TAKEN AT THE FLOOD:
THE OPENING OF THE MARYLAND CAMPAIGN OF 1862

by
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A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

Thesis Director's Signature:

Houston, Texas
May, 1966
ABSTRACT

When Robert E. Lee took command of the Army of Northern Virginia, the Confederacy had reached desperate straits. He decided that only bold strategy could right the balance. At the outset his solution proved correct. By the end of August, 1862, Lee had virtually cleared Virginia of Federal troops. Success brought embarrassment, however, for it was impossible for the heavily outnumbered Southern army to pursue victory fully. Lee approached this dilemma as he approached the frontier of the Confederacy. On September 2, 1862, he chose from the courses open to him, all of which were unattractive in varying degrees, to try to stretch the definition of the defensive-offensive into larger meaning. This and not Pennsylvania, or foreign recognition, or revolution in Maryland, or boodle was the real objective of the Maryland campaign.

Lee's expedition failed for three reasons. First, straggling had worn his army too thin by the crucial phase of the campaign. Second, Lee's opponent, George McClellan, advanced the Northern army from the Washington forts too cautiously to be trapped but too rapidly to give the Southern army the time it needed once it had divided to clear the Shenandoah Valley. Third, Lee made several tactical miscalculations which governed the form the failure assumed and hastened its happening. Twice he misinterpreted the Harpers Ferry problem,
and once, but fatally, he misjudged McClellan's advance from Washington. In addition, his plans for the reduction of the enemy in the upper Valley were unnecessarily and detrimentally complicated.

For the Federal commander, George McClellan, the Maryland campaign was a success without serious qualification. McClellan merged two armies, one thoroughly dispirited and both utterly disorganized, into a manageable field force in less than a week. He took the field with ambiguous authority and the active dislike of nearly all the politicians in Washington except Lincoln, and even the President did not trust the general. Laboring under exaggerated reports of the enemy's size, he pushed his army forward cautiously, in a defensive-offensive strategy which successively blocked Lee's avenues for manœuvre.

In retrospect, it can be seen that Lee and McClellan were cast in very different roles throughout the Maryland campaign. Neither the objectives nor the problems of the Southern army were the same as those of the Northern army. The irony was that both sides were compelled by circumstances to adopt the same strategy, the defensive-offensive. For Lee this strategy was a gamble. For McClellan it represented the path of sureness. For both it was the result of a realistic appraisal of the difficult situations which each faced.
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TO TRUDY
Chapter One: "We Cannot Afford To Be Idle"
—Lee's Strategy in the Maryland Campaign

1. From the Interior to the Frontier

Military policy reflects the collective aims of a nation at war, and the major objectives of the Confederate States throughout the Civil War were defensive. After secession and the elimination of alien garrisons, the South stood to gain nothing by engaging in war. Peace and stability, instead, were needed, and the time to construct a nation from an unsteady foundation. Once they had seceded, Southerners had no quarrel with the North. They wanted no Northern lands, no plunder from Northern wealth, no voice in the councils of Washington. They wanted simply to be let alone to live their own "way of life." It was impossible for people and leaders who shared such views to wage an offensive war.

Military policy, however, is not the same thing as strategy. More precisely, strategy is the instrument employed by the military establishment to execute the national policy. Once it became apparent that the North intended to prevent secession and war became fact, it was necessary for the South to devise a strategy to implement her defensive policy. According to the accepted military theory of their time, Southern leaders could choose between alternative and substantially different strategies of defense. Antoine Henri
Jomini had discussed these alternative theories in his
Summary of the Art of War.

Jomini, in that treatise, had described the first course open to a nation compelled to assume the defensive policy as the "passive defense." In this strategy, the general's aim would be to frustrate his opponent with feints and minor engagements, bait him into exhausting pursuit far away from his base of supplies, and, above all, avoid pitched battles. Jomini was in principle opposed to passivity in the conduct of warfare, and he strongly advised against the use of the passive defense unless a commander were hopelessly outnumbered. The best course, according to Jomini, was the active defense or (as he unhappily insisted on naming it at times) the defensive-offensive. He realized that this second strategy was the most difficult to execute. It required a commander, even though he operated within a defensive framework, to seize the initiative and defeat the enemy, either by manoeuvres which forced the enemy army to retreat or by combat which destroyed it. Jomini championed the defensive-offensive, because he believed that only force, correctly applied, could win wars.

What Antoine Henri Jomini believed, it should be added, was of more than passing significance. As a member of Napoleon Bonaparte's staff, he had watched the greatest commander of modern times devise and apply the brilliant strategies which had shaken the military world. Jomini subsequently combined his observations with a study of other famous commanders in
his *Summary of the Art of War*. To the majority of the contemporary military profession, this work represented the definitive statement on the conduct of warfare.

Despite the unequivocal advice of Jomini, however, the South followed a strategy which was in effect the passive defense during the first year after First Manassas. Although the Confederate army in Virginia turned back one Federal invasion at Manassas, the South never employed or held but briefly military initiative in any form during that first year. Beginning in September, 1861, Northern columns snatched up isolated Confederate garrisons, captured weakly defended Southern cities, and drove the major Confederate lines deeper and deeper into their own heartland. By early June, 1862, the strategy of the passive defense had nearly lost the war for the South.

After a year of warfare the Confederacy faced critical prospects on every front. Kentucky was lost to the enemy, and Tennessee was nearly so. One Northern army had pierced the state of Mississippi, and another held New Orleans, the South's largest port. Virginia west of the Alleghenies was a lost province, and Ambrose Burnside, with an amphibious expeditionary force, was nibbling up pieces of the North Carolina coast. But the direst threat of all came in the east from the Federal Army of the Potomac, commanded by Major-General George B. McClellan. In March, McClellan's army, the largest and best organized the North had in the field, landed on the peninsula between the York and James rivers.
and moved slowly—but it seemed inexorably—toward the Confederate capital.

On every front the North held and pressed the initiative. Everywhere, consequently, the South was compelled to react to Northern strategy—to move in response to Northern offensives and to fight where the North chose to strike. As Jomini had predicted: "He who awaits the attack is everywhere anticipated." And, because she allowed the North to write all of the rules, the South was rapidly losing the game.

After First Manassas, which was only offensive in a strictly tactical sense, Confederate generals had made but two significant attempts to seize the initiative from their opponents. At Shiloh, in April, Albert Sidney Johnston assaulted Ulysses S. Grant's army in the hope of regaining Tennessee. And in late May, attempting to halt the Federal advance on Richmond, Joseph Johnston attacked McClellan near Fair Oaks Station. Both attempts failed completely, because in neither battle did the South drive the enemy from the field. Neither battle gained the initiative for the Confederacy, nor did either force the enemy to change his strategy. Ironically, Shiloh and Fair Oaks were more than failures, for they cost the South the life of Sidney Johnston and the long absence of the severely wounded Joseph Johnston. At the moment of its greatest crisis, and at the time when its strategy desperately needed revising, the military establishment of the Confederacy apparently lost its most experienced leadership.
It is at this critical juncture that Robert E. Lee becomes pertinent to Confederate military history. Jefferson Davis had always highly admired Lee and had employed him in the early part of the war as a presidential military adviser. On June 1st, riding back from the battlefield of Fair Oaks, Davis asked Lee to assume command of the Confederate army around Richmond in place of the disabled Johnston. Davis's choice was undoubtedly his best of the war. Lee enjoyed a combination of advantages which no other Confederate general ever possessed. The greatest of these was probably the strength of Lee's own character, especially his ability to impress his will on a situation and his aloofness from intrigue and jealousy. In addition, however, Lee was able to work with Davis in a spirit of trust and respect. Consequently, Lee occupied a unique position in the Confederate military system. He was able, even in his first campaign, to devise his own strategy and pursue it without serious interference from either the President or the Secretary of War.

When Lee assumed command of the Richmond army, he brought with him firm notions about what the strategic objectives of his theater must be. Immediately, he had to drive McClellan away from the Southern capital, and ultimately, he had to repel the other invading forces from Confederate soil. Lee's choice of these aims marked a turning point in the military history of the war. Lee changed Confederate strategy in the eastern theater from the passive to the active defense. Whether he did so consciously or not, Lee adopted Jomini's defensive-
offensive. He decided to seize the initiative in Virginia from the North and to gain for the South strategic control of the eastern theater.

Lee realized that the new strategy raised a serious problem. Offensive operations, however, qualified, usually required superior strength. Seemingly, more men would be needed to drive McClellan off, than would be needed simply to man the trenches of Richmond. How, then, could Lee, with an army smaller than McClellan's, assume the offensive? The lessons of Shiloh and Fair Oaks suggested that he could not. But Lee was familiar with an example more encouraging and more pertinent than either of these battles. While still adviser to President Davis, He had warmly supported the strategy employed by Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley. Operating in a side theater of the war and heavily outnumbered, Jackson should have had no influence on the course of the war. In a series of brilliant manoeuvres, however, Stonewall marched around the Valley defeating the separated units of the Federal army, and causing such concern for the safety of Washington that the North diverted a substantial force from its advance against Richmond to protect its own capital.

Jackson's accomplishments proved that initiative when properly applied could be as important as superior numbers in deciding the results of a campaign. Lee believed that the deployment of the Federal army before Richmond gave him an opening for similar strategy. The Chickahominy River, swollen by heavy spring rains, separated two of McClellan's corps
from the main body of the Army of the Potomac. Lee decided that, if Jackson were brought from the Valley to cooperate, the Confederate army could destroy this vulnerable wing and throw McClellan onto the defensive. In late June, 1862, Lee set this plan in motion.

On June 26th, leaving four divisions to protect Richmond from a Federal counterthrust, Lee concentrated his other three in front of the isolated corps of McClellan's army. While these divisions assaulted from the front, Jackson tardily arrived from the Valley, attacked the enemy's flank. This first engagement, the battle of Mechanicsville, was a tactical failure. The sluggish movements and faulty cooperation of the Confederate forces permitted McClellan to extricate his wing from its precarious position. Strategically, however, Mechanicsville yielded all that Lee could have desired. It stopped McClellan's advance on Richmond, forced the Army of the Potomac onto the defensive, and won the initiative for the Confederacy.

On June 27th, Lee proved his mettle as a strategist by resuming the attack at Gaines' Mill. He demonstrated his determination to keep and actively employ the initiative he had gained. For a full week the Confederate army continued its offensive, seeking an opening to destroy the Federal army, constantly skirmishing, probing, fighting heavy battles wherever the enemy would stand. Finally, however, McClellan reached Harrison's Landing on the banks of the James River. Here, under the protective fire of Federal gunboats, he
threw the Army of the Potomac into a virtually impregnable semi-circle. Lee's final thrust, a fruitless assault at Malvern Hill, ended the campaign on July 1st.

Like its opening engagement, Lee's first campaign had apparently failed to achieve its tactical objective. McClellan brought his army out of the Chickahominy swamps with its organization and trains in tact. Lee had probably demanded too much from the resources at his command by expecting to crush the Army of the Potomac. In any case, his accomplishments were of considerable significance. He had driven McClellan twenty-five miles south and east of Richmond, forced the Federals at least temporarily to assume the defensive, and injected badly needed enthusiasm into Southern morale.

Perhaps more importantly, Lee discovered in his first campaign that skillful strategy could be the successful answer to the problem posed by the North's superior strength. By applying the principles of concentration, manœuvre, force, initiative, and speed he had upset the odds which favored McClellan. The fact that these theories were Jominian and not new was much less important than Lee's realization that the theories could be made to work in practice and that he, with the army he commanded, could make them work. By far the happiest result of the Seven Days' campaign was the hope for victory which it restored to the Southern military establishment.

In early July, Lee concluded that nothing more could be gained against McClellan's strong position at Harrison's
Landing. In consequence, he withdrew the larger part of the Confederate army to the Richmond area for rest and refitting, and turned to consider the task which remained. Saving Richmond had been but half of Lee's strategic objective. He had planned after gaining the initiative to free all of Virginia from enemy occupation and, at the same time, to transfer the scene of war in the east from the interior of the Confederacy to the frontier. On the very day he had assumed command he had signified this determination by addressing his troops as "the Army of Northern Virginia." Now he had to undertake a second campaign immediately after the close of the first, because Federal forces still controlled a large portion of the state. Union troops under Jacob Cox occupied nearly all of the mountainous western counties and heavy garrisons held the key towns at the head of the Shenandoah Valley, Martinsburg, Winchester, and Harpers Ferry.

In addition, the North had now put a second full army into the field. This new force, designated as the Army of Virginia, came from a consolidation of the units which had fought Jackson in the Valley with portions of the Washington garrison and Irvin McDowell's Corps—which was supposed to be but never quite was—a part of McClellan's Army of the Potomac. Abraham Lincoln brought John Pope from a glowing reputation in the western theater to command this quilt-work army, and ordered him to cooperate with McClellan against Lee.

Because it was a field army, and a relatively large one, and not simply a garrison or some other kind of isolated
detachment, the presence of this second force severely complicated Lee's plans for a new campaign. He had now to contend with both Pope and McClellan, and, potentially, to confront a situation even more dangerous than the one he had just escaped. If Pope advance on Richmond from the north, while McClellan resumed his offensive from the southeast, Lee would either have to abandon the Confederate capital or be crushed between the prongs of a pincer. Facing even heavier odds than before, he would need even more to neutralize Federal strength by manouvre. Lee had no recourse, therefore, but to smash the trap before it closed too tightly.

To Lee's frustration, however, such smashing was impossible for an entire month. McClellan, while busily refitting and obviously preparing for a new move on Richmond, remained securely entrenched behind the fortifications at Harrison's Landing, receiving his supplies by water, and totally impervious to any manouvre Lee might make. Pope, on the other hand, marched his army about openly enough, but he kept it well north in Virginia, safely beyond the distance Lee could afford to advance so long as McClellan threatened Richmond. Consequently, during July Lee was reduced to patient watchfulness. Eventually, either McClellan or Pope, or both, would have to move and, then, the Confederate commander hoped there would be an opportunity for the Army of Northern Virginia to strike.

Uncertain as to which Federal army would offer the most immediate challenge, Lee temporized by keeping the bulk of the Southern army near Richmond and McClellan, but he sent
two divisions under Stonewall Jackson northward. Undoubtedly, Lee preferred to mount his new campaign against Pope. The Army of Virginia could hardly be as dangerous an enemy as the well-officered, well-trained, and larger Army of the Potomac. Nor, in Lee's eyes, was Pope of McClellan's high caliber as an opponent. Moving against Pope, moreover, would carry the war northward toward the Confederate frontier. For these reasons, Lee hoped that conditions would soon allow substantial reinforcements to be sent to Jackson's small command.

In early August an outside force broke the strategic stalemate. Ambrose Burnside abruptly suspended his campaign along the coast of North Carolina and, hurriedly embarking most of his expeditionary corps aboard transports, sailed up the Atlantic toward Virginia. Lee soon learned of Burnside's departure, and he immediately guessed that the corps was being transferred to support a new Northern offensive. Burnside's destination, therefore, would provide Lee the clue to Federal strategy. If the corps joined McClellan, the main Federal thrust would come from the south. If, instead, the transports sailed by Harrison's Landing and continued toward Washington, Pope would likely launch the main drive from the north.

The fighting which flared around Malvern Hill on August 5th and 6th while Burnside's transports lay in the James River nearby, suggested that McClellan once again would be the major threat to Richmond. The danger passed quickly,
however, for the transports sailed away as full as when they arrived, and Lee soon learned that Burnside was not to reenforce McClellan—in fact, he was not even to join Pope. Instead, the corps from North Carolina landed at the mouth of Aquia Creek, near Fredericksburg, forming, in effect, a third, separate column in the Federal campaign which already suffered from uncoordination. Before Lee's grateful eyes the North was breaking her own vice, inviting him once again to dare her strength with his strategy.

Lee could not have known yet, but the Federal invitation was even more gracious than it seemed, for McClellan also had been ordered to withdraw—by sea—to Aquia Creek. When the Federal General-in-Chief, Henry Wager Halleck, had viewed the eastern theater, he had seen no vices or pincers, simply a dangerous division of force where he thought there ought not be one. Considering that its aim was concentration, the remedy which Halleck devised was raggedly piecemeal. First, Burnside was to land at Aquia; then McClellan was to withdraw from the James River and join Burnside; and, ultimately, Pope would march south overland and complete the reunion at Aquia. Only then, Halleck believed, could a properly conducted offensive be launched. All Halleck's plan required was an enemy who would ignore the concentration until it was completed. Utterly in vain McClellan remonstrated: "Here is the true defence of Washington; it is here, on the James, that the fate of the Union should be decided." "Old Brains"
Halleck, who had translated Jomini from the French, knew the rules, however, and stood by his decision.

On August 13th, Lee did not yet know of McClellan's impending withdrawal, but, certain that Burnside's departure signalled a quiet period on the James, he sent Hood's division to reinforce Jackson. Jackson had meanwhile (August 9th) defeated Nathaniel Banks' corps of Pope's army in a small but stubborn affair at Cedar Mountain. This action, which amounted to know more than a bloody nose for the Army of Virginia, stopped Pope in his tracks. And—most significantly—his tracks had not yet carried him to a junction with Burnside.

Thursday, August 14th, was one of the most important days of the summer of 1862. On that day McClellan began his movement from Harrison's Landing to Fortress Monroe, where he was to embark for Aquia. Lee soon knew of the movement and grasped its significance immediately. The following day he went north to Gordonsville to begin the maneuvering he had long anticipated.

The results of the campaign which Lee now undertook, the campaign of Second Manassas, are justly famous. Unable to get hold of Pope at the Rapidan, Lee held the Army of Virginia at the Rappahannock with half his army, while Jackson, by a wide march to the west, got behind the Northern forces and between them and Washington. Pope claimed not to be disturbed by the loss of his base of supplies at Manassas and boasted that now he could defeat each part of the divided
Confederate army.

Pope turned first on Jackson in his rear, but to his surprise he found the indefatigable Stonewall had disappeared. On the 28th Pope found Jackson. On the 29th he attacked Jackson, but the gray lines held. On the 30th, Lee and Longstreet, following the same westerly detour, arrived on the field. Pope did not heed their presence, nor heed the fact that his line was overlapped a mile on the left by the new Southern front. Late in the afternoon, Longstreet's divisions, facing little but cavalry in their own front, wheeled smartly to the north and smashed Pope's left flank into his center. By nightfall the South had gained one of the most tactically decisive battles of the war. Even Lee could hardly have hoped to hurt Pope's army more.

Essentially, the success of the Second Manassas campaign resulted from an application of the same strategic principles which had gained victory for Lee in the Richmond battles. This time Lee had divided, concentrated, redivided, and reconcentrated his army, feinted and flanked, all in remarkably quick succession. Finally, when he had Pope so badly off balance that the Federal commander could scarcely locate the units of his own army, Lee struck with all of the force at his command. Second Manassas was virtually a textbook example of the manner in which strategy could overcome superior strength. At the final moment, while the Northern armies were still divided, Lee brought his masses to bear on the decisive point of contest. Lee displayed the true genius of
of the strategist—he had made his means obtain his ends.

2. "An Expedition into Maryland"

Ironically, the very magnitude of Lee’s success at Second Manassas was the source of the next great problem he had to face. Such complete achievement of his ultimate objective left Lee literally aimless. With the removal of Burnside from North Carolina, McClellan from the James, Pope from northern Virginia, and Cox from the western counties, Lee had apparently exhausted the potential of the active defense. Theoretically, his strategic freedom spread to the four points of the compass. Practically, however, he confronted a strategic dilemma.

If Lee marched the Army of Northern Virginia either south or west to rest and wait, he would, in effect, return to the passive defense. This course would be feasible if it were certain that the North would not invade Virginia again. But, as past experience suggested and Lincoln’s July call for volunteers indicated, the North intended to resume her invasion of the Confederacy. Under these circumstances, Lee’s return to the passive defense could only mean forfeiture of the initiative and of the fruits of the summer’s victories. Then the South would soon find itself in the same predicament it had just escaped.

On the other hand, if Lee marched the Army of Northern Virginia either east against Washington’s fortifications or
north into the enemy's country, he would abandon the defense entirely and involve the Confederacy in a full-scale offensive strategy. This Lee could not do. Whatever the advantages or disadvantages of a full offensive, Lee simply did not have the men or the supplies to undertake one. An assault on Washington—encircled by strong forts and occupied by four Federal armies—was unthinkable even with double the numbers available to Lee. An invasion, while not impossible, was too hazardous an operation to consider unless adequately prepared in advance. Had Lee had time to gather supporting troops from other areas of the Confederacy, too collect the ammunition and other military supplies he could not rely upon confiscating along his route of march; and time to arrange for cooperative manœuvres or demonstrations by the other Southern field armies, then, perhaps, an invasion would have offered some chance of success. According to Lee's assessment of the military situation of early September, 1862, he could not afford the time these preparations would require. Whatever strength Lee might gain, the enemy, in the same interval, would gain more. Not only would the old Northern armies be back in the field, but the score of new regiments recently recruited would be drilled and ready for combat. Lee had reason to believe that a large number of these new troops had already arrived in Washington.

This was Lee's dilemma on September 2, 1862, as he rested with the Army of Northern Virginia near Chantilly, Virginia. He knew that idleness would be pernicious and could
be fatal to the Confederate military situation in the east. But he knew also that the obvious alternative was foolhardy. Tentatively, however, a solution to this dilemma began to form in Lee's mind on the 2nd. The answer Lee devised was simple but brilliant and wholly consistent with the principles of strategy he had made work so well in his two previous campaigns. He decided that the defensive-offensive might be stretched into larger meaning. Presently the Northern were unassailable, but if they were forced to come out of the Washington fortifications—especially for a considerable distance—they would once again be vulnerable to manœuvre.

By combining threats with enticements, Lee might induce the Federal armies to leave Washington's safety before their reorganization had been completed or their ranks had been filled with recruits. If the Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac River and moved into Maryland just above Washington, it would threaten the Federal's right flank and compel them to shift the bulk of their troops north of the river. By keeping pressure simultaneously on Washington, Baltimore, and Pennsylvania, Lee might then be able to draw the Federal commander—whoever that might be—into a new campaign in western Maryland. Then Lee could take or make the opportunity to out-manœuvre the enemy and deal him another smashing blow.

A Campaign in Maryland was an attractive possibility, also, for reasons which lay beyond military strategy. Many Southerners believed that Maryland belonged in the Confederacy and had been kept from secession only by the Northern troops
heavily garrisoned around the state. There had been talk from
time to time—especially after First Manassas—about "libera-
ting Maryland from her oppressors, but this political goal
had never been feasible from a military viewpoint. Now, how-
ever, the time seemed ripe, if not actually to liberate Mary-
landers, then, at least, to support them if they chose to
join the Confederacy. Lee probably had doubts about this
possibility from the beginning, but he hoped that Maryland
would express her sympathy in ways other than secession. If
she but filled his ranks and supplied his army, it would be
sufficient justification for his campaign.

Lee had reason to believe, moreover, that his resources
would be adequate for this type of limited offensive. Some
fresh troops were at hand, freed from the Richmond area by
McClellan's complete withdrawal from the peninsula. Harvey
Hill, marching from Petersburg with his division of five
brigades, had picked up Lafayette McLaws four brigades at
Hanover Junction, and both were nearby. John Walker's small
division left Richmond on August 27th and would soon join
the army. Wade Hampton's brigade, sent in response to Lee's
request for additional cavalry, was already operating with
Jeb Stuart's division. These new troops would just about
make good the losses of the Second Manassas campaign and give
Lee about 55,000 men.

It was not a large army, but its elan counted for
thousands more. In addition, the command system had settled
considerably since its fumbling beginnings on the banks of
the Chickahominy. The names of incompetent generals were disappearing from the roster. Equally important, two men, James Longstreet and Thomas Jonathan (Stonewall) Jackson, had proved their ability to command units larger than divisions. Gradually, during the last campaign, the Army of Northern Virginia had begun to operate in two sections, as if hinged in the center. Corps were taking shape, Longstreet's and Jackson's, to replace the confusion of too many independent divisions. On September 2, 1862, the Army of Northern Virginia, its command structure in a stage of transition, was organized as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Robert E. Lee, commanding</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Longstreet's Command</strong> Major-General James Longstreet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Longstreet's (old) Division Brigadier-General David R. Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anderson's Division Major-General Richard H. Anderson</td>
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<td>Whiting's (old) Division Brigadier-General John B. Hood</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Jackson's Command</strong> Major-General Thomas Jonathan Jackson</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackson's (old) Division Brigadier-General John R. Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewell's Division Brigadier-General Alexander R. Lawton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hill's (Light) Division Major-General Ambrose P. Hill</td>
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For the battle of Second Manassas Lee had about 175 pieces of artillery, organized mainly in divisional battalions. But the artillery reserve, under Brigadier-General William Pendleton was advancing from Richmond with four excellent battalions, and the prospects were good that over 300 guns and a more compact organization would be available for a new campaign.

The present condition of the army was not so encouraging as its size and spirit, however. Much clothing was needed. Ammunition was low, and equipment was defective. Most of the material captured from Pope's army had been abandoned on the battlefield. Even more serious would be the problem of adequately provisioning the army once north of the Potomac. If Maryland's larder proved ill-stocked, or her citizens uncooperative, a long supply line would have to be maintained to Richmond. Lee, worrying particularly over this problem, broached the subject to Longstreet. Many years later, "Old
Pete" recalled that, because he strongly favored marching into Maryland, he reminded Lee of the days in the Mexican war, when the men had lived on "roasting ears and green oranges." Surely, he added, an autumnal Maryland would be at least as abundant in provisions.

Whether or not Longstreet's encouraging recollections were influential, Lee made a tentative decision on the 2nd. He called in A. L. Long, his assistant-adjutant-general, and dictated a letter to President Davis. Lee could not write the dispatch himself, because of a peculiar accident he had suffered on August 31st. Reaching for the bridle of his restless horse, Lee tripped over the over-alls he was wearing as protection against the rain. He fell heavily on both hands, breaking a bone in one and twisting the other. Both of his hands were now in splints and "were painful and most uncomfortable." Lee rode in an army ambulance until the 17th of September, and he was not able to dress himself for three weeks. His physical discomfort did not, however, for a moment deter his strategic planning.

"Mr. President," Lee dictated to Long, "The present seems to be the most propitious time since the commencement of the war for the Confederate Army to enter Maryland." The Federal armies are weakened and demoralized and will offer less resistance at this time. There are some sixty thousand recruits in Washington, and it would probably be best to open a campaign before these men are ready to take the field. Furthermore, now, if ever, is the time to give aid to Mary-
I have no intention, Lee continued, of attacking Washington. My army is in no condition for an assault against fortifications. I am, however, now in a position, "if found practicable, to cross into Maryland. The purpose if discovered, will have the effect of carrying the enemy north of the Potomac, and, if prevented, will not result in much evil."

By way of explaining his pessimistic caution, Lee noted that his army was not prepared for a full-scale invasion. Thousands needed clothing and shoes. "Still," Lee went on, "we cannot afford to be idle." Even with much against us, we must hurt the enemy; at least, we "must endeavor to harass if we cannot destroy them." Sensing, perhaps, the concern the movement might cause Davis, Lee professed, "...I have no fears for the safety of Richmond," for I will keep the enemy occupied. Now would be the time, he added, to strengthen the defenses of the capital.

Although the letter itself was tentative—merely proposing the movement to Davis—Lee temporarily put it aside. Perhaps, he was not yet convinced that the plan could work. Certainly there was a potentially embarrassing contradiction in his aims. On the one hand, he was going to liberate Maryland, or at least give her support, but, on the other, he was bringing war to her soil for (he hoped) a considerable period. He would have to achieve the delicate balance of wooing Maryland, while at the same time living off her resources. Certain peculiarly military supplies, moreover,
could not be obtained from even the most sympathetic citizen's storehouse. Ordinance for a campaign of any duration, for example, would have to come from Richmond. This meant Lee would have to establish a safe line of supply and communication. These were considerable problems which the Confederate general had to ponder in addition to the strategic merits of his plan.

It is not surprising that Lee refused to make so consequential a decision too hastily. Typically, however, even while hesitating, Lee acted. He ordered the fresh divisions of Hill and McLaws to march in the direction of Leesburg, a town near a number of good Potomac fords. He also instructed Jeb Stuart to send cavalrymen unfit for active service back to Manassas battlefield to secure the guns and equipment which had been abandoned in the hasty pursuit of the enemy. Stuart, on his own, contributed an important preliminary step on the 2nd. Hearing that Captain Sam Means' Loudoun Rangers, a body of irregular Virginia Unionists, held Leesburg, Jeb ordered Colonel Thomas Munford and the 2nd Virginia Cavalry to drive the "traitors" off.

Thus, although Lee had chosen to sleep on the decision, by the night of September 2nd, the route to Maryland was clear and several commands were already on the march toward the Potomac.
Chapter Two: "The Crisis of Our Fate"

—McClellan's Position at the Opening of the Maryland Campaign

1. "Heart-sick with the Folly"

Confusion was the hallmark of the Northern war effort in the eastern theater throughout 1862. The fog of war, supposedly confined to the battlefield, had floated densely before the eyes of the civilians who mapped the national strategy. The bright prospects which began the year had evaporated in a haze of cross-purposes, half-gestures, and well-intentioned but fatal meddling.

The jumble began on March 11th, when Lincoln demoted McClellan from General-in-Chief to simple commander of the Army of the Potomac. The President named no one to fill the vacancy. For the next four months no military mind gave overall direction to the war. The Department of the Potomac was carved into three separate and independent commands. Strategy drifted from day to day. Only on the Yorktown peninsula, in the immediate region of the Army of the Potomac, were strategy, tactics, and logistics meaningfully combined toward the ending of the war.

Finally, near the end of June, it became apparent that the vast forces scattered through upper Virginia must contribute more to the war effort than simply chasing Stonewall Jackson's small force around the Shenandoah Valley and making President Lincoln feel secure. At
this late date, too late in the light of Confederate strategy, Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton acknowledged that these forces were needed to help defeat the large Southern army in the Richmond area. Consequently, the recently scissored eastern department was patched together, this time as the Army of Virginia. Under John Pope, this force, which never achieved the cohesion of an army, moved South in slow, disjointed steps.

After McClellan had retired from Richmond, Lincoln called Henry Halleck from St. Louis to fill the vacant office of General-in-Chief. Less than two weeks after his arrival in Washington, Halleck ordered McClellan to withdraw the entire Army of the Potomac from the peninsula. Halleck gave this order on August 3rd.

McClellan did not immediately sail with his large army and tremendous amount of stores at the moment he received Halleck's dispatch. He had, after all, at one time been the General-in-Chief himself. He objected to an order of such vast consequence given by a commander only ten days on the job. The McClellan-Halleck dialogue spanned two days, but by the 5th it was certain that the order to withdraw would stand. McClellan first shipped off the sick and wounded as he had been ordered, and, simultaneously, filled extra transports with artillery and cavalry. His infantry feinted toward Richmond to cover the withdrawal.

It was fated that a race would begin at the first substantial evidence of McClellan's withdrawal. Lee needed only the assurance that the Army of the Potomac was leaving to safely shift the bulk of his own army northward to confront Pope. It was likewise fated that the North
would lose the race. Hurry as much as he might, McClellan could not load and unload his army, travel by exterior lines, keep his organization in tact, and arrive in time to allow a united Northern army to face the Confederates. He could not have done so under the most favorable circumstances. And far from favorable, the situation into which McClellan landed was confused beyond hope of untangling.

As the regiments of the Army of the Potomac passed through Fortress Monroe and up the Atlantic coast to support the other Federal army in Virginia, McClellan officially pressed them forward and urged the soldiers to carry out their duties. Halleck telegraphed: "We want immediately all the men that can possibly be sent." And McClellan replied: "I am pushing everything; not a moment is being lost, and it shall not be my fault if the troops do not arrive in time." Impelled by the urgency of the crisis he telegraphed to Fitz John Porter: "Please push off your troops without one moment's delay. The necessity is very pressing - a matter of life and death." And to Samuel Heintzelman: "It is of vital importance that you should get men and guns off as rapidly as possible..."

Privately, McClellan could not restrain his anguish at the folly he was powerless to correct. "...The absurdity of Halleck's course in ordering the army from here," he wrote to his wife, Ellen, "is that it cannot possibly reach Washington in time to do any good, but will necessarily be too late. I am sorry to say that I am forced to the conclusion that Halleck is very dull and very incompetent. Alas, poor country!"
Several days later, tired and disgusted, writing in a dimly lighted room in the middle of the night, he confided to his wife, "I fear that I am very mad, and think I have a perfect right to be so.... Every day convinces me more and more that it is the intention of Halleck and the government to drive me off, and I begin to feel that I cannot preserve my self-respect and remain in the service much longer. I think the crisis will soon arrive...." 12

And, finally, ensconced in Fortress Monroe, he wrote, "I do not know what they intend doing with me. I still think they will place me on the shelf or do something disagreeable to get me out of the way. I shall be glad of anything which severs my connection with such a set.... They may go to the deuce in their own way...." 13

Halleck, much buffeted by the political storms in Washington, tried hard to forget about McClellan, while he placed his greatest hopes for a decisive victory on Pope in Northern Virginia. Adverse to taking personal command, Halleck's dispatches to both Pope and McClellan during this period were a confusing mixture of direct orders, helpful suggestions and impossible hopes. There developed, consequently, in late August of 1862 a vacuum at the highest level of the Federal military hierarchy. Halleck, fearful for the safety of the capitol, nevertheless refused either to give a complete responsibility to Pope or McClellan or to supply unity of direction himself.

Alarmed by Lee's maneuvers in Virginia, Halleck telegraphed to McClellan on August 21st, "The forces of Burnside and Pope are hard pushed, and require aid as rapidly as you can send it. Come yourself as
soon as you can." McClellan, convinced from the beginning that Pope would mismanage his campaign and require veteran assistance to extricate his army, wrote his wife, "Now they are in trouble they seem to want the 'Quaker,' the 'procastinator,' the 'coward,' and the 'traitor!'

A journey, however, would not solve the tangled military chain of command. McClellan assumed the invitation to Washington implied that he was to have supreme command in the field. Arriving at Aquia Creek on the Potomac, he telegraphed to Halleck requesting information on the disposition of the troops he was to command. Halleck, who had no intention of putting McClellan into the field, replied simply that he did not know where Pope's troops were. McClellan's question thus remained unanswered and his position undefined.

Three days passed without further clarification of the confused command situation, three vital days in the military history of the war. Stonewall Jackson's wing of the Confederate Army got behind Pope and sat on his line of communications with Washington. On the 27th of August, Pope turned on Jackson believing he could crush the Southern army piecemeal. While units of the Army of the Potomac were marching to Pope's relief, McClellan spent most of his time trying to find horses and wagons for the army as it landed and moved to the front. But the army was the victim of the divided authority which directed it. Undoubtedly, there was much delay that could have been avoided.

"Can Franklin, without his artillery or cavalry, effect any useful purpose in front?" asked McClellan of Halleck on the 27th.
The obvious answer to this question (from one who knew the military situation at the front) was yes, Franklin would be more useful with Pope just now than at Washington. The obvious answer never came from Halleck. Indeed, no answer came from the General-in-Chief until he had been barraged by telegraphs from the chafing McClellan. From the weariness of harassment, Halleck finally replied to McClellan's repeated requests for information, "...I can give you no details. ...From your knowledge of the whole country about here you can best act. I have no time to obtain such knowledge. ...As you must be aware, more than three-quarters of my time is taken up with the raising of new troops and affairs in the west. I have no time for details. You will, therefore, as ranking General in the field, direct as you deem best; but at present orders for Pope's army should go through me." 19

The ambiguous but promising possibilities of this dispatch intrigued McClellan, who, on the night of the 27th, traveled up river to visit Halleck. From midnight until three in the morning, the two Generals talked openly and affably. 20 McClellan returned to Alexandria convinced that he had judged Halleck, who was caught in the deadly political cross-fire of Washington, too harshly. The discussion also convinced McClellan that he should "keep as clear as possible of the President and cabinet." 21 The hard work which lay ahead should be directed by military minds and be based upon military principles. McClellan was certain that the wages of political interference would be defeat.

The 28th of August passed without further delineation of
McClellan's command, and the salve of the discussion with Halleck soon evaporated, leaving McClellan as impatient and irritated as ever. On the 29th, with the first day's battle raging around Manassas Junction, Lincoln telegraphed McClellan "What news from direction of Manassas Junction? What generally?" McClellan, who must have been near the telegraph office when the message arrived, forgot his self-imposed injunction to keep clear of politicians, and seized the opportunity to press his case with the President.

Fifteen minutes after Lincoln's message left Washington, McClellan's reply was on the wire. Noting briefly his only information was an unreliable report that the Confederates were retiring, McClellan then presented what he believed to be the only alternatives now open to the Federal forces: "1st, to concentrate all our available forces to open communication with Pope; 2nd, to leave Pope to get out of his scrape, and at once use all our means to make the capitol perfectly safe." Seeking to press his initiative McClellan urged the President to define his position and send him orders that would put him into the action. 23

Even before Lincoln replied, however, McClellan had forsaken hope that his appeal would find favor in Washington. Obviously disgusted at the prevailing chaos and his inability to bring order, McClellan retired to his quarters and wrote his wife, Ellen, "I do not know whether I shall be permitted to save the capitol or not. I have just telegraphed very plainly to the President and Halleck what I think ought to be done. I expect merely a contemptuous silence.... I am heart-sick with the folly and ignorance I see around me. God grant that I may never pass through
such a scene again!" 24

Lincoln's reply came about an hour after McClellan had written to his wife. The President expressed the opinion that the "right" alternative was to open communications with Pope, but, he added, Halleck was the one to make the decision. 25 At this point, it must have seemed to McClellan that the paralysis in command extended to the very pinnacle of the hierarchy and was beyond remedy. There seemed to be small chance that the "Young Napoleon" would ever again have the opportunity to serve his country. 26

Rapidly befalling events on the battlefront, however, impersonal and untainted by the intrigue of ambition, were intervening to sever the Gordian knot in the Federal command system. On August 30th, Pope's army was swept from the plains of Manassas by Longstreet's Corps. The Federal army which fell back on Washington was not the panic stricken mob which had fled from the same field a year before. Veterans of a year's hard campaigning braced the army now, and the two divisions which countered Jackson's feint at Chantilly two days later proved that Washington could not be taken without a heavy engagement. Nevertheless, the currents of shock flowed along the turnpike to Washington.

By the evening of August 31st the crisis was approaching its height. Halleck, after a day of unsuccessful attempts to secure accurate information from the front, became alarmed at the unfolding events. 27 Shortly after ten o'clock that night he telegraphed to McClellan, "I beg of you to assist me in this crisis with your ability and experience. I am utterly tired out." 28 This finally, was McClellan's opportunity, and he
knew it. Twenty minutes after Halleck's message left Washington, the reply was on the wire. "I am ready to afford you any assistance in my power, but you will readily perceive how difficult an undefined position such as I now hold must be. At what hour in the morning can I see you...?"

The next morning, the first day of the eventful September of 1862, McClellan journeyed to Washington to visit Halleck. Upon entering the city, McClellan moved into a political storm which had been building for many months. He would visit Halleck unaware that, ironically, the conspiracy against him which he feared for over a year had just begun in earnest.

2. "Friends and Advisors"

On September 1, 1862, McClellan's position was not only undefined, it was also tenuous. In addition to the vacuum which paralyzed the Northern military command, a political conspiracy threatened to upset it. There were men in Washington who pathologically hated George McClellan. They hoped that a great victory by Pope would permanently eclipse McClellan and keep him from ever again holding a major command. As the news of Pope's reverses leaked back to Washington, these men, fearing McClellan would be reinstated, turned from grumbling to action.

Edwin McMasters Stanton, the Secretary of War, was the chief conspirator and most inverterate enemy of McClellan, but he found willing allies in Salmon Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, Edward Bates,
the Attorney-General, and Caleb Smith, Secretary of the Interior. All of these men were staunch Republicans. McClellan was a Democrat.

To what degree the enmity of the cabinet conspirators arose purely from partisan politics, and to what degree it arose from a genuine belief that McClellan was an incompetent commander is difficult to discern. Doubtlessly, the two motives supported one another in strengthening the determination of Stanton and his colleagues to block McClellan's return to active command.

Stanton took the first decisive step in the anti-McClellan campaign on August 29th, when he visited Chase at the Treasury building. The two secretaries found themselves in emphatic accord that "McClellan ought not to be trusted with the command of any army of the Union." Both men realized that quickly moving events demanded prompt action if McClellan were to be balked.

Swept on by their emotions, Stanton and Chase left the Treasury to visit Bates. Not finding the Attorney-General at home, however, the two men continued on to Halleck's office. Stanton, after he had "remonstrated against Genera McClelland commanding," gave Halleck written orders to report on McClellan's recent conduct. Specifically, the Secretary of War wanted Halleck's opinion on whether McClellan had sent troops to Pope's support "as promptly as the national safety required." Halleck replied that he would prepare the report the next morning.

The next day, August 30th, Bates came to Chase's office and, learning of the events of the day before, concurred in the conclusions which Chase and Stanton had reached on McClellan. Strengthened by this
additional support, Chase went to the War Department. Here he found a petition drawn up by Stanton for presentation to Lincoln. The petition was a severe indictment of McClellan's conduct, which closed by asserting, "We are unwilling to be accessory to the destruction of our armies, the protraction of the war, the waste of our national resources, and the overthrow of the Government, which we believe must be the inevitable consequence of George B. McClellan being continued in command ..." After Chase suggested several modifications, both men signed the petition.

With a nice sense of tradition for such an untraditional document, Chase and Stanton agreed that additional signatures should be in the order of the signers' cabinet rank. With Secretary of State William Seward absent from Washington, the Secretaries of War and Treasury had signed first. The next ranking member was Gideon Welles, so Chase took the petition to the Navy department late in the afternoon of the 30th.

Secretary of the Navy Welles was startled by the audacity of the paper. He assured Chase that he agreed McClellan should not be returned to command, but he protested that the petition contained allegations about which he knew nothing. Furthermore, Welles asserted, he did not believe this was the proper manner in which to present complaints to the President. Cabinet meetings provide ample opportunity for a frank exchange of opinions on the policies which the administration should pursue. Also, Welles added, although he "believed his removal from command was demanded... by the best interests of the country, "he" did not choose
to denounce McClellan for incapacity or to pronounce him a traitor.  

Chase impatiently replied that there was no time for such dallying, "that the time had arrived when the cabinet must act with energy and promptitude, for either the Government or McClellan must go down." Welles maintained that the whole method was "repugnant to his ideas of duty and right," and he refused to sign.

At this juncture the Postmaster-General, Montgomery Blair, entered Welles' office. Blair, a member of the powerful political family of Maryland which extended back to the "kitchen-cabinet" of Andrew Jackson, was a strong Unionist but a moderate Republican. He was a close friend of Lincoln's and had often opposed Chase in cabinet sessions. Blair's entrance obviously upset Chase as Welles still held the paper before him. Welles did not mention the petition, and much to the relief of the Secretary of the Treasury, Blair departed after a few moments' conversation.

In Welles' mind the scene underscored the deviousness of the scheme, and Chase left with the unsigned statement. But he returned almost immediately to enjoin Welles not to mention the petition to anyone, particularly to Montgomery Blair.

Later the same evening, Welles departed early from an intimate gathering at the home of the Prussian Ambassador to visit the War Department. Welles found Stanton with Caleb Smith. The conversation of the three secretaries soon turned upon McClellan and the question of the command of the Union army. Stanton delivered a prolonged diatribe
on the history of McClellan's crimes. McClellan, it seemed, had plagued Stanton from the day he became Secretary of War. He followed with a long review of McClellan's "blunders and reverses," which ended upon the accusation that McClellan had deliberately withheld support from Pope in order to further his own career. 39

A great part of Stanton's argument on McClellan's delay in forwarding troops from Fortress Monroe, Aquia Creek and Alexandria was based on the report he had received from Halleck. The General-in-Chief had diplomatically pointed out that McClellan had presented excuses and that once the "movement was begun it was rapidly carried out," but he had concluded, his order "was not obeyed with the promptness he expected and the national safety... required." Halleck's report, with a sheaf of communiques attached, gave Stanton the evidence he needed to prosecute McClellan. His conclusions, however, went far beyond those warranted by the evidence supplied by Halleck. 40

Shortly after Stanton's tirade ended, Smith left the War Office. Stanton then turned to Welles and, lowering his voice, mentioned the petition which Welles had refused to sign and asked him if he did not believe that McClellan ought to be permanently relieved. Welles replied that he did agree McClelland should be retired but that Stanton's methods were "unwise and injudicious," if for no reason other than the petition was "discourteous and disrespectful to the President..." This statement enraged Stanton who declared "he knew of no particular obligations he was under to the President..." Welles refrained from commenting on this remarkable assertion and, soon thereafter, went home. The third
signature had still not been obtained for the petition. 41

On September 1st, the day McClellan rode into Washington to confer with Halleck, the conspiracy entered its second phase. Caleb Smith had signed the original petition in the meanwhile, but, with the adamantine Welles still holding out, Attorney General Bates proposed that another draft be drawn up. 42 The petition was reduced to a paragraph which simply stated that the signers, having been chosen as advisors by the President, felt constrained to give him their "deliberate opinion that at this time it is not safe to intrust to Major-General McClellan the command of any army of the United States." They would be prepared at any time, they added, to state at length the reasons behind their opinions. 43 This time there was to be as little delay as possible in the signing, and Stanton, Chase, Smith, and Bates penned their names to the statement immediately. 44

Chase was chosen to carry the revised petition to the recalcitrant Secretary of the Navy. Welles immediately noted that a space had been left between the signatures for the insertion, at the proper place, of his own name and that of Blair. After carefully reading the statement, Welles remarked that he found it to be "more carefully prepared and less exceptionable" than the first draft, but he could still not join in such an action. 45 He then more frankly stated what he had insinuated to both Chase and Stanton two days earlier. Lincoln had indeed appointed his cabinet to be "friends and advisors, with whom he might counsel and consult," but said Welles bluntly, "...not to enter into combinations to control him." 46
Chase was startled by this forthright accusation. He recovered sufficiently to disclaim any such intentions and to assert that it was necessary to make such a forceful demonstration because talking to the President "was like throwing water on a duck's back." This petition was "designed to tell the President that the administration must be broken up or McClellan dismissed." Before the increasingly dismayed Secretary of the Navy, Chase recounted McClellan's crimes and "frankly stated" that he "believed McClellan ought to be shot, and should, were he President, be brought to summary punishment." 47

Welles interrupted to point out that he had lost his own faith in McClellan's efficiency nine months ago, but he had not previously doubted the General's intelligence nor his patriotism and did not, even now. Moreover, Welles added, McClellan had the confidence of the army. 48 Undoubtedly, Welles' criticism did not alter Chase's opinion. Nevertheless, his reluctance to sign the second petition and his words of caution made their impression on the conspirators, who decided to postpone further action until the cabinet meeting which was scheduled for the next day. 49

On the crucial 1st of September, therefore, and due in large part to Secretary Welles' conservatism, the anti-McClellan campaign was delayed. The postponement was fatal to the cabal. Purely military tides were sweeping over the sand-castles of the conspirators. The waves of disaster flowing from Manassas had to be damned, and Lincoln had to find the general who was best suited to build the dike.
Halleck had shown little disposition to control the armies in the field from his desk in the War Department. Indeed, he had shown little disposition to leave that desk for any reason whatsoever. Now Pope was being rapidly discredited in Virginia. There was no time to transfer a general from another theater, who would, in any case, be wholly unfamiliar with the situation. It did not seem wise to elevate to high command in a crisis a general with no experience as an independent commander. Ambrose Burnside, who had led the expedition into North Carolina and who was now in Virginia with his corps, had firmly refused the President's offer. 50

Where was the President to turn? to McClellan? the general whose "slowness" had driven Lincoln to despair? The closing days of summer were as heavy with decision for the North as they were for the South.

3. Such a Hurrah as the Army Had Never Heard Before"

September 1st, 1862, was warm and clear. 57 For Henry Halleck, however, the day was much warmer than it was clear. His own protests not withstanding, Halleck devoted considerably more attention to operations in the east during this period than he did to those of the west. 52 But troublesome affairs on the far side of the Appalachians constantly intervened to distract the General-in-Chief and further burden him with decision. Grant's department along the Mississippi was presently quiet. 53 But Don Carlos Buell, commanding in eastern Tennessee, was sending a
series of dispatches warning of the advance of a large Confederate army under Braxton Bragg. Now, in addition to this background of turmoil, Halleck faced the distasteful necessity of giving a major command to a general in whom he had little confidence.

Late in the morning McClellan arrived at Halleck's office. Halleck ordered the general to take command of the fortifications of Washington and the troops garrisoning them, but he specifically forbid McClellan to interfere with the army under Pope in the field. Responding to this implied criticism of his abilities, McClellan described to Halleck the deplorable condition of the army from which he was to be excluded. Halleck, citing Pope's dispatches as evidence, refused to believe that the Army of Virginia was as demoralized as McClellan depicted it.

McClellan then urged Halleck to ride to the front and personally ascertain the condition of Pope's troops. Halleck replied that his office duties were too heavy at this time to permit him to leave. Refusing to be dismissed so easily, McClellan then suggested that a member of Halleck's staff be sent. Colonel J. C. Kelton, Halleck's adjutant-general, spoke up at this point and volunteered to ride to the front. McClellan, fearful that Kelton might talk only with Pope and not see the straggling and confusion of the army, drew him to one side and "advised" him to talk with various generals as well as with Pope.

It is likely that this meeting was Halleck's attempt to resolve the confusion in the command system of the Union armies in the east. The War Department order of August 30th had given McClellan
command of that portion of the Army of the Potomac which had not been sent to Pope. As all of the men of the Army of the Potomac at hand had already been sent toward Manassas, this had left McClellan without a command. It seems probable that Halleck's verbal instructions of September 1st, putting McClellan in command of the troops in and around Washington, but excluding the field army, was simply a redefinition of the earlier order, broadened somewhat in response to the crisis which had since arisen. Halleck still had no intention of either jettisoning Pope or elevating McClellan.

On the afternoon of the 1st, Lincoln, yet undecided about McClellan and still greatly disturbed by charges the army was torn by factionalism among the generals, got Halleck to invite McClellan to the General-in-Chief's home. Here the President bluntly told McClellan of the reports that officers of the Army of the Potomac were holding back their full support from Pope. McClellan vigorously denied the possibility of such treasonous conduct on the part of his friends.

Lincoln, although appreciating McClellan's strong denial, was not convinced that all that could be done, was being done by some of Pope's subordinates. The President, therefore, asked McClellan to telegraph "to Fitz John Porter or some other of his friends, and try to do away with any feeling that might exist." No doubt, McClellan was mortified by the request, but, under the circumstance he could not refuse the President. He replied he would "cheerfully" send a message to Pope, and would, furthermore, "do anything else in his power to gratify the President's"
wishes and relieve his anxiety." Lincoln, satisfied by his promise, thanked McClellan for his cooperation and left Halleck's home.

McClellan immediately composed the telegram to Porter. "I ask of you," he wrote, "for my sake, that of the country, and the old Army of the Potomac, that you and all my friends will lend the fullest and most cordial co-operation to General Pope...." McClellan told Porter: "This week is the crisi of our fate," and asked him to relay the message to his other "friends." "I am in charge of the defences of Washington," he added, "and am doing all I can to render your retreat safe, should that be necessary." McClellan gave the telegram to Halleck to forward to Porter and return to his own quarters.

Throughout the day and night of September 1st, the magnitude of Pope's defeat became more obvious as his shattered army neared Washington, its worst and most demoralized elements in the lead. A New York Tribune correspondent, who left Washington for the front twenty-four hours before Colonel Kelton, heard and saw incidents which later made a front page story of his paper a severe indictment of Pope and Irwin McDowell.

The roads from Manassas were choked with creeping columns of wagons and men. Units had lost their organization and were hopelessly mingled together. No one had either food or ammunition, or knew where either might be found. General after general who passed the newspapermen, swore that they would resign rather than serve longer under Pope. One unidentified commander declared, "I cannot see my men
murdered." Further along the road the correspondent discovered that there were still troops in line and ready to meet the enemy, but his mind had been fixed on the debacle which he first encountered, and the scene of rout would fill the bulk of his report. 60

Perhaps, the ride to the front had a similar affect on Kelton. In any event, the next morning the Colonel gave such a gloomy report of the condition of Pope's army that Lincoln became alarmed for the safety of Washington. With a reluctant Halleck in tow, the President went to McClellan's headquarters early in the morning. Lincoln gave McClellan the gist of Kelton's report and expressed his concern about an impending attack on the capitol.

The President, having at last decided upon his general, forthrightly admitted to McClellan that he believed him to be the one best able to reduce the chaos to order and asked him if he would resume command. McClellan quickly replied that he would take the command and that he would save the city. Lincoln then gave more explicit instructions to the general, although these were never put into writing. McClellan should, the President directed, "collect the stragglers, ... place the works in a proper state of defense, and... go out to meet and take command of the army when it approached the vicinity...." 61

Lincoln's decision must have been a difficult one for him to make. He had often remarked on McClellan's military disease, which he called the "slows." At times he had even thought the general a little mad. 62 Moreover, he seemingly gave full credence to Pope's allegation
that McClellan had withheld support during the Second Manassas Campaign. "Unquestionably," the President admitted to his secretary, John Hay, "he has acted badly toward Pope! He wanted him to fail." Lincoln had especially disapproved of McClellan's suggestion "to leave Pope get out of his scrape..." as an alternative to sending support to the embattled army.

But the President knew that the moment had arrived for decisive action. The defeated Federal army was falling back upon Washington, its confidence in John Pope shaken. McClellan may have acted badly during the recent campaign, Lincoln reflected to Hay, "but we must use what tools we have. There is no man in the army who can man these fortifications and lick these troops of ours into shape half as well as he... He is too useful just now to sacrifice... If he can't fight himself, he excels in making others ready to fight." The President, therefore, made the momentous decision in favor of McClellan. He must have known that his decision would arouse a furor.

Public reaction, however, would be both delayed and ephemeral. A more immediate and adverse consequence of the President's decision was the predictable antagonism it would raise in the cabinet meeting which was scheduled for the same day, September 2nd. Although he was probably not aware of the anti-McClellan conspiracy, Lincoln was acquainted with the views of the chief conspirators, for neither Stanton nor Chase had been reticent in expressing their opinions of McClellan.
It was, perhaps, in anticipation of this opposition that Lincoln went to Stanton's office to see the Secretary of War before the meeting began.

When the cabinet assembled that afternoon, three members were missing. Frederick Seward represented his father, who was still absent from Washington, while Lincoln and Stanton had not yet arrived from the War Department. The Secretaries' informal conversation soon centered upon McClellan and the military situation. All, including Blair, agreed that a change in the army leadership was required and that McClellan "could not be wisely trusted with the chief command." 

There was a great amount of dismay, therefore, when Stanton entered and, "in a suppressed voice, trembling with excitement," announced McClellan had been given command of all of the forces defending Washington. 

When Lincoln entered the room and heard the conversation, he at once put forward a lucid defense of his action. He had, he said, taken the course which seemed best to him. McClellan's greatest fault, his "slows," would be a minimal danger in a purely defensive role. The general knew the fortifications well and was a good engineer. Moreover, it was generally agreed that "there is no better organizer...." Pointedly the President added that McClellan "had beyond any other officer the confidence of the army." 

Politics, however, defied the logic of Lincoln's decision. The discussion which followed the President's announcement was very emotional. "There was," Welles later wrote in his diary, "a more disturbed and desponding feeling than I have ever witnessed in council...."
Stanton predicted that Halleck and McClellan would get in one another's way and neither would take full responsibility. Lincoln disagreed, reasserting that McClellan was charged simply with posting the returning troops and commanding the defenses of Washington.  

This was, Chase argued, a tantamount to making McClellan the temporary commander-in-chief, and, appalled by the thought, the Secretary of the Treasury spoke at length on McClellan's unfitness for command. He concluded by asserting "that giving the command to him was equivalent to giving Washington to the rebels." Lincoln expressed his regret at the difference of opinion, but, he said, "he could not see who could do the work wanted as well as McClellan." Chase promptly nominated Hooker, Burnside, and Sumner, but the President refused to reconsider McClellan's appointment. At the close of the cabinet meeting the conspiracy was dead and the conspirators temporarily silenced.

The President, by standing firm, had gained a truce in the sniper's war being waged in McClellan's rear, but now it was entirely McClellan's responsibility to carry on the shooting war in the front. He entered upon his new task with energy. Immediately after receiving command of Washington's defenses, McClellan sent a dispatch to Pope which repeated Halleck's order to withdraw the Army of Virginia to the Washington Forts, and gave the precise location which each unit was to occupy. McClellan now had under his command eight full army corps, the detached division of Darius Couch of the 4th Corps and the various
independent brigades of the capitol's garrison. The total of this consolidated army was probably about 120,000 men.

On the afternoon of September 2nd, however, this large army was divided by fear, jealousy, distrust, and despair. The Army of the Potomac was far from fully amalgamated with the Army of Virginia prior to Second Manassas, and the disastrous rout suffered in that battle had not increased the spirit of unity. The manner in which McClellan reorganized the two armies into one and the spirit in which he was received as chief commander would be of great consequence. George McClellan was the most significant bond between the armies, and his deportment would, in large part, determine the immediate course of the war.

McClellan, believing that the Confederates were "savagely" pursuing Pope and that he would have "dangerous work" before him, dressed in his finest uniform, dashed off a note to his wife which intimated it might be his last, and rode across the Potomac to meet his fate. He stopped first, however, at the headquarters of General Jacob Cox, who had arrived in Washington a week earlier with a fine division of veterans from the West Virginia theater.

Cox had spent the week at Upton's Hill just in the rear of Fort Buffalo which was about five miles south of Washington. He had become accustomed to McClellan's visits in this period, during which a warm friendship had been renewed. On his last visit, McClellan had worn a blue hunting shirt and inconspicuous general's insignia, and he had been without side arms. This afternoon, however, he rode into camp in full dress uniform, a yellow sash around his waist, and a
sword buckled to his side. "Well, General," he called out to Cox, "I am in command again!"

At about four o'clock, McClellan, Cox, and several staff officers rode south to Upton's Hill to meet the returning troops. McDowell's Corps, which had been heavily engaged at Second Manassas, led the column, and at its head were generals Pope and McDowell. The two commanders were "covered with dust, and their beards were powdered with it. They looked worn and serious," and did not at first recognize McClellan. When their attention was directed to the "stiff and soldierly" figure on horseback by the side of the road, they immediately rode over to him and exchanged greetings. McClellan announced that he was now in command of all troops in the vicinity of Washington, and he specified the positions Pope's men were to take as they entered the fortifications.

The 2nd was a cold and windy day, and gales from the south carried the sound of artillery fire to the generals in conference. McClellan asked what the cannonade indicated. Pope replied that it probably came from the rear guard, under Sumner, which was engaged with the enemy. McClellan feared this confirmed his apprehensions, and, when Pope requested leave to continue to Washington, he replied that he "was going to that artillery firing." Exchanging bows, the generals departed in opposite directions.

Almost immediately, and before Pope was out of ear-shot, McClellan passed the first division of McDowell's Corps. This division was commanded by John Hatch, who had been demoted by Pope several
weeks earlier. Sighting McClellan, Hatch, turning to his division, shouted, "boys, McClellan is in command again Three cheers!"
The moment of truth had arrived for George McClellan, but he need not have worried. "The cheers were given with wild delight, and were taken up and passed toward the rear of the column." Hatch's men had not been part of the army on the peninsula. Instead, they represented the new elements now coming under McClellan command. Their hearty welcome indicated the ultimate wisdom of Lincoln's choice. Old men or new, from the Army of the Potomac or the Army of Virginia, the soldiers had confidence in McClellan. Just returned from a battlefield of "signal defeat," they found cause to cheer.

In order to avoid the confusion on the Alexandria Turnpike, McClellan rode across country toward Lewinville and the sound of firing. The moon was shining by the time he came to the first body of troops. It was Morell's Division of Porter's Corps, an old peninsula unit. There was "great cheering and excitement" as he rode among them. As McClellan made provision for their withdrawal and issued orders for the route of march, the word spread to the whole Corps that he was present.

The regular infantry of Sykes' Division had halted just down the road. Professionals that they were, the Regulars had already begun speculating about the next chance they would have to fight the enemy. But now, after two days of unbroken marching, the halts had become longer, the men harder to rouse from rest. Anxiety over the future had succumbed to weariness and the gloom of night.
Twenty-four years could not dull the memory of that moonlight halt in the mind of one Regular, who remained in the Army to become a captain of the 4th United States Infantry. Vividly through the decades William Powell recalled spying a familiar figure. Turning to his colonel, he exclaimed, "if I did not know that General McClellan had been relieved of all command, I should say that he is one of that party." As the rider came closer, he added, "I do really believe it is he!"

"Nonsense," grumbled his tired colonel. "What would General McClellan be doing out in this lonely place, at this time of night, without an escort." And the rider passed down the road and into the shadows.

But almost at once an officer came running from the same direction, shouting, "Colonel! Colonel! General McClellan is here!"

Tiredness disappeared. The weary soldiers were suddenly on their feet and sending up "such a hurrah as the Army of the Potomac had never heard before. Shout upon shout went out into the stillness of the night..." 86

A century of detractors have never quite taken this night of vindication from George McClellan.
Chapter Three: "Better the Fire Upon Thee Roll"

—Lee Launches the Campaign

1. "More Fully Persuaded"

The 3rd was a fine late summer's day. And for the South the September sun shone especially bright. The Federal eastern offensive, so menacing only two months ago, had virtually disappeared. The armies of McClellan, Pope, Burnside, and Cox, no longer held Confederate soil or even threatened Confederate arms. Now all four Northern armies huddled beneath the guns of Washington. "To prolong a state of affairs in every way desirable," seemed to Lee preeminently logical. On the 3rd, therefore, the Confederate commander sent Jefferson Davis the dispatch which proposed a campaign in Maryland.

The operations of the Army of Northern Virginia on the 3rd, however, were not the firm movements of decision. There were two good reasons for this apparent sluggishness. First, Lee had not yet finally determined to cross the Potomac. Secondly, the men badly needed rest after the Second Manassas Campaign. The straggling, which was to characterize the marches in Maryland, had already begun. In large part, the men dropped out of the ranks simply because they had passed the limits of human endurance and not because they were bad soldiers or for the want of courage. The long march from Richmond had greatly reduced the size of even the new units.

The army, with Lee in the advance, moved on easy marches
by its left or western flank toward Leesburg. Harvey Hill’s division was in the lead, followed by Longstreet’s three divisions, while Jackson brought up the rear. Walker’s division had not yet joined the army, nor had the Reserve Artillery, under Pendleton, which was still near Bull Run. By these movements Lee concentrated the Confederate army in the vicinity of Leesburg without undertaking an irrevocable commitment to enter Maryland. Loudoun County was on the frontier of the Confederacy and for nearly a year had been inaccessible to her recruiting agents, quartermasters, and commissary officers. Whatever moves might later be undertaken Leesburg would prove a profitable bivouac for the Army of Northern Virginia.

Unable to ride on horseback because of his injured hands, Lee arrived in the small Virginia town in the advance of the larger part of his army, traveling in an army ambulance. From Leesburg, the General sent a dispatch to the Confederate Secretary of War, George Randolph, suggesting that measures be taken to gather in conscripts from the northern counties of Virginia which had been freed from Federal occupation. The number of men gained would probably not be great, but Lee felt the scarcity of soldiers too keenly to ignore this opportunity.

It was also at Leesburg that Lee learned that Winchester at the head of the Shenandoah had been abandoned by its Federal garrison—unmenaced by Southern troops—on the night of the 2nd. This intelligence was undoubtedly very important to Lee. It suggested to him that the Union armies, falling back on other fronts, would not remain in the upper valleys of Virginia. The Federal troops at Winchester had retired
twenty-five miles northward to Martinsburg and Harpers Ferry. It was logical to assume that any further Confederate advance would compel these other garrisons to retire in a similar manner. Once the Shenandoah Valley was cleared of enemy troops, it would then be available to Lee as a line of supply and communication with Richmond.

This was an attractive possibility, for the Valley offered numerous advantages as a logistical route. First, it was many miles to the west of the Union armies now around Washington. Second, it lay behind the protective screen of the Blue Ridge Mountains. And third, the mouth of the Valley opened into western Maryland very near the region in which Lee proposed to transfer the theater of war. It was obvious to Lee that his present line with Richmond, running through Warrenton and Culpeper, was very vulnerable and could be protected only by a retirement southward of the Confederate army. The abandonment of Winchester, therefore, fell heavily and opportunely into the scales upon which the question of a Confederate offensive was being weighed.

The next day, September 4th, Lee decided in favor of the "expedition into Maryland." The Confederate commander had passed two days in indecision. Once his mind was convinced, however, he never again failed in his belief that he had taken the proper course, and, even amidst the growing tribulations which were to come, he never faltered in his determination, nor failed to take whatever action was necessary to support his hard wrought decision. This firmness of purpose is the key to an understanding of Lee and his strategic decisions in the campaign in
Maryland.

"...I am more fully persuaded," Lee wrote to Davis from Leesburg on the 4th, "of the benefit that will result from an expedition into Maryland, and I shall proceed to make the movement at once, unless you should signify your disapprobation." Lee admitted to the President that he was still uneasy about maintaining a supply of ammunition, food, and forage. He no longer believed these considerations were prohibitive, however, and was gathering in all of the supplies available in the Loundoun area. Once in Maryland provisions would be more difficult to acquire, especially so, if the citizens of that border state were to be won to the Southern cause. Looting of any kind, of either field or store, must be avoided as much as possible. Lee knew that it would be difficult for men to call benefactors those who robbed their property because it was questionable that Marylanders would enthusiastically accept Confederate money for food and clothing; the problem of obtaining supplies in Maryland was likely to impede the expedition.

Lee suggested to Davis that Enoch Lowe, an ex-governor of Maryland and Southern sympathizer now living in Virginia, be persuaded to accompany the army into Maryland as an ambassador of good-will. Lowe was a native of western Maryland and might be able to aid the Confederates in maintaining cordial relations with the people of that area and, as important, in obtaining supplies from them. Then, acknowledging the great distinction in the Confederate mind between Maryland, the Southern state held in the Federal orb only by "the despot's heel" and Pennsylvania, which was admittedly enemy territory, Lee advised Davis that the
expedition might be carried into Pennsylvania, unless the President "deem it unadvisable upon political or other grounds." 9

Lee learned in detail the same night what difficulties he might expect to encounter in Maryland. Jackson brought to the Confederate commander's tent Bradley T. Johnson, who commanded a brigade in Stonewall's old division. Johnson was a native of the "Old Line State" and had been prominent in Maryland politics before the war. Lee now asked him for information on the geography and politics of western Maryland.

Johnson spoke for several hours, emphasizing the Unionist sentiments of the region. He told Lee that he did not believe much could be expected even from the Southern sympathizers unless the Confederacy could promise an extended occupation and adequate protection. 10 Johnson's information underlined the necessity for maintaining tactful relations with the Marylander's—a condition Lee had anticipated in his second dispatch to Davis. After this conversation, it is unlikely that Lee cherished "grander aims" for his new campaign. 11 In fact, according to his own words it is improbable that he ever had.

In his cautious dispatches of September 3rd and 4th, Lee gave Davis no reason to believe that a full-scale invasion would be undertaken. Indeed, he took pains to demonstrate that this would be impossible in his present circumstances. What he had proposed, instead, was an "expedition" beyond the Potomac, into western Maryland and possibly southern Pennsylvania, to transfer the war to a fresh theater with abundant supplies, to provide Maryland the opportunity to throw off Northern occupation, and,
most importantly, to detain the Federal armies beyond the Potomac until the arrival of the winter season prevented another enemy advance into Virginia.

Lee's aims appear modest only if they are compared to the grandiose schemes for the conquest and occupation of the North which are sometimes attributed to him. Lee entertained no such impossible plans. He fully appreciated the limitations imposed upon him by the weakness of his own army and the strength of the enemy. Yet, even within the framework of his realistic appraisal, Lee entered upon a desperate gamble when he crossed the Potomac. The stakes which Lee chose to risk were of immeasurable value.

The Army of Northern Virginia and its reputation for success had become the mainstay of the Confederate military effort. By entering Maryland Lee gambled both the army and its reputation. Only a substantial victory could justify such a risk. Lee would need the freedom to maneuver more than ever before. He would need the initiative to control the campaign and force the enemy to give him an opening such as Pope had offered at Second Manassas. That lesser men would not have risked so much or dared such odds is a mark of Lee's greatness. But an even more exacting test of Lee as a military commander was the manner in which he implemented his bold decision with determined action.

2. "Ragged, Dirty Souls"

From the beginning, a screen of cavalry activity concealed
the movements of the Army of Northern Virginia. The three brigades of Jeb Stuart's division fanned out on the front and flanks of the army, constantly skirmishing with the enemy, and preventing him from knowing with certainty the direction or intention of the Confederate offensive. On the 3rd, Stuart had feinted toward Washington from three directions. Fitzhigh Lee's brigade, on the far right, in front of Alexandria, Wade Hampton's brigade in the center between Dranesville and Falls Church, and Beverly Robertson's Brigade on the left, in the vicinity of the Chain Bridge had engaged Federal pickets near Washington's fortifications. These feints kept pressure on the Northern capitol, while Lee concentrated his infantry around Leesburg. 13

On September 4th, without waiting for a reply from President Davis, Lee issued a general order preparing the army for the expedition into Maryland. The army's trains were to be stripped of all wagons not required to carry the "absolute necessities" of food, clothing, and ammunition. All horses "not actually employed for artillery, cavalry or drought purposes" were to remain in Virginia. Artillery batteries without a proper complement of men and officers or with insufficient or worn out horses were to be temporarily disbanded, the men and usable horses distributed to other batteries, and the guns sent to the rear.

In the order, Lee took special notice of the peculiar circumstances involved in moving into a border state. "This army," he asserted "is about to engage in most important operations, where any excesses committed will exasperate the people, lead to disastrous results, and enlist the populace on the side of the Federal forces in hostility to our own."
To avoid "exasperating" the people of Maryland it was imperative that supplies obtained from them be bought and paid for by authorized quartermaster and commissary agents. Supplies thus obtained would be fairly distributed to the troops. This system would remove "all excuse for depredations." Straggling, an omnipresent evil, must be reduced during the coming campaign. Brigade commanders would be personally responsible for placing guards in the rear and on the flanks of their columns to arrest these "useless members of the service...." 14

On the 4th, with the main body of the army camped near the Potomac and busy with the preparations for the expedition, Harvey Hill crossed the river with four of his brigades at Cheek's Ford, a broad but shallow passage nearly due east of Leesburg. Hill's fifth brigade, four North Carolina regiments under George B. Anderson, moved up the Virginia side of the Potomac to disrupt Baltimore & Ohio traffic running through Berlin. 15

By the evening of the 4th, therefore, the Maryland campaign was underway. "...'Maryland, My Maryland' was in the air, and on the lips of every man from General Lee down to the youngest drummer." 16 The Maryland ex-patriates scattered through the Confederate ranks were "especially wild in their enthusiasm." 17 The Maryland legend as believed in the South and consummately expressed by James Ryder Randall, the self-styled "exiled son," held the "Old Line State" to be Southern in sentiment and kept from joining the Confederacy only by Federal bayonets. Now Maryland would be given the opportunity to "burst the tyrant's chain" and join her natural sisters. "Better the fire upon thee roll," the poet
had sung, "...Than crucifixion of the soul." Now the whole Confederate army was singing the same ominous words. 18

With bands playing the Maryland air, Stonewall Jackson's command stepped out 19 on a "fair and pleasant" September 5th. 20 Swinging through Leesburg toward White's Ford, the men were cheering and singing." 21 In the streets of Leesburg Confederate hearts had been lifted by the sight of "an old lady with upraised hands, and with tears in her eyes" speeding them on with "The Lord bless your dirty, ragged souls!" 22

The Potomac held no magic to mend the Confederates' ragged clothing, but undoubtedly Stonewall's men were cleaner when they emerged on the northern bank than they had been or would for some time be. Jackson, himself, with an uncharacteristic demonstration of high spirits, saluted his men with doffed cap in the middle of the river and was rewarded by a resounding rebel yell. 23 The men in their happiness were generous with their good will on this day and were likely to break out in cheers at the appearance of any "well known officers." 24

There was a minor reorganization in the Army of Northern Virginia as it embarked on its operations in Maryland. The assignment of the troops newly arrived from Richmond more firmly established the wing formation of the army. Jackson's wing gained the division of Harvey Hill, the largest of the reenforcements. By the evening of the 5th, the whole of Jackson's enlarged command was across the river. 25 The main body moved up the northern bank of the Potomac avoiding even
the smallest settlements, and camped about three miles from the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in the vicinity of Buckeystown. Harvey Hill spent his second day in Maryland in a vain effort to destroy the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal locks at the mouth of the Monocacy River. The attempt was finally abandoned for "want of powder and tools," and Hill moved on to the north in the rear of Jackson's column. 26

The Confederate cavalry crossed the Potomac on the same afternoon. Fitz Lee's brigade, in the advance, drove a small party of Federal cavalry from Poolesville and won the honor of being first to enter a Maryland town. 27 The Confederates were warmly received by the few natives they met. Stuart was greeted by "the greatest demonstrations of joy," 28 while Jackson received less abstract tokens of admiration. Jackson first acquired a "noble mellon" 29 and then a "gigantic grey mare." 30 Perhaps the most surprising gift, however, came that evening as the men prepared a camp. While there was an abundance of post and rail fences around the fields, Jackson, mindful of maintaining good relations with Marylanders, sent for the owner of the farm. "Burn away," said the philosophic farmer, when apprised of the situation, "that's what rails are for when there's no other wood about." 31

The friendly attitude of the Marylanders did not throw Jackson off his stride, however, and, uneasy at the separation of the army by the river, he ordered the cavalry to scout well out on his flanks. Expecting Federal opposition, Jackson had hoped to reach the Baltimore and Ohio bridge over the Monocacy and destroy it before darkness. Delays in fording the Potomac had frustrated this hope and his command went into
camp just east of the Catoctin Mountains, about ten miles south of Frederick. The apprehensive Jackson ordered the bivouac to be securely picketed for the night. 32

South of the river, Lee passed the 5th making certain that his rear would be protected. He prepared a final dispatch to Davis confirming his intended plans. "As I have already had the honor to inform you," Lee wrote, "this army is about entering Maryland, with a view of affording the people of that State an opportunity of liberating themselves. Whatever success may attend that effort, I hope, at any rate, to annoy and harass the enemy." Lee then informed the President that he was abandoning his supply route through Warrenton and Culpeper. He requested that all provisions be sent to the army through Winchester, the city he had chosen as depot for the Maryland expedition.

"It is not yet certain," Lee admitted, "that the enemy have evacuated the Shenandoah valley, but there are reports to that effect, and I have no doubt that they will leave that section as soon as they learn of the movement across the Potomac." 33 Lee was by this time convinced that the Federal troops occupying Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry would retire northward to avoid being cut off by the Confederate advance. If Lee had believed these garrisons would remain to interfere with his supply lines, he could have moved upon them from Virginia before crossing the Potomac. Crediting his opponents with the elementary wisdom to withdraw isolated outposts, however, he proceeded into Maryland ignoring Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry.

Two things only marred the Confederate entrance into
Maryland. Both were to have a lasting effect on the campaign by increasing the already large number of stragglers and outright deserters from the ranks. First, a number of the soldiers objected to leaving the Confederacy. While the majority of the Southern troops were exultantly in favor of the expedition, there were some who believed that it violated the principles upon which they had entered the service. This was particularly true of the mountain men from North Carolina. Few could excel these mountaineers in courage or endurance, but they were provincial in the broadest sense. Ignorant and suspicious of the world at large, many having never seen a locomotive before enlistment, they had volunteered solely for the defense of their homes. The complicated logic whereby the offense becomes the best defense escaped them. Undoubtedly, many of these men inconspicuously disappeared from their regiments, to rejoin once again when the army returned to Virginia. 34

The second cause for concern at the beginning of the campaign was the difficulty, immediately apparent, in obtaining food in Maryland. Longstreet had called to Lee's mind the days in Mexico when men had lived on corn from the fields, but he had failed to recollect the results of a steady diet of green corn. The consequences of too much corn was the dissipation of the Confederate Army under the assaults of General Diarrhea. 35 Those with a sense of humor remembered their stay in Maryland as "the green corn campaign," 36 but, far from humorous at the time, "such sickness became serious," decreasing the Southern ranks and weakening those who remained. 37
Longstreet's wing of the army, increased to four divisions by the addition of McLaws, crossed the Potomac on September 6th. John Walker with his division, also assigned to Longstreet but just arrived in Leesburg, halted to rest his men and did not immediately follow. The Artillery Reserve battalions, stripped to their best guns and horses, forded the river in the afternoon. Now in Maryland were all but three brigades of the Confederate Army. With the expedition well under way, Stuart moved the cavalry north and west to interpose it between the Confederate line of march and the Federal forces in Washington.

From this day forward the troopers formed a long, thin, but opaque gray curtain between the Army of Northern Virginia and its enemy. Munford's small brigade held Poolesville and anchored the line on the Potomac near the fords. In the shadow of Sugar Loaf Mountain, Hampton's brigade formed the center at Hyattstown. Fifteen miles north of the Potomac, Fitz Lee held the right of the line, covering New Market and the important National Turnpike. This road connected Baltimore and Frederick and was the most likely route of any Federal army moving to intercept the Confederate advance. Stuart's activity was ceaseless along the entire front and, long after the infantry had concentrated in the north, the cavalry would give the enemy the false impression that the whole army was still in line behind the Monocacy from the Potomac to Frederick.

It was not, of course, Lee's intention to give battle east of the mountains. He hoped, instead, to draw the Union armies beyond the
Catoctin and the Blue Ridge ranges into western Maryland. To accomplish this end, Lee would move north along the eastern slope of the mountains to Frederick, pause to concentrate and provision his army, and then cross the mountains on the National Turnpike at Turner's Pass.

Jackson's restless column continued their march northward on the 6th, stumbling wearily along the narrow country lanes and grumbling their disappointment over a milkless, honeyless Canaan. Jackson, himself, gained an unwanted rest. The famous Little Sorrel, his usual mount, had been missing for several days, so that Stonewall called for the gray mare which had been given to him the day before. The mare, "strong-sinewed" and "powerful" but "a little heavy and awkward for a war-horse," was "more suited for artillery than the saddle." Jackson, finding the gray sluggish, dug his spurs into her flanks. Up reared the mare, erect on her hind legs and then over backward, throwing the general heavily to the ground. Jackson lay "stunned, bruised, and injured in the back...for more than half an hour" before he could be moved.

Harvey Hill took command of the wing moving toward Frederick, while its famed leader bumped along behind in an army ambulance. 41

The entire Confederate army reached Frederick by the late afternoon of the 6th, 42 but Lee halted it three miles from the city as a precaution against looting. Colonel Bradley Johnson, the native who had advised Lee about conditions in Maryland, assumed the duties of Provost Marshall of Frederick and the responsibility of guarding the city with the brigade he temporarily commanded in John R. Jones' division. Johnson seized the telegraph office, cut the wires, and confiscated the small
amount of Federal property in the area. No Confederate troops, other
than the provost guard, were allowed to enter the city without a pass.
The remainder of Jones' division went into camp beyond Frederick on
the road to Emmitsburg and the Pennsylvania border. 43

The main body of the army bivouacked two miles south of
Frederick. In their midst, in a small copse known as Best's Grove,
Lee, Longstreet, Jackson, and Stuart established their headquarters in
a rare display of neighborliness. None of the famous Confederate gen¬
erals left the camp on the 6th, but some of the bolder citizens came to
them. Lee and Jackson, both incapacitated, refused to entertain callers,
but Longstreet was "more sociable" and the gallant Stuart was available
"to see and talk to every good-looking woman." Later in the day Lee
sent for Jackson. On his way to his chief's tent, Stonewall met with his
second accident of the day, which, although less dangerous, left the stern
Presbyterian deacon no less dazed than the first. Recognizing the Gen¬
eral immediately, two young ladies from Baltimore jumped from a near¬
by carriage and rushed upon him. They clasped his hand; they embraced
him; they twittered in unison their admiration "with the wildest enthusiasm."
The leader of legions and courageous battle captain was lost under such an
assault. When the ladies' enthusiasm had evaporated, and they had driven
away in their carriage, Jackson stood staring at their wake, "cap in hand,
bowing, speechless, paralyzed." Stonewall did not venture far from his
tent the remainder of the day. 44

Sunday, September 7th, the second day of the Maryland expe¬
dition, was fair and warm, 45 and, for the Confederates resting around
Frederick, unusually quiet. Perhaps the most exciting event was the audacious prayer for the President of the United States which the Reformed Church minister sent heavenward in the presence of Jackson. There was no umbrage taken, for the weary General slept throughout the service. Not all of the Confederates were able to partake of the traditional sabbatical pastime, however. John Walker, joined by Anderson's North Carolina Brigade from the upper Potomac, crossed the river with his division as the rearguard of the expedition. Less than eight miles below Cheek's Ford, where Walker's men waded the Potomac, Federal cavalry attacked Munford's Brigade, the right wing of Stuart's line. This was the first demonstration that the North did not intend to allow the Confederates to advance unopposed through Maryland.

Two miles from Frederick, Lee kept his staff busy as he dictated three dispatches to Davis. One letter to the President was concerned entirely with the problem of straggling in the army. "I need not say to you," Lee observed to the President, "that the material of which it is composed is the best in the world, and, if properly disciplined and instructed, would be able successfully to resist any force that could be brought against it." There had never been sufficient time, however, to inculcate thoroughly military discipline into the soldiers, and, with the recent "forced marches and hard service," absence from the ranks, both temporary and permanent, had greatly increased. To correct this "great-evil" Lee suggested that a more efficient, summary means of arresting and punishing be devised.
In a second letter to Davis, Lee assured the President that the expedition was progressing favorably from a military standpoint. The entire army was across the Potomac, and there had been no untoward movement by the enemy which threatened Confederate plans. The second expressed intention of the campaign, however, giving succor to oppressed Maryland, was meeting with less success. There had been numerous "individual expressions of kindness" and, Lee believed, the Marylanders had a "general sympathy in the success of the Confederate States...." Nevertheless, he reflected, "...situated as Maryland is, I do not anticipate a general rising of the people in our behalf." It would be helpful, Lee reminded Davis, if ex-governor Lowe or some other prominent Marylander with Southern sympathies could be sent to travel with the army.

Lee's third dispatch to the Confederate President reflected his continuing concern with the safety of the army's supply line. Winchester, in Confederate hands since the 3rd, was to be the main depot on the line through the Shenandoah Valley. Lee had already ordered the men, horses and equipment not taken into Maryland to be assembled there. Evidencing his intention to remain in western Maryland for a considerable period, Lee requested that Davis direct the opening of blacksmith and machine shops in Winchester. He also asked the President for the assignment of a capable officer to command the depot. Lee forwarded with this dispatch the report of General Julius White, the commander of the Federal garrison which had evacuated Winchester. In closing, Lee passed on to Davis a rumor that White had
retired to Pennsylvania. He repeated the same report in another letter he wrote on the 7th to Gustavus Smith, the general charged with the defenses of Richmond. In writing to Smith, Lee added, "I think the enemy will concentrate about Washington." Evidently Lee gave some credence to this rumor, as it seemed to corroborate his belief that the Federal garrisons in the upper Shenandoah Valley would flee well ahead of the Confederate advance. As late as the 7th, therefore, Lee was confident that his supply line could be transferred west of the mountains without serious incidence and that the eastern theater of war could be maintained for a time in western Maryland.

The crest of the Maryland expedition passed much earlier than Lee anticipated. The 8th of September was to be the last day of grace for the Confederates in Maryland. The strength of the army was at its peak. Many of the involuntary stragglers, men who simply had not been able to match the army's stride, rejoined the ranks at Frederick. Here also a large group of North Carolinian conscripts arrived and were distributed to the emasculated Tar Heel regiments. Never again during the campaign would Lee have so many men to command.

3. "Come of Your Own Free Will"

Monday the 8th was also the last day on which Lee possessed absolute freedom of strategic decision. Thus far no purpose of the expedition had been denied the Confederate commander, no failure had marked the campaign. The threefold aims of the northward thrust, aid to
Maryland, fresh supplies, and transfer of the scene of the war, were yet accessible. 55

There was yet no reason to despair of accomplishing all three. The Federals were still concentrating their forces around Washington, and it did not seem probable an enemy field army would challenge the Confederates for many days. The only contact so far had been a cavalry skirmish in the streets of Poolesville.

Such being the prospects, it was at least possible that Lee could induce Marylanders to rally to the Southern standard. It is true that, with individual exceptions, the citizens around Frederick had been "silent in regard to giving demonstrations of opinion." 56 As Bradley Johnson had predicted this was the wrong end of the state for the South to woo. Given the ample time which the confused Northern response seemed to offer, however, natives from Baltimore and the Eastern Shore could join the army. 57

Bradley Johnson was authorized, therefore, to organize and arm such recruits as should come in. Unfortunately, the 1st Maryland Infantry, the famed Maryland Line of Jackson's Valley Campaign, had been disbanded in August. Johnson, who had been the colonel of the 1st, regretted that there was now no organization to serve as a nucleus for what he hoped would be a Maryland division. The Maryland batteries which were with the army were scattered and could not effectively serve as a rallying point. 58

Consequently, Johnson had to start from scratch. He established a camp for the recruits and then issued a colorful proclamation
to stir up business. Speaking as a Marylander, Johnson urged his fellow
citizens to seize this opportunity "for working out their own redemption"
and to overthrow with violence "sixteen months of oppression more gal-
ling than the Austrian tyranny...." He announced his authority to raise
regiments and arm volunteers, who were to bring with them only "a stout
pair of shoes, a good blanket and a tin cup." Other impediments would be
superfluous, as "Jackson's men have no baggage."

Fort McHenry, once the pride, was now the bane of Maryland,
and her citizens should remember not its flag but its prison cells. "Re-
member the Dungeons! the arrestes/ the midnight searches of your
houses! Remember these wrongs! and rise at once in arms, and strike
for liberty and right." 59

For various reasons, Lee felt compelled to issue a procla-
mation of his own. 60 In the absence of an official statement, there was
undoubtedly a great amount of speculation among the residents about the
designs of the Confederate occupation. As Lee wrote later to President
Davis, "the citizens were embarrassed as to the intentions of the army,
\(\text{and}\) I determined to delay no longer in making known our purpose." 61
Displaying an adept touch in public relations, Lee instructed Major
Charles Marshall, his aide-de-campe and another native of Baltimore,
to draw up an address which would call upon the people to avail them-
selves of this opportunity to throw off Northern tyranny. 62

The "Address to the People of Maryland" which was issued
on the 8th over Lee's name was measured and restrained. It recounted
"the wrongs and outrages" which had been inflicted on Maryland by the
Federal government and its armies and pledged the South's "deepest sympathy." The Confederacy, however, had no intention of becoming the new "heel" on Maryland's shore. The Army of Northern Virginia had not come to conquer but to assist Marylanders in regaining their freedom. Eloquently, the appeal concluded,

This, citizens of Maryland, is our mission, so far as you are concerned. No constraint upon your free will is intended. It is for you to decide your destiny freely. This army will respect your choice, whatever it may be; and while the Southern people will rejoice to welcome you to your natural position among them, they will only welcome you when you come of your own free will.

It is doubtful that Lee, in the context of his own words and the conversation with Bradley Johnson, seriously believed rhetoric would impel Marylanders to revolt. He recognized that the state's anomalous position in separating the North from its capitol would turn it into the cockpit of the war if Marylanders abandoned for a moment their docility. And yet, Virginia, Kentucky and Missouri had willingly invited contending armies within their borders in preference to submission. Now Maryland was called upon to sacrifice her security and follow the mandate of her conscience. Better the fire of combat sear her limbs than the ice of atrophy freeze her soul.
Chapter Four: "This Was Not Repose"

— McClellan Organizes the Federal Response

1. "A Rainbow in a Dark Political Sky"

In early September, 1862, Washington throbs with confusion. Into the city from the south flowed the long trains of wounded from Manassas, filling and overflowing the hospitals and convalescence camps. From the north, marching with the steady tread of the untried and the naive, came the longer lines of the new recruits. "We are coming, Father Abraham," they sang, "three hundred thousand more." Another line, stationary and patient, crouched behind the parapets of the forts, peering anxiously through the embrasures and across the Virginia fields of uncertain prospect.

The disabled, the disheartened, the novice, and the veteran, with excitable officials and harassed civilians interlarded, crowded the environs of the capitol. Some men, disgusted with the mess, were ready to give up the game. Others were too weary to care what happened next. Many, new to the contest, were bewildered and unsure where to turn. But there was, also, a core of men, both leaders and followers, fired and tempered veterans of a half-score hard fought fields, who asked only that they be competently led against the foe they did not fear. ¹

It was these veterans who responded enthusiastically to George McClellan's reappearance. Whatever his reputed failings, the men knew that his restoration was token of a return to system and order
in the war. There would never be a Third Manassas so long as "Little Mac" commanded. He might be cautious, but he was never foolish. His return alone was sufficient to revive the morale of the soldiers. To their way of thinking a "Deliverer had come. A real 'rainbow of promise' had appeared suddenly in the dark political sky." Lincoln only, of the civilian leaders of the North, understood how much this assurance meant to the officers and soldiers of the Union army.

McClellan, himself, thrived upon the cheers roaring in his ears and the caps which flew heavenward at his passing. He thrust the mantle of martyrdom well back into his closet and dusted off the finery of "Little Napoleon." Again, he wrote immodestly to his wife, "I have been called upon to save the country." McClellan believed himself a savior, and he behaved like one. Riding among the "shattered remnants" of his "noble Army of the Potomac," he took pains to make his presence known and to scatter widely words of encouragement and cheer. His reward, beyond the applause and demonstrations, was the nearly instantaneous reinvigoration of the dispirited army. From the moment he took command, McClellan was able to give orders with the assurance that officers and men would obey to the best of their ability.

It was with confidence, therefore, that the General prepared to defend the capitol. It seemed natural to him that Lee, on the heels of his victory at Manassas, would strike for Washington. On the 2nd and 3rd of September, McClellan acted upon this premise. Without taking time for the reorganization and refitting which the army so badly needed, he spread his forces in a semi-circle south of the Potomac. The Signal
Corps, recently arrived from the peninsula, he posted on the heights to keep the approaches to the capitol under constant telescopic surveillance. He ordered new earthworks thrown up and additional batteries posted at weak points along the line. By the night of the 3rd, no army of the Confederacy could have taken Washington.

The obvious strength of the capitol's fortifications, when garrisoned by 120,000 men, gradually made an impression upon McClellan, Halleck, the administration, and the soldiers in the trenches. Once admitting that the enemy could not take the city, they began to doubt that he would try to take it. The most important question then became: what would Lee do next?

As early as the 2nd, John Pope had predicted that the Confederate army would bypass Washington and invade the North. He astutely reasoned that Lee would continue to maneuver by his left flank and avoid a frontal assault on the Federal position. This strategy had gained for Lee a summer of successes, and Pope believed that the Confederate commander, rather than battering his army against strong forts, would attempt once more to turn the Federal flank.

Never, however, was a man more suited to the role of Cassandra than was John Pope after Second Manassas. His predictions were embodied in the same optimistic dispatches which seemed to falsify the real condition of the retreating army. To believe in Pope, one had to believe in Pope's army, believe that it was a battle-ready shield dissuading Lee from moving on the capitol. During the darkest days, September 1st and 2nd, few people believed in Pope's army. They
feared his disorganized columns invited attack on the capitol, and, consequently, his admonitions were taken at discount.

Gradually, however, reports accumulated which could not be discounted. Even through the uncertain haze of Stuart's cavalry cloud, it became apparent by the 3rd that the Confederate army was moving toward Leesburg. Scouts out from Dixon Miles' diversion at Harpers Ferry saw the movement as they looked east; the guards at Edwards' Ferry just across the river from Leesburg also reported the concentration. Alfred Pleasonton, whose brigade patrolled the area between Lee and Washington, sent word to McClellan that stragglers coming into his lines declared the Confederate army was going to cross the Potomac. These reports sufficiently alarmed the Secretary of War to make him wonder if the Confederates might try to isolate and capture Harpers Ferry. Stanton ordered Halleck to remove the paroled prisoners in camp at Point of Rocks, twelve miles above Leesburg, to Cumberland for safety.

By the 4th, the same day Lee confirmed his decision and sent Harvey Hill's division splashing across the river, reliable reports flowed into headquarters of the Army of the Potomac and the War Department clearly recording the Confederate movements. These accounts were, on the whole, factual concerning the time and place of the crossing but semi-hysterical regarding the numbers involved.

Although only part of one division of the Confederate army, 5,000 men at most, forded the Potomac on the 4th, Henry Banning, colonel of a three-months regiment, the 87th Ohio, saw six times as many
pass his command at Point of Rocks. Banning, panic-stricken at the thought of 30,000 enemy troops marching on his regiment of raw volunteers, bombarded Miles at Harpers Ferry with telegrams. The report was taken up by Miles and by John Garrett, President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and forwarded to Halleck in Washington.

The authoritative report, however, came from the intrepid wig-waggers of the Signal Corps. Observation stations had opened on Sugar Loaf Mountain and Maryland Heights on the 2nd. The lone officer and his flagman on Sugar Loaf sent a steady flow of reports to the relay station at Poolesville, from which the messages were telegraphed to Washington. The view from the mountain was unequaled along the lower Potomac. Many miles of Virginia and all of the fords as far west as Point of Rocks were clearly visible from the station. Enemy arriving at Leesburg, waved the flags on the 3rd. And the next day: rebels crossing the Potomac. Then: last message, enemy approaching.

Down the mountain scurried the two signal men. They descended upon a hapless Confederate courier and were relieving him of burdensome dispatches from Jefferson Davis to Lee, when jingling down the road came the van of Stuart's cavalry on its way to Poolesville. The troopers captured the signal man and sent the dispatches safely on to their intended destination. Nevertheless, the warning was broadcast. The information was in Washington by the 5th, the enemy was crossing into Maryland near Leesburg.

September 5th was the day of epiphany for the Federal high command. Pleasonton, skeptical as late as lunch time, was converted
by dinner. His scouts had convinced him that thirty to forty-five thou-
and Confederates had crossed at White's Ford, and, he acknowledged to
army headquarters, the direction of the dust cloud hanging above their
column indicated they were marching on Frederick. 19 Reports accumu-
lated during the day which gave a nearly accurate picture of the force and
direction of the Confederate offensive. Both Halleck and McClellan now
knew of Lee's movement. 20 Lincoln ambled over to the War Department
to verify the rumor and found that it was true. 21

An unofficial report soon spread to the public, but there was
little panic at the first news of the "invasion." Baltimore, a city of clash-
ing currents since the street riots in early 1861, was most sensitive to
the rumors, but the city was so heavily garrisoned by Federal troops that
order was easily maintained. 22 Elsewhere, particularly in New York,
Northerners reacted with a curious blend of apprehensive skepticism and
sadistic optimism. There was a general feeling that the Confederates had
too much sense to invade the North, because such an attempt was bound to
failure, if not the outright ruin of the Southern army. 23 So strong was
this belief that the stock market continued to rally on the basis of the re-
ported safety of Washington; and, on the 6th, the New York Tribune as-
sured its readers that Jackson's raid into Maryland had ended with his
return to Virginia.

As evidence grew that Confederate columns were, indeed,
marching northward, Pennsylvania lost the blasé attitude of the rest of
the nation. Governor Andrew Curtin became convinced that Lee could
and would march straight down the Cumberland Valley and snap up
Harrisburg. He called out twenty-five regiments of militia and set up a cry for the War Department to furnish him with equipment, additional forces, and a competent commander. The citizens of Philadelphia, much to the amusement of their neighbors in New York City, were fearfully certain where the Confederates would turn after they had gobbled up the state capitol. The archives were hustled northward, and the town fathers set about preparing to defend the City of Brotherly Love.

Virtually the only calm in the storm centered around McClellan's headquarters. While the rest of the country braced for autumn elections, panicked over Lee's advance, and despaired over the wreckage in northern Virginia, McClellan single-mindedly began to clear away the ruin and organize the force to frustrate Lee's plans.

2. "Working Like a Beaver"

McClellan faced a tremendous task, and he threw himself into his work with gusto. Even the President was impressed. Lincoln remarked to his secretary, John Hay, that the General was "working like a beaver." Evidently, he concluded, McClellan had benefited by the "sort of snubbing he got last week." The President thought, in other words, that McClellan had been chastened, and now, like a little boy caught at the cookie-jar, was eagerly trying to atone for his errors.

Whether or not Lincoln at other times understood McClellan, as has been sometimes alleged, he was far off the mark of comprehension during the days of late August and early September 1862. In McClellan's
mind there had been no "snubbing." Politics had tried to run the war and had botched things badly. In the dire emergency which resulted he had once more been called upon "to save the nation." 30

That he was, indeed, cast in his proper role was proved to him by two facts. First was the clinging, pleading soldiers who cried out at his passing, "George, don't leave us!... They sha'n't take you away from us again." 31 Second was the complete chaos to which the army had been reduced in his absence. 33 McClellan believed that only he could frustrate Lee's intentions in Maryland. Whether or not the administration would define his authority, the General was certain of his duty, and he was determined to meet it.

George McClellan was, in this instance, absolutely correct. The army and the nation, at this particular time, needed him as much as he always needed them. The hand of a master organizer, a hand which the rank and file and their officers trusted, was needed to put the inoperative army into gear. The organization of the troops around Washington had dissolved into bits and dribblets. One of McClellan's greatest tasks, during the five day period which he devoted to preparing the army for the field, was the fusion of these disparate fragments into an integrated and dynamic fighting force.

There were in Washington 296 regiments of infantry, 27 regiments of cavalry, and 100 batteries of artillery. About a quarter of these units came from Pope's Army of Virginia; about half from McClellan's Army of the Potomac; and the remaining quarter, many of them new organizations, came from Burnside's Corps from North Carolina, Cox's
Division from West Virginia, and finally, from the forces stationed in Washington's forts which were not attached to any larger command.

There were eleven units with sufficient cohesion for field service:

**Army of Virginia:**

1st Corps (Major General Franz Sigel)
2nd Corps (Major General Nathaniel P. Banks)
3rd Corps (Major General Irvin McDowell)
Reserve Corps (Brigadier General Samuel D. Sturgis)

**Army of the Potomac:**

2nd Corps (Major General Edwin V. Sumner)
3rd Corps (Major General Samuel P. Heintzelman)
4th Corps (One division) (Major General Darius N. Couch)
5th Corps (Major General Fitz John Porter)
6th Corps (Major General William B. Franklin)
Miscellaneous:

9th Corps (Major General Ambrose E. Burnside)
Kanawha Division (Brigadier General Jacob D. Cox)

In addition there were nuclei for cavalry and artillery field commands in the eight regiments of horse of Alfred Pleasonton and the thirteen batteries of Henry Hunt, both from the reserves of the Army of the Potomac.

In consolidating these forces and preparing a powerful and unified army for active duty, however, McClellan had to struggle with three embarrassing obstacles. In the first instance, he was not yet certain that the Southern offensive was not merely a feint to draw Union troops westward and weaken the defenses of Washington, so that another Confederate army might take the city from the south. Or, on the other hand, that Lee might not try to move around the Federal flank, capture Baltimore and sever the capital's ever tenuous connection with the North. Until Confederate intentions were pinpointed McClellan had to provide for every contingency.

Secondly, the ranks of the veteran units had worn very thin. The three corps of the Army of Virginia were reduced to 31,000 men. The four corps of the Army of the Potomac, including Couch's Division, totalled no more than 56,000. The experienced soldiers of Burnside and Cox added another 10,000. With Pleasonton's cavalry, McClellan had, therefore, only 100,000 men with which to pursue and frustrate Lee,
and, at the same time, adequately defend Washington. Should the roster strength be taken and the new troops counted as well, the number would probably surpass 150,000. But rosters would never kill a single Confederate soldier, and the new troops—unless properly handled—would scarcely be of more help. The larger number was a hope to be realized, but at this point it was not an accomplished fact to be acted upon.

McClellan's third embarrassment was the great disorder which prevailed in every department of the army. Some divisions had too many batteries, while some had none at all. Much of the supplies of the Signal, Medical, Ordinance, and Quartermaster Corps remained at the depot at Harrison's Landing on the peninsula. The trains which had reached Washington were defective in equipment, pulled by worn out horses and mules, and were, in many instances, officially "lost," because they had been assigned to the wrong command or, in the confusion, had not been assigned at all. This disorder resulted largely from the hasty withdrawal from the peninsula and the imbroglio of Second Manassas. There was also, however, a great amount of inefficiency and inability in the lower echelons of the supporting branches of the army.

It was for just such a situation that McClellan was ideally suited. His reorganization and refitting of the new Army of the Potomac occupied but three days, September 3rd through 5th, although many final adjustments were made even after the march had commenced. McClellan placed men of ability and experience in command of the various depart-
ments. He named Henry Hunt Chief of Artillery and gave him the task of evening out the proportion of guns, equipping the batteries with better horses and material, and creating an artillery reserve corps. He directed Alfred Pleasonton to form a cavalry division for field duty from the various unassigned troopers in the vicinity of Washington.

All of the department heads had served under McClellan before and were of his ilk, and they set about their tasks with a gusto which matched his own. The army which left Washington in pursuit of Lee was well advanced towards a high level of efficient administration and intelligent organization.

McClellan's solution to the problem of integrating the various units and of retaining an adequate force for Washington's defense was characterized by intelligence and sight—both fore and hind. The large, new regiments which had been pouring into Washington in response to the presidential call for volunteers in July and had, thus far, not been attached to any unit, he interspersed in the veteran commands. These new regiments had been raised to number a thousand men, and, even with the sickness which inevitably breaks out in the camps of the new soldiers, still averaged about eight hundred.

It cannot be demonstrated conclusively that McClellan, himself, rearranged the organization of the army and its general officers to favor the old Army of the Potomac or to place men whom he knew to be friendly in the major positions of command. Yet this was the consumate result of his own premeditated measures and of several fortuitous events.
None of the four major generals of the old Army of Virginia served with McClellan during the Maryland Campaign. Pope was relieved from active duty by Halleck; Irvin McDowell received an unrequested leave of absence; Franz Sigel and his entire corps were ordered to remain in Washington; and McClellan designated Nathaniel Banks to take command of the capital's defenses. Joseph Hooker, who assumed command of McDowell's Corps, and Alpheus Williams, who was elevated in Banks' absence, both owed their positions directly to McClellan.

In another adroit move, McClellan paired each of the army corps from Pope's old command with a corps from his own Army of the Potomac. And, in all but one instance, he placed the larger unit thus formed under a general with known McClellan sympathies. It would be easy to interpret McClellan's actions as evidence of favoritism. Yet certainly the end he sought was served by the organization he created. A general should be able to rely upon his chief lieutenants, and the command system of the field army, as finally cast, was such that McClellan believed he could trust it.

The new Army of the Potomac which began the Maryland Campaign on September 8th, was a tightly knit organization which showed few traces of its diverse origins:
Army of Potomac, September 8, 1862

Left Wing: Major General William B. Franklin

6th Corps  Franklin
4th Corps (one division only) Major General Darius N. Couch

Center: Major General Edwin V. Sumner

2nd Corps  Sumner
12th Corps (formerly Banks' 2nd of Army of Virginia)
Brigadier General Alpheus S. Williams

Right Wing: Major General Ambrose E. Burnside

1st Corps (formerly McDowell's 3rd of Army of Virginia)
Major General Joseph Hooker
9th Corps (formerly North Carolina Expeditionary Corps, including troops from South Carolina)
Major General Jesse L. Reno
Kanawha Division (formerly of District of West Virginia; attached as 4th division of 9th Corps)
Brigadier General Jacob D. Cox

Field Reserve:

5th Corps (one division only)
Brigadier General George Sykes
Artillery Battalion Colonel Henry J. Hunt
Cavalry Division Brigadier General Alfred Pleasonton

Defenses of Washington: Major General Nathaniel P. Banks

3rd Corps Major General Samuel P. Heintzelman
11th Corps (formerly Sigel's 1st of Army of Virginia)
Major General Franz Sigel
5th Corps  (Morell's Division only)
Major General Fitz John Porter
Miscellaneous regiments and batteries

The force which set out from Washington to run down the
interloping Confederates was not simply the old Army of the Potomac
with new units grafted on. Essentially, McClellan created a "new" Army
of the Potomac. This organization, which might be termed the army of
the middle period, continued virtually unchanged until after the battle of
Gettysburg.

It was an army of great potential, but it still needed much
effort and some time to weld it seamlessly into the instrument which
could finally bring Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia to
bay and the war to its close. In the meantime, rough edges or not, it
must take the field and frustrate if it could not destroy its audacious
foe. 40

3. "That Is My Intention"

Lee's entrance into Maryland plunged the administration
and the military establishment of the North into a new crisis. As
Chase had predicted, once McClellan was returned to command it would
be difficult to keep him from taking the field again. 41 Had Chase fore-
seen how quickly the enemy would force the Northern army to emerge
from the forts, he would have had even greater reason for concern.
One emergency succeeded the other too rapidly to allow those who
disliked McClellan time to find someone else to take his place.

John Pope, the butt of "an immense amount of ill-feeling all through the army," was useless to the President. The luckless general gave a bitter personal report to Lincoln, denouncing the actions of McClellan, Fitz John Porter and other officers of the Army of the Potomac as the cause of his disaster at Second Manassas. The President listened patiently, because he liked Pope and believed, at least in part, the allegations which the general made. He set aside the charges, however, at least for the moment. Lincoln was disgusted with the factionalism in the army, and he was determined, during the emergency, to squelch it, even at the expense of justice for Pope. On the 5th, Halleck informed the former commander of the Army of Virginia that the Union armies in the east had been consolidated under McClellan. Pope was ordered to report to the Secretary of War, and, two days later, was observed in civilian dress quietly boarding a train for the west.

Lincoln and his subordinates were more devious in replacing Pope, however, than they had been in retiring him. The general, overwhelming attitude of the administration was a reluctance to order McClellan into the field to meet Lee. Even Lincoln and those who favored McClellan's return to the command of Washington's defenses believed the general was afflicted by a fatal cautiousness which would prevent him from ever gaining a decisive victory. There was, consequently, much backing, hawing, and geeing in putting the Federal army in the field.
On the 3rd Stanton ordered Halleck to organize a force for active operations. Halleck, in passing the order on to McClellan, indicated that the General was to prepare but not to lead the army. By September 5th, however, when Confederate intentions had been more fully developed, the General-in-Chief had grown vague concerning who was to be field commander. He telegraphed to McClellan, "I think there can be no doubt that the enemy are crossing the Potomac in force, and that you had better dispatch General Sumner and additional forces to follow. If you agree with me, let our troops move immediately." The ambiguities of this order were never resolved in McClellan's mind. He never felt that he had been given specific instructions to lead the army in the field. Indeed, in later years he contended that he conducted the campaign with a noose around his neck, because if Lee had been successful, his enemies, accusing him of "assuming command without authority," would have tried and executed him for treason.

McClellan really faced no such danger, for the President fully approved the General's taking the field. No one ever questioned his assumption of command. Yet, in the circumstances, McClellan's uncertainty was not unreasonable. Both Lincoln and Halleck denied Broadening his authority, which had been strictly limited as late as September 3rd. Indeed, on the 5th the President had renewed his offer to Burnside to take command of the army. It is possible, therefore, that McClellan never received but the vaguest verbal orders to pursue Lee. At the time, it seems it was accepted as an inevitable evil
forced upon the nation by an uncongenial enemy: with Lee wandering about the northern countryside, McClellan--there was no help for it--would have to be sent in pursuit. No matter what it galled, it was necessary.

McClellan, himself, continued to act as if he had whatever authority each particular emergency required. On the 3rd, to guard against an attack from the Maryland side of the Potomac, the General moved Sumner and Banks (2nd and 12th Corps) to Tenallytown, D. C., about three miles northwest of Washington proper. On the same day, he ordered Burnside's Corps (9th) to take up position on the Seventh Street road to the north and sent Pleasonton's Cavalry along a parallel road to the south to scout the lower fords of the Potomac. 52

McClellan's dispositions north of the river, made as early as the 3rd, determined the route he would follow in advancing against Lee. He knew that the Federal army would have to move to the northwest, if the Confederates crossed the Potomac. The main avenue in this direction was the road to Frederick through Tenallytown, Rockville, Middlebrook, Clarksburg, and Urbana, a distance of about thirty miles. It was on this pike that McClellan placed the center of his line under Sumner.

But McClellan also knew that Washington and Baltimore could not be defended and the Potomac fords watched all from this one road. Both for the defensive posture the army must assume as it reorganized and for the route of march once the offense were begun,
it was necessary to fan out the units on a curved line, from a point nearly due west to another nearly due north. In this way, the enemy would be presented a long front and denied the flanks of the Federal army. 53

Undoubtedly, this plan was the best McClellan could have adopted until he knew more about Lee's intentions. A single column moving westward would have been an invitation for a third Manassas or another Seven Days. The plan did have disadvantages. The army would have to move simultaneously by parallel roads; and it would require intricate timing and a great deal of effort to keep the front in line and solid, so that the enemy would not be given the opportunity to defeat the columns separately. Until McClellan had definite information, however, that Lee were heading for Baltimore or Pennsylvania or that he were recrossing the river, there was no reason for the army of the Potomac to be committed in haste--none, save one, that is. 54

The sole argument for a rapid advance was the precarious position of the garrison at Harpers Ferry which had been isolated by Lee's penetration of Maryland. McClellan urged on several occasions that the vulnerable post be abandoned and its troops ordered to fall back into western Maryland or Pennsylvania. His pleas had been ignored, however, and Major General John Wool, who commanded the 8th Corps of which the garrison was a part, had telegraphed to its commander, Colonel Dixon Miles, to hold on at any cost.

There were about twelve thousand men at Harpers Ferry and
a huge store of supplies and ordinance. The loss of the post would be a great misfortune for the North. But it is unlikely that McClellan considered its quick relief a sufficient cause to rush into western Maryland until more were known of the size of the Confederate army and its location. Weighed against the safety of Washington and Baltimore and the protection of the Federal grand army on the march, the fate of Harpers Ferry did not even budge the scales. 55

Unfortunately for McClellan's plans, there was no road other than the Frederick Pike which ran from the capital directly west or northwest. The other roads meandered about, came to dead ends, and shot off at tangents. It would be necessary, therefore, for the wing of the army to change roads often by using lateral, connecting routes, and it would not be possible for them to keep even pace with the center. The only reasonable solution, if the front were to be maintained, was to decelerate the advance of Sumner to keep him even with the wings.

By posting the 9th Corps on the Seventh Street Road, McClellan indicated that he had chosen the route for the right wing. And, indeed, it was the only feasible course. Burnside, by picking his way through a maze of roads, could travel through Leesborough, Mechanicsville, Brookville, and Cooksville, and thereby gain the Frederick-Baltimore Turnpike. In the process, he would protect both Baltimore and the right wing of the army.

No force but Pleasonton's cavalry was in position on the
supply branches, concentrated a cavalry force for the field, and reconnoitered, as best he could, the positions of the enemy. On September 4th, when the rumors of "invasion" first began to come in, the 2nd, 9th, and 12th Corps were in position west and north of Washington, and Pleasonton had scouted the Potomac as far as Muddy Branch, a tributary about midway between the ford used by the Confederates and Washington. Couch's Division (4th Corps) was ordered from Alexandria to Tenallytown on the same day to support the cavalry and form the nucleus for the left wing of the line.

September 5th was a busy day for the Federals. Halleck wrote out the order for the organization of a field army. McClellan probably received the order in the morning, for, by 11:30 a.m., he was implementing it. Commands flew in every direction: all the forces south of the Potomac were to cook three days' rations and be prepared to march at a moment's notice; Cox with his division was to report to Burnside's 9th Corps; Pleasonton was to scout farther west; the line north of the Potomac was to push forward an average of eight miles--Couch, on the left, to Offutt's Crossroads; Sumner's two corps, in the center, to Rockville; and Burnside, on the right, to Leesborough. Colonel Henry Hunt was appointed Chief of Artillery. Later, Halleck could write, "most of his army was in motion by the 5th of September."

For three days only had McClellan been in command of the polyglot forces crowded around Washington. For many of the hours of
those days he had been wholly involved in strengthening the defenses of the capitol. That any preparations whatsoever had been made for the creation of a field army was due to his foresight. When officially ordered to prepare such a force, he turned his attention almost exclusively to the task, building on the foundations he had already laid down.

From the 5th onward, McClellan was compelled to wear two hats. With the work of bringing order to the military chaos far from complete, he had now to prepare and push forward a force to develop Lee's intentions and then frustrate them. If he were to remain at the head of the field army after it passed beyond the limits of the "Defenses of Washington," then it was likely that he would be burdened with the double task of leading while organizing for the entire campaign. Only Lee's precipitate retreat into Virginia would relieve McClellan's embarrassment, and that in view of Lee's summer performance was hardly likely. It seemed certain that the army would have to congeal as it advanced. For the present, Lee was the piper who called the tune to which the Army of the Potomac marched. It could be no other way.

On the 6th of September that tune became loud and clear. Although McClellan had no way of knowing, however, it was deceptive music. Longstreet's divisions were just now crossing the Potomac, while Jackson's were already approaching Frederick. Pleasonton, whose cavalry line by this time stretched in a quarter-circle twenty miles west and north of Washington, reported to his chief that the Confederates were massing
behind Parr's Ridge, east of the Monacacy River. Pleasonton sent a series of dispatches, starting early in the morning, all of which indicated that Washington was Lee's object. 65

This information was given in more certain terms than it should have been. Pleasonton relied upon news brought to him by his pickets, who were, as he admitted, very "nervous." 66 He filled in the gaps with reports from friendly but excited civilians. Yet his own words to McClellan left little doubt that he also believed the enemy was marching on the capitol. They would come in two columns, he wrote; Lee and the main force moving directly on Washington, while Jackson drove down the Frederick-Baltimore Turnpike to flank the Federal position.

These were the reports of the only source upon which McClellan could to any degree rely, and he acted accordingly. He ordered Franklin's Corps (6th) and Sykes Division of Regular infantry from Porter's (5th) to Tenallytown; and sent the 1st Corps, now under Hooker instead of McDowell, to Leesborough to strengthen the right wing. The center, under Sumner, the 2nd and 12th Corps, was thrown forward in line of battle several miles beyond Rockville.

To fill the thinned ranks of the veteran units, McClellan distributed thirty-four of the new regiments, some twenty-five thousand men, throughout the army. 67 Many of these new organizations came literally fresh from the mustering-in ceremony. Their first bivouac under the stars lay yet before them. Their only drill would come on the march after Lee. Much larger than their veteran counterparts, these
new regiments gave a false impression of the strength and size of the army, particularly to those whose only standard was martial display. To those with a more intimate knowledge of the typical raw volunteer, including the commander of the Army of the Potomac, their reliability was cause for constant anxiety.

With no more certain information about Lee, McClellan pushed forward his preparations on the 7th. He ordered the right wing to advance to Brookville. Burnside, now officially commander of that wing, faced, in miniature, all of McClellan's problems. In the 9th Corps, under Jesse Reno, he lacked competent division commanders. The 1st Corps had been wrecked at Second Manassas, only eight days before. Now, under Hooker, its new commander of only a day, it was still, understandably, in sad shape. The arrival of generals Samuel Sturgis and Orlando Willcox helped the 9th Corps, and Hooker's men gradually recovered in the field, but Burnside's problems, illustrative of those of the whole army, indicate why Lee was not thrown into the Potomac in a trice as many then and since seem to have expected. 68

On the same day, the coalescing left wing, under Franklin, moved from Tenallytown to Rockville, while the center remained in line in advance. On the 7th, therefore, the right moved forward twelve miles and the left ten, and both were brought into line with the center for the forward advance. At this juncture, with his line beyond the District's borders and from twelve to nineteen miles from Washington, itself, and the enemy reported to be only fifteen miles farther west, McClellan
decided that the army must now be directed from the front.

The latest cavalry reports suggested that Lee would move on Baltimore, but Pleasonton doubted that the Confederates would foolishly expose their flank and thought an attack on Washington still more likely. Halleck saw one of the reconnaissance reports and wrote to McClellan, warning him not to become preoccupied with the right wing and let an enemy force slip across the river in his rear. Authority or no, it no longer seemed possible to command from headquarters in Washington.

Late on the afternoon of the 7th, McClellan visited the White House, the War Department, and Seward's home. Finding no one of importance at any of these places, he left his card, marked P. P. C., and took matters into his own hands. He appointed Nathaniel Banks commander of Washington in his absence, and, gathering his staff and headquarters paraphernalia, set out for Rockville and the front.

At dusk, as McClellan galloped out Pennsylvania Avenue, he glimpsed a familiar figure salute him from the sidewalk. Secretary of the Navy Welles had been on a Sunday evening stroll with his son, when he recognized the General as one of the horsemen dashing past. Fittingly, though he could not have known of the debt he owed Welles, McClellan halted the cavalcade and rode over to say good-bye.

Welles asked if he were going up the Potomac. Yes, said McClellan, he was going to the front to take active command. "Well," said the Secretary pointedly, "onward, General, is now the word; the country will expect you to go forward."
"That," McClellan replied, "is my intention."

"Success to you then, General, with all my heart," Welles responded. And the two parted with a "mutual farewell." McClellan and his staff rode off into the darkness. They arrived at Rockville late the same night. 74

September 8th was McClellan's first day in the field. No longer burdened by the confusion in Washington, he could now concentrate on making the "field force" into an army and on obtaining a more accurate picture of the enemy's location and intention than the badly constructed jigsaw puzzle thus far given to him. Although it did not look it on the map, the 8th was a busy day, and, under the circumstances, it was for McClellan a fruitful one.

McClellan did not advance either Burnside or Sumner beyond the positions designated on the 7th, because the sketchy information available suggested that the enemy was moving in their direction. In addition, Burnside's difficult to manage wing did not get into line at Brookville until the evening of the 8th. The left took definite shape, however, as Franklin's 6th Corps marched due west to Muddy Branch from Rockville, completing the Federal arc to the Potomac River. Couch's Division remained at Offutt's Crossroads to act as reserve for Franklin and to guard the army's rear from attack south of the river. The general reserve, Sykes' Division, moved forward ten miles to Rockville. The majority of the army was in motion on the 8th, therefore. Many of the new regiments were, moreover, just now joining the commands to which they had been assigned.
Even in the field, however, McClellan found it extremely difficult to get accurate information on Lee. Pleasonton had only the few servicable horsemen which had arrived from the peninsula. Averill's brigade had not yet disembarked, and the cavalry which had been with Pope, which in any case was so worn out as to be nearly worthless, had to remain south of the river. Pleasonton had concentrated most of his reconnaissence force in front of the left wing, near the river. When the Confederates were crossing the Potomac, he reported they were massing in front of the Monocacy. When they moved off to Frederick, he first reported they were marching on Washington; then he said, perhaps Washington, perhaps Baltimore; and, finally, by the 8th, Pleasonton had settled on Baltimore as the Southern objective. Had there been more Federal cavalry and had it been pushed farther north, toward Frederick, McClellan would have had a much truer picture of Lee's movements.

As it was, McClellan knew only that the Army of Northern Virginia had moved northwestward. This was conclusive by the 8th, when Pleasonton captured Poolesville and discovered no enemy infantry in the immediate vicinity. McClellan, therefore, laid plans for a general advance on the 9th and a thorough reconnaissence to the northwest. Lee's possible moves were now being narrowed by elimination, and McClellan could act with more certainty.

By September 8th, the new Army of the Potomac was taking definite shape; its units were coalescing; its command vacancies being
filled. The supporting trains, quartermaster, subsistence, ordinance, and medical were organized for the advance. Men and supplies were concentrating along the Muddy Branch-Gaithersburg-Brookville line.

The great preparation had its personal touches. Lieutenant-Colonel David Hunter Strother, the "Porte Crayon" of pre-war literary fame, had found himself without an assignment after Pope's staff had disbanded. On the 7th, while hoping for a period of rest and recuperation, he casually applied for a position on McClellan's staff. At 11:30 on the night of the 8th, a courier banged on his hotel door in Washington. A groggy Strother climbed out of bed to find a military telegram ordering him to report for duty at Rockville in the morning. "This was not repose," the Porte grumbled to his diary, "but action." And, indeed, he was right. 79
Chapter Five: "How Does It Look Now?"
—The Turning Point of the Campaign

1. "In This I Was Disappointed"

On September 9th, while the skies clouded over Washington and the Chesapeake shores, the beautiful weather lingered in up-country Maryland, around Frederick. There was change in the air, though, for Lee had decoded that the Army of Northern Virginia must march again. The orders which detailed the routes and objectives for the various commands were drawn up and issued the same day. On the 10th, the Southern army left Frederick for points farther west, beyond the South Mountain range.

Viewed in the light of subsequent events, September 9th is easily discernible as the day on which Lee lost the initiative in the campaign. At the time, the movement from Frederick was not interpreted as the beginning of the end. But Lee had to accept it as a modification of his original plans. Under normal conditions the Confederate commander would not have abandoned Frederick so early for two reasons. First, Lee did not know yet that the Federal army had been committed to pursuit. Secondly, he was marching away from the most effective recruiting station he could possibly have occupied immediately after issuing his proclamation.

Two unforeseen developments forced this change upon Lee. Of somewhat lesser importance was the growing friction between the army and the residents of Frederick. In increas-
ing numbers the merchants and farmers declined to exchange food and other supplies for Confederate money. Since Lee refused to seize private property and disliked forcing the Southern script upon the Marylanders; the alternative was for the army to move on after the generosity of the sympathetic and the greed of the speculative had played out. This was true by the 9th.

Of greater importance was Lee's growing concern over his supply line. He had planned to use the Shenandoah Valley as his line, with Winchester, at its head, as the depot for the army rendezvous for stragglers and convalescents returning to their commands.

In planning to use the Valley, Lee assumed that the entire route would be under Confederate control. It was on this important point that Lee was "disappointed" on the 9th. The Federal garrisons at Harpers Ferry and Martinsburg, square at the jaws of the Valley's mouth, had not retired, nor did they give any indication that they intended to retire. Lee had, therefore, either abandon entirely his plan to remain in western Maryland for a considerable period, or else he had to drive away the enemy from these posts. It was for this reason that Lee had to leave Frederick before he would otherwise have. And it was to accomplish this objective that the Army of Northern Virginia broke camp on the 10th and marched west into the still gray mountains at dawn. The plans for the movement were given in great detail in Special Orders No. 191.
Lee, or so it would seem, was solely responsible for the contents of these orders. He consulted both Longstreet and Jackson on the morning of the 9th, but he issued S. O. 191 inspite of the advice he received from his chief lieutenants. The defensively minded Longstreet, who evidently did not grasp the strategic problem, argued that enemy garrisons should be ignored. Jackson, on the other hand, recommended that the whole Southern army should be used to clear the upper Valley. Lee disagreed with points of view. Neither satisfied the requirements of his long range plans for the campaign.

Lee's solution was more nearly correct than either Longstreet's or Jackson's. The Federals had to be driven away, but he rightly believed it would not require the entire army to chase them from the Confederate supply line. Lee wanted to exploit his new theater of operations, and part of the army was needed for this end. Moreover, and probably more importantly, the movement of the entire army to the vicinity of Harpers Ferry would require a larger operation than Lee intended to initiate. All the trains of the army and its reserve artillery would have to tag along, as they could not remain twenty or more miles to the north without infantry support. Their presence would slow the army and complicate its march. The whole manoeuvre would be quicker and neater, if only the force actually needed were dispatched, and the remainder of the army could undertake sundry other
operations at the same time.

The provisions of Special Orders 191 reflected this thinking. By its direction the Army of Northern Virginia divided into five separate columns, each to pursue a different objective. Two divisions (MoLaws' and Anderson's), amounting to about nine thousand men, were to form one column, under Major-General Lafayette MoLaws. Strategically, MoLaws drew the most important and the most difficult assignment. Continuing with the main body until it reached Middletown, MoLaws was then to march due south and capture Maryland Heights—the spur of the mountains which towered above Harpers Ferry immediately across the Potomac River. He was to accomplish this task by the morning of the 12th; and, then, he was to "endeavor to capture the enemy at Harpers Ferry and vicinity." MoLaws' advance up the Middletown Valley would prevent any of the enemy garrison from escaping to the northeast.

A second column, under, Jackson, was also to leave the army at Middletown. Jackson had to cover a greater distance than MoLaws. He was allowed to select the forces from the three divisions (Jackson, Ewell, and A. P. Hill) of his old command he thought necessary, and he was permitted latitude in choosing his route of march. Generally, Jackson was to "cross the Potomac at the most convenient point, and by Friday morning September 12th take possession of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, capture such of the enemy as may be at Martinsburg, and intercept such as may attempt to escape from Harpers Ferry." Thus MoLaws and Jackson would
between them, clear the Valley. In addition, escapees would be stopped from two directions.

The only other column designated to operate at a distance from the main body was Brigadier-General John G. Walker's division of some 3500 men. When S. O. 191 was issued, Walker was at the mouth of the Monocacy River attempting to destroy the locks of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal along the Potomac. The orders directed Walker to complete his task and then to cross the river and march west along its right bank to close the escape route to the southeast. By the morning of the 12th, he was to be in position on Loudoun Heights across the Shenandoah River from Harpers Ferry.

The remaining two columns constituted the main body of the Confederate army. Longstreet with the two unassigned divisions of his old command (David Jones' and Hood's) and presumably the portions of Jackson's which did not accompany that General to Martinsburg, was to march to Boonsboro and bivouac there to await the reunion of the army. D. H. Hill with his own division of about five thousand men was designated the rear guard. Hill was to follow Longstreet and the trains of wagons and artillery to Boonsboro.

Such were the provisions of Special Orders 191, issued on September 9th. They evidenced Lee's continuing confidence in the maneuverability of the Army of Northern Virginia; and they bore hallmark of Lee's genius for achieving great results with meager forces. At the same time, however, the
orders reflected also Lee's weakness as a strategist. Sometimes he tried to accomplish too much, and sometimes his confidence in the Southern army led him to underestimate the enemy. S. O.] was faulty in both respects.

Lee's plans were too complicated, and they took too little account of what the enemy might do. In this regard, Lee seemed to revert to the messy strategy of the Seven Days and to ignore the lessons learned there and in the Second Manassas campaign which followed. The division of the army into two wings or corps, which had slowly evolved since the fighting around Richmond, was abandoned. Jackson and Longstreet retained enlarged commands, but divisions which had seemed to be falling into the wing pattern were split off to pursue independent missions. Responsibility for the success of S. O. 191 was parcelled out to no less than five generals. Moreover, even Longstreet's old command was definitely splintered by the orders, when Anderson's division was given to McLaws; and Jackson's could have been, if that general had not decided to take all three of his divisions with him to Martinsburg. D. H. Hill's division had seemed permanently added to Jackson's wing. On numerous occasions Hill reported to Jackson for orders, and he took command of the whole wing, when Jackson had been incapacitated by his fall. Now, however, Hill had a separate command. Once again Lee undertook a strategy which depended upon precise timing and intricate cooperation between a number of independent commands.
In addition to these internal weaknesses, Lee's plan for the second phase of the campaign was defective in the two respects in which it underestimated the enemy. In the first place, Lee still did not face the problem of Harpers Ferry in a wholly realistic manner. He still expected it to fall easily and quickly. It seems almost certain that he did not anticipate the necessity of a siege. Lee knew Harpers Ferry well, perhaps, too well. He knew that Maryland Heights dominated the town, and he expected the garrison to flee or surrender once McLaws gained the crest. Undoubtedly, this was the reason that so much of S. O. 191 was devoted to closing "escape" routes, and that so little artillery was sent on the expedition, and also, why Lee did not think it was dangerous to divide his army beyond the frontier of the Confederacy. The Federal garrisons in the upper Valley had never seemed a serious obstacle to him, and they did not seem very serious even now. Had Lee known the size of the enemy forces, a total of about 11,000 men, and of their orders to hold their posts at any hazard, he presumably would have laid down different plans for their reduction.

Yet Harpers Ferry was not Lee's greatest miscalculation, for it would not matter that these operations consumed more time than planned, if the Confederates were given ample time by the main Federal army around Washington. Lee depended upon the confusion and low morale of this conglomerate enemy force to prevent it from advancing rapidly enough to frus-
trate his plans. He knew by the 9th that a "strong column" had advanced from Washington some distance along the Potomac. He knew also that Federal cavalry had retaken Poolesville. He did not, however, construe these signs to indicate the general advance of the Northern army. Stuart's cavalry was to retain its line east of the mountains, and could, Lee evidently believed, give adequate warning if a dangerous situation developed.

Unfortunately for Lee, just about everything which could go wrong with these plans, went wrong. The enemy at Martinsburg did flee without battle—but directly to Harpers Ferry. McLaws and Walker, both of whom were unsuited for independent command, failed to get into position by the 12th. Almost immediately after leaving Frederick, Lee found it necessary to push Longstreet northwest to Hagerstown to counter the rumored advance of enemy troops from Pennsylvania. This unplanned division of the main body left only D. H. Hill to guard the rear of the army and support Stuart, in the event that became necessary. And, most ominously, on the 12th the Northern field army established its line west of the Monocacy and occupied Frederick.

By the noon of the 13th of September, Lee's plans were in ruins. Neither Walker nor McLaws were yet in position. The enemy still held Maryland Heights. Jackson had to move even farther from the main body to force the issue at Harpers Ferry, which was now dragging badly. And, at the same time, McClellan's cavalry advanced beyond the Catootins and pressed
Stuart back on the South Mountain gaps.

Shortly before noon came the crowning ignominy—and it was no more than that, it was not the watershed of the campaign. In Frederick, McClellan was handed one of the original copies of Special Orders 191.

2. "He Will Find It Hard To Escape Me"

Part of Lee's distress arose from a simple blunder. The Federals should have abandoned Harpers Ferry by the 9th. McClellan argued for it, and Lee confidently expected it. But the men with the authority, John Wool and Edwin Stanton, thought otherwise. And the garrison's commander, Dixon Miles, was ordered to hold on regardless the consequences.

The other part of Lee's distress, however, was no accident. The speed with which McClellan created a field army and his strategically sound advance from Washington caught Lee by surprise. On the 9th, the very day the Confederate commander felt sufficiently secure to fragment his army, McClellan changed from low to second gear the operations of the new Army of the Potomac.

The reconnaissance of the 8th accurately reported the Confederate line to be just west of the Monocacy River, with a heavy concentration of force at Frederick. McClellan believed, therefore, and reasonably so at this point, that the armies would probably clash at the Monocacy. On the 9th he ordered the whole Federal front forward an average of
four to six miles. Pleasonton's cavalry captured Barnesville, about eight miles in advance of their previous line, and, then, pressed on the foot of Sugar Loaf Mountain. The new line ran from Seneca to Middlebrook to Cracklinton, about ten miles from the point McClellan expected battle and twenty miles at its closest to Frederick.

McClellan realized that Lee could yet choose one of several courses. The Southern army might await attack near Frederick, or it might try to flank the Northern army and move on Baltimore. Yet again it might move north into Pennsylvania or south and simply recross the Potomac. McClellan had no information which would allow him to rule out any of these possibilities.

Yet two did seem more likely than the others. If the Southern army moved on Baltimore or Pennsylvania it would invitingly present its flank or rear, respectively, to McClellan's front. Either course would op to the Federals opportunities so desirable that they could hardly be expected from a general of Lee's calibre. It was not impossible that Lee would merely retire, but with a strong line behind the Monocacy, this too seemed uncharacteristic, and, in any event, it was not a course McClellan could count upon without definite information that Lee were withdrawing. No intelligence of the 8th or 9th reported any such thing. The probabilities were strong at this point, therefore, that Lee would hold his present position or move forward to catch
McClellan on the advance. McClellan knew from his experience during the Seven Days that Lee would not hesitate to try such a gambit.

Nevertheless, whatever Lee might attempt, McClellan's advance, step by step, with front in tact, would answer for any contingency. The Northern army could swing left or right to pursue the enemy either north or south, or continue forward for pursuit to the west. And it would be prepared to meet a stationary or assaulting foe at any point along that advance. Lee still had the initiative, and until he committed his army definitely to some objective McClellan's had to be offensive-defensive in nature. That, precisely, is what it was. And it was a classic of its kind.

On the 10th, the day Lee broke bivouac, McClellan swung the Federal front to the northwest, using the right wing ad pivot. Franklin, on the left, advanced obliquely about eleven miles to Barnesville, just a short distance from the Monocacy. Sumner split the center into two columns, pushing the 2nd Corps forward five miles to Clarksburg on the left center and the 12th Corps twelve miles (by lateral roads) to Damascus on the right center.

The right wing was to move a short distance, but a reconnaissance to New Market encountered such stiff resistance that McClellan ordered the advance to be suspended. Pleasonton also found the going rougher on the 10th. All along the line the Confederate cavalry sharply disputed his progress.
Three times the Federal horse assaulted Sugar Loaf, but were each time driven back. Behind Stuart's spirited resistance, Lee's departure from Frederick was hidden from McClellan. He still expected on the 11th, therefore, to meet the enemy at the Monocacy. On that day the Federal commander threw his front forward almost to that river. Had Lee intended to fight east of the mountains, the 11th would probably have been the first day of battle of the campaign. Aware of this, McClellan advanced almost due northwest on lines concentrating on Frederick. This movement carried Franklin away from Harpers Ferry, but the isolated garrison was, for the moment at least, decidedly of secondary importance.

McClellan's line did not quite reach the Monocacy on the 11th. Burnside marched north to the Frederick-Baltimore Turnpike and, then, west to and beyond New Market, but he halted about four miles from the river. In the center, the 12th Corps remained at Damascus and the 2nd Corps at Clarksburg. The left moved toward Urbana, capturing Sugar Loaf on its advance to within a mile of the Monocacy. Respectively, the two wings covered distances of about fifteen and five miles.

Although McClellan's line did not touch the Monocacy's banks on the evening of the 11, he was close enough to be able to fight his way across on the next day. More importantly, he was close enough to discover that Lee had marched away from Frederick and that such a fight would not be necessary. Consequently, McClellan had to modify his thinking.
It now became necessary to plan the advance in terms of eventually having to pass through the South Mountain passes. If the concentration on Frederick were continued, the entire army would, in due course, pile up at Turner's Gap on the Old National Road, the main westward route from Frederick, or else time would be lost in a redeployment of the line. Franklin, therefore, could be turned back to a more southerly line and once again move so that his advance would carry him to the relief of Harpers Ferry. The center and left continued to converge, however, so that a sufficient force would be at hand to carry Turner's Gap.

September 12th was a good, very good day for George McClellan. Diverse pieces of the strategic puzzle snapped together and vindicated his hard work and deliberate planning. As early as the 9th, the first day of the advance of the new Northern army, he had confidently assayed the situation and concluded: "I am now in a position to watch the enemy closely, and he will find it hard to escape me if he commits a blunder. We shall do our best, and I think that will suffice."

By the 12th, McClellan's prophesy stood all but accomplished. The crossing of the Monocacy occasioned some delay, as the bridge on the Baltimore Turnpike had been destroyed by the Confederates. By late afternoon, however, Pleasonton had cleared Frederick of Stuart's cavalry, and the vanguard of Burnside's wing entered the city by nightfall. At the moment McClellan established his line west of the Monocacy, the strategic nature of the campaign—from the Federal viewpoint—changed decisively for the better. Neither Washington nor Baltimore was thereafter in danger. Lee still held the
initiative, but his possible courses of action were reduced to three: a hasty retirement to Virginia; a desperate drive into Pennsylvania, abandoning his rear to McClellan; or a stubborn defense of the Confederate foothold on western Maryland's narrow neck. All but the second of these courses, an obviously unsound and dangerous move, were defensive.

Thus, although Lee retained, at least to a degree, the initiative, the offense passed over to the North on the 12th. It was toward this end that McClellan had aimed his plans. Both his concept and his execution had been well nigh flawless. Deliberately, he had restricted Lee's maneuverability—that which Lee had come to Maryland for—and, thereby, even without precise knowledge of Lee's intentions, he had fatally hobbled the Confederate commander's strategy. From the 12th forward, so long as he remained vigilant and refused to give through blunder the kind of tactical opening which Lee had so quickly exploited on the peninsula and on the plains of Manassas, McClellan would be the master of the Maryland Campaign.

As early as the evening before, therefore, September 13th looked to be the first day of the final phase of the campaign. Not only had the offensive been wrested from the enemy, but, also, McClellan now had more troops and more information than at any previous stage. His final plans could be laid with the knowledge that ten thousand veteran troops, George Morell's division (5th Corps) and Max Weber's Brigade (to be in the 2nd Corps), were marching from Wash-
ington to reinforce the Army of the Potomac. In addition, the Federal commander by this time knew the essentials, at least, of Lee's division of force. McClellan knew that part of the Confederate army had reached Hagerstown and that another part had moved to the vicinity of Harpers Ferry.

This seemed to indicate that Lee would stand in western Maryland, as too did the stiff resistance which the Federal line now encountered at every step of its advance. McClellan did not know, however, whether or not Lee would dispute his passage through the mountains; nor did he know what force of the Southern army was neither at Hagerstown nor at Harpers Ferry but directly in his front.

McClellan's plans for the 13th were based both on his knowledge and on his uncertainties. He ordered Franklin with the left wing to resume the advance—as had been planned before the concentration on Frederick had seemed necessary—by crossing the Monocacy and marching to Buckeystown, on the route to Harpers Ferry by way of Crampton's Gap. At the same time, McClellan ordered Burnside with the right wing to move ahead of the center, force passage of the Catoctin Mountains and enter the Middletown Valley. Much as the movements of the 11th would have brought on the final battle had Lee intended to fight at the Monocacy, so too those of the 13th would had Lee planned to stand at the mountains. Lee's plans, however, had foreseen no such necessity, and McClellan's movements were carried out with only the valiant but futile
opposition of Stuart's cavalry.

In the interim, of course, occurred the single, most famous event of the Maryland Campaign. As has been recounted numberless times, a soldier found an original copy of Special Orders 191 in Frederick, the copy addressed to D. H. Hill. With remarkable speed, the "Lost Orders" passed through channels and—before noon—into McClellan's hands. On the dot of the meridian, McClellan telegraphed to President Lincoln of his good fortune. This telegram has been, on occasion, the vehicle for sharp criticism of McClellan. Except for the ebullience which peeps through in reference to Mrs. Lincoln, however, the message was entirely proper, accurately descriptive of the situation, and intelligently cautious regarding the future.

McClellan's enthusiasm should be readily understandable. With the reading of S. O. 191 the last strategic uncertainties of the campaign disappeared, and the wisdom of the man who had created the new Army of the Potomac and put it into the position from which it could exploit its happy find was confirmed. The real significance of the finding of the Lost Orders was that it allowed McClellan to press the Maryland campaign to a more rapid conclusion than would have been possible had he been forced to rely on the usual channels of intelligence. It was no more important than a half-dozen other twists in the strategy of the campaign, but it was more fortuitous, and—hence—more dramatic. Perhaps, it is for this reason that the Lost Orders have cast a deep, obscuring
shadow over the early, decisive phases of the campaign, for one who sees their finding as a great turning point is blinded to the brilliance of McClellan's achievements. Such a view, whatever its convience for larger interpretations, is not justified by the facts.

The final phase of the Maryland campaign was not quite so tightly constructed as the conclusion of an Aristotelian drama, but the analogy is not far-fetched. With the complication largely complete by September 13th, the action unravelled logically if not inevitably to its climax four days later around the village of Sharpsburg, near the banks of Antietam Creek. During these last four days the theater of war in the east, encompassing thousands of square miles at the outset of the campaign, narrowed in focus to a small peninsula jutting into the Potomac. Strategy, its work finished when the two armies locked in commitment, gave way to tactics. The savage finale broke on September 17th, in the bloodiest day's battle in the history of the Western Hemisphere. On the night of the following day, Lee recrossed the Potomac, and the campaign ended.

3. The Tide Taken at Its Flood

In retrospect, it can be seen that Lee and McClellan were cast in very different roles throughout the Maryland
campaign. Neither the objectives nor the problems of the Southern army were the same as those of the Northern. The irony was that both sides were compelled by circumstances to adopt the same strategy, the defensive-offensive. For Lee this strategy was a gamble. For McClellan it represented the path of sureness. For both it was the result of a realistic appraisal of the difficult situations which each faced.

When Lee took command of the army in Virginia, the Confederacy had reached desperate straits. He decided that only bold strategy could right the balance. His solution proved correct—or, at least, it proved correct under his guidance. By the end of August he had virtually cleared Virginia of enemy troops. Success brought embarrassment, however, for each step which Lee took toward the Potomac River brought him nearer also to the central dilemma of the Confederacy's fight for nationhood. The South might dress up her defensive as much as she pleased, she might call it by whatever name she fancied, but in the end the defensive must still be her strategy. After every battlefield victory the ugly and impudent but inescapable question arose: what now? So long as the enemy was deep in Virginia or on his way there, Lee's course was clear; but once he had foiled the invader's plans, he must always face the dilemma of what to do next.

Some historians have concluded with certainty what strategy Lee (and all other Civil War generals for that matter) should have followed. Citing Karl von Clausewitz
for support, they assert that the prime objective of any
general should be the destruction of the enemy army. Unlike
his critics, however, Lee, who after all stood in the middle
of the forest, never lost sight of the trees. It is, indeed,
true he never made annihilation the object of his grand or
overall strategy. This was not due to ignorance of "modern"
warfare, however, nor was it the result of slavish adherence
to traditional and outmoded military principles. Lee was
simply too realistic and too intelligent to attempt the
palpably impossible. He did try to destroy the Federal army
on the tactical level on several occasions, but even then,
when by quick manouver and concentration of force he jug¬
gled the odds against him to fairer balance, he found the
task beyond the resources at his command. So far as Lee was
concerned, because of the restrictions under which he labored,
Clausewitz might as well never have lived or written. 35

He first directly confronted the dilemma on September
2nd. He chose from among the courses open to him, all of
which were unattractive in varying degrees, to try to stretch
the definition of the defensive-offensive into larger mean¬
ing. This and not Pennsylvania, or foreign recognition, or
revolution in Maryland, or even boodle was the real objective
of his Fall campaign of 1862. Lee explained his simple aim
on a number of occasions. He wanted to draw the Federal army
north of the Potomac and detain it there until the good
campaigning weather had passed for the season.
His expedition failed for three reasons. In the first place, at the crucial phase of the campaign he lacked sufficient force to carry through his plans. At the outset the army was conceivably large enough, but the rigors of the operations in Maryland, superimposed as they were on the exhausting summer, sheared the Army of Northern Virginia to its core of virtually indestructible fighters. The men who remained were capable of extraordinary achievements. Their valor allowed Lee to stand at Sharpsburg with an army smaller than he ever commanded, except the one he surrendered at Appomattox. But there numbers were too few to enable him to salvage the campaign. Lee wanted to draw the Northern army west to battle, but, when the battle came, he could do no more than hold his own—and that was a very near thing.

Lee's plans failed, secondly, because of the manner in which his opponent responded to his challenge. McClellan advanced too cautiously to be trapped but too rapidly to give the Southern army the time it needed once it had divided to clear the Valley of Virginia. Had Lee faced any general but George McClellan, his chances for success would have been much better. Confronted as he was, however, by the man who could in five days create from chaos a field army which would advance deliberately, blocking successively the avenues for Southern manœuvre, the odds against Lee's success were all but insurmountable.

Thirdly, and finally, Lee made several tactical miscal-
culations which governed the form the failure assumed and hastened its happening. Twice he misinterpreted the Harpers Ferry problem, and once, but fatally, he misjudged McClellan's advance from Washington. In addition, his plans for the reduction of the enemy posts in the upper Valley were unnecessarily and detrimentally complicated.

The nature of these causes for Lee's failure was not such, however, as to prove that the strategic concept, itself, was faulty. Given adequate preparation, a less competent opponent, and a tighter command system, the South might yet expand its defensive-offensive beyond the frontier. Lee subsequently proved that he did not view the Maryland campaign as conclusive evidence that the South could not pursue victory northward. For his second attempt, however, Lee would set his aim much higher.

It is the fate of some men to be more conviently caricatured than to be drawn as in life. George McClellan is a preeminent and enduring example of the truth of this platitude in the art of history. His career is traditionally interpreted as an amazingly consistent and unvarying whole. The same criticisms levelled at him for his actions during the winter of 1861 and during the peninsula campaign are tirelessly repeated in recounting his role against Lee in Maryland. Whatever his previous military sins may have been, however, and they lie beyond the scope and researches of this
study, they can only with distortion be represented as extending to his performance in the Maryland campaign.

From August 14th to September 19, the dates which mark the farthest legitimate bounds of these pages, George McClellan was never "over-cautious."

He was never "too slow."

He was never paralyzed by the fear of overwhelming enemy numbers.

He never stood revealed "as a man whose grasp of reality was so frail as to approach neuroticism."

McClellan did, of course, have faults. Two were purely military. He never moved with the boldness (and occasional rashness) which was characteristic of Lee. And he was the rather constant victim of an exaggerated estimate of the size of the Confederate army.

These criticisms, however, though often used to condemn McClellan of incompetency, need more qualification and greater study than they have ever yet received. It is at least possible that caution (of the kind which is necessarily an ingredient of sureness) was a very proper basis for Federal strategy in the war. It is also at least possible that a history of the development of the gathering of military intelligence, although undeniably more prosaic, would be equally illuminating as the psychoanalysis of an army's commander in explaining why an enemy were overestimated.

On another, more personal level, however, McClellan had
graver faults. Although his strategies were as sound as those of any general of the war; his administrative abilities greater than those of most, and, perhaps, the greatest of any; and his hold over the men he commanded positively unequalled, he was not the general to end the war. As a citizen, he was a Democrat; as a soldier, a thorough-going professional; and, in all, a man of aristocratic tastes and bearing. Such a combination of qualities, however innocuous in normal times, proved for McClellan an insurmountable handicap during the Civil War.

McClellan's flaws combined to produce an uncompromisingly different view of the war from the equally uncompromising views of the Republican administration which governed the North. The Republicans, never certain of their strength, wanted a quick victory—or, if that were impossible, they demanded, as the least, a heads-down, arms flailing fight, ignoring the consequences so long as the nation were kept at the task of winning the war and themselves at the head of the government.

McClellan did not share this view, but it was not because he did not want to win the war as quickly as possible, nor because he purposely aimed to destroy a political party. Instead, McClellan was one of the of the new breed of soldiers in America. He was a professional who believed war had its own grammar if not its own logic. This view was all but the antithesis of the American military tradition, and it must nearly have been inevitable that its first proponent to
reach high command would founder in the storm of political opposition he raised. Compromise could come only through lessons learned by galvanizing experience. The day would come when the needs and wisdom of both the politician and the general would blend into a common goal called the National Purpose in wartime.

McClellan came too soon for that. But, then, of course, had to come too soon. Some one had to force the issue and prepare the way. Some one had to be too emphatically professional, too wholly ignorant of politics, before the long neglected opposing argument could be fully stated and the ground cleared for compromise. Long strides were taken toward that compromise before the close of the war, when Grant, no more politically naive than McClellan but less involved in politics, would be allowed to wage the war substantially as he pleased.

The case should not rest here, however, for McClellan's career was more than a libation poured out to military progress. If this is not evident during his first year in command, it is revealed unmistakably in his actions during the Maryland campaign. As of September 2nd, during the period when the Union crisis reached its height and all bets on the outcome of the war were off, politics wholly if briefly gave way to the military. During the following two weeks the administration, although its support was ambiguous, did not, at least, interfere.

For the crisis, debate on ultimate strategy ceased.
McClellan, in general, pursued the courses he chose. He selected his officers, shaped his army, and set its path. The Maryland campaign might be fairly considered, therefore, a just gauge of McClellan's generalship, the only time he labored under conditions sufficiently similar to Lee's to justify comparison.

That gauge reads high. During the Maryland campaign McClellan demonstrated that, when preparation did not mean preparation to end the war but preparation to end a crisis, he could be satisfied with considerably less than perfection. He demonstrated, also, the manner in which speed and precision can be correlated when a commander has the confidence of his army and the license of his government. He displayed intelligence, comprehension, and realistic insight. He was good enough to beat Lee at Lee's own game. Perhaps that alone, in view of Lee's virtually unblemished historical reputation, is sufficient cause for a fresh look at George McClellan.
FOOTNOTES

Chapter One:


4. Hittle, p. 69; and Mendell, p. 74.


7. For an incisive analysis of Lee's Seven Days' strategy see REL, II, 220-250; and LL, I, 602, 603-632, 670-675.

8. REL, II, 216-266, 272-273; and LL, II, 1.

Chapter One

10. **REL, II, 269-270.**

11. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Halleck: Lincoln's Chief of Staff* (Baton Rouge, La., 1962), pp. 64-65. See also United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (four series, 70 vols. in 123 books, Washington, D.C., 1880-1901), 11.1, 82; and series III, vol.2, 869-870; hereinafter cited as: OR, with volume number given as left member of a decimal and part number as right member, and with all references to series one unless otherwise noted. See also in this connection, United States Senate, *Conduct of the War: Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. Senate Reports, 37th Congress, 3rd session, 1862-1863* (4 vols.; Washington, 1863), II, 452—hereinafter cited as: CCW.


13. **REL, II, 273-274.**

14. For a similar survey of the courses of action open to Lee see REL, II, 350-351; and Charles Marshall, *An Aide-de-Camp of Lee...*, ed. Frederick Maurice (Boston, 1927), pp. 144-148, 248-249; and OR, 19.1, 144-145.


16. That the northward thrust of the three Confederate armies occurring at this time, the so-called "three-pronged" offensive, was not all piece of a master plan which included Lee is implicit in the fact that Lee's campaign was not all fore-planned. It is further attested by the following: Lee's Dispatches, pp. 38-40; OR, 12.3, 927; and 19.2, 591.

17. OR, 19.2, 590; 12.3, 940-943; and, also, 19.1, 144.
18. OR, 19.2, 590-591, 591-592, 593-594, 596, 603, 604-605; 19.1, 144-145; and II, II, 718, 720-721; Marshall, op. cit., pp. 144-150, 158, 248-249; see also the following: Robert E. Lee, III, Recollections and Letters of Robert E. Lee... (New York, 1904), p. 416—hereinafter cited as: Lee; and Southern Historical Society Papers, VII (January to December, 1885), 421; and XII (October to December, 1884), 504-505; and William Blackford, War Years with Jeb Stuart (New York, 1945), p. 142.

19. OR, 19.1, 145, 1019; and 12.3, 942, 945, 946. See also Henry W. Thomas, History of the Doles-Cook Brigade (Atlanta, Ga., 1903), pp. 68, 469—hereinafter cited as: Thomas.


28. Sorrel, p. 97; Long, p. 206; Thomas, p. 469; OR, 19.2, 588; and also, William M. Owen, *In Camp and Battle with the Washington Artillery...* (Boston, 1885), p. 127—hereinafter cited as: Owen.

30. Marshall, p. 248; and Lee, p. 416, which is quoted in REL, II, 349.

31. Lee here goes on to add: "I am aware that the movement is attended with much risk, yet I do not consider it impossible," OR, 19.2, 591.

32. This dispatch is dated September 3rd, the date on which it was sent to Davis, OR, 19.2, 590-591. Where quotation marks are lacking, I have paraphrased—in most cases changing the impersonal third person to "I" and the past to the present tense—to reflect Lee's thinking on the 2nd, while he was dictating the letter to Long.

33. OR, 19.2, 588; 19.1, 144-145, and 1019.

34. OR, 19.2, 589, 601.


Chapter Two:

1. OR, 5.0, 54; also B&L, II, 168.

2. OR, 12.3, 435; also, B&L, II, 450-451.

3. OR, series III, vol. 2, 217; also, OR, 127.2, 4-5.

4. Cf. note 3, immediately above; to which add: B&L, II, 548; and George B. McClellan, *McClellan's Own Story* (New York, 1887, 495-496—hereinafter cited as: MOS.

5. See the series of dispatches in OR, 11.1, 80-84; also MOS, pp. 495-498.

7. OR, 12.3, 599.

8. OR, 12.3, 605; but see also p. 599.

9. OR, 12.3, 606.

10. OR, 12.3, 606.

11. MOS, p. 465.

12. McClellan wrote from a steamer en route to Fort Monroe, MOS, p. 467—ellipses are in original.

13. MOS, pp. 469-470—first ellipsis only is in original.

14. OR, 11.1, 92; MOS, p. 507.

15. MOS, p. 470; I have made the punctuation consistent.


17. OR, 12.3, 646, two telegrams; 11.1, 96; and MOS, p. 508.

18. OR, 12.3, 689.

19. OR, 12.3, 691—italics not in original.

20. MOS, p. 529.

21. MOS, p. 530.

22. OR, 11.1, 98; MOS, p. 514.

23. OR, 11.1, 98; MOS, p. 515.

24. MOS, p. 530—ellipsis in the original.

25. OR, 11.1, 98; MOS, p. 515.


28. OR, 11.1, 103; MOS, p. 525; and McClellan Papers, I, Vol. 75, #15334-15335, which is the version followed herein.

29. OR, 12.3, 773—ellipses not in the original.

30. This is an oversimplification of a very complex historical problem. Stanton, for example, had so recently as a year past been a Democrat—yet he was by this time well on his way down the path which would carry him into violent conflict on the side of the Radicals and against Andrew Johnson. Bates, it should also be noted, often cooperated with the Moderates. Sources for the incidents surveyed by this study are given in the notes below. They do not in themselves explain how or why the animosity arose between McClellan and the politicians. That topic badly needs a full examination, which it cannot here receive. Many years ago, John Burgess wrote: "...it is very nearly certain there were some who would have preferred defeat to...a victory with McClellan in command. It was a dark, mysterious, uncanny thing, which the historian does not need to touch and prefers not to touch," The Civil War and the Constitution... (2 vols., New York, 1901), I, 105. No one has yet proven him mistaken. David Donald in Lincoln Reconsidered (New York, 1961) makes an attempt which is something less than convincing.

31. Salmon P. Chase, Diary and Correspondence of..., Annual Report of the American Historical Association for...1902 (2 vols., Washington, 1903), II, 62—this volume only hereinafter cited as: Chase.

32. This whole encounter is described in Chase, p. 62.

33. OR, 12.3, 706, 739.

34. Chase, p. 62.


37. Welles, I, 94; also, Chase, p. 62.

38. Welles, I, 94-95.


40. Chase, p. 62; OR, 12.3, 739-744.

41. Welles, I, 97-98.
42. Chase, p. 63.
43. Michie, p. 394.
44. Chase, p. 63; Welles, I, 100.
45. Welles, I, 100.
46. Welles, I, 102.
47. Welles, I, 102.
48. Welles, I, 103.
49. Chase, p. 63.
50. CCW, II, 637-639; Cox, I, 257, 378; and, Benjamin Perley Poore, The Life...of Ambrose E. Burnside... (Providence, R. I., 1882), p. 154—hereinafter cited as: Poore; and also, Orville Hickman Browning, Diary of..., eds. Theodore Calvin Pease and James G. Randall (2 vols., Springfield, Ill., 1925), I, 563—hereinafter cited as: Browning.
52. See OR, 16.2 and 17.2 passim.
53. OR, 17.2, 194.
54. OR, 16.2 passim.
55. There are four accounts of this meeting: OR, 11.1, 104 and 19.1, 36; B&L, II, 549; and MOS, pp. 534-535. But see also, OR, 19.1, 25 and 12.3, 771-773; CCW, II, 438; MOS, p. 532; and Military Historical Society of Massachusetts Papers, II, 302.
56. OR, 11.1, 103; McClellan Papers, I, vol., 75, #15320, 15358.
57. Cf. note 26 of this chapter, above.
58. OR, 11.1, 102-103; 12.3, 691; MOS, p. 525; and Cox, I, 242.
59. Accounts of the meeting are given in OR, 19.1, 36-37; but see also, 11.1, 104; 12.3, 787, 798; and McClellan Papers, I, vol. 76, #15405.
61. For accounts of this meeting see: MOS, p. 566, 535; OR, 19.1, 37; CCW, II, 438; Cox, I, 243; B&L, II, 549-550.


63. Hay, p. 47.

64. Hay, p. 45.

65. Hay, p. 45.

66. See the Washington Daily National Intelligencer, 3 September, 1862; OR, 12.3, 807; 51.1, 782; MOS, pp. 543-547; McClellan Papers, II, vol., 2, #36153; and also E. D. Townsend, *Anecdotes of the Civil War...* (New York, 1884), pp. 68-70.


68. Hay, p. 45.

69. Chase, pp. 63-64.

70. Welles, I, 104.

71. Welles, I, 105.

72. Welles, I, 105; and Hay, p. 45.

73. Chase, p. 64.

75. OR, 11.1, 105; 19.1, 38; and MOS, p. 536.

74. Chase, pp. 64-65; Hassler, p. 226.

76. MOS, p. 566.

77. Cox, a Republican colleague of James Garfield in the lower house of the Ohio legislature, was one of the best of the so-called "political generals."


79. Cox, I, 245.

80. Strother, p. 100.

81. OR, 19.1, 38; MOS, p. 537; and Cox, I, 245.
82. Strother, p. 99.

83. Cox, I, 245; Strother, p. 100; MOS, p. 537; OR, 11.1, 105; 19.1, 38. For supplementary details see: von Borcke, II, 173-175; OR, 12.2, 744; 19.1, 814, 822; and CCW, II, 367.

84. Cox, I, 245, including the footnote.

85. MOS, p. 537.

86. From a letter of William H. Powell to the editors of Century Magazine, dated 12 March 1885, and printed as a footnote in B&L, II, 547-548; the incident is given in extended form in Powell's The Fifth Corps...(New York, 1896), 246-259—hereinafter cited as: Powell.

Chapter Three:

1. Strother, p. 100.

2. OR, 19.1, 144.

3. Cf. note 70 of chapter One, above.

4. OR, 19.2, 596.

5. OR, 19.1, 829.


7. OR, 19.2, 589-590.


12. Cf. note 18 of chapter one, above.


15. OR, 19.1, 1019.

16. Longstreet, p. 199; Owen, p. 129.


18. For a good example of the "Southern view" of Maryland, see the editorial in the Richmond Whig, 13 September 1862.


20. Strother, p. 100, gives the weather.


25. All that is but Geroge B. Anderson's brigade, still absent on its independent mission.

26. OR, 19.1, 1019; 19.2, 593; LL, II, 154, n. 6; and D. H. Hill's essay in "Land We Love, IV (February, 1868), 274.


28. OR, 19.1, 815.

29. LL, II, 154.
32. OR, 19.1, 952; 19.2, 593.
33. OR, 19.2, 593-594.
34. N.Ca.Regts., II, 293, 296.
35. Sorrel, p. 103.
36. Owen, p. 130; quoted in LL, II, 151.
37. Sorrel, p. 103.
38. OR, 19.2, 596; and B&L, II, 604.
39. OR, 19.1, 829.
40. OR, 19.1, 815, 822, and 825; also H. B. McClellan, p. 110.
41. Douglas, pp. 147-148; B&L, II, 620; see also Vandiver, p. 376; and OR, 19.1, 1019.
42. See Dowdey, p. 296 for a dispatch from Lee to Davis which is not in the OR's.
43. OR, 19.1, 952, 885, 966, 1011; also 12.2, 667; and Worsham, pp. 137-138.
45. Strother, p. 102.
46. Douglas, pp. 149-150; Vandiver, p. 377-378; and B&L, II 621.
47. B&L, II, 604.
48. OR, 19.1, 208, 815, 825.
49. OR, 19.2, 597-598.
50. OR, 19.2, 596-597.
52. OR, 19.1, 139-140.
53. OR, 19.2, 599.
55. On September 8th, Lee suggested to Davis that a peace overture might have some influence on the coming elections, OR, 19.2, 958.
57. For exaggerated Southern claims see, the following Richmond papers: Enquirer, 9 September 1862; Dispatch, 10, 11, and 15 September 1862; and Whig, 12 September 1862.
59. CMH, II, 90-91; Washington Daily Intelligencer, 13 September 1862; see same paper for September 10th for the proclamation by Governor A. W. Bradford of Maryland.
60. Alexander, p. 225; Washington Daily Intelligencer, 11 September 1862. Louis H. Manarin, in "A Proclamation to the People of...," North Carolina Historical Review, XLI (Spring, 1964), 246-251, is mistaken in believing this recently discovered document "proves" anything. Lee never saw it, and Davis, himself, may never have.
61. OR, 19.2, 605.
63. OR, 19.2, 601-602.

Chapter Four:

1. For a colorful narrative of the capital during these anxious days see Margaret Leech, Reveille in Washington, 1860-1865 (New York, 1941), pp. 188-193.
3. MOS, p. 567.
4. MOS, p. 567.
5. OR, 19.1, 93.
7. OR, 19.1, 38.
8. OR, 19.1, 25.
9. OR, 19.1, 38; MOS, p. 567.
13. OR, 19.2, 177.
16. OR, 19.2, 179.
18. Cf. note 17 immediately above; to which add: OR, 19.1, 815; and von Borcke, I, 187.
19. OR, 19.2, 185, 185-186.
22. New York Tribune, 9 and 11 September 1862; Washington Daily National Intelligencer, 9 September 1862; and also, OR, 19.2, 246 and 304.


28. New York Tribune, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 September 1862; Washington Daily National Intelligencer, 12, 15 and 16 September 1862; also OR, 19.2, 278, 250; and see Frank H. Taylor, Philadelphia in the Civil War, 1861-1865 (Philadelphia, 1913), pp. 175, 216, 167-168, and 348-349.


30. MOS, p. 567.

31. MOS, p. 567.

32. This table anticipates the change of designation for Pope's corps which was not officially announced until 12 September 1862, OR, 19.2, 279.

33. OR, 19.1, 38.


36. Cf. note 35 immediately above.

37. OR, 12.3, 813; 19.2, 197; Chase, pp. 66-69; and MOS, pp. 70-71, 568.

38. See McClellan Papers, I, vol., 77, #15644.

40. The evolution of organization may be traced through the "Organizations of the War" in volume I, of Frederick H. Dyer's Compendium of the War of the Rebellion (3 vols., New York, 1959), 260-578.

41. Chase, p. 64.


43. Pope's written report is dated September 3rd, OR, 12.2, 12-17.

44. Chase, p. 64; OR, 12.2, 12-17.

45. OR, 12.3, 812-813, 813.

46. Strother, p. 102.

47. OR, 19.2, 169.


49. OR, 19.2, 182.

50. B&L, II, 552; MOS, p. 551; OR, 19.1, 25-26, 39; and also CCW, II, 438-439.


52. OR, 19.1, 38-40.

53. OR, 19.1, 25, 38, 41; MOS, pp. 553-554; B&L, II, 554-555; and CCW, II, 439.

54. Cf. note 53 immediately above.

55. OR, 19.1, 516-803.

56. OR, 19.2, 182, two telegrams.

57. OR, 51.1, 788.

58. OR, 51.1, 789.

59. OR, 51.1, 789, 789-790.

60. McClellan Papers, I, vol. 77, #15590, 1558

62. OR, 19.1, 25, 39; 19.2, 196-197; also itinerary on p. 432 of 19.1; also Cox, I, 263.

63. OR, 19.2, 188.

64. OR, 19.1, 4.


66. OR, 12.2, 82, 278; 19.2, 184, 195, 196, 226-227; McClellan Papers, I, vol. 77, #15568-15569, 15582, 15586-15587, 15624, 15701; and vol. 78, #15759, 15805-15806, 15811-15812, 15827; and also, New York Tribune, 5 September 1862.

67. OR, 19.2, 192.

68. OR, 19.2, 197-198.

69. OR, 19.2, 200.

70. OR, 19.2, 201.

71. MOS, pp. 550-551, 567, and 567-568.


73. Welles, I, 114-115.

74. MOS, p. 569.

75. Cf. note 68 immediately above.

76. OR, 19.1, 208.

77. OR, 19.2, 209, 211, two telegrams.

78. OR, 51.1, 800.

79. Strother, p. 102.
Chapter Five:

1. Owen, p. 133; Strother, p. 102.

2. See the first article of Special Orders, 191, OR, 19.2, 603.

3. OR, 19.2, 609.


5. Longstreet, pp. 201, 202-203.


7. OR, 19.2, 603.

8. OR, 19.2, 603.


10. OR., 19.2, 603; 19.1, 839; Longstreet, pp. 205-206; and also B&L, II, 663-664.


13. At least Lee should have heard by this time from Stuart about the skirmishing around Poolesville which had commenced on the 7th.


16. OR, 19.1, 145.


18. See the lengthy report of the Harpers Ferry Commission, OR, 19.1, 516-503.


22. MOS, p. 642.


24. McClellan Papers, I, vol. 78, #15897-15898, 15911-15912; also, OR, 51.1, 809.

25. OR, 19.2, 238.


28. OR, 19.2, 256-257, 269; also, 51.1, 814-815, 816, and 818.

29. OR, 19.2, 221.


31. MOS, p. 570.

32. OR, 19.2, 252, 253, 254-255; McClellan Papers, I, vol. 78, #15837; Francis A. Walker, History of the Second Corps... (New York, 1891), pp. 97-98.


34. OR, 19.2, 270-271, 281.

35. For a similar analogy used by Lee, himself, see Lee, pp. 233-234.

37. For an interesting comment on McClellan's political naivete, see, McClellan Papers, I, vol. 74, #14985-14987.

38. CCW, II, 439.
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