

THE
BRITISH AMERICAN MAGAZINE.

JULY, 1863.

WASHINGTON AFTER THE FIRST BATTLE OF
FREDRICKSBURG.

ON the morning of the 13th of last December, we left New York direct for Washington. While crossing the Jerseys, whose dead level is unbroken except by the stacks of sedgy grass, which seems to be the only produce the seaboard yields, we were reminded by the name of every railway station of Washington's retreat, and his subsequent victorious pursuit of the Hessians upon this very ground; but the reflections which the scene suggested received from the events transpiring around us, a very different direction to which at any other time they would have taken. The *New York Herald* of that morning gave a glowing account of the crossing of the Rappahannock two days previously, of the faint opposition the enemy had made, and of the occupation by the Federal forces of the deserted city of Fredricksburg. We knew, therefore, that a battle must now be raging, and all who had studied the enemy's tactics feared the worst, for they were well aware that the passage of the river would have been more hotly contested had not every preparation been made on the Southern side to ensure a victory ultimately; and they trembled for the safety of their friends, penned in between impregnable heights in front, and a broad river in their rear. It was an anxious day throughout the Union, the 13th of December—and we, though not personally interested, could not but share the general apprehension.

As we passed through Philadelphia we were painfully reminded by the symbols of mourning, which hung from so many a house, of the fearful havoc the war was making. In the poorer districts of the town death seemed to have entered every home, and the indications of this—the half closed white shutters, secured by long black ribbons—gave an aspect of lamentable desolation to the city. Nor was it to be wondered at! Pennsylvania had in the field 170 regiments, which, after making all allow-