



Petersburg Railroad.

Confederate Fort.

Confederate Mortar Battery.

City of Petersburg.

Ninth Corps Battery.

Explosion of the Mine.

BEFORE PETERSBURG, JULY 30, 1864.—EXPLOSION OF THE MINE, AND CHARGE ON THE CONFEDERATE WORKS.—FROM A SKETCH BY ANDREW MCCALLUM.

One of the most famous of those expedients which, completely successful as engineering feats, are military failures, was the mining of the "crater" before Petersburg, which was exploded on July 30, 1864. The successive assaults made during June by Burnside's Ninth corps had brought the Union forces to an advanced position before the outworks guarding the city, and within 130 yards of a field fortification behind which was a depression of the ground, or "crater." Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Pleasants obtained permission to run a mine under this work, and plans were made to throw troops through the gap thus made in the defence line, with the object of pressing forward to an important position on Cemetery Hill in the rear of the "crater." The tunnel was dug under great disadvantages, official doubts as to the success of the scheme resulting in Colonel Pleasants being short of tools suitable for his purpose. It was 510 feet long and had, at the inner end, lateral galleries for powder, each 38 feet long. Into these a charge of 8000 pounds of powder was placed, and at 4 o'clock on the morning of July 30 the mine was exploded.