

of the 3d, when the Army of the Potomac was set in motion and crossed the Rapidan on five pontoon bridges near Germania, Culpeper Mine, and Ely's fords. On crossing, it plunged at once into the Wilderness, which is here traversed from north to south by two roads, a mile or two apart. And these roads are crossed by two—the Orange turnpike and Orange plank road—running nearly east and west. Besides these, there are numerous cross-roads and wood-paths. It would have been easy for the army to pass through this wooded tract in a very few hours, and deploy in the open country; but the supply and ammunition train consisted of 4000 wagons, and the reserve artillery of more than 100 guns—all of which must be protected by keeping the army between them and the enemy. Consequently the troops remained in the Wilderness during the 4th, while the long procession was filing across the bridges and

Confederate commander had resorted to the bold device of launching his whole army down the two parallel roads, with the purpose of striking the Army of the Potomac when it was ill-prepared to receive battle. Under some circumstances he would thus have gained a great advantage; but as it was, the army was clear of the river, with all its trains safe in the rear, was reasonably well together, had had a night's rest, and was not in any proper sense surprised. Hancock's corps, which had the lead, was quickly recalled, Burnside's was hurried up from the rear, and a line of battle was formed—so far as there could be any line of battle in a jungle. Neither artillery nor cavalry could be used to any extent by either side, and the contest was little more than a murdering-match between two bodies of men, each individual having a musket in his hand, and being unable to see more than a few of his nearest

at the hour named; but just then came rumors of a flank movement by Longstreet, and Hancock, detaching troops to meet it, greatly weakened the blow he was ordered to deliver. Yet this advance was powerful enough to drive the enemy before him for more than a mile. At that juncture Longstreet came up, the broken Confederate line rallied on his corps, and Hancock was in turn driven back. Here the fighting was stubborn, and the losses heavy. General James S. Wadsworth, one of the most patriotic men in the service, was mortally wounded and died within the Confederate lines. The Confederate General Jenkins was killed, and Longstreet was seriously wounded in almost exactly the same way that Stonewall Jackson had been, a year and three days before, on nearly the same ground. His men were thrown into great confusion, and General Lee, who now took command of them in person, found it impos-



GENERAL ASBOTH AND STAFF AT THE BATTLE OF PEA RIDGE, ARK.

stretching away on the easternmost roads. And after this the bridges were taken up. Grant's headquarters that night were at the old Wilderness Tavern, on the Orange turnpike, near the intersection of the road from Germania ford. It had been supposed that Lee would either dispute the passage of the river, or (as he had done on previous occasions) await attack on some chosen ground that was suitable for fighting. As he had not disputed the passage, the army now expected to march out of the Wilderness the next day, thus turning the enemy's right flank, and placing itself between him and his capital.

But Grant kept pickets out on all the roads to the west; and it cannot be said that he was surprised, though he was probably disappointed, when he found his lines attacked on the morning of the 5th, and it soon became evident that the

neighbors. This went on all day, increasing hourly as more of the troops came into position, with no real advantage to either side. Lee's attack had been vigorous on his left, but imperfect on his right, where Longstreet's corps did not get up in time. No sooner had the battle ended than both sides began to intrench for the struggle of the morrow.

Grant intended to take the initiative on the morning of the 6th, and gave orders for an attack at five o'clock. But Lee, who did not want the real battle of the day to begin till Longstreet's corps should be in place on his right, attacked with his left at a still earlier hour. Grant recognized this as a feint, and went on with his purpose of attacking the enemy's right before Longstreet should come up. This work devolved upon Hancock's corps, which as usual was ready to advance

sible to rally them for an attack on Hancock's intrenchments. But late in the afternoon such an assault was made, and met with a little temporary success. The Confederates burst through the line at one point, but were soon driven back again with heavy loss. At this point a fire broke out in Hancock's front, and soon his log breastworks were burning. His men were forced back by the heat, but continued firing at their enemy through the flame. Large numbers of the dead and wounded were still lying where they fell, scattered over the belt of ground, nearly a mile wide, where the tide of battle had swayed back and forth, and an unknown number of the wounded perished by the fire and smoke. Burnside had come into line, and fighting had been kept up along the entire front, but it was nowhere so fierce as on the left or southern end of the line, where