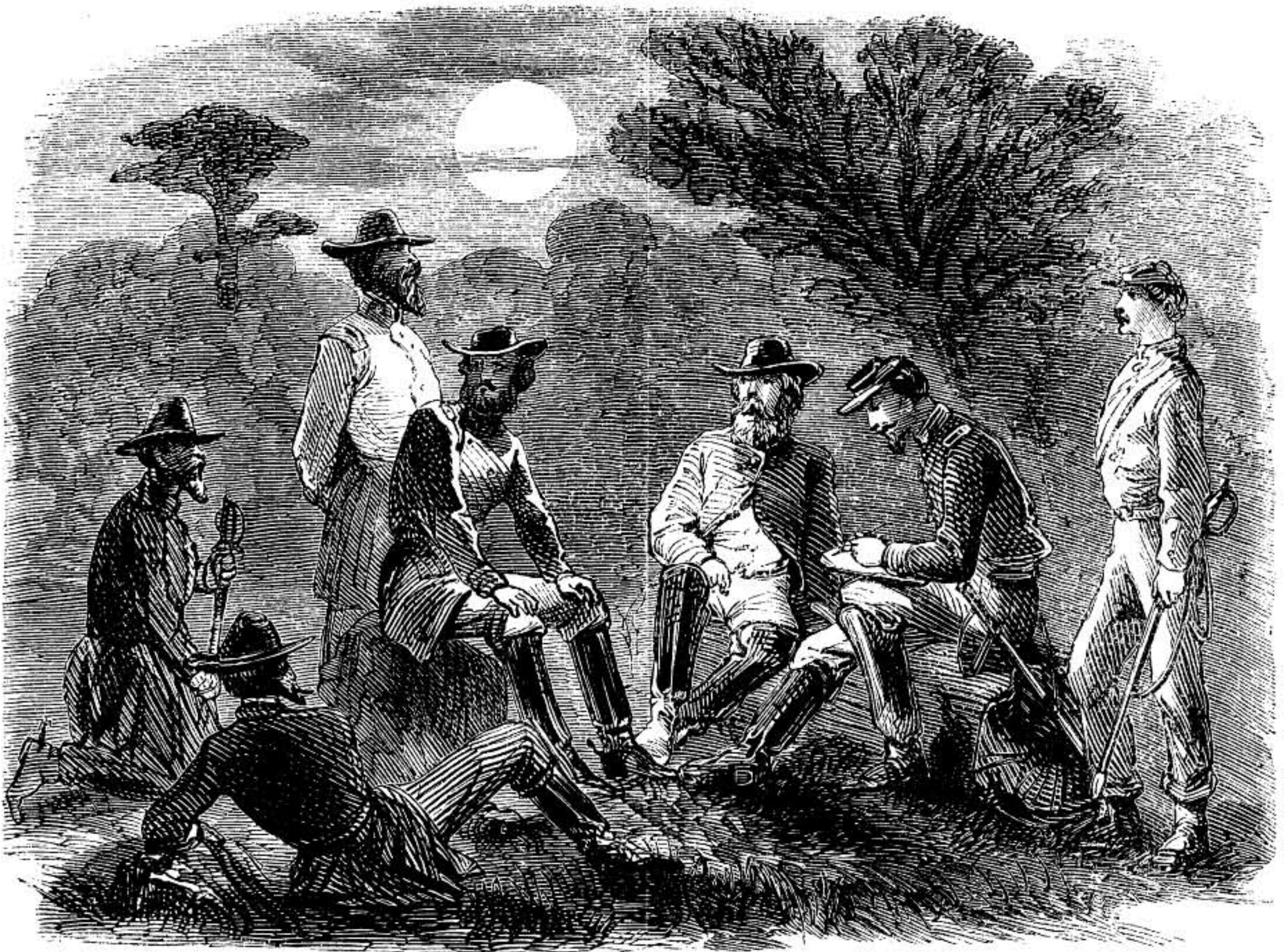


HEROIC DEEDS OF HEROIC MEN.

BY JOHN S. C. ABBOTT.



DICTATING DISPATCHES BY MOONLIGHT.

II.—SIEGE OF VICKSBURG.

The Situation of Vicksburg.—General Sherman's Assault.—General Grant's Movement.—Williams's Cut.—The Lake Providence Scheme.—The Moon Lake Scheme.—The Steele's Bayou Plan.—The March from Milliken's Landing.—Running the Batteries.—The Landing at Bruinsburg.—General Grant's Baggage.—Movements of General Sherman.—Celerity of General Grant's March.—Battle of Oak Hills.—Farnden's Creek.—Capture of Jackson.—Battle of Champion's Hill.—Battle of Big Black River.—The Investment.—The Siege.—The Surrender.

THE city of Vicksburg, about four hundred miles above New Orleans, is situated on a bluff on the east bank of the Mississippi, which commands the stream for many miles above and below. The nature of the location renders it nearly impregnable against any attack by water. The peculiarities of the surrounding country render it exceedingly difficult of military approach by land.

Early in January, 1861, the rebels commenced throwing up batteries at this spot, and after the fall of Island No. 10 their fortifications were greatly enlarged and strengthened. In June, 1862, some abortive attempts were made toward the reduction of the place by Admiral Farragut, who ascended the river with a fleet from New Orleans. After several weeks of bombardment it became evident that the place could not be

taken without the co-operation of a land force, and the fleet withdrew. At this time Vicksburg was the only fortified place on the Mississippi held by the rebels. During this summer, however, they took possession of Port Hudson, nearly three hundred miles below, which they strongly fortified that ships might be prevented from ascending from New Orleans to co-operate in the reduction of Vicksburg. They were so far successful in this movement that it became necessary to assail Vicksburg from above by the army of General Grant.

Immediately after the battle of Corinth arrangements were made for this enterprise. On the 20th of September, 1862, an expedition set sail from Memphis under General Sherman. It consisted of a fleet of one hundred transports, several gun-boats, and a force of about fifteen thousand men. They arrived at the mouth of the Yazoo, just above Vicksburg, on Saturday morning, September 29. A line of high bluffs here fringe the eastern shores of both the Yazoo and the Mississippi. This bluff on the Yazoo is at a short distance from the river, and the intervening space consists of a low and marshy bottom, often overflowed by the swellings of the stream, and at all other times intersected by sluggish bayous. This chain of bluffs frowned with batteries on the summit and sides, and with

rifle-pits near the base. The plan of attack was for General Sherman to assail these works in front, while General Grant, advancing by the way of Jackson, was to charge them in the rear. But by the inconceivable imbecility of a subordinate at Hollis Springs, a raiding party of rebels had fallen upon our magazines of supplies there, and had destroyed two millions' worth in a few hours. General Grant was thus delayed. General Sherman heroically, perhaps imprudently, resolved to make the attempt alone.

On the very day of the disembarking of the

troops General Sherman, encountering but slight opposition, pushed his army across the marshy river bottom to near the edge of the bluff. The next morning the engagement was opened, first with an impetuous fire of artillery, and then with an infantry charge upon the first line of the rebel rifle-pits. The heroic enterprise was crowned with success, and as the patriots swarmed into the captured works the rebels fled to their second line of defense. In the mean time the rebels had concentrated a great force within their ramparts, while but one-half of the patriot army

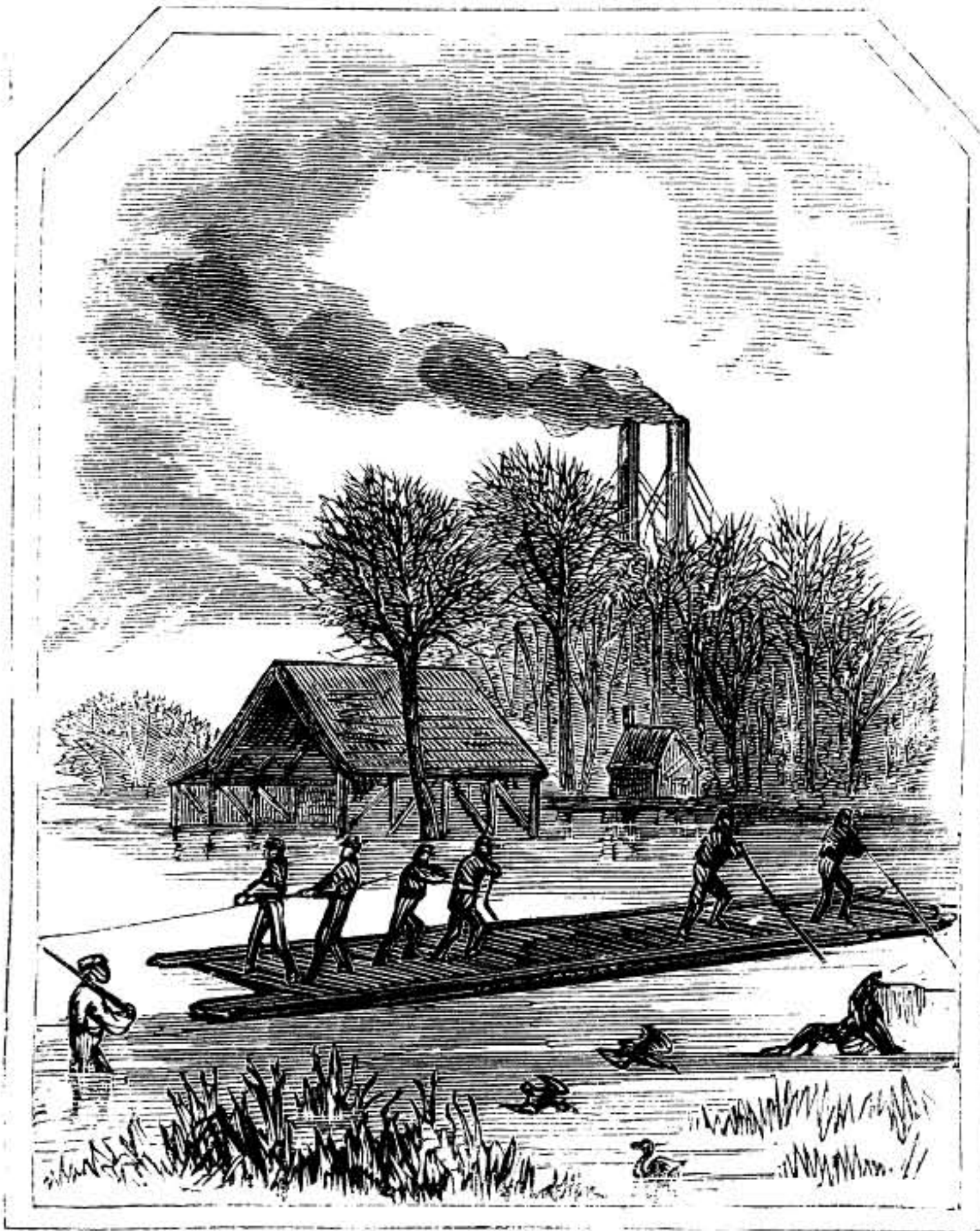
designed for the enterprise was in the field. Sunday and a part of Monday were spent by both armies in preparation for the decisive conflict, while each endeavored to annoy the other by occasional artillery firing. General Sherman, having thrown several bridges across the bayous, ordered a general assault at two o'clock Monday afternoon.

At the appointed hour the storm burst in all its fury. The hill belched forth flame and smoke, with tremblings of the earth under the cannons' roar, as though a hundred volcanoes were in violent eruption. The soldiers, in the charge, were compelled to wade the bayous and struggle through the swamps. General Blair's horse became hopelessly mired, and he slid from him and led his brigade, which was first in the charge, on foot. De Courcey's brigade was next; but his men pressed forward so vehemently in the daring onset that it was soon difficult to tell which brigade was in the advance. Onward they swept through flame, and smoke, and blood, leaving the dying and the dead behind them, climbing, crawling, fighting their way up the slope, with the desperation of men resolved to conquer or to die.

Their thinned ranks, breathless and bleeding, reached the centre of the enemy's works. Here they were assailed by an awful fire from outnumbering foes nearly surrounding them. Bravely they had won their position; but it was found impossible to hold it. One-third of Blair's division, in this terrible charge, had been placed *hors du combat*. They had



ULYSSES S. GRANT.



AMONG THE BAYOUS.

taken both the first and second line of the rebel intrenchments, and yet they found but defeat in their victory. Such a destructive storm of shot and shell was poured in upon them that they were compelled precipitately to retire. With saddened hearts they yielded to the cruel necessity. General Blair, who was one of the first to ascend, was the last to leave the hill.

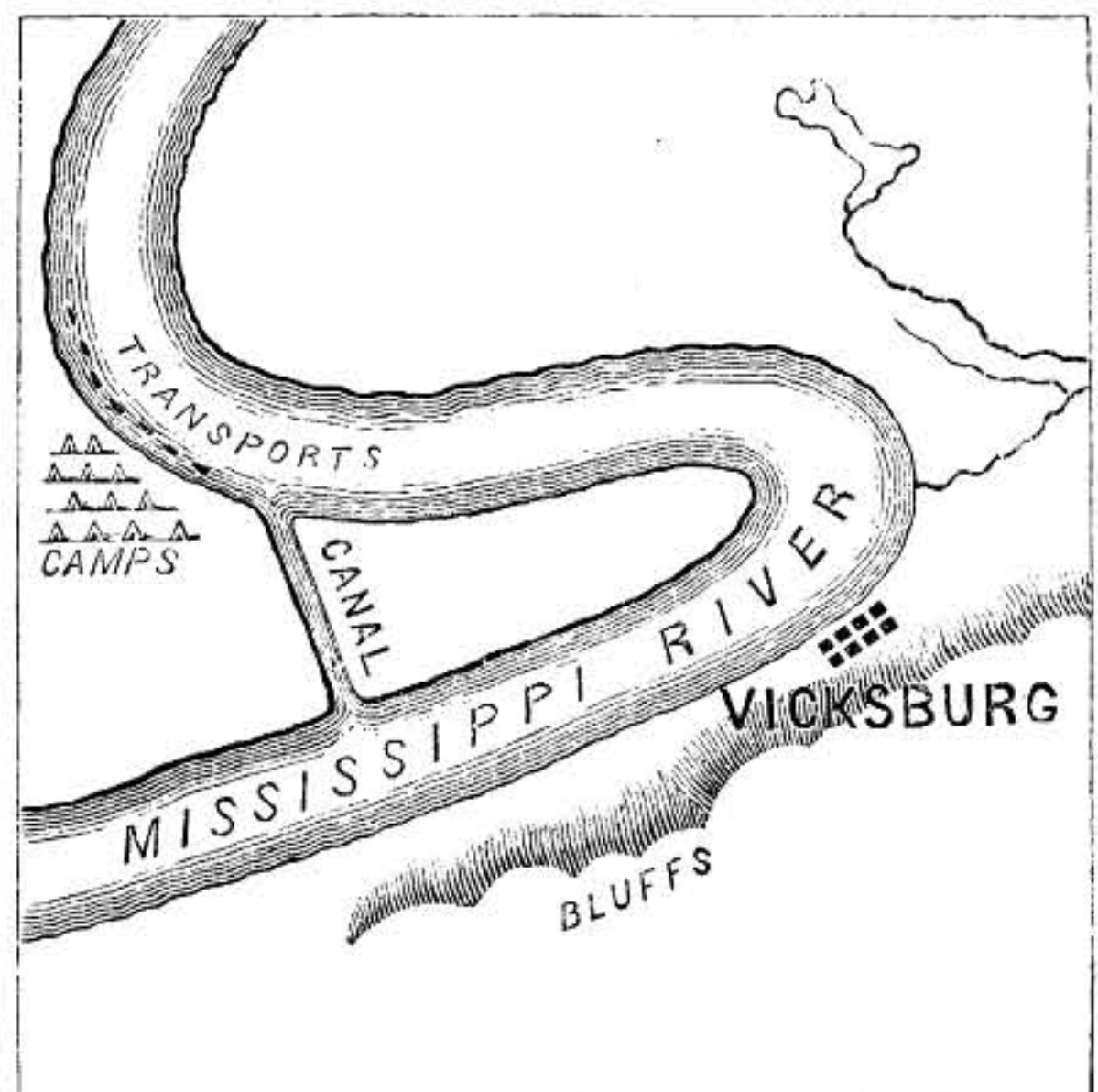
Such was the battle of Chickasaw Bluffs. It was a brave but desperate conflict. The patriots accomplished all that mortal valor could achieve. But the experiment proved that it was impossible to carry those frowning heights, by charging them in the face of all their batteries with but half of the army commissioned for the enterprise.

Any further attempt to carry Vicksburg from this direction, and with the force then at General Sherman's disposal, would be manifestly fruitless. Preparations were accordingly made to withdraw from the scene of the disaster and return to Memphis. Nearly four months now elapsed while more formidable preparations were being made for the renewal of the assault upon Vicksburg. On the 29th of January, 1863, General Grant, descending the Mississippi with gun-boats and transports, landed a portion of his army a few miles above Vicksburg, on the western shore, at Milliken's Bend. Another portion he landed a little farther down the river, here about a mile wide, opposite Vicksburg, at Young's Point. Under this indefatigable commander there was now commenced a series

of operations almost unparalleled in the history of military science.

The Mississippi River, fed by innumerable tributaries, emptying their floods into this majestic stream from all directions, is subject to sudden and great changes in its volume of water. The country around, low and marshy, is often flooded for leagues in the swellings of the river, the stream expanding often into an almost illimitable ocean, spreading through sombre forests and over gloomy morasses. Through a region of hundreds of square miles this country, sublimely dreary, where God, by the slow deposit of ages, is preparing soil for future tillers, now presents bogs, and lakes, and sluggish bayous, the congenial home of alligators and all unclean reptiles. Mosquitoes, the vilest of earth's tormentors, darken the air. Majestic trees, draped in funereal moss, overhang these gloomy waters, while the rankest undergrowth of every tough, creeping, climbing, intertwining shrub renders the boundless thicket almost impenetrable.

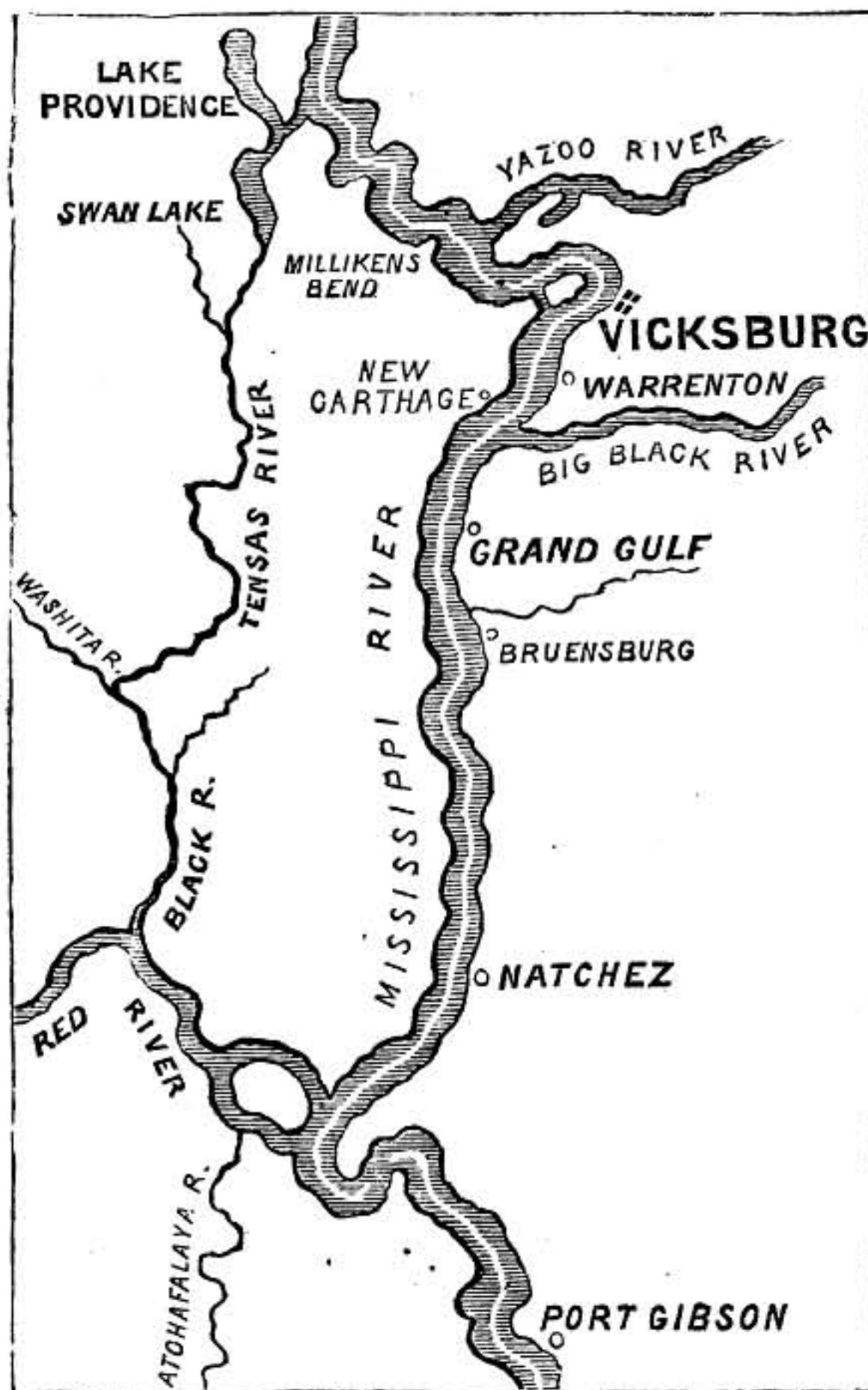
Where the land is sufficiently raised above the water to be cultivated, it is protected from the spring and autumnal freshets by dykes or levees, artificial mounds of earth, about ten feet high and fifteen feet wide, constructed, at an immense expense, along the river banks. Vicksburg is situated upon the eastern bank of the river, on a high bluff, near the point of one of the most majestic bends of the stream. On the opposite or western shore of the peninsula formed by the bend the land is low and protected by a dyke. In the attempt upon Vicksburg by Commodore Farragut's fleet General Williams had essayed to cut a canal across the neck of this



FIRST EXPERIMENT—WILLIAMS'S CANAL.

peninsula, hoping thus to change the channel of the river. This would leave Vicksburg an inland town of no military importance. Our ships could ascend and descend the stream far beyond the reach of the Vicksburg batteries. The plan was abandoned then, in consequence of the low state of the water.

General Grant's first attempt upon Vicksburg was by the renewal of this experiment. He hoped at least thus to secure a channel for the passage of his transports. Accomplishing this he could land his troops below Vicksburg, and thus gain a position to assault the city from its rear. For six weeks thousands of hands were incessantly at work in this vast trench, and the eyes of the nation anxiously watched the progress of the enterprise. When the work was nearly two-thirds done an unfortunate break in the dam, at the upper end of the canal, flooded the immense ditch with water, effectually stopping all further work. Before this injury could be repaired the period of high-water passed away and the enterprise was abandoned.



SECOND EXPERIMENT BY LAKE PROVIDENCE.

General Grant, aware of the grandeur of the task before him, and of the uncertainty of the success of the canal, had instituted other measures to be carried on simultaneously. While a portion of his army were busy with pickaxe and spade at Young's Point, another body of men were detailed for a somewhat similar operation up the river nearly seventy miles north from Vicksburg. Here there is found, about five miles west of the river, a large expanse of water called Lake Providence. A bayou full of snags,

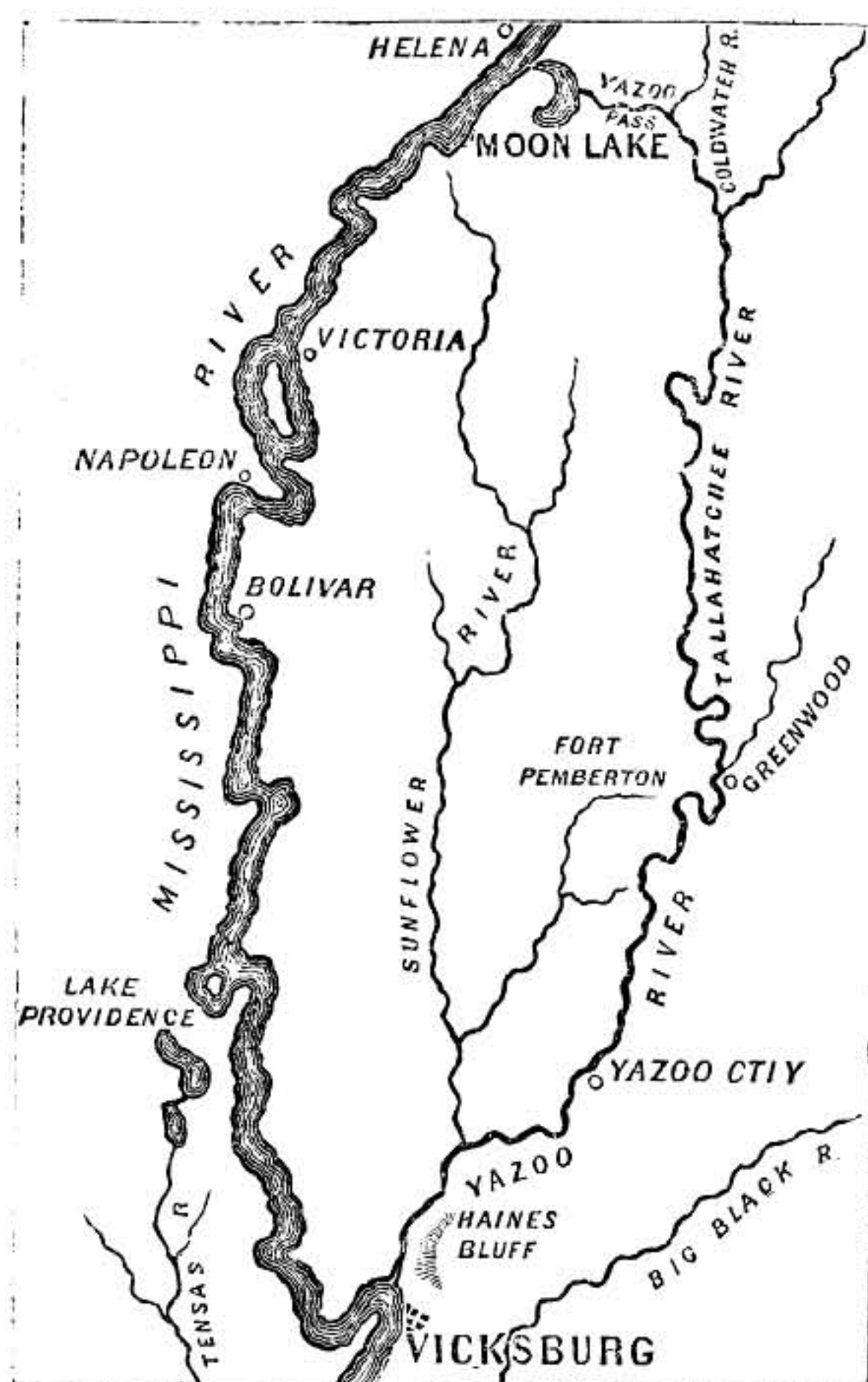
and winding through the entangling forest, connected the southern extremity of this lake with the northern extremity of Swan Lake. This sheet of water, thirty miles in extent, found an outlet in the Tensas River which emptied into the Black River, which last stream flowed sluggishly into the Red River. Could the boats descend by this route they would enter the Mississippi several miles below Natchez. It was apparently only necessary to cut a canal, five miles long, through the morass, dig out the shallows, drag out the snags, cut away the wind-falls and saw off the gigantic stumps, through this route of more than one hundred and fifty miles, to give us, as it were, a new Mississippi parallel with the old one.

Stupendous as this plan was, it was by no means Quixotic. The river is continually abandoning its old channels and finding new ones. A glance at the map will show that it would not be strange if in this way the channel of the stream should be changed even to the Gulf. The region thus to be traversed was gloomy, wild, desolate, and mostly uninhabited. Here and there could be found a spot of sunny soil in the midst of the pestilential morass. In that dreary wilderness the adventurers engaged in one of the most stupendous enterprises of war had no human foe to fear. Newspaper correspondents kept the community well informed respecting the progress of these plans. Many were very sanguine respecting the result. It was even by some apprehended that the channel of the river would be changed all the way to the Gulf, leaving both Natchez and New Orleans inland towns far away to the east of that great river upon which their existence depended. One letter-writer, in the flush of anticipated success, writes:

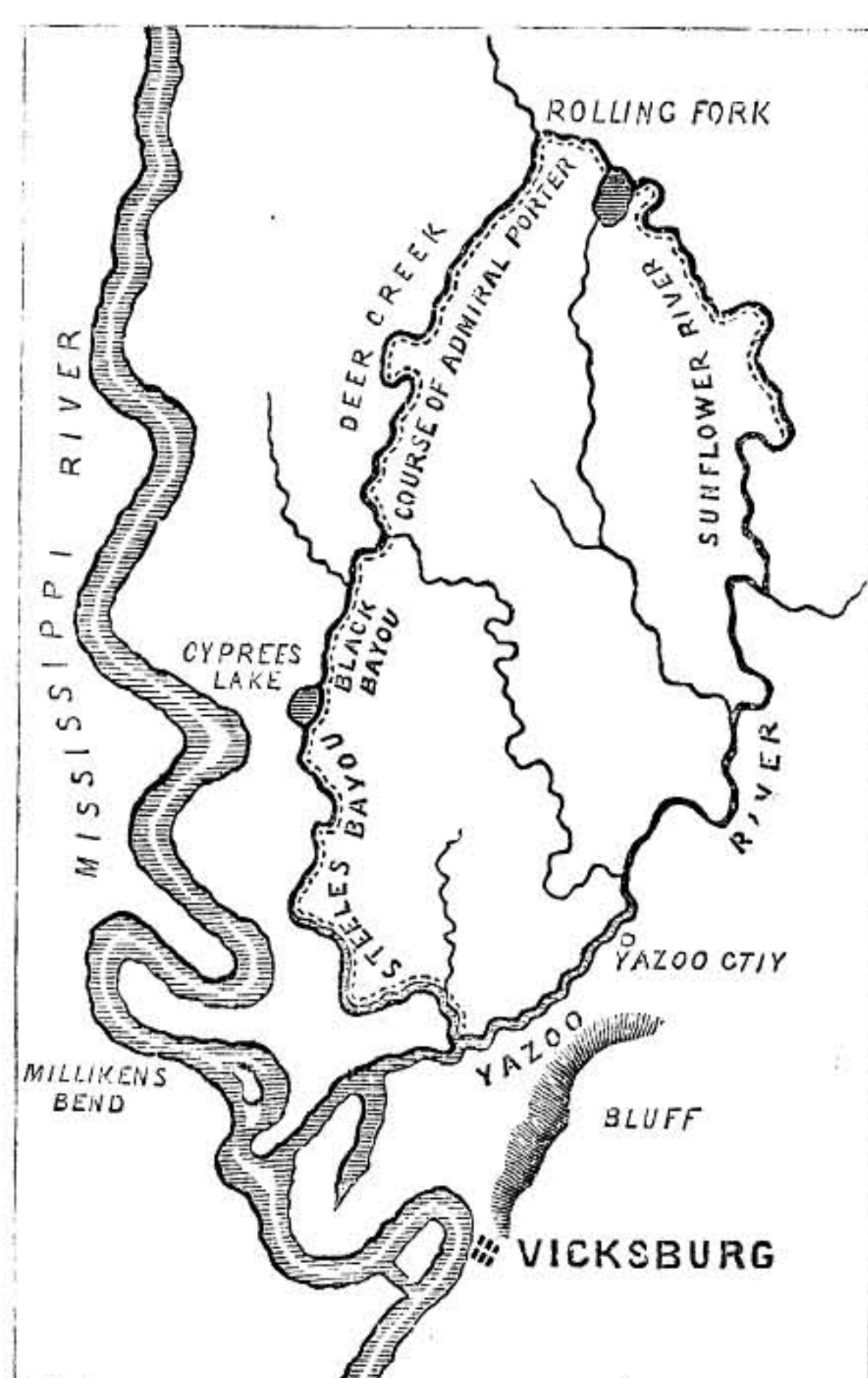
"The control of the Mississippi is almost within our grasp. Even if we have to desolate West Louisiana, we may save the nation. Even if we shall be obliged to leave New Orleans, the removal of a few spadefuls of dirt may give us the outlet to the sea undisputed."

The canal was successfully opened. One steamer and a few barges entered the lake and began to descend the sluggish bayous. But the river persisted in its old course. As the waters of the spring flood fell, the new channel became but a shallow creek, through which the majestic stream scorned to flow. West Louisiana was not flooded, New Orleans was not left to dust and ashes. The Lake Providence canal proved a failure—one of those failures through a series of which keen sagacity and indomitable energy, fruitful in resources and never discouraged, often accomplishes its most signal successes.

There was a third plan to be tried. One hundred and fifty miles north of Vicksburg in an air line, and nearly opposite St. Helena, there is on the eastern shore of the river a sheet of water called Moon Lake. It is separated from the river but by a narrow strip of land, a few hundred yards wide. From this lake a crooked and narrow stream, known as the Ya-



THIRD EXPERIMENT BY MOON LAKE.



FOURTH EXPERIMENT BY STEELE'S BAYOU.

zoo Pass, leads into the Coldwater River. This again enters into the Tallahatchie, which in turn empties into the Yazoo, about seventy miles north of Vicksburg. It was decided to cut a canal into Moon Lake, clear the obstructions from Yazoo Pass, and by this series of streams gain a position in the rear of the rebel fortifications at Haines's Bluff, near the mouth of the Yazoo.

The canal was speedily cut, and the steamboats, entering Moon Lake, commenced their perilous descent through these labyrinthine streams, along which the canoe of the Indian had never yet been paddled. The task was one of extremest difficulty. The crooked channel was overhung by the gigantic branches of cypress and sycamore trees, sweeping low down over the water and rendering the passage almost impossible. Gnarled roots and stumps and snags obstructed the channel. The flood of the swollen Mississippi rushing through the bayous created a swift and dangerous current. Upon these whirling streams the steamers were drifted along, using their paddlewheels only in backing water to check their otherwise too rapid motion. They found it frequently necessary to make an entire stop to remove obstructions. Under these circumstances it is not strange that their

average rate of speed should have been but a mile in three hours and a half.

The expedition succeeded at length in surmounting all obstacles, and passing through the Tallahatchie they entered the Yazoo. Here, in a commanding position, the rebels had erected



EXPLORING A BAYOU.



IN THE SWAMPS.

a fort. Surrounded by illimitable bogs it was impossible to approach these formidable works by land. The wooden gun-boats had but small chance against their formidable batteries. For two days the rebel ramparts were fiercely bombarded from the boats, but it was all in vain. The fort could not be reduced, and it could not be passed. This plan thus had also failed, and the expedition returned to its point of departure.

Weak souls are disheartened by obstacles. Strong ones are only incited by them to more heroic endeavor. General Grant does not appear to have been in the slightest degree discouraged. "Try, try again," was his motto. About seven miles up the Yazoo, from its entrance into the Mississippi, there is the mouth of a stream known as Steele's Bayou. This bayou is connected with a labyrinthine net-work of creeks, called Black Bayou, Rolling Fork, and Sunflower River. These sluggish waters have several entrances into the Yazoo, one of the most important of which is just below Yazoo City. By this succession of streams a complete circuit of Haines's Bluff is made.

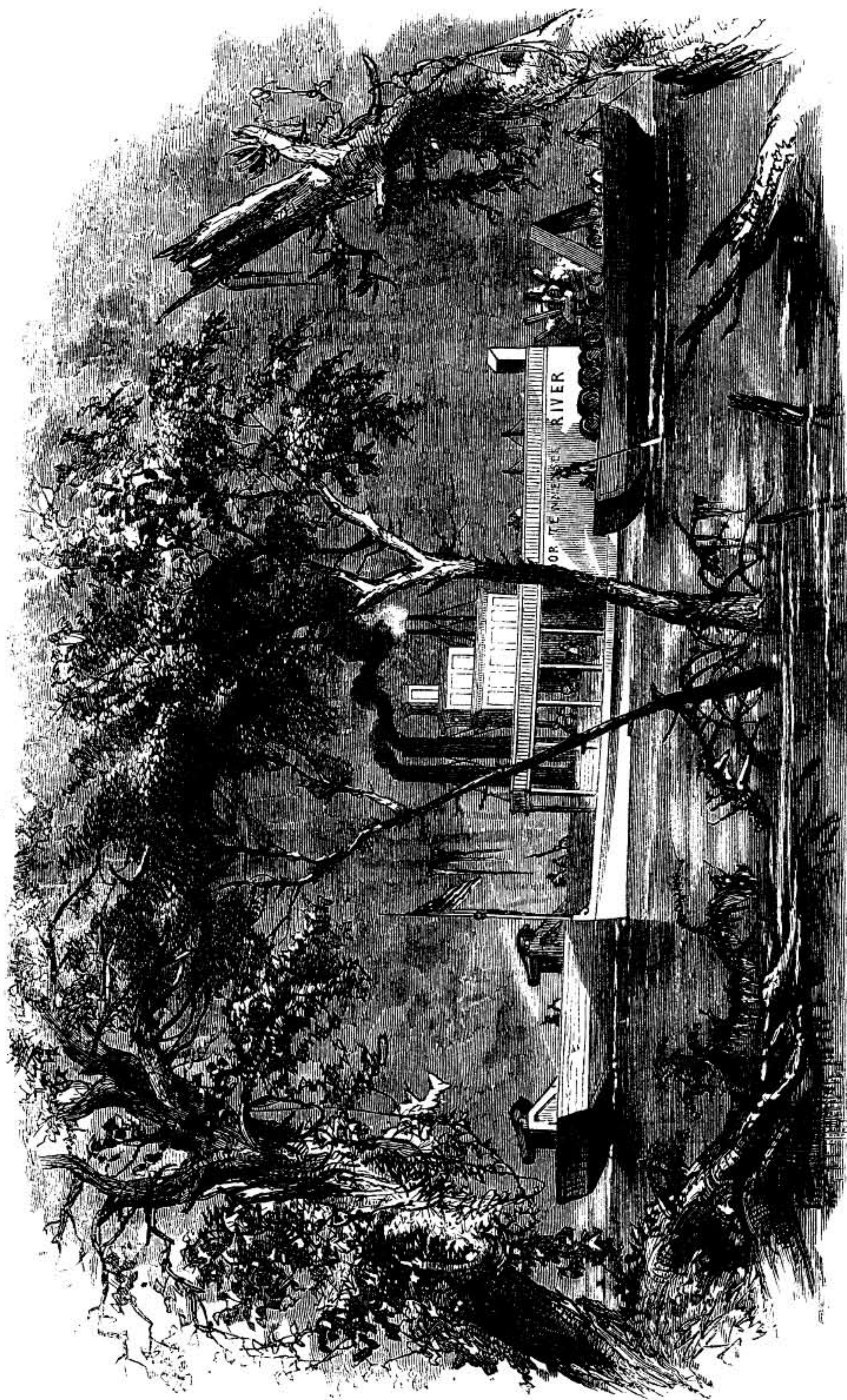
Admiral Porter on the 14th of March started with a gun-boat fleet, determined, if possible, to force a passage through this tortuous, tangled, and hitherto impervious channel, to attain

a position in the rear of the batteries frowning upon the bluffs. The expedition was accompanied by a considerable force of infantry under General Sherman. The progress of the boats was very slow. The Admiral was compelled to cut his way through an almost impenetrable forest. Meanwhile the rebels gathered in force to dispute his advance. Their sharp-shooters, lurking in every thicket, and behind every concealment, threw bullets with unerring aim upon his decks, and upon every working party. They felled huge forest trees across his path to retard his advance, and in the rear of his passage to prevent his return. The danger of being caged and captured in this hideous wilderness became imminent. The expedition had nearly reached the Sunflower River when their peril became manifestly so great that prudence demanded that they should retrace their steps. In safety they accomplished their return. Thus ended the last of these marvelous and heroic attempts to capture Vicksburg by digging canals and traversing bayous.

"What next?" the nation anxiously inquired. "Nothing!" was the response of all timid souls. But this was not General Grant's response. He had put his hand to the plow, and was not disposed to look back. At no time had General Grant depended upon the success of either of these movements. He fully ap-



GUERRILLA ATTACK.



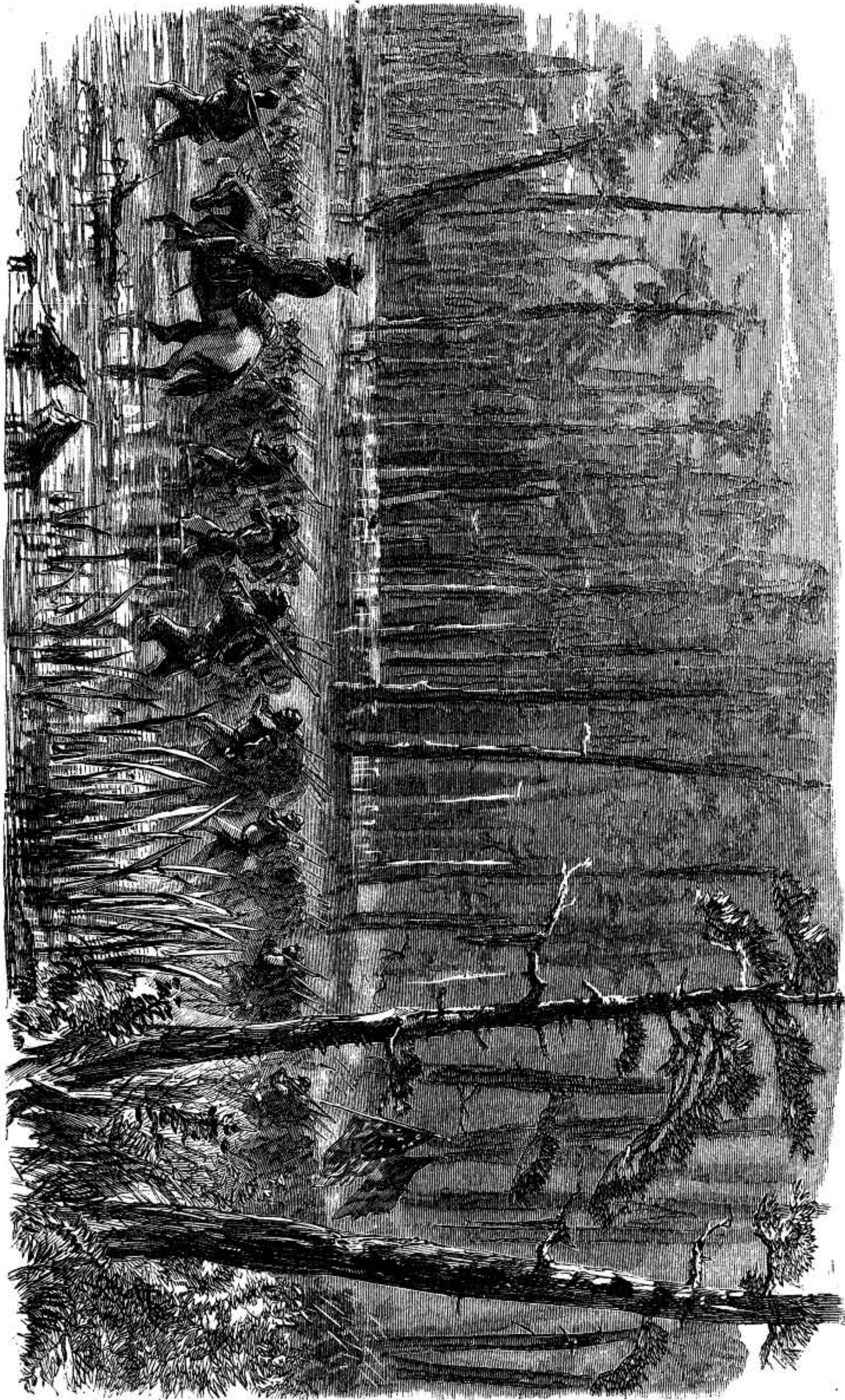
STEAMING THROUGH THE BAYOU.

preciated the philosophy of the declaration of Holy Writ: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not which may prosper, whether this or that." Other plans were already fully matured in his mind. But they could not be consummated until a fall of the water should render it possible for the army to traverse the marshy country on the western banks of the river opposite Vicksburg. In the mean while the measures already attempted, which certainly presented a fair chance of success, served to occupy the army, to engage the thoughts and feed the hopes of the country, always impatient of idleness, and

to divert the attention of the enemy from those designs in which General Grant reposed his ultimate hopes.

General Sherman's desperate assault had demonstrated that Vicksburg could not be taken by a direct attack from the river. The failure of the Yazoo expedition, and the expedition through Steele's Bayou, proved that the fortress could not be approached for assault from the north. One alternative remained. It was to effect the transportation of the troops to some point south of Vicksburg, cross the river, and thus gain a position in the rear. But how could this be accomplished? Some of the gun-boats

MARCH THROUGH THE BOG.



might, by chance, run the terrible batteries; but how could the troops be transported down the river? The attempt to convey transports around the Vicksburg batteries by the Williams's Canal, and by Lake Providence, had both failed. Audacity attempted and accomplished that which the most skillful engineering could not achieve.

As soon as the spring flood had sufficiently fallen to render it possible, General Grant ordered his forces to advance by land through the forest, and threading the edge of the morass on the western shore of the river, entirely concealed from observation, to march from Milliken's Landing above the rebel ramparts to New

Carthage below. In this movement General M'Clermand, with the Eleventh Army Corps, led the advance. It had been necessary to delay this enterprise until the water in the river and the bayous should recede. Still the road was all but impassable. It lay through a vast bog, intersected with numerous bayous half-flooded with water. The heavy artillery wheels cut through the slime and the mud, rendering the path a perfect mortar-bed, through which the men and horses waded knee-deep, and where the hubs of the wheels often disappeared from sight. The advance of the army was found to be utterly impracticable, except by the building

of corduroy roads, cutting outlets for the egress of the water, and bridging the bayous. In fact, the army had to build for itself, under the most difficult circumstances, a military road as it advanced. Twenty miles of levee had to be most carefully guarded lest it should be cut by the enemy, and the whole country flooded.

The vigilant foe got some intimation of this movement, notwithstanding it had been most carefully concealed. As the patriot troops approached New Carthage they found that the rebels had cut the levee, and the surrounding country was so flooded that New Carthage was converted into an island. After ineffectual attempts to bridge the rushing waters, or to cross them in boats, it was found necessary to march in search of some point farther down the river. Inspired rather than discouraged by such obstacles the heroic band pressed on, and after having constructed seventy miles of road, and about two thousand feet of bridging, they reached their final destination.

A considerable part of the army was now south of Vicksburg, but on the wrong side of the river, which here rushed along, a wide, deep, turbid torrent. They had no means of crossing, and as the rebels had a strong array of batteries at Port Hudson, no transports could be sent up the river to their aid. But without transports the river could not be crossed. General Grant was prepared for this emergency. He had resolved to undertake the apparently desperate enterprise of running the terrific batteries with his steamboats.

Three transports and eight gun-boats, in a bend of the river where they were secluded from all observation, were secretly prepared for the trying ordeal. The transports were plain, wooden boats. Speed was essential to their safety, and capaciousness necessary to render them useful should they reach the army below. The boilers were carefully protected by bales of cotton and hay on the side exposed to the batteries. The engines were put in the best possible running order. An ingenious contrivance was adopted to prevent any gleam of the fires from reaching the eyes and guiding the aim of the foe. It was not deemed right to *command* men to engage in an enterprise so desperate, and volunteers were called for. More came forward than could be accepted, and the eager aspirants agreed to abide the decision of the lot. The excitement was intense to see who would be the favored ones. Pilots, engineers, firemen, deck hands, had eagerly proffered their services for one of the most perilous enterprises in which one could engage. One single regiment furnished one hundred and thirty-two such volunteers. The

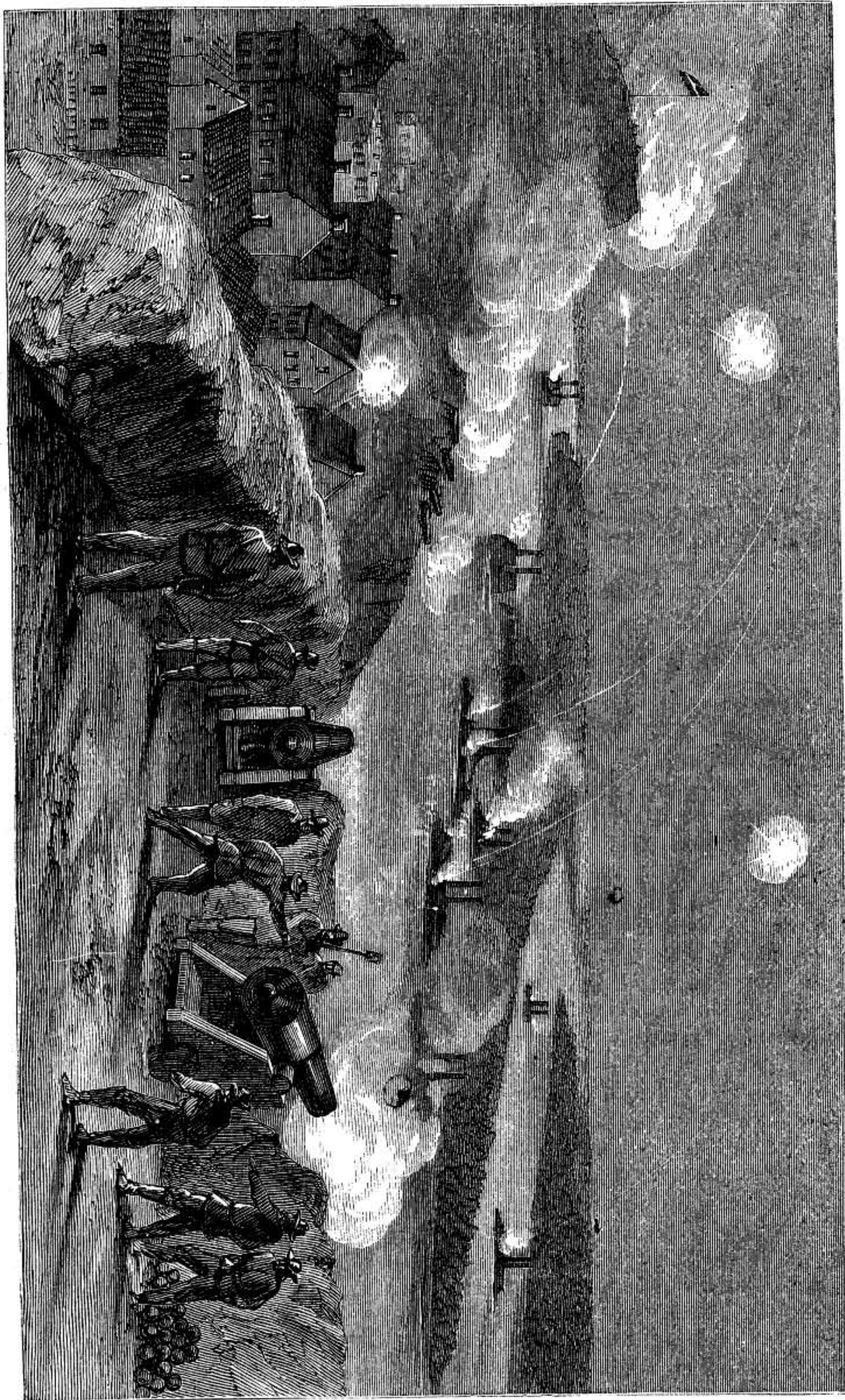


A GENERAL ON DUTY.

contest among them was so great that a boy, who was a successful drawer, was offered one hundred dollars for his place. He rejected the offer, held his post, and passed the batteries in safety. Such was the spirit which animated the American patriots in this war against rebellion.

The plan was for the gun-boats to pass down in single file, and, when opposite the batteries, to open upon them a terrific fire. Under cover of this fire, and sheltered by the gun-boats, the transports were to endeavor to run by unseen. A little before midnight, when most of the lights had disappeared in Vicksburg and silence reigned over both of the camps, the gun-boats, one after another, huge shadowy masses, emerged from their concealment and floated silently down the stream. The patriot army breathlessly watched the movements of these clouds of darkness, from which war's most awful thunders were soon to burst. Three quarters of an hour of silence elapsed, when two flashes from one of the Vicksburg batteries, followed by a roar which shook the hills, announced the opening of the sublime drama. In an instant the whole line of bluffs was ablaze with fire. The three transports, the *Forest Queen*, *Henry Clay*, and *Silver Wave*, were now on the most impetuous rush down the stream. The iron-clad gun-boats lay squarely before the city, from twenty-five guns pouring their storm of shell, grape, and shrapnell direct-

RUNNING THE BATTERIES AT VICKSBURG.



ly into its streets. Suddenly a gleam of light appeared, and an immense bonfire blazed from one of the hills of Vicksburg, converting night into day. The beacon-flame lit up the river so brilliantly that every boat was exposed to the careful aim of the batteries. The first of the transports, the *Forest Queen*, received two shots, which so disabled her that she floated helpless upon the current. She was immediately taken in tow by a gun-boat, and carried without further injury down the stream. The next transport, the *Henry Clay*, was struck by a shell, which set her cotton on fire. The curling flames grew every moment more brilliant, throwing up

huge billows of smoke, and the majestic fabric floated down the stream a mountain of fire. The crew took to their boats and escaped on the western shore. The doomed vessel was burned to the water's edge. The *Silver Wave* ran the fiery gauntlet without being touched. No one on either transport was injured. The whole of the eight gun-boats reached their journey's end without material damage. On the *Benton*, Porter's flag-ship, one man was killed and two wounded. The batteries extended along a line of eight miles. One hour and a quarter was occupied in passing them.

The injuries which the boats received in run-

ning the batteries were speedily repaired by volunteer mechanics, who came forth from the ranks, ready for any work in wood or iron, and who were skillful artisans in all the most difficult departments of mechanics.

"It is a striking feature," says General Grant, "so far as my observation goes, of the present volunteer army of the United States, that there is nothing which men are called upon to do, mechanical or professional, that accomplished adepts can not be found for the duty required in almost every regiment."

The success of this experiment was so gratifying that on the 22d of April six more transports were sent down the stream, towing twelve barges loaded with forage. One of these transports, the *Tigress*, received a shot below the water-line, and sank on the Louisiana shore. The rest, with one-half of the barges, got through with but trifling damage.

On the 29th of April the fleet and army were ready for action. A little below Vicksburg, and on the same side of the river, is the town of Grand Gulf. Here General Grant had expected to effect a landing, and make it, for the time being, the base of his operations against Vicksburg. But the rebels, anticipating the danger, had planted batteries there and dug rifle-pits. It was not, however, supposed that these works were very formidable, but that, under protection of the gun-boats, General Grant would be able to land a sufficient force to carry them by assault. Admiral Porter, with the gun-boats, opened fire on the 29th, and continued the bombardment for five hours. General Grant, who witnessed the battle from a tug in the middle of the stream, says,

"Many times it seemed to me that the gun-boats were within pistol-shot of the enemy's batteries."

The attempt, however, proved unsuccessful. The gun-boats, having exhausted all the energies of valor and of skill, were, a little after noon, compelled to withdraw, leaving the principal battery of the rebels apparently uninjured. During all the time this bombardment was raging the army had been impatiently waiting upon the transports the moment when their advance would be ordered. The withdrawal of the fleet filled them with disappointment, for it seemed that the whole expedition had proved a failure.

General Grant, however, was prepared for this emergency, as he had been for all others. A previous reconnoissance had disclosed a good landing at a point a short distance below, called Bruinsburg. He immediately disembarked his troops, and ordered them to continue their march down the western banks of the river about three miles. Their movement was buried in the forest, so that the foe could not perceive it. That night he ran the Grand Gulf batteries with his transports, and the next morning but one, on the 30th of April, triumphantly, and without the loss of a man, landed the whole force he had with him on the eastern shore of the river.

General Grant himself was the first man to step upon the bank.

One of the ever-friendly negroes was at hand to guide him through this unknown land by a good road from Bruinsburg to Port Gibson, a small town situated back from the river, in a southeasterly direction from Grand Gulf. This movement, in landing one corps of his army, the Thirteenth, under General M'Clermand, on the eastern banks of the river, was bold even to audacity. The enemy were strongly intrenched just above him, in superior force, commanding the river. General Sherman was still left with one corps above Vicksburg, for a purpose which will soon appear. Grant's line of communication was long and liable to attack. All the provisions of his army had to be conveyed by wagons down the western banks of the river, by the military road which he had constructed. The country through which he was to advance was wild, entirely unknown, very sparsely inhabited, full of hills and gloomy ravines, most admirably adapted for defensive warfare. Every thing now depended upon celerity of movement and almost reckless bravery. General Grant ordered his troops to march with as little baggage as possible. He set them the example.

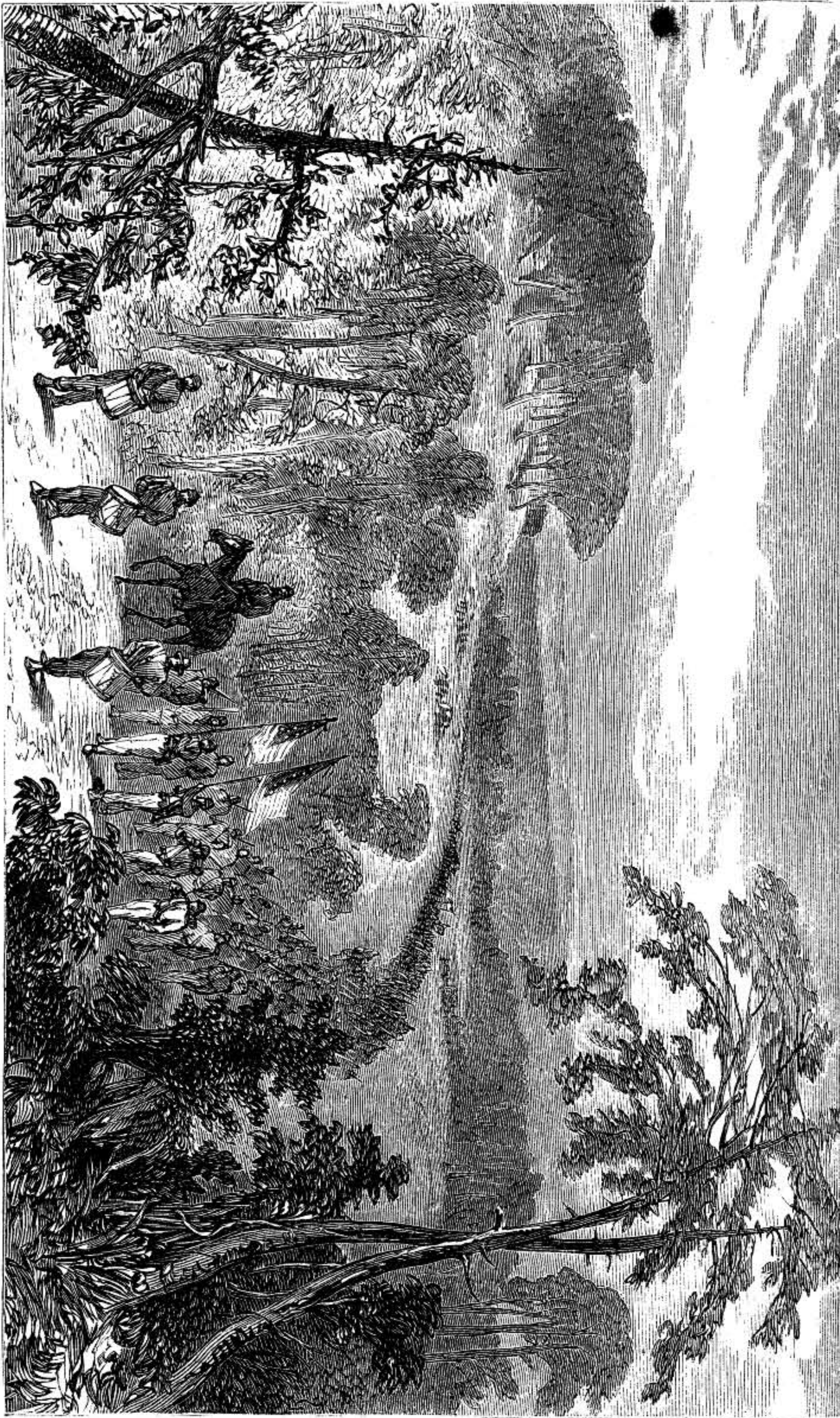
"He took with him," says the Hon. Mr. Washburne, of Illinois, who accompanied the expedition, "neither a horse, nor an orderly, nor a camp chest, nor an over-coat, nor a blanket, nor even a clean shirt. His entire baggage for six days was a tooth-brush. He faréd like the commonest soldier in his command, partaking of his rations and sleeping upon the ground with no covering but the canopy of heaven."

The attention of the main rebel army at Vicksburg was successfully diverted from these operations by the feint of an attack upon their works by the Fifteenth Corps, left behind under the impetuous Sherman. In co-operation with the fleet under Admiral Porter, a vigorous assault was made upon the rebel works at Haines's Bluff, on the 29th and 30th of April, just at the time when General Grant was landing at Bruinsburg. While the fleet opened a fierce bombardment on the batteries, the troops landed under cover of the fire, and made preparations as though to attempt to carry the works by storm. By this ruse the rebels were prevented from sending a combined force to crush General Grant, now advancing from the south. This object being accomplished, General Sherman re-embarked his troops, and following General Grant, marched them rapidly across the peninsula from Milliken's Landing, and down the western banks of the river to the transports. He effected a junction with Grant's main army about the 8th of May.

But General Grant, aware of the importance of the utmost possible celerity in such a movement as he had undertaken, did not wait for the arrival of General Sherman's corps.

"I deemed it a matter of vast importance," he said, "that the highlands should be reached without resistance."

MARCH THROUGH AN UNKNOWN COUNTRY.



He accordingly directed General M'Clermand with his corps to march directly for the interior, so soon as his troops could be provided with three days' rations. He did not even wait for army wagons to be brought across the river. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the 30th of April, the very day on which the troops landed at Bruinsburg, General M'Clermand's corps commenced its march. The road for two miles led along the levee. It then encountered the river bluffs, and, turning to the right, entered a hilly country, broken, precipitous, and rugged. It was the spring of the year, in almost a tropical clime. Beauty bloomed and fragrance was dif-

fused all around them. Flowering shrubs embroidered the hill-sides, and the utmost luxuriance of vegetation, in billows of verdure, feasted the eye. The natural enchantments of the scene were enhanced by the brilliant military array, climbing the hills and threading the valleys in a long line, presenting a scene of wonderful picturesque beauty.

Even the waning day did not arrest their march. Through the still, cool, balmy hours of a brilliant night, they pressed joyously on until 2 o'clock in the morning. They were then brought to a sudden halt by a rebel battery which frowned upon an eminence directly before them.

As in the obscurity of that hour it was not possible to ascertain precisely its position, or the strength of its armament, the army were compelled to wait patiently until morning. The wearied soldiers were soon asleep. The rebel General Bowen had pushed out from his intrenchments at Grand Gulf, and had planted his batteries on these commanding heights, hoping to hold the patriots in check until he could receive reinforcements. But Generals Grant and M'Clermand allowed him no time to strengthen his position or to await his expected aid.

With the earliest dawn the position of the rebels was carefully examined. Again a friendly negro came to our aid. He informed General M'Clermand that the rebels had seized upon a point where the road forked. The two branches, however, leading by routes about two miles apart, both conducted to Port Gibson. The space between the two roads and for miles around was diversified by open fields, thick woods, abrupt hills, and deep ravines. Both of the two roads ran along narrow ridges, where a small force could hold a much larger one at bay. The ravines on either side were filled with thick underbrush, and were almost impassable, affording excellent protection against a flank attack. The rebels occupied both of these roads.

There was manifestly nothing to do but to fight, and that as quickly as possible. The position of the rebels was impregnable by a direct assault. Generals Hovey, Carr, and Smith, under the personal direction of General M'Clermand, attacked upon the right, and steadily forced the enemy back. General Osterhaus led the assault on the left. For a time it required his utmost exertions to hold his own. Soon, however, a division of General M'Pherson's corps, under General Logan of Illinois, came to his aid. Thus reinforced, and leading a gallant charge in person against the foe, he routed the portion of the rebel line against which he advanced, capturing three cannon.

Equally gallant and successful was a charge upon the right, by the Twelfth Division, under General Hovey of Indiana. But no valor exhibited on that day of heroic deeds is more worthy of honorable mention than that of Amos Neagle, a private in the Ninety-seventh Regiment of Illinois Cavalry, who captured the color-bearer and the colors of the Fifteenth Arkansas. The rebel banner was inscribed with the names of four battle-fields, "Oak Hills," "Elkhorn," "Corinth," and "Hatchie Bridge."

The battle occupied much of the day. During the darkness of the succeeding night the rebels retreated, leaving the road open for the march of the patriots to Port Gibson unopposed. The severity of this conflict may be estimated from the loss of the Union troops, which consisted of 130 killed 700 wounded and 3 missing. Five cannon and more than a thousand prisoners were captured from the rebels. Grant's dispatch to the Government, giving an account of the battle, was written by moonlight on the

field. This victory was attended with glorious results. The routed rebels retreated across the Big Black River. Grand Gulf, thus outflanked and no longer tenable, was precipitately abandoned, the guns spiked, and the ammunition destroyed. On the 3d of May the deserted works were taken possession of by the fleet. It became immediately a very important base for General Grant's supplies until his plans for the investment of Vicksburg could be completed.

The rebel army was now divided. General Bowen had retreated across the Big Black River. General Joe Johnston was gathering another rebel army at Jackson, the capital of the State of Mississippi, an important military post situated at the junction of two railroads. The rebels had here large magazines of supplies. General Pemberton was in command at Vicksburg. He was to form a junction with Bowen and assail General Grant in front, while General Johnston, with the large force he was gathering was to fall on the patriot rear. The plan was excellent, but General Grant spoiled its execution. Deceiving his foes into the belief that he was making arrangements to pursue the fugitives across the Big Black, he suddenly and rapidly sent his whole army to the east, moving along the southern bank of the river. At the same time he abandoned his line of communication with the Grand Gulf, depending for the supply of his army upon forage and such stores as he could take with him.

In this advance General M'Pherson's corps took the right, moving directly upon Jackson, by the way of Raymond. Generals Sherman and M'Clermand took the left, keeping close to the Big Black and threatening the railroad between Jackson and Vicksburg. The ferries across the river were closely guarded so as to conceal General Grant's real intentions. These several corps of the patriot army were carefully kept within supporting distance of each other. General Grant's design was to seize the city of Jackson, scatter the army which Johnston was gathering there, and destroy the supplies he had accumulated. Then, having dispersed the one rebel army, he would turn suddenly about and destroy the other at Vicksburg. His plan was good. He accomplished it.

On the 12th of May General Logan came up with the enemy, two brigades strong, three miles in front of the town of Raymond. They were advantageously posted in a piece of timber, but were driven out after some hard fighting. Falling back a little way the rebels re-formed at Farnden's Creek. The banks of the creek were steep, and there was but little water in the channel. In front of the creek there was an open field. The rebels, crouching in this natural rifle-pit, could effectually sweep the approach with their fire, while they were protected.

Here again apparent rashness was the only prudence. A charge was ordered, impetuously made, and after a brief but terrible struggle the rebels were driven from their lurking-place, and were again on the retreat. In this brief, fiery



CROCKER'S CHARGE.

storm of war the patriots lost 69 killed, 341 wounded, and 32 missing.

In Raymond copies of the Jackson papers of the previous day were found, from which the patriots read with amusement that they had been thoroughly defeated at Grand Gulf and Port Gibson, and were falling back to the protection of their gun-boats. The following day General M'Pherson entered Clinton. That night the rain fell in torrents, and continued to fall until noon of the 14th, making the roads very miry. The advance was, however, still continued, and the troops, animated by past success, pushed forward through mud and rain without a murmur.

In the afternoon of the 14th the enemy were again encountered, in line of battle, upon the crest of a hill over which the road passed, about two and a half miles from Jackson. At the foot of this hill there was an open plain which the rebel batteries effectually commanded. After a short artillery duel and some indecisive skirmishing, General Crocker ordered a charge. The patriots, with slow, measured, and resolute step, with banners unfurled and bugle peals, as on dress parade, moved across the plain, and up the hill regardless of volley after volley of death-dealing bullets which greeted their approach. Though great rents were made in their line, and

the dead and the wounded were left strewn along their path, not a foot faltered. It was like the march of a spirit host, whom shot could not terrify and who returned no answering fire. Not until they were within thirty yards of the rebel line did the patriots discharge a gun. Then with unerring aim the whole line flashed with fire; and with a cheer, which burst simultaneously and almost frenziedly from every throat, they rushed, with fixed bayonets, upon the foe.

"Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just." The guilty rebels, desperate men as they were, fighting not to establish but to overthrow free institutions, could not stand the onset, though they had every advantage of preparation and position. Their momentary resistance was swept away by the impetuosity of the charge. Breaking they fled in confusion, leaving a battery of six pieces to fall into the hands of the patriots. The victors pressed joyously forward, and that night occupied Jackson, the capital of Mississippi.

General Grant gave his bewildered foes no time to recover from their consternation. The evening of the capture of Jackson he learned that the rebel General Pemberton was advancing from Vicksburg to attack him in the rear. Leaving General Sherman to destroy the railroads, bridges, and governmental work-shops in Jackson, he immediately faced about with the remainder of his army, and, by converging lines, advanced toward Edwards's Dépôt, two miles east of the Big Black River. At this point the rebels were said to be strongly fortified. The rebel General Johnston, with ten batteries of artillery and twenty-five thousand men, was preparing to descend from the North; and thus General Grant was to be crushed between these two armies. General Grant's salvation depended upon his crushing or dispersing the troops of Pemberton before Johnston should arrive. General Pemberton selected his position with skill, which he had acquired at the expense of the United States at West Point. The main road, by which the patriots must advance, passing over open fields, turned suddenly to the south, and ascended diagonally a heavy swell of land with a precipitous front, called Champion's Hill. The upper side of this road and the crest of the hill was covered with thick timber. Below were open fields. The rebels had stationed themselves under cover of these woods. Their batteries commanded the road and swept the open fields.

Here General Grant came upon the foe, and immediately opened the drama of battle. General Grant was upon the field, and commanded in person. The battle commenced about nine o'clock in the morning. The rebels, massing their forces, hurled them upon the centre of the patriot line, which was under the command of General Hovey. For a time he held his heroic, well-trying troops firm under the tremendous onset. But the fire grew hotter and deadlier. From the concealment of the woods incessant volleys of bullets swept their ranks, and no available shot could be returned. A more ter-

rible musketry fire was perhaps never experienced.

At length General Hovey was compelled to fall back. He did this, however, slowly and in perfect order, as he expected every moment reinforcements. Soon they arrived—General Quimby's division of M'Pherson's corps. Thus strengthened he massed his artillery, concentrated it upon the advancing foe, and brought them to a stand. Just at this moment came the word that General Logan had gained a position on the rebel left, and was threatening their rear. Then the order was given to charge. With a cheer the patriots rushed on, and the rebels were driven back, pell-mell, to their thickets. Onward streamed the victors. The foe, vanquished, bewildered, disheartened, fled from their covert, and disappeared over the brow of the hill. The patriots were soon in possession of Edwards's Station, but not until the retreating rebels had set fire to five car-loads of ammunition, which they had time to destroy but not to remove.

Thus ended the battle of Champion's Hill, or Edwards's Station. It was the most decisive of Grant's battles in his advance on Vicksburg. It really decided the campaign; for Generals Pemberton and Johnston could no longer hope to effect a junction. Over one thousand prisoners and two batteries fell into the Union hands. This great victory, however, was not purchased but at a corresponding price. Nearly one-third of General Hovey's division was placed *hors du combat*. The entire patriot loss was 429 killed, 1842 wounded, and 189 missing.

The next morning, the 17th, General M'Clermand, in hot pursuit of the foe, came upon them in force at the Big Black River. Here the fugitives had made another stand, determined to resist the passage. The position was admirable for the purpose for which it was chosen, and a bloody battle was anticipated. As the patriot troops approached the river over a plain, they found before them a bayou, about twenty feet wide and three feet deep, which with wide protecting sweep encircled a rebel battery of eighteen guns. Just beyond, on a bluff which fringed the farther bank of the river, were seen another array of batteries and of troops. The bayou broke out from the river above the hostile position, and, after the sweep of a mile, entered it below. Both the railroad and turnpike crossed the bayou and the river at this point, upon bridges, side by side. To reach the opposite shore it was necessary to march over the open plain, and cross both the bayou and the river in the face of the rebel batteries.

General M'Clermand immediately commenced an artillery attack upon the rebel position, to which there was a vigorous response. Almost at the first fire General Osterhaus was wounded so as to disable him. General A. L. Lee was assigned temporarily to his command. While this not very effectual conflict was taking place at the centre, General Lawler succeeded in approaching quite near the rebel works on the

right unobserved. Here, casting off their blankets and their knapsacks, and fixing their bayonets, his men rushed from their concealment, passed the open field, and plunged into the stagnant waters of the bayou. A murderous fire of shot and shell was instantly turned upon them, reddening the water with their blood.

But the assault from that direction was so sudden and unlooked-for that the rebel fire was not given with such destructive aim as usual. The bayou was successfully crossed, and the surrender of the rebel works demanded at the point of the bayonet. A score of extemporized white flags rose along the line, and the works were yielded without further resistance. The two bridges spanning the river were destroyed by the rebels before the victorious patriots could cross. But fifteen hundred prisoners with eighteen cannon, beside quite a supply of ammunition and small-arms, fell into the hands of the victors. The Union loss was 373 killed, wounded, and missing.

In the mean time General Sherman had moved to a point above, and crossed the river on the 18th. Thence, turning to the right, he marched for the Yazoo River, so as to come in upon the rear of the rebel works, which five months before he had endeavored in vain to carry by assault in front. Admiral Porter had been already several days in the Yazoo, waiting to co-operate with him in opening a new line of communication with the patriot army.

The rebels now abandoned their position on the Big Black as no longer tenable. General M'Clermand bridged the stream and pressed on toward Vicksburg, turning to the south as he approached the city. On the morning of the 19th the doomed city was completely invested. The national lines extended from the Yazoo above to Warrenton on the Mississippi below. The rebel army were cooped up in their fortress without a possibility of escape.

The memorable events of the siege, which continued for about two months, we have not space to record. All the arts of offensive and defensive war were exhausted by the combatants. The rebels found themselves in a gripe which was daily tightening. Food became scarce. The soldiers were reduced to quarter rations. Ammunition failed. The patriot shot and shell began to explode in the heart of the city itself. The people lived in caves and cellars. Exploding mines opened immense gaps through the rebel ramparts. The 4th of July was now at hand. It was supposed that on that illustrious day the patriots would make their final assault. The weakened and disheartened garrison would be able to present but feeble resistance. On the 3d of July General Pemberton sent two officers with a flag of truce to arrange terms for the capitulation.

"This I do," he said, "though fully able to maintain my position for an indefinite period of time, in order to avoid the further effusion of blood."

General Grant replied: "Your note of this

date, just received, proposes an armistice of several hours for the purpose of arranging terms of capitulation through commissioners to be appointed. The effusion of blood you propose stopping by this course can be ended at any time you may choose by an *unconditional surrender* of the city and garrison. Men who have shown so much endurance and courage as those now in Vicksburg will always challenge the respect of an adversary, and I can assure you will be treated with all the respect due them as prisoners of war. I do not favor the appointing commissioners to arrange terms of capitulation, because I have no other terms than those indicated above."

General Grant was then requested to hold a personal interview with General Pemberton. He consented. At 3 o'clock that afternoon, at a preconcerted signal, General Grant, accompanied by Generals M'Pherson and A. J. Smith, and General Pemberton, accompanied by General Bowen and Colonel Montgomery, stepped out simultaneously from their respective fortifications. They met in an open space between the two lines, under the shade of a gigantic oak. The respective armies, swarming like bees upon their ramparts, watched with intensest interest the interview which involved results so vast. General Pemberton was the first to speak.

"General Grant," said he, "I meet you in order to arrange terms for the capitulation of the city of Vicksburg and its garrison. What terms do you propose?"

"Unconditional surrender!" was the reply.

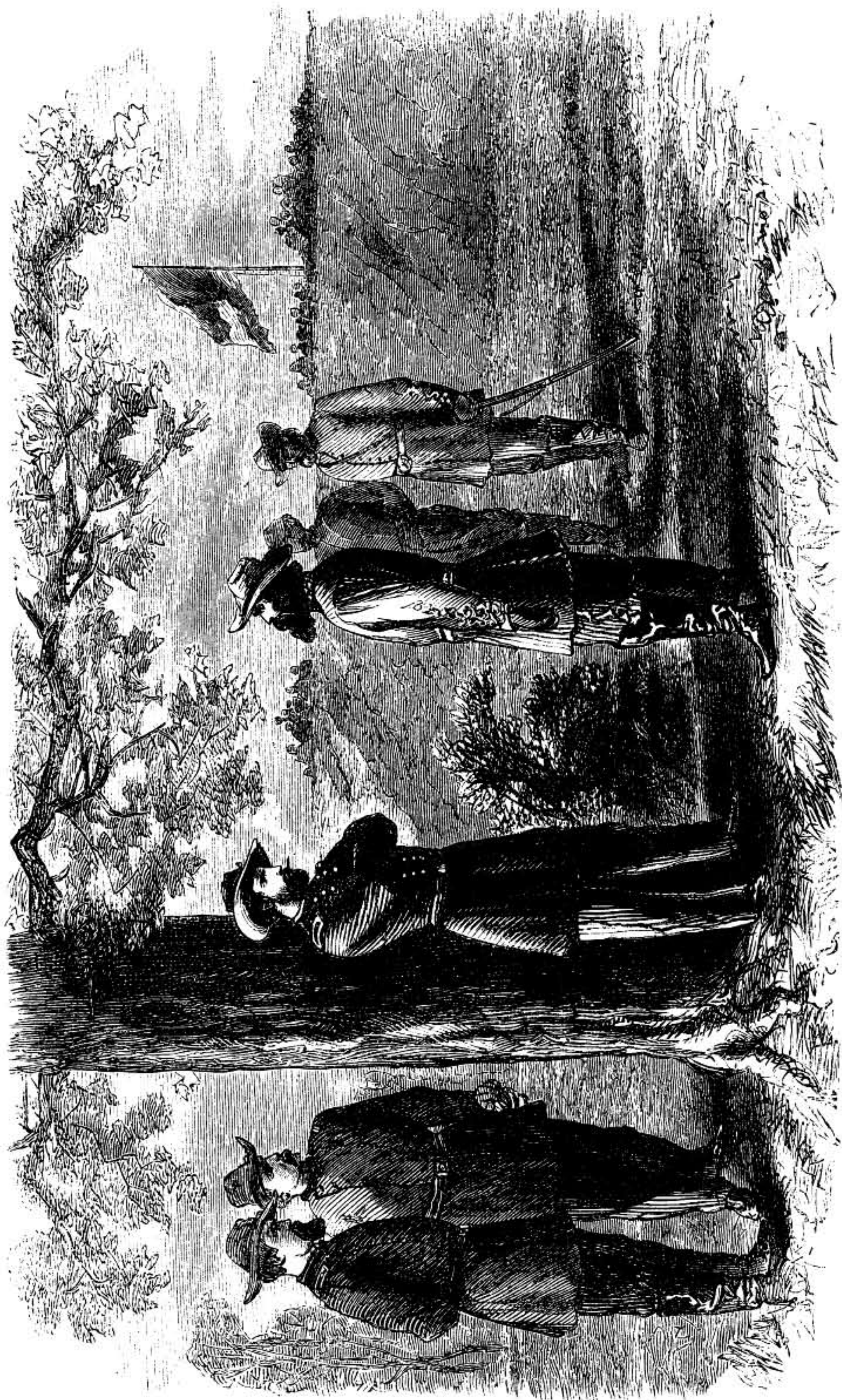
"Unconditional surrender!" repeated General Pemberton. "Never, so long as I have a man left me. I will fight rather."

"Then, Sir," rejoined General Grant, "you can continue the defense. My army has never been in a better condition for the prosecution of the siege."

The two generals, as by a mutually instinctive movement, separated themselves from their companions, and retiring a short distance by themselves, continued the interview. No definite result was reached. It was, however, agreed that General Grant should confer with his officers, and transmit in writing to General Pemberton the terms he would accept. Promptly the note was sent to General Pemberton. It demanded, as ever, the entire surrender of the place, the garrison, and the stores.

"On your accepting the terms proposed," the note stated, "I will march in one division as a guard, and take possession at 8 o'clock to-morrow morning. As soon as paroles can be made out, and signed by the officers and men, you will be allowed to march out of our lines, the officers taking with them their regimental clothing, and staff, field, and cavalry officers one horse each. The rank and file will be allowed all their clothing, but no other property."

Early the next morning, the glorious 4th of July, General Pemberton's reply was returned. He accepted the terms on condition that his troops should be permitted to march out with



THE INTERVIEW BETWEEN GRANT AND PEMBERTON.

their colors and arms, stacking them outside of their works.

Thus, after a campaign really of six months duration, and of nearly two months vigorous siege, the rebel batteries of Vicksburg, which had insolently attempted to rob a nation of the most majestic river on the globe, fell, and the Mississippi was again thrown open for the unrestricted commerce of the United States from Cairo to the Gulf. During the progress of the campaign the rebels were defeated in five battles outside of Vicksburg. Jackson, the capital of the State, as well as Vicksburg, was captured. The enemy lost thirty-seven thousand prisoners,

including fifteen general officers. At least ten thousand were killed and wounded, including Generals Tracy, Tilghman, and Green. Arms and munitions of war for an army of sixty thousand men, besides an immense amount of public property, consisting of railroads, locomotives, cars, steamboats, cotton, etc., fell into the hands of the victors. The total loss of General Grant's army during the campaign, in killed, wounded, and missing, is estimated at eight thousand five hundred and seventy-five. When we contemplate this achievement in all its aspects, it must be admitted that it stands prominent among the most heroic deeds of heroic men.