

Field

No. 10.

Subject
The Georgia Campaign of 1864

Valton

3500 words
estimated

THE GEORGIA CAMPAIGN OF 1864.

from these manuscripts
I. DALTON.

After a rest of ~~some months~~ ^{now} I resume the account of the Georgia

Campaign where I left off, and hope to be able to continue the

story of the war to some reasonable halting point
~~manuscript till the end of the war of the Rebellion.~~

these lads & lassies
If it were not that ~~the little ones~~, concerning whom our home

always letters were *always* filled with thoughts and messages *of love*, have grown up

around us into manhood and womanhood, we, comrades of campaign

and battle could hardly realize that it is ~~twenty-three~~ *thirty* years ago

last May since
~~this Spring~~ that General Grant from Washington, undertook "the

initiative in the spring campaign" when he hoped to be able "to work all parts of the army together".

But I am settled in a conviction of the truth when I catch up an old letter of mine dated "Cleveland, East Tennessee, May ~~1~~ *1*, 1864

with the printed caption, "Headquarters Fourth Army Corps, Department of the Cumberland". That letter begins; "It is almost the

anniversary of the battle of Chancellorsville and of the birth of our little boy (born May 3^d, 1864". This child was then but

one year old; now he is in the full vigor of manhood, strong and hearty, *of thirty* ~~twenty-five and married~~. Thus comrades, we open our eyes

to behold another generation *closing up* ~~close~~ behind us and fast taking our places in active busy life; but, thank God, not *notwithstanding the strikes,* ~~in a~~ bloody spring

campaign of a hundred battles like that of *three times ten* ~~twenty-three~~ years ago.

How heartily Grant's lieutenant the impulsive the indefatigable, the sanguine, the prophetic Sherman, responded to the call of his able chief: He declared that his (Grant's) letters (which contained the plans of campaign) afforded him (Sherman) "infinite satisfaction". That this working together, this verging

to a common centre, appeared to ^{him} [Sherman] to be, for the first time, "enlightened war". "Like yourself!" ^{Sherman wrote} ~~to~~ Grant, "you take the biggest load, and from me you shall have thorough and hearty co-operation".

When Sherman ^{perceived} ~~this~~ this he was already in Nashville organizing ^{those} ~~the~~ three armies of the Tennessee, the Cumberland, and the Ohio, ^{his available weapons for offense & defense} and was introducing ^{among them} a systematic plan for supplies which rigidly adhered to, did lay the proper foundations for a campaign. ^{run after} ~~the~~ Sherman movements were ^{main} ~~the~~ destined not to end till ~~his~~ enemy's forces had been crushed, his resources hopelessly crippled, his means of transportation fatally interrupted, and all communication between his remaining fragments in the extreme East and the far West ^{completely severed} ~~absolutely cut off~~. ^{He knew} Grant ^{uniformly} counted upon Sherman's experience and ability, his quickness and his prompt co-operation, ^{in General Sherman} ~~and~~ he did not in the least mistake his man.

Of the respective commanders of the armies which were to operate in advance of Chattanooga, namely, of the Cumberland, the Tennessee, and the Ohio, ~~General~~ Sherman was ~~also~~ fortunate in his Lieutenants. He writes: "In Generals Thomas, McPherson and Schofield I had three generals of education and experience admirably qualified for the work before us. Each has made a history of his own, ^{small} and I need not here dwell on their respective merits as men, or as commanders of armies, except that each possessed special qualities of mind and of character which fitted him in the highest degree for the work then in contemplation".

Certain subordinate changes affected me personally.

^{with two or three officers} The 5th. of April, 1864, I ^{rode} ~~went~~ from my camp in Lookout Valley to Chattanooga ^{some eight or ten miles} and visited General Thomas. He explained that the order was already prepared for consolidating the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps into one body ^{to form} a new Twentieth Corps, of which

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General Hooker was to have command. General Slocum ^{had been or} was to be sent to Vicksburg, Mississippi, to control operations in that quarter; and I was to go to the Fourth Army Corps, ostensibly to enable

General Gordon ^{Stranger} to take advantage of a leave of absence.

^{After my return the same evening} The formal instructions themselves replete with exciting changes ^{the promise of} and sudden partings, reached my camp ~~that evening~~.

I had commanded the Eleventh Army Corps but a year and four days; yet that included three important campaigns and four battles.

One division ^{had been} sent to South Carolina, so that the Eleventh now had but two divisions and was comparatively small. I was to ~~lose~~ ^{gain}

under these new orders a fine corps twenty thousand strong, composed mainly of Western men. It had three divisions. Two commanders, ^{then present for duty} Generals Stanley and T. J. Wood, were of large experience.

A little later General John Newton, who will be recalled for his work at Gettysburg and in other engagements ^{both} in the East and ~~the~~

West, an officer well known to every soldier, came to me at Cleveland, East Tennessee, and was assigned to the remaining division, which General Wagner had been temporarily commanding at

~~East Tennessee. I set out very promptly for the new command~~ Loudon. The corps was much scattered, as I found on my arrival at headquarters in Loudon the 10th of April. The First Division

(Stanley's) General Thomas had kept on outpost duty along his front east of Chattanooga; two brigades ^{being} at Blue Springs and one at Ottawah; while the third Division (Wood's) had remained, after the fall Knoxville-campaign, in the Department of the Ohio near

to Knoxville, and the Second, as I have intimated, ~~was~~ at Loudon.

^{This small village was} not far from the mouth of the Little Tennessee held there to

keep up communications between the two departments of Thomas, and of Schofield. It was here at Loudon the previous autumn that Colonel Boughton, of the One Hundred and Forty-third New York Regiment,

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had found the numerous Confederate wagons, partially destroyed,
with which during a single night he bridged the deep ford of the
^{at that point} river more than a thousand feet across. ^{It is to recall Sherman's}
^{work as a display of}
^{tremendous energy.}
After the briefest visit to Loudon and assumption of command, ~~and~~
I speedily moved ^{the} headquarters ^{of this 1st Corps} to Cleveland, ^{E. Tennessee,} fifty miles below.
My first duty immediately undertaken was to concentrate the corps
in that vicinity, inspect the different brigades, and ascertain
their needs as to transportation, clothing, and other supplies.
^{under Gen. Wood} Part of the command had been all winter marching and camping,
skirmishing and fighting in the country of East Tennessee, so
^{as one may well imagine} that the regiments coming from that quarter were short of every-
^{supplies were wanting} thing essential to the field. ^{they} their animals ^{were} weak and thin.
We must here remember, to the credit of General Sherman, who,
with extraordinary promptness, increased the railway transpor-
tation from Nashville to our army, that supplies were soon forth-
coming; and, to the credit of the officers, subordinate command-
ers, quartermasters, and commissaries, ^{on} the 3d of May, when
orders arrived for the first ^{organizing} movement, the entire corps had
sufficient transportation, clothing, rations, and ammunition ^{to enable it}
effect with safety and order a ^{considerable} flanking march, ^{This was accomplished} in the im-
mediate presence of ^{on} the enemy, to Catoosa Springs.
This 3d of May, General Schofield ^{having come} down from Knoxville to
complete ^{what became Sherman's} ~~the~~ grand army General Schofield, with his head of
^{already} column, had arrived at Cleveland. With us the preceding month
had been a very busy one. For both officers and men the dis-
couragements of the past ^{through} seemed ^{already} over. Now, new life was
infused ^{seen} into the whole body. Something was doing. Large forces
were rapidly coming together; and it was evident to every soldier
that ^{work} something important was to be undertaken. On Sundays the
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Christian Commission, had been permitted to visit our camps, and ^{the evangelist a noble soul} were still with us, among them was D. L. Moody, now so well known to the country ^{his} for sympathy, and friendship for men.

His words of hope and encouragement then spoken to ~~the~~ multitudes of soldiers will never be forgotten. I wrote from East Tennessee ^{preserved till now, me} a few words, which ^{serve} as reminders: "I have a very ^{very} pleasant place for headquarters, just in the outskirts of Cleveland".

The house belonged to the company which owned the copper-mill. ^{Again:}

"WE are drawing near another trial of arms, perhaps more terrific than ever. But, on the eve of an active campaign and battles I am not in any degree depressed. . . . When it can be done, there is a quiet happiness in being able to say, think, and feel, 'not ~~will~~ what I will, but what Thou wilt.'". We are hoping that this campaign ^{gn} will end the war, and I am more sanguine in that belief or hope ~~than~~ than ever before. God grant that no more disasters befall us!"

With our left well covered by McCook's cavalry, our Fourth Corps emerging from Cleveland commenced to move in two columns, the left one passing through Red Clay and the other ^{farther west} by Salem Church.

The morning of the 4th ^{at the spot before named} of May found us ~~as I have before said~~.

~~at~~ Catoosa Springs. These springs were on the left of General ~~the~~ ^{army lines. His} Thomas's ^{looked eastward} whole front ~~was~~ toward Tunnel Hill.

Tunnel Hill was, between the armies, the dividing ridge, it was the outpost of Confederate Johnston's ^{northern & southern} ~~army~~, which ^{advanced troops} ~~looked~~ ^{faced} toward Chattanooga. The bulk of his force was at Dalton, covered by artificial works northward and eastward, and by the mountain range of

Rocky Face Ridge ^{which is} toward the west. The famous defile through this abrupt mountain was called Buzzard's Roost Gap, From Rocky

Face to Tunnel Hill a parallel range of heights, the Chattanooga

~~the 30th of~~ Railway crosses ~~the~~ ^{sketches} a narrow valley, passes beneath the hill by a tunnel, and on toward Chattanooga.

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Tunnel Hill was between the armies, the dividing ridge, it was the outpost of Confederate Johnston's, which led towards Chatanooga. The bulk of his force was at Dalton, covered by artillery works northward and eastward, and by the mountain range of Rocky Face Ridge towards the west.

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Railway crosses the narrow valley, passes beneath the Hill by a tunnel, and on towards Chattanooga.

The Confederate official returns for April 30, 1864, ^{gave} Johnston's total force ^{as} fifty two thousand nine hundred and ninety-two, ^{corps} and when Polk's had joined a little later at Resaca, his total ^{raised to} was seventy-one thousand two hundred and thirty-five.

General Sherman, in his memoirs, aggregates the Army of the Cumberland, sixty thousand seven hundred and seventy-three; the Army ⁱⁿ of the Tennessee the field, twenty-four thousand four hundred and sixty-five; the Army of the Ohio, thirteen thousand five hundred and fifty-nine; making a grand total of ninety-eight thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven officers and men, with two hundred and fifty-four cannon.

As Johnston's ~~artillerymen~~ ^{artillery} were about the same in number as Sherman's, probably Johnston's ^{in its guns} ~~pieces of~~ artillery numbered not less than Sherman's.

The Army of the Cumberland delayed in the vicinity of Catoosa

Springs till the 7th, of May, to enable McPherson with the Army of the Tennessee to get into a position in Sugar Valley to the ^{around from Johnston's Northern Alabama} south of us, and to bring down Schofield to the east of us, ^{from East Tennessee} ~~near~~ ^{He was located near} Red Clay, - that is, ^{near} Johnston's direct northern front.

It will be seen that the Chattanooga (Western and Atlantic) Railroad, which passes through the Tunnel Hill, Buzzard's Roost, and then on to Dalton, where it meets another branch coming ^{from the North} through Red Clay, constituted our line of supply and communication. General Thomas had ^{early} advised ^{Sherman that in his judgment} McPherson and Schofield should ^{a strong} make demonstration directly against the ^{Enemy's} position at Dalton; while he himself, with the Army of the Cumberland, should pass through the Snake Creek Gap and fall upon Johnston's communica-

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proved, was quite right; but Sherman then thought that the risk
to his own communications was too great to admit of his throwing
his main body so quickly upon the enemy's rear, and he feared to at-
tempt this by a detour of upwards of twenty miles. Later in the
campaign, Sherman's practical judgment induced him to risk even ~~more~~
more than that when he sent whole armies upon the enemy's lines of
communication. But at this time Sherman chose McPherson's Small
force ~~was selected~~ for that forward and flanking operation.

being
Everything in readiness on the 7th of May, the Army of the
Cumberland began its ~~characteristic~~ ^{a work that became characteristic,} work; that is, to go straight
against the enemy's front lines, and then skirmish and fight,
intrench batteries, work forward little by little, here and there,
and bang away against every sort of obstacle, natural and artifi-
cial, that might lie in the way. This ^{undertaken} was in order to keep
Sherman's enemy busy while Schofield or McPherson was turning that
position. The morning of the 7th, the Fourth Corps left
camp at Catoosa Springs to perform its part in these operations.

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It led off due east along the Alabama road till it came into the
neighborhood of a Mr. Lee's house. Here a partial unfolding of
its troops took place; quite a long front appeared, Stanley on
the right, Newton on the left and Wood in reserve. First a few
cracks of rifles, then an exciting skirmish set in, but there was
no halting. Steadily our men pressed forward, driving back
first the ^{southern} ~~enemy's~~ cavalry-pickets and outer lines till, awakening
opposition more and more, about nine o'clock our foe crowned
Tunnel Hill with considerable force, and fired briskly upon our
advance. The same angry reception was given to the Fourteenth
Corps, coming up simultaneously ^{southward} beyond our right.

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along our
order to charge ran ~~the~~ lines; our troops promptly sprang forward and carried the crowned hill.

from Tunnel Hill we had Rocky Face in plain view. It was a continuous, craggy ridge, at least five hundred feet high, very narrow on top but having in places spur-like abutments jutting out

to the east ~~and west~~. On the crest, ~~for the most part~~, it was

so narrow that six men could not march abreast. The Western front

presented in places a perpendicular face almost as abrupt as the

Palisades of the Hudson; while, favorable to Johnston's ascent

and defence, the eastern steeps were more gradual. Through

Buzzard's Roost ~~there~~ ^{gap which cut in two the Rocky face} were both a railway and a wagon road, also

a small stream of water. This the Confederates had so dammed up

as to present a formidable obstacle. They had ^{further} so arranged their

batteries and their infantry intrenchments as to completely

sweep ^{every} ~~every~~ hollow and pathway in that defile. General Thomas,

however, pushed forward his troops with steadiness and vigor, -

Fourteenth Corps in the centre, Fourth and Twentieth on the right

and left, ^{steadily} ~~while~~ ^{McPerson} was winding his way through Snake Creek

Gap towards Resaca, and Schofield ^{constantly} ~~steadily~~ pressing his heavy

skirmish-lines ^{Toward Dalton} from Red Clay to unveil from that northern side

the ^{half concealed} ~~hidden~~ intrenchments.

^{A couple of miles} ~~far~~ away to my right, southward, on the 9th, of May, the twentieth

Corps, under Hooker, had hard fighting indeed. He afterwards

wrote: "The rebel line was carried and held for a few minutes,

^[no men] but finding themselves exposed to a raking, plunging fire from a

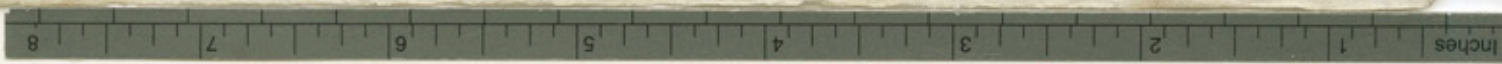
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The Fourteenth Corps also, under general Palmer, ^{or} near to us had its own ²⁴birsk work. Morgan's brigade, especially, was put into line and hotly engaged. From this command, the Sixty - sixth Illinois Regiment kept working forward by the side of the dangerous gap, drawing fire and driving in the enemy's outer lines. It is said that ^{the soldier} ~~they~~ finally obtained shelter, without being able to get farther forward, within speaking distance of their foe. One enterprising corporal, it is reported, made a bargain with some Confederates who were throwing down heavy boulders from above, that if they would refrain from their bothersome work he would read ^{to} ~~them~~ the President's famous amnesty proclamation. He did so and comparative quiet was kept during this strange entertainment.

Now, to go back a little in ^{our} ~~the~~ narrative, on the 8th, of May, General Newton with my Second Division managed, ^{after working up} some two miles north of the gap, to push a small force up the slope, and then, ^{southward} taking the defenders by a rush, drove them along until he had succeeded in capturing ⁺ from the Confederates at least one third of the ridge. He there established a signal station. He next tried, but in vain, to seize and capture ⁺ a Confederate signal party, which he deemed too actively talking ^{the buses} by use of their flags.

Stanley and Wood, on Newton's right, stretched out their own lines to some extent, and gave Newton all the support they could in that ^{locate} difficult ground. ^{near the West palisades of the Ridge} During the night his men dragged up the steep two pieces of artillery, and by their help gained another hundred yards of the hotly disputed crest.

On the 9th, of May, another experiment was tried. ^{Under instructions} ~~Under~~ I sent Stanley's Division for a reconnaissance into that horrid gap of Buzzard's Roost until it had drawn from the enemy a strong artillery fire, which redoubled the echo and roarings of the valleys and

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but in vain, to seize and capture a Confederate signal party,
which he deemed too actively talkingly use of their flags.
Stanley and Wood on Newton's right, stretched out their own lines
to some extent, and gave Newton all the support they could in that
difficult ground. During the night his men dragged up the steep
two pieces of artillery, and by their help gained another hun-
dreds of the hotly disputed crest.

On the 9th of May another experiment was tried. Unders, I sent
Stanley's Division for a reconnaissance into that horrid gap of
Buzard's Roost until it had drawn from the enemy a strong artill-
ery fire, which redoubled the echo and roarings of the valleys and

we well known
caused to be opened ~~an~~ incessant rattle of long lines of musketry.

It was while making preparations for this fearful reconnaissance that a group of officers were standing around me, among ~~them~~ General Stanley and Colonel (then Captain) J. C. Kniffin of his staff. The enemy's riflemen were we thought, beyond range; but one of them noticing our party, fired into the group. His eccentric bullet made two or three holes through the back of my coat, but without wounding me, and then passed through Captain Kniffin's hat, and ^{finally} struck a tree close at hand. ^{the} Besure that group of observers ^{their} speedily changed position. ^{now} McPherson's operations near Resaca were not so successful as General Sherman had hoped.

Though there were but two Confederate brigades at that town, the nature of the ground was, ^{so he claimed,} for McPherson unpropitious in the extreme. The abrupt ravines, the tangled and thick wood, and the complete artificial works recently renewed, which covered the approaches to Resaca, made McPherson ^{unusually} cautious and caused him to follow the letter rather than the spirit of his instructions; so that ^{the first day} after an unsuccessful effort to strike the railroad, Johnston's main artery, he fell back to a defensive line near the mouth of the gap, and there thoroughly intrenched his front. Speaking of this Sherman says, "Such an opportunity does not occur twice in a single life!" Still, he (McPherson) was perfectly justified by his orders, and he fell back, and assumed an unassailable defensive position in Sugar Valley, on the Resaca side of Snake Creek Gap.

Just as soon as Sherman had received this news ^{Sherman} he altered his plan, and sent his main army, except ^{Stoneman's} cavalry division and my corps, the Fourth, by the same route. ^{General} Stoneman with his force had just arrived from Kentucky.

With this comparatively small force I kept up on the old ground a

caused to be opened an incessant rattle of long lines of musketry.

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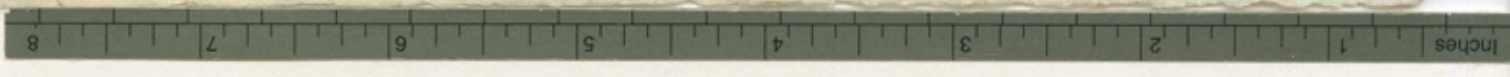
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lively aggressive work during Thomas and Schofield's southward
march with perhaps even more persistency than before; yet probably
the withdrawal of Schofield ^{from Red Clay} by General Sherman, and the replace-
ment of his skirmishers by cavalry, together with the report that
McPherson was so near to his communications, made the always ^{so watchful} ~~always~~
~~active~~ Confederate General suspicious that something in the
enemy's camp, that is, in my part of it, was going wrong for him.
Therefore, on the 12th, ^{as a force} he pushed out northward towards Stoneman,
and made a strong reconnoissance, which I beheld at a distance,
and which in the ravines and thickets and uncertain light was
magnified ^{large proportions in} to the lively vision of the soldiers beholding.
At first some of our generals feared that Johnston, letting his
communications go, would attempt a battle so as to crush the
Fourth Corps alone. But soon the tide turned, and the tentative
force retired within the Confederate intrenchments. Under the ~~cover~~
cover of the night ensuing, Joe Johnston, as he did many times
thereafter, made one of his handsome retreats, ~~from the front of~~
~~an active,~~ No man could make retreats ²¹⁷ from the front of an
active, watchful enemy ^{with} ~~with~~ better success than he. ^{with all speed}
At daylight of the 13th, I pressed my moving forces after the
foe, the cavalry and the Fourth Corps, as boldly as possible,
but was delayed all day by the enemy's active rear-guard;
the roughness of the country affording that guard successive
shelters. It took time to dislodge the fearless hinderers, yet
I did finally ^{before dark & the same} ~~that very night~~ succeed in forming substantial junc-
tion with General Sherman, who was at that time near McPerson on
ground to the west of Resaca. Meanwhile, Johnston with his main
body was preparing ^{military} ~~by~~ his peculiar ^{asperities} approaches to
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To show the costliness of such operations, in my Corps alone there were already in the little combats about three hundred killed and wounded.

Our march ^{all the day} had been rapid and full of excitement. Our minds had been bent upon the situation, watching against any sudden change, sending scouts to the right and left, getting reports from the ^{cavalry} ~~avalry~~ in front, or beating up the woods and thickets that

might conceal an ambushade. At first after our ^{at evening} arrival came the arrangement of the men upon new ground, then the essential reports and orders for the next day, then following the welcome

reminder that our enterprising mess-purveyor and skillful cook had promptly prepared. Here around the mess-chest, for a table,

my staff officers sat with me and spent a pleasant hour chatting, and leisurely ^{eat} ~~eating~~ the meal and discussing the events of the

day and the hopes of the morrow. There was cheerfulness there, ^{even} ~~yet~~

and ^{home circle} ~~afterward~~ it existed as we wrote messages to the far

distant ^{withal} ~~loved ones~~, but ~~with~~ all there was deep solemnity in our

hearts, for we knew that the next dawn would usher in another dreadful battle, and that few mess-tables, there at the front,

would have the same number of plates and the same number of

friends ^{as at that} ~~at the next~~ dinner. We looked ^{into} ~~at~~ each others faces, and secretly wondered who would be taken, and who would be left.

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