



Stonewall Jackson and the American civil war

G. F. R. Henderson

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This historic book may have numerous typos, missing text or index. Purchasers can download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. 1898. Not illustrated. Excerpt: ... courage vanished. The Confederate position was undoubtedly strong, but it was not impregnable. The woods on either flank gave access under cover to the central ridge. The superior weight of his artillery was sufficient to cover an advance across the open; and although he was without maps or guide, the country was not so intersected as to render manoeuvring impracticable. In his official report Fremont lays great stress on the difficulties of the ground; but reading between the lines it is easy to see that it was the military situation which overburdened him. The vicious strategy of converging columns, where intercommunication is tedious and uncertain, once more exerted its paralysing influence. It was some days since he had heard anything of Shields. That general's dispatch, urging a combined attack, had not yet reached him: whether he had passed Luray or whether he had been already beaten, Fremont was altogether ignorant; and, in his opinion, it was quite possible that the whole of the Confederate army was before him. A more resolute commander would probably have decided that the shortest way out of the dilemma was a vigorous attack. If Shields was within hearing of the guns--and it was by no means improbable that he was --such a course was the surest means of securing his co-operation; and even if no help came, and the Confederates maintained their position, they might be so crippled as to be unable to pursue. Defeat would not have been an irreparable misfortune. Washington was secure. Banks, Saxton, and McDowell held the approaches; and if Fremont himself were beaten back, the strategic situation could be in no way affected. In fact a defeat, if it had followed an attack so CROSS KEYS 459 hotly pressed as to paralyse Jackson for the time being, would have bee...

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