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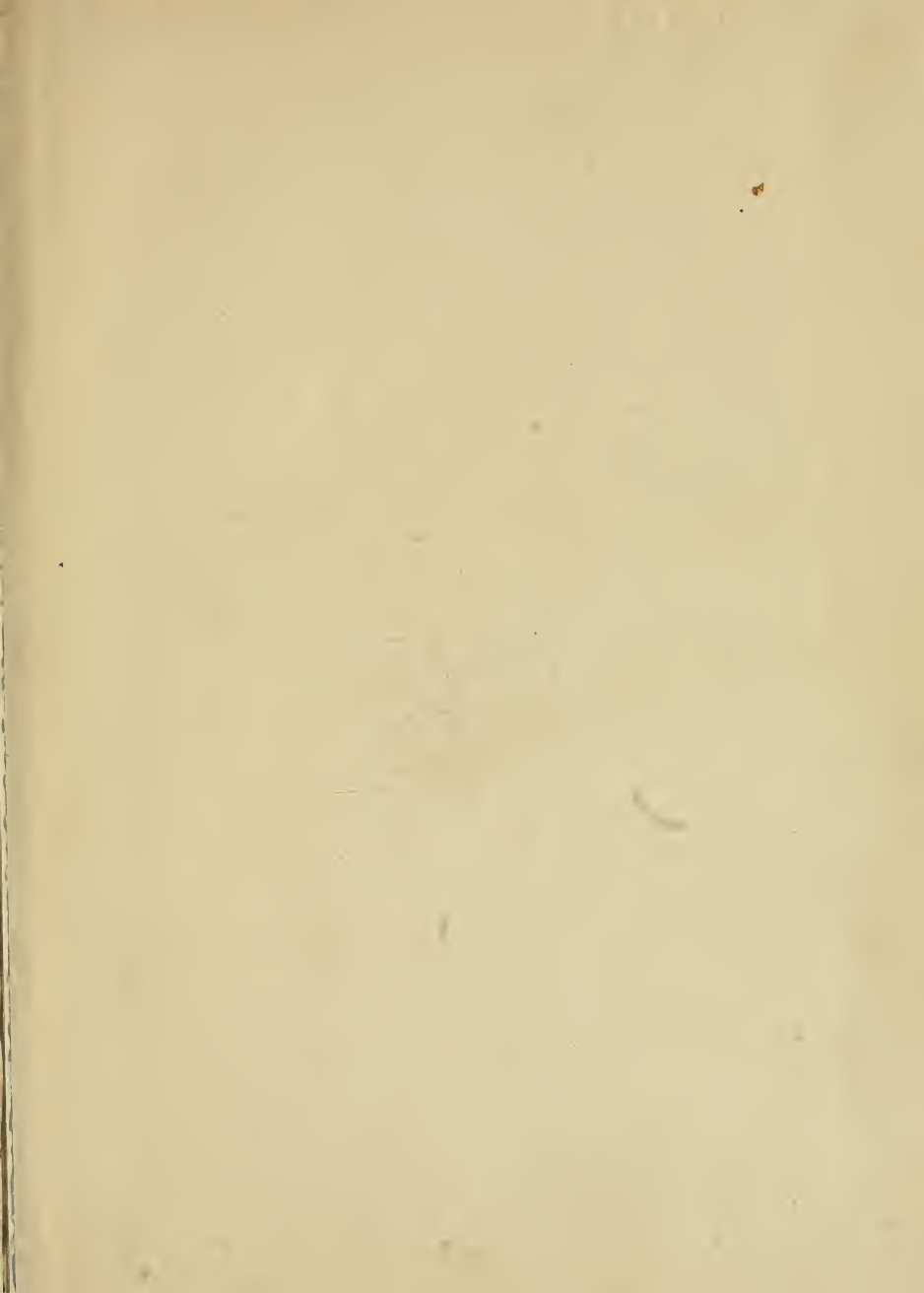
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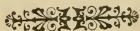
Tactics at Gettysburg

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As Described by
Participants in the Battle



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TACTICS AT GETTYSBURG

As Described by Participants in the Battle.

I.

GEN. LEE'S PURPOSE.

"I think I can throw Gen. Hooker's army across the Potomac and draw troops from the South, embarrassing their plan of campaign in a measure, if I can do nothing more and have to return," wrote Gen. Robert E. Lee to President Davis, of the Southern Confederacy, June 25, 1863, describing in a single sentence the purpose of the Pennsylvania invasion that ended with the battle of Gettysburg. In his report of the Gettysburg campaign dated January, 1864, Gen. Lee thus referred to his expectations:

"If unable to attain the valuable results which might be expected to follow a brief advantage gained over the enemy in Maryland or Pennsylvania, it was hoped that we should at least so far disturb his plan for the summer campaign as to prevent its execution during the season of active operations."

Col. A. L. Long, Gen. Lee's military biographer, says in his Memoirs of Gen. Lee:

"The object of the campaign being the defense of Rich-

mond, Gen. Lee could either continue on the defensive and oppose the Federal advance, as he had recently done, or he might assume the offensive and by bold maneuvering oblige the Federal army to recede from its present line of operations to protect its capital or oppose the invasion of Maryland or Pennsylvania. The advance upon Richmond would thus be delayed, at least for a time. The dispirited condition of the Federal army since its late defeat and the high tone of that of the Confederates inspired the adoption of the latter plan."

"To defend Richmond by threatening Washington and Baltimore and Philadelphia was perhaps the most promising purpose of the Confederate invasion," says Gen. John B. Gordon, "Reminiscences of the Civil War."

Said Rev. James Power Smith, D.D., formerly A. D. C. to Gen. Ewell, in a paper read before the Massachusetts Historical Society, April 4, 1905:

"The Commissary General at Richmond said, 'If Gen. Lee wants rations let him seek them in Pennsylvania.' Such an aggressive movement would compel the Federal army to retire from the unassailable north bank of the Rappahannock, would remove the campaign from northern Virginia and give the country opportunity for recuperation. For at a time, at least, the Confederate forces would find supply in the abundance of the rich fields and barns of Pennsylvania. If a successful battle could be fought on northern soil it might result in some change of sentiment in the North and a cry for peace; and it might bring recognition by foreign powers and a close of the war. All things pointed to the invasion. Conditions compelled it and Gen. Lee, knowing the odds

which were against him and the perils of the movement, had the audacity to undertake it."

Lee formed his army into three corps, under the command of Longstreet, Ewell and Hill, each corps comprising three divisions. Having entrusted to the cavalry the task of protecting the right flank of the army and the duty of observing the enemy, the Army of Northern Virginia in the latter part of June, 1863, was moved down the Shenandoah Valley toward the Potomac. Gen. Milroy's force of Federals was overwhelmed and nearly 4,000 prisoners were taken. The Potomac was crossed and the Confederates pushed on west of South Mountain into Pennsylvania.

The danger that the North might sweep down and capture Richmond was not ignored, but it was not highly regarded. Indeed, Gen. Lee is credited with having remarked that he was willing to "swap queens"—exchange Richmond for Washington. But this was a jocular remark, for the reports and orders of Gen. Lee fail to show that he had any designs on the Federal capital, or that he believed the North would menace Richmond. On the contrary, he looked for a battle on northern soil, but he expected it would be on ground of his own selection, and that he would be enabled to act upon the defensive. His calculations in this respect were upset by the rashness of one of his own commanders, the rapidity of the movements of the northern army when it was learned that he was invading the North, and his ignorance of the whereabouts of the opposing forces, owing to the failure of the cavalry to keep him informed. For this Gen. Stuart has been unjustly blamed. Gen. Stuart

was authorized, June 22, to take position on Ewell's right and to collect supplies. Stuart failed to overtake Ewell because the latter was recalled from the Confederate advance. Stuart left two of his brigades for Lee's use.

"Lee, Longstreet and Stuart," says Col. Mosby, ("Stuart's Cavalry in the Gettysburg Campaign"), "were all absent for the same reason on the first day—because the army had not been ordered to Gettysburg and it was not their duty to be there. They were in their proper places. Hill and Heth were not."

Gen. Hooker, in command of the Army of the Potomac, meanwhile had been informed of Lee's movement. He ordered Gen. Slocum with the 12th Corps to Harper's Ferry, with the intention of adding the 10,000 troops in garrison there to Slocum's command. With this force Slocum was instructed to operate against the Confederate line of communications while the Army of the Potomac attacked in front. But Gen. Halleck, the commander-in-chief, refused Hooker's request that this garrison be placed at his disposal. Gen. Hooker thereupon resigned and Gen. Meade was appointed his successor.

Gen. Meade did not know whether Lee's movement was limited to a raid into Pennsylvania, with the possible capture of Harrisburg, or whether he aimed at Washington and Baltimore. He was accordingly forced to proceed with caution. He was handicapped, too, by orders not to permit the enemy to get between him and Washington. Lee was unhampered by instructions, but he was ignorant of the whereabouts of his opponents.

The Army of the Potomac crossed the river on the 25th and 26th, but Lee did not learn it until the 27th. When news came to him that the advance of the Army of the Potomac had reached Frederick, Maryland, he ordered a concentration at Cashtown, Pennsylvania.

He sent the following order to Gen. Ewell, commanding the advance of the Confederate forces :

Chambersburg, June 28, 1863, 7.30 a. m.

LIEUT. GEN. R. S. EWELL,

Commdg. Corps.

GENERAL:

I wrote you last night stating that Gen. Hooker was reported to have crossed the Potomac and is advancing by way of Middletown, the head of his column being at that point in Frederick county. I directed you in that letter to move your forces to this point. I think it preferable to keep on the east side of the mountains.

R. E. LEE, Gen.

Ewell had been ordered June 21 to take Harrisburg and was starting from Carlisle June 29, with that end in view, when he received orders to join the main body of the army at Cashtown. Early's division meanwhile had moved on a more southerly line to the Susquehanna river and was preparing to unite his forces with the rest of Ewell's Corps when he, too, was recalled to the main body.

Meade on June 28, was no better informed of the location of Lee's forces than Lee was of the position of the Federal corps. He telegraphed that day to Gen. Halleck, commander-in-chief at Washington :

"If he (Lee) is crossing the Susquehanna I shall rely upon Gen. Couch with his force holding him until I can fall upon his rear and give him battle."

Two days later he telegraphed to Couch at Harrisburg:

"We shall push to your relief. * * Can you keep the enemy from crossing the river?"

Meanwhile Gen. John F. Reynolds, commanding the 1st Corps, and the left wing of the Federal army, had been able to send to Gen. Meade a fairly definite statement of the position of the Confederate forces. Under date of June 29, 3.15 p. m., he wired Gen. Butterfield, Meade's Chief of Staff:

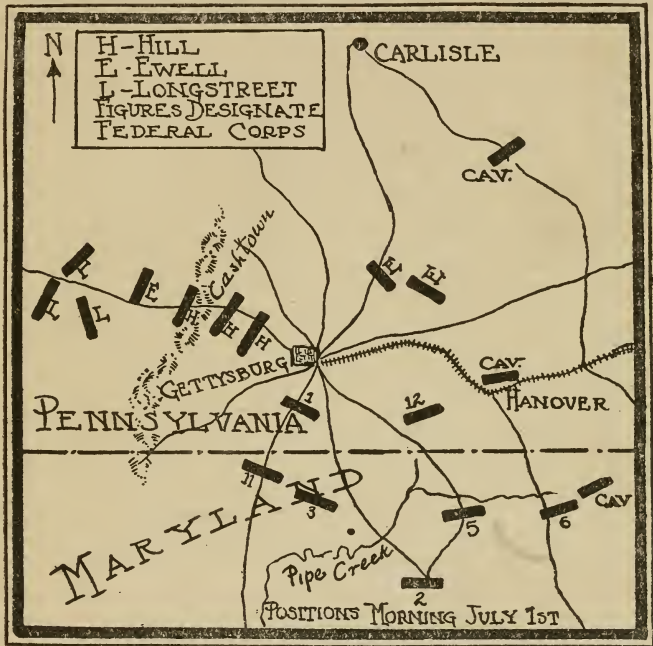
"Hopkins, a scout of Sharpe's has just returned from Gettysburg with a statement of the affairs in that quarter yesterday. Early's division passed there in the direction of York and the other division (Gordon's, I think) with the trains was in the valley and moved along a road nearer the mountains. Another division (Rodes') of Ewell's was up by Carlisle, and Hill (A. P.) was said to be moving up through Greencastle in the direction of Chambersburg. The cavalry with Early was sent off to Hanover Junction and up the railroad to York."

On the following day, June 30, Meade issued the following circular to his commanders:

"The Commanding General has received information that the enemy are advancing probably in strong force on Gettysburg. It is the intention to hold this army pretty nearly in the position it now occupies until the

plans of the enemy shall have been more fully developed.”

By night Meade had received such information that he was convinced that all designs on the Susquehanna



Positions Morning July 1.

had been abandoned. For the next day's moves he ordered the 1st and 11th Corps to Gettysburg, the 3rd to Emmitsburg, the 2nd to Taneytown, the 5th to Hanover, the 12th to Two Taverns, the 6th being left at Man-

chester, 34 miles from Gettysburg. These dispositions have been much criticised. By advancing his left Meade placed it between the converging forces of Hill and Ewell.

Gen. O. O. Howard, who succeeded Gen. Reynolds in command of the left wing of the Federal army, says in his autobiography (page 399, Vol. 1) :

“On June 30 the Confederate Army formed a concave line (concavity toward us) embracing Chambersburg, Carlisle and York. Ours formed an indented line, extending from Marsh Run to Westminster, the left of that line being thrown far forward. If Lee could bring his men together east of the South Mountain near Cash-town it would appear that he might strike us in the flank, before we could assemble, blow after bow and beat us in detail.”

Meade had directed two of his corps to go to Gettysburg as a covering movement, but followed up his instructions with orders for a concentration on the line of Pipe Creek, fourteen miles south of Gettysburg, in case the enemy assumed the offensive. Gen. Meade's headquarters were at Taneytown, ten miles south of Gettysburg.

II.

BUFORD'S UNTENABLE POSITION.

Pettigrew's Confederate brigade belonging to Hill's Corps, seeking army supplies, especially shoes, made its

appearance in the western suburbs of Gettysburg about 10 o'clock June 30, near the Lutheran Seminary and halted, while the officers scanned the country with glasses. Learning of the Federal advance the brigade withdrew toward Cashtown, stationing pickets west of Gettysburg. At 11 o'clock two brigades of Buford's division of Federal cavalry entered the town and moved out westerly on the Chambersburg pike or the Cashtown road. Buford soon discovered the proximity of the enemy, but, knowing that Gen. Reynolds was in supporting distance with the 1st and 11th Corps, he decided to resist the Confederate advance and took position near the Seminary.

"By daylight on July 1," Gen. Buford's report, August 27, 1863, says: "I had gained positive information of the enemy's position and movements and my arrangements were made for entertaining him until Gen. Reynolds could reach the scene."

Gettysburg is about ten miles east of the South Mountain range. So many roads lead to it that it has been compared to the hub of a wheel. These converging roads are the Fairfield road from the south-west, the Chambersburg and Mummasburg roads from the north-west, the Carlisle from the north, the Heidlersburg or Harrisburg from the north-east, the York from the east, the Baltimore, Taneytown and the Emmitsburg roads from the south.

Buford's decision was contrary to Meade's wishes as expressed in the following order:

Taneytown, Md., July 1, 1863.

GEN. BUFORD:

GEN.: The Major General commanding directs me to order you to fall back to Taneytown and then to Middleburg in case the enemy should advance in force upon you and press you hard. The cavalry will dispute every inch of the ground and fall back very slowly to the point designated and send in all information they can gather. By order of Maj Gen. Pleasanton.

C. ROSS SMITH,
Lieut. Col., etc.

Lee was just as desirous as Meade of avoiding action except on ground of his own selection. That day he notified Gen. J. D. Imboden as follows:

"My headquarters for the present will be at Cashtown, east of the mountains."

He had no thought of going to Gettysburg. In fact he told Gen. Anderson of Hill's Corps, that day at Cashtown that if the whole Federal army was in front of him "We must fight a battle here."

Early on the morning of that day the outposts of the two armies came into collision on the ridge west of Gettysburg. Lee's unexpected encounter with the Federal forces at Gettysburg, where he never had intended to fight, was brought about, Col. Mosby asserts in his "Stuart's Cavalry in the Gettysburg Campaign," by the unauthorized precipitancy of Heth, aided and abetted by Hill, his corps commander. Heth's report says he went to Gettysburg on a reconnoissance, on learning from Pettigrew of the Federal advance. He should have re-

tired when he had developed the force in front of him. But he remained. Hill ordered more troops to him and the battle was brought on from which Lee felt he could not retire.

"The report on its face shows that he was not making a reconnoissance," says Col. Mosby. "Two of his brigades had been shattered and a brigadier general captured. But Hill, instead of winning expected trophies, had been worsted; he did not want to go back to camp and meet Gen. Lee with his plume torn and a black eye. So he ordered Pender in."

It was "a premature movement contrary to the spirit, at least, of Lee's instructions," says James P. Smith, formerly A. D. C. to Gen. Ewell. "It made the great battle, not one of defense on the eastern slopes of Cash-town, but of offense at Gettysburg."

Lee's orders were to avoid bringing on an action, and that general's first intimation of danger of collision was his hearing Hill's guns at Gettysburg. He was much disturbed by it. But it was now too late to draw back and reinforcements were hurried forward. "It was not by the choice of Lee nor by the foresight of Meade," says Smith, "that the Federal army found itself placed upon lines of magnificent defense."

"War is a business of positions," said Napoleon. The events of the day that followed proved the truth of the remark. Buford had imprudently seized a position that was strong against an attack in front, but which could be easily turned by the forces he must have known were coming from the north and northeast. Of the seven corps of the Army of the Potomac only two, the

1st and 11th, were in supporting distance. The Confederates could be reinforced much more readily than the Federal troops. Gettysburg itself was not worth fighting for.

Col. Mosby says in his "Stuart's Cavalry in the Gettysburg Campaign, (page 93) :

"Gettysburg offered no offensive or defensive advantages. On the day before the battle the commander of neither army wanted to get possession of it, and either was willing for the other to have it and hold it. Meade, who had superseded Hooker, held it simply as a cavalry post; Gen. Lee had no thought of going there.

"Some writers have said it was a place of military importance because it was the center from which so many roads radiated. That was the very thing that made it weak and untenable. It was so easy to approach it from any direction and turn it. An army on the Ridge had a tactical advantage in an attack on its front, but the attacking force had the choice of turning its flanks."

In Col. Mosby's view that Gettysburg is a weak strategic position Col. John H. Calef, a Federal officer, coincides. He says in "Gettysburg Notes. The Opening Gun":

"By a glance at the map it will be seen that from Gettysburg as a center many roads radiate. * * Guarding those leading from Chambersburg and York the troops must be disposed on lines facing west and north, forming a salient order of battle, a very weak one, and which is open to the objections that the fire is eccentric; that the two faces are exposed to enfilade fire; that an

opening out at the angle presents the flanks to attack and the retreat of one wing compromises the safety of the other. That is precisely what happened and in the battle of this day each one of the objections noted received its illustration. * * Then again, each one of the many roads meeting at the town, like the spokes of a wheel, presented an avenue for outflanking. If the lines were deployed, covering all the approaches, they would be everywhere weak. If concentrated to guard the main roads, a flank would be presented as well as a conspicuous target for the opposing artillery."

Had Reynolds received Meade's order to withdraw to Pipe Creek on the morning of July 1, before starting for camp, no battle would have been fought at Gettysburg.

"When he reached Gettysburg," says Col. Mosby, "he found Buford's cavalry engaged with Heth's division that was advancing on the pike from Cashtown. Buford knew that Hill was at Cashtown and that Ewell was ten miles north at Heidlersburg the night before. He could not have expected to do more than hold the Confederates in check. Instead of forming his line of battle on Cemetery Ridge with Buford's cavalry on his flanks, Reynolds abandoned that strong position and moved two miles out on the Cashtown road with his infantry to join Buford. He then had Hill in his front and Ewell on his flank. The result of his tactical error was a defeat for which he paid the penalty of his life. His movement on the field perpetuates the memory of a heroic action and a great blunder." But it has been claimed that Reynolds would have retired to Cemetery

Hill had he not been killed. The Comte de Paris in his "Civil War in America" says, "One of Reynolds' aide de camp, Capt. Rosengarten, has even asserted that Reynolds had designated Cemetery Hill as the point which Howard was to occupy."

Gen. Howard in his report to Gen. Meade, after the battle of July 1, said:

"The position was not a good one, because both flanks were exposed and a heavy force approaching from the northern roads rendered it untenable."

Artillery was promptly placed in position on both sides and exchanged shots. The fight had raged for over an hour when the Federal signal officer in the belfry of the Seminary, turning his eyes toward the Emmitsburg road, saw in the distance the flag of the 1st Corps. Reynolds hurried up, and having surveyed the field, rode back to meet the 1st Corps and rush the troops forward to Buford's relief. He also sent word to Gen. Howard to bring up the 11th Corps from Emmitsburg. While leading forward in his impetuous manner the 19th Indiana of Meredith's Iron Brigade, General Reynolds received a fatal wound and fell from his horse. Gen. Doubleday took command.

As the 1st Corps came up it replaced the cavalry who were put on the flanks.

Midway between the Fairfield and Chambersburg roads was a triangular piece of woods, the base resting on Willoughby Run and the spur reaching up towards Seminary Ridge. "These woods," says Gen. Doubleday, "possessed all the advantages of a redoubt, strengthening the center of our lines, and enfilading the enemy's

columns should they advance in the open space on either side. I deemed the extremity of the woods which extended to the summit of the ridge, the key to the position."

"It must be evident," says Samuel P. Bates (The Battle of Gettysburg), "that the maneuvering of Doubleday was admirable and that it stamps him as a corps commander of consummate excellence. Where in the whole history of the late war is this skill and coolness of the commander, or this stubborn bravery of the troops matched?"

Attacks by Davis and Archer's Brigades of Heth's Division were outflanked, and the Confederates lost considerably in prisoners.

The fighting that ensued was as desperate as any in the Civil War. Col. Henry A. Morrow, Col. 24th Mich. Vols., 1st Brig., 1st Corps, who was captured while wounded, says in his report:

"During the time I was a prisoner I conversed freely with distinguished rebel officers in relation to the battle on the 1st instant and, without exception, they spoke in terms of admiration of the conduct of our troops, and especially of that of the troops composing the First Army Corps. One of them informed me that Lieut. Gen. A. P. Hill said he had never known the Federals to fight so well."

Hon. C. D. Prescott, in an address to veterans of the 97th N. Y. Vols., July 1, 1889, related this incident:

"A Union horseman who charged wildly down the lines in a critical juncture of the battle thundered what it meant to the northern soldiers. "There are no troops

behind you. You stand alone between the rebel army and your homes. Fight like hell.'”

The 76th New York lost 169 out of 27 officers and 348 men. The 147 New York lost 207 out of 380 men in action. The 26th North Carolina regiment of Pettigrew's brigade had only 216 out of over 800 remaining when the fight closed.

Lieut. Col. George Wagner, of the 88th Pennsylvania, has made the following estimate of the losses of the first day and a comparison with the losses of the other two days, showing that the percentage of casualties on each side was greater on the first day than on the other days:

FEDERAL LOSSES.

	Engaged.	K. & W.	Per Ct.	Total Includ-
First day	17,000	4,823	28.3	51.2 ing miss
Other days	66,000	12,905	19.5	21.6 ing
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Total engaged	83,000	17,727	21.3	27.7 22,990

CONFEDERATE LOSSES.

	Engaged.	K. & W.	Per Ct.	Total Includ-
First day	30,000	7,001	23.3	28.6 ing miss
Other days	39,000	8,297	21.2	30.4 ing
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Total engaged	69,000	15,298	21.7	29.6 20,448

III.

ROUT OF THE FEDERALS.

Gen. Howard had in the meantime arrived in Gettysburg in advance of his corps and examined the battlefield from an elevated position in the town.

“On hearing of the death of Gen. Reynolds (about 11.30 a. m.),” he says in his report, “I assumed command of the left wing. * * After an examination of the general features of the country I came to the conclusion that the only tenable position for my limited force was the ridge to the southeast of Gettysburg, now so well known as Cemetery Ridge.”

But he did not order his forces to Cemetery Hill, although a lull in the fighting had come. He admits that there was a cessation of hostilities after the first attack of the Confederates was repulsed. He says in his autobiography:

“The temporary repulse of Cutler and the defeat of Archer and Davis had produced a feeling of caution on both sides so that there was a period of delay before any organized assault was again attempted.”

Gen. Abner Doubleday, who succeeded Gen. Reynolds in command of the 1st Corps, says in his “Gettysburg Made Plain”:

“Before the 11th Corps came up the enemy could have walked right over the small force opposed to them, but, owing to the absence of Stuart’s cavalry, they had not been kept informed as to the movements Meade was making, and, fearing that the whole Union army was

concentrated in their front, they were over-cautious. There was now a lull in the battle for about an hour."

Gen. Doubleday continues:

"Gen. Howard succeeded to the command of the field, but did not issue any orders to the 1st Corps until the afternoon. In the meantime Gen. Doubleday continued the contest, captured a great part of the forces that had assailed him and cleared his immediate front of all enemies."

Lieut. Col. Wm. F. Fox, 107th N. Y. Vols., says in "New York at Gettysburg":

"The fighting ceased and for three hours (after 11 a. m.), there was a lull in the conflict. The success of the Union troops in repelling this opening attack made Heth cautious and he occupied the ensuing interval in bringing up his two other brigades, Pettigrew's and Brockenbrough's. During the two hours or more succeeding the repulse of Heth there was no infantry fighting. Each side was preparing for a renewal of the contest, Doubleday and his men disdaining to avail themselves of this opportunity to effect a safe and honorable retreat."

Gen. Doubleday says in his report:

"Upon taking a retrospect of the field it might seem, in view of the fact that we were finally forced to retreat, that this would have been a proper time to retire; but to fall back without orders from the Commanding General might have inflicted lasting disgrace upon the corps, and as Gen. Reynolds, who was high in the confidence of Gen. Meade had formed his lines to resist the entrance

of the enemy into Gettysburg, I naturally supposed that it was the intention to defend the place."

After endeavoring to justify himself, he shifts the responsibility to Gen. Howard. He continues in the following words:

"Nor could I have retreated without the full knowledge and approbation of Gen. Howard, who was my superior officer and who had now arrived on the field. Had I done so it would have uncovered the left flank of his corps. If circumstances required it, it was his place, not mine, to issue the order. Gen. Howard, from his commanding position on Cemetery Hill, could overlook all the enemy's movements as well as our own, and I, therefore, relied much upon his superior facilities for observation to give me timely warning of any unusual danger."

In course of conversation with John Codman Ropes, the military critic, 38 years after the battle, Gen. Carl Schurz, who succeeded Gen. Howard in command of the 11th Corps, asked him what was his criticism of the conduct of the Federal troops.

"He said," continues Gen. Schurz, in his *Reminiscences*, "that on the whole we fought well and were obliged to yield the field north and east of the town, but that we committed a great mistake in not retreating to our second position south and east of Gettysburg an hour and perhaps two hours earlier."

The Comte de Paris remarks: "If he (Howard) had not delayed so long in giving this order (to retreat) the retrograde movement in the presence of an enemy who had shown but little enterprise, could have been exe-

cuted without difficulty or any serious loss and consequently the position of Cemetery Hill could have been more strongly occupied."

Says Samuel P. Bates: "Howard is without excuse for holding out so long."

Howard halted Steinwehr's division, two brigades, on Cemetery Hill, as a reserve, and advanced Schurz and Barlow to the front. With these he formed line to cover the approaches as far east as Rock Creek.

"This disposition was bad," says Col. E. P. Alexander in his "Military Memoirs." "The force was small for so long a line, and its right flank was in the air near the Heidlersburg road, by which Early was now drawing near."

"About 11.30," says Gen. Schurz in his "Reminiscences," after describing the march of the 11th Corps from Emmitsburg, "I found Gen. Howard on an eminence east of the cemetery of Gettysburg, from which we could overlook a wide plain. * * From where we stood we observed the thin lines of troops and here and there puffy clouds of white smoke on and around Seminary Ridge and heard the crackle of the musketry and the booming of the cannon, indicating a forward movement of our 1st Corps, which we knew to be a little over 8,000 men strong. Of the troops themselves we could see little. * * Gen. Reynolds' death devolved the command of the 1st Corps upon Gen. Doubleday, the command of all the troops then on the field upon Gen. Howard, and the command of the 11th Corps upon me.

"The situation before us was doubtful. We received a report from Gen. Wadsworth, one of the division com-

manders of the 1st Corps, that he was advancing; that the enemy's forces in his front were apparently not very strong, but that he thought that the enemy was making a movement toward his right. From our point of observation we could perceive but little of the strength of the enemy and Wadsworth's dispatch did not relieve our uncertainty. If the enemy before us was only in small force, then we had to push him as far as might seem prudent to Gen. Meade. But if the enemy was bringing on the whole or a large part of his army, which his movement toward Gen. Wadsworth's right might be held to indicate, then we had to look for a strong position in which to establish and maintain ourselves until reinforced or ordered back. Such a position was easily found at the first glance. It was Cemetery Hill on which we then stood and which was to play so important a part in the battle to follow. Accordingly Gen. Howard ordered me to take the 1st and 3rd Divisions of the 11th Corps through the town and to place them on the right of the 1st Corps, while he would hold back the 2nd Division under Gen. Steinwehr and the reserve artillery on Cemetery Hill and the eminence east of it as a reserve.

"About 12.30 the head of the column of the 11th Corps arrived. The weather being sultry, the men, who had marched several miles at a rapid pace, were streaming with perspiration and panting for breath. But they hurried through the town as best they could and were promptly deployed on the right of the 1st Corps. But the deployment could not be made as originally designed by simply prolonging the 1st Corps line, for in the mean-

time a strong Confederate force had arrived on the battlefield on the right flank of the 1st Corps so that to confront it the 11th Corps had to deploy under fire at an angle with the 1st Corps. Gen. Schimmelfennig, temporarily commanding my (the 3rd) Division, connected with the 1st Corps on his left as well as he could under the circumstances and Gen. Francis Barlow, commanding our 1st Division, formerly Devens', deployed on his right. * * Within the next two hours he (Barlow) made the mistake of being too brave.

"I had hardly deployed with two divisions, about 6,000 men, on the north side of Gettysburg, when the action very perceptibly changed in character. Until then the 1st Corps had been driving before it a comparatively small force of the enemy, taking many prisoners, among them the rebel General Archer, with almost his whole brigade. My line, too, advanced, but presently I received an order from Gen. Howard to halt where I was and to push forward only a strong line of skirmishers. This I did and my skirmishers, too, captured prisoners in considerable number. But then the enemy began to show greater strength and tenacity. He planted two batteries on a hillside, one above the other, opposite my left, enfilading part of the 1st Corps. Capt. Dilger, whose battery was attached to my 3rd Division, answered promptly, dismounting four of the enemy's guns, as we observed through our field glasses, and drove away two rebel regiments supporting them. In the meantime the infantry firing on my left and on the right of the 1st Corps grew much in volume. It became evident that the enemy's line had been heavily reinforced and was

pressing upon us with a constantly increasing vigor. I went up to the roof of a house behind my skirmish line to get a better view of the situation and observed that my right and center were not only confronted by largely superior forces, but also that my right was becoming seriously overlapped. I had ordered Gen. Barlow to refuse his right wing, that is, to place his right brigade, Col. Gilsa's, a little in the right rear of his other brigade in order to use it against a possible flanking movement by the enemy. But I now noticed that Barlow, be it that he had misunderstood my order or that he was carried away by the ardor of the conflict, had advanced his whole line and lost connection with my 3rd Division on his left, and, in addition to this, he had, instead of refusing, pushed forward his right brigade so that it formed a projecting angle with the rest of the line. At the same time I saw the enemy emerging from the belt of woods on my right with one battery after another and one column of infantry after another, threatening to envelop my right flank and cut me off from the town and the position on Cemetery Hill behind.

"I immediately gave orders to the 3rd Division to re-establish its connection with the 1st, although this made still thinner a line already too thin, and hurried one staff officer after another to Gen. Howard with the urgent request for one of his reserve brigades to protect my right against the impending flank attack by the enemy. Our situation became critical. * * But before that Brigade came the enemy advanced to the attack along the whole line with great impetuosity. Gilsa's little brigade in its exposed position 'in the air' on Barlow's extreme

right had to suffer the first violent onset of the Confederates and was fairly crushed by the enemy rushing on from the front and both flanks. While I was doing my utmost, assisted by my staff officers, to rally and reform what was within my reach of the 1st Division for the purpose of checking the enemy's advance around my right and to hold the edge of the town the reserve brigade I had so urgently asked for, the 1st Brigade of the 2nd Division, 11th Corps, under Col. Coster, at last arrived. It came too late for that offensive push which I had intended to make with it in order to relieve my right, if it had come half or even a quarter of an hour earlier. But I led it out of the town and ordered it to deploy on the right of the junction of the roads near the railway station which the enemy was fast approaching. There the brigade, assisted by a battery, did good service in detaining the enemy long enough to permit the 1st Division to enter the town without being seriously molested on its retreat."

Gen. Howard appeared to be much concerned over his left flank, held by the 1st Corps, but little worried over his right, which was his vulnerable point. He went over to inspect the position of the 1st Corps about 2 o'clock. He says in his autobiography (page 416):

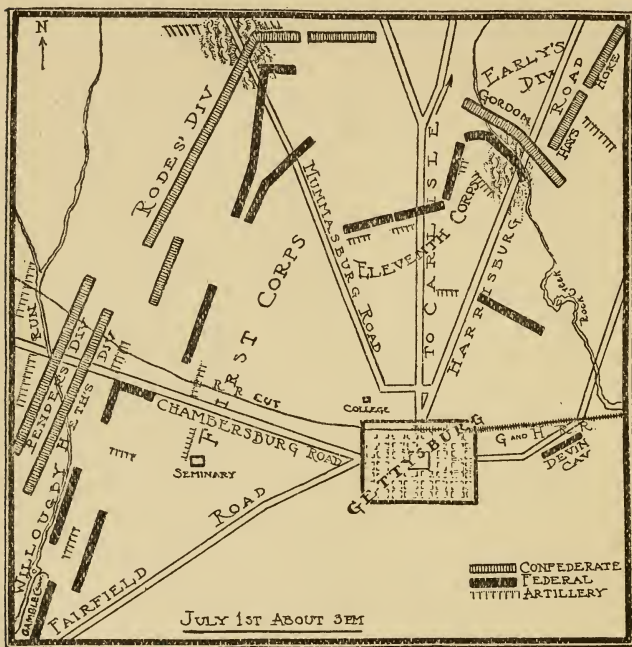
"I returned to my headquarters feeling exceeding anxious about the left flank. * * In order to relieve the threatened pressure against the 1st Corps and at the same time to occupy the enemy's attention, I ordered Schurz to push out a strong force from his front and seize a wooded height situated some distance north of Robinson's position, but the order had hardly left me

when Major Howard brought me word that Early's Division of Ewell's Corps was at hand; in fact, the entire corps was coming in from the north and east."

The 140th N. Y. Vols. occupied the extreme right of the 1st Corps on the east slope of Oak Hill, to which Col. John R. Strang, commanding the regiment says it clung until support to the right and left was gone, when the regiment slowly retired, fighting as it went. Of 330 in battle line, there were lost 194, nearly two-thirds. Col. Strang, in an address to the survivors of the regiment, September 4, 1888, said regarding the fight for the Mummasburg road, which ran between the 1st and 11th Corps:

"An open space of 300 yards or more still remained between the right of the 1st Corps and the left of the 11th, perceiving which, part of Rodes' Division was massed for attack under shelter of the McLean buildings and shrubbery north of the Mummasburg road. We had no reserve left to fill this gap and I was directed by Col. Prey to find the nearest brigade or division commander of the 11th Corps and represent to him the position of affairs and the danger which was apparent that the enemy thus massing at McLean's would penetrate our lines through this opening which, if done in sufficient force, would immediately render the position of both corps untenable. I was unable to find either of those commanders, but delivered my message to a staff officer and the commanding officer of the nearest 11th Corps troops and then returned to the regiment. Before reaching it, on looking back I saw that the right of the 11th Corps was rapidly being driven back and its

brigade nearest us was changing front to the right in order to protect its flank and line of retreat, instead of coming to our aid. The anticipated attack upon our right immediately took place and, being left without any protection on that flank, we were subjected to a



July 1st about 3 P. M.

murderous enfilading fire and obliged to fall back and change front to the right in order to protect our rear. The rebel advance from the west was also renewed with resistless numbers, Gen. A. P. Hill's Corps, comprising

about one-third of Lee's army, closing in upon the 1st Corps from that direction, while two divisions of Ewell's Corps assailed us from the north. We were slowly driven back to the town and through the streets and having been at the extreme right of the corps a good many of our men were cut off and captured before they could reach the town."

Gamble's Brigade of cavalry, on the left flank of the 1st Corps, offered a stubborn opposition to the advance of the Confederates.

"Gamble lost heavily," Col. John H. Calef, U. S. A., says, "but the importance of the gallant stand made by this handful of dismounted troopers has never been properly recognized, for had Lane reached the Emmitsburg road his position on the flank and rear of the 1st Corps would have seriously compromised the retrograde movement of that corps, then being executed, toward Cemetery Hill."

Gen. Doubleday thus describes the retreat of the 1st Corps:

"About 4 p. m. the enemy, having been strongly reinforced, advanced in large numbers, everywhere deploying into double and triple lines, overlapping our left for a third of a mile, pressing heavily upon our right and overwhelming our center. It was evident Lee's whole army was approaching. Our tired troops had been fighting desperately, some of them for six hours. They were thoroughly exhausted and Gen. Howard had no reinforcements to give me. It became necessary to retreat. * * It is stated by Gen. Wadsworth in his official report that the portion of the 11th Corps nearest to us, unable to

stand the pressure, had fallen back some time before this and that our right flank was thus uncovered, so far as that Corps was concerned. * * When that part of the 11th Corps adjacent to us fell back, a force of 30,000 men was thrown upon the 1st Corps, which in the beginning only contained about 8,200."

The disaster to the Federal troops was brought about, as Gen. Schurz indicates, by Barlow's rashness in advancing the right of the 11th Corps.

Gen. Henry J. Hunt, in "Battles and Leaders," says that Doles, of Rodes' Division of Ewell's Corps, had sent his skirmishers forward to drive Devin's troopers from a hillock on Rock Creek, when Barlow advanced his division, attacked Doles' skirmishers and seized the knoll afterward known as Barlow's Knoll. The arrival of Gordon, of Early's Division, on Barlow's right brought an overwhelming force on his flank and he fell back, carrying back the whole line.

Gen. J. A. Early says in his report (August 22, 1863) of the attack on Barlow's right that on arriving in sight of Gettysburg he found the enemy engaged in an attempt to drive back Rodes' left. He continues:

"Gordon was formed on the right, Hays in the center and Hoke on the left and Smith in rear of Hoke. Jones' artillery battalion was posted on the left of the Heidlersburg road in front of Hoke's brigade. Gordon was ordered forward to the support of Doles' Brigade on Rodes' left. The enemy had advanced to a wooded hill on west side of Rock Creek. After a short but hot contest, Gordon routed the force opposed to him, and drove it back with great slaughter."

Gen. Gordon in his "Reminiscences of the Civil War" thus describes the attack:

"Returning from the banks of the Susquehanna and meeting at Gettysburg July 1, 1863, the advance of Lee's forces, my command was thrown quickly and squarely on the right flank of the Union army. * * With a ringing yell my command rushed upon the line posted to protect the Union right. Here occurred a hand to hand struggle. That protecting Union line once broken left my command not only on the right flank, but obliquely in rear of it. Any troops that were ever marshaled would under like conditions have been as surely and swiftly shattered. There was no alternative for Howard's men except to break and fly or to throw down their arms and surrender. Under the concentrated fire from front and flank the marvel is that any escaped. * * The whole of that portion of the Union army in my front was in inextricable confusion and in flight."

"At 4.10 p. m.," says Gen. Howard's report, "on finding that I could hold out no longer and that the troops were already giving way, I sent a positive order to the commanders of the 1st and 11th Corps to fall back gradually, disputing every inch of the ground and to form near my position, the 11th Corps on the right and the 1st Corps on the left of the Baltimore pike."

IV.

LEE'S LOST OPPORTUNITY.

Military students declare that Gen. Lee let a great op-

portunity slip when he failed to push the attack against the retreating Federals, though Gen. Ewell is held primarily responsible.

Col. W. H. Taylor in his "Four Years With Lee," says:

"Gen. Lee witnessed the flight of the Federals through Gettysburg and up the hills beyond. He then directed me to go to Gen. Ewell and say to him that from the position which he occupied he could see the enemy retreating over those hills without organization and in great confusion; that it was only necessary to press those people in order to secure possession of the heights and that, if possible, he wished him to do this. * * Gen. Ewell did not express any objection or indicate the existence of any impediment to the execution of the orders conveyed to him, but left the impression upon my mind that they would be executed."

Gen. Ewell's report says:

"On entering the town I received a message from the Commanding General to attack this hill if I could do so to advantage. I could not bring artillery to bear on it and all the troops with me were jaded by twelve hours' marching and fighting and I was notified that Gen. Johnson's Division (the only one of my corps that had not been engaged) was close to the town."

Gen. Gordon, whose brigade had routed Barlow's Division, says in his Memoirs:

"In less than half an hour my troops would have swept up and over those hills, the possession of which was of such momentous consequence. It is not surprising that with a full realization of the consequences of a

halt I should have refused at first to obey the order. Not until the third or fourth order of the most preemp-tory character reached me did I obey. * * It is stated on the highest authority that Gen. Lee said some time before his death that if Jackson had been there he would have won in this battle a great and possibly decisive victory. * * No soldier in a great crisis ever wished more ardently for a deliverer's hand than I wished for one hour of Jackson, when I was ordered to halt. Had he been there his quick eye would have caught a glance of the entire situation and, instead of halting me, he would have urged me forward and have pressed the advantage to the utmost, simply notifying Gen. Lee that the battle was on and that he had decided to occupy the heights. Had Gen. Lee himself been present, this would undoubtedly have been done."

Early says in his report that he sent word to Hill that if he would send a division he would take the hill and he also told Ewell the same. He was told, he says, that Johnson was coming up and that it had been determined to take the wooded hill to the left of Cemetery Hill which it commanded. But Johnson arrived at a late hour, his movements having been delayed by a report of the enemy's advance on the York road.

Rev. James Power Smith, D.D., formerly A. D. C. to Gen. Ewell, in a paper read before the Massachusetts Historical Society, April 4, 1905, said:

"About 5 p. m. I rode with Gen. Ewell and staff into the town square of Gettysburg. * * It was a moment of most critical importance, more evidently critical to us now than it would seem to any one then. But

even then some of us who had served on Jackson's staff sat in a group in our saddles and one said sadly, 'Jackson is not here.' Our corps commander, Gen. Ewell, as true a Confederate officer as ever went into battle, was simply waiting for orders when every moment of his time could not be balanced with gold. Gen. Early and Gen. Rodes' came with great earnestness and animation to tell of their advanced position (these men had gone on to the foot of the slopes of Cemetery Hill). They desired Gen. Lee to be informed that they could go forward and take Cemetery Hill if they were supported on their right; that to the south of the cemetery there was in sight a position commanding it which should be taken at once and I was sent by Gen. Ewell to deliver the message to the Commanding General. * * Gen. Lee directed me to say to Gen. Ewell that he regretted that his people were not up to support him on his right, but he wished him to take Cemetery Hill if it were possible; and that he would ride over and see him very soon. Whatever the opportunity was, it was lost. Early and Rodes were ready for the assault. A. P. Hill felt the losses in his command and waited for his third division, Anderson's; and Gen. Ewell, waiting for his third division, Johnson's and diverted by the false alarm on his left, lacked initiative and looked for instructions from his commander."

"The attack was not pressed that afternoon," said Gen. Lee in his report of July 31, 1863, "the enemy's force being unknown, and it being considered advisable to await the arrival of the rest of our troops."

Gen. Lee, in January, 1864, gave this further information :

“Gen. Ewell was instructed to carry the hill occupied by the enemy if he found it practicable, but to avoid a general engagement until the arrival of the other divisions of the army which were ordered to hasten forward.”

Col. A. L. Long, in his “Memoirs of Gen. Lee,” speaks of the Federals having been reinforced. He says:

“As the troops were evidently very much fatigued and somewhat disorganized by rapid marching and hard fighting, it seemed inadvisable to immediately pursue the advantage which had been gained, particularly as the retreating forces of the enemy were known to have been reinforced and to have taken a strong defensive position about a mile south of the town. * * Col. Long was directed to make a reconnoissance of the Federal position on Cemetery Ridge, to which strong line the retreating troops had retired. This he did and found that the ridge was occupied in considerable force. On this fact being reported to Gen. Lee he decided to make no further advance that evening, but wait until morning before attempting to follow up his advantage. He turned to Longstreet and Hill, who were present, and said, ‘Gentlemen, we will attack the enemy in the morning as early as practicable.’ In the conversation that succeeded he directed them to make the necessary preparations and be ready for prompt action the next day.”

It is undeniable that the Federals were apprehensive of the result of a Confederate attack. Gen. Schurz tells in his autobiography of the fears entertained both by

himself and by Gen. Hancock, whom Gen. Meade had sent to the field on hearing of Gen. Reynold's death.

Gen. Hancock said years after (January 17, 1878) :

"In my opinion, if the Confederates had continued the pursuit of Gen. Howard on the afternoon of the first day of July at Gettysburg, they would have driven him over beyond Cemetery Hill."

Brevet Maj. Gen. St. Clair Mulholland, 116 Pa., 2nd Corps, speaking of the time when Hancock arrived at Cemetery Hill, says :

"At this moment our defeat seemed to be complete. Our troops were flowing through the streets of the town in great disorder, closely pursued by the Confederates, the retreat fast becoming a rout and in a very few minutes the enemy would have been in possession of Cemetery Hill, the key to the position, and the battle of Gettysburg would have gone into history as a Confederate victory."

Col. John B. Bachelder says :

"There is no question but what a combined attack on Cemetery Hill within an hour would have been successful."

Gen. Meade, himself, years after the battle, admitted that an attack in force by the Confederates would have resulted in a Federal defeat. In a letter to Col. G. G. Benedict, of Burlington, Vermont, March 16, 1870, he said :

"Lieut. Gen. Ewell in a conversation held with me shortly after the war asked what would have been the effect if at 4 p. m. on the 1st, he had occupied Culp's Hill and established batteries on it. I told him that, in

my judgment, in the condition of the 11th and 1st Corps with their morale affected by their withdrawal to Cemetery Ridge with the loss of over half their numbers in killed, wounded and missing, (of the 6,000 prisoners we lost in the field nearly all came from these corps in the first day) his occupation of Culp's Hill with batteries commanding the whole of Cemetery Ridge would have produced the evacuation of that ridge and the withdrawal of the troops there by the Baltimore pike and Taneytown and Emmitsburg roads. He then informed me that at 4 p. m. on the 1st he had his corps, 20,000 strong, in column of attack, and on the point of moving on Culp's Hill, which he saw unoccupied and commanded Cemetery Ridge, when he received an order from Gen. Lee directing him to assume the defensive and not to advance; that he sent to Gen. Lee, urging to be permitted to advance with his reserves, but the reply was a reiteration of the previous order. To my inquiry why Lee had restrained him he said our troops coming up (Slocum's) were visible and Lee was under the impression that the greater part of our army was on the ground and deemed it prudential to await the rest of his."

The retreating soldiers were met at East Cemetery Hill by Gen. Hancock and Gen. Howard, who directed them to the various positions to which they had been assigned. The 1st Corps was disposed on the left on Cemetery Ridge and Culp's Hill on the extreme right and the 11th on East Cemetery Hill around Steinwehr.

In the meantime the 12th Corps was arriving on the Baltimore pike, and soon after Sickles' 3rd Corps was

seen coming up from Emmitsburg. Hancock had been instructed to take command and to report if he thought the ground suitable for fighting. Hancock on arriving established a battle line on the elevations southeast of Gettysburg. Geary's Division of the 12th Corps was ordered to occupy the ground to the extreme left to the right of and in advance of Round Top.

Hancock then sent word to Gen. Meade that the position was a very strong one, but that it might be easily turned. He surrendered the command to Slocum and returned to Taneytown to report in person. Both Slocum and Sickles had moved their corps on to Gettysburg without orders from Gen. Meade; in fact, in direct opposition to instructions issued by him, having in mind the formation of the army along Pipe Creek. They exercised the discretion allowed in such cases and their action was afterward approved.

Gen. Meade, without awaiting Hancock's return, acted on the information sent by him and decided to fight at Gettysburg. He sent order to his corps commanders that as the battle would probably be fought there they must put their troops in motion and by forced marches reach that place as soon as possible. Meade left Taneytown that night and arrived at Gettysburg at 1 o'clock in the morning of July 2. The 2nd Corps (Hancock's) under the command of Gibbon, pressed on along the Taneytown road and was halted about three miles south of the town, where it passed the night. Five of the seven corps of the army were on the field or in supporting distance at nightfall.

V.

THE FEDERAL LEFT TURNED.

Regarding the decision to engage in battle the next day, Gen. Lee says in his report of January, 1864:

“It had not been intended to fight a general battle at such a distance from our base unless attacked by the enemy, but, finding ourselves unexpectedly confronted by the Federal army, it became a matter of difficulty to withdraw through the mountains with our large trains. At the same time the country was unfavorable for collecting supplies while in the presence of the enemy’s main body, as he was enabled to restrain our foraging parties by occupying the passes of the mountain with regular and local troops. A battle thus became in a measure unavoidable. Encouraged by the successful issue of the engagement of the first day, and in view of the valuable results that would ensue from the defeat of the army of Gen. Meade, it was thought advisable to renew the attack.”

The plan of battle he describes as follows:

“It was determined to make the principal attack upon the enemy’s left and endeavor to gain a position from which it was thought that our artillery could be brought to bear with effect. Longstreet was directed to place the divisions of McLaws and Hood on the right of Hill, partially enveloping the enemy’s left which he was to drive in. Gen. Hill was ordered to threaten the enemy’s center, to prevent reinforcements being drawn to either wing and co-operate with his right division in Long-

street's attack. Gen. Ewell was instructed to make a simultaneous demonstration upon the enemy's right to be converted into a real attack should opportunity offer."

The valley in which the battle of the next day was fought seems fitted by nature for the scene of a great military contest. The western elevation extending south from the Seminary, has a fringe of trees. The eastern slope finally occupied by the Federal army was admirably adapted for awaiting an attack. Meade's final position is frequently spoken of as a fishhook, the barb being Culp's Hill, Wolf's Hill further to the south-east forming the point. The stem runs along Cemetery Ridge to the south ending in Little Round Top and Round Top, the foot of the shank. The elevation of the former is 187 ft. The latter is 300 ft. high. The two Round Tops are not separated by a gap, but merely a depression. Their western slope descends to a marshy stream called Plum Run. West of the banks of Plum Run and opposite the Round Tops is an assemblage of boulders known as Devil's Den.

The morning of July 2 was passed in anxious expectation by the men of both armies and in final preparations. Gen. Meade looked for an attack in force on his right stationed on Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill. These are the points that would have been assailed had the attack been made the day before. This expectation led him to neglect his left, including the important positions of the Round Tops.

Gen. Lee planned a repetition of the concealed march and attack on the flank which was so successful at Chancellorsville. The flank attack by Longstreet's

Corps was to be supported by Anderson's Division of Hill's Corps, lying parallel with the Emmitsburg road, each brigade to attack as soon as the brigade on its right engaged.

In his plan Lee was unwittingly aided by the orders of the Union commander. Geary's Division of the 12th Corps had passed the night on the left. He was ordered to the right and went into position on Culp's Hill. Buford's Division of cavalry had been temporarily stationed on the left flank in front of the Round Tops, but Gen. Meade ordered it to Westminster to refit, having been erroneously informed that other cavalry had prepared to relieve him.

"The withdrawal of Buford's Cavalry Division to Westminster is one of the unexplained incidents of this battle," says Lieut. Col. Wm. F. Fox (New York at Gettysburg). "That a division should be withdrawn 'to refit,' that it should be ordered thirty miles to the rear at the very moment when the enemy was forming in its front for an attack, cannot well escape the notice of thoughtful readers. The casualties in this division at Gettysburg aggregated 127, a loss which would hardly warrant withdrawal; and it had suffered no loss whatever in equipment or horses. It was not needed to protect Westminster, for Huey's fine brigade of cavalry had already been left behind at that place."

One of the controversies of the Gettysburg battle has been over the alleged daylight order. It has been claimed that Longstreet was ordered to attack Meade's left at daylight of July 2. This Longstreet always denied. Col. A. L. Long in his "Memoirs of Gen. Lee," asserts

that Longstreet was distinctly ordered to attack at daylight and continues:

“As the morning advanced surprise began to be felt at the delay in commencing the attack on the right which had been ordered to take place at an early hour. After giving Gen. Ewell instructions as to his part in the coming engagement he (Lee) proceeded to reconnoiter Cemetery Ridge in person. * * Lee’s impatience increased after this reconnoissance and he proceeded in search of Longstreet, remarking in a tone of uneasiness, ‘What *can* detain Longstreet? He ought to be in position now.’ This was about 10 a. m. * * The opportunity which the early morning had presented was lost. The entire Army of the Potomac was before us.”

“As a matter of fact,” says Gen. E. P. Alexander in his “Military Memoirs of a Confederate,” “43 of the 51 Federal brigades of infantry were upon the ground at 8 a. m.”

“About 11 a. m. his (Lee’s) orders were issued,” says Gen Alexander. “Anderson’s Division of Hill’s Corps was directed to extend Hill’s line upon Seminary Ridge to the right, while Longstreet with Hood’s and McLaws’ Divisions should make a flank march to the right and pass beyond the enemy’s flank which seemed to extend along the Emmitsburg road. Forming then at right angles to this road, the attack was to sweep down the enemy’s line from their left, being taken up successively by the brigades of Anderson’s Division as they were reached. Ewell’s Corps, holding the extreme left, was to attack the enemy’s right on hearing Longstreet’s guns. Longstreet was directed in his march to avoid

exposing it to the view of a Federal station on Little Round Top Mountain.”

Sickles' 3rd Corps was stationed on the left of the 2nd, which occupied Cemetery Ridge. The left of the 3rd Corps, the extreme left of the Union line, was in an unsatisfactory position. The corps' Chief of Artillery says in his official report that the positions of his batteries “were low, unprotected and commanded by the ridge along which was the road from Emmitsburg,” and that “there were no desirable positions on our part of the line.” On the left was a screen of woods which the experience of the Union troops at Chancellorsville made a source of serious apprehension. Picket lines of the 2nd and 1st Corps lay along the Emmitsburg road. Sickles did not have force enough to occupy the Round Tops without leaving a wide gap in line between his forces and those of the 2nd Corps.

From the left of the 2nd Corps to the Round Tops was 2,200 yards. As the front of the 2nd Corps covered only 1,200 yards, although that corps was larger than the 1st, Sickles felt that his corps could not adequately cover the ground from Hancock's left to the Round Tops. Meade, convinced that the attack would fall upon his right, did not think it necessary to strengthen his left and ignored the requests to that effect sent by Sickles. The latter believed that if he remained where he was the enemy would speedily occupy the Round Tops and be in a position to take the Union army in flank.

He decided that the most practicable way out of his dilemma was to occupy the high ground in front of Lit-

tle Round Top and extending from Devil's Den to the Emmitsburg road, forming at that spot a salient in a peach orchard. He hoped thus to be able to meet a flank attack with a battle line. A reconnoissance in force had disclosed three columns of infantry in motion on the Confederate right and confirmed him in his belief that the attack would be made on his left.

“Had it not been for the activity of Sickles and the reconnoissance made by some of his troops,” says Lieut. Col. Fox, “Longstreet would have massed 17,000 men in the woods on the Union flank without their presence being known. Longstreet's movement was a surprise to Gen. Meade, although information regarding it had been sent to headquarters. Meade paid little attention to his left until he found that it was attacked.”

The position in which Gen. Sickles placed the 3rd Corps has been the cause of more discussion probably than any other feature of the battle except Pickett's charge the next day. Gen. Sickles has been censured on one hand for an error in judgment that cost many lives, and, on the other hand, he has been praised for an act that saved the Federal army from defeat. The former contention perhaps is best outlined in the words of Gen. Meade in a letter to Col. G. G. Benedict, March 16, 1870, in which he says:

“My first orders to Gen. Sickles were to relieve the 12th Corps division (Geary's) and occupy their position. * * When he came to my headquarters at about noon and said he did not know where to go I answered, ‘Why, you were to relieve the 12th Corps.’ He said they had no position; they were massed awaiting

events. Then it was I told him his right was to be Hancock's left, his left on Round Top, which I pointed out. Now his right was three-quarters of a mile in front of Hancock's left and his left one-quarter of a mile in front of the base of Round Top, leaving that key point unoccupied, which ought to have been occupied by Longstreet before we could get there with the 5th Corps. Sickles' movement practically destroyed his entire corps, the 3rd, caused the loss of 50 per cent. in the 5th Corps and very heavily damaged the 2nd Corps; as I said before, producing 66 per cent. of the loss of the whole battle, and with what result?—driving us back to the position he was ordered to hold originally."

The defense of Gen. Sickles is given in a letter to the "New York Times" in August, 1886, replying to the statements in Gen. Meade's letter. He says:

"Gen. Meade nowhere pretends in his official report or in his testimony before the committee on the conduct of the war that I was to occupy Round Top. He states that he expected me to occupy Geary's position. Hancock's report proves that Geary was ordered to the right of Round Top—precisely the ground I held, extending my left to the Devil's Den and my right toward the Emmitsburg road.

"Gen. Meade's statement, I repeat, is absurd, tactically and topographically, because it designates a line and position for the 3rd Corps which it could not have occupied by reason of the great extension of the line and the number of troops required to hold Round Top. * * Moreover, the direct line from Hancock's left to Round Top was a line through swale, morass, swamp, boulders,

and forest and tangled undergrowth, unfit for infantry, impracticable for artillery and hopelessly dominated by the ridge in front which I would have surrendered to Lee without a blow if I had attempted to execute the impossible order Gen. Meade confidentially states to his correspondent that he gave me. Nay, more, if I had occupied the line Gen. Meade represents in 1870 that he told me to take I would have had no position whatever for my artillery and would have surrendered to Lee the positions for his artillery which he states in his official report it was the object of his movement to gain. In other words, the line indicated by Gen. Meade in his confidential letter is one that would have abandoned to the enemy all the vantage ground he sought and had to fight for all the afternoon. And this vantage ground, by which I mean the Emmitsburg road ridge, the Devil's Den, the Emmitsburg road itself and the intersecting roads leading to our left, once in the possession of the enemy without loss, would have enabled him to deliver his assault upon me in the position indicated by Gen. Meade three hours before it was delivered and with advantage of position and force that would have given Lee the victory.

“If the reinforcements which came up from 5 o'clock to 6.30 had arrived three hours before Longstreet's assault on the second would have been repulsed as promptly and decisively as on the third day.”

Sickles did not feel confident that he could successfully resist the attack, but he felt that he could hold his position until supports were brought up and defeat the enemy's attempt to outflank him.

Two-thirds of the corps wheeled south to meet the attack that soon came. Longstreet said in a letter written to Sickles many years after the war, Sept. 19, 1902: "I believe that it is now conceded that the advanced position at the peach orchard, taken by your corps and under your orders, saved that battlefield for the Union cause."

Meanwhile Meade had been concerned about his right. He contemplated an attack upon the Confederates in that direction. At 9.30 a. m. he sent the following order to Gen. Slocum, commanding the 12th Corps:

"The Commanding General desires that you will at once examine the ground on your front and give him your opinion as to the practicability of attacking the enemy in that quarter."

This order he supplemented with the following:

"Commanding Officer, 12th Corps:

"The Commanding General desires you to make your arrangements for an attack from your front on the enemy to be made by the 12th Corps supported by the 5th. He wishes this a strong and decisive attack which he will order as soon as he gets definite information of the approach of the 6th Corps which will be also directed to co-operate in this attack."

To these orders Gen. Slocum at 10.30 a. m., replied as follows:

Gen.:

"Your note of 9.30 a. m. is received. I have already made a better examination of the position in my front than I am able to now that we have taken up the new line.

If it is true that the enemy are massing troops on our right I do not think we could detach enough troops for an attack to insure success. I do not think the ground in my front held by the enemy possesses any peculiar advantages for him.

“H. W. SLOCUM,
“Maj. Gen. Com.”

The contemplated attack was abandoned.

At 3 o'clock, just before the fighting opened, Gen. Meade telegraphed to Gen. Halleck, the Commander-in-Chief at Washington:

“He (the enemy) has been moving on both my flanks apparently, but it is difficult to tell exactly his movements. I have delayed attacking to allow the 6th Corps and parts of other corps to reach this place and rest the men. Expecting a battle, I ordered all my trains to the rear. If not attacked and I can get any positive information of the position of the enemy which will justify me in so doing, I shall attack. If I find it hazardous to do so, or am satisfied the enemy is endeavoring to move to my rear and interpose between me and Washington, I shall fall back to my supplies at Westminster.”

About 3 o'clock Longstreet's batteries opened along his entire line with an energy that indicated that an attack would soon follow. Gen. Meade went over to the left, where he expressed surprise at the advanced position of Sickles' Corps. It was too late to change it, and he promised to order up the 5th Corps to support his left, and instructed Sickles to call on Hancock for reinforcements on his right.

“The position at the Peach Orchard,” says Bates, “was a commanding one for artillery and could the pieces have been protected by lunettes, as were those of Steinwehr, they could have defied the whole weight of opposing metal from left to right that was brought to bear upon them.”

“Had it (the peach orchard) been occupied soon and been well intrenched,” says Fox, “it might have proved a still more serious obstacle to the enemy.”

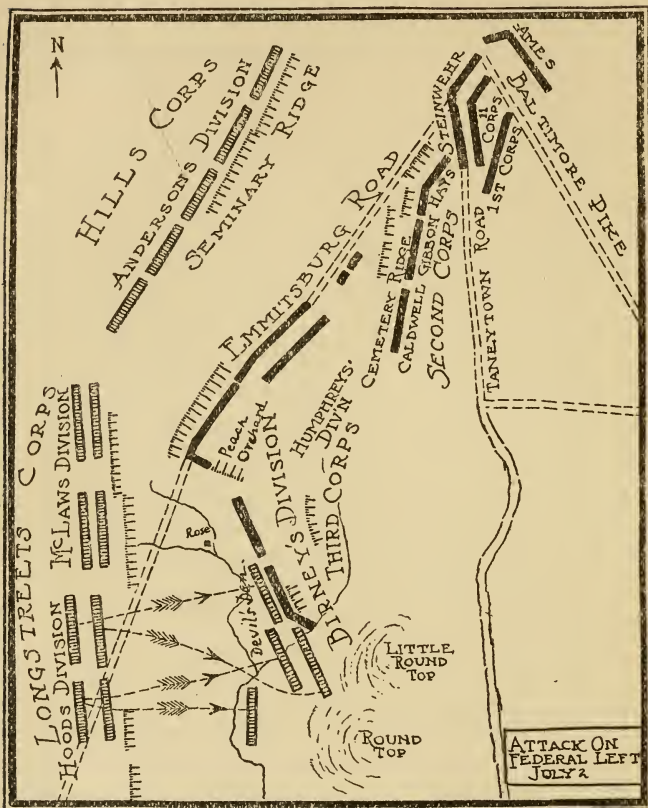
The 3rd Corps was struck at the southern base of Devil’s Den, and the attack then rolled up to the Peach Orchard and along the Emmitsburg road to Codori’s.

Col. Charlese H. Weygant, 124th N. Y. Vols., which was stationed on the extreme left of the 3rd Corps, says:

“Ward’s Brigade formed the left wing of Birney’s Division and the 124th, after being moved about considerably, was ordered to form battle line on the rocky ridge at Devil’s Den. When the battle opened there was nothing to our left but a section of Smith’s battery, the remaining guns of which were in position a short distance to our rear.” Reinforcement was slow, he charged. He continued:

“That Sickles’ entire corps fought most nobly and that Ward’s Brigade was left unsupported and held its own for over an hour and a half in a most deadly contest with a force of the enemy which outnumbered it four to one, until its line of battle was reduced to a mere skeleton and then, with the exception of one regiment, was not driven, but withdrawn, because there was no force at hand to prevent the enemy’s moving past its flank

must be acknowledged by all honest writers who are acquainted with the facts."



Attack on Federal Left July 2.

Maj. Samuel H. Leavitt, 86th N. Y. Vols., (also of Ward's Brigade), asserts:

“We hung on grimly and maintained our ground until 5 p. m. The enemy had pressed the brigade back from the Devil’s Den and attacked Round Top. Our left flank had been turned and we were forced to fall back, which we did in good order.”

The Confederates, however, claim that the resistance was briefer.

“In less than an hour from the time we advanced to the attack,” says Gen. Law in “Battles and Leaders,” “the hill by Devil’s Den, opposite the center, was taken with three pieces of the artillery that had occupied it.”

Col. A. L. Long, in his “Memoirs of Gen. Lee,” thus describes the Confederate effort to capture Little Round Top:

“Through an interval which lay between Sickles’ left and the foot of Round Top, Hood’s extreme right thrust itself unperceived by the Federals, and made a dash for Little Round Top, which through some strange oversight was at this moment quite unoccupied by any portion of Meade’s army. * * Yet it was the keypoint of that whole section of the battlefield and had Hood dreamed of its being unoccupied, pushed a powerful force in that direction and seized the commanding summit, the victory would have been in his grasp since the possession of this point would not only have placed Sickles’ Corps in a highly perilous position, but have enabled him to take the entire line in reverse. It was at this critical moment that the Federals discovered their error and hastened to amend it. The prompt energy of a single officer, General Warren, chief engineer

of the army, rescued Meade's army from imminent peril."

Gen. Hood does not deserve Col. Long's animadversion. Hood had sent some scouts up Big Round Top who returned with the information that both Round Tops were unoccupied; that some of the Union wagon trains were parked behind those hills and that he could march through open woodlands and level fields around Big Round Top to where he could attack the enemy in flank or rear. Hood at once dispatched a staff officer to Longstreet with a message declaring that, in his opinion, it was unwise to attack up the Emmitsburg road and urgently requesting permission to pass to the south of Big Round Top and thereby turn the position. Longstreet returned word that Gen. Lee's orders were to attack up the Emmitsburg road. A second and third time Hood renewed his request to turn Round Top so that he could attack the opposing forces in flank and rear, but each time he received the same reply. Longstreet did not forward Hood's request to Gen. Lee because he had already urged upon the Commanding General the advisability of the same movement, but without success. He could not re-open the argument without appearing insubordinate. As a result, Gen. Lee was left in ignorance of the true position of the enemy's flank.

Gen. John B. Hood, years after, wrote in his "Advance and Retreat": "After this urgent protest against entering into battle at Gettysburg according to instructions—which protest is the first and only one I ever

made during my entire military career—I ordered my line to advance and make the assault.”

Gen. Warren, as has been indicated, noted the flanking movement of the Confederates and took measures to oppose it. He appealed to Gen. Sykes, of the 5th Corps, for men to occupy Little Round Top. The orders reached Gen. Strong Vincent first and he ordered his brigade to the elevation.

Lieut. O. W. Norton, 83rd Pa., bearer of the brigade flag, and bugler for Gen. Vincent, says while Vincent was waiting for orders near the Weikert house an officer came galloping from the wheat field, who said, “Gen. Sykes told me to direct Gen. Barnes to send one of his brigades to occupy that hill yonder.” Gen. Vincent replied, “I will take the responsibility of taking my brigade there,” and, ordering Col. Rice to follow as rapidly as possible, he dashed at full speed for the hill.

Hardly had the line been formed when it was attacked fiercely by Confederate regiments. But the latter received such a deadly fire that they recoiled and intrenched themselves at the foot of the slope. Another assault was made, but Hazlett’s battery had been, by the greatest exertion, dragged into position on the summit, the drivers lashing the teams, forcing them up the steep slope with the heavy cannon. Col. O’Rorke’s 140th New York regiment rushed up on one side of the hill as the Confederates ascended from the other. O’Rorke leaped from his horse, drew his saber, and shouting to his men to follow, led the way down the rocky hillside. The regiment formed on Vincent’s right. Meanwhile Hazlett’s battery blazed forth with shrapnel and the

Confederate charge was again repulsed, and Little Round Top was saved. Reinforcements came up and the danger was passed.

The fighting on Little Round Top was brought about not by the desire of the Confederates to obtain the hill, but by the Federal opposition to the Confederates' flanking movement. Had Little Round Top not been occupied by the Federals, the Confederates would have pushed over Plum Run and joined in the attack on the left of the 3rd Corps. Little Round Top was deemed of so little importance that not even a whole brigade was used by the Confederates in its attack. The marker on the field indicating the position of Law's Alabama Brigade of Hood's Division, the right of the Confederate line, reads as follows:

"The 4th, 15th and 47th regiments attacked Little Round Top and continued the assault until dark. The 44th and 48th assisted in capturing Devil's Den and three guns of Smith's N. Y. battery. Present about 1,500. Losses about 550."

In the inscription on the Warren monument no assertion is made that the Confederates sought to capture Little Round Top, but it is stated that the eminence was seized by the Federals to prevent Hood's flanking movement. It is true that the place is spoken of as the key to the Union position, but this phrase was an afterthought. Able general that Lee was, he did not regard it of great value. Rather he looked upon the high ground west of Plum Run, occupied by Sickles' 3rd Corps, as the key and that was the ground he aimed to seize. In his official report he says, "Longstreet suc-

ceeded in getting possession of and holding the desired ground."

The loss of the 3rd Corps' position, Brig. Gen, M. D. Hardin declared in an address at the dedication of the 41st Pa. Regt. monument, was due to the fact that the 5th and 6th Corps were not brought up soon enough, the one to Sickles' support, the other to form a second line on the Little Round Top ridge.

Reinforcements were sent to Sickles, but it has been repeatedly asserted they were not sent soon enough. They were sent, but in piecemeal. The large 1st Division of the 2nd Corps was ordered to support the 3rd Corps, but, according to Lieut. W. S. Shallenberger, 140th Pa., who was in the division, "It was just 6 o'clock by the watch I carried when we crossed the corner of the wheat field, going into action."

This was about three hours after the attack on the Federal left opened.

The 5th Corps lay upon Powers' Hill the greater part of the day.

Capt. Porter Farley, 140th N. Y. Vols., 5th Corps, in an address delivered years after on Little Round Top, said:

"During the greater part of the remainder of that day we lay with the whole of our corps upon Powers' Hill, about a mile eastward from the spot where we now stand."

Gen. Meade's official report declared that the superiority in numbers of the enemy enabled him to outflank the 3rd Corps and Gen. Birney was compelled to fall back, but it is asserted, on the other hand, that the num-

ber of Federals engaged on the left was fully equal to that of the Confederates, only the Federals were not all there at one time. They were beaten in detail.



Sketch Showing Birney's Division.

When the Confederate attack opened there were on the Federal side six brigades of the 3rd Corps, number-

ing 9,800 men. In the front were eight brigades of Confederates, numbering about 17,000.

The division of the 2nd Corps sent to Sickles' aid pushed the Confederates back through the woods into the open fields south; Brooke's Brigade reached the Rose farm, the furthest point attained. The 64th New York of this brigade took 185 men and 19 officers into the fight and lost 98, including its colonel, a major, a captain and 4 lieutenants. The Peach Orchard was still held, but soon came a Confederate rush that captured it. Three brigades opposed one, and after a desperate resistance, in which the 141st Pa. Regt. lost 76 per cent. of its men, the Confederates seized the position. Anderson's forces on the Emmitsburg road joined Longstreet in the attack. The Federal line at the wheat field was outflanked. A battalion of artillery followed fast on Barksdale's charging Mississippians and seventeen guns were planted on the high ground abandoned by the Federal troops. Gen. Sickles was wounded and Gen. Birney took command. Federal reinforcements were pushed forward, but they were whipped in detail. The resistless wave of the Confederates, Longstreet's Corps and Anderson's Division, now united, swept across Plum Run.

Wilcox's Alabama Brigade forced its way to the Federal line on Cemetery Ridge, striking a point which had been divested of troops through calls for reinforcements. Hancock discerned through the smoke the dangerous proximity of the enemy's red flags. He ordered the 1st Minnesota regiment to attack them. This regiment drove Wilcox back, capturing the colors of the leading

regiment. But it was only after the regiment had sustained the heaviest loss suffered by any regiment during the war, and, it might be said, in history.

Harper's Weekly, in speaking of this charge, said:

"The charge saved the day, but 82 per cent. of the men who made the charge were left on the field. Nearly every officer was dead or mortally wounded. Of 262 men who made the charge 215 were shot down by the bullets of the enemy; 47 were still in line." Ex-Pension Commissioner Lochren, one of the survivors, says of it, "The annals of war contain no parallel to this charge. In its desperate valor, complete execution, successful result and its sacrifice of men in proportion to the number engaged, authentic history has no record with which it can be compared."

Wright's Georgia Brigade, on the left of Wilcox, advancing past the Codori house, on the Emmitsburg road, penetrated to the battery posted in front of an angle formed in the stone wall on Cemetery Ridge, used by the Federal troops for breastworks. The Confederates charged up the ridge to a point where they could look down on the eastern side. But Hancock's 2nd Corps rallied and drove them back. Wright captured and had temporary possession of eighteen cannon, but, for lack of support, was obliged to abandon them. Attacked front and flank, the Georgians faced about and fought their way back in the gloom of the twilight to the Emmitsburg road. Wright remarked the next day when Pickett's contemplated charge over exactly the same ground was being discussed: "It's not so hard as it looks to get there, the thing is to stay."

Wright's action closed Longstreet's battle of the afternoon.

Gen. Alexander says in his "Memoirs of a Confederate" regarding the failure of the Confederate attack:

"Three of Anderson's five brigades had attacked in progressive order and in single lines. They had been defeated and driven back, one at a time, in the order of their advance. No better demonstration could be asked of the evils of progressive attacks. The three brigades could just as easily have attacked simultaneously with McLaws, and several other brigades of Hill's Corps could have supported and advanced with them. The temporary success of each brigade in a single and isolated line puts it beyond doubt that such an attack would have had better result."

About the time that Wright was being driven back Crawford's Division of Pennsylvania Reserves charged down the western slope of Little Round Top, and drove the Confederates out of the valley of Plum Run into the woods around Devil's Den and the wheat field. Part of the 6th Corps that had arrived in the afternoon rendered efficient service in thrusting back the enemy's lines. When fighting ended for the day the Federal line included the two Round Tops and the wheat field and a strong picket line on the Emmitsburg road. All the Federal guns that had been captured during the day were retaken but four. Some of Longstreet's troops remained in Devil's Den and held the line of the Emmitsburg road at the Peach Orchard.

"From these positions," says Gen. Alexander, "the firing was kept up until darkness brought a welcome

end. For in our worn out and isolated position we were in a very dangerous situation. Had Meade now ordered an advance he would have found Longstreet's left flank in the air and the whole of McLaws' and Hood's Divisions much exhausted and but poorly supplied with ammunition. The ground on the left was open and the moon was full. There was certainly a great opportunity offered the Federal commander with his large force of fresh troops in hand near the field and only needing the word to go."

VI.

ATTACK ON THE FEDERAL RIGHT.

But, although fighting on the Federal left had ceased, a battle was raging on the Federal right. The fighting was not surpassed in fierceness by any that day and the Confederates came near success. Ewell, commanding Lee's left, had been ordered to attack the Federal right when he heard Longstreet's guns down in front of the Round Tops. Assaults were to be made on Culp's and Cemetery Hills. The sun had gone down when the Confederate infantry moved against Culp's Hill.

"Johnson's Division, which was to attack Culp's Hill, had not been pushed close to the hill in preparation for the assault, although one had been contemplated all day," says Gen. Alexander. "It had a mile to advance and Rock Creek had to be crossed. This could be done at only a few places and involved much delay. Gen. Johnson's report states that it was dark when the foot of the mountain was reached."

The "Stonewall" Brigade encountered Federal cavalry east of Culp's Hill as it was moving to position and was delayed so long that it could not take part in the assault.

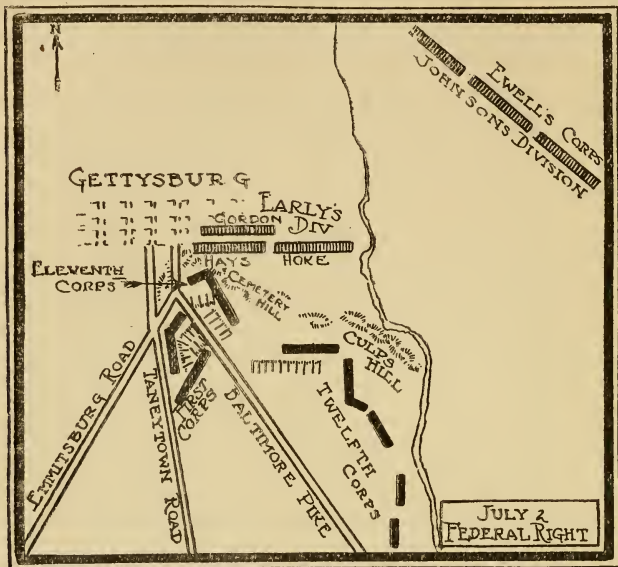
The entire 12th Corps had gone over to assist the left, only Greene's Brigade being left to defend the earthworks. Meade, at first wholly concerned about his right, later wanted to strip it entirely to reinforce his left, but was dissuaded by Slocum.

Meade's action "seems the more inexplicable," says Bates. "inasmuch as the 6th Corps, the strongest in the whole army had arrived on the ground at 2 p. m., two full hours before the fighting for the day had commenced and it was neither used to reinforce the left until the fighting had nearly ceased nor was it put into the breastworks upon the right to supply the place made vacant by the withdrawal of the 12th. A worse blunder could not have been committed."

Greene's Brigade formed one man deep, behind the extended breastworks, stopped the Confederate advance. Seven regiments, numbering only about 800 men, were sent to reinforce Greene. It was after midnight when the Confederates gave up the attempt. One Confederate brigade seized a line of abandoned breastworks thrown up by the 12th Corps and pushed forward to within 400 yards of the Baltimore pike, where were the Federal supply trains and reserve artillery.

When the sound of musketry on Culp's Hill was heard two of Early's brigades, under command of Gen. Hays, advanced to the assault on the east side of Cemetery Hill. Rodes' Division had been ordered to attack at

the same time the west front. It was about 8 o'clock when Early's brigades advanced. They had only about 500 yards to go on leaving the streets of Gettysburg.



July 2 Federal Right.

The Federal artillery fire being high, did not check them. The infantry at the base of the hill were easily dislodged. As the Confederates swept up the slope the batteries on the crest opened with canister, but, owing to the darkness and smoke and inability to depress the guns sufficiently, the assaulting force suffered little. It rushed in among the guns. The cannoneers, assisted by the drivers, defended their guns with rammers, hand-

spikes and every weapon at hand. From all sides the infantry of the 11th Corps rushed to save the guns. Rodes' Division had failed to attack on the west front of Cemetery Hill, and the Federal troops there were free to come to the aid of the 11th Corps on East Cemetery Hill. Carroll's Brigade of the 2nd Corps was rushed to the spot, and the assailants were forced down the hill.

Gen. Hays says of the attack in his report of August 3, 1863:

"A little before 8 p. m. I was ordered to advance with my own and Hoke's Brigade on my left, which had been placed for the time under my command. I immediately moved forward and had gone but a short distance when my whole line became exposed to a most terrific fire from the enemy's batteries from the entire range of hills in front and to the right and left; still both brigades advanced steadily up and over the first hill and into a bottom at the foot of Cemetery Hill. Here we came upon a considerable body of the enemy and a brisk musketry fire ensued; at the same time his artillery, of which we were now within canister range, opened upon us, but, owing to the darkness of the evening, now verging into night, and the deep obscurity afforded by the smoke of the firing, our exact locality could not be discovered by the enemy's gunners, and we thus escaped what in the full light of day could have been nothing else than horrible slaughter. Taking advantage of this, we continued to move forward until we reached the second line behind a stone wall at the foot of a fortified hill. We passed such of the enemy who had not fled and who were still clinging for shelter to the wall to the rear as prison-

ers. Still advancing, we came upon an abatis of fallen timber and the third line disposed in rifle pits. This line we broke and, as before, found many of the enemy who had not fled hiding in the pits for protection. These I ordered to the rear as prisoners and continued my progress to the crest of the hill. Arriving at the summit, by a simultaneous rush from my whole line I captured several pieces of artillery, four stands of colors and a number of prisoners. At that time every piece of artillery which had been firing upon us was silenced. A quiet of several minutes now ensued. Their heavy masses of infantry were heard and perfectly discerned through the increasing darkness advancing in the direction of my position. Approaching within 120 yards a line was discovered before us from the whole length of which a simultaneous fire was delivered. I reserved my fire from the uncertainty of this being a force of the enemy or of our men, as I had been cautioned to expect friends both in front, to the right and to the left, but after the delivery of a second and third volley the flashing of the musketry disclosed the still advancing line to be that of the enemy. I then gave the order to fire. The enemy was checked for a time, but, discovering another line moving up in rear of this one and still another force in rear of that, and being beyond the reach of support, I gave the order to retire to the stone wall at the foot of the hill."

Rodes gave afterward as his reason for not attacking that he had much further to go to get into position than Early's men, and that when he was ready to attack Early had withdrawn.

That night Meade's corps commanders in council unanimously voted to stay and fight it out. The result of the day's fighting was satisfactory.

In the night the Federal right on Culp's Hill was strengthened by the return of the 12th Corps and plans were made to drive out the Confederates who occupied the vacated intrenchments. Promptly at daybreak (about 3.30 o'clock) the artillery of the 12th Corps opened fire. The Confederates were already in line and were preparing to resume the attack begun the night before. The artillery fire was only a preliminary to the infantry attack by the 12th Corps, which immediately followed. The Confederates opened fire and advanced at the same time. The Confederates had also been strengthened in the night. Their force numbered about 9,600, those opposed to them about 11,200. The efforts of the Confederates were directed toward gaining possession of the Baltimore pike. The firing was close and deadly. The expenditure of ammunition was enormous. The 145th New York fired 150 rounds per man. The 27th Indiana and the 2nd Massachusetts regiments made a spirited charge upon the Confederates concealed behind breastworks in the woods, and in a few minutes lost 246 men of the 659 taken into action. A number of Confederate Sharpshooters concealed in the Tawney house across Rock Creek, which flows just east of Culp's Hill, annoyed the Federal troops considerably for a time, but a few shells rendered the house untenable.

The men of Geary's Division who during all these hours, for the fighting had been going on for hours, had been watching for the proper opportunity, noted the

failure of the Confederate assault, and springing forward with loud cheers, followed up their advantage. The whole line pushed ahead and drove the Confederates out of the Federal works. At 11 a. m. the 12th Corps was in full possession of its original line. The Confederates withdrew to Rock Creek.

For nearly eight hours the unremitting roar of the rifle had continued along the front of the 12th Corps, varied at times by heavier crashes where some fresh regiment, relieving another, opened with a full volley. As fast as regiments expended their ammunition they were relieved, went to the rear, cleaned their rifles, refilled their cartridge boxes and resumed their place in line. It was the longest continuous fight of any made at Gettysburg.

VI.

ATTACK ON THE FEDERAL CENTER.

Meanwhile everything was quiet in the center and the left of the Federal line. The men rested idly, listening to the roar of the conflict on Culp's Hill. Gen. Meade had made his left secure. There was no inducement for the Confederates to attack there. They had been repulsed on the Federal right. Only the center was left if another assault was to be made. Encouraged by the success attending Wright's attack with his unsupported Georgia Brigade, Gen. Lee selected the same point for another attack, but one to be made by a strong column with ample artillery support. Gen. Longstreet endeavored to dissuade his chief from any other offensive move-

ment. He urged that Lee should move his army around Meade's left flank and by passing to the south of Round Top force him to vacate his strong position at Gettysburg. Such a movement would menace Meade's communications with Washington and even threaten the national capital. Such a movement, as has been shown by Meade's dispatch to Halleck, would have forced him from his position. But the Confederate commander was bent on making another attack and listened with impatience.

Commenting on the result of the fighting of July 2, Gen. Lee says regarding his plans for the next day in his report of January, 1864:

"The result of this day's operations induced the belief that with proper concert of action and with the increased support that the positions gained on the right would enable the artillery to render the assaulting force we should ultimately succeed, and it was accordingly determined to continue the attack. The general plan was unchanged. Longstreet, reinforced by Pickett's three brigades which arrived near the battlefield during the afternoon of the 2nd, was ordered to attack the next morning, and Gen. Ewell was directed to assail the enemy's right at the same time. The latter, during the night, reinforced by Gen. Johnson with two brigades from Rodes' and one from Early's Division.

"Gen. Longstreet's dispositions were not completed as early as was expected, but before notice could be sent to Gen. Ewell Gen. Johnson had already become engaged and it was too late to recall him. * * The projected attack on the enemy's left not having been made, he

(the enemy) was enabled to hold his right with a force largely superior to that of Gen. Johnson and finally to threaten his flank and rear, rendering it necessary for him to retire to his original position about 1 p. m.

“Gen. Longstreet was delayed by a force occupying the high, rocky hills on the enemy’s extreme left, from which his troops could be attacked in reverse as they advanced. His operations had been embarrassed the day previous by the same cause and he now deemed it necessary to defend his flank and rear with the divisions of Hood and McLaws. He was, therefore, reinforced by Heth’s Division and two brigades of Pender’s, to the command of which Maj. Gen. Trimble was assigned. Gen. Hill was directed to hold his line with the rest of his command, afford Gen. Longstreet further assistance, if required, and avail himself of any success that might be gained.

“A careful examination was made of the ground secured by Longstreet and his batteries placed in positions which, it was believed, would enable them to silence those of the enemy. Hill’s artillery and part of Ewell’s was ordered to open simultaneously and the assaulting column to advance under cover of the combined fire of the three. The batteries were directed to be pushed forward as the infantry progressed, protect their flanks and support their attacks closely.”

Continuing the narrative of the attack, Gen. James Longstreet says in his report of July 27, 1863:

“The Commanding General joined me and ordered a column of attack to be formed of Pickett’s, Heth’s and part of Pender’s divisions, the assault to be made di-

rectly at the enemy's main position, the Cemetery Hill.
* * Orders were given by Maj. Gen. Pickett to form his line under the best cover that he could get from the enemy's batteries and so that the center of the assaulting column would arrive at the salient of the enemy's position, Gen. Pickett's line to be the guide and to attack the line of the enemy's defenses, and Gen. Pettigrew, in command of Heth's Division, moving on the same line as Gen. Pickett, was to assault the salient at the same moment. Pickett's Division was arranged, two brigades in the front line, supported by his third brigade, and Wilcox's Brigade was ordered to move in rear of his right flank to protect it from any force that the enemy might attempt to move against it.

"Heth's Division, under command of Brig. Gen. Pettigrew, was arranged in two lines, and these supported by part of Maj. Gen. Pender's Division, under Maj. Gen. Trimble."

Gen. Lee's plan was for the assaulting column to advance under cover of the combined fire of the artillery of the three Confederate corps. The plan was not carried out. The Confederate artillery was engaged for an hour before the assaulting column advanced from the woods on Seminary Ridge. Then the ammunition was so depleted that proper support could not be given to the advance.

Lieut. Col. Robt. M. Strebbling says in "The Gettysburg Campaign," referring to Pickett's repulse:

"Instead of close co-operation between the two arms of the service, as was ordered, the battle was divided into two separate and distinct parts—the first fought by

artillery without any infantry and the second by infantry without any artillery."

Gen. Longstreet apparently did not fully grasp Gen. Lee's plan. Instead of an attack by infantry supported by the fire of artillery, he judged that the demoralization of the enemy by a cannonading was intended. In a note to Col. E. P. Alexander, in command of the artillery on the extreme right, from which position the best view of the Federal line could be gained, he wrote:

"Colonel: If the artillery fire does not have the effect to drive off the enemy or greatly demoralize him so as to make our effort pretty certain, I would prefer that you should not advise Pickett to make the charge. I shall rely a great deal upon your judgment to determine the matter and shall expect you to let Gen. Pickett know when the moment offers."

In an explanatory note, sent shortly after to Col. Alexander, Gen. Longstreet said:

"The intention is to advance the infantry if the artillery has the desired effect of driving the enemy's off, or having other effect such as to warrant us in making the attack. When that moment arrives advise Gen. Pickett, and, of course, advance such artillery as you can use in aiding the attack."

To this Col. Alexander replied:

"General: When our fire is at its best I will advise Gen. Pickett to advance."

The artillery firing was begun by the Confederates at exactly 1 p. m., 172 guns taking part. It is estimated that 220 guns replied from the Federal lines. Col. Alexander waited in vain for a favorable development,

but he dared not presume on using more than an hour's ammunition and judging that it would take Pickett half an hour to get to close quarters with the Federals after the notice was sent to him Col. Alexander dispatched the following note at 1.25 p. m. to Pickett:

"General: If you are to advance at all you must come at once or we will not be able to support you as we ought. But the enemy's fire has not slackened materially and there are still 18 guns firing from the cemetery."

Col. Alexander had been erroneously informed that the objective point, a clump of trees, was the cemetery. Fifteen minutes later, Pickett's men not having emerged from the woods, Col. Alexander sent the following urgent appeal:

"For God's sake, come quick. The 18 guns have gone. Come quick or my ammunition will not let me support you properly."

Pickett thereupon rode to Longstreet's quarters. "As he came up," says Gen. Longstreet (Lee's Right Wing at Gettysburg, Battles and Leaders) "he asked if the time for his advance had come. I was convinced that he would be leading his troops to needless slaughter and did not speak. He repeated the question and without opening my lips I bowed in answer. In a determined voice Pickett said, 'Sir, I shall lead my division forward.' He then remounted his horse and rode back to his command. * * Col. Alexander had set aside a battery of seven guns to advance with Pickett, but Gen. Pendleton, from whom they were borrowed, recalled them just before the charge was ordered. Col. Alexan-

der told me of the seven guns which had been removed and that his ammunition was so low he could not properly support the charge. I ordered him to stop Pickett until the ammunition could be replenished and he answered, 'There is no ammunition with which to replenish.' In the hurry he got together such guns as he could to move with Pickett."

Col. Alexander says in his Memoirs regarding Longstreet's anticipations of failure:

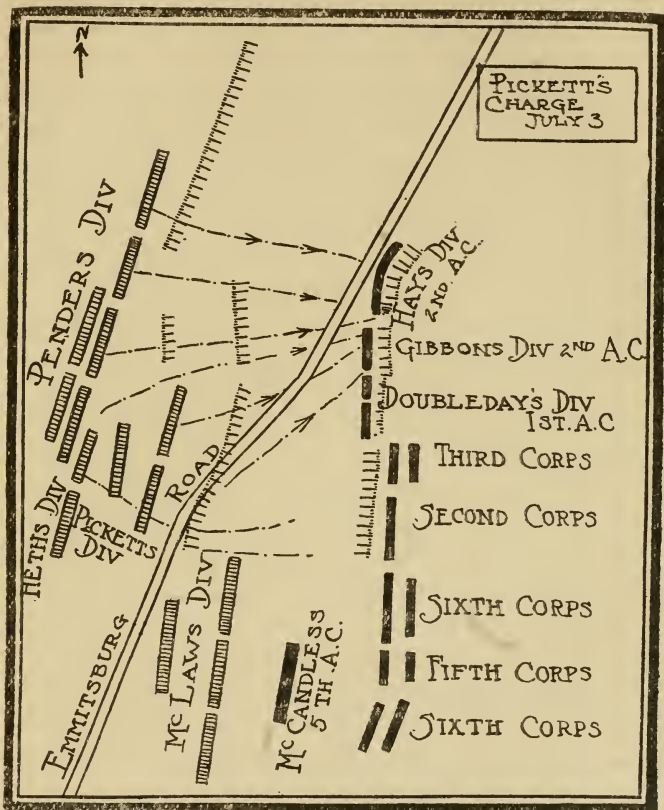
"Yet even he could have scarcely realized until the event showed how entirely unprepared were Hill and Ewell to render aid to his assault and to take prompt advantage of even temporary success. None of their guns had been posted with a view to co-operative fire nor to follow the charge, and much of their ammunition had been wasted. And, although Pickett's assault, when made, actually carried the enemy's guns, nowhere was there the slightest preparation to come to his assistance. The burden of the whole task fell upon the ten brigades employed. The other 27 brigades and 56 fresh guns were but widely scattered spectators."

Six brigades were in the first line, estimated at 10,000 men; three brigades in the second line, which followed about 200 yards in rear. Wilcox's Brigade, posted in rear of the right of the attacking force, was not put in motion until twenty minutes later and was too late to be of any assistance. The attacking force numbered about 14,300, arranged as follows:

Brockenbrough, Davis, Pettigrew, Archer, Garnett, Kemper.

Lane, Scales, Armistead, Wilcox.

"All accounts of the charge agree," says Gen. Alexander, "that its failure began when the advance had cov-



Pickett's Charge July 3.

ered about half the distance to the Federal line. At that point the left flank of Pettigrew began to crumble away and the crumbling extended along the line to the

right as they continued to advance until two-thirds of the line was gone."

"Our artillery, having nearly exhausted their ammunition in the protracted cannonade that preceded the advance of the infantry, were unable to reply or render the necessary support to the attacking party," says Gen. Lee's report. "Owing to this fact, which was unknown to me when the assault took place, the enemy was enabled to throw a strong force of infantry against our left, already wavering under a concentrated fire of artillery from the ridge in front and from Cemetery Hill on the left. It finally gave way and the right, after penetrating the enemy's line, entered his advanced works and capturing some of his artillery, was attacked simultaneously in front and on both flanks and driven back with heavy loss."

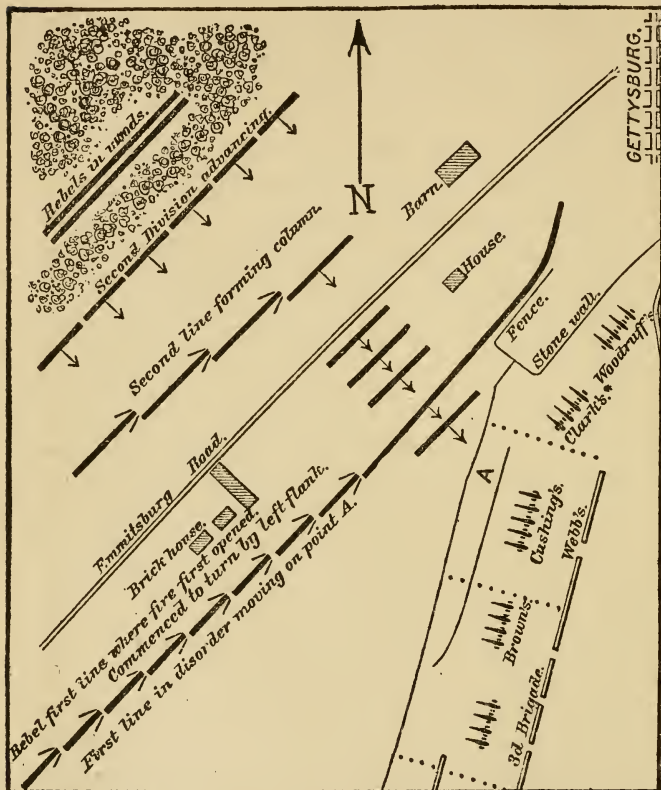
The attack on the left flank of the Confederate troops which all accounts agree was a largely contributing factor in the failure of the charge has been compiled from the official reports by Lieut. Col. Wm. F. Fox in the following narrative:

"The two brigades on the left of Pettigrew's line—Davis' and Brockenbrough's—while moving forward across the fields received destructive flank fire before reaching the Emmitsburg road from the 8th Ohio, which had been posted in the advance position for picket duty. Without halting to reply these brigades on the left pushed forward; but on reaching the road they again encountered a flank fire from the skirmishers of Willard's Brigade under command of Capt. Armstrong (Samuel C. Armstrong), of the 125th New York, whose

men withdrew to the right and formed quickly there. Pettigrew's troops, having crossed the road, received a further and more disastrous enfilade from the 127th New York, of Willard's Brigade, which Gen. Hays had hurried into position for this purpose. Broken and disorganized by this strong flank attack, but few of the men on Pettigrew's left succeeded in nearing the main Union line."

The valley across which the Confederate advance was made is about one mile wide. The surface of the ground is rolling, with occasional depressions, in which the advancing troops were hidden from view at times and protected from artillery fire in front. The Federal battery on Little Round Top, distant a mile or more, reopened with an enfilading fire that inflicted considerable loss, but did not delay the advance. The men promptly closed up the gaps and moved steadily forward. For the most part the Confederate artillery was silent. The main line of the Federal artillery reserved its fire until the enemy was within 700 yards. The clump of trees which was pointed out to Pickett as the place of assault was not opposite the position from which he started, but was situated a thousand yards or more to the left. Consequently his troops marched diagonally across the fields, and, after crossing the Emmitsburg road near the Codori house, moved by the left flank some distance, after which they faced to the front again. The brigade of Wilcox which Perry followed did not see this movement to the left in the smoke which had settled on the field and obscured the Confederate advance, but moved straight forward, thus making an isolated charge.

Raising the charging yell, the brigades of Kemper and Garnett rushed on an angle in the stone wall, behind which were Webb's Philadelphia Brigade and Cushing's



*Should be Arnold's.

Sketch in Col. N. J. Hall's Report Showing Pickett's Movement.

battery. Two regiments of Stannard's Vermont Brigade at the same time poured a fire on their right flank. The Confederates came together in a mass at the stone wall. Gen. Garnett was killed. Gen. Kemper was severely wounded. Gen. Armistead pushed forward his men from the rear, and, placing his hat on the point of his sword, sprang over the low wall. He fell, mortally wounded. Several hundred Confederates followed him over the wall, and the Confederate colors waved within the Federal lines. But Federal troops promptly came up, until the men were massed four deep about the daring Confederates. In swift succession the Confederate flags went down, while those who had not crossed the wall turned in quick retreat.

The assault had failed, and a loud cheer rang along the Federal lines as the Confederate columns fell back in haste over the field over which they had just charged. Pickett's three brigades lost 2,888 out of 4,000 engaged. The losses in Pettigrew's and Trimble's commands are not known. The isolated charge by Perry's and Wilcox's brigades lost 259 men out of 1,600 before the men turned in flight.

"Pickett was overwhelmed, not by troops in front," says Col. Wm. Allan, C. S. A., in "Battles and Leaders," "but by those on his flanks, especially by those on his right flank where Wilcox was sent forward too late to be of use and where he was too weak to have effected much at best."

Years after the war, when Lee was the target of criticism for ordering Pickett's charge against the Federal center, he was not disposed to shirk the responsibility

for the movement. He admitted that he had conceived and ordered it. Pickett's Division was composed of fresh troops. Not a man of them had been engaged in the fighting of the previous two days. Lee did not consider that Longstreet's assaults on the left of the Federal line on the previous day had been a failure. He had not accomplished all that had been intended and desired, but Lee believed that he had inflicted a blow upon the Federal army, which had only to be vigorously followed up to result in victory. He was persuaded in his own mind that Pickett's fresh troops could easily penetrate Meade's center, cutting the Army of the Potomac in two and insuring its defeat. He ordered the movement in good faith, looking for satisfactory results. That Pickett did actually penetrate the Federal center Gen. Lee looked upon as confirming his judgment in ordering the assault. Had the orders for Pickett's support which he had issued been as faithfully carried into execution as was the main charge, he thought the result might have been materially different.

Col. Walter H. Taylor, Adj. Gen. on Gen. Lee's staff, writes in "Southern Historical Papers":

"The attack was not made as designed: Pickett's Division, Heth's Division and two brigades of Pender's Division advanced. Hood and McLaws were not moved forward. There were nine divisions in the army; seven were quiet, while two assailed the fortified line of the enemy. A. P. Hill had orders to be prepared to assist Longstreet further if necessary. Anderson, who commanded one of Hill's divisions, and was in readiness to respond to Longstreet's call, made his dispositions to

advance, but Gen. Longstreet told him it was of no use—the attack had failed. Had Hood and McLaws followed or supported Pickett and Pettigrew and Anderson been advanced, the design of the Commanding General would have been carried out; the world would not be so at a loss to understand what was designed by throwing forward unsupported against the enemy's stronghold so small a portion of our army."

Col. A. L. Long writes in his "Memoirs of Gen. Lee": "The author can add his testimony to that of Col. Taylor. The original intention of Gen. Lee was that Pickett's attack should be supported by the divisions of McLaws and Hood and General Longstreet was so ordered. This order was given verbally by Gen. Lee in the presence of Col. Long and Major Venable, of his staff, and other officers of the army."

Gen. Lee, in a letter to Maj. Wm. M. McDonald, wrote in 1868:

"It (the battle) was commenced in the absence of correct intelligence. It was continued in the effort to overcome the difficulties by which we were surrounded and it would have been gained could one determined and united blow have been delivered by our whole line."

Lieut. Col. Wm. F. Fox in his critical remarks on the repulse of Pickett says:

"Longstreet's assault on the third day had some slight semblance of success when Armistead and his men crossed the wall—just enough to divert attention from the utter hopelessness of the attempt and relieve the affair from the odium of an inexcusable error. But this slight success of the Confederates would not have been possible

but for the mistake in placing a battery on the front line at the angle. It was through this opening—and at no other place—that an entrance was made. Had there been a strong force of infantry on that portion of the line not a Confederate would have crossed the wall. The storm of bullets would have beaten them back there the same as at every other point of the line.”

Later an attack was made on the right of the Confederate line by Farnsworth's and Merritt's brigades of cavalry. The ground was wholly unsuited for cavalry and the attack was a sacrifice. Farnsworth was killed. There soon followed, however, an infantry charge that was more effective. Gen. Alexander claims that the attack was made during the process of withdrawal of troops of Hood and McLaws which had been ordered by Longstreet who felt that his right was too far advanced. The collision was brought about, he says, by a mistake in marching the 15th Georgia to the front when it had been ordered to the rear.

The Pennsylvania Reserves, who had driven back the Confederates the day before, were ordered to clear the woods about Devil's Den and the wheat field. Two brigades from the 6th Corps were sent to support them. The troops at 5.30 p. m. opened their charge, which was entirely successful, the Confederates retreating to Seminary Ridge, and the battle of Gettysburg was over.

While Pickett's charge was being made a battle was taking place between parts of cavalry corps of both armies on the Rummel farm, about three miles east of Gettysburg. The mounted troops of Gregg and Stuart were guarding respectively the right and left flanks of

the two armies. Stuart had about 6,000 men, Gregg about 5,000. Stuart was detected in a movement to gain position to attack the Federal rear, and a fight followed. Brilliant dashes were made by regiments from both sides and there were many hand-to-hand contests. Gen. Wade Hampton, of the Confederates, received a severe wound. Both sides used artillery. At 5 o'clock each abandoned offensive operations. At evening Stuart withdrew.

Lee saw the necessity for immediate retreat. In his official report he said that owing to the strength of the enemy's position and the reduction of their own ammunition, they could not renew the engagement. The difficulties of obtaining supplies made it impossible for them to stay where they were. Consequently he remained on the field only during the 4th and retired at night, having first sent back his wagon trains and wounded. Gen. Meade called a council of war, which unanimously voted against an attack on the Confederates, and it was determined to remain in position and await the development of Lee's plans. Meanwhile the latter had begun to fall back. A severe storm came up and amid almost blinding rain the defeated Confederates pressed on through the mud to the Potomac, which the army finally crossed on the 13th and 14th, returning to Virginia.

"Gettysburg was the greatest, grandest battle of the war," says Lieut. Col. Wm. F. Fox. "And yet the victory won there was not a decisive one. It was but a repetition of Antietam, with this difference only, that the Confederacy was one year nearer the end of its resources, one year nearer the inevitable."

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TACTICS AT GETTYSBURG



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