

not only did not continue this plan, but gave up the idea that the Confederate army was his true objective, assumed the city of Richmond to be such, and set out for that place by way of the north bank of the Rappahannock and the city of Fredericksburg, after consuming ten days in reorganizing his army into three grand divisions, under Sumner, Hooker and Franklin. On the 15th of November he began the march from Warrenton; the head of his first column reached Falmouth on the 17th, and by the 20th the whole army was there. By some blunder (it is uncertain whose) the pontoon train that was to have met the army at this point, and afforded an immediate crossing, did not arrive till a week later; and by this time Lee had placed his army on the heights south and west of Fredericksburg. His line was about five and a half miles long, and was as strong as a good natural position, earthworks,

their weapons was heard, picking off the men that were laying the bridges. At the lower bridges the sharpshooters, who there had no shelter but rifle-pits in the open field, were dislodged after a time, and by noon those bridges were completed. But the work on the three upper bridges came to a standstill. Burnside tried bombarding the town, threw 70 tons of iron into it, and set it on fire; but still the sharpshooters clung to their hiding-places. At last General Hunt, chief of artillery, suggested a solution of the difficulty. Four regiments that volunteered for the service—the 7th Michigan, the 19th and 20th Massachusetts, and the 89th New York—crossed in pontoon boats, under the fire of the sharpshooters, landed quickly, and drove them out of their fastness, capturing a hundred of them, while the remainder escaped to the hills. The bridges were then completed, and the crossing was begun.

Exactly what Burnside expected to do next, if these movements had been successful, nobody appears to know.

The division chosen to lead Franklin's attack was Meade's. This advanced rapidly, preceded by a heavy skirmish line, while his batteries shelled the heights, crossed the railroad under a heavy fire, that had been withheld till they were within close range, penetrated between two divisions of the first Confederate line, doubling back the flanks of both and taking many prisoners and some battle-flags, scaled the heights, and came upon the second line. By this time the momentum of the attack was spent, and the fire of the second line drove them back. The divisions of Gibbon and Doubleday had followed in support, which relieved the pressure upon Meade; and when all three were returning unsuccessful and in considerable confusion, Birney's moved out and



RETREAT OF THE FEDERAL TROOPS FROM THE VIRGINIA SHORE ACROSS A CANAL BOAT BRIDGE AT EDWARDS' FERRY, ON THE NIGHT OF OCTOBER 23, 1861.

and an abundance of artillery could make it. He could not prevent Burnside from crossing the river; for the heights on the left bank rose close to the stream, commanding the intermediate plain, and on these heights Burnside had 147 guns. It was the 10th of December before the National commander was ready to attempt the passage of the stream. He planned to lay down five bridges—three opposite the city and the others two miles below—and depended upon his artillery to protect the engineers.

Before daybreak on the morning of the 11th, in a thick fog, the work was begun; but the bridges had not spanned more than half the distance when the sun had risen and the fog lifted sufficiently to reveal what was going on. A detachment of Mississippi riflemen had been posted at every point where a man could be sheltered on the south bank; and now the incessant crack of

On the morning of the 13th, Burnside was ready to attack, and Lee was more than ready to be attacked. He had concentrated his whole army on the fortified heights, Longstreet's corps forming his left wing and Jackson's his right, with every gun in position and every man ready and knowing what to expect. The weak point of the line, if it had any, was on the right, where the ground was not so high, and there was plenty of room for the deployment of the attacking force. Here Franklin commanded, with about half of the National army; and here, according to Burnside's first plan, the principal assault was to be made. But when the hour for action arrived Franklin was ordered to send forward a division or two, and hold the remainder of his force ready for "a rapid movement down the old Richmond road," while Sumner on the right was ordered to send out two divisions to seize the heights back of the city.

stopped the pursuing enemy. Sumner's attack was made with the divisions of French and Hancock, which moved through the town and deployed in columns under the fire of the Confederate batteries. This was very destructive, but was not the deadliest thing that the men had to meet. Marye's Hill was skirted near its base by an old sunken road, at the outer edge of which was a stone wall, and in this road were two brigades of Confederate infantry. It could hardly be seen at a little distance, that there was a road at all. When French's charging columns had rushed across the open ground under an artillery fire that ploughed through and through their ranks, they suddenly confronted a sheet of flame and lead from the rifles in the sunken road. The Confederates here were so numerous that each one at the wall had two or three behind to load muskets and hand them to him, while he had only to lay them flat across the