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ATLANTA CAMPAIGN.

Mastery Monographs From a Trenchant Pen.

A TURNING POINT.

Sherman Plays a Waiting Game with His Opponent.

A CONTROVERSY.

Bombardment which Nearly Caused Hood's Surrender.

BY

O. O. Howard

Major-General.

XIX.—JONESBORO.—THE CAMPAIGN.

THE BATTLE OF Ezra Church was a turning point in the Atlanta campaign. Hood was very naturally sore after his three terrific though ineffective blows; the first delivered at Peachtree Creek, the second against McPherson the 22d of July, and the third at Ezra Church the 28th. These were so disastrous that he determined, for a season at least, to keep his main body on the defensive.

Sherman, too, though comparatively successful in the issue of these engagements, was made more cautious by considerable losses and Hood's boldness. Kennesaw had taught its dreadful lesson, and Sherman had become unwilling to attack thoroughly-prepared lines of intrenchment. He had by experience learned how to interpret Joe Johnston, but he felt remarkably uncertain as to what the peculiar Hood would undertake next.

When my command, the Army of the Tennessee, moved around to the west of Atlanta with a view of getting possession of those railroads leading out of the city southward, our General had in mind a conjoint action of his cavalry, which indeed ought to have been more successful. He then had three cavalry divisions of considerable strength—Ed. McCook's, 3,500 effective, at the time at Turner's Ferry, where the Chattahoochee was bridged; Stoneman's, 2,500, and Garrard's, 4,000, at or near Decatur, on his left.

Here is what was in Sherman's mind prior to Ezra Church, expressed in his own words:

"My plan of action was to move the Army of the Tennessee to the right rapidly and boldly against the railroad below Atlanta, and at the same time to send all the cavalry around by the right and left to make a lodgment on the Macon Railroad about Jonesboro."

We have seen how the Army of the Tennessee marched and fought at Ezra Church without reaching the Macon Railroad. The cavalry, except Garrard's, had received its orders, and set forth to carry them out. Sherman now for three or four days strengthened his right flank by putting two infantry divisions of Thomas's (Baird's and Davis's, of Palmer's Corps,) in rear of my right flank for a reserve. Perhaps he hoped Hood



GEN. JOHN M. PALMER.

would come out again and attack us; but

SHERMAN WAS MAINLY WAITING for "the effect of this cavalry movement against the railroad about Jonesboro."

The first report that came to him, Aug. 1, to the effect that Ed. McCook's Division had been defeated and captured, he stoutly discredited and disbelieved; yet he took prompt action in view of the possibility of such a disaster. He put all the garrisons guarding our depots and communications on the qui vive, brought Schofield's troops around to and beyond my right, and had Thomas send there also the whole of Palmer's Fourteenth Corps, Garrard doing what he could with his small cavalry force to take care of Thomas's left near Atlanta.

Ed McCook had done well at the first onset. He struck the railroad and did much damage, and finding no co-operation from Stoneman, drifted back with over 400 prisoners to Newnan. Thence Confederate Wheeler's dispatch, doubtless under the excitement slightly

exaggerated, tells the story of McCook's defeat. It reads:

"We have just completed the killing, capturing and breaking up of the entire raiding party under Gen. McCook; some 950 prisoners, two pieces of artillery and 1,200 horses and equipments captured."

McCook here lost his captured Confederates, but reported from Turner's Ferry to Sherman a loss to himself of but 600.

Gen. Stoneman, for some unaccountable reason, did not carry out Sherman's instructions as they were given. Coming from Decatur, he did not meet McCook near Jonesboro. Instead of that, he passed off behind the Ocmulgee and went down on the eastern bank.

Another recorded Confederate dispatch from Macon shows the result of this raid:

"Gen. Stoneman, after HAVING HIS FORCE ROUTED, yesterday surrendered with 500 men; the rest of his men are scattered and flying toward Eatonton. Many have been already killed and captured."

Col. Adams with but small loss came back to us from Stoneman, but Col. Capron's Brigade suffered more, was scattered, and returned to Sherman in

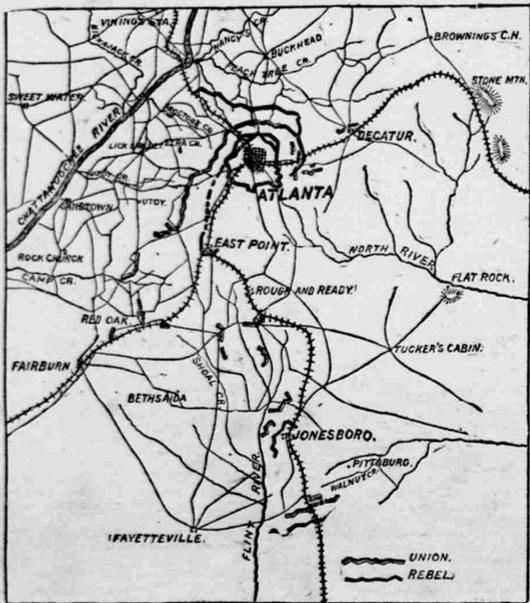
divined his object, moved in pursuit, overtook him at an early hour, attacked, and forced him to retreat, after sustaining considerable loss in killed, wounded, and prisoners."

Hood acknowledged the burning of the Jonesboro depot, the cutting of the telegraph wires, and the destruction of a mile and a half of railway. Thus the estimates of these Generals—Kilpatrick and Hood—differ! Two days after Kilpatrick's return one would hardly believe that he had been defeated at all. His memory and his imagination were often in conflict, but we all liked his bright face and happy stories.

Meanwhile the work of extending our lines had gone on. Hood's intrenchments followed suit, ever protecting his railroad, a vital line of supply. When Schofield and Palmer went to our right, Bate and Cleburne went to Hood's left. An unfortunate controversy arose about this time to further annoy our good General.

With the hope of striking Hood's line of supplies—i. e., the Macon Railway—without too much detour, Sherman put upon Schofield the special work of

STRIKING A HEAVIER BLOW than those we had been able to deliver



AROUND ATLANTA.

fragments. Hood was not long in repairing the damage done by our cavalry.

Hood in his Narrative insists that his cavalry was superior to ours. He avers, however, that his was not really cavalry, but "mounted infantry." I suspect that the habit of fighting dismounted and using the horses mostly for transportation from point to point was what he was considering, and not the difference of armament.

Hood promptly tried Sherman's plan on a larger scale. Forrest and Wheeler with abundant horses were sent against our long line of supply between Atlanta and Nashville; Forrest above and Wheeler below Chattanooga. Hood, as sanguine as Sherman, in his Narrative says: "I was hopeful that the combined movement would compel Sherman to retreat for want of supplies, and thus allow me an opportunity to fall upon his rear with our main body." But these efforts of the Confederate cavalry were as effectually thwarted by Sherman as Hood's own had been. Hood had to acknowledge that he could not anywhere in our rear bring together sufficient force at important points on the line to compel our retreat.

Sherman, after this sad experiment, declared that our cavalry "could not, or would not, make a sufficient lodgment on the railroad below Atlanta, and that nothing would suffice but for us to reach it with the main body."

After the return of Ed McCook and the other commanders, Sherman, with marvelous quickness, had our horse reorganized and resupplied. He formed it into three divisions, under Garrard, McCook, and Kilpatrick. The latter, with

HIS OPTIMISTIC NATURE

and fearless enterprise, had come back to us after the healing of his wound. Hood had stripped himself of the bulk of his cavalry, and sent it back against our depots, stations, and bridges; then Sherman tried one more raid, using the energy of our sanguine Kilpatrick. That General made his march with promptness, but soon came back. His report claimed three miles of railway-track destroyed near Jonesboro, the capture of four cannon, spiking three and bringing one; three battleflags and 70 prisoners of war. His visit, however, he owned, was shortened by encountering a brigade of Confederate cavalry and an infantry division. Hood's account of this operation is brief and interesting:

Gen. Kilpatrick was reported to be moving via Fairburn in the direction of Jonesboro. Gen. Jackson (the Confederate who led the residue of the cavalry after Wheeler's departure) quickly



GEN. JEFF C. DAVIS.

since Ezra Chapel. In addition to Ed McCook's small division of cavalry and his own Twenty-third Corps, Sherman directed Gen. Palmer, with his Fourteenth Corps, to report to him and be under his leadership. He was also to have a fair proportion of artillery. Schofield, after making two or three attempts to carry out Sherman's wishes—for they were wishes rather than orders—the evening of the 5th reported to Sherman in these remarkable words:

"I am compelled to acknowledge that I have totally failed to make any aggressive movement with the Fourteenth Corps. I have ordered Gen. Johnson's Division to replace Gen. Hascall's this evening, and I propose to-morrow to take my own troops (Twenty-third Corps) to the right and try to recover what has been lost by two days' delay. The force may likely be too small."

While Palmer was thoroughly willing to co-operate with Schofield, he refused to carry out his instructions, claiming that he himself was the senior. Gen. Sherman's opinion of Gen. Palmer is given in his Memoirs, stating that "Gen. Palmer was a man of ability, but was not enterprising. His three divisions were compact and strong, well commanded, admirable on the defensive, but slow to move or to act on the offensive."

Upon Gen. Palmer insisting that Schofield had no proper right to command him, Sherman took the relative rank of the two Generals under consideration, and decided that, as their commissions were of the same date, Schofield was actually the senior "by reason of his previous superior rank of Brigadier-General."

This decision, coupled with some complaints of Sherman concerning the recent movements of the Fourteenth Corps, caused Palmer to tender his resignation. This resignation, accompanied by a brief leave of absence, was accepted, and Brig.-Gen. Jeff C. Davis was promoted to a Major-General and assigned by the President to the command of the corps. Sherman remarks naively: "Thenceforward I had no reason to complain of the slowness or inactivity of

THAT SPLENDID CORPS."

I knew nothing at the time of the merits of the controversy, which occurred at a most unfortunate time in face of the enemy. It caused delay and loss to us. I had always regarded Gen. Palmer as a strong man, brave and resolute, and of good judgment. Under similar circumstances to his, perhaps a little more aggravating, I served under a junior for a few hours, biding my time. Of course, one must be guided by his own sense of what is right; yet, in a case of doubt, he ought to give the benefit to his country's service.

Some glimpses of the other side show how the enemy kept up his extension and how we pushed our lines ever closer and closer. The skirmishing along P. Anderson's and Clayton's Divisions amounted to almost an engagement for a week. Hardee's Corps was pushed to the left of Lee's to check Schofield's advance. On Aug. 7 Lee congratulated Tyler's Brigade, of Bate's Division, for repulsing three assaults of the Yankees in the engagement of Aug. 6, in which he ascribed to them a loss of a thousand men, two colors, 400 small-arms, and abundant intrenching tools, while their own loss did not exceed 20 killed and wounded.

Patton Anderson, who commanded a Confederate division (lately Hindman's) opposite to Jeff C. Davis's Division and Cox's—these two holding all the ground from my right to the Utoy Creek—has sketched some pictures that give glimpses of those long days and nights of the endless skirmishing and close fighting that cost so many lives, yet

NEVER AMOUNTED TO A BATTLE.

His four brigades were placed there opposite, in order from right to left, viz., Deas's, Brantley's, Sharp's, and Manigault's. He worked his division night and day, till his intrenchments were as strong as ours. At one point in front, between Deas and Brantley, the Yankees established their skirmish-line within 60 yards, and put in a battery with embrasures for six guns. Featherstone's guns on Loring's left, and Deas's skirmishers, hindered the Yankees fearfully; but at last, by working nights, they (the Union men) completed their battery. They succeeded in getting one large piece in place. Deas's indefatigable sharpshooters kept back the other guns. That one terrible gun began to fire. Its cannoners could not be reached. "Day after day did they (the Yankees) use it with damaging effect upon our rifle-pits, only 60 paces from my muzzle, frequently leveling the earth along the line for 40 or 50 yards, and literally covering the men in the pits with the debris." The damage was repaired at night. At last, by a large concert of action of Confederate riflemen on the right and left, the Yankees were forced to desert.

The Confederate accounts give also their method of gradually enlarging the short pits 400 or 500 yards in advance of the main line, and extending them from one to the other till their skirmish-line became itself as strong as a main line. From the 1st of August up to the 25th, our men, the great majority of them full of ingenuity, managed to make themselves comfortable; and though they were anxious to see something accomplished, yet their confidence in their leaders gave them at all times a contented appearance. They recuperated their ranks to some extent, as many recruits came up and recovered wounded men returned.

The combat which was the subject of S. D. Lee's congratulations was a part of Schofield's determined efforts to get beyond Hood and seize upon the rail-



GEN. CHARLES P. STONE.

roads. A division of the Twenty-third Corps had undertaken a reconnaissance. Reilly's Brigade was on the lead. It was followed by Casement's Brigade in support. As it was pushing forward, ascending a slope, its advance was impeded by the rough ground, the underbrush, and plenty of felled trees, and doubtless to some extent broken up by persistent pushing through them. They found the enemy's works strongly occupied, as usual. They succeeded, however, in getting very near them, and of course a lively fusillade resisted their approach.

By careful maneuvering of the reserves, Cox soon withdrew Reilly's Brigade to safer ground, intrenching, and getting the skirmish-line pretty close up to the enemy's position. Cox at this time seems to have secured some advantage and caused the abandonment of a part of Hood's intrenchments, but did not succeed in accomplishing more.

At one period Sherman had heavy guns brought up and bombarded the city, carrying into it terror and destruction. This was not sufficient, however, to induce Hood to surrender, but it did cause the demoralization, if not the complete destruction, of that beautiful little city; for it was small in those days.

(To be continued.)

A Grain of Comfort. [Washington Star.] "This emancipated woman," said Cholly Cookins, "may go 'round in bloomers, you know, but there's one respect in which she can't imitate us fellows." "What's that?" "She can't wail her bloomers up at the ankles when it rains in London, don't you know."

BALL'S BLUFF

How the Battle Was Fought and Lost.

ORDERS TO STONE.

The Critical Point in Devens's Reconnoissance.

BAD POSITION.

Col. Baker not Able to Accomplish a Rescue.



DEFEAT AND disaster are things which perhaps few soldiers care to chronicle, and yet in the history of warfare we find few battles were ever fought without defeat or disaster. In fact, it is in either of these that we immediately recognize both the true worth and bravery of the true soldier. It is

here in the hour of defeat or disaster that we discover the self-sacrificing spirit of the true soldier better perhaps than at any other time or place. The men who shout the loudest in the hour of victory do not necessarily better soldiers than those who rush forward silently to the assistance of their comrades in the hour of defeat. It is certainly not their fault if victory is not won.

Now, while much has been said and written in reference to that disastrous battle fought on the picturesque Ball's Bluff, overlooking the old Potomac, Oct. 21, 1861, it may not be out of place, even at this late date, especially in view of the many untruthful and conflicting statements that have from time to time been made in reference to it, to state just how the battle was fought and how fought and lost. The writer participated in the battle, and was among the last party under the command of that gallant officer, Capt. Timothy O'Meara, to surrender to the enemy at 12 o'clock on the night of the battle. I will endeavor to state as accurately as possible what took place from the beginning to the end of that battle.

The following is an order from the Headquarters of the Army of the Potomac to Gen. Charles P. Stone, commanding the troops in the vicinity of Poolesville, Md., which will, in a measure, explain

WHY THE MOVEMENT WAS MADE and for what purpose:

Oct. 20, 1861. Brig.-Gen. STONE, Poolesville, Md. Gen. McClellan desires me to inform you that Gen. MeCall occupied Drainsville yesterday, and is still there. Will send out heavy reconnoissances to-day in all directions from that point. The General desires that you keep a good lookout upon Leesburg to see if this movement has the effect to drive them away. Perhaps a slight demonstration on your part would have that effect. A. V. COLBURN, Assistant Adjutant-General.

In compliance with the foregoing order Gen. Stone immediately issued the following order to Col. Devens, commanding the 15th Mass., a part of which were at this time doing picket duty on Harrison's Island:

HEADQUARTERS CORPS OF OBSERVATION, POOLESVILLE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD., Oct. 20, 1861. COLONEL: You will please send orders to the canal to have the two new flat-boats now there, opposite the island, transferred to the river, and will, at 3 o'clock p. m., have the island reinforced by all your regiments now on duty on the canal, and New York battery. The pickets will be replaced by the companies of the 19th Mass., now there.

CHAS. P. STONE, Brigadier-General. Col. CHARLES DEVENS, commanding 15th Mass. In accordance with the above orders Col. Devens immediately began crossing that portion of his regiment mentioned in the order, and about 3 o'clock on Sunday evening, Oct. 20, there were five companies of his regiment on Harrison's



COL. E. D. BAKER.

Island. Those companies were A, C, G, H and I. After crossing the river Col. Devens reported the fact to Gen. Stone, who immediately ordered him to send one of his Captains (Phillbrick), with a small body of men, across the Virginia branch of the river, ascend the bluff and make a reconnoissance in the direction of the town of Leesburg, going for this

purpose as far as he could under cover of the night without being observed by the enemy.

When darkness set in Capt. Phillbrick, taking some 20 men with him, crossed the river, and ascending the bluff by the winding pathway, started in the direction of Leesburg with orders to push forward to within a mile or so of the town, if he could, without being discovered by the enemy, then return and report.

After marching about a mile toward Leesburg Capt. Phillbrick's party returned and reported a camp of the enemy, some 30 tents, apparently unprotected. When this fact was reported to Gen. Stone he immediately

RESOLVED TO CAPTURE THE CAMP, and accordingly issued the following order to Col. Devens:

HEADQUARTERS CORPS OF OBSERVATION, POOLESVILLE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD., Oct. 20, 1861, 10:30 p. m. Special Order.

Col. Devens will cross the river and land opposite Harrison's Island with five companies of his regiment, and will proceed to surprise the camp of the enemy, discovered by Capt. Phillbrick, in the direction of the town of Leesburg, Va. The landing of the troops and the march will be effected with silence and rapidity. Col. Lee, 20th Mass. Vols., will immediately after Col. Devens's departure occupy Harrison's Island with four companies of his regiment, and will cause the four-ward boat to be taken across the island to the point of departure of Col. Devens. One company will be thrown across to occupy the heights on the Virginia side. After Col. Devens's departure, to cover his return, two mountain howitzers will be taken across the island to the top of the bluff, which he can undoubtedly hold until reinforced, and one which can be successfully held against largely superior numbers; in which case he will hold on and report. CHARLES P. STONE, Brigadier-General.

In compliance forthwith Col. Devens began crossing the Virginia branch of the river about 12:30 o'clock a. m. on the morning of the 21st inst., and by 4 o'clock all his troops were on the Virginia side. Col. Devens immediately followed his men. After landing in Virginia, however, the Colonel lost his way, and it took him a half hour or more to find his men.

Immediately after the departure of Col. Devens, and as soon as the boats returned to the island shore, Col. Lee, of the 20th Mass., began crossing with one company of his regiment, about 100 men. Col. Lee and his men arrived on top of the bluff about 5 o'clock a. m., and immediately reported to Col. Devens, in order that he (Devens) could march his troops forward. A little

Col. Devens, after placing his troops in what he considered a strong position in the woods, selected a strong reconnoitering party, and went forward some distance in the direction of Leesburg to the top of a knoll in full view of Leesburg and the surrounding country, and there in broad daylight began making observations of the country in full view of the watchful and concealed enemy.

What took place here is perhaps better told in Col. Devens's own statement given before the Investigating Committee of the 37th Congress on the Conduct of the War, pages 403 to 412. He says: "We moved about for some time, selecting various points of observation for the purpose of ascertaining what was to be seen, reconnoitering the country as thoroughly as we could, getting as good an idea of it as possible, in order to be able to answer any questions that might be asked me on my return. After this I returned to my regiment in the woods. At this time I deemed it my duty to report, as my force had not been discovered and I was in a good position and well protected."

Let me here remark that nothing could be observed from the point of observation selected by Col. Devens but what was already observed from the hill on the Maryland side of the river, and while it may be possible Col. Devens's troops were not at that time discovered by the enemy, there is no doubt whatever both himself and his reconnoitering party

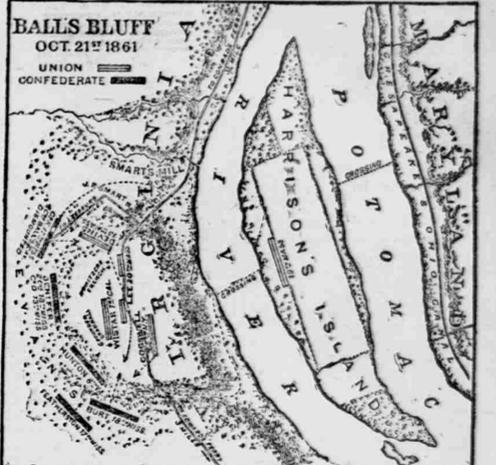


GEN. CHARLES P. STONE.

were being closely watched. Some of the Mississippians asked us after capture

WHO WAS THAT GENERAL OFFICER

whom they saw early in the morning going around as if selecting the ground for a battlefield. The Colonel continued: "Accordingly I directed the Quartermaster of the regiment to return to Gen. Stone as rapidly as possible and report the camp all a mistake, and that I was well posted in the woods, concealed, and awaited his further orders. "After the Quartermaster left, possi-



MAP OF BALL'S BLUFF.

after 5 o'clock, everything being in readiness, Col. Devens ordered his men forward. Capt. Phillbrick, having reported the discovery of the camp on the previous night, was in consequence given the right of the line of advance immediately after Col. Devens's column was put in motion. Col. Lee at once set to work making disposition of his men, placing them in what he considered the best position to accomplish the object in view, after which he awaited the development of events. When the head of Col. Devens's column arrived at the point where the camp of the previous night was supposed to be seen, which was perhaps one mile in advance of where Col. Lee's men were posted,

NO CAMP COULD NOW BE SEEN.

The cause of the mistake, however, for such it was, was very evident; for even through the reflecting light of the early morning, coming through the lower branches of a row of tall trees, a reflecting light was cast on the ground as if tents were there, at first sight. Even in the early morning this reflection did seem like a row of tents. A very sad mistake this proved in the light of subsequent events.

It was thought by many officers at the time that if Col. Devens at this point had used a little more discretion and acted more in accordance with the orders received, and upon finding that a mistake had been made, had immediately reported and asked for further orders, in all probability there would have been no disaster or cause for it at Ball's Bluff.

ably an hour, it might be perhaps 7:30 o'clock, a body of riflemen, afterward found to be Mississippian riflemen, were observed to be going up on our right in the direction of Conrad's Ferry. I directed Capt. Phillbrick to pass over the slope in front and attack them as they came around the edge of the woods. Instead of coming directly they passed down more into the plains, and Capt. Phillbrick was obliged to follow them farther. The arms we had were the old smooth-bore flint-lock musket altered to a percussion, and it was necessary for us to get pretty close to them.

"I accompanied Capt. Phillbrick, and suggested to him the orders, which were all given by him. We pursued them over this slope a little way, they falling back until they got into the cover of a ditch, or trench, and then the firing commenced. The skirmish was a pretty hot one. They were driven out of this trench and then forced into a field, which afforded them a very good ground, indeed, because it was a field in which the corn had been cut and stood in stacks. Of course, for an irregular force it was just the place they wanted.

"In the meantime I sent back for another company, intending to throw it over between the enemy and the woods. But just before they came a body of rebel cavalry was reported on the left, coming from the direction of Leesburg. I examined it as carefully as I could (I had no glass with me) and thought it was probably a movement of cavalry. At any rate, I thought there