

From Chancellorsville to Gettysburg, A Doctor's Diary

DIARIES written during the Civil War are not rare but a diary by a distinguished scholar who was present at most of the important battles of 1863 is unusual. Dr. Daniel Garrison Brinton, Yale '58, Jefferson Medical College '60, and student at Paris and Heidelberg in 1861, was born at Homestead Farm, Thornbury, Pennsylvania, a property owned by the Brinton family since 1684. He entered the army in August, 1862, and was assigned in February, 1863, as Surgeon-in-Chief of Division to the XI Corps of the Army of the Potomac. With that Corps he saw the desperate fighting at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. Later, he accompanied it to the relief of Chattanooga, and had a fine view of the battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. He continued with the Army of the Cumberland as Medical Director of the XI Corps until April, 1864, when, because of disabilities acquired in the field, he was appointed surgeon in charge of the United States Army General Hospital at Quincy, Illinois, where he served until August 5, 1865.

Dr. Brinton went on to become a noted anthropologist, specializing in the American Indian. He received honorary degrees from Yale and the University of Pennsylvania, as well as numerous citations from learned societies both at home and abroad. A member of the American Philosophical Society from 1869 until his death in 1899, one of its officers most of that time, he also belonged to many other similar societies all over the world. He was a prolific writer on many scholarly subjects and his works on the American Indian are still in demand.

When, in April, 1863, Dr. Brinton joined the Army of the Potomac, the war had been going on for almost exactly two years. General Lee's Army of Virginia, although checked at Antietam, had yet to be beaten. In December, 1862, at Fredericksburg, the most recent important battle in the East, it had bloodily repulsed the Union

Army. After this disaster, General Ambrose Burnside, the Union commander, had been replaced by swashbuckling "Fighting" Joe Hooker, who promised to crush Lee's army. General Hooker's strategy was to threaten to cross the Rappahannock near Fredericksburg, while, at the same time, actually crossing it twenty-seven miles upstream at Kelly's Ford. This move would enable him to envelop Lee's left flank. In accordance with the plan, on April 28 Union troops secured a bridgehead at Kelly's Ford.

By May 1, when Dr. Brinton reached the headquarters of the XI Corps, the Army of the Potomac was firmly established south of the Rappahannock. The main body, around Chancellorsville, pressed Lee's western flank, while a strong force under General John Sedgwick had thrust across the river at Fredericksburg to attack the Confederates from the east. Lee's much smaller army was in so precarious a position that early on May 2 Lee initiated a bold move. He sent General Thomas J. Jackson with a powerful detachment across the front of the Union army to assault its western flank. Because of the heavily wooded countryside, this maneuver went largely unnoticed and its significance was missed.

The XI Corps on the western flank was unprepared for the attack. To make matters worse, its reserves had been detached for action elsewhere. At all events, when Jackson attacked on the evening of May 2, the Corps was shattered. Quick action by other units and darkness eventually checked the Confederate advance. Hooker, however, was badly shaken, and, after some indecisive fighting, retreated north of the Rappahannock a few days later, leaving many of his wounded and much materiel. In the meantime, Sedgwick's force bore the full weight of a major part of Lee's army and was also forced to retire.

After his victory at Chancellorsville, Lee could have remained on the defensive in a fairly secure position. Instead, he chose to attack, hoping to win a decisive victory in the East in order to offset impending disaster in the West, for Grant was closing in for the kill at Vicksburg, the last strong Confederate position on the Mississippi. The Army of Virginia advanced north through the Shenandoah Valley toward Pennsylvania, while the Army of the Potomac marched in the same direction east of the Blue Ridge. A major and decisive battle was inevitable. As the two armies moved along

roughly parallel to each other, numerous small cavalry engagements took place in the area which separated them.

On July 1, the Battle of Gettysburg commenced. The town was at an important road junction, a likely place for the converging armies to clash. Fighting began when forward units collided, and it increased steadily in fury and dimension as the opposing forces concentrated their full strength.

Dr. Brinton's XI Corps had been the second Union corps to arrive. From the top of Cemetery Hill he viewed the deployment of both Union and Confederate forces, a scene of epic drama. General John F. Reynolds, in command of the Union advance units, had been killed early in the battle, and General O. O. Howard of the XI Corps took command, to be superseded later in the day by General Winfield Scott Hancock. The commanding general, General George Gordon Meade, successor to the unfortunate Hooker, came on the ground at 1 A.M. on July 2. Fierce fighting on the flanks took place that day, but the Federal troops could not be dislodged from their strong position on Cemetery Ridge.

Lee, realizing that his position so far from his base was untenable, took the gamble of winning a decision by a massive attack on the Union center. At about 2:30 on the afternoon of July 3, he launched one of the most gallant charges in history. Massed artillery and musket fire shattered its advance, and ended the bloodiest and most noted battle of the war. On July 4, Lee started his long retreat to Virginia, followed cautiously by Meade. It was in the light of such events that Dr. Brinton composed his diary.

Trinity College

D. G. BRINTON THOMPSON

Apr. 24, 1863. Friday
Willard's Hotel,¹ Washington, D. C.

On the 20th of Feb. I was very much & very agreeably surprised at receiving a commission of Surgeon in the Corps of U.S. Vols. My acceptance was dated the next day. It was, I think, the 6th of March

¹ Willard's Hotel on 14th Street, the leading hotel in Washington.

that I received my orders, & the next day, having bidden farewell to Turner's Lane Hospital² I went home.

In company with Sibyla³ and Pap⁴ I went to Phila. in the morning. The day previous I had sent down my mare in charge of Antony, my servant, & then had to forward her to Washington. This, with a visit to Amont & Scott, getting a dozen photographs, and various little necessities occupied me till midnight when I left for Washington.

This morning I called on Dr. Dunster⁵ and Dr. Brinton⁶ (J. H.). The latter was very busy, surrounded by piles of papers and a perfect charnel house assortment of bones—pathological specimens.

By Dr. Dunster, I was presented to Dr. Woodward,⁷ who is engaged on the medical history of the rebellion. He received me affably & took pains to show me the colored & pencil sketches designed to illustrate his work. Some of these are of extraordinary excellence, the artist possessing uncommon talents in this branch. On parting Dr. D. invited me to dine at his mess at five o'clock. My horse was to be here at one p.m. but when I reached the depot I was most disagreeably taken aback to learn from another groom that my colored servant had been stopped in Baltimore & not permitted to come on. For some moments I was quite annoyed. He could neither go back nor forwards, nor could I leave Washington without a pass. Having considered the matter a while I hastened to a livery stable, with some difficulty induced them to send a man to the depot to await the horse, the bill of lading for which I fortunately had in my possession, then went to Dr. Dunster to ask his advice. He finally suggested what I was wishing, viz. that he should procure me citizen's clothes, & that

² The small Turner's Lane Hospital in Philadelphia was reserved for service men with nerve wounds or nervous disorders. Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, author and pioneer neurologist, was one of those in charge.

³ Sibyla Brinton (1840-1905), sister of D. G. Brinton.

⁴ Lewis Brinton (1804-1869), father of D. G. Brinton, resided in West Chester, Pa., at this time. Gilbert Cope and J. W. Schoonover, *The Brinton Genealogy* (Trenton, N. J., 1924).

⁵ Dr. Edward S. Dunster, assistant surgeon attached to the surgeon general's office.

⁶ Dr. John Hill Brinton (1832-1907), cousin of D. G. Brinton, was an 1852 graduate of Jefferson Medical College, and taught there both before and after the war. In 1862, after serving in the field, he was assigned to the surgeon general's office as medical director. Under his supervision, the Army Medical Museum was founded and the *Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion* was begun.

⁷ Dr. Joseph Janvier Woodward of Philadelphia was attached to the surgeon general's office where he assisted Dr. J. H. Brinton with the Medical Museum and had charge of the medical section of the *Medical and Surgical History*.

I should go on to Balt. and bring my servant. With this arrangement I went to the depot & had to wait till nearly four to get the horse, & then make a very hasty toilet & repair to the "mess" to dine. The company was pleasant, all regular army men, and the dinner good. Very fair Madeira and Phila. ale were freely set out & did not detract from the pleasure of the repast. We arranged that the citizens dress should be sent down this evening & that in the first train tomorrow morning I should go to Balt. As I entered the hotel on my return, a corpulent gentleman, brilliant in buttons & bearing captain's passants, [*sic*] accosted me. Notwithstanding the familiarity of his face I could not recall Hickman James's name at the moment. After a few minutes conversation, he mentioned that my servant was outside looking for me. I was very much relieved at this news. Antony had been stopped, had telegraphed me, & had afterwards been passed over the road on the representations of a policeman to whom he had stated his case. Thus the day, which had been one of toil & anxiety to me for the most part, has turned out like a comedy, the banquet being entertained with appetite and good digestion, & the knots of the plot unravelling themselves by way of desert.

Apr. 27. Monday.
Camp at Falmouth Station⁹

The day after my last entry I passed in completing my out fit and the evening with Dr. Brinton. Early the following morning I took the government steamer John Brooks for Acquia creek.¹⁰ It was a clear and calm Sunday. I enjoyed the trip very much. The historic sites of Mount Vernon and the batteries so much talked of a year ago were pointed out to me. At Acquia I met Dr. Herbst¹¹ who was on the lookout for me. With him and Gen. Geary¹² I dined & might have

⁸ Captain Hickman James was no doubt a relative since Brintons and Hickmans were related by marriage.

⁹ Falmouth, Va., was on the north side of the Rappahannock, almost opposite Fredericksburg. Falmouth Station was to its east on the railroad from Acquia.

¹⁰ Acquia, Va., on Acquia Creek where it emptied into the Potomac well south of Washington, was an important military landing place and the northern terminus of the railroad from Richmond.

¹¹ Dr. John E. Herbst, surgeon-in-chief, 2nd Division, XI Corps.

¹² Gen. John W. Geary commanded a division of the XII Corps.

passed a sociable afternoon, had he not received notice that his corps were to march at day break the next morning, in consequence of which he thought it best that I should report at once. He rode part way with me, and then turned me over to a chance guide who was proceeding in that direction on a very diminutive mule loaded with a saddler's horse and a camp stove. He was a butcher in Sickles'¹³ command. It was sunset when I reached headqurs.

April 30. Thursday
Wagon Camp, 5 ms N.W.
of Falmouth

The 11th Corps being on the march I was ordered this morning to go to the Corps hospital, in charge of Dr. Gunkle,¹⁴ near Brooke's Station,¹⁵ & there take the earliest opportunity to rejoin the corps. An ambulance was put at my service. In this I arrived at the hospital about noon in a drizzling rain. There were already two officers there for the same purpose as myself. We learned that the wagon train of the Corps was about 8 ms. ahead. The other two gentlemen—Col. Zook¹⁶ & Dr. Kipp,¹⁷ Asst. Surg. U.S.V. obtained horses from a sutler they knew, and leaving my servant & all my baggage except bedding & a shirt, we all three mounted our horses & went in pursuit of the train. It was 6 P.M. when we left the Corps hospital & night soon fell. It was foggy but there was sufficient moon to show us a dim trail; in fact several trails, quite too many, & had it not been for the luck of meeting some stragglers who set us right we should have had to pass the night in the woods. Nor were we wholly free from apprehension of bushwhackers. About 9 however we safely arrived at the train.

Today we learned that the Chief of Staff of our Corps is with us, about to join his Corps at the earliest opportunity & have been waiting for him all day. We have however just learned that all the pontoons have been taken up at both fords & the artillery returned, so it

¹³ Gen. Daniel E. Sickles (1825-1914) commanded the III Corps.

¹⁴ Dr. W. H. Gunkle, surgeon, XI Corps.

¹⁵ Brooks Station was on the railroad between Acquia and Falmouth at Potomac Creek.

¹⁶ Col. H. M. Zook of the 57th New York Regt.

¹⁷ Dr. Charles J. Kipp, assistant surgeon, XI Corps.

looks as if we were not to get off today. This morning we had one of the little incidents that vary camp life. A soldier convicted of stealing & drunkenness was drummed around camp to the time of the rogue's march, with his misdemeanor stated on a sheet of paper fastened to his back. The weather has been of April character, rain and sunshine alternately.

Hospital, United States Ford¹⁸
Rappahannock
May 4, Monday.

Early on the morning of May day Dr. K. & myself started for corps head quarters with Major Whittlesey of the staff. Our road lay through pine woods, rolling land & deep valleys by Hartwood church¹⁹ over the U.S. Ford, again through 4 or 5 ms of wood to Chancellorsville, Gen. Hooker's head quarters, 2½ ms. beyond which Gen. Howard²⁰ & our head quarters were posted.

The whole road—some 20 odd miles—was filled with wagon trains & infantry moving across the river. The day was very hot for the season, & the road was strewn with overcoats, blankets, & other articles thrown away by the troops in the hurry of march. In other places, where the troops were still encamped they were burning and tearing to pieces such articles, expecting to be soon engaged in the fight which we could already hear commencing on the extreme left. Sadder spectacles than this occasionally presented themselves where some poor fellow worn out by the heat or commencing disease lay helpless and uncared for by the roadside. It was sickening to see how every one passed them without a sympathising look or remark. Yet nothing could be done. Each knew that before sunset his own fate might be far worse.

We met the whole corps some distance beyond the general h.q. and having been introduced to Dr. Suckley²¹ Med. Dir. on horseback we

¹⁸ United States Ford crossed the Rappahannock on the road leading south to Chancellorsville.

¹⁹ Hartwood Church was at a road junction about three and one-half miles north of United States Ford.

²⁰ Gen. O. O. Howard commanded the XI Corps.

²¹ Dr. George Suckley, medical director of the XI Corps.

returned together to Gen. Hooker's. There orders were given that the corps move back to their original position. This was a large open farm of some 300 or 400 ac. of cleared ground around the house. In this latter was H.Q. of Gen. Howard. It was 2 P.M. when we arrived there & having with difficulty obtained food and forage I waited on Dr. S. for orders. He gave me only general directions to attach myself to H.Q. for the time. So I told him I should remain with Dr. K. who was also attached here as Asst. Surgeon of the body guard. With these accordingly we went. About 4 P.M. the skirmishing which in the morning we had heard on our extreme left & which we afterwards learned resulted most disastrously to Syke's²² regulars worked around our way. We replied by shelling the woods & the rebs. returned the fire. Only one of our men was injured however. Our corps was in front on the extreme right. I rested with the detachment of 1st Ind. Cav., Capt. Sherer, which constituted the body guard, in a jutting piece of pine woods about $\frac{1}{4}$ m. from the house. All night the pioneers were busy in throwing up breastworks around the house & running at right angles to the plank road & the next day, May 2, Sat. the work continued. Beyond this there was nothing of interest transpiring in our vicinity. Between us and Hooker's H.Q., Sickles' corps. These were busy skirmishing most of the day, and the H.Q. mentioned was evacuated in the morning on account of the unpleasant frequency of the enemy shells. About 4 P.M. Gen. Howard sent a detachment of nearly half our corps to assist Sickles in gaining a road. We had now kept our horses saddled for 36 hours, acc'y to orders. A silent anxiety was visible in every one, & their mirth was forced. I walked out about 2 hours before sunset to look at our works. They seemed admirably constructed. 2 semicircular earthworks & 2 parallels commanded respectively the two fronts. 3 batteries of artillery, on the heights, raked the low ground. Well, I thought, it won't come today, anyhow. I returned, found we had permission to unsaddle & feed. Scarcely had I given my horse the oats when with a noise like that of falling timber a volley of musketry poured in on our right. It was rapidly followed by others till it was one long roll. We all threw the saddles on without a moments delay and trotted slowly into the open ground. The musketry rapidly ap-

²² Gen. George Sykes commanded a division of the V Corps.

proached, one after another in quick succession the batteries opened, our trot became a gallop & in about 10 minutes the enemy were on the hillside we had left, took every battery, mounted the ill defended breastworks, & our corps was completely routed.

There were two slight attacks from the rebels at this point, our extreme right, during the afternoon—reconnoitering parties—easily repulsed. After each repulse the band in front of Gen. Schurz²³ H.Q. played “lively” national airs. Lucky if band & all like the Roman spectators of the fight of Alaric were not gobbled up.²⁴ Before the terrific rush of 40,000 men under Stonewall²⁵ it is said 2 deer & 1 bear were driven from the thickets at the edge of the “wilderness” & in an agony of terror rushed upon our men in the van of the rebels.

Personally I cannot say I was alarmed, as I saw no immediate reason, but seeing the surgeons generally leaving, I left with them. For the first half mile or mile it was a regular stampede. Then the cavalcade became more composed. We met Gen. Hooker & reinforcements rushing on at the double quick. At the same time the enemy commenced shelling his H.Q.; we passed them at a gallop & arrived in the main road where there was a regular panic. We went on for some miles & then the firing having lessened returned to Hooker’s H.Q. Here we found Gen. Howard & staff, the corps having been wholly routed & the wounded left in the field in the enemy’s hands. We passed the night here amid continual interruptions. About 8 or 9 o’clock P.M. the rebs tried to rout us, attacking in force. We repulsed them & shelled the woods. The shelling was tremendous, unequalled by any this army has seen, say the oldest of our campaigners. The next morning—Sunday—the attack recommenced with fury just after sunrise. We left the front—Dr. K. & myself—& returned to the ford where a large brick mansion had been converted into a hospital. I borrowed a case of instruments & went to work. Not many of the cases were severe, but they were abundant. Here we staid all day, & slept at night under a wagon, the forest burning all round us and the din of battle continually sounding in

²³ Gen. Carl Schurz commanded a division, which included many soldiers of German ancestry, in the XI Corps.

²⁴ A reference to the supposed fate of spectators of Alaric’s capture of Rome in 410 A.D.

²⁵ Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson of the Confederate army was accidentally killed by a Confederate picket in this battle.

our ears. Both the attack on our corps, and the subsequent one on the general H.Q. we afterwards learned from prisoners were conducted by Stonewall Jackson. The prisoners of whom we have many, are principally North Carolinians. The Surgeons are hard at work here today, but are thinning out the wounded by sending them back to the corps hospitals as fast as possible.

H.Q., 1st Div. 11th Corps.
near Brooke's Station, Va.
May 8th, Friday

Monday night I slept again under the medicine wagon & the next morning awoke feeling considerably out of sorts. The diet of raw pork, hard bread and coffee day in and day out was beginning to tell on me. Most of the day I passed at the large brick house we were using as a hospital. Dr. Herbst was there in the morning. Our lines were said to be very strong, yet men were continually at work at the entrenchments. We learned that the attack on Fredericksburg was a failure, that Sedgwick had been driven back with considerable loss, and that now the enemy could concentrate his whole force on us. About 4 P.M. a violent thunder storm came upon us. In a few minutes the ground was flooded & my last night's resting place a mass of mud. While debating where to lay my head we received orders from Dr. Letterman²⁶ to have every wounded man transported across the river & every medicine wagon to cross as soon as possible. Dr. Kipp & I took the hint and saddling our horses, proceeded about dusk toward the ford. As we passed over the flat south of the Rappahannock Gen. Hooker and staff passed us. The General was silent & moody. An orderly rode up & handed him a dispatch. Without a word or a glance he took it, put it in his pocket, & rode on. The pontoon bridge was covered with cedar branches plainly foretelling a silent retreat. The night was dark a cold rain drove in our faces, the roads were rapidly getting cut into deep ruts and gullies. A mile this side of the river we reached the corps hospital. It was a crowded, muddy Dunton wagon-tent. I obtained a stretcher however & passed a night not wholly miserably. When I arose next morning the army was in full

²⁶ Dr. Jonathan Letterman, Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac.

retreat past the tent. It was a wretched day, cold, rainy, & muddy. About 8 A.M. we saddled & pushed on with the rest. The retreat was well conducted but the weather & roads rendered it the most deplorable sight I ever saw. After having missed our road several times Dr. K. & myself reached the Corps' old camp ground at Brooke's Station. I had been ordered by Dr. Thom²⁷ Actg. Med. Dir. of Corps to take charge of the 1st Div. The next day accordingly I hunted up Gen. McLean's²⁸ H.Q. and duly reported myself. I am now in my tent, installed in my duties. Everything is in the utmost confusion as yet, but a few days will suffice to "straighten them out." Our position is about a mile from the station, on a high hill overlooking the hospital of the Corps. In this there are 1300 patients, about 500 of whom are wounded, the rest sick.

Same

May 10, 1863, Sunday

This morning I attended divine services at Gen. Howard's head Q. & there listened to a discourse from some army chaplain, not however, of a very fecund mind. Much better am I satisfied with the study of the library I brought with me, which affords a next to inexhaustive supply of mental pabulum. To be sure it consists of but 4 volumes but these are quite enough to busy one for a long time. The Bible, The Army Regulations, Sartor Resartus, and W. von Humboldt's *Briefe an eine Freundin*.²⁹ With these I flatter myself I can hardly be at lack either for something to read or something to think.

Same

Wednesday, May 13, 1863

I write to day not so much because I have any adventures to recount, but because it is my birth day. Our life here is for the moment one of rest. With my associates I have as yet no intimacy, but I am

²⁷ Dr. W. H. Thom had been Medical Director of the 1st Division, XI Corps.

²⁸ Gen. Nathaniel C. McLean commanded the 1st Division of the XI Corps.

²⁹ *Sartor Resartus* by Thomas Carlyle, and *Letters to a Lady Friend* by Wilhelm von Humboldt.

glad of the opportunity to become better acquainted with myself. It is a sort of substitute for the life I talked of once last winter, up in the north woods. Nature here offers few attractions & the desolations of war are painfully visible. Worse still every spot, no matter how secluded, is profaned & defiled, by the soldiery. Little does it present therefore, for quiet walks & shady nooks. The sky they do not reach however, and the sunset and the star sown firmament are as holy as ever. Properly employed, such times of ease & quiet—of idleness, as it seems, are our only periods of real employment, of lasting gain. It is of value, therefore, to have such crossroads & stopping places as to day, to weigh well the best means of employing such leisure and consider where we most need such aid & improvement.

Same
Monday, May 18, 1863

Little or nothing has occurred to interrupt the monotony of Camp life since my last entry. Rumors we have in abundance, but this is all. Several of our surgeons, who were captured at the battle of Chancellorsville have returned. They speak very favorably of their treatment, & all are deeply impressed with the ardor of the enemy, & their invincible determination to hold out to the end.

Hdqrs. 2nd Division
Friday June 5

The week has passed quietly enough till night before last. I had been up later than usual & it was about midnight ere I put out my light & disposed myself for a comfortable rest. Vain illusion! Hardly had I closed my eyes, when Capt. Stowe, (son of Mrs. H. B. Stowe),³⁰ A.A.G. thrust his head in my tent & cried "Hello, Doctor, get up & pack your things, we have just got a telegraph from Gen. Hooker, to prepare for marching at once & have the Division drawn up under arms & in line of battle by daylight." I stuffed my valise, & mindful

³⁰ Capt. Fred William Stowe, son of Harriet Beecher Stowe, the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

of the value of sleep, took another nap till daybreak, when I got up, found a general bustle, and the pioneers ready to strike the tent. Then came an order for the men to go back to their camps, but to hold themselves in readiness to start at once. Everything was quiet all day, & we made up our minds it was only discipline, but this morning came another order to send all superfluous baggage to the rear, & have three days cooked provisions on hand. At 4½ this afternoon, firing was heard in the direction of Fredericksburg. We counted 20 artillery reports the minute. Some say the 1st Corps crossed 2 miles below but a despatch to the General says it was our batteries bombarding the town. We expect brisk work shortly. The division is very bad [*sic*] off for surgeons & I am in great straits in consequence.

Same
Sunday, June 7.

Still here, though the signs of war are hourly thickening. Yesterday at 2 P.M. came a despatch that the 33 Mass. Col. Underwood³¹ com. should be ready to march at 4 o'clock with 3 dys rations, 150 rounds of cartridges and empty knapsacks. It was to form part of a detachment of 2000 infantry under Gen. Ames,³² composed of picked men able to march 18 ms. per day. Its destination was unknown. A little before five they passed our headquarters, the band playing an inspiring air, & took the road towards the upper fords, in the teeth of an opening thunder storm. 2000 cavalry & several batteries of artillery were to join it in advance. In the evening came another urgent order to be ready to march at the shortest notice. This was our condition on going to bed. At 3 A.M. I was awakened by the gallop of a horse close to my tent, & calls for the A.A.G. It proved to be Lt. Col. Faulkner, 136 N.Y. who came to inform us that the "long roll" was beating in the 12th Corps, signifying a real or supposed attack. We slept, however, peacefully till morning, & decided it was probably a false alarm. To day came advices from Col. Underwood that he marched 18 ms. to Spotted Tavern, & there bivouacked, the men in good condition. This is beyond Hartwood church on the road

³¹ Col. Adin Ballou Underwood.

³² Gen. Adelbert Ames commanded the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division, XI Corps.

to Kelly's Ford. The General's family left us to day, and we are in perfect readiness, as far as I can learn, to march at any moment. The first & sixth Corps are said to be already over the river at & near Fredericksburg. I obtained a case of pocket instruments to day from Acquia Creek. I have rec'd no orders about the sick in reg'tal hospitals. Surg. Geo. Suckley U.S.V. has resumed the Med. Directorship of the Corps.

Hdqrs. 2nd Div. in the field
near Brooke's Run, Va.³³
Sunday, June 14, 1863

About 10 A.M. on Friday the 12th came a despatch that we should be ready to proceed to Catlett's Station³⁴ at 1 P.M. This was 27 miles. Tents were quickly struck, valises packed, a hasty dinner eaten & horses saddled. At the hour indicated we commenced our march taking the road to Hartwood church. The day was warm and the number of cases of sunstroke said to be quite large. On the road I received orders for arrangement of Division in case of battle. About sunset we reached Hartwood church & established the headquarters in a farm house near by. After long waiting we were served with a tolerably good supper, & the night I passed not uncomfortably on a sofa. At 3½ o'clock the next morning we were aroused by the reveille & as we were under orders to march at 4½ we got up & looked about for breakfast. Such a phenomenon not being observed we made a hasty lunch on a cup of coffee and a cracker & mounted. We experienced considerable delay in getting under way & the sun was well up ere we were fairly *en route*. The day was exceedingly hot & owing to the prolonged drought, not only was the dust most annoying but for miles we travelled without finding an opportunity either to get water for ourselves or horses. The country we passed through was better cultivated & the land richer than any I have yet

³³ From the text and from maps it would seem that Dr. Brinton meant either Broad Run or Bull Run. Brooke's Run may have been so small as not to appear on most maps.

³⁴ Catlett's Station, Va., was on the Orange & Alexandria Railroad a little north of Warrenton Junction, which lay a few miles east of Warrenton. This line was the main rail connection between Washington and the South.

seen in Va. Very few crops were in the ground, principally rye. The fences were largely destroyed & in no house could we obtain anything to eat. This was doubly annoying as through a mistake all our food had been left behind with the train. At noon I dined off one cracker, but as in the course of the day we had half captured half purchased a small pig and a couple of chickens, the prospect of a good supper upheld me. About sunset we reached a spot one mile from Catlett's station, on the banks of Cedar Run, having marched 17 miles. During the afternoon we heard sounds which some attributed to thunder, some to artillery. The night promised rain, but passed off dry. Our supper was not what we expected but a good night's rest in an ambulance & a hearty breakfast prepared us for another day's march. We got under way at about ten o'clock the orders having been delayed. While crossing the plains of Manassas a brigade of flying artillery dashed past us at full speed. The dry red soil, parched by the excessive drought, flew up in such clouds of dust as I never before thought possible. It lay like a dense fog around us. Having crossed the plain we were overtaken by the night. The march though not long had been excessively trying on the men owing to the lack of water. We were under orders to reach Centreville³⁵ that night but it soon became so dark that further marching was impossible. Accordingly we camped on the banks of Broad run in a very uncomfortable position & had a brief & broken nights rest, getting up again at 3 A.M.

H.Q. 2nd Division

In the field on Goose Creek, Va.³⁶

June 17, 1863. Wednesday

We were now three miles from Centreville. Monday was very hot. We made the distance however with some comfort & came into camp S.W. of the little town. I passed a couple of hours in the morning in riding around, looking at a scene of which I had heard so much. Directly in front of us lay the Battlefield of Bull Run, extensive fortifications surround the town, which, for this very reason, has

³⁵ Centreville, Va., about 20 miles due west of Alexandria.

³⁶ Goose Creek flowed into the Potomac about twenty-five miles above Washington.

never been the scene of a conflict. In the afternoon I felt the consequence of my imprudent exposure in a headache which lasted nearly 48 hours. Fortunately we did not move on Tuesday thus giving us time to rest. On the day we learned the startling news that the enemy was in Pennsylvania in force, that Milroy³⁷ had been driven from the Shenandoah with the loss of 2000 men, & that a rebel force was at no great distance from us, at Thoroughfare gap.³⁸ We were not surprised therefore to receive orders to be ready to March at 2 A.M. this morning. Four hours sleep and we were ready for the saddle but not till after three did we finally start. The road led N. & N.W. toward Leesburg³⁹ and we pushed on in such haste that by 8 o'clock we had made Green Springs 12 ms. from Centreville. Here a hospitable Virginian regaled me with curdled milk, cottage cheese, and very good bread. It is a small village, pleasantly located. Our noon halt was at Mount Hope Village. Here to our astonishment we found a village school in full blast & our staff dined in the house of the Schoolma'am. She was a woman of strong character & with all around her of most decided secession sentiments. We talked with the school children & found they were quite as determined as their parents. One little girl not over ten or 12 quoted fluently various texts of scripture, referring to chapter & verse, showing by prophecy & precept that the north was wrong & destined to a speedy & final discomfiture. Hosea Rev. 2.32

"And I shall remove the armies of the
north far from her
For she is a harlot & the mother of
abomination."

All looked with great curiosity at Yankees, as no army had taken that road for a long time.

A rebel mail was captured during the day, containing nothing of importance. Several citizens were arrested but none found in arms. Our camp is on the west bank of Goose creek—a stream about twice

³⁷ Gen. Robert H. Milroy commanded a Union force in the Shenandoah Valley.

³⁸ Thoroughfare Gap was due west of Manassas Junction in the Bull Run Mountains, which lay some fifteen miles to the east of and parallel to the Blue Ridge.

³⁹ Leesburg, Va., about five miles south of the Potomac, was the western terminus of a railroad from Alexandria.

as large as the Brandywine. The country through which we passed was of good character, the crops in the ground & the fences standing. It is by far the best portion of Va. I have as yet seen. This afternoon cannonading was heard in the vicinity of Aldie⁴⁰ where we suppose the 1st Corps to have gone. Our march to day was not over 17 ms, but owing to the great heat and the rapidity with which a portion of it was executed, many men gave out and considerable complaining reached my ears. As for myself, I felt better than I have done for several days, largely owing no doubt to the fact that we have had more to eat than usual.

Same
June 19, Friday

Our present headquarters are in a house half log half frame, & around it we have pitched a few tents. In the afternoon a gust came over us, cooling the air, & laying the dust, a most refreshing event, as it was the first rain we have had for nearly a month. To day has likewise been cloudy. In the morning artillery fire was heard in the direction of the road from Aldie to Snicker's gap.⁴¹ We imputed it to Pleasonton's Cavalry.⁴² Our picket lines are observed with great strictness, no citizens allowed to go outside, & all approaching them are arrested. The number includes several women, some neither old nor ugly. The enemy has scouts & spies all around us. Lieut. Miller 1st Ind. Cav. was shot at yesterday by a bushwhacker, and to day there is a rumor, doubtful however, that four of our stragglers were found in the woods with their throats cut.

Same
Sunday, June 21

The creek rose so rapidly yesterday morning that at 4 A.M. the bridge was taken up & the 2nd Brigade brought over this side. It fell however in the course of the day and a more permanent structure

⁴⁰ Aldie, Va., some ten miles south of Leesburg.

⁴¹ Snicker's Gap, a pass in the Blue Ridge west of Leesburg.

⁴² Gen. Alfred Pleasonton commanded the Federal cavalry. During the march north, his troops were constantly skirmishing with Confederate cavalry.

was commenced. Night before last through some error one of the 73 Ohio was shot by our own pickets. He lived till noon of the same day. The wound was in the abdomen.

Foraging parties went out yesterday bringing in horses & hay & some sheep. The latter made a very pleasant change on our bill of fare. To day at 9 A.M. sharp cannonading commenced & continued without intermission till 6 P.M. Volleys [*sic*] of musketry could also be distinguished at first, but as the day wore on the firing seemed to be more and more removed. Instead of the village bells that call to church, this grim music has rung in our ears all day long, this quiet summer sabbath. At noon a despatch from Gen Hooker informed us that it was Pleasonton's cavalry, supported by 2 brigades of infantry ordered to attack the enemy near Aldie. We judge the result to be favorable.

Headquarters 2nd Div. 11th Corps.
Near Jefferson, Frederick Co.,⁴³
Maryland, Thursday, June 25, 1863.

Yesterday morning, just as we had almost concluded that we were going to remain on Goose creek indefinitely came an order to march. At 11½ A.M. we took up our line, following a road through the woods northward 4 miles to Edward's Ferry, at the junction of Goose creek & the Potomac. It took us nearly four hours to make this short course owing to frequent delays. Our tents were pitched in a cloverfield S. of the river & E. of the creek. Over both of these a pontoon bridge was thrown so that the transport of our artillery etc. could proceed without difficulty. This morning we were called out by 5 o'clock. The sun rose red as opal and its burning rays fell through a motionless atmosphere. We again brought up the rear, crossing the river immediately after the cannon. No sooner had we reached the soil of Maryland than a marked improvement became visible in the agriculture, the size of the barns & the taste of the houses & their environs. A few miles north of the ford is Poolesville; there we had a good breakfast in the house of a brother disciple of Aesculapius,⁴⁴ who we afterwards learned, was, with every body else

⁴³ Jefferson, Md., a small town not far from the Potomac.

⁴⁴ Aesculapius was the Roman god of medicine.

in this small & sleepy little place, a rank secessionist. The town contains some score of houses, mostly small, old fashioned, brick dwellings. At noon we crossed the Monocacy⁴⁵ at the Aqueduct. About 4 o'clock we halted near a church occupied by a company of cavalry. It was rather a neat, and well appointed rural church, the pulpit & chancel ornamented with red plush, bibles, prayer books and hymn books in number lying in the pews. To all the solemn & sacred associations that these called forth the sight of saddles, bridles, sabres, and horse blankets scattered about the pews, soldiers lying about the seats smoking, joking, and swearing, the churchyard around with its graves & monuments turned into a horse yard & slaughter pen for killing sheep, these offered a strange & novel contrast. While here a drizzling rain commenced which continued till night.

Hdqrs 2nd Division
South Mountain, Boonsboro' Pass.⁴⁶
June 27, 1863. Saturday

At nine o'clock yesterday we received marching orders, to proceed to Middletown.⁴⁷ It was only a distance of six miles, but it required about 4 hours to go this distance on account of numerous delays. The road lay through a portion of country that I have never seen surpassed for neatness & high cultivation. I had no idea that such a section existed in Maryland. It is a continuation of the valley east of the mountain that presents the same characteristics in Pennsylvania and is settled by the descendants of the same German stock. They are mostly Lutheran reformed in Sect. German is spoken but not to much extent. The barns are large & it is essentially a grain country, more than half the land being in grain. We are now in a country filled with prowling guerilla bands and we are on the extreme advance. This morning at 9 we came on 4 miles further to take pos-

⁴⁵ The Monocacy River flowed south across Maryland into the Potomac.

⁴⁶ South Mountain extended in a northerly direction across Maryland into Pennsylvania. Boonsboro, Md., was about five miles from the Potomac and just west of a pass in South Mountain.

⁴⁷ Middletown, Md., on Catocin Creek, six miles north of the Potomac and east of South Mountain.

session of the Pass over South Mountain leading to Boonsboro & on the summit of this pass, at a public house our headquarters are situated. It is the scene of the battle of South Mountain fought last summer, & 3 ms. from the ground of Antietam. Near by is a lofty ridge offering a beautiful view E. & W. over the Cumberland & Middletown vallies, one of the most lovely & peaceable landscapes I ever beheld. Yet now it is a scene of war & terror. Fleeing citizens pass hourly & great complaints are made of the ravages of the rebel cavalry. Only yesterday the rear guard of Lee & the general himself left Hagerstown.⁴⁸ The force already gone north is estimated at not less than 75,000. Bloody work is anticipated. Less actual damage is done by the rebels than one might suppose.

Hdqrt. 2nd Div. 11 corps
Camp near Emmitsburg, Md.⁴⁹
Monday, June 29, 1863.

Near the middle of the afternoon orders came to break up camp instantly. By this time we have learned the art of packing up & do it with commendable address, so in half an hour, with a feeling almost sad we left this mountain region, to return to the plain by the road we came. On reaching Middletown, we found the street blocked up by a double row of wagons, & a regiment of cavalry. With considerable difficulty we made our way through on the Frederick⁵⁰ city road, where a repetition of the same chaos met us. Drove of cattle, ammunition & supply trains, squadrons of cavalry, stragglers of all sorts, obstructed our progress all the way to Frederick, some 15 ms. When we got there, it was after 10, & we had no supper until 11½. Our quarters were in an enormous farmhouse, attached to which were two huge barns. The farmer received us well, & brought up from his cellar a pitcher of excellent old rye whiskey for our solace. I was very much fatigued & as we had orders to march at 4 A.M. without so much as taking off boots or spurs, I threw myself on a

⁴⁸ Hagerstown was one of the principal towns of Western Maryland and the southern terminus of a railroad from Harrisburg.

⁴⁹ Emmitsburg, Md., was close to the Pennsylvania border on the road to Gettysburg.

⁵⁰ Frederick, Md., an important town due south of Emmitsburg.

setee & slept a few hours. The infantry did not get to camp before midnight, & as by daybreak next morning they were hastened into line without breakfast, to march through a drizzling rain, over a greasy clay road, their exhaustion was great. From Frederick to this place, our route lay through a thickly populated & highly cultivated country, though not equal to that near Frederick & Middletown. As we approached Emmitsburg, the stately structures of Mount St. Mary's College, on the side of the mountain of that name overlooking the plain, is a conspicuous object, & near the village itself, stands the extensive & tasteful edifice belonging to the Sisters of Charity. The town itself was nearly half destroyed by fire a fortnight ago—through accident—and the ruinous walls offer a sad spectacle. The inhabs. manifested a pleasing enthusiasm at our coming, & several of us were recipients of bouquets from the ladies. We were in camp by 4½ P.M. having marched 38 miles in 24 hours, a march under the circumstances not surpassed in this war. In the evening I passed through the regiments, & found the men had stood it better than one could have expected, though they were in no very good humor.

Hdqu 2nd Div. Camp at
Horner's Mills
July 5—1863 Sunday

The battle of Gettysburg, the first & only victory that has been achieved by the army of the Potomac, is now over, & we are in hot pursuit. We marched the next morning [*June 30*] across the line once more into Pa. Shortly after we had passed an aid came from Gen. Howard that we should proceed without rest, & quickly. It was nigh noon as we reached the heights above Gettysburg, where the cemetery is located. It commanded a magnificent view of the whole scene. Already the battle was going on briskly on our left. Gen. Reynolds was already killed, & Howard had for the time assumed his position. The smoke of batteries, the marching of infantry, & the evolutions of cavalry going on in such a grand scale in the plain below us were watched with the keenest interest. I was in several parts of the field,

watching the engagement. One of the most interesting spectacles was the long line of Longstreet's skirmishers, some 2 miles in length, advancing against our left. During the day the medical officers were busily engaged in choosing and arranging a hospital. Its location was altered twice owing to the approaching fire of the enemy, but finally it was definitely established in a large barn 1 mile back from the cemetery. The wounded soon began to pour in, giving us such sufficient occupation that from the 1st of July till the afternoon of the fifth, I was not absent from the hospital more than once and then but for an hour or two. Very hard work it was, too, & little sleep fell to our share. Four operating tables were going night and day. On the 4th of July, which in its surroundings gloomy enough, was enlivened by our belief that we had gained a victory, the number in the hospital was 1000. A heavy rain came over in the afternoon and as we had laid many in spots without shelter some indeed in the barnyard where the foul water oozed up into their undressed wounds, the sight was harassing in the extreme. We worked with little intermission, & with a minimum amount of sleep. On one day I arose at 2 AM & worked incessantly till midnight. I doubt if ever I worked harder at a more disagreeable occupation. On the afternoon of the 3rd we were exposed to a sharp fire of shells. Several horses & one man were killed close to the hospital. Shells fell within 20 ft of the room where we were, and we were much in fear that the barn would blaze, which would have been an unspeakably frightful casualty. Fortunately we did not have this to record. Among our wounded were three Colonels, Gen. Barlow,⁵¹ & Gen. Armistead⁵² of the rebel army a fine man, intelligent & refined.

What I saw of the fight was consequently little, but our anxiety was correspondingly great. On Sunday, a rainy, sloppy day, we were informed that the corps had received marching orders, so I immediately repaired to my Division. No one on the staff had been killed, & the only wounded was Capt. F. Stowe, in the parastoid process of the temporal bone, by a fragment of shell which I extracted on July 3. The afternoon of the 5th I passed in strolling through the town and visiting the scene of battle on our right where the 12th corps had made a most valiant stand. The trees were scored with bullet marks

⁵¹ Gen. Francis C. Barlow commanded a division in the XI Corps.

⁵² Gen. Lewis A. Armistead died of his wounds.

& in some instances whole trunks were torn in two by cannon shot. The dead had just been buried but the ground still bore abundant evidence of the desperation with which the fight had been carried on.

Capt. Sprohl, U.S.I., had been with me for parts of two days. His mental condition was more deplorable than ever, & to crown his other acts, he had left his command in time of battle. I took him to corps h.q. & tried to induce him to join his regt.⁵³

It was nearly night fall when we took up the line of march, going southward by the road we came. After seven miles of very bad roads & darkness & night, we reached the house where I write. The gloomy weather continues and the roads are fast becoming mere Sloughs of Despond.

H.Q. 2nd Div. 11 Corps.

Camp near Berlin, Md.⁵⁴

July 17, 1863, Friday

For the last week I have felt little like writing. We have had arduous marches & part of the time I have felt little like exertion. The day on which I last wrote we remained quiet but the next, went several miles further & camped in the field on the side of Funkstown nearest Hagerstown. Firing was going on in front of us & brisk skirmishing on our left. Our corps occupied the turnpike forming the extreme left of the main army. Just before entering Funkstown we passed the scene of a cavalry fight that had occurred the day but one before. The dead were not yet all buried & we passed the nauseating spectacle of a rebel dragoon lying by the roadside dead, half clothed, & bloated by two July days. Funkstown is a small uninteresting secession village. The night we passed in an ambulance, the men entrenching & the rain pouring as usual. Next day we changed our headquarters to a neighboring house where we passed the day in quiet & comparative comfort. On Tuesday we learned the rebels had crossed the Potomac & for what foolish reason I cannot imagine the whole army marched solemnly down to near

⁵³ Capt. Samuel M. Sprole resigned July 14, 1863.

⁵⁴ Berlin was on the north bank of the Potomac, six miles east of Harper's Ferry.

Williamsport⁵⁵ where having passed the night we turned around & came back. Passing through Hagerstown we were received enthusiastically by the inhabs. who are mostly Union. From near Williamsport to near Middletown we marched in one hot day, a most fatiguing journey, going over Wildcat gap & Meyersville. The men suffered terribly, & their strength is clearly overtaken. I made a report on the physical condition of the Division this morning adverse to further toilsome marches.

⁵⁵ Williamsport, Md., on the Potomac south of Hagerstown, at one of the most important crossings of the river.