

FROM RECTORTOWN.

The Reception of the News of Gen. McClellan's Removal—The Exploits of Gen. Pleasanton and His Cavalry, &c.

RECTORTOWN, VA., 38 MILES FROM THE POTOMAC, }
SATURDAY EVENING, NOV. 8, 1862.

About 12½ o'clock this morning Gen. BUCKINGHAM arrived here with an order relieving Gen. GEO. B. McCLELLAN of the command of the Army of the Potomac, and substituting Gen. BURNSIDE in his place. Gen. GORMAN and a few other officers were with the Commander at the time of its reception. By daylight it became generally known among the soldiers. The effect of this sudden order was generally good upon officer and private; most of the new troops, and those of the Army of Virginia proper, expressing themselves pleased with the change, while those who served on the Peninsula are, to a certain extent, dissatisfied.

The Staff, as might be expected, make no concealment of their utter disgust with this new order of things, which removes their General, and for a time at least cuts short the military career which they have pursued with so little personal danger. There are some honorable exceptions, but, as a whole, no body of men in the army have been more unpopular. It is a wonder, as a General remarked to me this morning, how the commander should have been so unfortunate in his selections.

Numerous officers have expressed their determination to resign, though they are generally believed to be of that number who are waiting for some pretence for throwing up their commissions. Every one of them who lays down his sword at this critical juncture, thereby demonstrating that he has been fighting for a man and not for his country, should be held up to the public gaze, and receive all the scorn and ignominy which his conduct deserves.

There are many suppositions as to the reason for this sudden removal of Gen. McCLELLAN. My own opinion is that he had been relieved from his command through failure to cooperate in a grand strategic move planned at Washington. You remember of my writing you some time since that he had been ordered to again assume the offensive. Three army corps were reported as unprepared to march from lack of clothing and on account of being cut up so badly at Antietam. Of this number was FITZ-JOHN PORTER'S, which hardly entered that famous fight and suffered but slightly. They could soon be fully equipped,

however. Yet, day after day passed and not the least indications of a movement were apparent. Finally, after the enemy had been engaged for full two weeks in preparing their lines of retreat, the army crossed the Potomac and began the Southward march, the rebels falling back as fast as we advanced.

That Gen. McCLELLAN has endeared himself to his soldiers no one can doubt, but I question whether the affection entertained for him is anything more than all armies cherish for a leader who has been a long time with them. As a disciplinarian and strategist he has excelled, but that he has signally failed in execution, the relative position of our armies as compared with that occupied by them a year ago, fully demonstrates.

Our last letter, describing Gen. PLEASANTON'S achievement, left him Wednesday evening at Barbee's Cross Roads, erroneously spelled "Barbus" in Lloyd's Map. The enemy had been brilliantly routed for the sixth time, and our men encamped for the night. On the morrow they again pushed forward on the road leading into the turnpike which runs from Front Royal to this place. Reaching the Blue Ridge, skirmishers were thrown out in various directions. Gen. PLEASANTON discovered very soon that STUART had laid a trap for him. JACKSON'S force of infantry had retreated to Sandy Hook and Flint Hill. Gen. STUART stationed the main part of his force in Chester Gap, but left a small detachment on the turnpike leading to these places, hoping that our cavalry would be decoyed into following them. Gen. PLEASANTON, however, was too sharp for him, and pursued a direct contrary course.

The skirmishers and pickets were drawn in about 2 o'clock, and he proceeded back through "Barbee" to Orlean, where he encamped for the night. On reaching the Cross-roads it was ascertained that the enemy had suffered much more severely in the fight of the day previous than we had supposed. Over one hundred were killed, wounded and missing. The next day our cavalry proceeded in a southerly course, discovering the baggage wagons of Gen. BURNSIDE at the left. Turning on a road leading to the right of Waterloo, they crossed the Potomac and encountered the enemy's pickets belonging to the Thirteenth North Carolina. A brief skirmish delayed our advance for some twenty minutes, at the end of which time it pushed on to Amissville, reaching that place about noon—the enemy's pickets disappearing as we entered. Three guns were discovered here which STUART had abandoned in the fight of Thursday. An old negro had attached them to his ox-cart, and dragged them away to his barn, where they were found.

There were several cases of small-pox at Amissville. One house, said to contain patients, was broken into, and a large amount of supplies was found belonging to the Confederate Government. Gen. PLEASANTON spent last night here. Early this morning he proceeded several miles out on the Sperryville turnpike, but returned to-night. Thus closes a week of most gallant achievements on the part of our cavalry. STUART'S Cavalry, whom we have been whipping and pursuing all this time, were undoubtedly guarding a long wagon train which was proceeding in a southerly direction. J.