

The topography of Virginia is favorable to an army menacing Washington, and unfavorable to one menacing Richmond. The fertile valley of the Shenandoah was inviting ground for soldiers. A Confederate force advancing down the valley came at every step nearer to the National capital, while a National force advancing up the valley was carried at every step farther away from the Confederate capital.

Soon after Stuart's raid, Lee began to make his dispositions to attack McClellan and drive him from the peninsula. To convey the impression that Jackson was to move in force down the valley, Lee drew two brigades from his own army, placed

there, and advanced his outposts to a point only four miles from Richmond. But he began his movements too late, for the Confederates were already in motion. Leaving about 30,000 men in the immediate defences of Richmond, Lee crossed the Chickahominy with about 35,000 under Generals A. P. Hill, D. H. Hill, and Longstreet, intending to join Jackson's 25,000, and with this enormous force make a sudden attack on the 20,000 National troops north of the river, commanded by General Fitz John Porter, destroy them before help could reach them, and seize McClellan's communications with his base. Jackson, who was to have appeared on the field at

the 27th Porter fell back somewhat to a position on a range of low hills, where he could keep the enemy in check till the stores were removed to the other side of the river, which was now his only object, and McClellan sent him 5000 more men in the course of the day.

On the morning of the 27th Porter had 18,000 infantry, 2500 artillerymen, and a small force of cavalry, with which to meet the attack of at least 55,000. Longstreet and the Hills had followed the retreat closely, but, warned by the experience of the day before, were not willing to attack until Jackson should join them. The fighting began about two o'clock in the after-



THE BATTLE OF RICH MOUNTAIN, VA.—THE UNITED STATES TROOPS UNDER GENERAL ROSECRANS, OF GENERAL MCCLELLAN'S COMMAND; THE CONFEDERATES UNDER GENERAL PEGRAM.—THE THIRTEENTH INDIANA CAPTURE A GUN.

them on the cars in Richmond in plain sight of some prisoners that were about to be exchanged, and sent them off to Jackson. Of course the released prisoners carried home the news. But Jackson returned with these reinforcements and Ewell's division of his corps, joined Lee, and on the 25th of June concerted a plan for immediate attack. Secretary Stanton appears to have been the only one that saw through the game; for he telegraphed to McClellan that while neither Banks nor McDowell nor Frémont could ascertain anything about Jackson's movements, his own belief was that he was going to Richmond.

On the 25th McClellan had pushed back the Confederates on his left, taken a new position

sunrise of the 26th, was for once behind time. At midday A. P. Hill's corps drove the small National force out of Mechanicsville, and advanced to McCall's strong position on Beaver Dam Creek. This they dared not attack in front; but they made desperate attempts on both flanks, and the result was an afternoon of fruitless fighting, in which they were literally mown down by the well-served artillery and lost upward of 3000 men, while McCall maintained his position at every point and lost fewer than 300.

That night, in pursuance of the plan for a change of base, the heavy guns were carried across the Chickahominy, together with a large part of the baggage train. On the morning of

noon, when A. P. Hill assaulted the centre of Porter's position, and in a two-hours struggle was driven back with heavy loss. Two attacks on the right met with no better success. The effect on the new troops that had been hurried up from the coast was complete demoralization. The Confederate General Whiting says in his report: "Men were leaving the field in every direction, and in great disorder. Two regiments, one from South Carolina and one from Louisiana, were actually marching back from the fire. Men were skulking from the front in a shameful manner."

But at length Jackson's men arrived, and a determined effort was made on all parts of the line at once. Even then it seemed for a time as if