

## CHAPTER XXX.

### AMBROSE EVERETT BURNSIDE.

Characteristics of Burnside—Ancestry—Birth—Education—Appointed Cadet—Military Academy—"Cadet Barber"—On the Road to Mexico—Returns to United States—First Command—Wounded—Promoted—Marriage—Candidate for Congress—Inventor—The War Storm—Burnside's Brigade—Battle of Roanoke Island—Interview with Lincoln—Night March—Insubordination—Burnside Supersedes McClellan—Kentucky Quieted—Morgan's Raid—Siege of Petersburg—Political Campaign of 1864—Return to Civil Life—Home at Providence—Visit to Paris—United States Senator—Assassination of Garfield—Death of Burnside—Eulogy.

AMBROSE EVERETT BURNSIDE was born in Union county, Indiana, May 23, 1824. His birthplace was a log cabin near the town of Liberty. His father was by no means wealthy, and at the age of seventeen the subject of our sketch, feeling that he must depend on his own exertions for a livelihood, chose the business of tailoring. He became a skillful worker at this unambitious trade, but he passed most of his leisure time in reading, and was especially fond of studying military history and the lives of great soldiers. When his apprenticeship had expired he entered into partnership with a Mr. Myers, who had had military experience as colonel of a regiment of Indiana volunteers in the Mexican war. They studied tactics on their shop-board, and the future general once

worked out a movement *en echelon* by deploying five hundred buttons, one by one, from line into column.

In March, 1843, young Burnside had the good fortune to be appointed a cadet, through the influence of Mr. Robert Tyler, son of the President. It was with great satisfaction that he gave up his somewhat distasteful business and entered on the studies which he enjoyed. He proved a very quick and diligent student, but, being of a very frolicsome disposition, was regarded as rather "wild" when off duty. In fact, he became noted for the practical jokes which he played on newly-arrived cadets. Among the latter was a young man who, from his profusion of long, sandy hair and beard, was nicknamed the "Bison." A few days after his arrival he was met by Burnside's room-mate, who informed him that new-comers were obliged to have their hair trimmed and beards cut within twenty-four hours of their arrival, or else they were imprisoned for twenty days. The "Bison," much startled, hastily inquired where he should find the cadet barber, and was directed to Burnside's room. That hopeful youth had got himself up to look like a barber, and, when asked if he could shave the new cadet and cut his hair before evening parade, replied that he thought he could. When he had closely cut the hair from one side of the young man's head, and shaved one-half of his face, he stopped, saying that they must stop, as it was now time for parade. When the "Bison" appeared, his ludicrous appearance excited roars of laughter. Questioned by the superintendent as to how he dared appear on parade in such condition, he told his story. "Come with me, sir," shouted the superintendent, "and show me this cadet

fickle fair one. He was married to Miss Mary Richmond Bishop, at Providence, in 1852.

About this time Burnside devoted much time and thought to perfecting the invention of a breech-loading rifle. It was considered that his idea for the construction was superior to any yet known, and he was induced to resign his commission and establish a factory for his rifles at the town of Bristol. Here he made his home, attended closely to his manufacturing establishment, accepted the position of major-general of the volunteers of his own State, and was candidate for Congress. He was unsuccessful in this last ambition, and soon afterwards encountered a much more serious disappointment in the refusal of the government to accept his rifle as the one to be used in the army. This meant financial ruin, and the "Bristol Rifle Works," his property, went into bankruptcy. He assigned everything to his creditors, and now penniless, went into a Chatham street clothing store, and sold his uniform, epaulettes, and sword. Sending half of the thirty dollars which he received for them to his wife, he started west in search of employment.

He returned to Liberty, his old home, ruined but not despairing. He applied to his old classmate, George B. McClellan, then vice-president of the Illinois Central Railroad, for employment, and was appointed cashier of the railroad land office. Here he gave so much satisfaction that he was appointed treasurer to the corporation, with an office in New York city. While holding this position he made a visit to New Orleans, and was somewhat startled at the open manifestations of the rebellious spirit there. Returning to New York, and anticipating that, in the event of a war,

government might call for service on all West Pointers, he set his affairs in order, balanced his books, and made preparations to go immediately on receiving a summons. Consequently when Governor Sprague telegraphed: "A regiment of Rhode Island troops will go to Washington this week. How soon can you take command?" he replied "at once," and reported for duty at Providence next morning.

He was commissioned colonel of the First Rhode Island militia, April 16th, 1861, and immediately set about organizing and equipping his troops. The regiment set out with little delay, and arrived in Washington on the 26th of April. When McDowell succeeded Scott in the chief command, he appointed Burnside commander of the Second brigade, which included the First and Second Rhode Island, the Seventy-first New York, the Second New Hampshire, and the Second Battery of Rhode Island Artillery. In July, 1861, this brigade took part in the general onward movement which ended so disastrously at Bull Run. But in the earlier half of that day, the Burnside brigade encountered the enemy's fire for four hours, and sustained a loss of 123 killed and 236 wounded. In August, Burnside was appointed a brigadier-general of volunteers. He was ordered to organize a "coast division," and to establish headquarters at Annapolis. This division numbered twelve thousand men, who were embarked in sixty-five transports, under sealed orders. No one knew the destination of the fleet except General Burnside and Commodore Goldsborough. On the second day out there was a terrific storm. When the fleet arrived at Roanoke island the forces were landed, and ordered to take the Confederate

stronghold, which was situated on the middle of the island. Their attack was completely successful; the fortress was speedily surrendered; two thousand five hundred prisoners were taken, thirty-two guns, three thousand small arms, winter quarters for four thousand troops, and several hospital buildings. This victory created great joy throughout the North.

Burnside was created major-general of volunteers, and the State of Rhode Island voted him a sword.

For some time Burnside occupied North Carolina, and was then ordered to reinforce General McClellan, who had been obliged to retreat from before Richmond. At Fortress Monroe Burnside had a conference with President Lincoln, who offered him the command of the Army of the Potomac. This he peremptorily declined. After the army had been commanded for short periods by Halleck and Pope, the command was again offered to Burnside, who again declined and urged the president to reinstate McClellan. At the battle of South Mountain, Burnside distinguished himself, and was placed by McClellan in command of the Ninth corps.

At Antietam this corps held the bridge which was the key of the position, sustaining heavy losses. Pollard, the Southern historian, says: "It is certain that if we had had fresh troops to hurl against Burnside at the bridge of Antietam, the day would have been ours." On the morning of the battle, the corps numbered nearly 14,000 men. Its losses were over 2,000. When night came Burnside expressed to McClellan his opinion that the battle should be followed up next day, but the latter declined, and the army remained inactive for a month. This inaction was considered extremely unsatisfactory at Washington and throughout the country,

and an official order was issued, removing McClellan, and appointing Burnside to the command of the army. He accepted this position with some degree of reluctance. The Army of the Potomac now numbered two hundred and twenty-five thousand men. Burnside's plans were to make a rapid march to Falmouth, cross the Rappahannock to Fredericksburg, and make a forward movement to Richmond. The army started from Warrenton in November, marched forty miles in three days, and reached Fredericksburg. On the 10th of December the engineer corps was ordered to lay three pontoon bridges across the Rappahannock, cross the river, and carry the fortifications by assault. The bridges were built under heavy fire from the enemy. On the morning of the 13th the contest in front of the heights began. As the Union troops advanced, they were exposed to a furious fire of grape and canister, and an enfilading fire on their right and left from shot and shell. Below the batteries were stone fences and rifle-pits, where Confederate troops were concealed. When the Union men advanced to the heights, these rifle-pits bristled with muskets, which poured volley after volley into the assaulting column. The charge at Fredericksburg was in fact scarcely less daring or less deadly than that at Balaklava. The troops were driven back with tremendous loss. Next day Burnside ordered another attack, but was dissuaded by Generals Sumner and Franklin. The order was countermanded, and at night the army moved back across the Rappahannock.

Burnside was severely criticized for the conduct of the attack at Fredericksburg, and among his subordinate officers there was considerable disaffection. General Hooker, in particular, was outspoken in his censure of

his superior officer. Burnside asked for Hooker's dismissal, and that of several others of those who criticised him. This President Lincoln was unwilling to grant. Burnside was relieved from the command, as the only method of terminating the difficulty, and General Hooker was appointed in his place, the general-in-chief being transferred to the command of the Department of the Ohio. That section of country was in a very disturbed condition. Kentucky was under martial law, sympathizers with the rebellion talked boldly of the possibility of drawing Indiana, Kentucky, and East Tennessee into the Confederacy, and Burnside found himself obliged to take stringent measures to check the current of rebellion through these States. Mr. Clement Vallandigham, Democratic member of Congress from Ohio, openly advocated resistance to President Lincoln's measures for the restoration of the Union. By Burnside's orders he was arrested and imprisoned in Fort Warren, whence he was afterwards taken to Nashville, and was obliged to remain within the limits of the Confederacy until the close of the war. Burnside organized the militia of Indiana and Ohio so that they could effectively resist the raids of the guerilla leader, Morgan, and then turned his attention to Kentucky, where the secessionists were threatening to carry the State by illegal voting at the ensuing elections. In this they failed signally. Burnside then turned his attention to East Tennessee. He set out for Knoxville, at the head of eighteen thousand men. The march of this body across the Cumberland mountains is one of the most remarkable occurrences in military history. "In many cases the horses failed to drag the guns up the precipitous sides of the ascents, and then the worn and struggling

animals gave place to men, who, with hands and shoulders to wheel and limber, hoisted guns and caissons from height to height. The fearful wayside was strewn with broken wheels and vehicles, and with horses and mules, dying exhausted on the march. Baggage animals, mules, and drivers, in several instances made missteps and rolled down precipices. Nothing but the indomitable courage and hardihood of Burnside, nothing less lofty than the heroism that possessed his army, could have ever seen such an undertaking accomplished."

This march of two hundred and fifty miles over the rough mountain roads was made in fourteen days. The loyal people of East Tennessee received the Union forces with extreme delight. After a few days' stay at Knoxville, he pushed on to Cumberland Gap, which was surrendered to him unconditionally. Here he took 2,500 prisoners, eleven pieces of artillery, and 2,000 stand of small arms.

The Confederate general, Longstreet, now formed the plan of besieging Burnside's force in Knoxville, and taking the town. The siege began on the 17th of November, 1863, and on the 29th the Confederate force made a desperate assault, in which Longstreet lost over a thousand men. The siege was abandoned, and Knoxville was saved to the Union.

Burnside was now allowed leave to visit his home at Providence, and was ordered to recruit and fill up the Ninth Army Corps, for special service. It was supposed that this special service was to be in South Carolina. As the regiments reorganized, they proceeded to the appointed rendezvous, Annapolis. But the corps was assigned to the Army of the Potomac,

It had been moved about so much from one part of the Union to the other that it was known to the soldiers as "Burnside's Geography Class." This time its travels lay through the famous Wilderness, and stopped in front of Petersburg. But its losses during the battles of the Wilderness were very heavy. From the 3d of May to the 12th of June, the corps lost no less than 7,900 men.

At the assault on Petersburg, Burnside's troops made the attack on Cemetery hill, in which he lost 4,500 men, without any resulting gain. For this, he fell again under military censure, and General Meade actually appointed a court-martial to try him. General Grant disapproved the charges, but Burnside was relieved from the command of the Ninth corps, and tendered his resignation, which was not, however, accepted. He then retired to his home, where he received his usual cordial welcome. A court was appointed to collect facts as to the Fredericksburg affair, which, after a session of seventeen days, rendered a verdict of disapproval against five general officers, of whom General Burnside was one. When relieved from his command, the general entered with enthusiasm into the political campaign of 1864, warmly defending the policy of emancipation, and giving his support to the measures of President Lincoln. When the war had ended, he once more tendered his resignation, which President Johnson accepted in April, 1865.

Returning to civil life, he interested himself mainly in the construction of railroads, and was elected president of the Cincinnati and Martinsville Railroad.

In 1866 he was elected, by a large majority, Governor of Rhode Island, and in this position he showed

himself thoroughly qualified for the duties of a chief magistrate. He was one of the most popular governors the State ever had, and was re-elected the following two years. He peremptorily declined a fourth renomination. Soon afterwards, he was violently attacked in the United States Senate by Senator Sprague. This attack called out a number of warm eulogies, and a complimentary letter signed by five thousand citizens of Rhode Island.

In 1869 he went to England in the interest of the Covington and Vincennes railroad, and while there, having some curiosity to witness the operations of the great Franco-Prussian war, then at its culmination, he went to Paris, where the Prussian chancellor, Count Bismarck, paid him much attention. Here he saw perhaps the most extraordinary spectacle in history, a city with 500,000 men under arms shut up in it, the streets swarming with soldiers, and the inhabitants completely isolated from the rest of the world.

In 1875 General Burnside was elected senator from Rhode Island. As a politician his record is very honorable. He served on three important committees, viz.: those of Military Affairs, Commerce, and Education and Labor.

He lost his beloved wife in 1876, an affliction which he felt most keenly. For several months he suffered much from nervous prostration, and seriously contemplated resigning his position as senator, but was induced by his friends to resume his duties. He was re-elected in 1880.

The assassination of General Garfield made a most painful impression on Burnside. He entertained strong hopes of the president's recovery, and was much overcome by the intelligence of his death.

His own decease was somewhat unexpected. He had been for some days very slightly indisposed, but complained suddenly of severe pain in the region of the heart. He died the next morning of heart neuralgia. This occurred September 13th, 1881. His obsequies were celebrated with all the honors the State could give; and in the Senate several eloquent tributes were paid to his memory, of which perhaps the most interesting was that of Wade Hampton, the Confederate cavalry leader, who closed his remarks as follows:

"Others have worthily bedecked his tomb with wreaths of immortelles; I bring a spray of Southern cypress, to lay it tenderly and reverently on his grave. Peace to his ashes; for of him it may with truth be said, that throughout his long, varied, and honorable career,

"He bore without abuse  
The grand old name of gentleman."

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### GEORGE BRINTON M'CLELLAN.

Birth and Ancestry—Boyhood and Cadet Life—Rank and Experience at West Point—War with Mexico—In Civil Life—War of Secession—McClellan called to Washington—In Command—Battle of Bull Run—Scott Resigns and McClellan Becomes Commander-in-Chief—Battle of Manassas—Congress and McClellan—President assumes Command of the Army—Peninsular Campaign—Seven Days' Battle—McClellan's Departure from the Peninsula—Nominated for President—Civil Life—Governor of New Jersey—Tribute of Honor.

GEORGE BRINTON McCLELLAN was born in Philadelphia, December 3, 1826. His ancestors were distinguished in the medical profession, of gentle breeding, distinctly traceable to nobility, in the person of Lord Kirkcudbright, of Scotland. His boyhood was passed at school, where he was a good scholar and held high rank in his class, though he was by no means brilliant.

In June, 1842, he entered the military academy at West Point, being then fifteen years and six months old. His conduct here was unexceptionable. He was not quick in the acquisition of knowledge, but what he learned remained fixed in his mind. He exhibited perseverance, a strong will and resolute habits of application. It was matter of surprise to himself, at the close of his first year's examinations, to find he was

barber." They returned to the "barber shop," and found Burnside and his chum lying on the bed in spasms of laughter. The superintendent obliged Burnside to finish his work, and for some time the sobriquet of "Cadet Barber" was used in speaking of the joker. Burnside was a frequent visitor at Benny Havens's, and was noted for his talents in singing and cooking at that festive resort.

In his fourth year, the war with Mexico was at its height, and immediately after his graduation he was ordered to join the Second artillery, and proceed to the city of Mexico. His commission was that of second lieutenant. When he arrived at Vera Cruz, he learned with regret that the war was virtually over, but he was ordered to proceed to Mexico as escort to a baggage train. While there he yielded to the fascination of gambling, and was so "plucked" as to be penniless. His pay also was mortgaged six months in advance. He was on the point of resigning, when a senior officer advanced him money enough to relieve his embarrassments, and so prevented his career from being spoiled at the very outset. But the troops did not greatly enjoy their stay in Mexico, and they were glad to receive orders to return. Burnside's regiment was ordered to Fort Adams, near Newport, Rhode Island.

Here the young officer enjoyed his sojourn extremely for a time. Boating parties, drives, rides, walks, with music and dancing at night, made Newport very attractive. He frequently visited Providence, and there formed friendships which induced him later to make it his home.

But garrison life at its best becomes monotonous, and Burnside was well pleased when, in 1849, he was

directed to proceed to New Mexico for service against the Indians, who were indulging in a series of petty hostilities. A party of Americans had been murdered by them, two of whom were the mail carriers of the region. Burnside was sent with his detachment to bury the dead, collect the missing mail, if possible, and report what he could of the movements of the Indians.

This he managed skillfully, and shortly after had a somewhat severe skirmish with Indians, in which he received an arrow-wound.

He was soon after detailed as quarter-master and commissary in Texas, and he went thither, accompanied only by three men, making a journey of over twelve hundred miles through the country occupied by the Apaches, the most crafty and brutal of all the Indian tribes. It is a parched and desert land, and on one occasion they were eleven hours without a drop of water. They were harassed nearly all the way by parties of Indians following them. On arriving at Fort Leavenworth, they were so exhausted that they could be fed only with beef-tea, and at intervals of half an hour.

Burnside received many compliments on this daring ride, and was promoted to be first lieutenant. He also obtained a furlough to visit his home, and while there had a somewhat unpleasant adventure. He had proposed to, and was accepted by, a young lady from Kentucky, but at the marriage ceremony the bride suddenly changed her mind, answered "no" to the clergyman's question, and abruptly left the church, to the surprise and annoyance of the bridegroom. He soon afterwards returned to Fort Adams, and there made the acquaintance of a lady who replaced his