Chancellorsville and Gettysburg

By JOHN McELROY.

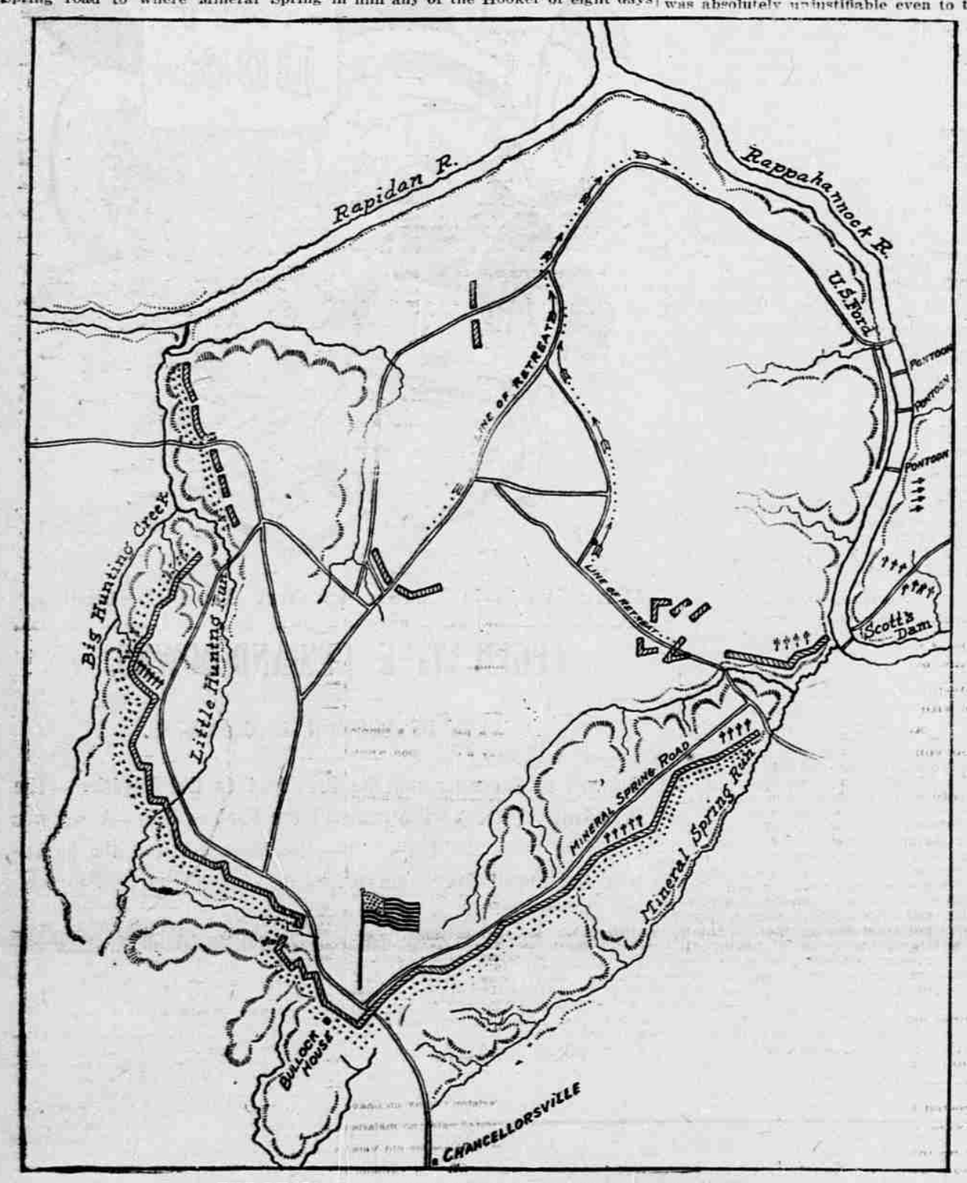
CHAPTER XI.

END OF THE BATTLE.

Hooker Concentrates and Intrenches, Leaving Sedgwick to His Fate—Sedgwick's Splendid Defensive Tactics. Hooker Calls a Council of War, and Decides to Retreat—Indignation of the Army—Sedgwick Withdraws His Corps Without Serious Molestation.

Hooker Remains Inert.

At the conclusion of the fighting on Sunday, May 3, Hooker had withdrawn all his troops into a compact, exceedingly strong position, to which his men were adding strength by industrious fortifications, throwing up lines of works and cutting trees down in front to make abatis. The left of this line followed the bluffs along the Mineral Spring road to where Mineral Spring Run emptied into the Rappahannock. The right followed a similar line of rugged elevations behind Hunting Creek to its junction with the Rapidan. The line was a rude triangle, with its base on the two rivers and its apex about three-quarters of a mile from Chancellorsville and near the Bullock House.



THE LINES BEHIND WHICH HOOKER MASSED HIS ARMY.

Following the two sides of the angle projecting toward the enemy, the distance must have been about six miles, with its base on the rivers about four miles long. Into this narrow space of four or five square miles of tangled forest Hooker had packed his entire force of 60,000 or 70,000 men, with their artillery, caissons, ammunition wagons, ambulances, pack mules and beef cattle. Here was a concentration of men equal to the extremest examples given in the European books on tactics, where as many as 10,000 men are massed on each mile of defense. Such a concentration would make a practically impregnable line, since the men would stand all along it four deep. It was what that famous "theoric" H. W. Halleck had accomplished in his absurd "Siege of Corinth," where he had massed men at the rate of 10,000 to the mile for his slow advance.

No matter what the books may say, the mere statement of such a concentration of men is in the highest degree absurd to any practical soldier. If the men were at all efficient, one-half of them would be all that was necessary to hold a line against any front attack, and more than that number be a wilful waste. When it is now known that Lee had left in front of this mighty array less than 25,000 battle-worn, exhausted troops Hooker's generalship excites derision. Common sense should have told him that, badly as his own troops had suffered, the enemy's troops must have suffered quite as severely, and the prospect of a continuance of the battle be far from agreeable to them. It speaks highly for Lee's talents for command, and also shows clearly his low opinion of Hooker, that he should have left Jackson's badly shattered corps standing up close to Hooker, feeling entirely confident that the latter would not take the opportunity to rush out and destroy it. Lee reduced the men in front of Hooker to the lowest point, in order to concentrate forces to crush and capture Sedgwick. Hooker had at least 37,000 fresh men, who had taken little or no part in the battle, who were expecting every moment to be led forward and eager to go.

Monday, May 4.

When daylight appeared on Monday, May 4, the soldiers on both sides scanned the ground in front of them with eager eyes. The Confederates saw the Yankees behind the strong line of works, rapidly adding to the strength of these by intrenchments and the cutting down of trees to make entanglements. The Confederates themselves were employed in similar works to guard against a forward movement on the part of the enemy. The tangled thickets were in a measure cleared by the trampling down of the low-growing brush in the fierce rush of the combatants and by the passage of pack mules, beef cattle and wheeled vehicles.

Both Federals and Confederates watched each other for hours without an attempt to advance except one feeble reconnoissance from our side, which met such prompt resistance that it was recalled, and with this all thought of the offensive faded from Hooker's mind. His only idea now was to save as much of his army as possible. He had crossed the river with eight days' rations, and seven days had passed. The rivers behind him were treacherous, and any sudden rain would swell them beyond their banks, making a recrossing impossible. Already they had risen until the pontoons first laid were insufficient and had to be pieced out by boats taken from the other bridges. Beyond the thought of saving that part of his army with him, Hooker did not seem able to go. He knew that Sedgwick still maintained himself on the hights above Fredericksburg, and had there been left in him any of the Hooker of eight days before undoubtedly there would have occurred to him the possibility, the brilliant prospect even, of detaching a portion of his forces and sending them upon a swift march to Sedgwick to so reinforce him that he could crush Lee and thus bring the campaign to a victorious termination. Sedgwick still held Taylor's Hill, the highest point in the neighborhood of Fredericksburg, and the new routes which had been established by the laying of the bridges at Scott's Ford reduced the distance between the two flanks of Hooker's army to five or six miles. Under any circumstances Hooker could have relied upon 15,000 or 20,000 of his men to hold the line of works which he had constructed. Had his been a military mind on the order of Grant's, Sheridan's or Hancock's, he would have put himself at the head of Reynolds's, Couch's and Meade's Corps, and made a rush for Sedgwick on the hights above Fredericksburg. This movement would have redeemed all his former misfortunes, and inevitably overwhelmed Lee in the open fields beyond Salem Church, where Hooker's great preponderance of fresh troops would have told to the utmost.

The Council of War.

While his troops were passing the day in strengthening their fortifications and waiting with tense expectancy a renewal of the fight, every crash of musketry from the nervous front lines against some movement of the enemy sending a thrill thru the hearts of the whole army, Hooker was vainly striving to come to some conclusion, and he finally decided upon a council of war, composed of his principal subordinates. When they were assembled Hooker explained to them the position of the army, and laid much stress upon the fact that they had crossed the rivers with only eight days' rations, which were now exhausted, with streams liable to torrential rises behind them, and which even then were swelling most alarmingly. With this he left the tent in which the council had assembled that the Generals might debate the matter more freely. What was said at that council will never be known, as there was no stenographic record made of it. Gen. D. N. Couch, in "Battles and Leaders," gives this account of it:

"At 12 o'clock on the night of the 4th-5th Gen. Hooker assembled his corps commanders in council. Meade, Sickles, Howard, Reynolds and myself were present. Gen. Slocum, on account of the long distance from his post, did not arrive till after the meeting was broken up. Hooker stated that his instructions compelled him to cover Washington, not to jeopardize the army, etc. It was seen by the most casual observer taht he had made up his mind to retreat. We were left by ourselves to consult, upon which Sickles made an elaborate argument, sustaining the views of the Commanding General. Meade was in favor of fighting, stating that he doubted if we could get off our guns. Howard was in favor of fighting, qualifying his views by the remark that our present situation was due to the bad conduct of his corps, or words to that effect. Reynolds, who was lying on the ground very much fatigued, was in favor of an advance. I had similar views to those of Meade as to getting off the guns, but said I 'would favor an advance if I could designate the point of attack.' Upon collecting the suffrages, Meade, Reynolds and Howard voted squarely for an advance, Sickles and myself squarely no; upon which Hooker informed the council that he should take upon himself the responsibility of retiring the army to the other side of the river. As I stepped out of the tent Reynolds, just behind me, broke out, 'What was the use of calling us together at this time of night when he intended to retreat anyhow?'"

Indignation in the Army.

Gen. Couch but faintly expresses the deep indignation which pervaded all ranks of the army when the news that Hooker had decided to retreat ran thru the camps like wildfire. The men could see absolutely no reason in it. They were not conscious of defeat; in fact, nobody had been really whipped except a small portion of the Eleventh Corps, and the remainder of that corps was particularly anxious to renew the fight in order to wipe out the shame of the surprise and rout. Sickles's and Slocum's Corps, which had done very much the most of the fighting, felt entirely satisfied with themselves and the way they had handled the enemy, tho they were not a little incensed at Hooker's failure to reinforce them, supply them with ammunition, and hold the ground which they had gained. While it is true they had yielded much ground to the enemy, they felt there was no reason for this, and that very ordinary generalship would have secured it. The surrender of the key-point at Hazel Grove was absolutely unjustifiable even to the common soldier. Every success which the enemy had gained had been by the superiority of generalship on his side and a woeful deficiency on ours. They could hear Sedgwick's guns thundering above Fredericksburg, and felt it recreant for them to retreat and allow Lee to throw his whole force upon one corps and annihilate it. The First and Fifth Corps, which had not been engaged, or only slightly, felt that disappointment which comes to men who have nerved themselves up to a great deed and then are not permitted to achieve it. They had all been looking forward for months to a decisive victory over the enemy which would possibly end the war, and now that that victory was within their very grasp why not put forth their hands and seize it?

There was one powerful influence animating the corps commanders in the council which Gen. Couch does not mention. This was their profound distrust of Hooker as a commander in battle. He had shown such incapacity in actual attack upon the enemy that none of them could cherish any hopes of success with him at the head of the army. He would not make the necessary dispositions himself nor permit his subordinates to do so. It is possible that if he had been absolutely incapacitated Couch or Reynolds would, assuming command, have directed an offensive movement which would have at least cleared the enemy from our front, and put the army in a good position for a further movement of this character. They would certainly have done something to relieve the pressure upon Sedgwick by giving Lee something else to think about than the capture of the Sixth Corps. Couch and the others were, however, afraid to assume any responsibility lest Hooker should recover from his torpor, countermand what they had done, and still further injure the prospects of the army.

Col. Bates's Explanation.

Col. Samuel P. Bates, of Pennsylvania, who was Hooker's literary executor, gives this statement of the situation:

"Gen. Hooker felt that to advance upon these intrenchments would be the Burnside-Fredericksburg problem over again and even worse, for there the open ground gave the utmost freedom for manuvering troops. Besides, a treacherous stream was behind him that in a few hours could be flooded by the Spring rains, which were even now threatening, and might carry away his frail bridges, his only avenue to the north bank. Should his communications be interrupted, with his rations nearly exhausted, the safety of his army might seriously be compromised. In view of his instructions to cover Washington, and of President Lincoln's emphasized advice in his letter giving him command of the army, 'Beware of rashness—beware of rashness,' it was Gen. Hooker's decided conviction that the wisest course to pursue was to withdraw his army from its present position, and to make entirely new combinations for another campaign, rather than to trust to the fortunes of battle with the odds so strongly against him. He laid matters before his corps commanders, with a statement of his instructions, and sought their counsel. There was some difference of opinion among them, Gen. Meade holding that the enemy would not permit a withdrawal, and Gen. Howard voting to remain and try to give battle, that an opportunity might be given for redeeming the mishaps in the previous fighting; but all substantially agreeing that a retrograde movement should be made if it could be safely effected. The order was accordingly issued on the morning of the 5th to make preparations to withdraw. As a precautionary measure Gen. Warren and Capt. Comstock were directed to lay out a new and contracted line, covering the approaches to the bridges, and new and direct roads were opened from the position of the different corps to the ford. 'A continuous cover and abatis was constructed,' says Gen. Warren, 'from the Rappahannock, at Scott's Dam, around to the mouth of Hunting Run, or the Rapidan, a distance of three miles. The roads were also put in order and a third bridge laid.' But no troops occupied this new line, except the rear guard, which was not until daylight of the 6th, when the passage of the river was nearly completed."

The Comte de Paris's View.

The Comte de Paris gives this result of his study of the situation of Hooker and his army:

"From the time that it had fallen back upon the works of the Bullock clearing until evening this army had remained inactive in the positions it had chosen. The divisions that had just been in action were enjoying a well-merited rest; the others were wondering at the inaction to which they were doomed. This astonishment increased when, toward evening, Sedgwick's cannon were heard thundering in the distance; and when night came without any order having been issued everyone understood that the blow which had prostrated Hooker had paralyzed the whole army. This night was passed in a state of immobility by the combatants of both parties. When daylight appeared on Monday, May 4, it found them almost everywhere fronting and mutually watching each other, but both hesitating alike to assume the offensive. During the night Hooker had been fully informed of the situation of the Sixth Corps by Warren, who had left it after the battle of Salem Church. The latter, whilst proceeding in the direction of Banks's Ford, had found a little further down, at Scott's Ford, the two pontoon bridges erected by Gen. Benham and the Engineer Brigade, with 34 pieces of ordnance placed in a prominent position along the left bank, so as to command the ford. If at this moment Hooker had been in possession of all his faculties he would no doubt have conceived and executed the simple and effective movement which he does not appear to have thought of until after the campaign, when he had recovered from his wound. As we have already stated, he could have sent a portion of his army to the aid of Sedgwick by way of the bridges, thus affording him the means for delivering a decisive battle on the 4th in an open country, while the rest of the Federal troops, occupying strong positions, would have sufficed to retain an important fraction of Lee's forces around Chancellorsville. Instead of a promise of reinforcements or co-operation, instead of positive instructions regarding the role he was about to be called upon to play, Sedgwick only received a dispatch from Warren informing him that Hooker was waiting for the attack of the enemy in his positions, and directing him not to assume the offensive. By a singular contradiction the General-in-Chief, while recommending him, on the one hand, to preserve his communications with both Banks's Ford and Fredericksburg, admitted, on the other hand, the probability of his recrossing the river; and being at too great a distance, as he has said, to give any precise instructions to his lieutenant, he authorized him to provide for the safety of the Sixth Corps as he thought best. Later, on the morning of the 4th, Hooker sent him several other dispatches, which simply enjoined him to maintain himself as long as possible on the right bank above the bridges of Banks's Ford, intimating the possibility of an attack by the main army upon Chancellorsville on the following day, the 5th. Even the messages did not reach their destination until after unheard-of delays, in consequence of a singular neglect in the telegraph service. Warren's dispatch, which a mounted courier could easily have brought in three hours, was not less than eight or nine hours on the road, and all those that were exchanged between Hooker and Sedgwick encountered the same fate. These delays increased still further the uncertainty which for the last three days had pervaded all the movements of the Federals."

The Army Retreats.

Col. Bates gives this description of the retirement of the army to the north side of the Rappahannock:

"It was not until 24 hours after the decision had been made to recross that the movement was fairly inaugurated, and nearly the same time had elapsed since Sedgwick had commenced to recross at Banks's Ford. The whole day of the 5th, from dawn to darkness, had been given the rebel army to concentrate and attack Gen. Hooker, had its commander been so disposed. The force which had been confronting Sedgwick could easily have come up in two or three hours, and a 15 minutes' ride would have brought Gen. Lee to Gen. Hooker's front.

"At 7:30 p. m. on the 5th the Union army began to recross the river. Scarcely had the artillery commenced to move when a sudden rise in the river, from the storm which had for several hours, since 4:30, been prevailing, interrupted the passage, the ends of the bridges on the north bank being submerged, and the strength of the current threatening to sweep all away. It was indeed a fearful night, the rushing of the waters, the pitchy darkness and the ceaseless descent of the rain combining to make it a dreary march. But Capt. Comstock was equal to the emergency, and taking up his upper bridge and using it to piece out his other two, he finally had them passable, and the retirement was resumed. Gen. Meade, who was charged with covering the movement, brought his rear guard into the new line at a little after daylight, and by 8 in the morning of the 6th the last of the army was across without the loss of men or material or the firing of a gun, the enemy refusing to follow or to attempt the interruption of the progress. Thus was ended eight eventful days in the life of the Army of the Potomac."

Gen. Couch's Account.

Gen. Couch says:

"On the morning of May 5 corps commanders were ordered to cut roads, where it was necessary, leading from their position to the United States Ford. During the afternoon there was a very heavy rainfall. In the meantime Hooker had in person crossed the river, but as he gave orders for the various corps to march at such and such times during the night, I am not aware that any of his corps Generals knew of his departure. Near midnight I got a note from Meade informing me that Gen. Hooker was on the other side of the river, which had risen over the bridges, and that communication was cut off from him. I immediately rode over to Hooker's headquarters, and found that I was in command of the army, if it had any commander. Gen. Hunt, of the artillery, had brought the information as to the condition of the bridges, and from the reports there seemed to be no danger of losing them entirely. After a short conference with Meade I told him that the recrossing would be suspended, and that 'we would stay where we were and fight it out,' returning to my tent with the intention of enjoying what I had not had since the night of the 30th ult.—a good sleep—but at 2 a. m., communication having been re-established, I received a sharp message from Hooker to order the recrossing of the army as he had directed, and everything was safely transferred to the north bank of the Rappahannock.

"In looking for the causes of the loss of Chancellorsville, the primary ones were that Hooker expected Lee to fall back without risking battle. Finding himself mistaken, he assumed the defensive, and was outgeneraled and became demoralized by the superior tactical boldness of the enemy."

Sedgwick's Brilliant Defense.

While Hooker was lying inert all day Monday, Gen. Sedgwick and his men passed the day in the greatest anxiety. Sedgwick's losses in the fight had been severe, reaching to the neighborhood of 5,000 men, which left him less than 18,000 to hold a line five or six miles in length and to confront the whole of Lee's army. The position was not naturally strong, and the lightness of the line made it dangerously easy for the enemy to break thru at some point on its great length. The weather was intensely hot, but the men, weary as they were from days of marching and fighting, exerted themselves in fortifying as best they could. There was almost desperation in this, since it was understood that Hooker had left the corps to its fate, and would do nothing to assist it. Sedgwick's line was in the shape of a horseshoe, with its flanks resting on the river and covering the bridges which had been laid at Banks's Ford. Howe's Division faced east toward Fredericksburg, with his left stretched out to the commanding hight of Taylor's Hill, which it was felt should be held at all hazards, not only to protect the crossing at Banks's Ford, but to be a point of vantage should Hooker decide to transfer his army thither and renew his advance upon Fredericksburg. In front of Howe's Division was Early, who had recovered Marye's Hights and advanced with the intention of cutting off Sedgwick from the river. Newton's Division, with Russell's Brigade, faced to the westward, and confronted McLaws's Division across Colin Run. Brooks's two other brigades, those of Barlett and Torbert, faced to the south, where they opposed Anderson's Division. Thus the entire line was unduly long and dangerously thin. Its greatest advantage was that it was generally on high ground, with open fields in front, which compelled the enemy to make a very much longer line of envelopment and greatly retarded his preparations for attack. In spite of Lee's urgency, the whole day was spent before he could get his men into position for the assault. The Confederates had their contretemps as well as we, and Lee was still further embarrassed by two of Early's Brigades firing into one another and making a great deal of confusion before the mistake could be found and rectified.

Among other preparations made by the Confederates were bringing up guns to fire upon Banks's Ford and marking the ranges for them so that they could kee pup the fire during the night. A good deal of skirmishing went on during the day, while Lee was arranging his troops and ours were busy fortifying, and Early made one serious assault in an attempt to turn Howe's left and cut off Sedgwick from the river. Howe had received timely notice of this, and carefully reconnoitered the ground in his front, making adequate preparations to meet the attack. He threw out one line, composed of Gen. Neill's Brigade, strengthened by two regiments from Grant's Vermont Brigade, to hold the reserve in hiding behind the tall weeds. About 5 o'clock Early advanced with a strong line of battle directed against Howe's left and center, but it encountered such a terrible fire that it was broken, and at an opportune time Howe advanced his right, taking a large number of prisoners, among them 21 officers and nearly all of the men of the 8th La. He then withdrew to a still stronger line in the rear with Butler's Artillery, and the rest of the Vermont Brigade joined him. The enemy renewed the attack, but was again struck in flank by the splendid Vermonters, aided by the fire of the artillery, and retreated in considerable disorder. Darkness came on, but soon a bright moon arose, and Howe claims that not an enemy could be seen between him and the hights of Fredericksburg. What had contributed much to this result was the admirable handling of Howe's artillery, in charge of Maj. J. Watts de Peyster. He had planted one of his batteries considerably in advance of the main line, with several regiments in ambush, and when Hays's and Hoke's Brigades made a rush to capture it the regiments rose up and delivered a withering fire directly in the face of the enemy, which sent them back precipitately.

The Last Attack Fails.

Gen. Lee had planned for a general attack at 6 o'clock, with three guns to be the signal and the main blow to be delivered in the center against the brigades of Bartlett and Torbert. By this he hoped to separate the two wings of the corps and throw them off in different directions, and by a rapid dash toward Banks's Ford capture the corps in a body. The attack was not made with the spirit that had characterized the earlier assaults. Lee's men were worn out by the days of continual fighting, and Torbert and Bartlett, with the aid of the artillery, easily repulsed the assault, not needing the help of Wheaton's Brigade, which Sedgwick hurried up to their assistance. The attack ended as darkness came on. Sedgwick then directed Newton, who had a high standing as an engineer, to select a shorter line in the rear upon which to withdraw the troops. The retirement was made in excellent order, with Gen. D. A. Russell covering the retreat. The enemy followed closely, yelling and firing, with Russell facing his troops about and firing volleys when the pursuers came too close. A strong line was taken up, with Newton on the right, Brooks next and Howe joining to continue the line to the river. The ground was somewhat lower, and the movement was hidden from the enemy by the customary fog, which rose to vail the position of the Union troops, while on the higher ground the enemy stood out in the full moonlight. The new line was covered by 35 guns placed on the bluff on the other side of the river. The enemy's scouts were active, however, and pushed up close to the line, threw up rockets to indicate its position to their artillery, which began a noisy but harmless shelling.

Sedgwick was in a desperate quandary, but Benham, who was his classmate, strongly advised him not to recross the river without Hooker's express orders, nor without the whole of his corps. This Sedgwick decided to do. An order finally came which authorized Sedgwick to cross at Banks's Ford, so as to be within supporting distance of the main army, and upon this Sedgwick acted. The crossing of the river was made in good order, with little annoyance from the enemy, tho he kept up a continual shelling of the bridges. When the last of the men were crossing the bridge Sedgwick received an order from Hooker countermanding that to cross, but it was then too late. As the troops could not regain their former position before daylight, when their movements would be exposed to the enemy, Sedgwick put his command into camp on the north side of the river, leaving an adequate force to guard the crossings.

(To be continued.)

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18th Mass.

Editor National Tribune: Please give a short history of the 18th Mass. and oblige one who cannot do without your valuable paper.—K. F. Wright, Jessamine, Fla.

The 18th Mass. was organized at Readville and Boston from August, 1861, to January, 1862, and was mustered out Sept. 2, 1864, the recruits being consolidated with the 32d Mass. It was commanded by Col. James Barnes, a West Point graduate, who was promoted Nov. 29, 1862, to Brigadier-General, succeeded by Col. Joseph Hayes, promoted May 12 to the same rank. At the time of muster-out the regiment was commanded by Lieut.-Col. Wm. B. White. It belonged to Griffin's Division, Fifth Corps, and lost 123 killed and 129 from disease, etc.—Editor National Tribune.

The 7th Conn.

Editor National Tribune: To settle a dispute I wish you would give me a short history of the 7th Conn., its number of battles, the men it lost, and the part it took on Morris Island and in the capture of Fort Wagner.—Thomas Smith, East Killingly, Conn.

The 7th Conn. was organized at New Haven, Sept. 13, 1861, and the original members mustered out, with the veterans and recruits retained until July 20, 1865. The first Colonel was Alfred H. Terry, promoted to Brigadier-General, April 25, 1862, succeeded by Joseph R. Hawley, also promoted to Brigadier-General, Sept. 17, 1864, and Col. S. S. Atwell was in command of the regiment when it was mustered out. It belonged to the Tenth Corps, served nearly all its time in the Department of the South, and saw much severe service around Charleston. It had four companies in the assault on Fort Wagner, where they displayed unusual gallantry. Out of 191 officers and men, 103 were killed, wounded, or missing. It lost still more heavily at Drewry's Bluff, and took part in the successful assault upon Fort Fisher. Out of the total enlistment of 1,657, it lost 168 killed, or 10.1 per cent. The total of killed and wounded was 598, while 68 died in Andersonville and other prisons.—Editor National Tribune.

3d Ill. Cav., 130th Ill. and 3d Ark. Cav.

Editor Nataional Tribune: Please give a short history of these regiments. I served in two of them.—I. L. Koonce, Greenville, Ill.

A short history of the 3d Ill. Cav. was prepared for publication a few weeks ago, and if it has not yet appeared, will shortly.

The 130th Ill. was organized at Camp Butler, Oct. 25, 1862, and mustered out Aug. 15, 1865. It was commanded by Col. Nathaniel Niles, who resigned Dec. 5, 1863; succeeded by Lieut-Col. James H. Matheny, who also resigned July 5, 1865. The command then fell upon Lieut.-Col. John B. Reid, who retained it until the regiment was mustered out. It belonged to A. J. Smith's Division, Thirteenth Corps, and lost 20 killed and 157 from disease, etc.

The 3d Ark. Cav. was organized at Little Rock in February, 1864, and mustered out June 30, 1865. It was commanded all thru its service by Col. Abraham H. Ryan.—Editor National Tribune.

118th Ohio.

Editor National Tribune: Please give a short history of the 118th Ohio.—Noah Sager, Fostoria, Ohio.

The 118th Ohio was organized at Cincinnati and Camp Mansfield from September to November, 1862, and mustered out June 24, 1865. It was commanded by Col. Samuel R. Mott, who resigned Feb. 10, 1864, succeeded by Lieut.-Col. Thos. L. Young, who was discharged Sept. 14, 1864. At the time of muster-out the regiment was under the command of Leiut.-Col. Edgar Sowers. It belonged to Hascall's Division, Twenty-Third Corps, and lost 56 killed and 128 from disease, etc.—Editor National Tribune.

12th Iowa.

Editor National Tribune: Please give a short sketch of the 12th Iowa.—John S. Mason, Sawtelle, Cal.

The 12th Iowa was organized at Dubuque, Nov. 25, 1861, and finally mustered out Jan. 20, 1866. It was commanded by Col. Joseph Jackson Wood, who retained the same until the expiration of his term of service, Nov. 22, 1864. Lieut.-Col. John H. Stibbs, promoted to Colonel Sept. 18, 1865, then took command and was at the head of the regiment at the time of final muster-out. It belonged to Tuttle's Division, Fifteenth Corps, and lost 80 killed and 268 from disease, etc.—Editor National Tribune.

The 2d Mass. Cav.

Editor National Tribune: Please give me a short history of the 2d Mass. Cav., and if any of my Co. E, boys are living, would like to hear from them, especially Alvin Hamilton.—Jos. Forst, 841 W. Lexington St., Baltimore, Md.

The 2d Mass. Cav. was organized from Dec. 10, 1862, to June 20, 1863, companies A, E, F, L and M, at San Francisco, H, at Boston, and B, C, D and I, at Readville, Mass., and was mustered out July 20, 1865. It was commanded by Col. Chas. R. Lowell, of the Regular Army, who died Oct. 19, 1864, of wounds received at Cedar Creek, succeeded by Col. Casper Crowninghield, who was discharged June 16, 1865. At the time of muster-out Maj. Archibald McKendry was in command. Private Philip B. Baybutt received a medal of honor from the Secretary of War. The 2d Mass. Cav. belonged to Merritt's Division, Cavalry Corps, and lost 90 killed and 141 from disease etc.—Editor National Tribune.

The 57th Ill.

Editor National Tribune: Will you please give a short history of the 57th Ill.? I would like to hear from some of the boys, if not all dead.—S. K. Heffelman, Floris, Iowa.

The 57th Ill. was organized in Chicago in December, 1861, and finally mustered out July 7, 1865. It was first commanded by Col. Silas D. Baldwin, who was dismissed March 26, 1863, followed by Col. Frederick J. Hurlburt, drowned in Chicago River April 27, 1865. At the time of muster-out Lieut.-Col. Frederick A. Battey had command. It belonged to Corse's Division, Sixteenth Corps, and lost 112 killed and 16 from disease, etc.—Editor National Tribune.

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