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Military Order of the Boyal Legion

OF THE

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COMMANDERY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.



WAR PAPERS.

74

Major-General William Starke Rosecrans,  
U. S. Army.

PREPARED BY COMPANION

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL

**GILBERT C. KNIFFIN,**

U. S. VOLUNTEERS,

AND

READ AT THE STATED MEETING OF NOVEMBER 4, 1908.

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1908



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## Major-General William Starke Rosecrans, U. S. Army.

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The mention of the name of Rosecrans never fails to fill me with recollections of his heroic service. From the dawn of the Rebellion until the shades of night closed upon its bier, the life of this superb soldier was devoted to the service of his country. The most skilful strategist that the war produced, the hardest and most persistent fighter, a strict disciplinarian, a thorough soldier, it was the fate of Major-General William S. Rosecrans to carve the way for others to march to glory, to sow the seed while others reaped the harvest of his victories.

The echo of his rifles at Rich Mountain in 1861 had scarcely ceased to reverberate among the hills of western Virginia, when his superior in command, who had no part in the battle, was selected to command the armies of the United States. It was his victory over Van Dorn at Corinth in October, 1862, which restored the waning confidence of the Government in its Department Commander, and at last when the magnificent Army of the Cumberland reorganized, and thrice led to victory at Stone's River, Tullahoma, and the capture of Chattanooga in 1863, by General Rosecrans, the chaplet was torn from his brow by the envy and jealousy of rivals, and placed upon the head of the heroic Thomas. But there was no jealousy between *these* two great men. The lofty patriotism that inspired each found expression in the confidence reposed in the other. With entire confidence in the nobility of his character I asked General Rosecrans in one of the confidential conver-

sations that we frequently held while he was Member of Congress and later Register of the Treasury, how it affected him to hear General Thomas referred to as the "Rock of Chickamauga."

"Of course he was the Rock," he exclaimed, "he was my rock, and he would not have been intrusted with the command of my army on the field after my return to Chattanooga, if he had not been a rock, and a solid rock at that."

And so with Thomas. At the organization of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland at the Burnett House in Cincinnati, in 1866, referring to the battle of Chickamauga, General Thomas said:

"Chickamauga! A battle in which I received great credit at the expense of a better soldier, General Rosecrans."

That is the way in which these great-hearted generals referred to each other, and that is why I to-night can give my meed of praise to one without abating one jot or tittle of my loyalty to the other.

You who knew him as he lived among us in his old age, can form little idea of the man of forty years as he appeared upon the field of battle, mounted upon his favorite roan horse, "Traveler," who spurned all obstacles. The general appeared the impersonation of war. Of splendid physique and untiring energy, he possessed that cool, unfaltering courage which finds its best expression upon the battlefield.

To see him in battle was a military education; to follow him, to win his approbation, men gave their lives. His face shone with the inspiration of the grand occasion. To plant a battery where its fire would be most effective, to hurl a brigade with the impetuosity of a limited express train upon an advancing line of the enemy, and above all to stand with no thought of yielding a strong position, while his clarion voice, rising above the full orchestra of battle, cheered the men whose

courage his example inspired. And so men followed where he led with the light of battle on their faces, wrenching victory from the jaws of defeat, while billowing the ground over which they fought with the forms of their fallen comrades.

The Rosecrans name is one closely allied to American military history, no less than five of the family having served as commissioned officers in the continental army and militia during the revolutionary war. The root of the family tree in this country was planted on the Hudson River by one of the Knickerbockers early in the last century.

Dr. Daniel Rosencrans, born in Dutchess County, N. Y., emigrated to Wyoming Valley, Pa., where in 1782 he married Miss Thankful Wilcox. In 1808 he headed an emigration to the far west. The colony planted itself in Delaware County, Ohio, and from these pioneers sprang the Rosecrans, Taylors, Armstrongs, Van Sickles, Starkes, and other prominent families in that State. Crandall Rosecrans, eldest son of Dr. Rosecrans, adjutant of the light horse battalion which served under General Harrison in the war of 1812, was a successful farmer and manufacturer of Delaware County, held in high esteem by his neighbors as a man of undoubted courage and stern, unflinching integrity. His wife was Miss Hopkins, daughter of a lieutenant in the Continental Army. His mother was one of the two adults who escaped the massacre at Wyoming. Warned by the wife of one of the Tory conspirators, she fled from her home with her two infant children, and traveled on foot sixty miles through the wilderness to Easton, Pa. The Hopkins family were of Connecticut extraction, tracing their descent from Stephen Hopkins, who came over in the *Mayflower*.

William Starke Rosecrans, the eldest son of Crandall Rosecrans, was born in Berkshire, Delaware County, on the 6th

of September, 1819. His boyhood was spent in his native place, where he gave early promise of future usefulness.

Reared in a healthful moral atmosphere, at a period when the lore of the fireside partook largely of the then recent struggle of the pioneers to establish themselves in their new homes, and endowed with strong health and great physical courage, it is not surprising that the ambition to rise above his surroundings seized upon him at an early age.

Deeds of prowess in the Indian wars were fresh in the memory of men still living. The story of his grandmother's escape from the horrors of savage barbarity at Wyoming, and of atrocities committed along the frontier, fired the heart of the future general to emulate the heroism and win the glory of a military chieftain.

At sixteen years of age, a position was tendered him by Mr. George B. Arnold, a merchant of Utica, Ohio, which he accepted, and for one year applied himself to mastering the details of business. While here, he was studious and an eager devourer of books, those relating to history especially; and, thenceforward, to obtain a military education became the absorbing desire of his life. With the habit of going straight to the point which has always been one of his chief characteristics, he addressed a letter to his father's old friend, Gen. Lewis Cass, stating his desires, and asked for the terms and qualifications required, and means of gaining admission to the Military Academy at West Point. The general sent him the required information, and finding that the applicant was a son of Crandall Rosecrans, procured for him an appointment, which reached him before he had mailed his application in regular form, accompanied by a long list of recommendations. In July, 1838, at the age of eighteen, he entered the Academy, which for four years was to witness his triumphs



and defeats in the rigorous schooling given by the nation to its embryo soldiers. General Rosecrans is described by his associates at West Point as a sturdy, energetic young man, fond of athletic sport and not averse to hard knocks when occasion demanded. In many regards the boy gave promise of the man. He was truthful, courageous, studious, fond of going to the root of questions, and working upward; scorning imposture, and not afraid to acknowledge his ignorance of a subject, if thereby he could obtain light upon it.

The class that was graduated at the Military Academy in 1842 contains the names of many prominent officers in the Union and Confederate armies. Second on the list is the name of John Newton, followed by William S. Rosecrans, Seth Williams, John Pope, Abner Doubleday, Napoleon J. T. Dana, and George Sykes, all of whom became major-generals of volunteers twenty years later.

Intermingled with these—friends then, as now, for *noblesse oblige*, these “West Pointers” stick pretty closely together when the demands of duty do not require them to shoot at each other—are such names as James Longstreet, Earl Van Dorn, Lafayette McLaws, Daniel H. Hill, Martin L. Smith, Alexander P. Stewart, and Gustavus W. Smith, who attained equal rank in the army of the Confederate States.

Rosecrans was graduated July 18, 1842, and breveted second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers, the elite of the army, third in mathematics and fifth in general merit, in a class of fifty-six.

Lieutenant Rosecrans had no sooner received his brevet appointment, than he was sent to Fortress Monroe, to win his rank under the veteran De Russy, where, after remaining one year, he was returned to his alma mater as assistant professor of engineering.

It was while a professor at West Point that he met with success in winning the heart and hand of Miss Anna E. Hegeman, only daughter of Adrian Hegeman, Esq., a well-known lawyer of New York City. They were married August 21, 1843. The domestic relations of the general, owing to the amiable qualities of his estimable wife, who died on Christmas morning, 1883, were more than usually happy. Their union was blest by the birth of seven children, two only of whom are living, Lillie, the wife of Governor Toole, of Montana, and Carl, of Los Angeles, California.

The next four years were spent at West Point, where he filled successively the chairs of engineering, natural philosophy, and finally of practical engineering. He was sent in 1847 to Newport, R. I. where he took charge of the fortifications and the construction of a large and permanent wharf, and thence in 1852 to New Bedford and Providence, where he took charge of the surveys of harbors at those points, and the Taunton River. The following year, in response to a request from the Secretary of the Navy for a competent engineer, Lieutenant Rosecrans was selected by the Secretary of War and assigned to duty at Washington Navy Yard, where he planned the immense shops now in use at that place for forging heavy work.

At the age of thirty-four, when near the head of his profession, Lieutenant Rosecrans decided to resign from the army, where he had served eleven years without having reached the dignity of a captain's commission, and seek employment in his profession in civil life. Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, expressed great reluctance to accept his resignation, being unwilling to lose so valuable an officer from the service, offering him, instead, six months' leave of absence in which to determine whether he preferred civil to military engineering. In April, 1854, his determination remaining unchanged, his resignation

was accepted, greatly to the regret of General Totten, Chief of Engineers, who expressed in his endorsement upon the resignation, his "regret that the country was about to lose the services of so able and valuable an officer."

The call of the Government for troops with which to crush a rebellion in the cotton States, brought him to the front as a soldier fully equipped by education and practice to take his place among the successful generals of the age. From the moment that war was declared inevitable, Rosecrans gave no thought to any business but that of his country.

On the 16th of May, 1861, he was commissioned colonel of the 23d Ohio Volunteers, and four days later his commission as brigadier-general reached him while actively engaged in assisting Governor Dennison in securing clothing and equipment for the troops then being mustered into service.

The First Brigade, commanded by General Rosecrans, was composed of the 17th and 19th Ohio and the 8th and 10th Indiana Infantry. A soldier of one of these regiments writes from the field of operations in West Virginia:

"Our general is an incessant worker. He is in the saddle almost constantly. He has not had a full night's sleep since he has been in Virginia, and he takes his meals as often on horseback as at the table. His geniality and affability endear him to all who come in contact with him."

Within two weeks after he assumed command of these troops, they had fought the battle of Rich Mountain under his leadership, which decided the first campaign of the war.

This engagement, like that of Mill Springs fought by General Thomas in Kentucky, though small as regards the numbers engaged as compared with those which this commander was destined later to plan and execute, was far-reaching in its results. A strong and confident foe held position in the mountains of

Western Virginia. They were within their own territory, where every road and mountain footpath was familiar to them.

On the first of August President Jeff. Davis wrote to Gen. Joseph E. Johnston:

“General Lee has gone to Western Virginia, and I hope may be able to strike a decisive blow at the enemy in that quarter; or, failing in that, will be able to organize and post our troops so as to check the enemy, after which he will return to this place.”

Pitted for six months against the future commander of the Confederate Army, General Rosecrans not only held his position against “a decisive blow,” but within three months had placed it beyond the power of General Lee to adopt the remaining alternative of “posting his troops so as to check the enemy.”

“Disaster have come, and disasters are coming,” wrote Henry A. Wise to General Lee, after Carnifex Ferry, “which you alone, I fear, can repair and prevent.”

When in January, 1862, General Lee was recalled to the army of Northern Virginia, the Confederates retired, leaving West Virginia to be incorporated into the Union as a sovereign State.

General Rosecrans, having rid West Virginia of hostile forces, was succeeded by Fremont, and in May, 1862, ordered to report to General Halleck before Corinth. Being assigned to the Army of the Mississippi, General Pope gave him command of one-half his army, where he remained until that officer was transferred to his “headquarters in the saddle” in Virginia, when he assumed command of the army. General Halleck having been called to Washington, the command of the armies of the Tennessee and the Mississippi—now incorporated into one—fell to General Grant.

The greater part of the Confederate Army moved away from

his front and concentrated at Chattanooga, for a movement under Bragg, in conjunction with Gen. E. Kirby Smith, into Kentucky. Having succeeded in reaching the center of that State by flanking Buell's army, General Bragg at once ordered co-operation from Generals Price and Van Dorn, then in occupation of central Mississippi.

General Bragg was so far misinformed as to the movements of Grant's forces as to believe that Rosecrans, who had, in obedience to Halleck's order, detached two divisions to Buell's assistance, was himself at Nashville with his entire force, leaving the way open for Price to march through middle Tennessee, and join him in Kentucky. General Price, though better informed, resolved to attempt the movement by flanking Rosecrans at Corinth, and by a rapid march, crossing the river north of Iuka, place several days' march between himself and pursuit. The movement was regarded as entirely feasible by both Price and Van Dorn as, in case Rosecrans followed Price, he would leave the coveted prize of Corinth undefended, and should Grant attempt to intercept him he could move by way of Chattanooga. Simultaneously with information of Price's movement came a rumor that Van Dorn was advancing upon Corinth. By rapid movements there would be time to overwhelm Price before Van Dorn's arrival before Corinth, and by Rosecrans' advice, General Ord's division marched eastward from Corinth to attack Price at Iuka, while Rosecrans was to cut off his line of retreat. Price passed through Jacinto on the 10th of September and captured Iuka, delaying to fill his supply trains from the captured stores.

General Grant reached a point seven and a half miles west of Iuka, with Ord's, Ross' and McKean's divisions of six thousand men on the 18th, at which time Rosecrans' advance was at Jacinto, from which place he despatched a courier in-

forming Grant of his position, saying that he should march the next morning at five o'clock and hoped to reach Iuka at not later than four P. M.

Within ten minutes of the time specified, Rosecrans, with Stanley's and Hamilton's divisions, encountered the enemy's pickets, drove them in, and Price opened upon him at once with grape and canister.

The battle was on, but where was Ord? He was in position early, awaiting the order to attack, but received an order instead to move up to within four miles, and await the sound of Rosecrans' guns. The latter, listening anxiously for support from Ord, saw the Confederate troops advancing from that direction to support the already overwhelming forces in front. Price had become aware of what he termed in his report "the overwhelming odds against him," and determined to crush the force in his rear before that on his right could join it.

The battle raged till night between these two forces without a gun having been fired from Ord's column. With desperate determination, Price hurled his strongest brigades upon Rosecrans' right, only to find them repulsed with heavy loss. Massing another and heavier column, he repeated the assault, but in vain. The Confederates wavered and fell back, just at the moment that the exultant Union troops found that their last cartridge was expended. During the fight Rosecrans was ubiquitous, exposing his life as freely as any of his soldiers. Mounted upon a white horse he was seen dashing from right to left, wherever his presence was needed to form a column or improvise a means of defense. Under cover of darkness Price moved out of the town and took up his line of march southward to join Van Dorn in an attack upon Corinth.

General Van Dorn had commanded the corps on Beauregard's right at the siege of Corinth and was bitterly opposed

to evacuating the city without a fight. Left in command of the troops in Mississippi by General Bragg, he had used every effort to organize a force with which to recapture that important point. He had obtained maps of the country surrounding it, and on the return of Price from Iuka was overjoyed to receive from him a topographical map, made by a United States engineer, containing a detailed description of the country, with the location of every road and water-course in North Mississippi.

Van Dorn's plan of attack depended for its success upon taking Rosecrans by surprise. To this end he moved from Holly Springs to Ripley, where he was joined by Price, and thence by rapid marches in the direction of Bolivar, near which place the main body of Grant's army was concentrated, leaving Corinth to the right. To more successfully deceive his enemy, he caused his men to work all night upon a bridge over which his army must pass on its way to Bolivar.

Meantime, Rosecrans had returned to Corinth and resumed work upon an inner line of intrenchments, mounting artillery, keeping his cavalry out on every road upon which the enemy could advance upon him. On the 2d of October his vigilance was rewarded by the discovery of Van Dorn's column moving on the Bolivar road. His first thought was that a good opportunity would be afforded to him to fall upon the enemy's rear while he was engaged with the troops at that point, but his efforts to place Corinth in a condition to resist attack were not relaxed. His force consisted of four divisions of infantry and artillery, under command of Generals Stanley, Hamilton, McKean and Davies, 20,384 strong, and 2,300 cavalry under Colonel Mizner. His information of the strength of the combined armies of Van Dorn and Price led him to believe that it was not less than 35,000, an opinion in which he afterwards

felt himself sustained by the fact that he captured prisoners from fifty-three regiments of infantry, eighteen of cavalry, and sixteen batteries.

In his report Van Dorn places the entire strength of his command at 22,000. Price's corps consisted of two divisions, seven brigades, under command of Generals Hebert and Maury; Van Dorn's of one division, General Lovell's of three brigades, commanded by Generals Rust, Villipigue and Bowen. It will be observed that, provided Van Dorn's estimate is correct, the contending forces were nearly equal in numerical strength.

Disposing his command so as best to meet the enemy should he advance direct or attempt a flank movement, Rosecrans enjoined upon all the utmost vigilance, and calmly awaited the approach of the enemy.

The march northward, from Ripley to Pocahontas, was a feint upon Bolivar. On the morning of the 3d of October Van Dorn turned sharply to the east from the latter place, and marched straight upon Corinth. He had fatigued his troops to no purpose, for his watchful antagonist was fully apprised of his coming, and ready to meet him.

Van Dorn's army came within reach of the Union pickets by nine o'clock A. M., but lost much time in forming line of battle, so that it was near noon when Davies, who was in advance, felt himself so pressed as to call for reinforcements. But it was no part of General Rosecrans' plan to fight at the outer works. His orders, however, were "to hold positions pretty firmly, to develop the enemy's force." Davies fell back, and Lovell pressed forward, when Price found his left flank attacked so vigorously as to prevent co-operation, and the Confederates contented themselves for the day with the capture of the outer line of works.

Charges were subsequently preferred against General Van



Dorn for his management of this campaign, by General Bowen, one of the specifications of which was that he did not press forward into Corinth on the evening of the 3d, Bowen claiming that Rosecrans received heavy reinforcements during the night. The battle was fought throughout by the troops already enumerated.

The night was spent by both commanders in forming their lines—the one for attack, the other for defense. Van Dorn formed a heavy column for attack upon the center, while Rosecrans formed his lines upon his batteries so as to bring Van Dorn's next attack within converging artillery fire. With his matchless capacity for hard work, he felt no fatigue. He sent for his division commanders and gave explicit instructions to each, and going out among the camps he encouraged the boys by quoting Barkis.

“Things is workin’,” said he.

Before daylight he was informed that the enemy was planting a battery not over six hundred yards from Battery Robinett. “Let them plant it,” said the General. “It will be a used-up battery when our guns open,” a prediction that was verified about daylight.

The magnificent charge of Price's corps at Corinth on the 4th of October has become historic. It compares with that of Breckenridge at Stone's River, Thomas at Mission Ridge, or Hood at Atlanta.

Sweeping forward in irresistible force, leaving its dead and wounded upon the ground like grain behind a reaper, its ragged front dashed down into the center of the town. Stormed at with shot and shell and a torrent of minie balls, it halted only inside of the fort, where, cowering under the guns from the storm of cannon shot and musketry rained upon it from the rear of the fort, it clung with desperate eagerness to turn them upon the Union forces.

There are times in every hard-fought battle, when the example of the general is worth a whole division of fresh troops. It was so here. It lives in the memory of every soldier who fought that day, how the magnificent form of Rosecrans was seen in the thickest of the fight, rallying his men by his splendid example until the charge was repulsed, and the torn and bleeding columns of the Confederates retired from the field.

It was a glorious victory. A strong and confident enemy had been defeated on a fair field, for after they had gained position in the town the fighting was hand to hand. General Rosecrans gave his exhausted troops a few hours in which to prepare supper and take much-needed rest, then ordered pursuit. General McPherson arriving, with his brigade, just as the column was forming, was given the advance, and came up with the enemy at the Hatchie Bridge, when, after a brisk skirmish with the rear-guard, the Confederates were driven in a disordered mass toward Holly Springs. Now was the opportunity to capture Vicksburg from the rear, and Rosecrans knew it. He knew then by the instinct of a soldier what Confederate records have since revealed, that Van Dorn's army comprised all the available troops in his department, and that, demoralized as they were by defeat and rapid pursuit, they could offer no sufficient opposition to an advance of the Union Army as far southward as they chose to march.

Pressing forward in pursuit, General Rosecrans despatched Grant at Bolivar, stating the condition of affairs and urging that supplies should be pushed forward to overtake him. The Confederates passed through Holly Springs and crossed the Tallahatchie, offering no opposition to their vigorous pursuers. While in the full tide of success, sweeping on toward the Yalobusha River, Rosecrans was halted by a peremptory order from Grant to return to Corinth. The order was obeyed,

but not without protest by the general, whose blood was up, and as a consequence, in Grant's report of the engagement, he passed by the battle of Corinth with a single clause, devoting the most extravagant praise to the troops engaged in the skirmish at Hatchie Bridge, and at the same time telegraphing to Halleck to have a favorite brigadier appointed major-general before the reports of the battle of Corinth should reach Washington. A coolness naturally sprang up between the two major-generals, which increased as time went on, enhanced probably by the reports brought to each by gossiping staff-officers, anxious to curry favor with their several chiefs.

But if a clause in an official report was deemed sufficient by the department commander in which to describe the severe and hotly-contested battle of Corinth, the people demanded a further account, and the country again rang with the praises of General Rosecrans.

In the War Department his star was rapidly rising to its zenith. A commander was required to relieve Gen. Don Carlos Buell in command of the Army of the Cumberland, and Rosecrans was selected.

He assumed command of that army on the 27th of October, and almost his first act was to antagonize the War Department.

Halleck insisted that he should countermarch his army from the vicinity of Bowling Green, where Buell had left it, to Cumberland Gap, in pursuit of Bragg, who had retreated into East Tennessee, and was at that moment on his way around to Murfreesboro, within thirty miles of the advance of the Union Army.

The occupation of East Tennessee had from the first been an object dear to the heart of President Lincoln. General Buell had been relieved of the command for persistently refusing to follow Bragg (barefoot and hungry, for he had no

adequate transportation for such a movement), and when Rosecrans declined to move into East Tennessee, as he said, to meet an enemy who was moving as rapidly as possible to meet him, the President requested Halleck to designate a successor to Rosecrans. General Rosecrans replied to General Halleck's note informing him of this in his usual manly, straightforward fashion:

"My appointment to the command having been made without any solicitation from me or my friends, if the President continues to have confidence in the propriety of the selection, he must permit me to use my judgment and be responsible for the results; but if he entertains doubts, he ought at once to appoint a commander in whom he can confide, for the good of the service, and of the country."

The new commander now bent every effort to the thorough organization of the different departments of his army. It had been well drilled and disciplined by his predecessor, and was in good fighting trim. He organized a topographical bureau and an inspector-general's department; divided the army into three grand divisions, the right wing under command of Maj.-Gen. A. McD. McCook, the left wing commanded by Maj.-Gen. Thomas L. Crittenden, and the center under Maj.-Gen. George H. Thomas.

General Bragg had advanced as far as Murfreesboro in November and formed his army across the Chattanooga road, as if to dispute any further advance of the Army of the Cumberland. The gage of combat was accepted as soon as the completion of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad warranted an advance by giving promise of abundant supplies, and the battle of Stones River was the result. The space given to this article will not admit of a description of this desperately fought engagement. For three days victory coquetted with each side before perching

upon the Union banners. Bragg retreated sullenly from the field, and made his first halt at Tullahoma and Shelbyville, where he erected a line of works absolutely impregnable to direct assault. A delay incomprehensible to the civilians who had charge of the War Department, but easily accounted for by military students of the campaigns of the Civil War, followed the first victory over the Confederate forces. The army moved, however, when the commander willed, and not in the direction which the enemy expected. As he lay at Tullahoma and Shelbyville, Bragg's right was protected, as he supposed, by rugged mountains, through which there were few roads, and none of them favorable for artillery; his left was advanced so as to compel a wide detour to enable the Union Army to reach the railroad in his rear. The country around the left was more open and intersected by good roads. To the surprise of all, General Rosecrans selected the former route for the excellent reason that he was not expected to do it. A quick dash through Hoover's Gap by Wilder's incomparable brigade of mounted infantry opened the way for the center. Further to the right through Guy's gap, General Stanley forced a passage and attacked Shelbyville with his cavalry, while Willich and Miller seized Liberty Gap, and covered McCook's flank. The left wing, by the most laborious march of all, moving clear around the enemy's right, threatened his rear, and communications with Chattanooga. There was no help for it—Bragg must go, and go quickly, which he did, and middle Tennessee was captured without a battle, which must have been fought if, like less skillful generals, the commander of the Army of the Cumberland had attacked in front, through an abatis, in mud up to the knees of the men. "This is the grandest campaign of your life," exclaimed the usually imperturbable Thomas, as he seized the hand of General Rosecrans after his return from the pursuit of the enemy across Elk River. Still, it was lacking in the pyro-

technics of the battlefield, and was lost to view amid the smoke and carnage of Gettysburg and Vicksburg.

A good deal of spicy correspondence had passed in the meantime between General Rosecrans and Secretary Stanton, in which the former had on one occasion expressed his regret that there was so little military knowledge at army headquarters in Washington. It may well be imagined that the peppery Secretary bided his time to strike a return blow which should crush his adversary.

The opportunity came with Chickamauga, when the two enemies of Rosecrans, the one General of the Army, and the other Secretary of War, were all-powerful with the President.

West Tennessee held by a division of troops, and middle Tennessee occupied by the Army of the Cumberland East Tennessee was evidently the next objective. To accomplish its occupation, two expeditions were fitted out. The Army of the Ohio, under General Burnside, was directed to move eastward, across the Cumberland Mountains from Kentucky, to attack General Buckner at Knoxville, while Rosecrans moved against Bragg at Chattanooga. The Army of the Tennessee was lying idle at Vicksburg, and little knowledge of the situation was required at Washington to dictate the union of that army with the Army of the Cumberland.

General Rosecrans' suggestions to this end, however, were, as usual, unheeded, and against his judgment he obeyed the peremptory order to move upon Chattanooga. Meantime, General Bragg had determined to concentrate all his force upon Rosecrans, knowing that the destruction of his army would open the way for his unimpeded march upon the northern States. To this end he recalled Buckner, who evacuated East Tennessee, leaving Burnside an unmolested passage to Knoxville; solicited and obtained a corps from the Army of Northern Virginia under General Longstreet, and prepared

to meet his old antagonist with an overwhelming force. The movement upon Chattanooga in all that goes to make a brilliant strategical march, must forever stand without a parallel in the War of the Rebellion.

To attack Chattanooga direct, with a navigable river in its front, was madness; to flank it was well nigh impossible. Between Rosecrans' right and Bragg's left were two ranges of mountains, impassable except by long and toilsome marches, which would carry the Union Army so far southward as to endanger his communications with Nashville. The busy brain of the commander had perfected his plans, however, and they were carried out by his skilful subordinates without a balk in the arrangements, until the enemy, taking the alarm, had evacuated Chattanooga, and marched southward to Lafayette, beyond his extreme right.

The movement of the army with its artillery and supply trains, over Raccoon and Lookout mountains, will always remain a monument to the boldness of the commander and to the endurance and discipline of his magnificent army. Artillery and wagons were dragged for miles up almost inaccessible cliffs by hand, over roads constructed by the Pioneer Corps, and then lowered into the valleys. On the 10th of September the left wing of the army—the 21st Army Corps—under command of General Crittenden, marched around the nose of Lookout Mountain into Chattanooga. Rapidly concentrating his army in the Chickamauga Valley, the battle was fought without support of any kind either from Burnside or Sherman—both lying within supporting distance when the movement began—and Chattanooga was won.

Common gratitude would have dictated a glowing general order from army headquarters thanking the army and its noble commander for the successful termination of so glorious a campaign.

A telegram from the Assistant Secretary of War, who was present at the battle and witnessed every movement from the beginning to the end, would have set the country wild with the praises of General Rosecrans. He might truthfully have telegraphed as follows: "General Rosecrans has fought a terrible battle in rear of Chattanooga. He has been compelled to withdraw from the field, but Chattanooga is ours." Instead of which, rushing in wild affright from the field with the first fugitives, he telegraphed the defeat of the army.

The occasion had come, and the downfall of Rosecrans, long decreed in the War Department, was near at hand. He was permitted to remain in command a few weeks, long enough to set in motion the plan subsequently carried out by his illustrious successor, to capture Moccasin Point, and thus open communication with his supply depot at Bridgeport, when he was removed from command of the army he had thrice led to victory.

He received the order relieving him without a murmur. He knew that history would vindicate him, and condemn his enemies. More than all, he felt that consciousness of duty well done, that goes far to assuage the deepest wounds to pride.

The war is ended, and the Union, purer and stronger by the baptism of blood through which it has passed, better for all work which the great Ruler of Nations has for it to accomplish, stands to-day the peer of any upon earth.

Among the names of great and successful soldiers, to whose skill in planning and executing great campaigns, to whose courage and constancy under the most trying circumstances, and to whose unswerving loyalty to the general Government we, as a people, are indebted for this glorious consummation, none will, as time goes on, outshine in the history of the War of the Rebellion that of William Starke Rosecrans.





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