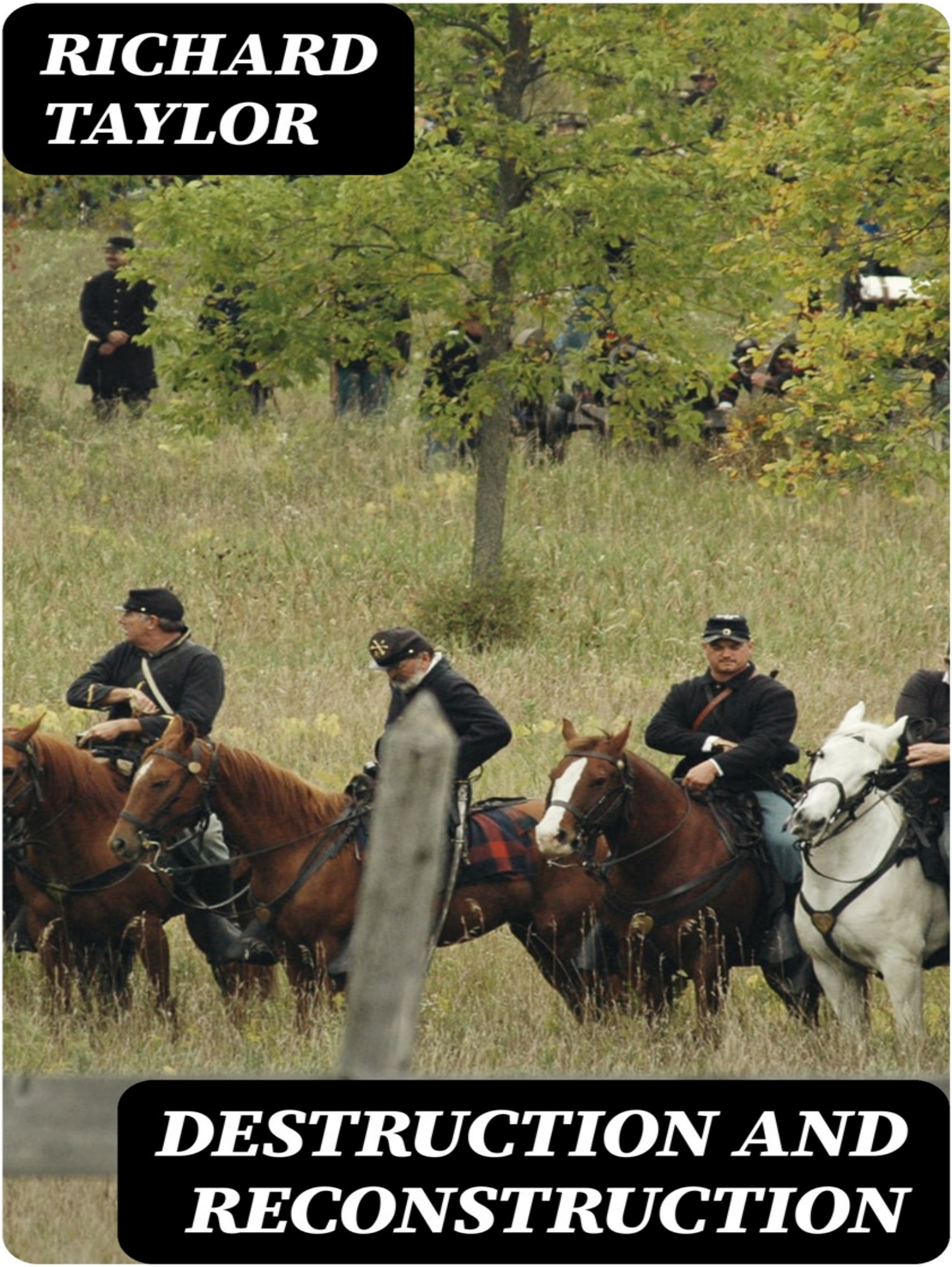
RICHARD TAYLOR



DESTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION

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Destruction and Reconstruction

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PREFACE.

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These reminiscences of Secession, War, and Reconstruction it has seemed to me a duty to record. An actor therein, accident of fortune afforded me exceptional advantages for an interior view.

The opinions expressed are sincerely entertained, but of their correctness such readers as I may find must judge. I have in most cases been a witness to the facts alleged, or have obtained them from the best sources. Where statements are made upon less authority, I have carefully endeavored to indicate it by the language employed.

R. TAYLOR.
December, 1877.

CHAPTER I.

SECESSION.

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The history of the United States, as yet unwritten, will show the causes of the "Civil War" to have been in existence during the Colonial era, and to have cropped out into full view in the debates of the several State Assemblies on the adoption of the Federal Constitution, in which instrument Luther Martin, Patrick Henry, and others, insisted that they were implanted. African slavery at the time was universal, and its extinction in the North, as well as its extension in the South, was due to economic reasons alone.

The first serious difficulty of the Federal Government arose from the attempt to lay an excise on distilled spirits. The second arose from the hostility of New England traders to the policy of the Government in the war of 1812, by which their special interests were menaced; and there is now evidence to prove that, but for the unexpected peace, an attempt to disrupt the Union would then have been made.

The "Missouri Compromise" of 1820 was in reality a truce between antagonistic revenue systems, each seeking to gain the balance of power. For many years subsequently, slaves—as domestic servants—were taken to the Territories without exciting remark, and the "Nullification" movement in South Carolina was entirely directed against the tariff.

Anti-slavery was agitated from an early period, but failed to attract public attention for many years. At length, by unwearied industry, by ingeniously attaching itself to

exciting questions of the day, with which it had no natural connection, it succeeded in making a lodgment in the public mind, which, like a subject exhausted by long effort, is exposed to the attack of some malignant fever, that in a normal condition of vigor would have been resisted. The common belief that slavery was the cause of civil war is incorrect, and Abolitionists are not justified in claiming the glory and spoils of the conflict and in pluming themselves as "choosers of the slain."

The vast immigration that poured into the country between the years 1840 and 1860 had a very important influence in directing the events of the latter year. The numbers were too great to be absorbed and assimilated by the native population. States in the West were controlled by German and Scandinavian voters, while the Irish took possession of the seaboard towns. Although the balance of party strength was not much affected by these naturalized voters, the modes of political thought were seriously disturbed, and a tendency was manifested to transfer exciting topics from the domain of argument to that of violence.

The aged and feeble President, Mr. Buchanan, unfitted for troublous times, was driven to and fro by ambitious leaders of his own party, as was the last weak Hapsburg who reigned in Spain by the rival factions of France and Austria.

Under these conditions the National Democratic Convention met at Charleston, South Carolina, in the spring of 1860, to declare the principles on which the ensuing presidential campaign was to be conducted, and select candidates for the offices of President and Vice-President. Appointed a delegate by the Democracy of my State, Louisiana, in company with others I reached Charleston two days in advance of the time. We were at once met by an

invitation to join in council delegates from the Gulf States, to agree upon some common ground of action in the Convention, but declined for the reason that we were accredited to the National Convention, and had no authority to participate in other deliberations. This invitation and the terms in which it was conveyed argued badly for the harmony of the Convention itself, and for the preservation of the unity of the Democracy, then the only organization supported in all quarters of the country.

It may be interesting to recall the impression created at the time by the tone and temper of different delegations. New England adhered to the old tenets of the Jefferson school. Two leaders from Massachusetts, Messrs. Caleb Cushing and Benjamin F. Butler, of whom the former was chosen President of the Convention, warmly supported the candidacy of Mr. Jefferson Davis. New York, under the direction of Mr. Dean Richmond, gave its influence to Mr. Douglas. Of a combative temperament, Mr. Richmond was impressed with a belief that "secession" was but a bugbear to frighten the northern wing of the party. Thus he failed to appreciate the gravity of the situation, and impaired the value of unusual common sense and unselfish patriotism, qualities he possessed to an eminent degree. The anxieties of Pennsylvania as to candidates were accompanied by a philosophic indifference as to principles. The Northwest was ardent for Douglas, who divided with Guthrie Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Louisiana held moderate opinions, and were ready to adopt any honorable means to preserve the unity of the party and country. The conduct of the South Carolina delegates was admirable. Representing the most advanced constituency in the Convention, they were singularly reticent, and abstained

from adding fuel to the flames. They limited their rôle to that of dignified, courteous hosts, and played it as Carolina gentlemen are wont to do. From Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas came the fiery spirits, led by Mr. William L. Yancey of Alabama, an able rhetorician. This gentleman had persuaded his State Convention to pass a resolution, directing its delegates to withdraw from Charleston if the Democracy there assembled refused to adopt the extreme Southern view as to the rights of citizens in the territories. In this he was opposed by ex-Governor Winston, a man of conservative tendencies, and long the rival of Mr. Yancey in State politics. Both gentlemen were sent to Charleston, but the majority of their co-delegates sustained Mr. Yancey.

Several days after its organization the National Convention reached a point which made the withdrawal of Alabama imminent. Filled with anxious forebodings, I sought after nightfall the lodgings of Messrs. Slidell, Bayard, and Bright, United States senators, who had come to Charleston, not as delegates, but under the impulse of hostility to the principles and candidacy of Mr. Douglas. There, after pointing out the certain consequences of Alabama's impending action, I made an earnest appeal for peace and harmony, and with success. Mr. Yancey was sent for, came into our views after some discussion, and undertook to call his people together at that late hour, and secure their consent to disregard instructions. We waited until near dawn for Yancey's return, but his efforts failed of success. Governor Winston, originally opposed to instructions as unwise and dangerous, now insisted that they should be obeyed to the letter, and carried a majority of the Alabama delegates with him. Thus the last hope of preserving the

unity of the National Democracy was destroyed, and by one who was its earnest advocate.

The withdrawal of Alabama, followed by other Southern States, the adjournment of a part of the Convention to Baltimore and of another part to Richmond, and the election of Lincoln by votes of Northern States, require no further mention.

In January, 1861, the General Assembly of Louisiana met. A member of the upper branch, and chairman of its Committee on Federal Relations, I reported, and assisted in passing, an act to call a Convention of the people of the State to consider of matters beyond the competency of the Assembly. The Convention met in March, and was presided over by ex-Governor and ex-United States Senator Alexander Mouton, a man of high character. I represented my own parish, St. Charles, and was appointed chairman of the Military and Defense Committee, on behalf of which two ordinances were reported and passed: one, to raise two regiments; the other, to authorize the Governor to expend a million of dollars in the purchase of arms and munitions. The officers of the two regiments were to be appointed by the Governor, and the men to be enlisted for five years, unless sooner discharged. More would have been desirable in the way of raising troops, but the temper of men's minds did not then justify the effort. The Governor declined to use his authority to purchase arms, assured as he was on all sides that there was no danger of war, and that the United States arsenal at Baton Rouge, completely in our power, would furnish more than we could need. It was vainly urged in reply that the stores of the arsenal were almost valueless, the arms being altered flintlock muskets, and the accouterments out of date. The current was too strong to stem.

The Convention, by an immense majority of votes, adopted an ordinance declaring that Louisiana ceased to be a State within the Union. Indeed, similar action having already been taken by her neighbors, Louisiana of necessity followed. At the time and since, I marveled at the joyous and careless temper in which men, much my superiors in sagacity and experience, consummated these acts. There appeared the same general *gaîté de cœur* that M. Ollivier claimed for the Imperial Ministry when war was declared against Prussia. The attachment of northern and western people to the Union; their superiority in numbers, in wealth, and especially in mechanical resources; the command of the sea; the lust of rule and territory always felt by democracies, and nowhere to a greater degree than in the South—all these facts were laughed to scorn, or their mention was ascribed to timidity and treachery.

As soon as the Convention adjourned, finding myself out of harmony with prevailing opinion as to the certainty of war and necessity for preparation, I retired to my estate, determined to accept such responsibility only as came to me unsought.

The inauguration of President Lincoln; the confederation of South Carolina, Georgia, and the five Gulf States; the attitude of the border slave States, hoping to mediate; the assembling of Confederate forces at Pensacola, Charleston, and other points; the seizure of United States forts and arsenals; the attack on "Sumter"; war—these followed with bewildering rapidity, and the human agencies concerned seemed as unconscious as scene-shifters in some awful tragedy.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST SCENES OF THE WAR.

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I was drawn from my retreat by an invitation from General Bragg, a particular friend, to visit Pensacola, where he commanded the southern forces, composed of volunteers from the adjacent States. Full of enthusiasm for their cause, and of the best material, officers and men were, with few exceptions, without instruction, and the number of educated officers was, as in all the southern armies, too limited to satisfy the imperious demands of the staff, much less those of the drill-master. Besides, the vicious system of election of officers struck at the very root of that stern discipline without which raw men cannot be converted into soldiers.

The Confederate Government, then seated at Montgomery, weakly receded from its determination to accept no volunteers for short terms of service, and took regiments for twelve months. The same blindness smote the question of finance. Instead of laying taxes, which the general enthusiasm would have cheerfully endured, the Confederate authorities pledged their credit, and that too for an amount which might have implied a pact with Mr. Seward that, should war unhappily break out, its duration was to be strictly limited to sixty days. The effect of these errors was felt throughout the struggle.

General Bragg occupied Pensacola, the United States navy yard, and Fort Barrancas on the mainland; while Fort Pickens, on Santa Rosa island, was held by Federal troops, with several war vessels anchored outside the harbor. There

was an understanding that no hostile movement would be made by either side without notice. Consequently, Bragg worked at his batteries bearing on Pickens, while Major Brown, the Federal commander, strengthened with sand bags and earth the weak landward curtain of his fort; and time was pleasantly passed by both parties in watching each other's occupation.

Some months before this period, when Florida enforced her assumed right to control all points within her limits, a small company of United States artillery, under Lieutenant Slemmer, was stationed at Barrancas, where it was helpless. After much manœuvring, the State forces of Florida induced Slemmer to retire from Barrancas to Pickens, then *garrisoned* by one ordnance sergeant, and at the mercy of a corporal's guard in a rowboat. Fort Sumter, in Charleston harbor, was in a similar condition before Anderson retired to it with his company. The early seizure of these two fortresses would have spared the Confederates many serious embarrassments; but such small details were neglected at that time.

My visit to Pensacola was brought to a close by information from the Governor of Louisiana of my appointment to the colonelcy of the 9th Louisiana infantry, a regiment just formed at camp on the railway some miles north of New Orleans, and under orders for Richmond. Accepting the appointment, I hastened to the camp, inspected the command, ordered the Lieutenant Colonel—Randolph, a well-instructed officer for the time—to move by rail to Richmond as rapidly as transportation was furnished, and went on to New Orleans, as well to procure equipment, in which the regiment was deficient, as to give some hours to private affairs. It was known that there was a scarcity of small-arm ammunition in Virginia, owing to the rapid

concentration of troops; and I was fortunate in obtaining from the Louisiana authorities a hundred thousand rounds, with which, together with some field equipment, I proceeded by express to Richmond, where I found my command, about a thousand strong, just arrived and preparing to go into camp. The town was filled with rumor of battle away north at Manassas, where Beauregard commanded the Confederate forces. A multitude of wild reports, all equally inflamed, reached my ears while looking after the transportation of my ammunition, of which I did not wish to lose sight. Reaching camp, I paraded the regiment, and stated the necessity for prompt action, and my purpose to make application to be sent to the front immediately. Officers and men were delighted with the prospect of active service, and largely supplied want of experience by zeal. Ammunition was served out, three days' rations were ordered for haversacks, and all camp equipage not absolutely essential was stored.

These details attended to, at 5 P.M. I visited the war office, presided over by General Pope Walker of Alabama. When the object of my visit was stated, the Secretary expressed much pleasure, as he was anxious to send troops forward, but had few in readiness to move, owing to the lack of ammunition, etc. As I had been in Richmond but a few hours, my desire to move and adequate state of preparation gained me some "red-letter" marks at the war office. The Secretary thought that a train would be in readiness at 9 o'clock that night. Accordingly, the regiment was marched to the station, where we remained several weary hours. At length, long after midnight, our train made its appearance. As the usual time to Manassas was some six hours, we confidently expected to arrive in the early forenoon; but this expectation our engine brought to grief. It proved a machine

of the most wheezy and helpless character, creeping snail-like on levels, and requiring the men to leave the carriages to help it up grades. As the morning wore on, the sound of guns, reëchoed from the Blue Ridge mountains on our left, became loud and constant. At every halt of the wretched engine the noise of battle grew more and more intense, as did our impatience. I hope the attention of the recording angel was engrossed that day in other directions. Later we met men, single or in squads, some with arms and some without, moving south, in which quarter they all appeared to have pressing engagements.

At dusk we gained Manassas Junction, near the field where, on that day, the battle of first "Manassas" had been fought and won. Bivouacking the men by the roadside, I sought through the darkness the headquarters of General Beauregard, to whom I was instructed to report. With much difficulty and delay the place was found, and a staff officer told me that orders would be sent the following morning. By these I was directed to select a suitable camp, thus indicating that no immediate movement was contemplated.

The confusion that reigned about our camps for the next few days was extreme. Regiments seemed to have lost their colonels, colonels their regiments. Men of all arms and all commands were mixed in the wildest way. A constant fusillade of small arms and singing of bullets were kept up, indicative of a superfluity of disorder, if not of ammunition. One of my men was severely wounded in camp by a "stray," and derived no consolation from my suggestion that it was a delicate attention of our comrades to mitigate the disappointment of missing the battle. The elation of our people at their success was natural. They had achieved all, and more than all, that could have been expected of raw troops; and some commands had emulated veterans by

their steadiness under fire. Settled to the routine of camp duty, I found many opportunities to go over the adjacent battle field with those who had shared the action, then fresh in their memories. Once I had the privilege of so doing in company with Generals Johnston and Beauregard; and I will now give my opinion of this, as I purpose doing of such subsequent actions, and commanders therein, as came within the range of my personal experience during the war.

Although since the days of Nimrod war has been the constant occupation of men, the fingers of one hand suffice to number the great commanders. The "unlearned" hardly think of usurping Tyndall's place in the lecture room, or of taking his cuneiform bricks from Rawlinson; yet the world has been much more prolific of learned scientists and philologers than of able generals. Notwithstanding, the average American (and, judging from the dictatorship of Maître Gambetta, the Frenchman) would not have hesitated to supersede Napoleon at Austerlitz or Nelson at Trafalgar. True, Cleon captured the Spartan garrison, and Narses gained victories, and Bunyan wrote the "Pilgrim's Progress;" but pestilent demagogues and mutilated guardians of Eastern zenanas have not always been successful in war, nor the great and useful profession of tinkers written allegory. As men without knowledge have at all times usurped the right to criticise campaigns and commanders, they will doubtless continue to do so despite the protests of professional soldiers, who discharge this duty in a reverent spirit, knowing that the greatest is he who commits the fewest blunders.

General McDowell, the Federal commander at Manassas, and a trained soldier of unusual acquirement, was so hounded and worried by ignorant, impatient politicians and newspapers as to be scarcely responsible for his acts. This

may be said of all the commanders in the beginning of the war, and notably of Albert Sidney Johnston, whose early fall on the field of Shiloh was irreparable, and mayhap determined the fate of the South. McDowell's plan of battle was excellent, and its execution by his mob no worse than might have been confidently expected. The late Governor Andrew of Massachusetts observed that his men thought they were going to a town meeting, and this is exhaustive criticism. With soldiers at his disposal, McDowell would have succeeded in turning and overwhelming Beauregard's left, driving him from his rail communications with Richmond, and preventing the junction of Johnston from the valley. It appears that Beauregard was to some extent surprised by the attack, contemplating movements by his own centre and right. His exposed and weak left stubbornly resisted the shock of attacking masses, while he, with coolness and personal daring most inspiriting to his men, brought up assistance from centre and right; and the ground was held until Johnston, who had skillfully eluded Patterson, arrived and began feeding our line, when the affair was soon decided.

There can be little question that with a strong brigade of soldiers Johnston could have gone to Washington and Baltimore. Whether, with his means, he should have advanced, has been too much and angrily discussed already. Napoleon held that, no matter how great the confusion and exhaustion of a victorious army might be, a defeated one must be a hundred-fold worse, and action should be based on this. Assuredly, if there be justification in disregarding an axiom of Napoleon, the wild confusion of the Confederates after Manassas afforded it.

The first skirmishes and actions of the war proved that the Southron, untrained, was a better fighter than the

Northerner—not because of more courage, but of the social and economic conditions by which he was surrounded. Devoted to agriculture in a sparsely populated country, the Southron was self-reliant, a practiced horseman, and skilled in the use of arms. The dense population of the North, the habit of association for commercial and manufacturing purposes, weakened individuality of character, and horsemanship and the use of arms were exceptional accomplishments. The rapid development of railways and manufactures in the West had assimilated the people of that region to their eastern neighbors, and the old race of frontier riflemen had wandered to the far interior of the continent. Instruction and discipline soon equalized differences, and battles were decided by generalship and numbers; and this was the experience of our kinsmen in their great civil war. The country squires who followed the banners of Newcastle and Rupert at first swept the eastern-counties yeomanry and the London train-bands from the field; but fiery and impetuous valor was at last overmatched by the disciplined purpose and stubborn constancy of Cromwell's Ironsides.

The value of the "initiative" in war cannot be overstated. It surpasses in power mere accession of numbers, as it requires neither transport nor commissariat. Holding it, a commander lays his plans deliberately, and executes them at his own appointed time and in his own way. The "defensive" is weak, lowering the morale of the army reduced to it, enforcing constant watchfulness lest threatened attacks become real, and keeping commander and troops in a state of anxious tension. These truisms would not deserve mention did not the public mind ignore the fact that their application is limited to trained soldiers, and often become impatient for the employment of proved

ability to sustain sieges and hold lines in offensive movements. A collection of untrained men is neither more nor less than a mob, in which individual courage goes for nothing. In movement each person finds his liberty of action merged in a crowd, ignorant and incapable of direction. Every obstacle creates confusion, speedily converted into panic by opposition. The heroic defenders of Saragossa could not for a moment have faced a battalion of French infantry in the open field. Osman's solitary attempt to operate outside of Plevna met with no success; and the recent defeat of Moukhtar may be ascribed to incaution in taking position too far from his line of defense, where, when attacked, manœuvres of which his people were incapable became necessary.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER MANASSAS.

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After the action at Manassas, the summer and winter of 1861 wore away without movements of special note in our quarter, excepting the defeat of the Federals at Ball's Bluff, on the Potomac, by a detached brigade of Confederates, commanded by General Evans of South Carolina, a West-Pointer enjoying the sobriquet of *Shanks* from the thinness of his legs.

In the organization of our army, my regiment was brigaded with the 6th, 7th, and 8th regiments of the Louisiana infantry, and placed under General William H.T. Walker of Georgia. Graduated from West Point in the summer of 1837, this officer joined the 6th United States infantry operating against the Seminoles in Florida. On Christmas day following was fought the battle of Okeechobee, the severest fight of that Indian war. The savages were posted on a thickly jungled island in the lake, through the waters of which, breast-high, the troops advanced several hundred yards to the attack. The loss on our side was heavy, but the Indians were so completely routed as to break their spirit. Colonel Zachary Taylor commanded, and there won his yellow sash and grade. Walker was desperately wounded, and the medical people gave him up; but he laughed at their predictions and recovered. In the war with Mexico, assaulting Molino del Rey, he received several wounds, all pronounced fatal, and science thought itself avenged. Again he got well, as he

said, to spite the doctors. Always a martyr to asthma, he rarely enjoyed sleep but in a sitting posture; yet he was as cheerful and full of restless activity as the celebrated Earl of Peterborough. Peace with Mexico established, Walker became commandant of cadets at West Point. His ability as an instructor, and his lofty, martial bearing, deeply impressed his new brigade and prepared it for stern work. Subsequently Walker died on the field near Atlanta, defending the soil of his native State—a death of all others he would have chosen. I have dwelt somewhat on his character, because it was one of the strangest I have met. No enterprise was too rash to awaken his ardor, if it necessitated daring courage and self-devotion. Truly, he might have come forth from the pages of old Froissart. It is with unaffected feeling that I recall his memory and hang before it my humble wreath of immortelles.

In camp our army experienced much suffering and loss of strength. Drawn almost exclusively from rural districts, where families lived isolated, the men were scourged with mumps, whooping-cough, and measles, diseases readily overcome by childhood in urban populations. Measles proved as virulent as smallpox or cholera. Sudden changes of temperature drove the eruption from the surface to the internal organs, and fevers, lung and typhoid, and dysenteries followed. My regiment was fearfully smitten, and I passed days in hospital, nursing the sick and trying to comfort the last moments of many poor lads, dying so far from home and friends. Time and frequent changes of camp brought improvement, but my own health gave way. A persistent low fever sapped my strength and impaired the use of my limbs. General Johnston kindly ordered me off to the Fauquier springs, sulphur waters, some twenty miles to the south. There I was joined and carefully nursed by a

devoted sister, and after some weeks slowly regained health.

On the eve of returning to the army, I learned of my promotion to brigadier, to relieve General Walker, transferred to a brigade of Georgians. This promotion seriously embarrassed me. Of the four colonels whose regiments constituted the brigade, I was the junior in commission, and the other three had been present and "won their spurs" at the recent battle, so far the only important one of the war. Besides, my known friendship for President Davis, with whom I was connected by his first marriage with my elder sister, would justify the opinion that my promotion was due to favoritism. Arrived at headquarters, I obtained leave to go to Richmond, where, after an affectionate reception, the President listened to the story of my feelings, the reasons on which they were based, and the request that the promotion should be revoked. He replied that he would take a day for reflection before deciding the matter. The following day I was told that the answer to my appeal would be forwarded to the army, to which I immediately returned. The President had employed the delay in writing a letter to the senior officers of the brigade, in which he began by stating that promotions to the grade of general officer were by law intrusted to him, and were made for considerations of public good, of which he alone was judge. He then, out of abundant kindness for me, went on to soothe the feelings of these officers with a tenderness and delicacy of touch worthy a woman's hand, and so effectually as to secure me their hearty support. No wonder that all who enjoy the friendship of Jefferson Davis love him as Jonathan did David.

Several weeks without notable incident were devoted to instruction, especially in marching, the only military quality

for which Southern troops had no aptitude. Owing to the good traditions left by my predecessor, Walker, and the zeal of officers and men, the brigade made great progress.

With the army at this time was a battalion of three companies from Louisiana, commanded by Major Wheat. These detached companies had been thrown together previous to the fight at Manassas, where Wheat was severely wounded. The strongest of the three, and giving character to all, was called the "Tigers." Recruited on the levee and in the alleys of New Orleans, the men might have come out of "Alsatia," where they would have been worthy subjects of that illustrious potentate, "Duke Hildebrod." The captain, who had succeeded to the immediate command of these worthies on the advancement of Wheat, enjoying the luxury of many aliases, called himself White, perhaps out of respect for the purity of the patriotic garb lately assumed. So villainous was the reputation of this battalion that every commander desired to be rid of it; and General Johnston assigned it to me, despite my efforts to decline the honor of such society. He promised, however, to sustain me in any measures to enforce discipline, and but a few hours elapsed before the fulfillment of the promise was exacted. For some disorder after tattoo, several "Tigers" were arrested and placed in charge of the brigade guard. Their comrades attempted to force the guard and release them. The attempt failed, and two ringleaders were captured and put in irons for the night. On the ensuing morning an order for a general court-martial was obtained from army headquarters, and the court met at 10 A.M. The prisoners were found guilty, and sentenced to be shot at sunset. I ordered the "firing party" to be detailed from their own company; but Wheat and his officers begged to be spared this hard duty, fearing that the "Tigers" would refuse to fire on their comrades. I

insisted for the sake of the example, and pointed out the serious consequences of disobedience by their men. The brigade, under arms, was marched out; and as the news had spread, many thousands from other commands flocked to witness the scene. The firing party, ten "Tigers," was drawn up fifteen paces from the prisoners, the brigade provost gave the command to fire, and the unhappy men fell dead without a struggle. This account is given because it was the first military execution in the Army of Northern Virginia; and punishment, so closely following offense, produced a marked effect. But Major "Bob" Wheat deserves an extended notice.

In the early summer of 1846, after the victories of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, the United States Army under General Zachary Taylor lay near the town of Matamoros. Visiting the hospital of a recently joined volunteer corps from the States, I remarked a bright-eyed youth of some nineteen years, wan with disease, but cheery withal. The interest he inspired led to his removal to army headquarters, where he soon recovered health and became a pet. This was Bob Wheat, son of an Episcopal clergyman, who had left school to come to the war. He next went to Cuba with Lopez, was wounded and captured, but escaped the garrote to follow Walker to Nicaragua. Exhausting the capacities of South American patriots to *pronounce*, he quitted their society in disgust, and joined Garibaldi in Italy, whence his keen scent of combat summoned him home in convenient time to receive a bullet at Manassas. The most complete Dugald Dalgetty possible, he had "all the defects of the good qualities" of that doughty warrior.

Some months after the time of which I am writing, a body of Federal horse was captured in the valley of Virginia. The colonel commanding, who had been dismounted in the fray,

approached me. A stalwart man, with huge mustaches, cavalry boots adorned with spurs worthy of a *caballero*, slouched hat, and plume, he strode along with the nonchalant air of one who had wooed Dame Fortune too long to be cast down by her frowns. Suddenly Major Wheat, near by, sprang from his horse with a cry of "Percy! old boy!" "Why, Bob!" was echoed back, and a warm embrace was exchanged. Colonel Percy Wyndham, an Englishman in the Federal service, had last parted from Wheat in Italy, or some other country where the pleasant business of killing was going on, and now fraternized with his friend in the manner described.

Poor Wheat! A month later, and he slept his last sleep on the bloody field of Cold Harbor. He lies there in a soldier's grave. Gallant spirit! let us hope that his readiness to die for his cause has made "the scarlet of his sins like unto wool."

As the autumn of the year 1861 passed away, the question of army organization pressed for solution, while divergent opinions were held by the Government at Richmond and General Johnston. The latter sent me to President Davis to explain his views and urge their adoption. My mission met with no success; but in discharging it, I was made aware of the estrangement growing up between these eminent persons, which subsequently became "the spring of woes unnumbered." An earnest effort made by me to remove the cloud, then "no greater than a man's hand," failed; though the elevation of character of the two men, which made them listen patiently to my appeals, justified hope. Time but served to widen the breach. Without the knowledge and despite the wishes of General Johnston, the descendants of the ancient dwellers in the cave of Adullam gathered themselves behind his shield, and shot their arrows at President Davis and his advisers, weakening the

influence of the head of the cause for which all were struggling.

Immediately after the birth of the Confederacy, a resolution was adopted by the "Provisional Congress" declaring that military and naval officers, resigning the service of the United States Government to enter that of the Confederate, would preserve their relative rank. Later on, the President was authorized to make five appointments to the grade of general. These appointments were announced after the battle of Manassas, and in the following order of seniority: Samuel Cooper, Albert Sidney Johnston, Robert E. Lee, Joseph E. Johnston, and G.T. Beauregard.

Near the close of President Buchanan's administration, in 1860, died General Jesup, Quartermaster-General of the United States army; and Joseph E. Johnston, then lieutenant-colonel of cavalry, was appointed to the vacancy. Now the Quartermaster-General had the rank, pay, and emoluments of a brigadier-general; but the rank was staff, and by law this officer could not exercise command over troops unless by special assignment. When, in the spring of 1861, the officers in question entered the service of the Confederacy, Cooper had been Adjutant-General of the United States Army, with the rank of colonel; Albert Sidney Johnston, colonel and brigadier-general by brevet, and on duty as such; Lee, lieutenant-colonel of cavalry, senior to Joseph E. Johnston in the line before the latter's appointment above mentioned; Beauregard, major of engineers. In arranging the order of seniority of generals, President Davis held to the superiority of line to staff rank, while Joseph E. Johnston took the opposite view, and sincerely believed that injustice was done him.

After the grave and wondrous scenes through which we have passed, all this seems like "a tempest in a tea-pot;"

but it had much influence and deserves attention.

General Beauregard, who about this time was transferred to the army in the West, commanded by Albert Sidney Johnston, was also known to have grievances. Whatever their source, it could not have been *rank*; but it is due to this General—a gentleman of taste—to say that no utterances came from him. Indiscreet persons at Richmond, claiming the privilege and discharging the duty of friendship, gave tongue to loud and frequent plaints, and increased the confusion of the hour.

As the year 1862 opened, and the time for active movements drew near, weighty cares attended the commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. The folly of accepting regiments for the short period of twelve months, to which allusion has been made, was now apparent. Having taken service in the spring of 1861, the time of many of the troops would expire just as the Federal host in their front might be expected to advance. A large majority of the men were willing to reënlist, provided that they could first go home to arrange private affairs; and fortunately, the fearful condition of the country permitted the granting of furloughs on a large scale. Except on a few pikes, movements were impossible, and an army could no more have marched across country than across Chesapeake bay. Closet warriors in cozy studies, with smooth macadamized roadways before their doors, sneer at the idea of military movements being arrested by mud. I apprehend that these gentlemen have never served in a bad country during the rainy season, and are ignorant of the fact that, in his Russian campaign, the elements proved too strong for the genius of Napoleon.

General Johnston met the difficulties of his position with great coolness, tact, and judgment; but his burden was by no means lightened by the interference of certain politicians

at Richmond. These were perhaps inflamed by the success that had attended the tactical efforts of their Washington peers. At all events, they now threw themselves upon military questions with much ardor. Their leader was Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia, Vice-President of the Confederacy, who is entitled to a place by himself.

Like the celebrated John Randolph of Roanoke, Mr. Stephens has an acute intellect attached to a frail and meagre body. As was said by the witty Canon of St. Paul's of Francis Jeffrey, his mind is in a state of indecent exposure. A trained and skillful politician, he was for many years before the war returned to the United States House of Representatives from the district in which he resides, and his "device" seems always to have been, "Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum." When, in December, 1849, the Congress assembled, there was a Whig administration, and the same party had a small majority in the lower House, of which Mr. Stephens, an ardent Whig, was a member; but he could not see his way to support his party's candidate for Speaker, and this inability to find a road, plain mayhap to weaker organs, secured the control of the House to his political adversaries. During the exciting period preceding "secession" Mr. Stephens held and avowed moderate opinions; but, swept along by the resistless torrent surrounding him, he discovered and proclaimed that "slavery was the corner-stone of the confederacy." In the strong vernacular of the West, this was "rather piling the agony" on the humanitarians, whose sympathies were not much quickened toward us thereby. As the struggle progressed, Mr. Stephens, with all the impartiality of an equity judge, marked many of the virtues of the Government north of the Potomac, and all the vices of that on his own side of the river. Regarding the military questions

in hand he entertained and publicly expressed original opinions, which I will attempt to convey as accurately as possible. The war was for principles and rights, and it was in defense of these, as well as of their property, that the people had taken up arms. They could always be relied on when a battle was imminent; but, when no fighting was to be done, they had best be at home attending to their families and interests. As their intelligence was equal to their patriotism, they were as capable of judging of the necessity of their presence with the colors as the commanders of armies, who were but professional soldiers fighting for rank and pay, and most of them without property in the South. It may be observed that such opinions are more comfortably cherished by political gentlemen, two hundred miles away, than by commanders immediately in front of the enemy.

In July, 1865, two months after the close of the great war, I visited Washington in the hope of effecting some change in the condition of Jefferson Davis, then ill and a prisoner at Fortress Monroe; and this visit was protracted to November before its object was accomplished. In the latter part of October of the same year Mr. Stephens came to Washington, where he was the object of much attention on the part of people controlling the Congress and the country. Desiring his coöperation in behalf of Mr. Davis, I sought and found him sitting near a fire (for he is of a chilly nature), smoking his pipe. He heard me in severe politeness, and, without unnecessary expenditure of enthusiasm, promised his assistance. Since the war Mr. Stephens has again found a seat in the Congress, where, unlike the rebel brigadiers, his presence is not a rock of offense to the loyal mind.[1]

1 The foregoing sketch of Mr. Stephens appeared substantially in the "North American Review," but the date of the interview in Washington was not stated. Thereupon Mr. Stephens, in print, seized on July, and declared that, as he was a prisoner in Fort Warren during that month, the interview was a "Munchausenism." He also disputes the correctness of the opinions concerning military matters ascribed to him, although scores of his associates at Richmond will attest it. Again, he assumes the non-existence of twelve-months' regiments because some took service for the war, etc.

Like other ills, feeble health has its compensations, especially for those who unite restless vanity and ambition to a feminine desire for sympathy. It has been much the habit of Mr. Stephens to date controversial epistles from "a sick chamber," as do ladies in a delicate situation. A diplomatist of the last century, the Chevalier D'Eon, by usurping the privileges of the opposite sex, inspired grave doubts concerning his own.

CHAPTER IV.

OPENING OF THE PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN.

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Pursuing "the even tenor of his way," Johnston rapidly increased the efficiency of his army. Furloughed men returned in large numbers before their leaves had terminated, many bringing new recruits with them. Divisions were formed, and officers selected to command them. Some islands of dry land appeared amid the sea of mud, when the movement of the Federal forces in our front changed the theatre of war and opened the important campaign of 1862.

When overtaken by unexpected calamity African tribes destroy the fetich previously worshiped, and with much noise seek some new idol in which they can incarnate their vanities and hopes. Stunned by the rout at Manassas, the North pulled down an old veteran, Scott, and his lieutenant, McDowell, and set up McClellan, who caught the public eye at the moment by reason of some minor successes in Western Virginia, where the Confederate General, Robert Garnett, was killed. It is but fair to admit that the South had not emulated the wisdom of Solomon nor the modesty of Godolphin. The capture of Fort Sumter, with its garrison of less than a hundred men, was hardly Gibraltar; yet it would put the grandiloquent hidalgoes of Spain on their mettle to make more clatter over the downfall of the cross of St. George from that historic rock. McClellan was the young Napoleon, the very god of war in his latest avatar. While this was absurd, and in the end injurious to McClellan, it was of service to his Government; for it strengthened his loins to