



General Robert E. Lee flanked by his son, Custis (left), and the author, Walter Herron Taylor (right), in a photograph taken by Mathew Brady a week after Appomattox.

GENERAL LEE

HIS CAMPAIGNS IN VIRGINIA

1861-1865

WITH PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

BY

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CHAPTER VIII

THE SEVEN DAYS' BATTLES AT RICHMOND

MECHANICSVILLE

THE time for the commencement of the movement had been determined after a careful consideration of the time necessary to enable General Jackson's command to get into position, and no miscarriage was looked for in this direction. Thursday, the 26th, arrived, and General A. P. Hill, who was to open the battle, had everything in readiness, and only awaited the arrival of General Jackson. General McClellan, with two thirds of his army on the south side of the Chickahominy, was confronted by but twenty-five thousand Confederates. Unless attacked, he might assail this force and attempt to capture Richmond. Indecision on the part of the Confederates under these conditions would have invited disaster. After waiting until three o'clock in the afternoon, without any sign of Jackson's troops, and presuming that by the time he crossed the Chickahominy and got into position General Jackson would connect with his left, General A. P. Hill crossed over Meadow Bridge with his division. He drove the enemy out of Mechanicsville and was soon in front of the strongly fortified position along Beaver Dam Creek, constituting the right of the Federal line and held by the command of General Fitz John Porter. General A. P. Hill promptly deployed his troops and made dispositions to assault that line. In addition to

his own division, he was reinforced by Ripley's brigade of D. H. Hill's division. He had every reason to rely upon the coöperation of General Jackson, who was to attack the enemy's right flank and rear, but as yet no sign of the approach of Jackson's troops. What had become of them? Why this unexpected delay? Those were anxious moments to Hill and to all. Colonel Allan, chief ordnance officer of Jackson's command, in his book "The Army of Northern Virginia," thus explains this delay:

Jackson, who was to have passed Ashland on the 25th and camp in the vicinity of the Virginia Central Railroad, was only able to reach Ashland on that day. . . . The long forced march of Jackson to Ashland had consumed half a day more than was expected. He had consequently reached the Central Railroad, his arrival at which point was to be the signal for the movement of the other divisions, five or six hours late; and his march all day, though vigorously pressed, had been impeded to some extent by the enemy's scouting parties, but far more by the unknown character of the country, which was all new to him. He had therefore not reached Beaver Dam Creek in time to dislodge, or in conjunction with A. P. Hill to overwhelm, McCall.

It was a remarkable fact that in all these movements of the Seven Days' Battles around Richmond the Confederates were operating to the greatest disadvantage because of their ignorance of the country and the lack of accurate maps showing its topography and the location of the roads. One would have supposed that in the time which had elapsed since the commencement of the war accurate surveys and maps would have been made of the country for miles around the city of Richmond, and of every approach to that city likely to be attempted by the enemy; but neither generals nor officers of the staff had any such information, and, as a rule, the

country people who were relied on as guides seemed to have no knowledge of such matters beyond the immediate vicinity of their homes.

Hill's troops advanced in gallant style until they reached Beaver Dam Creek, which was practically impassable in the face of a determined foe. Several attempts were made to reach the Federal line, but as there was no simultaneous attack upon its flank and rear, they were repulsed with heavy loss. The firing continued until about 9 P.M., when the engagement ceased.

General Lee ordered the battle to be renewed at dawn on the 27th, when Jackson, whose command was now up, would be in position to cooperate, and to carry out the original plan of attack. This, however, would be attended with very different conditions. General McClellan was now fully aware of the purpose of General Lee, and had time to strengthen and reinforce the threatened flank. The spirited advance made by the troops of A. P. Hill and the approach of Jackson, now fully disclosed, made it evident to the Federal commander that, although a strong line for defense against direct attack, the position along Beaver Dam Creek would be untenable when turned by Jackson; so during the night the Federals retired from that line and took up their second line, extending from the Chickahominy along Powhite Creek, by Gaines's Mill to Cold Harbor—naturally a strong line, and greatly strengthened by the erection of breastworks and the construction of abatis.

GAINES'S MILL AND COLD HARBOR

On the morning of the 27th the attack was renewed as originally contemplated in General Lee's order of battle. A. P. Hill's division was in the center; Longstreet's division was in reserve, in the rear and to the right of A. P. Hill; and the commands of D. H. Hill

and Jackson were on the left. Again the troops of A. P. Hill were the first to become engaged. The fighting soon became fast and furious. Hill seemed to be contending alone against the whole Federal right wing, as Jackson's movements were again unaccountably slow; and as no attack was being made on the enemy's right, he was enabled to concentrate in his resistance to the assault of A. P. Hill. General Jackson, in his report of the battle, thus explains his attitude at that time:

Soon after General A. P. Hill became engaged, and being unacquainted with the ground, and apprehensive, from what appeared to me to be the respective positions of the Confederate and Federal forces engaged, that if I then pressed forward our troops would be mistaken for the enemy and fired into, and hoping that generals A. P. Hill and Longstreet would soon drive the Federals toward me, I directed General D. H. Hill to move his division to the left of the road, so as to leave between him and the woods on the right of the road an open space, across which I hoped the enemy would be driven.

To aid General A. P. Hill in his endeavor to force the lines of the enemy, General Lee directed General Longstreet to advance some of his brigades against the Federal left, with the hope that this would have the effect of drawing off troops from the enemy's right, prevent any strengthening of the force in A. P. Hill's front, and by weakening the right of the Federal line afford a better opportunity to generals Jackson and D. H. Hill for making a lodgment there. General Longstreet, in speaking of the movement, says:

Three brigades were sent to open fire and threaten their left from the forest edge, with orders not to cross the open. These brigades engaged steadily, and parts of them essayed to pass the field in front, as their blood grew hot, but were recalled, with

orders repeated to engage steadily, only threatening assault, the army all the while engaged in efforts to find a point that could be forced.

Meanwhile, General Jackson had discovered from the direction and sound of the firing that General A. P. Hill was having heavy work, and so he ordered a general advance of his entire command, which commenced with D. H. Hill upon the left, and extended to the right through Ewell's, Jackson's, and Whiting's divisions in the order named. In some way General Whiting with his division, consisting of his own and General Hood's brigades, found his way to our right, and reporting to General Longstreet, asked that he be put into battle.

General Lee now ordered a simultaneous advance of his whole line. General Longstreet, who up to this time had only threatened assault, now pushed his troops forward, the two brigades of Whiting and Hood advancing with the brigades of Longstreet's division. These troops advanced with great impetuosity against the Federal left; they assaulted the enemy's position at Gaines's Mill with a determination and courage that insured success. Forcing their way through abatis, they scaled the heights, carrying several intrenched lines, and finally driving the Federals in confusion across the plateau in rear of the heights so stubbornly defended and so gallantly captured.

Simultaneously with the advance of the brigades of Longstreet's division the whole Confederate line moved forward. The troops of Jackson and D. H. Hill had then gotten into position, and attacked the enemy's right flank and center with great impetuosity. The success of General Longstreet's division, supported by General Whiting, in piercing the enemy's lines, and the heavy assault made by the troops of Jackson and D. H. Hill on the right flank of the enemy, caused their whole line to

give way, and the right wing of the Federal army retreated upon the main body, pursued by the successful Confederates.

No more creditable performance can be found in the history of the Army of Northern Virginia than the capture of the Federal position near Gaines's Mill by the brigades of Longstreet's and Whiting's divisions, and better soldiers never fought. There was some question at the time as to what troops first pierced the Federal lines, but General McClellan in his report says that the Confederates "threw fresh troops against General Porter with their greatest fury, and finally gained the woods held by our left. This reverse, aided by the confusion that followed an unsuccessful charge by five companies of the Fifth Cavalry, and followed as it was by more determined assault on the remainder of our lines, now outflanked, caused a general retreat from our position to the hill in rear, overlooking the bridge." And General Jackson in his report says: "The Fourth Texas, under the lead of General Hood, was the first to pierce these strongholds and seize the guns." This clearly proves that the part of the Federal line that was the first to give way was their left, where the brigades under Longstreet made their attack, and accords with my own impressions formed at the time.

As in this battle the Confederates were acting on the aggressive, assaulting intrenched lines, their losses were very heavy. The losses on the Federal side were also very heavy. This was especially noticeable where Hood's brigade made its assault. In riding over the field at that point, I recall that I had to exercise great care in guiding my horse not to strike a dead or wounded Federal soldier.

On the morning of the 28th, when the Confederate skirmishers were advanced, it was ascertained that the enemy had retired to the south side of the Chickahominy, where McClellan's whole army was then con-

centrated. The York River Railroad, the artery by which General McClellan's army had received its supplies, was seized by General Stuart with his cavalry, and the Federal commander was forced to select a new base of supplies. He had to choose between the Peninsula and James River, and he determined to go to James River, where he would have the protection of gunboats.

General McClellan had conceived the most exaggerated ideas concerning the strength of General Lee's army. It is difficult to understand how he was so greatly deceived: he had, or should have had, pretty accurate information concerning the Confederate forces that had been operating on the Peninsula; he had been in contact with Johnston's army at Williamsburg and at Seven Pines; he knew General Johnston well enough to understand that he would not have retreated before him had he not been outnumbered. He had under his command about one hundred and five thousand effective men, excluding the troops at Fortress Monroe.

Previous to the attack of General Lee almost daily appeals were sent by General McClellan to the authorities at Washington for reinforcements, in which he represented that he was greatly outnumbered, and, at the same time, expressed again and again his purpose to take aggressive action. On June 2d he telegraphed to Washington: "Our left is within four miles of Richmond. I only wait for the river to fall to cross with the rest of the force and make a general attack. The morale of my troops is now such that I can venture much. I do not fear for odds against me." On June 7th he telegraphed: "I shall be in perfect readiness to move forward to take Richmond the moment that McCall reaches here and the ground will admit the passage of artillery." On June 11th he reported: "McCall's troops have commenced arriving at the White House. . . . Weather good to-day. Give me a little good weather, and I shall

have progress to report here." On June 14th he said: "Weather now very favorable. I shall advance as soon as the bridges are completed and the ground fit for artillery to move." On June 18th: "After to-morrow we shall fight the Rebel army as soon as Providence will permit." On June 25th he sent up a wail over his lack of men: "The Rebel force is stated at two hundred thousand, including Jackson and Beauregard. I shall have to contend against vastly superior odds, if these reports be true; but this army will do all in the power of men to hold their position and repulse any attack. I regret my great inferiority of numbers, but feel that I am in no way responsible for it, as I have not failed to represent repeatedly the necessity of reinforcements. . . . I will do all that a general can do with the splendid army I have the honor to command, and if it is destroyed by overwhelming numbers, can at least die with it and share its fate; but if the result of the action which will probably occur to-morrow or within a short time is a disaster, the responsibility cannot be thrown on my shoulders. I feel there is no use in my again asking for reinforcements."

On June 2d General McClellan did not fear for the odds against him. On June 25th he seemed to have suffered from a dreadful nightmare, and to have been in mortal terror of the innumerable hosts about to overwhelm him. He gave too great credence, no doubt, to the reports of his secret-service corps. In a memorandum of "General Estimates of the Rebel Forces in Virginia" made by the secret-service men, and published with his report, will be found the following:

One hundred and eighty thousand troops at Richmond prior to reinforcements from Charleston. Rebel troops in the Seven Days' Battles, including Jackson's whole force, estimated at two hundred and twenty thousand to two hundred and sixty thousand.

Now that the smoke of battle has cleared away and time has permitted a winnowing of fancy from fact, the truth stands revealed that the strength of General Lee's army in the Seven Days' Battles was under eighty-one thousand men. In the battles of Gaines's Mill and Cold Harbor the Confederates engaged numbered about fifty thousand, and the Federals opposing them numbered about thirty-five thousand; but it should be borne in mind that these latter were acting on the defensive and fighting behind fortifications. Later in the war there was another encounter about this same spot, Cold Harbor; then the positions were reversed: General Lee was on the defensive and General Grant made the assault. There has never been any question as to which side then had the most men. The Confederates on the defensive made impregnable the position they had captured in the Seven Days' Battles; the Federals, after heroic and most courageous but vain efforts to capture the position they had once lost, sullenly refused to move when again ordered forward to assault it.

The troops constituting the right wing of the Federal army that were defeated at Gaines's Mill and Cold Harbor, in their retreat had destroyed the bridges over the Chickahominy in their rear; and it was not practicable for the Confederates to reconstruct them in the presence of the enemy, whose artillery completely commanded the river and its banks. The army of General McClellan held all the bridges on the lower Chickahominy, and the way was open for it to retreat by way of the Peninsula, or by a direct route to James River, as might be deemed most advantageous. If the retreat should be down the Peninsula, then General Lee would need his troops, where the recently engaged force already was, on the north side of the Chickahominy; it was necessary to wait until the purpose of General McClellan was fully discerned. General Lee, therefore, was inactive on the

28th, as it was not ascertained until late in the evening of that day that General McClellan was retreating to James River.

SAVAGE STATION

On the next day the pursuit of the retreating army began. General Lee ordered Longstreet and A. P. Hill to recross the Chickahominy at New Bridge and to take direction of the army in retreat. Meanwhile it was discovered that the enemy had abandoned their line in front of generals Huger and Magruder, and they were ordered to pursue the Federal army. General Jackson was ordered to cross the Chickahominy at Grapevine Bridge and take up the line of pursuit. In all the movements of the Confederates in the pursuit of General McClellan's army, they were greatly hindered and delayed by the character of the country, abounding there in small streams and extensive swamps, and by the ignorance of the general staff concerning the roads. General Jackson was delayed on the 29th by the necessity of repairing the Grapevine Bridge, which the Federals had partially destroyed. This delay on the part of Jackson's troops was not anticipated, and from it some confusion resulted. General Magruder, who was advancing by the Williamsburg road, was the first to come up with the enemy, and promptly engaged his rear-guard. General Jackson, who was expected to cross the river at Grapevine Bridge, would have thus been in position to cooperate with General Magruder, and he had orders to this effect. General Jackson, in his official report of these battles, says that he was delayed all day by the necessity of reconstructing the bridge by which he was to cross to the south side of the Chickahominy.

The military student will naturally seek some explanation of the fact that no more decisive blow was given by the Confederates to the retreating Federal army. He

will discover that the history of that pursuit is but a record of lost opportunities, and he will ascertain that the failure to accomplish more was due, in great part, to unlooked-for impediments encountered by the division commanders in moving over a section of country unknown to them and admirably adapted to defense, which delayed their own movements and deprived others of the cooperation expected of them. The delay of Jackson in crossing the Chickahominy deprived Magruder of the cooperation he looked for at Savage Station, and naturally caused him much anxiety. It was reported to him by General D. R. Jones, who commanded the brigade on the left of Magruder's line, and who appears to have been in communication with General Jackson, that in response to a request from him to know if he could rely on his cooperation, he had received reply from General Jackson to the effect that he "had other important duties to perform." It was this, perhaps, that led General Magruder to fear that he was not to have Jackson's support.

I cannot explain to what General Jackson referred in his reply to General Jones; but certainly there is no room for misunderstanding as to his orders. General Lee, on being told of the apprehension concerning Jackson's support entertained by General Magruder, sent him a message, quoted in Vol. XI, Part II, page 675, of War Records as follows:

I learn from Major Taylor that you are under the impression that General Jackson has been ordered not to support you. On the contrary, he has been directed to do so, and to push the pursuit vigorously.

As it was, while those of Magruder's brigades that were put into action at Savage Station did splendid service, a considerable portion of his force did not be-

come engaged, and might put an end to a conflict without decisive results. General Lee says in his report:

Late in the afternoon Magruder attacked the enemy with one of his divisions and two regiments of another. A severe action ensued and continued about two hours, when it was terminated by night. The troops displayed great gallantry and inflicted heavy loss upon the enemy, but, owing to the lateness of the hour and the small force employed, the result was not decisive, and the enemy continued his retreat under cover of darkness, leaving several hundred prisoners, with his dead and wounded, in our hands. But the time gained enabled the retreating column to cross White Oak Swamp without interruption and destroy the bridge.

FRAZIER'S FARM

General Jackson reached Savage Station on the 30th. He was directed to continue the pursuit. In his advance he captured so many prisoners and small arms that he was compelled to detach two regiments to guard them. His advance was checked at White Oak Swamp: the bridge had been destroyed. The enemy occupied the opposite side of the swamp and so commanded the banks as to prevent the rebuilding of the bridge. Generals Longstreet and A. P. Hill continued their advance and in the afternoon came upon the enemy at Frazier's Farm. From the position occupied by General Huger on the right, his cooperation was looked for on that flank. Having no knowledge of the cause of General Jackson's delay, his cooperation was looked for on the left.

Meanwhile, General Holmes, who with a part of his division had crossed from the south side of James River on the 29th, had moved down the river road, and on the 30th encountered the retreating army near Malvern Hill. He opened upon the enemy with artillery, but soon discovered that the batteries opposed to him greatly

outnumbered his own, and also that the fire of the gun-boats from James River guarded this part of their line. General Magruder was ordered to support General Holmes, but, being at a greater distance than had been supposed, he did not reach the position of the latter in time to assist in an attack.

General Huger reported that his progress was obstructed; soon, however, firing was heard on the right of Longstreet, which was supposed to be by the troops of General Huger, and General Longstreet opened with his artillery to give notice of his presence. This developed the fact that the enemy was present in great force, and an engagement was brought on at once, although it was not designed that this should be until the troops of General Huger were in position to attack.

General Longstreet threw troops forward as rapidly as possible to the support of the attacking columns. Again, however, owing to the nature of the ground, the desired coöperation of commands failed. Only the divisions of Longstreet and A. P. Hill were engaged. The enemy was in position and numerically exceeded the attacking columns. General Longstreet says in his report: "The enemy, however, was driven back slowly and steadily. Contesting the ground inch by inch, he succeeded in getting some of his batteries off the field, and, by holding his last position until dark, in withdrawing his forces under cover of the night." General Jackson was delayed by the difficulties attending his effort to force the passage of White Oak Swamp. General Lee, in his report, said: "The battle raged furiously until 9 P.M. By that time the enemy had been driven with great slaughter from every position but one, which he maintained until he was enabled to withdraw under cover of darkness."

Major-general McCall was taken a prisoner in this battle. To illustrate the character of the fighting on

both sides, as seen by him, the following extract is given from his official report:

Soon after this a most determined charge was made on Randol's battery by a full brigade advancing in wedge shape, without order, but in perfect recklessness. Somewhat similar charges had been previously made on Cooper's and Kern's batteries by single regiments without success, they having recoiled before the storm of canister hurled against them. A like result was anticipated in Randol's battery, and the Fourth Regiment was requested not to fire until the battery had done with them. Its gallant commander did not doubt his ability to repel the attack, and his guns did indeed mow down the advancing host, but still the gaps were closed and the enemy came in on a run to the very muzzle of his guns. It was a perfect torrent of men, and they were in his battery before the guns could be removed, and the enemy, rushing past, drove the greater part of the Fourth Regiment before them. I had ridden into the regiment and endeavored to check them, but with only partial success. It was here my fortune to witness one of the fiercest bayonet fights that perhaps ever occurred on this continent. Bayonet wounds, mortal or slight, were given and received. I saw skulls crushed by the butts of muskets, and every effort made by either party in this life-or-death struggle, proving indeed that here Greek had met Greek.

MALVERN HILL

General Jackson reached the scene of the battle at Frazier's Farm early on July 1st, and was ordered to continue the pursuit by the Willis Church road. His advancing column was soon fired upon by the enemy, who nevertheless continued to fall back until he reached Malvern Hill, where he was found in force, most advantageously placed, with a large number of batteries on the crest of the hill, supported by masses of infantry partially protected by earthworks.

A great part of the day was consumed in reconnoitering the position of the enemy and in getting the different commands in position for attack. The position of the Federals on Malvern Hill was indeed formidable; it could hardly have been stronger. In its entire front the ground was open for some distance, and every approach was commanded by the numerous guns that poured from its crest. To reach this position the Confederates had to advance through a broken country, traversed throughout its whole extent by a swamp that very greatly interfered with the movements of the troops. It was late in the day before any advance was made. Jackson was on the left, with the divisions of Whiting and D. H. Hill and one of the brigades of Ewell's division in front, Jackson's own division and the balance of Ewell's being in reserve. Two brigades of Huger's division were on Jackson's right, and Magruder's division and one of Huger's brigades constituted the right of the line. Orders were issued for a general advance at a signal to be given, but, as General Lee says in his report, concert of action by the troops was prevented by the causes referred to. General D. H. Hill was the first to become engaged. His troops advanced gallantly and drove back the first line of the enemy, but the fire from the Federal batteries was terrific, and he was forced to relinquish most of the ground he had gained, after suffering heavily and inflicting great loss upon the enemy. General Hill complained bitterly of the failure of the other divisions to support him. He says in his report:

The front line of the enemy was twice broken and in full retreat when fresh troops came up to its support. At such critical juncture the general advance of the division on my right and left must have been decisive. Some half an hour after my division had ceased to struggle against odds of more than ten to

one and had fallen back, McLaws's division advanced, but to share a similar fate.

On the right the divisions of Huger and Magruder attacked in the same gallant style, but with the same ultimate result. Some of the brigades advanced bravely across the open field and attempted to carry the hill by assault, driving back the infantry and compelling the most advanced batteries to retire to escape capture; but owing to a lack of coöperation among the assaulting columns, the enemy was enabled to concentrate and so to strengthen the threatened part of their line with reinforcements as to compel the Confederates to yield the positions gained. The fighting continued late into the night, but all efforts to pierce the enemy's line failed. The Federals retired during the night, leaving their dead unburied and their wounded as they fell. They abandoned three pieces of artillery and thousands of small arms. As expressed by General D. H. Hill, "None of their previous retreats exhibited such unmistakable signs of rout and demoralization. The wheat-fields about Shirley were all trampled down by the fugitives, too impatient to follow the road. Arms, accouterments, knapsacks, and overcoats were strewn on the roadside and in the field."

The cavalry under General Stuart that had seized the York River Railroad on June 28th had proceeded, under the orders of the commanding general, down that railroad, to ascertain if there was any movement of the enemy in that direction. General Stuart reached the vicinity of the White House on June 29th without serious opposition. At his approach the enemy destroyed an immense quantity of stores accumulated at that point, and retreated toward Fort Monroe. General Stuart then proceeded with the main portion of the cavalry, in compliance with his orders, to guard the lower bridges

of the Chickahominy. On the 30th of June he was directed to recross the river and to move to cooperate with General Jackson, and reached the scene of operations, at Malvern Hill, at the close of the engagement at 9 P.M. on July 1st.

On the morning of July 2d it was discovered that the enemy had retired during the night, leaving his dead and wounded on the field, and other unmistakable evidence of demoralization and haste. Pursuit was ordered immediately. The cavalry under General Stuart being in advance, General Stuart put his column in motion for Haxall's, hoping to intercept the enemy there. His advance soon reached the river road in rear of Turkey Creek, where many prisoners were captured, and a small body of his men reached the vicinity of Haxall's and became satisfied that the enemy was not there. He then endeavored to gain the fork of the roads near Shirley, but found that position well defended by the enemy's infantry, but, from what was learned from the prisoners captured, it was evident that the retreating army had gone below that point. Meanwhile, a part of his force was engaged in harassing the enemy's rear, and in collecting prisoners and small arms abandoned by the retreating Federals. That night a squadron of cavalry with a howitzer, under Captain Pelham, was sent toward Westover, with orders to reach the immediate vicinity of the river road below, so as to shell it, if the enemy attempted to retreat that night.

During the night Captain Pelham reported to General Stuart that the enemy had taken position between Shirley and Westover, and indicated the advantage to be gained by occupying Evelington Heights, a plateau from which the enemy's camps could be completely commanded.

In his report General Stuart says:

I found Evelington Heights easily gained. A squadron in possession vacated without much hesitation, retreating up the road, the only route by which it could reach Westover, owing to the impassability of Herring's Creek below Roland's Mill. Colonel Martin was sent around farther to the left, and the howitzer brought into action in the river road, to fire upon the enemy's camp. Judging from the great commotion and excitement caused below, it must have had considerable effect. We soon had prisoners from various corps and divisions, and from their statements, as well as those of citizens, I learned that the enemy's main body was there, but much reduced and demoralized. I kept the commanding general apprised of my movements, and I soon learned from him that Longstreet and Jackson were en route to my support. I held the ground from about 9 A.M. until 2 P.M., when the enemy had contrived to get one battery in position on this side the creek. The fire, however, was kept up until a body of infantry was found approaching by our right flank. I had no apprehension, however, as I felt sure Longstreet was near-by; and although Pelham reported but two rounds of ammunition left, I held out, knowing how important it was to hold the ground until Longstreet arrived. The enemy's infantry advanced, and the battery kept up its fire. I just then learned that Longstreet had taken the wrong road, and was at Nance's Shop, six or seven miles off. Pelham fired his last round, and the sharpshooters, strongly posted in the skirt of wood bordering the plateau, exhausted every cartridge, and had at last to retire.

The progress of the infantry, meanwhile, had been greatly retarded by a heavy storm, and by obstacles placed in the roads by the retreating enemy. Longstreet was further delayed by the necessity for countermarching his command, having been misled by his guide, and did not reach the point occupied by Stuart until late in the afternoon of the 3d. Jackson, who was following, reached the scene early on the morning

of the 4th, and drove in the pickets of the enemy. General Stuart then pointed out the position of the enemy, now occupying, apparently in force, the plateau from which he had shelled their camps the day before, and suggested a route by which the plateau could be reached. Generals Longstreet and Jackson conferred together concerning the advisability of attack, and determined to await the arrival of General Lee.

After having thoroughly examined the ground, General Lee concluded that the natural strength of the position occupied by McClellan's army, and the protection further given it by the Federal gunboats, made it unadvisable to attempt to carry it by assault, and the men of his army were permitted to enjoy some days of inactivity, that they might rest and recuperate.

In the Report* of the Committee of Congress of the United States on the Conduct of the War, it is said:

The retreat of the army from Malvern Hill to Harrison's Bar was very precipitate. The troops, upon their arrival there, were huddled together in great confusion, the entire army being collected within a space of about three miles along the river. No orders were given the first day for occupying the heights which commanded the position, nor were the troops so placed as to be able to resist an attack in force by the enemy; and nothing but a heavy rain, thereby preventing the enemy from bringing up their artillery, saved the army there from destruction. The enemy did succeed in bringing up some of their artillery, and threw some shells into the camp, before any preparations for defense had been made. On the 3d of July the heights were taken possession of by our troops, and works of defense commenced, and then, and not until then, was our army secure in that position.

General Casey testified before the same committee as follows:

* Report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War, Part I, page 171.

The enemy had come down with some artillery upon our army massed together on the river, the heights commanding the position not being in our possession. Had the enemy come down and taken possession of those heights with a force of twenty or thirty thousand men, they would, in my opinion, have taken the whole of our army, except that small portion of it that might have got off on the transports. I felt very much alarmed for the army until we had got possession of those heights and fortified them. After that it was a strong position.

The firing of the little howitzer was a mistake. Every effort should have been made to hasten the march of the infantry and the field-artillery; and in the meantime only a squadron or two of cavalry for the purpose of observation should have occupied Evington Heights. General Stuart retired from the heights at 2 P.M., and some of Longstreet's divisions came up late that evening. The testimony is abundant to prove the fact that no attempt was made by the enemy to take possession of Evington Heights until after their camp had been fired upon by the horse-artillery. Only a few hours more and the infantry, with field-batteries, would have been up, and would have made sure of the plateau commanding the position held by the enemy. This, however, is rather a narrative of facts than a lament; and the reader will be left to draw his own inferences and make his own conjectures of what might have been, taking the cue from the testimony of General Casey given above.

The retreat of General McClellan's army to Malvern Hill was admirably conducted. There appears to have been considerable demoralization after that.

In considering the causes that contributed to prevent a more complete victory to the army under General Lee, after all that has been said, we cannot emphasize too strongly the fact that more was not accomplished be-

cause of the character and personality of the men behind the guns on the Federal side. The army under General McClellan was made up largely of the flower of the manhood of the Northern and Eastern States, and his lieutenants were men and soldiers of a very high type. The system of bounties and substitutes that subsequently prevailed in the recruiting of the ranks of the Federals had not then begun to operate, and under the generally acknowledged and remarkable administrative powers of General McClellan his army had been raised to the highest degree of efficiency. Nothing less than an army of the finest material, most excellently officered, could have so well resisted the terrible blows delivered by the Confederates under General Lee.

General Lee in his report says:

Under ordinary circumstances, the Federal army should have been destroyed. Its escape was due to the causes already stated. Prominent among these is the want of correct and timely information. This fact, attributable chiefly to the character of the country, enabled General McClellan skilfully to conceal his retreat, and to add much to the obstructions with which nature had beset the way of our pursuing columns; but regret that more was not accomplished gives way to gratitude to the Sovereign Ruler of the universe for the results achieved. The siege of Richmond was raised, and the object of a campaign, which had been prosecuted after months of preparation at an enormous expenditure of men and money, completely frustrated. More than ten thousand prisoners, including officers of rank, fifty-two pieces of artillery, and upward of thirty-five thousand stands of small arms were captured. The stores and supplies of every description which fell into our hands were great in amount and volume, but small in comparison with those destroyed by the enemy.

CHAPTER IX

GENERAL LEE MANEUVERS TO DRAW GENERAL MCCLELLAN AWAY FROM RICHMOND

THE army under General McClellan had been defeated, but it was still a formidable force. In his testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War, the Federal commander gave the strength of his army at Harrison's Landing as between eighty-five and ninety thousand men. The position occupied by it could not be assailed with any promise of success. Its proximity to the Confederate capital, its practically unassailable position, its ability to cross the river without opposition and move upon Richmond from the south side, combined to make the situation one of profound solicitude, and called for the exercise of prompt and heroic measures on the part of the Confederate commander.

Quietly to assume the defensive and thus afford General McClellan the time and opportunity that he desired to recruit and strengthen his shattered divisions, and to swell his army to its original strength by the addition of heavy reinforcements, of which he had been positively assured by the Federal authorities, would be equivalent to a surrender of all the advantages resulting to the Confederates from their dearly bought victories in the Seven Days' Battles, and would again reduce the city of Richmond to a state of siege.

It was necessary to devise some plan of campaign that