

ence of which — important as is the part they have in the lives of so many of the ornaments of polite society — it is the custom of society to ignore. This quartette repaired finally to a gaming establishment, discreetly kept, and provided with every convenience and luxury, and sat down to play.

Before daylight the heir of the Eureka Tool Works of Kingboltsville had squandered a sum which increased his reputation for extravagance even in quarters where large figures were no novelty. He awoke in his apartment late in the afternoon, that day, instead of at nine in the morning. There came

to him almost at once, as an unwelcome thought, the engagement in which he had involved himself, to drive a load of guests on his drag up to Sprowle Onderdonk's garden party on the morrow. He devoted some reflection to a means to get out of it, but none occurred as feasible.

No, he said. He would appear before Angelica at the *fête* — given to celebrate her coming nuptials though it were — with a proud and contemptuous demeanor, which should make it plain to her that she was by no means the cause of the agitation in his breast she might fancy.

William Henry Bishop.

THE LAST CHANCE OF THE CONFEDERACY.

ON the morning of the 19th of March, 1865, the little group of ragged wall-tents which formed the imposing headquarters of the Fourteenth Army Corps was pitched on a sloping hill-side about thirty or forty miles south of Raleigh, North Carolina, and about twenty-five miles east of Fayetteville, or nearly midway between that place and Goldsboro, toward which point General Sherman's army was moving.

The early spring morning was soft and balmy, and the trees were covered with such delicate verdure as our latitude shows more than two months later. Fruit trees were in full bloom around Underhill's farm-house, not far off, and here and there along the roadside. It was about five o'clock, and the reveille had been sounded in the camps of one regiment after another, in the woods and fields around; and now, as it was Sunday morning, the familiar strains of Old Hundred floated up to our ears from a brigade band hidden in the little valley of Mill Creek, below us. Never before, perhaps, had the sweet notes of the

grand old hymn sounded sweeter than they did in the stillness of that bright spring morning; and to weary soldiers, as they stopped to listen, they brought thoughts of quiet homes and of country churches and friends far away. Some of those who heard it then never heard it again; for, like many a Sunday in the army, that day, which opened so calmly and beautifully, was to be a day of battle and of death.

Six weeks before, General Sherman's army had started from Savannah; and it had ever since been toiling through mud and rain across the States of South and North Carolina. The inhospitable rains of the South had poured down incessantly, and unfriendly mud had met us in every road. Layer after layer of corduroy had disappeared in the ooze, as each hundred of our heavy wagons passed over them. The streams, faithful to their States, had risen into torrents, and swept away our pontoon bridges. Supplies were few, and shoes and hats and coats had been worn out and lost. The pride and pomp and cir-

cumstance of glorious war had disappeared, and the whole command was ragged and tattered. Here a Confederate coat and there a Confederate hat did duty on a Federal back and head, while many a valiant Union warrior went hatless and shoeless. But a hardier and knottier lot of men never carried musket or helped a wagon out of the mire. Years of hardship and exposure and fighting had sifted out the weak and the sickly, and nothing but the toughest material was left. The deeper the mud and the harder the march, the jollier they were; and a heavier rain pouring down on them as they went into camp, or a wetter swamp than usual to lie down in, only brought out a louder volley of jokes. An army of military Mark Tapleys, they strode onward, uncomplaining and jolly under the most difficult circumstances possible.

We had rested a day at Fayetteville, and had destroyed the beautiful United States arsenal there, so that it might never again fall into hostile hands. A day or two later, a part of the Twentieth Corps, supported by the Fourteenth, had had a sharp engagement with the enemy, under Hardee, at Averysboro, and had chased him northward toward Raleigh. After this affair and Hardee's retreat, General Sherman made his dispositions for an easy though rapid march to Goldsboro, — "supposing," as he says in his Memoirs, "all danger was over." In his report of the campaign, he says, "All signs induced me to believe that the enemy would make no farther opposition to our progress, and *would not attempt to strike us in the flank while in motion.* I therefore directed," etc. These directions provided for a rapid march of his army toward Goldsboro, over the best parallel roads available, without reference to a menacing enemy.

For once, General Sherman had reckoned without his host, and that host was Joseph E. Johnston, whose hospitalities

General Sherman had known and respected the year before, in all the long campaign from Chattanooga to Atlanta. The Confederate president had but recently recalled General Johnston from undeserved retirement and placed him in command of all the Confederate troops in that region, with instructions to "concentrate all available forces, and drive back Sherman." It is difficult to ascertain exactly what those forces were, but from Johnston's own Narrative they must have numbered between twenty-five and forty thousand men. The event proved that when General Sherman supposed "all danger was over," these forces had been, unknown to him, well concentrated on his left flank and front, and within striking distance. Once more these two foemen, well worthy of each other's steel, were to try conclusions; and this time with the odds largely in favor of the Confederate chieftain.

General Sherman's army consisted of between fifty-seven and fifty-eight thousand men, not seventy thousand, as General Johnston states in his Narrative. On the morning of the 19th of March, this force was situated as follows: two divisions of the Fourteenth Army Corps, numbering a little over eight thousand men, and constituting the advance of the left wing, were at the point named at the opening of our narrative, on the direct road from Averysboro to Goldsboro. Two divisions of the Twentieth Corps, also about eight thousand men, had encamped eight miles in the rear of the advance divisions on the same road, — a terrible stretch of almost impassable mire lying between the two commands. The two remaining divisions of these corps were escorting and guarding the supply trains, some miles further to the south and rear. The right wing of the army was similarly scattered on roads lying five to ten miles south of the road on which the left wing was advancing.

General Sherman had himself been marching for several days with the left

and exposed wing, and on the night of the 18th his headquarters, as well as those of General Slocum, who commanded the left wing, had been pitched within the lines of the Fourteenth Army Corps. On the morning of the 19th, he had determined to ride southward to the right wing, composed of the Fifteenth and Seventeenth corps, and push them on rapidly in advance to Goldsboro. He did not leave, however, until after the leading division had moved out; and at perhaps half past seven o'clock he and General Slocum, with General Jefferson C. Davis, commanding the Fourteenth Army Corps, sat together upon their horses, at the crossroads, listening to the signs of opposition which already came up from the front. Something impressed the soldierly instinct of General Davis with the belief that he was likely to encounter more than the usual cavalry opposition, and he said as much to General Sherman. The latter, after listening attentively a moment or two, replied, in his usual brisk, nervous, and positive way, "No, Jeff; there is nothing there but Dibbrell's cavalry. Brush them out of the way. Good-morning. I'll meet you to-morrow morning at Cox's Bridge." And away he rode, with his slender staff, to join Howard and the right wing. It proved that three days yet lay between us and Cox's Bridge. But to go back.

When the strains of Old Hundred had ceased, and the men had had their accustomed breakfast of coffee and hard-tack, varied here and there with a piece of cold chicken or ham, or a baked sweet potato, foraged from the country, the regiments of the first division — General W. P. Carlin's — of the Fourteenth Corps filed out upon the road, and began the advance. This was about seven o'clock. For the first time almost in weeks, the sun was shining, and there was promise of a beautiful day; and the men strode on vigorously and cheerily.

They found in their front, as they always did, the enemy's cavalry, watching their movements and opposing their advance. But there was of course "nothing but cavalry," and the men pressed on, light-hearted, anticipating the rest they should have at Goldsboro, and then the last march toward Richmond and home. But the cavalry in front were stubborn. They did not yield a foot of ground before it was wrested from them. They were inclined to fight; and the old expression of the Atlanta campaign was brought out for use again: "They don't drive worth a damn." Even the organized parties of foragers, the historical "bummers" of Sherman's army, men who generally made short work of getting through a thin curtain of cavalry, when chickens and pigs and corn and sweet potatoes were on the other side, — even these renowned troopers fell back, dispirited, behind our skirmishers, and lined the roadsides.

At length the whole of the first brigade — General H. C. Hobart's — was deployed and pushed vigorously forward; but still the resistance of the enemy was determined and the advance slow. It began to be evident that they had some reason for this unusual opposition. Ten o'clock came, and we had gained but five miles. General Hobart was hotly engaged. The second brigade — Colonel George P. Buell's — was ordered to make a *détour* to the left, and take the enemy's line in the flank; but meanwhile our own right flank was becoming exposed to a similar fate, as the enemy overlapped us in that direction, and the third brigade — Lieutenant-Colonel Miles's — was deployed on the right of the first. Thus the whole of General Carlin's division was now deployed and in line of battle; yet everywhere it found the enemy in front strong and stubborn. The right and left of our line were ordered to advance and develop his strength. They did advance right gallantly, but they soon encountered a

strong line of infantry. This was pressed back several hundred yards, after severe fighting; and our men dashed, all unprepared, against a line of earth-works, manned with infantry and strengthened with artillery. The enemy opened upon them such a destructive fire that they were compelled to fall back, with severe loss. Many men and officers and two regimental commanders had fallen, and the whole line was severely shattered; but very important information had been gained. Observations and the reports of prisoners captured left little reason to doubt that General Johnston's whole army was in position in our immediate front, and the persistent fighting of the cavalry had been intended to give time for ample preparation.

It was now about half past one o'clock, and Generals Slocum and Davis were together in consultation, in the woods to the left of the road, when a deserter from the enemy was sent to them by General Carlin. He belonged to that class which had acquired the strange name of "galvanized Yankees." They were men who had been captured, and who, rather than endure the trials of prison life, had taken service in the rebel army. This man told a straight but startling story. It was to the effect that General Johnston's whole army, consisting of over thirty thousand men, had by night marches been concentrated in our immediate front, and was strongly entrenched. He said that General Johnston, accompanied by Generals Hardee and Cheatham and Hoke, had just ridden around among his troops, in the highest spirits, and that he had heard him address a portion of them, telling them that "at last the long-wished-for opportunity had occurred;" that they were "concentrated and in position, while General Sherman's army was scattered over miles of country, separated by almost impassable roads," and they "could now easily crush him in detail;" that a part of the Fourteenth

Army Corps was in their power, and they "would now take in those two light divisions out of the wet." He had been greeted with cheers and the highest enthusiasm by his men. At first this man's story — that of a double deserter — was doubted; but an officer of General Slocum's staff came up, and recognized him as a fellow townsman, and it was believed that he was telling the truth. Just then Colonel Litchfield, Inspector-General of the Fourteenth Corps, rode up with a confirmatory report. Colonel Litchfield was a competent and experienced officer, who had been superintending the extension of our line to the right, and when asked by General Slocum what he had seen, his reply was characteristically slow and emphatic: "Well, general, I find a great deal more than Dibbrell's cavalry: I find infantry entrenched along our whole front, *and enough of them to give us all the amusement we want for the rest of the day.*"

The news had come none too soon, for our little command was again preparing to attack. The first division — Carlin's — was all in line of battle, very much extended and attenuated. It had been deployed without reference to any such force as that which now confronted it; its position was weak, and its strength had been much impaired by the serious work it had already gone through. The second division — General J. D. Morgan's — had been deployed on the right of the first division, with two brigades in line and one in reserve; while one small brigade of the Twentieth Corps — Robinson's — had come up, and had been placed in an opening in Carlin's line. In other words, two divisions and a brigade, with a battery of artillery, — in all, less than ten thousand men, — were face to face with an overwhelming force of the enemy, who had chosen their own ground, strengthened it with field-works, and placed their artillery in position. Confident and prepared, they

awaited the order to advance, while we were deceived and surprised.

It was certain that they would lose no time, but attack at once and in overwhelming numbers. Up to this time General Slocum had shared the belief of General Sherman that the force in our front was inconsiderable. He was now thoroughly undeceived, and he went energetically to work to prepare for the most vigorous defensive fighting possible. Every precaution was taken, and the men all along our line were in the act of throwing up hasty field-works, when the attack came upon us like a whirlwind. I had gone to the rear, by direction of General Slocum, to order General Williams, commanding the Twentieth Corps, to push his troops to the front with all possible speed. I found him less than a mile to the rear, whither he had ridden far in advance of his troops. Receiving the order, he galloped back to his command, the greater part of which was still several miles to the rear and clogged in almost impassable roads, and I again started for the front, where the roar of musketry and artillery was now continuous. Almost immediately I met masses of men slowly and doggedly falling back along the road, and through the fields and open woods on the left of the road. They were retreating, and evidently with good cause; but there was nothing of the panic and rout so often seen on battle-fields earlier in the war. They were retreating, but they were not demoralized. Minie-balls were whizzing in every direction, although I was then far from the front line as I had left it only a short time before. Pushing on through these retreating men, and down the road, I met two pieces of artillery, — a section of the 19th Indiana battery, — and was dashing past it, when the lieutenant in command called out, "For Heaven's sake, don't go down there! I am the last man of the command. Everything is gone in front of you. The lieutenant

commanding my battery and most of the men and horses are killed, and four guns are captured. These two guns are all we have left."

Checking my horse, I saw the rebel regiments in front in full view, stretching through the fields to the left as far as the eye could reach, advancing rapidly, and firing as they came. Everything seemed hopeless on our centre and left; but in the swampy woods on the right of the road our line seemed still to be holding its position. An overwhelming force had struck Carlin's entire division and Robinson's brigade, and was driving them off the field. The onward sweep of the rebel lines was like the waves of the ocean, resistless. Nothing in Carlin's thin and attenuated line, decimated as it had already been, could stand before it. It had been placed in position on the theory of the morning, that it was driving back a division of cavalry; but in view of the fact that it was fighting an army, its position was utterly untenable. As it fell back, General Carlin himself, unwilling to leave the field, was cut off from his troops, and narrowly escaped death or capture. General Morgan's division, on the right, had also been heavily assailed; but it was better situated, and not being at this time outflanked, it held its position.

One of Morgan's brigades, — that of General Fearing, — being in reserve, had not been engaged. When the left first began to give way, General Davis sent Colonel Litchfield to Fearing, with instructions to hold his brigade in readiness to march in any direction. A few moments later, when the left was falling back, and the rebel line was sweeping after them in hot pursuit, General Davis came plunging through the swamp on his fiery white mare toward the reserve. "Where is that brigadé, Litchfield?" "Here it is, sir, ready to march." It was in column of regiments, faced to the front. Ordering it swung round to

the left, General Davis shouted, "Advance upon their flank, Fearing! Deploy as you go! Strike them wherever you find them! Give them the best you've got, and we'll whip them yet!" All this was uttered with an emphasis and fire known only upon the field of battle. The men caught up the closing words, and shouted back, "Hurrah for old Jeff! We'll whip 'em yet!" as they swung off through the woods at a rattling pace. Officers and men, from General Fearing down, were alike inspired with the spirit of their commander, and "We'll whip them yet!" might well be considered their battle-cry. They struck the successful enemy with resistless impetuosity, and were quickly engaged in a desperate conflict. Upon this movement, in all probability, turned the fortunes of the day. It was the right thing, done at the right time.

Seeing at once that, as Fearing advanced, his right flank must in turn become exposed, General Davis sent to General Slocum, begging for another brigade to move in upon Fearing's right and support him. Fortunately, Cogswell's fine brigade of the Twentieth Corps arrived not long after upon the field, and it was ordered to report to General Davis for that purpose. Not often does an officer, coming upon the field with tired troops (for his men had marched all the night previous), display the alacrity which General Cogswell showed, on receiving his orders from General Davis to move forward into that roaring abyss of musketry firing. It was splendidly done. The men of these two brigades — Fearing's and Cogswell's — seemed to divine that upon them had devolved the desperate honor of stemming the tide of defeat, and turning it into victory; and magnificently they responded. Finer spirit and enthusiasm could not be shown by troops; and it is no wonder that, after a fierce and bloody contest, the flushed and victorious troops of the enemy, thus

taken in the flank, gave way, and in their turn fell back in confusion. So stunned and bewildered were they by this sudden and unexpected attack that their whole line withdrew from all the ground they had gained, and apparently reëntered their works.

And now there was a lull along the whole front, which gave invaluable time for the re-formation of our shattered lines. It was late in the afternoon, and if the ground could be held until night-fall the right wing would undoubtedly be within supporting distance by the next morning at daylight. Rapidly the work of reorganization and re-formation was carried on. Morgan's line, on the right of the road, was still intact, and its left needed only to be slightly refused. Carlin's troops — veterans as they were, and used to all the vicissitudes of the battle-field — were easily rallied in a new line, considerably to the rear of their former position, with the left sharply refused, and supported by such troops of the Twentieth Corps, as had reached the front. The centre of the new line rested upon a slight elevation, with open fields in front, across which the enemy must advance to a second attack. Here several batteries of artillery were massed with a certainty of doing good service.

To the surprise of every one, a full hour was allowed by the enemy for these new dispositions; and it was about five o'clock before their long line was again seen emerging from the pine woods and swampy thickets in front, and sweeping across the open fields. As soon as they appeared, our artillery opened upon them with most destructive effect. Still they pressed gallantly on, but only to be met with a well-delivered fire from our infantry, securely posted behind hastily improvised field-works, such as our troops were then well skilled in throwing up in a very brief time, and of which they had dearly learned the value. Attack after attack was gal-

lantly met and repulsed, and the golden opportunity of the enemy upon our left was lost.

Meanwhile, the heat of the conflict was raging in front of and around Morgan's division, in the low swampy woods to the front and on the right of the road. This division had filed into position between one and two o'clock in the day, with two brigades — General John G. Mitchell's and General Vandervere's — in line of battle. When, a little later, the troops upon the left had been swept away, the third brigade, Fearing's, had been faced to the left, as we have seen, and, supported later by Coggs well, had made their gallant and effective charge upon the advancing enemy, checking him and forcing him back to his works. In this charge many had fallen, and the young and dashing brigadier, Fearing, had been severely wounded and disabled. Retiring from the field he left his brigade, shattered and still heavily pressed, to the command of a gallant officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Langley of the 125th Illinois. After their charge the brigades of Coggs well and Langley held position in a gap which existed between the divisions of Carlin and Morgan. But the gap was so large that those two decimated commands could but partially fill it.

Morgan's whole division was now stretched out over such an extent of ground that all his troops were in the front line, and he had no men left for a second line or a reserve. As all old troops were wont to do at that time, when in the presence of the enemy, they had at once fallen to to build such field-works as could be hastily thrown up with rails and light timber. As one of their officers expressed it, they had often attacked works, but they had rarely had the pleasure of fighting behind them themselves, and they rather enjoyed the prospect. They were there, and they meant to stay. Their skirmishers were heavily engaged from the time they took position, and they found the

enemy in front in force, and shielded by well-constructed works. They were fighting more or less severely until about half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, when the enemy attempted to carry their position by assault. The charge was desperate and persistent, and the roar of musketry, as it rolled up from that low wood, was incessant. For half an hour it continued, and the commander of the corps, General Davis, sat uneasily on his horse, a short distance in the rear, and listened to it. He could do nothing but let these men fight it out. Not a manœuvre could be made, and not a regiment could be sent to their assistance; even his escort and headquarters guard were in the line. Still that terrible and continuous roar came back through the woods, and the smoke obscured everything in front. No ground seemed to be yielded, and not a straggler could be seen.

After a while, a slight cessation was noticed in the firing; and by direction of General Davis, I rode forward toward the line to ascertain definitely how matters stood. The ground was swampy, and here and there were openings through the trees, while generally bushes and thickets obstructed the view. I had gone but a few rods, when I caught a glimpse through a vista, obliquely to the left, of a column of men moving to the right, straight across my path and directly in the rear of our line, though out of sight of it. They looked like rebels, and my sharp-sighted orderly, Batterson, said they were "rebs;" but the view was obscured by smoke, and the idea that the enemy could be in that position was preposterous. I hesitated but a moment, and pressed on. An hundred yards further through the bushes, and I broke out suddenly into a large, nearly circular, open space, containing perhaps half an acre. Here the view was not a cheerful one. On the opposite side of the opening, at perhaps twenty-five yards' distance, was a body

of unmistakably rebel troops, marching by the flank in column of fours, toward the right. Beyond the column, under a wide-spreading tree, dismounted, stood a group of Confederate officers, whose appearance and uniforms indicated high rank.

As I broke through the bushes, and my horse floundered in the mire, for the ground was very soft, I was greeted with cheers and shouts of "Come down off that horse, Yank!" Two or three years earlier, I should have quietly accepted the invitation; but we had all grown used to dangers, and preferred a little risk to the prospect of a Confederate prison. I gathered up my plunging horse, and struck my spurs vigorously into his sides, turning him sharply to the right and rear, just in time to become entangled with my orderly, who came through the bushes behind and on the right of me. Both horses went down together; and perhaps it is well they did, for just then my hilarious friends across the way, finding their summons not likely to be obeyed, sent a volley of minie-balls recklessly about our heads, and I saw the little twigs and leaves, which were cut off by the bullets, flutter down around us, as we, having extricated our horses, disappeared through the bushes. Neither man nor horse was hit. As usual, in their haste, our friends had fired high. I rode about a hundred yards to the right, and tried again to reach our line, but again encountered the enemy. This time I was more cautious, however. A third attempt, a little further to the right, carried me beyond their column.

In my ride I had met General Morgan. He was now thoroughly informed of his perilous situation. Mitchell's brigade had already discovered the intruders in their rear, who at first were thought by them to be reinforcements. At this time the division had successfully resisted the persistent attacks from the front, and General Vandervere's

brigade, leaping over their works, had pursued the retreating rebels into their own works again. In this pursuit the 14th Michigan regiment had captured the colors of the 40th North Carolina regiment. Fortunately, all was now quiet in front, and General Morgan quickly got his men to the reverse of their own works. In other words, they were now in front of their works, and prepared to sustain an attack from the rear. Hardee's corps, or a considerable part of it, had passed through the opening in the line on the left, and Hardee and his staff were the group of officers I had seen under the tree, superintending the movement, or so I was informed the next day by a captive Confederate captain.

The enemy attacked vigorously, but instead of taking Morgan by surprise, he found him ready. Again the struggle was sharp and bloody, but brief. Nothing could stand that day before the veterans of the old second division. Truly they were enjoying the novelty of fighting behind works. Hardee was repulsed, with severe loss. The men again leaped over their own works, and charged to the rear, taking many prisoners. The 14th Michigan captured the battle-flag of the 54th Virginia in the rear of their works, just as, a short time before, they had captured the North Carolina flag in front. An incident like this, where troops resist in quick succession attacks from front and rear, is exceptional in the annals of any battle; and yet it was repeated several times in the eventful history of Mitchell's and Vandervere's brigades that afternoon. Not once, but several times, between four and half past six o'clock, they scaled their works, and met and repelled the charges of the enemy from their rear. It is impossible to accord too high admiration to troops who, knowing themselves without connection or support on their right or left flanks, and overwhelmingly attacked in front and in rear, could preserve all their

steadiness and *morale*, and, fighting now in the rear and now in front of their own works, could successfully hold their position during several hours of almost continuous fighting. This, these two brigades had done. They had not lost a foot of ground, and had contributed their full share on that trying field to wrest victory from seemingly inevitable defeat. At length daylight faded, and gradually the firing along the whole line ceased. Never was coming darkness more welcome to wearied soldiers. Every one knew that before morning the troops of the right wing would have marched to our assistance, and that General Johnston's great effort was handsomely foiled.

Into what irregular and detached positions the troops upon the field had been thrown by the desperate wrestle of the afternoon is shown by one dramatic incident, which occurred soon after night-fall. General Mitchell, tired and worn out, had borrowed a rubber blanket, and was just comfortably settled on the ground, when an officer came and waked him, saying, "Here is a staff officer with a message for you." He sat up, and was confronted by a bright young fellow, who said, "Colonel Hardee presents his compliments to you, and asks that you will apprise your line that he is forming in your front to charge the Yankee lines on your left." General Mitchell sprang to his feet, and asked him to repeat his message, which he did. The general inquired what Colonel Hardee it was; and was told Colonel Hardee of the 23d Georgia, commanding a brigade in Hoke's division. General Mitchell asked the young gentleman if he had had his supper, and being told that he had not, he was politely sent in charge of a staff officer to the officer in charge of the prisoners in the rear. General Mitchell then drew in his entire picket line, and gave orders that at the tap of a drum his whole line should fire one volley, and that the picket line should then re-

sume its position without further orders. By the time this was arranged the marching and even the talking of the Confederate line in front could be distinctly heard. One loud tap was given on a bass drum, and one volley was fired low; and General Mitchell says, "I never expect to hear again such a volume of mingled cries, groans, screams, and curses. The next morning there was displayed in front of our works, among the dead, a line of new Enfield rifles and knapsacks, almost as straight as if laid out for a Sunday morning inspection. When we reached Raleigh, a week or two later, some of my officers went to see Colonel Hardee, who was there in hospital, wounded. He told them that his men had been in the fortifications in and around Wilmington during the whole war; that they had never before been in battle, and had not participated in this fight during the day. They were brought out for this night attack, and were determined to go right over the Yankee lines; and, breathing fire, they had vowed to take no prisoners. But out of the stillness of that dark night came that tremendous volley right in their faces and flank. 'The fools'—these were Colonel Hardee's words—'thought they were discovered and surrounded. They ran, and I have no doubt they are still running, for we have never been able to get ten of them together since their flight.'" No further attempt, it is needless to say, was made to disturb the Yankee lines during the night.

Considering the great disaster which was imminent, and which was averted, it is not too much to claim for this engagement that it was one of the most decisive of the lesser battles of the war. When Johnston, with skillful strategy, and with wonderful celerity and secrecy, massed his scattered troops near the little hamlet of Bentonville, and placed them, unknown to his great adversary, in a strong position directly across the road upon which two "light divisions,"

as he expressed it, were marching, he proposed to himself nothing less than to sweep these two divisions from the field, in the first furious onset; and then, hurrying on with flushed and victorious troops, to attack, in deep column and undeployed, the two divisions of the Twentieth Corps, which, through heavy and miry roads, would be hastening to the assistance of their comrades. These divisions he expected to crush easily, while General Sherman and the right wing were many miles from the field. Then, with half his army destroyed, with supplies exhausted, and far from any base, he believed General Sherman and his right wing only would no longer be a match for his elated and eager troops. Never before, in all the long struggle, had fortune and circumstance so united to favor him, and never before had hope shone so brightly. If Sherman's army were destroyed, the Confederacy would be inspired with new spirit, and ultimate success would be at last probable. Doubtless such dreams as these flitted through General Johnston's mind on that Sunday morning, when his well-laid plans seemed so sure of execution. With what a sad and heavy heart he turned at night from the hard-fought field, realizing that the last great opportunity was lost, we can only imagine. As the sun went down that night, it undoubtedly carried with it, in the mind of General Johnston, at least, the last hopes of the Southern Confederacy.

At night-fall of that eventful Sunday, General Sherman went into camp with the head of General Howard's column, at a distance of nearly twenty miles from the battle-field. At about eleven o'clock that morning, after the battle had commenced, General Slocum, then of the same opinion with General Sherman, had sent an officer to inform the general-in-chief that he had nothing in his front but a division of cavalry, and that he could easily take care of it. This confirmed General Sherman's view

of the matter; and in spite of the heavy and continuous firing which resounded during all the afternoon in the direction of Bentonsville, he continued his march.

But meanwhile many of the officers and men of the right wing listened with anxiety to the distant sounds of battle. The diary of an officer in General Howard's command gives ample evidence of this. He says, "For a time, the general [Howard] and most of the staff thought it was nothing more than a spirited cavalry engagement; but at the end of an hour, and as battery after battery went into position, and the heavy rumbling of the guns increased, all shook their heads, and it was the universal opinion that the left wing was heavily engaged." Again, "We were all satisfied that the artillery fire we heard indicated heavy battle." And again, "The engagement was evidently a long way off; nevertheless, we could distinctly hear the deep, heavy, sullen boom, boom, of the guns. We estimated their number at not less than seventy-five." And farther on, "All day long we have heard the heavy and continuous roar of artillery, which was indicative to us of a fierce and desperate struggle between the left wing and Johnston's army; and as hour after hour passed, and no word came, our anxiety increased." General Howard's notes of the day bear witness to the same uneasiness. But General Sherman rode on, and turned no head of column to the scene of conflict. His wonderfully acute military instinct, right at least nine times out of ten, so wonderfully sure and correct that he had learned to rely upon it as he would upon actual knowledge, had decided that there was nothing there but cavalry, and this decision had been reinforced by Slocum's later dispatch. His cavalry, under Kilpatrick, which should have been well informed of the movements of the enemy on his exposed flank, had given him no intelligence of their rapid movements and concentration, and

he rode on, confident that Johnston and his infantry were forty miles away, near Smithfield or Raleigh.

Late in the afternoon, General Slocum had sent Major Guindon with information of the true state of affairs. The great distance and the heavy roads had detained him, so that it was long after dark before he reached the general-in-chief at General Howard's headquarters. The diary of an officer who was present gives a graphic picture of his arrival: "At about half past nine, one of General Slocum's aids came up at a dashing pace, and, throwing himself from his horse, asked for General Sherman. We all gathered round, and listened attentively, as he told the particulars of the battle. The commander-in-chief would have made a good subject for Punch or Vanity Fair. He had been lying down in General Howard's tent, and hearing the inquiry for him, and being of course anxious to hear the news of the fight, he rushed out to the camp-fire without stopping to put on his clothes. He stood in a bed of ashes up to his ankles, chewing impatiently the stump of a cigar, with his hands clasped behind him, and with nothing on but a red flannel undershirt and a pair of drawers." No wonder the general-in-chief was thoughtless of appearances, for Major Guindon informed him that "the enemy had made four distinct assaults on our line, and been repulsed; but that just as he left they were coming again, and he feared we had lost the battle, as the enemy overlapped our troops on both flanks." Then, of course, there was hurrying to and fro, and mounting in hot haste; and the troops of the right wing spent most of the night retracing their steps, and marching with all possible speed to the rescue of their comrades. At daylight on the morning of the 20th the advance division — Hazen's — filed into position in support of their battle-tried comrades of the Fourteenth and Twentieth corps, and

never were fellow soldiers more heartily welcomed. The next two days were spent in manoeuvring, skirmishing, and fighting; but the history of those two days has been frequently given, and does not need repeating here. Johnston's only object then was to extricate his army from the very dangerous position which his failure to overwhelm the left wing on the 19th had left it in. He was now surrounded on three sides by Sherman's united army, and Mill Creek was in his rear. But General Sherman did not deem it wise to press him sharply, and Johnston once more showed that he was a consummate master of the difficult art of retreat. On the morning of the 22d he had safely recrossed Mill Creek, and we moved on to Goldsboro.

Why the great effort failed, it would perhaps be impossible to say. So well was the plan laid, and so completely was General Sherman deceived, that it would seem as if victory must have crowned the attempt. Probably the quick and decisive action of General Davis in hurling his one reserve brigade upon the flank of the enemy when in full tide of success was the chief factor in determining the result. But it must also be said that while this checked and paralyzed the enemy, and gained invaluable time, it could not have secured final success had it not been followed up by steady, plucky, persistent fighting on the part of the troops, such as has seldom, if ever, been excelled. The men would not acknowledge defeat. It is even rumored that while at one time the regimental commanders of one brigade were considering whether their duty to their men did not demand a surrender, their deliberations were cut short by the action of a gigantic sergeant-major, who sprang forward with a cheer, and called for a charge, which was successfully made, and the dilemma was ended. It is probable, too, that Johnston's long practice in defensive fighting unfitted him for the confident and persistent dash

which was necessary, at the critical moment, to secure success, while a lack of confidence in the steadiness of troops hastily gathered together, and consequently without perfect organization, must also have embarrassed him.

The history of the first day's fight at Bentonville has been, till now, an untold story; nowhere, so far as I know, can be found in the histories of the war any adequate account of it, and General Sherman's *Memoirs* make little more than an allusion to it, while two or three pages of his book are mainly occupied with the accounts of the operations of the next two days, when he had come up with the rest of the army. In the battle of the first day, out of ten thousand men actually engaged on our side, we lost during the afternoon 1200; and General Johnston, in his narrative, admits a loss on his side of 1915. In all the fighting of the next two days, we lost in our whole army a little over 400 men; and Johnston states his loss at 428. These figures easily show when the severe fighting was done.

It is natural that the men who fought the battle of the first day, and were proud of doing, as they supposed, something toward saving their great leader and his great army from defeat, should have wondered that so little is known about Bentonville. Many an old soldier who was in that leaden rain and iron hail, and who perhaps carries with him a memento of it in a shattered limb or the recollection of a dead comrade, has smiled grimly as he has read General Sherman's scanty reference to it. If he was in Fearing's, or Cogswell's, or Mitchell's, or Vandervere's brigade, he may have looked back to Chickamauga, and to twenty pitched battles besides, and may still have thought that in none of them had he had a hand in such stubborn work as that at Bentonville. And then he has been doubly amused as he has read in the *Memoirs* this sentence:

"I doubt if, after the first attack on Carlin's division, the fighting was as desperate as described in Johnston's narrative." He has probably thought that his old chief, whom he deeply loved and respected, could have learned all about that by asking some one nearer home than General Johnston, and he has felt like rising to a personal explanation, and a statement such as I have here attempted. It is due to the gallant troops who so heroically did their duty in that deadly breach, and to the commanding officers, — to Henry W. Slocum, to Jefferson C. Davis, to Morgan and Carlin, and their brigade commanders, — whose cool judgment and quick intelligence aided to conduct the fight to so fortunate an end, that the truth about the battle of Bentonville, as about all other battles, should be told.

The reputation of the general commanding-in-chief is of such strong and stalwart stuff that he can easily afford it. There may be men who would not have made the mistake at Bentonville; but they are men who could not have made that masterly five months' campaign, when every hour brought its skirmish, every day its fight, and every week its battle, which secured the fall of Atlanta. Nor could they have planned and executed that great march, without example or precedent, which in its demoralizing effects crumbled the rebellion in the minds of its stanchest upholders, and showed them that its end was near. History may admit, and will admit, that there was an error and a narrow escape at Bentonville in the great game played between Sherman and Johnston; and yet she will find remaining enough of brilliancy and genius in the many masterly moves and combinations of General William T. Sherman throughout the struggle to lift him into the front rank of great captains, and enough to dwarf most of the military reputations of modern history.

Alexander C. McClurg.

WILLIAM RUFUS.

Few of us feel much interest in the reign of the fierce and vicious son of the Norman conqueror of England. We remember his strange death by the arrow of Walter Tyrrel, in that New Forest which he had made ready for his pleasure at the cost of so many ruined homesteads. We know that he was hated in life and abandoned in death, and we turn to some brighter theme. And yet to any one who cares to study the origin of our institutions, his reign is full of interest; for in it that feudal system was formed under which England was governed for centuries. The Red King made no written code, but he shaped the nation. Mr. Freeman¹ makes this important period more real to us than ever before. We feel now that we know the man, with all his strange ability and shocking vice. The general effect is no more striking than the picture of him in the Norman Conquest, but here we have the details before us from which to make up our own opinion; and that opinion is somewhat more favorable to the political genius of William Rufus than Mr. Freeman is ready to grant.

There was no courtly dignity about the Red King. In bodily form he resembled his father. "He was a man of no great stature, of a thick, square frame, with a projecting stomach. His bodily strength was great. His speech was stammering, especially when he was stirred to anger. He lacked the power of speech which had belonged to his father, and had descended to his elder brother; his pent-up wrath or merri-ment, or whatever the momentary passion might be, broke out in short, sharp sentences, often showing some readiness of wit, but no continued flow of speech.

He had the yellow hair of his race, and the ruddiness of his countenance gave him the surname which has stuck to him so closely." His character was a curious compound of savage impulse and sound judgment, of foxy cunning and profound statesmanship, of bravery and cruelty, of falseness and chivalry, of filial reverence and contempt for everything that man holds dear. He united the political genius of his race with its vices in their most detestable shape. Passionate and vicious were all his house, but in him excesses took a form so hideously repulsive that even his callous contemporaries shrank from him. It is hard for a modern writer fairly to weigh virtues against such a frightful accompaniment of crime; the work of Rufus is the harder to judge because he avoided new legislation, and one can judge his course only by comparing the English kingdom which he left to Henry with that which he had received from his father, the Conqueror. During the dozen years thus spanned a novel system of government arose. A form of feudalism, not only new to England, but unknown anywhere else, had been created, without the approval of the people, and against the vehement opposition of the nobility and the church; a system which held its own for hundreds of years, until a new form of civilization grew up, in which the old organization was no longer necessary.

One of the most marked characteristics of the English people was their determined opposition to any new burden. They never asked for a new reform. The freedom of their forefathers was ever their demand. The main stress of the anger which the new institutions of the Red King aroused naturally fell upon

¹ *The Reign of William Rufus and the Accession of Henry the First.* By EDWARD A. FREEMAN. VOL. I. — NO. 299.

MAN. Two volumes. Oxford: The Clarendon Press. 1882.