

AN ENGLISH VIEW OF THE CIVIL WAR.

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THE *Century* Company has, in my judgment, done a great service to the soldiers of all armies by the publication of these records of the great War* in the United States. The first volume of the republication has just reached me, and I propose in the following pages to restrict my comments to that part of the history embraced within the seven hundred-odd pages it contains.

The story of the War, as told by the several actors in it, has not, in this volume, reached the date at which I personally paid a visit to one of the contending armies. I can only, therefore, comment on the evidence supplied to us, as a deeply interested student of the mighty struggle. The characteristic features of this part of the history are very unlike those of the later campaigns. The attention of soldiers in Europe has been so much directed to the long series of campaigns that were fought over the ground between Washington and Richmond, that we are prone to regard them as representing the character of the War throughout. The elaborately-prepared defensive positions of the later campaigns, and the sharp counter-strokes with which Lee, using Stonewall Jackson as his right arm, met the continued and systematic process of attrition applied by the Northern generals, have hardly their counterpart in this earlier period of the War. Nor do those far-reaching raids of mounted men on either side, which afterwards gave such a distinctive character to the War, appear to have yet made themselves felt.

The stately figure of Robert Lee, as yet, remains in the background. It is, however, excessively interesting to get clearer views than we have hitherto had of the circumstances under which Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Jackson, and others first made their appearance in this great struggle. The story of the first battle of Bull Run, and of Shiloh, are each told here with much cir-

* " Battles and Leaders of the Civil War " (The *Century* War Book).

cumstantial detail that supplies most valuable corrections to what we knew of them before. The stories of the capture of Fort Henry and of Fort Donelson have a very different aspect, now that we are able to judge of them from both sides and from many points of view. To English soldiers, all the minor circumstances of the gathering of the Northern and Southern forces have a special interest, as they enable us to realize in a new way the analogous incidents which must have attended the beginning of the war between King and Parliament in Charles I.'s time. The uncertainty as to which side men would take, the acts of vigorous, personal individuality, like those of Captain Lyon in Missouri, were common to both epochs. The trains with recruits for both sides, passing one another almost amicably on the same American railroad, with other kindred incidents, are all just of such a kind as must have happened in England, when men rallied to the standards of Rupert and of Cromwell. In the later instance, however, they were strangely affected in their form by all the elaborations of modern civilization and by the vastness of the theatre of war,—an area in which our whole island would be lost.

It is with the deepest regret that I feel obliged, at this early part of my review of the War, to call in question the fitness of Mr. Jefferson Davis for the high position he occupied. A man weighed down with years, with misfortunes, and, above all, with sad memories of a lost cause, and, I presume, the conviction that he was a failure, appeals to our pity rather than invites our censure. Like all the great actors on both sides, he was, I am sure, influenced in the course he took by the highest motives. He sincerely believed in the justice of the cause he espoused, and he brought to the service of his country an honesty of purpose, a fervid patriotism, an ability of no mean order, a zeal, and a persistent determination which all will admit he possessed. But that he was a third-rate man, and a most unfortunate selection for the office of President, I cannot conceal from myself. The great misfortunes of public servants who have utterly failed in the one great public venture of their lives must not be allowed to silence the voice of censure, much less of criticism. In dealing with private individuals we can afford to indulge our amiable feelings for misfortune. What we owe to historical truth and to the teaching of future generations forbids us, however, to deal similarly with men who have filled high positions. I note it here as

a curious and, in my opinion, a regrettable fact, that in this, the first volume of "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," there is no picture of the President of the Confederate States, although there are likenesses of many much less important men on both sides in this great struggle. The tremendous indictment against his capacity, which is drawn by Mr. R. Barnwell Rhett, so strongly supports my views regarding him that I regret very much that no answer to it has been printed side by side with it, in accordance with the impartial method of "The Century War Series." What reasonable answer could be made to it? If the Northern troops had then really known how he unwittingly worked for them, would they have wished to "hang Jeff. Davis to a sour-apple tree"?

It may be said that it was impossible for any one to foresee the dimensions to which the struggle would grow. But surely it is a statesman's business at least partially to gauge the strength of the forces with which he has to deal. The *soi-disant* statesman who began his high duties with the avowed expectation that 10,000 Enfield rifles would be sufficient to overawe the United States; who then refused the services of 366,000 men, the flower of the South, and accepted only a fraction of them, because he had not arms for more; the man who neglected to buy the East Indian fleet, which happy chance and the zeal of subordinates threw in his way; the ruler who could not see that the one vital necessity for the South was, at all sacrifice and at all hazard, to keep the ports open; who rejected all means proposed by others for placing the finances of the Confederacy on a sound basis,—that man, as I think, did more than any other individual on either side to save the Union. I have not attempted to make the charge against him as complete and crushing as it could easily be made by those who trusted him with almost unlimited powers in their behalf. Enough has been said to illustrate what, I think, is, on this point, the commonly accepted verdict of history.

It is the old, old story over again, of civil rulers who blunder, and, failing to foresee events, sacrifice everything to a momentary popularity, in order to divert popular wrath from themselves to the unfortunate soldiers who have been their victims. An illustration of my meaning is to be found in the pathetic story told in this volume of the gallant and high-minded Albert Sidney Johnston. Like Robert Lee, he hated the War, and had also refused

the highest military position in the United States Army, at the call of what he considered to be his duty to his State. Those who played the part of statesmen on the Southern side had left Johnston without resources. Despite all his efforts, and despite his zeal and great military ability, he was overwhelmed by the popular fury at a failure for which others had prepared the way, and where the action of his Government had rendered success well-nigh impossible. To do Mr. Davis justice, he no doubt, in this instance, did his best to support by words the soldier whom he had failed to support by deeds.

To pass to other matters: I am struck, throughout the whole story of the minor operations of this period, by the illustrations they afford of the regularity with which the old rules and principles of war assert their supremacy. The battle of Wilson's Creek, on August 10, 1861, and that of Pea Ridge, on March 7, 1862, are curiously alike in their military lessons. In both, the attempt was made to carry out distinctly separated movements by isolated parts of an attacking force, in order to strike upon the flanks or rear of a concentrated defensive force. Both attempts failed, as might have been predicted beforehand. No doubt Sigel's movement round the rear of Price at Wilson's Creek was a more hazardous, as well as a bolder, attempt than that of Price and McCulloch at Pea Ridge, so far as their separation on the field of battle was concerned. But McCulloch, at Pea Ridge, was completely disconnected from the attack made upon the Federal right by Price. The consequences in each battle followed in the same way. McCulloch, at Pea Ridge, and Sigel, at Wilson's Creek, each for the moment gained advantage from a surprised enemy; but when time had been given for the surprised to recover, there was in neither instance a supporting force sufficiently near at hand to meet the supports brought up by the enemy. The advantage gained at first was soon lost, and then the isolated force was crushed. The result was, in each instance, that the depending army was thus soon able to devote its whole strength to meet the remainder of the attack, and to crush that in its turn also. It is worthy of note that, in the general position taken up for the attack, Price had passed completely to the rear of the Federal position. It is clear that he sacrificed as much as he gained by so doing. The Federals were as directly on his line of communications as he on theirs.

I am much struck, in this intricate series of minor actions, by the terrible difficulty under which generals act who are in command of troops that cannot be employed solely to win victory, and to bring about peace by securing it. I refer to the necessity which the leaders on both sides had to yield to, of retaining often large forces for the defence of points of political, but of small military, importance, if of any at all. McCulloch, tied to the defence of the trans-Mississippi region, and especially to that of Arkansas, on the Indian territory, could not, perhaps would not, join with Price in any large military movement. Here, as always, the orders from the Civil Government at Richmond hampered the military movement of the Confederate leaders; otherwise it is clear that a far more effective mode of meeting the Federal advance could have been devised than that of passing round to their rear. The Federal forces, based on St. Louis, had advanced by way of Rolla, Lebanon, and Dug Spring to the Pea Ridge. (See map on page 263.) Van Dorn had his headquarters at Pocahontas. Price had fallen back before the Federal Army as it advanced. McCulloch was, at first, at Maysville. It is not very clear from any of the narratives how much force Van Dorn, who was in command of the whole, had gathered at Pocahontas; but, as he had been contemplating a movement on St. Louis, he must, at least, have collected a considerable quantity of stores at Pocahontas. It would seem that McCulloch might have been at once transferred to the eastern side of the White River, allowing Price to continue his retreat towards the same point. General Curtis, when he reached Pea Ridge with the Federal force, entered a most difficult country; and had Price gradually given him the slip, with a view to a junction with the other Confederate forces, it is clear that an advance northward, directly upon Rolla or Springfield, based on Pocahontas, would have obliged Curtis to abandon his invasion of Arkansas, and would have enabled Van Dorn to fight at far greater advantage than he actually did. The Federal line, even from Rolla to Sugar Creek, was two hundred and ten miles in length, and from St. Louis it was three hundred and twenty miles. It would have been exposed throughout that entire distance to such a stroke from Pocahontas.

I do not, however, say this as a criticism on the generals on either side. No one who has himself realized the practical diffi-

culties of command in the field is much tempted to any slap-dash criticism of those who are engaged in high command. The lesson which is most impressed upon me by a study of these campaigns is the danger there always is of popular irritability and ignorant impatience preventing a general from doing the very thing which would, if time were allowed, surely gain the ends which the people desire. If England were invaded, or threatened with invasion, the general in supreme command would be exposed to the same difficulty. People in Manchester would be uneasy because the Lancashire Volunteer Corps were drawn away from the defence of their own locality, for the purpose of crushing the enemy in the field elsewhere, by the united action of all our available military forces. It is for this reason that I hope the *Century's* admirable narrative of the Confederate War may be read attentively by the large numbers of educated volunteer officers whom we now have in England. Its campaigns are replete with instruction for all our auxiliary forces, as well as for our army.

In 1866, during the western campaign in Germany, very similar events repeated themselves. There, Vogel von Falkenstein, with a numerically very inferior force of Prussians, triumphed over the army opposed to him—an army made up of Hanoverians, Wurtembergers, Bavarians, and troops of various other minor states—because the officers commanding each contingent were hampered by their respective civil governments with orders which had their origin in a desire to keep each its own troops for the defence of its own particular state. Hence the absence of all unity of action, and the impossibility of concentration upon the decisive points. On the other hand, the Prussians triumphed because they were everywhere directed upon the decisive points against enemies whose several interests kept them from working heartily together. I dwell upon this because I have heard English politicians say that, in the event of danger here, we should have great difficulties with localities, which would cry out against having their volunteer corps removed for the defence of distant, though possibly most vital, points.

This great principle of strategy rules everywhere; and although I have every wish to do justice to the ability of General Albert Sidney Johnston, it is impossible to accept the reasons which his son advances for his having allowed General Curtis to attack Fort Donelson without moving to resist him, when he was, himself,

within supporting distance at Nashville. The statement that he was bound to remain at Nashville, because it was the objective point of the Federal campaign, is answered by the facts. He was immediately obliged to abandon Nashville and to fall back on Corinth, as soon as Donelson fell. As long as the point of Federal attack was uncertain, it would seem to have been quite permissible for him to divide his forces between Donelson and Nashville, each of which was of great importance. What appears to me certain is that the course which was pursued by the Confederate commanders, prior to the first Bull Run, would here have been the right one. Whilst Buell's advance on Nashville was delayed, and Grant's attack on Donelson was declared, it would have been well to demonstrate in advance of Nashville, so as to convey the impression of intended aggression from that point, just as in the early summer of 1861 General Joseph E. Johnston did against Patterson, before he moved to support Beauregard, then in position on Bull Run.

If a similar course had been followed in Kentucky and Tennessee in February, 1862, and a rapid movement made with all the troops which General Albert S. Johnston could have then collected to attack Grant before Fort Donelson, it is difficult to believe, considering what actually did happen there, that the Federal forces could have escaped decisive defeat. It is evident that the personal presence of General A. S. Johnston himself was badly needed at Fort Donelson, and the moral effect of his arrival there with fresh troops would have been enormous. Such a success would have greatly assisted Van Dorn's campaign, and if that campaign had been conducted in the way suggested, on the line from Pocahontas towards Rolla, the forces under Johnston and Van Dorn would have occupied a central position between Buell and Curtis, and might have struck with great advantage at either. That such a coöperation between Van Dorn and A. S. Johnston was not rendered impossible by any material obstacles, or by distance, is clear from the fact that, previous to Shiloh, Beauregard was looking for support from Van Dorn (page 574) on February 21, three days before Van Dorn started for the Pea Ridge campaign, and whilst Van Dorn was still at Pocahontas.

I shall not enter into the disputed claims of General Beauregard and of General A. S. Johnson to have conceived the scheme of the Shiloh campaign. Whoever conceived it, the advance to

attack Grant where he stood in position was in every respect a sound military operation.

It is curious to see how differently men regard operations in which they have been personally engaged and those in which they have had no special or direct interest. General Grant's own account of Shiloh leaves one the impression that he is conscious that his proceedings there were not militarily defensible. I hardly know of two commanders to whose sound military judgment I would more unhesitatingly commit the following proposition than Generals Grant and Sherman, supposing it were possible to do so, and that it could be put to them regarding an action in which they had not been personally concerned. I cannot do better than state the proposition in the terms, and in what seems to me the unanswerable criticism, of General Buell, given on page 487.

"An army comprising seventy regiments of infantry, twenty batteries of artillery, and a sufficiency of cavalry, lay for two weeks and more in isolated camps, with a river in its rear, and a hostile army, claimed to be superior in numbers, twenty miles distant in its front, while the commander made his headquarters and passed his nights nine miles away on the opposite side of the river. It had no line or order of battle, no defensive works of any sort, no outposts, properly speaking, to give warning, or check the advance of an enemy and no recognized head during the absence of the regular commander. On a Saturday the hostile force arrived and formed in order of battle, without detection or hindrance, within a mile and a half of the unguarded army, advanced upon it the next morning, penetrated its disconnected lines, assaulted its camps in front and flank, drove its disjointed members successively from position to position, capturing some and routing others, in spite of much heroic resistance, and steadily drew near the landing and depot of its supplies in the pocket between the river and an impassable creek."

Had not the commander of that assailed army positively invited defeat? Is there a syllable in that summary of the facts which does not accurately represent the incidents of the first day's fight at Shiloh?

It is hoped that no one will imagine for a moment that I wish to throw a stone at General Grant. We are all of us liable to human error. The greatest generals have made great, perhaps some of the greatest, mistakes ever made in war. The matter is looked at solely as a question of military study, and, looking so, it would not appear that General Buell's criticism, in the chapter called "Shiloh Reviewed," admits of any good answer. No satisfactory answer is, in my opinion, supplied to it by General Grant's statements on the battle of Shiloh. As a matter of fact, it would seem that Grant and Sherman before Shiloh, like Wellington and Blucher before Quatre Bras and Ligny, were contemplating an offensive, not a defensive, campaign. By coupling together these

names as I have done, I shall perhaps best show that I am not speaking with any disparagement of Grant or of Sherman.

In both instances alike, the error of taking for granted that an active and able enemy is restricted to one course of action, was severely punished. In both cases alike, it very narrowly missed being fatally punished. In no other way, with, perhaps, the reservation that Grant had not at that time acquired the experience he afterwards gained, can I explain the facts. Grant was avowedly waiting for the arrival of Buell's force to begin an offensive campaign with a united army. By means of his gunboats he had complete command of the passage of the Tennessee. Supposing that it was advisable to make the concentration in the neighborhood of Pittsburg Landing, clearly the right course would have been to cover that concentration by the river, and, therefore, to have retained the bulk of his forces concentrated on the east bank, awaiting Buell's arrival. If it were necessary, as perhaps it was, to secure Pittsburg Landing itself, as a means of debouching on the opposite bank, there could have been no objection, and probably would have been advantage, in having a small, strongly-intrenched position near that point, in the nature of a bridge-head, with its flanks thoroughly swept by the fire of the gunboats. Clearly, if, as General Grant says, the troops required discipline and drill more than work at intrenchments, it would have been easier and safer to impart both to them on the east bank of the river, away from the enemy, than on the west bank within his easy reach.

The accidents and mistakes which occurred in regard to the march of General Wallace's division were only such as continually occur when a change in the position of troops, that has not been previously arranged for and worked out beforehand, is suddenly ordered in any sudden exigency. As an admirable illustration of the kind of method that makes all the difference between success and failure in war, the student should carefully compare the arrangements made for the march of General Lew Wallace's division with the—on the surface—apparently very similar steps taken by Napoleon before Austerlitz, for the due arrival of Davoust's corps. Napoleon deliberately kept that corps away from Austerlitz till the actual day of battle, in a way that might, to a careless student, seem similar to that which left General Lew Wallace within a march of the field of Shiloh. The difference lay in this: Napoleon had been for weeks watching

closely the movements of the Allies, and had been endeavoring to tempt them to attack him, by not allowing the forces that he knew he could count on for the field of battle to be apparently within reach. Every detail for Davoust's march had been carefully thought out and prepared beforehand. He was destined to arrive on a part of the field where it was important to encourage the enemy to attack, where the enemy's advance must necessarily be slow, and where it was advisable to allow him to secure some temporary advantage. All this had been previously designed.

On the other hand, for days before Shiloh nothing was known of the movements of Johnston and Beauregard. No attack from them was either expected or prepared for. The direction of Lew Wallace's march depended on his correctly interpreting a single loosely-worded order. The very position of his three brigades seems to have been imperfectly known at Grant's headquarters, for the order of march was certainly not made in accordance with their actual position. Time and distance are elements of vital importance in all these matters. Altogether, the more one studies this first day's battle on the Federal side, the more clear it seems that the opportunity presented to the enemy for attack was as favorable as it well could have been. It is hardly necessary to insist upon the point so well made by General Buell in the passage I have quoted, that the risk was enormously enhanced by the fact that this detached and isolated army, unprepared as it was to resist attack, was liable to be driven "into the pocket between the river," which it had so rashly crossed, and an "impassable creek." When the opportunity is presented to a commander for an attack upon any fraction of a hostile army then in the act of concentrating against him, there are two conditions for which he prays. One is that there shall be time and opportunity for defeating the fraction in question before it can be supported. The other is that the position of the fraction shall be such that, when once defeated, it shall be so utterly broken up and demolished that it can render no assistance to the new supporting force which may possibly arrive.

Both these conditions were presented to Generals Beauregard and Johnston when they designed the march to attack Grant at Shiloh. Seeing the enormous change in the whole situation which would have been wrought if the first day's action had been final and conclusive, it is of great interest to consider, from the

Confederate side, what the circumstances were which deprived them of the success which seemed so nearly within their grasp.

It seems tolerably clear that, had everything been done as rapidly as it might have been, the Confederates could and would have made their attack on Saturday, April 5, instead of on Sunday, April 6, 1862. If the attack had been thus made twenty-four hours earlier than it was, I think nothing could have saved Grant's army from complete destruction. Buell had pressed his march, despite the fact that Grant had not proposed to send boats to Savannah "till Monday or Tuesday, or some time early in the week," and had always written in the sense of his words on that very Saturday in Nelson's camp: "There will be no fighting at Pittsburg Landing; we will have to go to Corinth, where the rebels are fortified. If they come to attack us, we can whip them, as I have more than twice as many troops as I had at Fort Donelson." Considering the state of the rivers and bridges, as described by Buell, it seems impossible that any portion of his force should have arrived earlier than it did. Nothing would have tended to change the conditions of Lew Wallace's march, and, therefore, as far as one can judge, in all probability Saturday would have placed the Confederates in a position even more favorable than they actually were in by Sunday evening; more favorable because on Saturday their final movement would not have been checked by the arrival of Nelson's division.

In all probability, therefore, even on Saturday evening a final attack would have resulted in the capture of Pittsburg Landing itself, and of the powerful force of reserve artillery concentrated there. In any case, that would have happened on Sunday morning, and, as an incident of the fighting on that day, Lew Wallace, committed, as he would have been, to a position on the Confederate side of Snake Creek, would have been cut off from the only bridge by which he could have returned. Attacked, as he certainly would have been, by overwhelming forces in front, flank, and rear, he must have lost his whole division in a few hours. The Confederates, fully aware of the proximate advance of Buell, would, in that case, have had the greater part of Sunday in which to prepare for him. If Buell had attempted, under these circumstances, to attack, he would have done so under the greatest disadvantages. The whole artillery and all the stores of Grant's army would have been available for

employment against him. He must have necessarily landed division by division, because apparently there was not river transport available for more than one division at a time. No doubt the gunboats would have afforded him powerful assistance, but even with their aid the enterprise would have been one which few prudent commanders would have risked. In all probability, he would have been obliged to gather his forces on the further side of the Tennessee, whilst the Confederates, supplied with all the arms and stores of which they stood so sorely in need, would have been joined by thousands of recruits whom they would then have been able effectively to arm and equip. No wonder that the battle has been looked upon, on both sides, as the turning event of the Western War.

What, then, was the cause of the Confederate delay, which proved so fatal to them? It has been remarked by able officers on the Confederate side that, while nothing could have been more admirable than the conception of the attack on Shiloh, nothing could have been more miserable in all details than the execution. That, I take it, was the inevitable result of the condition of the army at the time. Military training and organization would be useless and, certainly, very expensively purchased qualities, if it were possible that an army of recruits, gathered together in the way the army at Corinth was, should be able to execute a well-prepared plan with all the celerity and certainty which attend the movements of veteran armies. The difficulties which the want of experience, the want of drill, the want of discipline, and the want of a highly-trained staff entailed on both armies, are insisted on at every stage by those who took part in the operations. It is, however, in the movements of attack conducted through an intricate country, almost without roads and very imperfectly mapped or known, that these defects of an army tell most severely. An army in a defensive position, requiring relatively little movement, does not feel them nearly so severely. It was in his thorough appreciation of these facts that, later on in the war, General Robert Lee showed his masterly power of adapting means to ends. He always used Jackson's seasoned soldiers for those wide-reaching strokes by means of which he sought to compensate for the inferiority of his less handy troops. The newly-raised battalions, whom he could not trust to manoeuvre, but who shot fairly enough, he placed in position

where their want of military efficiency was not particularly felt, whilst their strength was evident.

Nevertheless, it is very interesting to note the incidents which, in the mere delivery of orders and in the mode in which they were interpreted, tended to cause delay. The "Notes of a Confederate Staff Officer at Shiloh" (pages 594-603) are in this respect most valuable. General Jordan observes, in a note to page 595: "As I framed this order, I had before me Napoleon's order for the battle of Waterloo, and, in attention to ante-battle details, took those of such soldiers as Napoleon and Soult for models." Now, it is worth noting that, during the Waterloo campaign, Soult on one or two occasions failed Napoleon as a chief of the staff, not in the drawing-up of orders, but in getting them actually delivered and acted on. The whole movement of Napoleon's army on the 15th was seriously hampered because Vandamme's corps did not move in time, owing to his not having received his orders. In the movement on Shiloh, the army was delayed, and the attack was postponed from Saturday to Sunday, largely because General Polk's corps did not march at the appointed time, he thinking it his duty to await written orders. It had, as we learn, been expressly arranged at a meeting between General Beauregard and the three corps commanders that they should march at twelve, noon, on April 3, without waiting for the written orders containing the detail of their respective routes. General Beauregard himself had, when in bed, worked out these routes during the night of April 2-3 "on the backs of telegrams and envelopes." As it was likely to take some time to reduce these plans and orders to shape, it had been arranged, as already stated, that the corps, to avoid delay, should at once advance over that part of the route which was well known and had been explained previously to their commanders by General Beauregard. It was promised that complete instructions in writing should be sent them on the march.

But it is clear that, while General Beauregard and his staff believed that all the corps generals had understood that they were to move off without waiting for further orders, General Polk, whose corps was leading, had not understood this. According to General Jordan's own account (page 595), the written circular order to the corps commanders directed "that each should hold his corps under arms by 6 A.M. on the 3d of April *ready to march*,

with one hundred rounds of ammunition," etc. Now, in a conference of several people it is extremely difficult to be sure that anything which has not been reduced to writing has been understood separately by each of them. Men are very apt to think that everybody else understands what they themselves understand. It seems to me, therefore, that as a lesson of staff-work to be deduced from this experience, which is by no means exceptional, the right course in similar cases would be this: A written memorandum, which could have been drawn out in two minutes, should have been noted by each corps commander to this effect:

"Camp —————, 3d April, 1862.

"It is to be understood that the troops will move off at 12 to-day, under the orders of their corps commanders, without waiting for further instructions from headquarters. Full instructions as to the direction and mode of attack will be sent in due course to each corps commander en route."

This is not suggested as a censure on the actual course pursued by the staff on this occasion. It is only by the reiterated experiences of this kind which war supplies that we learn to avoid the possibilities of future error. Nevertheless, this case and that of Soult at Waterloo, which General Jordan has taken as a model, are illustrations for all soldiers of the number of points which ought to engage the attention of a chief of the staff independent of the mere correct drawing-up of orders. War is big with instances of the importance of the links which connect the actual schemes of operations with their practical execution by means of the feet and legs of men. All our accumulated experience of this kind points to the great importance—I may say the necessity—of the presence, at the right hand of the actual commander, of a chief of the staff, who should be the general who is next to him in genius and ability in the army. The most important function of this chief of the staff is to see that the strategic and tactical plans of the commander are practically worked out and properly executed. It is all very well to design a brilliant stroke, such as that on Shiloh; but if the men do not actually march at the appointed hour, if a corps like Polk's "somehow blocks the line of march," if, for some reason or other, a corps like Bragg's is moved "with inexplicable tardiness," the best-laid schemes "gang off agley," as Burns has it.

It is impossible, without a more intimate knowledge of all the circumstances, and of the actual condition of the ground at the time, than those who were not there now possess, not to accept

as actual fact the statement of General Beauregard that any movement of the three corps toward the field in three separate columns was "an absolute impossibility." (Page 581, note.) I cannot see that Colonel Johnston has in any way upset this statement by the man who, certainly, from all his circumstances, had the best means of knowing the character of the ground. No one would doubt that, had it been possible, it would have been better and more rapid to move by three roads. As the Confederate force scarcely exceeded 40,000 men of all arms, the term "three corps" tends to give rather an exaggerated impression of the crowding that must have taken place on the two bad roads they actually followed.

It is difficult to judge with certainty, and with absolute fairness to all concerned, the conduct of a very complex action of the kind which followed. Nevertheless, I cannot, for instance, agree with General Beauregard that the whole sequence of events shows that, when once in presence of the position, it would have been better for Johnston not to attack. A retreat under such circumstances would have been most demoralizing. All, or almost all, the reasons which General Beauregard advanced at the time for not carrying out the enterprise proved, in fact, to be mistaken. The enemy were *not* "intrenched up to the eyes," as he believed they would be, or intrenched at all. The enemy had *not* been roused by the clumsy recognizance in force made by part of Bragg's corps. To all intents and purposes, the enemy were completely surprised. Nothing shows it more clearly than the contrast between Grant's words at Nelson's camp at Savannah, the previous evening, which I have already quoted, saying that no attack would be made by the enemy, and the letter he wrote to General Buell during the attack (see page 492), in which he states that "the rebel forces," actually numbering 40,000, "are estimated at over 100,000 men."

All that occurred bespoke it the surprise it actually was. The postponement of the attack from Saturday to Sunday clearly deprived the assailants of their best hope of gaining a crushing victory. Seeing, however, how successful the Confederates were on that day, it seems to me that they stood to win more by the attack than by a retreat, which would have brought down on them the united forces of Grant and Buell, untouched and in full power. As General Buell fairly urges, the Confederates, considering the

extent to which they had been able to re-arm and re-equip themselves, were actually stronger at the end than they were at the beginning of the first day, whilst the Federals had been materially weakened. Moreover, despite all that General Beauregard has urged, as to the impossibility of carrying, before nightfall, the last foot-hold of the Federal Army at Pittsburg Landing with the forces then actually up, it was, as far as I can judge, a case where the attacking general himself ought to have pushed to the front, gathering all the forces he could from every quarter, for a final attack. It was then a question of "neck or nothing" with him to push home his victory. Arrangements could have been made afterwards for the disposal of the ample supplies of food and ammunition captured in the Federal camps. It seems that all the evidence on both sides, as to the situation of things along the river bank, tends to confirm the evidence supplied on this point by Colonel Lockett, who was present on the spot. "In our front only one single point was showing fight, a hill crowned with artillery"; Bragg with his forces on the spot was confident of victory, when he was stopped by a messenger from Beauregard saying: "The General directs that the pursuit be stopped; the victory is sufficiently complete; it is needless to expose our men to the fire of the gunboats."

That seems to me to indicate exactly the condition of General Beauregard's mind. The shells of the gunboats were, according to all testimony, telling upon the far-distant rear of the Confederate forces. They were producing, however, no effect whatever on the front, and did not in the slightest degree interfere with the carrying-out of the final assault. But that was a condition of things in which, from his position at Shiloh, General Beauregard could do nothing. He was very much debilitated by bad health; he had not wished that the attack should be made that day at all; he was occupied with the by no means important fighting which was still taking place on the Federal right; he saw the streams of disordered men who always hang about the rear of newly-raised armies, composed as both those were which contended at Shiloh. He saw the effects of the shells on these stragglers. He does not seem to have realized the importance of pushing the attack home, or the ease with which it could have been made. He failed to see that it was then a question of "now or never." It is clear that not 5,000 men, and those all more or less seriously shaken,

were available to avert the final collapse of the Federal Army, had the Confederates pushed their victory home. Moments were all precious ; they were lost, never to be regained. It is impossible not to sympathize with the exclamation attributed to General Bragg : " My God ! Was a victory ever sufficiently complete ? " " My God ! My God ! It is too late ! "—*i. e.*, to carry out the attack because of the inopportune order to retreat.

General Beauregard's position during the earlier phases of the battle seems to have been more in accordance with the duties of a general in supreme command than were those rapid movements throughout the day, from point to point, of General Johnston. General Beauregard not unfairly observes, upon Johnston's frequent changes of position, that owing to them he was not able to govern the course of battle at all. As he puts it at page 588 :

" At no time does it appear from the reports of subordinates in any other part of the field that, either personally or by his staff, General Johnston gave any orders or concerned himself with the general movements of our forces. In fact, engrossed, as he soon became, with the operations of two or three brigades on the extreme right, it would have been out of his power to direct our general operations, especially as he set no machinery in motion with which to gather information of what was being done elsewhere or generally by the Confederate Army, in order to enable him to handle it intelligently from his position on the field."

It must be remembered that Johnston was the general in command until mortally wounded a little after 2 P.M. Beauregard, though probably better placed for directing the general operations up to that time, seems to have deprived himself of such staff as was left him, and not to have possessed sufficient authority, or sufficient means, to carry out the duties of command which Johnston had so largely vacated. Both Johnston and most of the headquarters staff seem to have been carried away by that longing, which all real soldiers experience, to be engaged in the close fighting line. It is a fatal mistake for a commander to give way to any such feeling, and a good deal of the incoherence in the execution of that day's well-conceived project—an incoherence which has been commented upon by almost all those who were present—seems to have been due to this. Indeed, there was so little unity of intention and direction throughout the day's operations that the absence of any one controlling spirit was apparent everywhere. Staff officers seem to have been going about issuing orders according to their own lights, without the smallest means of ascertaining what General Johnston's wishes actually were, without any clear knowledge of where he was, or even if he were

alive,—and, as a matter of fact, he was not alive during part of the time I refer to. It was probably, on the whole, the less of two evils that orders should have been given even in this way than that troops should have remained out of action for lack of orders; but the chaos that must have necessarily ensued from all this is obvious. A committee directing a battle is an appalling condition of things to contemplate; but a dispersed committee, not even able to consult together, is a yet more certain cause of failure.

It would, therefore, be very unfair, in my judgment, to make General Beauregard, even after Johnston's death, responsible for the want of direction which is conspicuous in a good deal of this day's fighting. At the same time, it must be admitted that, when the Federals had been driven back, and the stress of battle had manifestly passed on towards the bank of the river, the time had come for the general in chief command to go forward. Had he done so, it does not seem that the battle would have ceased when it did. Had he then appeared upon the scene, the evidence goes to show that the reserve Federal artillery must then have been captured, and that, although the battle had been begun by the Confederates twenty-four hours later than it ought to have been, Buell would have arrived too late to save Grant's army from destruction. As has so often happened in war, the fight on either side was, it seems, considerably affected by the state of health of the two commanders. Had Beauregard been in his usual health, he would probably have ridden to the front between four and five o'clock in the afternoon. Had it not been for the severe fall, from the effects of which Grant was then suffering, probably there would not have been that absence of direction on the Federal side of which Buell speaks.

The numerous graphic sketches which are given of the "Hornet's Nest" are very interesting. The peculiar strength of the position seems to have depended on the fact that the assailants had to move out of cover across a rather narrow belt of open ground, against troops well posted under cover on the further side, the open space being also swept by flanking batteries. There is in the Niederwald, on the site of the battle of Woerth, a very similar clear break in the wood. The fire-arms of 1870 were, I suppose, a good deal more punishing than those of 1862. But this space was not flanked by any batteries; yet the whole German infantry of the XIth Corps were checked at this point,

and unable to pass because of the conditions I have described. The analogy suggests some curious reflections as to the nature of ground that is most difficult for attacking troops to surmount.

As a student of war, I have endeavored to express, with impartial freedom, but, I hope, without offence to any one, these comments which the circumstances of this very interesting battle of Shiloh have suggested to me. Being in Canada at the time, I followed very closely all the newspaper accounts of it ; but its details have never been made so clear as by the accounts from many different quarters with which the *Century* Company have now supplied us. It would be impossible so to reconcile these different accounts as to satisfy all who took part in the action that justice had been done to the views which they advocate upon the responsibility of individual generals for failure and success. I think, however, that soldiers who desire to learn experience from these events will succeed in doing so much better by a perusal of the accounts given by the actors in this great drama, than from any ordinary pleasantly-sounded narrative. After all, it is as individual men, as actual soldiers, that we take our share of duty and responsibility, and the experiences of what other men have actually gone through are interesting, just because they represent the very partial view of a great action which we are, any of us, able to gain. We are able to see better how the swirl and whirl of the battle surged round different parts of the field, by having laid before us the statements of what each actor saw and did in the performance of his own part.

I do not propose to touch, in any detail, the part that was played in these campaigns by the naval service on either side; but, for several reasons, very much interest attaches itself to the general scope and method of the combined land and water movements of this War. In the first place, owing to the many wars we have to carry on in wild and distant countries, the bearing of river transport upon military operations is a matter of great importance to our army. The subject is, therefore, especially interesting to us. Then, again, these full accounts of the methods pursued in these great river campaigns are of great value to English soldiers and sailors. Owing to our insular position, all operations of war, outside Great Britain, must necessarily begin with combined naval and military expeditions. It is, indeed,—according to Mr. Kinglake's happy phrase,—on our “amphibious strength” that we depend.

The magnificent sea-like rivers of the United States, and the essential dependence of the whole scheme of offence and defence, throughout this war in the West, on the retention or conquest of the course of the Tennessee, the Ohio, the Missouri, the Cumberland, and the Mississippi, make the whole character of the theatre of war and its method of special interest to us. The originality and force with which all the resources and ingenuity of a great industrial and commercial people were thrown into the struggle, give to these combined naval and military movements a modern form, unique of its kind.

Each campaign is full of useful suggestions for us, upon the employment of similar means, should we, as seems more than likely, be forced to throw our whole strength into some—not in point of time—distant struggle for Imperial existence. There was, throughout all the phases of the detailed arrangements for this war, a similar originality in the adaptation of means to ends; as, for instance, in the Confederates' use of the bales of wet hemp during the siege of Lexington. I have preferred to deal first at large with these campaigns in the West, because the whole series hangs closely together, while the campaigns in Western Virginia and of the first Bull Run stand out like isolated combats, as far as this part of the history is concerned, and are much more closely connected with the history of the succeeding years. Indeed, as every one who writes of these campaigns in the West remarks, by the time that Donelson, Henry, Pea Ridge, Memphis, and Shiloh had been lost, the Confederate cause in the West was doomed. Vicksburg was more important as the final death-blow to that cause than as determining to which side victory should incline. The struggle for the great rivers was, during the earlier part of the War, almost as vital to the successful establishment of a Southern Confederacy as the defence of Richmond. When this period ended, the whole interest of the War shifted eastward and was concentrated on the line between Richmond and Washington.

Though, therefore, in point of date, the campaigns in Western Virginia and the battle of Bull Run preceded most of the events in Missouri and Tennessee, those campaigns are really the introduction to the history of the later period of the War. I may add that, except for the personal connection of General Beauregard with both Shiloh and Bull Run, and for the effect which was

undoubtedly produced throughout the West by the Confederate success at Bull Run, the two series of events might almost as well have taken place on different continents, as far as any immediate influence which they exercised upon each other was concerned. The battle of Bull Run—certainly one of the battles of the war which have been most talked about and written about in Europe—would appear, from these accounts of it, to have gathered round itself, hitherto, a large margin of fiction and misconception.

As far as General Beauregard himself is concerned, there is a quaint historical parallelism between the battle of Shiloh and that of Bull Run. In neither was he the actual commander in point of seniority. In both, the actual commander seems to have left to him a certain authority on the battle-field, the nature of which has become the subject of subsequent fierce controversy. In the case of both battles, he succeeded in persuading the commander of forces engaged in a neighboring district to form a junction of both armies in his own district, with a view to crush one part of the enemy's forces, before that part which was in the neighboring district could be brought to its support. In both battles, the commander who so joined him was a General Johnston, though, so far as I am aware, there was not any family connection between General J. E. Johnston, who commanded at Bull Run, and Albert Sidney Johnston, who commanded at Shiloh; nor, to judge by the two likenesses on pages 228 and 542, was there the smallest personal resemblance between the two men. In both instances, the ground over which the battles were fought was much better known to General Beauregard than to either General Johnston. In both battles,—though here we enter upon more disputed ground,—the evidence seems clear that the general arrangements of the campaign had been thought out some time beforehand by General Beauregard, and that the other commander, on his arrival, almost inevitably accepted Beauregard's proposals. In both cases, the scheme of battle was so affected by unforeseen circumstances that at one, Shiloh, Beauregard himself, at the last moment, recommended the abandonment of the attack he had so ably planned, and at the other, Bull Run, where the enemy's forward movement left him no choice in that matter, his designed attack was converted into an almost purely defensive battle, carried out by a part only of the forces at his disposal. In both battles, taking account only of the first day's action at Shiloh, in-

cidents occurred toward the end of the day which shook men's confidence in the man who had had the most share in the general planning of the campaign. In both battles, with whatever difference of cause and circumstance, those incidents were connected with a supposed too early stopping of the battle, and failure to drive the enemy to complete and final destruction. In both battles, General Beauregard attributed this early stopping of the action to the fatigue and exhaustion of his men, and to his want of food and ammunition for them. In both campaigns, he complained bitterly that he had not been supported properly by the civil authorities at Richmond. These analogies afford some food for reflection, and I leave readers to draw from them their own conclusions, which will probably differ not a little. The corrections which are supplied to the popularly-received account of Bull Run all seem to tend in the direction of substituting a picture of battle truly representative of what war really is for the kind of imaginative ideal of a battle which people at a distance love to create for themselves. General Beauregard says (page 216):

"It was a point made at the time, at the North, that, just as the Confederate troops were about to break and flee, the Federal troops anticipated them by doing so, being struck into this precipitation by the arrival on their flank of the Shenandoah forces marching from railroad trains halted en route with that aim—errors that have been repeated by a number of writers, and by an ambitious, but superficial, French author."

I am sorry to say that the error has been freely repeated by English as well as by French authors, and has even crept into some of our best-known text-books. The matter is of some importance, because it gives a false conception of the possible use of railways in war. It looks very pretty to draw a line of railway running at right angles to an enemy's line of advances, and to represent troops getting out of the trains and coming straight away from them to strike the exposed flank of the enemy. In the case of a pure infantry force, this might be possible, if it had been thought out beforehand. Very rarely indeed would it be possible for cavalry, and still more rarely for artillery. Moreover, where a mixed body of troops were coming by railway to an assigned railway junction, which, like Manassas, possessed some sidings and platforms provided for their disembarkation, it would very rarely be possible to disarrange the sequence of trains so as to disembark the infantry at some other

point more important tactically, without disturbing the movement of the whole force, and probably causing much delay in the arrival of the troops upon the battle-field. Now, General Johnston, who actually directed upon the field at Bull Run the troops of Elzey and Early, which troops, in fact, turned the Federal right flank, tells us expressly (page 249) that Elzey, who arrived first with three infantry battalions, came from "Manassas Junction." Early, who came next, arrived with "Stuart's cavalry and Beckham's battery." The cavalry and artillery had evidently come up from Manassas, joining Early en route. It is clear that, essentially, this railway movement was purely one of general reinforcement. Manassas Junction lay far away to the right rear of that part of the Confederate line where the battle was actually fought. The overlapping of the Federal right was accomplished by movements made under General Johnston's own orders, advantage being taken of the concealment afforded by the woods near Chinn's house on the Federal right. Of the movements of General Smith, who at first commanded Elzey's brigade, Johnston says :

"He was instructed through a staff officer, sent forward to meet him, to form on the left of our line, his left thrown forward, and to attack the enemy in flank. At his request I joined him, directed his course, and gave him these instructions."

Moreover, the extreme troops on the Confederate left flank, and those which carried out the ultimate turning movement, were, so far as the infantry was concerned, not those which had arrived by railway at all, but Early's brigade, which had been in reserve behind Longstreet and Jones near Blackburn's and McLean's Ford, being, in fact, a part of Beauregard's own army. Thus it is as clear as possible that the important service which the Manassas Railway did for the Confederates was in putting them, strategically, in a military sense, as Beauregard says, "on interior lines" with regard to the two Federal armies of McDowell and Patterson. The really decisive fact of the campaign was the strategical transfer of Johnston's force from the Shenandoah region, unknown to Patterson. The turning of the Federal right was a tactical incident, due in part to the troops which were put at the disposal of the Confederate commander by that strategical transfer of force. In all essentials, the cause of the Confederate success was a movement like that which preceded the defeat of Hasdrubal by the Romans, or like that which preceded the battle

of Blenheim. Almost all great military successes have these simple actions as their basis. Only, as has been said, it is that which is simple which in war is so very difficult.

Here, as in almost every other instance, the defeat of McDowell seems to have been due to the blunders of the authorities at Washington, acting under the influence of popular opinion. McDowell had fully foreseen the danger with which he was threatened. This is shown conclusively by his making it one of the conditions of his movement that General J. E. Johnston's force should be kept engaged by Major-General Patterson. Nothing can be clearer than this fact—that the Bull Run disaster, which so appalled public opinion in the North, was deliberately prepared for itself by that very public opinion taking upon itself to enforce its demands upon the generals in the field through the medium of its recognized exponents. General James Fry puts this well in separate paragraphs which are worth collating:

“General Scott, who controlled both McDowell and Patterson, assured McDowell that Johnson should not join Beauregard without having Patterson on his heels.” (Page 181.) “Northern enthusiasm was unbounded. On to Richmond was the war-cry. Public sentiment was irresistible, and, in response to it, the army advanced.” (Page 176.)

Yet, again, after showing how completely Johnston gave Patterson the slip, he says, “It rested, however, with higher authority than Patterson to establish between his army and McDowell's the relations the occasion called for” (note, page 183); and then he goes on to show how the public fear in the Capital of attack by the Shenandoah Valley obliged the Washington authorities to insist on Scott's not only keeping Patterson in the Shenandoah Valley, but actually reënforcing him at the moment when every man was required to reënforce McDowell. Furthermore, if Patterson was to keep Johnston from reënforcing McDowell, it could only be done by steady and persistent fighting. But he had been warned against fighting, lest the Capital should be exposed by want of “caution.” Hence, as General Fry truly says, “as soon as McDowell advanced, Patterson was upon an exterior line and in a false military position.”

To sum up, then, the indictment against the true criminal. Let us clearly understand that the prisoner at the bar is “Public Opinion.” This is the case against him. He understood nothing whatever of military principles or the conditions of the movements of armies; yet he took into his ignorant hands the entire

conduct of this part of the war. Without even realizing the connection between the several things which he required as a sacrifice to his imagined omniscience, he kept Patterson and all his forces in the Shenandoah Valley for fear lest Johnston should move on the Capital. Then, having deprived McDowell of all possible supports and crowded his camps with picnicking parties, "under no military restraint, that passed to and fro among the troops as they pleased," reducing indefinitely the fighting power of his army, the prisoner at the bar sent forward the unfortunate general and army to meet their fate from the two armies whose union he (the prisoner) had facilitated. Whom shall we hang? This thing, or the fine soldier whose portrait is given on page 170? Unfortunately, the number of convictions against the prisoner, and the freedom with which he secures the power to repeat his crimes, are so notorious that there is little use in convicting him. In 1861 he cries out madly, "To Richmond!" In 1870 his mad cry is, "To Berlin!" If only some one would make out a true record of all the crimes with which he has been justly charged, seeing that there is and can be no defence for him, one might hope that perhaps on some future occasion, some one or two of the host that go to swell his power, to tickle his vanity, and to lead his followers to destruction, might pause and consider. Even one or two strong men facing the stampede of an ignorant crowd that knows not where it is going, have often a wonderful power in breaking its force and in turning it aside from ruin. Therefore, it is worth while to seize such occasions as one may, to hold up to this creature, to this self-styled god, a mirror in which it may see its own likeness, and seeing it, and appalled by the image, may cower before perpetrating fresh crime. I doubt very much if the criminal is as powerful or as ignorant in the United States as he is among us. I believe, with Sir Henry Maine, that the creators of your Constitution showed their wisdom mainly in shackling his impatient hands; in at least providing for an appeal from him when he is drunk to the time when he is sober.

I can here only touch upon the first phase of the next fit of madness which, in 1861, seized him in the United States. I have always had a great respect for General McClellan. But to those who, having first caused the destruction of McDowell's army, carried out the next stage of the programme usual in such cases,

namely, the discovery that McDowell was responsible for all they had done, and decided to replace him by a "Young Napoleon," the graphic details of the campaigns in Western Virginia, under McClellan's leadership, must be painful reading. If General Cox had tried to complete this part of my indictment against the reckless interference of Public Opinion in the conduct of military affairs, he could hardly have worded it more incisively than he has done, in what he himself describes as the "unvarnished tale" of the attack on Rich Mountain, and in his description of the mode in which it led to its one important consequence—the promotion of McClellan to the command of the Potomac Army. It would not be unfair to sum it up thus: McClellan arranged to detach a small turning force under Rosecrans to attack a flank of Rich Mountain. The success of such a movement ordinarily depends on the vigor with which other forces combine in the attack, and on the support afforded to the small turning force, which is otherwise dangerously risked. McClellan had undertaken to attack vigorously as soon as Rosecrans was heard to be in action. "The noise of the engagement had been heard in McClellan's camp, and he formed his troops to attack, but the long continuance of the cannonade, and some sign of exultation in Pegrams's camp, seem to have made him think that Rosecrans had been repulsed." Therefore, McClellan did nothing whatever; meantime Rosecrans, who had planned his own movement, and had volunteered for it, had, by extraordinary good fortune and good management, succeeded in carrying the whole position entirely with his own force. Thereupon the defence of the remainder of the Mountain collapsed. "On McClellan's part," beyond a rather timidly-conducted pursuit, "nothing further was attempted." McClellan, however, published a dispatch in which he congratulated his troops on having "annihilated two armies, commanded by educated and experienced soldiers, intrenched in mountain fortresses fortified at their leisure." "The country was," we are told, "eager for good news, and took it as literally true." Whereupon McClellan was photographed in the Napoleonic attitude, and duly promoted to the command of the Potomac Army, to be dealt with afterwards according to the time-honored fashion of that hoary-headed and cruel old rascal, Public Opinion, towards his broken idols.

WOLSELEY.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE TREE OF POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE.

BY THE REV. DR. EDWARD EVERETT HALE.

A HUNDRED years ago it was a new thing in America for the people to be sovereign, and this novelty was such a stimulus that it was thought they would, of course, take eagerly to the duties which it involved. It is interesting and pathetic to read the notions of citizenship which the fathers of the Constitution had. To take from a king and aristocracy all their dignities and privileges, and to give them to the people, was so great a thing that men took it for granted that the people would rise to the occasion and assume the responsibility gladly.

So far as the old New England democracies went, and the habits which had grown up in other regions, where the people had generally managed their own affairs, it was quite safe to rely on their instinct for government and the willingness of every man to do his share. At an average "town-meeting," for instance, everybody in the town was present; everybody, in fact, had some personal interest; or, at least, there was the entertainment to be gathered from an assembly, not very frequent, of all the neighbors. It was not very hard to extend the interest which men thus took in the affairs of the town, and bid them take a similar interest in the affairs of the State. At last, "we, the people," were intrusted with making or approving the Constitution of the United States.

So far the theory went—that everybody would be interested in his citizenship, and everybody would try to prepare himself for his duties. But one has only to read John Adams's private letters home, from Philadelphia to Massachusetts, while he was serving in the Continental Congress, to see that even then he understood very well that the Leaders Lead, and that the great body of the people did not take a great deal of interest in their own public affairs. They were not taking nearly as much as John Adams wished they were. In point of fact, except in some great crisis, like the outbreak of the Revolution or the outbreak of the Civil War, it always proves very difficult to hold up to the mark a very