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A Soldier of the Civil War

11. 1. 1900



GEN. GEORGE EDWARD PICKETT

A Soldier of the Civil War

BY A MEMBER OF THE VIRGINIA
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A modern type of the Chevalier Bayard *sans peur et sans reproche*. . . In all time to come the proud boast, "I am descended from one of Pickett's men," will be held equivalent to the words in France — "One of the Old Guard which dies but never surrenders." — *General George B. McClellan (U. S. A.)*.



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HISTORY

March

Preface

WE have received a handsomely-bound copy of a military biography which is the production of a Southern writer and bears the imprint of a Southern house. It revives familiar memories of the Southern struggle for independence and relates with scholarly exactness, in a clear and brilliant style, and with no touch or trace of partisan bitterness or exaggeration, the story of a Southern soldier's life; the strange, eventful history of a Confederate leader who in all that he did and all that, lucklessly, he tried to do, seemed, like the Vergilian hero, to be directed by an inexorable destiny and to become, in spite of instinct and volition, an unconscious helper in founding an Empire greater than the one he lost. "Every man," says Balzac, "takes the color of his time." Of this historic soldier it may be said that if he took from his surroundings a touch of contemporary color, he was also moulded in no small degree by formative influences from the past. To comprehend the conditions he was called to confront, we must consider, in each instance, the historic influences which created the conditions he found to exist. His military career, splendid and inspiring as it was, must be regarded as a mere episode in a vast and comprehensive movement, or migration, of a conquering race. The sweeping and resistless advance of a branch, or of branches, of the great Teutonic stock across the North American continent has been characterized by a modern writer — himself a daring and sagacious explorer — as the most dramatic spectacle in the history of man; a march often interrupted, but never checked, by desperate struggles

with alien or aboriginal races, by intercurrent civil conflicts, and by international rivalries and ambitions which to this day have not ceased to disturb the social and political amities of a common race. Very recently, as we know, they have provisionally adjusted a diplomatic difference over the line of the Chilkat pass.

The movement of these warrior races reached its limit when it touched the Pacific slope, and the closing incident of that transcontinental march is vividly described in the military biography which we are asked to review. The American branch of the race, having completed its cycle of conquest and colonization, halted for a moment on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and then resumed the imperial movement, with resistless impetus, among the decrepit civilizations of the East—upon the islands of the Pacific Ocean, and upon the shores of Manila Bay.

The salient and essential features of the story which the faithful and accomplished biographer has told so well we shall attempt to reproduce in the compass of a brief review. It is a modern story with the thrilling charm of old romance.*

*A Review of "Pickett and His Men." By La Salle Corbell Pickett (Mrs. G. E. Pickett). Atlanta, Ga. The Foote & Davies Company. The Review, of which this is a reprint, was first published in November, 1899.

AT Warwick Castle, in one of the chambers overlooking the peaceful Avon, there hangs the portrait of a cavalier of the Cromwellian period. The countenance has a marked individuality, a certain patrician air of resolution and self-restraint, and that settled cast of thought which is supposed to mark an excess of devotion to habits of scholastic or scientific research. The features are not of Cromwellian proportions, but they are finely balanced and firmly moulded, and in the deep, dark eyes there is an expression of calmness and concentration that denotes a masterful force of intellect and an abiding sense of power. Is it the face of a statesman, or of a scholar? of a sagacious civil administrator, or of a prudent and sedate member of the Privy Council? or, simply, of a country gentleman of scholarly tastes and quiet habits who loves his country and is loyal to the king? Strange as it may seem from the description, it is the portrait of a dashing cavalier — of the fiery Prince Rupert, famous in the annals of the House of Stuart as commander of the Royal Horse, and infamous during the Cromwellian Protectorate as a buccaneer upon the Spanish Main; of varied and proved capacity in public affairs; one of the ablest soldiers that ever served a despotic prince, and one of the most brilliant and versatile savants of his day. It was the peculiar destiny of this reckless cavalier, who flung away a kingdom at Marston Moor, to give his name to an empire of which the ambitious despots of his house had never dreamed.

Cromwell was in his grave and the Stuart was again on the throne; and Prince Rupert, then

absorbed in his studies at Paris, was selected as the governor of "a company of gentlemen adventurers," organized to exploit the resources of the vast region which pours its waters into Hudson's Bay. For nearly two hundred years this organization, known as the "Hudson's Bay Company," bore the ineffaceable stamp of its founders, and pursued with inflexible determination the despotic methods of the house from which Prince Rupert sprang. This chartered monopoly was in effect a colonial agency of the British crown; it was the embodiment of the characteristic claims and pretensions of the English race; it embraced within its imperial circle of administration a domain of continental dimensions — one-third larger in territorial area than the entire continent of Europe; and, under the liberal charter granted by the second Charles, it possessed exclusive commercial rights in that vast and undefined region for all time, holding it by the same title that an Englishman holds the farm or the homestead that he calls his own. It was a conveyance of chartered rights almost without parallel in the history of the New World, and this privileged domain — this game preserve of a chartered monopoly — was as free from trespass or intrusion as the garden of an English duke. It was truly Rupert's Land. The charter was Rupert's; the informing spirit was Rupert's; the centralized and aggressive system was Rupert's; and every detail of practical administration bore the impress of Rupert's iron hand. The company's operations extended from ocean to ocean; from the tide-waters of the Mackenzie to the head-waters of the Yellowstone and the Mississippi. Its powers were ample and its resources potentially without limit. Its factories were fortified posts; its agents were ubiquitous and innumerable; its scouts were sagacious and indefatigable; its trappers and woodsmen penetrated every nook that could be reached with the dog-train, the pirogue, or the birch-canoe.

Its aggressive movements were as stealthy as a Huron's on the warpath; its territorial encroachments as noiseless as the footfalls of a wolf on the snow; its leaders as daring, rapacious, and insatiable as the viking race from which they sprang. "It was the very embodiment," says Barrows, "of Great Britain in America; a monopoly that, growing bolder and more grasping, became at last continental in sweep, inexorable in spirit, and irresistible in power." At this day such a monopoly would be characterized as a "trust,"—a "Crédit Mobilier" fur company, organized upon a semi-military basis and controlling half a continent through an army of factors, commissioners, trappers, traders, scouts, Indians, and mixed-breed retainers of varied hue. Every energy of this vast organization was directed to the collection of furs. There were military trading stations by the score. Every wigwam was an agency. Every redskin was a purveyor of peltries to the imperial monopoly established by Rupert, and plied his vocation as collector through every foot of this vast dominion of forests and snows. The boundaries of Rupert's Land were practically without limit, perpetually expanding with the monopoly's desires. Its progress was that of the glacier, moving without haste in the darkness and silence of an arctic world.

Every rival save one had gone down under the pressure of its advance. Speaking to American senators, Rufus Choate exclaimed: "Keep your eye always open, like the eye of your own eagle, upon the Oregon. Eternal vigilance is the condition of Empire as it is of liberty."

The warning was not lost. When the encroaching monopoly sought to appropriate the Territory of Oregon, it stood face to face with a republic which had also been peopled by men of English blood. The States were at once aflame. The voice of Senator Benton thrilled the popular heart. It was like the blast of a trumpet. "Thirty

thousand rifles," he cried, "are wanted in the valley of the Oregon." The wild spirits of the Western frontier awakened at the call and by armed colonization kept the rapacious monopoly at bay. Since the days of the Stuarts it had encountered no such opposition as this, and the daring intruder paused. Even the bold spirit of Rupert would have recoiled from another conflict with the spirit of republicanism that had swept over his columns at Marston Moor. The fur monopolist was subtle, as well as strong and bold. He again has recourse to diplomacy, to the slippery methods of negotiation that had served him in the past; but the crack of the frontiersman's rifle is heard in the valley of the Oregon, and the southward advance of the great fur monopoly is forever stayed; it not only ceases to advance, but it recoils—possibly for another spring. Wherever found, the British colonist is a desperate and formidable fighter; he has the fire of the Scandinavian, the stubbornness of the Saxon, and the craft of the Celt. With the trait which is peculiar to each, he has the courage which is common to all.

At last the Oregon treaty, drawn under the eye of the English ministry by an English hand, was proclaimed by President Polk to be the law, and the settlement of the vexatious boundary question was supposed to be complete. But this was a mistake. A full decade of exasperating delays vexed the popular heart before a commission could be appointed to run the lines. Meantime it was found that the phraseology of one provision of the treaty was ambiguous and inexact. An error in archipelagic geography, a—diplomatic error—had established the claim of "the Company" to the possession of the splendid island of San Juan. Lord Russell was emphatic and defiant. The treaty could not stand except the island of San Juan be reserved to the British crown. Governor Douglas declared the sovereignty of the island to be in the crown, and

soundingly protested under hand and seal against the occupation of the island by aliens or pretenders from abroad. When the island was subsequently seized and occupied by American troops, the commanding officer was informed by a servant of the monopoly that the ground on which the American camp was pitched was the property of the Hudson's Bay Company. Having appropriated half the continent, the company was now about to seize the islands along the coast. The island of San Juan was included by territorial legislation in a county of the State of Oregon. The company refused to pay taxes to the State and the Oregon sheriff sold enough of its property to liquidate the dues. Hence mutual recrimination and bitter local conflicts, trespass, retaliation, and deep-seated discontent. The island, already occupied by American settlers and forming part of a county of the State of Oregon, was seized and used by the servants of the company as a sheep-ranch, and American soldiers in actual possession for the protection of American citizens were coolly informed by a subordinate agent of the company that they "must immediately cease to occupy the same." The English premier, Lord Russell, Governor Douglas of Vancouver, and the company's imperious servant were plainly of one mind upon this point, and it was evident that the day for diplomacy was past.

The officer in command of the American troops (a mere handful of regulars) was a young captain of infantry who had served with distinction in the brilliant Mexican campaign of General Winfield Scott, having led a forlorn hope at the siege of Chapultepec and planted the American colors on the castle heights; and among all the officers of the regular army that had participated in this advance upon the Aztec capital there was none more conspicuous for personal gallantry than George Edward Pickett, the young Virginian now selected by General Harney, the commander of the Department of

Oregon, for the military occupation and defense of the island of San Juan.

When the underling of the company at San Juan issued his peremptory notice to quit, a British frigate of thirty guns was lying broadside to the American camp. The American commander, in spite of a certain constitutional impetuosity of temper, had learned to parley as well as fight. With the courtesy and self-restraint which seemed to be instinctive with the West Pointer of the old school, he quietly took his position, and there he stayed. "I do not acknowledge," he said in response, "the right of the Hudson's Bay Company to dictate my course of action. I am here by virtue of an order from my government and shall remain till recalled by the same authority."

Four days after he had been "warned off" by the agent of the company, Captain Pickett was summoned to appear before an official of her Britannic Majesty. "I am here by authority," he replied courteously, "and will retain my position if possible." To a demand of the English commander, Hornby, he said, "I cannot allow any joint occupation until so ordered by my commanding general." Three British men-of-war were lying there to enforce the English demand.

"I have one thousand men on board the ships," said Captain Hornby, "ready to land to-night."

"If you undertake it," said Pickett, "I will fight you as long as I have a man."

"Very well," answered Hornby, "I will land them at once."

"Give me forty-eight hours, until I can hear from my commanding officer," said Pickett, "or accept the responsibility for the bloodshed that will follow."

"Not one minute," was the Englishman's reply.

At once Pickett ordered his command (sixty-eight men) to fall into line on the hillside facing the beach. "We'll make a Bunker's Hill of it," he

said to his men, "and don't be afraid of their big guns."

The sequel is told by General Harney in his report to General Scott. "The senior officer of three British ships of war threatened to land an overpowering force upon Captain Pickett, who nobly replied that whether they landed fifty or five thousand men, his own conduct would not be affected by it; that he would open fire and, if compelled, take to the woods fighting." The British officer was satisfied that Pickett meant precisely what he said and indefinitely postponed the execution of the threat. The hand and the will of Rupert were not there; but the spirit of Cromwellian republicanism stood incarnate and undaunted upon that island shore. The "Company" of Rupert had played the long drama of imperial aggression to a close.

On the 5th of August Governor Douglas and Captain Hornby proposed to Captain Pickett a conference on board a British man-of-war. "I have the honor to say in reply," writes Pickett, "that I shall most cheerfully meet you in my camp at whatever hour you may designate." Captain Hornby at once responds: "I shall do myself the honor of calling on you at 2 P. M., in company with the captains of her Britannic Majesty's ships." This conference was immediately followed by a satisfactory settlement of the San Juan affair.

President Buchanan, in his third annual message, says that the chief object of General Harney's order to Pickett was to extend protection to American residents of the island against oppressive interference from the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company. The President also commends the thoughtfulness and discretion of the British admiral.

The news of the threatened collision upon the Pacific coast stirred the national heart as it had not been stirred for years. It was like a declaration of war. The name of the young Virginian was upon every lip, and the fame of the San Juan incident

flew swiftly across the sea. For a moment the clamors of faction were hushed in the national councils, and there was a lull in the wild storm of controversy raging between the slave states and the free. Sedition for a season ceased to ply its devilish trade. There were no longer strange voices in the air; no auguries of public ill upon prophetic lips; no disastrous portents in the political sky. The whole nation was rallying as one man to the support of the lone soldier upon the Pacific coast; and many a patriot hoped that the jarring and discordant states might again be brought together and swept by a wave of enthusiasm into a war of resistance to the territorial aggressions of the British race. It has transpired in recent years that not only had many patriots desired such a result, but some, in the interest of national unity, had actually planned to precipitate a foreign war. The conspiracy was the very desperation of patriotic impulse, the wildest excess of patriotic zeal. "Evil," they said, "be thou our good." If war with England must come, let it come at once. It will at least avert impending civil war. "For this purpose," says General McClellan, "Captain Pickett volunteered to risk his life." He would gladly have sacrificed himself to save his country from the civil conflict which was to immortalize his name. But, happily, the sacrifice was not required. However reckless, the sagacious Englishman never quite loses his head, and where nothing is to be accomplished he has but little stomach for a fight. "One month of war," said Sir Robert Peel, "would have cost more than all the land in dispute."

The island of San Juan was afterward awarded to the United States by the Emperor William of Germany, and with this award the Hudson's Bay Company as a great imperial agency practically ceased to exist. Its policy and methods were antagonistic to the normal development of civilization in British America, and a Parliamentary Commission

soon furnished ample proofs of the fact. The propagation of beavers has since given place to the cultivation of wheat. Witness the golden grain-fields of Manitoba, which once figured as an irreclaimable wilderness in the company's official reports. Even Oregon, said Governor-General Simpson, was worthless for agricultural uses.

* * * *

Events were developing with startling rapidity in the States, and Captain Pickett soon passed to another field of service, upon another coast, under another flag, and in support of another cause.

II

WHEN Virginia was swept into the movement of secession and proudly took her position at the head of the column of seceding states, it was but natural that Captain Pickett, as a native of Virginia, should follow her leading, and should feel too that the path of honor and duty lay that way. So far as he was concerned there was no pretense of justification for the step upon constitutional grounds, although he was perfectly familiar, by virtue of his West Point training, with the principles of constitutional interpretation laid down in Rawle. He simply said, "Proud as I am of the great name of American citizen, I cannot raise my arm against my own kith and kin." But if fight they must, it was his earnestly expressed hope that they would fight under the old flag. He wanted the stars and stripes to float over the armies of the South.

In February, 1862, General Pickett was assigned by the Confederate government to the command of a Virginian brigade of infantry. With characteristic promptitude he pushed at once to the front, and, upon ground made historic by the surrender of Cornwallis, maintained unbroken a line of defense against the advancing forces of McClellan. At the battle of Williamsburg his command not only checked the advance of that magnificent army, but actually drove it back. At Gaines' Mill he led the assault which broke the enemy's line. The situation, near sunset, was extremely critical. "Something must be done," said Lee to Longstreet, "or the day is lost." The Federal line extended from Chickahominy to Cold Harbor. The position was naturally strong, and powerful batteries were planted

at every dominant point. To save the day, the brigades of Pickett and Anderson were ordered to an assault upon the formidable line of defenses in front. The battle was raging furiously; the enemy were holding their entrenchments with the tenacity of desperation, and one hundred and twenty guns were hurling a destructive fire upon the column of advance. But nothing could resist the determined and impetuous fury of the assault. Pickett, shot from his horse, paused but a moment, and pressing forward on foot still led his dauntless brigade, the riderless horse following close, as if the animal's master still held the rein. The charge was resistless, and the field was won. The strong blue line recoils; the reserves give way; the faithful gunners are swept from their guns; the contested ground is seized and held by the Confederate column of assault; McClellan's disciplined legions are driven tumultuously into the Chickahominy swamps, and Lee with his whole army is in hot pursuit. The Federal commander, whose patient genius for war was even then preparing the way for ultimate success, was only saved from utter rout by the roads and bridges which he had constructed for a victorious Federal advance. Pickett's and Anderson's brigades had not only saved the day but had shed imperishable glory upon the Confederate arms. The attack in front was made by these brigades alone.

General Pickett's wound was severe enough to keep him from the field for several months, and when he rejoined his brigade, in September, he was still unable to bear the pressure of a sleeve. In the fight at Frazier's Farm, three days after the battle of Gaines' Mill, the general's brother, Major Charles Pickett, was shot down while carrying the colors at the head of the advancing brigade. He "wanted to be in at the finish," he said, and he almost realized his wish. The gallant young soldier was disabled for life.

III

GENERAL Pickett was assigned to the command of a division in September, 1862, and on the 10th of the following month was promoted to the rank of major-general. In the reorganization of the army which followed the return from the Maryland campaign, the brigades of Pickett, Kemper, and Jenkins were consolidated into a division, to which, later, Armistead's brigade was attached, and Major-General Pickett was assigned to the permanent command, the division as now constituted forming part of Longstreet's corps. Its first appearance upon the field was at the battle of Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862, when it was held in reserve with instructions from Longstreet simply to "hold the ground in defense," conjointly with the division of Hood, unless they could see an opportunity to attack the enemy while engaged with A. P. Hill on the right. At the first moment of the break on Jackson's lines (says Longstreet) Pickett, eager to strike the Federal column as it advanced in the open field, rode to Hood and urged that the opportunity anticipated was at hand, but Hood "failed to see it in time for effective work." His failure was a subject of critical remark and even reported in the official accounts. Hood stood in high favor with the authorities at Richmond, and the biographer of President Davis says that he was "the noblest contribution of the chivalry of Kentucky to the armies of the South."

The division of Pickett was held in reserve, therefore, but straining at the leash and impatient for the signal to advance. The gallant division waited long — many months, indeed, but it did not wait in vain. The opportunity came at last.

a The renowned legions of Longstreet and Ewell (the latter in command of Jackson's old corps) abandoned their position near Fredericksburg on the third day of June, leaving A. P. Hill on guard along the line of the Rappahannock, watching ford and ferry and vigilantly confronting the forces of the Federal commander, General Hooker, who has signally failed to grasp the strategic significance of the situation in front, and, wholly oblivious of the campaign in progress, is meditating with the solicitude of a true soldier upon the prospective operations of General Lee. Days elapse, and on the 22nd of June, General Hooker is still in quest of information concerning the movements of his great antagonist, and the electric wires are flashing his notes of interrogation to every point. "Have any of the enemy's infantry," he asks General Tyler, in command at Maryland Heights, "marched north from the Potomac?" "Do they continue to cross?" he asks again on the following day. He is clearly not satisfied with the assurance given by his chief of staff that Lee's movement upon the Potomac is a mere cover for a cavalry raid; nor with the scandalous suggestion of Pleasanton—a stout fighter—that they are still in the Shenandoah Valley, and will remain there as long as they are permitted to "steal supplies" from the adjoining states. Still less can he be induced to believe that the movement is simply a wild dash of Confederate foragers, and that the "whole population of the country—generals and all"—are crazed with a panic and "stricken with a heavy stampede."

When Tyler received Hooker's telegram on the 22nd, the Confederate camp-fires were already ablaze upon the banks of the Potomac. Ewell boldly leading the old Stonewall corps, has crossed the river and is marching northward with Imboden's cavalry on his left wing, the cavalry of Stuart on his right, and the first division of A. P. Hill's

corps moving up rapidly in his rear. Hooker may have been slow in his perceptions, but he was prompt to act; when the emergency was pressing none could be more alert or bold. He was a soldier upon instinct. His cavalry were "out," he said, "feeling up to the enemy and hard at work." He ordered Heintzelman to seize the South Mountain Pass and hold it at all hazards; the first corps was ordered to seize and occupy Crampton's Pass; and Stahel's command was directed to move at once toward Gettysburg and Frederick, and "drive from the country every rebel in it."

On the 24th day of June the chief engineer of the Army of the Potomac (Warren) submitted to the Federal commander some cogent strategic reasons for moving the army immediately to the neighborhood of Harper's Ferry. "It is the straightest line to reach Lee's army," he said, "and will enable us to paralyze his movements by striking his flank and rear." In the orders which Hooker gave he seems to have adopted these views at once. The mountain passes were directed to be seized and held. The possibility of such a movement had been anticipated by Lee. On the 19th of June he writes to Ewell. "Longstreet," he says, "is maneuvering to detain Hooker east of the mountains until A. P. Hill can come up in support of the Confederate advance. Should the enemy force a passage through the mountains you would be separated from A. P. Hill, and it is this separation of forces that Longstreet is striving to prevent." Not knowing what force is at Harper's Ferry, and having no definite information as to the movements of General Hooker, the Confederate commander does not feel that he is in position to advise; but should Hooker be drawn across the river by Ewell's advance, he assures Ewell that Longstreet will follow at once. It is evident that the strategic conceptions of Hooker and his chief of engineers were anticipated in the reflections of General Lee.

The report of Warren to Hooker advising the movement upon Harper's Ferry was dated at Stafford Court-House, June 24. Hooker lost no time in moving upon the lines indicated in the report of his engineer. On the 25th and 26th of June he crossed the Potomac at Edward's Ferry. He marched at once to Frederick, and arranging to reinforce Slocum with the troops at Harper's Ferry, he expected to push rapidly through the western passes and fall upon the flank and rear of Lee — precisely as Lee had hypothetically prognosticated, and as Warren had actually proposed. "Troops from Harper's Ferry! No," was the peremptory response of Halleck; "the troops must not be taken from Harper's Ferry; the Maryland Heights must be held as the key to Maryland." "But why hold the key," said the injudicious Hooker, "when the door has been smashed in?" The only response to this felicitous counter-stroke was the official announcement from Washington that General Hooker had been relieved from his command.

On the day that Hooker was relieved, the 27th of June, the vanguard of Lee under Ewell moved from Chambersburg to Carlisle. Sixty thousand Confederate veterans were now upon Pennsylvanian soil, seeking a decisive conflict upon a Northern field with the magnificent army which had been trained by the disciplinary genius of McClellan, and after many reverses was now rallying with incredible swiftness under the leadership of the intrepid and soldierly Meade.

It is worthy of special remark that one of the first acts of the new commander-in-chief was an incidental vindication of his gallant predecessor. He ordered the immediate withdrawal of the ten thousand troops from Harper's Ferry. They were withdrawn and placed in active service at once. Hooker was vindicated; the army was seasonably reinforced; and Halleck was apparently justified in

his estimate of the military capacity of Meade—the latest Federal protagonist projected into the arena of war.

The commands of Longstreet and Ewell, as we have seen, abandoned the line of the Rappahannock on the 3rd day of June.

On the 18th of June, 1863 (a notable anniversary in the annals of war), Lee with sixty thousand disciplined veterans and two hundred effective guns crossed the Potomac and swept northward, pouring a tide of invasion directly into the heart of the loyal states. The field of conflict was transferred at once to Northern soil, as yet untouched by the hand of war. In less than ten days the Southern army was threatening an advance upon the capital of the state—possibly upon the capital of the United States; but wherever it went and whatever it did, or failed to do, this is certainly true, that the hand of the spoiler was stayed by a strong and peremptory order from Lee. No retaliation, he said, no robbery, no spoliation, outrage or waste. "We make war only upon armed men." If the needy invaders paid for supplies in Confederate scrip, it was with the conscientious assumption that ultimately the discredited paper would be made good by Confederate success.

Not the least, then, of the glories of the Gettysburg campaign was the famous General Order No. 73. It registers the high-water mark of modern civilized war.

On the 28th day of June, General Lee issued an order directing an immediate concentration of his forces at Cashtown, which lies east of the mountains and near the northern extremity of the valley where the battle of Gettysburg was fought. At the entrance of this narrow valley lies Gettysburg itself—a natural strategic center to which all roads seem to lead; and toward this compelling center gathered the converging forces as by the operation of a natural law. Among the roads radiating from

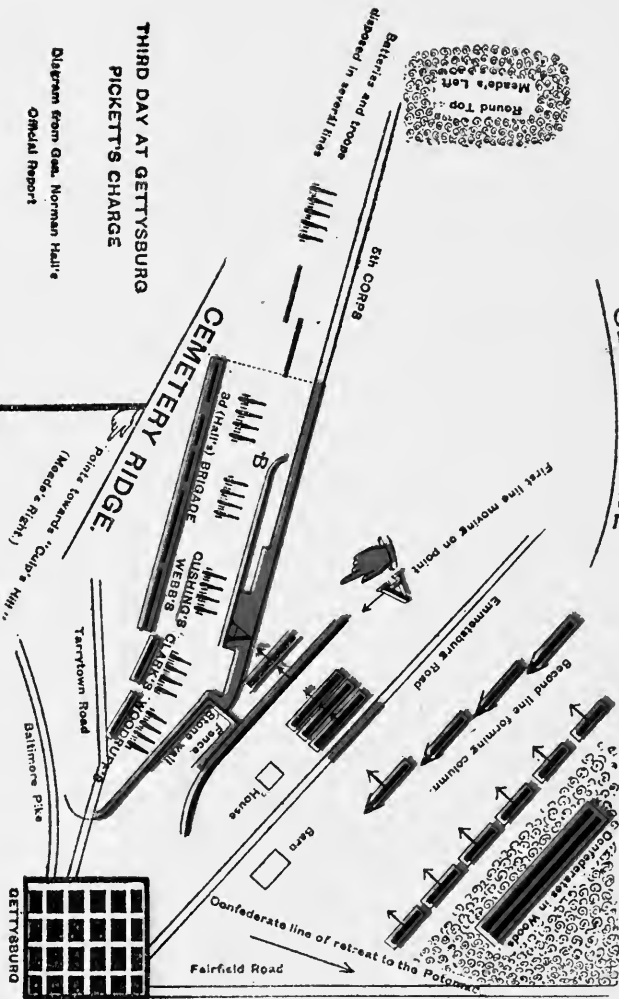
the mountain village is a broad thoroughfare leading toward the northwest. It is the Chambersburg road, and it was at or near the town of Chambersburg that Pickett's division was left to guard the trains and secure the rear. There it remained until the 2nd day of July.

It is told that when this gallant division was moving northward through the prosperous farming regions of Southern Pennsylvania, they were greeted at one of the pretty villages in an old German settlement through which they passed by an enthusiastic little maid, who stood with the national flag in her hand, defiantly waving it at the advancing column and flaunting it directly under the eyes of the Confederate commander who was riding ahead. Instantly the Southern leader wheeled from the line, doffed his cap with easy grace, and bowing to the little patriot, respectfully saluted the flag she bore. Turning, he lifted his hand, and as the splendid column passed every veteran doffed his cap in chivalric salute to the national banner and the heroic little maid. When afterward asked how he could bring himself to salute the enemy's flag, the Confederate leader replied: "No, not the enemy's flag; I saluted the glorious banner of my youth, and the heroic womanhood in the heart of a young girl."

For two mortal days the eager and impatient veterans of Pickett lay within a few hours' march of the battle that was imminent or raging upon the mountain ridges to the east; and it was not until the morning of the 2nd of July that the division which was to become exceptionally conspicuous upon that field received orders from Gettysburg to join its corps. A march of twenty-four miles under a burning July sun brought Pickett's division within three miles of Gettysburg, where they halted at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, their commander promptly reporting their arrival to General Lee, and asking but two hours' rest to put them in

thorough readiness for service in the field. He then rode at once to meet Longstreet, the commander of the corps—noting the little town of Gettysburg on the left as he passed into the valley, and the two parallel ridges upon which the contending armies were encamped—the Federal forces upon “Cemetery” Ridge looking west, the Confederates upon “Seminary” Ridge looking east, the town of Gettysburg lying between. He found Longstreet in the midst of battle, and greatly relieved by the arrival of his Virginian brigades. “I always feel certain and sure,” said the gallant old warrior, “of Pickett and Pickett’s men.” Over the ridge they rode thoughtfully together, watching the fight in front of Little Round Top, and studying the field for the fight tomorrow. Lee had achieved, as he said in his report, “partial successes;” he had gained some ground; the enemy had suffered heavy losses; his own army was still formidable and well in hand; and, with that fatal contempt for a luckless and awkward adversary which infected even the soul of Lee, the Confederate commander was ready for another and final assault upon the following day. Everywhere throughout the army it was understood that Pickett and his splendid division would make the assault; and as early as 3 o’clock on the morning of the 3rd it was under arms behind the crest and forming a line of battle facing Cemetery Ridge, a little to the left of Meade’s center; Kemper on the right, Garnett on the left, Armistead directly in the rear—a division of less than five thousand men. When the attacking column was complete the division of Pettigrew was on the left of Pickett’s division; to the left and rear of Pettigrew were the two brigades of Trimble. Anderson and Wilcox were ordered to support the column of assault. The line formed, the men were ordered to lie down in the deep grass and keep still. And there they lay until deep in the shadows of the westering sun.

SEMINARY RIDGE



THIRD DAY AT GETTYSBURG
PICKETT'S CHARGE

Diagram from Gen. Norman Hall's
Official Report

During the struggle that was now in progress for the possession of Culp's Hill, the rugged eminence to the east which formed the right of Meade's crescentic line, Pickett stood with Longstreet and Lee on the summit of Seminary Ridge, as on the previous day he had stood with Longstreet alone noting the assault upon Little Round Top, the left of Meade's compact, projecting, curvilinear front. Today his own division will deliver the assault upon Meade's center; and the series of independent, unsupported, and unsuccessful assaults upon the Federal entrenchments will be complete. The scene before the opening of the battle was one of idyllic peace. The morning sun was pouring a flood of light into every nook of the narrow valley; the air was beginning to shimmer with excess of heat, and the almost vertical rays of sunlight were suffused with a reddish flame that seemed not only to smite but sear. The luxuriance of midsummer was crowning every summit and brightening every slope, and the leafage of the woodlands was taking a deeper and a richer hue. Cattle were browsing peacefully upon the shaded slopes of the eastern hills, or ruminating drowsily in the shadows of the woodland trees; orchards were bending and aglow with their burdens of summer fruit; the golden wheat fields were aflame with the radiance of the morning sun; the murmurous life of midsummer was in the quivering air; and, innocently oblivious of impending battle, flocks of migratory pigeons were circling over all. But the three Confederate leaders, intent upon other thoughts, were making a personal reconnoissance of the situation in front — the long line of lowland, the threatening slope and summit stretching toward the north, and the embattled hilltops confronting their lines upon the east — a fine historic group for a great artist as they sat upon their horses, like cavaliers in bronze, their erect, soldierly figures rising boldly above the summit of the ridge and sharply outlined against the

morning sky. They gazed upon the scene with an intentness that bespoke the interest that they felt; and, if sagacity and experience in war could reveal what they sought, they might easily have wrested the secrets of destiny from what they saw in the long reaches of the valley, upon the rugged eastern slopes, upon the rocky salients frowning like bastions upon the projected line of advance, and upon the central convexity of the long crescentic ridge entrenched to the sky-line with batteries that seemed to make it almost impregnable to assault. Between the Confederate line and the proposed point of attack were ridges and roads and streams, a strong stone wall, post-and-rail fences, streaks of swale, and low, steep hills. In the shadows of the distant ridge were two tiers of guns, supported by soldiers of unflinching resolution and served by gunners of experience and skill. The reserves of infantry, the flower of the Federal host, were in double columns near the crest, screened and protected by the solid stone wall that skirts the lower slope. The line of advance was also obstructed by a strong post-and-rail fence in the plain below. This was the position to be taken by assault, and the Confederate leaders did not underrate the seriousness and magnitude of the attempt. Longstreet had tested the practicability of the assault the day before. A renewal of the attempt would require close coöperation of the entire Confederate line and a minimum force of thirty thousand men. "The fifteen thousand men," he said, "who could make a successful assault over that field had never been arrayed for battle." But Lee was obstinate, and Pickett was confident of success. With leaders and men alike, "strong battle was in the air."

The Confederate column of assault lies in long, silent ranks in the tall grass, and they rise and salute silently as the commanders pass in thoughtful review, honored and touched by the homage they receive and proud of the source from which

it comes. The assaulting column was well chosen for the work. The soldiers that composed it were the flower of the Virginian infantry and the pride of the warlike Confederacy whose flag they bore. Not surly zealots moulded into soldiers by the iron discipline of Cromwellian war; far less, swaggering and dissolute cavaliers clinging desperately to the fortunes of a falling house. They were neither profligates nor fanatics; and yet they had the soldierly virtues of both the Roundhead and the Cavalier. Offspring of a generous English breed, cradled in Christian homes and reared within sound of the church-going bell; with spirits finely touched by the subtle influences of a Virginian environment, and inspired by ideals drawn from the highest traditions of their race, it was a thoroughly disciplined host of patient, high-bred, resolute, God-fearing men, fighting, as they devoutly believed, for the honor, for the rights, for the existence of that ancient state to which they were as loyal as a cavalier to his king. The earliest escutcheon of the Old Dominion was quartered with the arms of the Stuart dynasty, but the earliest political charter of the Commonwealth of Virginia was charged with the principles of civil and religious liberty which drove the despotic Stuart from his throne. In laying the political foundations of Virginia, Sir Edwin Sandys had placed a Genevan stamp upon Church and State; and, building upon the lines of his ideal commonwealth, had trained its people in a rigid republican school.* The austere virtues of the founders were transmitted to their children, and the seasoned warriors who are standing upon the perilous edge of battle at Gettysburg today are typical representatives of much that was best in the generations of the past. They are not the Janizaries of a "barbarous patriciate," as an eloquent Spanish statesman would have had the world believe, but the military élite of a free Anglican commonwealth,

* *The Genesis of the United States*: Dr. Alexander Brown.

which even in its cradle defied the malice and machinations of a Spanish king. Cromwell himself would have been proud to lead the men who charge at Gettysburg this day; and when it is told that the favorite hymn of their daring commander — of the man who had led them through a tempest of fire at Gaines' Mill — was the familiar Christian lyric, *Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah*, that old-world hymn sung over cradles by generations of Virginian mothers — it helps us to form some conception of the devout and trustful nature of this indomitable soldier of the South. The simple lines of that old Protestant hymn are touched with the true prophetic fire, and its awful imagery, "Death of Death and Hell's destruction," might well appeal to the imagination of the Virginian soldier who led the charge on that tremendous day.

The men are, indeed, well chosen for the work, and the leader is worthy of the men; and his generals are worthy of their chief — Garnett, who served with Stonewall Jackson; Armistead, who charged in generous rivalry with Pickett at Chapultepec; and Kemper, who in the Seven Days' battles led the old Longstreet brigade. Pickett himself was finely and generously characterized by McClellan, the Federal commander, as "the incomparable paladin of the far-famed infantry of the South." "Give George Pickett an order," said a veteran Confederate officer, "and he will storm the gates of hell."

The ridge upon which Meade's lines were extended may be likened in its general curvilinear course to the outline of that familiar pastoral implement, an English shepherd's crook, the Federal left resting upon a knobbed handle at the Round Top and the right upon the terminal querl at Culp's Hill, that section of the shaft between Cemetery Hill, near Gettysburg on the north, and the wooded heights of Round Top on the south representing Meade's main or west front — looking

directly westward upon Seminary Ridge and in close touch at the rear with the Federal east-front at Culp's Hill, on the right. Near the left center of the main or west-front is the point selected by Lee for the assault.

Glancing eastward from the Confederate position, we note that the distance to be covered by the charging column is scarcely less than three-quarters of a mile; the distance from the Confederate batteries to the Federal position on Cemetery Hill does not exceed fourteen hundred yards; the entire area of the field upon which the drama unfolds does not exceed a mile square—actually limiting the space upon which the column is to be developed and extended for the charge. Along the crest of the ledge-like elevations at the foot of Seminary Ridge, corresponding to similar elevations at the base of Cemetery Ridge, is a line of one hundred and forty-five Confederate guns. Alexander's battery of seventy-five guns is on an elevation near the Emmitsburg Road; Walker's sixty-three guns are posted to the left of Alexander on Seminary Ridge. The attacking column was ordered to advance under cover of the continued fire of these guns. The batteries were in position by 10 o'clock in the morning. Lee had ordered batteries to be pushed forward with the infantry to protect their flanks and support their attacks, and Alexander held nine howitzers in reserve, intending to push them ahead of Pickett's line of advance nearly up to musket-range.

These guns were removed just before the advance without his sanction or knowledge; other guns were provided, but ammunition was scant, and the assaulting column pushed forward on the afternoon of the 3rd was practically unprotected by guns. The Confederate artillery for the preliminary assault on the Federal center was in position on the crest of a ridge nearly parallel to the enemy's line which was formed on a corresponding

elevation on Cemetery Ridge, a distance of nearly one mile. For a distance of two miles, the line of Confederate batteries "covered," or commanded the enemy's western front — stretching from a point opposite the town of Gettysburg to the Peach Orchard which closed the view to the left. "Never," said the Federal Chief of Artillery, "had such a sight been witnessed on this continent, and rarely, if ever, abroad." At 1 o'clock the signal-guns broke silence and the Confederate batteries, which were massed at the edge of the woods, opened a direct, continuous, undeviating fire upon the entrenched line between the cemetery and the right of the Fifth Corps, which was at a distance of several hundred yards from the Federal left at Round Top. A hundred guns upon Cemetery Ridge flashed back an instant response. Every crest is clouded with smoke and aflame with flashes of volcanic light; the hills and valleys are reverberant with the deep and continuous roar of two hundred guns. A storm of deadly missiles fills the clouded air, and the low valley is suffocating with the hot breath of war; the shells from the cemetery passing over the line of artillery, and exploding as they pass the reclining ranks of the Confederate infantry, search the sheltering coverts with destructive effect. The Federal infantry on Cemetery Ridge cling to the shelter of the solid stone wall near the summit; but the space in the rear of the crest is swept with deadly effect by the fire of the Confederate guns. The Federal camp is a scene of indescribable confusion. The general headquarters were a hopeless wreck, the army trains were in wild retreat, and a horde of frantic camp followers was rolling tumultuously to the rear. "Never," says the Federal General Walker, "had so dreadful a storm burst upon mortal men." The Federal army closely massed upon a contracted ridge (a result of the recent operations of Lee) were in a favorable position to test the effects of

the convergent Confederate fire, which only ceased when the ammunition failed, after two hours of terrific war. A half hour of silence and deadly suspense and the attacking column begins to form, just below the brow of Seminary Ridge, in long double lines debouching from valleys, ravines, and woody coverts, and falling rapidly into a formidable column of attack, thirteen thousand strong, two separate lines of double ranks, formed one hundred yards apart; in the center, Pickett's division (the veteran brigades of Garnett, Armistead, and Kemper) selected to deliver the assault in front, the division of Pettigrew and Trimble supporting the advance upon the left; the command of Wilcox, in columns of battalions, following on the right.

As Pickett rode up to Longstreet for orders, a courier advanced hurriedly with a note. It is from Alexander, the Chief of Artillery. The ammunition is failing; the situation is pressing; and there is no slackening of the enemy's fire. "If you are coming," said Alexander to Pickett, "come at once." Pickett turned to Longstreet. "General, shall I advance?" There was no response, and, awaiting none, Pickett said, "I will lead my division forward." And the extraordinary march began. For once, at least, without an order, "he would storm the gates of hell."

The veteran Longstreet, deeply moved, said nothing. He could only bow assent to the imperative orders of Lee. Writing thirty-four years afterward, he still sees in memory the gallant soldier as he rides into battle on that memorable day,—glorious as young Harry with his cuisses on,—of medium height, of graceful figure, of magnetic presence, and incomparable in all the accomplishments of war. Doubtless, too, the veteran recalls another day, in another land, and a desperate assault under another flag, when a young lieutenant seized the colors which a wounded comrade had

dropped, and under a deadly fire, triumphantly planted them on the captured heights. The young Lieutenant was Pickett, and the wounded comrade Longstreet. To-day, too, when Longstreet falters, Pickett seizes the drooping colors and bears them in triumph to the flaming crest of Cemetery Ridge.

There is a passing flutter along the line, and the magnificent column begins to move—launched straight at the Federal center. Near the middle of Hancock's line is a clump of trees. This had been indicated by Lee as the objective point of attack, and toward this point the column is now moving as if each soldier were a center of resistless force. The strong individuality of the Southern soldier is manifest at every step. The tall, lithe, erect figure; the bold, resolute air; the strong, spare, sinewy physique; the leopard-like elasticity of frame; and the calm, penetrating intelligence of the eye all bespeak the evolution of another type. It is the Anglo-Virginian type evolved by conditions antedating the war. Sir Charles Dilke "looked instinctively for baldrick and rapier" when he saw these Confederate veterans in the piping times of peace.

As soon as Pickett, emerging from the woods on the reverse slope, passes the crest of the hill, the Federal batteries open fire; and a strong continuous flight of shell, passing over the line of Confederate batteries, falls upon the advancing column with deadly effect. As he descends the eastern slope of Seminary Ridge, the column encounters a combined fire from Round Top on the Federal left and from the batteries directly in front. As the column passes the marshy tract in the field below, a line of infantry moves down upon the left flank. Beyond this point they encounter a destructive fire from the Federal sharpshooters; and this is followed, as the field opens, by a terrific fire of musketry from the front, and a deadly enfilade from the rifled guns on Round Top. Two

armies are watching with breathless interest every step of the awful march. From the moment the glorious column takes shape upon the wooded crest of Seminary Ridge, until it disappears in the lurid clouds of battle in the east, not a detail of the magnificent movement is lost. On, on they come: a double line of skirmishers; the line of battle for the charge; another line of battle in reserve. Shells from the Federal batteries on Cemetery Ridge drop destructively on the advancing column; and, as it descends the slope with stately, measured tread, it is torn by round shot plunging through its ranks; the Emmitsburg road is reached, the Federal skirmishers fall back, the fire of the Confederate batteries ceases; and, as the unwavering column advances, a concentrated fire is poured from ridge and Round Top directly upon flank and front. Half-way over the field they halt in a ravine to rest, and reform for the final charge. As it resumes the advance, a clear ringing order of Pickett, "Left oblique," changes the direction of the column from the front to the left, and at once from the batteries on Cemetery Ridge, a fire from forty cannon is poured upon the exposed right flank. It is like the scythe of death. "Front forward!" again comes a clear, trumpet-like command, and in an instant the indomitable column is sweeping upon the center as before, but now, in the midst of a concentrated fire from the Federal guns on Cemetery Ridge, from the infantry behind the Federal works, and from the enfilading batteries on Round Top, a wild, destructive storm of round shot, shells, shrapnel, canister, and grape. The slaughter is appalling. Kemper falls desperately wounded. Garnett keeps his head, and raising his mighty voice, in vibrant tones steadies the shattered column, and cheers the unfaltering advance. From behind the stone wall a withering fire of musketry is pouring into the devoted column, which promptly responds, with a

deadly precision of aim. "Cease firing," cries Garnett, "save your strength." At once the disciplined veterans reload their guns and shoulder arms, yet not for one instant slackening the pace of that triumphant advance. The post-and-rail fence gives but a moment's pause. The entire column glides over it as lightly as a sportsman in quest of game. On, on they press, the movement quickened by the concentrated fire of a hundred guns. "Pickett moved among his men," says an eyewitness, "as if he courted death by his reckless daring." The rain of deadly missiles never ceases, and the Federal parapet on the heights is fringed with fire from end to end. In the midst of the wild tempest beating from the hilltop, these incomparable soldiers preserve their company formation, and respond to commands as if upon parade or review, halting, aligning, reforming their thinned and bleeding ranks; and, at last, in perfect line, pressing steadily forward, Armistead's brigade closing up in staunch support, they suddenly dash with a wild cry, at a double-quick, and under a deadly cross-fire, upon guns shotted to the muzzle, and charged with destruction for the advancing ranks. "Here," says General Gibbon, "the contest raged with almost unparalleled ferocity for nearly an hour." At point blank range, the Federal commander with perfect deliberation, gives the command to fire, and the Confederate line seems "literally to melt" under the crash of eighteen thousand guns. But the second line moves steadily up; every gap in the line of attack is closed as soon as made; the shattered division sweeps relentlessly over the fiery crest; the enemy, lifted from their feet by the impetuous rush, fall back from their smoking guns, and, for one inspiring quarter of an hour, the blue flag of Virginia is seen floating from the summit of Cemetery Ridge!

But it was a fleeting triumph. The resistless

wave of battle which sweeps over the entrenched front of the ridge, clings for an instant, as if lapping the blood-stained crest, and rapidly recedes when its initial force is spent. The Federal infantry held their position with desperate tenacity, and the heroic gunners handled their batteries with consummate skill.* The Federal commanders divide the bloody honors of the battle with the leaders of the bold assault. Hancock † and Gibbon were wounded while personally directing the defense; and Cushing, from the old Bay State, was killed while pushing his last gun to the front and driving the last canister into Armistead's advancing ranks. Armistead dies with his hand resting upon one of Cushing's guns, and the two heroes fall together, immortalized by their mutual antagonism and linked in an eternal embrace.

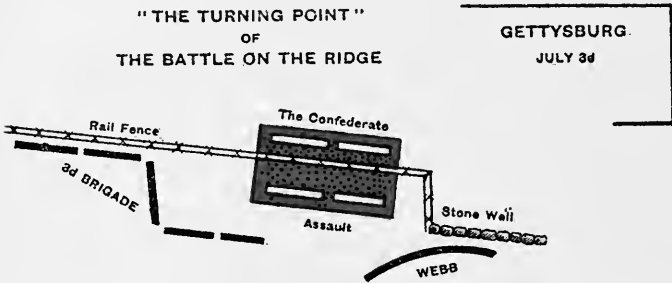
For a time, consternation reigned in the Federal camp, and organization was almost wholly lost. The line of General Webb was crumpled up on the right, and many men belonging to other commands, says the Federal Commander Hall, "were making to the rear as fast as possible, while the enemy were pouring over the rail fence." Finding two regiments of another command on the left, he tried to move them by the right flank to the break in the line, but coming under a hot fire, they crowded to the slight shelter of the rail fence, refusing to come out and reform. He was then forced to order his own brigade back from the line and move

* Colonel Andrew Cowan, whose battery was with General Webb on the right, says in his report:

"The rebel line advanced in a most splendid manner. The infantry in front of five of my pieces and posted behind a slight defense of rails, some ten yards distant, turned and broke, but were rallied by General Webb . . . in a most gallant manner. It was then I fired my last charge of canister, many of the rebels being over the defenses and within less than ten yards of my pieces." They were "literally swept," he says, from the Federal front.

† General Hancock says that he was "wounded with a ten-penny nail,"—an indication, he thought, that the Confederate ammunition was getting short.

forward by the flank under a heavy fire. "The enemy," he says, "was rapidly gaining a foothold; organization was mostly lost; in the confusion commands were useless." But, finally, by desperate efforts, the threatened retreat was stayed.



(This diagram is, in its essential features, an exact reproduction of the diagram in Gen. Norman Hall's official report.)

The Federal veterans rallied gallantly on the second line, steadily reformed, poured a destructive fire into the captured works, and closed with their daring assailants in a deadly hand-to-hand fight. The invincible division of Pickett soon lapsed into a forlorn hope. Generals, colonels, and officers of all grades went down in the unequal fight, and a score of Confederate battle-flags were captured in a space of one hundred yards square. A mere remnant of the division clung to the bloody ridge. Wilcox had failed to support the advance; Pettigrew's men had fled; and Anderson only moved when the assault had failed. Even when Wilcox moved forward (thirty minutes after Pickett's advance) there "was no longer anything to support." The gallant Trimble advancing under a destructive cross-fire in front and on both flanks, opened fire upon the enemy when in easy range, drove the artillerists from their guns, and only gave way when the whole force on his right was gone. The troops that wavered in the advance, soon broke ranks and fell back in

disorder, and at once an overwhelming force is thrown upon Pickett's flanks and front. The time for effective support was past; and Longstreet ordered Anderson's advancing division to halt. Stuart's resolute and well-sustained dash upon Meade's right was almost lost sight of in the overshadowing interest of Pickett's charge; and his repulse though decisive, is even now scarcely included among the disasters of the day. It was neither helpful as a diversion nor seriously embarrassing as a defeat. But the leadership was brilliant and the fighting superb.

It is said that on the third day at Gettysburg the Confederates lost sixty per cent of the assaulting forces. But it is hardly possible to give arithmetical expression to the statement of an irreparable loss. It furnishes some conception, however, of the desperate character of the charge to say that of fourteen field officers, but one remained. The men lay dead in heaps. "Looking around for his supports"—says a contemporary chronicler—"Pickett found himself alone." His gallant comrades had helplessly fallen in an unequal conflict, and the appealing blasts of the paladin's bugle are still echoing among the passes of the hills. Who was it that had failed to respond when honor and duty were calling in this crisis of a people's fate? This we cannot say; nor is it needful that we should know that which Lee declared should remain unknown; but certain it is that Pickett's magnificent division—the pride of Virginia, and the glory of the South—was hopelessly shattered in one brief hour. In that immortal charge glory and disaster rode arm in arm. It was a bloody repulse for the division of Pickett; it was a serious reverse for the army of Lee; it was an irretrievable disaster for the cause of the South.

Slowly and sullenly the bleeding and tattered remnant of the command retires from the disastrous field; but the sentiment of American citizen-

ship in its highest sense forbids us to say that, even for the vanquished, that day was lost. In the heart of the Confederate leader there was sorrow enough, but there was none of the bitterness, or the rancor, or the hopelessness of defeat. "Would that we had never crossed the Potomac," he said, "or that our splendid army had not been fought in detail." Confronted at the opening of the civil conflict by a divided duty, he had met an imperative demand and had met it in a manly and resolute way. In a purely dramatic aspect, his career as a soldier was now rounded and complete. But he did not exalt himself. He gave the true measure of his greatness when he said: "I have done nothing; my men have done it all."* If mere eulogy could add to the glory of Pickett and his men, what can exceed in pathetic eloquence the simple speech of Lincoln as he stood at the foot of Cemetery Ridge? Some one had reverently said: "Think of the men who held these heights." "And think," said Lincoln, "of the men who stormed these heights." Standing upon the same consecrated spot, and, speaking words that in solemn and impressive beauty recall that diviner discourse upon the Mount, Abraham Lincoln declared that the dead of Gettysburg had not died in vain and that, under God, there would be "a new birth of freedom for all." Even while he spoke, he must have felt, as his thoughts recurred to the past, how strange and mysterious had been the ways of Providence in the selection of instruments for the work to which he himself had dedicated his life. Scarcely a quarter of a century had elapsed, since a young Virginian with an hereditary bent toward the profession of arms, had been appointed through the influence of Mr. Lincoln, a friend of his family, to the military academy at

* An officer who was on the staff of General Rhodes says that when he saw Pickett falling back from the charge, he was walking beside General Kemper gently fanning the wounded brigadier as he was carefully borne from the field.

West Point. "You see," said Mr. Lincoln, writing familiarly to the boy, "I should like to have a perfect soldier credited to dear old Illinois." And writing again, after his admission to the academy, Mr. Lincoln said: "The only victory that we can ever hope to call complete, will be the one which proclaims there is not a slave on God's green earth."

The young cadet thus carefully launched into a military career was George Edward Pickett, who was then preparing, under the eye of Lincoln himself, to enact a part upon the stage of American affairs, of which the great Emancipator little dreamed. With a depth of affection that to the common mind passes all understanding, the heart of the great statesman went out to his wayward protégé to the very end. The Southern Confederacy was crumbling under the ceaseless and crushing assaults of Grant, and the stupendous drama of civil war was hastening rapidly to a close. With the surrender of the Confederate capital came the proclamation of peace. After the surrender of Richmond, there stood one morning at the door of the old Pickett home, a tall, strong-visaged stranger, with careworn features, and a kindly light in his large, melancholy eyes. In the street, before the door, is a carriage with retinue and guard. It is apparently a visitor of note. A servant responds to the bell, but the visitor's inquiry is answered by a lady who comes to the door with an infant in her arms. "I am George Pickett's wife," she said. "And I," said the stranger in a deep, sympathetic voice, "am Abraham Lincoln." "The President?" she asked. "No," was the prompt response, "Abraham Lincoln, George's old friend." And then some kindly words to George's child, which touched the mother's heart. A few days later, George Pickett received the announcement of the President's tragical and untimely death. The indomitable

spirit of the Confederate veteran was crushed, and, remembering only the Lincoln he had loved, he cried out from his very heart, "My God! My God! The South has lost her best friend."

To say that Abraham Lincoln was not faultless is merely to say that he was not divine; to insist that he was not far-sighted and sagacious, is to suggest that he was divinely inspired. If he sometimes erred in his conceptions of the military situation, he erred with men who were presumed to be masters in the art of war. In vain we look among the children of men for infallibility either in statesmanship or the strategic art. Imperial Cæsar sometimes slept. The greatest captains sometimes err. Nothing is more fickle than the fortune of war. Nevertheless, Abraham Lincoln was an incomparable leader of men; and, while McClellan and Grant could direct more or less successfully the operations of a hundred thousand men in the field, it was Abraham Lincoln alone that could hold in hand the vast and turbulent electorate of eighteen Northern States. This was the host, in its more dangerous aspects a coalition of fanaticism and greed, which the South was called to confront; and it was Lincoln's consummate generalship, happily for the South, that held these radical and aggressive elements in check. From a disciplined army in the field, the populations of the seceding States had far less to fear, even when its soldiers were embittered by disaster or inflamed by success. The attitude of Lincoln in the contest was that of the famous warrior whose sagacious policy of procrastination baffled the Carthaginian invader, flushed with successive victories over the consular armies of Rome. As it was felicitously said of the one, so most fitly it may be said of the other:

UNUS HOMO NOBIS CUNCTANDO RESTITUIT REM.

Abraham Lincoln was, politically, the highest embodiment of the ideas, the aspirations, the

impulses of his time. He was the incarnation, too, of the sovereign will which made him chief. Popular clamors wearied his ear and vexed his heart; but they could not affect the convictions of a lifetime, his profound sense of administrative duty, or the settled policy of the pending war. He was leading the forces of the loyal States; he was assailing the forces of the seceding States; he endeavored to be faithful to the fundamental interests of both. When the end of the Confederacy came, he was standing as a tall, strong pillar of support for the broken and exhausted South; and when he fell, the vanquished Confederates felt that their cause was indeed lost. They looked forward to the inauguration of his successor with a natural sentiment of dread. This sentiment of apprehension was not realized at once. Though an iron policy of reconstruction was subsequently adopted in the subjugated States, they were happily relieved from immediate apprehension by the heroic interposition of Grant. It is, nevertheless, true that at this particular juncture "the South had lost her best friend." And many a generous Southerner grieved honestly for the loss.

The echoes of that great battle among the Northern hills have long since died away; thousands of heroic combatants are sleeping their eternal sleep in the peace of Pennsylvanian fields, and the convictions which drove them to conflict no longer dominate the thoughts of men, nor, in an economic epoch, direct the policies of States; but the lesson of the battles that they fought will not be wholly lost so long as the souls of men are thrilled by memories of the charge that Pickett made, or are inspired by the sentiment of the immortal words that Lincoln spoke.

IV

THE still powerful army of Lee was now moving southward—a stricken and shattered host, but as dauntless and defiant in retreat as in advance; with its morale unimpaired, its confidence in its leaders unabated, its military prestige increased. “We failed, comrades,” said Lee, “but it was all my fault.” In anticipation of prospective dissensions and a possible war of recrimination among his disaffected chieftains, he had requested General Pickett to suppress, or withhold, a part of his official report. Pickett complied promptly and without complaint. He simply lamented the wanton destruction of his gallant command and the absence of the two brigades whose presence in the battle would have absolutely assured success. Before leaving Virginia, he had said to General Lee that he wanted a complete division; since as much would be expected of a weak division as of a strong one. But, even now, fresh from the disastrous field, there is no diminution of confidence in the intrepid leader or in his staunch and splendid command. Writing to General Pickett, a few days after the battle, General Lee says: “I still have the greatest confidence in your division, and feel assured that, with you at its head, it will be able to accomplish any service upon which it may be placed.” The subsequent history of the division shows that this was not merely the formal commendation of a military order or report. The applause of his own comrades was not less grateful than the commendation of Lee. After the battle, says Colonel Fremantle (an English officer who witnessed the charge), the plucky Confederate cannoneers were open in their

admiration of the advance of Pickett's superb division, and of the skillful manner in which Pickett led the assault. But there was no applause more generous than that of the men who repelled the apparently resistless advance. "The lines were formed," said General Hancock, "with a precision and steadiness that extorted the admiration of the witnesses of that memorable scene." "The enemy advanced magnificently," said General Hunt, "unshaken by shot and shell." "The march was as steady," said the gallant General Hays, "as if impelled by machinery." "The perfect order and steady, rapid advance," said Colonel Hall, "gave the line the appearance of being fearfully irresistible." Many impulsively expressed their admiration even as they braced themselves against the impending assault; and "Magnificent!" was the utterance of many warrior-lips that closed and spake no more. "Magnificent!" is still the exclamation of all who read the deathless story of that day. The heroic Lee, with all his outward calm, seemed to be profoundly stirred, and hastened without staff or other attendants to the front, looking as if he would personally rally the broken columns to a supreme and desperate defense. "No soldier," says Alexander, the bold artillerist who launched the column, "could have looked on at Pickett's charge and not burned to be in it." And what a cloud of witnesses hovered over the scene—a lowering cloud charged with latent fires and ready to burst upon the field below. A camp-rumor had stirred the Confederate heart, and apparently settled the question of supports. "Lee," it was said, "was going to send every man he had, upon that hill;" and every slope and crest of Seminary Ridge was alive with expectation and eager for the signal to advance. Unhappily there was but little concert of action in that long straggling Confederate line, and there came no order for a general advance upon that disastrous day.

But the failure—was it the fault of Lee? Who shall decide but Lee himself, who assumed the whole responsibility at once? And yet, even Lee's decision cannot stand against conclusive facts; especially where the assumption of responsibility was determined in some measure by a generous desire to screen subordinate officers from attack, to compose the susceptibilities of some, and to repress the savagely critical instincts of others. His motive is sufficiently apparent in his letter to General Pickett. But as a matter of fact it would seem that Lee had done all that he could personally be expected to do as commander of a veteran well-disciplined organization, to ensure the success of Pickett's assault. Granted that Longstreet's sound military advice, to move by the enemy's left flank, would have assured the desired results, it does not follow that the failure to support Pickett was attributable to any unsoldierly neglect or oversight on the part of Lee. The general order for attack was well understood; and every man in the ranks believed, and every subordinate officer knew, that under the commander's order to assault, ample provision must be made for a prompt and effective support. It is not possible for the greatest captain to supervise the arrangements of tactical details. A meddling disposition in the matter of military administration has been imputed as a reproach to Napoleon himself; and in no other army than Napoleon's, it has been said, would a subordinate officer be held justified for neglect, because of a failure to receive orders from his chief. An English officer (Fremantle) who carefully noted, while at Gettysburg, the military habits of Lee says it was evidently his system to arrange the plan thoroughly with his three corps commanders and "then leave to them the duty of modifying and carrying it out to the best of their abilities." On the second day, Fremantle had remarked that General Lee sent

but one message and received but one report. It is said that the most remarkable point in Von Moltke's strategic method was the self-restraint he practiced in giving free scope to his subordinate commanders. Von Moltke might have learned this from Lee; if, indeed, he had not already learned that it is the fundamental maxim of modern administration—select competent and responsible agents and trust the man that is on the spot.

None understood better than the sagacious and experienced chieftains of the South, the absolute necessity of concerted action in that great Northern campaign. Nevertheless, for an apparent lack of that initiative, which is a characteristic mark of the modern soldier, in all ranks, a momentous and decisive assault upon the Federal left center was allowed to fail. It is possible, too, that the bonds of discipline were beginning to relax; though many thought that in this matter Stonewall Jackson had given the Confederacy a lasting lesson in the early days of the war. When Secretary Benjamin sustained Loring in his insubordination at Romney, Jackson resigned his position and demanded relief from "duty" at once. But whatever the explanation, the fact remains. The pending campaign was manifestly lacking in concerted action and cohesive force. In the attack upon the center the Confederate commander applied the final and conclusive test. It was the last battle and upon the last day—the Confederate commander's last desperate play for success. Lee was calm and confident; Pickett was eager and sanguine; and the assault only failed for lack of timely support; lapsing into a spectacular butchery under the astonished eyes of the chivalrous legions of the South. The gallant division had done all that human valor and endurance could do; it had actually pierced the Federal center, and in defect of promised support, had literally been crushed by the Federal reserves.

But would it not have been better, say the

critics, to move by the left flank, as Longstreet advised? No one could be more competent to advise in such a situation than the masterly lieutenant of Lee, a soldier of almost matchless courage, sagacity, and resource. He is sustained, too, in his contention by the accepted maxims of war; by the circumstances of the situation; and by the confessed apprehensions of the enemy, as well as by the declared object and scope of the campaign as originally projected by Lee. If Napoleon operated by the flank in preference to the front, it is certainly no discredit to other commanders to do the same. But Napoleon himself ruthlessly violated the academic maxims of war when he successfully launched Krazinski's squadron of cavalry up the long narrow pass of Samosierra against an almost impregnable position defended by powerful batteries and twelve thousand disciplined men. Energy and genius, says Clausewitz, will easily "rise superior to the beggardom of rules."

The reasons assigned by Longstreet were in a sense unanswerable; nor did Lee attempt to answer them. As Longstreet says, the Confederate commander "had fixed his heart upon the work," and the fighting instincts of every soldier sympathize with the daring commander in this fixed intent. The proposed assault looked practicable to the experienced eye of Lee, and proved to be tactically successful even as delivered by Longstreet's reluctant hand. The Virginians had done all that they were commanded to do; they had captured the enemy's works. That they could hold the works against an entrenched force of thrice their strength, the most sanguine had not ventured to predict. If Pickett could have stayed where he planted his flag, Lee would have completely realized the object of the assault; he would have had full command of the elevated ground beyond the point of attack, and with abundance of ammunition for the artillery, the position would have become the point

for a still more successful advance. The important point "beyond" was Culp's Hill, where rested the Federal right. It was one of the characteristic miscalculations of this campaign that Ewall's assault upon that position should cease, before Pickett's assault upon the center began. But, if we may credit the observations of Fremantle, General Lee was certainly not accountable for a tactical contretemps so disconcerting as this. Doubtless the most judicious military critics will agree that the worst that can be said of the great Virginian leader, is simply this, that he had been made over-confident by the loyalty, the energy, and the skill of his generals; by the incomparable fighting capacity of his men; and, as the Confederate commander, by an almost unbroken career of military success. While the result did not fully realize his reasonable expectations, it cannot be affirmed that in a strict military sense it discredited his judgment or skill. General Hunt, the commander of the Federal artillery, pays tribute to the generalship of the Confederate leader when he says that the Confederates "were almost always stronger at the points of contact." It was precisely here, however, that Pickett's assault had failed. The assaulting column was not strong enough at the point of contact, and was incontinently crushed by the reserves, who, rallying on the second line, recaptured the crest.

But in regard to the great operations of war there can be no one more competent to speak with critical authority (if he can speak without prejudice or prepossession) than the man that is competent to conduct them; and in such a case at least it would be sheer effrontery for a subordinate soldier or a simple reviewer to dispute with the commander of twenty legions. Incontestably, such a critic was Lee himself. After the repulse of Pickett's division, he said in the presence of the English colonel, Fremantle: "All this has been my fault." On

the same day he said to the Confederate general, Imboden, his voice trembling with emotion: "I never saw troops behave more magnificently than Pickett's division of Virginians did today. Had they been supported as they were to have been, but for some reason not yet fully explained to me they were not, we should have held the position they so gloriously won;" presently adding in an almost agonized tone: "Too bad! Too bad! Too bad!" In the winter of 1863-64 he wrote to General Longstreet: "Had I followed your advice . . . how different all would have been." The adoption of Longstreet's admirable plan would certainly have ensured that perfect coöperation, which, under any plan, was essential to success. In considering the point in dispute (it is only for an inspired commander to decide it) it must always be remembered that the artillery reserved for the advance that day unaccountably disappeared at the critical moment; that the supplies of ammunition for the available artillery unexpectedly fell short; and that the promised columns of support were, practically, at the proper moment for advance, disinterested spectators of the distant fight. The mere possibility of such complications was certainly not contemplated in the original plans of Lee. Neither is it to be supposed that the Confederate leader could foresee the failure of President Davis to make a demonstration against Washington coincidently with the Confederate advance into Pennsylvania under Lee. Davis pleaded "impossibility," and the dispatch, which was intercepted by a Federal scout, was a positive inspiration to General Meade. It was an assurance that no peril lurked in the rear. Lee's theory was that even a single brigade, with Beauregard to lead it, had been ample force for the end in view. By a demonstration similar to the one proposed, Stonewall Jackson, with a single division, had paralyzed the movements of an army of 70,000 men in 1862.

The brilliant commander had staked everything upon one bold throw; there was a prodigal expenditure of valor, of skill, and blood, but everything was not lost. The great movement had failed and the tide of battle was reversed; but the Confederate leader was still in condition to effect a masterly retreat and the enemy was too badly crippled to venture a counter-assault. "Our own line was in disorder," said the brave commander of the Federal artillery, "and in no condition to advance." In darkness and storm, the Confederate forces silently withdrew from the field that had been made glorious by their arms. The commander entrenched a line from Peach Orchard to Oak Hill, covering the line of retreat, pushed his long column of prisoners, and his military impedimenta to the front and moved his army to the Potomac by interior lines, compelling the Federal commander to seek circuitous routes through the lower passes, if he felt inclined to pursue.

ON the return to Virginia the war was renewed upon the old lines, but with a modification of Grant's favorite method of "attrition." Instead of flinging his disciplined veterans in wild assaults upon the Confederate entrenchments, the Federal commander had resolved to drive the enemy into the "open," if possible, and "make the work of attrition mutual." Lee accepted the challenge and arranged for an immediate advance — placing the staunch and intrepid Pickett at one end of the line, and himself at the other. The initial advance was brilliantly successful. Three divisions of the Fifth Corps recoil under the powerful assault of Lee; and Pickett, pressing his advance upon the other flank, drives Sheridan back to Didwiddie Court-House, where, night coming on, the battle rests, and Sheridan appeals to Grant for help. At midnight there is an urgent dispatch from Meade to the commander of the Fifth Corps, "Sheridan cannot maintain himself at Didwiddie without reinforcements." Duly warned, Pickett falls back to Five Forks, where he receives a peremptory order from Lee, "Hold Five Forks at all hazards." It was an imperative order to do an impossible thing; and Pickett habituated by years of service to this sort of work, cheerfully accepted the task. "Hatcher's Run," was more defensible, but the order was imperative to hold Five Forks, a low, flat, marshy, wooded tract, softened by the winter frosts and flooded by the spring rains; a clayey soil mixed with sand upon which it was difficult or impossible to improvise defensive works and where the very artillery was floated into position upon a corduroy road

actually laid under the advancing wheels, a notably different terrain from the rocky slopes at Gettysburg. Having ordered Sheridan to be reinforced by the Fifth Corps, General Grant sends a dispatch to Warren: "Pickett's division is developed today along the White Oak Pond, its right at Five Forks and extending toward Petersburg." Here Pickett formed his line of battle behind a hastily-constructed breastwork, W. H. L. Lee's cavalry on the right flank, Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry on the left, infantry and artillery between; in all not more than six thousand men, under an imperative order to hold the position against thirty-five thousand fresh, well-fed infantry and cavalry, supported by heavy guns. Pickett's cavalry, in spite of express orders to be on the alert, had given no notice of the enemy's advance. The Federal general, Warren, remarked this apathy of the Confederate scouts, and attributed it to a growing conviction of the hopelessness of their cause. The first attack upon Pickett's position was along the whole front and upon the right flank, which was quickly repulsed; but was immediately followed by an overwhelming assault on the left and rear. Here the gallant Pegram fell. Warren's infantry corps swept down upon the left flank, while Sheridan's cavalry was engaging the front and right. The effect was simply crushing. Scarcely a trace of organization could be seen. Like Dick Wildblood's cavaliers, the Confederate fighters were without front, flank, or rear. There was wild confusion; but no serious panic followed the surprise. The grand old division amply sustained its well-earned reputation. Charge after charge was repulsed, and it might have held on until night had not the ammunition failed. Even then they made a desperate stand, fighting hand to hand, and at the last, compelled a rally and a stand on Corse's brigade, "which was still in perfect order and had repelled every assault." General Pickett, as if bearing a

charmed life, rode through the whirling storm of battle, rallying and reforming the broken ranks, battle-flag in hand. His men were singing, *Rally round the flag, boys; rally once again*, and Pickett, still waving his flag of battle, joined in the rallying song. Sheridan's men rush tumultuously over the crumbling parapet, and plunge into a deadly hand-to-hand fight. The combatants were so closely intermingled that for a time (says General Grant) it was almost a question which one was going to demand the surrender of the other. Though outnumbered five to one, the Confederate soldiers fought desperately until night fell upon the disastrous field, closing the bloody scenes of the last great battle of the South. Again the Confederate commander stands alone; and again the reinforcements arrive too late to reinforce — even with hope. The glorious leader, though the last to leave the scene of conflict, was not quite alone. As he rode from the ghastly battle-field, a band of devoted followers in slow retreat, drew upon themselves the enemy's fire. They did it to save their commander's life!

“It has always seemed to me,” says General Humphreys, the Federal Chief of Engineers, “to have been a grave mistake to require General Pickett to fight at Five Forks.” He should have been placed where he could be promptly reinforced from Lee's right. At Five Forks he was hopelessly isolated.

On the morning of April 2nd, the Federal Sixth Corps broke the Confederate line of defense at a point southwest of Petersburg, and A. P. Hill was slain. The lean, gray lines were breaking fast; their gallant commanders were falling one by one; and the proud Confederacy was at last beginning to crumble under the ponderous hammer of Thor.

General Longstreet says that George E. Pickett's greatest battle was really at Five Forks. His operations, he declares, were masterly and skillful, and, if they had been executed as he designed

them, there might have been no Appomattox; that if any soldier could have snatched victory from defeat, it was Pickett, and that it was cruel to leave that brilliant and heroic leader, as at Gettysburg, without reinforcements or support. The casualty list of the battle bears eloquent and impressive testimony to the desperate character of the defense. "He lost more men in thirty minutes," says Longstreet, "than we lost from all causes, in the recent Spanish-American war." The unsupported veterans had been butchered in a sort of strategic battue in which brigades were trapped and slaughtered instead of beasts. There followed a crashing echo of this bloody conflict at Sailor's Run, after which (as the biographer happily remarks) there occurred the first reunion of the Blue and the Gray: Sheridan's soldiers shared their rations with Pickett's men.

The military situation in the South during the past three months had become so critical that General Lee and President Davis urged the adoption of a measure which had been proposed in 1862;* which had been favored by General Pickett in 1863; and which had been warmly advocated in the Confederate Congress in the winter of 1865, to wit: The emancipation and enlistment of the slave. The proposal was peculiarly offensive to the non-slaveholding whites of the South, and the measure, as recommended by General Lee and the Confederate Executive, was rejected in the popular branch. But the necessity for some strong and effective measure was pressing, and the legislative body finally proposed to meet the exigency — the immediate demand for new armies — by the incredible *chinoiserie* of proclaiming a dictator and adopting a new flag.

* *Vide* Granier de Cassagnac's *History of the Working Classes*. Translated by Benjamin E. Green. Diplomatic memorandum by Colonel Pickett, the Confederate Commissioner to Mexico, Feb., 1862. Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, publishers, Philadelphia, 1872.

Within sixty days from that time the broken and dispirited army of Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House, Lee having less than ten thousand effective soldiers in his ragged and famished ranks.

In summing up the characteristics of George E. Pickett as a soldier, it may be said that he perfectly realized in his brilliant military career the Napoleonic conception of *un grand homme de guerre*, a phrase which Napoleon sometimes saw fit to apply to a marshal of the armies of France. He was in truth, "the perfect soldier" which Lincoln hoped that he might be; he was the incomparable soldier of Longstreet; he was the great soldier and paladin of McClellan, who generously characterized him as "the best infantry soldier developed by the war." There is an old French proverb which says that a great warrior must be a sleuth-hound in assault, a wolf in pursuit, a wild boar in defense; which is merely a medieval way of saying that the true soldier is an embodiment of all the qualities that give success in military operations:—"initiative," promptitude, audacity; endurance, stubbornness, inbred Satanic grit; above all, he must have an infallible *coup d'œil*, or eye for war. As Sovóroff's maxim puts it briefly and characteristically, "A correct eye, rapidity, dash,"—the other qualities being assumed to exist. In a battle, as in a boxing-match (to compare great things with small), it is the eye that determines the result. Instinctively, it detects the opening, and, almost involuntarily, it directs the blow.

George E. Pickett was a soldier to the manner born. "A military bent of mind was hereditary," says his biographer, "in the Pickett family." The very surname, a familiar variant of an ancient Norman form, attests the existence of a certain Berserker quality in the blood; and this combative instinct was notably manifest in the Virginian

scions of the original English stock.* Thanks to Abraham Lincoln the young Virginian received at the National Academy a training in perfect keeping with his tastes. In the Mexican campaign the young soldier showed at once the stuff of which he was made. The daring exploit at Chapultepec was the beginning of a brilliant career. In the Indian war that followed he maintained the reputation he had won in the Mexican campaign; and added largely to it, in the estimation of scholars, by studying in the occasional lull of conflict the dialects of the various tribes he was called upon to fight; and so strong was the linguistic penchant that came with his blood that he actually translated the Lord's Prayer into the Indian tongue, and patiently impressed it upon Lo's untutored mind.

Nor meantime was he idle in the field. He actively participated in a two years' campaign in which fourteen hundred regulars and two thousand volunteers effectually subdued the savage tribes upon the Pacific coast, the Filipinos of their day. We next see him standing for the imperial interests of his country upon the island of San Juan. His seizure of that disputed territory was executed, as McClellan says, "by a masterly movement in the night,"—anticipating the arrival of the British fleet just forty-eight hours. At "Camp Pickett," a fortified post on the island of San Juan, he continued in command until the beginning of the Civil War. We have followed him through his Virginian campaigns and found him everywhere exhibiting the

*The military lists, preserved at Washington, show that the Picketts of Piedmont, Virginia, were fighters as far back as the "Old French War" (*Va. Mag. Hist.*). They fought in the war of the Revolution; in the war of 1812; in the war with Mexico; in Cuba; in the Civil War; and one of the same stock, as we have seen, was uncommonly willing to try conclusions with the British Empire on the island of San Juan. They are known in Virginian tradition as "the fighting Picketts of Fauquier" (*Greene's Historic Families*): Not Tybalt's, however, nor truculent tavern-brawlers; but in war, or peace, a grave, silent race—men of reserved manners, simple habits, pacific inclinations, and quiet tastes.

same high qualities for command. At Fair Oaks, a Confederate general, in undue haste ordered a retreat under fire. "Pickett, the true soldier," says Longstreet, grasping the situation at once, wholly ignored the order, pressed the enemy harder, and fought the apparently failing battle to a brilliant and successful finish. At Gaines' Mill he signally defeated Casey's division; at Fredericksburg he urged an assault upon Franklin's flank, and effectively answered the enemy's fire at the south angle of Marye's Hill; unsupported by the authorities at Richmond, he repelled the advance of Butler and his 30,000 men; he recaptured the outer line of breastworks at Bermuda Hundred; he saved the town of Petersburg, "the citadel of the Confederacy;" and prolonged the existence of the Confederacy itself. It was at this time that Grant telegraphed to Lincoln: "Pickett has bottled up Butler at Bermuda Hundred." This pointed telegram became at once a popular epigram. It stung the ambitious warrior of Bermuda Hundred to the quick. After the war, Butler intrigued to try Pickett by a military commission "organized to convict;" General Grant not only interposed for the protection of Pickett, but offered him the marshalship of the State of Virginia which he declined. The Confederate veteran was "poor and broken," but he keenly realized the difficulties of Grant's position as well as of his own. "You cannot afford to do this," said Pickett, "and I cannot afford to accept it from you." "I can afford to do as I choose," said the generous Soldier-President. And so it passed.

General McClellan has said that "Pickett was the purest type of the perfect soldier; that his mind was large and capable, and his courage of that rare proof that rose to the occasion, and his genius for war so marked that his mind worked more clearly under fire than even at the mess-table or in the merry bivouac, where his perfect breeding

as a gentleman made him beloved by his friends. No man of his time was more beloved of women and of men."

There can be no higher praise than this; not the praise commended by the old Campanian bard,—*laudari a laudato viro*,—but the applause of one who, worthy of all praise, was as fit to bestow as to receive it. It is no slight tribute to this modest and matchless Soldier of the Civil War, that he should take captive the affections of the men he fought, and receive countless proofs of the devotion of such admirers as Lincoln, McClellan, and Grant. In spite of military hardships that would have racked a frame of steel, and of shocks in battle that only a dauntless soul could endure, the "Bayard of the Confederacy,"—the hero of Chapultepec, San Juan, Gaines' Mill, Gettysburg, and Five Forks,—for a decade of peaceful and honored years survived the desolating war which gave him a deathless name. The speech of the veteran warrior in the old tragedy might well have fallen from this Southern soldier's lips:

"For I have fought where few alive remained,
And none unscathed."

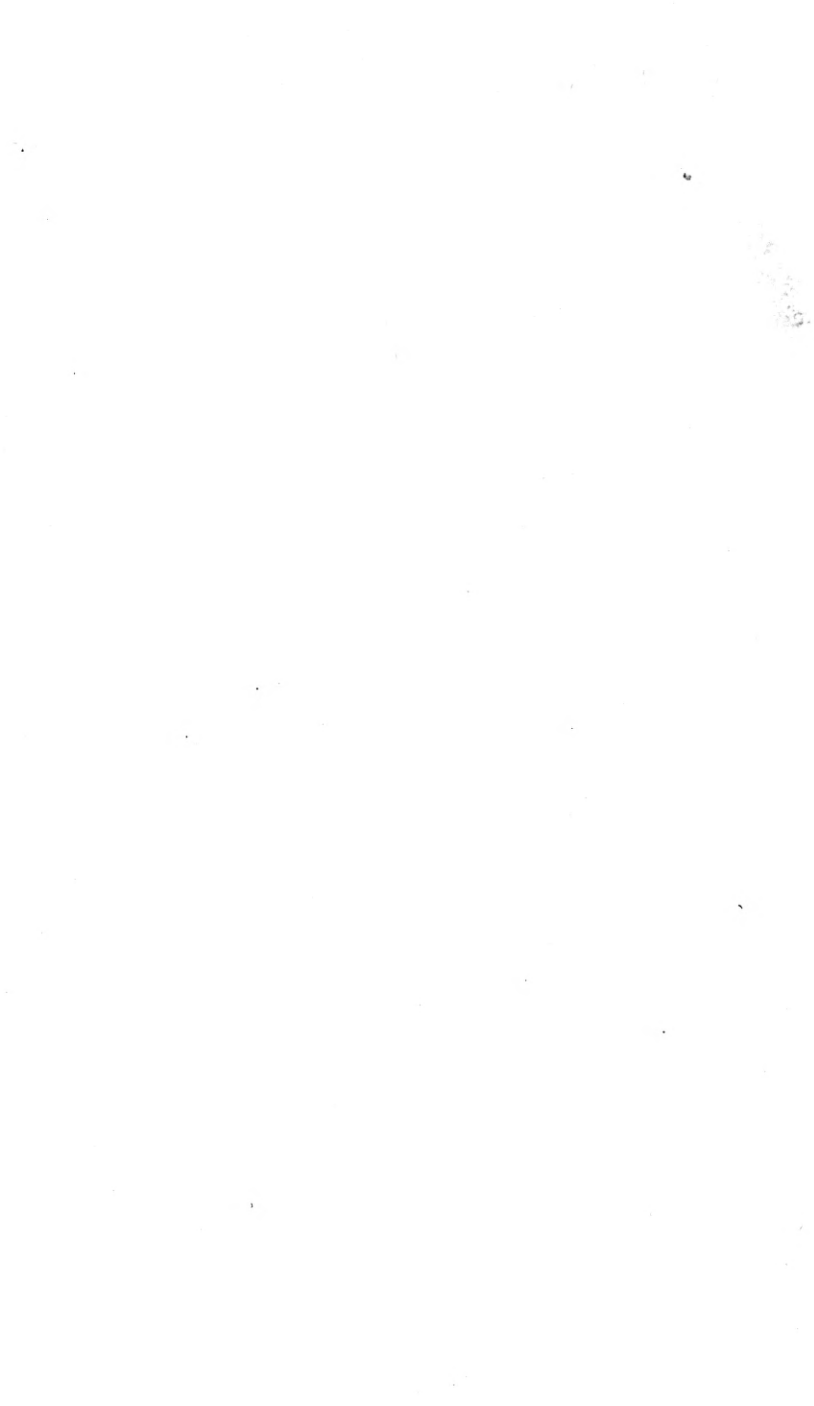
VI

BEFORE riding into battle on the third day at Gettysburg, General Pickett hastily penciled a note of farewell to a lovely Virginian girl: "Good-bye and God bless you, little one!" This note was entrusted to General Longstreet, who wrote upon the cover: "As I watched him, gallant and fearless as any knight of old, riding to certain doom, I said a prayer for his safety, and made a vow to the Holy Father that my friendship for him, poor as it is, should be your heritage." A few days after the battle on Cemetery Ridge, Pickett wrote again to the "little one" in Virginia: "We were ordered to take a height. We took it, but under the most withering fire that, even in my dreams, I could have conceived of; and I have seen many battles. . . . How any of us survived is marvelous, unless it was by prayer." A few days later he again writes: "I thank the great and good God that he has spared me to come back and claim your promise."

This charming and accomplished Virginian girl lived to describe the battles that Pickett fought. Her book is entitled "Pickett and His Men." It is full of instruction and charm; it reconstructs the period of which it treats, and gives many glimpses of that idyllic Virginian life, which, even in the midst of war, was still touched with the old colonial grace. There is nothing careless or commonplace in the style and the writer seems to be especially solicitous of fairness and accuracy in the statement of historic facts. The dedication is eloquent and touching: "To my Husband and the Brave Men whom he led."









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