

under him, says that at Cashtown an order came from General Lee requiring a cavalry force to be sent to Fairfield, and that in the *absence of General Robertson* he determined to move in that direction at once, and that near there he encountered and routed the 6th United States Regulars. There was only *one* regiment of Federal cavalry there, which thus neutralized two Confederate brigades with two batteries of artillery. If all of our cavalry had been at the front, Meade could not have spared even this one regiment to send after Lee's trains; it would have been all he could do to take care of his own. In the skirmish at Fairfield on July 3d was the first time Robertson's command had seen the enemy since it disappeared from his front at Middleburg, Va., early on the morning of June 26th. Keeping eight days out of sight of the enemy was not exactly the way to carry out Stuart's order to *watch and harass him*. It was his leadership *preceding* the battle that I criticised. In modern war the most important service of cavalry is rendered before a battle begins. General Robertson says that it was at Martinsburg, and not at Ashby's Gap in the Blue Ridge, "*as Colonel Mosby insinuates*," that he received orders from General Lee to join the army. In December, 1877, a letter of his was published in the Philadelphia "Times," in which he justified his delay in Virginia, on the ground that his instructions required him "*to await further orders*," and stated that on June 29th, *at Ashby's Gap*, he received orders from General Lee to join the army, and started forthwith. He fortified this statement by certificates of two members of his staff. The instructions which I recently found among the Confederate archives direct him to hold the mountain gaps "as long as the enemy remains in your [his] front in force." He staid there *three* days after they had gone into Pennsylvania, and now makes no explanation of the delay, but raises an immaterial issue about the skirmish at Fairfield, which simply proves that on the day of battle he was in the rear with the wagon trains. General Robertson says that he gave satisfaction to General Lee. Now, that General Lee was dissatisfied with some one is shown by his report in which he complains that "the movement of the army *preceding* the battle of Gettysburg had been much embarrassed by the absence of the cavalry." I have elsewhere shown that this censure can only apply to the commander of the cavalry who was left with him to observe the enemy. As soon as the army returned to Virginia, General Robertson, at his own request, was relieved of command. No argument in favor of acquittal can be drawn from the leniency that was shown in this case. There was but little of the stern Agamemnon in the character of General Lee.

Jno. S. Mosby.

SAN FRANCISCO, August 24th, 1887.

An Anecdote of the Petersburg Crater.

I WAS in Virginia in 1864, and the paragraph in General Grant's Vicksburg paper describing the mine explosion and the frightened negro who was lifted "bout t'ree mile" brings to my mind the mining of the Confederate works before Petersburg in the summer of 1864. Among the prisoners captured was one whose face was greatly begrimed, and as he marched by he was saluted by a blue-coat with the remark, "Say, John-

ny! guess you got blown up." "Well," replied Johnny with an oath, "I should just say so; but somehow I got the start of the other fellows, for when I was coming down I met the regiment going up, and they all called me a blasted straggler!"

Henry R. Howland.

BUFFALO, September 7th, 1885.

Ransom's Division at Fredericksburg.

IN the August, 1886, number of THE CENTURY General James Longstreet published what he "saw of the battle of Fredericksburg, Va., December 13th, 1862."

The omissions in that article were so glaring and did such injustice, that I wrote to him and requested him to correct what would produce false impressions. His answer was unsatisfactory, but promised that, "I [Longstreet] expect in the near future to make accounts of all battles and put them in shape, in a form not limited by words, but with full details, when there will be opportunity to elaborate upon all points of interest."

General Lee, in his report of the battle of Fredericksburg, December 13th, 1862, writes as follows:

... "Longstreet's corps constituted our left, with Anderson's division resting upon the river, and those of McLaws, Pickett, and Hood extending to the right in the order named. Ransom's division supported the batteries on Marye's and Willis's hills, at the foot of which Cobb's brigade of McLaws's division and the 24th North Carolina of Ransom's brigade were stationed, protected by a stone wall. *The immediate care of this point was committed to General Ransom.*"

The italics in this paper are all mine. The positions are stated by General Lee exactly as the troops were posted. Lee's report continues, farther on:

... "About 11 A. M., having massed his [the enemy's] troops under cover of the houses of Fredericksburg, he moved forward in strong columns, to seize Marye's and Willis's hills. General Ransom advanced Cooke's brigade to the top of the hill, and placed his own, with the exception of the 24th North Carolina, a short distance in rear." ... "In the *third* assault" [his report continues] "the brave and lamented Brigadier-General Thomas R. Cobb fell at the head of his gallant troops, and almost at the same moment Brigadier-General Cooke was borne from the field severely wounded. Fearing that Cobb's brigade might exhaust its ammunition, General Longstreet had directed General Kershaw to take two regiments to its support. Arriving after the fall of Cobb, he assumed command, his troops taking position on the crest and at the foot of the hill, to *which point General Ransom also advanced three other regiments.*"

General Kershaw took command of Cobb's brigade, which I had had supplied with ammunition from my wagons, and I repeated the supply during the day.

General Longstreet in his official report says:

... "General Ransom on Marye's Hill was charged with the *immediate care of the point attacked*, with orders to send forward additional reinforcements, if it should become necessary, and to use Featherston's brigade of Anderson's division, if he should require it." And continuing, "I directed Major-General Pickett to send me two of his brigades: *one, Kemper's, was sent to General Ransom to be placed in some secure position to be ready in case it should be wanted.*" And again, "I would also mention, as particularly distinguished in the engagement of the 13th, Brigadier-Generals Ransom, Kershaw, and Cooke (severely wounded)."

General McLaws was not upon the part of the field in the vicinity of Marye's and Willis's hills during the

battle, but his aide, Captain King, was killed on the front slope of the hill near Marye's house.

My own permanent command was a small division of two brigades of infantry,—my own, containing the 24th, 25th, 35th, and 49th; and Cooke's, the 15th, 27th, 46th, and 48th regiments,—all from North Carolina; and attached to my brigade was Branch's battery, and to Cooke's brigade the battery of Cooper.

At the time the fog began to lift from the field, I was with Generals Lee and Longstreet, on what has since been known as Lee's Hill. Starting to join my command as the Federals began to emerge from the town, General Longstreet said to me, "Remember, general, I place that salient in your keeping. Do what is needed; and call on Anderson if you want help."

I brought up Cooke before the first assault to the crest of the hills, and before that assault ended, Cooke took the 27th and 46th and part of the 15th North Carolina into the sunken road in front. The 48th North Carolina fought on top of the hill all day.

At the third assault I brought up the 25th North Carolina just in time to deliver a few deadly volleys, and then it "took position shoulder to shoulder with Cobb's and Cooke's men in the road."

During this third attack General Cobb was mortally hit, and almost at the same instant, and within two paces of him, General Cooke was severely wounded and borne from the field, Colonel E. D. Hall, 46th North Carolina, assuming command of Cooke's brigade.

At this juncture I sent my adjutant-general, Captain Thomas Rowland, to the sunken road to learn the condition of affairs. "His report was most gratifying, representing the troops in fine spirits and an abundance of ammunition. I had ordered Cobb's brigade supplied from my wagons."

After this third attack I was bringing up the 35th and 49th North Carolina of my brigade, when General Kershaw, by a new road leading from the mill below, came up on horseback with his staff at the head of *one regiment*, which he took in just at Marye's house. He was followed by a second regiment, which halted behind a brick-walled graveyard upon Willis's Hill.

About sundown Brigadier-General Kemper was brought up, and relieved the 24th North Carolina with two of his regiments and held the others in closer supporting distance. On the 20th of December, 1862, he sent me a list of his casualties, with this note:

"HEADQUARTERS KEMPER'S BRIGADE,
December 20th, 1862.

"GENERAL: I inclose herewith the statement of the losses of my brigade on the 13th and 14th insts. while acting as part of your command. While a report of my losses has been called for by my permanent division commander, and rendered to him, it has occurred to me that a similar one rendered to yourself would be proper and acceptable. Permit me to add, general, that our brief service with you was deeply gratifying to myself and to my entire command. I have the honor to be, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant.

"J. L. KEMPER, BRIGADIER-GENERAL.
"BRIG.-GEN. RANSOM, COMMANDING DIVISION."

As stated in my letter to General Longstreet dated August 14th, 1886, when I brought to his attention his extraordinary omissions, it gave me unfeigned pleasure to mention properly in my official report the meritorious conduct of those who were a part of my permanent command and those others who that day fell under my direction by reason of my "*immediate care of the point attacked.*" My official report exhibits no self-seeking nor partial discriminations.

Upon a letter from me (of the 17th of December, 1862) to General R. H. Chilton, assistant adjutant-general Army of Northern Virginia, wherein I protest against the ignoring of my command in some telegraphic dispatches to the War Department at Richmond relative to the battle of the 13th, General Longstreet indorses these words: "*General Ransom's division was engaged throughout the battle and was quite as distinguished as any troops upon the field*"; and the same day, the 19th of December, I received from both him and General Chilton notes expressing the regret felt by General Lee at the injustice of which I complained. Those original letters are now among the "Official Records" in Washington.

I may be pardoned for remembering with pride that among the Confederate troops engaged on the *whole* battle-field of Fredericksburg, Va., December 13th, 1862, none were more honorably distinguished than the sons of North Carolina, and those of them who with brother soldiers from other States held the lines at Marye's Hill against almost ten times their number of as brave and determined foes as ever did battle can well trust their fame to history when written from truthful official records.*

R. Ransom.

* When credit is not given for quotations, they are from my official report of the battle.—R. R.



THE BAGGAGE GUARD.