

The prompt mention in our list of "Books of the Week" will be considered by us an equivalent to their publishers for all volumes received. The interests of our readers will guide us in the selection of works for further notice.

CHANCELLORSVILLE AND GETTYSBURG.*

GENERAL DOUBLEDAY bore a prominent part in the Battle of Gettysburg, where he commanded the First Corps, on July 1st, and a somewhat subordinate part at Chancellorsville, where he commanded one of the divisions which Hooker did not bring into action. He has, therefore, a certain amount of personal knowledge of both battles; but the events of which a corps commander is personally cognizant constitute only a part of any battle and are by no means a sufficient foundation for the history of the whole. Such a history must be based upon a thorough and comprehensive study of all the data available, and, in making this study, the mind must be divested of the prejudices and bias of the exciting days when the events took place. It is evident that General Doubleday has written in no such impartial frame of mind. He conceived certain opinions at the time these battles were fought; he submitted them to the President and Cabinet at that time, and delivered them at length in his testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War; he now reproduces them, nearly twenty years afterward, as history. It is not meant that he especially exaggerates his own part (although his book is not wholly free from that charge), or that he does not state the main facts of both battles; but he writes in the spirit of personal controversy and animosity, rather than in the spirit of history; he frequently distorts the truth by telling only half of it or by giving undue or insufficient prominence to different parts of it; and he has evidently relied upon his own recollection and such data as were available at the close of the war, instead of making a painstaking analysis of the documents now accessible at the War Department, as has been done by his predecessors in this series. For instance, it is hardly sufficient, at this day, in writing a book designed as a standard, to quote the *Comte de Paris* or the author of *Harper's "History of the Great Rebellion"* as authorities, when the original reports can now be consulted at the War Department. To General Doubleday's book, if published independently and under the name of "Memoirs," no objection could be taken except by those affected by his criticisms; but he has taken advantage of this series, the general excellence of which has already gained it the place of a standard authority, to elaborate certain opinions peculiarly his own and not shared by any considerable number of the actors, writers, or students of the Civil War.

It is agreed by common consent that the responsibility for the loss of the battle of Chancellorsville rests upon Hooker to such a degree that all other responsibility is comparatively of minor importance. Hooker had double the force of Lee. He conceived and executed a brilliant move for position preliminary to the battle, and yet he was completely and disgracefully beaten. It has even been gravely discussed whether a large part of his force would not have been captured had Jackson lived two days longer. Hooker lost the battle because on the 1st of May he retreated, without any necessity, from the open ground between the Wilderness and Frederickburg back into the thickets around the Chancellor house, because, on the 2d of May, he sent an absurd order to Sedgwick to join him by a route which was occupied by nearly the whole of Lee's army; because, on the 3d, he allowed himself, in a position where attack was most difficult, to be driven back by an inferior force while 37,000 of his own men lay idle; and because, on the 4th of May, he did absolutely nothing, while Lee took his whole army to overwhelm Sedgwick.

Howard, who commanded the 11th corps, contributed to the disaster, because, on the 2d of May, he neglected, in spite of distinct orders, to take the most ordinary precautions to secure his right flank. Jackson

attacked this flank at dusk, rolled it up and drove the whole corps into utter rout and confusion. These principal facts of the battle are disputed by no one. They show that on each of the four days Hooker's action was the worst possible, and that on one day Howard's neglect entailed the temporary destruction of his corps, which constituted about one-tenth of the whole army. While Howard's action was most justly censurable, yet it is not to be compared in importance with the faults or failings of Hooker. Yet General Doubleday gives such prominence to Howard's error that the reader, trusting to this account alone, would say unhesitatingly that the whole battle was lost by Howard, which is the very reverse of the truth. This distortion becomes all the more glaring when there is reason to believe that Doubleday has a personal jealousy of Howard, growing out of the events at Gettysburg.

The account of this latter battle here given, besides being full of unnecessary sneers at Howard, is flagrantly unjust to Meade. Whether a man of more vigorous nature, like Grant or Sheridan, would not have attacked Lee after his final and unsuccessful assault, or on any one of the following days before Lee reached the Potomac, and what would have been the result of such an attack—this is a proper subject for fair-minded and temperate discussion in any history of this campaign. This discussion should state not only the effect of a successful offensive, but also the direful results which would have followed had the Union commander at that critical moment possessed boldness without skill, or had his movements failed in spite of skill. General Doubleday makes no such discussion, and his naked assertions are not only the reverse of fair-minded, but they are fairly liable to the charge of untruth. He says "we all expected that a grand counter-charge would be made," meaning probably by "we all" the corps commanders; whereas, in fact, the testimony of several of the corps commanders and principal staff-officers was against the propriety of such an attack. He says, again: "Sedgwick told one of his division commanders that it was decided [July 2d] that the army was to retreat on Westminster." Whereas, in April, 1864, Sedgwick testified in these words: "I never heard of any order to retreat until within the last four weeks, and when I first heard it I denied most positively that any such order could have been given."

I do not think he [Meade] ever contemplated any retreat." And, finally, Doubleday makes this deliberate assertion: "There can be no question that, at the council referred to, General Meade did desire to retreat." Whereas, not only is Meade's own testimony most solemn and explicit that he had no idea of retreating, but the testimony of all the officers present at the council, except General Butterfield, is to the same effect.

Against such testimony, and without any reference to it, General Doubleday now asserts his own opinions with the easy assurance that there can be no question about it.

The above passages have been cited to show how little title this book has to be considered as history and how little reliance is to be placed upon it; and we may add that its inaccuracy as to fact and its frequent typographical errors are not relieved by any charm of style or clearness of language. It is thoroughly out of place in this series.

* CHANCELLORSVILLE AND GETTYSBURG. By ARTHUR DOUBLEDAY, Brevet Major-General U. S. A. ("Campaigns of the Civil War," VI.) New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882.