



DEFENDING AN EMBRASURE.

REPELLING HOOD'S INVASION OF TENNESSEE.

BY HENRY STONE, BREVET COLONEL, U. S. V., MEMBER OF THE STAFF OF GENERAL THOMAS.

ON September 28th, 1864, less than four weeks from the day the Union forces occupied Atlanta, General Sherman, who found his still unconquered enemy, General Hood, threatening his communications in Georgia, and that formidable raider, General Forrest, playing the mischief in west Tennessee, sent to the latter State two divisions — General Newton's of the Fourth Corps, and General J. D. Morgan's of the Fourteenth — to aid in destroying, if possible, that intrepid dragoon. To make assurance doubly sure, the next day he ordered General George H. Thomas, his most capable and experienced lieutenant, and the commander of more than three-fifths of his grand army, "back to Stevenson and Decherd . . . to look to Tennessee."

No order could have been more unwelcome to General Thomas. It removed him from the command of his own thoroughly organized and harmonious army of sixty thousand veterans, whom he knew and trusted, and who knew and loved him, and relegated him to the position of supervisor of communications. It also sent him to the rear just when great preparations were making for an advance. But, as often happens, what seemed an adverse fate opened the door to great, unforeseen opportunity. The task of expelling Forrest and reopening the broken communications was speedily completed, and on the 17th of October General Thomas wrote to General Sherman, "I hope to join you very soon." Sherman, however, had other views, and the hoped-for junction was never made. On the 19th he wrote to General Thomas:

"I will send back to Tennessee the Fourth Corps, all dismounted cavalry, all sick and wounded, and all incumbrances whatever except what I can haul in our wagons. . . . I want you to remain in Tennessee and take command of all my [military] division not actually

present with me. Hood's army may be set down at forty thousand (40,000) of all arms, fit for duty. . . . If you can defend the line of the Tennessee in my absence of three (3) months, it is all I ask."

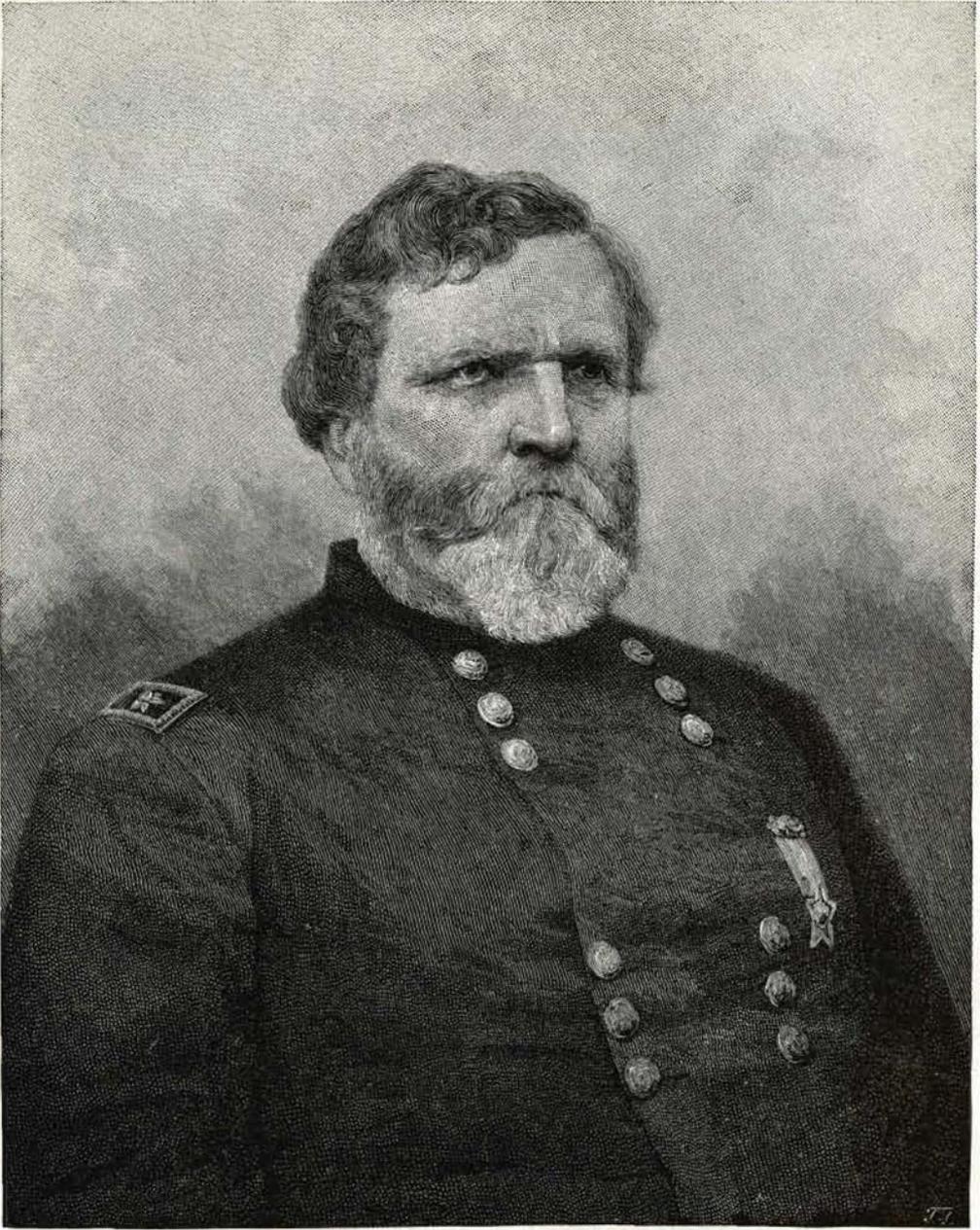
With such orders, and under such circumstances, General Thomas was left to play his part in the new campaign.

General Hood, after a series of daring adventures which baffled all Sherman's calculations ("he can turn and twist like a fox," said Sherman, "and wear out my army in pursuit"), concentrated his entire force, except Forrest's cavalry, at Gadsden, Alabama, on the 22d of October, while General Sherman established his headquarters at Gaylesville,—a "position," as he wrote to General Halleck, "very good to watch the enemy." In spite of this "watch," Hood suddenly appeared on the 26th at Decatur, on the Tennessee River, seventy-five miles north-west of Gadsden. This move was a complete surprise, and evidently "meant business." The Fourth Corps, numbering about twelve thousand men, commanded by Major-General D. S. Stanley, was at once ordered from Gaylesville, to report to General Thomas. On the 1st of November its leading division reached Pulaski, Tennessee, a small town on the railroad, about forty miles north of Decatur, where it was joined four days later by the other two.

Making a slight though somewhat lengthened demonstration against Decatur, General Hood pushed on to Tusculumbia, forty-five miles west. Here he expected to find—what he had weeks before ordered—ample supplies, and the railroad in operation to Corinth. But he was doomed to disappointment. Instead of being in condition to make the rapid and triumphant march with which he had inflamed the ardor of his troops, he was detained three weeks, a delay fatal to his far-reaching hopes. Placing one corps on the north side of the river at Florence, he waited for supplies and for Forrest, who had been playing havoc throughout west Tennessee, from the line of the Mississippi border, northward to Kentucky, and was under orders to join him.

Convinced now of Hood's serious intentions, General Sherman also ordered the Twenty-third Corps, ten thousand men, under command of Major-General J. M. Schofield, to report to General Thomas. Reaching Pulaski, with one division, on the 14th of November, General Schofield, though inferior in rank to Stanley, assumed command by virtue of being a department commander. The whole force gathered there was less than 18,000 men; while in front were some 5000 cavalry, consisting of a brigade of about 1500, under General Croxton, and a division of some 3500, under General Edward Hatch, the latter being fortunately intercepted while on his way to join Sherman.

The Confederate army in three corps (S. D. Lee's, A. P. Stewart's, and B. F. Cheatham's) began its northward march from Florence on the 19th of November, in weather of great severity. It rained and snowed and hailed and froze, and the roads were almost impassable. Forrest had come up, with about six thousand cavalry, and led the advance with indomitable energy. Hatch and Croxton made such resistance as they could; but on the 22d the head of Hood's column was at Lawrenceburg, some 16 miles due west of Pulaski, Tennessee and on a road running direct to Columbia, where the railroad and turn-



MAJOR-GENERAL GEORGE H. THOMAS. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

pike to Nashville cross Duck River, and where there were less than 800 men to guard the bridges. The situation at Pulaski, with an enemy nearly three times as large fairly on the flank, was anything but cheering. Warned by the reports from General Hatch, and by the orders of General Thomas, who, on the 20th, had directed General Schofield to prepare to fall back to Columbia, the two divisions of General J. D. Cox and General George D. Wagner (the latter Newton's old division) were ordered to march to Lynnville—about half-way

to Columbia — on the 22d. On the 23d the other two divisions, under General Stanley, were to follow with the wagon-trains. It was not a moment too soon. On the morning of the 24th General Cox, who had pushed on to within nine miles of Columbia, was roused by sounds of conflict away to the west. Taking a cross-road, leading south of Columbia, he reached the Mount Pleasant pike just in time to interpose his infantry between Forrest's cavalry and a hapless brigade, under command of General Capron, which was being handled most unceremoniously. In another hour Forrest would have been in possession of the crossings of Duck River, and the only line of communication with Nashville would have been in the hands of the enemy. General Stanley, who had left Pulaski in the afternoon of the 23d, reached Lynnville after dark. Rousing his command at 1 o'clock in the morning, by 9 o'clock the head of his column connected with Cox in front of Columbia — having marched thirty miles since 2 o'clock of the preceding afternoon. These timely movements saved the little army from utter destruction.

When General Sherman had finally determined on his march to the sea, he requested General Rosecrans, in Missouri, to send to General Thomas two divisions, under General A. J. Smith, which had been lent to General Banks for the Red River expedition, and were now repelling the incursion of Price into Missouri. As they were not immediately forthcoming, General Grant had ordered General Rawlins, his chief-of-staff, to St. Louis, to direct, in person, their speedy embarkation. Thence, on the 7th of November, two weeks before Hood began his advance from Florence, General Rawlins wrote to General Thomas that Smith's command, aggregating nearly 14,000, would begin to leave that place as early as the 10th. No news was ever more anxiously awaited or more eagerly welcomed than this. But the promise could not be fulfilled. Smith had to march entirely across the State of Missouri; and instead of leaving St. Louis on the 10th, he did not arrive there until the 24th. Had he come at the proposed time, it was General Thomas's intention to place him at Eastport, on the Tennessee River, so as to threaten Hood's flank and rear if the latter advanced. With such disposition, the battles of Franklin and Nashville would have been relegated to the category of "events which never come to pass." But when Smith reached St. Louis, Hood was threatening Columbia; and it was an open question whether he would not reach Nashville before the reënforcements from Missouri.

↓ Major Henry C. Connelly, of the 14th Illinois cavalry, on August 8th, 1887, wrote to the editors as follows:

"When General Hood advanced from the Tennessee River, General Capron's brigade was on the extreme right of our army, and from the 19th of November until the 24th, the day Columbia was reached, we fought Forrest's cavalry. I was with the rear-guard on the occasion referred to; it fell back and found the brigade in good position in line of battle. I rode to General Capron and expressed the opinion that he could not hold his position a moment against the troops pressing us in the rear and on the flanks, which we could easily see advancing rapidly to attack us. General Capron replied that he had been ordered to make a decided stand if it sacrificed every man in his brigade; that we must hold the advancing forces in check to enable the infantry to

arrive and get in position. I replied, 'We are destroyed and captured if we remain here.' At this moment General Capron gave the order to retire. While passing through a long lane south of Columbia, Forrest's forces charged the brigade in rear and on both flanks with intrepid courage. Our command was confined to a narrow lane, with men and horses in the highest state of excitement. We were armed with Springfield rifles, which after the first volley were about as serviceable to a cavalryman thus hemmed in as a good club. The men could not reload while mounted, in the excitement of horses as well as soldiers. The only thing that could be done was to get out as promptly as possible, and before Forrest's forces should close in and capture the command.

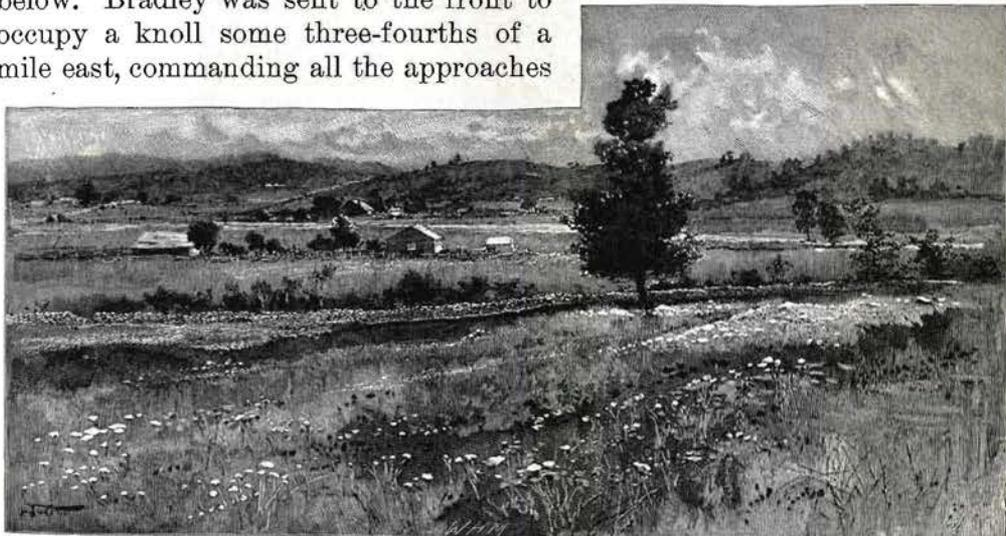
"This was done successfully. The brigade was composed of the 14th and 16th Illinois cavalry and the 8th Michigan cavalry."

As fast as the Union troops arrived at Columbia, in their hurried retreat from Pulaski, works were thrown up, covering the approaches from the south, and the trains were sent across the river. But the line was found to be longer than the small force could hold; and the river could easily be crossed, above or below the town. Orders were given to withdraw to the north side on the night of the 26th, but a heavy storm prevented. The next night the crossing was made, the railroad bridge was burned, and the pontoon boats were scuttled. This was an all-night job, the last of the pickets crossing at 5 in the morning. It was now the fifth day since the retreat from Pulaski began, and the little army had been exposed day and night to all sorts of weather except sunshine, and had been almost continually on the move. From deserters it was learned that Hood's infantry numbered 40,000, and his cavalry, under Forrest, 10,000 or 12,000. But the Union army was slowly increasing by concentration and the arrival of recruits. It now numbered at Columbia about 23,000 infantry and some 5000 cavalry — of whom only 3500 were mounted. General James H. Wilson, who had been ordered by General Grant to report to General Sherman,— and of whom General Grant wrote, "I believe he will add fifty per cent. to the effectiveness of your cavalry,"— had taken command personally of all General Thomas's cavalry, which was trying to hold the fords east and west of Columbia. [See article by General Wilson, to follow.]

In spite of every opposition, Forrest succeeded in placing one of his divisions on the north side of Duck River before noon of the 28th, and forced back the Union cavalry on roads leading toward Spring Hill and Franklin. At 1 o'clock on the morning of the 29th General Wilson became convinced that the enemy's infantry would begin crossing at daylight, and advised General Schofield to fall back to Franklin. At 3:30 the same morning General Thomas sent him similar orders. Daylight revealed the correctness of Wilson's information. Before sunrise Cheatham's corps, headed by Cleburne's division,— a division unsurpassed for courage, energy, and endurance by any in the Confederate army,— was making its way over Duck River at Davis's Ford, about five miles east of Columbia. The weather had cleared, and it was a bright autumn morning, the air full of invigorating life. General Hood in person accompanied the advance.

When General Schofield was informed that the Confederate infantry were crossing, he sent a brigade, under Colonel P. Sidney Post, on a reconnoissance along the river-bank, to learn if the report was true. He also ordered General Stanley to march with two divisions, Wagner's and Kimball's, to Spring Hill, taking the trains and all the reserve artillery. In less than half an hour after receiving the order, Stanley was on the way. On reaching the point where Rutherford Creek crosses the Franklin Pike, Kimball's division was halted, by order of General Schofield, and faced to the east to cover the crossing against a possible attack from that quarter. In this position Kimball remained all day. Stanley, with the other division, pushed on to Spring Hill. Just before noon, as the head of his column was approaching that place, he met "a cavalry soldier who seemed to be badly scared," who reported that Buford's division of Forrest's cavalry was approaching from

the east. The troops were at once double-quickened into the town, and the leading brigade, deploying as it advanced, drove off the enemy just as they were expecting, unmolested, to occupy the place. As the other brigades came up, they also were deployed, forming nearly a semicircle,—Opdycke's brigade stretching in a thin line from the railroad station north of the village to a point some distance east, and Lane's from Opdycke's right to the pike below. Bradley was sent to the front to occupy a knoll some three-fourths of a mile east, commanding all the approaches



VIEW OF THE WINSTEAD HILLS, FRANKLIN, WHERE HOOD FORMED HIS LINE OF BATTLE. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH. The right of Wagner's two brigades, in the advanced position, was posted behind the stone wall in the foreground. The Columbia Pike is shown passing over the hills on the left of the picture.

from that direction. Most of the artillery was placed on a rise south of the town. The trains were parked within the semicircle.

From Spring Hill roads radiate to all points, the turnpike between Columbia and Franklin being there intersected by turnpikes from Rally Hill and Mount Carmel, as well as by numerous country roads leading to the neighboring towns. Possession of that point would not only shut out the Union army from the road to Nashville, but it would effectually bar the way in every direction. Stanley's arrival was not a moment too soon for the safety of the army, and his prompt dispositions and steady courage, as well as his vigorous hold of all the ground he occupied, gave his little command all the moral fruits of a victory.

Hardly had the three brigades, numbering, all told, less than four thousand men, reached the positions assigned them, when Bradley was assailed by a force which the men declared fought too well to be dismounted cavalry. At the same time, at Thompson's Station, three miles north, an attack was made on a small wagon train heading for Franklin; and a dash was made by a detachment of the Confederate cavalry on the Spring Hill station, north-west of the town. It seemed as if the little band, attacked from all points, was threatened with destruction. Bradley's brigade was twice assaulted, but held its own, though with considerable loss, and only a single regiment could be spared to reënforce him. The third assault was more successful, and he was

driven back to the edge of the village, Bradley himself receiving a disabling wound in rallying his men. While attempting to follow up this temporary advantage, the enemy, in crossing a wide corn-field, was opened upon with spherical case-shot from eight guns posted on the knoll, and soon scattered in considerable confusion. These attacks undoubtedly came from Cleburne's division, and were made under the eye of the corps commander, General Cheatham, and the army commander, General Hood. That they were not successful, especially as the other two divisions of the same corps, Brown's and Bate's, were close at hand, and Stewart's corps not far off, seems un-

accountable. Except this one small division deployed in a long thin line to cover the wagons, there were no Union troops within striking distance; the cavalry were about Mount Carmel, five miles east, fully occupied in keeping Forrest away from Franklin and the Harpeth River crossings. The nearest aid was Kimball's division, seven miles south, at Rutherford Creek. The other three divisions of infantry which made up Schofield's force—Wood's, Cox's, and Ruger's (in part)—were still at Duck River. Thus night closed down upon the solitary division, on whose boldness of action devolved the safety of the whole force which



BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL EMERSON OPDYCKE.
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

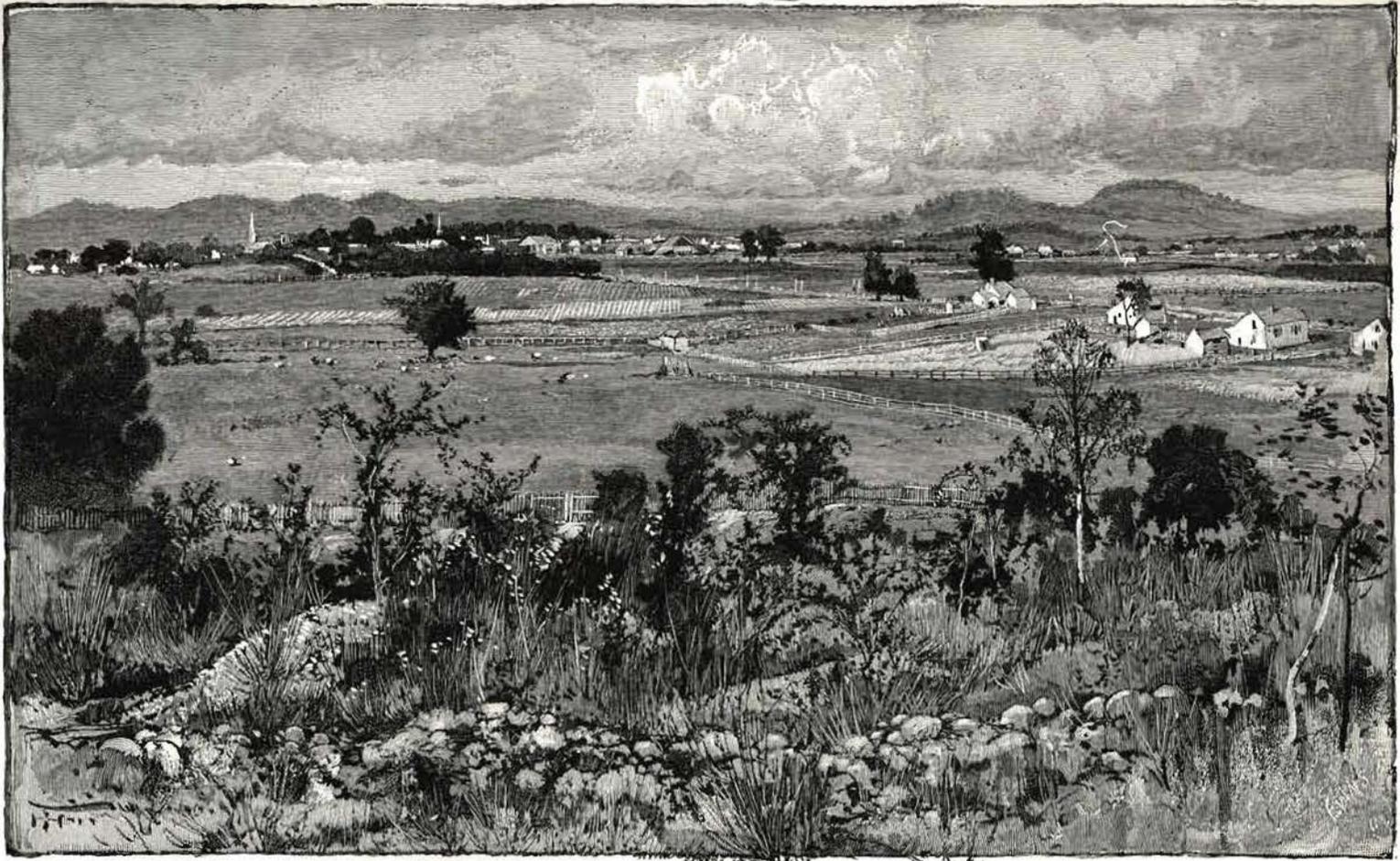
Sherman had spared from his march to the sea to breast the tide of Hood's invasion. When night came, the danger increased rather than diminished. A single Confederate brigade, like Adams's or Cockrell's or Maney's,—veterans since Shiloh,—planted squarely across the pike, either south or north of Spring Hill, would have effectually prevented Schofield's retreat, and daylight would have found his whole force cut off from every avenue of escape by more than twice its numbers, to assault whom would have been madness, and to avoid whom would have been impossible.

Why Cleburne and Brown failed to drive away Stanley's one division before dark; why Bate failed to possess himself of the pike south of the town; why Stewart failed to lead his troops to the pike at the north; why Forrest, with his audacious temper and his enterprising cavalry, did not fully hold Thompson's Station or the crossing of the West Harpeth, half-way to Franklin: these are to this day disputed questions among the Confederate commanders; and it is not proposed to discuss them here. The afternoon and night of November 29th, 1864, may well be set down in the calendar of

CARTER HOUSE (UNDER STEEPLD.

GIN-HOUSE.

ROPER'S KNOB.



THE BATTLE-FIELD OF FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE, LOOKING NORTH FROM GENERAL CHEATHAM'S HEADQUARTERS. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

lost opportunities. The heroic valor of the same troops the next day, and their frightful losses as they attempted to retrieve their mistake, show what might have been.

By 8 o'clock at night — two hours only after sunset, on a moonless night — at least two corps of Hood's army were in line of battle facing the turnpike, and not half a mile away. The long line of Confederate camp-fires burned



MAJOR-GENERAL D. S. STANLEY.
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

bright, and the men could be seen standing around them or sauntering about in groups. Now and then a few would come almost to the pike and fire at a passing Union squad, but without provoking a reply. General Schofield, who had remained at Duck River all day, reached Spring Hill about 7 P. M., with Ruger's division and Whitaker's brigade. Leaving the latter to cover a cross-road a mile or two below the town, he started with Ruger about 9 P. M. to force a passage at Thompson's Station, supposed to be in the hands of the enemy. At 11 P. M. General Cox arrived with his division, and soon after Scho-

field returned to Spring Hill with the welcome news that the way was open. From Thompson's Station he sent his engineer officer, Captain William J. Twining, to Franklin, to telegraph the situation to General Thomas, all communication with whom had been cut off since early morning. Captain Twining's dispatch shows most clearly the critical condition of affairs: "The general says he will not be able to get farther than Thompson's Station to-night. . . . He regards his situation as extremely perilous. . . . Thinking the troops under A. J. Smith's command had reached Franklin, General Schofield directed me to have them pushed down to Spring Hill by daylight to-morrow." This was Tuesday. The day before, General Thomas had telegraphed to General Schofield that Smith had not yet arrived, but would be at Nashville in three days — that is, Thursday. The expectation of finding him at Franklin, therefore, was like a drowning man's catching at a straw.

Just before midnight Cox started from Spring Hill for Franklin, and was ordered to pick up Ruger at Thompson's Station. At 1 A. M. he was on the road, and the train, over five miles long, was drawn out. At the very outset it had to cross a bridge in single file. So difficult was this whole movement, that it was 5 o'clock in the morning before the wagons were fairly under way. As the head of the train passed Thompson's Station, it was attacked by the Confederate cavalry, and for a while there was great consternation. Wood's division, which had followed Cox from Duck River, was marched along to the east of the pike, to protect the train, and the enemy were speedily driven off. It was near daybreak when the last wagon left Spring Hill. Kimball's division

followed Wood's, and at 4 o'clock Wagner drew in his lines, his skirmishers remaining till it was fairly daylight. The rear-guard was commanded by Colonel Emerson Opdycke, who was prepared, if necessary, to sacrifice the last man to secure the safety of the main body. So efficiently did his admirable brigade do its work, that, though surrounded by a cloud of the enemy's cavalry, which made frequent dashes at its lines, not a straggler nor a wagon was left behind. The ground was strewn with knapsacks cut from the

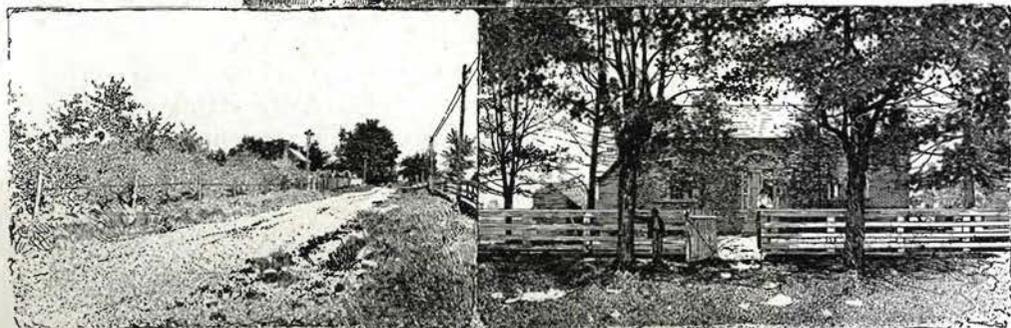
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1. THE CARTER HOUSE, FROM THE SIDE TOWARD THE TOWN. 2. THE CARTER HOUSE, FROM THE CONFEDERATE SIDE. 3. FRONT VIEW OF THE CARTER HOUSE. FROM PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN IN 1884.

men, who had fought and marched, day and night, for nearly a week, threw up a line of earth-works on a slight eminence which guards the southern approach to the town, even before they made their coffee. Then they gladly dropped anywhere for the much-needed "forty winks." Slowly the rest of the weary column, regiment after regiment of worn-out men, filed into the works, and continued the line, till a complete bridge-head, from the river-bank above to the river-bank below, encircled the town. By noon of the 30th all the troops had come up, and the wagons were crossing the river, which was already fordable, notwithstanding the recent heavy rain-falls. The rear-guard was still out, having an occasional bout with the enemy. [See map of the field, p. 430.]

The Columbia Pike bisected the works, which at that point were built just in front of the Carter house, a one-story brick dwelling west of the pike, and a large gin-house on the east side. Between the gin-house and the river the works were partly protected in front by a hedge of Osage orange, and on the knoll, near the railroad cut close to the bank, were two batteries belonging to the Fourth Corps. Near the Carter house was a considerable thicket of locust trees. Except these obstructions, the whole ground in front was entirely

unobstructed and fenceless, and, from the works, every part of it was in plain sight. General Cox's division of three brigades, commanded that day, in order from left to right, by Colonels Stiles and Casement and General Reilly, occupied the ground between the Columbia Pike and the river above the town. The front line consisted of eight regiments, three in the works and one in reserve for each of the brigades of Stiles and Casement, while Reilly's brigade nearest the pike had but two regiments in the works, and two in a second line, with still another regiment behind that. West of the pike, reaching to a ravine through which passes a road branching from the Carter's Creek Pike, was Ruger's division of two brigades—the third, under General Cooper, not having come up from Johnsonville. Strickland's brigade, of four regiments, had two in the works and two in reserve. Two of these regiments, the 72d Illinois and 44th Missouri, belonged to A. J. Smith's corps, and had reported to General Schofield only the day before. A third, which was in reserve, the 183d Ohio, was a large and entirely new regiment, having been mustered into service only three weeks before, and having joined the army for the first time on the 28th. Moore's brigade, of six regiments, had four in the works and two in reserve. Beyond Ruger, reaching from the ravine to the river below, was Kimball's division of the Fourth Corps,—all veterans,—consisting of three brigades commanded by Generals William Grose and Walter C. Whitaker and Colonel Isaac M. Kirby. All the troops in the works were ordered to report to General Cox, to whom was assigned the command of the defenses. † General Wood's division of the Fourth Corps had gone over the river with the trains; and two brigades of Wagner's division, which had so valiantly stood their ground at Spring Hill and covered the rear since, were halted on a slope about half a mile to the front. Opdycke had brought his brigade within the works, and held them massed, near the pike, behind the Carter house. Besides the guns on the knoll, near the railroad cut, there were six pieces in Reilly's works; four on Strickland's left; two on Moore's left, and four on Grose's left—in all, twenty-six guns in that part of the works, facing south, and twelve more in reserve, on or near the Columbia Pike.

As the bright autumn day, hazy with the golden light of an Indian summer atmosphere, wore away, the troops that had worked so hard looked hopefully forward to a prospect of ending it in peace and rest, preparatory either to a night march to Nashville, or to a reënforcement by Smith's corps and General Thomas. But about 2 o'clock, some suspicious movements on the hills a mile or two away—the waving of signal flags and the deployment of the enemy in line of battle—caused General Wagner to send his adjutant-general, from the advanced position where his two brigades had halted, to his commanding general, with the information that Hood seemed to be preparing for attack. In a very short time the whole Confederate line could be

† General D. S. Stanley, who commanded the Fourth Corps, takes exception to this statement. Some of his troops as they arrived were assigned to positions by General Cox. General Stanley, in the performance of his duty, went with General Schofield to the north side of the river, but returned when the firing began and assisted in rally-

ing Wagner's brigades, of his corps, during which he was wounded. General Schofield said in his report of December 31st, 1864: "The troops were placed in position and intrenched under his [Cox's] immediate direction, and the greater portion of the line engaged was under his command during the battle."—EDITORS.

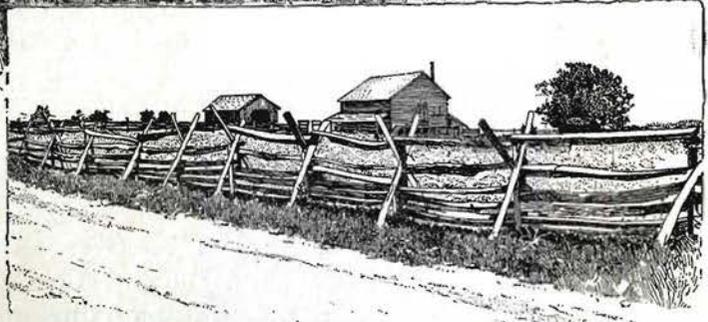
seen, stretching in battle array, from the dark fringe of chestnuts along the river-bank, far across the Columbia Pike, the colors gayly fluttering and the muskets gleaming brightly, and advancing steadily, in perfect order, dressed on the center, straight for the works. Meantime General Schofield had retired to the fort, on a high bluff on the other side of the river, some two miles away, by the road, and had taken General Stanley with him. From

the fort the whole field of operations was plainly visible. Notwithstanding all these demonstrations, the two brigades of Wagner were left on the knoll where they had been halted, and, with scarcely an apology for works to



FRONT VIEW OF THE GIN-HOUSE.

The line of the Union works ran in front of the Gin-house, and only a few feet from it; in 1886 a faint depression along the edge of the field still indicated the position. Near the tree seen in the lower picture there is a round, deep hollow which afforded protection to the Union soldiers. The lower view was taken from the same point on the pike, looking a little to the right, as the view of "The Carter House, from the Confederate side," on p. 449.



VIEW OF THE GIN-HOUSE, FROM THE PIKE.

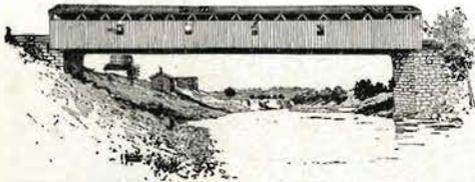
protect them, had waited until it was too late to retreat without danger of degenerating into a rout.

On came the enemy, as steady and resistless as a tidal wave. A couple of guns, in the advance line, gave them a shot and galloped back to the works. A volley from a thin skirmish-line was sent into their ranks, but without causing any delay to the massive array. A moment more, and with that wild "rebel yell" which, once heard, is never forgotten, the great human wave swept along, and seemed to engulf the little force that had so sturdily awaited it.

The first shock came, of course, upon the two misplaced brigades of Wagner's division, which, through some one's blunder, had remained in their false position until too late to retire without disaster. They had no tools to throw up works; and when struck by the resistless sweep of Cleburne's and Brown's divisions, they had only to make their way, as best they could, back to the works. In that wild rush, in which friend and foe were intermingled, and the piercing "rebel yell" rose high above the "Yankee cheer," nearly seven hundred were made prisoners. But, worst of all for the Union side, the men of Reilly's and Strickland's brigades dared not fire, lest they should shoot down their own comrades, and the guns, loaded with grape and canister, stood silent in the embrasures. With loud shouts of "Let's go into the

works with them," the triumphant Confederates, now more like a wild, howling mob than an organized army, swept on to the very works, with hardly a check from any quarter. So fierce was the rush that a number of the fleeing soldiers—officers and men—dropped exhausted into the ditch, and lay there while the terrific contest raged over their heads, till, under cover of darkness, they could crawl safely inside the intrenchments.

On Strickland's left, close to the Columbia Pike, was posted one of the new infantry regiments. The tremendous onset, the wild yells, the whole infernal din of the strife, were too much for such an undisciplined body. As they saw their comrades from the advance line rushing to the rear, they too turned and fled. The contagion spread, and in a few minutes a disorderly stream was pouring down the pike past the Carter house toward



BRIDGE AT FRANKLIN OVER THE HARPETH RIVER,
LOOKING UP-STREAM.

The left of the picture is the north bank of the stream; Franklin is upon the south bank. Fort Granger, where General Schofield had his headquarters, occupied the site of the buildings on the north bank.

the town. The guns, posted on each side the Columbia Pike, were abandoned, and the works, for the space of more than a regimental front, both east and west of the pike, were deserted. Into the gap thus made, without an instant's delay, swarmed the jubilant Confederates, urged on by Cleburne and Brown, and took possession of both works and guns. For a moment it looked as though these

two enterprising divisions, backed by the mass of troops converging toward the pike, would sweep down the works in both directions, and, taking Strickland and Reilly on the flank, drive them out, or capture them. Fortunately, there were at hand reserves of brave men who were not demoralized by the momentary panic. Colonel Emerson Opdycke, of Wagner's division, as already stated, had brought his brigade inside the works, and they were now massed near the Carter house, ready for any contingency. Two regiments of Reilly's brigade, the 12th and 16th Kentucky, which had reached Franklin about noon, had taken position a little in rear of the rest of the brigade, and thrown up works. As soon as the break was made in the lines all these reserves rushed to the front, and, after a terrific struggle, succeeded in regaining the works. Opdycke's brigade, deploying as it advanced, was involved in as fierce a hand-to-hand encounter as ever soldiers engaged in. The two Kentucky regiments joined in the fight with equal ardor and bravery. A large part of Conrad's and Lane's men, as they came in, though wholly disorganized, turned about and gave the enemy a hot reception. Opdycke's horse was shot under him, and he fought on foot at the head of his brigade. General Cox was everywhere present, encouraging and cheering on his men. General Stanley, who, from the fort where he had gone with General Schofield, had seen the opening clash, galloped to the front as soon as possible and did all that a brave man could until he was painfully wounded. Some of Opdycke's men manned the abandoned guns in Reilly's works; others filled the gap in Strickland's line. These timely movements first checked and then

repulsed the assaulting foe, and soon the entire line of works was reoccupied, the enemy sullenly giving up the prize which was so nearly won. Stewart's corps, which was on Cheatham's right, filling the space to the river, kept abreast of its valiant companion, and, meeting no obstacle, reached the works near the Union left before Cheatham made the breach at the Columbia Pike. Owing to the peculiar formation of the field, the left of Stewart's line was thrown upon the same ground with the right of Cheatham's; the two commands there became much intermingled. This accounts for so many of General Stewart's officers and men being killed in front of Reilly's and Casement's regiments.

Where there was nothing to hinder the Union fire, the muskets of Stiles's and Casement's brigades made fearful havoc; while the batteries at the railroad cut plowed furrows through the ranks of the advancing foe. Time after time they came up to the very works, but they never crossed them except as prisoners. More than one color-bearer was shot down on the parapet. It is impossible to exaggerate the fierce energy with which the Confederate soldiers, that short November afternoon, threw themselves against the works, fighting with what seemed the very madness of despair. There was not a breath of wind, and the dense smoke settled down upon the field, so that, after the first assault, it was impossible to see at any distance. Through this blinding medium, assault after assault was made, several of the Union officers declaring in their reports that their lines received as many as thirteen distinct attacks. Between the gin-house and the Columbia Pike the fighting was fiercest, and the Confederate losses the greatest. Here fell most of the Confederate generals, who, that fateful afternoon, madly gave up their lives; Adams of Stewart's corps—his horse astride the works, and himself within a few feet of them. Cockrell and Quarles, of the same corps, were severely wounded. In Cheatham's corps, Cleburne and Granbury were killed near the pike. On the west of the pike Strahl and Gist were killed, and Brown was severely wounded. General G. W. Gordon was captured by Opdycke's brigade, inside the works. The heaviest loss in all the Union regiments was in the 44th Missouri, the advance guard of Smith's long-expected reënforcement, which had been sent to Columbia on the 27th, and was here stationed on the right of the raw regiment that broke and ran at the first onset of the enemy. Quickly changing front, the 44th held its ground, but with a loss of 34 killed, 37 wounded, and 92 missing, many of the latter being wounded. In the 72d Illinois, its companion, every field-officer was wounded, and the entire color-guard, of one sergeant and eight corporals, was shot down. Its losses were 10 killed, 66 wounded, and 75 missing.

While this infantry battle was going on, Forrest had crossed the river with his cavalry some distance east of the town, with the evident purpose of getting at Schofield's wagons. But he reckoned without his host. Hatch and Croxton, by General Wilson's direction, fell upon him with such vigor that he returned to the south side and gave our forces no further trouble. At nightfall the victory was complete on every part of the Union lines. But here and there on the Confederate side desultory firing was kept up till long after dark, though with little result.

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, as the Confederate lines were forming for their great assault, General Schofield, in reply to a telegram from General Thomas, asking him if he could "hold Hood at Franklin for three days longer," replied, "I do not think I can. . . . It appears to me I ought to take position at Brentwood at once." Accordingly General Thomas, at 3:30, directed him to retire to Brentwood, which he did that night, bringing away all the wagons and other property in safety. Among the spoils of war were thirty-three Confederate colors, captured by our men from the enemy. The morning found the entire infantry force safe within the friendly shelter of the works at Nashville, where they also welcomed the veterans of A. J. Smith, who were just arriving from Missouri. Soon after, a body of about five thousand men came in from Chattanooga, chiefly of General Sherman's army, too late for their proper commands. These were organized into a provisional division under General J. B. Steedman, and were posted between the Murfreesboro' Pike and the river. Cooper's brigade also came in after a narrow escape from capture, as well as several regiments of colored troops from the railroad between Nashville and Johnsonville. Their arrival completed the force on which General Thomas was to rely for the task he now placed before himself—the destruction of Hood's army. It was an ill-assorted and heterogeneous mass, not yet welded into an army, and lacking a great proportion of the outfit with which to undertake an aggressive campaign. Horses, wagons, mules, pontoons, everything needed to mobilize an army, had to be obtained. At that time they did not exist at Nashville. [See map, p. 434.]

The next day Hood's columns appeared before the town and took up their positions on a line of hills nearly parallel to those occupied by the Union army, and speedily threw up works and prepared to defend their ground.

Probably no commander ever underwent two weeks of greater anxiety and distress of mind than General Thomas during the interval between Hood's arrival and his precipitate departure from the vicinity of Nashville. The story is too painful to dwell upon, even after the lapse of twenty-three years. From the 2d of December until the battle was fought on the 15th, the general-in-chief did not cease, day or night, to send him from the headquarters at City Point, Va., most urgent and often most uncalled-for orders in regard to his operations, culminating in an order on the 9th relieving him, and directing him to turn over his command to General Schofield, who was assigned to his place—an order which, had it not been revoked, the great captain would have obeyed with loyal single-heartedness. This order, though made out at the Adjutant-General's office in Washington, was not sent to General Thomas, and he did not know of its existence until told of it some years later by General Halleck, at San Francisco. He felt, however, that something of the kind was impending. General Halleck dispatched to him, on morning of the 9th: "Lieutenant-General Grant expresses much dissatisfaction at your delay in attacking the enemy." His reply shows how entirely he understood the situation: "I feel conscious I have done everything in my power, and that the troops could not have been gotten ready before this. *If General Grant should order me to be relieved, I will submit without a murmur.*" As he

was writing this,—2 o'clock in the afternoon of December 9th,—a terrible storm of freezing rain had been pouring down since daylight, and it kept on pouring and freezing all that day and a part of the next. That night General Grant notified him that the order relieving him—which he had divined—was suspended. But he did not know who had been designated as his successor. With this threat hanging over him; with the utter impossibility, in that weather, of making any movement; with the prospect that the labors of his whole life were about to end in disappointment, if not disaster,—he never, for an instant, abated his energy or his work of preparation. Not an hour, day and night, was he idle. Nobody—not even his most trusted staff-officers—knew the contents of the telegrams that came to him. But it was very evident that something greatly troubled him. While the rain was falling and the fields and roads were ice-bound, he would sometimes sit by the window for an hour or more, not speaking a word, gazing steadily out upon the forbidding prospect, as if he were trying to will the storm away. It was curious and interesting to see how, in this gloomy interval, his time was occupied by matters not strictly military. Now, it was a visit from a delegation of the city government, in regard to some municipal regulation; again, somebody whose one horse had been seized and put into the cavalry; then, a committee of citizens, begging that wood might be furnished, to keep some poor families from freezing; and, of evenings, Governor Andrew Johnson—then Vice-President elect—would unfold to him, with much iteration, his fierce views concerning secession, rebels, and reconstruction. To all he gave a patient and kindly hearing, and he often astonished Governor Johnson by his knowledge of constitutional and international law. But, underneath all, it was plain to see that General Grant's dissatisfaction keenly affected him, and that only by the proof which a successful battle would furnish could he hope to regain the confidence of the general-in-chief.

So when, at 8 o'clock on the evening of December 14th, after having laid his plans before his corps commanders, and dismissed them, he dictated to General Halleck the telegram, "The ice having melted away to-day, the enemy will be attacked to-morrow morning," he drew a deep sigh of relief, and for the first time for a week showed again something of his natural buoyancy and cheerfulness. He moved about more briskly; he put in order all the little last things that remained to be done; he signed his name where it was needed in the letter-book, and then, giving orders to his staff-officers to be ready at 5 o'clock the next morning, went gladly to bed.

The ice had not melted a day too soon; for, while he was writing the telegram to General Halleck, General Logan was speeding his way to Nashville, with orders from General Grant that would have placed him in command



HILL NEAR NASHVILLE FROM WHICH BATE'S CONFEDERATE DIVISION WAS DRIVEN ON DECEMBER 16. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1884.

of all the Union forces there assembled. General Thomas, fortunately, did not then learn this second proof of General Grant's lack of confidence; and General Logan, on reaching Louisville, found that the work intended for him was already done—and came no farther. At the very time when these orders were made out at Washington, in obedience to General Grant's directions, a large part of the cavalry was unmounted; two divisions were absent securing horses and proper outfit; wagons were unfinished and mules lacking or unbroken; pontoons unmade and pontoniers untrained; the ground was



THE CAPITOL, NASHVILLE.

Strong works, set with cannon, inclosed the foundations of the Capitol. Cisterns within the building held a bountiful supply of water. Owing to its capacity and the massiveness of the lower stories, the Capitol was regarded as a citadel, in which a few thousand men could maintain themselves against an army.

his wound, went North, and General T. J. Wood, who had been with it from the beginning, succeeded to the command of the Fourth Corps. General Ruger, who had commanded a division in the Twenty-third Corps, was also disabled by sickness, and was succeeded by General D. N. Couch, formerly a corps commander in the Army of the Potomac, and who had recently been assigned to duty in the Department of the Cumberland.† General Wagner was retired from command of his division, and was succeeded by General W. L. Elliott, who had been chief of cavalry on General Thomas's staff in the Atlanta campaign. General Kenner Garrard, who had commanded a cavalry division during the Atlanta campaign, was assigned to an infantry division in Smith's corps. In all these cases, except in that of General Wood succeeding to the command of the Fourth Corps, the newly assigned officers were entire strangers to the troops over whom they were placed.

On the afternoon of the 14th of December General Thomas summoned his corps commanders, and, delivering to each a written order containing a

† General Couch was in command of the Department of the Susquehanna from June 11th, 1863, to December 1st, 1864. On December 8th, 1864, he took command of the Second Division of the Twenty-third Corps.—EDITORS.

covered with a glare of ice which made all the fields and hillsides impassable for horses and scarcely passable for foot-men. The natives declared that the Yankees brought their weather as well as their army with them. Every corps commander in the army protested that a movement under such conditions would be little short of madness, and certain to result in disaster.

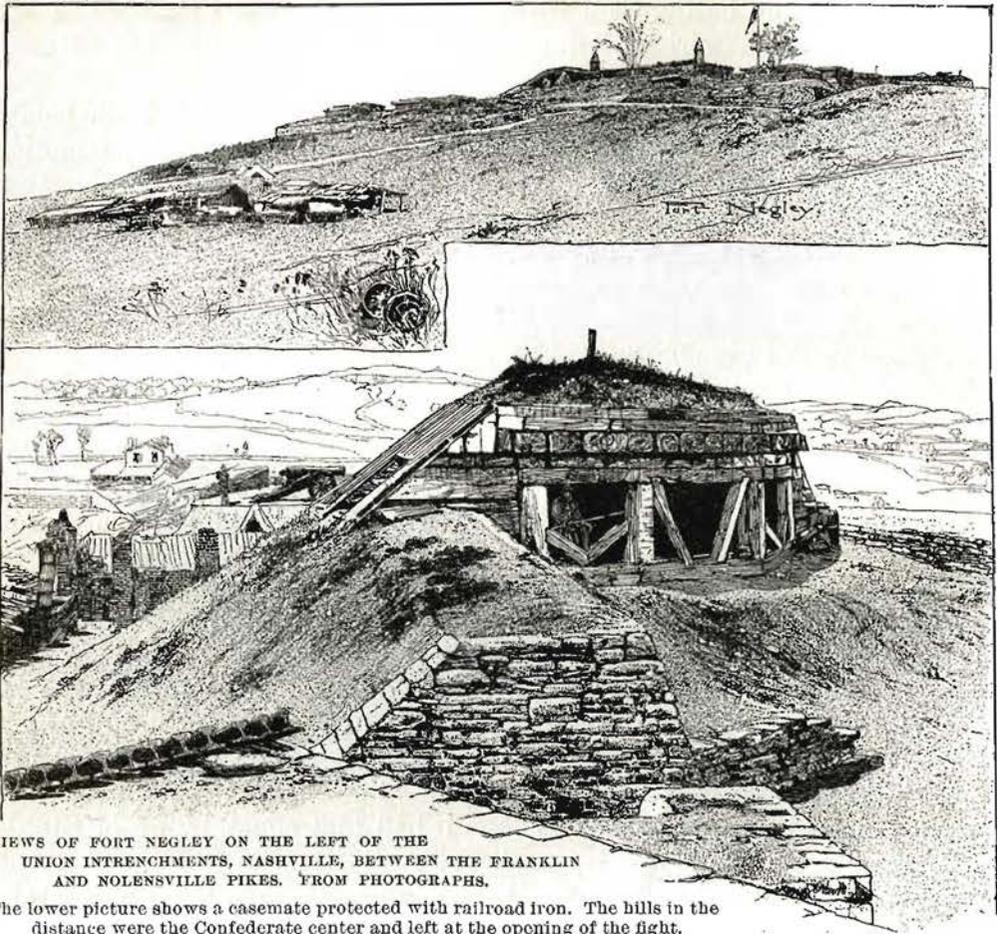
A very considerable re-organization of the army also took place during this enforced delay. General Stanley, still suffering from

detailed plan of the battle, went with them carefully and thoroughly over the whole ground, answering all questions and explaining all doubts. Never had a commander a more loyal corps of subordinates or a more devoted army. The feeling in the ranks was one of absolute and enthusiastic confidence in their general. Some had served with him since his opening triumph at Mill Springs; some had never seen his face till two weeks before. But there was that in his bearing, as well as in the confidence of his old soldiers, which inspired the new-comers with as absolute a sense of reliance upon him as was felt by the oldest of his veterans.

The plan, in general terms, was for General Steedman, on the extreme left, to move out early in the morning, threatening the rebel right, while the cavalry, which had been placed on the extreme right, and A. J. Smith's corps were to make a grand left wheel with the entire right wing, assaulting and, if possible, overlapping the left of Hood's position. Wood was to form the pivot for this wheel, and to threaten and perhaps attack Montgomery Hill; while General Schofield was to be held in reserve, near the left center, for such use as the exigency might develop.

It was not daylight, on the morning of the 15th of December, when the army began to move. In most of the camps reveille had been sounded at 4 o'clock, and by 6 everything was ready. It turned out a warm, sunny, winter morning. A dense fog at first hung over the valleys and completely hid all movements, but by 9 o'clock this had cleared away. General Steedman, on the extreme left, was the first to draw out of the defenses, and to assail the enemy at their works between the Nolensville and Murfreesboro' pikes. It was not intended as a real attack, though it had that effect. Two of Steedman's brigades, chiefly colored troops, kept two divisions of Cheatham's corps constantly busy, while his third was held in reserve; thus one Confederate corps was disposed of. S. D. Lee's corps, next on Cheatham's left, after sending two brigades to the assistance of Stewart, on the Confederate left, was held in place by the threatening position of the garrison troops, and did not fire a shot during the day. Indeed, both Cheatham's and Lee's corps were held, as in a vise, between Steedman and Wood. Lee's corps was unable to move or to fight. Steedman maintained the ground he occupied till the next morning, with no very heavy loss.

When, about 9 o'clock, the sun began to burn away the fog, the sight from General Thomas's position was inspiring. A little to the left, on Montgomery Hill, the salient of the Confederate lines, and not more than six hundred yards distant from Wood's salient, on Lawrens Hill, could be seen the advance line of works, behind which an unknown force of the enemy lay in wait. Beyond, and along the Hillsboro' Pike, were stretches of stone wall, with here and there a detached earth-work, through whose embrasures peeped the threatening artillery. To the right, along the valley of Richland Creek, the dark line of Wilson's advancing cavalry could be seen slowly making its difficult way across the wet, swampy, stumpy ground. Close in front, and at the foot of the hill, its right joining Wilson's left, was A. J. Smith's corps, full of cheer and enterprise, and glad to be once more in the open field. Then



VIEWS OF FORT NEGLEY ON THE LEFT OF THE UNION INTRENCHMENTS, NASHVILLE, BETWEEN THE FRANKLIN AND NOLENSVILLE PIKES. FROM PHOTOGRAPHS.

The lower picture shows a casemate protected with railroad iron. The hills in the distance were the Confederate center and left at the opening of the fight.

came the Fourth Corps, whose left, bending back toward the north, was hidden behind Lawrens Hill. Already the skirmishers were engaged, the Confederates slowly falling back before the determined and steady pressure of Smith and Wood.

By the time that Wilson's and Smith's lines were fully extended and brought up to within striking distance of the Confederate works, along the Hillsboro' Pike, it was noon. Post's brigade of Wood's old division (now commanded by General Sam Beatty), which lay at the foot of Montgomery Hill, full of dash and spirit, had since morning been regarding the works at the summit with covetous eyes. At Post's suggestion, it was determined to see which party wanted them most. Accordingly, a charge was ordered—and in a moment the brigade was swarming up the hillside, straight for the enemy's advanced works. For almost the first time since the grand assault on Missionary Ridge, a year before, here was an open field where everything could be seen. From General Thomas's headquarters everybody looked on with breathless suspense, as the blue line, broken and irregular, but with steady persistence, made its way up the steep hillside against a fierce storm of musketry and artillery. Most of the shots, however, passed over the men's heads.

It was a struggle to keep up with the colors, and, as they neared the top, only the strongest were at the front. Without a moment's pause, the color-bearers and those who had kept up with them, Post himself at the head, leaped the parapet. As the colors waved from the summit, the whole line swept forward and was over the works in a twinkling, gathering in prisoners and guns. Indeed, so large was the mass of the prisoners that a few minutes later was seen heading toward our own lines, that a number of officers at General Thomas's headquarters feared the assault had failed and the prisoners were Confederate reserves who had rallied and retaken the works. But the fear was only momentary; for the wild outburst of cheers that rang across the valley told the story of complete success.

Meanwhile, farther to the right, as the opposing lines neared each other, the sound of battle grew louder and louder, and the smoke thicker and thicker, until the whole valley was filled with the haze. It was now past noon, and, at every point the two armies were so near together that an assault was inevitable. Hatch's division of Wilson's cavalry, at the extreme right of the continuous line, was confronted by one of the detached works which Hood had intended to be "impregnable"; and the right of McArthur's division of A. J. Smith's infantry was also within striking distance of it. Coon's cavalry brigade was dismounted and ordered to assault the work, while Hill's infantry brigade received similar orders. The two commanders moved forward at the same time, and entered the work together, Colonel Hill falling dead at the head of his command. In a moment the whole Confederate force in that quarter was routed and fled to the rear, while the captured guns were turned on them.

With the view of extending the operations of Wilson's cavalry still farther to the right, and if possible gaining the rear of the enemy's left, the two divisions of the Twenty-third Corps that had been in reserve near Lawrens Hill were ordered to Smith's right, while orders were sent to Wilson to gain, if possible, a lodgment on the Granny White Pike. These orders were promptly obeyed, and Cooper's brigade on reaching its new position got into a handsome fight, in which its losses were more than the losses of the rest of the Twenty-third Corps during the two days' battle.

But though the enemy's left was thus rudely driven from its fancied security, the salient at the center, being an angle formed by the line along Hillsboro' Pike and that stretching toward the east, was still firmly held. Post's successful assault had merely driven out or captured the advance forces; the main line was intact. As soon as word came of the successful assault on the right, General Thomas sent orders to General Wood, commanding the Fourth Corps, to prepare to attack the salient. The staff-officer by whom this order was sent did not at first find General Wood; but seeing the two division commanders whose troops would be called upon for the work, gave them the instructions. As he was riding along the line he met one of the brigade commanders — an officer with a reputation for exceptional courage and gallantry — who, in reply to the direction to prepare for the expected assault, said, "You don't mean that we've got to go in here and

attack the works on that hill?" "Those are the orders," was the answer. Looking earnestly across the open valley, and at the steep hill beyond, from which the enemy's guns were throwing shot and shell with uncomfortable frequency and nearness, he said, "Why, it would be suicide, sir; perfect suicide." "Nevertheless, those are the orders," said the officer; and he rode on to complete his work. Before he could rejoin General Thomas the assault was made, and the enemy were driven out with a loss of guns, colors, and



VIEW OF A PART OF THE UNION LINES AT NASHVILLE.
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

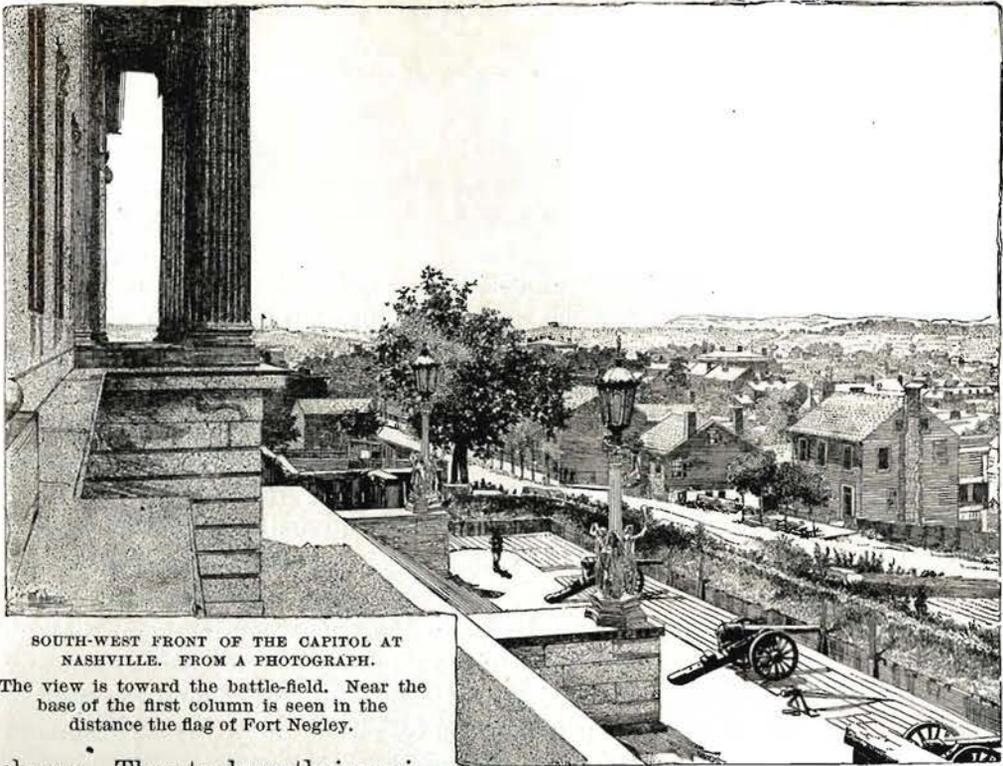
prisoners, and their whole line was forced to abandon the works along the Hillsboro' Pike and fall back to the Granny White Pike. The retreating line was followed by the entire Fourth Corps (Wood's), as well as by the cavalry and Smith's troops; but night soon fell, and the whole army went into bivouac in the open fields wherever they chanced to be.

At dark, Hood, who at 12 o'clock had held an unbroken, fortified line from the Murfrees-

boro' to the Hillsboro' Pike, with an advanced post on Montgomery Hill and five strong redoubts along the Hillsboro' Pike, barely maintained his hold of a line from the Murfreesboro' Pike to the Granny White Pike, near which on two large hills the left of his army had taken refuge when driven out of their redoubts by Smith and Wilson. These hills were more than two miles to the rear of his morning position. It was to that point that Bate, who had started from Hood's right when the assault was first delivered on the redoubts, now made his way amidst, as he says, "streams of stragglers, and artillerists, and horses, without guns or caissons—the sure indications of defeat."

General Hood, not daunted by the reverses which had befallen him, at once set to work to prepare for the next day's struggle. As soon as it was dusk Cheatham's whole corps was moved from his right to his left; Stewart's was retired some two miles and became the center; Lee's also was withdrawn and became the right. The new line extended along the base of a range of hills two miles south of that occupied during the day, and was only about half as long as that from which he had been driven. During the night the Confederates threw up works along their entire front, and the hills on their flanks were strongly fortified. The flanks were also further secured by return works, which prevented them from being left "in the air." Altogether, the position was naturally far more formidable than that just abandoned.

At early dawn the divisions of the Fourth Corps moved forward, driving out the opposing skirmishers. The men entered upon the work with such ardor that the advance soon quickened into a run, and the run almost into a



SOUTH-WEST FRONT OF THE CAPITOL AT NASHVILLE. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

The view is toward the battle-field. Near the base of the first column is seen in the distance the flag of Fort Negley.

charge. They took up their positions in front of the enemy's new line, at one point coming within 250 yards of the salient at Overton's Hill. Here they were halted, and threw up works, while the artillery on both sides kept up a steady and accurate fire. Steedman also moved forward and about noon joined his right to Wood's left, thus completing the alignment.

On his way to the front General Thomas heard the cannonading, and, as was his custom, rode straight for the spot where the action seemed heaviest. As he was passing a large, old-fashioned house, his attention was attracted by the noise of a window closing with a slam. Turning to see the cause, he was greeted by a look from a young lady whose expression at the moment was the reverse of angelic. With an amused smile, the general rode on, and soon forgot the incident in the excitement of battle. But this trifling event had a sequel. The young lady, in process of time, became the wife of an officer then serving in General Thomas's army,—though he did not happen to be a witness of this episode.

The ground between the two armies for the greater part of the way from the Franklin to the Granny White Pike is low, open, and crossed by frequent streams running in every direction, and most of the fields were either newly plowed or old corn-fields, and were heavy, wet, and muddy from the recent storms. Overton's Hill, Hood's right, is a well-rounded slope, the top of which was amply fortified, while hills held by the left of his line just west of the Granny White Pike are so steep that it is difficult to climb them, and their summits were crowned with formidable barricades, in front of which

the open field, the continuity of his line was broken by a large fallen tree. As the men separated to pass it, the enemy opened an enfilading fire on the exposed flanks of the gap thus created, with telling effect. In consequence, at the very moment when a firm and compact order was most needed, the line came up ragged and broken. Meantime Post's assault was repulsed, and the fire which had been concentrated on him was turned against Thompson. Nothing was left, therefore, but to withdraw as soon as possible to the original position. This was done without panic or confusion, after a loss of 467 men from the three regiments composing the brigade.

When it was seen that a heavy assault on his right, at Overton's Hill, was threatened, Hood ordered Cleburne's old division to be sent over to the exposed point, from the extreme left, in front of Schofield. About the same time General Couch, commanding one of the divisions of the Twenty-third Corps, told General Schofield that he believed he could carry the hill in his front, but doubted if he could hold it without assistance. The ground in front of General Cox, on Couch's right, also offered grand opportunities for a successful assault. Meantime the cavalry, on Cox's right, had made its way beyond the extreme left flank of the enemy, and was moving northward over the wooded hills direct to the rear of the extreme rebel left.

General Thomas, who had been making a reconnoissance, had no sooner reached Schofield's front than General McArthur, who commanded one of Smith's divisions, impatient at the long waiting, and not wanting to spend the second night on the rocky hill he was occupying, told Smith that he could carry the high hill in front of Couch,—the same that Couch himself had told Schofield he could carry,—and would undertake it unless forbidden. Smith silently acquiesced, and McArthur set to work. Withdrawing McMillen's (his right) brigade from the trenches, he marched it by the flank in front of General Couch's position, and with orders to the men to fix bayonets, not to fire a shot and neither to halt nor to cheer until they had gained the enemy's works, the charge was sounded. The gallant brigade, which had served and fought in every part of the South-west, moved swiftly down the slope, across the narrow valley, and began scrambling up the steep hillside, on the top of which was the redoubt, held by Bate's division, and mounted also with Whitworth guns. The bravest onlookers held their breath as these gallant men steadily and silently approached the summit amid the crash of musketry and the boom of the artillery. In almost the time it has taken to tell the story they gained the works, their flags were wildly waving from the parapet, and the unmistakable cheer, "the voice of the American people," as General Thomas called it, rent the air. It was an exultant moment; but this was only a part of the heroic work of that afternoon. While McMillen's brigade was preparing for this wonderful charge, Hatch's division of cavalry, dismounted, had also pushed its way through the woods, and had gained the tops of two hills that commanded the rear of the enemy's works. Here, with incredible labor, they had dragged, by hand, two pieces of artillery, and, just as McMillen began his charge, these opened on the hill where Bate was, up the opposite slope of which the infantry were scrambling. At the same time

Coon's brigade of Hatch's division with resounding cheers charged upon the enemy and poured such volleys of musketry from their repeating-rifles as I have never heard equaled. Thus beset on both sides, Bate's people broke out of the works, and ran down the hill toward their right and rear as fast as their legs could carry them. It was more like a scene in a spectacular drama than a real incident in war. The hillside in front, still green, dotted with the boys in blue swarming up the slope; the dark background of high hills beyond; the lowering clouds; the waving flags; the smoke slowly rising through the leafless tree-tops and drifting across the valleys; the wonderful outburst of musketry; the ecstatic cheers; the multitude racing for life down into the valley below,—so exciting was it all, that the lookers-on instinctively clapped their hands, as at a brilliant and successful transformation scene, as indeed it was. For, in those few minutes, an army was changed into a mob, and the whole structure of the rebellion in the South-west, with all its possibilities, was utterly overthrown. As soon as the other divisions farther to the left saw and heard the doings on their right, they did not wait for orders. Everywhere, by a common impulse, they charged the works in front, and carried them in a twinkling. General Edward Johnson and nearly all his division and his artillery were captured. Over the very ground where, but a little while before, Post's assault had been repulsed, the same troops now charged with resistless force, capturing fourteen guns and one thousand prisoners. Steedman's colored brigades also rallied and brought in their share of prisoners and other spoils of war. Everywhere the success was complete.

Foremost among the rejoicing victors was General Steedman, under whose command were the colored troops. Steedman had been a life-long Democrat and was one of the delegates, in 1860, to the Charleston convention, at which ultimately Breckinridge was nominated for President. As he rode over the field, immediately after the rout of the enemy, he asked, with a grim smile, as he pointed to the fleeing hosts, "I wonder what my Democratic friends over there would think of me if they knew I was fighting them with 'nigger' troops?"

I have not space to tell the story of the pursuit, which only ended, ten days later, at the Tennessee River. About a month before, General Hood had triumphantly begun his northward movement. Now, in his disastrous retreat, he was leaving behind him, as prisoners or deserters, a larger number of men than General Thomas had been able to place at Pulaski to hinder his advance—to say nothing of his terrific losses in killed at Franklin. The loss to the Union army, in all its fighting,—from the Tennessee River to Nashville and back again,—was less than six thousand killed, wounded, and missing. At so small a cost, counting the chances of war, the whole North-west was saved from an invasion that, if Hood had succeeded, would have more than neutralized all Sherman's successes in Georgia and the Carolinas; saved by the steadfast labors, the untiring energy, the rapid combinations, the skillful evolutions, the heroic courage and the tremendous force of one man, whose name will yet rank among the great captains of all time.