were about a hundred thousand of them somewhere about that field—each to pass the hour according to his duty or his humor, let us look to the enemy.

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Here let me state, that according to the best information that I could get, I think a fair estimate of the Rebel force engaged in this battle would be a little upwards of a hundred thousand men of all arms. Of course we can't now know, but there are reasonable data for this estimate. At all events there was no great disparity of numbers in the two opposing armies. We thought the enemy to be somewhat more numerous than we, and he probably was. But if ninety-five men should fight with a hundred and five, the latter would not always be victors—and slight numerical differences are of much less consequence in great bodies of men.

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Skillful generalship and good fighting are the jewels of war. These concurring are difficult to overcome; and these, not numbers, must determine this battle.

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During all the morning—and of the night, too—the skirmishers of the enemy had been confronting those of the Eleventh, First and Twelfth Corps. At the time of the fight of the First, he was seen in heavy force North of the town—he was believed to be now in the same neighborhood, in full force. But from the woody character of the country, and thereby the careful concealment of troops, which the Rebel is always sure to effect, during the early part of the morning almost nothing was actually seen by us of the invaders of the North. About nine o'clock in the morning, I should think, our glasses began to reveal them at the West and North-west of the town, a mile and a half away from our lines. They were moving towards our left, but the woods of Seminary Ridge so concealed them that we could not make out much of their movements. About this time some rifled guns in the Cemetery, at the left of the Eleventh Corps, opened fire—almost the first shots of any kind this morning—and when it was found they were firing at a Rebel line of skirmishers merely, that were advancing upon the left of that, and the right of the Second Corps, the officer in charge of the guns was ordered to cease firing, and was rebuked for having fired at all. These skirmishers soon engaged those at the right of the Second Corps, who stood their ground and were reinforced to make the line entirely secure. The Rebel skirmish line kept extending further and further to their right—toward our left. They would dash up close upon ours and sometimes drive them back a short distance, in turn to be repulsed themselves—and so they continued to do until their right was opposite the extreme left of the Third Corps. By these means they had ascertained the position and extent of our lines—but their own masses were still out of view. From the time that the firing commenced, as I have mentioned, it was kept up, among the skirmishers, until quite noon, often briskly; but with no definite results further than those mentioned, and with no considerable show of infantry on the part of the enemy to support. There was a farm house and outbuildings in front of the Third Division of the Second Corps at which the skirmishers of the enemy had made a dash, and dislodged ours posted there, and from there their sharp shooters began to annoy our line of skirmishers and even the main line, with their long range rifles. I was up to the line, and a bullet from one of the rascals hid there, hissed by my cheek so close that I felt the movement of the air distinctly. And so I was not at all displeased when I saw one of our regiments go down and attack and capture the house and buildings and several prisoners, after a spirited little fight, and, by Gen. Hays' order, burn the buildings to the ground. About noon the Signal Corps, from the top of Little Round Top, with their powerful glasses, and the cavalry at the extreme left, began to report the enemy in heavy force, making disposition of battle, to the West of Round Top, and opposite to the left of the Third Corps. Some few prisoners had been captured, some deserters from the enemy had come in, and from all sources, by this time, we had much important and reliable information of the enemy—of his disposition and apparent purposes. The Rebel infantry consisted of three Army Corps, each consisting of three Divisions, Longstreet, Ewell—the same whose leg Gibbon's shell knocked off at Gainesville on the 28th of August last year—and A. P. Hill, each in the Rebel service having the rank of Lieutenant General, were the commanders of these Corps. Longstreet's Division commanders were Hood, McLaws and Pickett; Ewell's were Rhodes, Early and Johnson, and Hill's were Pender, Heth and Anderson. Stewart and Fitzhugh Lee commanded Divisions of the Rebel cavalry. The rank of these Divisions commands, I believe, was that of Major General. The Rebels had about as much artillery as we did; but we never have thought much of this arm in the hands of our adversaries. They have courage enough, but not the skill to handle it well. They generally fire far too high, and the ammunition is usually of a very inferior quality. And, of late, we have begun to despise the enemies' cavalry too. It used to have enterprise and dash, but in the late cavalry contests ours have always been victor; and so now we think about all this chivalry is fit for is to steal a few of our mules occasionally, and their negro drivers. This army of the rebel infantry, however, is good—to deny this is useless. I never had any desire to—and if one should count up, it would possibly be found that they have gained more victories over us, than we have over them, and they will now, doubtless, fight well, even desperately. And it is not horses or cannon that will determine the result of this confronting of the two armies, but the men with the muskets must do it—the infantry must do the sharp work. So we watched all this posting of forces as closely as possible, for it was a matter of vital interest to us, and all information relating to it was hurried to the commander of the army. The Rebel line of battle was concave, bending around our own, with the extremities of the wings opposite to, or a little outside of ours. Longstreet's Corps was upon their right; Hill's in the center. These two Rebel Corps occupied the second or inferior ridge to the West of our position, as I have mentioned, with Hill's left bending towards, and resting near the town, and Ewell's was upon their left, his troops being in, and to the East of the town. This last Corps confronted our Twelfth, First, and the right of the Eleventh Corps. When I have said that ours was a good defensive position, this is equivalent to saying that that of the enemy was not a good offensive one; for these are relative terms, and cannot be both predicated of the respective positions of the two armies at the same time. The reasons that this was not a good offensive position, are the same already stated in favor of ours for defense. Excepting, occasionally, for a brief time, during some movement of troops, as when advancing to attack, their men and guns were kept constantly and carefully, by woods and inequalities of ground, out of our view.

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Noon is past, one o'clock is past, and, save the skirmishing that I have mentioned, and an occasional shot from our guns, at something or other, the nature of which the ones who fired it were ignorant, there was no fight yet. Our arms were still stacked, and the men were at ease. As I looked upon those interminable rows of muskets along the crests, and saw how cool and good spirited the men were, who were lounging about on the ground among them, I could not, and did not, have any fears as to the result of the battle. The storm was near, and we all knew it well enough by this time, which was to rain death upon these crests and down their slopes, and yet the men who could not, and would not escape it, were as calm and cheerful, generally, as if nothing unusual were about to happen. You see, these men were veterans, and had been in such places so often that they were accustomed to them. But I was well pleased with the tone of the men today—I could almost see the foreshadowing of victory upon their faces, I thought. And I thought, too, as I had seen the mighty preparations go on to completion for this great conflict—the marshaling of these two hundred thousand men and the guns of the hosts, that now but a narrow valley divided, that to have been in such a battle, and to survive on the side of the victors, would be glorious. Oh, the world is most unchristian yet!

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Somewhat after one o'clock P. M.—the skirmish firing had nearly ceased now—a movement of the Third Corps occurred, which I shall describe. I cannot conjecture the reason of this movement. From the position of the Third Corps, as I have mentioned, to the second ridge West, the distance is about a thousand yards, and there the Emmetsburg road runs near the crest of the ridge. Gen. Sickles commenced to advance his whole Corps, from the general line,—straight to the front, with a view to occupy this second ridge, along, and near the road. What his purpose could have been is past conjecture. It was not ordered by Gen. Meade, as I heard him say, and he disapproved of it as soon as it was made known to him. Generals Hancock and Gibbon, as they saw the move in progress, criticized its propriety sharply, as I know, and foretold quite accurately what would be the result. I suppose the truth probably is that General Sickles supposed he was doing for the best; but he was neither born nor bred a soldier. But one can scarcely tell what may have been the motives of such a man—a politician, and some other things, exclusive of the Barton Key affair—a man after show and notoriety, and newspaper fame, and the adulation of the mob! O, there is a grave responsibility on those in whose hands are the lives of ten thousand men; and on those who put stars upon men's shoulders, too! Bah! I kindle when I see some things that I have to see. But this move of the Third Corps was an important one—it developed the battle—the results of the move to the Corps itself we shall see. O, if this Corps had kept its strong position upon the crest, and supported by the rest of the army, had waited for the attack of the enemy!

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It was magnificent to see those ten or twelve thousand men—they were good men—with their batteries, and some squadrons of cavalry upon the left flank, all in battle order, in several lines, with flags streaming, sweep steadily down the slope, across the valley, and up the next ascent, toward their destined position! From our position we could see it all. In advance Sickles pushed forward his heavy line of skirmishers, who drove back those of the enemy, across the Emmetsburg road, and thus cleared the way for the main body. The Third Corps now became the absorbing object o f interest of all eyes. The Second Corps took arms, and the 1st Division of this Corps was ordered to be in readiness to support the Third Corps, should circumstances render support necessary. As the Third Corps was the extreme left of our line, as it advanced, if the enemy was assembling to the West of Round Top with a view to turn our left, as we had heard, there would be nothing between the left flank of the Corps and the enemy, and the enemy would be square upon its flank by the time it had attained the road. So when this advance line came near the Emmetsburg road, and we saw the squadrons of cavalry mentioned, come dashing back from their position as flankers, and the smoke of some guns, and we heard the reports away to Sickles' left, anxiety became an element in our interest in these movements. The enemy opened slowly at first, and from long range; but he was square upon Sickles' left flank. General Caldwell was ordered at once to put his Division—the 1st of the Second Corps, as mentioned—in motion, and to take post in the woods at the left slope of Round Top, in such a manner as to resist the enemy should he attempt to come around Sickles' left and gain his rear. The Division moved as ordered, and disappeared from view in the woods, towards the point indicated at between two and three o'clock P. M., and the reserve brigade—the First, Col. Heath temporarily commanding—of the Second Division, was therefore moved up and occupied the position vacated by the Third Division. About the same time the Fifth Corps could be seen marching by the flank from its position on the Baltimore Pike, and in the opening of the woods heading for the same locality where the 1st Division of the Second Corps had gone. The Sixth Corps had now come up and was halted upon the Baltimore Pike. So the plot thickened. As the enemy opened upon Sickles with his batteries, some five or six in all, I suppose, firing slowly, Sickles with as many replied, and with much more spirit. The artillery fire became quite animated, soon; but the enemy was forced to withdraw his guns farther and farther away, and ours advanced upon him. It was not long before the cannonade ceased altogether, the enemy having retired out of range, and Sickles, having temporarily halted his command, pending this, moved forward again to the position he desired, or nearly that. It was now about five o'clock, and we shall soon see what Sickles gained by his move. First we hear more artillery firing upon Sickles' left—the enemy seems to be opening again, and as we watch the Rebel batteries seem to be advancing there. The cannonade is soon opened again, and with great spirit upon both sides. The enemy's batteries press those of Sickles, and pound the shot upon them, and this time they in turn begin to retire to position nearer the infantry. The enemy seems to be fearfully in earnest this time. And what is more ominous than the thunder or the shot of his advancing guns, this time, in the intervals between his batteries, far to Sickles' left, appear the long lines and the columns of the Rebel infantry, now unmistakably moving out to the attack. The position of the Third Corps becomes at once one of great peril, and it is probable that its commander by this time began to realize his true situation. All was astir now on our crest. Generals and their Staffs were galloping hither and thither—the men were all in their places, and you might have heard the rattle of ten thousand ramrods as they drove home and "thugged" upon the little globes and cones of lead. As the enemy was advancing upon Sickles' flank, he commenced a change, or at least a partial one, of front, by swinging back his left and throwing forward his right, in order that his lines might be parallel to those of his adversary, his batteries meantime doing what they could to check the enemy's advance; but this movement was not completely executed before new Rebel batteries opened upon Sickles' right flank—his former front—and in the same quarter appeared the Rebel infantry also. Now came the dreadful battle picture, of which we for a time could be but spectators. Upon the front and right flank of Sickles came sweeping the infantry of Longstreet and Hill. Hitherto there had been skirmishing and artillery practice—now the battle began; for amid the heavier smoke and larger tongues of flame of the batteries, now began to appear the countless flashes, and the long fiery sheets of the muskets, and the rattle of the volleys, mingled with the thunder of the guns. We see the long gray lines come sweeping down upon Sickles' front, and mix with the battle smoke; now the same colors emerge from the bushes and orchards upon his right, and envelope his flank in the confusion of the conflict.

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O, the din and the roar, and these thirty thousand Rebel wolf cries! What a hell is there down that valley!

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These ten or twelve thousand men of the Third Corps fight well, but it soon becomes apparent that they must be swept from the field, or perish there where they are doing so well, so thick and overwhelming a storm of Rebel fire involves them. It was fearful to see, but these men, such as ever escape, must come from that conflict as best they can. To move down and support them with other troops is out of the question, for this would be to do as Sickles did, to relinquish a good position, and advance to a bad one. There is no other alternative—the Third Corps must fight itself out of its position of destruction! What was it ever put there for?

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In the meantime some other dispositions must be made to meet the enemy, in the event that Sickles is overpowered. With this Corps out of the way, the enemy would be in a position to advance upon the line of the Second Corps, not in a line parallel with its front, but they would come obliquely from the left. To meet this contingency the left of the Second Division of the Second Corps is thrown back slightly, and two Regiments, the 15th Mass., Col. Ward, and the 82nd N. Y., Lieut. Col. Horton, are advanced down to the Emmetsburg road, to a favorable position nearer us than the fight has yet come, and some new batteries from the artillery reserve are posted upon the crest near the left of the Second Corps. This was all Gen. Gibbon could do. Other dispositions were made or were now being made upon the field, which I shall mention presently. The enemy is still giving Sickles fierce battler rather the Third Corps, for Sickles has been borne from the field minus one of his legs, and Gen. Birney now commands—and we of the Second Corps, a thousand yards away, with our guns and men are, and must be, still idle spectators of the fight.

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The Rebel, as anticipated, tries to gain the left of the Third Corps, and for this purpose is now moving into the woods at the west of Round Top. We knew what he would find there. No sooner had the enemy gotten a considerable force into the woods mentioned, in the attempted execution of his purpose, than the roar of the conflict was heard there also. The Fifth Corps and the First Division of the Second were there at the right time, and promptly engaged him; and there, too, the battle soon became general and obstinate. Now the roar of battle has become twice the volume that it was before, and its range extends over more than twice the space. The Third Corps has been pressed back considerably, and the wounded are streaming to the rear by hundreds, but still the battle there goes on, with no considerable abatement on our part. The field of actual conflict extends now from a point to the front of the left of the Second Corps, away down to the front of Round Top, and the fight rages with the greatest fury. The fire of artillery and infantry and the yells of the Rebels fill the air with a mixture of hideous sounds. When the First Division of the Second Corps first engaged the enemy, for a time it was pressed back somewhat, but under the able and judicious management of Gen. Caldwell, and the support of the Fifth Corps, it speedily ceased to retrograde, and stood its ground; and then there followed a time, after the Fifth Corps became well engaged, when from appearances we hoped the troops already engaged would be able to check entirely, or repulse the further assault of the enemy. But fresh bodies of the Rebels continued to advance out of the woods to the front of the position of the Third Corps, and to swell the numbers of the assailants of this already hard pressed command. The men there begin to show signs of exhaustion—their ammunition must be nearly expended—they have now been fighting more than an hour, and against greatly superior numbers. From the sound of the firing at the extreme left, and the place where the smoke rises above the tree tops there, we know that the Fifth Corps is still steady, and holding its own there; and as we see the Sixth Corps now marching and near at hand to that point, we have no fears for the left—we have more apparent reason to fear for ourselves.

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The Third Corps is being overpowered—here and there its lines begin to break—the men begin to pour back to the rear in confusion—the enemy are close upon them and among them—organization is lost to a great degree—guns and caissons are abandoned and in the hands of the enemy—the Third Corps, after a heroic but unfortunate fight, is being literally swept from the field. That Corps gone, what is there between the Second Corps, and these yelling masses of the enemy? Do you not think that by this time we began to feel a personal interest in this fight? We did indeed. We had been mere observers—the time was at hand when we must be actors in this drama.

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Up to this hour Gen. Gibbon had been in command of the Second Corps, since yesterday, but Gen. Hancock, relieved of his duties elsewhere, now assumed command. Five or six hundred yards away the Third Corps was making its last opposition; and the enemy was hotly pressing his advantages there, and throwing in fresh troops whose line extended still more along our front, when Generals Hancock and Gibbon rode along the lines of their troops; and at once cheer after cheer—not Rebel, mongrel cries, but genuine cheers—rang out all along the line, above the roar of battle, for "Hancock" and "Gibbon," and "our Generals." These were good. Had you heard their voices, you would have known these men would fight. Just at this time we saw another thing that made us glad:—we looked to our rear, and there, and all up the hillside which was the rear of the Third Corps before it went forward, were rapidly advancing large bodies of men from the extreme right of our line of battle, coming to the support of the part now so hotly pressed. There was the whole Twelfth Corps, with the exception of about one brigade, that is, the larger portion of the Divisions of Gens. Williams and Geary; the Third Division of the First Corps, Gen. Doubleday; and some other brigades from the same Corps—and some of them were moving at the double quick. They formed lines of battle at the foot of the Taneytown road, and when the broken fragments of the Third Corps were swarming by them towards the rear, without halting or wavering they came sweeping up, and with glorious old cheers, under fire, took their places on the crest in line of battle to the left of the Second Corps. Now Sickles' blunder is repaired. Now, Rebel chief, hurl forward your howling lines and columns! Yell out your loudest and your last, for many of your best will never yell, or wave the spurious flag again!

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The battle still rages all along the left, where the Fifth Corps is, and the West slope of Round Top is the scene of the conflict; and nearer us there was but short abatement, as the last of the Third Corps retired from the field, for the enemy is flushed with his success. He had been throwing forward brigade after brigade, and Division after Division, since the battle began, and his advancing line now extends almost as far to our right as the right of the Second Division of the Second Corps. The whole slope in our front is full of them; and in various formation, in line, in column, and in masses which are neither, with yells and thick volleys, they are rushing towards our crest. The Third Corps is out of the way. Now we are in for it. The battery men are ready by their loaded guns. All along the crest is ready. Now Arnold and Brown—now Cushing, and Woodruff, and Rhorty!—you three shall survive to-day! They drew the cords that moved the friction primers, and gun after gun, along the batteries, in rapid succession, leaped where it stood and bellowed its canister upon the enemy. The enemy still advance. The infantry open fire—first the two advance regiments, the 15th Mass. and the 82d N. Y.—then here and there through—out the length of the long line, at the points where the enemy comes nearest, and soon the whole crest, artillery and infantry, is one continued sheet of fire. From Round Top to near the Cemetery stretches an uninterrupted field of conflict. There is a great army upon each side, now hotly engaged.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.374

To see the fight, while it went on in the valley below us, was terrible,—what must it be now, when we are in it, and it is all around us, in all its fury?

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.374

All senses for the time are dead but the one of sight. The roar of the discharges and the yells of the enemy all pass unheeded; but the impassioned soul is all eyes, and sees all things, that the smoke does not hide. How madly the battery men are driving home the double charges of canister in those broad-mouthed Napoleons, whose fire seems almost to reach the enemy. How rapidly these long, blue-coated lines of infantry deliver their file fire down the slope.

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But there is no faltering—the men stand nobly to their work. Men are dropping dead or wounded on all sides, by scores and by hundreds, and the poor mutilated creatures, some with an arm dangling, some with a leg broken by a bullet, are limping and crawling towards the rear. They make no sound of complaint or pain, but are as silent as if dumb and mute. A sublime heroism seems to pervade all, and the intuition that to lose that crest, all is lost—How our officers, in the work of cheering on and directing the men, are falling.

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We have heard that Gen. Zook and Col. Cross, in the First Division of our Corps, are mortally wounded—they both commanded brigades,—now near us Col. Ward of the 15th Mass.—he lost a leg at Balls Bluff—and Lieut. Col. Horton of the 82d N. Y., are mortally struck while trying to hold their commands, which are being forced back; Col. Revere, 20th Mass., grandson of old Paul Revere, of the Revolution, is killed, Lieut. Col. Max Thoman, commanding 59th N. Y., is mortally wounded, and a host of others that I cannot name. These were of Gibbon's Division. Lieut. Brown is wounded among his guns—his position is a hundred yards in advance of the main line—the enemy is upon his battery, and he escapes, but leaves three of his six guns in the hands of the enemy.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.375

The fire all along our crest is terrific, and it is a wonder how anything human could have stood before it, and yet the madness of the enemy drove them on, clear up to the muzzle of the guns, clear up to the lines of our infantry—but the lines stood right in their places. Gen. Hancock and his Aides rode up to Gibbon's Division, under the smoke. Gen. Gibbon, with myself, was near, and there was a flag dimly visible, coming towards us from the direction of the enemy. "Here, what are these men falling back for?" said Hancock. The flag was no more than fifty yards away, but it was the head of a Rebel column, which at once opened fire with a volley. Lieut. Miller, Gen. Hancock's Aide, fell, twice struck, but the General was unharmed, and he told the I St Minn., which was near, to drive these people away. That splendid regiment, the less than three hundred that are left out of fifteen hundred that it has had, swings around upon the enemy, gives them a volley in their faces, and advances upon them with the bayonet. The Rebels fled in confusion, hut Col. Colville, Lieut. Col. Adams and Major Downie, are all badly, dangerously wounded, and many of the other officers and men will never fight again. More than two-thirds fell.

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Such fighting as this cannot last long. It is now near sundown, and the battle has gone on wonderfully long already. But if you will stop to notice it, a change has occurred. The Rebel cry has ceased, and the men of the Union begin to shout there, under the smoke, and their lines to advance. See, the Rebels are breaking! They are in confusion in all our front! The wave has rolled upon the rock, and the rock has smashed it. Let us shout, too!

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First upon their extreme left the Rebels broke, where they had almost pierced our lines; thence the repulse extended rapidly to their right. They hung longest about Round Top, where the Fifth Corps punished them, but in a space of time incredibly short, after they first gave signs of weakness, the whole force of the Rebel assault along the whole line, in spite of waving red flags, and yells, and the entreaties of officers, and the pride of the chivalry, fled like chaff before the whirlwind, back c!own the slope, over the valley, across the Emmetsburg road, shattered, without organization in utter confusion, fugitive into the woods, and victory was with the arms of the Republic. The great Rebel assault, the greatest ever made upon this continent, has been made and signally repulsed, and upon this part of the field the fight of to-day is now soon over. Pursuit was made as rapidly and as far as practicable, but owing to the proximity of night, and the long distance which would have to be gone over before any of the enemy, where they would be likely to halt, could be overtaken, further success was not attainable to-day. Where the Rebel rout first commenced, a large number of prisoners, some thousands at least, were captured; almost all their dead, and such of their wounded as could not themselves get to the rear, were within our lines; several of their flags were gathered up, and a good many thousand muskets, some nine or ten guns and some caissons lost by the Third Corps, and the three of Brown's battery—these last were in Rebel hands but a few minutes—were all safe now with us, the enemy having had no time to take them off.

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Not less, I estimate, than twenty thousand men were killed or wounded in this fight. Our own losses must have been nearly half this number,—about four thousand in the Third Corps, fully two thousand in the Second, and I think two thousand in the Fifth, and I think the losses of the First, Twelfth, and a little more than a brigade of the Sixth—all of that Corps which was actually engaged—would reach nearly two thousand more. Of course it will never be possible to know the numbers upon either side who fell in this particular part of the general battle, but from the position of the enemy and his numbers, and the appearance of the field, his loss must have been as heavy, or as I think much heavier than our own, and my estimates are probably short of the actual loss.

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The fight done, the sudden revulsions of sense and feeling follow, which more or less characterize all similar occasions. How strange the stillness seems! The whole air roared with the conflict but a moment since—now all is silent; not a gunshot sound is heard, and the silence comes distinctly, almost painfully to the senses. And the sun purples the clouds in the West, and the sultry evening steals on as if there had been no battle, and the furious shout and the cannon's roar had never shaken the earth. And how look these fields? We may see them before dark—the ripening grain, the luxuriant corn, the orchards, the grassy meadows, and in their midst the rural cottage of brick or wood. They were beautiful this morning. They are desolate now—trampled by the countless feet of the combatants, plowed and scored by the shot and shell, the orchards splintered, the fences prostrate, the harvest trodden in the mud. And more dreadful than the sight of all this, thickly strewn over all their length and breadth, are the habiliments of the soldiers, the knapsacks cast aside in the stress of the fight, or after the fatal lead had struck; haversacks, yawning with the rations the owner will never call for; canteens of cedar of the Rebel men of Jackson, and of cloth-covered tin of the men of the Union; blankets and trowsers, and coats, and caps, and some are blue and some are gray; muskets and ramrods, and bayonets, and swords, and scabbards and belts, some bent and cut by the shot or shell; broken wheels, exploded caissons, and limber-boxes, and dismantled guns, and all these are sprinkled with blood; horses, some dead, a mangled heap of carnage, some alive, with a leg shot clear off, or other frightful wounds, appealing to you with almost more than brute gaze as you pass; and last, but not least numerous, many thousands of men—and there was no rebellion here now—the men of South Carolina were quiet by the side of those of Massachusetts, some composed, with upturned faces, sleeping the last sleep, some mutilated and frightful, some wretched, fallen, bathed in blood, survivors still and unwilling witnesses of the rage of Gettysburg.

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And yet with all this before them, as darkness came on, and the dispositions were made and the outposts thrown out for the night, the Army of the Potomac was quite mad with joy. No more light-hearted guests ever graced a banquet, than were these men as they boiled their coffee and munched their soldiers' supper to-night. Is it strange?

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Otherwise they would not have been soldiers. And such sights as all these, will be certain to be seen as long as war lasts in the world, and when war is done, then is the end and the days of the millennium are at hand.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.378

The ambulances commenced their work as soon as the battle opened—the twinkling lanterns through the night, and the sun of to-morrow saw them still with the same work unfinished.

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I wish that I could write, that with the coming on of darkness, ended the fight of to-day, but such was not the case. The armies have fought enough to-day and ought to sleep to-night, one would think, but not so thought the Rebel. Let us see what he gained by his opinion. When the troops, including those of the Twelfth Corps had been withdrawn from the extreme right of our line, in the afternoon, to support the left, as I have mentioned, thereby, of course, weakening that part of the line so left, the Rebel Ewell, either becoming aware of the fact, or because he thought he could carry our right at all events, late in the afternoon commenced an assault upon that part of our line. His battle had been going on there simultaneously with the fight on the left, but not with any great degree of obstinacy on his part. He had advanced his men through the woods, and in front of the formidable position lately held by the Twelfth Corps cautiously, and to his surprise, I have no doubt, found our strong defenses upon the extreme right, entirely abandoned. These he at once took possession of, and simultaneously made an attack upon our right flank, which was now near the summit of Culp's hill, and upon the front of that part of the line. That small portion of the Twelfth Corps, which had been left there, and some of the Eleventh Corps, sent to their assistance, did what they could to check the Rebels; but the Eleventh Corps men were getting shot at there, and they did not want to stay. Matters began to have a bad look in that part of the field. A portion of the First Division of the First Corps, was sent there for support—the 6th Wisconsin, among others, and this improved matters—but still, as we had but a small number of men there, all told, the enemy with their great numbers, were having too much prospect of success, and it seems that, probably emboldened by this, Ewell had resolved upon a night attack upon that wing of the army, and was making his dispositions accordingly. The enemy had not at sundown, actually carried any part of our rifle pits there, save the ones abandoned, but he was getting troops assembled upon our flank, and altogether, with our weakness there, at that time, matters did not look as we would like to have them. Such was then the posture of affairs, when the fight upon our left, that I have described, was done. Under such circumstances it is not strange that the Twelfth Corps, as soon as its work was done upon the left, was quickly ordered back to the right, to its old position. There it arrived in good time; not soon enough, of course, to avoid the mortification of finding the enemy in the possession of a part of the works the men had labored so hard to construct, but in ample time before dark to put the men well in the pits we already held, and to take up a strong defensible position, at right angles to, and in rear of the main line, in order to resist these flanking dispositions of the enemy. The army was secure again. The men in the works would be steady against all attacks in front, as long as they knew that their flank was s'fe. Until between ten and eleven o'clock at night, the woods upon the right, resounded with the discharges of musketry. Shortly after or about dark, the enemy made a dash upon the right of the Eleventh Corps. They crept up the windings of a valley, not in a very heavy force, but from the peculiar mode in which this Corps does outpost duty, quite unperceived in the dark until they were close upon the main line. It is said, I do not know it to be true, that they spiked two guns of one of the Eleventh Corps' batteries, and that the battery men had to drive them off with their sabres and rammers, and that there was some fearful "Dutch" swearing on the occasion, "donner wetter" among other similar impious oaths, having been freely used. The enemy here were finally repulsed by the assistance of Col. Correll's brigade of the Third Division of the Second Corps, and the 106th Pa., from the Second Division of the same Corps, was by Gen. Howard's request sent there to do outpost duty. It seems to have been a matter of utter madness and folly on the part of the enemy to have continued their night attack, as they did upon the right. Our men were securely covered by ample works and even in most places, a log was placed a few inches above the top of the main breastwork, as a protection to the heads of the men as they thrust out their pieces beneath it to fire. Yet in the darkness, the enemy would rush up, clambering over rocks and among trees, even to the front of the works, but only to leave their riddled bodies there upon the ground or to be swiftly repulsed headlong into the woods again. In the darkness the enemy would climb trees close to the works, and endeavor to shoot our men by the light of the flashes. When discovered, a thousand bullets would whistle after them in the dark, and some would hit, and then the Rebel would make up his mind to come down.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.380

Our loss was light, almost nothing in this fight—the next morning the enemy's dead were thick all along this part of the line. Near eleven o'clock the enemy, wearied with his disastrous work, desisted, and thereafter until morning, not a shot was heard in all the armies.

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So much for the battle. There is another thing that I wish to mention, of the matters of the 2d of July.

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After evening came on, and from reports received, all was known to be going satisfactorily upon the right, Gen. Meade summoned his Corps Commanders to his Headquarters for consultation. A consultation is held upon matters of vast moment to the country, and that poor little farmhouse is honored with more distinguished guests than it ever had before, or than it will ever have again, probably.

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Do you expect to see a degree of ceremony, and severe military aspect characterize this meeting, in accordance with strict military rules, and commensurate with the moment of the matters of their deliberation? Name it "Major General Meade, Commander of the Army of the Potomac, with his Corps Generals, holding a Council of War, upon the field of Gettysburg," and it would sound pretty well,—and that was what it was; and you might make a picture of it and hang it up by the side of "Napoleon and his Marshals," and "Washington and his Generals," maybe, at some future time. But for the artist to draw his picture from, I will tell how this council appeared. Meade, Sedgwick, Slocum, Howard, Hancock, Sykes, Newton, Pleasanton—commander of the cavalry—and Gibbon, were the Generals present. Hancock, now that Sickles is wounded, has charge of the Third Corps, and Gibbon again has the Second. Meade is a tall, spare man, with full beard, which with his hair, originally brown, is quite thickly sprinkled with gray—has a Romanish face, very large nose, and a white, large forehead, prominent and wide over the eyes, which are full and large, and quick in their movements, and he wears spectacles. His fibres are all of the long and sinewy kind. His habitual personal appearance is quite careless, and it would be rather difficult to make him look well dressed. Sedgwick is quite a heavy man, short, thick-set and muscular, with florid complexion, dark, calm, straight-looking eyes, with full, heavyish features, which, with his eyes, have plenty of animation when he is aroused. He has a magnificent profile, well cut, with the nose and forehead forming almost a straight line, curly, short, chestnut hair and full beard, cut short, with a little gray in it. He dresses carelessly, but can look magnificently when he is well dressed. Like Meade, he looks and is, honest and modest. You might see at once, why his men, because they love him, call him "Uncle John," not to his face, of course, but among themselves. Slocum is small, rather spare, with black, straight hair and beard, which latter is unshaven and thin, large, full, quick, black eyes, white skin, sharp nose, wide cheek bones, and hollow cheeks and small chin. His movements are quick and angular, and he dresses with a sufficient degree of elegance. Howard is medium in size, has nothing marked about him, is the youngest of them all, I think—has lost an arm in the war, has straight brown hair and beard, shaves his short upper lip, over which his nose slants down, dim blue eyes, and on the whole, appears a very pleasant, affable, well dressed little gentleman. Hancock is the tallest and most shapely, and in many respects is the best looking officer of them all. His hair is very light brown, straight and moist, and always looks well, his beard is of the same color, of which he wears the moustache and a tuft upon the chin; complexion ruddy, features neither large nor small, but well cut, with full jaw and chin, compressed mouth, straight nose, full, deep blue eyes, and a very mobile, emotional countenance. He always dresses remarkably well, and his manner is dignified, gentlemanly and commanding. I think if he were in citizens' clothes, and should give commands in the army to those who did not know him, he would be likely to be obeyed at once, and without any question as to his right to command. Sykes is a small, rather thin man, well dressed and gentlemanly, brown hair and beard, which he wears full, with a red, pinched, rough-looking skin, feeble blue eyes, long nose, with the general air of one who is weary and a little ill-natured. Newton is a well-sized, shapely, muscular, well dressed man, with brown hair, with a very ruddy, clean-shaved, full face, blue eyes, blunt, round features, walks very erect, curbs in his chin, and has somewhat of that smart sort of swagger that people are apt to suppose characterizes soldiers. Pleasonton is quite a nice little dandy, with brown hair and beard, a straw hat with a little jockey rim, which he cocks upon one side of his head, with an unsteady eye, that looks slyly at you and then dodges. Gibbon, the youngest of them all, save Howard, is about the same size as Slocum, Howard, Sykes and Pleasonton, and there are none of these who will weigh one hundred and fifty pounds. He is compactly made, neither spare nor corpulent, with ruddy complexion, chestnut brown hair, with a clean-shaved face, except his moustache, which is decidedly reddish in color, medium-sized, well-shaped head, sharp, moderately-jutting brow, deep blue, calm eyes, sharp, slightly aquiline nose, compressed mouth, full jaws and chin, with an air of calm firmness in his manner. He always looks well dressed. I suppose Howard is about thirty-five and Meade about forty-five years of age; the rest are between these ages, but not many under forty. As they come to the council now, there is the appearance of fatigue about them, which is not customary, but is only due to the hard labors of the past few days. They all wear clothes of dark blue, some have top boots and some not, and except the two-starred straps upon the shoulders of all save Gibbon, who has but one star, there was scarcely a piece of regulation uniform about them all. They wore their swords, of various patterns, but no sashes, the Army hat, but with the crown pinched into all sorts of shapes and the rim slouched down and shorn of all its ornaments but the gilt band—except Sykes who wore a blue cap, and Pleasonton with his straw hat with broad black band. Then the mean little room where they met,—its only furniture consisted of a large, wide bed in one corner, a small pine table in the center, upon which was a wooden pail of water, with a tin cup for drinking, and a candle, stuck to the table by putting the end in tallow melted down from the wick, and five or six straight-backed rush-bottomed chairs. The Generals came in—some sat, some kept walking or standing, two lounged upon the bed, some were constantly smoking cigars. And thus disposed, they deliberated whether the army should fall back from its present position to one in rear which it was said was stronger, should attack the enemy on the morrow, wherever he could be found, or should stand there upon the horse-shoe crest, still on the defensive, and await the further movements of the enemy.

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The latter proposition was unanimously agreed to. Their heads were sound. The Army of the Potomac would just halt right there, and allow the Rebel to come up and smash his head against it, to any reasonable extent he desired, as he had to-day. After some two hours the council dissolved, and the officers went their several Ways.

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Night, sultry and starless, droned on, and it was almost midnight that I found myself peering my way from the line of the Second Corps, back down to the General's Headquarters, which were an ambulance in the rear, in a little peach orchard. All was silent now but the sound of the ambulances, as they were bringing off the wounded, and you could hear them rattle here and there about the field, and see their lanterns. I am weary and sleepy, almost to such an extent as not to be able to sit on my horse. And my horse can hardly move—the spur will not start him—what can be the reason? I know that he has been touched by two or three bullets to-day, but not to wound or lame him to speak of. Then, in riding by a horse that is hitched, in the dark, I got kicked; had I not a very thick boot, the blow would have been likely to have broken my ankle—it did break my temper as it was—and, as if it would cure matters, I foolishly spurred my horse again. No use, he would but walk. I dismounted; I could not lead him along at all, so out of temper I rode at the slowest possible walk to the Headquarters, which I reached at last. Generals Hancock and Gibbon were asleep in the ambulance. With a light I found what was the matter with "Billy." A bullet had entered his chest just in front of my left leg, as I was mounted, and the blood was running down all his side and leg, and the air from his lungs came out of the bullet-hole. I begged his pardon mentally for my cruelty in spurring him, and should have done so in words if he could have understood me. Kind treatment as is due to the wounded he could understand and he had it. Poor Billy! He and I were first under fire together, and I rode him at the second Bull Run and the first and second Fredericksburg, and at Antietam after brave "Joe" was killed ; but I shall never mount him again—Billy's battles are over.

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"George, make my bed here upon the ground by the side of this ambulance. Pull off my sabre and my boots—that will do!" Was ever princely couch or softest down so soft as those rough blankets, there upon the unroofed sod? At midnight they received me for four hours delicious dreamless oblivion of weariness and of battle. So to me, ended the Second of July.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.384

At four o'clock on the morning of the Third, I was awakened by Gen. Gibbon's pulling me by the foot and saying: "Come, don't you hear that?" I sprang up to my feet. Where was I? A moment and my dead senses and memory were alive again, and the sound of brisk firing of musketry to the front and right of the Second Corps, and over at the extreme right of our line, where we heard it last in the night, brought all back to my memory. We surely were on the field of battle, and there were palpable evidences to my reason that to-day was to be another of blood. Oh! for a moment the thought of it was sickening to every sense and feeling! But the motion of my horse as I galloped over the crest a few minutes later, and the serene splendor of the morning now breaking through rifted clouds and spreading over the landscape soon reassured me. Come day of battle! Up Rebel hosts, and thunder with your arms! We are all ready to do and to die for the Republic!

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I found a sharp skirmish going on in front of the right of the Second Corps, between our outposts and those of the enemy, but save this—and none of the enemy but his outposts were in sight—all was quiet in that part of the field. On the extreme right of the line the sound of musketry was quite heavy; and this I learned was brought on by the attack of the Second Division, Twelfth Corps, Gen. Geary, upon the enemy in order to drive him out of our works which he had sneaked into yesterday, as I have mentioned. The attack was made at the earliest moment in the morning when it was light enough to discern objects to fire at. The enemy could not use the works, but was confronting Geary in woods, and had the cover of many rocks and trees, so the fight was an irregular one, now breaking out and swelling to a vigorous fight, now subsiding to a few scattering shots; and so it continued by turns until the morning was well advanced, when the enemy was finally wholly repulsed and driven from the pits, and the right of our line was again reestablished in the place it first occupied. The heaviest losses the Twelfth Corps sustained in all the battle, occurred during this attack, and they were here quite severe. I heard Gen. Meade express dissatisfaction at Gen. Geary for making this attack, as a thing not ordered and not necessary, as the works of ours were of no intrinsic importance, and had not been captured from us by a fight, and Geary's position was just as good as they, where he was during the night. And I heard Gen. Meade say that he sent an order to have the fight stopped; but I believe the order was not communicated to Geary until after the repulse of the enemy. Late in the forenoon the enemy again tried to carry our right by storm. We heard that old Rebel Ewell had sworn an oath that he would break our right. He had Stonewall Jackson's Corps, and possibly imagined himself another Stonewall, but he certainly hankered after the right of our line—and so up through the woods, and over the rocks, and up the steeps he sent his storming parties—our men could see them now in the day time. But all the Rebel's efforts were fruitless, save in one thing, slaughter to his own men. These assaults were made with great spirit and determination, but as the enemy would come up, our men lying behind their secure defenses would just singe them with the blaze of their muskets, and riddle them, as a hail storm, the tender blades of corn. The Rebel oath was not kept any more than his former one to support the Constitution of the United States. The Rebel loss was very heavy indeed, here, ours but trifling. I regret that I cannot give more of the details of this fighting upon the right—it was so determined upon the part of the enemy, both last night and this morning—so successful to us. About all that I actually saw of it during its progress, was the smoke, and I heard the discharges. My information is derived from officers who were personally in it. Some of our heavier artillery assisted our infantry in this by firing, with the piece elevated, far from the rear, over the heads of our men, at a distance from the enemy of two miles, I suppose. Of course, they could have done no great damage. It was nearly eleven o'clock that the battle in this part of the field subsided, not to be again renewed. All the morning we felt no ap' prehension for this part of the line, for we knew its strength, and that our troops engaged, the Twelfth Corps and the First Division, Wadsworth's, of the First, could be trusted.

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For the sake of telling one thing at a time, I have anticipated events somewhat, in writing of this fight upon the right. I shall now go back to the starting point, four o'clock this morning, and, as other events occurred during the day, second to none in the battle in importance, which I think I saw as much of as any man living, I will tell you something of them, and what I saw, and how the time moved on. The outpost skirmish that I have mentioned, soon subsided. I suppose it was the natural escape of the wrath which the men had, during the night, hoarded up against each other, and which, as soon as they could see in the morning, they could no longer contain, but must let it off through their musket barrels, at their adversaries. At the commencement of the war such firing would have awaked the whole army and roused it to its feet and to arms; not so now. The men upon the crest lay snoring in their blankets, even though some of the enemy's bullets dropped among them, as if bullets were as harmless as the drops of dew around them. As the sun arose to-day, the clouds became broken, and we had once more glimpses of sky, and fits of sunshine—a rarity, to cheer us. From the crest, save to the right of the Second Corps, no enemy, not even his outposts could be discovered, along all the position where he so thronged upon the Third Corps yesterday. All was silent there—the wounded horses were limping about the field; the ravages of the conflict were still fearfully visible—the scattered arms and the ground thickly dotted with the dead—but no hostile foe. The men were roused early, in order that the morning meal might be out of the way in time for whatever should occur. Then ensued the hum of an army, not in ranks, chatting in low tones, and running about and jostling among each other, rolling and packing their blankets and tents. They looked like an army of rag-gatherers, while shaking these very useful articles of the soldier's outfit, for you must know that rain and mud in conjunction have not had the effect to make them clean, and the wear and tear of service have not left them entirely whole. But one could not have told by the appearance of the men, that they were in battle yesterday, and were likely to be again to-day. They packed their knapsacks, boiled their coffee and munched their hard bread, just as usual—just like old soldiers who know what campaigning is; and their talk is far more concerning their present employment—some joke or drollery—than concerning what they saw or did yesterday.

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As early as practicable the lines all along the left are revised and reformed, this having been rendered necessary by yesterday's battle, and also by what is anticipated to-day.

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It is the opinion of many of our Generals that the Rebel will not give us battle to-day—that he had enough yesterday—that he will be heading towards the Potomac at the earliest practicable moment, if he has not already done so; but the better, and controlling judgment is, that he will make another grand effort to pierce or turn our lines—that he will either mass and attack the left again, as yesterday, or direct his operations against the left of our center, the position of the Second Corps, and try to sever our line. I infer that Gen. Meade was of the opinion that the attack to-day would be upon the left—this from the disposition he ordered, I know that Gen. Hancock anticipated the attack upon the center.

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The dispositions to-day upon the left are as follows:

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The Second and Third Divisions of the Second Corps are in the position of yesterday; then on the left come Doubleday's—the Third Division and Col. Stannard's brigade of the First Corps; then Colwell's—the First Division of the Second Corps; then the Third Corps, temporarily under the command of Hancock, since Sickles' wound. The Third Corps is upon the same ground in part, and on the identical line where it first formed yesterday morning, and where, had it stayed instead of moving out to the front, we should have many more men to-day, and should not have been upon the brink of disaster yesterday. On the left of the Third Corps is the Fifth Corps, with a short front and deep line; then comes the Sixth Corps, all but one brigade, which is sent over to the Twelfth. The Sixth, a splendid Corps, almost intact in the fight of yesterday, is the extreme left of our line, which terminates to the south of Round Top, and runs along its western base, in the woods, and thence to the Cemetery. This Corps is burning to pay off the old scores made on the 4th of May, there back of Fredericksburg. Note well the position of the Second and Third Divisions of the Second Corps—it will become important. There are nearly six thousand men and officers in these two Divisions here upon the field—the losses were quite heavy yesterday, some regiments are detached to other parts of the field—so all told there are less than six thousand men now in the two Divisions, who occupy a line of about a thousand yards. The most of the way along this line upon the crest was a stone fence, constructed of small rough stones, a good deal of the way badly pulled down, but the men had improved it and patched it with rails from the neighboring fences, and with earth, so as to render it in many places a very passable breastwork against musketry and flying fragments of shells.

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These works are so low as to compel the men to kneel or lie down generally to obtain cover. Near the right of the Second Division, and just by the little group of trees that I have mentioned there, this stone fence made a right angle, and extended thence to the front, about twenty or thirty yards, where with another less than a right angle it followed along the crest again.

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The lines were conformed to these breastworks and to the nature of the ground upon the crest, so as to occupy the most favorable = places, to be covered, and still be able to deliver effective fire upon the enemy should he come there. In some places a second line was so posted as to be able to deliver its fire over the heads of the first line behind the works; but such formation was not practicable all of the way. But all the force of these two divisions was in line, in position, without reserves, and in such a manner that every man of them could have fired his piece at the same instant. The division flags, that of the Second Division, being a white trefoil upon a square blue field, and of the Third Division a blue trefoil upon a white rectangular field, waved behind the divisions at the points where the Generals of Division were supposed to be; the brigade flags, similar to these but with a triangular field, were behind the brigades; and the national flags of the regiments were in the lines of their regiments. To the left of the Second Division, and advanced something over a hundred yards, were posted a part of Stannard's Brigade two regiments or more, behind a small bush-crowned crest that ran in a direction oblique to the general line. These were well covered by the crest, and wholly concealed by the bushes, so that an advancing enemy would be close upon them before they could be seen. Other troops of Doubleday's Division were strongly posted in rear of these in the general line.

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I could not help wishing all the morning that this line of the two divisions of the Second Corps was stronger; it was so far as numbers constitute strength, the weakest part of our whole line of battle. What if, I thought, the enemy should make an assault here to-day with two or three heavy lines—a great overwhelming mass; would he not sweep through that thin six thousand?

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But I was not General Meade, who alone had power to send other troops there; and he was satisfied with that part of the line as it was. He was early on horseback this morning, and rode along the whole line, looking to it himself, and with glass in hand sweeping the woods and fields in the direction of the enemy, to see if aught of him could be discovered. His manner was calm and serious, but earnest. There was no arrogance of hope, or timidity of fear discernible in his face; but you would have supposed he would do his duty conscientiously and well, and would be willing to abide the result. You would have seen this in his face. He was well pleased with the left of the line to-day, it was so strong with good troops. He had no apprehension for the right where the fight now was going on, on account of the admirable position of our forces there. He was not of the opinion that the enemy would attack the center, our artillery had such sweep there, and this was not the favorite point of attack with the Rebel. Besides, should he attack the center, the General thought he could reinforce it in good season. I heard Gen. Meade speak of these matters to Hancock and some others, at about nine o'clock in the morning, while they were up by the line, near the Second Corps.

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No further changes of importance except those mentioned, were made in the disposition of the troops this morning, except to replace some of the batteries that were disabled yesterday by others from the artillery reserve, and to brace up the lines well with guns wherever there were eligible places, from the same source. The line is all in good order again, and we are ready for general battle.

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Save the operations upon the right, the enemy so far as we could see, was very quiet all the morning. Occasionally the outposts would fire a little, and then cease. Movements would be discovered which would indicate the attempt on the part of the enemy to post a battery. Our Parrotts would send a few shells to the spot, then silence would follow.

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At one of these times a painful accident happened to us, this morning. First Lieut. Henry Ropes, 20th Mass., in Gen. Gibbon's Division, a most estimable gentleman and officer, intelligent, educated, refined, one of the noble souls that came to the country's defense, while lying at his post with his regiment, in front of one of the Batteries, which fired over the Infantry, was instantly killed by a badly made shell, which, or some portion of it, fell but a few yards in front of the muzzle of the gun. The same accident killed or wounded several others. The loss of Ropes would have pained us at any time, and in any manner; in this manner his death was doubly painful.

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Between ten and eleven o'clock, over in a peach orchard in front of the position of Sickles yesterday, some little show of the enemy's infantry was discovered; a few shells scattered the gray-backs; they again appeared, and it becoming apparent that they were only posting a skirmish line, no further molestation was offered them. A little after this some of the enemy's flags could be discerned over near the same quarter, above the top and behind a small crest of a ridge. There seemed to be two or three of them—possibly they were guidons—and they moved too fast to be carried on foot. Possibly, we thought, the enemy is posting some batteries there. We knew in about two hours from this time better about the matter. Eleven o'clock came. The noise of battle has ceased upon the right; not a sound of a gun or musket can be heard on all the field; the sky is bright, with only the white fleecy clouds floating over from the West. The July sun streams down its fire upon the bright iron of the muskets in stacks upon the crest, and the dazzling brass of the Napoleons. The army lolls and longs for the shade, of which some get a hand's breadth, from a shelter tent stuck upon a ramrod. The silence and sultriness of a July noon are supreme. Now it so happened, that just about this time of day a very original and interesting thought occurred to Gen. Gibbon and several of his staff; that it would be a very good thing, and a very good time, to have something to eat. When I announce to you that I had not tasted a mouthful of food since yesterday noon, and that all I had had to drink since that time, but the most miserable muddy warm water, was a little drink of whisky that Major Biddle, General Meade's aide-de-camp, gave me last evening, and a cup of strong coffee that I gulped down as I was first mounting this morning, and further, that, save the four or five hours in the night, there was scarcely a moment since that time but that I was in the saddle, you may have some notion of the reason of my assent to this extraordinary proposition. Nor will I mention the doubts I had, as to the feasibility of the execution of this very novel proposal, except to say that I knew this morning that our larder was low; not to put too fine a point upon it, that we had nothing but some potatoes and sugar and coffee in the world. And I may as well say here, that of such, in scant proportion, would have been our repast, had it not been for the riding of miles by two persons, one an officer, to procure supplies; and they only succeeded in getting some few chickens, some butter, and one huge loaf of bread, which last was bought of a soldier, because he had grown faint in carrying it, and was afterwards rescued with much difficulty and after a long race from a four-footed hog, which had got hold of and had actually eaten a part of it. "There is a divinity," etc. Suffice it, this very ingenious and unheard of contemplated proceeding, first announced by the General, was accepted and at once undertaken by his staff. Of the absolute quality of what we had to eat, I could not pretend to judge, but I think an unprejudiced person would have said of the bread that it was good; so of the potatoes before they were boiled. Of the chickens he would have questioned their age, but they were large and in good running order. The toast was good and the butter. There were those who, when coffee was given them, called for tea, and vice versa, and were so ungracious as to suggest that the water that was used in both might have come from near a barn. Of course it did not. We all came down to the little peach orchard where we had stayed last night, and, wonderful to see and tell, ever mindful of our needs, had it all ready, had our faithful John. There was an enormous pan of stewed chickens, and the potatoes, and toast, all hot, and the bread and the butter, and tea and coffee. There was satisfaction derived from just naming them all over. We called John an angel, and he snickered and said he "knowed" we'd come. General Hancock is of course invited to partake, and without delay, we commence operations. Stools are not very numerous, two, in all, and these the two Generals have by common consent. Our table was the top of a mess chest. By this the Generals sat. The rest of us sat upon the ground, cross-legged, like the picture of a smoking Turk, and held our plates upon our laps. How delicious was the stewed chicken. I had a cucumber pickle in my saddle bags, the last of a lunch left there two or three days ago, which George brought, and I had half of it. We were just well at it when General Meade rode down to us from the line, accompanied by one of his staff, and by General Gibbon's invitation, they dismounted and joined us. For the General commanding the Army of the Potomac George, by an effort worthy of the person and the occasion, finds an empty cracker box for a seat. The staff officer must sit upon the ground with the rest of us. Soon Generals Newton and Pleasonton, each with an aide, arrive. By an almost superhuman effort a roll of blankets is found, which, upon a pinch, is long enough to seat these Generals both, and room is made for them. The aides sit with us. And, fortunate to relate, there was enough cooked for us all, and from General Meade to the youngest second lieutenant we all had a most hearty and well relished dinner. Of the "past" we were "secure." The Generals ate, and after, lighted cigars, and under the flickering shade of a very small tree, discoursed of the incidents of yesterday's battle and of the probabilities of to-day. General Newton humorously spoke of General Gibbon as "this young North Carolinian," and how he was becoming arrogant and above his position, because he commanded a corps. General Gibbon retorted by saying that General Newton had not been long enough in such a command, only since yesterday, to enable him to judge of such things. General Meade still thought that the enemy would attack his left again to-day towards evening; but he was ready for them General Hancock thought that the attack would be upon the position of the Second Corps. It was mentioned that General Hancock would again assume command of the Second Corps from that time, so that General Gibbon would again return to the Second Division.

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General Meade spoke of the Provost Guards, that they were good men, and that it would be better to-day to have them in the works' than to stop stragglers and skulkers, as these latter would be good for but little even in the works;' and so he gave the order that all the Provost Guards should at once temporarily rejoin their regiments. Then General Gibbon called up Captain Farrel, First Minnesota, who commanded the provost guard of his division, and directed him for that day to join the regiment. "Very well, sir," said the Captain, as he touched his hat and turned away. He was a quiet, excellent gentleman and thorough soldier. I knew him well and esteemed him. I never saw him again. He was killed in two or three hours from that time, and over half of his splendid company were either killed or wounded.

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And so the time passed on, each General now and then dispatching some order or message by an officer or orderly, until about half-past twelve, when all the Generals, one by one, first General Meade, rode off their several ways, and General Gibbon and his staff alone remained.

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We dozed in the heat, and lolled upon the ground, with half open eyes. Our horses were hitched to the trees munching some oats. A great lull rests upon all the field. Time was heavy, and for want of something better to do, I yawned, and looked at my watch. It was five minutes before one o'clock. I returned my watch to its pocket, and thought possibly that I might go to sleep, and stretched myself upon the ground accordingly. Ex uno disce omnes. My attitude and purpose were those of the General and the rest of the staff.

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What sound was that? There was no mistaking it. The distinct sharp sound of one of the enemy's guns, square over to the front, caused us to open our eyes and turn them in that direction, when we saw directly above the crest the smoke of the bursting shell, and heard its noise. In an instant, before a word was spoken, as if that was the signal gun for general work, loud, startling, booming, the report of gun after gun in rapid succession smote our ears and their shells plunged down and exploded all around us. We sprang to our feet. In briefest time the whole Rebel line to the West was pouring out its thunder and its iron upon our devoted crest. The wildest confusion for a few moments obtained sway among us. The shells came bursting all about. The servants ran terror-stricken for dear life and disappeared. The horses, hitched to the trees or held by the slack hands of orderlies, neighed out in fright, and broke away and plunged riderless through the fields. The General at the first had snatched his sword, and started on foot for the front. I called for my horse; nobody responded. I found him tied to a tree, near by, eating oats, with an air of the greatest composure, which under the circumstances, even then struck me as exceedingly ridiculous. He alone, of all beasts or men near, was cool. I am not sure but that I learned a lesson then from a horse. Anxious alone for his oats, while I put on the bridle and adjusted the halter, he delayed me by keeping his head down, so I had time to see one of the horses of our mess wagon struck and torn by a shell. The pair plunge—the driver has lost the reins—horses, driver and wagon go into a heap by a tree. Two mules close at hand, packed with boxes of ammunition, are knocked all to pieces by a shell. General Gibbon's groom has just mounted his horse and is starting to take the General's horse to him, when the flying iron meets him and tears open his breast. He drops dead and the horses gallop away. No more than a minute since the first shot was fired, and I am mounted and riding after the General. The mighty din that now rises to heaven and shakes the earth is not all of it the voice of the rebellion; for our guns, the guardian lions of the crest, quick to awake when danger comes, have opened their fiery jaws and begun to roar—the great hoarse roar of battle. I overtake the General half way up to the line. Before we reach the crest his horse is brought by an orderly. Leaving our horses just behind a sharp declivity of the ridge, on foot we go up among the batteries. How the long streams of fire spout from the guns, how the rifled shells hiss, how the smoke deepens and rolls. But where is the infantry? Has it vanished in smoke? Is this a nightmare or a juggler's devilish trick? All too real. The men of the infantry have seized their arms, and behind their works, behind every rock, in every ditch, wherever there is any shelter, they hug the ground, silent, quiet, unterrified, little harmed. The enemy's guns now in action are in position at their front of the woods along the second ridge that I have before mentioned and towards their right, behind a small crest in the open field, where we saw the flags this morning. Their line is some two miles long, concave on the side towards us, and their range is from one thousand to eighteen hundred yards. A hundred and twenty-five rebel guns, we estimate, are now active, firing twenty-four pound, twenty, twelve and ten-pound projectiles, solid shot and shells, spherical, conical, spiral. The enemy's fire is chiefly concentrated upon the position of the Second Corps. From the Cemetery to Round Top, with over a hundred guns, and to all parts of the enemy's line, our batteries reply, of twenty and ten-pound Parrotts, ten-pound rifled ordnance, and twelve-pound Napoleons, using projectiles as various in shape and name as those of the enemy. Captain Hazard commanding the artillery brigade of the Second Corps was vigilant among the batteries of his command, and they were all doing well. All was going on satisfactorily. We had nothing to do, therefore, but to be observers of the grand spectacle of battle. Captain Wessels, Judge Advocate of the Division, now joined us, and we sat down behind the crest, close to the left of Cushing's Battery, to bide our time, to see, to be ready to act when the time should come, which might be at any moment. Who can describe such a conflict as is raging around us? To say that it was like a summer storm, with the crash of thunder, the glare of lightning, the shrieking of the wind, and the clatter of hailstones, would be weak. The thunder and lightning of these two hundred and fifty guns and their shells, whose smoke darkens the sky, are incessant, all pervading, in the air above our heads, on the ground at our feet, remote, near, deafening, ear-piercing, astounding; and these hailstones are massy iron, charged with exploding fire. And there is little of human interest in a storm; it is an absorbing element of this. You may see flame and smoke, and hurrying men, and human passion at a great conflagration; but they are all earthly and nothing more. These guns are great infuriate demons, not of the earth, whose mouths blaze with smoky tongues of living fire, and whose murky breath, sulphur-laden, rolls around them and along the ground, the smoke of Hades. These grimy men, rushing, shouting, their souls in frenzy, plying the dusky globes and the igniting spark, are in their league, and but their willing ministers. We thought that at the second Bull Run, at the Antietam and at Fredericksburg on the 11th of December, we had heard heavy cannonading; they were but holiday salutes compared with this. Besides the great ceaseless roar of the guns, which was but the background of the others, a million various minor sounds engaged the ear. The projectiles shriek long and sharp. They hiss, they scream, they growl, they sputter; all sounds of life and rage; and each has its different note, and all are discordant. Was ever such a chorus of sound before? We note the effect of the enemies' fire among the batteries and along the crest. We see the solid shot strike axle, or pole, or wheel, and the tough iron and heart of oak snap and fly like straws. The great oaks there by Woodruff's guns heave down their massy branches with a crash, as if the lightning smote them. The shells swoop down among the battery horses standing there apart. A half a dozen horses start, they stumble, their legs stiffen, their vitals and blood smear the ground. And these shot and shells have no respect for men either. We see the poor fellows hobbling back from the crest, or unable to do so, pale and weak, lying on the ground with the mangled stump of an arm or leg, dripping their life-blood away; or with a cheek torn open, or a shoulder mashed. And many, alas! hear not the roar as they stretch upon the ground with upturned faces and open eyes, though a shell should burst at their very ears. Their ears and their bodies this instant are only mud. We saw them but a moment since there among the flame, with brawny arms and muscles of iron wielding the rammer and pushing home the cannon's plethoric load.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.397

Strange freaks these round shot play! We saw a man coming up from the rear with his full knapsack on, and some canteens of water held by the straps in his hands. He was walking slowly and with apparent unconcern, though the iron hailed around him. A shot struck the knapsack, and it, and its contents flew thirty yards in every direction, the knapsack disappearing like an egg, thrown spitefully against a rock. The soldier stopped and turned about in puzzled surprise, put up one hand to his back to assure himself that the knapsack was not there, and then walked slowly on again unharmed, with not even his coat torn. Near us was a man crouching behind a small disintegrated stone, which was about the size of a common water bucket. He was bent up, with his face to the ground, in the attitude of a Pagan worshipper before his idol. It looked so absurd to see him thus, that I went and said to him, "Do not lie there like a toad. Why not go to your regiment and be a man?" He turned up his face with a stupid, terrified look upon me, and then without a word turned his nose again to the ground. An orderly that was with me at the time, told me a few moments later, that a shot struck the stone, smashing it in a thousand fragments, but did not touch the man, though his head was not six inches from the stone.

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All the projectiles that came near us were not so harmless. Not ten yards away from us a shell burst among some small bushes, where sat three or four orderlies holding horses. Two of the men and one horse were killed. Only a few yards off a shell exploded over an open limber box in Cushing's battery, and at the same instant, another shell over a neighboring box. In both the boxes the ammunition blew up with an explosion that shook the ground, throwing fire and splinters and shells far into the air and all around, and destroying several men. We watched the shells bursting in the air, as they came hissing in all directions. Their flash was a bright gleam of lightning radiating from a point, giving place in the thousandth part of a second to a small, white, puffy cloud, like a fleece of the lightest, whitest wool. These clouds were very numerous. We could not often see the shell before it burst; but sometimes, as we faced towards the enemy, and looked above our heads, the approach would be heralded by a prolonged hiss, which always seemed to me to be a line of something tangible, terminating in a black globe, distinct to the eye, as the sound had been to the ear. The shell would seem to stop, and hang suspended in the air an instant, and then vanish in fire and smoke and noise. We saw the missiles tear and plow the ground. All in rear of the crest for a thousand yards, as well as among the batteries, was the field of their blind fury. Ambulances, passing down the Taneytown road with wounded men, were struck. The hospitals near this road were riddled. The house which was General Meade's headquarters was shot through several times, and a great many horses of officers and orderlies were lying dead around it. Riderless horses, galloping madly through the fields, were brought up, or down rather, by these invisible horse-tamers, and they would not run any more. Mules with ammunition, pigs wallowing about, cows in the pastures, whatever was animate or inanimate, in all this broad range, were no exception to their blind havoc. The percussion shells would strike, and thunder, and scatter the earth and their whistling fragments; the Whitworth bolts would pound and ricochet, and bowl far away sputtering, with the sound of a mass of hot iron plunged in water; and the great solid shot would smite the unresisting ground with a sounding "thud," as the strong boxer crashes his iron fist into the jaws of his unguarded adversary. Such were some of the sights and sounds of this great iron battle of missiles. Our artillerymen upon the crest budged not an inch, nor intermitted, but, though caisson and limber were smashed, and the guns dismantled, and men and horses killed, there amidst smoke and sweat, they gave back, without grudge, or loss of time in the sending, in kind whatever the enemy sent, globe, and cone, and bolt, hollow or solid, an iron greeting to the rebellion, the compliments of the wrathful Republic. An hour has droned its flight since first the war began. There is no sign of weariness or abatement on either side. So long it seemed, that the din and crashing around began to appear the normal condition of nature there, and fighting man's element. The General proposed to go among the men and over to the front of the batteries, so at about two o'clock he and I started. We went along the lines of the infantry as they lay there flat upon the earth, a little to the front of the batteries. They were suffering little, and were quiet and cool. How glad we were that the enemy were no better gunners, and that they cut the shell fuses too long. To the question asked the men, "What do you think of this?" the replies would be, "O, this is bully," "We are getting to like it," "O, we don't mind this." And so they lay under the heaviest cannonade that ever shook the continent, and among them a thousand times more jokes than heads were cracked.

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We went down in front of the line some two hundred yards, and as the smoke had a tendency to settle upon a higher plain than where we were, we could see near the ground distinctly all over the fields, as well back to the crest where were our own guns as to the opposite ridge where were those of the enemy. No infantry was in sight, save the skirmishers, and they stood silent and motionless—a row of gray posts through the field on one side confronted by another of blue. Under the grateful shade of some elm trees, where we could see much of the field, we made seats of the ground and sat down. Here all the more repulsive features of the fight were unseen, by reason of the smoke. Man had arranged the scenes, and for a time had taken part in the great drama; but at last, as the plot thickened, conscious of his littleness and inadequacy to the mighty part, he had stepped aside and given place to more powerful actors. So it seemed; for we could see no men about the batteries. On either crest we could see the great flaky streams of fire, and they seemed numberless, of the opposing guns, and their white banks of swift, convolving smoke; but the sound of the discharges was drowned in the universal ocean of sound. Over all the valley the smoke, a sulphury arch, stretched its lurid span; and through it always, shrieking on their unseen courses, thickly flew a myriad iron deaths. With our grim horizon on all sides round toothed thick with battery flame, under that dissonant canopy of warring shells, we sat and heard in silence. What other expression had we that was not mean, for such an awful universe of battle?

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.400

A shell struck our breastwork of rails up in sight of us, and a moment afterwards we saw the men bearing some of their wounded companions away from the same spot; and directly two men came from there down toward where we were and sought to get shelter in an excavation near by, where many dead horses, killed in yesterdays fight had been thrown. General Gibbon said to these men, more in a tone of kindly expostulation than of command "My men, do not leave your ranks to try to get shelter here. All these matters are in the hands of God, and nothing that you can do will make you safer in one place than in another." The men went quietly back to the line at once. The General then said to me: "I am not a member of any church, but I have always had a strong religious feeling; and so in all these battles I have always believed that I was in the hands of God, and that I should be unharmed or not, according to His will. For this reason, I think it is, I am always ready to go where duty calls, no matter how great the danger." Half-past two o'clock, an hour and a half since the commencement, and still the cannonade did not in the least abate; but soon thereafter some signs of weariness and a little slacking of fire began to be apparent upon both sides. First we saw Brown's battery retire from the line, too feeble for further battle. Its position was a little to the front of the line. Its commander was wounded, and many of its men were so, or worse; some of its guns had been disabled, many of its horses killed; its ammunition was nearly expended. Other batteries in similar case had been withdrawn before to be replaced by fresh ones, and some were withdrawn afterwards. Soon after the battery named had gone, the General and I started to return, passing towards the left of the division, and crossing the ground where the guns had stood. The stricken horses were numerous, and the dead and wounded men lay about, and as we passed these latter, their low, piteous call for water would invariably come to us, if they had yet any voice left. I found canteens of water near—no difficult matter where a battle has been—and held them to livid lips, and even in the faintness of death the eagerness to drink told of their terrible torture of thirst. But we must pass on. Our infantry was still unshaken, and in all the cannonade suffered very little. The batteries had been handled much more severely. I am unable to give any figures. A great number of horses had been killed, in some batteries more than half of all. Guns had been dismounted. A great many caissons, limbers and carriages had been destroyed, and usually from ten to twenty-five men to each battery had been struck, at least along our part of the crest. Altogether the fire of the enemy had injured us much, both in the modes that I have stated, and also by exhausting our ammunition and fouling our guns, so as to render our batteries unfit for further immediate use. The scenes that met our eyes on all hands among the batteries were fearful. All things must end, and the great cannonade was no exception to the general law of earth. In the number of guns active at one time, and in the duration and rapidity of their fire, this artillery engagement, up to this time, must stand alone and preeminent in this war. It has not been often, or many times, surpassed in the battles of the world. Two hundred and fifty guns, at least, rapidly fired for two mortal hours. Cipher out the number of tons of gunpowder and iron that made these two hours hideous.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.402

Of the injury of our fire upon the enemy, except the facts that ours was the superior position, if not better served and constructed artillery, and that the enemy's artillery hereafter during the battle was almost silent, we know little. Of course, during the fight we often saw the enemy's caissons explode, and the trees rent by our shot crashing about his ears, but we can from these alone infer but little of general results. At three o'clock almost precisely the last shot hummed, and bounded and fell, and the cannonade was over. The purpose of General Lee in all this fire of his guns—we know it now, we did not at the time so well—was to disable our artillery and break up our infantry upon the position of the Second Corps, so as to render them less an impediment to the sweep of his own brigades and divisions over our crest and through our lines. He probably supposed our infantry was massed behind the crest and the batteries; and hence his fire was so high, and his fuses to the shells were cut long, too long. The Rebel General failed in some of his plans in this behalf, as many generals have failed before and will again. The artillery fight over, men began to breathe more freely, and to ask, What next, I wonder? The battery men were among their guns, some leaning to rest and wipe the sweat from their sooty faces, some were handling ammunition boxes and replenishing those that were empty. Some batteries from the artillery reserve were moving up to take the places of the disabled ones; the smoke was clearing from the crests. There was a pause between acts, with the curtain down, soon to rise upon the final act, and catastrophe of Gettysburg. We have passed by the left of the Second Division, coming from the First; when we crossed the crest the enemy was not in sight, and all was still—we walked slowly along in the rear of the troops, by the ridge cut off now from a view of the enemy in his position, and were returning to the spot where we had left our horses. General Gibbon had just said that he inclined to the belief that the enemy was falling back, and that the cannonade was only one of his noisy modes of covering the movement. I said that I thought that fifteen minutes would show that, by all his bowling, the Rebel did not mean retreat. We were near our horses when we noticed Brigadier General Hunt, Chief of Artillery of the Army, near Woodruff's Battery, swiftly moving about on horseback, and apparently in a rapid manner giving some orders about the guns. Thought we, what could this mean? In a moment afterwards we met Captain Wessels and the orderlies who had our horses; they were on foot leading the horses. Captain Wessels was pale, and he said, excited: "General, they say the enemy's infantry is advancing." We sprang into our saddles, a score of bounds brought us upon the all-seeing crest. To say that men grew pale and held their breath at what we and they there saw, would not be true. Might not six thousand men be brave and without shade of fear, and yet, before a hostile eighteen thousand, armed, and not five minutes' march away, turn ashy white? None on that crest now need be told that the enemy is advancing. Every eye could see his legions, an overwhelming resistless tide of an ocean of armed men sweeping upon us! Regiment after regiment, and brigade after brigade, move from the woods and rapidly take their places in the lines forming the assault. Pickett's proud division, with some additional troops, hold their right; Pettigrew's (Worth's) their left. The first line at short interval is followed by a second, and that a third succeeds; and columns between, support the lines. More than half a mile their front extends; more than a thousand yards the dull gray masses deploy, man touching man, rank pressing rank, and line supporting line. The red flags wave, their horsemen gallop up and down; the arms of eighteen thousand men, barrel and bayonet, gleam in the sun, a sloping forest of flashing steel. Right on they move, as with one soul, in perfect order, without impediment of ditch, or wall or stream, over ridge and slope, through orchard and meadow, and cornfield, magnificent, grim, irresistible. All was orderly and still upon our crest; no noise and no confusion. The men had little need of commands, for the survivors of a dozen battles knew well enough what this array in front portended, and, already in their places, they would be prepared to act when the right time should come. The click of the locks as each man raised the hammer to feel with his fingers that the cap was on the nipple; the sharp jar as a musket touched a stone upon the wall when thrust in aiming over it, and the clicking of the iron axles as the guns were rolled up by hand a little further to the front, were quite all the sounds that could be heard. Cap-boxes were slid around to the front of the body; cartridge boxes opened, officers opened their pistol-holsters. Such preparations, little more was needed. The trefoil flags, colors of the brigades and divisions moved to their places in rear; but along the lines in front the grand old ensign that first waved in battle at Saratoga in 1777, and which these people coming would rob of half its stars, stood up, and the west wind kissed it as the sergeants sloped its lance towards the enemy. I believe that not one above whom it then waved but blessed his God that he was loyal to it, and whose heart did not swell with pride towards it, as the emblem of the Republic before that treason's flaunting rag in front. General Gibbon rode down the lines, cool and calm, and in an unimpassioned voice he said to the men, "Do not hurry, men, and fire too fast, let them come up close before you fire, and then aim low and steadily." The coolness of their General was reflected in the faces of his men. Five minutes has elapsed since first the enemy have emerged from the woods—no great space of time surely, if measured by the usual standard by which men estimate duration—but it was long enough for us to note and weigh some of the elements of mighty moment that surrounded us; the disparity of numbers between the assailants and the assailed; that few as were our numbers we could not be supported or reinforced until support would not be needed or would be too late; that upon the ability of the two trefoil divisions to hold the crest and repel the assault depended not only their own safety or destruction, but also the honor of the Army of the Potomac and defeat or victory at Gettysburg. Should these advancing men pierce our line and become the entering wedge, driven home, that would sever our army asunder, what hope would there be afterwards, and where the blood-earned fruits of yesterday? It was long enough for the Rebel storm to drift across more than half the space that had at first separated it from us. None, or all, of these considerations either depressed or elevated us. They might have done the former, had we been timid; the latter had we been confident and vain. But, we were there waiting, and ready to do our duty—that done, results could not dishonor us.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.405

Our skirmishers open a spattering fire along the front, and, fighting, retire upon the main line—the first drops, the heralds of the storm, sounding on our windows. Then the thunders of our guns, first Arnold's, then Cushing's and Woodruff's and the rest, shake and reverberate again through the air, and their sounding shells smite the enemy. The General said I had better go and tell General Meade of this advance. To gallop to General Meade's headquarters, to learn there that he had changed them to another part of the field, to dispatch to him by the Signal Corps in General Gibbon's name the message, "The enemy is advancing his infantry in force upon my front," and to be again upon the crest, were but the work of a minute. All our available guns are now active, and from the fire of shells, as the range grows shorter and shorter, they change to shrapnel, and from shrapnel to canister; but in spite of shells, and shrapnel and canister, without wavering or halt, the hardy lines of the enemy continue to move on. The Rebel guns make no reply to ours, and no charging shout rings out to-day, as is the Rebel wont; but the courage of these silent men amid our shots seems not to need the stimulus of other noise. The enemy's right flank sweeps near Stannard's bushy crest, and his concealed Vermonters rake it with a well-delivered fire of musketry. The gray lines do not halt or reply, but withdrawing a little from that extreme, they still move on. And so across all that broad open ground they have come, nearer and nearer, nearly half the way, with our guns bellowing in their faces, until now a hundred yards, no more, divide our ready left from their advancing right. The eager men there are impatient to begin. Let them. First, Harrow's breastworks flame; then Hall's; then Webb's. As if our bullets were the fire coals that touched off their muskets, the enemy in front halts, and his countless level barrels blaze back upon us. The Second Division is struggling in battle. The rattling storm soon spreads to the right, and the blue trefoils are vieing with the white. All along each hostile front, a thousand yards, with narrowest space between, the volleys blaze and roll; as thick the sound as when a summer hailstorm pelts the city roofs; as thick the fire as when the incessant lightning fringes a summer cloud. When the Rebel infantry had opened fire our batteries soon became silent, and this without their fault, for they were foul by long previous use. They were the targets of the concentrated Rebel bullets, and some of them had expended all their canister. But they were not silent before Rhorty was killed, Woodruff had fallen mortally wounded, and Cushing, firing almost his last canister, had dropped dead among his guns shot through the head by a bullet. The conflict is left to the infantry alone. Unable to find my general, when I had returned to the crest after transmitting his message to General Meade, and while riding in the search having witnessed the development of the fight, from the first fire upon the left by the main lines until all of the two divisions were furiously engaged, I gave up hunting as useless—I was convinced General Gibbon could not be on the field; I left him mounted; I could easily have found him now had he so remained—but now, save myself, there was not a mounted officer near the engaged lines—and was riding towards the right of the Second Division, with purpose to stop there, as the most eligible position to watch the further progress of the battle, there to be ready to take part according to my own notions whenever and wherever occasion was presented. The conflict was tremendous, but I had seen no wavering in all our line. Wondering how long the Rebel ranks, deep though they were, could stand our sheltered volleys, I had come near my destination, when—great heaven! were my senses mad? The larger portion of Webb's brigade—my God, it was true—there by the group of trees and the angles of the wall, was breaking from the cover of their works, and, without orders or reason, with no hand lifted to check them, was falling back, a fear-stricken flock of confusion! The fate of Gettysburg hung upon a spider's single thread! A great magnificent passion came on me at the instant, not one that overpowers and confounds, but one that blanches the face and sublimes every sense and faculty. My sword, that had always hung idle by my side, the sign of rank only in every battle, I drew, bright and gleaming, the symbol of command. Was not that a fit occasion, and these fugitives the men on whom to try the temper of the Solinzen steel? All rules and proprieties were forgotten; all considerations of person, and danger and safety despised; for, as I met the tide of these rabbits, the damned red flags of the rebellion began to thicken and flaunt along the wall they had just deserted, and one was already waving over one of the guns of the dead Cushing. I ordered these men to "halt," and "face about" and "fire," and they heard my voice and gathered my meaning, and obeyed my commands. On some unpatriotic backs of those not quick of comprehension, the flat of my sabre fell not lightly, and, at its touch their love of country returned, and, with a look at me as if I were the destroying angel, as I might have become theirs, they again faced the enemy. General Webb soon came to my assistance. He was on foot, but he was active, and did all that one could do to repair the breach, or to avert its calamity. The men that had fallen back, facing the enemy, soon regained confidence in themselves, and became steady. This portion of the wall was lost to us, and the enemy had gained the cover of the reverse side, where he now stormed with fire. But Webb's men, with their bodies in part protected by the abruptness of the crest, now sent back in the enemies' faces as fierce a storm. Some scores of venturesome Rebels, that in their first push at the wall had dared to cross at the further angle, and those that had desecrated Cushing's guns, were promptly shot down, and speedy death met him who should raise his body to cross it again. At this point little could be seen of the enemy, by reason of his cover and the smoke except the flash of his muskets and his waving flags. These red flags were accumulating at the wall every moment, and they maddened us as the same color does the bull. Webb's men are falling fast, and he is among them to direct and encourage; but, however well they may now do, with that walled enemy in front, with more than a dozen flags to Webb's three, it soon becomes apparent that in not many minutes they will be overpowered, or that there will be none alive for the enemy to overpower. Webb has but three regiments, all small, the 69th, 715th and 72nd Pennsylvania—the 106th Pennsylvania, except two companies, is not here to-day—and he must have speedy assistance, or this crest will be lost. Oh, where is Gibbon? where is Hancock?—some general—anybody with the power and the will to support that wasting, melting line? No general came, and no succor! I thought of Hayes upon the right, but from the smoke and war along his front, it was evident that he had enough upon his hands, if he stayed the inrolling tide of the Rebels there. Doubleday upon the left was too far off and too slow, and on another occasion I had begged him to send his idle regiments to support another line battling with thrice its numbers, and this "Old Sumpter Hero" had declined. As a last resort, I resolved to see if Hall and Harrow could not send some of their commands to reinforce Webb. I galloped to the left in the execution of my purpose, and as I attained the rear of Hall's line from the nature of the ground and the position of the enemy it was easy to discover the reason and the manner of this gathering of Rebel flags in front of Webb. The enemy, emboldened by his success in gaining our line by the group of trees and the angle of the wall, was concentrating all his right against and was further pressing that point. There was the stress of his assault; there would he drive his fiery wedge to split our line. In front of Harrow's and Hall's Brigades he had been able to advance no nearer than when he first halted to deliver fire, and these commands had not yielded an inch. To effect the concentration before Webb, the enemy would march the regiment on his extreme right of each of his lines by the left flank to the rear of the troops, still halted and facing to the front, and so continuing to draw in his right, when they were all massed in the position desired, he would again face them to the front, and advance to the storming. This was the way he made the wall before Webb's line blaze red with his battle flags, and such was the purpose there of his thick-crowding battalions. Not a moment must be lost. Colonel Hall I found just in rear of his line, sword in hand, cool, vigilant, noting all that passed and directing the battle of his brigade. The fire was constantly diminishing now in his front, in the manner and by the movement of the enemy that I have mentioned, drifting to the right. "How is it going?" Colonel Hall asked me, as I rode up. "Well, but Webb is hotly pressed and must have support, or he will be overpowered. Can you assist him?" "Yes." "You cannot be too quick." "I will move my brigade at once." "Good." He gave the order, and in briefest time I saw five friendly colors hurrying to the aid of the imperilled three; and each color represented true, battle-tried men, that had not turned back from Rebel fire that day nor yesterday, though their ranks were sadly thinned, to Webb's brigade, pressed back as it had been from the wall, the distance was not great from Hall's right. The regiments marched by the right flank. Col. Hall superintended the movement in person. Col. Devereux coolly commanded the 19th Massachusetts. His major, Rice, had already been wounded and carried off. Lieut. Col. Macy, of the 20th Mass., had just had his left hand shot off, and so Capt. Abbott gallantly led over this fine regiment. The 42d New York followed their excellent Colonel Mallon. Lieut. Col. Steel, 7th Mich., had just been killed, and his regiment, and the handful of the 59th N. Y., followed their colors. The movement, as it did, attracting the enemy's fire, and executed in haste, as it must be, was difficult; but in reasonable time, and in order that is serviceable, if not regular, Hall's men are fighting gallantly side by side with Webb's before the all important point. I did not stop to see all this movement of Hall's, but from him I went at once further to the left, to the 1st brigade. Gen'l Harrow I did not see, but his fighting men would answer my purpose as well. The 19th Me., the 15th Mass., the 82d N. Y. and the shattered old thunderbolt, the 1st Minn.—poor Farrell was dying then upon the ground where he had fallen,—all men that I could find I took over to the right at the double quick.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.410

As we were moving to, and near the other brigade of the division, from my position on horseback, I could see that the enemy's right, under Hall's fire, was beginning to stagger and to break. "See," I said to the men, "See the chivalry! See the gray-backs run!" The men saw, and as they swept to their places by the side of Hall and opened fire, they roared, and this in a manner that said more plainly than words—for the deaf could have seen it in their faces, and the blind could have heard it in their voices—the crest is safe!

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.410

The whole Division concentrated, and changes of position, and new phases, as well on our part as on that of the enemy, having as indicated occurred, for the purpose of showing the exact present posture of affairs, some further description is necessary. Before the 2d Division the enemy is massed, the main bulk of his force covered by the ground that slopes to his rear, with his front at the stone wall. Between his front and us extends the very apex of the crest. All there are left of the White Trefoil Division—yesterday morning there were three thousand eight hundred, this morning there were less than three thousand—at this moment there are somewhat over two thousand;—twelve regiments in three brigades are below or behind the crest, in such a position that by the exposure of the head and upper part of the body above the crest they can deliver their fire in the enemy's faces along the top of the wall. By reason of the disorganization incidental in Webb's brigade to his men's having broken and fallen back, as mentioned, in the two other brigades to their rapid and difficult change of position under fire, and in all the division in part to severe and continuous battle, formation of companies and regiments in regular ranks is lost; but commands, companies, regiments and brigades are blended and intermixed—an irregular extended mass—men enough, if in order, to form a line of four or five ranks along the whole front of the division. The twelve flags of the regiments wave defiantly at intervals along the front; at the stone wall, at unequal distances from ours of forty, fifty or sixty yards, stream nearly double this number of the battle flags of the enemy. These changes accomplished on either side, and the concentration complete, although no cessation or abatement in the general din of conflict since the commencement had at any time been appreciable, now it was as if a new battle, deadlier, stormier than before, had sprung from the body of the old—a young Phoenix of combat, whose eyes stream lightning, shaking his arrowy wings over the yet glowing ashes of his progenitor. The jostling, swaying lines on either side boil, and roar, and dash their flamy spray, two hostile billows of a fiery ocean. Thick flashes stream from the wall, thick volleys answer from the crest. No threats or expostulation now, only example and encouragement. All depths of passion are stirred, and all combatives fire, down to their deep foundations. Individuality is drowned in a sea of clamor, and timid men, breathing the breath of the multitude, are brave. The frequent dead and wounded lie where they stagger and fall—there is no humanity for them now, and none can be spared to care for them. The men do not cheer or shout; they growl, and over that uneasy sea, heard with the roar of musketry, sweeps the muttered thunder of a storm of growls. Webb, Hall, Devereux, Mallon, Abbott among the men where all are heroes, are doing deeds of note. Now the loyal wave rolls up as if it would overleap its barrier, the crest. Pistols flash with the muskets. My "Forward to the wall" is answered by the Rebel counter-command, "Steady, men!" and the wave swings back. Again it surges, and again it sinks. These men of Pennsylvania, on the soil of their own homesteads, the first and only to flee the wall, must be the first to storm it. "Major——, lead your men over the crest, they will follow." "By the tactics I understand my place is in rear of the men." "Your pardon, sir; I see your place is in rear of the men. I thought you were fit to lead." "Capt. Suplee, come on with your men." "Let me first stop this fire in the rear, or we shall be hit by our own men." "Never mind the fire in the rear; let us take care of this in front first." "Sergeant, forward with your color. Let the Rebels see it close to their eyes once before they die." The color sergeant of the 72d Pa., grasping the stump of the severed lance in both his hands, waved the flag above his head and rushed towards the wall. "Will you see your color storm the wall alone?" One man only starts to follow. Almost half way to the wall, down go color bearer and color to the ground—the gallant sergeant is dead. The line springs—the crest of the solid ground with a great roar, heaves forward its maddened load, men, arms, smoke, fire, a fighting mass. It rolls to the wall—flash meets flash, the wall is crossed—a moment ensues of thrusts, yells, blows, shots, and undistinguishable conflict, followed by a shout universal that makes the welkin ring again, and the last and bloodiest fight of the great battle of Gettysburg is ended and won.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.412

Many things cannot be described by pen or pencil—such a fight is one. Some hints and incidents may be given, but a description or picture never. From what is told the imagination may for itself construct the scene; otherwise he who never saw can have no adequate idea of what such a battle is.

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When the vortex of battle passion had subsided, hopes, fears, rage, joy, of which the maddest and the noisiest was the last, and we were calm enough to look about us, we saw that, as with us, the fight with the Third Division was ended, and that in that division was a repetition of the scenes immediately about us. In that moment the judgment almost refused to credit the senses. Are these abject wretches about us, whom our men are now disarming and driving together in flocks, the jaunty men of Pickett's Division, whose steady lines and flashing arms but a few moments since came sweeping up the slope to destroy us? Are these red cloths that our men toss about in derision the "fiery Southern crosses," thrice ardent, the battle flags of the rebellion that waved defiance at the wall? We know, but so sudden has been the transition, we yet can scarce believe.

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Just as the fight was over, and the first outburst of victory had a little subsided, when all in front of the crest was noise and confusion—prisoners being collected, small parties in pursuit of them far down into the fields, flags waving, officers giving quick, sharp commands to their men—I stood apart for a few moments upon the crest, by that group of trees which ought to be historic forever, a spectator of the thrilling scene around. Some few musket shots were still heard in the Third Division; and the enemy's guns, almost silent since the advance of his infantry until the moment of his defeat, were dropping a few sullen shells among friend and foe upon the crest. Rebellion fosters such humanity. Near me, saddest sight of the many of such a field and not in keeping with all this noise, were mingled alone the thick dead of Maine and Minnesota, and Michigan and Massachusetts, and the Empire and Keystone States, who, not yet cold, with the blood still oozing from their deathwounds, had given their lives to the country upon that stormy field. So mingled upon that crest, let their honored graves be. Look with me about us. These dead have been avenged already. Where the long lines of the enemy's thousands so proudly advanced, see how thick the silent men of gray are scattered. It is not an hour since these legions were sweeping along so grandly; now sixteen hundred of that fiery mass are strewn among the trampled grass, dead as the clods they load; more than seven thousand, probably eight thousand, are wounded, some there with the dead, in our hands, some fugitive far towards the woods, among them Generals Pettigrew, Garnett, Kemper and Armstead, the last three mortally, and the last one in our hands. "Tell General Hancock," he said to Lieutenant Mitchell, Hancock's aide-de-camp, to whom he handed his watch, "that I know I did my country a great wrong when I took up arms against her, for which I am sorry, but for which I cannot live to atone." Four thousand, not wounded, are prisoners of war. More in number of the captured than the captors. Our men are still "gathering them in." Some hold up their hands or a handkerchief in sign of submission; some have hugged the ground to escape our bullets and so are taken; few made resistance after the first moment of our crossing the wall; some yield submissively with good grace, some with grim, dogged aspect, showing that but for the other alternative they could not submit to this. Colonels, and all less grades of officers, in the usual proportion are among them, and all are being stripped of their arms. Such of them as escaped wounds and capture are fleeing routed and panic stricken, and disappearing in the woods. Small arms, more thousands than we can count, are in our hands, scattered over the field. And these defiant battle-flags, some inscribed with "First Manassas," the numerous battles of the Peninsula, "Second Manassas," "South Mountain," "Sharpsburg," (our Antietam,) "Fredericksburg," "Chancellorsville," and many more names, our men have, and are showing about, over thirty of them.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.415

Such was really the closing scene of the grand drama of Gettysburg. After repeated assaults upon the right and the left, where, and in all of which repulse had been his only success, this persistent and presuming enemy forms his chosen troops, the flower of his army, for a grand assault upon our center. The manner and result of such assault have been told—a loss to the enemy of from twelve thousand to fourteen thousand, killed, wounded and prisoners, and of over thirty battle-flags. This was accomplished by not over six thousand men, with a loss on our part of not over two thousand five hundred killed and wounded.

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Would to Heaven Generals Hancock and Gibbon could have stood there where I did, and have looked upon that field! It would have done two men, to whom the country owes much, good to have been with their men in that moment of victory—to have seen the result of those dispositions which they had made, and of that splendid fighting which men schooled by their discipline, had executed. But they are both severely wounded and have been carried from the field. One person did come then that I was glad to see there, and that was no less than Major General Meade, whom the Army of the Potomac was fortunate enough to have at that time to command it. See how a great General looked upon the field, and what he said and did at the moment, and when he learned of his great victory. To appreciate the incident I give, it should be borne in mind that one coming up from the rear of the line, as did General Meade, could have seen very little of our own men, who had now crossed the crest, and although he could have heard the noise, he could not have told its occasion, or by whom made, until he had actually attained the crest. One who did not know results, so coming, would have been quite as likely to have supposed that our line there had been carried and captured by the enemy—so many gray Rebels were on the crest—as to have discovered the real truth. Such mistake was really made by one of our officers, as I shall relate.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.416

General Meade rode up, accompanied alone by his son, who is his aide-de-camp, an escort, if select, not large for a commander of such an army. The principal horseman was no bedizened hero of some holiday review, but he was a plain man, dressed in a serviceable summer suit of dark blue cloth, without badge or ornament, save the shoulder-straps of his grade, and a light, straight sword of a General or General staff officer. He wore heavy, high-top boots and buff gauntlets, and his soft black felt hat was slouched down over his eyes. His face was very white, not pale, and the lines were marked and earnest and full of care. As he arrived near me, coming up the hill, he asked in a sharp, eager voice: "How is it going here?" "I believe, General, the enemy's attack is repulsed," I answered. Still approaching, and a new light began to come in his face, of gratified surprise, with a touch of incredulity, of which his voice was also the medium, he further asked: "What! Is the assault already repulsed?" his voice quicker and more eager than before. "It is, sir," I replied. By this time he was on the crest, and when his eye had for an instant swept over the field, taking in just a glance of the whole—the masses of prisoners, the numerous captured flags which the men were derisively flaunting about, the fugitives of the routed enemy, disappearing with the speed of terror in the woods—partly at what I had told him, partly at what he saw, he said, impressively, and his face lighted: "Thank God." And then his right hand moved as if it would have caught off his hat and waved it; but this gesture he suppressed, and instead he waved his hand, and said "Hurrah!" The son, with more youth in his blood and less rank upon his shoulders, snatched off his cap, and roared out his three "hurrahs" right heartily. The General then surveyed the field, some minutes, in silence. He at length asked who was in command—he had heard that Hancock and Gibbon were wounded—and I told him that General Caldwell was the senior officer of the Corps and General Harrow of the Division. He asked where they were, but before I had time to answer that I did not know, he resumed: "No matter; I will give my orders to you and you will see them executed." He then gave direction that the troops should be reformed as soon as practicable, and kept in their places, as the enemy might be mad enough to attack again. He also gave directions concerning the posting of some reinforcements which he said would soon be there, adding: "If the enemy does attack, charge him in the flank and sweep him from the field; do you understand." The General then, a gratified man, galloped in the direction of his headquarters.

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Then the work of the field went on. First, the prisoners were collected and sent to the rear. "There go the men," the Rebels were heard to say, by some of our surgeons who were in Gettysburg, at the time Pickett's Division marched out to take position—"There go the men that will go through your d—d Yankee lines, for you." A good many of them did "go through our lines for us," but in a very different way from the one they intended—not impetuous victors, sweeping away our thin lines with ball and bayonet, but crest-fallen captives, without arms, guarded by the true bayonets of the Union, with the cheers of their conquerors ringing in their ears. There was a grim truth after all in this Rebel remark. Collected, the prisoners began their dreary march, a miserable, melancholy stream of dirty gray, to pour over the crest to our rear. Many of the officers were well dressed, fine, proud gentlemen, such men as it would be a pleasure to meet, when the war is over. I had no desire to exult over them, and pity and sympathy were the general feelings of us all upon the occasion. The cheering of our men, and the unceremonious handling of the captured flags was probably not gratifying to the prisoners, but not intended for taunt or insult to the men; they could take no exception to such practices. When the prisoners were turned to the rear and were crossing the crest, Lieut. Col. Morgan, General Hancock's Chief of Staff, was conducting a battery from the artillery reserve, towards the Second Corps. As he saw the men in gray coming over the hill, he said to the officer in command of the battery: "See up there! The enemy has carried the crest. See them come pouring over! The old Second Corps is gone, and you had better get your battery away from here as quickly as possible, or it will be captured." The officer was actually giving the order to his men to move back, when close observation discovered that the gray-backs that were coming had no arms, and then the truth flashed upon the minds of the observers. The same mistake was made by others.

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In view of the results of that day—the successes of the arms of the country, would not the people of the whole country, standing there upon the crest with General Meade, have said, with him: "Thank God?"

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I have no knowledge and little notion of how long a time elapsed from the moment the fire of the infantry commenced, until the enemy was entirely repulsed, in this his grand assault. I judge, from the amount of fighting and the changes of position that occurred, that probably the fight was of nearly an hour's duration, but I cannot tell, and I have seen none who knew. The time seemed but a very few minutes, when the battle was over.

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When the prisoners were cleared away and order was again established upon our crest, where the conflict had impaired it, until between five and six o'clock, I remained upon the field, directing some troops to their position, in conformity to the orders of General Meade. The enemy appeared no more in front of the Second Corps; but while I was engaged as I have mentioned, farther to our left some considerable force of the enemy moved out and made show of attack. Our artillery, now in good order again, in due time opened fire, and the shells scattered the "Butternuts," as clubs do the gray snow-birds of winter, before they came within range of our infantry. This, save unimportant outpost firing, was the last of the battle.

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Of the pursuit of the enemy and the movements of the army subsequent to the battle, until the crossing of the Potomac by Lee and the closing of the campaign, it is not my purpose to write. Suffice it that on the night of the 3rd of July the enemy withdrew his left, Ewell's Corps, from our front, and on the morning of the 4th we again occupied the village of Gettysburg, and on that national day victory was proclaimed to the country; that floods of rain on that day prevented army movements of any considerable magnitude, the day being passed by our army in position upon the field, in burying our dead, and some of those of the enemy, and in making the movements already indicated; that on the 5th the pursuit of the enemy was commenced—his dead were buried by us—and the corps of our army, upon various roads, moved from the battlefield.

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With a statement of some of the results of the battle, as to losses and captures, and of what I saw in riding over the field, when the enemy was gone, my account is done.

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Our own losses in killed, wounded and missing I estimate at twenty-three thousand. Of the "missing" the larger proportion were prisoners, lost on the 1st of July. Our loss in prisoners, not wounded, probably was four thousand. The losses were distributed among the different army corps about as follows: In the Second Corps, which sustained the heaviest loss of any corps, a little over four thousand five hundred, of whom the missing were a mere nominal number; in the First Corps a little over four thousand, of whom a great many were missing; in the Third Corps four thousand, of whom some were missing; in the Eleventh Corps nearly four thousand, of whom the most were missing; and the rest of the loss, to make the aggregate mentioned, was shared by the Fifth, Sixth and Twelfth Corps and the cavalry. Among these the missing were few; and the losses of the Sixth Corps and of the cavalry were light. I do not think the official reports will show my estimate of our losses to be far from correct, for I have taken great pains to question staff officers upon the subject, and have learned approximate numbers from them. We lost no gun or flag that I have heard of in all the battle. Some small arms, I suppose, were lost on the 1st of July.

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The enemy's loss in killed, wounded and prisoners I estimate at forty thousand, and from the following data and for the following reasons: So far as I can learn, we took ten thousand prisoners, who were not wounded—many more than these were captured, but several thousands of them were wounded. I have so far as practicable ascertained the number of dead the enemy left upon the field, approximately, by getting the reports of different burying parties. I think his dead upon the field were five thousand, almost all of whom, save those killed on the first of July, were buried by us—the enemy not having them in their possession. In looking at a great number of tables of killed and wounded in battles I have found that the proportion of the killed to the wounded is as one to five, or more than five, rarely less than five. So with the killed at the number stated, twenty five thousand mentioned. I think fourteen thousand of the enemy, wounded and unwounded, fell into our hands. Great numbers of his small arms, two or three guns, and forty or more—was there ever such bannered harvest?—of his regimental battle-flags, were captured by us. Some day possibly we may learn the enemy's loss, but I doubt if he will ever tell truly how many flags he did not take home with him. I have great confidence however in my estimates, for they have been carefully made, and after much inquiry, and with no desire or motive to overestimate the enemy's loss.

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The magnitude of the armies engaged, the number of the casualties, the object sought by the Rebel, the result, will all contribute to give Gettysburg a place among the great historic battles of the world. That General Meade's concentration was rapid—over thirty miles a day was marched by some of the Corps—that his position was skilfully selected and his dispositions good; that he fought the battle hard and well; that his victory was brilliant and complete, I think all should admit. I cannot but regard it as highly fortunate to us and commendable in General Meade, that the enemy was allowed the initiative, the offensive, in the main battle; that it was much better to allow the Rebel, for his own destruction, to come up and smash his lines and columns upon the defensive solidity of our position, than it would have been to hunt him, for the same purpose, in the woods, or to unearth him from his rifle-pits. In this manner our losses were lighter, and his heavier, than if the case had been reversed. And whatever the books may say of troops fighting the better who make the attack, I am satisfied that in this war, Americans, the Rebels, as well as ourselves, are best on the defensive. The proposition is deducible from the battles of the war, I think, and my own observation confirms it.

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But men there are who think that nothing was gained or done well in this battle, because some other general did not have the command, or because any portion of the army of the enemy was permitted to escape capture or destruction. As if one army of a hundred thousand men could encounter another of the same number of as good troops and annihilate it! Military men do not claim or expect this; but the McClellan destroyers do, the doughty knights of purchasable newspaper quills; the formidable warriors from the brothels of politics, men of much warlike experience against honesty and honor, of profound attainments in ignorance, who have the maxims of Napoleon, whose spirit they as little understand as they do most things, to quote, to prove all things; but who, unfortunately, have much influence in the country and with the Government, and so over the army. It is very pleasant for these people, no doubt, at safe distances from guns, in the enjoyment of a lucrative office, or of a fraudulently obtained government contract, surrounded by the luxuries of their own firesides, where mud and flooding storms, and utter weariness never penetrate, to discourse of battles and how campaigns should be conducted and armies of the enemy destroyed. But it should be enough, perhaps, to say that men here, or elsewhere, who have knowledge enough of military affairs to entitle them to express an opinion on such matters, and accurate information enough to realize the nature and the means of this desired destruction of Lee's army before it crossed the Potomac into Virginia, will be most likely to vindicate the Pennsylvania campaign of Gen. Meade, and to see that he accomplished all that could have been reasonably expected of any general of any army. Complaint has been, and is, made specially against Meade, that he did not attack Lee near Williamsport before he had time to withdraw across the river. These were the facts concerning this matter:

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The 13th of July was the earliest day when such an attack, if practicable at all, could have been made. The time before this, since the battle, had been spent in moving the army from the vicinity of the field, finding something of the enemy and concentrating before him. On that day the army was concentrated and in order of battle near the turnpike that leads from Sharpsburg to Hagerstown, Md., the right resting at or near the latter place, the left near Jones' crossroads, some six miles in the direction of Sharpsburg, and in the following order from left to right: the 12th corps, the 2d, the 5th, the 6th, the 1st, the 11th; the 3d being in reserve behind the 2d. The mean distance to the Potomac was some six miles, and the enemy was between Meade and the river. The Potomac, swelled by the recent rain, was boiling and swift and deep, a magnificent place to have drowned all the Rebel crew. I have not the least doubt but that Gen. Meade would have liked to drown them all, if he could, but they were unwilling to be drowned, and would fight first. To drive them into the river then, they must be routed. Gen. Meade, I believe, favored an attack upon the enemy at that time, and he summoned his corps commanders to a council upon the subject. The 1st corps was represented by William Hayes, the 3d by French, the 5th by Sykes, the 6th by Sedgwick, the 11th by Howard, the 12th by Slocum, and the Cavalry by Pleasanton. Of the eight generals there, Wadsworth, Howard and Pleasanton were in favor of immediate attack, and five, Hayes, French, Sykes, Sedgwick and Slocum were not in favor of attack until better information was obtained of the position and situation of the enemy. Of the pros Wadsworth only temporarily represented the 1st corps in the brief absence of Newton, who, had a battle occurred, would have commanded. Pleasanton, with his horses, would have been a spectator only, and Howard, with the brilliant 11th corps, would have been trusted nowhere but a safe distance from the enemy—not by Gen. Howard's fault, however, for he is a good and brave man. Such was the position of those who felt sanguinarily inclined. Of the cons were all of the fighting generals of the fighting corps, save the 1st. This, then, was the feeling of these generals—all who would have had no responsibility or part in all probability, hankered for a fight—those who would have had both part and responsibility, did not. The attack was not made. At daylight on the morning of the 14th, strong reconnaissances from the 12th, 2d and 5th corps were the means of discovering that between the enemy, except a thousand or fifteen hundred of his rear guard, who fell into our hands, and the Army of the Potomac, rolled the rapid, unbridged river. The Rebel General, Pettigrew, was here killed. The enemy had constructed bridges, had crossed during all the preceding night, but so close were our cavalry and infantry upon him in the morning, that the bridges were destroyed before his rear guard had all crossed.

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Among the considerations influencing these generals against the propriety of attack at that time, were probably the following: The army was wearied and worn down by four weeks of constant forced marching or battle, in the midst of heat, mud and drenching showers, burdened with arms, accoutrements, blankets, sixty to a hundred cartridges, and five to eight days' rations. What such weariness means few save soldiers know. Since the battle, the army had been constantly diminished by sickness or prostration and by more straggling than I ever saw before. Poor fellows—they could not help it. The men were near the point when further efficient physical exertion was quite impossible. Even the sound of the skirmishing, which was almost constant, and the excitement of impending battle, had no effect to arouse for an hour the exhibition of their wonted former vigor. The enemy's loss in battle, it is true, had been far heavier than ours; but his army was less weary than ours, for in a given time since the first of the campaign, it had marched far less and with lighter loads. These Rebels are accustomed to hunger and nakedness, customs to which our men do not take readily. And the enemy had straggled less, for the men were going away from battle and towards home, and for them to straggle was to go into captivity, whose end they could not conjecture. The enemy was somewhere in position in a ridgy, wooded country, abounding in strong defensive positions, his main bodies concealed, protected by rifle-pits and epaulements, acting strictly on the defensive. His dispositions, his position even, with any considerable degree of accuracy was unknown, nor could they be known except by reconnaissances in such force, and carried to such extent, as would have constituted them attacks liable to bring on at any moment a general engagement, and at places where we were least prepared and least likely to be successful. To have had a battle there then, Gen. Meade would have had to attack a cunning enemy in the dark, where surprises, undiscovered rifle-pits and batteries, and unseen bodies of men might have met his forces at every point. With his not greatly superior numbers, under such circumstances had Gen. Meade attacked, would he have been victorious? The vote of these generals at the council shows their opinion—my own is that he would have been repulsed with heavy loss, with little damage to the enemy. Such a result might have satisfied the bloody politicians better than the end of the campaign as it was; but I think the country did not need that sacrifice of the Army of the Potomac at that time—that enough odor of sacrifice came up to its nostrils from the 1st Fredericksburg field, to stop their snuffing for some time. I felt the probability of defeat strongly at the time, when we all supposed that a conflict would certainly ensue; for always before a battle—at least it so happens to me—some dim presentiment of results, some unaccountable foreshadowing pervades the army. I never knew the result to prove it untrue, which rests with the weight of a conviction. Whether such shadows are cause or consequence, I shall not pretend to determine; but when, as they often are, they are general, I think they should not be wholly disregarded by the commander. I believe the army of the Potomac is always willing, often eager, to fight the enemy, whenever, as it thinks, there is a fair chance for victory; that it always will fight, let come victory or defeat whenever it is ordered so to do. Of course the army, both officers and men, had very great disappointment and very great sorrow that the Rebels escaped—so it was called—across the river; the disappointment was genuine, at least to the extent that disappointment is like surprise; but the sorrow to judge by looks, tones and actions, rather than by words, was not of that deep, sable character for which there is no balm.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.425

Would it be an imputation upon the courage or patriotism of this army if it was not rampant for fight at this particular time and under the existing circumstances? Had the enemy stayed upon the left bank of the Potomac twelve hours longer, there would have been a great battle there near Williamsport on the 14th of July.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.425

After such digression, if such it is, I return to Gettysburg.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.425

As good generalship is claimed for Gen. Meade in the battle, so was the conduct of his subordinate commanders good. I know, and have heard, of no bad conduct or blundering on the part of any officer, save that of Sickles, on the 2d of July, and that was so gross, and came so near being the cause of irreparable disaster that I cannot discuss it with moderation. I hope the man may never return to the Army of the Potomac, or elsewhere, to a position where his incapacity, or something worse, may bring fruitless destruction to thousands again. The conduct of officers and men was good. The 11th corps behaved badly; but I have yet to learn the occasion when, in the opinion of any save their own officers and themselves, the men of this corps have behaved well on the march or before the enemy, either under Siegel or any other commander. With this exception, and some minor cases of very little consequence in the general result, our troops whenever and wherever the enemy came, stood against them storms of impassable fire. Such was the infantry, such the artillery—the cavalry did less but it did all that was required.

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The enemy, too, showed a determination and valor worthy of a better cause. Their conduct in this battle even makes me proud of them as Americans. They would have been victorious over any but the best of soldiers. Lee and his generals presumed too much upon some past successes, and did not estimate how much they were due on their part to position, as at Fredericksburg, or on our part to bad generalship, as at the 2d Bull Run and Chancellorsville.

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The fight of the 1st of July we do not, of course, claim as a victory; but even that probably would have resulted differently had Reynolds not been struck. The success of the enemy in the battle ended with the 1st of July. The Rebels were joyous and jubilant—so said our men in their hands, and the citizens of Gettysburg—at their achievements on that day. Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville were remembered by them. They saw victory already won, or only to be snatched from the streaming coat-tails of the 11th corps, or the "raw Pennsylvania militia" as they thought they were, when they saw them run; and already the spires of Baltimore and the dome of the National Capitol were forecast upon their glad vision—only two or three days march away through the beautiful valleys of Pennsylvania and "my" Maryland. Was there ever anything so fine before? How splendid it would be to enjoy the poultry and the fruit, the meats, the cakes, the beds, the clothing, the Whiskey, without price in this rich land of the Yankee! It would, indeed! But on the 2d of July something of a change came over the spirit of these dreams. They were surprised at results and talked less and thought more as they prepared supper that night. After the fight of the 3d they talked only of the means of their own safety from destruction. Pickett's splendid division had been almost annihilated, they said, and they talked not of how many were lost, but of who had escaped. They talked of these "Yanks" that had clubs on their flags and caps, the trefoils of the 2d corps that are like clubs in cards.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.426

The battle of Gettysburg is distinguished in this war, not only as by far the greatest and severest conflict that has occurred, but for some other things that I may mention. The fight of the 2d of July, on the left, which was almost a separate and complete battle, is, so far as I know, alone in the following particulars: the numbers of men actually engaged at one time, and the enormous losses that occurred in killed and wounded in the space of about two hours. If the truth could be obtained, it would probably show a much larger number of casualties in this than my estimate in a former part of these sheets. Few battles of the war that have had so many casualties altogether as those of the two hours on the 2d of July. The 3d of July is distinguished. Then occurred the "great cannonade"—so we call it, and so it would be called in any war, and in almost any battle. And besides this, the main operations that followed have few parallels in history, none in this war, of the magnitude and magnificence of the assault, single and simultaneous, the disparity of the numbers engaged, and the brilliancy, completeness and overwhelming character of the result in favor of the side numerically the weaker. I think I have not, in giving the results of this encounter, overestimated the numbers or the losses of the enemy. We learned on all hands, by prisoners and by the newspapers, that over two divisions moved up to the assault—Pickett's and Pettigrew's—that this was the first engagement of Pickett's in the battle, and the first of Pettigrew's, save a light participation on the 1st of July. The Rebel divisions usually number nine or ten thousand, or did at that time, as we understood. Then I have seen something of troops and think I can estimate their numbers somewhat. The number of the Rebels killed here I have estimated in this way: the 2d and 3d divisions of the 2d corps buried the Rebel dead in their own front, and where they fought upon their own grounds, by count they buried over one thousand eight hundred. I think no more than about two hundred of these were killed on the 2d of July in front of the 2d division, and the rest must have fallen on the 3d. My estimates that depend upon this contingency may be erroneous, but to no great extent. The rest of the particulars of the assault, our own losses and our captures, I know are approximately accurate. Yet the whole sounds like romance, a grand stage piece of blood.

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Of all the corps d'armie, for hard fighting, severe losses and brilliant results, the palm should be, as by the army it is, awarded to the "Old Second." It did more fighting than any other corps, inflicted severer losses upon the enemy in killed and wounded, and sustained a heavier life loss, and captured more flags than all the rest of the army, and almost as many prisoners as the rest of the army. The loss of the 2d corps in killed and wounded in this battle—there is no other test of hard fighting—was almost as great as that of all Gen. Grant's forces in the battle that preceded and in the siege of Vicksburg. Three-eights of the whole corps were killed and wounded. Why does the Western Army suppose that the Army of the Potomac does not fight? Was ever a more absurd supposition? The Army of the Potomac is grand! Give it good leadership—let it alone—and it will not fail to accomplish all that reasonable men desire.

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Of Gibbon's white trefoil division, if I am not cautious, I shall speak too enthusiastically. This division has been accustomed to distinguished leadership. Sumner, Sedgwick and Howard have honored, and been honored by, its command. It was repulsed under Sedgwick at Antietam and under Howard at Fredericksburg; it was victorious under Gibbon at the 2d Fredericksburg and at Gettysburg. At Gettysburg its loss in killed and wounded was over one thousand seven hundred, near one-half of all engaged; it captured seventeen battle-flags and two thousand three hundred prisoners. Its bullets hailed on Pickett's division, and killed or mortally wounded four Rebel generals, Barksdale on the 2d of July, with the three on the 3d, Armstead, Garnett and Kemper. In losses, in killed and wounded, and in captures from the enemy of prisoners and flags, it stood pre-eminent among all the divisions at Gettysburg.

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Under such generals as Hancock and Gibbon, brilliant results may be expected. Will the country remember them?

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It is understood in the army that the President thanked the slayer of Barton Key for saving the day at Gettysburg. Does the country know any better than the President, that Meade, Hancock and Gibbon were entitled to some little share of such credit?

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At about six o'clock on the afternoon of the 3d of July, my duties done upon the field, I quitted it to go to the General. My brave horse Dick—poor creature, his good conduct in the battle that afternoon had been complimented by a Brigadier—was a sight to see. He was literally covered with blood. Struck repeatedly, his right thigh had been ripped open in a ghastly manner by a piece of shell, and three bullets were lodged deep in his body, and from his wounds the blood oozed and ran down his sides and legs and with the sweat, formed a bloody foam. Dick's was no mean part in that battle. Good conduct in men under such circumstances as he was placed in might result from a sense of duty—his was the result of his bravery. Most horses would have been unmanageable with the flash and roar of arms about and the shouting. Dick was utterly cool, and would have obeyed the rein had it been a straw. To Dick, belongs the honor of first mounting that stormy crest before the enemy, not forty yards away, whose bullets smote him, and of being the only horse there during the heat of the battle. Even the enemy noticed Dick, and one of their reports of the battle mentions the "solitary horseman" who rallied our wavering line. He enabled me to do twelve times as much as I could have done on foot. It would not be dignified for an officer on foot to run; it is entirely so, mounted, to gallop. I do not approve of officers dismounting in battle, which is the time of all when they most need to be mounted, for thereby they have so much greater facilities for being everywhere present. Most officers, however, in close action, dismount. Dick deserves well of his country, and one day should have a horse-monument. If there be "ut sapientibus placit," and equine elysium, I will send to Charon the brass coin, the fee for Dick's passage over, and on the other side of the Styx in those shadowy clover-fields he may nibble the blossoms forever.

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I had been struck upon the thigh by a bullet which I think must have glanced and partially spent its force upon my saddle. It had pierced the thick cloth of my trowsers and two thicknesses of under-clothing, but had not broken the skin, leaving me with an enormous bruise that for a time benumbed the entire leg. At the time of receiving it, I heard the thump, and noticed it and the hole in the cloth into which I thrust my finger, and I experienced a feeling of relief, I am sure, when I found that my leg was not pierced. I think when I dismounted my horse after that fight that I was no very comely specimen of humanity. Drenched with sweat, the white of battle, by the reaction, now turned to burning red. I felt like a boiled man; and had it not been for he exhilaration at results I should have been miserable. This kept me up, however, and having found a man to transfer the saddle from poor Dick, who was now disposed to lie down by loss of blood and exhaustion, to another horse, I hobbled on among the hospitals in search of Gen. Gibbon.

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The skulkers were about, and they were as loud as any in their rejoicings at the victory, and I took a malicious pleasure as I went along and met them, in taunting the sneaks with their cowardice and telling them—it was not true—that Gen. Meade had just given the order to the Provost Guard to arrest and shoot all men they could find away from their regiments who could not prove a good account of themselves. To find the General was no easy matter. I inquired for both Generals Hancock and Gibbon—I knew well enough that they would be together—and for the hospitals of the 2d corps. My search was attended with many incidents that were provokingly humorous. The stupidity of most men is amazing. I would ask of a man I met, "Do you know, sir, where the 2d corps hospitals are?" "The 12th corps hospital is there!" Then I would ask sharply, "Did you understand me to ask for the 12th corps hospital?" "No!" "Then why tell me what I do not ask or care to know?" Then stupidity would stare or mutter about the ingratitude of some people for kindness. Did I ask for the Generals I was looking for, they would announce the interesting fact, in reply, that they had seen some other generals. Some were sure that Gen. Hancock or Gibbon was dead. They had seen his dead body. This was a falsehood, and they knew it. Then it was Gen. Longstreet. This was also, as they knew, a falsehood.

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Oh, sorrowful was the sight to see so many wounded! The whole neighborhood in rear of the field became one vast hospital of miles in extent. Some could walk to the hospitals; such as could not were taken upon stretchers from the places where they fell to selected points and thence the ambulances bore them, a miserable load, to their destination. Many were brought to the building, along the Taneytown road, and too badly wounded to be carried further, died and were buried there, Union and Rebel soldiers together. At every house, and barn, and shed the wounded were; by many a cooling brook, or many a shady slope or grassy glade, the red flags beckoned them to their tented asylums, and there they gathered, in numbers a great army, a mutilated, bruised mass of humanity. Men with gray hair and furrowed cheeks and soft-lipped, beardless boys were there, for these bullets have made no distinction between age and youth. Every conceivable wound that iron and lead can make, blunt or sharp, bullet, ball and shell, piercing, bruising, tearing, was there; sometimes so light that a bandage and cold water would restore the soldier to the ranks again; sometimes so severe that the poor victim in his hopeless pain, remedyless save by the only panacea for all mortal suffering, invoked that. The men are generally cheerful, and even those with frightful wounds, often are talking with animated faces of nothing but the battle and the victory. But some are downcast, their faces distorted with pain. Some have undergone the surgeon's work; some, like men at a ticket office, await impatiently their turn to have an arm or a leg cut off. Some walk about with an arm in a sling; some sit idly upon the ground; some lie at full length upon a little straw, or a blanket, with their brawny, now blood-stained, limbs bare, and you may see where the minie bullet has struck or the shell has torn. From a small round hole upon many a manly breast, the red blood trickles, but the pallid cheek, the hard-drawn breath and dim closed eyes tell how near the source of life it has gone. The surgeons, with coats off and sleeves rolled up, and the hospital attendants with green bands upon their caps, are about their work; and their faces and clothes are spattered with blood; and though they look weary and tired, their work goes systematically and steadily on. How much and how long they have worked, the piles of legs, arms, feet, hands, and fingers about partially tell. Such sounds are heard sometimes—you would not have heard them upon the field—as convince that bodies, bones, sinews and muscles are not made of insensible stone. Near by appear a row of small fresh mounds, placed side by side. They were not there day before yesterday. They will become more numerous every day.

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Such things I saw as I rode along. At last I found the Generals. Gen. Gibbon was sitting on a chair that had been borrowed somewhere, with his wounded shoulder bare, and an attendant was bathing it with cold water. Gen. Hancock was near by in an ambulance. They were at the tents of the Second Corps hospitals, which were on Rock Run. As I approached Gen. Gibbon, when he saw me, he began to hurrah and wave his right hand. He had heard the result. I said: "O, General, long and well may you wave"—and he shook me warmly by the hand. Gen. Gibbon was struck by a bullet in the left shoulder, which had passed from the front through the flesh and out behind, fracturing the shoulder blade and inflicting a severe but not dangerous wound. He thinks he was the mark of a sharpshooter of the enemy hid in the bushes, near where he and I had sat so long during the cannonade; and he was wounded and taken off the field before the fire of the main lines of infantry had commenced, he being at the time he was hit near the left of his division. Gen. Hancock was struck a little later near the same part of the field by a bullet, piercing and almost going through his thigh, without touching the bone, however. His wound was severe, also. He was carried back out of range, but before he would be carried off the field, he lay upon the ground in sight of the crest, where he could see something of the fight, until he knew what would be the result.

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And then, at Gen. Gibbon's request, I had to tell him and a large voluntary crowd of the wounded who pressed around now, for the wounds they showed not rebuked for closing up to the Generals, the story of the fight. I was nothing loth; and I must say though I used sometimes before the war to make speeches, that I never had so enthusiastic an audience before. Cries of "good," "glorious," frequently interrupted me, and the storming of the wall was applauded by enthusiastic tears and the waving of battered, bloody hands.

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By the custom of the service the General had the right to have me along with him, while away with his wound; but duty and inclination attracted me still to the field, and I obtained the General's consent to stay. Accompanying Gen. Gibbon to Westminster, the nearest point to which railroad trains then ran, and seeing him transferred from an ambulance to the cars for Baltimore on the 4th, the next day I returned to the field to his division, since his wounding in the command of Gen. Harrow.

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On the 6th of July, while my bullet bruise was yet too inflamed and sensitive for me to be good for much in the way of duty—the division was then halted for the day some four miles from the field on the Baltimore turnpike—I could not repress the desire or omit the opportunity to see again where the battle had been. With the right stirrup strap shortened in a manner to favor the bruised leg, I could ride my horse at a walk without serious discomfort. It seemed very strange upon approaching the horse-shoe crest again, not to see it covered with the thousands of troops and horses and guns, but they were all gone—the armies, to my seeming, had vanished—and on that lovely summer morning the stillness and silence of death pervaded the localities where so recently the shouts and the cannon had thundered. The recent rains had washed out many an unsightly spot, and smoothed many a harrowed trace of the conflict; but one still needed no guide save the eyes, to follow the track of that storm, which the storms of heaven were powerless soon to entirely efface. The spade and shovel, so far as a little earth for the human bodies would render their task done, had completed their work—a great labor, that. But still might see under some concealing bush, or sheltering rock, what had once been a man, and the thousands of stricken horses still lay scattered as they had died. The scattered small arms and the accoutrements had been collected and carried away, almost all that were of any value; but great numbers of bent and splintered muskets, rent knapsacks and haversacks, bruised canteens, shreds of caps, coats, trowsers, of blue or gray cloth, worthless belts and cartridge boxes, torn blankets, ammunition boxes, broken wheels, smashed limbers, shattered gun carriages, parts of harness, of all that men or horses wear or use in battle, were scattered broadcast over miles of the field. From these one could tell where the fight had been hottest. The rifle-pits and epaulements and the trampled grass told where the lines had stood, and the batteries—the former being thicker where the enemy had been than those of our own construction. No soldier was to be seen, but numbers of civilians and boys, and some girls even, were curiously loitering about the field, and their faces showed not sadness or horror, but only staring wonder or smirking curiosity. They looked for mementoes of the battle to keep, they said; but their furtive attempts to conceal an uninjured musket or an untorn blanket—they had been told that all property left here belonged to the Government—showed that the love of gain was an ingredient at least of their motive for coming here. Of course, there was not the slightest objection to their taking anything they could find now; but their manner of doing it was the objectionable thing. I could now understand why soldiers had been asked a dollar for a small strip of old linen to bind their own wound, and not be compelled to go off to the hospitals.

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Never elsewhere upon any field have I seen such abundant evidences of a terrific fire of cannon and musketry as upon this. Along the enemy's position, where our shells and shot had struck during the cannonade of the third, the trees had cast their trunks and branches as if they had been icicles shaken by a blast. And graves of the Rebels' making, and dead horses and scattered accoutrements, showed that other things besides trees had been struck by our projectiles. I must say that, having seen the work of their guns upon the same occasion, I was gratified to see these things. Along the slope of Culp's Hill, in front of the position of the 12th, and the 1st Division of the 1st Corps, the trees were almost literally peeled, from the ground up some fifteen or twenty feet, so thick upon them were the scars the bullets had made. Upon a single tree, not over a foot and a half in diameter, I actually counted as many as two hundred and fifty bullet marks. The ground was covered by the little twigs that had been cut off by the hailstorm of lead. Such were the evidences of the storm under which Ewell's bold Rebels assaulted our breastworks on the night of the 2d and the morning of the 3d of July. And those works looked formidable, zig-zaging along these rocky crests, even now when not a musket was behind them. What madness on the part of the enemy to have attacked them! All along through these bullet-stormed woods were interspersed little patches of fresh earth, raised a foot or so above the surrounding ground. Some were very near the front of the works; and near by, upon a tree whose bark had been smoothed by an axe, written in red chalk would be the words, not in fine handwriting, "75 Rebels buried here." " 54 Rebs. there." And so on. Such was the burial and such the epitaph of many of those famous men, once led by the mighty Stonewall Jackson. Oh, this damned rebellion will make brutes of us all, if it is not soon quelled! Our own men were buried in graves, not trenches; and upon a piece of board, or stave of a barrel, or bit of cracker box, placed at the head, were neatly cut or penciled the name and regiment of the one buried in such. This practice was general, but of course there must be some exceptions, for sometimes the cannon's load had not left enough of a man to recognize or name. The reasons here for the more careful interment of our own dead than such as was given to the dead of the enemy are obvious and I think satisfactory. Our own dead were usually buried not long after they fell, and without any general order to that effect. It was a work that the men's hearts were in as soon as the fight was over and opportunity offered, to hunt out their dead companions, to make them a grave in some convenient spot, and decently composed with their blankets wrapped about them, to cover them tenderly with earth and mark their resting place. Such burials were not without as scalding tears as ever fell upon the face of coffined mortality. The dead of the enemy could not be buried until after the close of the whole battle. The army was about to move—some of it was already upon the march, before such burial commenced. Tools, save those carried by the pioneers, were many miles away with the train, and the burying parties were required to make all haste in their work, in order to be ready to move with their regiments. To make long shallow trenches, to collect the Rebel dead, often hundreds in one place, and to cover them hastily with a little earth, without name, number, or mark, save the shallow mound above them—their names of course they did not know—was the best that could be done. I should have been glad to have seen more formal burial, even of these men of the rebellion, both because hostilities should cease with death, and of the respect I have for them as my brave, though deluded, countrymen. I found fault with such burial at the time, though I knew that the best was done that could be under the circumstances; but it may perhaps soften somewhat the rising feelings upon this subject, of any who may be disposed to share mine, to remember that under similar circumstances—had the issue of the battle been reversed—our own dead would have had no burial at all, at the hands of the enemy, but, stripped of their clothing, their naked bodies would have been left to rot, and their bones to whiten upon the top of the ground where they fell. Plenty of such examples of Rebel magnanimity are not wanting, and one occurred on this field, too. Our dead that fell into the hands of the enemy on the 1st of July had been plundered of all their clothing, but they were left unburied until our own men buried them after the Rebels had retreated at the end of the battle.

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All was bustle and noise in the little town of Gettysburg, as I entered it on my tour of the field. From the afternoon of the 1st to the morning of the 4th of July, the enemy was in possession. Very many of the inhabitants had, upon the first approach of the enemy, or upon the retirement of our troops, fled their homes and the town not to return until after the battle. Now the town was a hospital where gray and blue mingled in about equal proportion. The public buildings, the courthouse, the churches and many private dwellings were full of wounded. There had been in some of the streets a good deal of fighting, and bullets had thickly spattered the fences and walls, and shells had riddled the houses from side to side. And the Rebels had done their work of pillage there, too, in spite of the smooth-sounding general order of the Rebel commander enjoining a sacred regard for private property—the order was really good and would sound marvelously well abroad or in history. All stores of drugs and medicines, of clothing, tinware and all groceries had been rifled and emptied without pay or offer of recompense. Libraries, public and private, had been entered and the books scattered about the yards or destroyed. Great numbers of private dwellings had been entered and occupied without ceremony and whatever was liked had been appropriated or wantonly destroyed. Furniture had been smashed and beds ripped open, and apparently unlicensed pillage had reigned. Citizens and women who had remained had been kindly relieved of their money, their jewelry and their watches—all this by the high-toned chivalry, the army of the magnanimous Lee! Put these things by the side of the acts of the "vandal Yankees" in Virginia, and then let mad Rebeldom prate of honor! But the people, the women and children that had fled, were returning, or had returned to their homes—such homes—and amid the general havoc were restoring as they could order to the desecrated firesides. And the faces of them all plainly told that, with all they had lost and bad as was the condition of all things they found, they were better pleased with such homes than with wandering houseless in the fields with the Rebels there. All had treasures of incidents of the battle and of the occupation of the enemy—wonderful sights, escapes, witnessed encounters, wounds, the marvelous passage of shells or bullets which, upon the asking, or even without, they were willing to share with the stranger. I heard of no more than one or two cases of any personal injury received by any of the inhabitants. One woman was said to have been killed while at her wash-tub, sometime during the battle; but probably by a stray bullet coming a very long distance from our own men. For the next hundred years Gettysburg will be rich in legends and traditions of the battle. I rode through the Cemetery on "Cemetery Hill." How these quiet sleepers must have been astounded in their graves when the twenty-pound Parrott guns thundered above them and the solid shot crushed their gravestones! The flowers, roses and creeping vines that pious hands had planted to bloom and shed their odors over the ashes of dear ones gone, were trampled upon the ground and black with the cannon's soot. A dead horse lay by the marble shaft, and over it the marble finger pointed to the sky. The marble lamb that had slept its white sleep on the grave of a child, now lies blackened upon a broken gun-carriage. Such are the incongruities and jumblings of battle.

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I looked away to the group of trees—the Rebel gunners know what ones I mean, and so do the survivors of Pickett's division—and a strange fascination led me thither. How thick are the marks of battle as I approach—the graves of the men of the 3d Division of the 2d Corps; the splintered oaks, the scattered horses—seventy-one dead horses were on a spot some fifty yards square near the position of Woodruff's battery, and where he fell.

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I stood solitary upon the crest by "the trees" where, less than three days ago, I had stood before; but now how changed is all the eye beholds. Do these thick mounds cover the fiery hearts that in the battle rage swept the crest and stormed the wall? I read their names—them, alas, I do not know—but I see the regiments marked on their frail monuments—"20th Mass. Vols.," "69 P. V.," "1st Minn. Vols." and the rest—they are all represented, and as they fought commingled here. So I am not alone. These, my brethren of the fight, are with me. Sleep, noble brave! The foe shall not desecrate your sleep. Yonder thick trenches will hold them. As long as patriotism is a virtue, and treason a crime, your deeds have made this crest, your resting place, hallowed ground!

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.438

But I have seen and said enough of this battle. The unfortunate wounding of my General so early in the action of the 3d of July, leaving important duties which, in the unreasoning excitement of the moment, I in part assumed, enabled me to do for the successful issue, something which under other circumstances would not have fallen to my rank or place. Deploring the occasion for taking away from the division in that moment of its need its soldierly, appropriate head, so cool, so clear, I am yet glad, as that was to be, that his example and his tuition have not been entirely in vain to me, and that my impulses then prompted me to do somewhat as he might have done had he been on the field. The encomiums of officers, so numerous and some of so high rank, generously accorded me for my conduct upon that occasion—I am not without vanity—were gratifying. My position as a staff officer gave me an opportunity to see much, perhaps as much as any one person, of that conflict. My observations were not so particular as if I had been attached to a smaller command; not so general as may have been those of a staff officer to the General commanding the army; but of such as they were, my heart was there, and I could do no less than to write something of them, in the intervals between marches and during the subsequent repose of the army at the close of the campaign. I have put somewhat upon these pages—I make no apology for the egotism, if such there is, of this account—it is not designed to be a history, but simply my account of the battle. It should not be assumed, if I have told of some occurrences, that there were not other important ones. I would not have it supposed that I have attempted to do full justice to the good conduct of the fallen, or the survivors of the 1st and 12th Corps. Others must tell of them. I did not see their work. A full account of the battle as it was will never, can never be made. Who could sketch the changes, the constant shifting of the bloody panorama? It is not possible. The official reports may give results as to losses, with statements of attacks and repulses; they may also note the means by which results were attained, which is a statement of the number and kind of the forces employed, but the connection between means and results, the mode, the battle proper, these reports touch lightly. Two prominent reasons at least exist which go far to account for the general inadequacy of these official reports, or to account for their giving no true idea of what they assume to describe—the literary infirmity of the reporters and their not seeing themselves and their commands as others would have seen them. And factions, and parties, and politics, the curses of this Republic, are already putting in their unreasonable demands for the foremost honors of the field. "Gen. Hooker won Gettysburg." How? Not with the army in person or by infinitesimal influence—leaving it almost four days before the battle when both armies were scattered and fifty miles apart! Was ever claim so absurd? Hooker, and he alone, won the result at Chancellorsville. "Gen. Howard won Gettysburg!" "Sickles saved the day!" Just Heaven, save the poor Army of the Potomac from its friends! It has more to dread and less to hope from them than from the red bannered hosts of the rebellion. The states prefer each her claim for the sole brunt and winning of the fight. "Pennsylvania won it!" "New York won it!!! Did not Old Greece, or some tribe from about the sources of the Nile win it?" For modern Greeks—from Cork—and African Hannibals were there. Those intermingled graves along the crest bearing the names of every loyal state, save one or two, should admonish these geese to cease to cackle. One of the armies of the country won the battle, and that army supposes that Gen. Meade led it upon that occasion. If it be not one of the lessons that this war teaches, that we have a country paramount and supreme over faction, and party, and state, then was the blood of fifty thousand citizens shed on this field in vain. For the reasons mentioned, of this battle, greater than that of Waterloo, a history, just, comprehensive, complete will never be written. By-and-by, out of the chaos of trash and falsehood that the newspapers hold, out of the disjointed mass of reports, out of the traditions and tales that came down from the field some eye that never saw the battle will select, and some pen will write what will be named the history. With that the world will be and, if we are alive, we must be, content.

Haskell, Battle of Gettysburg, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.440

Already, as I rode down from the heights, nature's mysterious loom was at work, joining and weaving on her ceaseless web the shells had broken there. Another spring shall green these trampled slopes, and flowers, planted by unseen hands, shall bloom upon these graves; another autumn and the yellow harvest shall ripen there—all not in less, but in higher perfection for this poured out blood. In another decade of years, in another century, or age, we hope that the Union, by the same means, may repose in a securer peace and bloom in a higher civilization. Then what matters it if lame Tradition glean on this field and hand down her garbled sheaf—if deft story with furtive fingers plait her ballad wreaths, deeds of her heroes here? or if stately history fill as she list her arbitrary tablet, the sounding record of this fight? Tradition, story, history—all will not efface the true, grand epic of Gettysburg.

FRANK A. HASKELL.

To H. M. Haskell.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, 19 November 1865

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, 1863

Title: Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

Author: Abraham Lincoln

Date: 1863

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.441

On Nov. 19, 1863, a part of the battlefield of Gettysburg was set aside as a cemetery, where monuments to the soldiers who fell there might be set up. The main oration was delivered by Edward Everett, at the conclusion of which Lincoln dedicated the field in this most pregnant and eloquent of his utterances.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.441

FOURSCORE and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.441

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that the nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Proclamation of Amnesty

Title: Proclamation of Amnesty

Author: Abraham Lincoln

Date: 1863

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, pp.442-444

The Proclamation of Amnesty gives an interesting indication of the lines along which Lincoln, had he lived, would have attempted to solve the problem of reconstruction. The main idea was to create by generous treatment a party loyal to the Union in each State, in whose hands the restored state government might, as speedily as possible, be placed.

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.442

WHEREAS, in and by the Constitution of the United States, it is provided that the President "shall have power to grant reprieves and pardons for offences against the United States, except in cases of impeachment;" and

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.442

Whereas, a rebellion now exists whereby the loyal State governments of several States have for a long time been subverted, and many persons have committed and are now guilty of treason against the United States; and

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.442

Whereas, with reference to said rebellion and treason, laws have been enacted by Congress declaring forfeitures and confiscation of property and liberation of slaves, all upon terms and conditions therein stated, and also declaring that the President was thereby authorized at any time thereafter, by proclamation, to extend to persons who may have participated in the existing rebellion of any State or part thereof, pardon and amnesty, with such exceptions and at such times and on such conditions as he may deem expedient for the public welfare; and

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.442

Whereas, the congressional declaration for limited and conditional pardon, accords with well-established judicial exposition of the pardoning power; and

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.442

Whereas, with reference to said rebellion, the President of the United States has issued several proclamations with provisions, in regard to the liberation of slaves; and

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.442

Whereas, it is now desired by some persons heretofore engaged in said rebellion to resume their allegiance to the United States, and to reinaugurate loyal State governments within and for their respective states: Therefore—

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.443

I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States, do proclaim, declare, and make known to all persons who have, directly or by implication, participated in the existing rebellion, except as herein—after excepted, that a full pardon is hereby granted to them and each of them, with restoration of all rights of property, except as to slaves, and in property cases, where rights of third parties shall have intervened, and upon the condition that every such person shall take and subscribe an oath, and thenceforward keep and maintain said oath inviolate; and which oath shall be registered for permanent preservation, and shall be of the tenor and effect following, to wit:

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.443

"I,———————————, do solemnly swear, in presence of Almighty God, that I will henceforth faithfully support, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Union of the States thereunder; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all acts of Congress passed during the existing rebellion with reference to slaves, so long and so far as not repealed, modified, or held void by Congress, or by decision of the supreme court; and that I will, in like manner, abide by and faithfully support all proclamations of the President made during the existing rebellion having reference to slaves, so long and so far as not modified or declared void by decision of the Supreme Court. So help me God."

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.443

The persons excepted from the benefits of the foregoing provisions are all who are, or shall have been, civil or diplomatic officers or agents of the so-called Confederate government; all who have left judicial stations under the United States to aid the rebellion; all who are, or shall have been, military or naval officers of said so-called Confederate government above the rank of colonel in the army or of lieutenant in the navy; all who left seats in the United States Congress to aid the rebellion; all who resigned commissions in the army or navy of the United States and afterwards aided the rebellion; and all who have engaged in any way in treating colored persons, or white persons in charge of such, otherwise than lawfully as prisoners of war, and which persons may have been found in the United States service as soldiers, seamen, or in any other capacity.

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.444

And I do further proclaim, declare, and make known, that whenever, in any of the States of Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina, a number of persons, not less than one tenth in number of the votes cast in such state at the presidential election of the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty, each having taken the oath aforesaid, and not having since violated it, and being a qualified voter by the election laws of the state existing immediately before the so-called act of secession, and excluding all others, shall reestablish a State government which shall be republican, and in nowise contravening said oath, such shall be recognized as the true government of the State, and the State shall receive thereunder the benefits of the constitutional provision, which declares that "the United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application of the legislature, or the executive (when the legislature cannot be convened), against domestic violence."

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.444

And I do further proclaim, declare, and make known, that any provision which may be adopted by such State government in relation to the freed people of such State, which shall recognize and declare their permanent freedom, provide for their education, and which may yet be consistent as a temporary arrangement with their present condition as a laboring, landless, and homeless class, will not be objected to by the National Executive.

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.444

And it is suggested as not improper that, in constructing a loyal State government in any State, the name of the State, the boundary, the subdivisions, the constitution, and the general code of laws, as before the rebellion, be maintained, subject only to the modifications made necessary by the conditions hereinbefore stated, and such others, if any, not contravening said conditions, and which may be deemed expedient by those framing the new State government.

Lincoln, Proclamation of Amnesty, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.444

To avoid misunderstanding, it may be proper to say that this proclamation, so far as it relates to state governments, has no reference to states wherein loyal state governments have all the while been maintained. And, for the same reason, it may be proper to further say, that whether members sent to congress from any state shall be admitted to seats constitutionally, rests exclusively with the respective houses, and not to any extent with the Executive. And still further, that this proclamation is intended to present the people of the states wherein the national authority has been suspended, and loyal state governments have been subverted, a mode in and by which the national authority and loyal state governments may be reestablished within said states, or in any of them; and, while the mode presented is the best the Executive can suggest, with his present impressions, it must not be understood that no other possible mode would be acceptable.

Given under my hand at the city of Washington, on the 8th day of December, A. D. 1863, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-eighth.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

SEAL

Lee and Grant in the Wilderness

Title: Lee and Grant in the Wilderness

Author: Charles Anderson Dana

Date: 1864

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.221-228

Dana was an eye-witness of the battles between the Union and Confederate armies, commanded by Grant and Lee respectively, in what is known as the Wilderness campaign, culminating at Spottsylvania Court House, May 21, 1864. His "Recollections of the Civil War," published by D. Appleton & Company, from which this account is derived, is a record of his observations as Assistant Secretary of War, with headquarters in the field. He acted as personal representative of Lincoln and Stanton at the front, and was often in contact with Grant.

After the war, Dana found time, in addition to conducting the New York Sun, to edit several works, including a "Life of Grant," "Lincoln and His Cabinet," "Art of Newspaper Making," and an earlier popular "Household Book of Poetry. His literary judgments and perceptions were keen, and his own writing exhibited a mastery of English style.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.221–p.222

MEADE was in command of the Army of the Potomac; but it was Grant, the lieutenant-general of the armies of the United States, who was really directing the movements. The central idea of the campaign had not developed to the army when I reached headquarters, but it was soon clear to everybody. Grant's great operation was the endeavor to interpose the Federal army between Lee's army and Richmond, so as to cut Lee off from his base of supplies. He meant to get considerably in advance of Lee—between him and Richmond—thus compelling Lee to leave his intrenchments and hasten southward. If in the collision thus forced Grant found that he could not smash Lee, he meant to make another move to get behind his army. That was to be the strategy of the campaign of 1864. That was what Lee thwarted, though he had a narrow escape more than once.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.222

The first encounter with Lee had taken place in the Wilderness on May 5th and 6th. The Confederates and many Northern writers love to call the Wilderness a drawn battle. It was not so; in every essential light it was a Union victory. Grant had not intended to fight a battle in those dense, brushy jungles, but Lee precipitated it just as he had precipitated the Battle of Chancellorsville one year before, and not six miles to the eastward of this very ground. In doing so he hoped to neutralize the superior numbers of Grant as he had Hooker's, and so to mystify and handle the Union leader as to compel a retreat across the Rapidan. But he failed. Some of the fighting in the brush was a draw, but the Union army did not yield a rood of ground; it held the roads southward, inflicted great losses on its enemy, and then, instead of recrossing the river, resumed its march toward Richmond as soon as Lee's attacks had ceased. Lee had palpably failed in his objects. His old-time tactics had made no impression on Grant. He never offered general battle in the open afterward.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.222–p.223

The previous history of the Army of the Potomac had been to advance and fight a battle, then either to retreat or to lie still, and finally to go into winter quarters. Grant did not intend to proceed in that way. As soon as he had fought a battle and had not routed Lee, he meant to move nearer to Richmond and fight another battle. But the men in the army had become so accustomed to the old methods of campaigning that few, if any, of them believed that the new commander-in-chief would be able to do differently from his predecessors. I remember distinctly the sensation in the ranks when the rumor first went around that our position was south of Lee's. It was the morning of May 8th. The night before the army had made a forced march on Spottyslvania Courthouse. There was no indication the next morning that Lee had moved in any direction. As the army began to realize that we were really moving south, and at that moment were probably much nearer Richmond than was our enemy, the spirits of men and officers rose to the highest pitch of animation. On every hand I heard the cry, "On to Richmond!"

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.223

But there were to be a great many more obstacles to our reaching Richmond than General Grant himself, I presume, realized on May 8, 1864. We met one that very morning; for when our advance reached Spottsylvania Courthouse it found Lee's troops there, ready to dispute the right of way with us, and two days later Grant was obliged to fight the battle of Spottsylvania before we could make another move south.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.223–p.224

The battle had begun on the morning of May 10th, and had continued all day. On the 11th the armies had rested, but at half past four on the morning of the 12th fighting had been begun by an attack by Hancock on a rebel salient. Hancock attacked with his accustomed impetuosity, storming and capturing the enemy's fortified line, with some four thousand prisoners and twenty cannon. The captures included nearly all of Major-General Edward Johnson's division, together with Johnson himself and General George H. Steuart.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.224

It is not part of my plan to go into detailed description of all the battles of this campaign, but rather to dwell on the incidents and deeds which impressed me most deeply at the moment. In the Battle of Spottsylvania, a terrific struggle, with many dramatic features, there is nothing I remember more distinctly than a little scene in General Grant's tent between him and General Johnson. I was at Grant's headquarters when General Johnson was brought in a prisoner. He was a West Pointer and had been a captain in the old army before secession, and was an important officer in the Confederate service, having distinguished himself in the Valley in 1863, and at Gettysburg. Grant had not seen him since they had been in Mexico together. The two men shook hands cordially, and at once began a brisk conversation, which was very interesting to me, because nothing was said in it on the subject in which they were both most interested just then—that is, the fight that was going on, and the surprise that Hancock had effected. It was the past alone of which they talked.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.224–p.225

It was quite early in the morning when Hancock's prisoners were brought in. The battle raged without cessation throughout the day, Wright and Hancock bearing the brunt of it, Burnside made several attacks, in which his troops generally bore themselves like good soldiers. The results of the Battle of Spottsylvania were that we had crowded the enemy out of some of his most important positions, had weakened him by losses of between nine thousand and ten thousand men killed, wounded, and captured, besides many battle flags and much artillery, and that our troops rested victorious upon the ground they had fought for.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.225–p.226

After the battle was over and firing had nearly ceased, Rawlins and I went out to ride over the field. We went first to the salient which Hancock had attacked in the morning. The two armies had struggled for hours for this point, and the loss had been so terrific that the place has always been known since as the "Bloody Angle." The ground around the salient had been trampled and cut in the struggle until it was almost impassable for one on horseback, so Rawlins and I dismounted and climbed up the bank over the outer line of the rude breastworks. Within we saw a fence over which earth evidently had been banked, but which now was bare and half down. It was here the fighting had been fiercest. We picked our way to this fence, and stopped to look over the scene. The night was coming on, and, after the horrible din of the day, the silence was intense; nothing broke it but distant and occasional firing or the low groans of the wounded. I remember that as I stood there I was almost startled to hear a bird twittering in a tree. All around us the underbrush and trees, which were just beginning to be green, had been riddled and burnt. The ground was thick with dead and wounded men, among whom the relief corps was at work. The earth, which was soft from the heavy rains we had been having before and during the battle, had been trampled by the fighting of the thousands of men until it was soft, like thin hasty pudding. Over the fence against which I leaned lay a great pool of this mud, its surface as smooth as that of a pond.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.226

As we stood there, looking silently down at it, of a sudden the leg of a man was lifted up from the pool and the mud dripped off his boot. It was so unexpected, so horrible, that for a moment we were stunned. Then we pulled ourselves together and called to some soldiers near by to rescue the owner of the leg. They pulled him out with but little trouble and discovered that he was not dead, only wounded. He was taken to the hospital, where he got well, I believe.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.226–p.227

The first news which passed through the ranks the morning after the Battle of Spottsylvania was that Lee had abandoned his position during the night. Though our army was greatly fatigued from the enormous efforts of the day before, the news of Lee's departure inspired the men with fresh energy, and everybody was eager to be in pursuit. Our skirmishers soon found the enemy along the whole line, however, and the conclusion was that their retrograde movement had been made to correct their position after the loss of the key points taken from them the day before, and that they were still with us in a new line as strong as the old one. Of course, we could not determine this point without a battle, and nothing was done that day to provoke one. It was necessary to rest the men.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.227

In changing his lines Lee had left more uncovered the roads leading southward along his right wing, and, Grant ordered Meade to throw the corps of Warren, which held the right, and the corps of Wright, which held the center of Meade's army, to the left of Burnside, leaving Hancock upon our right. If not interrupted, Grant thought by this maneuver to turn Lee's flank and compel him to move southward.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.227

The movement of the two corps to our left was executed during the night of May 13th and 14th, but for three days it had rained steadily, and the roads were so bad that Wright and Warren did not get up to surprise the enemy at daylight as ordered….

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.227

The two armies were then lying in a semicircle, the Federal left well around toward the south. We were concentrated to the last degree, and, so far as we could tell, Lee's forces were equally compact. On the 15th, 16th, and 17th, we lay in about the same position. This inactivity was caused by the weather. A pouring rain had begun on the 11th, and it continued until the morning of the 16th; the mud was so deep that any offensive operation, however successful, could not be followed up. There was nothing to do but lie still and wait for better weather and drier roads.

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.228

While waiting for the rain to stop, we had time to consider the field returns of losses as they were handed in. The army had left winter quarters at Culpepper Courthouse on May 4th, and on May 16th the total of killed, wounded, and missing in both the Army of the Potomac and the Ninth Corps amounted to a little over thirty-three thousand men. The missing alone amounted to forty-nine hundred, but some of these were, in fact, killed or wounded. When Grant looked over the returns, he expressed great regret at the loss of so many men. Meade, who was with him, remarked, as I remember, "Well, General, we can't do these little tricks without losses."

Dana, Lee and Grant in the Wilderness, America, Vol.8, p.228

By the afternoon of May 17th the weather was splendid…. Grant determined to engage Lee, and orders for a decisive movement of the army were issued, to be executed during the night. At first he proposed an attack upon the enemy's right, but changed the plan. Instead of attacking there Hancock and Wright made a night march back to our right flank and attacked at daylight…. but…. both corps having artfully but unsuccessfully sought for a weak point where they might break through, Grant, at nine o'clock, ordered the attack to cease. The attempt was a failure. Lee was not to be ousted; and Grant, convinced of it, issued orders for another movement which he had in contemplation for several days, but which he did not wish to try till after a last attempt to get the enemy out of his stronghold. This was nothing less than to slip away from Lee and march on toward Richmond again.

The Sinking of the "Alabama"

Title: The Sinking of the "Alabama"

Author: Captain Raphael Semmes

Date: 1864

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.229-233

Semmes resigned from the United States Navy in 1861 and became the most famous and destructive commander in the Confederate Navy. As commander of the Alabama, an English-built cruiser which the Confederacy bought and maintained as a commerce-destroyer, he is credited with capturing and sinking seventy vessels of the United States. The Alabama never entered an American port during the two years (1862-4) of her career, depending entirely upon captures and neutral ports for supplies and recruits.

As stated in the accompanying report by Captain (later Admiral) Semmes to Samuel Barron, general European naval agent of the Confederacy, the Alabama engaged the superior armed United States cruiser Kearsarge off the coast of Cherbourg, France, June 19, 1864, and was sunk. Semmes was picked up by the English yacht Deerhound and taken to Southampton, where he wrote this report.

Semmes, Sinking of the Alabama, America, Vol.8, p.229–p.230

I HAVE the honor to inform you, in accordance with my intention as previously announced to you, I steamed out of the harbor of Cherbourg between 9 and 10 o'clock on the morning of June 19 for the purpose of engaging the enemy's steamer "Kearsarge," which had been lying off and on the port for several days previously. After clearing the harbor we descried the enemy, with his head offshore, at a distance of about 9 miles. We were three-quarters of an hour in coming up with him. I had previously pivoted my guns to starboard, and made all my preparations for engaging the enemy on that side. When within about a mile and a quarter of the enemy he suddenly wheeled, and bringing his head inshore presented his starboard battery to me.

Semmes, Sinking of the Alabama, America, Vol.8, p.230

By this time we were distant about 1 mile from each other, when I opened on him with solid shot, to which he replied in a few minutes, and the engagement became active on both sides. The enemy now pressed his ship under a full head of steam, and to prevent our passing each other too speedily, and to keep our respective broadsides bearing, it became necessary to fight in a circle, the two ships steaming around a common center and preserving a distance from each other of from a quarter to half a mile. When we got within good shell range, we opened upon him with shell.

Semmes, Sinking of the Alabama, America, Vol.8, p.230–p.231

Some ten or fifteen minutes after the commencement of the action our spanker gaff was shot away and our ensign came down by the run. This was immediately replaced by another at the mizzenmasthead. The firing now became very hot, and the enemy's shot and shell soon began to tell upon our hull, knocking down, killing, and disabling a number of men in different parts of the ship. Perceiving that our shell, though apparently exploding against the enemy's sides, were doing but little damage, I returned to solid shot firing, and from this time onward alternated with shot and shell. After the lapse of about one hour and ten minutes our ship was ascertained to be in a sinking condition, the enemy's shell having exploded in our sides and between decks, opening large apertures, through which the water rushed with great rapidity. For some few minutes I had hopes of being able to reach the French coast, for which purpose I gave the ship all steam and set such of the fore-and-aft sails as were available. The ship filled so rapidly, however, that before we had made much progress the fires were extinguished in the furnaces, and we were evidently on the point of sinking. I now hauled down my colors to prevent the further destruction of life, and dispatched a boat to inform the enemy of our condition. Although we were now but 400 yards from each other, the enemy fired upon me five times after my colors had been struck, dangerously wounding several of my men. It is charitable to suppose that a ship of war of a Christian nation could not have done this intentionally. We now turned all our exertions toward the wounded and such of the boys as were unable to swim. These were dispatched in my quarter boats, the only boats remaining to me, the waist boats having been torn to pieces.

Semmes, Sinking of the Alabama, America, Vol.8, p.231–p.232

Some twenty minutes after my furnace fires had been extinguished, and the ship being on the point of settling, every man, in obedience to a previous order which had been given to the crew, jumped overboard and endeavored to save himself. There was no appearance of any boat coming to me from the enemy until after the ship went down. Fortunately, however, the steam yacht "Deerhound," owned by a gentleman of Lancashire, England (Mr. John Lancaster), who was himself on board, steamed up in the midst of my drowning men and rescued a number of both officers and men from the water. I was fortunate enough myself thus to escape to the shelter of the neutral flag, together with about forty others, all told. About this time the "Kearsarge" sent one and then, tardily, another boat.

Semmes, Sinking of the Alabama, America, Vol.8, p.232

Accompanying you will find lists of the killed and wounded, and of those who were picked up by the "Deerhound." The remainder there is reason to hope were picked up by the enemy and by a couple of French pilot boats, which were also fortunately near the scene of action. At the end of the engagement it was discovered by those of our officers who went alongside the enemy's ship with the wounded that her midship section on both sides was thoroughly iron-coated, this having been done with chains constructed for the purpose, placed perpendicularly from the rail to the water's edge, the whole covered over by a thin outer planking, which gave no indication of the armor beneath. This planking had been ripped off in every direction by our shot and shell, the chain broken and indented in many places, and forced partly into the ship's side. She was most effectually guarded, however, in this section from penetration. The enemy was much damaged in other parts, but to what extent it is now impossible to tell. It is believed he was badly crippled.

Semmes, Sinking of the Alabama, America, Vol.8, p.232–p.233

My officers and men behaved steadily and gallantly, and though they have lost their ship they have not lost honor. Where all behaved so well it would be invidious to particularize; but I cannot deny myself the pleasure of saying that Mr. Kell, my first lieutenant, deserves great credit for the fine condition in which the ship went into action, with regard to her battery, magazine, and shell rooms; also that he rendered me great assistance by his coolness and judgment as the fight proceeded.

Semmes, Sinking of the Alabama, America, Vol.8, p.233

The enemy was heavier than myself, both in ship, battery and crew; but I did not know until the action was over that she was also ironclad. Our total loss in killed and wounded is 30, to wit, 9 killed and 21 wounded.

Southampton, England, June 21, 1864.

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester

Title: Sheridan's Ride from Winchester

Author: Philip Henry Sheridan

Date: 1864

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.234-241

General Sheridan's twenty-mile ride from Winchester to Cedar Creek, Virginia, where he rallied his demoralized army, as told in his "Personal Memoirs," (from which this account is taken by permission of D. Appleton & Company), and won a brilliant victory, was perhaps the most dramatic episode of the Civil War. But for it, no great credit would belong to Sheridan, insofar as he commanded 31,000 troops, and the Confederate General, Early, only 18,500.

Sheridan had spent the night of October 18, 1864, in Winchester, en route from Washington to rejoin his army, when apprised of its rout. Reaching the front, he quickly reversed the situation. This was the last Confederate attempt to strike the North through the Shenandoah Valley.

At the close of the war Sheridan ranked in popular estimation next to Grant and Sherman. His exploit furnished the theme of the stirring poem, "Sheridan's Ride," by T. Buchanan Read.

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.234–p.235

TOWARD 6 o'clock the morning of the 19th [October, 1864], the officer on picket duty at Winchester came to my room, I being yet in bed, and reported artillery firing from the direction of Cedar Creek. I asked him if the firing was continuous or only desultory, to which he replied that it was not a sustained fire, but rather irregular and fitful…. I tried to go to sleep again, but grew so restless that I could not, and soon got up and dressed myself. A little later the picket officer came back and reported that the firing, which could be distinctly heard from his line on the heights outside of Winchester, was still going on. I asked him if it sounded like a battle, and as he…. said that it did not, I still inferred that the cannonading was caused by Grover's division banging away at the enemy simply to find out what he was up to. However, I went downstairs and requested that breakfast be hurried up, and at the same time ordered the horses to be saddled and in readiness, for I concluded to go to the front before any further examinations were made in regard to the defensive line.

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.235

We mounted our horses between half-past 8 and 9, and as we were proceeding up the street which leads directly through Winchester, from the Logan residence, where Edwards was quartered, to the Valley Pike, I noticed that there were many women at the windows and doors of houses, who kept shaking their skirts at us and who were otherwise markedly insolent in their demeanor, but supposing this conduct to be instigated by their well-known and perhaps natural prejudices. I ascribed to it no unusual significance. On reaching the edge of the town I halted a moment, and there heard quite distinctly the sound of artillery firing in an unceasing roar…. Moving on, I put my head down toward the pommel of my saddle and listened intently, trying to locate and interpret the sound, continuing in this position till we had crossed Mill Creek, about half a mile from Winchester. The result of my efforts in the interval was the conviction that the travel of the sound was increasing too rapidly to be accounted for by my own rate of motion, and that therefore my army must be falling back.

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.236

At Abrahams Creek my escort fell in behind, and we were going ahead at a regular pace, when, just as we made the crest of the rise beyond the stream, there burst upon our view the appalling spectacle of a panic-stricken army—hundreds of slightly wounded men, throngs of others unhurt but utterly demoralized, and baggage-wagons by the score, all pressing to the rear in hopeless confusion, telling only too plainly that a disaster had occurred at the front. On accosting some of the fugitives, they assured me that the army was broken up, in full retreat, and that all was lost; all this with a manner true to that peculiar indifference that takes possession of panic-stricken men. I was greatly disturbed by the sight, but at once sent word to Colonel Edwards, commanding the brigade in Winchester, to stretch his troops across the valley, near Mill Creek, and stop all fugitives, directing also that the transportation be passed through and parked on the north side of the town….

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.236–p.237

For a short distance I traveled on the road, but soon found it so blocked with wagons and wounded men that my progress was impeded, and I was forced to take to the adjoining fields to make haste. When most of the wagons and wounded men were past I returned to the road, which was thickly lined with unhurt men, who, having got far enough to the rear to be out of danger, had halted, without any organization, and begun cooking coffee, but when they saw me they abandoned their coffee, threw up their hats, shouldered their muskets, and as I passed along turned to follow with enthusiasm and cheers. To acknowledge this exhibition of feeling I took off my hat, and with Forsyth and O'Keefe rode some distance in advance of my escort, while every mounted officer who saw me galloped out on either side of the pike to tell the men at a distance that I had come back. In this way the news was spread to the stragglers off the road, when they, too, turned their faces to the front and marched toward the enemy, changing in a moment from the depths of depression to the extreme of enthusiasm…. I said nothing except to remark, as I rode among those on the road: "If I had been with you this morning this disaster would not have happened. We must face the other way; we will go back and recover our camp.

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.237

…. At Newtown I was obliged to make a circuit to the left, to get round the village. I could not pass through it, the streets were so crowded, but meeting on this detour Major McKinley, of Crook's staff, he spread the news of my return through the motley throng there.

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.237–p.238

When nearing the Valley pike, just south of New' town I saw about three-fourths of a mile west of the pike a body of troops, which proved to be Rickett's and Wheaton's divisions of the Sixth Corps, and then learned that the Nineteenth Corps had halted a little to the right and rear of these; but I did not stop, desiring to get to the extreme front. Continuing on parallel with the pike, about midway between Newtown and Middletown I crossed to the west of it, and a little later came up in rear of Getty's division of the Sixth Corps. When I arrived, this division and the cavalry were the only troops in the presence of and resisting the enemy; they were apparently acting as a rear guard at a point about three miles north of the line we held at Cedar Creek when the battle began.

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.238–p.239

General Torbert was the first officer to meet me, saying as he rode up, "My God! I am glad you've come." Getty's division, when I found it, was about a mile north of Middletown, posted on the reverse slope of some slightly rising ground, holding a barricade made with fence-rails, and skirmishing slightly with the enemy's pickets. Jumping my horse over the line of rails, I rode to the crest of the elevation, and there taking off my hat, the men rose up from behind their barricade with cheers of recognition…. I then turned back to the rear of Getty's division, and as I came behind it, a line of regimental flags rose up out of the ground, as it seemed, to welcome me. They were mostly the colors of Crook's troops, who had been stampeded and scattered in the surprise of the morning. The color-bearers, having withstood the panic, had formed behind the troops of Getty. The line with the colors was largely composed of officers, among whom I recognized Colonel R. B. Hayes, since President of the United States, one of the brigade commanders. At the close of this incident I crossed the narrow valley, or depression, in rear of Getty's line, and dismounting on the opposite crest, established that point as my headquarters. In a few minutes some of my staff joined me, and the first directions I gave were to have the Nineteenth Corps and the two divisions of Wright's corps brought to the front, so they could be formed on Getty's division, prolonged to the right; for I had already decided to attack the enemy from that line as soon as I could get matters in shape to take the offensive….

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.239

All this had consumed a great deal of time, and I concluded to visit again the point to the east of the Valley pike, from where I had first observed the enemy, to see what he was doing. Arrived there, I could plainly see him getting ready for attack, and Major Forsyth now suggested that it would be well to ride along the line of battle before the enemy assailed us, for although the troops had learned of my return, but few of them had seen me. Following his suggestion I started in behind the men, but when a few paces had been taken I crossed to the front and, hat in hand, passed along the entire length of the infantry line….

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.239–p.240

Between half-past 3 and 4 o'clock, I was ready to assail, and decided to do so by advancing my infantry line in a swinging movement, so as to gain the Valley pike with my right between Middletown and the Belle Grove House; and when the order was passed along, the men pushed steadily forward with enthusiasm and confidence…. General McMillan…. doing his work so well that the enemy's flanking troops were cut off from their main body and left to shift for themselves. Custer, who was just then moving in from the west side of Middle Marsh Brook, followed McMillan's timely blow with a charge of cavalry, but before starting out on it, and while his men were forming, riding at full speed himself, to throw his arms around my neck. By the time he had disengaged himself from this embrace, the troops broken by McMillan had gained some little distance to their rear, but Custer's troopers sweeping across the Middletown meadows and down toward Cedar Creek, took many of them prisoners before they could reach the stream—so I forgave his delay.

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.240

My whole line as far as the eye could see was now driving everything before it, from behind trees, stone walls, and all such sheltering obstacles, so I rode toward the left to ascertain how matters were getting on there…. When I reached the Valley pike Crook had reorganized his men, and as I desired that they should take part in the fight, for they were the very same troops that had turned Early's flank at the Opequon and at Fisher's Hill, I ordered them to be pushed forward; and the alacrity and celerity with which they moved on Middletown demonstrated that their ill-fortune of the morning had not sprung from lack of valor.

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.240–p.241

Meanwhile Lowell's brigade of cavalry, which, it will be remembered, had been holding on, dismounted, just north of Middletown ever since the time I arrived from Winchester, fell to the rear for the purpose of getting their led horses. A momentary panic was created in the nearest brigade of infantry by this withdrawal of Lowell, but as soon as his men were mounted they charged the enemy clear up to the stone walls in the edge of Middletown; at sight of this the infantry brigade renewed its attack, and the enemy's right gave way. The accomplished Lowell received his death-wound in this courageous charge.

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.241

All our troops were now moving on the retreating Confederates, and as I rode to the front Colonel Gibbs, who succeeded Lowell, made ready for another mounted charge, but I checked him from pressing the enemy's right, in the hope that the swinging attack from my right would throw most of the Confederates to the east of the Valley pike, and hence off their line of retreat through Strasburg to Fisher's Hill. The eagerness of the men soon frustrated this anticipation, however, the left insisting on keeping pace with the center and right, and all pushing ahead till we regained our old camps at Cedar Creek. Beyond Cedar Creek, at Strasburg, the pike makes a sharp turn to the west toward Fisher's Hill, and here Merritt uniting with Custer, they together fell on the flank of the retreating columns, taking many prisoners, wagons, and guns, among the prisoners being Major-General Ramseur, who, mortally wounded, died the next day.

Sheridan's Ride from Winchester, America, Vol.8, p.241

When the news of the victory was received, General Grant directed a salute of one hundred shotted guns to be fired into Petersburg, and the President at once thanked the army in an autographed letter.

Sherman's March to the Sea

Title: Sherman's March to the Sea

Author: General Sherman

Date: 1864

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.242-248

In his "Memoirs," from which this account is taken by permission of D. Appleton & Company, Sherman states that when he reached Atlanta his "march to the sea" was virtually accomplished. "I simply moved from Atlanta to Savannah as one step in the direction of Richmond, a movement that had to be met and defeated, or the war was necessarily at an end."

In January, 1864, Sherman had made a similar devastating raid across the State of Mississippi. It so impressed Grant that, on his orders, Sherman set out from Chattanooga, Tennessee, in May, with an army of 100,000 strong to invade Georgia. Sherman fought four battles with the retreating Confederates under Johnston.

Leaving Atlanta for Savannah, as here related, the Union army made a line sixty miles wide. Its wake was a path of ruin. While in Savannah Sherman received the thanks of Congress for his "triumphal march."

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.242

ON the 12th of November [1864] the railroad and telegraph communications with the rear were broken, and the army stood detached from all friends, dependent on its own resources and supplies. The strength of the army, as officially reported, shows an aggregate of 55,329 infantry, 5,063 cavalry, and 1,812 artillery—in all, 62,204 officers and men….

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.242

The most extraordinary efforts had been made to purge this army of non-combatants and of sick men so that all on this exhibit may be assumed to have been able-bodied, experienced soldiers, well armed, well equipped, and provided, as far as human foresight permitted, with all the essentials of life, strength and vigorous action.

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.243

The two general orders made for this march appear to me, even at this late day, so clear, emphatic, and well-digested, that no account of that historic event is perfect without them and, though they called for great sacrifice and labor on the part of the officers and men, I insist that these orders were obeyed as well as any similar orders ever were, by an army operating wholly in an enemy's country, and dispersed, as we necessarily were, during the subsequent period of nearly six months. The wagon-trains were divided equally between the four corps, so that each had about eight hundred wagons, and these usually on the march occupied five miles or more of road….

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.243

The march from Atlanta began on the morning of November 15th, the right wing and cavalry following the railroad southeast toward Jonesboro, and General Slocum with the Twentieth Corps leading off to the east by Decatur and Stone Mountain, toward Madison. These were divergent lines, designed to threaten both Macon and Augusta at the same time, so as to prevent a concentration at our intended destination, or "objective," Milledgeville, the capital of Georgia, distant southeast about one hundred miles….

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.243–p.244

About 7 A.M. of November 16th we rode out of Atlanta by the Decatur road, filled by the marching troops and wagons of the Fourteenth Corps; and reaching the hill, just outside of the old rebel works, we naturally paused to look back upon the scenes of our past battles. We stood upon the very ground whereon was fought the bloody battle of July 22d, and could see the copse of wood where McPherson fell. Behind us lay Atlanta, smoldering and in ruins, the black smoke rising high in air, and hanging like a pall over the ruined city. Away off in the distance, on the McDonough road, was the rear of Howard's column, the gun-barrels glistening in the sun, the white-topped wagons stretching away to the south; and right before us the Fourteenth Corps, marching steadily and rapidly, with a cheery look and swinging pace that made light of the thousand miles that lay between us and Richmond. Some band, by accident, struck up the anthem of "John Brown's soul goes marching on"; the men caught up the strain, and never before or since have I heard the chorus of "Glory, glory, hallelujah!" done with more spirit, or in better harmony of time and place….

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.244–p.245

The first night out we camped by the roadside near Lithonia. The whole horizon was lurid with the bonfires of rail-ties, and groups of men all night were carrying the heated rails to the nearest trees, and bending them around the trunks. Colonel Poe had provided tools for ripping up the rails and twisting them when hot; but the best and easiest way is the one of heating the middle of the iron rails on bonfires made of the cross-ties, and then winding them around a telegraph-pole or the trunk of some convenient sapling. I attached some importance to this destruction of the railroad, gave it my own personal attention, and made reiterated orders to others on the subject….

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.245

…. We found abundance of corn, molasses, meal, bacon, and sweet potatoes. We also took a good many cows and oxen, and a large number of mules. In all these the country was quite rich, never before having been visited by a hostile army; the recent crop had been excellent, had been just gathered and laid by for the winter. As a rule, we destroyed none, but kept our wagons full, and fed our teams bountifully.

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.245

The skill and success of the men in collecting forage was one of the features of this march. Each brigade commander had authority to detail a company of foragers, usually about fifty men, with one or two commissioned officers selected for their boldness and enterprise. This party would be dispatched before daylight with a knowledge of the intended day's march and camp; would proceed on foot five or six miles from the route traveled by their brigade, and then visit every plantation and farm within range. They would usually procure a wagon or family carriage, load it with bacon, corn-meal, turkeys, chickens, ducks, and everything that could be used as food or forage, and would then regain the main road, usually in advance of their train. When this came up, they would deliver to the brigade commissary the supplies thus gathered by the way.

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.245–p.246

Often would I pass these foraging-parties at the roadside, waiting for their wagons to come up, and was amused at their strange collections—mules, horses, even cattle, packed with old saddles and loaded with hams, bacon, bags of corn-meal, and poultry of every character and description. Although this foraging was attended with great danger and hard work, there seemed to be a charm about it that attracted the soldiers, and it was a privilege to be detailed on such a party. Daily they returned mounted on all sorts of beasts, which were at once taken from them and appropriated to the general use; but the next day they would start out again on foot, only to repeat the experience of the day before.

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.246

No doubt, many acts of pillage, robbery and violence were committed by these parties of foragers, usually called "bummers"; for I have since heard of jewelry taken from women, and the plunder of articles that never reached the commissary; but these acts were exceptional and incidental. No army could have carried along sufficient food and forage for a march of three hundred miles; so that foraging in some shape was necessary. By it our men were well supplied with all the essentials of life and health, while the wagons retained enough in case of unexpected delay, and our animals were well fed. Indeed, when we reached Savannah, the trains were pronounced by experts to be the finest in flesh and appearance ever seen with any army….

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.246–p.247

November 23d, we rode into Milledgeville, the capital of the State, whither the Twentieth Corps had preceded us; and during that day the left wing was all united, in and around Milledgeville. The first stage of the journey was, therefore, complete, and absolutely successful….

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.247

I was in Milledgeville with the left wing, and was in full communication with the right wing at Gordon. The people of Milledgeville remained at home, except the Governor (Brown), the State officers, and Legislature, who had ignominiously fled, in the utmost disorder and confusion….

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.247

Meantime orders were made for the total destruction of the arsenal and its contents, and of such public buildings as could be easily converted to hostile uses. Meantime the right wing continued its movement along the railroad toward Savannah, tearing up the track and destroying its iron. Kilpatrick's cavalry was brought into Milledgeville, and crossed the Oconee by the bridge near the town; and on the 23d I made the general orders for the next stage of the march as far as Millen….

Sherman's March to the Sea, America, Vol.8, p.247–p.248

On the 18th of December, at my camp by the side of the plank-road, eight miles back of Savannah, I received General Hardee's letter declining to surrender, when nothing remained but to assault. The ground was difficult, and, as all former assaults had proved so bloody, I concluded to make one more effort to completely surround Savannah on all sides, so as further to excite Hardee's fears, and, in case of success, to capture the whole of his army…. Toward evening of December 21st we discovered coming toward us, a tug…. belonging to the Quartermaster's Department, with a staff officer on board, bearing letters from Colonel Dayton to myself and to the admiral reporting that the city of Savannah had been found evacuated on the morning of December 21st, and was then in our possession. General Hardee had crossed the Savannah River by a pontoon-bridge, carrying off his men and light artillery, blowing up his iron-clads and navy-yard, but leaving for us all the heavy guns, stores, cotton, railway-cars, steamboats, and an immense amount of public and private property….

Farragut in Mobile Bay

Title: Farragut in Mobile Bay

Author: Admiral Farragut

Date: 1864

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.258-262

Farragut made this report of what is known as the Battle of Mobile Bay to the Navy Department shortly after the naval engagement occurred, August 5, 1864, and before Fort Morgan surrendered eighteen days later to the combined Federal military and naval force engaged in the operation. In addition to Fort Morgan, the city of Mobile, thirty miles above the Gulf, was protected by Fort Gaines, by a torpedo-mined channel, by the ironclad ram Tennessee and four gunboats. The Federal fleet under Farragut comprised four monitors, the flagship Hartford and six other wooden sloops, together with a complement of gunboats.

It was after the monitor Tecumseh had been torpedoed, and the sloop Brooklyn, at the head of the Federal battle-line, had begun to back, that Farragut was informed of the danger. He shouted his famous order: "Damn the torpedoes! Four bells! Captain Drayton, go ahead! Jouett, full speed!"

The Admiral's Own Account

Farragut in Mobile Bay, America, Vol.8, p.258

THE vessels outside the bar, which were designed to participate in the engagement, were all under way by forty minutes past five in the morning (August 5), two abreast, and lashed together. The ironclads were already inside the bar, and had been ordered to take up their positions on the starboard side of the wooden ships, or between them and Fort Morgan, for the double purpose of keeping down the fire from the water battery and the parapet guns of the fort, as well as to attack the ram 'Tennessee" as soon as the fort was passed….

Farragut in Mobile Bay, America, Vol.8, p.258–p.259

The attacking fleet steamed steadily up the main ship-channel, the "Tecumseh" firing the first shot at forty-seven minutes past six o'clock. At six minutes past seven the fort opened upon us, and was replied to by a gun from the "Brooklyn," and immediately after the action became general. It was soon apparent that there was some difficulty ahead.

Farragut in Mobile Bay, America, Vol.8, p.259

The "Brooklyn," for some cause which I did not then clearly understand, arrested the advance of the whole fleet, while, at the same time, the guns of the fort were playing with great effect upon that vessel and the "Hartford." A moment after I saw the "Tecumseh," struck by a torpedo, disappear almost instantaneously beneath the waves, carrying with her gallant commander and nearly all her crew. I determined at once, as I had originally intended, to take the lead; and after ordering the "Metacomet" to send a boat to save, if possible, any of the perishing crew, I dashed ahead with the "Hartford," and the ships followed on, their officers believing that they were going to a noble death with their commander-in-chief.

Farragut in Mobile Bay, America, Vol.8, p.259–p.260

I steamed through between the buoys, where the torpedoes were supposed to have been sunk. These buoys had been previously examined by my flag-lieutenant, J. Crittenden Watson, in several nightly reconnaissances. Though he had not been able to discover the sunken torpedoes, yet we had been assured by refugees, deserters, and others, of their existence, but believing that, from their having been some time in the water they were probably innocuous, I determined to take the chance of their explosion. From the moment I turned to the northwestward, to clear the middle ground, we were enabled to keep such a broadside fire upon the batteries of Fort Morgan that their guns did us comparatively little injury.

Farragut in Mobile Bay, America, Vol.8, p.260

"Just after we passed the fort, which was about ten minutes before eight o'clock, the ram 'Tennessee' dashed out at this ship, as had been expected, and in anticipation of which I had ordered the monitors on our starboard side. I took no further notice of her than to return her fire….

Farragut in Mobile Bay, America, Vol.8, p.260

Having passed the fort and dispersed the enemy's gunboats, I had ordered most of the vessels to anchor, when I perceived the ram "Tennessee" standing up for this ship. This was at forty-five minutes past eight. I was not long in comprehending his intentions to be the destruction of the flag-ship. The monitors, and such of the wooden vessels as I thought best adapted for the purpose, were immediately ordered to attack the ram, not only with their guns, but bows on at full speed, and then began one of the fiercest naval combats on record.

Farragut in Mobile Bay, America, Vol.8, p.260

The "Monongahela," Commander Strong, was the first vessel that struck her, and in doing so carried away his own prow, together with the cutwater, without apparently doing her adversary much injury. The "Lackawanna," Captain Marchand, was the next vessel to strike her, which she did at full speed; but though her stem was cut and crushed to the plank ends for the distance of three feet above the water's edge to five feet below, the only perceptible effect on the ram was to give her a heavy list.

Farragut in Mobile Bay, America, Vol.8, p.261

The "Hartford" was the third vessel which struck her, but, as the "Tennessee" quickly shifted her helm, the blow was a glancing one, and as she rasped along our side, we poured our whole port broadside of nine-inch solid shot within ten feet of her casement. The monitors worked slowly, but delivered their fire as opportunity offered. The "Chickasaw" succeeded in getting under her stern, and a fifteen-inch shot from the "Manhattan" broke through her iron plating and heavy wooden backing though the missile itself did not enter the vessel.

Farragut in Mobile Bay, America, Vol.8, p.261

Immediately after the collision with the flagship, I directed Captain Drayton to bear down for the ram again. He was doing so at full speed when, unfortunately, the "Lackawanna" ran into the "Hartford" just forward of the mizzen-mast, cutting her down to within two feet of the water's edge. We soon got clear again, however, and were fast approaching our adversary, when she struck her colors and ran up the white flag.

Farragut in Mobile Bay, America, Vol.8, p.261–p.262

She was at this time sore beset; the "Chickasaw" was pounding away at her stern, the "Ossipee" was approaching her at full speed, and the "Mononga hela," "Lackawanna," and this ship were bearing down upon her, determined upon her destruction. Her smoke-stack had been shot away, her steering-chains were gone, compelling a resort to her relieving tackles, and several of her port shutters were jammed. Indeed, from the time the "Hartford" struck her, until her surrender, she never fired a gun. As the "Ossipee," Commander Le Roy, was about to strike her, she hoisted the white flag, and the vessel immediately stopped her engine, though not in time to avoid a glancing blow. During this contest with the rebel gunboats and the ram "Tennessee," which terminated in her surrender at ten o'clock, we lost many more men than from the fire of the batteries of Fort Morgan….

Farragut in Mobile Bay, America, Vol.8, p.262

As I had an elevated position in the main rigging near the top, I was able to overlook not only the deck of the "Hartford," but the other vessels of the fleet….

Lincoln Reelected President

Title: Lincoln Reelected President

Author: William H. Herndon

Date: 1864

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.263-266

That Lincoln was apprehensive regarding his re-election to the Presidency in 1864 is indicated by his letter to General Sherman, quoted in this account taken from Herndon and Weik's "Abraham Lincoln" (Appleton), suggesting that Sherman, who was marching through Georgia, let as many as possible of his Indiana men return home to vote. Lincoln's opponent was General McClellan, affectionately known to his soldiers as "Little Mac," who was nominated by the Democratic party on a platform which denounced the war as a failure. To this view, however, McClellan did not subscribe, and in his letter of acceptance he advocated a vigorous prosecution of the war.

In the Electoral College the vote stood 212 for Lincoln, and 21 for McClellan, while the popular vote for Lincoln was 2,200,000, and for McClellan 1,800,000. McClellan had resigned from the army in order to make the campaign.

Herndon, Lincoln Reelected President, America, Vol.8, p.263–p.264

THE Summer and Fall of 1864 were marked by Lincoln's second Presidential campaign, he, and Andrew Johnson, of Tennessee, for Vice-President, having been nominated at Baltimore on the 8th of June. Fremont, who had been placed in the field by a convention of malcontents at Cleveland, Ohio, had withdrawn in September, and the contest was left to Lincoln and General George B. McClellan, the nominee of the Democratic convention at Chicago. The canvass was a heated and bitter one. Dissatisfied elements appeared everywhere. The Judge Advocate-General of the army (Holt) created a sensation by the publication of a report giving conclusive proof of the existence of an organized secret association at the North, controlled by prominent men in the Democratic party, whose objects were the overthrow by revolution of the administration in the interest of the rebellion. Threats were rife of a revolution at the North, especially in New York City, if Mr. Lincoln were elected. Mr. Lincoln went steadily on in his own peculiar way…. Mr. Swett has told us how indifferent he appeared to be regarding any efforts to be made in his behalf. He did his duty as President, and rested secure in the belief that he would be reelected whatever might be done for or against him. The importance of retaining Indiana in the column of Republican States was not to be overlooked. How the President viewed it, and how he proposed to secure the vote of the State, is shown in the following letter written to General Sherman:

Herndon, Lincoln Reelected President, America, Vol.8, p.264

"Executive Mansion,

"Washington, September 19, 1864.

"Major General Sherman:

Herndon, Lincoln Reelected President, America, Vol.8, p.264–p.265

"The State election of Indiana occurs on the 11th of October, and the loss of it to the friends of the Government would go far towards losing the whole Union cause. The bad effect upon the November election, and especially the giving the State government to those who will oppose the war in every possible way, are too much to risk if it can be avoided. The draft proceeds, notwithstanding its strong tendency to lose us the State. Indiana is the only important State voting in October whose soldiers cannot vote in the field. Anything you can safely do to let her soldiers or any part of them go home and vote at the State election will be greatly in point. They need not remain for the Presidential election, but may return to you at once. This is in no sense an order, but is merely intended to impress you with the importance to the army itself of your doing all you safely can, yourself being the judge of what you can safely do.

"Yours truly,

"A. LINCOLN."

Herndon, Lincoln Reelected President, America, Vol.8, p.265–p.266

The election resulted in an overwhelming victory for Lincoln. He received a majority of over four hundred thousand in the popular vote—a larger majority than had ever been received by any other President up to that time. He carried not only Indiana, but all the New England States, New York, Pennsylvania, all the Western States, West Virginia, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, and the newly admitted State of Nevada. McClellan carried but three States: New Jersey, Delaware, and Kentucky. The result, as Grant so aptly expressed it in his telegram of congratulation, was "a victory worth more to the country than a battle won." A second time Lincoln stood in front of the great Capitol to take the oath of office administered by his former rival, Salmon P. Chase, whom he himself had appointed to succeed the deceased Roger B. Taney. The problem of the war was now fast working its own solution. The cruel stain of slavery had been effaced from the national escutcheon, and the rosy morn of peace began to dawn behind the breaking clouds of the great storm. Lincoln, firm but kind, in his inaugural address bade his misguided brethren of the South come back. With a fraternal affection characteristic of the man, and strictly in keeping with his former utterances, he asked for the return of peace. "With malice towards none, with charity for all," he implored his fellow-countrymen, "with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations….

The Battle of Fredericksburg

Title: The Battle of Fredericksburg

Author: Ambrose Everett Burnside

Date: 1862

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.150-158

This account of the Battle of Fredericksburg, fought on December 13, 1862, between the Federal Army of the Potomac, numbering approximately 116,000, under Major-General Burnside, and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, numbering about 78,000, under Lee, is embodied in Burnside's official report to the War Department. The Union command had been forced upon Burnside, in succession to McClellan, despite his misgivings as to his competency. That they were well-founded was borne out by the overwhelming Confederate victory at Fredericksburg, where the Union loss was 12,653, and the Confederate 5,377.

In the camp of his beaten army that night, Burnside moaned over and over: "Those men upon the ground! Those men, those men, those men!" Yet it was only with great difficulty that he was dissuaded by his officers from renewing the attack on the following day. A month or so after this battle Burnside was replaced by General Hooker in command of the Army of the Potomac.

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.150

I WAS to move the army to Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg, and there cross the Rappahannock on pontoon bridges, which were to be sent from Washington….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.150–p.151

In my interview with General Halleck I represented to him that soon after commencing the movement in the direction of Fredericksburg my telegraphic communication with Washington would be broken, and that I relied upon him to see that such parts of my plan as required action in Washington would be carried out. He told me that everything required by me would receive his attention, and that he would at once order, by telegraph, the pontoon trains spoken of in my plan, and would, upon his return to Washington, see that they were promptly forwarded….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.151

On my arrival at Falmouth, on the 19th [November], I dispatched to General Halleck's chief of staff the report…. which…. states the fact of the non-arrival of the pontoon train. These pontoon trains and supplies, which were expected to meet us on our arrival at Falmouth, could have been readily moved overland in time for our purposes in perfect safety….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.151

…. Great exertions were made by Colonel Spaulding to push his train forward, but before his arrival at the Occoquan he decided to raft his boats when he reached that river, and have them towed to Belle Plain, for which purpose he sent an officer back for a steamer to meet him at the mouth of the river. The animals were sent overland. He arrived at Belle Plain with his pontoons on the 24th, and by the night of the 25th he was encamped near general headquarters.

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.151

By this time the enemy had concentrated a large force on the opposite side of the river, so that it became necessary to make arrangements to cross in the face of a vigilant and formidable foe. These arrangements were not completed until about December 10….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.151–p.152

…. Before issuing final orders, I concluded that the enemy would be more surprised by a crossing at or near Fredericksburg, where we were making no preparations, than by crossing at Skinners Neck, and I determined to make the attempt at the former place. It was decided to throw four or five pontoon bridges across the river—two at a point near the Lacy house, opposite the upper part of the town, one near the steamboat landing at the lower part of the town, one about a mile below, and, if there were pontoons sufficient, two at the latter point.

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.152

Final orders were now given to the commanders of the three grand divisions to concentrate their troops near the places for the proposed bridges….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.152

The right grand division (General Sumner's) was directed to concentrate near the upper and middle bridges; the left grand division (General Franklin's) near the bridges, below the town; the center grand division (General Hooker's) near to and in rear of General Sumner. These arrangements were made with a view of throwing the bridges on the morning of December 11th. The enemy held possession of the city of Fredericksburg and the crest or ridge running from a point on the river, just above Falmouth, to the Massaponax, some 4 miles below. This ridge was in rear of the city, forming an angle with the Rappahannock. Between the ridge and the river there is a plain, narrow at the point, where Fredericksburg stands, but widening out as it approaches the Massaponax….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.152–p.153

During the night of the 10th the bridge material was taken to the proper points on the river, and soon after 3 o'clock on the morning of the 11th the working parties commenced throwing the bridges, protected by infantry, placed under cover of the banks, and by artillery, on the bluffs above. One of the lower bridges, for General Franklin's command, was completed by 10.30 a.m. without serious trouble, and afterward a second bridge was constructed at the same point. The upper bridge, near the Lacy house and the middle bridge near the steamboat landing were about two-thirds built at 6 a.m., when the enemy opened upon the working parties with musketry with such severity as to cause them to leave the work. Our artillery was unable to silence this fire, the fog being so dense as to make accurate firing impossible. Frequent attempts were made to continue the work, but to no purpose.

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.153

About noon the fog cleared away, and we were able, with our artillery, to check the fire of the enemy. After consultation with Generals Hunt and Woodbury, I decided to resume the work on the bridges, and gave directions, in accordance with a suggestion of General Hunt, to send men over in pontoons to the other shore as rapidly as possible, to drive the enemy from his position on the opposite bank. This work was most gallantly performed by Colonel Hall's brigade—the Seventh Michigan and Nineteenth and Twentieth Massachusetts—at the upper bridges, and by the Eighty-ninth New York at the middle bridge, and the enemy were soon driven from their position. The throwing of the bridges was resumed, and they were soon afterward finished.

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.154

No more difficult feat has been performed during the war than the throwing of these bridges in the face of the enemy by these brave men….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.154

It was now near night-fall. One brigade of Franklin's division crossed over to the south side; drove the enemy's pickets from the houses near the bridge head, and Howard's division, together with a brigade from the Ninth Corps, both of General Sumner's command, crossed over on the upper and middle bridges, and, after some sharp skirmishing, occupied the town before daylight on the morning of the 12th.

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.154

During this day, the 12th, Sumner's and Franklin's commands crossed over and took position on the south bank, and General Hooker's grand division was held in readiness to support either the right or left, or to press the enemy in case the other command succeeded in moving him….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.154

The old Richmond road…. runs from the town in a line nearly parallel with the river, to a point near the Massaponax, where it turns to the south, and passes near the right of the crest, or ridge, which runs in rear of the town, and was then occupied by the enemy in force. In order to pass down this road it was necessary to occupy the extreme right of this crest, which was designated on the map then in use by the army as "Hamilton's….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.154–p.155

It was my intention, in case this point had been gained, to push Generals Sumner and Hooker against the left of the crest, and prevent at least the removal of the artillery of the enemy, in case they attempted a retreat….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.155

…. General Franklin was directed to seize, if possible, the heights near Captain Hamilton's, and to send at once a column of attack for that purpose, composed of a division at least, in the lead, well supported, and to keep his whole command in readiness to move down the old Richmond road. The object of this order is clear. It was necessary to seize this height in order to enable the remainder of his forces to move down the old Richmond road, with a view of getting in rear of the enemy's line on the crest. He was ordered to seize these heights, if possible, and to do it at once. I sent him a copy of the order to General Sumner, in which…. I directed General Sumner's column not to move until he received orders from me, while he (General Franklin) was ordered to move at once. The movements were not intended to be simultaneous; in fact, I did not intend to move General Sumner until I learned that Franklin was about to gain the heights near Hamilton's, which I then supposed he was entirely able to do….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.155

…. one of the smallest divisions of the command (General Meade's) led the attack….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.155–p.156

From General Meade's report it seems that he had great difficulty in getting his command into position to assault the hill. The time occupied for that purpose was from 9 a.m. till 1.15 p.m. In consequence of the smallness of his division, and the absence of immediate and available supports, he was forced to make frequent halts, for the purpose of protecting his flanks and silencing the enemy's artillery; but, once in position, his division moved forward with the utmost gallantry. He broke the enemy's line; captured many prisoners and colors; crossed the road that ran in the rear of the crest, and established himself at the desired point on the crest; and, had he been able to hold it, our forces would have had free passage to the rear of the enemy's line along the crest. The supports which the order contemplated were not with him, and he found himself across the enemy's line, with both flanks unprotected. He dispatched staff officers to Generals Gibbon and Birney, urging them to advance to his right and left, in support of his flanks; but before the arrival of these divisions he was forced to withdraw from his advanced position, with his lines broken. These two divisions met his division as it was retreating, and by their gallant fighting aided materially in its safe withdrawal. An unsuccessful effort was made to reform the division, after which it was marched to the rear and held in reserve….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.156–p.157

General Sumner's corps was held in position until after 11 o'clock, in the hope that Franklin would make such an impression upon the enemy as would enable him (Sumner) to carry the enemy's line near the Telegraph and Plank roads. Feeling the importance of haste, I now directed General Sumner to commence his attack. He had already issued his orders, but had, in accordance with my instructions, directed his troops to be held in readiness for the attack, but not to move without further orders from him.

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.157

The enemy was strongly posted along the crest in his front, covered by rifle-pits and batteries, which gave him a commanding sweep of the ground over which our troops had to pass. I supposed when I ordered General Sumner to attack that General Franklin's attack on the left would have been made before General Sumner's men would be engaged, and would have caused the enemy to weaken his forces in front of Sumner, and I therefore hoped to break through their lines at this point. It subsequently appeared that this attack had not been made at the time General Sumner moved, and, when it was finally made, proved to be in such small force as to have had no permanent effect upon the enemy's line.

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.157

…. Never did men fight more persistently than this brave grand division of General Sumner. The officers and men seemed to be inspired with the lofty courage and determined spirit of their noble commander, but the position was too strong for them.

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.157–p.158

At 1.30 p.m. I ordered General Hooker to support General Sumner with his command. Soon after receiving this order, he (General Hooker) sent an aide-de-camp to me with the statement that he did not think the attack would be successful. I directed him to make the assault. Some time afterward General Hooker came to me in person with the same statement. I reiterated my order, which he then proceeded to obey. The afternoon was now well advanced. General Franklin before this had been positively ordered to attack with his whole force, and I hoped before sundown to have broken through the enemy's line. This order was not carried out.

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.158

At 4 p.m. General Humphreys was directed to attack, General Sykes' division moving in support of Humphreys' right. All these men fought with determined courage, but without success….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.158

Our forces had been repulsed at all points, and it was necessary to look upon the day's work as a failure….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.158

From the night of the 13th until the night of the 15th, our men held their positions. Something was done in the way of intrenching, and some angry skirmishing and annoying artillery firing was indulged in in the meantime….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.158

On the night of the 15th, I decided to remove the army to the north side of the river, and the work was accomplished without loss of men or "materiel."….

Burnside, Battle of Fredericksburg, America, Vol.8, p.158

The courage and heroism displayed by the army at the Battle of Fredericksburg has not been excelled during the war, and the memories of the brave officers and men who fell on that field will ever be cherished and honored by a grateful country.

Lincoln's Letter to Mrs. Bixby, 1864

Title: Lincoln's Letter to Mrs. Bixby

Author: Abraham Lincoln

Date: November 21, 1864

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.446

Executive Mansion, Washington, November 21, 1864.

MRS. BIXBY, Boston, Massachusetts:

Lincoln's Letter to Mrs. Bixby, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.446

DEAR MADAM: I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, 4 March 1865

Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

Title: Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address

Author: Abraham Lincoln

Date: Saturday, March 4, 1865

Source: Inaugural Addresses of the Presidents of the United States from George Washington 1789 to George Bush 1989: Bicentennial Edition (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1989), pp.142-143

Weeks of wet weather preceding Lincoln's second inauguration had caused Pennsylvania Avenue to become a sea of mud and standing water. Thousands of spectators stood in thick mud at the Capitol grounds to hear the President. As he stood on the East Portico to take the executive oath, the completed Capitol dome over the President's head was a physical reminder of the resolve of his Administration throughout the years of civil war. Chief Justice Salmon Chase administered the oath of office. In little more than a month, the President would be assassinated.

Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

Fellow-Countrymen:

Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, urgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war-seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.

Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public

Title: Lincoln's Last Words in Public

Author: Abraham Lincoln

Date: 1865

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.9, pp.8-14

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.8

We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart. The evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond, and the surrender of the principal insurgent army, give hopes of a righteous and speedy peace, whose joyous expression can not be restrained. In the midst of this, however, He from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten. A call for a National Thanksgiving is being prepared, and will be duly promulgated. Nor must those whose harder part gives us the cause for rejoicing be overlooked. Their honors must not be parceled out with others. I, myself, was near the front, and had the high pleasure of transmitting much of the good news to you; but no part of the honor for the plan or execution is mine. To General Grant, his skilful officers and brave men all belongs. The gallant navy stood ready, but was not in reach to take active part.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.9

By these recent successes, the reorganization of the national authority—reconstruction, which has had a large share of thought from the first—is prest much more closely upon our attention. It is fraught with great difficulty. Unlike a case of war between independent nations, there is no authorized organ for us to treat with. No one man has authority to give up the rebellion for any other man. We simply must begin with and mold from disorganized and discordant elements. Nor is it a small additional embarrassment that we, the loyal people, differ among ourselves as to the mode, manner and measure of reconstruction.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.9

As a general rule, I abstain from reading the reports of attacks upon myself, wishing not to be provoked by that to which I can not properly offer an answer. In spite of this precaution, however, it comes to my knowledge that I am much censured for some supposed agency in setting up and seeking to sustain the new State Government of Louisiana. In this I have done just so much and no more than the public knows. In the annual message of December, 1863, and the accompanying proclamation, I presented a plan of reconstruction, as the phrase goes, which I promised, if adopted by any State, should be acceptable to and sustained by the Executive Government of the nation, I distinctly stated that this was not the only plan which might possibly be acceptable; and I also distinctly protested that the Executive claimed no right to say when or whether members should be admitted to seats in Congress from such States.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.10

This plan was in advance submitted to the then Cabinet, and distinctly approved by every member of it. One of them suggested that I should then, and in that connection apply the Emancipation Proclamation to the therefore excepted parts of Virginia and Louisiana; that I should drop the suggestion about apprenticeship for freed people, and that I should omit the protest against my own power in regard to the admission of members of Congress. But even he approved every part and parcel of the plan which has since been employed or touched by the action of Louisiana.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.10

The new Constitution of Louisiana, declaring emancipation for the whole State, practically applies the proclamation to the parts previously excepted. It does not adopt apprenticeship for freed-people, and is silent, as it could not well be otherwise, about the admission of members of Congress. So that, as it applied to Louisiana, every member of the Cabinet fully approved the plan. The message went to Congress, and I received many commendations of the plan, written and verbal, and not a single objection to it from any profest emancipationist came to my knowledge, until after the news reached Washington that the people of Louisiana had begun to move in accordance with it.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.11

From about July, 1962, I had corresponded with different persons supposed to be interested in seeking a reconstruction of a State government for Louisiana. When the message of 1863, with the plan before mentioned reached New Orleans, General Banks wrote me that he was confident that the people, with his military cooperation, would reconstruct substantially on that plan. I wrote to him and some of them to try it. They tried it, and the result is known. Such has been my only agency in getting up the Louisiana government. As to sustaining it, my promise is out, as before stated; but as bad promises are better broken than kept, I shall treat this as a bad promise, and break it whenever I shall be convinced that keeping it is adverse to the public interest, but I have not yet been so convinced.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.11

I have been shown a letter on the subject (supposed to be an able one), in which the writer expresses regret that my mind has not seemed to be definitely fixt on the question whether the seceded States, so called, are in the Union or out of it. It would, perhaps, add astonishment to his regret, were he to learn that since I have found profest Union men endeavoring to answer that question I have purposely forborne any public expression upon it. As appears to me, that question has not been, nor yet is, a practically material one, and that any discussion of it, while it thus remains practically immaterial, could have no effect other than the mischievous one of dividing friends. Whatever it may hereafter become, that question is bad as the basis of a controversy, and good for nothing at all—a merely pernicious abstraction.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.12

We all agree that the seceded States, so called, are out of their proper practical relation with the Union, and that the sole object of the Government, civil and military, in regard to those States, is again to get them into that proper practical relation. I believe that it is not only possible, but, in fact, easier, to do this without deciding, or even considering, whether those States have ever been out of the Union, than with it. Finding themselves safely at home, it would be utterly immaterial whether they had every been abroad. Let us all join in doing the acts necessary to restore the proper practical relations between those States and the Union, and each forever after innocently indulge his own opinion, whether in doing the acts he brought the States from without into the Union, or only gave them proper assistance, they never having been out of it.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.12

The amount of constituency, so to speak, on which the new Louisiana government rests, would be more satisfactory to all if it contained 50,000 or 30,000 or even 20,000, instead of only about 12,000, as it does. It is also unsatisfactory to some that the elective franchise is not given to the colored men. I would myself prefer that it were now conferred on the very intelligent and on those who served our cause as soldiers. Still the question is not whether the Louisiana government, as it stands, is quite all that is desirable. The question is, will it be wiser to take it as it is, and help to improve it, or to reject and disperse it? Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new State government? Some 12,000 voters in the heretofore slave State of Louisi-ana have sworn allegiance to the Union, assumed to be the rightful political power of the State, held elections, organized a State Government, adopted a free-State constitution, giving the benefit of the public schools equally to black and white, and empowered the legislature to confer elective franchise upon the colored men.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.13

This legislature has already voted to ratify the constitutional amendment recently passed by Congress abolishing slavery throughout the nation. These 12,000 persons are thus fully committed to the Union, and to perpetuate freedom in the State, committed to the very things, and nearly all things the nation wants, and they ask the nation's recognition and its assistance to make good their committal.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.13

Now, if we reject and spurn them, we do our utmost to disorganize and disperse them. We, in fact, say to the white man, You are worthless, or worse; we will neither help you, nor be helped by you. To the blacks we say: This cup of liberty, which these, your old masters, held to your lips, we will dash from you, and leave you to the chances of gathering the spilled and scattered contents in some vague and undefined when, where and how.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.13

If this course of discouraging and paralyzing both white and black has any tendency to bring Louisiana into proper practical relations with the Union, I have so far been unable to perceive it. If, on the contrary, we sustain and recognize the new government of Louisiana, the converse of all this is made true. We encourage the hearts and nerve the arms of 12,000 to adhere to their work and argue for it, and proselyte for it, and fight for it, and feed it, and grow it, and ripen it to a complete success.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.14

The colored man, too, in seeing all united for him, is inspired with vigilance, and energy and daring to the same end. Grant that he desires the elective franchise, will he not attain it sooner by saving the already advanced steps toward it than by running backward over them? Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only to what it should be as the egg is to the fowl, we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.14

Again, if we reject Louisiana, we also reject our vote in favor of the proposed amendment to the National Constitution. To meet this proposition, it has been argued that no more than three-fourths of those States which have not attempted secession are necessary to validly ratify the amendment. I do not commit myself against this further than to say that such a ratification would be questionable and sure to be persistently questioned, while a ratification by three-fifths of all the States would be unquestioned and unquestionable.

Lincoln's Last Words in Public, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.14

I repeat the question: Can Louisiana be brought into practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new State Government? What has been said of Louisiana will apply to other States. As yet these great peculiarities pertain to each State, and such important and sudden changes occur in the same State, and withal so new and unprecedented is the whole case, that no exclusive or inflexible plan can safely be prescribed as to details and collaterals. Such an exclusive and inflexible plan would surelybecome a new entanglement. Important principles may and must be inflexible. In the present situation, as the phrase goes, it may be my duty to make some new announcement to the people of the South. I am considering, and shall not fail to act when satisfied that action will be proper.

Lincoln's Presentiment on the Day of His Assassination

Title: Lincoln's Presentiment on the Day of His Assassination

Author: Charles Dickens

Date: 1865

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.9, pp.16-17

Dickens, Lincoln's Presentiment on the Day of His Assassination, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.16

I am going to-morrow to see the President, who has sent to me twice. I dined with Charles Sumner last Sunday, against my rule; and as I had stipulated for no party, Mr. Secretary Stanton was the only other guest, besides his own secretary. Stanton is a man with a very remarkable memory, and extraordinarily familiar with my books. He and Sumner having been the first two public men at the dying President's bedside, and having remained with him until he breathed his last, we fell into a very interesting conversation after dinner, when, each of them giving his own narrative separately, the usual discrepancies about details of time were observable. Then Mr. Stanton told me a curious little story which will form the remainder of this short letter.

Dickens, Lincoln's Presentiment on the Day of His Assassination, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.16

On the afternoon of the day on which the President was shot, there was a cabinet council at which he presided. Mr. Stanton, being at the time commander-in-chief of the Northern troops that were concentrated about here, arrived rather late. Indeed, they were waiting for him, and on his entering the room, the President broke off in something he was saying, and remarked: "Let us proceed to business, gentlemen." Mr. Stanton then noticed, with great surprize, that the President sat with an air of dignity in his chair instead of lolling about it in the most ungainly attitudes, as his invariable custom was; and that instead of telling irrelevant or questionable stories, he was grave and calm, and quite a different man.

Dickens, Lincoln's Presentiment on the Day of His Assassination, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.17

Mr. Stanton, on leaving the council with the Attorney-General, said to him, "That is the most satisfactory cabinet meeting I have attended for many a long day! What an extraordinary change in Mr. Lincoln!" The Attorney-General replied, "We all saw it, before you came in. While we were waiting for you, he said, with his chin down on his breast, "Gentlemen, something very extraordinary is going to happen, and that very soon." To which the Attorney-General had observed, "Something good, sir, I hope?" when the President answered very gravely: "I don't know; I don't know. But it will happen, and shortly, too!" As they were all imprest by his manner, the Attorney-General took him up again: "Have you received any information, sir, not yet disclosed to us?" "No," answered the President; "but I have had a dream. And I have now had the same dream three times. Once, on the night preceding the Battle of Bull Run. Once, on the night preceding" such another (naming a battle also not favorable to the North). His chin sank on hisbreast again, and he sat reflecting. "Might one ask the nature of this dream, sir?" said the Attorney-General. "Well," replied the President, without lifting his head or changing his attitude, "I am on a great broad rolling river—and I am in a boat—and I drift—and I drift!—But this is not business—" suddenly raising his face and looking round the table as Mr. Stanton entered, "let us proceed to business, gentlemen." Mr. Stanton and the Attorney-General said, as they walked on together, it would be curious to notice whether anything ensued on this; and they agreed to notice. He was shot that night.

Assassination of Lincoln—Stanton's Official Announcement

Title: Assassination of Lincoln—Stanton's Official Announcement

Author: Edwin Stanton

Date: April 14, 1865

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.9, pp.19-20

Stanton, Assassination of Lincoln, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.19

This evening at about 9:30 P. M., at Ford's Theater, the President, while sitting in his private box with Mrs. Lincoln, Miss Harris, and Major Rathbone, was shot by an assassin who suddenly entered the box and approached the President. The assassin then leapt upon the stage, brandished a large dagger or knife, and made his escape in the rear of the theater. The pistol-ball entered the back of the President's head and penetrated nearly through the head. The wound is mortal. The President has been insensible ever since it was inflicted and is now dying.

Stanton, Assassination of Lincoln, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.19

About the same hour an assassin, whether the same or not, entered Mr. Seward's apartments, and under the pretense of having a prescription, was shown to the Secretary's sick chamber. The assassin immediately rushed to the bed, and inflicted two or three stabs on the throat and two on the face. It is hoped the wounds may not be mortal. My apprehension is that they will prove fatal. The nurse alarmed Mr. Frederick Seward, who was in an adjoining room, and hastened to the door of his father's room, when he met the assassin, who inflicted upon him one or more dangerous wounds. The recovery of Frederick Seward is doubtful.

Stanton, Assassination of Lincoln, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.20

It is not probable that the President will live throughout the night. General Grant and wife were advertised to be at the theater this evening, but he started for Burlington at six o'clock this evening. At a cabinet meeting at which General Grant was present, the subject of the state of the country, and the prospect of a speedy peace was discust. The President was very cheerful and hopeful, and spoke very kindly of General Lee and others of the Confederacy, and of the establishment of government in Virginia. All the members of the cabinet, except Mr. Seward, are now in attendance upon the President.

Stanton, Assassination of Lincoln, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.20

I have seen Mr. Seward, but he and Frederick are both unconscious.

EDWIN M. STANTON,

Secretary of War. April 14, 1865.

The Assassination of Lincoln

Title: The Assassination of Lincoln

Author: John George Nicolay and John Hay

Date: 1865

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.306-318

Nicolay and Hay, from whose "Abraham Lincoln: A History," this account is taken, by permission of the Century Company, were respectively Secretary and Assistant Secretary to President Lincoln from the time he took office until his tragic death. Nicolay had been an Illinois newspaper editor, when he and Lincoln formed a friendship. Hay, six years younger than Nicolay, studied law in Lincoln's office at Springfield and accompanied the President-elect on his memorable journey to Washington.

Both these biographers were present at the death-bed of the "Great Emancipator," who is here eloquently characterized as "the greatest man of his time, in the glory of the most stupendous success in our history, the idolized chief of a nation already mighty, with illimitable vistas of grandeur to come…. on whom quick death was to descend—the central figure, we believe, of the great, and good men of the century.

Nicolay, Assasination of Lincoln, America, Vol.8, p.306–p.307

FROM the very beginning of his Presidency Mr. Lincoln had been constantly subject to the threats of his enemies and the warnings of his friends. The threats came in every form; his mail was infested with brutal and vulgar menace, mostly anonymous, the proper expression of vile and cowardly minds. The warnings were not less numerous; the vaporings of village bullies, the extravagances of excited secessionist politicians, even the drolling of practical jokers, were faithfully reported to him by zealous or nervous friends. Most of these communications received no notice. In cases where there seemed a ground for inquiry it was made, as carefully as possible, by the President's private secretary and by the War Department, but always without substantial result. Warnings that appeared to be most definite, when they came to be examined proved too vague and confused for further attention. The President was too intelligent not to know he was in some danger. Madmen frequently made their way to the very door of the Executive offices and sometimes into Mr. Lincoln's presence. He had himself so sane a mind, and a heart so kindly even to his enemies, that it was hard for him to believe in a political hatred so deadly as to lead to murder. He would sometimes laughingly say, "Our friends on the other side would make nothing by exchanging me for Hamlin," the Vice-President having the reputation of more radical views than his chief.

Nicolay, Assasination of Lincoln, America, Vol.8, p.307–p.308–p.309

He knew indeed that incitements to murder him were not uncommon in the South. An advertisement had appeared in a paper of Selma, Alabama, in December, 1864, opening a subscription for funds to effect the assassination of Lincoln, Seward, and Johnson before the inauguration. There was more of this murderous spirit abroad than was suspected. A letter was found in the Confederate Archives from one Lieutenant Alston, who wrote to Jefferson Davis immediately after Lincoln's reelection offering to "rid his country of some of her deadliest enemies by striking at the very heart's blood of those who seek to enchain her in slavery. This shameless proposal was referred, by Mr. Davis's direction, to the Secretary of War; and by Judge Campbell, Assistant Secretary of War, was sent to the Confederate Adjutant-General indorsed "for attention." We can readily imagine what reception an officer would have met with who should have laid before Mr. Lincoln a scheme to assassinate Jefferson Davis. It was the uprightness and the kindliness of his own heart that made him slow to believe that any such ignoble fury could find a place in the hearts of men in their right minds. Although he freely discussed with the officials about him the possibilities of danger, he always considered them remote, as is the habit of men constitutionally brave, and positively refused to torment himself with precautions for his own safety. He would sum the matter up by saying that both friends and strangers must have daily access to him in all manner of ways and places; his life was therefore in reach of any one, sane or mad, who was ready to murder and be hanged for it; that he could not possibly guard against all danger unless he were to shut himself up in an iron box, in which condition he could scarcely perform the duties of a President; by the hand of a murderer he could die only once; to go continually in fear would be to die over and over. He therefore went in and out before the people, always unarmed, generally unattended. He would receive hundreds of visitors in a day, his breast bare to pistol or knife. He would walk at midnight, with a single secretary or alone, from the Executive Mansion to the War Department, and back. He would ride through the lonely roads of an uninhabited suburb from the White House to the Soldiers' Home in the dusk of evening, and return to his work in the morning before the town was astir. He was greatly annoyed when, late in the war, it was decided that there must be a guard stationed at the Executive Mansion, and that a squad of cavalry must accompany him on his daily ride; but he was always reasonable and yielded to the best judgment of others.

Nicolay, Assasination of Lincoln, America, Vol.8, p.309–p.310–p.311–p.312

Four years of threats and boastings, of alarms that were not founded, and of plots that came to nothing, thus passed away; but precisely at the time when the triumph of the nation over the long insurrection seemed assured, and a feeling of peace and security was diffused over the country, one of the conspiracies, not seemingly more important than the many abortive ones, ripened in the sudden heat of hatred and despair. A little band of malignant secessionists, consisting of John Wilkes Booth, an actor, of a famous family of players; Lewis Powell, alias Payne, a disbanded rebel soldier from Florida; George Atzerodt, formerly a coachmaker, but more recently a spy and blockade runner of the Potomac; David E. Herold, a young druggist's clerk; Samuel Arnold and Michael O'Laughlin, Maryland secessionists and Confederate soldiers, and John H. Surratt, had their ordinary rendezvous at the house of Mrs. Mary E. Surratt, the widowed mother of the last named, formerly a woman of some property in Maryland, but reduced by reverses to keeping a small boarding-house in Washington. Booth was the leader of the little coterie. He was a young man of twenty-six, strikingly handsome, with a pale olive face, dark eyes, and that ease and grace of manner which came to him of right from his theatrical ancestors. He had played for several seasons with only indifferent success; his value as an actor lay rather in his romantic beauty of person than in any talent or industry he possessed. He was a fanatical secessionist; had assisted at the capture and execution of John Brown, and had imbibed, at Richmond and other Southern cities where he had played, a furious spirit of partisanship against Lincoln and the Union party. After the reelection of Mr. Lincoln, which rang the knell of the insurrection, Booth, like many of the secessionists North and South, was stung to the quick by disappointment. He visited Canada, consorted with the rebel emissaries there, and at last—whether or not at their instigation cannot certainly be said—conceived a scheme to capture the President and take him to Richmond. He spent a great part of the autumn and winter inducing a small number of loose fish of secession sympathies to join him in this fantastic enterprise. He seemed always well supplied with money, and talked largely of his speculations in oil as a source of income; but his agent afterwards testified that he never realized a dollar from that source; that his investments, which were inconsiderable, were a total loss. The winter passed away and nothing was accomplished. On the 4th of March, Booth was at the Capitol and created a disturbance by trying to force his way through the line of policemen who guarded the passage through which the President walked to the east front of the building. His intentions at this time are not known; he afterwards said he lost an excellent chance of killing the President that day. There are indications in the evidence given on the trial of the conspirators that they suffered some great disappointment in their schemes in the latter part of March, and a letter from Arnold to Booth, dated March 27, showed that some of them had grown timid of the consequences of their contemplated enterprise and were ready to give it up. He advised Booth, before going further, "to go and see how it will be taken in R——d." But timid as they might be by nature, the whole group was so completely under the ascendancy of Booth that they did not dare disobey him when in his presence; and after the surrender of Lee, in an access of malice and rage which was akin to madness, he called them together and assigned each his part in the new crime, the purpose of which had arisen suddenly in his mind out of the ruins of the abandoned abduction scheme. This plan was as brief and simple as it was horrible. Powell, alias Payne, the stalwart, brutal, simple-minded boy from Florida, was to murder Seward; Atzerodt, the comic villain of the drama, was assigned to remove Andrew Johnson; Booth reserved for himself the most difficult and most conspicuous role of the tragedy; it was Herold's duty to attend him as a page and aid in his escape. Minor parts were assigned to stage-carpenters and other hangers-on, who probably did not understand what it all meant. Herold, Atzerodt, and Surratt had previously deposited at a tavern at Surrattsville, Maryland, owned by Mrs. Surratt, but kept by a man named Lloyd, a quantity of ropes, carbines, ammunition and whisky, which were to be used in the abduction scheme. On the 11th of April Mrs. Surratt, being at the tavern, told Lloyd to have the shooting-irons in readiness, and on Friday, the 14th, again visited the place and told him they would probably be called for that night.

Nicolay, Assasination of Lincoln, America, Vol.8, p.312–p.313

The preparations for the final blow were made with feverish haste; it was only about noon of the 14th that Booth learned the President was to go to Ford's Theater that night. It has always been a matter of surprise in Europe that he should have been at a place of amusement on Good Friday; but the day was not kept sacred in America, except by the members of certain churches. It was not, throughout the country, a day of religious observance. The President was fond of the theater; it was one of his few means of recreation. It was natural enough that, on this day of profound national thanksgiving, he should take advantage of a few hours' relaxation to see a comedy. Besides, the town was thronged with soldiers and officers, all eager to see him; it was represented to him that appearing occasionally in public would gratify many people whom he could not otherwise meet. Mrs. Lincoln had asked General and Mrs. Grant to accompany her; they had accepted, and the announcement that they would be present was made as an advertisement in the evening papers; but they changed their minds and went north by an afternoon train. Mrs. Lincoln then invited in their stead Miss Harris and Major Rathbone, the daughter and the stepson of Senator Harris. The President's carriage called for these young people, and the four went together to the theater. The President had been detained by visitors, and the play had made some progress when he arrived. When he appeared in his box the band struck up "Hail to the Chief," the actors ceased playing, and the audience rose, cheering tumultuously; the President bowed in acknowledgment of this greeting and the play went on.

Nicolay, Assasination of Lincoln, America, Vol.8, p.313–p.314

From the moment Booth ascertained the President's intention to attend the theater in the evening his every action was alert and energetic. He and his confederates, Herold, Surratt and Atzerodt, were seen on horseback in every part of the city. He had a hurried conference with Mrs. Surratt before she started for Lloyd's tavern. He intrusted to an actor named Matthews a carefully prepared statement of his reasons for committing the murder which he charged him to give to the publisher of the "National Intelligencer," but which Matthews, in the terror and dismay of the night, burned without showing to any one. Booth was perfectly at home in Ford's Theater, where he was greatly liked by all the employees, without other reason than the sufficient one of his youth and good looks. Either by himself or with the aid of his friends he arranged his whole plan of attack and escape during the afternoon. He counted upon address and audacity to gain access to the small passage behind the President's box; once there, he guarded against interference by an arrangement of a wooden bar to be fastened by a simple mortise in the angle of the wall and the door by which he entered, so that the door could not be opened from without. He even provided for the contingency of not gaining entrance to the box by boring a hole in its door, through which he might either observe the occupants or take aim and shoot. He hired at a livery stable a small, fleet horse, which he showed with pride during the day to bar-keepers and loafers among his friends.

Nicolay, Assasination of Lincoln, America, Vol.8, p.314–p.315–p.316

The moon rose that night at ten o'clock. A few minutes before that hour he called one of the underlings of the theater to the back door and left him there holding his horse. He then went to a saloon near by, took a drink of brandy, and, entering the theater, passed rapidly through the crowd in rear of the dress-circle and made his way to the passage leading to the President's box. He showed a card to a servant in attendance and was allowed to pass in. He entered noiselessly, and, turning, fastened the door with the bar he had previously made ready, without disturbing any of the occupants of the box, between whom and himself there yet remained the slight partition and the door through which he had bored the hole. Their eyes were fixed upon the stage; the play was "Our American Cousin," the original version by Tom Taylor, before Sothern had made a new work of it by his elaboration of the part of Dundreary. Not one, not even the comedian on the stage, could ever remember the last words of the piece that were uttered that night—the last Abraham Lincoln heard upon earth. The whole performance remains in the memory of those who heard it a vague phantasmagoria, the actors the thinnest of specters. The awful tragedy in the box makes everything else seem pale and unreal. Here were five human beings in a narrow space—the greatest man of his time, in the glory of the most stupendous success in our history, the idolized chief of a nation already mighty, with illimitable vistas of grandeur to come; his beloved wife, proud and happy; a pair of betrothed lovers, with all the promise of felicity that youth, social position and wealth could give them; and this young actor, handsome as Endymion upon Latmos, the pet of his little world. The glitter of fame, happiness and ease was upon the entire group, but in an instant everything was to be changed with the blinding swiftness of enchantment. Quick death was to come on the central figure of that company—the central figure, we believe, of the great and good men of the century. Over all the rest the blackest fates hovered menacingly—fates from which a mother might pray that kindly death would save her children in their infancy. One was to wander with the stain of murder on his soul, with the curses of a world upon his name, with a price set upon his head, in frightful physical pain, till he died a dog's death in a burning barn; the stricken wife was to pass the rest of her days in melancholy and madness; of those two young lovers, one was to slay the other, and then end his life a raving maniac.

Nicolay, Assasination of Lincoln, America, Vol.8, p.316–p.317

The murderer seemed to himself to be taking part in a play. The fumes of brandy and partisan hate had for weeks kept his brain in a morbid state. He felt as if he were playing Brutus off the boards; he posed, expecting applause. Holding a pistol in one hand and a knife in the other, he opened the box door, put the pistol to the President's head, and fired; dropping the weapon, he took the knife in his right hand, and when Major Rathbone sprang to seize him he struck savagely at him. Major Rathbone received the blow on his left arm, suffering a wide and deep wound. Booth, rushing forward, then placed his left hand on the railing of the box and vaulted lightly over to the stage. It was a high leap, but nothing to such a trained athlete. He was in the habit of introducing what actors call sensational leaps in his plays. In "Macbeth," where he met the weird sisters, he leaped from a rock twelve feet high. He would have got safely away but for his spur catching in the folds of the Union flag with which the front of the box was draped. He fell on the stage, the torn flag trailing on his spur, but instantly rose as if he had received no hurt, though in fact the fall had broken his leg, turned to the audience, brandishing his dripping knife and shouting the State motto of Virginia, "Sic Semper Tyrannis," and fled rapidly across the stage and out of sight. Major Rathbone had shouted, "Stop him!" The cry went out, "He has shot the President." From the audience, at first stupid with surprise and afterwards wild with excitement and horror, two or three men jumped upon the stage in pursuit of the flying assassin; but he ran through the familiar passages, leaped upon his horse, which was in waiting in the alley behind, rewarded with a kick and a curse the call-boy who had held him, and rode rapidly away in the light of the just risen moon.

Nicolay, Assasination of Lincoln, America, Vol.8, p.317–p.318

The President scarcely moved; his head drooped forward slightly, his eyes closed. Major Rathbone, at first not regarding his own grievous hurt, rushed to the door of the box to summon aid. He found it barred, and on the outside some one was beating and clamoring for entrance. He opened the door; a young officer named Crawford entered; one or two army surgeons soon followed, who hastily examined the wound. It was at once seen to be mortal. It was afterwards ascertained that a large derringer bullet had entered the back of the head on the left side, and, passing through the brain, had lodged just behind the left eye. By direction of Rathbone and Crawford, the President was carried to a house across the street and laid upon a bed in a small room at the rear of the hall, on the ground floor. Mrs. Lincoln followed, half distracted, tenderly cared for by Miss Harris. Rathbone, exhausted by loss of blood, fainted, and was carried home. Messengers were sent for the members of the Cabinet, for the Surgeon-General, for Dr. Stone, the President's family physician; a crowd of people rushed instinctively to the White House and, bursting through the doors, shouted the dreadful news to Robert Lincoln and Major Hay, who sat gossiping in an upper room. They ran downstairs. Finding a carriage at the door, they entered it to go to Tenth Street. As they were driving away, a friend came up and told them that Mr. Seward and most of the Cabinet had been murdered. The news was all so improbable that they could not help hoping it was all untrue. But when they got to Tenth Street and found every thoroughfare blocked by the swiftly gathering thousands, agitated by tumultuous excitement, they were prepared for the worst….

Nicolay, Assasination of Lincoln, America, Vol.8, p.318

The President had been shot a few minutes past ten. The wound would have brought instant death to most men, but his vital tenacity was extraordinary. He was, of course, unconscious from the first moment; but he breathed with slow and regular respiration throughout the night. As the dawn came, and the lamplight grew pale in the fresher beams, his pulse began to fail; but his face even then was scarcely more haggard than those of the sorrowing group of statesmen and generals around him. His automatic moaning, which had continued through the night, ceased; a look of unspeakable peace came upon his worn features. At twenty-two minutes after seven he died. Stanton broke the silence by saying, "Now he belongs to the ages." Dr. Gurley kneeled by the bedside and prayed fervently. The widow came in from the adjoining room supported by her son and cast herself with loud outcry on the dead body.

The Death of Lincoln as Reported in the New York Tribune

Title: The Death of Lincoln as Reported in the New York Tribune

Author: New York Tribune

Date: 1865

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.9, pp.21-32

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.21

We give the dispatches in the order in which they reached us, the first having been received a little before midnight, for we know that every line, every letter will be read with the intensest interest. In the sudden shock of a calamity so appalling, we can do little else than give such details of the murder of the President as have reached us. Sudden death is always overwhelming; assassination of the humblest of men is always frightfully startling; when the head of thirty millions of people is hurried into eternity by the hand of a murder—that head a man so good, so wise, so noble as Abraham Lincoln, the chief magistrate of a nation in the condition of ours at this moment—the sorrow and the shock are too great for many words. There are none in all this broad land to-day who love their country, who wish well to their race, that will not bow down in profound grief at the event it has brought upon us. For once all party rancor will be forgotten, and no right-thinking man can hear of Mr. Lincoln's death without accepting it as a national calamity. We can give in these its first moments, no thought of the future. God, in His inscrutable Providence, has thus visited the nation; the future we must leave to Him.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.22

First Dispatch.

Washington, Friday, April 14, 1865. To the Associated Press:

The President was shot in a theater to-night, and perhaps mortally wounded.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.22

Second Dispatch.

To the Editors: Our Washington agent orders the dispatch about the President "stopt." Nothing is said about the truth or falsity of the dispatch.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.22

Third Dispatch. Special Dispatch to the New York Tribune:

The President was shot at Ford's Theater. The ball entered his neck. It is not known whether the wound is mortal. Intense excitement.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.22

Fourth Dispatch. Special to the New York Tribune:

The President expired at a quarter to 12.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.22

Fifth Dispatch.

Washington, April 15—12:30 A. M. To the Associated Press:

The President was shot in a theater to-night, and is perhaps mortally wounded. The President is not expected to live through the night. He was shot at the theater. Secretary Seward was also assassinated. No arteries were cut. particulars soon.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.23

Sixth Dispatch.

Washington, Friday, April 14, 1865. Special Dispatch to the New York Tribune:

Like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky spread the announcement that President Lincoln was shot while sitting in his box at Ford's Theater. The city is wild with excitement. A gentleman who was present thus describes the event: At about 10:30 o'clock in the midst of one of the acts, a pistol-shot was heard, and at the same instant a man leapt upon the stage from the same box occupied by the President, brandished a long knife, and shouted, "Sic semper tyrannis!" then rushed to rear of the scenes and out of the back door of the theater. So sudden was the whole thing that most persons in the theater supposed it a part of the play, and it was some minutes before the fearful tragedy was comprehended. The man was pursued, however, by some one connected with the theater to the outer door and seen to mount a horse and ride rapidly away. A regiment of cavalry have started in all directions, with orders to arrest every man found on horseback. Scarce had the news of this horror been detailed, when couriers came from Secretary Seward's, announcing that he also had been assassinated.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.23

Seventh Dispatch.

Washington, Friday, April 14, 1865. Special Dispatch to the New York Tribune:

The President attended Ford's Theater, and about 10 o'clock an assassin entered his privatebox and shot him in the back of the head. The ball lodged in his head, and he is now lying insensible in a house opposite the theater. No hopes are entertained of his recovery. Laura Keene claims to have recognized the assassin as the actor, J. Wilkes Booth. A feeling of gloom like a pall has settled on the city.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.24

About the same hour a horseman rode up to Secretary Seward's, and, in dismounting, announced that he had a prescription to deliver to the Secretary in person. Major Seward and Miss Seward were with their father at the time. Being admitted the assassin delivered the pretended prescription to the Secretary in bed, and immediately cut his throat from ear to ear. Fortunately the jugular vein was not severed, and it is possible that Mr. Seward may survive. Secretary Stanton was undisturbed at his residence. Thus far, no other murderous demonstrations are reported. It is deemed Providential that General Grant left tonight for New Jersey. He was publicly announced to be present at the theater with the President. Ten thousand rumors are afloat, and the most intense and painful excitement pervades the city.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.25

Eighth Dispatch.

Washington, Friday, April 14, 1865. Special Dispatch to the New York Tribune:

The assassin is said to have gained entrance to the President's box by sending in his card requesting an interview. The box was occupied by Mrs. Lincoln and Colonel Parker of General Grant's staff. The villain drew his pistol across Mrs. Lincoln's shoulder and fired. Colonel Parker sprang up and seized the assassin, but he wrested himself from his grip and sprang down upon the stage as described. His spur caught in the American flag as he descended, and threw him at length. He unloosed the spur and dashed to the rear, brandishing his knife and revolver.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.25

Ninth Dispatch.

Washington, Friday, April 14, 1865. To the Associated Press:

The screams of Mrs. Lincoln first disclosed the fact to the audience that the President had been shot, when all present rose to their feet, rushed toward the stage, many exclaiming, "Hang him, hang him" The excitement was of the wildest possible description, and of course there was an abrupt termination to the theatrical performance.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.25

There was a rush toward the President's box, when cries were heard: "Stand back and give him air." "Has any one stimulants?" On a hasty examination, it was found that the President had been shot through the head, above and back of the temporal bone, and that some of the brains were oozing out. He was removed to a private house opposite to the theater, and the Surgeon-General of the army and other surgeons sent for to attend to his condition.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.26

On an examination of the private box, blood was discovered on the back of the cushioned rocking-chair on which the President had been sitting, also on the partition and on the floor. A common single-barreled pocket-pistol was found on the carpet. A military dispatch was placed in front of the private residence to which the President had been conveyed. An immense crowd was in front of it, all deeply anxious to learn the condition of the President. It had been previously announced that the would was mortal, but all hoped otherwise. The shock to the community was terrible. At midnight the Cabinet, together with Messrs. Sumner, Colfax, and Farnsworth, Judge Curtis, Governor Oglesby, General Meigs, Colonel Hay and a few personal friends, with Surgeon-General Barnes and his immediate assistants, were around his bedside. The President was in a state of syncope, totally insensible, and breathing slowly. The blood oozed from the wound at the back of his head. The surgeons exhausted every possible effort of medicinal skill, but all hope was gone.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.26

The President and Mrs. Lincoln did not start for the theater until 8:15 o'clock. Speaker Colfax was at the White House at the time, and the President stated to him that he was to go. Mrs. Lincoln had not been well, but because the papers had announced that General Grant and they were to be present, and, as General Grant had gone North, he did not wish the audience to be dispirited. He went with apparent reluctance, and urged Mr. Colfax to go with him, but that gentleman had made other engagements, and with Mr. Ashman, of Massachusetts, bade him good night.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.27

Tenth Dispatch.

Washington, April 15—1 A. M. Special Dispatch to the New York Tribune:

One of our reporters is just in from the Presidential mansion, who says an orderly reports the President still breathing, but beyond all probable recovery. The circumstances of Secretary Seward's assassination were thus narrated by a member of his household: A man on horseback rode to the Secretary's house, rang the bell and told the servant attending upon the door that he had a prescription from Dr. Verdi, Mr. Seward's attending physician, for the suffering Secretary, which he must deliver in person. The servant took him upstairs, and ushered him into Mr. Frederick Seward's room, where he delivered the same message, but was assured by young Mr. Seward that he could not see his father. He then started to retire, but he turned with an inaudible mutter and leveled a blow at Frederick with a slung-shot. A scuffle then ensued, in which the assassin used his knife, and very seriously wounded the Assistant Secretary; then rushing by him he passed through the door into the father's room. He found the Secretary in charge of his male nurse, and with an instantaneous rush he drew his knife and cut the Secretary's throat from ear to ear, then, lunging his knife into the nurse, hedarted out, when he encountered young Major Seward, who seized him and endeavored to detain him, without knowing the horrible tragedy he had enacted. He again used his knife and billy, but was most eager to escape, and as soon as he had cut himself loose fled to the outer door, mounting his horse and was off before the inmates could give to any one an alarm. In fact the wonderful suddenness with which both acts of brutality were enacted, is perhaps the most surprizing feature of this dire national calamity.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.28

Eleventh Dispatch.

Washington, Friday, April 14—1:15 A. M. Special Dispatch to the New York Tribune:

The President is slowly dying. The brain is slowly oozing through the bullet-hole in his forehead. He is of course insensible. There is an occasional lifting of his hand, and heavy stentorous breathing; that is all. Mrs. Lincoln and her two sons are in a room opposite to Ford's Theater, where the President was taken, and adjoining that where he is lying. Mr. Sumner is seated at the head of the bed. Secretary Stanton, Welles, Dennison, Usher, and McCulloch, and Mr. Speed are in the room. A large number of surgeons, generals, and personal family friends of Mr. Lincoln fill the house All are in tears. "Andy" Johnson is here. He was in bed in his room at the Kirkwood when the assassination was committed. He was immediately apprized of the event, and got up. The precaution was taken to provide a guard of soldiers for him, and these were at his door before the news was well through the evening. Captain [Major] Rathbone of Albany was in the box with the President. He was slightly wounded.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.29

Later—The accounts are confused and contradictory. One dispatch announces that the President died at 12:30 P. M. Another, an hour later, states that he is still living, but dying slowly. We go to press without knowing the exact truth, but presume there is not the slightest ground for hope. Mr. Seward and his son are both seriously wounded, but are not killed. But there can be little hope that the Secretary can rally with this additional and frightful wound.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.29

Twelfth Dispatch.

Washington, Friday, April 14, 1865. Special Dispatch to the New York Tribune:

Secretaries Stanton, Welles, and other prominent officers of the Government called at Secretary Seward's house to inquire into his condition, and there heard of the assassination of the President. They then proceeded to the house where he was lying, exhibiting, of course, intense anxiety and solicitude. An immense crowd was gathered in front of the President's house, and a strong guard was also stationed there, many persons evidently supposing he would be brought to his home. The entire city to-night presents a scene of the wildest excitement, accompanied by violent expressions of indignation, and the profoundest sorrow; many shed tears. The military authorities have dispatched mounted patrols in every direction, in order, if possible, to arrest the assassins. The whole metropolitan police are likewise vigilant for the same purpose. The attacks, both at the theaterand at Secretary Seward's house, took place at about the same hour—ten o'clock—thus showing a preconcerted plan to assassinate those gentlemen. Some evidences of the guilt of the party who attacked the President are in the possession of the police. Vice-President Johnson is in the city, and his headquarters are guarded by troops.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.30

Thirteenth Dispatch.

Washington, Friday, April 14, 1865. Special Dispatch to the New York Tribune:

It was Major Rathbone, late of General Burnside's staff, and stepson of Senator Harris, with Miss Harris, who were in the box with Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln. The captain received a wound in the arm in his effort to detain the assassin. The President is rapidly sinking, and the attending surgeons say he will expire in a very short time. Secretary Seward has just dropt into a comfortable sleep. His pulse remains full, and his physicians pronounce him in a hopeful state.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.30

A burden of anxiety has been lifted by a dispatch just received from General Grant. The train reached Philadelphia all right. The six rebel generals accompanied him on this train, while the remainder of the three or four hundred other officers below that rank, who arrived to-day, were sent to the Old Capitol. There is one universal acclaim of accusation rising against J. Wilkes Booth as the assassin. If he be indeed innocent, popular feeling against him must be to him unbearable.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.31

Fourteenth Dispatch.

Washington, Saturday, April 15—1:30 A. M. Special Dispatch to the New York Tribune:

I have just visited the dying couch of Abraham Lincoln. He is now in the agonies of death, and his physicians say he cannot live more than an hour. He is surrounded by the members of his Cabinet, all of whom are bathed in tears. Senator Sumner is seated on the right of the couch on which he is lying, the tears streaming down his cheeks and sobbing like a child. All around him are his physicians, Surgeon-General Barnes directing affairs. The President is unconscious, and the only sign of life he exhibits is by the movement of his right hand, which he raises feebly. mrs. Lincoln and her two sons are in an adjoining room, into which Secretary Stanton has just gone to inform them that the President's physicians have pronounced his case hopeless. As I passed through the passage to the front door I hear shrieks and cries proceeding from the room in which the grief-stricken wife and children are seated.

Death of Lincoln, New York Tribune, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.31

Fifteenth Dispatch.

Washington, Saturday, April 15—2:12 A. M. Special Dispatch to the New York Tribune:

The President is still living, but he is growing weaker. The ball is lodged in the brain three inches from where it entered the skull. He remains insensible, and his condition is utterly hopeless. The Vice-President has been to see him; butall company, except the members of the Cabinet and of the family, is rigidly excluded. Large crowds still continue in the street, as near to the house as the line of guards allows.

The Funeral of Lincoln

Title: The Funeral of Lincoln

Author: James G. Blaine

Date: 1865

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.9, pp.1-5

Blaine, Funeral of Lincoln, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.1

The remains of the late President lay in state at the Executive Mansion for four days. The entire city seemed as a house of mourning. It was remarked that even the little children in the streets wore no smiles upon their faces, so deeply were they imprest by the calamity which had brought grief to every loyal heart. The martial music which had been resounding in glad celebration of the national triumph had ceased; public edifice and private mansion were alike draped with the insignia of grief; the flag of the Union, which had been waving more proudly than ever before, was now lowered to half-mast, giving mute but significant expression to the sorrow that was felt wherever on sea or land that flag was honored.

Blaine, Funeral of Lincoln, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.1

Funeral services, conducted by the leading clergymen of the city, were held in the East Room on Wednesday, the 19th of April. Amid the solemn tolling of church-bells, and the still more solemn thundering of minute-guns from the vast line of fortifications which had protected Washington, the body, escorted by an imposing military and civic procession, was transferred to the rotunda of the Capitol. The day was observed throughout the Union as one of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. The deep feeling of the people found expression in all the forms of religious solemnity. Service in the churches throughout the land were held in unison with the services at the Executive Mansion, and were everywhere attended with exhibition of profound personal grief. In all the cities of Canada business was suspended, public meetings of condolence with a kindred people were held, and prayers were read in the churches. Throughout the Confederate States where war had ceased but peace had not yet come, the people joined in significant expressions of sorrow over the death of him whose very name they had been taught to execrate.

Blaine, Funeral of Lincoln, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.2

Early on the morning of the 21st the body was removed from the Capitol and placed on the funeral-car which was to transport it to its final resting-place in Illinois. The remains of a little son, who had died three years before, were taken from their burial-place in Georgetown, and borne with those of his father for final sepulcher in the stately mausoleum which the public mind had already decreed to the illustrious martyr. The train which moved from the National Capital was attended on its course by extraordinary manifestation of grief on the part of the people. Baltimore, which had reluctantly and sullenly submitted to Mr. Lincoln's formal inauguration and to his authority as President, now showed every mark of honor and of homage as his body was borne through her streets, Confederate and Unionist alike realizing the magnitude of the calamity which had overwhelmed both North and South.

Blaine, Funeral of Lincoln, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.3

In Philadelphia the entire population did reverence to the memory of the murdered patriot. A procession of more than a hundred thousand persons formed his funeral cortege to Independence Hall, where the body remained until the ensuing day. The silence of the sorrowful night was in strange contrast with the scene in the same place, four years before, when Mr. Lincoln, in the anxieties and perils of the opening rebellion, hoisted the national flag over our ancient Temple of Liberty, and before a great and applauding multitude defended the principles which that flag typifies. He concluded in words which, deeply impressive at the time, proved sadly prophetic now that his body lay in a bloody shroud where his living form then stood: "sooner than surrender these principles, I would be assassinated on this spot."

Blaine, Funeral of Lincoln, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.3

In the city of New York the popular feeling was, if possible, even more marked than in Philadelphia. The streets were so crowded that the procession moved with difficulty to the City Hall, where, amid the chantings of eight hundred singers, the body was placed upon the catafalque prepared for it. Throughout the day and throughout the entire night the living tide of sorrowful humanity flowed past the silent form. At the solemn hour of midnight the German musical societies sang a funeral hymn with an effect so impressive and so touching that thousands of strong men were in tears. Other than this no sound was heard throughout the night except the footsteps of the advancing and receding crowd. At sunrise many thousands still waiting in the park were obliged to turn away disappointed. It was observed thatevery person who passed through the hall, even the humblest and poorest, wore the insignia of mourning. In a city accustomed to large assemblies and to unrestrained expressions of popular feeling, no such scene had ever been witnessed. On the afternoon appointed for the procession to more westward, all business was suspended, and the grief of New York found utterance in Union Square before a great concourse of people in a funeral oration by the historian Bancroft and in an elegiac ode by William Cullen Bryant.

Blaine, Funeral of Lincoln, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.4

Similar scenes were witnessed in the great cities along the entire route. Final obsequies were celebrated in Oakridge Cemetery near Springfield on the fourth day of May. Major-General Joseph Hooker acted as chief marshal upon the occasion, and an impressive sermon was pronounced by Bishop Simpson of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Perhaps in the history of the world no such outpouring of the people, no such exhibition of deep feeling, had ever been witnessed as on this funeral march from the National Capital to the capital of Illinois. The pomp with which sovereigns and nobles are interred is often formal rather than emotional, attaching to the rank rather than to the person. Louis Philippe appealed to the sympathy of France when he brought the body of the Emperor Napoleon from St. Helena twenty years after his death; but the popular feeling among the French was chiefly displayed in connection with the elaborate rites which attended the transfer of the dead hero to the Invalides, where the shattered remnants of his valiant and once conquering legions formed for the last time around him. Twelve years later the victorious rival bywhom the imperial warrior was at last overcome, received from the populace of London, as well as from the crown, the peers, and the commons of England, the heartiest tribute that Britons ever paid to human greatness.

Blaine, Funeral of Lincoln, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.5

The splendor of the ceremonials which aggrandize living royalty as much as they glorify dead heroism, was wholly wanting in the obsequies of Mr. Lincoln. No part was taken by the Government except the provision of a suitable military escort. All beyond was the spontaneous movement of the people. For seventeen hundred miles, through eight great States of the Union, whose population was not less than fifteen millions, an almost continuous procession of mourners attended the remains of the beloved President. There was no pageantry save their presence. There was no tribute but their tears. They bowed before the bier of him who had been prophet, priest, and king to his people, who had struck the shackles from the slave, who had taught a higher sense of duty to the free man, who had raised the Nation to a loftier conception of faith and hope and charity. A countless multitude of men, with music and banner and cheer and the inspiration of a great cause, presents a spectacle that engages the eye, fills the mind, appeals to the imagination. But the deepest sympathy of the soul is touched, the height of human sublimity is reached, when the same multitude, stricken with a common sorrow, stands with uncovered head, reverent and silent.

The Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth

Title: The Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth

Author: Ray Stannard Baker

Date: 1865

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.9, pp.38-55

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.38

Colonel Baker's first step was the publication over his own name of a handbill offering $30,000 reward for the capture of the fugitives. Twenty thousand dollars of this amount was subscribed by the city of Washington, and the other $10,000 Colonel Baker offered on his own account, as authorized by the War Department. To this handbill minute descriptions of Booth and the unknown person who attempted the assassination of Secretary Seward were appended. Hardly had the bills been posted when the United States Government authorized the publication of additional rewards to the amount of $100,000 for the capture of Booth, Surratt, and Herold, Surratt at that time being suspected of direct complicity in the assassination. Three States increased this sum by $25,000 each, and many individuals and companies, shocked by the awful atrocity of the crime, offered rewards in varying amounts. Fabulous stories were told of the wealth which the assassin's captor would receive, the sums being placed anywhere from $500,000 to $1,000,000. This prospect of winning a fortune at once sent hundreds of detectives, recently discharged Union officers and soldiers, and a vast host of mere adventurers—the flotsam of Washington—into the field, and the whole of southern Maryland and eastern Virginia was scoured and ransacked until it seemed as if a jack-rabbit could not have escaped. And yet, at the end of ten days, the assassins were still at large.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.39

Booth was accompanied in his flight by a callow, stage-struck youth named David C. Herold, who was bound to the older man by the ties of a marvelous personal magnetism which the actor exercised as a part of his art. Two hours after the assassination the fugitives reached Mrs. Surratt's tavern, where Herold secured a carbine, two flasks of whisky, and a field-glass. They imparted the information with some show of pride that they had just killed the President of the United States. By the time Booth's broken leg had begun to give him excruciating pain, and the two rode without delay to the house of Dr. Mudd, a southern sympathizer of the most pronounced type. Here the assassin's leg was set and splinted, for lack of better material, with bits of an old cigar-box. Rude crutches were whittled out by a friend of Dr. Mudd's, and on the following day Booth and his deluded follower rode on to the southward.

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For more than a week they were hidden in a swamp near Fort Tobacco by Samuel Cox and Thomas Brown, both of whom were stanch Confederates. Here they were compelled to kill their horses for fear that a whinny might reveal their presence to their eager pursuers. After many attempts Brown was able to send the fugitives across the river in a little boat, for which Booth paid $300. Once in Virginia, and among Southerners, Booth felt that they would be safe; but in this supposition he was sorely disappointed. At least one prominent Confederate treated them as murderers and outcasts, and they were compelled to accept the help of negroes and to skulk and cower under assumed names….

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Colonel Baker sent Theodore Woodall, one of the detectives, into lower Maryland, accompanied by an expert telegrapher named Beckwith, who was to attach his instrument to the wires at any convenient point and report frequently to the headquarters at Washington. These men had been out less than two days when they discovered a voluble negro who told them quite promptly that two men answering to the description of Booth and Herold had crossed the Potomac below Port Tobacco on Saturday night (April 22d) in a fishingboat. This evidence which had already been spurned by a company of troops, was regarded as of so much importance, that the negro was hurried to Washington by the next boat, where Colonel Baker questioned him closely, afterward showing him a large number of photographs. He at once selected the pictures of Booth and Herold as being the persons whom he had seen in the boat. Colonel Baker decided that the clue was of the first importance, and, after a hurried conference with Secretary Stanton, he sent a request to General Han-cock for a detachment of cavalry to guard his men in the pursuit….

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Lieutenant Edward P. Doherty of the Sixteenth New York Cavalry, with twenty-five men, Sergeant Boston Corbett second in command, reported to Colonel Baker for duty. He was directed to go with Lieutenant Baker and Conger wherever they might order, and to protect them to the extent of his ability. Without waiting even to secure a sufficient supply of rations, Lieutenant Baker and his men galloped down to the Sixth Street dock, where they were hurried on board the Government tug John S. Ide.

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It was a little after three o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, April 24th, when the expedition started. Seven hours later the tug reached Belle Plaine landing. At this point there is a sharp bend in the river, and Colonel Baker had advised his men to scour the strip of country stretching between it and the Rappahannock.

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Again in their saddles, they struck across the country in the direction of Port Conway, a little town on the Rappahannock about twenty-two miles below Fredericksburg. Between two and three o'clock in the afternoon they drew rein near a planter's house half a mile distant from the town, and ordered dinner for the men and feed for the horses. Baker pushed on ahead to the bank of the Rappahannock. Here, dozing in front of his little cottage in the sunshine, Baker found a fisherman-ferryman whose name was Rollins. He asked him if he had seen a lame man cross the river within the past few days. Yes, he had, and there was another man with him. In fact, Rollins said that he had ferried them across the river.

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These men, as they afterward learned, were Bainbridge and Herold; and Booth at that moment was less than half a mile away, lying on the grass in front of the Garrett house. Indeed, he saw his pursuers distinctly as they passed his hiding-place, and commented on their dusty and saddle-worn appearance. But they believed him to be in Bowling Green, fifteen miles away, and so they pushed on, leaving behind them the very man they so much desired to see.

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It was near midnight when the party clattered into Bowling Green, and with hardly a spoken command, surrounded the dark, rambling old hotel. Baker stept boldly to the front door, while Conger strode to the rear, from whence came the dismal barking of a dog. Presently a light flickered on the fan-light, and some one opened the door a crack and inquired, in a frightened, feminine voice, what was wanted. Baker thrust his toe inside, flung the door wide open, and was confronted by a woman. At this moment Conger came through from the back way, led by a stammering negro. The woman admitted at once that there was a Confederate cavalryman sleeping in her house, and she promptly pointed out the room. Baker and Conger, candle in hand, at once entered. Captain Jett sat up, staring at them.

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"What do you want?" he asked.

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"We want you," answered Conger; "you took Booth across the river, and you know where he is."

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"You are mistaken in your man," he replied, crawling out of bed.

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"You lie." roared Conger, springing forward, his pistol clicking close to Jett's head.

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By this time the cavalrymen were crowding intothe room, and Jett saw the candle-light glinting on their brass butons and on their drawn revolvers.

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"Upon honor as a gentleman," he said, paling, "I will tell you all I know if you will shield me from complicity in the whole matter."

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"Yes, if we get Booth," responded Conger.

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"Booth is at the Garrett house, three miles this side of Port Conway," he said; "if you came that way you may have frightened him off, for you must have passed the place."

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In less than thirty minutes the pursuing party was doubling back over the road by which it had just come, bearing Jett with it as a prisoner. His bridle-reins were fastened to the men on each side of him, in the fear that he would make a dash to escape and alarm Booth and Herold.

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It was a black night, no moon, no stars, and the dust rose in choking clouds. For two days the men had eaten little and slept less, and they were so worn out that they could hardly sit their jaded horses. And yet they plunged and stumbled onward through the darkness, over fifteen miles of meandering country road, reaching Garrett's farm at half-past three o'clock in the morning of April 26th. Like many other Southern places, Garrett's house stood far back from the road, with a bridle-gate at the end of a long lane. So exhausted were the cavalrymen, that some of them dropt down in the sand where their horses stopt and had to be kicked into wakefulness. Rollins and Jett were placed under guard, and Baker and Conger made a dash up the lane, some of the cavalrymen following.

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Garrett's house was an old-fashioned Southernmansion, somewhat dilapidated, with a wide, hospitable piazza reaching its full length in front, and barns and tobacco houses looming big and dark apart. Baker leapt from his horse to the steps, and thundered on the door. A moment later a window close at hand was cautiously raised, and a man thrust his head out. Before he could say a word Baker seized him by the arm.

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"Open the door; be quick about it."

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The old man tremblingly complied, and Baker slipt inside, closing the door behind him. A candle was quickly lighted, and then Baker demanded of Garrett to reveal the hiding-place of the two men who had been staying in his house.

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"They're gone to the woods," he said, paling and beginning to tremble.

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"Don't tell me that," he said; "they are here."

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Conger now came in with young Garrett.

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"Don't injure father," said the young man; "I will tell you all about it. The men did go to the woods last evening when some cavalry went by, but the came back and wanted us to take them over to Louisa Court House. We said we could not leave home before morning, if at all. We were becoming suspicious of them, and father told them they could not stay with us—"

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"Where are they now?" interrupted Baker.

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"In the barn; my brother locked them in for fear they would steal the horses. He is now keeping watch in the corn-crib."

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It was plain that the Garretts did not know the identity of the men who had been imposing on their hospitality. Consequently, Baker askedno more questions, but taking young Garrett's arm, he made a dash toward the barn. Conger ordered the cavalrymen to follow, and formed them in such positions around the barn that no one could escape. By this time the soldiers had found the boy in the crib, and had brought him up with the key. Baker unlocked the door, and told young Garrett that, inasmuch as the two men were his guests, he must go inside and induce them to come out and surrender. The young man objected most vigorously.

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"They are armed to the teeth," he faltered; "and they'll shoot me down."

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But he appreciated the fact that he was looking into the black mouth of Baker's revolver, and hastily slid through the doorway. There was a sudden rustling of corn-blades, and the sound of voices in low conversation. All around the barn the soldiers were picketed, wrapt in inky blackness and uttering no sound. In the midst of a little circle of candle-light Baker stood at the doorway with drawn revolver. Conger had gone to the rear of the barn. During the heat and excitement of the chase he had assumed command of the cavalrymen, somewhat to the umbrage of Lieutenant Doherty, who kept himself in the background during the remainder of the night. Further away, around the house, Garrett's family huddled together trembling and frightened.

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Suddenly from the barn a clear, high voice rang out, the voice of the tragedian in his last play.

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"You have betrayed me, sir; leave this barn or I will shoot you."

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Baker now called to the men in the barn, or-dering them to turn over their arms to young Garrett, and to surrender at once.

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"If you don't," threatened Baker, "we shall burn the barn, and have a bonfire and a shooting match."

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At that Garrett came running to the door and begged to be let out. He said he would do anything he could, but he didn't want to risk his life in the presence of two such desperate men. Baker therefore opened the door, and Garrett came out with a bound. He turned and pointed to the candle which Baker had been carrying since he left the house.

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"Put that out or he will shoot you by its light," he whispered in a frightened voice.

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Baker placed the candle on the ground at a little distance from the door so that it would light all the space in front of the barn. Then he called again to Booth to surrender. In a full, clear, ringing voice—a voice that smacked of the stage—Booth replied:

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"There is a man here who wishes very much to surrender," and then they heard him say to Herold, "Leave me, will you? Go; I don't want you to stay."

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At the door Herold was whimpering: "Let me out; I know nothing of this man in here."

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"Bring out your arms and you can come," answered Baker.

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Herold denied having any arms, and Booth finally said: "He has no arms; the arms are mine, and I shall keep them."

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By this time Herold was praying piteously to be let out. He said he was afraid of being shot, and he begged to be allowed to surrender. Bakeropened the door a little, and told him to put out his hands. The moment they appeared Baker seized them, whipt Herold out of the barn, and turned him over to the soldiers.

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"You had better come, too," Baker then said to Booth.

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"Tell me who you are and what you want of me. It may be I am taken by my friends."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.47

"It makes no difference who we are," was the reply. "We know you and we want you. We have fifty well-armed men stationed around this barn. You can not escape, and we do not wish to kill you."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.47

There was a moment's pause, and then Booth said falteringly:

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.47

"Captain, this is a hard case, I swear. I am lame. Give me a chance. Draw up your men twenty yards from here, and I will fight your whole command."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.47

"We are not here to fight," said Baker; "we are here to take you."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.47

Booth then asked for time to consider, and Baker told him that he could have two minutes, no more. Presently he said:

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.47

"Captain, I believe you to be a brave and honorable man. I have had half a dozen chances to shoot you. I have a bead drawn on you now—but I do not wish to kill you. Withdraw your men from the door, and I'll go out. Give me this chance for my life. I will not be taken alive."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.47

Even in his deep distress Booth had not forgotten to be theatrical. If he must die he wisht to die at the climax of a highly dramatic situation.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.47

"Your time is up," said Baker firmly; "if you don't come out we shall fire the barn."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.48

"Well, then, my brave boys," came the answer in clear, ringing tones that could be heard by the women who cowered on Garrett's porch, rods away, "you may prepare a stretcher for me." Then, after a slight pause, he added, "One more stain on the glorious old banner."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.48

Conger now came around the corner of the barn and asked Baker if he was ready. Baker nodded, and Conger stepped noiselessly back, drew a handful of corn-blades through a crack in the barn, scratched a match, and in a moment the whole interior of the barn was brilliant with light. Baker opened the door and peered in. Booth had been leaning against the mow, but he now sprang forward, half blinded by the sudden glare of fire, his crutches under his arms, and his carbine leveled in the direction of the flames as if he would shoot the man who had set them going. But he could not see into the darkness outside. He hesitated, then reeled forward again. An old table was near at hand. He caught hold of it as tho to cast it top down on the fire, but he was not quick enough. Dropping one crutch, he hobbled toward the door.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.48

About the middle of the barn he stopt, drew himself up to his full height, and seemed to take in the entire situation. His hat was gone, and his wavy, dark hair was tossed back from his high white forehead; his lips were firmly comprest, and, if he was pale, the ruddy glow of the firelight concealed that fact. In his full, dark eyes there was an expression of mingled hatred, terror, and the defiance of a tiger hunted to his lair. In one hand he held a carbine, in the other a revolver, and his belt contained another revolver anda bowie-knife. He seemed prepared to fight to the end, no matter what numbers opposed him. By this time the flames in the dry corn-blades had mounted to the rafters of the dingy old building, arching the hunted assassin in a glow of fire more brilliant than the lighting of any theater in which he had ever played. And for once in his life, J. Wilkes Booth was a great actor. He was in the last scene of his last play. The curtain soon would drop.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.49

Suddenly Booth threw aside his remaining crutch, dropt his carbine, raised his revolver, and made a spring for the door. It was his evident intention to shoot down any one who might bar his way, and make a dash for liberty, fighting as he ran.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.49

There came a shock that sounded above the roar of the flames. Booth leapt in the air and pitched forward on his face. Baker was upon him in an instant, grasping both his arms to prevent the use of the revolver. But this precaution was entirely unnecessary. Booth would struggle no more. Another moment and Conger and the soldiers came rushing in. Baker turned the wounded man over and felt for his heart.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.49

"He must have shot himself," said Conger.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.49

"No," replied Baker; "I saw him every moment after the fire was lighted. The man who did do the shooting goes back to Washington in irons for disobedience of orders."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.49

In the excitement that followed the firing of the barn, Sergeant Boston Corbett, an eccentric

"After Corbett had shot Booth, and just as day was breaking, he was crossing the lawn in front of Garrett's house. Conger hailed him, and demanded the reason why he had fired against orders. Corbett took the position of a soldier, saluted, and pointed heavenward.

"'God Almighty directed me,' he said.

"'Well,' was Conger's answer, as he turned away, 'I guess He did, or you couldn't have hit Booth through that crack in the barn."

"Years afterward Corbett became insane, and was confined in a Kansas asylum."character who had accompanied the cavalry detachment, had stolen up to the side of the barn, placed his revolver to the crack between two boards, and just as Booth was about to spring through the doorway, had fired the fatal shot. He afterward told Lieutenant Baker that he knew Booth's movement meant death either for him (Baker) or for Booth.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.50

Booth's body was caught up and carried out of the barn and laid under an apple-tree not far away. Water was dashed in his face, and Baker tried to make him drink, but he seemed unable to swallow. Presently, however, he opened his eyes and seemed to understand the situation. His lips moved, and Baker bent down to hear what he might say.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.50

"Tell mother—tell mother—" he faltered, and then became unconscious again. The flames of the burning barn now grew so intense that it wasnecessary to remove the dying man to the piazza of the house, where he was laid on a mattress provided by Mrs. Garrett. A cloth wet in brandy was applied to his lips, and under its influence he revived a little. Then he opened his eyes and said with deep bitterness:

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.51

"Oh, kill me; kill me quick."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.51

"No, Booth," said Baker, "we don't want you to die. You were shot against orders." Then he was unconscious again for several minutes, and they thought he never would speak again. But his breast heaved, and he acted as if he wisht to say something. Baker placed his ear at the dying man's mouth, and Booth faltered:

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.51

"Tell mother I died for my country. I did what I thought was best."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.51

With a feeling of pity and tenderness, Baker lifted the limp hand, but it fell back again as if dead at his side. Booth seemed conscious of the movement; he turned his eyes and muttered hopelessly:

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.51

"Useless—useless"—and he was dead.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.51

When his collar was removed it was found that the bullet had struck the assassin under the ear, in almost the exact location that his own had struck the President. The great nerve of the spinal column had been severed, resulting in instant paralysis of the entire body below the wound.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.51

About twenty minutes before Booth's death, Conger had started for Washington, taking with him Booth's arms, his diary, and other articles found on his person. While the Garretts were preparing breakfast for the hungry men, Booth's body was wrapt in a saddle blanket and the blanket stoutly sewed together. The body was then placed in an ancient and decrepit market wagon owned by an old colored man, who had been forced into the service somewhat against his will. Without waiting for breakfast, Baker, accompanied by a corporal, set out over the road for Belle Plaine, the negro driving the old horse as rapidly as he could….

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.52

On one of the hardest hills the king-bolt of the rickety old wagon gave out with a snap; the front lurched heavily forward. The big letters "U. S." on the blanket were wet with the assassin's blood, which had also trickled down over the axle and dribbled for miles along the road. The negro driver crawled under the wagon to repair the break, and some of the blood fell on his hand. He sprang back, shrieking in terror.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.52

"Oh," he groaned. "It will neber, neber wash off. It am de blood ob a murderer."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.52

So horrified was he that he tried to leave his burden, wagon, horse, and all, and escape through the woods, but Baker forced him to continue on the journey. After thirty miles of heat and dust, up hill and down, they crept over the top of a sandy knoll, and Baker saw the blest blue of the Potomac glimmering through the trees. It was just twilight, and the tinkle of cow-bells came up drowsily from the river-bank. Booth's body, wrapt in blue, was now gray with dust. The body was placed in the boat, and, a few minutes later it was hoisted to the deck of the John S. Ide. Baker saw it properly under guard, and then sank in a stupor of sleep on the deck. On reaching Washington the body was removed to the gunboat Sau-gatuck, which lay at anchor in the navy-yard, and there the autopsy and the inquest were held.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.53

Conger had brought the news of the capture to Washington many hours before, and every town in the country was ringing with the tidings. The moment the evidences of Booth's death—the diary, two revolvers, the carbine, the belt, and the compass—were placed in Colonel Baker's hands, he carried them to the office of the Secretary of War.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.53

"I rushed into the room," relates Colonel Baker, "and said, 'We have got Booth.' Secretary Stanton was distinguished during the whole war for his coolness, but I never saw such an exhibition of it in my life as at this time. He put his hands over his eyes and lay for nearly a minute without saying a word. Then he got up, put on his coat, and inquired how the capture had come about." . . .

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.53

Late in the afternoon of the second day after Booth's body was brought to Washington (April 28th) Colonel Baker received orders to dispose of the body in the way that seemed best to him, so that Booth's Confederate friends might never get it. Taking Lieutenant Baker with him, he started at once for the navy-yard, stopping on the way at the old penitentiary prison. They reached the ironclad on which Booth's body reposed just as twilight was deepening into night. The body was sewn again in its bloody winding-sheet and lowered into a small rowboat. Hundreds of people stood watching on the shore, knowing that it was Booth's body, and determined to ascertain what was to be done with it. Colonel Baker had brought with him a heavy ball and chain, which he placed in the boat by the side of the body, making no apparent attempt at secrecy. He and Lieutenant Baker stept into the little craft, and a few strokes of the oars sent it speeding out on the black Potomac in the gathering darkness. It had passed from lip to lip that the body of Booth was to be sunk in the river, and the crowds followed eagerly along the shore until the little rowboat and its occupants disappeared. It was a moonless, starless night, warm with mid-spring. In the distance blinked the lights of the city, vieing with the near illumination of the river craft. For nearly two miles the boat drifted silently. Its occupants spoke no word; there was not even the creak of an oar-lock.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.54

At Geeseborough Point the river widens and its shallows grow rank with rushes and marsh weeds. Here the boat was driven toward shore until its speed was quenched in the mud of a little cove. It was the loneliest of lonely spots on the Potomac—the burial ground of worn-out and condemned Government horses and mules—a place dreaded alike by white men and negroes. For a time the two officers listened intently to make sure they were not followed. All was quiet on the Potomac. No sounds reached their ears but the strident croak of bull-frogs and the lapping of the water on the sedgy shore.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.54

Presently the boat was turned and pulled slowly back toward the city. The utmost caution was observed to make no sound. They dreaded even the lisping of the oars and the faint lapping of the water at the gunwales. Suddenly against the sky loomed the huge black hulk of the old penitentiary. A few more strokes and the boat reached the base of the grim, forbidding wall. Silently they crept along until they came to a holelet into the solid masonry close to the water's edge. An officer who stood just inside of the opening, challenged the party in a low voice, and Colonel Baker answered with the countersign.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.55

They lifted the body from the boat and carried it through the hole in the masonry into a convict's cell. A huge stone slab, worn with the fretting of many a prisoner, had been lifted up, and under it there was a shallow grave, dug only a few hours before. A dim lantern outlined the damp walls of the cell and emphasized the shadows. Just at midnight Booth's body was lowered into the black hole, the stone slab was replaced over the unhonored grave, and the two officers crept back to their boat and returned to Washington.

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.55

It was believed that the body had been sunk in the Potomac, and for days the river was dragged by Booth's friends in the hope of finding it. The newspapers gave circumstantial accounts of the watery burial, and Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly for May 20, 1865, had a full-page illustration showing Colonel Baker and Lieutenant Baker in the act of slipping the body over the edge of the boat into the river. It was entitled "an authentic sketch."

Baker, Pursuit, Capture, Death and Burial of Booth, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.55

For several years no one but Colonel Baker, Lieutenant Baker, and two or three other officers, knew of the disposition of Booth's body. Indeed, there were rumors, widely credited in certain parts of the country, that Booth never had been captured. Later, however, after the heat and excitement of the time had subsided, permission was given for the removal of the remains to Baltimore, where they now rest.

Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville

Title: Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville

Author: John Bell Hood

Date: 1865

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.249-257

General Hood, a Kentuckian and West Point graduate, resigned from the United States Army in 1861 to accept a commission in the Confederate service under General Lee. Early in the war his gallantry gained him the rank of major-general. In July, 1864, to the great satisfaction of General Sherman, who was leading his Union army through Georgia, Hood succeeded the less impetuous General Johnston in command of the Army of the Tennessee, and was defeated by General Thomas at the Battle of Nashville, December 15-16, 1864. In this official report of the battle Hood attributes his defeat to the weakness of General Bates division on the Confederate left, which was pierced by the Federal attack. The Confederates were greatly outnumbered.

As a military force in retreat, Hood's army practically disappeared, and on January 23, 1865, he asked to be relieved of his command. As a result of this battle, Congress thanked Thomas.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.249–p.250

THE army arrived at Florence on the 31st of October. This unfortunate delay allowed the enemy time to repair the damage to his railroad, and to accumulate at Atlanta sufficient supplies to enable him to return the greater part of his army to that place and move with it through to the Atlantic coast. The remainder he threw across the Tennessee under Thomas. When our army arrived at Florence it had entirely recovered from the depression that frequent retreats had created. The enemy having for the first time divided his forces, I had to determine which of the two parts to direct my operations against. To follow the forces about to move through Georgia under Sherman would be to again abandon the regained territory to the forces under Thomas, with little hope of being able to reach the enemy in time to defeat his movement, and also to cause desertion and greatly impair the morale or fighting spirit of the army by what would be considered a compulsory retreat. I thought the alternative clear that I should move upon Thomas. If I succeeded in beating him the effect of Sherman's movement would not be great, and I should gain in men sufficiently to compensate for the damages he might inflict. If beaten I should leave the army in better condition than it would be if I attempted a retrograde movement against Sherman.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.250

Upon all these questions I had a full and free conference with General Beauregard at Tuscumbia. General Beauregard left it optional with me either to divide the army, sending a part after Sherman and to push on with the remainder, or to move forward at once against Thomas with the entire force. The army I thought too small to divide. I so informed him, when he directed me by telegraph to push forward at once….

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.250–p.251

The want of a good map of the country, and the deep mud through which the army marched, prevented our overtaking the enemy before he reached Columbia, but on the evening of the 27th of November our army was placed in position in front of his works at that place. During the night, however, he evacuated the town, taking position on the opposite side of the river, about a mile and a half from the town, which was considered quite strong in front.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.251

…. We pursued the enemy rapidly and compelled him to burn a number of his wagons. He made a feint as if to give battle on the hills about four miles south of Franklin, but as soon as our forces began to deploy for the attack and to flank him on his left he retired slowly to Franklin.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.251

I learned from dispatches captured at Spring Hill, from Thomas to Schofield, that the latter was instructed to hold that place till the position at Franklin could be made secure, indicating the intention of Thomas to hold Franklin and his strong works at Murfreesborough. Thus I knew that it was all important to attack Schofield before he could make himself strong, and if he should escape at Franklin he would gain his works about Nashville. The nature of the position was such as to render it inexpedient to attempt any further flank movement, and I therefore determined to attack him in front, and without delay.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.251–p.252

On the 30th of November Stewart's corps was placed in position on the right, Cheatham's on the left, and the cavalry on either flank, the main body of the cavalry on the right, under Forrest. Johnson's division, of Lee's corps, also became engaged on the left during the engagement. The line advanced at 4 p.m., with orders to drive the enemy into or across the Big Harpeth River, while General Forrest, if successful, was to cross the river and attack and destroy his trains and broken columns. The troops moved forward most gallantly to the attack. We carried the enemy's first line of hastily constructed works handsomely. We then advanced against his interior line, and succeeded in carrying it also in some places. Here the engagement was of the fiercest possible character. Our men possessed themselves of the exterior of the works, while the enemy held the interior. Many of our men were killed entirely inside the works. The brave men captured were taken inside his works in the edge of the town. The struggle lasted till near midnight, when the enemy abandoned his works and crossed the river, leaving his dead and wounded in our possession. Never did troops fight more gallantly. The works of the enemy were so hastily constructed that while he had a slight abatis in front of a part of his line there was none on his extreme right. During the day I was restrained from using my artillery on account of the women and children remaining in the town. At night it was massed ready to continue the action in the morning, but the enemy retired.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.252

We captured about 1,000 prisoners and several stand of colors. Our loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners was 4,500….

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.252

The number of dead left by the enemy on the field indicated that his loss was equal or near our own.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.252

The next morning at daylight, the wounded being cared for and the dead buried, we moved forward toward Nashville, Forrest with his cavalry pursuing the enemy vigorously.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.253–p.254

On the 2d of December the army took position in front of Nashville, about two miles from the city. Lieutenant-General Lee's corps constituted our center, resting upon the Franklin pike, with Cheatham's corps upon the right and Stewart's on the left, and the cavalry on either flank, extending to the river. I was causing strong detached works to be built to cover our flanks, intending to make them inclosed works, so as to defeat any attempt of the enemy should he undertake offensive movements against our flank and rear. The enemy still held Murfreesborough with about 6,000 men, strongly fortified; he also held small forces at Chattanooga and Knoxville. It was apparent that he would soon have to take the offensive to relieve his garrisons at those points or cause them to be evacuated, in which case I hoped to capture the forces at Murfreesborough, and should then be able to open communication with Georgia and Virginia. Should he attack me in position I felt that I could defeat him, and thus gain possession of Nashville with abundant supplies for the army. This would give me possession of Tennessee. Necessary steps were taken to furnish the army with supplies, which the people were ready and willing to furnish. Shoe-shops were in operation in each brigade. We had captured sufficient railroad stock to use the road to Pulaski, and it was already in successful operation. Having possession of the State, we should have gained largely in recruits, and could at an early day have moved forward to the Ohio, which would have frustrated the plans of the enemy, as developed in his campaign toward the Atlantic coast.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.254

I had sent Major-General Forrest, with the greatest part of his cavalry and Bates division of infantry, to Murfreesborough, to ascertain if it was possible to take the place. After a careful examination and reconnaissance in force, in which, I am sorry to say, the infantry behaved badly, it was determined that nothing could be accomplished by assault. Bate's division was then withdrawn, leaving Forrest with Jackson's and Buford's divisions of cavalry in observation. Mercer's and Palmer's brigades of infantry were sent to replace Bate's division. Shortly afterward Buford's division was withdrawn and ordered to the right of the army, on the Cumberland River.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.254

Nothing of importance occurred until the morning of the 15th of December when the enemy, having received heavy re-enforcements, attacked simultaneously both our flanks. On our right he was handsomely repulsed, with heavy loss, but on our left, toward evening, he carried some partially completed redoubts of those before mentioned.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.254–p.255

During the night of the 15th our whole line was shortened and strengthened; our left was also thrown back; dispositions were made to meet any renewed attack. The corps of Major-General Cheatham was transferred from our right to our left, leaving Lieutenant-General Lee on our right, who had been previously in the center, and placing Lieutenant-General Stewart's corps in the center, which had been previously the left.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.255–p.256

Early on the 16th of December the enemy made a general attack on our lines, accompanied by a heavy fire of artillery. All his assaults were repulsed with heavy loss till 3.30 p.m., when a portion of our line to the left of the center, occupied by Bate's division, suddenly gave way. Up to this time no battle ever progressed more favorably; the troops in excellent spirits, waving their colors and bidding defiance to the enemy. The position gained by the enemy being such as to enfilade our line caused in a few moments our entire line to give way and our troops to retreat rapidly down the pike in the direction of Franklin, most of them, I regret to say, in great confusion, all efforts to reform them being fruitless. Our loss in artillery was heavy—54 guns. Thinking it impossible for the enemy to break our line, the horses were sent to the rear for safety, and the giving way of the line was so sudden that it was not possible to bring forward the horses to move the guns which had been placed in position. Our loss in killed and wounded was small. At Brentwood, some four miles from our line of battle, the troops were somewhat collected, and Lieutenant-General Lee took command of the rear guard, encamping for the night in the vicinity. On leaving the field I sent a staff officer to inform General Forrest of our defeat, and to direct him to rejoin the army with as little delay as possible to protect its rear, but owing to the swollen condition of the creeks, caused by the heavy rain then falling, he was unable to join us until we reached Columbia, with the exception of a portion of his command, which reached us while the enemy was moving from Franklin to Spring Hill.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.256

On the 17th we continued the retreat toward Columbia, encamping for the night at Spring Hill. During this day's march the enemy's cavalry pressed with great boldness and activity, charging our infantry repeatedly with the saber, and at times penetrating our lines. The country being open was favorable to their operations. I regret to say that also on this day Lieutenant-General Lee, commanding the covering force, was severely wounded in the foot. We continued our retreat across Duck River to Columbia, the corps alternating as rear guards to the army. Lieutenant-General Lee and the corps commanded by him deserve great credit.

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.256–p.257

After the fight at Nashville I at first hoped to be able to remain in Tennessee, on the line of Duck River; but after arriving at Columbia I became convinced that the condition of the army made it necessary to recross the Tennessee without delay; and on the 21st the army resumed its march for Pulaski…. From Pulaski I moved by the most direct road to the Bainbridge crossing on the Tennessee River, which was reached on the 25th, where the army crossed without interruption, completing the crossing on the 27th, including our rear guard, which the enemy followed with all his cavalry and three corps of infantry to Pulaski, and with cavalry between Pulaski and the Tennessee River. After crossing the river the army moved by easy marches to Tupelo, Miss…. Here, finding so much dissatisfaction throughout the country as in my judgment to greatly impair, if not destroy, my usefulness and counteract my exertions, and with no desire but to serve my country, I asked to be relieved, with the hope that another might be assigned to the command who might do more than I could hope to accomplish. Accordingly, I was so relieved on the 23d of January by authority of the President….

Hood, Thomas Defeats Hood at Nashville, America, Vol.8, p.257

From Palmetto to Spring Hill the campaign was all that I could have desired. The fruits ought to have been gathered at that point. At Nashville, had it not been for an unfortunate event which could not justly have been anticipated, I think we would have gained a complete victory. At any time it was in the power of the army to retire from Tennessee in the event of failure, as is established by the leisurely retreat which was made under the most difficult and embarrassing circumstances. It is my firm conviction that, notwithstanding that disaster, I left the army in better spirits and with more confidence in itself than it had at the opening of the campaign. The official records will show that my losses, including prisoners, during the entire campaign do not exceed 10,000 men. Were I again placed in such circumstances I should make the same marches and fight the same battles, trusting that the same unforseen and unavoidable accident would not again occur to change into disaster a victory which had been already won.

The Hampton Roads Conference

Title: The Hampton Roads Conference

Author: Alexander H. Stephens

Date: 1865

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.267-270

Stephens, whose account of the Hampton Roads Conference, February 3, 1865, appears in his "Constitutional View of the War Between the States," was, as Vice-President of the Confederacy, head of the Confederate Commission that met President Lincoln and Secretary Seward to confer upon terms of peace. His Confederate associates were Senator Robert M. T. Hunter and Assistant Secretary of War John A. Campbell.

The conference was brought about primarily by Francis P. Blair, who fancied that the war might be brought to a close and the country reunited by arranging for joint action of the Federal and Confederate armies against Maximilian in Mexico. During the parley, which lasted four hours on board the vessel River Queen, Lincoln expressed himself in favor of the Federal Government paying a fair indemnity to former slave-owners, but declined to modify his Emancipation Proclamation. No agreement was reached.

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.267

THE interview took place in the saloon of the steamer, on board of which were Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward, and which lay at anchor near Fortress Monroe. The Commissioners were conducted into the saloon first. Soon after, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward entered. After usual salutations on the part of those who were previously acquainted, and introductions of the others who had never met before, conversation was immediately opened by the revival of reminiscences and associations of former days….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.267–p.268

…. With this introduction I said in substance: Well, Mr. President, is there no way of putting an end to the present trouble, and bringing about a restoration of the gen eral good feeling and harmony then existing between the different States and sections of the country?….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.268

Mr. Lincoln in reply said, in substance, that there was but one way that he knew of, and that was for those who were resisting the laws of the Union to cease that resistance. All the trouble came from an armed resistance against the national authority.

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.268

But, said I, is there no other question that might divert the attention of both parties, for a time, from the questions involved in their Present strife, until the passions on both sides might cool, when they would be in better temper to come to an amicable and proper adjustment of those points of difference out of which the present lamentable collision of arms has arisen? Is there no continental question, said I, which might thus temporarily engage their attention? We have been induced to believe that there is….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.268

…. Is there not now such a continental question in which all the parties engaged in our present war feel a deep and similar interest? I allude, of course, to Mexico, and what is called the Monroe Doctrine, the principles of which are directly involved in the contest now waging there. From the tone of leading Northern papers and from public speeches of prominent men, as well as from other sources, we are under the impression that the administration at Washington is decidedly opposed to the establishment of an empire in Mexico by France and is desirous to prevent it….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.268–p.269

Could not both parties then, said I, in our contest come to an understanding and agreement to postpone their present strife by a suspension of hostilities between themselves, until this principle is maintained in behalf of Mexico; and might it not, when successfully sustained there, naturally, and would it not almost inevitably, lead to a peaceful and harmonious solution of their own difficulties?….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.269

The conversation was again diverted from that view of the subject by Mr. Lincoln. He repeated that he could not entertain a proposition for an armistice on any terms, while the great and vital question of reunion was disposed of. That was the first question to be settled….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.269

Judge Campbell now renewed his inquiry of how restoration was to take place, supposing that the Confederate States were consenting to it?

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.269

Mr. Lincoln replied: By disbanding their armies and permitting the national authorities to resume their functions….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.269–p.270

Mr. Lincoln said that so far as the Confiscation Acts, and other penal acts, were concerned, their enforcement was left entirely with him, and on that point he was perfectly willing and explicit, and on his assurance perfect reliance might be placed. He should exercise the power of the Executive with the utmost liberality. He went on to say that he would be willing to be taxed to remunerate the Southern people for their slaves. He believed the people of the North were as responsible for slavery as the people of the South, and if the war should then cease, with the voluntary abolition of slavery by the States, he should be in favor, individually, of the Government paying a fair indemnity for the loss to the owners. He said he believed this feeling had an extensive existence at the North. He knew some who were in favor of an appropriation as high as four hundred millions of dollars for this purpose….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.270

Mr. Seward said, that the Northern people were weary of the war. They desired peace and a restoration of harmony, and he believed would be willing to pay as an indemnity for the slaves what would be required to continue the war, but stated no amount.

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.270

I then said: I wish, Mr. President, you would reconsider the subject of an armistice on the basis which has been suggested. Great questions, as well as vast interests are involved in it….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.270

Well, said he, as he was taking my hand for a farewell leave, and with a peculiar manner very characteristic of him: Well, Stephens, I will reconsider it, but I do not think my mind will change, but I will reconsider.

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.270

The two parties then took formal and friendly leave of each other, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward withdrawing first from the saloon together….

The Evacuation and Fall of Richmond

Title: The Evacuation and Fall of Richmond

Author: Horace Greeley and Edward A. Pollard

Date: 1865

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.271-277

Pollard, whose account of the evacuation of the Confederate capital on April 2, 1865, is given in Greeley's "American Conflict," was an editorial writer on the Richmond Examiner and an eye-witness of the scene here described. Soon after the fall of Richmond he was captured while attempting to run the blockade on his way to England, and was imprisoned for eight months in Fort Warren in Boston.

By order of General Ewell, the Confederate troops, before leaving Richmond, set fire to the warehouses and destroyed a great part of the city. The Federal forces entered the city on the day after the evacuation.

Some months before these events, Greeley unofficially represented President Lincoln on a mission to Canada to confer with Confederate agents on the subject of peace. The conference proved as fruitless as did the more famous one at Hampton Roads.

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.271–p.272

WHILE Petersburg was still held by the Confederate army, Lee saw that it could not be held much longer. His heavy losses—by this time exceeding 10,000 men—and the utter demolition of his right, rendered it morally certain that to hold on was to insure the capture or destruction of his army; and well he knew that his veterans were the last hope of the Rebellion. For Grant was now at liberty to throw forward his left to Appomattox; while it was morally certain that his cavalry would soon clutch the railroad junction at Burkesville, which had now become the jugular vein of the gasping Confederacy. At 10:30 a.m. [April 2, 1865], therefore, he telegraphed to Davis in Richmond a dispatch, containing very nearly these words:

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.272

"My lines are broken in three places. Richmond must be evacuated this evening."

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.272

That message found Mr. Davis, at 11 a.m., in church, where it was handed to him, amid an awful hush; and he immediately went quietly, soberly out—never to return as President of the Confederacy. No word was spoken; but the whole assemblage felt that the missive he had so hastily perused bore words of doom. Though the handwriting was not blazoned on the wall, it needed no Daniel to declare its import.

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.272

But no one can duly depict that last afternoon and night of Confederate rule in Richmond but an eyewitness: so let Pollard narrate for us the visible collapse and fall of the Slave Power in its chosen metropolis. After stating how, upon Mr. Davis's withdrawal from church, "the rumor was caught up in the streets that Richmond was to be evacuated, and was soon carried to the ends of the city," he proceeds:

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.272–p.273

"Men, women, and children rushed from the churches, passing from lip to lip news of the impending fall of Richmond. And yet, it was difficult to believe it. To look up to the calm, beautiful sky of that spring day, unassailed by one single noise of battle, to watch the streets, unvexed by artillery or troops, stretching away into the quiet, hazy atmosphere, and believe that the capital of the Confederacy, so peaceful, so apparently secure, was in a few hours to be the prey of the enemy, and to be wrapt in the infernal horrors of a conflagration!

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.273

"It was late in the afternoon when the signs of evacuation became apparent to the incredulous. Wagons on the streets were being hastily loaded at the departments with boxes, trunks, etc., and driven to the Danville depot. Those who had determined to evacuate with the fugitive government looked on with amazement; then, convinced of the fact, rushed to follow the government's example. Vehicles suddenly rose to a premium value that was astounding; and ten, fifteen, and even a hundred dollars, in gold or Federal currency, was offered for a conveyance. Suddenly, as if by magic, the streets became filled with men, walking as though for a wager, and behind them excited negroes with trunks, bundles, and luggage of every description. All over the city it was the same—wagons, trunks, bandboxes, and their owners, a mass of hurrying fugitives, filling the streets. The banks were all open, and depositors were as busy as bees removing their specie deposits; and the directors were equally active in getting off their bullion. Hundreds of thousands of dollars of paper money was destroyed, both State and Confederate. Night came; and with it came confusion worse confounded. There was no sleep for human eyes in Richmond that night.

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.273–p.274

"The City Council had met in the evening and resolved to destroy all the liquor in the city, to avoid the disorder consequent on the temptation to drink at such a time. About the hour of midnight the work commenced, under the direction of committees of citizens in all the wards. Hundreds of barrels of liquor were rolled into the street, and the heads knocked in. The gutters ran with a liquor freshet, and the fumes filled and impregnated the air. Fine cases of bottled liquors were tossed into the street from third-story windows, and wrecked into a thousand pieces. As the work progressed, some straggling soldiers, retreating through the city, managed to get hold of a quantity of the liquor. From that moment law and order ceased to exist. Many of the stores were pillaged; and the sidewalks were encumbered with broken glass, where the thieves had smashed the windows in their reckless haste to lay hands on the plunder within. The air was filled with wild cries of distress, or the yells of roving pillagers.

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.274

"But a more terrible element was to appear upon the scene. An order had been issued from General Ewell's headquarters to fire the four principal tobacco warehouses of the city—namely, the public warehouse, situated at the head of the basin, near the Petersburg railroad depot; Shockoe warehouse, situated near the center of the city, side by side with the Gallego flour-mills; Mayo's warehouse, and Dibrell's warehouse, on Cary Street, a square below Libby prison.

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.274–p.275

"Morning broke upon a scene such as those who witnessed it can never forget. The roar of an immense conflagration sounded in their ears; tongues of flame leapt from street to street; and in this baleful glare were to be seen, as of demons, the figures of busy plunderers, moving, pushing, rioting, through the black smoke and into the open street, bearing away every conceivable sort of plunder.

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.275

"The scene at the commissary depot, at the head of the dock, beggared description. Hundreds of government wagons were loaded with bacon, flour, and whisky, and driven off in hot haste to join the retreating army. Thronging about the depot were hundreds of men, women, and children, black and white, provided with capacious bags, baskets, tubs, buckets, tin pans, and aprons; cursing, pushing, and crowding; awaiting the throwing open of the doors, and the order for each to help himself.

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.275

"About sunrise the doors were opened to the populace; and a rush that almost seemed to carry the building off its foundation was made, and hundreds of thousands of pounds of bacon, flour, etc., were soon swept away by a clamorous crowd."

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.275–p.276

Our lines opposite Richmond—that is, north of the James—had been held since Ord's withdrawal southward, by 'General Godfrey Weitzel, with Kautz's division of the Twenty-fourth and Ashborne's and Thomas's divisions of the Twenty-fifth Corps, under instructions from Grant to make the utmost show of strength and purpose to assault, so as to keep the enemy here in force, while the bulk of our army should be flanking and fighting him out of Petersburg. These instructions had been faithfully, efficiently obeyed; though Longstreet, confronting Weitzel, had at length suspected the true character of Grant's strategy, and had himself, with a part of his force, moved southward to the help of Lee at Petersburg…. No one on our side seems to have suspected that the Confederate soldiery were even then stealthily withdrawing from their works in our front, preparatory to hastening after their comrades who had already filed hurriedly and dolefully out of the opposite portals of Richmond….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.276

The enemy defenses appeared to have been, while manned, almost impregnable. Two separate lines of abatis, three lines of rifle-pits and earthworks—the first and second connected by regular lines of redans—with a fort or very strong earthwork on every elevation—such were a part of the impediments which had so long kept our soldiers out of Richmond. If one of these lines had been carried, it was completely commanded by that next behind it; so that our loss while holding it must have been ten to one; while to advance and storm the next barrier must, for the moment, have involved still greater prodigality of life. Yet these works our troops had lain down the previous night expecting to assail at daybreak in the morning….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.276–p.277

Jefferson Davis had left at 10 p.m. of Sunday. Nearly all the Confederate officials, including their members of Congress, had also taken their leave; as had William Smith, Governor of Virginia, and most of his satellites. There was no shadow of resistance offered to our occupation; and there Is no room for doubt that a large majority of all who remained in Richmond heartily welcomed our army as deliverers….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.277

The city was of course placed under military rule…. The fire was extinguished so soon as possible; but not till it had burned out the very heart of Richmond, including its great warehouses, the post-offices, etc. The losses of private property by the conflagration must have amounted to many millions of dollars, since a full third of the city was destroyed. Libby prison, Castle Thunder, and the Tredegar Iron Works, were unharmed….

Stephens, Hampton Roads Conference, America, Vol.8, p.277

Before noon of that day the news of Richmond's fall had been flashed across the loyal States, and it was soon confirmed by telegrams from President Lincoln, then at City Point, and from the Secretary of War at Washington. In New York an impromptu gathering of many thousands immediately filled Wall Street, and listened, with cheers and thanksgiving to dispatches, addresses, etc.; while the bells of Trinity and St. Paul's chimed melodiously with the general joy and praise. So in Washington and other great cities, the popular feeling of relief and gratitude found many modes of expression, wherein the readers of next day's journals detected no unmanly exaltation over the fallen, and scarcely a word of wrath or bitterness, or demanding vengeful inflictions on those whose unhallowed ambition had so long divided, so widely devastated, and so nearly destroyed, the Republic.

The Last Stand of Lee's Army

Title: The Last Stand of Lee's Army

Author: John B. Gordon

Date: 1865

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.278-285

General Gordon, from whose "Reminiscences of the Civil War" this account is taken by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons, commanded one wing of Lee's army during the final period of the war. He here describes its desperate situation on April 8, 1865, the day before the Confederate surrender.

Gordon, a native of Georgia, entered the Confederate army as a captain of infantry in 1861, and rose to be a lieutenant-general. After the war he served two terms in the United States Senate, where he was a Democratic leader, and was celebrated for his oratory. Later he was Governor of Georgia, and attained national celebrity as a lecturer on subjects connected with the Civil War.

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.278

ON the evening of April 8th, this little army, with its ammunition nearly exhausted, was confronted by the forces of General Grant, which had been thrown across our line of retreat at Appomattox. Then came the last sad Confederate council of war. It was called by Lee to meet at night. It met in the woods at his headquarters and by a low burning bivouac-fire. There was no tent there, no table, no chairs, and no camp-stools. On blankets spread upon the ground or on saddles at the roots of the trees we sat around the great commander. A painter's brush might transfer to canvas the physical features of that scene, but no tongue or pen will ever be able to describe the unutterable anguish of Lee's commanders as they looked into the clouded face of their beloved leader and sought to draw from it some ray of hope.

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.279

There were present at this final council the general-in-chief, the commander of his artillery, General Pendleton; General Fitzhugh Lee, who in the absence of Wade Hampton commanded the cavalry, and General Longstreet and myself, commanding all that was left of his immortal infantry. These fragments of each arm of the service still represented the consecration and courage that had made Lee's army, at the meridian of its power, almost invincible.

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.279–p.280

The numbers and names of the staff officers who were present I cannot now recall; and it would be as impossible to give the words that were spoken or the suggestions that were made as it would to photograph the thoughts and emotions of that soldier group gathered at Lee's last bivouac. The letters of General Grant asking surrender, and the replies thereto, evoked a discussion as to the fate of the Southern people and the condition in which the failure of our cause would leave them. There was also some discussion as to the possibility of forcing a passage through Grant's lines and saving a small portion of the army, and continuing a desultory warfare until the Government at Washington should grow weary and grant to our people peace, and the safeguard of local self-government. If all that was said and felt at that meeting could be given it would make a volume of measureless pathos. In no hour of the great war did General Lee's masterful characteristics appear to me so conspicuous as they did in that last council. We knew by our own aching hearts that his was breaking. Yet he commanded himself, and stood calmly facing and discussing the long-dreaded and inevitable.

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.280

It was finally determined that with Fitz Lee's cavalry, my infantry, and Long's artillery, under Colonel Thomas H. Carter, we should attempt at daylight the next morning to cut through Grant's lines. Longstreet was to follow in support of the movement.

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.280

The utmost that could be hoped for was that we might reach the mountains of Virginia and Tennessee with a remnant of the army, and ultimately join General Johnston. As we rode away from the meeting I directed a staff officer to return to General Lee and ask him if he had any specific directions as to where I should halt and camp for the night. He said: "Yes; tell General Gordon that I should be glad for him to halt just beyond the Tennessee line." That line was about two hundred miles away, and Grant's battlelines and breastworks were in our immediate front, ready to check any movement in that direction; but General Lee knew that I would interpret his facetious message exactly as he intended it. His purpose was to let me infer that there was little hope of our escape and that it did not matter where I camped for the night; but if we should succeed in cutting our way out, he expected me to press toward the goal in the mountains.

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.280–p.281

The Federals had constructed a line of breastwork across our front during the night. The audacious movement of our troops was begun at dawn. The dashing cavalry leader, Fitzhugh Lee, swept through the Union left flank, while the infantry and artillery attacked the front. I take especial pride in recording the fact that this last charge of the war was made by the footsore and starving men of my command with a spirit worthy the best days of Lee's army. The Union breastworks were carried. Two pieces of artillery were captured, The Federals were driven from all that portion of the field, and the brave boys in tattered gray cheered as their battle-flags waved in triumph on that last morning.

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.281–p.282

The Confederate battle-lines were still advancing when I discovered a heavy column of Union infantry coming from the right and upon my rear. I gathered around me my sharpshooters, who were now held for such emergencies, and directed Colonel Thomas H. Carter, of the artillery, to turn all his guns upon the advancing columns. It was held at bay by his shrapnel, grape and canister. While the Confederate infantry and cavalry were thus fighting at the front, and the artillery was checking the development of Federal forces around my right and rear, Longstreet was assailed by other portions of the Federal army. He was so hardly pressed that he could not join, as contemplated, in the effort to break the cordon of men and metal around us. At this critical juncture a column of Union cavalry appeared on the hills to my left, headed for the broad space between Longstreet's command and mine. In a few minutes that body of Federal cavalry would not only have seized the trains but cut off all communication between the two wings of Lee's army and rendered its capture inevitable. I therefore detached a brigade to double-quick and intercept this Federal force.

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.282

Such was the situation, its phases rapidly shifting and growing more intensely thrilling at each moment, when I received a significant inquiry from General Lee. It was borne by Colonel Charles S. Venable, of his staff, afterward the chairman of the faculty of the University of Virginia. The commander wished me to report at once as to the conditions on my portion of the field, what progress I was making, and what encouragement I could give. I said: "Tell General Lee that my command has been fought to a frazzle, and unless Longstreet can unite in the movement, or prevent these forces from coming upon my rear, I can not long go forward."

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.282

In the words of Colonel Venable: "At three o'clock on the morning of that fatal day, General Lee rode forward, still hoping that he might break through the countless hordes of the enemy who hemmed us in. Halting a short distance in rear of our vanguard, he sent me on to General Gordon to ask him if he could cut through the enemy. I found General Gordon and General Fitz Lee on their front line in the light of the morning, arranging an attack. Gordon's reply to the message (I give the expressive phrase of the Georgian) was this: 'Tell General Lee I have fought my corps to a frazzle, and I fear I can do nothing unless I am heavily supported by Longstreet's corps.'"

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.283

Colonel Venable adds that when General Lee received my message he said: "There is nothing left me but to go and see General Grant, and I had rather die a thousand deaths." My troops were still fighting, furiously fighting in nearly every direction, when the final note from General Lee reached me. It notified me that there was a flag of truce between General Grant and himself, stopping hostilities, and that I could communicate that fact to the commander of the Union forces in my front. There was no unnecessary delay in sending that message. I called Colonel Green Peyton of my staff, and directed him to take a flag of truce and bear the message to General Ord, who commanded, as I supposed, the Union infantry in my front. I ordered him to say to the Union commander this, and nothing more: "General Gordon has received notice from General Lee of a flag of truce, stopping the battle." Colonel Peyton soon informed me that we had no flag of truce. I said: "Well, take your handkerchief and tie that on a stick, and go." He felt in his pocket and said, "General, I have no handkerchief." "Then tear your shirt, sir, and tie that to a stick." He looked at his shirt, and then at mine, and said, "General, I have on a flannel shirt, and I see you have. I don't believe there is a white shirt in the army." "Get something, sir," I ordered, "Get something and go!"

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.283–p.284

He secured a rag of some sort, and rode rapidly away in search of General Ord. He did not find Ord, but he found Sheridan, and returned to me accompanied by an officer of strikingly picturesque appearance. This Union officer was slender and graceful, and a superb rider. He wore his hair very long, falling almost to his shoulders. Guided by my staff-officer, he galloped to where I was sitting on my horse, and, with faultless grace and courtesy, saluted me with his saber and said:

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.284

"I am General Custer, and bear a message to you from General Sheridan. The general desires me to present to you his compliments, and to demand the immediate and unconditional surrender of all the troops under your command." I replied, "You will please, general, return my compliments to General Sheridan, and say to him that I shall not surrender my command." "He directs me to say to you, general, if there is any hesitation about your surrender, that he has you surrounded and can annihilate your command in an hour."

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.284

To this I answered that I was probably as well aware of my situation as was General Sheridan; that I had nothing to add to my message informing him of the contents of the note from General Lee; that if General Sheridan decided to continue the fighting in the face of the flag of truce, the responsibility for the blood shed would be his and not mine.

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.284

In a short time thereafter a white flag was seen approaching. Under it was Philip Sheridan, accompanied by a mounted escort almost as large as one of Fitz Lee's regiments. Sheridan was mounted on an enormous horse, a very handsome animal….

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.285

The meeting of Lee and Grant, and the impressive formalities which followed, put an end to the interview, and we parted without the slightest breach of strict military courtesy….

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.285

When the proud and sensitive sons of Dixie came to a full realization of the truth that the Confederacy was overthrown and their leader had been compelled to surrender his once invincible army, they could no longer control their emotions, and tears ran down their shrunken faces. The flags which they still carried were objects of undisguised affection. These Southern banners had gone down before overwhelming numbers; and torn by shells, riddled by bullets, and laden with the powder and smoke of battle, they aroused intense emotion in the men who so often followed them to victory. Yielding to overpowering sentiment, these high-mettled men began to tear the flags from the staffs and hide them in their bosoms, as they wet them with burning tears.

Gordon, Last Stand of Lee's Army, America, Vol.8, p.285

The Confederate officers faithfully endeavored to check this exhibition of loyalty and love for the old flags. A great majority of them were duly surrendered; but many were secretly carried by devoted veterans to their homes, and will be cherished forever as honored heirlooms.

The Surrender of Lee at Appomattox

Title: The Surrender of Lee at Appomattox

Author: Ulysses S. Grant

Date: 1865

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.286-292

If ever there was a book written under difficulties, it was Grant's Memoirs. A business failure had involved him in financial ruin, and at the time he was living on borrowed money. He was ill, slowly dying of cancer in fact, fighting to live long enough to complete the work which would provide for his wife and children. With dogged determination he steeled himself to endure the increasing pain and put in long hours at his desk.

The circumstances of the book's publication created an immense audience for it, and justified "Mark Twain"—Samuel L. Clemens—who published it, in the first royalty payment of $200,000, said to be the largest single payment of royalty in the world, which he made to Grant's widow. General Grant died happy in the realization that his work was not only finished, but highly acceptable to his countrymen. This account is taken from Grant's Memoirs, by permission of the Century Co.

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.286

ON the 8th [April, 1865] I had followed the Army of the Potomac in rear of Lee…. During the night I received Lee's answer to my letter of the 8th, inviting an interview between the lines on the following morning. But it was for a different purpose from that of surrendering his army, and I answered him as follows….

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.286–p.287

[April 9.] Your note of yesterday is received. As I have no authority to treat on the subject of peace, the meeting proposed for ten a.m. to-day could lead to no good. I will state, however, General, that I am equally anxious for peace with yourself, and the whole North entertains the same feeling. The terms upon which peace can be had are well understood. By the South laying down their arms they will hasten that most desirable event, save thousands of human lives, and hundreds of millions of property not yet destroyed. Sincerely hoping that all our difficulties may be settled without the loss of another life, I subscribe, etc….

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.287

Lee…. sent…. this message…. to me.

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.287

[April 9.]…. I received your note of this morning on the picket-line whither I had come to meet you and ascertain definitely what terms were embraced in your proposal of yesterday with reference to the surrender of this army. I now request an interview in accordance with the offer contained in your letter of yesterday for that purpose….

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.287

…. I found him at the house of a Mr. McLean, at Appomattox Court House, with Colonel Marshall, one of his staff officers, awaiting my arrival….

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.287

…. We greeted each other, and after shaking hands took our seats. I had my staff with me, a good portion of whom were in the room during the whole of the interview.

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.287–p.288

What General Lee's feelings were I do not know. As he was a man of much dignity, with an impassible face, it was impossible to say whether he felt inwardly glad that the end had finally come, or felt sad over the result, and was too manly to show it. Whatever his feelings, they were entirely concealed from my observation; but my own feelings, which had been quite jubilant on the receipt of his letter, were sad and depressed. I felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly, and had suffered so much for a cause, though that cause was, I believe, one of the worst for which a people ever fought, and one for which there was the least excuse. I do not question, however, the sincerity of the great mass of those who were opposed to us.

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.288

General Lee was dressed in a full uniform which was entirely new, and was wearing a sword of considerable value, very likely the sword which had been presented by the State of Virginia; at all events, it was an entirely different sword from the one that would ordinarily be worn in the field. In my rough traveling suit, the uniform of a private with the straps of a lieutenant-general, I must have contrasted very strangely with a man so handsomely dressed, six feet high and of faultless form. But this was not a matter that I thought of until afterwards.

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.288–p.289

We soon fell into a conversation about old army times. He remarked that he remembered me very well in the old army; and I told him that as a matter of course I remembered him perfectly, but from the difference in our rank and years (there being about sixteen years' difference in our ages), I had thought it very likely that I had not attracted his attention sufficiently to be remembered by him after such a long interval. Our conversation grew so pleasant that I almost forgot the object of our meeting. After the conversation had run on in this style for some time, General Lee called my attention to the object of our meeting, and said that he had asked for this interview for the purpose of getting from me the terms I proposed to give his army. I said that I meant merely that his army should lay down their arms, not to take them up again during the continuance of the war unless duly and properly exchanged. He said that he had so understood my letter.

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.289

Then we gradually fell off again into conversation about matters foreign to the subject which had brought us together. This continued for some little time, when General Lee again interrupted the course of the conversation by suggesting that the terms I proposed to give his army ought to be written out. I called to General Parker, secretary on my staff, for writing materials, and commenced writing out the following terms….

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.289

[April 9.]…. In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th inst., I propose to receive the surrender of the Army of N. Va. on the following terms, to wit: Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate. One copy to be given to an officer designated by me, the other to be retained by such officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged, and each company or regimental commander sign a like parole for the men of their commands. The arms, artillery and public property to be parked and stacked, and turned over to the officer appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the sidearms of the officers, nor their private horses or baggage. This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they may reside….

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.290

When I put my pen to the paper I did not know the first word that I should make use of in writing the terms. I only knew what was in my mind, and I wished to express it clearly, so that there could be no mistaking it. As I wrote on, the thought occurred to me that the officers had their own private horses and effects, which were important to them, but of no value to us; also that it would be an unnecessary humiliation to call upon them to deliver their side arms.

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.290

No conversation, not one word, passed between General Lee and myself, either about private property, side arms, or kindred subjects. He appeared to have no objections to the terms first proposed; or if he had a point to make against them he wished to wait until they were in writing to make it. When he read over that part of the terms about side arms, horses and private property of the officers, he remarked, with some feeling, I thought, that this would have a happy effect upon his army.

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.291

Then, after a little further conversation, General Lee remarked to me again that their army was organized a little differently from the army of the United States (still maintaining by implication that we were two countries); that in their army the cavalrymen and artillerists owned their own horses; and he asked if he was to understand that the men who so owned their horses were to be permitted to retain them. I told him that as the terms were written they would not; that only the officers were permitted to take their private property. He then, after reading over the terms a second time, remarked that that was clear.

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.291

I then said to him that I thought this would be about the last battle of the war—I sincerely hoped so; and I said further I took it that most of the men in the ranks were small farmers. The whole country had been so raided by the two armies that it was doubtful whether they would be able to put in a crop to carry themselves and their families through the next winter without the aid of the horses they were then riding. The United States did not want them and I would, therefore, instruct the officers I left behind to receive the paroles of his troops to let every man of the Confederate army who claimed to own a horse or mule take the animal to his home. Lee remarked again that this would have a happy effect.

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.291

He then sat down and wrote out the following letter:

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.292

[April 9.]…. I received your letter of this date containing the terms of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia as proposed by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th inst., they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the stipulations into effect….

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.292

General Lee, after all was completed and before taking his leave, remarked that his army was in a very bad condition for want of food, and that they were without forage; that his men had been living for some days on parched corn exclusively, and that he would have to ask me for rations and forage. I told him "certainly," and asked for how many men he wanted rations. His answer was "about twenty-five thousand": and I authorized him to send his own commissary and quartermaster to Appomattox Station, two or three miles away, where he could have, out of the trains we had stopped, all the provisions wanted. As for forage, we had ourselves depended almost entirely upon the country for that….

Grant, Surrender of Lee at Appomattox, America, Vol.8, p.292

When news of the surrender first reached our lines our men commenced firing a salute of a hundred guns in honor of the victory. I at once sent word, however, to have it stopped. The Confederates were now our prisoners, and we did not want to exult over their downfall.

Davis's Flight from Richmond and Capture in Georgia

Title: Davis's Flight from Richmond and Capture in Georgia

Author: Jefferson Davis

Date: 1865

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.293-300

In his "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government (D. Appleton & Company) Jefferson Davis thus recounts his flight from Richmond, on hearing from General Lee that the city must be evacuated. The President of the Confederacy, with a volunteer escort, started for Washington, Georgia, intending to make his way beyond the Mississippi. A report that his wife was in danger led him to change his course to join her, and on May 10, 1865, he was captured near Irwinville, Georgia. The story of his masking in a woman's dress had no other foundation than is here set forth.

General Nelson A. Miles, who was in command of Fortress Monroe while Davis was imprisoned there, has denied treating him with undue harshness and has explained that light anklets were placed upon his ankles "to prevent the possibility of his attempting to jump past the guard or commit any act of violence while grated doors were being put in his room.

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.293–p.294

ON Sunday, the 2d of April [1865], while I was in St. Paul's Church, General Lee's telegram, announcing his speedy withdrawal from Petersburg and the consequent necessity for evacuating Richmond, was handed to me. I quietly rose and left the church. The occurrence probably attracted attention, but the people of Richmond had been too long beleaguered, had known me too often to receive notice of threatened attacks, and the congregation of St. Paul's was too refined, to make a scene at anticipated danger. For all these reasons, the reader will be prepared for the announcement that the sensational stories which have been published about the agitation caused by my leaving the church during service were the creation of fertile imaginations. I went to my office and assembled the heads of departments and bureaus, as far as they could be found on a day when all the offices were closed, and gave the needful instructions for our removal that night, simultaneously with General Lee's withdrawal from Petersburg. The event was not unforeseen, and some preparation had been made for it, though, as it came sooner than was expected, there was yet much to be one….

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.294

Being alone in Richmond, the few arrangements needful for my personal wants were soon made after reaching home. Then, leaving all else in the care of the housekeeper, I waited until notified of the time when the train would depart; then, going to the station, started for Danville, whither I supposed General Lee would proceed with his army….

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.294–p.295

We arrived at Charlotte on April 18, 1865, and I there received, at the moment of dismounting, a telegram from General Breckinridge announcing, on information received from General Sherman, that President Lincoln had been assassinated. An influential citizen of the town, who had come to welcome me, was standing near me, and, after remarking to him in a low voice that I had received sad intelligence, I handed the telegram to him. Some troopers encamped in the vicinity had collected to see me; they called to the gentleman who had the dispatch in his hand to read it, no doubt supposing it to be army news. He complied with their request, and a few, only taking in the fact, but not appreciating the evil it portended, cheered, as was natural at news of the fall of one they considered their most powerful foe. The man who invented the story of my having read the dispatch with exultation had free scope for his imagination, as he was not present, and had no chance to know whereof he bore witness, even if there had been any foundation of truth for his fiction.

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.295

For an enemy so relentless in the war for our subjugation, we could not be expected to mourn; yet, in view of its political consequences, it could not be regarded otherwise than as a great misfortune to the South. He had power over the Northern people, and was without personal malignity toward the people of the South; his successor was without power in the North, and the embodiment of malignity toward the Southern people, perhaps the more so because he had betrayed and deserted them in the hour of their need. The war had now shrunk into narrow proportions, but the important consideration remained to so conduct it that, if failing to secure independence, we might obtain a treaty or quasi-treaty of peace which would secure to the Southern States their political rights, and to the people thereof immunity from the plunder of their private property….

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.295

…. On the second or third day after leaving Washington, I heard that a band of marauders, supposed to be stragglers and deserters from both armies, were in pursuit of my family, whom I had not seen since they left Richmond, but of whom I heard, at Washington, that they had gone with my private secretary, and seven paroled men, who generously offered their services as an escort, to the Florida coast. Their route was to the east of that I was pursuing, but I immediately changed direction and rode rapidly across the country to overtake them….

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.296

For the protection of my family I traveled with them two or three days, when, believing that they had passed out of the region of the marauders, I determined to leave their encampment at nightfall, to execute my original purpose. My horse and those of my party proper were saddled preparatory to a start, when one of my staff, who had ridden into the neighboring village, returned and told me that he had heard that a marauding party intended to attack the camp that night. This decided me to wait long enough to see whether there was any truth in the rumor, which I supposed would be ascertained in a few hours. My horse remained saddled and my pistols in the holsters, and I lay down, fully dressed, to rest.

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.296–p.297

Nothing occurred to rouse me until just before dawn, when my coachman, a free colored man, who faithfully clung to our fortunes, came and told me there was firing over the branch, just behind our encampment. I stepped out of my wife's tent and saw some horsemen, whom I immediately recognized as cavalry, deploying around the encampment. I turned back and told my wife these were not the expected marauders, but regular troopers. She implored me to leave her at once. I hesitated, from unwillingness to do so, and lost a few precious moments before yielding to her importunity. My horse and arms were near the road on which I expected to leave, and down which the cavalry approached; it was therefore impracticable to reach them. I was compelled to start in the opposite direction.

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.297

As it was quite dark in the tent I picked up what was supposed to be my "raglan," a waterproof, light overcoat, without sleeves; it was subsequently found to be my wife's, so very like my own as to be mistaken for it; as I started my wife thoughtfully threw over my head and shoulders a shawl. I had gone perhaps fifteen or twenty yards when a trooper galloped up and ordered me to halt and surrender, to which I gave a defiant answer, and, dropping the shawl and raglan from my shoulders, advanced toward him; he leveled his carbine at me, but I expected, if he fired, he would miss me, and my intention was in that event to put my hand under his foot, tumble him off on the other side, spring into his saddle and attempt to escape.

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.297–p.298

My wife, who had been watching, when she saw the soldier aim his carbine at me, ran forward and threw her arms around me. Success depended on instantaneous action, and, recognizing that the opportunity had been lost, I turned back, and, the morning being damp and chilly, passed on to a fire beyond the tent. Our pursuers had taken different roads, and approached our camp from opposite directions; they encountered each other and commenced firing, both supposing they had met our armed escort, and some casualties resulted from their conflict with an imaginary body of Confederate troops. During the confusion, while attention was concentrated upon myself, except by those who were engaged in pillage, one of my aides, Colonel J. Waylor Wood, with Lieutenant Barnwell, walked off unobserved. His daring exploits on the sea had made him, on the part of the Federal Government, an object of special hostility, and rendered it quite proper that he should avail himself of every possible means of escape. Colonel Pritchard went over to their battle-field, and I did not see him for a long time, surely more than an hour after my capture. He subsequently claimed credit, in a conversation with me, for the forbearance shown by his men in not shooting me when I refused to surrender.

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.298

Wilson and others have uttered many falsehoods in regard to my capture, which have been exposed in publications by persons there present—by Secretary Reagan, by the members of my personal staff, and by the colored coachman, Jim Jones, which must have been convincing to all who were not given over to believe a lie. For this reason I will postpone, to some other time and more appropriate place, any further notice of the story and its variations, all the spawn of a malignity that shames the civilization of the age. We were, when prisoners, subjected to petty pillage, and to annoyances such as military gentlemen never commit or permit.

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.298–p.299

On our way to Macon we received the proclamation of President Andrew Johnson, offering a reward for my apprehension as an accomplice in the assassination of the late President Abraham Lincoln. Some troops by the wayside had the proclamation, which was displayed with vociferous demonstrations of exultation over my capture. When we arrived at Macon I was conducted to the hotel where General Wilson had his quarters. A strong guard was in front of the entrance, and, when I got down to pass in, it opened ranks, facing inward, and presented arms….

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.299

At Augusta we were put on a steamer, and there met Vice-President Stephens, and C. C. Clay, who had surrendered himself, At Port Royal we were transferred to a sea-going vessel which, instead of being sent to Washington City, was brought to anchor at Hampton Roads.

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.299–p.300

One by one all my companions in misfortune were sent away, we knew not whither, leaving on the vessel only Mr. Clay and his wife and myself and family. After some days' detention, Clay and myself were removed to Fortress Monroe, and there incarcerated in separate cells. Not knowing that the government was at war with women and children, I asked that my family might be permitted to leave the ship and go to Richmond or Washington City, or to some place where they had acquaintances, but this was refused. I then requested that they might be permitted to go abroad on one of the vessels lying at the Roads. This was also denied; finally, I was informed that they must return to Savannah on the vessel by which we came. This was an old transport-ship, hardly seaworthy. My last attempt was to get for them the privilege of stopping at Charleston, where they had many personal friends. This also was refused—why, I did not then know, have not learned since, and am unwilling to make a supposition, as none could satisfactorily account for such an act of inhumanity.

Davis's Flight and Capture, America, Vol.8, p.300

My daily experience as a prisoner shed no softer light on the transaction, but only served to intensify my extreme solicitude. Bitter tears have been shed by the gentle, and stern reproaches have been made by the magnanimous, on account of the needless torture to which I was subjected, and the heavy fetters riveted upon me, while in a stone casemate and surrounded by a strong guard; but all these were less excruciating than the mental agony my captors were able to inflict. It was long before I was permitted to hear from my wife and children, and this, and things like this, was the power which education added to savage cruelty.

The Disbanding of the Federal Army

Title: The Disbanding of the Federal Army

Author: James G. Blaine

Date: 1865

Source: America, Vol.8, pp.301-305

At the time the Federal army was disbanded in 1865, Blaine was a member of Congress from Maine, to which body he was elected in 1862, serving seven successive terms. This account is taken from his "Twenty Years in Congress."

Blaine was a native of Pennsylvania, where he graduated from Washington College in 1847, subsequently becoming a Maine newspaper editor, and in 1858 was a member of the Maine Legislature. Nominated for the Presidency by the Republican National Convention of 1884, he was defeated by Grover Cleveland.

The number of Federal soldiers of official Civil War record was 2,666,999. Federal casualties numbered 359,528; 110,070 men were killed in action or died of wounds, and 249,458 died from disease, accident or other causes. Enrolled in the Confederate armies were about 500,000 men. Their entire loss in killed and wounded was less than 100,000.

Blaine, Disbanding of the Federal Army, America, Vol.8, p.301

THE wonder excited by the raising of the vast army which saved the Union from destruction was even surpassed by the wonder excited by its prompt and peaceful dissolution. On the day that the task of disbandment was undertaken, the Army of the United States bore upon its rolls the names of one million five hundred and sixteen men (1,000,516). The killed, and those who had previously retired on account of wounds and sickness and from the expiration of shorter terms of service, aggregated, after making due allowance for reenlistments of the same persons, at least another million. The living among these had retired gradually during the war, and had resumed their old avocations, or, in the great demand for workmen created by the war itself, had found new employment. But with the close of hostilities many industries which had been created by the demands of war ceased, and thousands of men were thrown out of employment. The disbandment of the Volunteer Army would undoubtedly add hundreds of thousands to this number, and thus still further overstock and embarrass the labor market. The prospect was not encouraging, and many judicious men feared the result.

Blaine, Disbanding of the Federal Army, America, Vol.8, p.302–p.303

Happily all anticipations of evil proved groundless. By an instinct of self-support and self-adjustment, that great body of men who left the military service during the latter half of the year 1865 and early in the year 1866 reentered civil life with apparent contentment and even with certain advantages. Their experience as soldiers, so far from unfitting them for the duties and callings of an era of Peace, seem rather to have proved an admirable school, and to have given them habits of promptness and punctuality, order and neatness, which added largely to their efficiency in whatever field they were called to labor. After the Continental Army was dissolved, its members were found to be models of industry and intelligence in all the walks of life. The successful mechanics, the thrifty tradesmen, the well-to-do farmers in the old thirteen States were found, in great proportion, to have held a commission or carried a musket in the Army of the Revolution. They were, moreover, the strong pioneers who settled the first tier of States to the westward, and laid the solid foundation which assured progress and prosperity to their descendants. Their success as civil magistrates, as legislators, as executives was not less marked and meritorious than their illustrious service in war. The same cause brought the same result a century later in men of the same blood fighting with equal valor the same battle of constitutional liberty. The inspiration of a great cause does not fail to ennoble the humblest of those who do battle in its defense. Those who stood in the ranks of the Union Army have established this truth by the twenty years of honorable life through which they have passed since their patriotic service was crowned with victory.

Blaine, Disbanding of the Federal Army, America, Vol.8, p.303–p.304

The officers who led the Union Army throughout all the stages of the civil conflict were in the main young men. This feature has been a distinguishing mark in nearly all the wars in which the American people have taken part, and with a few notable exceptions has been the rule in the leading military struggles of the world. Alexander the Great died in his thirty-second year. Caesar entered upon the conquest of Gaul at forty. Frederick the Great was the leading commander of Europe at thirty-three. Napoleon and Wellington, born the same year, fought their last battle at forty-six years of age. On the exceptional side Marlborough's greatest victories were won when he was nearly sixty (though he had been brilliantly distinguished at twenty-two), and in our own day the most skillful campaign in Europe was under the direction of Von Moltke when he was in the seventieth year of his age….

Blaine, Disbanding of the Federal Army, America, Vol.8, p.304

General Grant won his campaign of the Tennessee, and fought the battles of Henry, Donelson, and Shiloh when he was thirty-eight years of age. Sherman entered upon his onerous work in the southwest when he was forty-one, and accomplished the march to the sea when he was forty-four. Thomas began his splendid career in Kentucky when he was forty-three, and fought the critical and victorious battle of Nashville when he was forty-six. Sheridan was but thirty-three when he confirmed a reputation, already enviable, by his great campaign in 1864 in the Shenandoah Valley. Meade won the decisive battle of Gettysburg when he was forty-seven. McClellan was but thirty-five when he succeeded General Scott in command of the army. McDowell was forty-five when he fought the first battle of magnitude in the war. Buell was forty-two when he joined his forces with Grant's army on the second day's fight at Shiloh. Pope was scarcely over forty when he attained the highest credit for his success in the southwest. Hancock was forty-one when he proved himself one of the most brilliant commanders in the army by his superb bearing on the field of Spottyslvania. Hooker was forty-six when he assumed command of the Army of the Potomac….

Blaine, Disbanding of the Federal Army, America, Vol.8, p.304–p.305

Among the officers who volunteered from civil life the success of young men as commanders was not less marked than among the graduates of West Point General Logan, to whom is conceded by common consent the leading reputation among volunteer officers, and who rose to the command of an army, went to the field at thirty-five. General Butler was forty-two when he was placed at the head of the Army of the Gulf, and began his striking career in Louisiana. General Banks was forty-four when with the rank of major-general he took command of the Department of Maryland. Alfred Terry, since distinguished in the regular service, achieved high rank as a volunteer at thirty-five. Garfield was a major-general at thirty-one with brilliant promise as a soldier when he left the field to enter Congress. Frank Blair at forty-one was a successful commander in the arduous campaign which ended with the fall of Vicksburg.

Terms of Lee's Surrender at Appomattox

Title: Terms of Lee's Surrender at Appomattox

Author: Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee

Date: 1865

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.447

The following letters exchanged by Generals Grant and Lee give the terms under which the latter surrendered his army and practically brought to a close the War of Secession.

"Appomattox Court-House, Virginia, April 9, 1865.

Lee's Surrender At Appomattox, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.447

"GENERAL: In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th instant, I propose to receive the surrender of the army of Northern Virginia on the following terms, to wit: Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate, one copy to be given to an officer to be designated by me, the other to be retained by such officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the government of the United States until properly exchanged; and each company or regimental commander to sign a like parole for the men of their commands. The arms, artillery, and public property to be parked and stacked, and turned over to the officers appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side-arms of the officers nor their private horses or baggage. This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to his home, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they may reside.

"U. S. GRANT, Lieutenant-General.

"General R. E. Lee."

"Head-Quarters, Army of Northern Virginia,

April 9, 1865.

Lee's Surrender At Appomattox, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.448

"GENERAL: I received your letter of this date containing the terms of the surrender of the army of Northern Virginia, as proposed by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th instant, they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the stipulations into effect.

"R. E. LEE, General.

"Lieutenant-General U. S. Grant."

Lee's Farewell to His Army, 10 April 1865

Lee's Farewell to His Army, 1865

Title: Lee's Farewell to His Army

Author: Robert E. Lee

Date: 1865

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.449

Head-Quarters,

Army of Northern Virginia,

April 10, 1865.

Lee's Farewell to His Army, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.449

AFTER four years of arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources. I need not tell the survivors of so many hard-fought battles, who have remained steadfast to the last, that I have consented to this result from no distrust of them: but, feeling that valour and devotion could accomplish nothing that could compensate for the loss that would have attended the continuation of the contest, I have determined to avoid the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen. By the terms of the agreement, officers and men can return to their homes and remain there until exchanged. You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed; and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you His blessing and protection. With an increasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration of myself, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

"R. E. LEE, General."

General Grant Reviews Post-War Conditions in the South

Title: General Grant Reviews Post-War Conditions in the South

Author: Ulysses S. Grant

Date: 1865

Source: America, Vol.9, pp.16-19

Andrew Jounson, arisen from the position of a tailor to the Vice-Presidency, succeeded to the Presidency on the death of Lincoln. As President he reversed his attitude toward the South, and soon proclaimed a general policy of leniency toward the seceded States. As a step in that direction he requested Grant, for whom Congress had created the full rank of General, to tour the South and prepare for him (Johnson) the accompanying report of conditions as he found them.

Throughout this trying period Grant maintained a loyal and dignified position but was drawn into the struggle between the President and Congress as it became intensified. He was inclined to support Johnson, who characterized the course of Congress toward the South as another rebellion. It was while Grant was on this mission that the Wade-Davis Reconstruction Bill, aimed as a gun at Johnson, was passed by a defiant Congress.

His Report to President Johnson

Grant Reviews Post-War Conditions, America, Vol.9, p.16

WITH your approval, and also that of the honorable Secretary of War, I left Washington City on the 27th of last month (November) for the purpose of making a tour of inspection through some of the Southern States, or States lately in rebellion, and to see what changes were necessary to be made in the disposition of the military forces of the country; how these forces could be reduced and expenses curtailed, etc.; and to learn, as far as possible, the feelings and intentions of the citizens of those States toward the general Government. The following are the conclusions come to by me:

Grant Reviews Post-War Conditions, America, Vol.9, p.16–p.17

I am satisfied that the mass of thinking men of the South accept the present situation of affairs in good faith. The questions which have heretofore divided the sentiment of the people of the two sections—slavery and State rights, or the right of a State to secede from the Union—they regard as having been settled forever by the highest tribunal—arms—that man can resort to. I was pleased to learn from the leading men whom I met that they not only accepted the decision arrived at as final, but, now that the smoke of battle has cleared away, and time has been given for reflection, that this decision has been a fortunate one for the whole country, they receiving like benefits from it with those who opposed them in the field and in council.

Grant Reviews Post-War Conditions, America, Vol.9, p.17

Four years of war, during which law was executed only at the point of the bayonet throughout the States in rebellion, have left the people possibly in a condition not to yield that ready obedience to civil authority the American people have generally been in the habit of yielding. This would render the presence of small garrisons throughout those States necessary until such time as labor returns to its proper channel, and civil authority is fully established. I did not meet any one, either those holding places under the Government or citizens of the Southern States, who think it practicable to withdraw the military from the South at present. The white and the black mutually require the protection of the general government.

Grant Reviews Post-War Conditions, America, Vol.9, p.17–p.18

There is such universal acquiescence in the authority of the general government throughout the portions of country visited by me, that the mere presence of a military force, without regard to numbers is sufficient to maintain order. The good of the country, and economy, require that the force is kept in the interior, where there are many freedmen (elsewhere in the Southern States than at forts upon the sea coast no force is necessary), should all be white troops. The reasons for this are obvious without mentioning many of them. The presence of black troops, lately slaves, demoralizes labor, both by their advice and by furnishing in their camps a resort for the freedmen for long distances around. White troops generally excite no opposition, and therefore a small number of them can maintain order in a given district. Colored troops must be kept in bodies sufficient to defend themselves. It is not the thinking men who would use violence toward any class of troops sent among them by the general government, but the ignorant in some places might; and the late slave seems to be imbued with the idea that the property of his late master should, by right, belong to him, or, at least, should have no protection from the colored soldier. There is danger of collisions being brought on by such causes.

Grant Reviews Post-War Conditions, America, Vol.9, p.18–p.19

My observations lead me to the conclusion that the citizens of the Southern States are anxious to return to self-government, within the Union, as soon as possible; that while reconstructing they want and require protection from the government; that they are in earnest in wishing to do what they think is required by the Government, not humiliating to them as citizens, and that if such a course were pointed out they would pursue it in good faith. It is to be regretted that there cannot be a greater commingling, at this time, between the citizens of the two sections, and particularly of those intrusted with the law-making power.

Robert E. Lee's Attitude After the War

Title: Robert E. Lee's Attitude After the War

Author: Robert E. Lee

Date: 1865

Source: America, Vol.9, pp.13-15

Lee, to whom Lincoln had first offered the command of the United States Army, in April, 1861, and had declined it, stating that, "though opposed to secession and deprecating war," he "could take no part in the invasion of the Southern States," ranks as the greatest of the Confederate leaders, not only because of his military genius, but for the magnanimous way in which he accepted the result. This letter, addressed to a personal friend, in September, 1865, is valued as an important document in evidence of his desire to infuse others with his own spirit. It is taken from the Rev. J. W. Jones's "Personal Recollections of Lee," published in 1875.

A month after writing this letter, General Lee was installed as president of Washington College at Lexington, Virginia, now Washington and Lee University—a post which he held until his death, October 12, 1870.

Lee's Attitude After the War, America, Vol.9, p.13

I HAVE received your letter of the 23rd ult. [August, 1865], and in reply will state the course I have pursued under circumstances similar to your own, and will leave you to judge of its propriety. Like yourself, I have, since the cessation of hostilities, advised all with whom I have conversed on the subject, who come within the terms of the President's proclamations, to take the oath of allegiance, and accept in good faith the amnesty offered.

Lee's Attitude After the War, America, Vol.9, p.13–p.14

But I have gone further, and have recommended to those who were excluded from their benefits to make application under the proviso of the proclamation of the 29th of May, to be embraced in its provisions. Both classes, in order to be restored to their former rights and privlleges, were required to perform a certain act, and I do not see that an acknowledgment of fault is expressed in one more than the other. The war being at an end, the Southern States have laid down their arms, and the question at issue between them and the Northern States having been decided, I believe it to be the duty of every one to unite in the restoration of the country, and the reestablishment of peace and harmony.

Lee's Attitude After the War, America, Vol.9, p.14

These considerations governed me in the counsels I gave to others, and induced me on the 13th of June to make application to be included in the terms of the amnesty proclamation. I have not received an answer, and cannot inform you what has been the decision of the President. But, whatever that may be, I do not see how the course I have recommended and practiced can prove detrimental to the former President of the Confederate States.

Lee's Attitude After the War, America, Vol.9, p.14–p.15

It appears to me that the allayment of passion, the dissipation of prejudice, and the restoration of reason, will alone enable the people of the country to acquire a true knowledge and form a correct judgment of the events of the past four years. It will, I think, be admitted that Mr. Davis has done nothing more than all the citizens of the Southern States, and should not be held accountable for acts performed by them in the exercise of what had been considered by them unquestionable right. I have too exalted an opinion of the American people to believe that they will consent to injustice; and it is only necessary, in my opinion, that truth should be known, for the rights of every one to be secured. I know of no surer way of eliciting the truth than by burying contention with the war.

General Carl Schurz's Conclusion

Title: General Carl Schurz's Conclusion

Author: Carl Schurz

Date: 1866

Source: Great Epochs in American History, Vol.9, pp.62-65

Schurz's Conclusion, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.62

There is, at present, no danger of another insurrection against the authority of the United States on a large scale, and the people are willing to reconstruct their State governments, and to send their Senators and Representatives to Congress.

Schurz's Conclusion, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.62

But as to the moral value of these results, we must not indulge in any delusions. There are two principal points to which I beg to call your attention. In the first place, the rapid return to power and influence of so many of those who but recently were engaged in a bitter war against the Union, has had one effect which was certainly not originally contemplated by the Government. Treason does, under existing circumstances, not appear odious in the South. The people are not imprest with any sense of its criminality. And, secondly, there is, as yet, among the Southern people an utter absence of national feeling….

Schurz's Conclusion, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.62

The principal cause of that want of national spirit which has existed in the South so long, and at last gave birth to the rebellion, was, that the Southern people cherished, cultivated, idolized their peculiar interests and institutions in preference to those which they had in common with the rest of the American people. Hence the importance of the negro question as an integral part of the question of union in general, and the question of reconstruction in particular….

Schurz's Conclusion, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.63

Aside from the assumption that the negro will not work without physical compulsion, there appears to be another popular notion prevalent in the South, which stands as no less serious an obstacle in the way of a successful solution of the problem. It is that the negro exists for the special object of raising cotton, rice and sugar for the whites, and that it is illegitimate for him to indulge, like other people, in the pursuit of his own happiness in his own way. Altho it is admited that he has ceased to be the property of a master, it is not admitted that he has a right to become his own master…. An ingrained feeling like this is apt to bring forth that sort of class legislation which produces laws to govern one class with no other view than to benefit another. This tendency can be distinctly traced in the various schemes for regulating labor which here and there see the light….

Schurz's Conclusion, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.63

As to what is commonly termed "reconstruction," it is not only the political machinery of the States and their constitutional relations to the general society that must be reconstructed, or rather constructed anew, so as to bring it in harmony with the rest of American society. The difficulties of this task are not to be considered overcome when the people of the South take the oath of allegiance and elect governors and legislatures and members of Congress, and militia captains….

Schurz's Conclusion, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.63

The true nature of the difficulties of the situation is this: The general government of the re-public has, by proclaiming the emancipation of the slaves, commenced a great social revolution in the South, but has, as yet, not completed it. Only the negative part of it is accomplished. The slaves are emancipated in point of form, but free labor has not yet been put in the place of slavery in point of fact….

Schurz's Conclusion, Great Epochs, Vol.9, p.64

The planters, who represented the wealth of the Southern country, are partly laboring under the severest embarrassments, partly reduced to absolute poverty. Many who are stript of all available means, and have nothing but their land, cross their arms in gloomy despondency, incapable of rising to a manly resolution. Others, who still possess means, are at a loss how to use them, as their old way of doing things is, by the abolition of slavery, rendered impracticable, at least where the military arm of the Government has enforced emancipation. Others are still trying to go on in the old way, and that old way is in fact the only one they understand, and in which they have any confidence. Only a minority is trying to adopt the new order of things. A large number of the plantations, probably a considerable majority of the more valuable estates, is under heavy mortgages, and the owners know that, unless they retrieve their fortunes in a comparatively short space of time, their property will pass out of their hands. Almost all are, to some extent, embarrassed. The nervous anxiety which such a state of things produces extends also to those classes of society which, altho not composed of planters, were always in close business connection with the planting interest, and there was hardly a branch of commerce or industry in the Southwhich was not directly or indirectly so connected. Besides, the Southern soldiers, when returning from the war, did not, like the Northern soldiers, find a prosperous community which merely waited for their arrival to give them remunerative employment. They found, many of them, their homesteads destroyed, their farms devastated, their families in distress; and those that were less unfortunate found, at all events, an impoverished and exhausted community which had but little to offer to them. Thus a great many have been thrown upon the world to shift as best they can.

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Beecher, 1863

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool

Title: Beecher's Speech in Liverpool

Author: Beecher

Date: 1863

Source: The World's Famous Orations, Vol.10, pp.9-26

Born in 1813, died in 1887; Pastor of churches in Indiana in 1837-47, and of Plymouth Church in Brooklyn in 1847-87; Founder and Editor of The Christian Union in 1870-81; one of the most prominent of antislavery orators; made notable speeches in England during the American Civil War.

Delivered in Liverpool on October 16, 1863, when his audience became repeatedly little more than a shouting mob, tempered by periodical exhaustion, so strong were its sympathies with the Southern cause. Abridged.

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.9

FOR more than twenty-five years I have been made perfectly familiar with popular assemblies in all parts of my country except the extreme south. There has not for the whole of that time been a single day of my life when it would have been safe for me to go south of Mason and Dixon's line in my country, and all for one reason: my solemn, earnest, persistent testimony against that which I consider to be the most atrocious thing under the sun—the system of American slavery in a great, free republic. [Cheers.] I have passed through that early period when right of free speech was denied to me. Again and again I have attempted to address free speech, visited me with all manner of contumelious epithets; and now since I have been England, altho I have met with greater kindness and courtesy on the part of most than I deserved, yet, on the other hand, I perceive that the Southern influence prevails to some extent in England. [Applause and uproar.] It is my old acquaintance; I understand it perfectly—[laughter]—and I have always held it to be an unfailing truth that where a man had a cause that would bear examination he was perfectly willing to have it spoken about. [Applause.] Therefore, when I saw so much nervous apprehension that, if I were permitted to speak—[hisses and applause]—when I found that they considered my speaking damaging to their cause—[applause]—when I found that they appealed from facts and reasonings to mob law—[applause and uproar]—I said. No man need tell me what the heart and secret counsel of these men are. They tremble and are afraid. [Applause, laughter, hisses, "No, no!" and a voice, "New York mob."]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.10

Now, personally, it is a matter of very little consequence to me whether I speak here to-night or not. [Laughter and cheers.] But one thing is very certain—if you do permit me to speak here to-night you will hear very plain talking. [Applause and hisses.] You will not find a man,—you will not find me to be a man that dared to speak about Great Britain three thousand miles off, and then is afraid to speak to Great Britain when he stands on her shores. [Immense applause and hisses.] And if I do not mistake the tone and the temper of Englishmen, they had rather have a man who opposes them in a manly way—[applause from all parts of the hall]—than a sneak that agrees with them in an unmanly way. [Applause and "Bravo!"] If I can carry you with me by sound convictions, I shall be immensely glad; but if I can not carry you with me by facts and sound arguments, I do not wish you to go with me at all; and all that I ask is simply fair play. [Applause and a voice, "You shall have it, too."] Those of you who are kind enough to wish to favor my speaking—and you will observe that my voice is slightly husky, from having spoken almost every night in succession for some time past—those who wish to hear me will do me the kindness simply to sit still and to keep still; and I and my friends the Secessionists will make all the noise. [Laughter.]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.11

There are two dominant races in modern history: the Germanic and the Romanic races. The Germanic races tend to personal liberty, to a sturdy individualism, to civil and to political liberty. The Romanic race tends to absolutism in government; it is clannish; it loves chieftains; it develops a people that crave strong and showy governments to support and plan for them. The Anglo-Saxon race belongs to the great German family, and is a fair exponent of its peculiarities. The Anglo-Saxon race belongs to the great German family, and is a fair exponent of its peculiarities. The Anglo-Saxon carries self-government and self-development with him wherever he goes. He has popular GOVERNMENT and popular INDUSTRY; for the effects of a generous civil liberty are not seen a whit more plainly in the good order, in the intelligence, and in the virtue of a self-governing people, than in their amazing enterprise and the scope and power of their creative industry. The power to create riches is just as much a part of the Anglo-Saxon virtues as the power to create good order and social safety. the things required for prosperous labor, prosperous manufactures, and prosperous commerce are three: first, liberty; secondly, liberty; thirdly, liberty—but these are not merely the same liberty, as I shall show you.

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.12

First, there must be liberty to follow those laws of business which experience has developed, without imposts or restrictions, or governmental intrusions. Business simply wants to be let alone. ["Hear, hear!"]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.12

Then, secondly, there must be liberty to distribute and exchange products of industry in any market without burdensome tariffs, without imposts, and without vexatious regulations. There must be these two liberties—liberty to create wealth, as the makers of it think best according to the light and experience which business has given them; and then liberty to distribute what they have created without unnecessary vexatious burdens. The comprehensive law of the ideal industrial condition of the world is free manufacture and free trade. ["Hear, hear!" A voice, "The Murrill tariff."]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.13

I have said there were three elements of liberty. The third is the necessity of an intelligent and free race of customers. There must be freedom among producers; there must be freedom among the distributers; there must be freedom among the customers. It may not have occurred to you that it makes any difference what one's customers are; but it does, in all regular and prolonged business. The condition of the customer determines how much he will buy, determines of what sort he will buy. Poor and ignorant people buy little and that of the poorest kind. The richest and the intelligent, having the more means to buy, buy the most, and always buy the best.

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.13

Here, then, are the three liberties: liberty of the producer, liberty of the distributer, and liberty of the consumer. The first two need no discussion—they have been long, thoroughly, and brilliantly illustrated by the political economists of Great Britain, and by her eminent statesmen; but it seems to me that enough attention has not been directed to the third, and, with your patience, I will dwell on that for a moment, before proceeding to other topics.

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.13

It is a necessity of every manufacturing and commercial people that their customers should be very wealthy and intelligent. Let us put the subject before you in the familiar light of your own local experience. To whom do the tradesmen of Liverpool sell the most goods at the highest profit? To the ignorant and poor, or to the educated and prosperous? [A voice, "To the Southerner." Laughter.] The poor man buys simple for his body; he buys food, he buys clothing, he buys fuel, he buys lodging. His rule is to buy the least and the cheapest that he can. He goes to the store as seldom as he can,—he brings away as little as he can—[much laughter]—and he buys for the least he can. Poverty is not a misfortune to the poor only who suffer it, but it is more or less a misfortune to all with whom they deal.

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.14

On the other hand, a man well off—how is it with him? He buys in far greater quantity. He can afford to do it; he has the money to pay for it. He buys in far greater variety, because he seeks to gratify not merely physical wants, but also mental wants. He buy for the satisfaction of sentiment and taste, as well as of sense. He buys silk, wool, flax, cotton; he buys all metals—iron, silver, gold, platinum; in short he buys for all necessities and of all substances. But that is not all. He buys a better quality of goods. He buys richer silks, finer cottons, higher grained wools. Now, a rich silk means so much skill and care of somebody's that has been expended upon it to make it finer and richer; and so of cotton, and so of wool. That is, the price of the finer goods runs back to the very beginning, and remunerates the workman as well as the merchant. Indeed, the whole laboring community is as much interested and profited as the mere merchant, in this buying and selling of the higher grades in the greater varieties and quantities.

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.15

The law of price is of skill; and the amount of skill expended in the work is as much for the market as are the goods. A man comes to the market and says, "I have a pair of hands"; and he obtains the lowest wages. Another man comes and says, "I have truth and fidelity"; he gets a higher price. Another man comes and says, "I have something more; I have hands and strength, and fidelity, and skill." He gets more than either of the others. The next man comes and says, "I have got hands and strength, and skill, and fidelity; but my hands work more than that. They know how to create things for the fancy, for the affections, for the moral sentiments"; and he gets more than any of the others. The last man comes and says, "I have all these qualities, and have them so highly that it is a peculiar genius"; and genius carries the whole market and gets the highest price. [Loud applause.] So that both the workman and the merchant are profited by having purchasers that demand quality, variety, and quantity.

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.15

Now, if this be so in the town or the city, it can only be so because it is a law. This is the specific development of a general or universal law, and therefore we should expect to find it as true of a nation as of a city like Liverpool. I know it is so, and you know that it is true of all the world; and it is just as important to have customers educated, intelligent, moral, and rich, out of Liverpool as it is in Liverpool. [Applause.] They are able to buy; they want variety, they want the very best; and those are the customers you want. That nation is the best customer that is freest, because freedom works prosperity, industry, and wealth. Great Britain, then, aside from moral considerations, has a direct commercial and pecuniary interest in the liberty, civilization, and wealth of every people and every nation on the globe. [Loud applause.]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.16

You have also an interest in this, because you are a moral and a religious people. ["Oh, oh!" Laughter and applause.] You desire it from the highest motives, and godliness is profitable in all things, having the promise of the life that is, as well as of that which is to come; but if there were no hereafter, and if man had no progress in this life, and if there were no question of moral growth at all, it would be worth your while to protect civilization and liberty, merely as a commercial speculation. To evangelize has more than a moral and religious import—it comes back to temporal relations. Wherever a nation that is crushed, cramped, degraded under despotism, is struggling to be free, you, Leeds, Sheffield, Manchester, Paisley, all have an interest that that nation should be free. When depressed and backward people demand that they may have a chance to rise—Hungary, Italy, Poland—it is a duty for humanity's sake, it is a duty for the highest moral motives, to sympathize with them; but besides all these there is a material and an interested reason why you should sympathize with them. Pounds and pence join with conscience and with honor in this design.

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.17

Now, Great Britain's chief want is—what? They have said that your chief want is cotton. I deny it. Your chief want is consumers. [Applause and hisses.] You have got skill, you have got capital, and you have got machinery enough to manufacture goods for the whole population of the globe. You could turn out fourfold as much as you do, if you only had the market to sell in. It is not therefore so much the want of fabric, tho there may be a temporary obstruction of that; but the principal and increasing want—increasing from year to year—is, where shall we find men to buy what we can manufacture so fast? [Interruption over a voice, "The Murrill tariff." Applause.]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.17

There is in this a great and sound principle of political economy. If the South should be rendered independent——

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.17

Well, you have had your turn; now net me have mine again. [Loud applause and laughter.] It is a little inconvenient to talk against the wind; but, after all, if you will just keep good-natured—I am not going to lose my temper; will you watch yours? Besides all that, it rests me, and gives me a chance, you know, to get my breath. [Applause and hisses.] And I think that the bark of those men is worse than their bite. They do not mean any harm; they do not know any better. [Loud applause, hisses and continued uproar.]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.18

What will be the result if this present struggle shall eventuate in the separation of America, and making the south—[loud applause, hooting and cries of "Bravo!"]—a slave territory exclusively—[cries of "No, no!" and laughter]—and the North a free territory; what will be the first result? You will lay the foundation for carrying the slave population clear through to the Pacific Ocean. That is the first step. There is not a man who has been a leader of the South any time within these twenty years, that has not had this for a plan. It was for this that Texas was invaded, first by colonists, next by marauders, until it was wrested from Mexico. It was for this that they engaged in the Mexican War itself, by which the vast territory reaching to the Pacific was added to the Union. Never have they for a moment given up the plan of spreading the American institution, as they call it, straight through toward the West, until the slave who has washed his feet in the Atlantic shall be carried to wash them in the Pacific. [Cries of "Question" and uproar.] There! I have got that statement out, and you can not put it back. [Laughter and applause.]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.19

Now, let us consider the prospect. If the South become a slave empire, what relation will it have to you as a customer? [A voice, "Or any other man." Laughter.] It would be an empire of twelve millions of people. Of these, eight millions are white and four millions black. [A voice, "How many have you got?"] Consider that one-third of the whole are the miserably poor, unbuying blacks. You do not manufacture much for them. You have not got machinery coarse enough. [Laughter and "No."] Your labor is too skilled by far to manufacture bagging and linsey-woolsey. [A Southerner, "We are going to free them every one."] Then you and I agree exactly. One other third consists of a poor, unskilled, degraded white population; and the remainder one-third, which is a large allowance, we will say, intelligent and rich. Now here are twelve millions of people, and only one-third of them are customers that can afford to buy the kind of goods that you bring to market. [Interruption and uproar.]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.19

My friends, I saw a man once, who was a little late at a railway station, chase an express train. He did not catch it. If you are going to stop this meeting, you have got to stop it before I speak; for after I have got the things out, you may chase as long as you please—you will not catch them. But there is luck in leisure; I'm going to take it easy. Two-thirds of the population of the Southern States to-day are non-purchasers of English goods. You must recollect another fact—namely, that this going on clear through to the Pacific Ocean; and if by sympathy or help you establish a slave empire, you sagacious Britons—if you like it better, then, I will leave the adjective out—are busy in favoring the establishment of an empire from ocean to ocean that should have fewest customers and the largest non-buying population. ["No, no!" A voice, "I thought it was a happy people that population parted."]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.20

Now, for instance, just look at this—the difference between free labor and slave labor to produce cultivated land. The State of Virginia has 15,000 more square miles of land than the State of New York; but Virginia has only 15,000 square miles improved, while New York has 20,000 square miles improved. Of unimproved land Virginia has about 23,000 square miles, and New York only about 10,000 square miles. These facts speak volumes as to the capacity of the territory to bear population. The smaller is the quantity of soil uncultivated, the greater is the density of the population; and upon that their value as customers depends. Let us take the States of Maryland and Massachusetts. Maryland has 2,000 more square miles of land than Massachusetts; but Maryland has about 4,000 square miles of land improved, Massachusetts has 3,200 square miles. Maryland has 2,800 unimproved square miles of land, while Massachusetts has but 1,800 square miles unimproved. But these two are little States,—let us take greater States: Pennsylvania and Georgia. The State of Georgia has 12,000 more square miles of land than Pennsylvania. Georgia has only about 9,800 square miles of improved land; Pennsylvania has 13,400 square miles of improved land, or about 2,300,000 acres more than Georgia. Georgia has about 25,600 square miles of unimproved land, and Pennsylvania has only 10,400 square miles, or about 10,000,000 acres less of unimproved land than Georgia. The one is a slave State and the other is a free State. I do not want you to forget such statistics as those, having once heard them.

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.21

Now, what can England make for the poor white population of such a future empire, and for her slave population? What carpets, what linens, what cottons can you sell to them? What machines, what cottons can you sell to them? What machines, what looking-glasses, what combs, what leather, what books, what pictures, what engravings? [A voice, "We'll ell them ships."] You may sell ships to a few, but what ships can you sell to two-thirds of the population of poor whites and blacks? A little bagging and a little linsey-woolsey, a few whips and manacles, are all that you can sell for the slave. [Great applause and uproar.] This very day, in the slave States of America there are eight millions out of twelve millions that are not, and can not be your customers from the very laws of trade.

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.22

Do you sympathize with the minority in Rome or the majority in Italy? [A voice, "With Italy."] To-day the South is the minority in America, and they are fighting for independence! For what? [Uproar. A voice, "Three cheers for independence!" Hisses.] I could wish so much bravery had a better cause, and that so much self-denial had been less deluded; that the poisonous and venomous doctrine of State rights might have been kept aloof; that so many gallant spirits, such as Jackson, might still have lived. [Great applause and loud cheers, again and again renewed.] The force of these facts, historical and incontrovertible, can not be broken, except by diverting attention by an attack upon the North. It is said that the North is fighting for the Union, and not for emancipation. The North is fighting for the Union, for that ensures emancipation. [Loud cheers, "Oh, oh!" "No, no!" and cheers.]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.22

A great many men say to ministers of the Gospel: "You pretend to be preaching and working for the love of the people. Why, you are all the time preaching for the sake of the Church." What does the minister say? "It is by means of the Church that we help the people," and when men say that we are fighting for the Union, I, too, say that we are fighting for the Union. ["Hear, hear!" and a voice, "That's right."] But the motive determines the value; and why are we fighting for the Union? Because we never shall forget the testimony of our enemies. They have gone off declaring that the Union in the hands of the North was fatal to slavery. [Loud applause.] There is testimony in court for you. [A voice, "See that!" and laughter.]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.23

In the first place I am ashamed to confess that such was the thoughtlessness—[interruption]—such was the stupor of the North—[renewed interruption]—you will get a word at a time; tomorrow will let folks see what it is you do not want to hear—that for a period of twenty-five years she went to sleep, and permitted herself to be drugged and poisoned with the Southern prejudice against black men. [Applause and uproar.]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.23

Now as to those States that had passed "black" laws, as we call them; they are filled with Southern emigrants. The southern parts of Ohio, the southern part of Indiana, where I myself lived for years, and which I knew like a book, the southern part of Illinois, where Mr. Lincoln lives—[great uproar]—these parts are largely settled by emigrants from Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Virginia, and North Carolina, and it was their vote, or the Northern votes pandering for political reasons to theirs, that passed in those States the infamous "black" laws; and the Republicans in these States have a record, clean and white, as having opposed these laws in every instance as "infamous." Now as to the State of New York; it is asked whether a negro is not obliged to have a certain freehold property, or a certain amount of property, before he can vote. It is so still in North Carolina and Rhode Island for white folks—it is so in New York State. [Mr. Beecher's voice slightly failed him here, and he was interrupted by a person who tried to imitate him. Cries of "Shame!" and "turn him out!"]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.24

No man can unveil the future; no man can tell what revolutions are about to break upon the world; no man can tell what destiny belongs to France, nor to any of the European powers; but one thing is certain, that in the exigencies of the future there will be combinations and recombinations, and that those nations that are of the same faith, the same blood, and the same substantial interests, ought not to be alienated from each other, but ought to stand together. [Immense cheering and hisses.] I do not say that you ought not to be in the most friendly alliance with France or with Germany; but I do say that your own children, the offspring of England, ought to be nearer to you than any people of strange tongue. [A voice, "Degenerate sons," applause and hisses; another voice, "What about the Trent?"] If there had been any feelings of bitterness in America, let me tell you that they had been excited, rightly or wrongly, under the impression that Great Britain was going to intervene between us and our own lawful struggle. [A voice, "No!" and applause.] With the evidence that there is no such intention all bitter feelings will pass away. [Applause.]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.25

We do not agree with the recent doctrine of neutrality as a question of law. But it is past, and we are not disposed to raise that question. We accept it now as a fact, and we say that the utterance of Lord Russell at Blairgowrie—[applause, hisses, and a voice, "What about Lord Brougham?"]—together with the declaration of the government in stopping war-steamers here—[great uproar and applause]—have gone far toward quieting every fear and removing every apprehension from our minds. [Uproar and shout of applause.] And now in the future it is the work of every good man and patriot not to create divisions, but to do the things that will make for peace. ["Oh, oh!" and laughter.] On our part it shall be done. [Applause and hisses, and "No, no!"]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.25

On your part it ought to be done; and when in any of the convulsions that come upon the world, Great Britain finds herself struggling single-handed against the gigantic powers that spread oppression and darkness—[applause, hisses, and uproar]—there ought to be such cordiality that she can turn and say to her firstborn and most illustrious child, "Come!" ["Hear, hear!" Applause, tremendous cheers, and uproar.] I will not say that England can not again, as hitherto, single-handed manage any power—[applause and uproar]—but I will say that England and America together for religion and liberty—[a voice, "Soap, soap," uproar, and great applause]—are a match for the world. [Applause; a voice, "They don't want any more soft soap."] Now, gentlemen and ladies—[a voice, "Sam Slick"; and another voice, "Ladies and gentlemen, if you please!"]—when I came I was asked whether I would answer questions, and I very readily consented to do so, as I had in other places; but I will tell you it was because I expected to have the opportunity of speaking with some sort of ease and quiet. [A voice, "So you have."]

Beecher's Speech in Liverpool, Famous Orations, Vol.10, p.26

I have for an hour and a half spoken against a storm—["Hear, hear!"]—and you yourselves are witnesses that, by the interruption, I have been obliged to strive with my voice, so that I no longer have the power to control this assembly. [Applause.] And altho I am in spirit perfectly willing to answer any question, and more than glad of the chance, yet I am by this very unnecessary opposition to-night incapacitated physically from doing it. Ladies and gentlemen, I bid you good evening.

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill, 1866

Title: The Kansas-Nebraska Bill

Author: Edward A. Pollard

Date: 1866

Source: America, Vol.7, pp.199-204

This article constitutes a chapter in Pollard's "Lost Cause" (1866), the earliest noteworthy book on the Civil War published by a Southern writer. The author, a Virginian, was long editor of the Richmond Examiner, including the Civil War period. He was a merciless critic of Jefferson Davis.

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill is chiefly significant in American history as having revived the contest between the North and South over the slavery question which had been regarded as settled, for many years at least, by the Clay Compromise of 1850. It was in effect a repeal of the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and had a powerful influence in the formation of the Republican Party on the principle of no extension of slavery. It roused Lincoln and gave a bent to his great political ambition.

Pollard, Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.199

THE wisest statesmen of America were convinced that the true and intelligent means of continuing the Union was to preserve the sectional equilibrium, and to keep a balance of power between North and South. That equilibrium had been violently disturbed, in 1820, at the time of the Missouri Compromise. The relative representations of the North and South in the United States Senate were then so evenly balanced that it came to be decisive of a continuance of political power in the South whether Missouri should be an addition to her ranks or to those of her adversary. The contest ended, immediately, in favor of the South; but not without involving a measure of proscription against slavery.

Pollard, Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.199–p.200

Another struggle for political power between the two sections occurred on the admission of Texas. The South gained another State. But the acquisition of Texas brought on the war with Mexico; and an enormous addition to Northern territory became rapidly peopled with a population allured from every quarter of the globe.

Pollard, Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.200

On the admission of California into the Union, the South was persuaded to let her come in with an anti-slavery Constitution for the wretched compensation of a reenactment of the fugitive-slave law, and some other paltry measures. The cry was raised that the Union was in danger. The appeals urged under this cry had the usual effect of reconciling the South to the sacrifice required of her, and embarrassed anything like resistance on the part of her representatives in Congress to the compromise measures of 1850. South Carolina threatened secession; but the other Southern States were not prepared to respond to the bold and adventurous initiative of Southern independence. But it should be stated that the other States of the South, in agreeing to what was called, in severe irony, the Compromise of 1850, declared that it was the last concession they would make to the North; that they took it as a "finality," and that the slavery question was thereafter to be excluded from the pale of Federal discussion.

Pollard, Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.200–p.201

In 1852 Franklin Pierce was elected President of the United States. He was a favorite of the State Rights Democracy of the South; and it was hoped that under his administration the compromise measures of 1850 would indeed be realized as a "finality," and the country be put upon a career of constitutional and peaceful rule. But a new and violent agitation was to spring up in the first session of the first Congress under his administration.

Pollard, Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.201

The Territory of Nebraska had applied for admission into the Union. Mr. Stephen A. Douglas, Senator from Illinois, reported from the Committee on Territories a bill which made two Territories—Nebraska and Kansas—instead of one, and which declared that the Missouri Compromise Act was superseded by the compromise measures of 1850, and had thus become inoperative. It held that the Missouri Compromise Act, "being inconsistent with the principles of nonintervention by Congress with slavery in the States and Territories as recognized by the legislation of 1850, commonly called the Compromise Measures, is hereby declared inoperative and void; it being the true intent and meaning of this act not to legislate slavery into any Territory or State, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions, subject only to the Constitution of the United States." The bill passed both houses of Congress in 1854.

Pollard, Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.201–p.202

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill, involving as it did the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, was taken by the South as a sort of triumph. The latter measure, being viewed as an act of proscription against the South, was justly offensive to her; although indeed the repeal was scarcely more than a matter of principle or sentiment, as the sagacious statesmen of the South were well aware that the States of the Northwest were likely, from the force of circumstances, to be settled by Northern people, and to be thus dedicated to their institutions. But it was then supposed that the phraseology of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was not liable to misconstruction; and that when it was declared that the people of the Territories were to determine the question of slavery, it meant, of course, that they were to do so in the act of forming a State Constitution and deciding upon other institutions of the State as well as that of slavery.

Pollard, Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.202

In the North, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was the occasion of a furious excitement. Mr. Douglas was hung in effigy in some of their towns, execrated by Northern mobs, and even threatened with violence to his person. The anti-slavery sentiment of the North was rapidly developed in the excitement; a new party was organized with reference to the question of slavery in the Territories; and thus originated the famous Republican party—popularly called the Black Republican party—which was indeed identical with the Abolition party in its sentiment of hostility to slavery, and differed from it only as to the degree of indirection by which its purpose might best be accomplished. This party comprised the great mass of the intellect and wealth of the North. It was also the Protectionist party. Its leaning was in favor of strong government, and whatever there might be of aristocracy in the North belonged to it.

Pollard, Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.203

The new party sprung at once into an amazing power. In the Presidential convass of 1852, which had resulted in the election of Mr. Pierce, John P. Hale, who ran upon what was called the "straightout" Abolition ticket, did not receive the vote of a single State, and but 175,296 of the popular vote of the Union. But upon the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, Abolitionism, in the guise of "Republicanism, swept almost everything before it in the North and Northwest in the elections of 1854 and 1855; and in the Thirty-first Congress, Nathaniel Banks, an objectionable Abolitionist of the Massachusetts school, was elected to the speakership of the House.

Pollard, Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.203

In the meantime, the language of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was the subject of no dispute. No one supposed that from this language there was to originate an afterthought on the part of Mr. Douglas, and that, by an ingenious torture of words, this measure was to be converted into one to conciliate the anti-slavery sentiment of the North, and to betray the interests of the South. This afterthought was doubtless the consequence of the rapid growth of the Black Republican party, and the conviction that the Democratic party in the North would only recover its power by some marked concession to the sectional sentiment now rapidly developing on the subject of slavery.

Pollard, Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.203–p.204

It should be noticed here that the doctrine of "non-intervention," which prohibited Congress from interfering with the question of slavery in the Territories, had been affirmed by a judicial decision in the Supreme Court of the United States. In the famous "Dred Scott case," a negro demanded his freedom on the ground of legal residence beyond the latitude of 36° 30' North—the line of the Missouri Compromise. The Supreme Court pronounced that Congress had no power to make that law; that it was therefore null and void; and declared "that the Constitution recognizes the right of property in a slave, and makes no distinction between that description of property and other property owned by a citizen;" and further, that every citizen had the clear right to go into any Territory, and take with him that which the Constitution recognized as his property.

Pollard, Kansas-Nebraska Bill, America, Vol.7, p.204

So far the rights of the South in the Territories were thought to be plain; the design of the Black Republican party to exclude slavery therefrom by the Federal authority had been pronounced unconstitutional by the highest judicial authority in the country; and the Kansas-Nebraska bill was thought to be a plain letter, which taught that slavery was the subject of exclusive legislation by States, or by Territories in the act of assuming the character of States. But the South only stood on the threshold of a new controversy—another exhibition of the ingenuity of the anti-slavery sentiment to assert itself in new methods and on new issues.

Proclamation Declaring the Insurrection at an End

Title: Proclamation Declaring the Insurrection at an End

Author: Andrew Johnson

Date: 1866

Source: Harvard Classics, Vol.43, pp.453-458

President Johnson's proclamation of May 10, 1865, marked the actual close of hostilities; that of April 2, 1866, declared the insurrection at an end in all the States save Texas; and this of Aug. 20, 1866, gave notice of the resumption of civil government in the States which had seceded.

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.453

WHEREAS, by proclamations of the 15th and 19th of April, 1861, the President of the United States in virtue of the power vested in him by the Constitution and the laws, declared that the laws of the United States were opposed and the execution thereof obstructed in the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas by combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings or by the powers vested in the marshals of the law; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.453

Whereas, by another proclamation made on the 16th day of August, in the same year, in pursuance of an act of Congress approved July 13, 1861, the inhabitants of the States of Georgia, South Carolina, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Florida (except the inhabitants of the State of Virginia lying west of the Alleghany Mountains, and except also the inhabitants of such other parts of that State and the other States before named as might maintain a loyal adhesion to the Union and Constitution or might be from time to time occupied and controlled by forces of the United States engaged in the dispersion of the insurgents) were declared to be in a state of insurrection against the United States; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.453

Whereas, by another proclamation of the 1st of July, 1862, issued in pursuance of an act of Congress approved June 7, in the same year, the insurrection was declared to be still existing in the States aforesaid, with the exception of certain specified counties in the State of Virginia; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.454

Whereas, by another proclamation made on the second day of April, 1863, in pursuance of an act of Congress of July 13, 1861, the exceptions named in the proclamation of August 16, 1861, were revoked and the inhabitants of the States of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Mississippi, Florida, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties of Virginia designated as West Virginia and the ports of New Orleans, Key West, Port Royal, and Beaufort, in North Carolina) were declared to be still in a state of insurrection against the United States; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.454

Whereas, by another proclamation, of the 15th day of September, 1863, made in pursuance of the act of Congress approved March 3, 1863, the rebellion was declared to be still existing and the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus was in certain specified cases suspended throughout the United States, said suspension to continue throughout the duration of the rebellion or until said proclamation should, by a subsequent one to be issued by the President of the United States, be modified or revoked; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.454

Whereas, the House of Representatives on the 22d day of July, 1861, adopted a resolution in the following words, namely:

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.454

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States, That the present deplorable civil war has been forced upon the country by the disunionists of the Southern States now in revolt against the constitutional Government, and in arms around the capitol: that in this national emergency, Congress, banishing all feelings of mere passion or resentment, will recollect only its duty to the whole country; that this war is not waged upon our part in any spirit of oppression, nor for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, nor purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those States; but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution, and to preserve the Union, with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the several States, unimpaired; and that as soon as these objects are accomplished the war ought to cease;and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.455

Whereas, the Senate of the United States on the 25th day of July, 1861, adopted a resolution in the words following, to wit:

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.455

Resolved, That the present deplorable civil war has been forced upon the country by the disunionists of the Southern States now in revolt against the constitutional Government and in arms around the capitol; that in this national emergency Congress, banishing all feelings of mere passion or resentment, will recollect only its own duty to the whole country; that this war is not prosecuted upon our part in any spirit of oppression, nor for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, nor purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those States; but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and all laws made in pursuance thereof and to preserve the Union, with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the several States unimpaired; that as soon as these objects are accomplished the war ought to cease; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.455

Whereas, these resolutions though not joint or concurrent in form, are substantially identical, and as such have hitherto been and yet are regarded as having expressed the sense of Congress upon the subject to which they relate; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.455

Whereas, the President of the United States by proclamation of the 13th of June, 1865, declared that the insurrection in the State of Tennessee had been suppressed, and that the authority of the United States therein was undisputed, and such United States officers as had been duly commissioned were in the undisturbed exercise of their official functions; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.455

Whereas, the President of the United States by further proclamation, issued on the 2d day of April, 1866, did promulgate and declare that there no longer existed any armed resistance of misguided citizens or others to the authority of the United States in any or in all the States before mentioned, excepting only the State of Texas, and did further promulgate and declare that the laws could be sustained and enforced in the several States before mentioned, except Texas, by the proper civil authorities, State or Federal, and that the people of the said States, except Texas, are well and loyally disposed, and have conformed or will conform in their legislation to the condition of affairs growing out of the amendment to the Constitution of the United States, prohibiting slavery within the jurisdiction of the United States;

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.456

And did further declare, in the same proclamation that it is the manifest determination of the American people that no State, of its own will, has a right or power to go out of, or separate itself from, or be separated from the American Union; and that, therefore, each State ought to remain and constitute an integral part of the United States;

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.456

And did further declare, in the same last-mentioned proclamation, that the several aforementioned States, excepting Texas, had in the manner aforesaid given satisfactory evidence that they acquiesce in this sovereign and important resolution of national unity; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.456

Whereas, the President of the United States in the same proclamation did further declare, that it is believed to be a fundamental principle of government that the people who have revolted and who have been overcome and subdued, must be dealt with so as to induce them voluntarily to become friends, or else they must be held by absolute military power or devastated so as to prevent them from ever again doing harm as enemies, which last-named policy is abhorrent to humanity and to freedom; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.456

Whereas, the President did, in the same proclamation further declare, that the Constitution of the United States provides for constituent communities only as States, and not as Territories, dependencies, provinces, or protectorates;

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.456

And further, that such constituent States must necessarily be, and by the Constitution and laws of the United States are, made equals and placed upon a like footing as to political rights, immunities, dignity, and power with the several States with which they are united;

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.456

And did further declare, that the observance of political equality, as a principle of right and justice, is well calculated to encourage the people of the before-named States, except Texas, to become more and more constant and persevering in their new allegiance; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.457

Whereas, the President did further declare, that standing armies, military occupation, martial law, military tribunals, and the suppression of the writ of habeas corpus are in times of peace dangerous to public liberty, incompatible with the individual right of the citizen, contrary to the genius and spirit of our free institutions, and exhaustive of the national resources, and ought not, therefore, to be sanctioned or allowed except in cases of actual necessity for repelling invasion and suppressing insurrection or rebellion;

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.457

And the President did further, in the same proclamation, declare that the policy of the Government of the United States from the beginning of the insurrection to its overthrow and final suppression had been conducted in conformity with the principles in the last-named proclamation recited; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.457

Whereas, the President, in the said proclamation, of the 13th of June, 1865, upon the grounds therein stated and hereinbefore recited, did then and thereby proclaim and declare that the insurrection which heretofore existed in the several States before named, except in Texas, was at an end, and was therefore to be so regarded; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.457

Whereas, subsequently to the said 2d day of April, 1866, the insurrection in the State of Texas has been completely and everywhere suppressed and ended, and the authority of the United States has been successfully and completely established in the said State of Texas and now remains therein unassisted and undisputed, and such of the proper United States officers as have been duly commissioned within the limits of the said State are now in the undisturbed exercise of their official functions; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.457

Whereas, the laws can now be sustained and enforced in the said State of Texas by the proper civil authority, State or Federal, and the people of the said State of Texas, like the people of the other States before named, are well and loyally disposed and have conformed or will conform in their legislation to the condition of affairs growing out of the amendment to the Constitution of the United States prohibiting slavery within the limits and jurisdiction of the United States; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.457

Whereas, all the reasons and conclusions set forth in regard to the several States therein especially named now apply equally and in all respects to the State of Texas, as well as to the other States which have been involved in the insurrection; and

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.458

Whereas, adequate provision has been made by military orders to enforce the execution of the acts of Congress, aid the civil authorities, and secure obedience to the Constitution and laws of the United States within the State of Texas, if a resort to military force for such purpose should at any time be necessary:

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.458

Now therefore, I, Andrew Johnson, President of the United States, do hereby proclaim and declare that the insurrection which heretofore existed in the State of Texas is at an end, and is to be henceforth so regarded in that State as in the other States before named, in which the said insurrection was proclaimed to be at an end, by the aforesaid proclamation of the 2d of April, 1866.

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.458

And I do further proclaim, that the said insurrection is at an end, and that peace, order, and tranquility, and civil authority now exist in and throughout the whole United States of America.

Johnson, Proclamation Declaring Insurrection at End, Harvard Classics, Vol.43, p.458

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

[Seal.] Done at the city of Washington, this 20th day of August, A. D. 1866, and of the Independence of the United States of America the ninety-first.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

By the President:

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,

Secretary of State.

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