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Patriot Union

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The Patriot & Union.

TUESDAY MORNING, APRIL 7, 1863.

OFFICIAL REPORT OF GEN. McCLELLAN.

INCLUDING HIS MILITARY OPERATIONS FROM THE TIME OF THE EVACUATION OF HARRISBURG TO THE CLOSE OF THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM, WHEN LEE WAS DRIVEN OUT OF MARYLAND.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, October 15, 1862.

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit a preliminary report of the military operations under my charge since the evacuation of Harrisburg's Landing.

main bodies of the right wing and centre passed through Frederick. In this city the manifestations of Union feeling were abundant and gratifying.

While at Frederick, on the 13th, I obtained reliable information of the movement and intentions of the enemy, which made it clear that it was necessary to force the passage of the South Mountain range, and gain possession of Boonsboro and Rohrersville before any relief could be afforded to Harper's Ferry.

pression between the crest and the adjoining hill, was fully successful. Ricketts's division pressed up the mountain about 5 p. m., arriving at the crest with the left of his command in time to participate in the closing scene of the engagement.

The carrying of Crampton's Pass by Frank-land was executed rapidly and decisively. Stonum's division was formed upon the right of the road leading through the right of the gap, Smith's upon the left.

peat what I have observed in reporting upon the other subjects of this communication, that I attempt in this preliminary report nothing more than a sketch of the main features of this great engagement, reserving for my official report, based upon the reports of the corps commanders, that full description of details which shall place upon record the achievements of individuals and particular bodies of troops.

The morning of the 16th (during which there was considerable artillery firing) was spent in obtaining information as to the ground, rectifying the position of the troops, and perfecting the arrangements for the attack.

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I do not learn that any of these messengers succeeded in reaching Harper's Ferry. I should have stated that on the 12th I was directed to assume command of the garrison at Harper's Ferry, but this order reached me after all communication with the garrison was cut off.

I directed artillery to be frequently fired by our advanced guards as a signal to the garrison that relief was at hand. This was done, and I learn that our firing was distinctly heard at Harper's Ferry, and that they were thus made aware that we were approaching rapidly.

In the absence of the full reports of corps commanders, a simple outline of the brilliant operations which resulted in the carrying of the two passes through the South Mountain is all that can be given with justice to the corps and commanders engaged, be furnished.

The carrying of Crampton's Pass, five or six miles below, was also important to crush the means of teaching the flank movement, direct relations to the attack on the principal pass, while it at the same time presented the most direct practicable route for the relief of Harper's Ferry.

Richardson's division of Sumner's corps, passing Boonsboro and Kedsyville, found a few miles beyond the town the enemy's forces displayed in line of battle, strong both in respect to numbers and position, and awaiting attack.

On the 16th the enemy had slightly changed their line and were posted upon the heights in the rear of the Antietam and in front of the road from Sharpsburg to Hagerstown, and protected by woods and other irregularities of the ground.

Paré's brigade, of Hatch's division, was sent—some portion up around the road, to turn the hill on the left, while the remainder advanced at sharpshooters up the hill, and occupied a position supported by Doubleday's and Phelps's brigades.

On the morning of the 16th I was informed by Union civilians living on the side of the mountains that the enemy were retreating in the greatest haste and in disordered masses to the river. There was such a concurrence of testimony on this point that there seemed no doubt as to the fact.

As soon as it was definitely known that the enemy had abandoned the mountains, the cavalry and the corps of Sumner, Hooker and Mansfield were ordered to pursue them, via the turn-pike and Boonsboro, as promptly as possible.

The cavalry advance overtook a body of the enemy's cavalry at Boonsboro, which it dispersed, after a brief skirmish, killing and wounding many, taking some two hundred and fifty prisoners and two guns.

On arriving at the front in the afternoon, I found but two divisions (Richardson's and Sykes') in position. The rest were halted in the rear of Richardson. After a rapid examination of the position I found that it was too late to attack that day, and at once directed locations to be selected for our batteries of position, and indicated the bivouacs for the bivouacs, massing them near and on both sides of the Sharpsburg pike.

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In proceeding to a narrative of the events of this and the succeeding day, I must here re-

peat what I have observed in reporting upon the other subjects of this communication, that I attempt in this preliminary report nothing more than a sketch of the main features of this great engagement, reserving for my official report, based upon the reports of the corps commanders, that full description of details which shall place upon record the achievements of individuals and particular bodies of troops.

The condition of things on the night towards the middle of the afternoon, notwithstanding the success wrested from the enemy by the stubborn bravery of the troops, was at this time unpromising. Sumner's, Hooker's and Mansfield's corps had lost heavily, several general officers having been carried from the field.

Burnside's corps, consisting of Wilcox's, Sturges' and Rodman's divisions, and Cox's Kanawha division, was entrusted with the difficult task of carrying the bridge across the Antietam, near Rohrback's farm, and assaulting the enemy's right, the order having been communicated to him at 10 o'clock a. m.

The valley of the Antietam, and near the bridge, is narrow, with high banks. On the right of the stream the bank is wooded and commands the approaches both to the bridge and the ford. The steep slopes of the bank were lined with rifle pits, and breastworks of rails and stones.

The advance of the troops brought on an obstinate and sanguinary contest, and from the great natural advantages of the position it was near one o'clock before the heights on the right bank were carried. At about 3 o'clock p. m. the corps again advanced with success, the right driving the enemy before it, and pushing on nearly to Sharpsburg, with the left after a hard encounter, also compelling the enemy to retire before it.

During the whole day our artillery was everywhere bravely and ably handled. Indeed, I cannot speak too highly of the efficiency of our batteries, and the great service they rendered. On more than one occasion, when our infantry was broken, they covered its re-formation and drove back the enemy.

The signal corps, under Major Meyer, rendered during the operations at Antietam, as at South Mountain, an efficient and valuable service. Indeed, by its services here, as on other fields elsewhere, this corps has gallantly earned its title to an independent and permanent organization.

a footing within it on the other. Under the depression of previous reverses, we had achieved victory over an adversary invested with the prestige of former successes and inflated with a recent triumph. Our forces slept that night conquerors on a field won by their valor, and covered with the dead and wounded of the enemy.

The night, however, presented serious questions; morning brought with it grave responsibilities. To renew the attack again on the 18th, or defer it, with the chance of the enemy's retirement after a day of suspense, were the questions before me. A careful and anxious survey of the condition of my command, and my knowledge of the enemy's force and position, failed to impress me with any reasonable certainty of success if I renewed the attack without reinforcing columns.

During the 18th orders were given for a renewal of the attack at daylight on the 19th. On the night of the 18th the enemy, after having been passed troops in the latter part of the day from the Virginia shore to their position behind Sharpsburg, as seen by our officers, suddenly formed the design of abandoning their line. This movement they executed before daylight.

While it gives me pleasure to speak of the gallantry and devotion of the officers and men generally displayed through this conflict, I feel it necessary to mention that some of the officers and men skulked from their places until the battle was over. Death on the spot must hereafter be the fate of all such cowards, and the hands of the military commanders must be strengthened with all the power of the Government to inflict it summarily.

Under the same circumstances, had the besieging force on the Virginia side at Harper's Ferry not been withdrawn, I would have had 35,000 or 40,000 men sent to encounter the Antietam, and must have destroyed or captured all opposed to me. As it was, I had to engage an army fresh from a recent and, to them, great victory, and to reap the disadvantage of their being freshly and plentifully supplied with ammunition and supplies.

The objects and results of this brief campaign may be summed up as follows: In the beginning of the month of September, the safety of the National Capitol was seriously endangered by the presence of a victorious enemy, who soon after crossed into Maryland, and there, directly between Washington and Baltimore, they encamped the gill of a loyal State and threatened an invasion of Pennsylvania.

Thirteen guns and 39 colors, more than 15,000 stand of small arms, and more than 6,000 prisoners, were the trophies which attest the success of our arms. Reading thanks to Divine Providence for his blessing upon our exertions, I close this brief report. I beg only to add the hope that the army's efforts for the cause in which we are engaged will be deemed worthy to receive the commendation of the government and the country.

Gen. D. D. McCLELLAN, Major General U. S. Army. Brigadier General L. Thomas, Adjutant General United States Army.

COMPARISONS.—It is useless to deny that the masses of the people have a deep seated and settled confidence in "Sarsaparilla" as an alternative remedy. Notwithstanding this confidence has of late years been shaken by many preparations claiming to possess its virtues but really with none at all, still the people believe in its intrinsic value as a remedy, because they have known of its cures. The rage for large bottles at low prices, has called into market many compounds of Sarsaparilla which contain scarcely any of it, or even any medicinal virtues whatever. Yet everybody knows that Sarsaparilla is the great subtle antidote for Scrofula, Eruptions and cutaneous diseases, and for the purification of the blood, when they can get the real article, or an actual extract of it. Such we are now able to inform them they can obtain. Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., the celebrated chemists of the East, whose reputation assures us they do not sell whatever they undertake, are selling a Compound Extract of Sarsaparilla, which, although the bottles do not contain quite a quart, do contain more of actual curative power than whole gallons of the stuff which have been in use. It is ascertained that one bottle of Ayer's Sarsaparilla contains more than double the amount of medicinal virtue, which is afforded by any other. This fact is not only apparent to the taste, but its efficacy and cures afford incontrovertible proof that it is true. Such a remedy has been long sought for, and is every where needed by all classes of our community. ["Age," Cynthia, Ky.]