

army had moved in the same direction, by a shorter route, and had quickly taken up a strong position across all these roads, with flanks on Beaver Dam and Totopotomoy creeks. Moreover, at this time it was heavily reinforced.

Near Bethesda church there was a small engagement, where a portion of Early's corps made an attack on the National left and gained a brief advantage, but was soon driven back. At dusk, one brigade of Barlow's division made a sudden rush and carried a line of Confederate rifle-pits. But it was ascertained that the position offered no chance of success in a serious assault. Furthermore, Grant was expecting reinforcements from Butler's Army of the James, to come by way of White House. So he extended his left toward Cold Harbor, sending Sheridan with cavalry and artillery to secure that place. Sheridan was heavily attacked there on the morning of June 1, but held his ground. In the course of the day he was relieved by the Sixth Corps, to which the 10,000 reinforcements under General William F. Smith were added. At the same time the Confederate line had been extended in the same direction, so as still to cover all roads leading to Richmond.

At six o'clock in the evening, Smith's and Wright's corps attacked the Confederate intrenchments. Along most of the front they were obliged to cross open ground that was swept by artillery and musketry; but they moved forward steadily, in spite of their rapid losses, and everywhere carried the first line of works, taking some hundreds of prisoners, but were stopped by the second. They intrenched and held their advanced position; but it had been dearly bought, since more than 2000 of their men were killed or wounded.

When the entire army was in its new position at Cold Harbor, eight or ten miles from Richmond, with its enemy but a little distance in front of it, an attack was planned for the morning of the 3d. The Confederate position was very strong. The line was from three to six miles from the outer defences of Richmond, the right resting on the Chickahominy, and the left protected by woods and swamps. The Chickahominy was between it and Richmond, but the water was low and everywhere fordable. The only chance for attack was in front. If Lee's line could be disrupted at the centre, and a strong force thrust through, it would for the time being disorganize his army, though a large part of it would undoubtedly escape across the river and rally in the intrenchments nearer the city.

At 4.30 a. m. of the 3d, the Second, Sixth and Eighteenth (Smith's) Corps moved forward as rapidly and regularly as the nature of the ground would admit, under a destructive fire of artillery and musketry, till they carried the first line of

intrenchments. Barlow's division struck a salient, and after a desperate hand to hand contest, captured it, taking nearly 300 prisoners and three guns, which were at once turned upon the enemy. But every assaulting column, on reaching the enemy's first line, found itself subjected to cross-fires from the artillery, and not one of them could go any farther. Most of them fell back speedily and took up positions midway between the lines. General Grant had given orders to General Meade to suspend the attack the moment it should appear hopeless, and the heavy fighting did not last more than an hour. A counter attack by Early's corps was as unsuccessful as those of the National troops had been, and one or two lighter attacks by the Confederates later in the day were also repelled.

The entire loss of the National army at Cold Harbor in the first twelve days of June—including the battles just described, and the almost constant skirmishing and minor engagements—was 10,058; and among the dead and wounded were many valuable officers. General Tyler and Colonel Brooke were wounded, and Colonels Porter, Morris, Meade and Byrnes were killed. The Confederate loss—which included General Doles among the killed, and Generals Kirkland, Lane, Law, and Finnegan among the wounded—is unknown, but it was much smaller than the National. The attack of June 3 is recognized as the most serious error in Grant's military career. He himself says in his "Memoirs" that he always regretted it was ever made. It was as useless, and almost as costly, as Lee's assault upon Meade's centre at Gettysburg. But we do not read that any of Grant's lieutenants protested against it, as Longstreet protested against the attack on Cemetery Ridge.

Grant determined to move once more by the left flank, swing his army across the James, and invest the city from the south. A direct investment of the Confederate capital on that side was out of the question, because the south bank of the James is lower than the city, and the movement would therefore resolve itself into a struggle for Petersburg, 30 miles south of Richmond, which was its railroad centre.

To withdraw an army from so close contact with the enemy, march it 50 miles, cross two rivers, and bring it into a new position, was a very delicate and hazardous task, and Grant performed it with consummate skill.

The march began in the evening of June 12, and at midday of the 13th a pontoon was thrown across at Long Bridge, 15 miles below the Cold Harbor position. The Fifth Corps followed quickly, and took a position covering these roads till the remainder of the army could cross. The Second, Sixth, and Ninth Corps crossed the Chickahominy a few miles farther down; while the Eighteenth had embarked at White House, to be sent around by water. In the evening of the 13th, the Fifth reached Wilcox's Landing, 10 miles below Haxall's. The other corps reached the landing on the 14th. The river there is more than 2000 feet wide; but between 4 p. m. and



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midnight a pontoon was laid, and the crossing began. The artillery and trains were sent over first, and the infantry followed in a long procession that occupied 48 hours. General Ewell said that when the National army got across the James River he knew that the Confederate cause was lost, and it was the duty of their authorities to make the best terms they could while they still had a right to claim concessions.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CONFEDERATE CRUISERS.

WHILE the Army of the Potomac was putting itself in fighting trim after its change of base, a decisive battle of the war took place 3000 miles away. A vessel known in the builders' yard as the "290," and afterward famous as the "Alabama," had been built for the Confederate Government in 1862, at Birkenhead, opposite Liverpool. She was of wood, a fast sailer, having both steam and canvas, was 220 feet long, and was rated at 1040 tons. She was thoroughly fitted in every respect, and cost nearly a quarter of a million dollars. The American Minister at London notified the British Government that such a ship was being built in an English yard, in violation of the neutrality laws, and demanded that she be prevented from leaving the Mersey. But either through design or stupidity the Government moved too slowly, and the cruiser escaped to sea. She went to Fayal, in the Azores, and there took on board her guns and coal, sent out to her in a merchant ship from London. Her commander was Raphael Semmes, who had served in the United States navy. Her crew were mainly Englishmen. For nearly two years she roamed the seas, and captured 69 American merchantmen, most of which were burned. Their crews were sent away on passing vessels, or put ashore at some convenient port. Several war-vessels were sent out in search of the "Alabama," but they were at constant disadvantage from the rule that when two hostile vessels are in a neutral port, the first that leaves must have been gone 24 hours before the other is permitted to follow.

In June, 1864, the "Alabama" was in the harbor of Cherbourg, France. The United



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