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Battle of Gettysburg

L.G.Young

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THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG.

AN ADDRESS BY CAPT. LOUIS G. YOUNG.

A Just Tribute to the Part Played in the Great Drama of War by the North Carolina Troops—The Battle of July 1, a Fierce and Bloody One, but Little Has Been Written of It—How the Battle of Gettysburg Was Brought About—The Incidents Leading Up to It—A Graphic and Thrilling Account of the Charge on Cemetery Ridge.

The following is an address delivered before the Confederate Veterans Camp at Savannah, Ga., last April, by Captain Louis G. Young, a native and resident of Charleston, S. C., and who, at the time of the battles described, was aide-de-camp on the staff of General J. Johnstone Pettigrew:

Mr. President and Comrades: In my first address to you, I pleaded for the preservation of our memories of the Southern Confederacy, and suggested that each veteran put on record what he saw and what happened in his own experience. Meet that I should practice what I preach, I venture to come before you with my recollections of the battle of Gettysburg. This I do the more willingly, as I hope that my testimony as a participant and eye-witness may be used to correct some errors, which have been injected into many accounts given of the famous charge on Cemetery Hill on the third day of the battle, whereby a portion of the troops engaged have not only been robbed of their share of the glories of the day, but have been unjustly blamed.

In the preparation of this paper I have endeavored to keep before me Cicero's high ideal of the duty of the historian. Nearly two thousand years ago he said: "It is the first law of history, that the writer should neither dare to advance what is false nor to suppress what is true, that he should relate the facts with strict impartiality, free from ill-will and favoritism." A high standard truly, but from which there has been so sad a departure that the historian Froude, writing in this century, is moved to say: "It often seems to me as if history was like a child's box of letters, with which we can spell any word we please. We have only to pick out such letters as we want, arrange them as we like, and say nothing about those which do not suit our purpose." A great deal has been written concerning the battle of Gettysburg, and much of it is of this character. It is a fact, historically true, that no impartial history can be written at, or near to, the time in which the events occurred which it seeks to record, therefore, a true history of our battles has not yet been, and cannot now be, written. We are not yet far enough off from the events, and we are too near to both the living and the dead who helped to create these, not to be influenced by our feelings. But the future historian must have material with which to write, and the testimony of the humblest participant in the great events which happened in our four years war should be preserved for him. Hence this effort.

The battle of Gettysburg was not a victory for either side, yet paradoxically, but rightly, it goes into history as

one of the decisive battles of the war between the States, for it checked the conquering career of the Southern army, and revived the broken spirit of the North at a most critical time. A great battle replete with valiant deeds, heroic efforts, and fatal mistakes, on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia, it has been more written of, and has produced more controversy, than all the other battles of the war; and many able, some brilliant, accounts have been put forth, for the most part by non-participants, in all of which vital errors are to be found; and while truth, with its proverbial slowness, has been taking time to put on its boots, many a falsehood has run its league and obtained credence. Against some of these my efforts shall be directed, with statements of what I saw, and what I know to be true. Before beginning my narrative, however, it will be well to recall some of the incidents connected with the campaign into Pennsylvania, which are so striking that it seems as if an unseen hand had directed them.

General Lee expecting from General Stuart, in command of his cavalry, a report of the movement of the Army of the Potomac, and not receiving it, supposed the enemy was still on the south side of the Potomac, and only on the 28th of June did he learn from a scout that they had crossed into Maryland and were then at and about Frederick. Hitherto General Lee's march had been northward with Harrisburg as the objective point for concentrating his columns. Now, the position of the enemy's forces was a menace to his line of communication, and he turned to the east and ordered his columns to concentrate near Gettysburg. At the same time fateful changes had been made in the Army of the Potomac. Hooker, who had not shown himself an able commander at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, but who had wisely asked for the withdrawal of the troops from Harper's Ferry, to be united with a portion of his army to operate against Lee's rear, tendered his resignation, because his request was refused; and Lincoln, apparently glad to get rid of him, contrary to his theory and saying, "Never swap horses while crossing a stream," accepted Hooker's resignation, and gave to the Army of the Potomac an abler commander in Meade, who was waked up late on the night of the 27th of June, only three days before the battle he was destined to direct, to receive his appointment. This change of commanders meant a change of plans, and Meade, a cautious commander, determined to manoeuvre so as to force Lee to attack him; and in making disposition for the defense of the line he had selected, ordered a portion of his army to Gettysburg as a mask to his movements. Thus it was that the two armies were nearing each

other, neither of them ready for or expecting the impending conflict, and not aware that Gettysburg like a highly charged magnet was drawing them to it.

On the night of the 30th of June, without thought of battle on the next day, Hill's Corps was in bivouac eight miles to the west of Gettysburg, the town was occupied by Buford's division of cavalry; and four miles to the southwest were the corps of Reynolds and Howard, with that of Sickles in calling distance, these three under command of Reynolds, a Kentuckian, and perhaps the most capable officer in the army of the Potomac.

Now to my narrative, which will be chiefly of Pettigrew and his brigade. I was then General Pettigrew's aide-de-camp with the rank of first lieutenant.

Hill's Corps had arrived at Cashtown, about eight miles west of Gettysburg, on the 29th of June. On the following morning General Pettigrew was ordered by General Heth, his division commander, to go to Gettysburg with the three of his four regiments present, three field pieces of the Washington Artillery of New Orleans and a number of wagons, for the purpose of collecting commissary and quartermaster stores for the use of the army. General Early had levied on Carlisle, Chambersburg and Shippensburg and had found no difficulty in having his requisitions filled. It was supposed that it would be the same at Gettysburg. It was told to General Pettigrew that he might find the town in possession of the home guard, which he would have no difficulty in driving away; but, if contrary to expectations, he should find any organized troops capable of making resistance, or any portion of the Army of the Potomac, he should not attack it. The orders to him were peremptory, not to precipitate a fight. General Lee with his columns scattered, and lacking the information of his adversary, which he should have had from his cavalry, was not ready for battle—hence the orders.

On the march to Gettysburg we were passed by General Longstreet's spy, who quickly returned and informed General Pettigrew, that Buford's division of cavalry—estimated at three thousand strong—had arrived that day and were holding the town. This report was confirmed by a knight of the Golden Circle who came out for the purpose of giving us warning. Buford's presence made it evident that the Army of the Potomac or at least a portion of it, was not far off, and General Pettigrew sent immediately to General Heth, a report of what he had learned, and asked for further instructions. The message received in reply, was simply a repetition of the orders previously given coupled with an expression of disbelief as to the presence of any portion of the Army of the Potomac. As the presence of Buford's Cavalry was certain, and it would not be possible for him to enter Gettysburg without a fight, which he was forbidden to make, General Pettigrew withdrew from before Gettysburg. This he did, not as was reported to General Lee, "because he was not willing to hazard an attack with the single brigade." (he had only three regiments of his brigade.) and with Buford's Cavalry, supported no doubt by

a home guard, to fight, the cost of the stores when gotten would have been dear; still General Pettigrew was willing to make the attack had not his orders forbidden it. Buford's Cavalry followed us at some distance, and Lieutenant Walter H. Robertson and I, of Pettigrew's staff, remained in the rear to watch it. This we easily did, for the country is rolling, and from behind the ridges we could see without being seen and we had a perfect view of the movements of the approaching column. Whenever it would come within three or four hundred yards of us we would make our appearance, mounted, when the column would halt until we retired. This was repeated several times. It was purely an affair of observation on both sides and the cavalry made no effort to molest us.

My object in mentioning so minutely what might seem unimportant and purely personal will appear when I tell you what happened the next day, and will help to show how the great battle of Gettysburg was stumbled into. Blindness in part seemed to have come over our commanders, who, slow to believe in the presence of an organized army of the enemy, thought there must be a mistake in the report taken back by General Pettigrew, but General Heth asked for and obtained permission to take his division to Gettysburg on the following day, for the purpose of reconnoitering, and of making the levy which had been the object of the expedition on the day before. Neither General Heth nor General Hill believed in the presence of the enemy in force, and they expressed their doubts so positively to General Pettigrew that I was called up to tell General Hill what I had seen while reconnoitering the movements of the force which had followed us from Gettysburg. As a staff officer with General Pender, I had served under General Hill in the seven days fights around Richmond and at Cedar Run, and because I was well known to General Hill, General Pettigrew supposed that my report might have some weight with him. Yet, when in answer to his inquiry as to the character of the column I had watched I said their movements were undoubtedly those of well-trained troops and not those of a home guard, he replied that he still could not believe that any portion of the Army of the Potomac was up; and, in emphatic words, expressed a hope that it was, as this was the place he wanted it to be. This spirit of unbelief had taken such hold, that I doubt if any of the commanders of brigades, except General Pettigrew, believed that we were marching to battle, a weakness on their part which rendered them unprepared for what was about to happen. General Archer, with his Tennessee brigade was to lead, and to him General Pettigrew described minutely the topography of the country between Cashtown and Gettysburg, and suggested that he look out for a road that ran at right angles to the one we were on, and which might be used by the enemy to break into his line of march. And, as he had carefully observed the configuration of the ground in the vicinity of the town, told him (General Archer) of a ridge some distance out of Gettysburg on which he

would probably find the enemy, as this position was favorable for defense. He found him there. General Archer listened, but believed not, marched on unprepared, and was taken by surprise, his command routed, a part captured and he himself taken prisoner. Davis' Mississippi brigade, close on to Archer's, felt the impact, and a portion of it, carried away by the break in front, made the mistake of seeking shelter in an adjacent railroad cut, and about four hundred of them were captured there. For want of faith in what had been told, and a consequent lack of caution, the two leading brigades of Heth's Division marched into the jaws of the enemy, met with disaster, and, contrary to General Lee's wish, brought on an engagement with the Army of the Potomac before we were ready, and precipitated one of the greatest battles of modern times.

Buord, informed by his scouts of the approach of Heth, posted his command, dismounted and acting as infantry, on McPherson's Ridge to the west of Gettysburg, and notified Reynolds, who, according to the testimony before the committee on the conduct of the war, had just received orders to withdraw to Middleburg and Manchester, but who, Swinton says, "was with Wadsworth's Division moving on to Gettysburg according to prescribed orders." Be this as it may, Reynolds was up immediately; and Wadsworth's Division arrived in time to strike Archer as he was crossing Willoughby Run, and to cause the disaster I have described. Blood now having been drawn, there seemed to be no calling off the battle; and disposition was immediately made by Heth for a charge upon the enemy's position. By this time Buford's Cavalry had been replaced by Wadsworth's Division, with the famous "Iron Brigade" posted directly in front of Pettigrew's Brigade. The other two divisions of the first corps arrived before the advance could be ordered, and were placed, Doubleday's to the left and Robinson's to the right of Wadsworth, forming a long line in front of, and overlapping the single division of Heth. It was scarcely prudent for this division, two of its brigades maimed in the start, to make an attack on so large a force, strongly posted on a commanding ridge, so Pender's Division was marched to supporting distance, and the attack postponed.

Pending these movements on our side, the Eleventh Corps of the Army of the Potomac had arrived, and the command of the two corps fell to Howard, Reynolds having been killed in the first engagement. More troops were therefore necessary to us, for we had only two divisions of infantry up against six of the enemy, and their cavalry hovered on our right, while we had none to oppose it. It was decided therefore to wait for R. H. Anderson's division of Hill's Corps, not far off, and for Ewell's Corps, which under the instructions previously given to concentrate in the neighborhood of Gettysburg, was on the march for Cashtown, but on hearing our guns, was shaping its course for Gettysburg. Rhode's Division coming up first, immediately attacked Robinson on our left, and was followed soon by Early, who turned

Howard's left and put to flight the army of the aliens—Schurz' Corps of Germans. Acting in concert with Ewell's two divisions—his third did not arrive until later—Heth's Division was ordered to charge the enemy in its front. We had confronted each other from early in the morning until the afternoon had well advanced, both sides understanding that a conflict or arms was in store for them, we ready to make the attack and they prepared to receive it. Only a few hundred yards separated us; they were advantageously posted in three lines on McPherson's Ridge, their right in a wood of large trees, no underbrush; and a wheat field lay between us with no other obstruction than the nearly ripe wheat.

As I have before stated, the "Iron Brigade" was posted directly in front of us. It was the finest brigade in the Army of the Potomac, and up to this time it had indulged in the proud boast that it had never been defeated. On the right of us, Brockenborough's and the remnant of Archer's Brigade, met with little opposition, and on our left, Davis' Brigade, crippled by its early conflict, was not so hotly engaged. Thus the brunt of the attack fell to Pettigrew's Brigade, more especially to its left. When the order came to advance, Pettigrew's Brigade, about three thousand strong, marched out in perfect alignment, and under as hot a fire as was ever faced, moved steadily through the wheat, reserved its fire for close range, which when delivered, it pressed on until it overcame its adversary. It was a hotly contested field, and the stubborn resistance of the "Iron Brigade" was met with more than equal determination on the part of Pettigrew's Brigade. For a short time the battle raged at forty, then twenty, yards between the contestants.

In the Twenty-sixth North Carolina thirteen standard bearers were shot down; and around a flag of the enemy, which was planted beside a large tree, the dead and wounded were piled up. At last with a rush the ridge was carried, and the famous "Iron Brigade" nearly annihilated. Only a small remnant was left, to be easily driven from its second position on Seminary Ridge by Pender's Division.

Of this charge the prisoners testified, that in defence of their own country, they fought as they had never done before, but that there was no withstanding such an attack. Pettigrew's Brigade, although it took only twenty to thirty minutes to cover the ground between it and the enemy, was more hotly engaged than were any of the troops that participated in the first day's fight, and more of the enemy were killed and wounded in front of it than on any other part of the field. I have taken part in many hotly contested fights, but this I think, was the deadliest of them all, not excepting the third day's charge on Cemetery Hill; and never have I seen or known of better conduct on the part of any troops, under any circumstances, or at any time. The marked achievement of Pettigrew's Brigade on this occasion was accomplished only at great sacrifice of life. It lost not one prisoner, but its loss in killed and wounded was 1,000 to 1,100, including a number of its best officers.

The Twenty-sixth North Carolina Regiment lost 549 out of 800. The Eleventh Regiment some 250 out of 550. The five field officers present with these two regiments were killed or wounded. The adjutant general of the brigade was mortally wounded, its inspector general killed, and its ordnance officer wounded, leaving of the field staff only a lad, who was a volunteer aid, and myself. In the many so-called histories of the battle of Gettysburg, which I have seen, I have found no record of these facts. The brilliant achievement of Pettigrew's brigade on this day, its persistent courage, and its great sacrifice, have never met with merited acknowledgment.

In the midst of the engagement General Heth was wounded, and General Pettigrew was placed in command of the division. Colonel Burgwyn, of the Twenty-sixth, had been killed, and Colonel Leventhorpe, of the Eleventh, had been wounded, so the command of General Pettigrew's Brigade fell to Colonel Marshall of the Fifty-second, a very able young officer.

I vividly recall my impression after the attack. The brilliant success of Rhodes and Early on our left, ours in driving the enemy from our front into a position on Seminary Ridge from which he was driven with scarcely an effort by Pender, left us with troops enough to follow up our success, and I wondered that we did not do so and take possession of Cemetery Hill, which I believed then, and believe now, we could have done easily. The troops which had been engaged, although they had suffered severe losses, were in high spirit and ready to go on. In Ewell's Corps, Johnson's Division had come up fresh, and in Hill's Corps, Pender's Division had been only slightly engaged, while Anderson was in bivouac a short distance away. That we did not continue the fight was the first opportunity frittered away. If Ewell's and Hill's divisions had pressed forward when the enemy retired to Cemetery Ridge, the battle of Gettysburg would have ended on the day it began. Ewell did not advance when General Lee wished him, Hill's Corps was halted, and the enemy availed of our delay to hasten up fresh troops and to strengthen his position.

Note 1. When we occupied the wood recently held by the enemy my attention was attracted by the dreadful—not moans but—howls of some of the wounded. It was so distressing that I approached several with the purpose of calming them if possible, and to my surprise I found them foaming at the mouth as if mad, and evidently unconscious of the sound of their voices. This was the only occurrence of the kind which came under my observation during the war.

Note 2. In some accounts it is stated that we were fighting for several hours. On the skirmish line there was firing for several hours, but the charge on the enemy's line was quick work. To confirm my impression of the time taken, which I remember as about twenty minutes, I took occasion at the Confederate reunion in Charleston to look up evidence, and I found two privates who had taken part in the charge. They were not together when I put the ques-

tion as to the time occupied in the charge; both answered promptly one said twenty minutes, and the other about half an hour.

Note 3. General R. H. Anderson, of South Carolina, told me after the war, that hearing our guns early in the day, he was hastening with his brigade to join us; was not more than two miles away, when he was met by a messenger from General Lee with an order for him to halt and bivouac his brigade. Surprised at this, he first obeyed the order, and then rode on to Gettysburg to see General Lee and learn from him if this message was correctly delivered. General Lee replied that there was no mistake made, and explained that his army was not all up, that he was in ignorance as to the force of the enemy in front, that his (General Anderson's) alone of the troops present, had not been engaged, and that a reserve in case of disaster was necessary.

The second of July was also a day of lost opportunities for the Confederates. An early attack on either flank of the enemy could scarcely have failed of success. His line, three miles long, aptly described as resembling a fish hook, with Round Top Mountain to the south, the end of the shank, and Culp's Hill, to the north the end of the curve, was a very strong defensive position if thoroughly fortified and manned with troops; but either end taken by us would have rendered it untenable, and would have enabled us to sweep down upon the enemy and destroy him before he could escape. It was evident that Meade's whole army could not all be up. The fact is, that only the First, Eleventh and a part of the Third Corps were present, the Second was distant 13 miles, the Fifth 23 miles, and the Sixth (16,000 strong) 34 miles. Here was an opportunity to crush the enemy in detail; and General Lee having nearly the whole of his army with him, was ready and anxious to avail of it. Meade's refusal right on Culp's Hill, if driven in, would have placed Lee's left partly in rear of it; this therefore seemed to be the most valuable point, and General Lee at first wished Ewell and Hill to commence the attack, to be followed up by Longstreet, on Hill's right; but Ewell's and Hill's troops had been hotly engaged, and the enemy's position in their front would be very formidable if fortified during the night, which it was, so Longstreet was instructed to open the attack on the enemy's left, as soon as possible in the morning, (he was expected to do so at sunrise,) while Ewell should make a demonstration on his right, so as to prevent reinforcements being sent to relieve the point of the main attack in front of Longstreet. Had this simple plan been carried out, one cannot doubt that the enemy's left positions would have fallen into our hands; and with little Round Top, which Meade said rightly was the key to his whole position, in our possession, three of the corps of the Army of the Potomac would have been crushed before they could have received assistance, we would have occupied Cemetery Ridge, and the battle of Gettysburg ended early on the second day. But Longstreet's heart was not in the attack; his troops were near the bat-

the field at day break, ready and waiting, while he "went to General Lee's headquarters at day light and renewed his (my) views against making an attack." (Longstreet's words) Every moment lost by us, was gain to the enemy, whose distant corps were hurrying to Gettysburg. Yet General Lee, not desiring to force Longstreet against his will, again reconnoitered the right of the enemy's position to see if it might not be better to make his main attack there; but he found that during the night Culp's Hill had been turned into a fort. He therefore at 11 o'clock ordered Longstreet to attack, which order was not obeyed, on the plea of waiting for Law's Brigade, which was on picket. The attack, therefore, instead of being at sunrise, or at 11 o'clock, was postponed to late in the afternoon, some nine hours later than it should have been. By this time Meade had strengthened his left, new troops had arrived, and what would, without doubt have been an easy and brilliant success in the morning, was a cruel failure in the afternoon.

Heth's Division was not engaged on the 2nd.

The third day found the army of Northern Virginia weakened by the hard fighting of the first day, and by the disjointed efforts of the second, but there was still left in its "incomparable Southern infantry" the spirit of strength to achieve success if a proper concert of action could be obtained. General Lee, therefore, decided to renew the attack, this time on the enemy's left center, his flank being now too strongly fortified and guarded. The attack was again unfortunately intrusted to Longstreet, who, if he had little heart for the second day's fight, made no concealment of the fact, that he had none at all for the third day's; and to this cause, without seeking any other, may be traced its failure. The weight of evidence goes to prove that it was General Lee's intention that Longstreet should make the attack with his entire corps, to be supported by half of Hill's Corps, all of it if necessary, and should this force succeed in penetrating the enemy's line, all the troops on the right to be pushed forward. Meanwhile Ewell on our left, acting in concert, was to assail the enemy's right so as to prevent him from re-enforcing his center, and to assist in crushing his right wing. The artillery was to prepare the way, and before the smoke of the guns should have cleared away the attacking column was to be started. All this required concert and prompt, spirited action. But this is what happened. "General Longstreet's dispositions were not completed as expected." (General R. E. Lee's report) and therefore Ewell could not be notified, his attack, which was to have been simultaneous with that of Longstreet's, was made and repulsed. Thus the object of the diversion on the enemy's right was defeated. At 11 o'clock Colonel A. P. Alexander, in charge of the artillery, with nearly 150 guns ranged along Seminary Ridge, reported that he was ready; but not until 1 p. m. was the order given by Longstreet to commence firing. At the appointed signal our artillery opened on the enemy with its 150 guns, and kept it up for nearly

two hours. Meanwhile the assaulting column had been formed, but its composition was not on the scale contemplated by General Lee. Instead of its being the entire First Corps with the Third to support it, Longstreet had selected only Pickett's division from his corps, to which were added from Hill's Corps Heth's Division, two brigades from Pender's and one from Anderson's. Pickett's Division of the three brigades was posted in two lines behind a rise on which runs the Emmetsburg road, its right supported by Wilcox's Brigade. Heth's Division to the left of Pickett's, and fully one hundred yards further back, was in one line behind the crest of Seminary Ridge, with Lane's and Scale's Brigades under Trimble in rear of its right.

When Pettigrew, commanding Heth's Division, reported to Longstreet he was instructed to form in rear of Pickett as a support to his division, but before the order could be executed it was countermanded, and directions given to place the division under the nearest cover to the left of Pickett's Division, with which it would advance in line. The alignment of the divisions from right to left, was, Archer's Brigade of Tennessee under Colonel B. D. Fry, Pettigrew's North Carolinians under Colonel James K. Marshall, Davis' Mississippians under General Joseph Davis, and Brockenborough's Virginians under Colonel Robert Mayo. Pickett's was the directing division; when it moved, Heth's Division was to move and as soon as possible overtake Pickett and continue the advance in line with it on its left. After much delay and uncertainty as to whether the attack would be made at all, Longstreet at last, with a nod of the head, started Pickett, and immediately Archer's and Pettigrew's Brigade moved forward. Pettigrew had taken every precaution to insure concert of action in the division; but this was no easy matter, for the woods which concealed us from view of the enemy, and to some extent sheltered us from his shells, contained other troops seeking the same shelter; and it so happened that General Davis, who afterwards told me that he had been indignant with General Pettigrew for cautioning him so frequently to conform promptly to the movement of Pettigrew's Brigade on his right, mistook other troops for Pettigrew's and did not discover his mistake until the two right brigades had advanced some distance. When we emerged from the wood into the plain, the absence of the two left brigades was discovered, and General Pettigrew instructed me to go for them with all speed, but I had scarcely turned to do so, when out came Davis from the wood with a rush, but not Brockenborough's Brigade, and I asked General Pettigrew if I should go for it. He replied "no," that it might follow, and if it failed to do so it would not matter. This was a small brigade that had suffered from frequent change of commanders, and had been so badly handled that it was in a chronic state of demoralization, and was not to be relied upon; it was virtually of no value in a fight. Afterward it advanced to the protection of some rifle pits in front of Seminary Ridge but it took no part in the charge.

The day was beautifully clear; the smoke from the guns of the artillery, which was to have concealed our start, had been blown away. Before us lay bright fields, and a fair landscape, embracing hill and dale and mountain; and beyond, fully three-fourths of a mile away loomed up Cemetery Ridge, for two miles, its heights capped with cannon, and behind them the whole Army of the Potomac waiting for our little band. Davis' Brigade with its impetuous rush soon caught up with the two brigades of Heth's Division which had preceded it, and then the three, pushing forward together, caught up with Pickett's Division, making one line of the two divisions, which first through shot and shell, then grape and canister, then a hail of bullets from the musketry, marched over the plain, surmounted every obstacle, and reached the enemy's position, the strength of which was all he could desire. From the crest upon which he was entrenched the hill sloped gradually, forming a natural glacis and the configuration of the ground was such that when the left of our line approached his line it must come within the arc of a circle, from which an oblique and the enfilade fire could be, and was, concentrated upon it. On the right Pickett's Division, Archer's and a part of Pettigrew's Brigade had penetrated the works, and so would all of it have done, but in advance the pressure had been from right to left, and when the line reached the ridge, it was slightly oblique; consequently the left of Heth's Division was thrown back somewhat. When not far from the stone fence behind which the enemy's infantry was entrenched, Davis' Brigade, reduced to a line of skirmishers, broke. It had suffered a great deal in the first day's fight; and in its rush from the wood on Seminary Ridge, it had arrived right oblique on Pettigrew's left, and in process of forcing its line back to the left, in order to get into position, there was for a little while a huddling of the men together, which exposed them to greater loss than should have been, but the line was soon straightened out, and no troops could have done better until they broke; but this brigade was on the extreme left, not a support of any kind to brace it up, and exposed to flank, oblique and direct fire, what hope or confidence could be left to the few men, that if they held on they could succeed. General Fitzhugh Lee, in his work entitled "General Lee," says of the left brigades of our assaulting columns, which includes Davis', Pettigrew's and Archer's:

"They made their assault in front of Hay and Gibbon's Divisions, Second Corps, in the vicinity Ziegler's Grove. Stormed at with shot and shell this column moved steadily on, closing up the gaps made, and preserving the alignment. 'They moved up splendidly,' wrote a Northern officer, 'deploying as they crossed the long, sloping interval. The front of the column was nearly up the slope, and within a few yards of the Second Corps' front and its batteries, when suddenly a terrific fire from every available gun on Cemetery Ridge burst upon them. Their graceful lines underwent an instantaneous transformation; in a dense cloud of smoke and

dust, arms, heads, blankets, guns, and knapsacks were tossed in the air, and the moans from the battlefield were heard from amid the storm of battle. Sheets of missiles flew through what seemed a moving mass of smoke; human valor was powerless, and the death-dealing guns were everywhere throwing blazing projectiles in their faces. No troops could advance and live. The fiery onslaught was repulsed as Pickett's Division had been, and then the survivors of both came back to their former positions, but not one-half of the fourteen thousand. The famous charge was over."

General Pettigrew had assigned me to the left of the division, and my duty was to see that the proper alignment was kept and if necessary to encourage the men, should there be any sign of faint-heartedness. At first I found it difficult to keep the men from crowding, and to make them give way to the pressure from the right, and this may have given the impression to some lookers on that our line wavered, but this trouble was soon remedied by the thinning of the ranks, done by shot and shell. As to my second duty, that of encouraging the men to move forward, there was no need of a word from me. When gaps were made in the line the ranks closed up of their own accord, and continued to advance, until the catastrophe, which I have described. Of course no troops, it matters not what their straits, should retire from an attack without orders to do so; but there is certainly mitigation for those who had none of their company officers to look to, and there were many companies, reduced to a few men, whose officers had all fallen. When what was left of Davis' Brigade broke, it did so in an instant, there was none of the before-hand wavering reported by Longstreet and others, who were looking on from afar or not at all. This, like many others of the reports concerning the charge, was wholly imaginary. When Davis' Brigade broke, I reported to General Pettigrew and he immediately sent me to General Trimble to ask him to hasten forward to our support. I was then on foot. My gallant mare—and that she was gallant, her groom, James R. Norwood, a colored man, now present, who was with me all during the war, and who has been my friend and servant for forty years, can testify—had succumbed to three wounds; and do not think me heartless, when I tell you, that when I placed a wounded soldier on her and sent them out, the thoughts of my heart were more with the spirited animal which had borne me bravely through many perils, than with my hurt comrade. I ran as fast as I could to deliver the message entrusted to me. General Trimble and his brigade, were not and had not been in supporting distance; they also must have been delayed, as was Davis' Brigade in the wood on Seminary Ridge. Be this as it may, they were too late to give any assistance to the assaulting column. When I delivered my message, I knew it was too late, and I recall my sad reflection, "What a pity that these brave men should be sacrificed." Already had the remnants of Pickett's and Heth's Division broken. They broke

simultaneously. They had together struck the stone fence, driven back the enemy posted behind it, looked down on the multitude beyond; and in the words of General McLaws, who was watching that attack, "rebounded like an India rubber ball." The lodgement effected, was apparently only for an instant. No twenty minutes expired, as claimed by some, before the hand full of braves was driven back by overwhelming numbers. Then Trimble's command should have been ordered to the rear. It continued its useless advance alone, only to return before it had gone as far as we had.

After delivering my message to General Trimble I returned to General Pettigrew. I found him walking out quietly; he too had been dismounted, and together we returned to our starting point, arriving there after most of the survivors from the two divisions. Thus ended the famous battle of Gettysburg. Notwithstanding the failure of its efforts, the army was still unconquered in spirit, and had Meade followed us back to Seminary Ridge, he would have found our troops ready to mete out to him what he had given us. But according to General Sickles, before the committee on the conduct of the war. "It was by no means clear, in the judgment of the corps commanders, or of the general in command, whether they had won or not," they therefore made no counter attack, and scarcely molested General Lee's army, as it slowly and deliberately withdrew, and returned to Virginia.

The number composing the assaulting column on this last day is variously estimated at 13,500 to 18,000 men. The troops actually engaged were in reality, only Pickett's Division of 4,500 to 5,000, and three brigades of Heth's, which were at the outside not over 4,000. Wilcox on the right advanced only a small part of the way and was of no assistance to Pickett, and Trimble's advance was too late to be of the least support to our left. The little band of less than 9,000 men had traversed the wide plain. Intersected with fences running, some parallel, some oblique to our line, without shelter of any kind, without assistance from our artillery which had expended its ammunition, and had done no damage to that of the enemy, or its infantry. The charge was grand, but that is all it was. "Some one had blundered." Said General Lee, "had I had Stonewall Jackson at Gettysburg I would have won a great victory." So I believe but the mantle of Elijah had not fallen on Ellisha. Longstreet was not Jackson.

There was, now is and always will be given to Pickett's Division exalted praise for its part in this famous charge upon the heights of Gettysburg, and it deserves it; but I claim for Pettigrew's and Archer's Brigade, not only equal, but larger share of the honors of the day; and even to Davis' Brigade, although the first to break. Is due the tribute which is the meed of noble effort and heroic sacrifice in face of certain defeat. Whatever might have been the probabilities on the right and center of the assaulting column, there was no hope for the left. Its flank stormed on by every conceivable missile of destruction. In its shattered

condition it could have made no lodgement. Pickett on the right, although not supported by Wilcox as was intended, had the advantage of having been formed in two lines—two brigades on the front, one on the second line as a support; whereas Heth's Division, under orders, advanced in one line. Pickett's Division having been posted more than one hundred yards in advance of Heth's, had a shorter distance to go; and above all, Pickett's division was fresh. It had not yet participated in the battle; its organization was complete, with a full roll of staff and field officers. Heth's Division had suffered great loss on the 1st, and General Pettigrew had with him as division staff, only the young volunteer aide, W. B. Shepard, and myself; therefore the brigades of Archer and Pettigrew, which did in all respects as well as did Pickett's Division, are entitled to more credit, whereas they have been often included in the number of those blamed for the failure of the charge on Cemetery Ridge.

No State in the Confederacy contributed braver, more devoted or better soldiers, or a greater number of them, than did North Carolina; and yet in this instance, for some unaccountable reason they were made a mark for ignorant or vicious and false disparagement. In Heth's division, of the sixteen regiments present at Gettysburg, only five were from North Carolina, yet such stuff as this, conceived in the brilliant imagination of Swinton, finds credence and is repeated in other histories, of the sort described by Froude and quoted at the opening of this address. Says Swinton, "It happens that the division on the left of Pickett under command of General Pettigrew was in considerable part made up of North Carolina troops, comparatively green. To animate them they had been told that they would only meet Pennsylvania militia; but when approaching the slope they received the feu d'enfer from Henry's line, there ran through the rank a cry the effect of which was like that which thrilled a Greek army when it was said that the god Pan was among them: 'The Army of the Potomac.' Then, suddenly disillusioned regarding their opponents, Pettigrew's troops broke in disorder leaving two thousand prisoners and fifteen colors in the hands of Henry's Division." Brilliant rhetoric, but not truth. Think of the audacity of the manufacture. It says of Heth's Division, that it was "in considerable part made up of North Carolinians," when they were only as five to sixteen; and then, that they were frightened at a cry. "The Army of the Potomac." This, two days after Pettigrew's Brigade of North Carolinians had nearly annihilated the best brigade in the Northern army.

Another matter of no little importance. The division, even by such authority as Colonel Walter H. Taylor, of General Lee's staff is spoken of as "Pettigrew's Division." Pettigrew had no division. The division was Heth's, and should be so spoken of, whether in praise or blame. "In war," said Napoleon, "men are nothing, a man is everything." Troops are what their commanders make them; and General Pettigrew had no hand in molding Heth's

Division. Nor is it fair to blame Heth for the short coming of Brockborough's Virginia Brigade, under Robert Mayo, the only troops on the ground which really behaved badly, for the division had been formed only a few weeks before, and had been constantly on the march since. There was not time for the influence of the commander to be felt. In this matter not even a suspicion of blame must be attached to the name of Pettigrew, whose genius was such that its influence inspired and became a part of the humblest soldier in his command. He had in a few months made of his brigade as fine a body of infantry as ever trod the earth, and his men would have followed him wherever he led on gone wherever he told them to go, no matter how desperate the enterprise. The brigade never lost the inspiration of his name, and from first to last was one of the very best in the army of the Confederate States. Its baptism of blood at Gettysburg prepared it for all subsequent hardships, and never, until included in the surrender of the 8,000 at Appomattox, did it fail to respond to the command to go forward. Its career was brilliant, and its history should be written and preserved. Its losses at Gettysburg attest its fierce struggle in that famous battle. On the morning of July 1st it numbered 2,800 to 3,000, on the 4th 935. All the field officers, save one who was captured, were killed or wounded; and the brigade was commanded after the repulse from Cemetery Ridge by Major Jones, of the Twenty-sixth North Carolina, who had been struck by a fragment of a shell on the 1st, and knocked down and stunned on the 3rd; General Pettigrew was painfully wounded, two of his staff were killed, and one so seriously wounded as to deprive the brigade of his services. On the 1st of July, Captain Tuttle of the Twenty-sixth North Carolina led into action two lieutenants, and 84 men. All of the officers and 83 men were killed or wounded. On the same day Company C, of the Eleventh, lost two officers killed and 34 out of 38 men killed and wounded. Captain Bird with the four remaining, participated in the fight of the 3rd; of these the flag bearer was shot, and the captain brought out the flag himself. These I give as examples to show how persistently our men fought. The losses in several other companies were nearly as great as these.

In the engagement of the 1st of July we lost no prisoners. After the repulse of the 3rd of July, the enemy advanced a heavy line of skirmishers and captured some of the brigade, but no blame is to be attached to these.

Lieutenant Colonel John R. Graves, of the Forty-seventh North Carolina, whose courage often elicited comment and praise, would not permit those of his regiment in his hearing, some 150

men, to retire, telling them to wait the arrival of the supports, with which they would advance; they were then not far from the stone fence. The supports never reached this point, and the lieutenant colonel and his men were taken prisoners.

It is said that the Northern soldiers cheered the gallant charge made by the assaulting column on the third day, and of Lincoln it is reported that, looking from the steeps of Cemetery Ridge, he said, "I am proud to be the countryman of the men who assailed these heights." Is it not a crying shame that while our very enemies do us honor, there should be some among our own people to slander our brave soldiers? The historian of the future will weigh the evidence in the scales of truth, and do justice to all.

It was my purpose to close with a reference to some of my associates, and there is one of them sitting there, of whom I would like to tell you. *He was quarter master, promoted from the rank of lieutenant in the line, to major, in the quarter master's department. If there had been more like him in the army, our generals would have been able to win more victories. After a separation of 35 years, my friend descended on me like a ray of sunshine through a riven cloud. I wish you to know him.

I wish also to pay a passing tribute to some of our heroes who fell in the battle of Gettysburg. Praise is due to their memory and for ourselves it is good to render it, since we in some measure take part in good actions when we praise them sincerely." Heroic deeds are also torches to light the paths of our young, and "Heaven doth with us as we with torches do.

Not light them for themselves."

I would like especially to tell of General James Johnston Pettigrew, who was a soldier of the highest attainments; in strength of intellect approaching nearer the attributes of genius than any it has been my fortune to meet, and in character like Robert E. Lee. But I have a mentor who tells me that this address is full long, and I can only say of our dead heroes, that

"They died
As they wished to die, the past is sure;
Whatever of sorrow may betide,
Those who still linger by the stormy
shore,
Change cannot harm them now nor
fortune touch them more."

*Major George P. Collins, of Hillsboro, N. C.

Pettigrew's Brigade was composed of the Eleventh, Twenty-sixth, Forty-fourth, Forty-seventh and Fifty-second North Carolina troops. The Forty-fourth was left in Virginia on duty at North Anna river so was not present at Gettysburg.

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