

THE INVASION OF TENNESSEE.]

BY J. B. HOOD, GENERAL, C. S. A.

UNLESS the army could be heavily reënforced, there was but one plan to be adopted [after withdrawing from Atlanta. See p. 343]: by manœuvres, to draw Sherman back into the mountains, then beat him in battle, and at least regain our lost territory. Therefore, after anxious reflection and consultation with the corps commanders, I determined to communicate with the President, and ascertain whether or not reënforcements could be obtained from any quarter.

The reply from His Excellency conveyed no hope of assistance :

“RICHMOND, September 5th, 1864.

“ . . . The necessity for reënforcements was realized, and every effort made to bring forward reserves, militia, and detailed men for the purpose. . . . No other resource remains. It is now requisite that absentees be brought back, the addition required from the surrounding country be promptly made available, and that the means in hand be used with energy proportionate to the country's need.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.”

I thereupon decided to operate at the earliest moment possible in the rear of Sherman, as I became more and more convinced of our inability successfully to resist an advance of the Federal army.

I recalled General Wheeler from Tennessee to join immediately the left of the army, whilst Colonel Presstman, of the engineer corps, made ready to move with the pontoon-train and a sufficient number of boats to meet any emergency.

Upon the morning of the 18th the army began to move in the direction of the West Point Railroad, which the advance reached on the 19th. Upon the 20th, line of battle was formed, with the right east of the railroad, and the left resting near the river, with army headquarters at Palmetto.

On the 28th I issued instructions to commence the movement across the Chattahoochee at Pumpkin Town and Phillips's Ferry, and on the following morning I directed that our supplies from Newnan cross the river at Moore's Ferry. At noon I rode over the pontoon-bridge in advance of the infantry, and that night established my headquarters at Pray's Church, along with General W. H. Jackson, commanding the cavalry.

The morning of the 1st of October Brigadier-General Jackson advanced with the cavalry, sending a detachment at the same time to operate against the railroad between the Chattahoochee and Marietta. That night the army went into bivouac eight miles north of Pray's Church, after having effected an undisturbed and safe passage of the Chattahoochee. Information was here received that Kilpatrick's cavalry was north of the river, and that Garrard's cavalry had moved in the direction of Rome.

The night of the 2d the army rested near Flint Hill Church. On the morning of the 3d Lieutenant-General Stewart was instructed to move with his corps and take possession of Big Shanty; to send, if practicable, a detachment for the same purpose to Ackworth, and to destroy as great a portion of

the railroad in the vicinity as possible; also to send a division to Allatoona to capture that place, if, in the judgment of the commanding officer, the achievement was feasible. The main body of the army in the meantime moved forward and bivouacked near Carley's house, within four miles of Lost Mountain.

On the 4th General Stewart captured, after a slight resistance, about 170 prisoners at Big Shanty, and at 9:30 A. M. the garrison at Ackworth, numbering 250 men, surrendered to General Loring. The forces under these officers joined the main body near Lost Mountain on the morning of the 5th, having, in addition, destroyed about ten or fifteen miles of the railroad.

I had received information that the enemy had in store at Allatoona large supplies which were guarded by two or three regiments. As one of the objects of the campaign was to deprive the enemy of provisions, Major-General French was ordered to move with his division, capture the garrison, if practicable, and gain possession of the supplies. Accordingly, on the 5th, at 10 A. M., after a refusal to surrender, he attacked the Federal forces at Allatoona, and succeeded in capturing a portion of the works; at that juncture he received intelligence that large reënforcements were advancing in support of the enemy, and fearing he would be cut off from the main body of the army, he retired and abandoned the attempt. Our soldiers fought with great courage; during the engagement Brigadier-General Young, a brave and efficient officer, was wounded and captured by the enemy. General Corse won my admiration by his gallant resistance, and not without reason the Federal commander complimented this officer, through a general order, for his handsome conduct in the defense of Allatoona. [See pp. 322, 323, and 324.]

Our presence upon his communications compelled Sherman to leave Atlanta in haste and cross the Chattahoochee on the 3d and 4th of October with, according to our estimate at that time, about 65,000 infantry and artillery and two divisions of cavalry. He left one corps to guard the city and the railway bridge across the river, and telegraphed to Grant he would attack me if I struck his road south of the Etowah.

On the 6th my army reached Dallas; our right rested at New Hope Church, where intelligence was received that the enemy was advancing from Lost Mountain. From Dallas we marched to Coosaville, ten miles south-west of Rome, via Van Wert, Cedartown, and Cave Spring. At the latter place Major-General Wheeler, with a portion of his command, joined me from Tennessee. We arrived at Coosaville on the 10th.

In a dispatch to General [Richard] Taylor, October 7th, I requested that Forrest be ordered to operate at once in Tennessee:

“Your dispatch of the 6th received. This army being in motion, it is of vital importance that Forrest should

] Taken by permission (and condensed) from General Hood's work, “Advance and Retreat,” published by General G. T. Beauregard for the Hood Orphan Memorial Fund: New Orleans, 1860.

move without delay, and operate on the enemy's railroad. If he cannot break the Chattanooga and Nashville Railroad he can occupy their forces there and prevent damage being repaired on the other road. He should lose no time in moving."

On the 11th the army crossed the Coosa River, marched in the direction of Resaca and Dalton, and bivouacked that night fourteen miles above Coosaville and ten miles north-west of Rome. That same day Major-General Arnold Elzey, chief-of-artillery, was directed to move to Jacksonville with the reserve artillery and all surplus wagons, and General Jackson was instructed to retard the enemy as much as possible, in the event of his advance from Rome.

Having thus relieved the army of all incumbrance, and made ready for battle, we marched rapidly to Resaca, and thence to Dalton, via Sugar Valley Post-Office. Lieutenant-General Lee moved upon Resaca, with instructions to display his forces and demand the surrender of the garrison, but not to attack unless, in his judgment, the capture could be effected with small loss of life. He decided not to assault the Federal works, and commenced at once the destruction of the railroad.

On the 13th I demanded the surrender of Dalton, which, in the first instance, was refused, but was finally acceded to at 4 P. M. The garrison consisted of about one thousand men. As the road between Resaca and Tunnel Hill had been effectually destroyed, the army was put in motion the next morning in the direction of Gadsden, and camped that night near Villanow.

From Villanow the army passed through the gaps in the mountains, and halted on the 15th at Cross Roads, in a beautiful valley about nine miles south of Lafayette. At this time I received intelligence that on the 13th Sherman had reached Snake Creek Gap, where the right of his line had rested in the early spring of this year; also that he was marching in our pursuit, whilst General Wheeler was endeavoring to retard his advance as much as possible. I here determined to advance no farther toward the Tennessee River, but to select a position and deliver battle, since Sherman, at an earlier date than anticipated, had moved as far north as I had hoped to allure him; moreover, I was again in the vicinity of the Alabama line, with the Blue Mountain Railroad in my rear, and I thought I had discovered that improvement in the morale of the troops which would justify me in delivering battle. In accordance with information received from our cavalry, Sherman had, however, made no further division of his forces after leaving Atlanta. I therefore estimated his strength to be about 65,000 effectives.

Upon the eve of action I considered it important to ascertain by personal inquiry and through the aid of officers of my staff,—not alone from corps commanders, but from officers of less rank,—whether or not my impressions after the capture of

† On the 28th of September General Beauregard had been placed in control of the operations in the departments commanded by Generals Hood and Taylor. His

Dalton were correct, and I could rely upon the troops entering into battle at least hopeful of victory. I took measures to obtain likewise the views of Lieutenant-General S. D. Lee, who at this juncture was with his corps in rear, at or near Ship's Gap. He agreed with all the officers consulted; the opinion was unanimous that although the army had much improved in spirit, it was not in condition to risk battle against the numbers reported by General Wheeler.

The renoucement of the object for which I had so earnestly striven brought with it genuine disappointment; I had expected that a forward movement of one hundred miles would re-inspirit the officers and men in a degree to impart to them confidence, enthusiasm, and hope of victory, if not strong faith in its achievement.

I remained two days at Cross Roads in serious thought and perplexity. I could not offer battle while the officers were *unanimous* in their opposition. Neither could I take an intrenched position with likelihood of advantageous results, since Sherman could do the same, repair the railroad, amass a large army, place Thomas in my front in command of the forces he afterward assembled at Nashville, and then, himself, move southward; or, as previously suggested, he could send Thomas into Alabama, whilst he marched through Georgia, and left me to follow in his rear. This last movement upon our part would be construed by the troops into a retreat, and could but result in disaster. In this dilemma I conceived the plan of marching into Tennessee with the hope to establish our line eventually in Kentucky, and determined to make the campaign which followed, unless withheld by General Beauregard ‡ or the authorities at Richmond. I decided to make provision for twenty days' supply of rations in the haversacks and wagons; to order a heavy reserve of artillery to accompany the army, in order to overcome any serious opposition by the Federal gun-boats; to cross the Tennessee at or near Gunter'sville, and again destroy Sherman's communications at Stevenson and Bridgeport; to move upon Thomas and Schofield, and to attempt to rout and capture their army before it could reach Nashville. I intended then to march upon that city, where I would supply the army and reinforce it, if possible, by accessions from Tennessee. I was imbued with the belief that I could accomplish this feat, afterward march north-east, pass the Cumberland River at some crossing where the gun-boats, if too formidable at other points, were unable to interfere, then move into Kentucky, and take position with our left at or near Richmond, and our right extending toward Hazel Green, with Pound and Stony gaps in the Cumberland Mountains at our rear.

In this position I could threaten Cincinnati, and recruit the army from Kentucky and Tennessee; the former State was reported, at this juncture, to be more aroused and embittered against the Federals than at any other period of the war. While

previous operations in defense of Petersburg are described by General Beauregard later in this work.—EDITORS.

Sherman was debating between the alternatives of following our army or marching through Georgia, I hoped, by rapid movements, to achieve these results.

If Sherman should cut loose and move south—as I then believed he would do after I left his front *without previously worsting him in battle*—I would occupy at Richmond, Kentucky, a position of superior advantage, as Sherman, upon his arrival at the sea-coast, would be forced to go on board ship, and, after a long détour by water and land, repair to the defense of Kentucky and Ohio or march direct to the support of Grant. If he should return to confront my forces, or follow me directly from Georgia into Tennessee and Kentucky, I hoped then to be in condition to offer battle; and, if blessed with victory, to send reinforcements to General Lee, in Virginia, or to march through the gaps in the Cumberland Mountains and attack Grant in rear. This latter course I would pursue in the event of defeat or of inability to offer battle to Sherman. If, on the other hand, he should march to join Grant, I could pass through the Cumberland gaps to Petersburg, and attack Grant in rear at least two weeks before he, Sherman, could render him assistance. This move, I believed, would defeat Grant, and allow General Lee, in command of our combined armies, to march upon Washington or turn upon and annihilate Sherman.

Such is the plan which during the 15th and 16th, as we lay in bivouac near Lafayette, I maturely considered, and determined to carry out.

On the 17th the army resumed its line of march, and that night camped three miles from the forks of the Alpine, Gaylesville, and Summerville roads; thence it proceeded towards Gadsden. I proposed to move directly on to Guntersville and to take into Tennessee about one-half of Wheeler's cavalry (leaving the remainder to look after Sherman) and to have a depot of supplies at Tusculumbia in the event that I should meet with defeat in Tennessee.

Shortly after my arrival at Gadsden, General Beauregard reached the same point; I at once unfolded to him my plan, and requested that he confer apart with the corps commanders, Lieutenant-Generals Lee and Stewart and Major-General Cheat-ham. If after calm deliberation he deemed it expedient we should remain upon the Alabama line and attack Sherman, or take position, intrench, and finally follow on his rear when he should move south, I would of course acquiesce, albeit with reluctance. If, contrariwise, he should agree to my proposed plan to cross into Tennessee, I would move immediately to Guntersville, thence to Stevenson, Bridgeport, and Nashville.

This important question at issue was discussed during the greater part of one night, with maps before us. General Beauregard at length took the ground that, if I should engage in the projected campaign, it would be necessary to leave in Georgia all the cavalry at present with the army, in order to watch and harass Sherman in case he should move south, and to instruct Forrest to join me as soon as I should cross the Tennessee River. To this proposition I acceded. After he had held a separate conference with the corps commanders, we again

debated several hours over the course of action to be pursued; and, during the interview, I discovered that he had gone to work in earnest to ascertain, in person, the true condition of the army; that he had sought information not only from the corps commanders, but from a number of officers, and had reached the same conclusion I had formed at Lafayette: that we were not competent to offer pitched battle to Sherman, nor could we follow him south without causing our retrograde movement to be construed by the troops into a *recurrence* of retreat, which would entail desertions and render the army of little or no use in its opposition to the enemy's march through Georgia. After two days' deliberation General Beauregard authorized me, on the evening of the 21st of October, to proceed to the execution of my plan of operations into Tennessee. General Beauregard's approval of a forward movement into Tennessee was soon made known to the army. The prospect of again entering that State created great enthusiasm, and from the different encampments arose at intervals that genuine Confederate shout so familiar to every Southern soldier, and which then betokened an improved state of feeling among the troops.

With twenty days' rations in the haversacks and wagons, we marched, on the 22d of October, upon all the roads leading from Gadsden in the direction of Guntersville, on the Tennessee River, and bivouacked that night in the vicinity of Bennettsville.

I here received information that General Forrest was near Jackson, Tennessee, and could not reach the middle portion of this State, as the river was too high. It would, therefore, be impossible for him to join me if I crossed at Guntersville; as it was regarded as essential that the whole of Wheeler's cavalry should remain in Georgia, I decided to deflect westward, effect a junction with Forrest, and then cross the river at Florence. General Beauregard sent orders to him to join me without delay, and also dispatched a messenger to hasten forward supplies to Tusculumbia.

The succeeding day the movement was continued toward Florence, in lieu of Guntersville as I had expected. Lieutenant-General Lee's corps reached the Tennessee, near Florence, on the 30th; [Edward] Johnson's division crossed the river and took possession of that town. My headquarters were during the 27th and 28th at the house of General Garth, near Decatur, where General Beauregard also stopped. While the army turned Decatur, I ordered a slight demonstration to be made against the town till our forces passed safely beyond, when I moved toward Tusculumbia, at which place I arrived on the 31st of October. Johnson's division, which held possession of Florence, was reinforced the same day by Clayton's division.

Thus the Confederate army rested upon the banks of the Tennessee one month after its departure from Palmetto. It had been almost continuously in motion during the interim; by rapid moves and manœuvres, and with only a small loss, it had drawn Sherman as far north as he stood in the

early spring. The killed and wounded at Allatoona had been replaced by absentees who returned to ranks, and, as usual in such operations, the number of desertions became of no consequence.

Notwithstanding my request as early as the 9th of October that the railroad to Decatur be repaired, nothing had been done on the 1st of November toward the accomplishment of this important object. I had expected upon my arrival at Tusculumbia to find additional supplies, and to cross the river at once. Unfortunately, I was constrained to



MAJOR-GENERAL WILLIAM B. BATE, C. S. A.
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

await repairs upon the railroad before a sufficient amount of supplies could be received to sustain the army till it was able to reach middle Tennessee.

General Beauregard remained two weeks at Tusculumbia and in its vicinity, during which interval the inaugurated campaign was discussed anew at great length. General Sherman was still in the neighborhood of Rome, and the question arose as to whether we should take trains and return to Georgia to oppose his movements south, or endeavor to execute the projected operations into Tennessee and Kentucky. I adhered to the conviction I had held at Lafayette and Gadsden, and a second time desired General Beauregard to consult the corps commanders, together with other officers, in regard to the effect a return to Georgia would produce upon the army. I also urged the consideration that Thomas would immediately overrun Alabama, if we marched to confront Sherman. I had fixedly determined, unless withheld by Beau-

regard or the authorities at Richmond, to proceed, as soon as supplies were received, to the execution of the plan submitted at Gadsden.

At this juncture I was advised of the President's opposition to the campaign into Tennessee previous to a defeat of Sherman in battle. † The President was evidently under the impression that the army should have been equal to battle by the time it had reached the Alabama line, and was averse to my going into Tennessee. He was not, as were General Beauregard and myself, acquainted with its true condition. Therefore, a high regard for his views notwithstanding, I continued firm in the belief that the only means to checkmate Sherman, and cooperate with General Lee to save the Confederacy, lay in speedy success in Tennessee and Kentucky, and in my ability finally to attack Grant in rear with my entire force.

Although every possible effort was made to expedite the repairs upon the railroad, the work progressed slowly. Heavy rains in that section also interfered with the completion of the road. On the 13th I established my headquarters in Florence, upon the north branch of the Tennessee, and the following day General Forrest, with his command, reported for duty. On the 15th the remainder of Lee's corps crossed the river and bivouacked in advance also of Florence. Stewart's and Cheatham's corps were instructed to cross. About the time all necessary preparations verged to a completion, and I anticipated to move forward once more, heavy rains again delayed our supplies. Working parties were at once detailed and sent to different points on the railroad; wagons were also dispatched to aid in the transportation of supplies. The officer in charge was instructed to require the men to labor unceasingly for the accomplishment of this important object. In the meantime information had reached me that Sherman was advancing south, from Atlanta. He marched out of that fated city on the 16th. Thus were two opposing armies destined to move in opposite directions, each hoping to achieve glorious results.

I well knew the delay at Tusculumbia would accrue to the advantage of Sherman, as he would thereby be allowed time to repair his railroad, and at least start to the rear all surplus material. I believed, however, that I could still get between Thomas's forces and Nashville, and rout them; furthermore, effect such manœuvres as to insure to our troops an easy victory. These convictions counterbalanced my regret that Sherman was permitted to traverse Georgia unopposed.

General Beauregard had moved in the direction of Georgia to assemble all available forces to oppose Sherman's advance.

you have not been able to avail yourself of that advantage during his march northward from Atlanta. Hope the opportunity will be offered before he is extensively recruited. If you keep his communications destroyed, he will most probably seek to concentrate for an attack on you. But if, as reported to you, he has sent a large part of his force southward, you may first beat him in detail, and, subsequently, without serious obstruction or danger to the country in your rear, advance to the Ohio River.

JEFFERSON DAVIS."

† "RICHMOND, November 7th, 1864.

"Via Meridian.

"GENERAL J. B. HOOD: No troops can have been sent by Grant or Sheridan to Nashville. The latter has attempted to reinforce the former, but Early's movements prevented it. That fact will assure you as to their condition and purposes. The policy of taking advantage of the reported division of his [Sherman's] forces, where he cannot reunite his army, is too obvious to have been overlooked by you. I therefore take it for granted that

On the 19th the cavalry was ordered to move forward. The succeeding day Lee's corps marched to the front about ten miles on the Chisholm road, between the Lawrenceburg and Waynesboro' roads. On the 20th of November, Stewart's corps having crossed the Tennessee and bivouacked several miles beyond on the Lawrenceburg road, orders were issued that the entire army move at an early hour the next morning. Lee's and Stewart's corps marched upon the Chisholm and the Lawrenceburg roads, and Cheatham's upon the Waynesboro' road. Early dawn of the 21st found the army in motion. I hoped by a rapid march to get in rear of Schofield's forces, then at Pulaski, before they were able to reach Duck River. That night headquarters were established at Rawhide, twelve miles north of Florence, on the Waynesboro' road. The march was resumed on the 22d and continued till the 27th, upon which date the troops, having taken advantage of every available road, reached Columbia, via Mount Pleasant. Forrest operated in our front against the enemy's cavalry, which he easily drove from one position to another.

The Federals at Pulaski became alarmed, and, by forced marches, reached Columbia, upon Duck River, in time to prevent our troops from cutting them off.

Colonel Prestman and his assistants laid the pontoons [over Duck River] during the night of the 28th, about three miles above Columbia; orders to move at dawn the following day having been issued to the two corps and the division above mentioned, I rode with my staff to Cheatham's right, passed over the bridge soon after daybreak, and moved forward at the head of Granbury's Texas brigade, of Cleburne's division, with instructions that the remaining corps and divisions follow, and at the same time keep well closed up during the march.

General Forrest had crossed, the evening previous, and moved to the front and right. I threw forward a few skirmishers who advanced at as rapid a pace as troops could possibly proceed.

During the march the Federal cavalry appeared on the hills to our left; not a moment, however, was lost on that account, as the army was marching by the right flank and was prepared to face at any instant in their direction. No attention, therefore, was paid to the enemy, save to throw out a few sharpshooters in his front.]

Thus I led the main body of the army to within about two miles and in full view of the pike from Columbia to Spring Hill and Franklin. I here halted about 3 P. M., and requested General Cheatham, commanding the leading corps, and

¶ In the "Southern Bivouac" for April, 1885, General Cheatham, in an article dated November 30th, 1881, says, in reply to the above paragraph :

"General John C. Brown states that 'at or near Bear Creek the commanding general, apprehending an attack on our left flank, ordered your (Cheatham's) corps, in its march from that point, to move in two parallel columns, so that it could come instantly into action in two lines of battle.' General Brown's division marched five or six miles through fields and woods and over rough ground some four hundred yards to the right of the road, necessarily causing more or less delay. General Brown further states that 'about the com-

Major-General Cleburne to advance to the spot where, sitting upon my horse, I had in sight the enemy's wagons and men passing at double-quick along the Franklin pike. As these officers approached, I spoke to Cheatham in the following words, which I quote almost verbatim, as they have remained indelibly engraved upon my memory ever since that fatal day: "General, do you see the enemy there, retreating rapidly to escape us?" He answered in the affirmative. "Go," I continued, "with your corps, take possession of and hold that pike at or near Spring Hill. Accept whatever comes, and turn all those wagons over to our side of the house." Then, addressing Cleburne, I said, "General, you have heard the



A SOUTHERN PRIVATE. FROM AN AMBROTYPE.

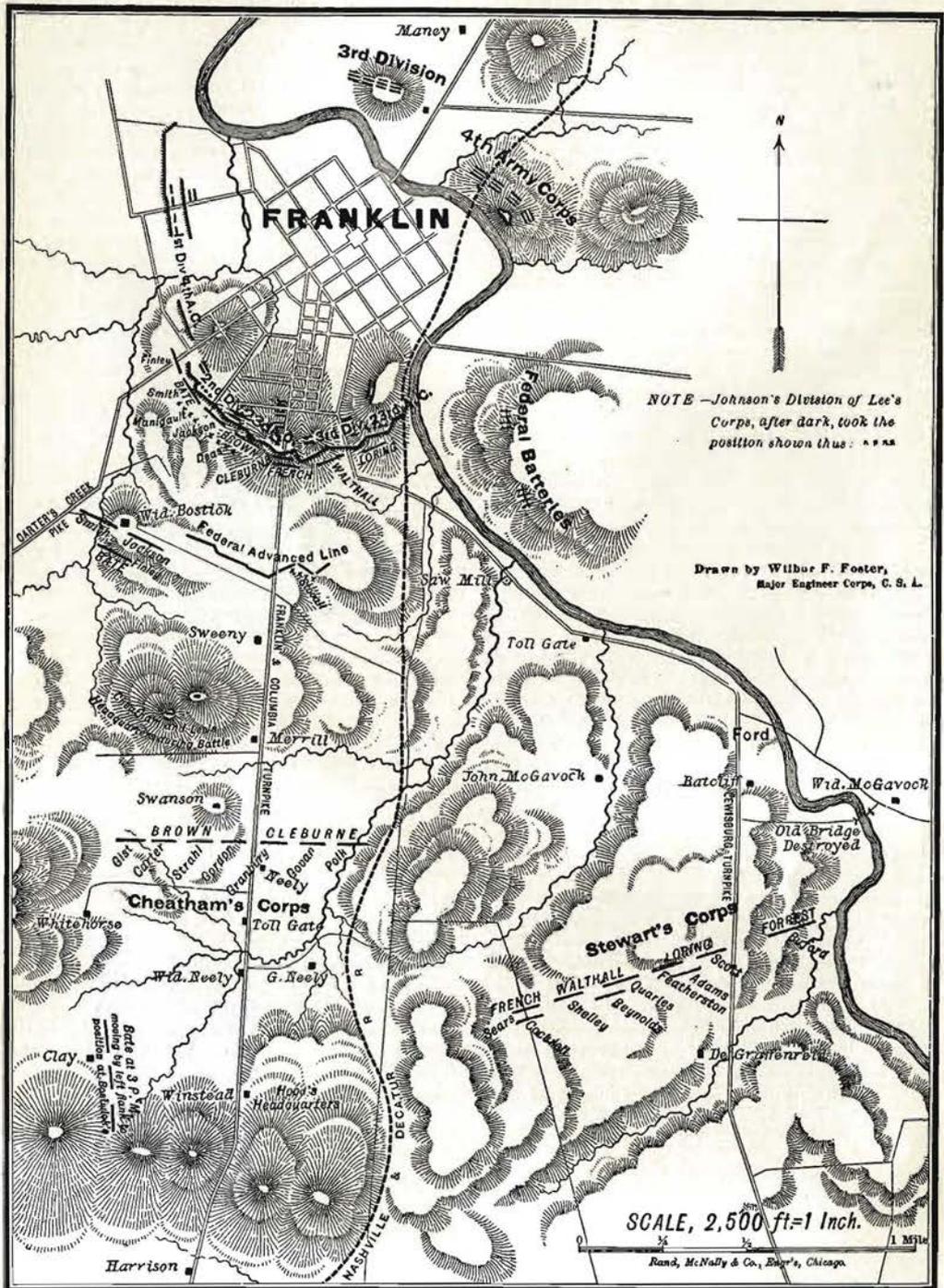
orders just given. You have one of my best divisions. Go with General Cheatham, assist him in every way you can, and do as he directs." Again, as a parting injunction to them, I added, "Go and do this at once. Stewart is near at hand, and I will have him double-quick his men to the front."¶

They immediately sent staff-officers to hurry the men forward, and moved off with their troops at a quick pace in the direction of the enemy. I sent several of my staff with orders to Stewart and Johnson to make all possible haste. Meantime I rode to one side and looked on at Cleburne's division, followed by the remainder of Cheatham's corps, as it marched by, seemingly ready for battle.

Within about one-half hour from the time Cheatham left me skirmishing began with the enemy, when I rode forward to a point nearer the pike, and again sent a staff-officer to Stewart and Johnson to push forward. At the same time I dispatched a

mentement of this movement, or soon afterward, by the orders of the commanding general in person, the whole of Gist's and about one-half of Strahl's brigade were detached for picket duty." EDITORS.

¶ "At the hour named, 3 P. M., there was no movement of 'wagons and men' in the vicinity of Spring Hill. Moreover, from the crossing at Duck River to the point referred to by General Hood, the turnpike was never in view, nor could it be seen until I had moved up to within three-quarters of a mile of Spring Hill. Only a mirage would have made possible the vision." . . . —GENERAL CHEATHAM, in the "BIVOUAC."



MAP OF THE BATTLE-FIELD OF FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE. FROM THE "BIVOUAC" FOR JUNE, 1862.

messenger to General Cheatham to lose no time in gaining possession of the pike at Spring Hill. It was reported back that he was about to do so. ☆

Listening attentively to the fire of the skirmishers in that direction I discovered there was no continued roar of musketry, and being aware of the quick approach of darkness, about 4 o'clock at that season of the year, I became somewhat uneasy, and again ordered an officer to go to General Cheatham, inform him that his supports were very near at hand; that he must attack at once, if he had not already so done, and take and hold possession of the pike. Shortly afterward I intrusted another officer with the same message, and, if my memory is not treacherous, finally requested the governor of Tennessee, Isham G. Harris, to hasten forward and impress upon Cheatham the importance of action without delay. I knew no large force of the enemy could be at Spring Hill, as couriers reported Schofield's main body still in front of Lee, at Columbia, up to a late hour in the day. I thought it probable that Cheatham had taken possession of Spring Hill without encountering material opposition, or had formed line across the pike, north of the town, and intrenched without coming in serious contact with the enemy, which would account for the little musketry heard in his direction. However, to ascertain the truth, I sent an officer to ask Cheatham if he held the pike, and to inform him of the arrival of Stewart, whose corps I intended to throw on his left, in order to assail the Federals in flank that evening or the next morning, as they approached and formed to attack Cheatham. At this juncture the last messenger returned with the report that the road had not been taken possession of. General Stewart was then ordered to proceed to the right of Cheatham and place his corps across the pike north of Spring Hill.

By this hour, however, twilight was upon us, when General Cheatham rode up in person. I at once directed Stewart to halt, and, turning to Cheatham, I exclaimed with deep emotion, as I felt the golden opportunity fast slipping from me, "General, why in the name of God have you not attacked the enemy and taken possession of that pike?" He replied that the line looked a little too long for him, and that Stewart should first form on his right. † I could hardly believe it possible that this brave old soldier, who had given proof of such courage and ability upon so many hard-fought fields, would even make such a report. After leading him within full view of the enemy, and pointing

☆ "General Hood conveniently forgot to mention, in his account of this affair, the facts as to his orders to me at Rutherford's Creek. [See p. 438.] And he also forgot that, at the very moment he claims to have sent staff-officers to the rear with orders to Stewart and Johnson to make all possible haste, Stewart was forming line of battle on the south side of Rutherford's Creek, in pursuance of orders from him; nor did he remember that Stewart's corps was not ordered forward until about dusk."—GENERAL CHEATHAM, in the "BIVOUCAC."

† "Here, again, General Hood's memory proved treacherous. As to the preliminary statements of this paragraph, I refer to that portion of my account [see p. 438] which covers the doings of the hours from 4 to 6 P. M., during most of which time General Hood was on

out to him the Federals retreating in great haste and confusion along the pike, and then giving explicit orders to attack, I would as soon have expected midday to turn into darkness as for him to have disobeyed my orders. I then asked General Cheatham whether or not Stewart's corps, if formed on the right, would extend across the pike. He answered in the affirmative. Guides were at once furnished to point out Cheatham's right to General Stewart, who was ordered to form thereon, with his right extending across the pike. Darkness, however, which was increased by large shade-trees in that vicinity, soon closed upon us, and Stewart's corps, after much annoyance, went into bivouac for the night, near, but not across, the pike, at about 11 or 12 o'clock.

It was reported to me about this hour that the enemy was marching along the road, almost under the light of the camp-fires of the main body of the army. I sent anew to General Cheatham to know if at least a line of skirmishers could not be advanced, in order to throw the Federals in confusion, to delay their march, and allow us a chance to attack in the morning. Nothing was done. The Federals, with immense wagon-trains, were permitted to march by us the remainder of the night, within gunshot of our lines. I could not succeed in arousing the troops to action, when one good division would have sufficed to do the work. One good division, I reassert, could have routed that portion of the enemy which was at Spring Hill; could have taken possession of and formed line across the road; and thus could have made it an easy matter to Stewart's corps, Johnson's division, and Lee's two divisions, from Columbia, to have enveloped, routed, and captured Schofield's army that afternoon and the ensuing day. General Forrest gallantly opposed the enemy farther down to our right to the full extent of his power; beyond this effort nothing whatever was done, although never was a grander opportunity offered to utterly rout and destroy the Federal army. Had I dreamed for one moment that Cheatham would have failed to give battle, or at least to take position across the pike and force the enemy to assault him, I would myself have ridden to the front and led the troops into action. ‡

In connection with this grave misfortune, I must here record an act of candor and nobility upon the part of General Cheatham, which proves him to be equally generous-hearted and brave. I was, necessarily, much pained by the disappointment suffered, and, a few days later, telegraphed to Rich-

the ground and in frequent personal communication with me. The dramatic scene with which he embellishes his narrative of the day's operations only occurred in the imagination of General Hood."—GENERAL CHEATHAM, in the "BIVOUCAC."

‡ "The next order, in the shape of a suggestion that I had better have my pickets fire upon straggling troops passing along the pike in front of my left, was received and was immediately communicated to General Johnson, whose division was on my left and nearest the pike. This note from Major Mason, received about midnight, was the only communication I had from General Hood after leaving him at his quarters at Captain Thompson's."—GENERAL CHEATHAM, in the "BIVOUCAC."

mond, to withdraw my previous recommendation for his promotion, and to request that another be assigned to the command of his corps. Before the receipt of a reply, this officer called at my headquarters—then at the residence of Mr. Overton, six miles from Nashville—and, standing in my presence, spoke an honest avowal of his error, in the acknowledgment that he felt we had lost a brilliant opportunity at Spring Hill to deal the enemy a crushing blow, and that he was greatly to blame. I telegraphed and wrote to the War Department to withdraw my application for his removal, in the belief that, inspired with an ambition to retrieve his shortcoming, he would prove in the future doubly zealous in the service of his country. The following are the dispatches above referred to:

"HEADQUARTERS, six miles from Nashville, on Franklin Pike, December 7, 1864.

"HON. J. A. SEDDON: I withdraw my recommendation in favor of the promotion of Major-General Cheatham, for reasons which I will write more fully.

"J. B. HOOD, General."

"HEADQUARTERS, six miles from Nashville, on Franklin Pike, December 8, 1864.

"HON. J. A. SEDDON, Secretary of War; GENERAL G. T. BEAUREGARD, Macon, Ga.: A good lieutenant-general should be sent here at once to command the corps now commanded by Major-General Cheatham. I have no one to recommend for the position.

"J. B. HOOD, General."

"HEADQUARTERS, six miles from Nashville, on Franklin Pike, December 8, 1864.

"HON. J. A. SEDDON: Major-General Cheatham made a failure on the 30th of November which will be a lesson to him. I think it best he should remain in his position for the present. I withdraw my telegrams of yesterday and to-day on this subject.

"J. B. HOOD, General."

On the 11th of December I wrote the Hon. Mr. Seddon:

... "Major-General Cheatham has frankly confessed the great error of which he was guilty, and attaches

↓ "In order to make clear what I have to say in this connection I will quote Governor Isham G. Harris:

"GOVERNOR JAMES D. PORTER.

"DEAR SIR: . . . General Hood, on the march to Franklin, spoke to me, in the presence of Major [Lieut.-Colonel A. P.] Mason [Assistant Adjutant-General, Army of Tennessee], of the failure of General Cheatham to make the night attack at Spring Hill, and censured him in severe terms for his disobedience of orders. Soon after this, being alone with Major Mason, the latter remarked that "General Cheatham was not to blame about the matter last night. I did not send him the order." I asked if he had communicated the fact to General Hood. He answered that he had not. I replied that "it is due General Cheatham that this explanation should be made." Thereupon Major Mason joined General Hood and gave him the information. Afterward General Hood said to me that he had done injustice to General Cheatham, and requested me to inform him that he held him blameless for the failure at Spring Hill, and on the day following the battle of Franklin I was informed by General Hood that he had addressed a note to General Cheatham assuring him that he did not censure him with the failure to attack.

"Very respectfully, ISHAM G. HARRIS.

"MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, May 20, 1877."

"The first intimation made to me, from any source, that my conduct at Spring Hill, on the 29th of November, 1864, or during the night of that day, was the subject of criticism, was the receipt of a note from General Hood, written and received on the morning of the 3d of December. This is the communication referred to in the letter of Governor Harris, above quoted. This note was read, so far as I know, by only four persons besides myself—my chief-of-staff, James D. Porter, Governor

much blame to himself. While his error lost so much to the country, it has been a severe lesson to him, by which he will profit in the future. In consideration of this, and of his previous conduct, I think that it is best that he should retain for the present the command he now holds."↓

The best move in my career as a soldier I was thus destined to behold come to naught. The discovery that the army, after a forward march of one hundred and eighty miles, was still, seemingly, unwilling to accept battle unless under the protection of breastworks, caused me to experience grave concern. In my inmost heart I questioned whether or not I would ever succeed in eradicating this evil. It seemed to me I had exhausted every means in the power of one man to remove this stumbling-block to the Army of Tennessee. On the morning of the 30th of November, Lee was on the march up the Franklin pike, when the main body of the army, at Spring Hill, awoke to find the Federals had disappeared.

I hereupon decided, before the enemy would be able to reach his stronghold at Nashville, to make that same afternoon another and final effort to overtake and rout him, and drive him into the Big Harpeth River at Franklin, since I could no longer hope to get between him and Nashville, by reason of the short distance from Franklin to that city, and the advantage which the Federals enjoyed in the possession of the direct road.

At early dawn the troops were put in motion in the direction of Franklin, marching as rapidly as possible to overtake the enemy before he crossed the Big Harpeth, eighteen miles from Spring Hill. Lieutenant-General Lee had crossed Duck River after dark the night previous, and, in order to reach Franklin, was obliged to march a distance of thirty miles. The head of his column arrived at Spring Hill at 9 A. M. on the 30th, and, after a short rest, followed in the wake of the main body.

Isham G. Harris, Major J. F. Cumming, of Georgia, and John C. Burch. Not having been in the habit of carrying a certificate of military character, I attached no special value to the paper, and it was lost somewhere during the campaign in North Carolina. Governor Porter and Major Cumming agree with me that the following was the substance of the note:

"December 3d, 1864.

"MY DEAR GENERAL: I do not censure you for the failure at Spring Hill. I am satisfied you are not responsible for it. I witnessed the splendid manner in which you delivered battle at Franklin on the 30th ult. I now have a higher estimate of you as a soldier than I ever had. You can rely upon my friendship. Yours very truly, J. B. HOOD, General.

"TO GENERAL B. F. CHEATHAM."

"On the morning of the 4th of December I went to the headquarters of General Hood, and, referring to his note and the criticism of my conduct that had evidently been made by some one, I said to him: 'A great opportunity was lost at Spring Hill, but you know that I obeyed your orders there, as everywhere, literally and promptly.' General Hood not only did not dissent from what I said, but exhibited the most cordial manner, coupled with confidence and friendship. The subject was never again alluded to by General Hood to myself, nor, so far as I know, to any one. When he wrote, under date of December 11th, 1864, to Mr. Seddon, that 'Major-General Cheatham has frankly confessed the great error of which he was guilty, and attaches much blame to himself,' he made a statement for which there was not the slightest foundation."—GENERAL CHEATHAM, in the "BIVOUAC."

Stewart's corps was first in order of march; Cheatham followed immediately, and Lieutenant-General Lee in rear. Within about three miles of Franklin, the enemy was discovered on the ridge over which passes the turnpike. As soon as the Confederate troops began to deploy, and skirmishers were thrown forward, the Federals withdrew slowly to the environs of the town.

It was about 3 P. M. when Lieutenant-General Stewart moved to the right of the pike and began to establish his position in front of the enemy. Major-General Cheatham's corps, as it arrived in turn, filed off to the left of the road, and was also disposed in line of battle. The artillery was instructed to take no part in the engagement, on account of the danger to which women and children in the village would be exposed. † General Forrest was ordered to post cavalry on both flanks, and, if the assault proved successful, to complete the ruin of the enemy by capturing those who attempted to escape in the direction of Nashville. Lee's corps, as it arrived, was held in reserve, owing to the lateness of the hour and my inability, consequently, to post it on the extreme left. Schofield's position was rendered favorable for defense by open ground in front, and temporary intrenchments which the Federals had had time to throw up, notwithstanding the Confederate forces had marched in pursuit with all possible speed. At one or two points, along a short space, a slight abatis had been hastily constructed, by felling some small locust saplings in the vicinity.

Soon after Cheatham's corps was massed on the left, Major-General Cleburne came to me where I was seated on my horse in rear of the line, and asked permission to form his division in two, or, if I remember correctly, three lines for the assault. I at once granted his request, stating that I desired the Federals to be driven into the river in their immediate rear, and directing him to advise me as soon as he had completed the new disposition of his troops. Shortly afterward Cheatham and Stewart reported all in readiness for action, and received orders to drive the enemy from his position into the river *at all hazards*. About that time Cleburne returned, and, expressing himself with an enthusiasm which he had never before betrayed in our intercourse, said, "General, I am ready, and have more hope in the final success of

† General J. D. Cox has pointed out that the reports confirm his own observation that Hood's artillery was used in the battle.—EDITORS.



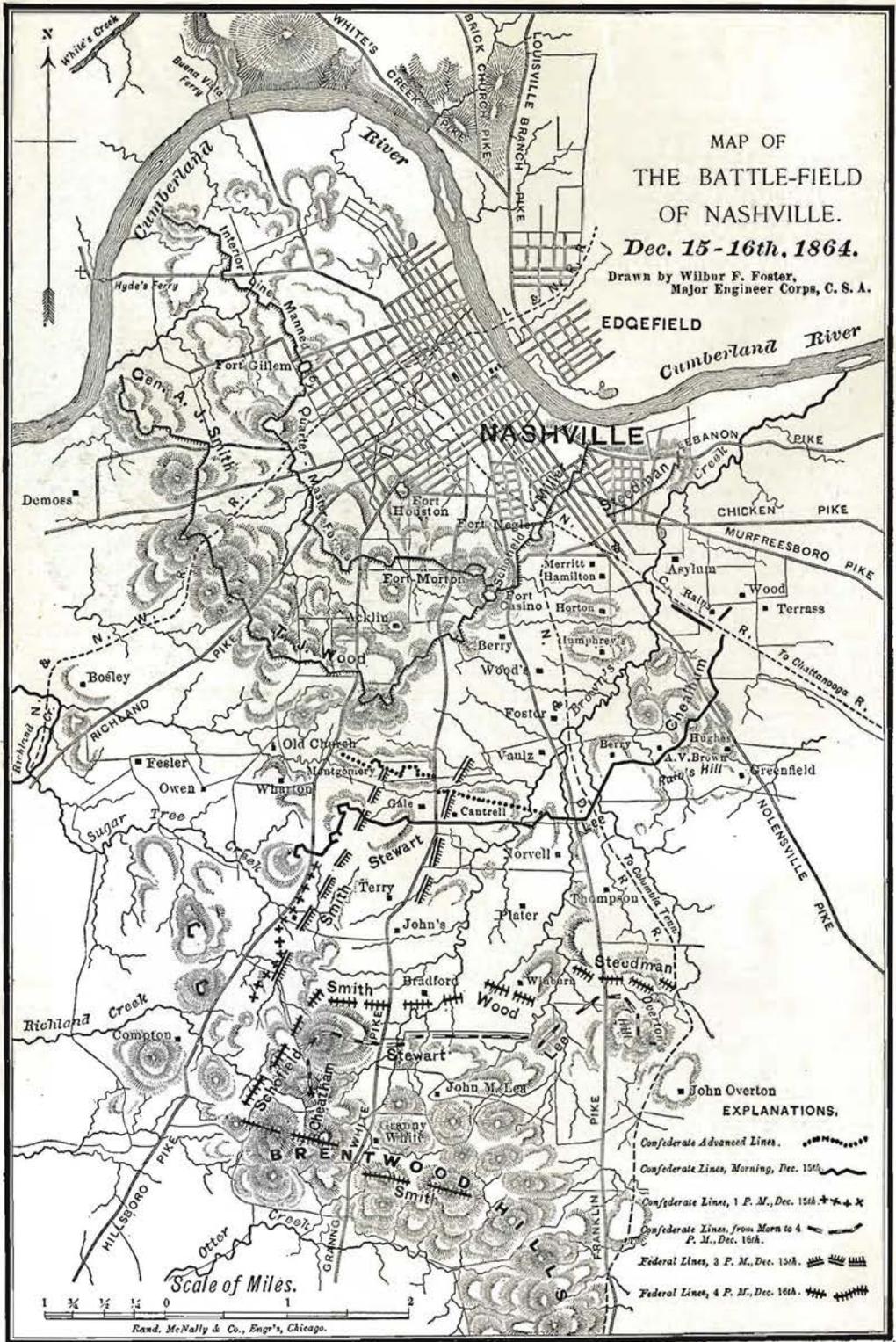
MAJOR-GENERAL PATRICK R. CLEBURNE, C. S. A., KILLED AT FRANKLIN, NOVEMBER 30, 1864. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

our cause than I have had at any time since the first gun was fired." I replied, "God grant it!" He turned and moved at once toward the head of his division; a few moments thereafter he was lost to my sight in the tumult of battle. These last words, spoken to me by this brave and distinguished soldier, I have often recalled; they can never leave my memory, as within forty minutes after he had uttered them he lay lifeless upon or near the breastworks of the foe.

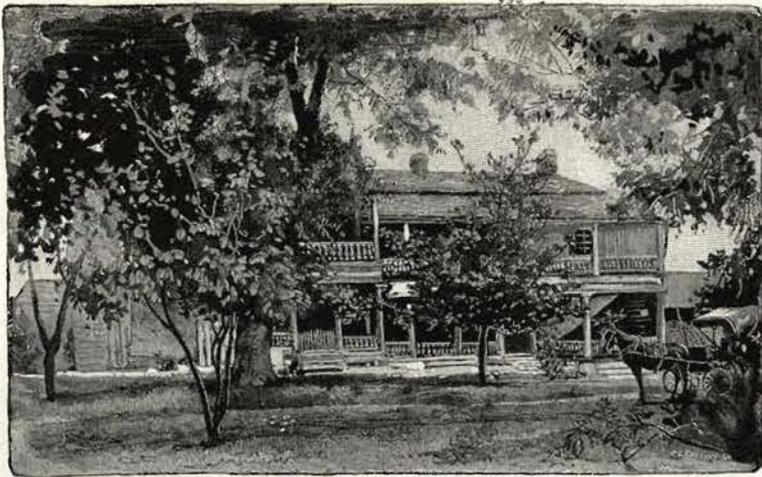
The two corps advanced in battle array at about 4 P. M., and soon swept away the first line of the Federals, who were driven back upon the main line. At this moment resounded a concentrated roar of musketry, which recalled to me some of the deadliest struggles in Virginia, and which now proclaimed that the possession of Nashville was once more dependent upon the fortunes of war. The conflict continued to rage with intense fury; our troops succeeded in breaking the main line at one or more points, capturing and turning some of the guns on their opponents.

Just at this critical moment of the battle, a brigade of the enemy, reported to have been Stanley's, ‡ gallantly charged, and restored the Federal line, capturing at the same time about one thousand of our troops within the intrenchments. Still

‡ Opdycke's brigade of Stanley's Fourth Corps, and the second line of Reilly's brigade of Cox's Twenty-third Corps.—EDITORS.



FROM THE "BIVOUAC" FOR AUGUST, 1886.



OVERTON'S HOUSE, HOOD'S HEADQUARTERS AT NASHVILLE. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1864.

the ground was obstinately contested, and at several points upon the immediate sides of the breastworks the combatants endeavored to use the musket upon one another, by inverting and raising it perpendicularly, in order to fire; neither antagonist, at this juncture, was able to retreat without almost a certainty of death. It was reported that soldiers were even dragged from one side of the breastworks to the other by men reaching over hurriedly and seizing their enemy by the hair or the collar.

Just before dark Edward Johnson's division of Lee's corps moved gallantly to the support of Cheat-ham; although it made a desperate charge and succeeded in capturing three stand of colors, it did not effect a permanent breach in the line of the enemy. Unfortunately, the two remaining divisions could not become engaged owing to the obscurity of night. The struggle continued with more or less violence until 9 P. M., when skirmishing and much desultory firing followed until about 3 A. M. the ensuing morning. The enemy then withdrew, leaving his dead and wounded upon the field. Thus terminated one of the fiercest conflicts of the war.

Nightfall, which closed in upon us so soon after the beginning of the battle, prevented the formation and participation of Lee's entire corps on the extreme left. This, it may safely be asserted, saved Schofield's army from destruction. I might, with equal assurance, assert that had Lieutenant-General Lee been in advance at Spring Hill the previous afternoon Schofield's army never would have passed that point.

☆ As shown by Colonel Mason's official report, made on the 10th of December, ten days after the battle, our effective strength was: Infantry, 18,342; artillery, 2405; cavalry, 2306,—total, 23,053. This last number, subtracted from 30,600, the strength of the army at Florence, shows a total loss from all causes of 7547, from the 6th of November to the 10th of December, which period includes the engagements at Columbia, Franklin, and of Forrest's cavalry. The enemy's estimate of our losses, as well as of the number of Confederate colors captured, is errone-

ous, as will be seen by my telegram of December 15th to the Secretary of War:

Major-General Cleburne had been distinguished for his admirable conduct upon many fields, and his loss at this moment was irreparable. He was a man of equally quick perception and strong character, and was, especially in one respect, in advance of many of our people. He possessed the boldness and the wisdom earnestly to advocate, at an early period of the war, the freedom of the negro and the enrollment of the young and able-bodied men of that race. This stroke of policy and additional source of strength to our armies would, in my opinion, have given us our independence.

After the failure of my cherished plan to crush Schofield's army before it reached its strongly fortified position around Nashville, I remained with an effective force of only 23,053. ☆ I was therefore well aware of our inability to attack the Federals in their new stronghold with any hope of success, although Schofield's troops had abandoned the field at Franklin, leaving their dead and wounded in our possession, and had hastened with considerable alarm into their fortifications—which latter information, in regard to their condition after the battle, I obtained through spies. I knew equally well that in the absence of the prestige of complete victory I could not venture with my small force to cross the Cumberland River into Kentucky, without first receiving reinforcements from the Trans-Mississippi Department. I felt convinced that the Tennesseans and Kentuckians would not join our forces, since we had failed in the first instance to defeat the Federal army and capture Nashville. The President was still urgent in his instructions relative to the transference of

ous, as will be seen by my telegram of December 15th to the Secretary of War:

"The enemy claim that we lost thirty colors in the fight at Franklin. We lost thirteen, capturing nearly the same number. The men who bore ours were killed on or within the enemy's interior line of works." J. B. H.

General J. D. Cox states in his "Franklin and Nashville" that the capture of 22 colors by Reilly and 10 by Opdycke was officially reported and verified at the time.—EDITORS.

troops to the Army of Tennessee from Texas, and I daily hoped to receive the glad tidings of their safe passage across the Mississippi River.

Thus, unless strengthened by these long-looked-for reinforcements, the only remaining chance of success in the campaign, at this juncture, was to take position, intrench about Nashville, and await Thomas's attack, which, if handsomely repulsed, might afford us an opportunity to follow up our advantage on the spot, and enter the city on the heels of the enemy.

I could not afford to turn southward, unless for the *special* purpose of forming a junction with the



MAJOR-GENERAL J. B. STEEDMAN. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

expected reinforcements from Texas, and with the avowed intention to march back again upon Nashville. In truth, our army was in that condition which rendered it more judicious the men should face a decisive issue rather than retreat—in other words, rather than renounce the honor of their cause, without having made a last and manful effort to lift up the sinking fortunes of the Confederacy.

I therefore determined to move upon Nashville, to intrench, to accept the chances of reinforcements from Texas, and, even at the risk of an attack in the meantime by overwhelming numbers, to adopt the only feasible means of defeating the enemy with my own reduced numbers, viz., to await his attack, and, if favored by success, to follow him into his works. I was apprised of each accession to Thomas's army, but was still unwilling to abandon the ground as long as I saw a shadow of probability of assistance from the Trans-Mississippi Department, or of victory in battle;

and, as I have just remarked, the troops would, I believed, return better satisfied even after defeat if, in grasping at the last straw, they felt that a brave and vigorous effort had been made to save the country from disaster. Such, at the time, was my opinion, which I have since had no reason to alter.

In accordance with these convictions I ordered the army to move forward on the 1st of December in the direction of Nashville; Lee's corps marched in advance, followed by Stewart's and Cheatham's corps, and the troops bivouacked that night in the vicinity of Brentwood. On the morning of the 2d the march was resumed, and line of battle formed in front of Nashville. Lee's corps was placed in the center and across the Franklin pike; Stewart occupied the left and Cheatham the right—their flanks extending as near the Cumberland as possible, whilst Forrest's cavalry filled the gap between them and the river.

General Rousseau occupied Murfreesboro' in rear of our right, with about eight thousand men, heavily intrenched. General Bate's division and Sears's and Brown's brigades were ordered, on the 5th, to report at that point to General Forrest, who was instructed to watch closely that detachment of the enemy. The same day information was received of the capture of 100 prisoners, two pieces of artillery, 20 wagons and teams by Forrest's cavalry at La Vergne; of the capture and destruction of three block houses on the Chattanooga Railroad by Bate's division; and of the seizure the day previous by Chalmers of two transports on the Cumberland River with 300 mules on board.

We had in our possession two engines and several cars, which ran as far south as Pulaski. Dispatches were sent to Generals Beauregard and Maury to repair the railroad from Corinth to Decatur, as our trains would be running in a day or two to the latter point. This means of transportation was of great service in furnishing supplies to the army. When we reached middle Tennessee our troops had an abundance of provisions, although sorely in need of shoes and clothing.

General Bate's division was ordered to return to the army; Forrest was instructed to direct Palmer's and Mercer's infantry brigades to thoroughly intrench on Stewart's Creek, or at La Vergne, according as he might deem more judicious, to constitute,

with these troops and his cavalry, a force in observation of the enemy at Murfreesboro', and, lastly, to send a brigade of cavalry to picket the river at Lebanon.

The Federals having been reported to be massing cavalry at Edgefield, Forrest was instructed to meet and drive them back, if they attempted to cross the Cumberland. The same day, the 10th of December, Generals Stewart and Cheatham were directed to construct detached works in rear of their flanks, which rested near the river, in order to protect these flanks against an effort by

the Federals to turn them. Although every possible exertion was made by these officers, the works were not completed when, on the 15th, the Federal army moved out and attacked both flanks, whilst the main assault was directed against our left. It was my intention to have made these defenses self-sustaining, but time was not allowed, as the enemy attacked on the morning of the 15th. Throughout that day they were repulsed at all points of the general line with heavy loss, and only succeeded toward evening in capturing the infantry outposts on our left, and with them the small force together with the artillery posted in these unfinished works. Finding that the main movement of the Federals was directed against our left, the chief engineer was instructed carefully to select a line in prolongation of the left flank; Cheatham's corps was withdrawn from the right during the night of the 15th and posted on the left of Stewart—Cheatham's left resting near the Brentwood Hills. The men were ordered to construct breastworks there during that same night.

The morning of the 16th found us with Lee's right on Overton's Hill. At an early hour the enemy made a general attack along our front, and were again and again repulsed at all points with heavy loss, especially in Lee's front. About 3:30 p. m. the Federals concentrated a number of guns against a portion of our line, which passed over a mound on the left of our center, and which had been occupied during the night. This point was favorable for massing troops for an assault under cover of artillery. Accordingly the enemy availed himself of the advantage presented, massed a body of men—apparently one division—at the base of this mound, and, under the fire of artillery, which prevented our men from raising their heads above the breastworks, made a sudden and gallant charge up to and over our intrenchments. Our line, thus pierced, gave way; soon thereafter it broke at all points, and I beheld for the first and only time a Confederate army abandon the field in confusion. I was seated upon my horse not far in rear when the breach was effected, and soon discovered that all hope to rally the troops was vain.

I did not, I might say, anticipate a break at that time, as our forces up to that moment had repulsed the Federals at every point, and were waving their colors in defiance, crying out to the enemy, "Come on, come on." Just previous to this fatal occurrence I had matured the movement for the next morning. The enemy's right flank, by this hour, stood in air some six miles from Nashville, and I had determined to withdraw my entire force during the night, and attack this exposed flank in rear. I could safely have done so, as I still had open a line of retreat.

The day before the rout, the artillery posted in the detached works had been captured; a number of guns in the main line were abandoned for the reason that the horses could not be brought forward in time to remove them. Thus the total number of guns captured amounted to fifty-four. We had fortunately still remaining a sufficient number of pieces of artillery for the equipment of the army, since, it will be remembered. I had

taken with me at the outset of the campaign a large reserve of artillery to use against gun-boats. Our losses in killed and wounded in this engagement were comparatively small, as the troops were protected by breastworks.

Order among the troops was in a measure restored at Brentwood, a few miles in rear of the scene of disaster, through the promptness and gallantry of Clayton's division, which speedily formed and confronted the enemy, with Gibson's brigade and McKenzie's battery, of Fenner's battalion, acting as rear-guard of the rear-guard. General Clayton displayed admirable coolness and courage that afternoon and the next morning in the discharge of his duties. Gibson, who evinced conspicuous gallantry and ability in the handling of his troops, succeeded, in concert with Clayton, in checking and staying the first and most dangerous shock which always follows immediately after a rout. The result was that even after the army passed the Big Harpeth, at Franklin, the brigades and divisions were marching in regular order.

General S. D. Lee displayed his usual energy and skill in handling his troops on the 17th, whilst protecting the rear of our army. Unfortunately, in the afternoon he was wounded and forced to leave the field. General C. L. Stevenson then assumed command of Lee's corps, and ably discharged his duties during the continuance of the retreat to and across the Tennessee River.

General Walthall, one of the most able division commanders in the South, was here ordered to form a rear-guard with eight picked brigades and Forrest's cavalry; the march was then resumed in the direction of Columbia, Stewart's corps moving in front, followed by those of Cheatham and Stevenson. The army bivouacked in line of battle near Duck River on the night of the 18th.

The following day we crossed the river and proceeded on different roads leading toward Bainbridge on the Tennessee. I entertained but little concern in regard to being further harassed by the enemy. I therefore continued to march leisurely, and arrived at Bainbridge on the 25th of December. The following day the march was continued in the direction of Tupelo, at which place Cheatham's corps, the last in the line of march, went into camp on the 10th of January, 1865.

On the 13th of January I sent the following dispatch to the Secretary of War: "I request to be relieved from the command of this army."

Upon General Beauregard's arrival at Tupelo, on the 14th of January, I informed him of my application to be relieved from the command of the army. I again telegraphed the authorities in Richmond, stating that the campaigns to the Alabama line and into Tennessee were my own conception; that I alone was responsible; that I had striven hard to execute them in such manner as to bring victory to our people, and at the same time repeated my desire to be relieved. The President finally complied with my request, and I bade farewell to the Army of Tennessee on the 23d of January, 1865, after having served with it somewhat in excess of eleven months, and having performed my duties to the utmost of my ability.