

CONCLUSION.

In the afternoon of the 30th March, after having turned over the command to General Echols, I rode to Marion in Smythe County, and was taken that night with a cold and cough so violent as to produce hemorrhage from the lungs, and prostrate me for several days in a very dangerous condition. While I was in this situation, a heavy cavalry force under Stoneman, from Thomas' army in Tennessee, moved through North Carolina to the east, and a part of it came into Virginia from the main column, and struck the Virginia and Tennessee rail-road at New River, east of Wytheville; whence, after destroying the bridge, it moved east, cutting off all communication with Richmond, and then crossed over into North Carolina. As soon as I was in a condition to be moved, I was carried on the railroad to Wytheville, and was proceeding thence to my home, in an ambulance under the charge of a surgeon, when I received, most unexpectedly, the news of the surrender of General Lee's army. Without the slightest feeling of irreverence, I will say, that the sound of the last trump would not have been more unwelcome to my ears.

Under the disheartening influence of the sad news I had received, I proceeded to my home, and I subsequently received a letter from General Lee, dated on the 30th of March, explaining the reasons for relieving me from command. As a copy of that letter has been published in Virginia, without any knowledge or agency on my part, it is appended to this narrative. The letter itself, which was written on the very day of the commencement of the attack on General Lee's lines which resulted in the evacuation of Richmond, and just ten days before the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, has a historical interest; for it shows that our great commander, even at that late day, was anxiously and earnestly contemplating the continuation of the struggle with unabated