

# Democrat and Sentinel.

THE BLESSINGS OF GOVERNMENT, LIKE THE DEWS OF HEAVEN, SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED ALIKE, UPON THE HIGH AND THE LOW, THE RICH AND THE POOR.

NEW SERIES.

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## The Peninsula Campaign.

As a *President's Officer Says of it*—The *Great Fight in Front of Richmond*.—A *General's Military Sketch*—*Memoirs of a Staff Officer of the Confederate Army*.—*How it Would Have Been Accomplished*.—*McDowell Had Killed McClellan*.—*Special Tribute to "Little Mac"*.

The following narrative is taken from an officer of rank in the rebel service, who recently went to Europe to recruit his health. The author was one of the eminent professional soldiers who organized the Southern army, in which he held an important command until a few weeks ago, when a severe illness induced him to seek a furlough. A foreigner by birth, he passed many years in this country, and was from personal knowledge and experience. The great military science he describes with so graphic and vivid a pen, he witnessed from first to last.

*Extract from the Kolyvian Zeitung* (Greece Gazette) of the 25th, 26th and 27th November.

THE EVACUATION OF YORKTOWN.

Upon the approach of the terrible Union armada we were forced to abandon our position on the peninsula at Yorktown, and after we had partially spiked our guns, we drew back to our defensive positions at Williamsburg, so as at that point to cover our capital, Richmond, by throwing up strong fortified works, and perfecting a compact military formation. McClellan, the commanding general of the Union troops, did not allow himself to be so deceived by our voluntary withdrawal from our position at Yorktown as to regard us as a beaten army, but with great energy and skill continued the disembarkation of his troops and began to fortify his position. It was not until he had completed his preliminary preparations that he advanced with hostile demonstrations against our line. The lines at Williamsburg were also given up by us without any great resistance, although it was very difficult to persuade the old fighting General Magruder of the propriety of the step, for he had loved the position as a father loves his child; and, to tell the truth, all the fortifications had been constructed with much talent under his personal direction. The hard-headed old soldier was won over only after repeated debate and expostulation. At length, however, after a few cavalry officers, the place was evacuated by our troops, and we took up our march, in two columns, for Richmond.

THE FURIOUS PANIC IN RICHMOND.

In the meanwhile the most fearful panic fell upon Richmond, and all who could possibly get away packed up everything they had and fled southward. The nearer the hostile approached, the city the fiercer the tumult and uproar became. The burning waves of popular alarm could not be stayed. The government itself feared the confusion. Instead of resolving to triumph or to fall with the army in front of Richmond, it at once ordered all the different bureaus to pack up, and despatched the officers of ordinance to empty the magazines and convey their stores further south. Even President Davis took to the road and hastened, with his wife and children, to North Carolina. As may be readily divine, this loss of presence of mind threw the people at large into the most frantic excess of terror. There was nothing on all sides but shouting and uproar, and confusion reached its utmost height. The secret police of Gen. Winler had lost all control. The civil authorities of Richmond were anxious to do something, but knew not what, and lost their senses. A small number of the Baltimore rabble took advantage of the hubbub, and, in public meeting, passed resolutions condemning Richmond to immediate secession as soon as the Union troops should enter it. Yet all who could escape did so. The sick and wounded were carried further into the interior, many public and private buildings were marked out for destruction, and, in short, a frightful catastrophe seemed to be impending over the Southern capital.

REBEL TROOPS SUMMONED FROM ALL QUARTERS.

At this most critical moment the General-in-Chief commanding our forces (Stoneman) was wounded at the battle of Seven Pines, and the command fell into the able hands of General Lee, who was exactly the man to bring quiet and order again out of this unreasonable chaos. He went to work with great zeal and energy to discharge his onerous task. All disposable troops were hastily summoned from all quarters: General Stoneman's army corps was ordered to Richmond; all the hospitals were closed for the moment and preparations made for ten thousand wounded men; artillery and ammunition wagons rattled by day and night through the streets, while aids and orderlies galloped to and fro in wild hurry-scurry with their dispatches. Masses of troops came pouring in daily, yes, hourly, but without music or any other military pomp. Sterily and silently those ragged, half-starved swarms of men moved onward through the thoroughfares; but the fire in their eyes showed that they were determined to defend their freedom or to perish.

## A GREAT COUNCIL OF WAR.

On the 25th of June another great council of war was held. It was assembled nearly all that was eminent in the Confederate Army. There stood like a rock General Lee, going cheerfully over the countenances of his comrades, for each of whom he had a part already assigned. Thoughtfully his eyes wandered from one to the other, as though he wished to stamp the features of each upon his memory, with the feeling that he, perhaps, should never behold many of them again. Close beside him towered the knightly form of General Baldwin: at his left leaned pensively Stoneman; Jackson, the idol of his troops, impatiently swinging his sabre to and fro, as though the quiet room were too narrow for him, and he were longing to be once more at the head of his columns. A little and quietly stood the two Hills, arm in arm, while in front of them old Gen. Wise was energetically speaking. Further to the right stood Generals Hunter, Longstreet, Branch, Anderson, Whiting, Ripley and Magruder in a group. When all these generals had assembled General Lee laid his plans before them, and in a few stirring words pointed out to each his allotted task. The scheme had already been elaborated. It was compact, concentrated action, and the result could not fail to be brilliant.

## THE ADVANTAGE WITH THE CONFEDERATE—MCCLELLAN'S FINE POSITION.

When the conference terminated all shook hands and hastened away to their respective army corps, to enter upon immediate activity. Now, in looking at the positions of the two armies, it will be seen that unquestionably the advantage was with the Southern host: for General McClellan and his forces necessarily on both sides of the Chickahominy, and owing to the many ravines in his neighborhood, could not without great difficulty and much loss of time execute his military movements. His front line reached over a distance of more than twenty miles, in the form of a semi-circle, extending from the James river towards Richmond and Ashland. While one part of his army crossed the Chickahominy, he took position with the main body on the north side of the river, from Meadow bridge to Bottom bridge. The heights on the banks of the stream were fortified so that his army, notwithstanding the great length of its lines, had excellent defensive cover.

## STONEMAN'S OPERATIONS—BATTLE AT HANOVER COURT HOUSE.

On the 26th of June, in the morning, our troops took up their positions. Jackson hastened by forced marches to Ashland, there to commence his outflanking operations against the enemy. Having arrived there his advance guard drove in the weakly posted foe, and pushed on without loss of time to Hanover Court House, where he threw forward General Branch's brigade between the Chickahominy and Pamunkey rivers, to establish a junction with General Hill, (first) who had to cross the stream at Meadow bridge. General Hill very gallantly opened the offensive and began his operations against the little town of Mechanicsville. The enemy who were stationed here made a brave resistance. Storming attacks were made again and again with a fury, and as often repelled with a cool determination, that awakened admiration. In vain did General Hill send his aids in quest of General Branch. The latter had encountered so many topographical difficulties that he reached his position in front of Mechanicsville only late at night, when the conflict was at an end. The morning of the 27th had scarcely begun to dawn ere our artillery opened a tremendous fire upon the enemy's front, so that the latter, when they also saw Branch's brigade advancing to the attack on their right, abandoned their position at Mechanicsville and fell back fighting, upon their second defensive line, farther down the stream. Just at the moment when he had established the crossing of the Chickahominy arrived General Longstreet's magnificent army corps—old, experienced veterans of the Army of the Potomac—and the division of General Hill (second). At once the order to advance was given all along the line. The divisions of General Hill (second), Anderson and Whiting formed

the centre, and moved towards Coal Harbor, while Jackson, Hill (first) and Longstreet formed the left, and marched down along the bank of the river. Magruder, commanding the right wing, was on account of the swampy nature of the ground he occupied, ordered to hold himself merely on the defensive. General Wise took command of Fort Darling on the James river.

## MCCLELLAN'S INACTIVITY—GENERAL ATTACK ORDERED.

All these military offensive operations and the two preceding fights must have given General McClellan knowledge of our intention to change our inconvenient position at Richmond, and to procure for ourselves more space and freedom of motion. He should, then, have instantly ordered the army corps of General McDowell, which for four months had lain inactive near Fredericksburg, to make a demonstration along the Richmond road. By such a movement even the flank march of General Jackson would have been rendered impracticable. But General McClellan must have been deceived in the character of General McDowell: for, notwithstanding all the communications in reference to our combined manoeuvres, the latter remained with imperturbable indifference in his secure position, and left General McClellan's army, which had suffered greatly by sickness and desertion, a prey to the heavy concessions of our attack. Scarcely, therefore, had General Lee received reliable intelligence of McDowell's inactivity than a general and simultaneous attack on McClellan's whole line was resolved upon. So soon as the arrival of General Jackson at Coal Harbor was reported, the Commander-in-Chief, with his staff, repaired to Gaines' Mill and ordered the divisions of Anderson, Hill (first), Longstreet and Pickett to attack. Before these columns got into motion the thunder of artillery on our left announced that General Jackson was already at work. This called forth in our troops the utmost enthusiasm.

## BATTLE OF GAINES' MILL—HEROISM OF THE IRISH BRIGADE—A FINE MILITARY PICTURE.

General McClellan's position on that day was remarkable in the highest degree. With one portion of his troops he had crossed to the south side of the Chickahominy, and there confronted Magruder, while, with the larger portion of his force, he had taken up a position more to the rear and nearer to the railroad, where he was resolved to accept battle. His dispositions revealed comprehensive forethought, talent and coolness. The different divisions of his army took their positions with a admirable precision and awaited our onset with firmness. It was the first time that the two hostile armies had, in relation to numbers, confronted one another with force so nearly equal; but the Unionists had the advantage of a better protected position, while our troops had to expose themselves to the hostile fire. The attack was opened by the columns of Hill (1st) Anderson and Pickett. These gallant masses rushed forward with thundering hurrahs upon the musketry of the foe, as though it were a joy to them. Whole ranks went down under that terrible hail, but nothing could restrain their courage. The billows of battle raged fiercely onward; the struggle was man to man, eye to eye, bayonet to bayonet. The hostile Magruder's brigade, composed chiefly of Irishmen, offered heroic resistance. After a fierce struggle our people began to give way, and at length all orders and encouragements were vain—they were falling back in the greatest disorder. Infernal, foaming at the mouth, banded, sabre in hand, at this critical moment Gen. Cobb appeared upon the field, at the head of his legion, and with him the Nineteenth North Carolina and Fourteenth Virginia regiments. At once these troops renewed the attack; but all their devotion and self-sacrifice were in vain. The Irish held their position with a determination and ferocity that called forth the admiration of our own officers. Broken to pieces and disorganized, the fragments of that fine legion came rolling back from the charge. The Nineteenth North Carolina lost eight standard-bearers, and the most of their staff officers were either killed or wounded. Again, General Hill (1st) and Anderson led their troops to the attack, and some regiments covered themselves with immortal glory. Our troops exhibited a contempt of death that made them the equals of old, experienced veterans; for, notwithstanding the bloody harvest the destroyer reaped in our ranks that day, no disorder, no timid bearing, revealed that many of the regiments were under fire and sought gunpowder then for the first time. But the enemy, nevertheless,

quietly and coolly held out against every attack we made, one after another. Notwithstanding the fact that solitary brigades had to stand their ground from 4 until 8 o'clock P. M., they performed feats of incredible valor; and it was only when the news came that Jackson was upon them in the rear that, about 8, they retired before our advance. Despite the dreadful carnage in their ranks they marched on with steaming banners and rolling drums, and carried with them all their slightly wounded and all their baggage; and when the cavalry regiments of Davies and Wickham went in pursuit, repelled this assault also with perfect coolness.

## THE BATTLE FIELD BY NIGHT—DEADELY CONDITION OF AFFAIRS AT RICHMOND.

By this time night had come on and overpowered the field of death with darkness, compassionately shutting out from the eyes of the living the horrid spectacle of slaughter. Quiet gradually returned; only a feeble canonade could be heard upon our furthest left, and that, too, little by little, died away. The soldiers were so fearfully exhausted by the day's struggle that many of them sank down from their places in the ranks upon the ground. Although I, to could scarcely keep the saddle, so great was my fatigue, I hastened with one of my aids to that quarter of the field where the struggle had raged the most fiercely. The scene of ruin was horrible, while ranks of the enemy lay prone where they had stood at the beginning of the battle. The number of wounded was fearful, too, and the groans and imploring cries for help that rose on all sides had, in the obscurity of the night, a ghastly effect that froze the blood in one's veins. Although I had been upon so many battle fields in Italy and Hungary, never had my vision beheld such a spectacle of human destruction. The preparations for the transportation of the wounded were too trifling, and the force detailed for that purpose was either too feeble in numbers or had no proper knowledge of its duties. Even the medical corps had, by the terrors of the situation, been rendered incapable of attending to the wounded with zeal and efficiency. With inconceivable exertion I at length succeeded, with the assistance of some humane officers, in bringing about some kind of order amid this frightful confusion. By the happiest chance I found some Union ambulances, had all our men that could drive and knew the way pressed into the service, and set to work to get the wounded to Richmond. A most heartrending task it was; for often the poor sufferer would expire just as we were about to extend him succor. By midnight we had got the first train ready. It consisted of sixty wagons with two hundred seriously wounded. I cautiously and slowly conducted this train with success to the city. The first hospital reached I was met with refusal: "All full!" was the reply to my inquiry. "Forward to the next hospital!" was my word of command. "All full!" was again the answer.

Just then a friend said to me that if I would wait he might be able to help me, as he would have a neighboring tenement used as a tobacco warehouse prepared for a hospital. So I had to make up my mind to wait there an hour and a half in order to supply the poor fellows with water, tea and other refreshments, so as to alleviate their sufferings in some degree; but the late hour of the night and the agitation of the city prevented me from putting my design into more than half execution. At length the so-called hospital was ready, but I could scarce believe my eyes when I saw the dismal hole offered me by that name. There, in open lots, without windows or doors, a few planks nailed together were to be the beds of the unfortunate dealers of their country. During those days of fate the soldiers had endured all things—hunger, thirst, heat; nothing could rob him of his courage, his indifference to death, at the door of his friends whose property he had defended, for whose welfare he had exposed his life, and these friends turn him away to an open barn, where, without dressing for his wounds or any care, he is left to perish. And yet this city had a population of forty thousand souls, had churches admirably adapted to conversion into hospitals, had clergy men in numbers. But neither the doors of the churches opened, nor were the ministers of the Gospel there to sweeten the last moments of the dying soldier. Sad and dispirited, I gave the order to bury in the wounded: cast one more glance at the house of death and horror, and then swung myself into my saddle and fled, with a swift oath on my lips, back to my regiment.

## ALL OVER WITH THE UNION ARMY—HEINTZELMAN TO THE RESCUE.

Gen. Jackson had accomplished his flanking march without meeting with important resistance from the enemy. Hardly had he arrived at the positions marked for him ere he sent his columns to the charge. Notwithstanding the difficulties and exertions of the march, which they had executed on short allowance, he led his troops—those desperate *ancients* of his—upon the federals. In vain was all the courage, all the bold manoeuvring of the enemy. Like a tempest Gen. Stuart and his cavalry swept down upon them and hurled everything to the earth that stood in his way. A genuine fury took possession of Jackson's men, who, throwing aside their muskets and drawing their terrible bowie knives, fell with these alone upon the victims offered up to them. Horrible was the carnage that then ensued, and, although the federals had at first made obstinate resistance, they now lost ground and fell back, throwing away arms, knapsacks, blankets—in fine, everything that could impede their flight. Subordination and discipline were at an end. The soldier no longer heard the command of his officer, and deserted the post entrusted to his keeping. Already had two generals of the four hostile brigades been left by their men, and it was believed that all was over with McClellan's entire army, when, at this perilous crisis, General Heintzelman appeared with his division, and again brought the battle to a stand. With great ability and gallantry he repulsed the onset of our troops, and at once ordered the organization of the beaten and fugitive brigades: but it was found impossible to restore order to these confused and intimidated masses. They bore their officers along with them, and rushed away in wild, disorderly flight.

## MCCLELLAN'S RETREAT COMPARED TO THAT OF THE AUSTRIANS IN COMBALETT.

General Heintzelman saw himself compelled to abandon his position, and, like an ox, with head down and ready to receive attack at any moment, he drew slowly back to the Chickahominy. All the wounded and all the accumulated stores of the enemy fell into our hands, and Jackson could, with a clear conscience, issue the order, "Enough for to-day." None of the other generals had performed their task with such rapidity and success as he, and therefore the fruits of his victory were unusually large. The Unionists had lost during the day two Brigadier-Generals, one hundred and fifteen staff and subaltern officers, and twenty-one cannon, and hundreds of ambulances and baggage wagons, with all their lading. The booty was immense; but, in a strategic point of view, Jackson's success was of far greater importance, since it cut general McClellan off completely from his base of retreat. When, therefore, the triumph of Jackson's arms became known at headquarters, all counted with perfect certainty upon the destruction or capture of McClellan's entire force. The rejoicing bordered on frenzy, and, when, early next morning, I rejoined my regiment, I found my poor fellows in a state of feverish excitement, for every man of them wanted to have a hand in the approaching capture or annihilation of the great federal army. I alone shrugged my shoulders as my officers commiserated their anticipations on the subject. We had gone through a similar experience in 1848, under Padezky, in Italy. There too, the Italians had already prepared quarters for the old man and his troops, and the Mayor of Milan was so confident of victory and its consequences that he hurried out to meet the gray old hero a prisoner, at the very moment when the latter, overcoming all difficulties, was quietly withdrawing into his fortress at Mantua and Verona.

## DEADLY DESTRUCTION OF THE CONFEDERATE CABINET—REEF DAVIS AND HIS TREMBLING CABINET ON THE FIELD.

I had just reached my regiment when we received the order to advance along the whole line. I looked with sadness upon our once fine division. How fearfully some regiments had been decimated! Many which, like my own, had marched out with eleven hundred men, had now but three or four hundred effective soldiers left. Yes, some—for instance, the Seventh Georgia and Twenty-first North Carolina—had only something over one hundred and eighty men. A vast number of officers were disabled, and many a fine fellow who, a few days before, full of confidence and jollity, had prophesied a golden future, was no more. I no longer had the courage to ask for this one or that one whom I did not see, but took it for granted that he had fallen on the field of battle or was lost on the way near the

same response "He is dead," "he fell here," or "there," in such and such a way. As our divisions were getting into motion, suddenly appeared the President, Jefferson Davis, surrounded by the General of Cavalry, Joseph Davis, and Messrs. Johnston and Smith, followed by the Secretary of War, Randolph, and his military cabinet. Now when the danger was over, when Richmond had been free from the iron yoke placed upon her neck by the encircling army of the foe, and when they began again to breathe freely within their walls, these parlor heroes could, at last, at the close of the bloody struggle, assume a theatrical attitude. Yet, with no hurrah as of yore, did the soldiers receive the conqueror of Beacon Vista. With a cold eye and as stiff as his horse he rode along the front of the regiments, only once in a while addressing a word to some friends.

## REBEL DISAPPOINTMENT—THE TURNING PYRAMID AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

When our division had successfully worked its way out from among the labyrinth of dismantled artillery, shattered wagons, and dead and wounded soldiers, and got room for freer movement, we opened our eyes with astonishment when, on reaching the position evacuated by the enemy, we found nothing but a few stands of arms and some baggage. All the material had been carried off by them in this part of the field, and only a huge number of dead told how fearfully the battle had raged at this point. The fortifications were of colossal dimensions, and had far greater solidity than we had supposed. We at once received orders to pursue the foe immediately, or at least so soon as we could ascertain his exact whereabouts. We had hardly got beyond White House when we descried a huge cloud of smoke which eddied above the woods about a mile and a half to our right. As we carefully advanced in that direction we perceived a high heaped-up pyramid briskly burning with a red-hot glow and sending forth volumes of steam. The hostile general had given orders to commit all the property that could not be carried away to the flames, and here these eager conquerors were robbed of millions of dollars worth of booty. Like hungry wolves my poor fellows rushed toward the huge glowing heap to save whatever yet could be saved. There were hundreds of casks of meat, coffee, sugar, molasses, rice, wine, even champagne—in fine, all those delicacies with which the Northern army was more than abundantly supplied, and which we poor devils scarcely knew the names of, piled up on one another. Yet all our efforts to rescue anything useful were vain. The enemy had taken his precautions for the total destruction of everything left behind with such cunning skill that there was nothing remaining but spoil and useless goods.

## GENERAL MCCLELLAN'S MISTERY RETREAT.

On the other hand, the entire field was covered with the heavy cloths cloaks of the fugitives; and these were very welcome to our troops. Yet all essential particulars proved to me that General McClellan had accomplished his retreat with order and sagacity, and that there was nothing farther from his thoughts than a surrender of the army. Indeed, from some stragglers captured by my men, I learned that he had crossed the Chickahominy with his entire force, had given up his former base of retreat and was now approaching the James river, probably with a view to form a junction with the fleet. I at once sent an officer with the intelligence to General Lee. Hereupon I received orders to halt, and presently there rushed by the twelve line brigades of Hill (first) and Longstreet to give the supposed flying enemy his death blow. About five miles from Darlington, on the Newmarket road, we got sight of the foe, but they had taken up a splendid position. The plain, thickly beset with trees at this point, and rough, broken ground, was very unfavorable to the operations of our brave cavalry, and they were condemned to inaction.

## THE BATTLE AT FRAZIER'S FARM—MCCLELLAN'S POLICY—STONEMAN'S FIFTEEN CONDUCT—MAGRUDER'S POLITICAL REASONS.

General McClellan had taken his position at Frazier's farm, which formed his centre. This point he had strengthened with nineteen pieces of heavy artillery, had collected his best troops there, and firmly and coolly awaited our attack. We had at all hazards, to drive the enemy from the neighborhood of our capital or succumb ourselves. No other choice remained for us. But General McClellan only too well his critical position. By the folly of General McDowell, the pitiful conduct of Secretary Stanton and the political wags of Commanding-in-Chief Halleck, at Washington, he was sufficed up, as it were, to desperation,