

several other points lower down, and followed in rapid pursuit, and were soon charging Mumford's rear furiously through Farmville. One column charged a piece of woods in which lay a force of infantry in ambush, and was literally cut to pieces.

The streams about Farmville were much swollen, and in order to save time General Fitz Lee's Division, still in several different columns, crossed at as many different points, in most cases swimming their horses. At nightfall the fighting ceased, but was resumed in the morning with increased fury.

All this time a large force of the enemy, both infantry and cavalry, had marched rapidly by parallel roads, and had gotten between General Lee and Lynchburg, then his only depot of supplies, had captured all the trains with provisions sent out from that city to meet his army, then on the verge of starvation, and on the morning of April 8th, near Appomattox Court House, suddenly attacked his ordnance train, which, in advance of the whole army, was pressing on toward Lynchburg, guarded only by one small brigade of cavalry. But notwithstanding the great disparity of forces a severe fight was kept up nearly an hour, the artillery particularly being well and effectually served, and drove back the enemy in front.

The infantry and dismounted cavalry, however, now completely surrounded and drove the men from their guns, and captured all the artillery and wagons, which left General Lee almost destitute of both. Some few artillerists escaped on their horses, and fled down the road toward the infantry, followed by a column of cavalry. But the infantry was prepared for their approach, and permitting the flying artillerists to pass, they poured in a most deadly volley, which scattered the pursuers in all directions.

For the balance of the night all remained quiet, and the two armies anxiously awaited the coming of the morrow, which must decide the fate of the Army of Northern Virginia. Further retreat was impossible, as the enemy held the roads on all sides, and without cannon or ammunition, or rations to supply even the wants of twelve thousand men now left of the once grand army, General Lee, on the morning of April 9th, confronted Grant's mighty hosts. All the difficulties of the position were well known and appreciated by the Confederate Army, but the men who formed that army then, who had followed their flag through all the gloom and trials of the retreat — a retreat which needs only the pen of a Xenophon to make as famous as that of the "Ten Thousand" — those men, though not of numbers, but of country, in the dawn of that April morning, advanced to meet their persistent foe with all the calm and lofty courage that would have made Appomattox Court House a Thermopylæ. Those men, had their leader so willed it, would have laid down their arms and lives together. They were men, indeed, and worthy to close the record of the Army of Northern Virginia.