

ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND AND THE GREAT CENTRAL CAMPAIGN

By JOHN McELROY.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

GRANT PREPARING A BLOW. BRAGG CONTINUES THE SIEGE WITHOUT APPARENT PURPOSE—LONGSTREET DETACHED TO CRUSH BURNSIDE—SHERMAN ARRIVES. THE PLAN OF ATTACK.

The successful wearing away of the control of the country between Lookout Mountain and the Tennessee River with the opening of the short and easy line of supplies for Thomas's army must have given Bragg some exceedingly dismal hours of self-communion in his tent. There was no excuse for his having been outgeneraled as easily as he had, and the failure of Longstreet's midnight assault upon Geary's two small brigades was a humiliating culmination to his chapter of opportunities wantonly sinned away.

of his orders, and hastened him on towards Sherman at Iuka, Corp'l Pike's appearance at that time would have deceived any but such keen-eyed students of character as Blair and Sherman. He was dressed in butternut, with a coonskin cap, and his long hair made him readily mistaken for one of the half-savage mountaineers of the region. The moment he began to speak in his natural tones, however, his real character was unmistakable, and Sherman, appreciating at once the verity and importance of the order, issued his own with that electrical energy so characteristic of him which set every one of his subordinates in active motion. Work on the railroad was immediately dropped by Blair, who began ferrying his first divisions across the river, and Sherman, putting himself at the head and leaving Blair to bring up the rear, rushed forward with all the speed of which his soldiers' legs would admit. At Florence, Ala., he found Ewing's column, and incorporated it into his marching force.

Gen. Johnston Tries to Interfere. Gen. Joe Johnston had received orders to prevent Sherman's junction with Grant, and did his utmost with the troops he had at his command. He had Jackson's Division at Canton and Loring's at Grenada, but these were too far away to interfere, and the best that he could do was to send Chamberlain's and S. D. Lee's Divisions of Cavalry to make what interruption and obstruct-

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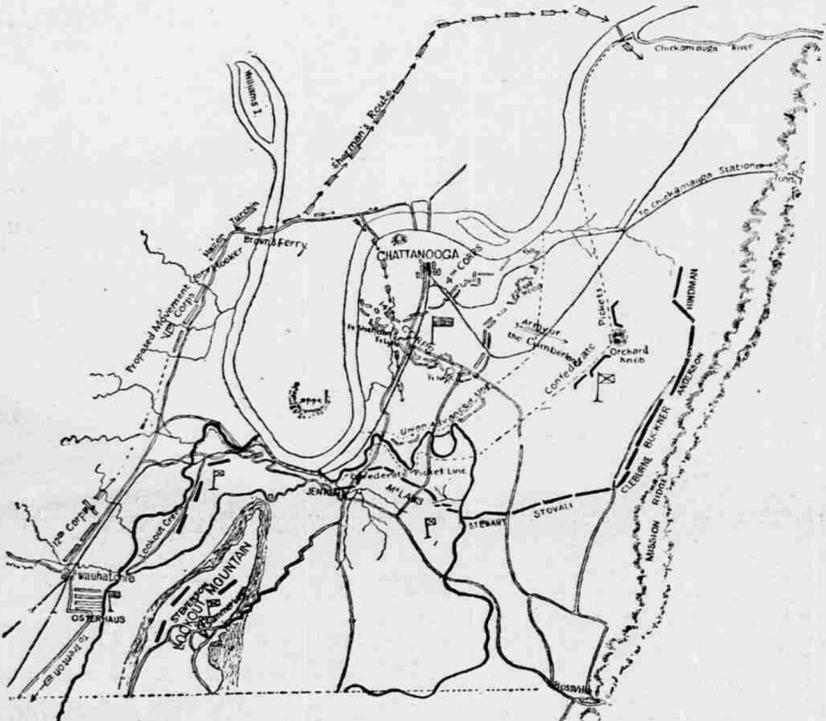
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Spring Johnson awaited the Union army.

Sherman Arrives. At Fayetteville Sherman had found orders from Grant directing him to divide his troops into several columns marching by different roads, so as to subvert them more easily and hasten their advance. Therefore, Sherman started one of his divisions from Decher, the other from Lookout Mountain, and the other from the Lookout Mountain road, with another moving on Bridgeport by the way of University. Blair marched the other divisions by the way of New Market, Larkinsville and Bellefont, which routes would take the troops thru a part of the country where a considerable amount of supplies might be found. Sherman himself reached Bridgeport Nov. 13. He could not expect his troops to come up before the 17th, and he therefore took the steamer to Kelly's Ferry, whence he rode across the peninsula to Chattanooga to meet his old friend and chief, and have a face-to-face conversation with him as to the situation and the way to be done. The first glance that Sherman gave at the scene around him was very depressing. He saw everywhere on the hills of New Market, Larkinsville and Bellefont, the Confederates with their flags flying and their cannon thundering at intervals. Everywhere was the manifestation of the great military and political advantage over the Union army in Chattanooga. It seemed to Sherman that all the crests were in the hands of the enemy, and his first remark was of deep uneasiness. "You are being besieged," it took some explanation from Gen. Grant to make him understand that the Confederate flag still floated from the commanding heights of Lookout Mountain, that the possession of that great wall was no longer of importance to Bragg, since the troops held it were not as numerous as far as the mouth of Lookout Creek, and that the enemy's position on Mission Ridge and the hills in front was not so strong as it had been.

Grant was entirely willing that Bragg and his army should be amused by this pretense, and he allowed him to pursue his quiet while Grant matured his plans for offensive operations, and until Sherman could come up with a force sufficient to be confident of the success of an aggressive movement. The most apprehension that Grant had was as to the fate of Burnside, and he ordered a messenger to be sent to him to keep him from any purpose, Grant was so in earnest, however, that he ordered the horses taken away from the mounted officers for the winter, and a careful examination of the enemy's position was made that evening if he had made his batteries available he could not have more than 18,000 effective infantry, and a few pieces of artillery.



GRANT'S FIRST PLAN OF OPERATIONS AGAINST BRAGG.

Quartermaster he declined to fill the requisition, and wrote himself a letter giving the reasons. Then as commander of the company he wrote to the Post Quartermaster an indirect way of denying his conclusions in the latter office, and so he kept on until he got himself so mixed up in his dual capacity that he would certainly have withdrawn for relief. "Well, Mr. Bragg," said the latter, after looking over the matter a little, "you have quarreled with every office in the army, and you are quarreling with yourself; I cannot help you."

tion they could. Harbit was on the alert, however, and sent his cavalry out, which met Chamberlain at Byhalia and handed him so roughly that he was only able to rally his force many miles

remained at Bear Creek, where his cavalry could throw itself across Sherman's path. This division, however, was exceedingly light weight to encounter such veteran infantrymen as Sherman had at his command. After several sharp little fights Lee saw the futility of wasting his men and withdrew to the mountain. Chamberlain's escape from capture by the Confederate cavalry at Collierville, but the small squad with him finally beat off the enemy, and allowed him to pursue Sherman's march that Nov. 8, he arrived at a station on the branch railroad from Decher, where he found a detachment of the Twelfth Corps, and what was much more to his liking at that juncture, 100,000 rations. The detachment of the Twelfth Corps at that point put him in touch with Grant, and made him part of the force immediately available for operations.

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The big Bragg had received was very far from being irreparable, and each first-class commander as Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Rosecrans, army from in front of Chattanooga, thrown it across Lookout Mountain, or even moved it around the nose of the mountain, and the Army of the Cumberland in its entangled condition could not have taken advantage of its absence from its front, he would have left the supplies north which for it to capture; at most it could not have gone farther than Ringgold, and would eventually have been forced to surrender. The advantages of this plan had been pointed out by the Confederate officers, and those who were opposed to Jefferson Davis made much of it. Corp'l Pike had left his camp at the Mussel Shoals, and struck across the country to Tusculum, where he had the luck to find Gen. Blair, who, in a few minutes, satisfied himself as to the messenger and the importance



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Gen. Sherman's arrival would bring from 20,000 to 40,000 more mouths, men and beasts to feed and immensely complicate the question of supplies. Also the fact that the Rebels' army, 25,000 more in Eastern Tennessee, would have to be fed from Chattanooga. Burnside had been hauling supplies from the mountains and in the pleasant Autumn months this had been a work of the utmost difficulty. Dead mules were so plentiful along the road that they were used to keep the "mule posts" by the soldiers, and full rations were an unheard of thing for the men. As the Fall rains set in the Rebels had to be content with the single track from Nashville to Bridgeport would at once become overtaxed. In the midst of his preparations for the winter, Grant received a plan of greatly increasing the capacity of his line, and sent an order to Gen. Sherman to halt Gen. Grenville M. Dodge with his division of Cavalry at Lookout Mountain, Ala., to rebuild the road from

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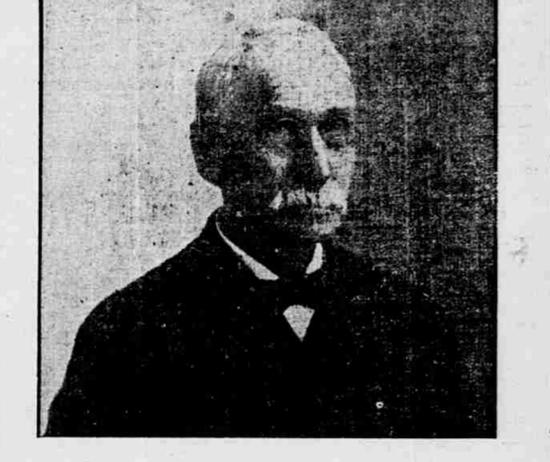
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A Grand Army Captain Praises Swamp-Root.

The following is a brief account of my army life, which I cheerfully give: I entered the service on Aug. 11, 1862, as a private, was soon promoted to Corporal, then to Sergeant, and later to the various grades of Sergeant, and still later I received a commission as Second Lieutenant, and later still as First Lieutenant in Co. K, 10th N. H. Regiment as Captain. From the time I was commissioned to Second Lieutenant to the close of the war I was in five battles and three sieges. The great battle of Fredericksburg was my first and my last was the siege of Richmond. After the second battle of Fair Oaks one other officer, myself and 16 men were all that was left of the regiment that escaped death, wounds or imprisonment, and for the following two weeks I was obliged to command the regiment for want of a ranking officer for this purpose.

The Lord very mercifully preserved me from all harm when men were falling on my right and on my left and in some cases very near to me.



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LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN FROM THE RUINED HOUSE ON CAMERON HILL.

Nashville to Deatur and Stevenson. From these points steamboats could carry supplies up the Tennessee to Chattanooga.

Gen. Grant tells us, with deep appreciation, how well Gen. Dodge performed his task:

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