

Thomas' command, which formed the centre, now held the enemy back till Rosecrans established a new line, nearly at right angles to the first, with artillery advantageously posted, when Thomas fell back to this and maintained his ground. Through the forenoon the Confederates had seemed to have everything their own way. But here, as usual, the tide was turned. The first impetuous rush of the Southern soldier had spent itself, and the superior staying qualities of his Northern opponent began to tell. Bragg hurled his men again and again upon the new line; but as they left the cedar thickets and charged across the open field they were mercilessly swept down by artillery and musketry fire, and every effort was fruitless. Even when 7000 fresh men were drawn over from Bragg's right and thrown against the National centre, the result was still the same. The day ended with Rosecrans immovable in his position; but he had been driven from half of the ground that he held in the morning, and had lost 28 guns and many men, while the enemy's cavalry was upon his communications. The next day there was no evidence of any disposition on either side

After Burnside's failure at Fredericksburg, he was superseded, January 25, 1863, by General Joseph Hooker, who had commanded one of his grand divisions. In giving the command to Hooker, President Lincoln accompanied it with a remarkable letter, which not only exhibits his own peculiar genius, but suggests some of the complicated difficulties of the military and political situation. He wrote: "I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skillful soldier, which of course I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable if not indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the

the spring campaign with every promise of success. The army was still on the Rappahannock, opposite Fredericksburg, and he planned to cross over and strike Lee's left. Making a demonstration with Sedgwick's corps below the town, he moved a large part of his army up stream, crossed quickly, and had 46,000 men at Chancellorsville before Lee guessed what he was about. This "ville" was only a single house. Eastward, between it and Fredericksburg, there was open country; west of it was the great thicket known as The Wilderness, in the depths of which, a year later, a bloody battle was fought.

Instead of advancing into the open country at once, and striking the enemy's flank, Hooker lost a day in inaction, which gave Lee time to learn what was going on and to make dispositions to meet the emergency. Leaving a small force to check Sedgwick, who had carried the heights of Fredericksburg, he moved toward Hooker with nearly all his army, May 1, and attacked at various points, endeavoring to ascertain Hooker's exact position. By nightfall of this same day, Hooker appears to have lost confidence in the



WILSON'S CAVALRY FORAGING IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY.

FROM SKETCHES BY J. E. TAYLOR.

to attack. Both sides were correcting their lines, constructing rifle-pits, caring for their wounded, and preparing for a renewal of the fight.

This came on the second day of the new year, when there was some desultory fighting, and Rosecrans advanced a division across the stream to strike at Bragg's communications. Breckenridge's command attacked this division and drove it back to the river, when Breckenridge suddenly found himself subjected to a terrible artillery fire and lost 2000 men in 20 minutes. Following this a charge by National infantry drove him back with a loss of four guns and many prisoners, and this ended the great battle of Stone River, or Murfreesboro. After the repulse of Breckenridge, Rosecrans advanced his left again, and that night occupied with some of his batteries high ground, from which Murfreesboro could be shelled. The next day there was a heavy rainstorm, and in the ensuing night the Confederate army quietly retreated. Rosecrans reported his loss in killed and wounded as 8778, and in prisoners as somewhat fewer than 2800. Bragg acknowledged a loss of over 10,000 and claimed that he had taken over 6000 prisoners,

country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticising their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, were he alive again, could get any good out of any army while such a spirit prevails in it. And now, beware of rashness! Beware of rashness! But with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories."

Hooker restored the discipline of the Army of the Potomac, reorganized it in corps, and opened

plans with which he set out, and to have been deserted by his old-time audacity; for instead of maintaining a tactical offensive, he drew back from some of his more advanced positions, formed his army in a semicircle, and awaited attack. His left and his centre were strongly posted and to some extent intrenched; but his right, consisting of Howard's corps, was "in the air," and moreover, it faced the Wilderness. When this weak spot was discovered by the enemy, on the morning of the 2d, Lee sent Jackson with 26,000 men to make a long detour, pass into the Wilderness, and, emerging suddenly from its eastern edge, take Howard by surprise. Jackson's men were seen and counted as they passed over the crest of a hill, they were even attacked by detachments from Sickles' corps, and Hooker sent orders to Howard to strengthen his position, advance his pickets, and not allow himself to be surprised. But Howard appears to have disregarded all precautions, and in the afternoon the enemy came down upon him, preceded by a rush of frightened wild animals driven from their cover in the woods by the advancing battle-line.