



"To care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans."

ESTABLISHED 1877.—NEW SERIES.

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GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN

Terrible Repulse of Pickett's Charge on Cemetery Ridge.

VALLEY OF DEATH.

How it Appeared from a Confederate Stand-point.

LEE'S SLOW RETREAT.

Meade's Pursuit—Termination of the Campaign.

CHAPTER IX.

General Longstreet, in a post-bellum account of the campaign and battle of Gettysburg—in which he claims to have urged General Lee to manoeuvre his army so as to act constantly on the defensive—after describing his attack on Sickles' corps at the Peach Orchard, refers as follows to the assault made upon the centre on the 3d of July:

"I did not see General Lee that night. On the next morning he came to see me, and fearing that he was still in his disposition to attack, I tried to anticipate him by saying: 'General, I have had my scouts out all night, and I find that you still have an excellent opportunity to move around to the right of Meade's army and manoeuvre him into attacking us.' He replied, pointing with his fist at Cemetery Hill: 'The enemy is there, and I am going to strike him.' I felt then that it was my duty to express my convictions. I said: 'General, I have been a soldier all my life; I have been with soldiers engaged in fights by companies, by squads, companies, regiments, divisions, and armies, and should know as well as any one what soldiers can do. It is my opinion that no 15,000 men ever arrayed for battle can take that position, pointing to Cemetery Hill. General Lee, in reply to this, ordered me to prepare Pickett's division for the attack. I should not have been so urgent had I not foreseen the hopelessness of the proposed assault. I felt that I must say a word against the sacrifice of my men; and then I felt that my record was such that I must say a word or could not misconstrue my motives. I said no more, however, but turned away. The most of the morning was consumed in waiting for Pickett's men and getting into position. The plan of assault was as follows: Our artillery was to be massed in a wood from which Pickett was to charge, and it was to pour a continuous fire upon the cemetery. Under cover of this fire, and supported by it, Pickett was to charge.

LONGSTREET'S DEPRESSION OF SPIRITS.

"Our artillery was in charge of General E. P. Alexander, a brave and gifted officer. Colonel Walton was my chief of artillery, but Alexander being at the head of the column, and being first in position, and being, besides, an officer of unusual promptness, sagacity, and intelligence, was given charge of the artillery. The arrangements were completed about 1 o'clock. General Alexander had arranged that a battery of seven 11-pound howitzers, with fresh horses and full caissons, were to charge with Pickett, at the head of his line; but General Pendleton, from whom the guns had been borrowed, recalled them just before the charge was made, and thus deranged this wise plan. Never was I so depressed as upon that day. I felt that my men were to be sacrificed, and that I should have to order them to make a hopeless charge. I had instructed General Alexander, being unwilling to trust myself with the entire responsibility, to carefully observe the effect of the fire upon the enemy, and when it began to tell to notify Pickett to begin the assault. I was so much impressed with the hopelessness of the charge that I wrote the following note to General Alexander: 'If the artillery fire does not have the effect to drive off the enemy or greatly demoralize him, so as to make our efforts pretty certain, I would prefer that you should not attack. I shall rely a great deal on your judgment to determine the matter, and shall expect you to let Pickett know when the moment offers.'

THE DISASTROUS CHARGE OF PICKETT AND HETH.

"To my note the General replied as follows: 'I will only be able to judge the effect of our fire upon the enemy by his return fire, for his infantry is but little exposed to view, and the smoke will obscure the whole field. If, as I infer from your note, there is an alternative to this attack, it should be carefully considered before opening our fire, for it will take all of the artillery ammunition we have left to test this one thoroughly, and if the result is unfavorable, we will have none left for another effort, and even if this is entirely successful it can only be so at a very bloody cost.' I still desired to save my men, and felt that if the artillery did not produce the desired effect I would be justified in holding Pickett off. I wrote this note to Colonel Walton at exactly 1:20 p. m.

"Let the batteries open. Order great precision in firing. If the batteries on the Peach Orchard cannot do us any good in the position we intend attacking, let them open on the enemy at Rocky Hill." The communication which opened upon both lines was equal. In a few moments a courier brought a note to General Alexander, which was handed to me. It was as follows: 'If you are coming at all you must come in haste, or I cannot give you proper support; but the enemy's fire has not slackened at all, and I feel confident you will still find from the Peach Orchard.' After I had read the note I said to General Alexander: 'I have no doubt that you will have a very good support; but the enemy's fire has not slackened at all, and I feel confident you will still find from the Peach Orchard.' After I had read the note I said to General Alexander: 'I have no doubt that you will have a very good support; but the enemy's fire has not slackened at all, and I feel confident you will still find from the Peach Orchard.'

"On the day after the close of the battle General Meade issued the following address to his army: 'HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, July 4th, 1863. 'The Commanding General, in behalf of the country, thanks the Army of the Potomac for the glorious result of the recent operations. 'An enemy superior in numbers and flushed with the pride of a successful invasion, attempted to overtake and destroy this Army. It repulsed the assault, and has now withdrawn from the contest. The prisoners and baggage the army has captured, and the heroic courage and gallantry it has displayed will be a glorious history to be ever remembered. 'Our task is not yet accomplished, and the Commanding General looks to the army for greater efforts to drive from our soil every vestige of the progress of the invader. 'It is right and proper that we should, on all suitable occasions, return our grateful thanks to the Almighty Donor of our country, that in the goodness of His Providence He has

thought fit to give victory to the cause of the just. 'By command of Major-General Meade: 'S. WILLIAMS, 'Assistant Adjutant-General.' President Lincoln also issued the following announcement: 'WASHINGTON, D. C., 'July 4th, 1863, 10 a. m. 'The President of the United States announces to the country that the news from the Army of the Potomac, up to 10 o'clock p. m. of the 3d, is such as to cover the army with the highest honor, to promise great success to the cause of the Union, and to claim the confidence of all for the many gallant fallen; and that for this he especially desires that on this day, 'He whose will, not ours, should ever be done,' be everywhere remembered and revered with the profoundest gratitude.

"On Saturday, July 4th, Ewell's corps was withdrawn from its position in the town and the hills southeast of it, and placed behind the defences on Seminary Ridge, and both armies were engaged in burying the dead and taking care of the wounded. At dark the whole Confederate army was put in motion, reaching Hagerstown on the 6th. The pursuit by the Union army is thus stated by General Meade in his report: 'THE MARCH OF THE CONFEDERATE ARMY. 'The 5th and 6th of July were employed in succoring the wounded and burying the dead, Major-General Sedgwick, commanding the Sixth Corps, having pursued the pursuit of the enemy as far as the Fairfield Pass, in the mountains, and reporting that the pass was a very strong one, in which a small force of the enemy could hold in check and delay for a considerable time any pursuing force. I determined to follow the enemy by a flank movement; and, accordingly, leaving McIntosh's brigade of cavalry and Neill's brigade of infantry to continue harassing the enemy, put the army in motion for Middletown, Maryland. Orders were immediately sent to Major-General French, at Frederick, to occupy Harper's Ferry and send a force to occupy Turner's Pass, in South Mountain. I subsequently ascertained Major-General French had not only anticipated these orders in part, but had pushed a cavalry force to Williamsport and Falling Waters, where they destroyed the enemy's pontoon bridge and captured its guard. Buford was at the same time sent to Williamsport and Hagerstown.

"The duty above assigned to the cavalry was most successfully accomplished, the enemy being greatly harassed, his trains destroyed, and many captures of guns and prisoners made. 'After halting a day at Middletown to procure necessary supplies and bring up the trains, the army moved through the South Mountain, and by July 12th was in front of the enemy, who occupied a strong position on the heights of Marsh Run, in advance of Williamsport. In taking this position several skirmishes and affairs had been had with the enemy, principally by the cavalry and the Eleventh and Sixth Corps. 'The 13th was occupied in reconnoissances of the enemy's position and preparations for attack, but on advancing on the morning of the 14th it was ascertained he had retired the night previous by a bridge at Falling Waters and the ford at Williamsport. The cavalry in pursuit overtook the rear-guard at Falling Waters, capturing two guns and numerous prisoners. 'Previous to the retreat of the enemy Gregg's division of cavalry was crossed at Harper's Ferry, and coming up with the rear of the enemy at Charlestown and Shepherdstown had a spirited contest, in which the enemy was driven to Martinsburg and Winchester and pressed and harassed in his retreat. 'The pursuit was resumed by a flank movement, the army crossing the Potomac at Berlin, and moving down the Loudoun Valley. The cavalry were immediately pushed into the several passes of the Blue Ridge, and having learned from scouts the withdrawal of the Confederate army from the lower valley of the Shenandoah, the army, the Third Corps, Major-General French, in advance, was moved into the Manassas Gap in the hope of being able to intercept a portion of the enemy."

"The trains, with such of the wounded as could be removed, were ordered to Williamsport on the 4th of July, part moving through Cashtown and Greencastle, escorted by General Imboden, and the remainder by the Fairfield road. The army retained its position until dark, when it was put in motion for the Potomac by the last-named route. A heavy rain continued throughout the night, and so much impeded its progress that Ewell's corps, which brought up the rear, did not leave Gettysburg until late in the forenoon of the following day. The enemy offered no serious interruption, and after an arduous march we arrived at Hagerstown on the afternoon of the 6th and morning of the 7th July.

"The great length of our trains made it difficult to guard them effectively in passing through the mountains, and a number of wagons and ambulances were captured. They succeeded in reaching Williamsport on the 6th, but were unable to cross the Potomac on account of the high stage of water. Here they were attacked by a strong force of cavalry and artillery, which was gallantly repulsed by General Imboden, whose command had been strengthened by several batteries and by two regiments of infantry which had been detached at Winchester to guard prisoners, and were returning to the army. While the enemy was being held in check, General Stuart arrived with the cavalry, which had performed valuable service in guarding the banks of the army during the retrograde movement, and after a short engagement drove him from the field. 'The rains that had prevailed almost without intermission since our entrance into Maryland, had made the Potomac formidable, and the pontoon bridge left at Falling Waters had been partially destroyed by the enemy. The wounded and prisoners were sent over the river as rapidly as possible in a few ferry boats, while the trains awaited the subsiding of the waters and the construction of a new pontoon bridge.

WAITING FOR THE FLOODS TO SUBSIDE.

"On the 14th July the enemy's cavalry advanced toward Hagerstown, but was repulsed by General Stuart, and pursued as far as Greencastle. With this exception nothing but occasional skirmishes occurred until the 15th, when the main body of the enemy arrived. The army then took a position previously selected, covering the Potomac from Williamsport to Falling Waters, where it remained for two days with the enemy immediately in front, maintaining an disposition to attack, but throwing up entrenchments along his whole line. 'By the 13th the river at Williamsport,

though still deep, was fordable, and a good bridge was completed at Falling Waters, near boats having been constructed and some of the old recovered. As further delay would enable the enemy to obtain reinforcements, and as it was found difficult to procure a sufficient supply of flour for the troops, the working of the mills being interrupted by high water, it was determined to await an attack no longer. Orders were accordingly given to cross the Potomac that night—Ewell's corps by the ford at Williamsport, and those of Longstreet and Hill on the bridge. The cavalry was directed to relieve the infantry skirmishers and bring up the rear. 'The movement was much retarded by a severe rain storm and the darkness of the night. Ewell's corps, having the advantage of a turnpike road, marched with less difficulty, and crossed the river by 8 o'clock the following morning. 'The condition of the road to the bridge and the time consumed in the passage of the artillery, ammunition wagons, and ambulances, which could not ford the river, so much delayed the progress of Longstreet and Hill that it was daylight before their troops began to cross. Heth's division was halted about a mile and a half from the bridge, to protect the passage of the column. No interruption was offered by the enemy until about 1 a. m., when his cavalry, supported by artillery, appeared in front of General Heth. A small number in advance of the main body was mistaken for our own cavalry retiring, no notice having been given of the withdrawal of the latter, and was suffered to approach our lines. They were immediately destroyed or captured, with the exception of two or three, but Brigadier General Pettigrew, an officer of great merit and promise, was mortally wounded in the encounter. He survived his removal to Virginia only a few days. The bridge being clear, General Heth began to withdraw. The enemy advanced, but his efforts to break our lines were repulsed, and the passage of the river was completed by 1 p. m."

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"The Comte de Paris says: 'It was a mistake to invade the Northern States at all, because it stirred up their military spirit. The best chance of the Confederacy was the security of its resources in men. The invasion was the death blow to what has been called the Copperhead party. It called under arms thousands of men who would never have enrolled otherwise, and who became experienced soldiers in 1861; and, moreover, it diminished for one or two years the resisting powers of the Confederate army.'

"Major Scheibert, of the Prussian Royal Engineers, serving in the Confederate army, agrees with Longstreet that General Lee lost his self-possession at Gettysburg, and attributes the fact to the loss of his counsellor, Stonewall Jackson. He says: 'Lee at Chambersville was full of calm, quiet self-possession; feeling that he had done his duty to the utmost, and had brought the army into the most favorable position to defeat the hostile host. In the days at Gettysburg this quiet self-possession was wanting. Lee was not at his ease, but was riding to and fro, frequently changing his position, making anxious inquiries here and there and looking care-worn.'

"Longstreet's plan to place Lee's army between the Army of the Potomac and Washington, and thus compel an attack by General Meade to drive it from its position, was doubtless the best disposition that could have been made of it after the error of invading Pennsylvania had been committed. This was apparent to General Lee when too late, for in January following we find him writing to Longstreet: 'Had I taken your advice at Gettysburg, instead of pursuing the course I did, how different all might have been.' Captain Gorie, of Longstreet's staff, bearer of dispatches to General Lee in the winter of 1863-'64, found him reading the Union accounts of the battle of Gettysburg. Lee said, with great frankness, that he had 'become satisfied from reading the reports of the battle that if he had allowed Longstreet to carry out his plans on the third day, instead of making the attack on Cemetery Hill, he would have been successful.'

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"The Comte de Paris says: 'It was a mistake to invade the Northern States at all, because it stirred up their military spirit. The best chance of the Confederacy was the security of its resources in men. The invasion was the death blow to what has been called the Copperhead party. It called under arms thousands of men who would never have enrolled otherwise, and who became experienced soldiers in 1861; and, moreover, it diminished for one or two years the resisting powers of the Confederate army.'

"Major Scheibert, of the Prussian Royal Engineers, serving in the Confederate army, agrees with Longstreet that General Lee lost his self-possession at Gettysburg, and attributes the fact to the loss of his counsellor, Stonewall Jackson. He says: 'Lee at Chambersville was full of calm, quiet self-possession; feeling that he had done his duty to the utmost, and had brought the army into the most favorable position to defeat the hostile host. In the days at Gettysburg this quiet self-possession was wanting. Lee was not at his ease, but was riding to and fro, frequently changing his position, making anxious inquiries here and there and looking care-worn.'

"Longstreet's plan to place Lee's army between the Army of the Potomac and Washington, and thus compel an attack by General Meade to drive it from its position, was doubtless the best disposition that could have been made of it after the error of invading Pennsylvania had been committed. This was apparent to General Lee when too late, for in January following we find him writing to Longstreet: 'Had I taken your advice at Gettysburg, instead of pursuing the course I did, how different all might have been.' Captain Gorie, of Longstreet's staff, bearer of dispatches to General Lee in the winter of 1863-'64, found him reading the Union accounts of the battle of Gettysburg. Lee said, with great frankness, that he had 'become satisfied from reading the reports of the battle that if he had allowed Longstreet to carry out his plans on the third day, instead of making the attack on Cemetery Hill, he would have been successful.'

"With regard to the leisurely retreat of Lee's army and the cautious pursuit by General Meade, there is less to say in praise of the latter than concerning the masterly handling of his troops while the battle was in progress. If General Lee lost his 'matchless epaulet,' during the battle, General Meade seems to have suffered the same loss at its close. He had an entire corps (Sedgwick's) fifteen thousand strong, which was comparatively fresh, to throw upon his antagonist after the repulse of Pickett's and Heth's divisions, but not a man moved outside the Union works. Longstreet says: 'When Pickett's charge had failed, I expected that, of course, the enemy would throw itself against our shattered works and try to crush us. For unaccountable reasons the enemy did not pursue his advantages. Our army was soon in compact shape and we turned our nose toward Virginia. During the so-called pursuit General Meade's army was re-enclosed by French's division and other troops to an amount more than filling his losses at Gettysburg, but we did not give up our position with the Confederate army at Falling Waters, where Lee was patient, awaiting the construction of a pontoon bridge, placing his army in line of battle and erecting fortifications, instead of attacking at once. The one another that appears to strike upon every brave and clear-headed army commander after a great victory now attacked the victorious general, and enabled his antagonist to march quietly back to Virginia.

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