

each commander was trying to double up the other's flank. At night the Confederates withdrew to their intrenchments, and from that time till the end of the campaign they seldom showed a disposition to leave them.

The best authorities vary as to the National loss, from fewer than 14,000 to about 15,400. The Confederate loss did not differ materially from the National loss, and in the circumstances of the battle there was no reason for thinking it would. Among the officers lost, besides those already mentioned, were, on the National side, General Alexander Hays, killed; Generals Getty, Baxter, and McAllister, and Colonels Carroll and Keifer wounded; and Generals Seymour and Shaler captured; on the Confederate side, Generals Pegram and Benning wounded.

If General Lee supposed that the Army of the Potomac, after a sudden blow and a bloody battle, would turn about and go home to repair damages—as it had been in the habit of doing—he omitted from his calculation the fact that it was now led by a soldier who never did anything of the kind. Indeed, he is reported to have said to his lieutenants, after this costly experiment, "Gentlemen, at last the Army of the Potomac has a head." Tactically, it had been a drawn battle. Grant accounts it a victory, which he says "consisted in having successfully crossed a formidable stream, almost in the face of an enemy, and in getting the army together as a unit."

There was no fighting on the 7th except a cavalry engagement at Todd's Tavern, by which Sheridan cleared the road for the southward movement of the army; and in the afternoon Grant gave the order to move by the left flank toward Spottsylvania.

Grant's general purpose was to place his army between the enemy and Richmond, interfering with the communications and compelling Lee to fight at disadvantage. The immediate purpose was a rapid march to Spottsylvania Court House, 15 miles southeast of the Wilderness battle-field, and a dozen miles southwest of Fredericksburg, to take a strong position covering the roads that radiate from that point. Warren's corps was to take the advance, marching by the Brock road, to be followed by Hancock's. Sedgwick's and Burnside's were to take a route farther north, through Chancellorsville. The trains were put in motion on Saturday, May 7, and Warren began his march at nine o'clock that evening. To withdraw an army in this manner, in the presence of a powerful enemy, and send it forward to a new position, is a difficult and delicate task, as it may be attacked after it has left the old position and before it has gained the new. The method adopted by General Grant was repeated

in each of his flanking movements between the Wilderness and the James. It consisted in withdrawing the corps that held his right flank, and passing it behind the others while they maintained their position.

The distances that the two armies had to march to reach Spottsylvania Court House were very nearly the same; but two unforeseen circumstances determined the race and the form of the ensuing battle. The Brock road was occupied by Confederate cavalry, and Warren's corps stood still while the National cavalry undertook to clear the way. This was not done easily, and the road was further obstructed by felled trees. After precious time had been lost, Warren's corps went forward and cleared the way for itself. The other circumstance was more purely fortuitous. Anderson's division of Longstreet's corps led the Confederate advance, and Anderson had his orders to begin the march early on Sunday morning, the 8th. But from the burning of the woods he found no suitable ground for bivouac, and consequently marched all night. The National cavalry were in Spottsylvania Court House Sunday morning, and found there but a slight force of cavalry, easily brushed away; but they had to retire before the Confederate infantry when Anderson came down the road. Consequently, when Warren came within sight of the Court House, he found the same old foe intrenched in his front. Hancock had been held back, because of apprehensions that the Confederates would make a heavy attack upon the rear. So the remainder of Longstreet's corps, and finally all of Lee's troops, poured into the rude sylvan fortress, and once more the Army of Northern Virginia stood at bay.

Grant now sent Sheridan with his cavalry to do to the Confederate army what in previous campaigns its cavalry had twice done to the Army of the Potomac—to ride entirely around it. Sheridan destroyed ten miles of railroad and several trains of cars, cut all the telegraph wires, and recaptured 400 prisoners who had been taken in the battle of the Wilderness. The Confederate cavalry, by hard riding, got between him and Richmond. Sheridan's troops met them at Yellow Tavern, seven miles north of the city, and after a hard fight defeated and dispersed them, General J. E. B. Stuart, the ablest cavalry leader in the Confederacy, being mortally wounded. Sheridan then crossed the Chickahominy, and rejoined the army on the 25th.

As the National army came into position before the intrenchments of Spottsylvania, Hancock's corps had the extreme right, or western end of the line; then came Warren's, then Sedgwick's, and on the extreme left Burnside's. While Sedgwick's men were placing their batteries, they were annoyed by sharpshooters. The men naturally shrank back from their work, when Sedgwick expostulated with them, remarking that "they couldn't hit an elephant at this distance." As he stepped forward to the works a bullet struck him in the face and he fell dead. In his fall the army

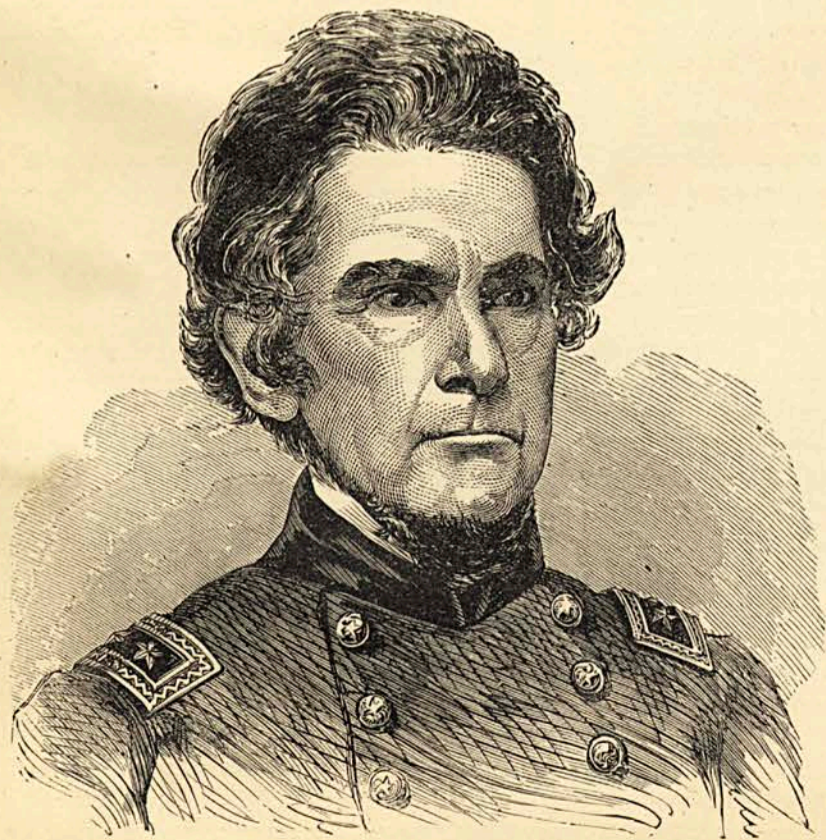


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lost one of its best soldiers, and the country one of its purest patriots. General Horatio G. Wright succeeded him in the command of the Sixth Corps.

On the evening of the 9th, Hancock's corps moved to the right, with a view to flanking and attacking the Confederate left, and made a reconnaissance at the point where the road from Shady Grove church crosses the Po. A brigade of Barlow's division crossed the stream but was confronted by intrenchments. It was now seen that the Confederate left rested on the stream at a point above, and before he could withdraw Barlow, the enemy sallied out from their intrenchments and attacked that brigade in heavy force. The assault was repelled with considerable loss to Barlow, but with much greater loss to the assailants. After a short interval the experiment was renewed, with precisely the same result; and Barlow then re-crossed.

The weak point in the Confederate line was the salient at the northern point of their intrenchment. A salient is weak because almost any fire directed against it becomes an enfilading fire for one or another part of it. But the National army could only learn the shape of the Confederate intrenchments after traversing thick woods, following out by-paths, and scrambling through dark ravines. As soon as the salient was discovered preparations were made for assaulting it. The storming party consisted of 12 regiments of Wright's corps, commanded by Colonel Emory Upton, and was to be supported by Mott's division of Hancock's, while the remainder of Wright's and all of Warren's corps were to advance and take advantage of any opportunity that should be made for them. While a heavy battery was firing rapidly at the salient and enfilading one of its sides, Upton's men formed under cover of the woods, and the instant the battery ceased firing, about 6 p. m., burst out with a cheer, swept over the works after a short hand to hand fight, and captured more than 1000 prisoners and a few guns. Mott, forming in open ground, did not move so promptly, suffered more from the fire from the enemy, and effected nothing. Warren's corps moved forward, but was driven back with heavy loss. In a second assault they reached the breastworks and captured them after fierce fighting, but were not able to hold them when strong Confederate reinforcements came up. Upton, who had broken through a



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