

**THE BATTLE-FIELDS OF VIRGINIA;
CHANCELLORSVILLE EMBRACING THE
OPERATIONS OF THE ARMY OF
NORTHERN VIRGINIA, FROM THE FIRST
BATTLE OF FREDERICKSBURG TO THE DEATH
OF LIEUTENANT-GENERAL JACKSON**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649071869

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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PREFACE.

It is the object of the succeeding pages to give a plain narrative of one of the most important events of our great civil contest. Our information has been drawn, almost entirely, from official documents; the contemporary newspaper accounts being too conflicting and unreliable to be available. We have mainly consulted the official reports of the officers engaged on both sides, and the very valuable Report of the Federal Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War. By combining a simple narrative of facts with accurate maps, showing the topography of the country, and the successive positions of both armies, maps prepared, for the most part, by the direction of General Lee, immediately after the battle, we hope to afford a hand-book to the traveller, and to give to the general reader a clear and truthful conception of one of the most important battles of the late war. All extended criticism has been purposely avoided. In regard to events so recent, good taste and good judgment would alike seem to require it. If we

shall make "Chancellorsville" more intelligible to some of those who, not three years ago, were electrified by the great drama there enacted, and shall contribute our mite to the treasury of the future historian, our ambition will be more than satisfied.

We have added a sketch of the last days of the Confederate chieftain whose name will ever be associated with Chancellorsville, as the scene of his last and perhaps most brilliant achievement. It is from the pen of Dr. HUNTER MCGUIRE, Professor of Surgery in the Richmond Medical College, and late Medical Director for Lieut.-Gen. JACKSON. It will possess a present and future value as the most faithful and accurate account now in existence of the wounds and death of this great man.

STAUNTON, VA. *April 1, 1866.*

THE BATTLE OF CHANCELLORSVILLE.

WITH the battle of the 13th. of December, at Fredericksburg, the eventful campaign of 1862 closed, in Virginia. Worn out by a campaign unsurpassed in long and toilsome marches, and in the number and violence of its contests, both armies were glad of the opportunity for rest and recuperation. The "Army of the Potomac," crippled by a series of fearful reverses on every field, from the Chickahominy to Harper's Ferry, and now paralyzed by the last great misfortune of Fredericksburg, imperatively demanded repose, that its material losses might be repaired, and its morale recovered. Nor to the "Army of Northern Virginia," though with an organization unimpaired, and a magnificent morale, was the quiet of winter quarters unnecessary. The favors of Fortune, it is true, had been bestowed upon it, with unusual constancy, but the struggle had been unequal and exhaustive. To oppose to the large and readily recruited numbers of the Union Armies, amply supplied with all the matériel and accessories of war, the Confederacy possessed but very limited resources of men, matériel and supplies. General Lee needed time to reclothe and re-equip his troops. Time and oppor-

tunity were needed to allow the conscription to fill up his depleted ranks ; and the recruits thus obtained required discipline and training. Thus it was that the approach of winter was not unwelcome to either party.

Fredericksburg is at the head of tide-water and navigation on the Rappahannock River. The river here is about three hundred yards in width, and of sufficient depth for the smaller class of ships and steamers. On the northern side, a range of hills rises immediately from the river, and extending for a long distance above and below the town, forms the now far-famed "Stafford Heights." Beyond these, towards the Potomac River and Aquia Creek, the country is very hilly and full of ravines. This country is, however, well watered and well wooded. Occupying the heights along the river, General Burnside encamped his army in the country to the rear, making use of the Aquia Railroad and the Potomac River, as avenues of supply. Here, with a water base, entirely under his control, close at hand, and with a stream fordable at but few places, and quickly made impassable by the mountain rains, in his front, he rested in security. No attack was to be feared in such a position, even had the season and the condition of the roads rendered one probable.

On the south side, the hills rise at some distance from the river, leaving an intervening plain. A short distance above Fredericksburg the ridge approaches close to the river, opposite Falmouth ; but from this

point it gradually falls away from the river, until at a distance of four or five miles below the town it is a mile and a half wide. The hills continue down the river at a distance ranging from one fourth to one and a half miles from it. General Lee occupied these heights, extending his infantry from Banks' Ford on the left to Port Royal on the right. His cavalry extended his left to Beverly's Ford, on the upper Rappahannock, and scoured the country on his right, included between the Rappahannock and Pamunkey rivers. His main channels of supply were by way of the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad, and from the depôts on the Central Railroad. The portion of his line stretching from a point opposite Falmouth to Hamilton's Crossing, had been the Confederate position at the battle of December 13th, and was strongly fortified. It was now occupied by the First, or General Longstreet's Corps. General Jackson's Corps (the Second), stretched from the neighborhood of Hamilton's Crossing to Port Royal, fortifying the same crest of hills. The crossings of the river, which are but few and difficult, were carefully guarded. In this position Lee was able to put his army into winter quarters, and to be at the same time ready to meet any demonstrations that his opponent might make. The lateness of the season, the difficulty in obtaining supplies, and his imperfect means of communication, rendered an offensive campaign on the part of the Confederate commander unadvisable.

During the six weeks that followed the battle of Fredericksburg, Burnside, notwithstanding his heavy losses and the unfavorable condition of his troops, made two attempts to cross the river and renew his attack on the Confederate army (Map No. 1). His first intention was to cross about the last of December with his whole force. His plan was as follows : to send out a force of twenty-five hundred cavalry, to the upper Rappahannock, of which one thousand picked men, with four pieces of artillery, were to cross at Kelly's Ford, and then cross the Rapidan at Raccoon Ford, tap the Virginia Central Railroad, push on to James River, and cross it in Goochland county, break the Lynchburg, Danville, and Weldon railroads, and moving through the Confederate lines south of Petersburg, join the Federal troops at Suffolk. To increase the chances of success of this column, by concealing the design, the remainder of the cavalry were to make demonstrations towards Warrenton and Culpeper, and part, after going to Raccoon Ford, were to return. These movements were intended to damage, as much as possible, the Confederate lines of communication, and to draw Lee's attention from the real point of attack ; and when they were advanced sufficiently for this purpose, it was contemplated to throw the whole Federal army across the river at Seddon's, a point six miles below Fredericksburg. Once over, the design was to turn Lee's right and throwing it back beyond the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railroad, to cut his communications with Rich-

mond, and then to defeat him, or by forcing a retreat towards Gordonsville, uncover the Confederate Capital. In the execution of this plan, Burnside had gone so far as to order ten days' rations and forage to be provided, and three days' cooked rations to be prepared, and his cavalry had already reached Kelly's Ford, when a telegram from President Lincoln, prohibiting further operations without his consent, put a stop to the movement. The action of the President in this matter had been brought about by the very strong and general opposition in the Federal army to this campaign.

The urgent representations made by General Burnside's subordinates of the impolicy and rashness of the undertaking had induced Mr. Lincoln to interfere. Nor, it must be confessed, is it easy to see in this movement any traces of that sagacity which, on other occasions, had characterized General Burnside. He proposed now to do, with a weakened and demoralized army, what he had failed to do on the 13th of December, with enthusiastic and well-appointed legions. He proposed to cross a difficult stream, in the face of a vigilant and powerful foe, and had this been effected, would have found himself opposite the centre of Jackson's corps. He would thus have been compelled to fight under circumstances not dissimilar from those of the first battle of Fredericksburg, save that his own army was now in much worse condition. Had success attended his first efforts, the deep mud of the winter must have speedily put a stop to all prog-