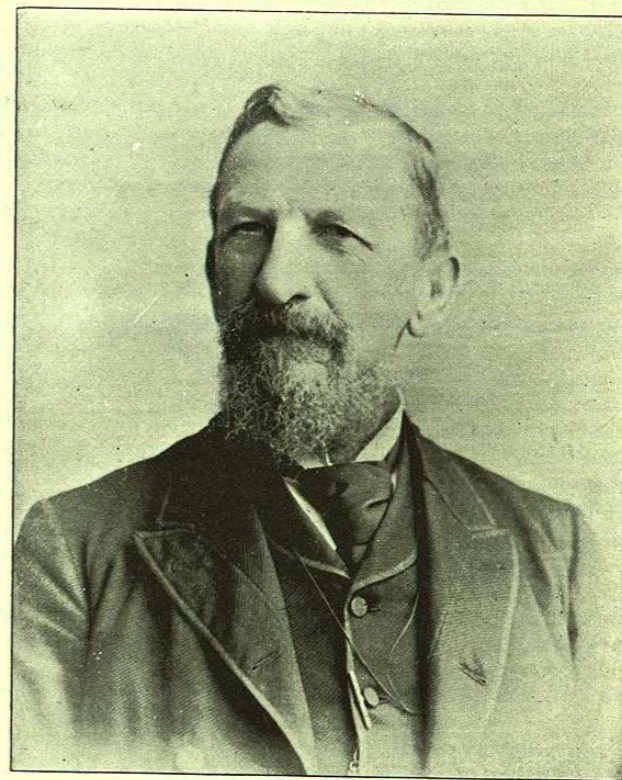


CHAPTER XV.

Our Army Falls Back from Kennesaw—Confederate "Rebel Yell"—Occupy Works on the Chattahoochee River—A. P. Stewart Appointed Lieutenant General—Assumes Command of the Army of Mississippi—Texas Brigade Fight to Obtain Tools—We Cross the Chattahoochee—Arrival of Gen. B. Bragg—Gen. Johnston Relieved—President Davis's Remark about Relieving Johnston from Command—Johnston's Policy versus Hood's—Battle of Peachtree Creek—We Occupy Atlanta—Battle of Atlanta—S. D. Lee Assigned to Command of Hood's Corps—Gen. Ector Wounded—Capt. Ward Killed—Battle of July 28, 1864—I Apply to Be Relieved from Serving with Hood—Gen. M. Jeff Thompson—Condition of the Camps of United States Troops—Evidence of the Terrible Fire of Small Arms—Evacuation of Atlanta—Jonesboro and Lovejoy's Station.

I LEFT Kennesaw with regret. From its slopes we repelled the assaults of the enemy, and from its top, where I loved to sit and witness the almost daily conflicts, and hear the "Rebel yell" from away down the throat, and the Federal cheer from the lips. The "Rebel yell" was born amidst the roar of cannon, the flash of the musket, the deadly conflict, comrades falling, and death in front—then, when rushing forward, that unearthly yell rose from a thousand Confederate throats, loud, above "the thunder of the captains and the shoutings," and with the force of a tornado they swept on over the field to death or victory. O how the heart throbs and the eye glares! As that yell is the offspring of the tempest of the battle and death, it cannot be heard in peace, no, never, never! The Federal cheer lives on, and is heard daily in the land. That Confederate yell was never, as far as I know, made when standing still. It was really an inspiration arising from facing danger and death which, as brave men, they resolved to meet. Ye children of peace can never hear it; wherefore I write of a sound that was produced by environment ye will never have. It died with the cause that produced it. The yell produced *awe*; the cheer indicated *joy*.

July 2. Not content with the waste of ammunition last evening, the enemy commenced again at 4:15 this morning—the heathens—and kept it up until 6 A.M. from every battery, and from some guns until 11 A.M. I went up the mountain early in the morning. The fire was not confined to my guns on the mountain, but extended some distance down the line. All this was intended, no doubt, to hold Johnston's main force on his own



A. P. STEWART.

right while they moved to our left, flanking as usual. At 1 P.M. I received orders to withdraw my division to-night, and did so at 10 P.M.

3d. The regiments left in the trenches and the skirmishers did not leave until 3 A.M. Owing to detention of the trains, etc., we did not reach our new position until after daylight. I went to work intrenching our line—and it is a bad one. Soon in the morning the enemy drove in our cavalry, and by noon had out his skirmishers and artillery to the front. It is wonderful how well our soldiers understand this falling back. Never before did an army constantly fight and fall back for seven weeks without demoralization, and it plainly establishes the intelligence and individuality of the men.

4th. The shelling this morning was very severe. This caused the Mississippi Brigade to seek protection in this way: They used the shingles from a house for spades, and bayonets for picks, and thus in a few minutes the men were in a shallow ditch. My men in rifle pits were shelled out and driven in. We were ordered to fall back to-night, which was done with much difficulty.

5th. At 3 A.M. we were on the retreat, and it was well executed by the troops, and we came into Vining Station ahead of the other divisions. Some sharpshooters with Whitworth rifles and a lieutenant of Hoslin's Battery were left in camp asleep, and they barely escaped capture. We were now on the right bank of the Chattahoochee river. The right of my line was a small redoubt east of the railroad (Western and Atlantic), thence it crossed it, thence across the Marietta dirt road, etc. At 10 A.M. the enemy swept the whole plain with shells down to the river. I established headquarters with Gen. Walthall in an old log house by the roadside.

6th. The enemy is quiet this morning. Yesterday the impolite followers of Sherman came near spoiling our dinner as we sat on the ground eating, by sending a twenty-pound Parrott shell near enough to throw the sand about and over it.

7th. This morning I rode along the lines with Gens. Loring and Shoup. Gen. A. P. Stewart, having been promoted to a lieutenant general, assumed command of the Army of Mississippi. After the death of Gen. Polk I unhesitatingly said that Gen. Stewart would be promoted. I rode along the whole of his command with him.

8th. The enemy keep up a sharp fire on our skirmish line at night. They evidently are apprehensive that we will cross the river at night, for during the day they are quiet.

As we have no tools for throwing up breastworks, Gen. Ector came to me for permission to move a regiment to his front in the woods, from where he had swung back, so as to attack the enemy when they came out to establish a picket line. This he did successfully, and returned with good picks, spades, and steel axes (ours were cast iron) that will cut wood. Shingleur, Robinson, and Yerger, aids, are all sick.

9th. About 9 A.M. the enemy attacked the line of skirmishers in front of Sears's Brigade with force and drove them from their pits. Col. Barry advanced the Thirty-Sixth Mississippi Regiment, under command of Maj. Parton, and forced them back, captured their line, and drove them nearly

to their main works, and reestablished ours. Prisoners were captured from five different regiments. Our loss was fifty-two men in all. After this they shelled my line for hours. About 2 P.M. the enemy commenced a slow cannonade on my front, and continued it till dark. The twenty-pound Parrotts passed over our quarters constantly and exploded in the road.

This P.M. I was sent for by Gen. Stewart, and received orders to withdraw my command across the river by the railroad bridge. After all were crossed both the railroad and dirt road bridges were burned. We moved on toward Paces' Ferry, and bivouacked by the wayside.

10th. The morning has been quiet, and the wearied troops have rested. This retrograde movement was caused by the enemy crossing the river above, near Roswell. The works of Gen. Shoup, with its stockades, did not give Johnston spare troops enough to prevent this movement of the enemy. Thus we are constantly outflanked by a superior force not disposed to attack us behind any kind of works. At 4 P.M. it commenced raining, and then artillery firing began at the railroad crossing and farther down the river. Now for nearly two months we have had daily firing, save only one day when on Lost Mountain. Gen. Ector was left to guard the railroad crossing and the river, above and below. This was on the 11th.

12th and 13th. The camp is filled with rumors. The enemy is reported to have crossed the river and then gone back. I rode to Stewart's headquarters, and thence to Atlanta. I saw Capt. Maupin in the hospital. Poor fellow; he was shot, at the Latimar House, through the breast. I went to see Gen. Johnston, and found Gen. Braxton Bragg there. He comes from Richmond. What is his mission? Who knows? Is Sherman on this side of the river? Has Grant's failures in Virginia, and Early's invasion of Pennsylvania, affected movements down here? A few days will determine. O for brighter days for the Confederacy! I have been obliged to order the guards to fire on the cavalry when they go in the river to bathe with the Federal cavalry. Federals never venture in unless our men are bathing. Our men are not seeking fords; they are. This is what they are looking for.

14th, 15th, 16th. We remained in bivouac, and nothing unusual occurred. We are still anxious to learn more about Early in Maryland. There is the usual amount of firing on our front.

Sunday, 17th. The enemy commenced a more rapid and continued fire from their batteries near the railroad bridge, where I have pickets. This, as usual, presages some movement. And here it is: "Hold your command ready for a movement." It does seem strange that we cannot have one quiet Sabbath. Sherman has no regard for the Fourth Commandment. I wish a Bible society would send him a prayer book, instead of shipping them all to the more remote heathen; but it would be the same in either case. The one is wicked by nature; the other, I fear, is becoming so from habit. Perhaps "Tecumseh" has something to do with it. There is much in a name.

18th. I moved into a position where my left rested on the Marietta

road, and commenced intrenching at night. Gen. Johnston was relieved on yesterday from the command of this army, and Gen. J. B. Hood assumed command by orders from Richmond. Early this morning I rode down to army headquarters and bade Johnston good-by.

And here I will state the conversation that occurred between Hood and me. I told him that I was sorry Johnston had been relieved; that I had often, when in Mississippi, talked with him concerning the manner of conducting the war; but "now that you are in command, I assure you I will serve under you as faithfully and cheerfully as with him." Although he took my hand and thanked me, I was ever afterwards impressed with the belief that he never forgave me for what I said.

Now, since I have alluded to it, I will state that in our conversation I agreed with Johnston that our success mainly depended on breaking the enemy down financially, by procrastinating the war; that to do this the strength of the army in the East and in the West should be maintained; that the armies upheld the government, and a great defeat would be disastrous.

It was because we could obtain no more recruits that Grant refused to exchange prisoners and receive the Andersonville prisoners and return a like number to increase the ranks of Lee's army. Here is Grant's letter on exchange of prisoners:

To Gen. Butler.

CITY POINT, August 18, 1864.

On the subject of exchange, however, I differ from Gen. Hitchcock. It is hard on our men held in Southern prisons not to exchange them, but it is humanity to those left in the ranks to fight our battles. Every man released, on parole or otherwise, becomes an active soldier against us at once, either directly or indirectly.

If we commence a system of exchange, which liberates all prisoners taken, we will have to fight on until the whole South is exterminated. If we hold those caught, they amount to no more than dead men. At this particular time to release Rebel prisoners North would insure Sherman's defeat, and would compromise our safety here.

As Gen. Grant discusses the humanity of his acts, I will compare it with what other distinguished men have written on the subject of exchange of prisoners.

Carthage, dispirited by her losses, wished for peace. For this purpose ambassadors were dispatched to Rome. Regulus (a prisoner in Carthage) was sent with the ambassadors to further the exchange, bound by an oath to return to Carthage in case of

a failure to make peace or exchange of prisoners. He dissuaded his countrymen from agreeing to either proposition, and, bound by his oath, returned to Carthage, where he well knew torture and death awaited him.

Cicero applauds Regulus in both particulars in returning to Carthage. Sir Walter Raleigh commends Regulus in maintaining the obligation of his oath, but in dissuading the Senate not to agree to exchange of prisoners he condemns his inhumanity, which no good reasons of state could justify.

However, be this as it may, one thing is certain, and that is that the inhumanity, if there were any, was assumed by the act of the United States (the North) in refusing to mitigate their sufferings on both sides by not exchanging prisoners, and it releases the South from the charge of all suffering incident, always, to prison life.*

O! had the gifted Senator from Georgia, Benjamin H. Hill, known of the existence of this letter defining the policy of the North in the treatment of prisoners of war, he would have vanquished his antagonist, Hon. J. G. Blaine, and silenced the jingo and stopped the waving of the bloody shirt to fire the Northern heart against the South.

In a private conversation with President Davis he told me that so great was the pressure made on him by deputations, committees, individuals, officials, and the press demanding to know if Atlanta and the State of Georgia were to be given up without a battle for its preservation, that he was reluctantly obliged to relieve Gen. Johnston to satisfy the clamorous demands made for a halt and a battle in defense of the State while the army was in the mountainous region, and so he yielded to the cry of the people.

20th. This morning it was resolved to attack the three corps of the enemy that were on the Peachtree creek and separated from the corps that were near Decatur. Sears's Brigade being on duty on the river and creek, I moved with the brigades of Cockrell and Ector to the right and formed line of battle in front of the Ragdale House. This position was the extreme left of the army.

The plan of battle was a good one. Hardee was to gain the enemy's rear, swing to the left, taking their line in flank, while we attacked the line in front in echelon of brigades as the battle swept down the creek. Walthall was on my right, and I was to keep within about three hundred yards of him. In advancing I came to an open field in front of the ene-

*See Tytler's "History," and War Office Records.

my. Their line was fortified, with two field batteries in position that kept up a continuous fire on my line. Gen. Loring's troops broke through the enemy's line of works. Reynolds and Featherston had to abandon the captured line by reason of the flank fire on them. The failure of Hardee deranged the plan of battle. After dark we withdrew.

22d. I had a slight skirmish with the enemy yesterday. We got twenty-four of them. Last night the army occupied Atlanta. My division formed the extreme left of the army. My headquarters are at Mr. Jennings's house, and the line crosses the road to Turner's Ferry and runs toward the Western and Atlantic railroad. Preparations are being made to attack the enemy's left wing over toward Decatur. Noon has passed, and there has been no infantry-firing yet, only the booming of artillery; but about 4 P.M. the volleys of musketry fell on the ear, died away, and then burst out anew, and did not cease until dark, when they receded in the distance, indicating the advance of our troops. The fruits of the victory are reported to be twenty-four pieces of artillery and three thousand one hundred prisoners. With it comes sad regrets for the death of Gen. W. A. T. Walker on our side, and Gen. McPherson, United States army, on their side.

27th. Nothing has occurred, save the usual siege firing, since the 22d. This morning when I was at Ward's Battery there was some artillery-firing, and a shell exploded overhead, striking Gen. Ector above the knee, requiring amputation, and Capt. Ward, mortally wounding him. I sent them to my quarters and thence to our hospital. Ward was an accomplished gentleman and a brave soldier. I wrote to Mrs. Ward, trying to console her in her bereavement. Gen. Ector in due time was walking by the aid of crutches. Gen. S. D. Lee to-day was assigned to the command of Hood's Corps.

28th. I rode to Gen. Stewart's and heard that the enemy was moving to our left. I then went to Hood's. Knowing that four divisions had been moved to my left, I felt assured that a battle was pending. S. D. Lee was in command. About 1 P.M. it began, and continued four hours. By request of Walthall I sent them Guibor's guns and Ector's Brigade. The attack was a failure because it was fought by weak detailed attacks instead of a consolidated force. Gen. Stewart was struck by a partly spent ball in the forehead, and Loring was wounded. As soon as I learned the position of the enemy I opened fire on them from my rifled thirty-two pounders and continued the fire slowly all night.

29th. All is quiet this morning. I rode to corps headquarters, and found that both Stewart and Loring had left, which made me commander of the corps, but to my surprise I found that Hood had placed Cheatham in command. I wrote to Hood in regard to the matter. Hood's act was in keeping with the intriguing so ruinous to this army, and I asked to be relieved from serving in it any longer.

31st. Nothing unusual happened yesterday. To-day is Sunday, and it dawned as though peace had spread her white wings over the land, for not a gun has yet been heard, and so it continued most of the day. Divine service was held in the brigades, and in the pond in front of my quarters a baptism took place.

August 1. My command was extended to cover Walthall's original front. I made a call on Gens. G. W. Smith and R. Toombs, and wrote to Richmond. This P.M. the enemy commenced artillery fire on the redoubt in front of my house. One shell killed a mule in the yard, another broke my wagon tongue, while a third knocked the pipe from Hedrick's (my orderly) mouth, etc. My application to be relieved from duty was returned disapproved, and I was informed that I would not be relieved. So on August 2 I wrote to the Adjutant General to be relieved from command in or serving with this army.

2d, 3d, 4th, 5th. [To transcribe my diary for these days would only be a reiteration of daily siege attacks.]

6th. I made a demonstration on the enemy this morning in his works in my front to aid Lee on our left. I moved my left over a mile to the front and attacked the enemy on his skirmish line and then their main line, but it was done at the expense of Lieut. Motherhead killed, Maj. Redwine wounded, and forty-three men killed and wounded. I was directed to make this demonstration; ordinarily they do but little good against old soldiers, because they know so well that they would not be attacked behind their works seriously unless by massed troops. Neither will they attack ours. In the afternoon they shelled my line complimentary to my attack in the morning. How polite they are in returning attentions! Bad news received from Mobile. It is reported that the United States fleet has passed Fort Morgan and is now in the bay.

8th, 9th. I gave my large map of the Yazoo Valley to Gen. M. L. Smith, who sent it to Macon to be copied, one copy for the commander of the Department of Mississippi, and the other for the War Department. I rode along the lines with Gen. Sears, who has returned. Cockrell also got back yesterday. While I was at Col. Young's the enemy commenced shelling, and it has continued ever since, full seven hours. So far it has done but little damage. Very many shells have fallen close by, and exploded over the house, and it has become anything but a pleasant residence, and at night disturbs pleasant dreams.

I sent a letter to the President on the matter of Gen. Hood's conduct in the assignment of Cheatham to Stewart's Corps during his absence.

10th and 11th. I rode out to our hospital this morning. The enemy seems disposed to get possession of my vidette line, which I have maintained up to this time. When the siege began I sent for my principal officers and told them all that I did not intend my camp should be rendered unpleasant from rifle balls, that the vidette line away in front must be held; that the picket line five hundred yards in front should be strong, and on it the fighting should be to the last extremity. The result of this course has been that my men are entirely free from annoyance, except from some artillery fire, and that is foolishly directed at our redoubts. I use artillery on their infantry camps and lines so as to destroy their rest both day and night. See the difference! While we sleep in safety, in some parts of the lines around the city no one can move without drawing the fire of the Yankees on themselves, so near are the lines together.

12th to 17th. [The diary is too full of detail to record here, so I will

merely remark that the everlasting fire continues on my picket line, and their guns shell my redoubts.]

17th. Gen. Stewart came to my quarters early this morning, at 6 A.M., and we went along the line. We returned and had breakfast. Then the artillery, as usual, began at the redoubt in front of the house. As the shells crossed the road on both sides of the house, it was dangerous to leave, and he remained an hour or more.

In the evening I was sitting on the fence enjoying my pipe while watching the explosion of the shells, when who should ride up but Gen. M. Jeff. Thompson, and he was invited to our quarters. I could not keep from laughing. I have an illustrated copy of the illustrious Don Quixote, and here was a duplicate picture, or rather here before me was the Don himself, in form and features, and if Sancho had seen Jeff he would have called him "Master." He passed the night with us, entertaining us with his adventures in the West. In the morning he went to see his Missouri friends.

18th. The Yankees must be angry. Because my batteries dared to wake them up with a few shells they raised—well—(I begin it with a "w") and never ceased until 2 P.M., and they threw not less than two thousand shot at us, and accomplished nothing, only one shell went by accident through our house.

19th, 20th, 21st, 22d. These days witnessed the usual expenditure of ammunition. On the 21st Lieut. Col. McDowell was killed in the rear of our second skirmish line. What an excellent man and gallant officer gave his life for the Confederacy! Peace to him and his friends!

23d. Firing as usual.

24th. The enemy fired hot shot on the city all last night, and to-day they set on fire some cotton, and burned a few houses.

25th. I wrote to Judge Ould. Firing as usual.

26th. This morning at daylight I was informed that the enemy had abandoned their works on my right and front nearly to my left. I found everything in their works horribly filthy, and alive with "dog" flies to such an extent that our horses could not be managed. The clothing, new and old, was covered with vermin. My servant boys carried some jackets home that had to be buried. Their line of works was very strong. I found the brick furnace where they made "shot red hot" to fire day and night at intervals to burn the city. At first little "niggers" got their fingers burned picking them up to sell to the ordnance department. Again on my skirmish line this evening was another good officer killed. Lieut. Col. Samuels fell from a rifle ball. From Decatur all the way around to the Turner's Ferry road the enemy has moved to our left. . . . There are no flies or vermin in our camp—strange but true.

27th. I made a reconnoissance with two brigades and artillery to Turner's Ferry over the Chattahoochee river. We had a fight there and captured some prisoners. They told me that the place, as I could see, was strongly fortified; that the Twentieth Corps (Hooker's) occupied the work; that Hooker had gone and Slocum was in command. I think they told me this, although not named in my diary. We slept in peace.

28th. I rode through the city. To give you an idea of the terrible mus-

ketry fire, in an open field between their picket line and mine one brigade picked up about five thousand pounds of lead balls that had been fired on the lines. The ground was literally covered with them—oxidized white like hailstones. Trees three and four inches in diameter in front of my line were cut down by balls. The lead was sold to the ordnance officers, and the weight was thus known.

29th, 30th. Our troops are moving to the left. Six of our men crossed the river and captured nine men and two wagons.

31st. Featherston and Walthall have been withdrawn from the city. My division and some State troops under the charge of Gen. G. W. Smith alone are in the city to-day. Some cavalry scouts followed my scouts nearly into the city. Firing is heard on our left. The railroad to Macon was cut to-day. This is unpleasant news.

September 1. This morning the news is that Hardee had failed to dislodge Sherman from his position. Everything indicates that Atlanta is to be abandoned, and before noon the order came. I became the rear guard. There is confusion in the city, and some of the soldiers in the town are drunk. Common sense is wanted. The five heavy guns that I had ordered to be spiked by the rear guard at 11 P.M. were burned by order of the chief of ordnance at 5 P.M., a proclamation to the enemy in my front that we were evacuating the place. As soon as I started to leave the works some of Hood's officers fired the ordnance trains. This should have been done the last of all, when the rear guard or pickets were withdrawn. Who would extinguish an ordnance train of bursting shells? So lighted by the glare of fires, flashes of powder, and bursting shells, I slowly left Atlanta, and at daylight on the morning of the 2d we were not five miles out of the city. I started soon after for Lovejoy's Station.

3d. Featherston took the advance. Last evening artillery was heard at Lovejoy's Station. Hardee was holding in check all of Sherman's army except the Twentieth Corps, and we are marching to his assistance. I passed S. D. Lee's Corps on the road. It was yesterday at Rough and Ready. This is attacking *in detail* as usual. On arrival my division was ordered to relieve Gen. Brown's. After dark I was ordered to move to my left and Gen. Guist to his right to exchange positions. This was a deliberately planned *trick* of Hardee's to put me in one side of a salient angle that was subject to a reverse fire of artillery from the enemy.

4th. This morning cannonading was not so rapid.

5th. Last night I made a change of position. Firing as usual. While I was on the line Capt. Kennerly (Mrs. Bowen's brother) and four others were killed and five wounded. During the day I lost forty men.

6th. It was now discovered that the enemy were falling back to take possession of Atlanta, now abandoned. Gave Cockrell permission to pursue them, and he skirmished with their rear guard and killed many of them and returned with over twenty prisoners.

7th, 8th, and 9th. [Diary records no important events.]

10th. A communication from Sherman to Hood was received stating that the citizens of Atlanta must leave. Those who so elect will be sent to the North. The remainder will be sent South. The work is to commence on Monday. There are about eighteen thousand people in the city. I am told that he also offers to exchange prisoners, provided he should receive only men who have yet two years to serve in the United States army. Prisoners who have served out the period of their enlistment, or have only a short time to serve, will not be received. Gen. Loring returned to-day.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BATTLE OF ALLATOONA.

From Lovejoy's to Lost Mountain—Big Shanty—Acworth—Destroying Railroad—In the Rear of Sherman—Situation of the Two Armies—Orders to Destroy the Etowah River Bridge—To Fill Up the Railroad Cut at Allatoona—Hood Not Aware that Allatoona Was Fortified and Garrisoned—March to Allatoona—Summons to Surrender—No Answer—Gen. Corse's Report Erroneous—The Fortifications—Strength of Forces—Equalization of Forces—Some Federal Dispatches—The Battle—Corse's Account—Col. Ludlow's Description—Desperate Fighting—The Main Line Captured—Enemy Driven into an Interior Fort—Dispatches from Gen. Armstrong Respecting Movements of the Enemy at Big Shanty—Withdraw to Avoid Being Surrounded by Converging Forces—Corse's Dispatch to Sherman—Provisions—Confederates Three Days and Nights without Rest or Sleep—Pass by the Enemy—Evangelist P. P. Bliss Writes the (Gospel) Hymn, "Hold the Fort"—Hood and His Erroneous Publications in His Book—His Admiration for Corse—My Admiration for the Confederates—The Soldier's Grave—The Lone Grave—Lieut. Gen. A. P. Stewart's Note in Regard to This Account of the Battle.

September 29. This morning Loring's, Walthall's, and my divisions moved on the Pumpkinton road and *crossed the Chattahoochee river* and encamped beyond Villa Rica. The following day we marched to near Brownsville Post Office.

Saturday, October 1. I remained in camp. At 10 A.M. all the division commanders were invited to Gen. Hood's headquarters, and the object of the move was discussed. I found in the room on my arrival Gens. Stewart, S. D. Lee, Loring, Walthall, Stevenson, and Clayton. As soon as I entered the room Hood said to me: "Gen. French, what do you think Gen. Sherman will do now?" I replied: "I suppose he will turn southwest and move on to Mobile; or he may go to Augusta to destroy our powder mills, and then make for Charleston or Savannah." "In that event do you believe he can sustain his troops on the march if our cavalry lay waste the country before him?" I answered: "He will find all he wants as he moves on." To this Hood replied: "Well, I have nothing to do with that, as the President has promised to attend to that matter." Every officer present disagreed with me save Gen. S. D. Lee. He thought all would have difficulty to subsist except the cavalry.

On the subject of destroying Sherman's communications my diary says:

I was in favor of an immediate move on the railroad above Kennesaw with the *whole army*, and expressed my regrets at the delay.

I received orders to move to-morrow. We were requested to inform