



VALLEY OF THE CHICKAHOMINY, LOOKING SOUTHEAST FROM MECHANICSVILLE, SCENE OF THE SIX BATTLES BETWEEN McCLELLAN AND LEE, JACKSON, MAGRUDER, LONGSTREET, ETC.

FROM A SKETCH BY WM. WAUD.

After the battle of Williamsburg and the engagement at West Point the Army of the Potomac found itself in the valley of the Chickahominy. The event showed that the Union commanders had not fully informed themselves respecting the character of the country. The Chickahominy is about 75 miles in length, entering the James 40 miles southeast of Richmond. The region is a low-lying, swampy country, traversed with roads that easily become impassable in bad weather. McClellan found it an inauspicious battle region. On the other hand, the Confederates were able to take advantage of their intimate knowledge of the country, and to plant themselves in the best possible position. The wide area that opens out here to the observer includes five of the principal battlefields of the Union war, namely, Fair Oaks, Mechanicsville, Gaines' Mill, and Savage's Station in the Peninsular campaign, and subsequently Cold Harbor in Grant's advance of 1864.