CAMPAIGNS OF THE CIVIL WAR.-IV. THE ARMY UNDER POPE

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Campaigns of the Civil War.-IV. The Army Under Pope by John Codman Ropes

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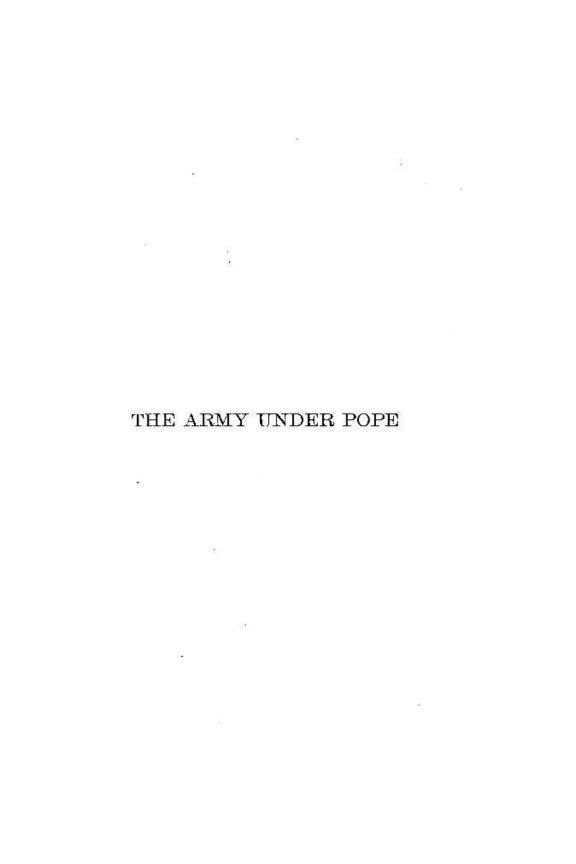
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JOHN CODMAN ROPES

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THE ARMY UNDER POPE



BY

JOHN CODMAN ROPES,

MEMBER OF THE MASSAGEVEETS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND THE MILITARY SUPPORTION SUCRETY OF MASSACHUSETS.

Forsan et hec olim meminisse juvabit.

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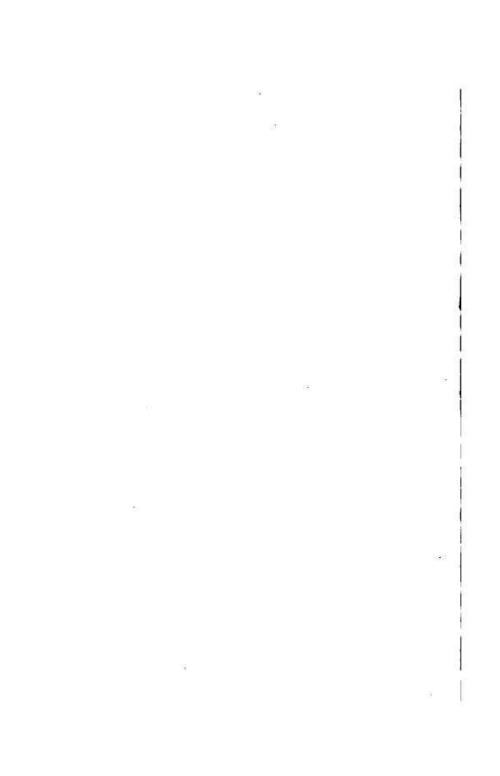
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MY YOUNGEST BROTHER

HENRY,

FIRST LIEUTENANT IN THE TWENTIETH REGIMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS VOLUNTEERS, WHO KELL AT THE HATTLE OF DESTYMBURG, JULY 3, 1863, THIS ESSAY IS AFFECTIONATELY

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THE ARMY UNDER POPE.

CHAPTER L

THE SITUATION IN JULY, 1862.

In order to understand the military situation at the time when General Pope was appointed to the command of the Army of Virginia—June 26, 1862—it will be necessary to go back a little.

The Cabinet of Mr. Lincoln found itself, in the spring of 1862, in the very difficult position of having called to the chief command of the army an officer in whom it did not place entire confidence. The attitude of General McClellan on many points was disliked; his political affiliations were distrusted; his extreme caution, so far as his own movements were concerned—his easy confidence when the matter at stake was the safety of Washington-his startling plan of removing the army to the Peninsula-all combined to awaken alarm, and to deprive him of that cordial support which his great undertaking required in order to be success-He had even attempted to evade the orders of the President, by taking with him to Yorktown troops supposed to be needed for the defence of Washington; the Government had promptly interfered by detaining the entire corps of McDowell; and, though two divisions of this corps were afterward sent to McClellan, the fact remained that he did not have at the outset of the campaign the overwhelming force on which he had calculated. The irritation caused by this found abundant expression in his correspondence with the President and the Secretary of War.

This, however, was not the worst consequence of this unfortunate state of things. Not only had Fremont—when, late in the winter, he had been relieved from command in Missouri—been given a considerable force in West Virginia, where a department had been unnecessarily created for his benefit, but, the moment McClellan arrived on the Peninsula, McDowell and Banks were detached from his control—the former being assigned to a new department, that of the Rappahannock, and the latter to another new department, that of the Shenandonh Valley. Here, then, were four separate and independent commands in Virginia, on the same theatre of war—a condition of things, it is safe to say, most unfavorable to military success.

Nevertheless, after McClellan arrived on the Chickahominy, on May 24th, the plan was that McDowell, who still relained three divisions of his corps—Franklin's having been sent to McClellan—together with Shields' division of Banks' corps, which had been transferred to McDowell's command, should join the Army of the Potomac from Fredericksburg. In pursuance of this plan, Porter had occupied Hanover Court House after a successful action, and the distance between the two forces was reduced to a matter of only twenty or thirty miles. Before the union was effected, however, Jackson made his brilliant raid in the Valley of the Shenandoah, driving the diminished force of Banks before him, and creating such alarm in Washington, that, despite the earnest remonstrance of McDowell, the plan for reinforcing McClellan from Fredericksburg was abandoned, and