

THE MOST SPECTACULAR FOURTH IN ALL HISTORY

By Nelson A. Miles, Lieutenant-General, U. S. Army, Retired.

With the one exception—the original Fourth—that Fourth of '63 will be longest remembered. That day marked the turning point in the Civil war, the fall of Vicksburg and the Union victory at Gettysburg. The fireworks were real then; the loss of life on both sides was great.

After Chancellorsville, General Lee invaded Maryland and Pennsylvania. He hoped, by an offensive campaign, partly to relieve the Confederate army in the West, then being besieged by Grant at Vicksburg, and also to threaten Washington, and to gain the great advantages a bold and successful offensive move always offers.

His movement caused great consternation throughout the eastern states, and every effort was made to resist it. The Confederate army had been increased by the addition of Longstreet's corps, and the success at Chancellorsville had inspired it with the greatest confidence.

The Union army was maneuvered so as to protect Washington and Baltimore. General Hooker was relieved, and Gen-

eral Meade given command. The contending forces gradually approached each other near Chambersburg, Pa., and finally met on the field at Gettysburg.

After fighting a successful engagement on July 1st, Lee found himself confronted by the entire Army of the Potomac, holding a strong position on the heights above Gettysburg.

To attack was a desperate measure, but, inspired by the magnificent confidence of his army and by his recent victories, Lee resolved there to end his campaign in failure or to win the war by the complete overthrow of the Union army.

For 48 hours the battle raged almost incessantly, but the Union lines were held against all assaults. This battle was the Waterloo of the continent. It was the crisis and turning point in the great tragedy. The North lost 23,000; the South 20,000 men.

The victory affected the perpetuity of the nation. In this great battle of Americans against Americans, their military genius, heroism and sacrifice were amply illustrated and will ever remain one of the glories of the military power and spirit of our people.

On the Fourth of July Lee retired his flanks and began a retreat to the Potomac, with Gregg's cavalry in pursuit. He fell back to Williamsport, where, after again offering battle, he crossed into Virginia on the night of the 14th.



Gen. Miles.