

"THE SEVEN DAYS," INCLUDING FRAYSER'S FARM. †

BY JAMES LONGSTREET, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL, C. S. A.



"GEN'L LONGSTREET'S BODY-SERVANT, SAH,
ENDU'IN' DE WAN!"

WHEN General Joseph E. Johnston was wounded at the battle of Seven Pines, and General Lee assumed his new duties as commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, General Stonewall Jackson was in the Shenandoah Valley, and the rest of the Confederate troops were east and north of Richmond in front of General George B. McClellan's army, then encamped about the Chickahominy River, 100,000 strong, and preparing for a regular siege of the Confederate capital. The situation required prompt and successful action by General Lee. Very early in June he called about him, on the noted Nine-mile road near Richmond, all his commanders, and asked each in turn his opinion of the military situation. I had my own views, but did not express them, believing that if they were important it was equally important that they should be unfolded privately to the commanding general. The next day I called on General Lee, and suggested my plan for driving the Federal forces away from the Chickahominy. McClellan had a small force at Mechanicsville, and farther back, at Beaver Dam Creek, a considerable portion of his army in a stronghold that was simply unassailable from the front. The banks of Beaver Dam Creek were so steep as to be impassable except on bridges. I proposed an echelon movement, and suggested that Jackson be called down from the Valley, and passed to the rear of the Federal right, in order to turn the position behind Beaver Dam, while the rest of the Confederate forces who were to engage in the attack could cross the Chickahominy at points suitable for the succession in the move, and be ready to attack the Federals as soon as they were thrown from their position. After hearing me, General Lee sent General J. E. B. Stuart on his famous ride around McClellan. The dashing horseman, with a strong reconnoitering force of cavalry, made a forced reconnoissance, passing above and around the Federal forces, recrossing the Chickahominy below them, and returning safe to Confederate headquarters. He made a favorable report of the situation and the practicability of the proposed plan. On the 23d of June General Jackson was summoned to General Lee's headquarters, and was there met by General A. P. Hill, General D. H. Hill, and myself. A conference resulted in the selection of the 26th as the day on which we should move against the Federal position at Beaver Dam. General Jackson was ordered down from the Valley. General A. P. Hill was to pass the Chickahominy with part of his division, and hold the rest in readiness to cross at Meadow Bridge, following

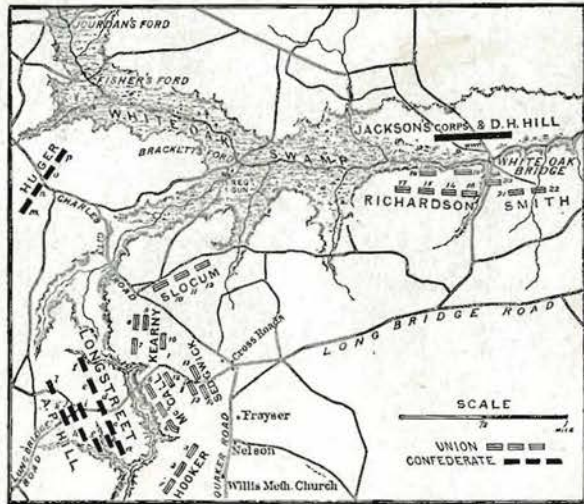
† The usual spelling is Frazier or Frazer. The authority for the form here adopted is Captain R. E. Frayser, of Richmond.—EDITORS.

Jackson's swoop along the dividing ridge between the Pamunkey and the Chickahominy. D. H. Hill and I were ordered to be in position on the Mechanicsville pike early on the 26th, ready to cross the river at Mechanicsville Bridge as soon as it was cleared by the advance of Jackson and A. P. Hill.

Thus matters stood when the morning of the 26th arrived. The weather was clear, and the roads were in fine condition. Everything seemed favorable to the move. But the morning passed and we received no tidings from Jackson. As noon approached, General Hill, who was to move behind Jackson, grew impatient at the delay and begged permission to hurry him up by a fusillade. General Lee consented, and General Hill opened his batteries on Mechanicsville, driving the Federals off. When D. H. Hill and I crossed at the Mechanicsville Bridge we found A. P. Hill severely engaged, trying to drive the Federals from their strong position behind Beaver Dam Creek. Without Jackson to turn the Federal right, the battle could not be ours. Although the contest lasted until some time after night, the Confederates made no progress. The next day the fight was renewed, and the position was hotly contested by the Federals until 7 o'clock in the morning, when the advance of Jackson speedily caused the Federals to abandon their position, thus ending the battle. †

† According to General Fitz John Porter, it was not Jackson's approach, but information of that event, that caused the withdrawal of the Union troops, who, with the exception of "some batteries and infantry skirmishers," were withdrawn before sunrise on the 27th.

EDITORS.



MAP OF THE BATTLE OF FRAYSER'S FARM (CHARLES CITY CROSS-ROADS OR GLENDALE), JUNE 30, 1862, SHOWING APPROXIMATE POSITIONS OF UNION AND CONFEDERATE TROOPS. ALSO DISPOSITION OF TROOPS DURING THE ARTILLERY ENGAGEMENT AT WHITE OAK BRIDGE.

Union brigades: 1, Sickles; 2, Carr; 3, Grover; 4, Seymour; 5, Reynolds (Simmons); 6, Meade (this brigade should be represented as north of the road); 7, Robinson; 8, Birney; 9, Berry; 10, Newton; 11, Bartlett; 12, 12, Taylor; 13, Burns; 14, 14, Dana; 15, 15, Sully; 16, 16, Caldwell; 17, French; 18, Meagher; 19, Naglee (of Keyes's corps); 20, Davidson; 21, Brooks; 22, Hancock. Randol's battery was on the right of the road, Kerns's and Cooper's on the left, and Diederichs's and Knieriem's yet farther to the left. Thompson's battery of Kearny's division was with General Robinson's brigade (7).

Confederate brigades: a, Kemper; b, Pickett (Hunton); c, R. H. Anderson (Jenkins); d, Wilcox; e, Featherston; f, Pryor; g, Branch; h, Archer; i, Field; j, J. R. Anderson; k, Pender; l, Gregg; m, n, o, p, Armistead, Wright, Mahone, and Ransom. Of the Confederate batteries, Rogers's, Dearing's, the Thomas artillery, Pegram's, Davidson's, and others were engaged.

The action at White Oak Bridge, about 11 A. M., and that between Huger and Slocum to the left, beginning about 3 P. M., were of artillery only, and were successful from the Union point of view, in that they prevented the Confederate forces at these points from reinforcing Longstreet, while they enabled four Union brigades (12, 14, 15, and 16) to reinforce his opponents. The battle of Frayser's farm, beginning about 4 P. M., resulted in the accomplishment of General McClellan's object, the protection of his trains from rear and flank attack as they were passing down the Long Bridge and Quaker roads to the James River. General Kearny's report characterized this battle as "one of the most desperate of the war, the one the most fatal if lost." The fighting began in force on the left of Seymour's brigade (4), and the brunt of the attack fell upon McCall and the left of Kearny. "Of the four divisions that day engaged," says General McCall's report, "each manœuvred and fought independently." McCall's division, being flanked on the left by Longstreet's right, was driven from its position after a stubborn resistance; its place was taken by Burns's brigade, reinforced by Dana's and Sully's, and these troops recovered part of the ground lost by McCall. The fury of the battle now shifted to the front of Kearny, who was reinforced by Taylor's and Caldwell's brigades. The Confederates gained some ground, but no substantial advantage, and the Union troops withdrew during the night to Malvern Hill.—EDITORS.



FRAYSER'S FARM-HOUSE, FROM THE QUAKER OR CHURCH ROAD, LOOKING SOUTH. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1885.

This house was used as General Sumner's headquarters and as a hospital during the battle. The fighting took place from half to three-quarters of a mile to the right, or westward. The National Cemetery is shown in the middle distance.

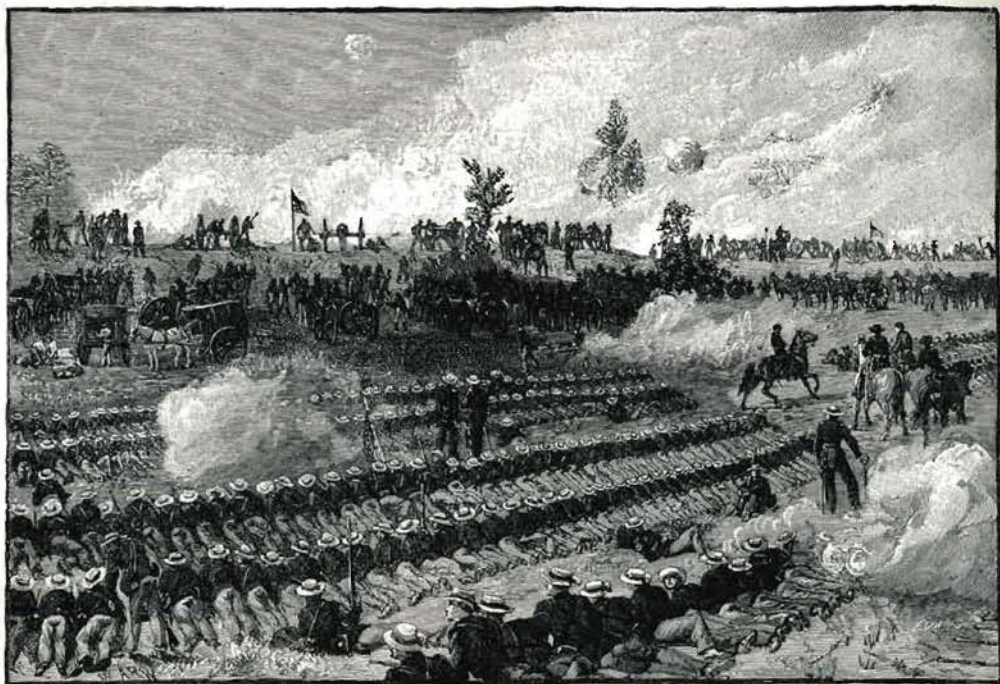
It is easy to see that the battle of the previous day would have been a quick and bloodless Confederate victory if Jackson could have reached his position at the time appointed. In my judgment the evacuation of Beaver Dam Creek was very unwise on the part of the Federal commanders. We had attacked at Beaver Dam, and had failed to make an impression at that point, losing several thousand men and officers. This demonstrated that the position was safe. If the Federal commanders knew of Jackson's approach on the 26th, they had ample time to reënforce Porter's right before Friday morning (27th) with men and field defenses, to such extent as to make the remainder of the line to the right secure against assault. So that the Federals in withdrawing not only abandoned a strong position, but gave up the *morale* of their success, and transferred it to our somewhat disheartened forces; for, next to Malvern Hill, the sacrifice at Beaver Dam was unequalled in demoralization during the entire summer.

From Beaver Dam we followed the Federals closely, encountering them again under Porter beyond Powhite Creek, where the battle of Gaines's Mill occurred. General A. P. Hill, being in advance, deployed his men and opened the attack without consulting me. A very severe battle followed. I came up with my reserve forces and was preparing to support Hill, who was suffering very severely, when I received an order from General Lee to make a demonstration against the Federal left, as the battle was not progressing to suit him. I threw in three brigades opposite the Federal left and engaged them

in a severe skirmish with infantry and artillery. The battle then raged with great fierceness. General Jackson was again missing, and General Lee grew fearful of the result. Soon I received another message from General Lee, saying that unless I could do something the day seemed to be lost. I then determined to make the heaviest attack I could. The position in front of me was very strong. An open field led down to a difficult ravine a short distance beyond the Powhite Creek. From there the ground made a steep ascent, and was covered with trees and slashed timber and hastily made rifle-trenches. General Whiting came to me with two brigades of Jackson's men and asked me to put him in. I told him I was just organizing an attack and would give him position. My column of attack then was R. H. Anderson's and Pickett's brigades, with Law's and Hood's of Whiting's division. We attacked and defeated the Federals on their left, capturing many thousand stand of arms, fifty-two pieces of artillery, a large quantity of supplies, and many prisoners,—among them General Reynolds, who afterward fell at Gettysburg. The Federals made some effort to reënforce and recover their lost ground, but failed, and during the afternoon and night withdrew their entire forces from that side of the Chickahominy, going in the direction of James River. On the 29th General Lee ascertained that McClellan was marching toward the James. He determined to make a vigorous move and strike the enemy a severe blow. He decided to intercept them in the neighborhood of Charles City cross-roads, and with that end in view planned a pursuit as follows: I was to march to a point below Frayser's farm with General A. P. Hill. General Holmes was to take up position below me on the New Market or River road, to be in readiness to coöperate with me and to attack such Federals as would come within his reach. Jackson was to pursue closely the Federal rear, crossing at the Grapevine Bridge, and coming in on the north of the cross-roads. Huger was to attend to the Federal right flank, and take position on the Charles City road west of the cross-roads. Thus we were to envelop the Federal rear and make the destruction of that part of McClellan's army sure. To reach my position south of the cross-roads, I had about sixteen miles to march. I marched 14 miles on the 29th, crossing over into the Darbytown road and moving down to its intersection, with the New Market road, where I camped for the night, about 3 miles south-west of Frayser's farm. On the morning of the 30th I moved two miles nearer up and made preparation to intercept the Federals as they retreated toward James River. General McCall, with a division of ten thousand Federals, was at the cross-roads and about Frayser's farm. My division, being in advance, was deployed in front of the enemy. I placed such of my batteries as I could find position for, and kept Hill's troops in my rear. As I had twice as far to march as the other commanders, I considered it certain that Jackson and



UNIFORM OF A NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER OF THE 1ST NEW YORK, BERRY'S BRIGADE, KEARNY'S DIVISION, 3D CORPS.



OPENING OF THE BATTLE OF FRAYSER'S FARM: SLOCUM'S ARTILLERY ENGAGED WITH THAT OF HUGER, AT BRACKETT'S, ON THE CHARLES CITY ROAD. FROM A SKETCH MADE AT THE TIME.

Huger would be in position when I was ready. After getting my troops in position I called upon General A. P. Hill to throw one of his brigades to cover my right and to hold the rest of his troops in readiness to give pursuit when the enemy had been dislodged. My line extended from near the Quaker road across the New Market road to the Federal right. The ground upon which I approached was much lower than that occupied by General McCall, and was greatly cut up by ravines and covered with heavy timber and tangled undergrowth. On account of these obstructions we were not disturbed while getting into position, except by the firing of a few shots that did no damage. Holmes got into position below me on the New Market road, and was afterward joined by Magruder, who had previously made an unsuccessful attack on the Federal rear-guard at Savage's Station.

By 11 o'clock our troops were in position, and we waited for the signal from Jackson and Huger. Everything was quiet on my part of the line, except occasional firing between my pickets and McCall's. I was in momentary expectation of the signal. About half-past 2 o'clock artillery firing was heard on my left, evidently at the point near White Oak Swamp where Huger was to attack. I very naturally supposed this firing to be the expected signal, and ordered some of my batteries to reply, as a signal that I was ready to cooperate. While the order to open was going around to the batteries, President Davis and General Lee, with their staff and followers, were with me in a little open field near the rear of my right. We were in pleasant conversation, anticipating fruitful results from the fight, when our batteries opened. Instantly the Federal batteries responded most spitefully. It was

impossible for the enemy to see us as we sat on our horses in the little field, surrounded by tall, heavy timber and thick undergrowth; yet a battery by chance had our range and exact distance, and poured upon us a terrific fire. The second or third shell burst in the midst of us, killing two or three horses and wounding one or two men. Our little party speedily retired to safer quarters. The Federals doubtless had no idea that the Confederate President, commanding general, and division commanders were receiving point-blank shot from their batteries. Colonel Micah Jenkins was in front of us, and I sent him an order to silence the Federal battery, supposing that he could do so with his long-range rifles. He became engaged, and finally determined to charge the battery. That brought on a general fight between my division and the troops in front of us. Kemper on my right advanced his brigade over difficult ground and captured a battery. Jenkins moved his brigade forward and made a bold fight. He was followed by the other four brigades successively.

The enemy’s line was broken, and he was partly dislodged from his position. The batteries were taken, but our line was very much broken up by the rough ground we had to move over, and we were not in sufficiently solid form to maintain a proper battle. The battle was continued, however, until we encountered succor from the corps of Generals Sumner and Heintzelman, when we were obliged to halt and hold the position the enemy had left. This line was held throughout the day, though at times, when vigorous combinations were made against me, McCall regained points along his line. Our counter-movements, however, finally pushed him back again, and more formidable efforts from our adversary were required. Other advances were made, and reënforcements came to the support of the Federals, who contested the line with varying fortune, sometimes recovering batteries we had taken, and again losing them. Finally McCall’s division was driven off, and fresh troops seemed to come in to their relief. Ten thousand men of A. P. Hill’s division had been held in reserve, in the hope that Jackson and Huger would come up on our left, enabling us to dislodge the Federals, after which Hill’s troops could be put in fresh to give pursuit, and follow them down to Harrison’s Landing. Jackson found Grapevine Bridge destroyed and could not reach his position; while for some unaccountable reason Huger failed to take part, though near enough to do so. † As neither Jackson nor Huger came up, and as night drew on, I put Hill in to relieve my troops. When he came into the fight the Federal line had been broken at every point except one. He formed his line and followed up in the position occupied by my troops. By night we succeeded in getting the entire field, though all of it was not actually occupied until we advanced in pursuit next day. As the enemy moved off they continued the fire of their artillery upon us from various points, and it was after 9 o’clock when the shells ceased to fall. Just before dark General McCall, while looking up a fragment of his division, found us where he supposed his troops were, and was taken prisoner. At the time he was brought in General Lee happened to be with us. As I had known General McCall pleasantly in our

† General Huger says, in his official report, that the road was very effectively obstructed.—EDITORS.



CHARGE OF CONFEDERATES UPON RANDOL'S BATTERY AT FRAYSER'S FARM.

The contest for this battery was one of the most severe encounters of the day. The Confederates (the 55th and 60th Virginia Regiments) advanced out of formation, in wedge shape, and with trailing arms, and began a hand-to-hand conflict over the guns, which were finally yielded to them [see p. 413].

service together in the 4th Infantry, I moved to offer my hand as he dismounted. At the first motion, however, I saw he did not regard the occasion as one for renewing the old friendship, and I merely offered him some of my staff as an escort to Richmond. ¶ But for the succoring forces, which should have been engaged by Jackson, Huger, Holmes, and Magruder, McCall would have been entirely dislodged by the first attack. All of our other forces were within a radius of 3 miles, and in easy hearing of the battle, yet of the 50,000 none came in to coöperate. (Jackson should have done more for me than he did. When he wanted me at the Second Manassas, I marched two columns by night to clear the way at Thoroughfare Gap, and joined

¶ Major W. Roy Mason, who served on the staff of General C. W. Field, C. S. A., gives this account of the capture of General McCall at Glendale, on the evening of June 30th:

"We occupied as headquarters [at the close of the battle] the center of an old road that ran through a dense pine-wood which the enemy had occupied only two hours before, and the dead and wounded were lying about us. General Field asked me to remain with the other members of the staff, and volunteered to go down to a water-course, where he had seen water trickling, to fill the canteens and make some coffee for me, for I was much exhausted, having been thrown violently by a wounded horse during the battle. While General Field was absent we saw, in the shadows, three or four men riding toward us, one of them being in

advance and having a cloak thrown around him. I recognized the figure at once as that of a Federal officer. 'What command is this?' he asked. 'General Field's, sir,' was my answer. 'General Field! I don't know him.' 'Perhaps not, as you are evidently in the wrong place.'

"He at once turned to retreat, spurring his horse, and I gave the alarm. A soldier of the 47th Virginia (S. Brooke Rollins) now came forward and seized the bridle of the horse, saying to the rider, 'Not so fast.' The captured officer proved to be General McCall, of the Pennsylvania Reserves."

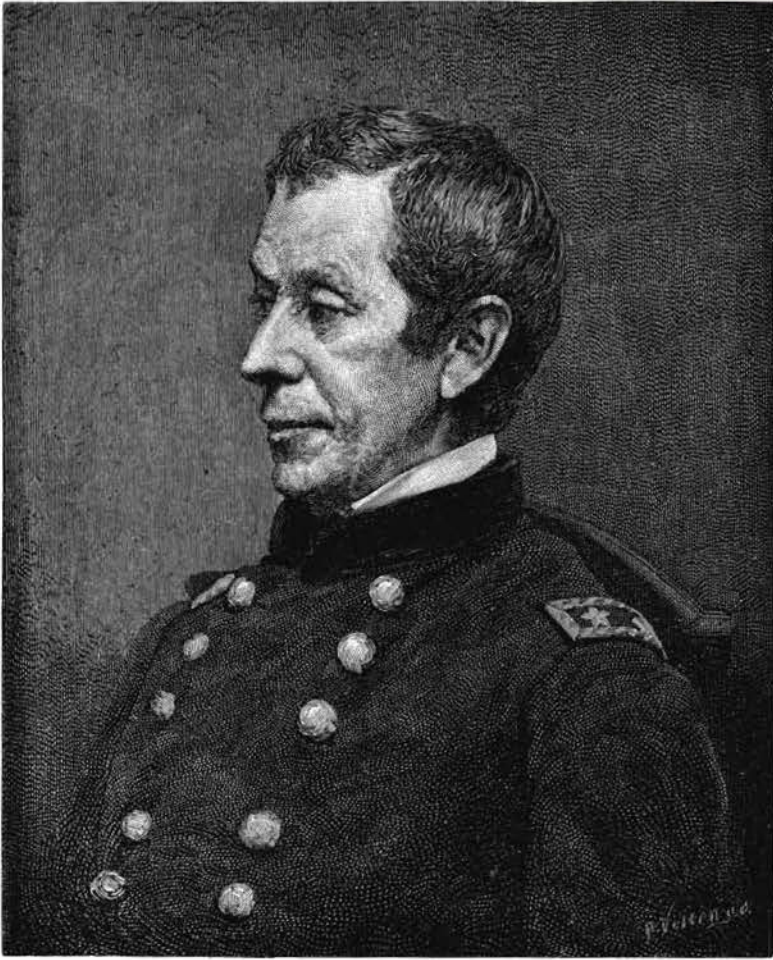
The staff-officers were fired upon while attempting to ride back, and Captain H. J. Biddle, McCall's adjutant-general, was instantly killed. Owing to the darkness the others escaped.—EDITORS.

him in due season.) Hooker claimed at Glendale to have rolled me up and hurriedly thrown me over on Kearny,—tennis-like, I suppose; but McCall showed in his supplementary report that Hooker could as well claim, with a little tension of the hyperbole, that he had thrown me over the moon. On leaving Frayser's farm the Federals withdrew to Malvern Hill, and Lee concentrated his forces and followed them.

On the morning of July 1st, the day after the battle at Frayser's farm, we encountered the enemy at Malvern Hill, and General Lee asked me to make a reconnoissance and see if I could find a good position for the artillery. I found position offering good play for batteries across the Federal left over to the right, and suggested that sixty pieces should be put in while Jackson engaged the Federal front. I suggested that a heavy play of this cross-fire on the Federals would so discomfit them as to warrant an assault by infantry. General Lee issued his orders accordingly, and designated the advance of Armistead's brigade as the signal for the grand assault. Later it was found that the ground over which our batteries were to pass into position on our right was so rough and obstructed that of the artillery ordered for use there only one or two batteries could go in at a time. As our guns in front did not engage, the result was the enemy concentrated the fire of fifty or sixty guns upon our isolated batteries, and tore them into fragments in a few minutes after they opened, piling horses upon each other and guns upon horses. Before night, the fire from our batteries failing of execution, General Lee seemed to abandon the idea of an attack. He proposed to me to move around to the left with my own and A. P. Hill's division, turning the Federal right. I issued my orders accordingly for the two divisions to go around and turn the Federal right, when in some way unknown to me the battle was drawn on. We were repulsed at all points with fearful slaughter, losing six thousand men and accomplishing nothing.

The Federals withdrew after the battle, and the next day I moved on around by the route which it was proposed we should take the day before. I followed the enemy to Harrison's Landing, and Jackson went down by another route in advance of Lee. As soon as we reached the front of the Federal position we put out our skirmish-lines, and I ordered an advance, intending to make another attack, but revoked it on Jackson urging me to wait until the arrival of General Lee. Very soon General Lee came, and, after carefully considering the position of the enemy and of their gun-boats on the James, decided that it would be better to forego any further operations. Our skirmish-lines were withdrawn, we ordered our troops back to their old lines around Richmond, and a month later McClellan's army was withdrawn to the North.

The Seven Days' Fighting, although a decided Confederate victory, was a succession of mishaps. If Jackson had arrived on the 26th,—the day of his own selection,—the Federals would have been driven back from Mechanicsville without a battle. His delay there, caused by obstructions placed in his road by the enemy, was the first mishap. He was too late in entering the fight at Gaines's Mill, and the destruction of Grapevine Bridge kept him from



GENERAL GEORGE A. MCCALL. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

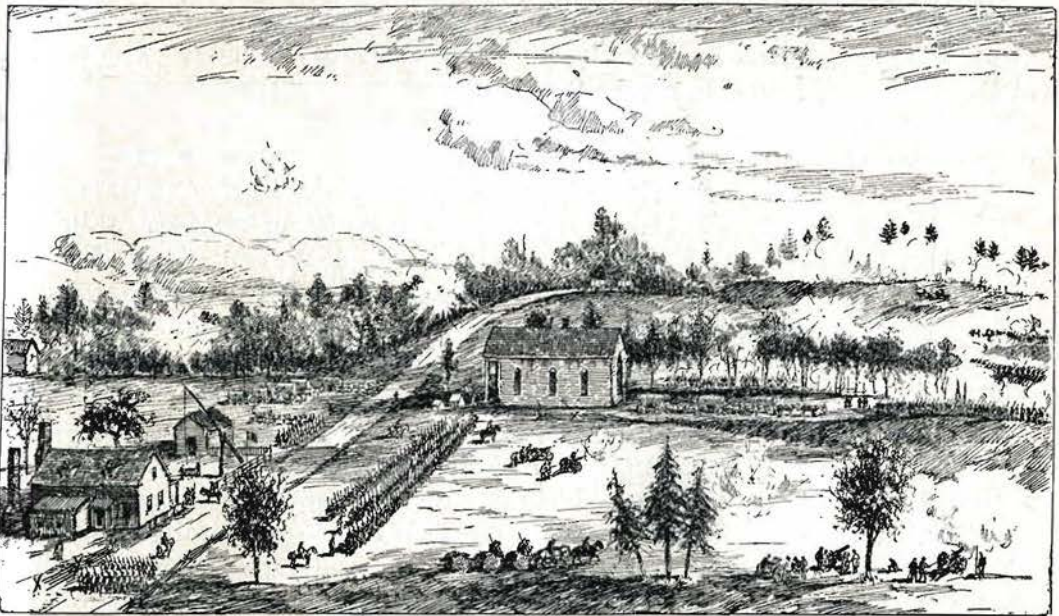
reaching Frayser's farm until the day after that battle. If he had been there, we might have destroyed or captured McClellan's army. Huger was in position for the battle of Frayser's farm, and after his batteries had misled me into opening the fight he subsided. Holmes and Magruder, who were on the New Market road to attack the Federals as they passed that way, failed to do so.

General McClellan's retreat was successfully managed; therefore we must give it credit for being well managed. He had 100,000 men, and insisted to the authorities at Washington that Lee had 200,000. In fact, Lee had only 90,000. General McClellan's plan to take Richmond by a siege was wise enough, and it would have been a success if the Confederates had consented to such a programme. In spite of McClellan's excellent plans, General Lee, with a force inferior in numbers, completely routed him, and while suffering less than McClellan, captured over ten thousand of his men.∧ General Lee's

∧ In this estimate General Longstreet follows General Lee's unspecific report. The Union returns state the "Captured or missing" of McClellan's army at 6053, and the total loss at 15,849. The Confederate loss was 20,135.—EDITORS.

plans in the Seven Days' Fight were excellent, but were poorly executed. General McClellan was a very accomplished soldier and a very able engineer, but hardly equal to the position of field-marshal as a military chieftain. He organized the Army of the Potomac cleverly, but did not handle it skillfully when in actual battle. Still I doubt if his retreat could have been better handled, though the rear of his army should have been more positively either in his own hands or in the hands of Sumner. Heintzelman crossed the White Oak Swamp prematurely and left the rear of McClellan's army exposed, which would have been fatal had Jackson come up and taken part in Magruder's affair of the 29th near Savage's Station.

I cannot close this sketch without referring to the Confederate commander when he came upon the scene for the first time. General Lee was an unusually handsome man, even in his advanced life. He seemed fresh from West Point, so trim was his figure and so elastic his step. Out of battle he was as gentle as a woman, but when the clash of arms came he loved fight, and urged his battle with wonderful determination. As a usual thing he was remarkably well-balanced — always so, except on one or two occasions of severe trial when he failed to maintain his exact equipoise. Lee's orders were always well considered and well chosen. He depended almost too much on his officers for their execution. Jackson was a very skillful man against such men as Shields, Banks, and Frémont, but when pitted against the best of the Federal commanders he did not appear so well. Without doubt the greatest man of rebellion times, the one matchless among forty millions for the peculiar difficulties of the period, was Abraham Lincoln.



NELSON'S HOUSE.

WILLIS CHURCH.

PENNSYLVANIA RESERVES.

GENERAL HEINTZELMAN'S HEADQUARTERS AT NELSON'S HOUSE, JUNE 30, DURING THE BATTLE OF GLENDALE. FROM A SKETCH MADE AT THE TIME.