

to the White Oak Road. Now on the twenty-ninth of March, Grant planned a general attack. Sheridan was here from the Valley, to come in on the grey rear with thirteen thousand horse. Every corps of the Army of the Potomac had its appointed place and task in a great movement to the right. Lee, divining, drew from his threadbare, extended lines what troops he might and placed them at Five Forks, confronting the Second and Fifth blue Corps,—Fitz Lee's and W. H. F. Lee's cavalry, say four thousand horse, Pickett's division, thirty-five hundred muskets, Anderson with as many more. All the night of the twenty-ninth, troops were moving in a heavy rain.

Through the dripping day of the thirtieth sounded, now and again, a sullen firing. On the thirty-first the grey attacked — attacked with all their old élan and fury — and drove Sheridan back in disorder on Dinwiddie Court House. Night came down and made the battle cease. There dawned, grey and still, the first of April. All day there was fighting, but in the dim evening came the catastrophe. Like a great river that has broken its banks, the blue, advancing in force, overflowed Pickett's division. . . . The grey loss at Five Forks was five thousand.

With the morning light Grant began his general advance upon Petersburg. The grey trenches fought him back, the grey trenches that were now no more than a picket line, the grey trenches with men five yards apart. They gave him pause — that was all that they could do. All the South was an iron bell that was swinging — swinging —

General Lee telegraphed Breckinridge, Secretary of War. "It is absolutely necessary that we abandon our position to-night or run the risk of being cut off in the morning. I have given all the orders to officers on both sides of the river, and have taken every precaution I can to make the movement successful. Please give all orders that you find necessary in and about Richmond. The troops will all be directed to Amelia Court House."

This day was killed A. P. Hill.

In Richmond, twenty miles away, the second of April was a day bright and mild, with the grass coming up like emerald, the fruit trees in bloom, white butterflies above the dandelions, the air all