I

The Gettysburg Campaign: *A Contemporary Account by Whitelaw Reid*

Assignment

1863, June 18
From Philadelphia

"Pennsylvania invaded!" "Harrisburg expected to fall!" "Lee's whole army moving through Chambersburg in three grand columns of attack!" And so on for quantity.

Such were the pleasing assurances that began to burst on us in the West on Tuesday morning. All Pennsylvania seemed to be quivering in spasms over the invasion. Pittsburgh suspended business and went to fortifying; veracious gentlemen along the railroad lines and in little villages of the interior rushed to the telegraph offices and did their duty to their country by giving their fears to the wings of the lightning. . . .

I was quietly settling myself in comfortable quarters at the Neil House to look on at the counterpart of last week's Vallandigham Convention[1] when dispatches reached me, urging an immediate

[1] Reid's reference is to the Ohio state Democratic convention, which convened in Columbus on June 11 and nominated Clement L. Vallandigham for the governorship. A leader of the northern Peace Democrats (often called Copperheads), Vallandigham had been arrested for treason on May 5, 1863, and, following banishment to Confederate lines, took up exile in Canada that July. The peace movement in the North gained thousands of adherents in the spring of 1863.

departure for the scene of action. I was well convinced that the whole affair was an immense panic, but the unquestioned movements of Lee and Hooker gave certain promise to something; and besides, whether grounded or groundless, the alarm of invasion was a subject that demanded attention.[2] And so, swallowing my disgust at the irregular and unauthorized demonstrations of the rebels, I hastened off.

A hasty trunk packing and a rush to the depot; and while the delegates to the great Union Convention were gathering by thousands and crowding Columbus as Columbus had never of late been crowded before, save when the people rushed spontaneously to arms at the first call for volunteers, the train was off for Pittsburgh and the East.[3]

Rumors

1863, June 24
From Washington

Washington has become the most *blasé* of cities. She has been "in danger" so long that to be out of danger would give her an unnatural, not to say unpleasant shock.

Just now the indications warrant greater apprehension here than at any point throughout the North; rebel papers incautiously admit that Lee has set out for the capture of Washington and the subjugation of Maryland. The disposition of Hooker's forces seems to warrant the inference that he takes the same view of the rebel plans, and at any rate the whole rebel army is but a short distance from us, and adverse fortunes in the daily expected battle might leave us

[2] Gen. R. E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker's Army of the Potomac had begun to move north during the second week in June. The two armies had been watching each other warily along the Rappahannock River since the Confederate victory at Chancellorsville on May 1–4, 1863.

[3] The Union Convention met in Columbus the week after the Democrats gathered, and Republican party leaders secured the gubernatorial nomination of a former Democrat named John Brough. Running against the absent Vallandigham, Brough won the election by a margin of 100,000 votes.

comparatively at their mercy; yet Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and even Philadelphia, are frantic, if compared with the unruffled serenity of the Capital. Being in danger pays, and besides, it isn't so very unpleasant a sensation, when you get used to it....

The bulk of Lee's army is still believed to be lying on the west side of Blue Ridge, in the vicinity of Snicker's Gap. Either army is protected in front from the other by the mountain, and matters look very much as if they had reached a deadlock. Some unexpected movement may of course precipitate a collision any hour; or Lee may suddenly dash off on some invading movement that will leave Hooker with a long stern chase before him; but on the other hand there is nothing to make it look improbable that we may have comparative inaction for a month.

While we hold Harper's Ferry and one or two other important points in the neighborhood, an invasion of Southern Pennsylvania is difficult, if not impossible. Lee cannot attack Hooker in front, without forcing the Blue Ridge gaps; if he attempts to ascend the valley and come out on Hooker's flank, he exposes himself on a long flank march, and leaves his transportation and supplies in a hazardous position. Altogether, it begins to look very much as if he had been checkmated in his grand movement of invasion. But, – it is never wise to exult too soon.

1863, June 28
From Washington

I have just returned from a flying visit to Frederick, Maryland....

On the streets of the old fashioned Maryland town I met General Seth Williams,[4] broad faced and genial looking as ever, though the stumpy red beard has sadly changed the familiar appearance of the workingman of McClellan's staff in the earlier days of the war. He had just made fifty miles without leaving the saddle!

From two such instances the movement can be inferred. The energy has been amazing, the rapidity of movement unprecedented

[4] Brig. Gen. Seth Williams, a native of Maine, served as adjutant general of the Army of the Potomac during the period of the Gettysburg campaign. The adjutant general operated as the primary administrative aid to the commanding general.

in the East, and equaled only by such dashing operations in the West as Mitchel's advance into Alabama....[5]

The week, it would seem, must bring a battle; two days may do it. Our fates depend on no *one* battle now; but if a good Providence shall at last turn the scale in our favor, it will be a sorrier day for rebeldom than defeat of theirs on any field has hitherto proved.

The Battles of Gettysburg

[Our space this morning is largely occupied with the details of the great battles fought Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of last week, near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. These reports are from the pen of our well known correspondent Agate, who was on the field, and witnessed all that it was possible for one man to see. As a descriptive writer Agate has few equals, and in addition, he has a merited reputation for reliability that adds largely to the value of his correspondence. We have no space this morning for more than this brief reference to the reports which we spread before our readers. – Cincinnati *Gazette*, July 8, 1863]

Washington,
June 29, 1863

Getting a Good Ready

"Would like you (if you feel able) to equip yourself with horse and outfit, put substitutes in your place in the office, and join Hooker's army in time for the fighting."

It was a dispatch, Sunday evening, from the manager, kindly alluding to a temporary debility that grew out of too much leisure on a recent visit west. Of course, I felt able, or knew I should by tomorrow. But, alas! it was Hooker's army no longer. Washington was all a-buzz with the removal. A few idol worshippers hissed their exultation at the constructive disgrace; but for the most part, there was astonishment

[5] Reid probably had in mind the advance into Alabama of Federal troops under the command of Brig. Gen. Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel, which had resulted in the capture of Huntsville and Decatur on April 11–13, 1862.

at the unprecedented act and indignation at the one cause to which all attributed it. Any reader who chanced to remember a few paragraphs in a recent number of the *Gazette*, alluding to the real responsibility for the invasion, must have known at once that the cause was – Halleck.[6] How the cause worked, how they quarrelled about holding Harper's Ferry, how Hooker was relieved in consequence, and how, within an hour afterward, Halleck stultified himself by telling Hooker's successor to do as he pleased concerning this very point, all this will be in print long before this letter can get west.

For once Washington forgot its *blasé* air, and through a few hours there was a genuine, old-fashioned excitement. The two or three Congressmen who happened to be in town were indignant, and scarcely tried to conceal it; the crowds talked over the strange affair in all its phases; a thousand false stories were put in circulation, the basest of which, perhaps, was that Hooker had been relieved for a fortnight's continuous drunkenness; rumors of other charges, as usual, came darkening the very air.

Never before in the history of modern warfare had there been such a case. A General had brought his army by brilliant forced marches face to face with the enemy. They were at the very crisis of the campaign; a great battle, perhaps the battle of the war, was daily if not hourly impending. No fault of generalship was alleged, but it happened that a parlor chieftain in his quiet study three score miles from the hourly-changing field, differed in judgment on a single point from the General at the head of the troops. The latter carefully examined anew the point in issue, again satisfied himself, and insisted on his conviction, or on relief from responsibility for a course he felt assured was utterly wrong. For this he was relieved – and within five hours was vindicated by his successor.[7]

But a good, perhaps a better general was put in his place – except from the unfortunate timing of the change, we had good reason to hope it would work, at least no harm. There was little regret for Hooker personally; it was only the national sense of fair play that was outraged.

[6] Maj. Gen. Henry Wager Halleck of New York, general-in-chief of the Union armies.

[7] For a much less flattering view of Hooker's generalship in the opening phase of the Gettysburg campaign, see Edwin B. Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), pp. 635–6 n.118.

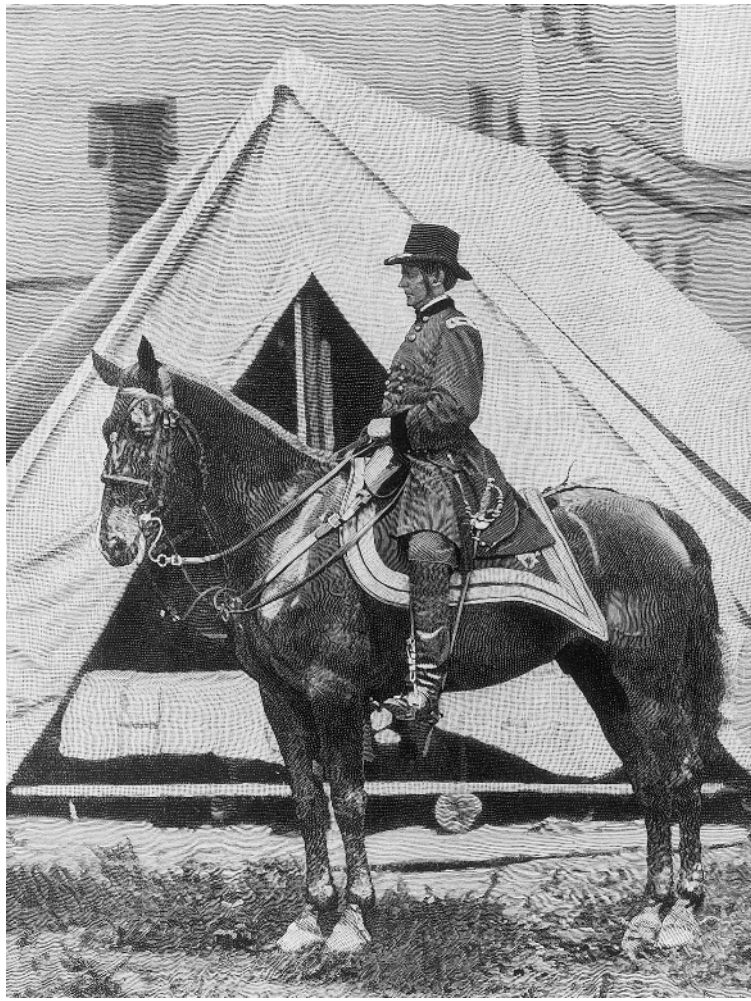


Figure 2 Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker, Commander of the Army of the Potomac during the First Phase of the Gettysburg Campaign

Presently there came new excitement. Stuart[8] had crossed the Potomac, twenty-five miles from Washington, had captured a train within twelve or thirteen miles, had thrown out small parties to within a mile or two of the railroad between Baltimore and Washington. In the night the road would certainly be cut, and for a few hours at any rate the Capital isolated from the country. We had need to make haste, or it might be difficult "to join Hooker's army."

It was not to be a solitary trip. Samuel Wilkeson, the well-known brilliant writer on the New York *Tribune*, lately transferred to the *Times*; and Uriah H. Painter, chief Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, a miracle of energy in such a sphere, were to go; and C. C. Coffin of the Boston *Journal*, known through all New England as "Carleton," had telegraphed an appointment to meet me in the army.[9]

Monday morning Washington breathed freer on learning that the Baltimore trains had come through. Stuart had failed, then? But we counted too fast.

A few hasty purchases to make up an outfit for campaigning along the border, and at eleven we were off. Unusual vigilance at the little blockhouses and embankments at exposed points along the road; soldiers out in unusual force, and every thing ready for instant attack; much chattering of Stuart and his failure in the train; anxious inquiries by brokers as to whether communication with New York was to be severed; and so we reach Baltimore.

"Am very sorry, gentlemen; would get you out at once if I could; would gladly run up an extra train for you; but – the rebels cut our road last night, this side of Frederick, and we have no idea when we

[8] Maj. Gen. James Ewell Brown "Jeb" Stuart, a Virginian who commanded the cavalry in the Army of Northern Virginia.

[9] Reid's three companions were among the more prominent northern newspaper correspondents of the war. Samuel Wilkeson, a New Yorker and former lawyer, initially headed the Washington bureau of the New York *Tribune* and during the Gettysburg campaign held the same post for the New York *Times*. A young Quaker from West Chester, Pennsylvania, Uriah Hunt Painter of the Philadelphia *Inquirer* was notable for his close working relationship with Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. Charles Carleton Coffin, a native of New Hampshire, remained an army correspondent throughout the war and subsequently published a number of books about the conflict and delivered more than 2,000 lectures about his exploits.

can run again." Thus Mr. Prescott Smith,[10] whom every body knows, that has ever heard of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

And so Stuart had *not* failed – we were just one train too late and were cut off from the army!

There was nothing for it but to wait; and so – ill satisfied with this "Getting a Good Ready" – back to Washington.

Off

Frederick, Md.,
Tuesday evening, June 30.

Washington was again like a city besieged as after Bull Run. All night long troops were marching; orderlies with clanking sabres clattering along the streets; trains of wagons grinding over the bouldered avenue; commissaries were hurrying up their supplies; the quartermaster's department was like a beehive; every thing was motion and hurry. From the War Department came all manner of exciting statements; men were everywhere asking what the President thought of the emergency. Trains had again come through regularly from Baltimore, but how long could it continue? Had not Stuart's cavalry been as near as the old Blair place at Silver Springs,[11] and might they not cut the track any moment they chose? Might they not, indeed, asked the startled bankers, might they not indeed charge past the forts on the Maryland side, pay a hurried visit to the President and Cabinet, and replenish their army chests from *our* well-stored vaults?

In the midst of all this there came a blistering sight that should blacken evermore every name concerned. With cries for reinforcements from the weakened front, with calls for volunteers and raw militia to step into the imminent breach and defend the invaded North, with everywhere urgent need for every man who knew how

[10] William Prescott Smith was the Master of Transportation for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, with headquarters in Baltimore.

[11] Francis Preston Blair, Sr., a close adviser to President Andrew Jackson whose son Montgomery served as Lincoln's postmaster general, called his country estate near Washington "Silver Spring."

to handle a musket, there came sprucely marching down the avenue, in all their freshness of brilliant uniforms and unstained arms, with faultlessly appareled officers and gorgeous drum major and clanging band and all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war (about the Capital,) with banners waving and bayonets gleaming in the morning sunlight, as with solid tramp that told of months of drill they moved down the street – in such bravery of peaceful soldiering there came a New England nine months' regiment, mustering over nine hundred bayonets, whose term of service that day expired! With Stuart's cavalry swarming about the very gates of the Capital, with the battle that was to decide whether the war should henceforth be fought on Northern or Southern soil hourly impending, these men, in all the blazonry of banners and music and glittering uniforms and polished arms, were marching – home! They had been implored to stay a fortnight, a week – three days even; but with one accord they insisted on starting *home*! Would that Stuart *could* capture a train that bears them!

Another exciting ride over a yet unmolested track, and we are again in Baltimore. Mr. Prescott Smith gave us the cheering assurance that the road was open again to Frederick; that nobody knew where Stuart had gone, but that in any event they would send us out in the afternoon.

For the rest there was news of more dashing movements by our army. The rebels were reported concentrating at York, Pennsylvania. Our army had already left Frederick far in the rear, and spreading out like a fan to make use of every available road, it was sweeping splendidly up to meet them. There was no fear of their not fighting under Meade. He was recognized as a soldier, brave and able, and they would follow him just as readily as Hooker – some of them indeed, far more willingly. But there was sore need for every musket. Lee at least equalled us in numbers, they thought.[12]

Baltimore had been in a panic. Monday evening some rebel cavalry had ventured up to within a few miles of the city, and frightened

[12] Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade inherited an Army of the Potomac from Hooker that would number slightly fewer than 90,000 men at Gettysburg; Lee's army would bring approximately 70,000 men to the field.

persons had rushed in with the story that great squadrons of horse were just ready to charge down the streets. Alarm bells rang, the Loyal Leagues[13] rushed to arms, the thoroughfares were thronged with the improvised soldiery, and within an hour thousands of bayonets guarded every approach. It was worthy the new life of Baltimore. Here, thank God, was an eastern city able and ready at all times to defend itself.

Stuart did not come – if he had, he would have been repulsed.

General Erastus B. Tyler[14] (former Colonel of the Seventh Ohio) had been hastily summoned here to assume command of the defences of Baltimore. This display of citizen soldiery was part of the work he had already done.

But those "defences!" "Small boy," exclaimed Wilkeson as we sauntered through the street and passed an urchin picking pebbles out of a tar barrel to fling at a passing pig, "small boy," and he uttered it with impressive dignity, "You must stop that, sir! You are destroying the defences of Baltimore!" And indeed he was. Single rows of tar barrels and sugar hogsheads, half filled with gravel, and placed across the streets with sometimes a rail or two on top, after the fashion of a "stake and rider" fence, constituted the "defences." They were called barricades, I believe, in some official paper on the subject. Outside the city, however, were earthworks, (to which additions had been made in the press of the emergency,) that would have afforded considerable resistance to an attack; and if cavalry had succeeded in getting into the city, the "barricades" might have been of some service in checking their charges.

In the afternoon Stuart's cavalry was heard from, making the best of its way by a circuitous route on the rear and flank of our army, to join Lee in Southern Pennsylvania. Baltimore, then, was

[13] In response to rising antiwar sentiment among elements of the Democratic party, a group of business and professional leaders had created the Union League and Loyal Publication Society in 1862. The Loyal Leagues and Union Leagues functioned as an adjunct of the Republican party, disseminating literature supporting the war effort and attacking Democrats who questioned the Lincoln administration's policies. Republicans called themselves the Union party for much of the war.

[14] Brig. Gen. Erastus Barnard Tyler, born in New York and reared in Ohio.

Figure 3 Samuel Wilkeson, Correspondent for the *New York Times* at Gettysburg

safe; and Stuart had made the most ill advised raid of the war. He had worn out his horses by a terrible march on the eve of a desperate battle when, in the event of a retreat, he was especially needed to protect the rear and hold our pursuit in check; and in return he had gained – a few horses, a single army train which he could only destroy, eighteen hours' interruption of communications by rail between the Capital and the army, and night's alarm in Washington and Baltimore.

Our own army was now reported to be concentrating at Westminster, manifestly to march on York. To reach this point, we must take the Western Maryland road, but this had been abandoned in terror by the Company, and the rolling stock was all in Philadelphia. There was nothing for it but to hasten to Frederick, then mount and follow the track of the army.

As our party stepped into the train a despatch brought Hooker's vindication as against Halleck. He had been relieved for insisting on withdrawing the troops from Harper's Ferry and using them in the active operations of the army. Precisely that thing his successor had done! All honor to Meade for the courage that took the responsibility!

It was a curious ride up the road. Eighteen hours ago the rebels had swarmed across it. The public had no knowledge that they were not yet in its immediate vicinity and might not attack the very train now starting; yet here were cars crowded to overflowing with citizens and their wives and daughters willing to take the risks rather than lose a train. Mr. Smith had been good enough to provide a car for our party, but the press was so great we had to throw open the doors to make room for women and children, recklessly ready to brave what they supposed the dangers of the ride.

Frederick is Pandemonium. Somebody has blundered frightfully; the town is full of stragglers, and the liquor-shops are in full blast. Just under my window scores of drunken soldiers are making night hideous; all over the town they are trying to steal horses or sneak into unwatched private residences or are filling the air with the blasphemy of their drunken brawls. The worst elements of a great army are here in their worst condition; its cowards, its thieves, its sneaks, its bullying vagabonds, all inflamed with whiskey, and drunk as well with their freedom from accustomed restraint.

The Rear of a Great Army

Two Taverns P. O., Pa.,
July 1

Our little party broke up unceremoniously. Both my companions thought it better to go back to Baltimore and up to Westminster by rail on the expected Government trains; I thought differently and adhered to the original plan of proceeding overland. I have already good reasons to felicitate myself on the lucky decision.

An hour after breakfast sufficed for buying a horse and getting him equipped for the campaign.

Drunken soldiers were still staggering about the streets, looking for a last drink or a horse to steal, before commencing to straggle along the road, when a messenger for one of the New York papers, who had come down with despatches, and myself were off for headquarters. We supposed them to be at Westminster but were not certain.

South Mountain, historic evermore, since a previous rebel invasion faded out thence to Antietam, loomed up on the left amid the morning mists;[15] before us stretched a winding turnpike, upheaved and bent about by a billowy country that in its cultivation and improvements began to give evidence of proximity to Pennsylvania farmers. The army had moved up the valley of the Monocacy through Walkersville, Woodbury, and Middleburg – all pleasant little Maryland villages – where in peaceful times Rip Van Winkle might have slumbered undisturbed. The direction seemed too far north for Westminster, and a courier, coming back with despatches, presently informed us that headquarters were not there but at Taneytown, a point considerably farther north and west. Evidently there was a change in our plans. We were not going to York, or headquarters would not be at Taneytown; and it was fair to suppose that our movements to the northwest were based upon news of a similar concentration by the rebels. The probabilities of a speedy battle were thus immensely increased, and we hastened the more rapidly on.

[15] A Federal victory at South Mountain on September 14, 1862, set the stage for the battle of Antietam three days later.

From Frederick out the whole road was lined with stragglers. I have heard General Marsena R. Patrick highly spoken of as an efficient Provost-Marshal General for the Potomac Army; but if he is responsible for permitting such scenes as were witnessed today in the rear, his successor is sadly needed.[16]

Take a worthless vagabond, who has enlisted for thirteen dollars a month instead of patriotism, who falls out of ranks because he is a coward and wants to avoid the battle, or because he is lazy and wants to steal a horse to ride on instead of marching, or because he is rapacious and wants to sneak about farmhouses and frighten or wheedle timid countrywomen into giving him better food and lodging than camp life affords – make this armed coward or sneak or thief drunk on bad whiskey, give him scores and hundreds of armed companions as desperate and drunken as himself – turn loose this motley crew, muskets and revolvers in hand into a rich country with quiet, peaceful inhabitants, all unfamiliar with armies and army ways – let them swagger and bully as cowards and vagabonds always do, steal or openly plunder as such thieves always will – and then, if you can imagine the state of things this would produce, you have the condition of the country in the rear of our own army on our own soil today.

Of course these scoundrels are not types of the army. The good soldiers never straggle – these men are the *debris*, the offscourings from nearly a hundred thousand soldiers.

There is no need for permitting these outrages. An efficient Provost Marshal, such as General Patrick has been called, would have put a provost guard at the rear of every division, if not of every regiment and brigade, and would have swept up every man that dared to sneak out of ranks when his comrades were marching to meet the enemy. The rebels manage these things better. Death on the spot is said to be their punishment for straggling, and in the main it is a just one.

[16] Brig. Gen. Marsena Rudolph Patrick, a New Yorker, served as provost marshal general of the Army of the Potomac through most of the war. For his description of problems of straggling and poor discipline during the 1863 Pennsylvania campaign, see chapter 8 of *Inside Lincoln's Army: The Diary of General Marsena Rudolph Patrick, Provost Marshal General, Army of the Potomac*, ed. David S. Sparks (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964).

The army itself had done surprisingly little damage to property along their route. Breaking off the limbs of cherry trees to pick the ripe cherries seemed to be about the worst of their trespasses. I have never before seen the country so little injured along the line of march of a great army.

But every farmhouse was now filled with drunken loafers in uniform; they swarmed about the stables, stealing horses at every opportunity and compelling farmers to keep up a constant watch; in the fence corners groups of them lay, too drunk to get on at all.

As we neared the army a new phase of the evil was developed. A few mounted patrols seemed to have been sent out to gather up the stragglers, and some of them had begun their duty by getting drunk, too.

In one fence corner we passed a drunken trio in fierce altercation with a gay-looking, drunken patrol with a rose jauntily worn in his button-hole and a loaded and cocked revolver carelessly playing in his hand. "These fellows are d-dr-drunk," he explained to us, "and ac'ly talk about sh-shootin' me for or'rin 'em to go to camp." One of the stragglers had his musket cocked and handsomely covering the red rose on the patrol's breast.

A few yards further on was another drunken party under the trees. A patrol, trying to get them started, was just drunk enough to be indiscreetly brave and talkative. "You're cowardly stragglers, every rascal of you," he roared, after a few minutes' unavailing efforts of coaxing. "You're lyin' scoune'rl," was the thick-tongued response; and the last we saw of the party as we galloped on, two of the stragglers were rushing at the patrol, and he was standing at a charge, bayonets ready to receive them. They probably halted before they reached the bayonet point.

As we stopped at a farmhouse by the roadside to feed our horses and get dinner, we passed a party of stragglers in the yard. After dinner to our amazement we discovered that my luckless "rebel look"[17] and an indignant reply about straggling to some impertinent question they had asked, had well-nigh got us into trouble. The rascals, drunk enough to half believe what they said, and angry enough at being called stragglers to do us any mischief they were able, had held a court on our cases while we were eating, had

[17] Reid wore his hair long in what was considered a "southern style."

adjudged us rebel spies and had sentenced us to – have our horses confiscated! Luckily my companion strolled down to the stable after dinner just as the fellows were getting the horses out to make off with them! They announced their conclusion that we were spies, and their sentence, and insisted on the horses, but a judicious display of hearty disposition on his part to knock somebody down induced them to drop the reins and allow him to put the horses back in the stable.

We had small time, as we galloped through, to appreciate the beauties of Taneytown, a pleasant little Maryland hamlet, named in honor of the Chief Justice of the United States (who has a countryseat in the vicinity,)[18] and like him now somewhat fallen into the sere and yellow leaf. Army trains blocked up the streets; a group of quartermasters and commissaries were bustling about the principal corner; across on the hills and along the road to the left, far as the eye could reach, rose the glitter from the swaying points of bayonets as with steady tramp the columns of our Second and Third corps were marching northward. They were just getting started – it was already well on in the afternoon. Clearly something was in the wind.

Half a mile further east, splashed by the hoofs of eager gallopers, a large, unpretending camp, looking very much like that of a battalion of cavalry – we turn in without ceremony and are at the headquarters of the Army of the Potomac.

At first all seems quiet enough, but a moment's observation shows signs of movement. The slender baggage is all packed, everybody is ready to take the saddle at a moment's notice. Engineers are busy with their maps; couriers are coming in with reports; the trustiest counsellors on the staff are with the General.

In a plain little wall tent, just like the rest, pen in hand, seated on a camp-stool and bending over a map, is the new "General Commanding" for the Army of the Potomac. Tall, slender, not ungainly, but certainly not handsome or graceful, thin-faced, with grizzled beard and moustache, a broad and high but retreating forehead, from each corner of which the slightly-curling hair recedes, as if giving premonition of

[18] Roger Brooke Taney of Maryland, author of the majority opinion in the famous Dred Scott case, served as chief justice of the United States from 1836 until his death in October 1864.

baldness – apparently between forty-five and fifty years of age – altogether a man who impresses you rather as a thoughtful student than a dashing solider – so General Meade looks in his tent.

"I tell you, I think a great deal of that fine fellow Meade," I chanced to hear the President say a few days after Chancellorsville. Here was the result of that good opinion. There is every reason to hope that the events of the next few days will justify it.

A horseman gallops up and hastily dismounts. It is a familiar face – Lorenzo L. Crounse,[19] the well-known chief correspondent of the *New York Times* with the Army of the Potomac. As we exchange hurried salutations, he tells us that he has just returned from a little post village in Southern Pennsylvania, ten or fifteen miles away; that a fight, of what magnitude he cannot say, is now going on near Gettysburg between the First corps and some unknown force of the enemy; that Major General John F. Reynolds[20] is already killed, and that there are rumors of more bad news.

Mount and spur for Gettysburg is, of course, the word. Crounse, who is going too, acts as guide. We shall precede headquarters but a little. A few minutes in the Taneytown tavern porch, writing despatches to be forthwith sent back by special messenger to the telegraph office at Frederick; then in among the moving mass of soldiers and down the Gettysburg road at such speed as we may. We have made twenty-seven miles over rough roads already today; as the sun is dipping in the woods of the western hilltops, we have fifteen more ahead of us.

It is hard work, forcing our way among the moving masses of infantry, or even through the crowded trains, and we make but slow progress. Presently aids and orderlies begin to come back, with an occasional quartermaster or surgeon or commissary in search of stores. Crounse seems to know every body in the army, and from every one he demands the news from the front. "Everything

[19] Lorenzo Livingston Crounse, who grew up on the Wisconsin frontier, reported on the war for a number of western newspapers and the New York *World* before covering the Army of the Potomac for the New York *Times*.

[20] Maj. Gen. John Fulton Reynolds, a Pennsylvanian, operated as a wing commander in charge of the First, Third, and Eleventh corps of the Army of the Potomac between June 25 and his death on July 1.

Figure 4 Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade, Commander of the Army of the Potomac at Gettysburg

splendid; have driven them five or six miles from Gettysburg." "Badly cut up, sir, and falling back." "Men rushed in like tigers after Reynolds's death, and swept everything before them." (Rushing in like tigers is a stock performance, and appears much oftener in the newspapers than on the field.) "Gettysburg burnt down by the rebels." "Things were all going wild, but Major General Winfield S. Hancock got up before we were utterly defeated,[21] and I guess there's some chance now." "D—d Dutchmen of the Eleventh corps broke and ran like sheep, just as they did at Chancellorsville, and it's going to be another disaster of just the same sort."[22] "We still hold Gettysburg, and everything looks favorable." "Major General James S. Wadsworth's division cut to pieces; not a full regiment left out of the whole of it; and half the officers killed."[23] "We've been driven pell-mell through Gettysburg, and things look bad enough, I tell you."

This is the substance of the information we gain by diligent questioning of scores. It is of such stuff that the "news direct from the battlefield," made up by itinerant liars and "reporters" at points twenty or thirty miles distant, and telegraphed thence throughout the country, is manufactured. So long as the public, in its hot haste, insists on devouring the news before it is born, so long must it expect such confusion and absurdity.

Riding through the columns became more and more difficult as we advanced; and finally, to avoid it, we turned off into a by-way

[21] Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock of Pennsylvania, who commanded the Second Corps, took charge of the Union defense upon his arrival on the battlefield between 4:00 and 4:30 on the afternoon of July 1.

[22] The Eleventh Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. Oliver Otis Howard of Maine, contained a significant number of regiments made up of men of German birth or descent. Many native-born soldiers in the Army of the Potomac disliked the "foreigners" in the Eleventh Corps and excoriated them for their performances at Chancellorsville, where they had been routed on May 2, 1863, and on the first day at Gettysburg, where they once again were driven from the field. That many of the regiments fought well at Gettysburg was lost on most observers. On the Germans at Chancellorsville, see Christian B. Keller, *Chancellorsville and the Germans: Nativism, Ethnicity, and Civil War Memory* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007).

[23] Maj. Gen. James Samuel Wadsworth, a member of one of the most prominent families in New York State, commanded a division in the Union First Corps. On May 6, 1864, he was mortally wounded in the battle of the Wilderness.

on the right. We were fortunately well supplied with maps, and from these we learned that but a few miles to the right of the Taneytown road, up which we had been going, ran the great Baltimore turnpike to Gettysburg; and a Dutch farmer told us that our bypath would bring us out, some miles ahead, on this pike. It was certain to be less obstructed, and we pushed on.

Across the hills to the left we could see the white-covered wagons slowly winding in and out through the forests and the masses of blue coats toiling forward. In either direction for miles you could catch occasional glimpses of the same sight through the openings of the foliage. The shades of evening dimmed and magnified the scene till one might have thought the hosts of Xerxes,[24] in all the glory of modern armor, were pressing on Gettysburg. To the front and right lay broad, well-tilled farms, dotted here and there with mammoth, many windowed barns, covered with herds and rustling with the ripening grain.

Selecting a promising looking Dutch house, with a more than usually imposing barn in its rear, we stopped for supper. The good man's "woman" had gone to see the soldiers on the road, but whatever he could get for us "you be very heartily welcome to." Great cherry trees bent before the door under their weight of ripe fruit; the kitchen garden was crowded with vegetables; contented cattle stood about the barn; sleek horses filled the stables; fat geese hissed a doubtful welcome as we came too near them; the very farmyard laughed with plenty.

We put it on the ground of resting our horses and giving them time for their oats; but I fear the snowy bread and well spread table of the hearty farmer had something to do with the hour that we spent.

Then mount and spur again. It was dark in the woods, but our bypath had become a neighborhood wagon road, and the moon presently cast us occasional glances from behind the clouds. The country was profoundly quiet; the Dutch farmers seemed to have all gone to bed at dark, and only their noisy house dogs gave signs

[24] The king of Persia (486–465 BC) who mounted an unsuccessful effort to conquer Greece in 480 BC.

of life as we passed. Once or twice we had to rouse a sleeping worthy out of bed for directions about the road. At last campfires gleamed through the woods; presently we caught the hum of soldiers' talk ahead; by the roadside we passed a house where all the lights were out, but the family were huddled on the doorstep, listening to the soldiers. "Yes, the army's right down there. If you want to stay all night, turn up by the school-house. 'Squire Durboraw's a nice man'."

"Right down there" was the post-village of Two Taverns – thronged with soldiers – the women all in the streets, talking and questioning and frightening themselves at a terrible rate. A corps general's headquarters had been there today, but they were now moved up to the front. That didn't look like serious disaster. We were four miles and a quarter or a half from the line of battle. Ewell had come down from York, and we had been fighting him today. A. P. Hill was also up coming by way of Chambersburg or Hagerstown. Longstreet was known to be on the way and would certainly be here tomorrow.[25] The reserves were on their way. In short, Lee's whole army was rapidly concentrating at Gettysburg, and tomorrow, it seemed, must bring the battle that is to decide the invasion. Today it had opened for us – *not* favorably.

"Squire Durboraw *is* a nice man." We roused him out of bed, where he must have been for two or three hours. "Can you take care of us and our horses till morning?" "I will do it with pleasure, gentlemen." And no more words are needed. The horses are housed in one of those great horse palaces these people build for barns; we are comfortably and even luxuriously quartered. If the situation is as we hope, our army must attack by daybreak. At any rate, we are off for the field at four in the morning.

[25] Lt. Gen. Richard Stoddert Ewell, a native of Georgetown, District of Columbia, commanded the Confederate Second Corps. Some of his troops had reached the Susquehanna River before being recalled to concentrate with the rest of the Army of Northern Virginia near Gettysburg. Lt. Gen. Ambrose Powell Hill of Virginia led the Confederate Third Corps, elements of which opened the battle of Gettysburg on July 1; Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, Lee's senior subordinate, commanded the Confederate First Corps.

The Repulse on Wednesday, First July

Field of Battle,
near Gettysburg, July 2

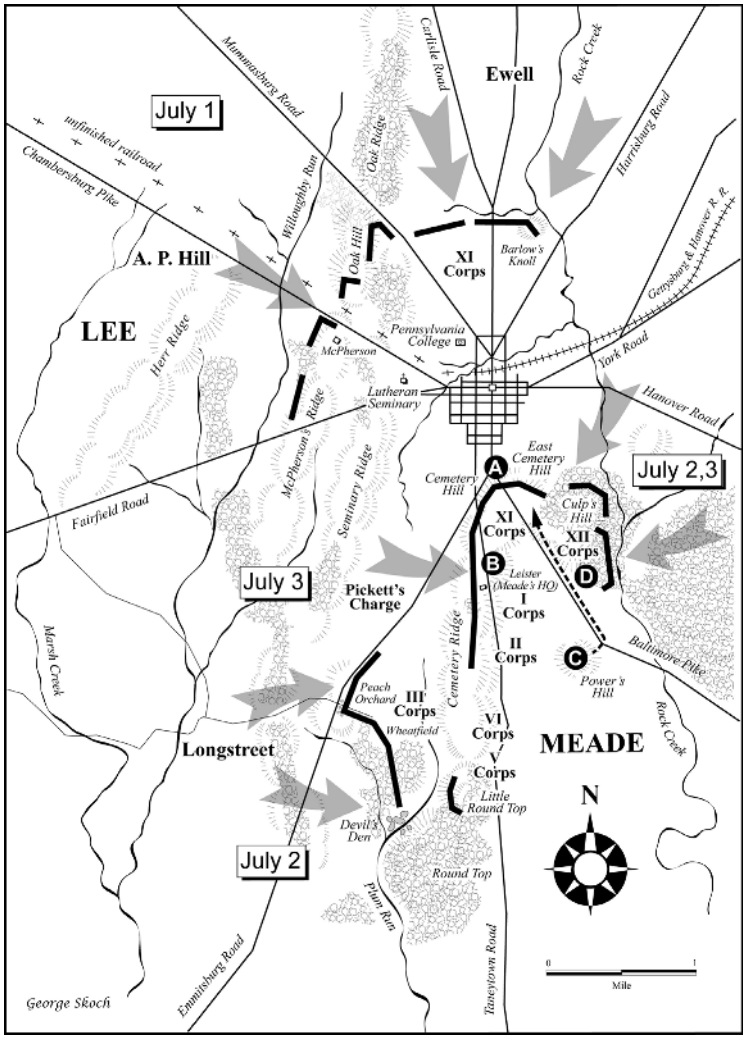
To the Front

We were in the saddle this morning a little after daybreak. The army was cut down to fighting weight; it had shaken off all retainers and followers – all but its fighters; and the road was alive with this useless material.

My companion and myself were forcing our way as fast as possible through the motley crowd toward the front, where an occasional shot could already be heard, and where we momentarily expected the crash of battle to open, when I was stopped by some one calling my name from a little frame dwelling, crowded with wounded soldiers. It proved to be Colonel Luther S. Stephenson, the librarian of Congress. He had run away from his duties in the Capital, and all day yesterday, through a fight that we now know to have been one of the hottest in the war, had been serving most gallantly as aid on General Solomon Meredith's staff. Congress should make an example of its runaway official![26]

The lower story of the house was crowded with wounded from the old "Iron Brigade" of Wadsworth's division; in a little upper room was their General. He had been grazed on the head with a fragment of shell, his horse had been shot under him and had fallen upon him; he had been badly bruised externally and worse internally, and there was little prospect of his being ready for service again for months. He spoke proudly of the conduct of his men, almost tearfully of their unprecedented losses.

[26] Brig. Gen. Solomon Meredith, a native of North Carolina who moved to Indiana as a young man, commanded the 1st Brigade of the 1st Division of the Union First Corps. Known as the Iron Brigade and composed of three regiments from Wisconsin and one each from Michigan and Indiana, Meredith's unit was one of the best, and perhaps the most famous, in the Army of the Potomac. It had fought well, and suffered heavy casualties, at the battles of Second Bull Run, Antietam, and Fredericksburg.



A	Observes the battlefield from Cemetery Hill on morning of July 2; returns to position at 8:00 A.M. on July 3.
B	Visits Meade's headquarters at noon on July 2; returns at 11:00 A.M. on July 3.
C	Visits Slocum's headquarters on Power's Hill on afternoon of July 2; returns on July 3 and watches Pickett's Charge from this high ground.
D	Rides up Baltimore Pike toward Cemetery Hill from Slocum's headquarters on evening of July 2.

Map 2 Reid's Movements at Gettysburg

Figure 5 Brig. Gen. James Samuel Wadsworth, Division Commander in the First Union Corps

Half a mile further on, through crowds of slightly wounded, and past farmhouses converted into hospitals, a turn to the right through a meadow, up the slope of an exposed hill, and by the side of a smouldering camp-fire. Stretched on the ground, and surrounded by his staff, lies General Wadsworth, (late Republican candidate for Governor of New York,) commander of the advance division in yesterday's fight. He, too, kindles as he tells the story of the day, its splendid fighting, and the repulse before overwhelming numbers.

Batteries are all about us; troops are moving into position; new lines seem to be forming, or old ones extending. Two or three general officers, with a retinue of staff and orderlies, come galloping by. Foremost is the spare and somewhat stooped form of the Commanding General. He is not cheered, indeed is scarcely recognized. He is an approved corps General, but he has not yet vindicated his right to command the Army of the Potomac. By his side is the calm, honest, manly face of General Oliver O. Howard. An empty coat sleeve is pinned to his shoulder – memento of a hard fought field before, and reminder of many a battle scene his splendid Christian courage has illumined.[27] They are arranging the new line of battle. Howard's dispositions of the preceding night are adopted for the centre; his suggestions are being taken for the flanks. It is manifest already that we are no longer on the offensive, that the enemy had the initiative.

The Position

A little further forward, a turn to the left, we climb the slope of another hill, hitch our horses halfway up under cover of the woods, make our way through frowning batteries and by long rows of tombstones, stop for an instant to look at the monument of a hero from Fair Oaks, and are startled by the buzzing hiss of a well-aimed Minie[28] from the foes that fought us at Fair Oaks, above our heads,

[27] Howard had suffered a wound at the battle of Seven Pines (or Fair Oaks) on May 31, 1862, that resulted in the amputation of his right arm.

[28] The most common infantry projectile of the Civil War was called the minié ball – a hollow base, lead bullet of cylindro-conoidal shape produced in .58 and other calibers. A pair of French army captains named Henri-Gustave Delvigne and Claude-Étienne Minié developed the bullet in the 1840s.

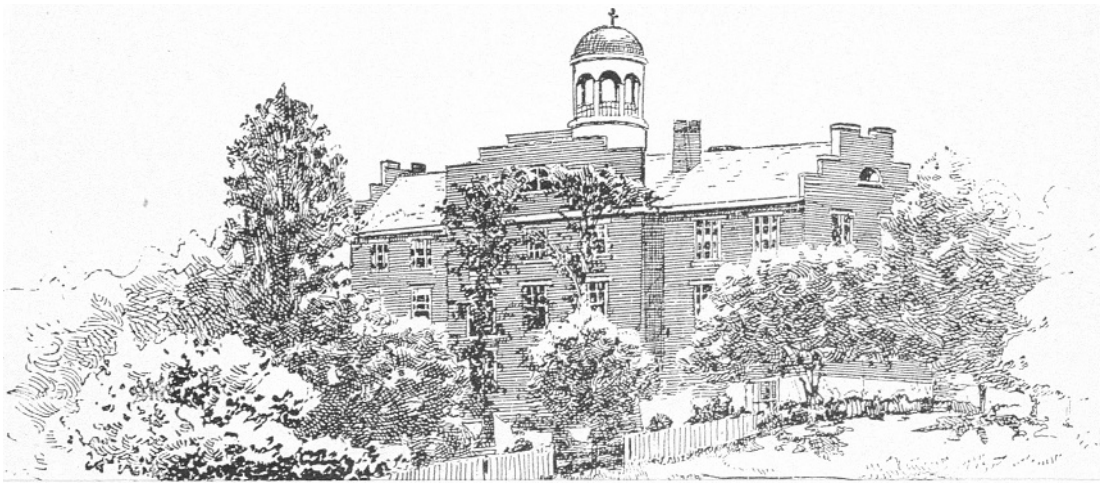


Figure 6 The Lutheran Seminary, Most Prominent Building on the First Day's Battlefield

move forward to an ambitious little gate-keeper's lodge at the entrance of the cemetery.

In front on a gradual declivity an orchard of gnarled old leafy trees; beyond the valley, a range of hills but little lower than that on which we stand; on this slope, half hidden among the clusters of trees, a large cupola-crowned brick building – a theological seminary;[29] between this and us half a dozen spires, roofs of houses, distinguishable amid the luxuriant foliage, streets marked by the lines of trees – Gettysburg!

No sound comes up from the deserted town, no ringing of bells, no voices of children, no hum of busy trade. Only now and then a blue curl of smoke rises and fades from some high window; a faint report comes up, and perhaps the hiss of a Minie is heard; the houses are not wholly without occupants.

We are standing on Cemetery Hill, the key to the whole position the enemy occupies, the centre of our line and the most exposed point for a concentration of the rebel fire. To our right and a little back, is the hill on which we have just left General Wadsworth; still farther back and sweeping away from the cemetery almost like the side of a horse-shoe from the toe, is a succession of other hills, some covered with timber and undergrowth, others yellow in the morning sunlight, and waving with luxuriant wheat; all crowned with batteries that are soon to reap other than a wheaten harvest. To the left, our positions are not so distinctly visible; though we can make out our line stretching off in another horse-shoe bend, behind a stone fence near the cemetery – unprotected, farther on; affording far fewer advantageous positions for batteries, and manifestly a weaker line on our right. An officer of General Howard's staff pointed out the positions to me, and I could not help hazarding the prediction that there on our left wing would come the rebel attack we were awaiting.

General Howard's headquarters were on this very Cemetery Hill – the most exposed position on the whole field. He had now returned and was good enough during the lull that still lasted, while we awaited the anticipated attack, to explain the action of yesterday as he saw it.

[29] The Lutheran Theological Seminary, which stood about three-quarters of a mile west of downtown Gettysburg on Seminary Ridge.

The Battle of Wednesday

I have now conversed with four of the most prominent generals employed in that action and with any numbers of subordinates. I am a poor hand to describe battles I do not see, but in this case I must endeavor to weave their statements into a connected narrative. The ground of the action is still in the enemy's hands, and I have no knowledge of it save from the description of others, and the distant view one gets from Cemetery Hill.

We had been advancing toward York. It was discovered that the rebels were moving for a concentration farther south, and we suddenly changed our own line of march. The First corps, Major General John F. Reynolds, had the advance; next came the unfortunate Eleventh corps, with a new record to make that should wipe out Chancellorsville, and ready to do it.

Saturday they had been at Boonsboro, twelve or fifteen miles to the northwest of Frederick; by Tuesday night, the First corps lay encamped on Marsh Creek, within easy striking distance of Gettysburg. The Eleventh corps was ten or twelve miles farther back. Both were simply moving under general marching orders, and the enemy was hardly expected yet for a day or two.

At an early hour in the forenoon the First corps was filing down around Cemetery Hill in solid column, and entering the streets of Gettysburg. In the town our skirmishers had met pickets or scouts from the enemy and had driven them pell-mell back. The news fired the column, and General Reynolds with little or no reconnaissance marched impetuously forward. Unfortunate haste of a hero, gone now to the hero's reward!

It was fifteen minutes past ten o'clock. The fire of the rebel skirmishers rattled along the front, but shaking it off as they had the dew from their night's bivouac, the men pushed hotly on.

Meantime General Reynolds, on receiving his first notice an hour ago from Brigadier General John Buford's cavalry,[30] that the rebels

[30] Brig. Gen. John Buford, born in Kentucky and reared there and in Illinois, commanded the 1st Division of the Cavalry Corps in the Army of the Potomac, two brigades of which offered the initial resistance to Confederate infantry moving toward Gettysburg on July 1.

Figure 7 Maj. Gen. John Fulton Reynolds, Commander of the First Union Corps

were in the vicinity of Gettysburg, had promptly sent word back to General Howard, and asked him, as a prudential measure, to bring up the Eleventh corps as rapidly as possible. The Eleventh had been coming up on the Emmitsburg road. Finding it crowded with the train of the First, they had started off on a byway, leading into the Taneytown road, some distance ahead; and were still on this byway eleven miles from Gettysburg when Reynolds's messenger reached them. The fine fellows, with stinging memories of not wholly merited disgrace at Chancellorsville, started briskly forward, and a little after one their advance brigade was filing through the town to the music of the fire above. General Reynolds's corps consists of three divisions – Wadsworth's, Major General Abner Doubleday's, and Brigadier General John C. Robinson's. Wadsworth's (composed of Brigadier General Solomon Meredith's and Major General Lysander Cutler's brigades – both mainly Western troops) had the advance, with Cutler on the right and Meredith on the left.[31] Arriving at the Theological Seminary above the town, the near presence of the enemy became manifest, and they placed a battery in position to feel him out and gradually moved forward.

An engagement of more or less magnitude was evidently imminent. General Reynolds rode forward to select a position for a line of battle. Unfortunate – sadly unfortunate again – alike for him with all a gallant soldier's possibilities ahead of him and for the country, that so sorely needed his well-trained services. He fell almost instantly, pierced by a ball from a sharpshooter's rifle, and was borne, dying or dead, to the rear. General Doubleday was next in command.

The enemy was seen ready. There was no time to wait for orders from the new corps commander; instantly, right and left, Cutler and Meredith wheeled into line of battle on the double quick. Well tried troops, those; no fear of *their* flinching; veterans of a score of

[31] Wadsworth led the 1st Division of the First Corps, Brig. Gen. John Cleveland Robinson of New York the 2nd Division, and Maj. Gen. Abner Doubleday, another New Yorker, the 3rd Division. Doubleday commanded the corps after Reynolds's death, while Brig. Gen. Thomas Algeo Rowley of Pennsylvania replaced him at the head of the 3rd Division. Brig. Gen. Lysander Cutler of Massachusetts led the 2nd Brigade of Wadsworth's division, which contained four regiments from New York and one each from Indiana and Pennsylvania.

battles – in the war some of them from the very start; with the first at Philippi, Laurel Hill, Carrick's Ford, Cheat Mountain and all the Western Virginia campaign, trusted of Shields at Winchester, and of Lander at Romney and Bloomery Gap;[32] through the campaign of the Shenandoah Valley, and with the Army of the Potomac in every march to the red slaughter sowing that still had brought no harvest of victory. Meredith's old Iron Brigade was the Nineteenth Indiana, Twenty-fourth Michigan, Sixth and Seventh Wisconsin – veterans all, and well mated with the brave New Yorkers whom Wadsworth also led.

Cutler, having the advance, opened the attack; Meredith was at it a few minutes later. Short, sharp fighting, the enemy handsomely repulsed, three hundred rebel prisoners taken, Brigadier General James J. Archer[33] himself reported at their head – such was the auspicious opening. No wonder the First determined to hold its ground.

Yet they were ill prepared for the contest that was coming. Their guns had sounded the tocsin for the Eleventh, but so they had too for – Ewell, already marching down from York to rejoin Lee. They were fighting two divisions of A. P. Hill's now – numerically stronger than their dwindled three. Their batteries were not up in sufficient numbers; on Meredith's left – a point that especially needed protection, there were none at all. A battery with Buford's cavalry stood near. Wadsworth cut red tape and in an instant ordered it up. The Captain, preferring red tape to red fields, refused to obey. Wadsworth ordered him under arrest, could find no officer for the battery, and finally fought it under a sergeant. Sergeant and captain there should henceforth exchange places.

The enemy repulsed, the First advanced their lines and took the position lately held by the rebels. Very heavy skirmishing, almost developing at times into a general musketry engagement, followed.

[32] Reid alludes to the fact that some of the soldiers in the First Corps had fought in 1862 under Brig. Gen. James Shields (a native of Ireland who settled in Illinois) in the Shenandoah Valley and under Brig. Gen. Frederick West Lander (a native of Massachusetts) in western Virginia.

[33] A Marylander who had practiced law before the war, Brig. Gen. James Jay Archer led a brigade in A. P. Hill's Third Corps. He remained in a Union prison for more than a year after his capture on July 1 and died shortly after his release.

Our men began to discover that they were opposing a larger force. Their own line, long and thin, bent and wavered occasionally, but bore bravely up. To the left, where the fire seemed the hottest, there were no supports at all, and Wadsworth's division, which had been in the longest, was suffering severely.

About one o'clock Major General Howard, riding in advance of his hastening corps, arrived on the field and assumed command. Carl Schurz[34] was thus left in command of the Eleventh while Doubleday remained temporarily Reynolds's successor in the First.

The advance of the Eleventh soon came up and was thrown into position to the right of the First. They had little fighting immediately – but their time was coming. Meantime the First, that had already lost its General commanding and had held its ground against superior numbers, without supports, from ten till nearly two, took fresh courage as another corps came up, and all felt certain of winning the day.

But alas! the old, old game was playing. The enemy was concentrating faster than we. Perhaps no one was to blame for it; no one among the living at least, and the thickly clustering honors that fitly crown the hero's grave bar all criticism and pardon all mistakes, if mistakes they were.

About half-past two that afternoon, standing where we now stand, on Cemetery Hill, one might have seen a long, gray line, creeping down the pike and near the railroad on the northeast side of the town. Little pomp in their march, but much haste; few wagons, but the ammunition trains all up; and the battle flags that float over their brigades are not our flags. It is the road from *York* – these are Stonewall Jackson's men[35] – led now by Stonewall Jackson's most trusted and loved Lieutenant [Ewell]. That gray serpent, bending in and out through the distant hills, decides the day.

They are in manifest communication with Hill's corps, now engaged, fully advised of their early losses, and of the exact situation.

[34] Maj. Gen. Carl Schurz, a native of Prussia and one of the most prominent German-born citizens of the United States, commanded the 3rd Division of the Eleventh Corps before replacing Howard at the head of the corps.

[35] Lt. Gen. Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson, a Virginian, had commanded the Confederate Second Corps until his death on May 10, 1863, in the wake of the battle of Chancellorsville.

They bend up from the York road, debouch in the woods near the crest of the hill, and by three o'clock, with the old yell and the old familiar tactics, their battleline comes charging down.

Small resistance is made on our right. The Eleventh does not flee wildly from its old antagonists, as at their last meeting when Stonewall Jackson scattered them as if they had been pigmies, foolishly venturing into the war of the Titans. It even makes stout resistance for a little while; but the advantage of position, as of numbers, is all with the rebels, and the line is forced to retire. It is done deliberately and without confusion, till they reach the town. Here the evil genius of the Eleventh falls upon it again. To save the troops from the terrible enfilading fire through the streets, the officers wheel them by detachments into cross streets, and attempt to march them thus around one square after another, diagonally, through the town. The Germans are confused by the maneuvre; perhaps the old panic at the battle cry of Jackson's flying corps comes over them; at any rate they break in wild confusion, some pouring through the town [in] a rout, and are with difficulty formed again on the heights to the southward. They lose over one thousand two hundred prisoners in twenty minutes. One of their Generals, Alexander Schimmelfennig, an old officer in the Russian service in the Crimean War, is cut off, but he shrewdly takes to cover, conceals himself somewhere in the town, and finally escapes.[36]

But while our right is thus suddenly wiped out, how fares it with the left – Robinson, and Doubleday, and sturdy Wadsworth, with the Western troops? Sadly enough.

By half-past three, as they counted the time, the whole of A. P. Hill's corps, acting in concert now with Ewell, precipitated itself upon their line. These men are as old and tried soldiers as there are in the war, and they describe the fire that followed as the most terrific they have ever known. In a single brigade, (Cutler's,) in twenty minutes, every staff officer had his horse shot under him, some of them two

[36] Brig. Gen. Alexander Schimmelfennig, like Carl Schurz a native of Prussia, led the 1st Brigade in Schurz's 1st Division of the Eleventh Corps. When Schurz assumed corps command, Schimmelfennig took over the division. Separated from his troops during their retreat into Gettysburg on the afternoon of July 1, Schimmelfennig hid in a small outbuilding (often described as a pigsty) for the remainder of the battle.

and three. In thirty minutes not a horse was left to General or staff, save one, and that one – as if the grim mockery of war there sought to outdo itself – had his tail shot off! General Cutler himself had three horses shot under him.

Few troops could stand it. All of the First corps could not. Presently the thin line of fire began to waver and bend and break under those terrible volleys from the dark woods above. The officers, brave almost always to a fault, sought to keep them in. One – his name deserves to be remembered – Captain Hollon Richardson of the Seventh Wisconsin seized the colors of a retreating Pennsylvania regiment and strove to rally the men around their flag. It was in vain; none but troops that have been tried as by fire can be reformed under such a storm of death; but the captain, left alone and almost in the rebels' hands, held on to the flaunting colors of another regiment, that made him so conspicuous a target, and brought them safely off.[37]

The right of the corps gave way. The fierce surge of Ewell's attack had beaten up to their front, and, added to Hill's heavy fire, forced them slowly back.

Wadsworth still holds on – for a few minutes more his braves protract the carnival of death. Doubleday managed to get three regiments over to their support; Colonel James Biddle's Pennsylvania regiment came in and behaved most gallantly.[38] Colonel Stephenson, who all the day had been serving in the hottest of the fight as aid to Meredith, relieved a wounded colonel, and strove to rally his regiment. Meredith himself, with his Antietam wound hardly yet ceasing to pain him, is struck again, a mere bruise, however – on the head, with a piece of shell. At the same instant his large, heavy horse falls, mortally wounded, bears the General under him to the ground, and beats him there with his head and shoulders in his death convulsions.

[37] In his official report of the battle, Gen. Doubleday mentioned that Richardson "rode up and down the lines, waving a regimental flag and encouraging the men to do their duty."

[38] Reid may have confused James C. Biddle, an officer on Meade's staff, with Col. Chapman Biddle, whose 1st Brigade of Doubleday's division contained one New York and three Pennsylvania regiments.

It is idle fighting Fate. Ewell turned the scale with the old, historic troops; brave men may now well retire before double their number equally brave. When the Eleventh corps fell back, the flank of the First was exposed; when the right of the First fell back, Wadsworth's flank was exposed; already flushed with their victory, rebels were pouring up against front and both flanks of the devoted brigades. They had twice cleared their front of rebel lines; mortal men could now do no more. And so, "slowly and sullenly firing," the last of them came back.

Meantime, the fate of the army had been settled. It was one of those great crises that come rarely more than once in a lifetime. For Major General Howard, brave, one-armed, Christian fighting hero, the crisis had come.

His command – two corps of the Grand Army of the Potomac – were repulsed, and coming back in full retreat, a few sturdy brigades in order, the most in sad confusion. One cavalry charge; twenty minutes' well-directed cannonading, might wipe out nearly a third of the army, and leave Meade powerless for the defence of the North. These corps must be saved, and saved at once.

General Howard met and overmastered the crisis. The Cemetery Hill was instantly selected.[39] The troops were taken to the rear and reformed under cover. Batteries hurried up, and when the rebel pursuit had advanced halfway through the town a thunderbolt leaped out from the whole length of that line of crest and smote them where they stood. The battle was ended, the corps were saved.

The last desperate attack lasted nowhere along the line over forty minutes; with most of it hardly over half so long. One single brigade, that "iron" column that held the left, went in one thousand eight hundred and twenty strong. It came out with seven hundred men. A few were prisoners; a few concealed themselves in houses and escaped – near a thousand of them were killed and wounded. Its fellow brigade went in one thousand five hundred strong; it came

[39] One of the many controversies about the battle of Gettysburg concerns who selected Cemetery Hill as the principal Union defensive position. For a discussion of this question, see A. Wilson Greene, "From Chancellorsville to Cemetery Hill: O. O. Howard and Eleventh Corps Leadership," in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *The First Day at Gettysburg: Essays on Confederate and Union Leadership* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1992), pp. 69–71.

Figure 8 Fighting on Seminary Ridge, July 1, 1863, with Cupola of Lutheran Seminary Building in the Background

out with forty-nine officers and five hundred and forty-nine men killed and wounded, and six officers and five hundred and eighty-four men missing and their fate unknown. Who shall say that they did not go down into the very Valley of the Shadow of Death on that terrible afternoon?

Thursday's Doubtful Issue – Friday's Victory

Field of Battle near Gettysburg, Pa.,
July 4

Two more days of such fighting as no Northern State ever witnessed before, and victory at last! Victory for a fated army, and salvation for the imperilled country!

It were folly for one unaided man, leaving the ground within a few hours after the battle has died fitfully out, to undertake a minute detail of the operations on all parts of the field. I dare only attempt the merest outline of its leading features – then off for Cincinnati by the speediest routes.

I have been unable even to learn all I sought concerning the part some of our own Ohio regiments bore – of individual brigades and regiments and batteries I can in the main say nothing. But what one man, not entirely unfamiliar with such scenes before, *could* see, passing over the ground before, during, and after the fight, I saw; for the rest I must trust to such credible statements by the actors as I have been able to collect.

The Battle-Field

Whoever would carry in his mind a simple map of our positions in the great battles of Thursday and Friday, the second and third, at Gettysburg, has but to conceive a broad capital A, bisected by another line drawn down from the top and equi-distant from each side. These three straight lines meeting at the top of the letter are the three roads along which our army advanced, and between and on which lay the battlefield. The junction of the lines is Gettysburg. The middle line, running nearly north and south, is the road to

Taneytown. The right-hand line, running southeast, is the Baltimore pike. That on the left is the Emmitsburg road.[40]

Almost at the junction of the lines, and resting on the left-hand side of the Baltimore pike, is the key to the whole position – Cemetery Hill. This constitutes our extreme front, lies just south of Gettysburg, overlooks and completely commands the town; the entire valley to right and left, the whole space over which the rebels advanced to attack our centre, and a portion of the woods from which the rebel lines on their centre debouched.

Standing on this hill and facing north (toward the town) you have, just across the Baltimore pike, another hill, almost as high, and crowned like the Cemetery with batteries that rake the centre front.[41] Farther to the right and rear, the country is broken into a series of short, billowy ridges, every summit of which affords a location for a battery. Through these passes the little valley of Rock Creek, crossing the Baltimore turnpike a couple of miles or so from town, and thus affording a good covered way for a rebel movement to attempt (by passing down the valley from the woods beyond this range of hills) to pierce our right wing, and penetrate to the rear of our centre.

On the left the hills are lower, afford fewer eligible positions for batteries, and are commanded by the heights on the rebel side.

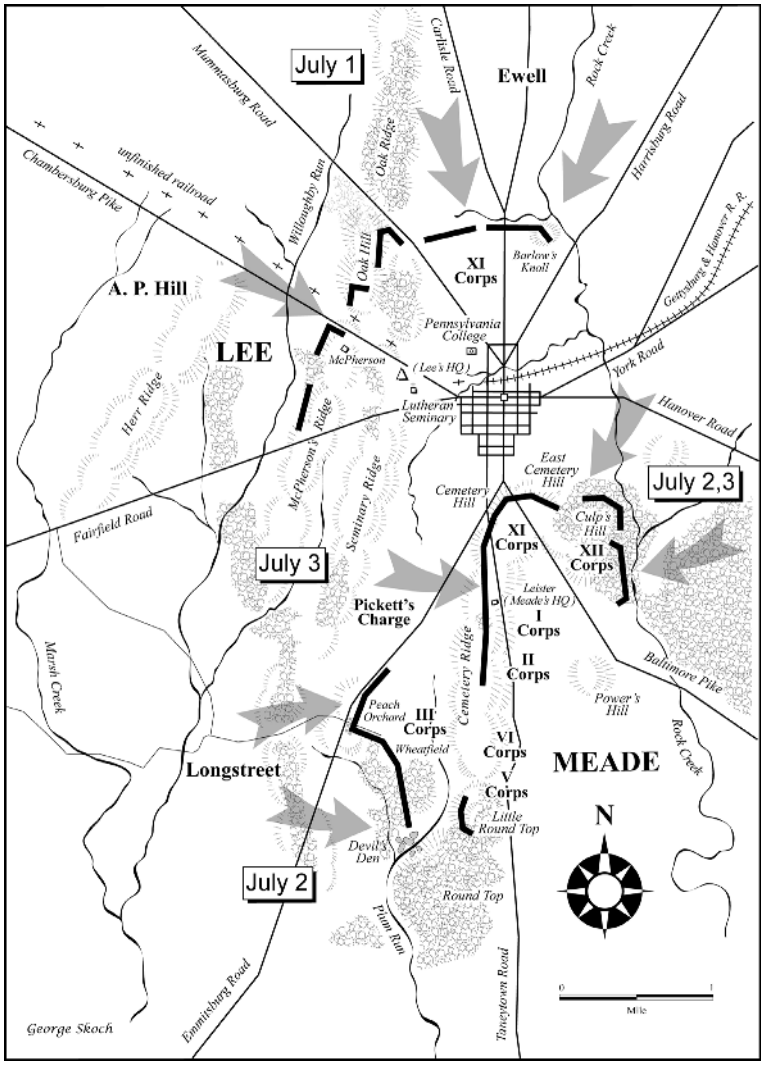
The space between these lines is rolling, and in parts quite hilly; partially under cultivation, the rest lightly timbered; passable nearly everywhere for infantry and cavalry, in most parts for artillery also.

Our Line of Battle

The reader can now in an instant trace for himself our line of battle on the bisected A. Near the apex, the Cemetery, of course; batteries around the crest; infantry in line of battle down the declivity, in the orchard, and sweeping over the Taneytown road and up to that to

[40] Although Reid uses the image of a "broad capital A" to characterize the Union line, most writers describe it as approximating a great fish-hook – with the point of the hook at Culp's Hill, the curve at East Cemetery Hill and Cemetery Hill, and the shank running south along Cemetery Ridge to Little Round Top and Round Top.

[41] The high ground just across the Baltimore Pike from Cemetery Hill is East Cemetery Hill.



Map 3 Battlefield at Gettysburg

Figure 9 Union Batteries on Cemetery Hill, Culp's Hill to the Left

Emmitsburg. Then along the stone fence which skirts the hither side of the Emmitsburg road for say half a mile. Then, bending in from the road a little, leaving its possession to our skirmishers alone, and so passing back for a mile and a half farther, in a line growing more and more distant from the Emmitsburg road, and nearer that to Taneytown. These are the lines of centre and left. Beginning at the Cemetery again, our right stretches *across* the Baltimore pike and along the range of hills already described, in a direction that grows nearly parallel with the pike, (at a distance from it of a quarter to half a mile,) and down it a couple of miles. Measuring all its sinuosities, the line must be about five miles long.

The Rebel Lines and Order of Battle

All the country fronting this remarkable horseshoe line is virtually in the hands of the rebels. It will be seen that their lines must be longer than ours, and that in moving from one point to another of the field they are compelled to make long detours, while our troops can be thrown from left to right, or from either to centre, with the utmost ease and by the shortest routes.

Take the crescent of the new moon, elongate the horns a little, turn the hollow side toward our positions, and you have the general direction the rebels were compelled to give their line of battle. As was seen in Wednesday's fight, Jackson's old corps under Ewell formed their left – opposite our right; while A. P. Hill held their centre, and Longstreet, who arrived early Thursday morning, their right.

Our Order of Battle

On our front the line of battle was arranged by General Meade, at an early hour on Thursday morning, as follows: On the centre, holding Cemetery Hill and the declivity in its front, Major General Howard with his Eleventh corps. Across the pike on the adjacent hill to the right, what was left of the First corps. Next to it, and stretching to our extreme right, Major General Henry W. Slocum with his Twelfth corps. Beginning again at the Cemetery Hill, and going toward the left, we have first, next to Howard, the Second

corps, Major General Hancock; next to it, the Third, Major General Daniel E. Sickles; and partly to the rear of the Third, and subsequently brought up on the extreme left, the Fifth corps, Major General George Sykes. The Sixth corps, Major General John Sedgwick, was kept near the Taneytown pike in the rear, and constituted the only reserve of the army.

Corps and Division Commanders

General readers are scarcely likely to be interested in minute details of the organization of the army, but perhaps it will be convenient to have a roster by corps and divisions, at least.[42]

First Corps – Major General John F. Reynolds

After General Reynolds's death, General John Newton was assigned by General Meade to the command of this corps.

First Division ..... Brigadier General James S. Wadsworth.
Second Division ..... Major General Abner Doubleday.
Third Division ..... Brigadier General John C. Robinson.

Second Corps – Major General Winfield S. Hancock

First Division ..... Brigadier General John C. Caldwell.
Second Division ..... Brigadier General John Gibbon.
Third Division ..... Brigadier General Alexander Hays.

[42] Reid's list of corps and division commanders contains a number of errors. Doubleday first took over the First Corps after Reynolds's death; Meade later replaced Doubleday with Maj. Gen. John Newton (Doubleday remained embittered for the rest of his life about Meade's action). As note 31 indicates, Robinson commanded the 2nd and Doubleday the 3rd Division in the First Corps. In the Third Corps of Maj. Gen. Daniel Edgar Sickles, Maj. Gen. David Bell Birney led the 1st Division until called upon to replace the wounded Sickles on July 2; Brig. Gen. John Henry Hobart Ward then assumed command of the 1st Division. Brig. Gen. Romeyn Beck Ayres led the 2nd Division of Sykes's Fifth Corps. The Twelfth Corps contained just two divisions: Brig. Gen. Alpheus Starkey Williams led the 1st and Brig. Gen. John White Geary the 2nd.

Third Corps – Major General Daniel E. Sickles

First Division …… Brigadier General John H. H. Ward.
Second Division … Brigadier General Andrew A. Humphreys.

Fifth Corps, (lately Meade's,) Major General George Sykes

First Division …… Brigadier General James Barnes.
Second Division …… General Sykes.

Eleventh Corps – Major General Oliver O. Howard

First Division …… Major General Carl Schurz.
Second Division … Brigadier General Adolph von Steinwehr.
Third Division …… Brigadier General Francis C. Barlow.

Twelfth Corps – Major General Henry W. Slocum

First Division ……. Brigadier General John W. Geary.
Second Division …… Brigadier General George S. Greene.
Third Division …. Brigadier General Alpheus S. Williams.

Of John Sedgwick's splendid Sixth corps, which only became engaged as reserves, were brought in on Friday, I cannot give the division commanders now, (there have been such changes since Fredericksburg,) with any assurance of accuracy.[43]

Our Concentration at Gettysburg

Our troops were not concentrated so early as those of the rebels, and but for their caution in so long feeling about our lines before

[43] Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick of Connecticut commanded the Sixth Corps, in which Brig. Gen. Horatio Gouverneur Wright led the 1st Division, Brig. Gen. Albion Parris Howe the 2nd Division, and Maj. Gen. John Newton the 3rd Division. Brig. Gen. Frank Wheaton replaced Newton when Meade appointed Newton to command the First Corps.

making an attack, we might have suffered in consequence. Sedgwick's corps did not all get up till nearly dark Thursday evening, having been sent away beyond Westminster with a view to the intended movement on York. The Twelfth corps had arrived about sunset, Wednesday evening, a couple of hours or more after our repulse beyond Gettysburg; the Second and Third during that night, and the Fifth about ten Thursday morning. For Thursday's fight the Fifth constituted the only reserve.

Thursday till Four O'clock

All Thursday forenoon there was lively firing between our skirmishers and those of the enemy, but nothing betokening a general engagement. Standing on Cemetery Hill, which, but for its exposed position, constituted the best point of observation on the field, I could see the long line of our skirmishers stretching around centre and left, well advanced, lying flat on the ground in the meadows or cornfields and firing at will as they lay. The little streak of curling smoke that rose from their guns faded away in a thin vapor that marked the course of the lines down the left. With a glass the rebel line could be even more distinctly seen, every man of them with his blanket strapped over his shoulder – no foolish "stripping for the fight" with these trained soldiers. Occasionally the gray-coated fellows rose from cover, and with a yell rushed on our men, firing as they came. Once or twice in the half-hour that I watched them, they did this with such impetuosity as to force our skirmishers back, and call out a shell or two from our nearest batteries – probably the very object their officers had in view.

Toward noon I rode over to general headquarters, which had been established in a little, square, one-story, whitewashed frame house,[44] to the left and rear of the cemetery, and just under the low hill where our left joined the centre. No part of the line was visible from the spot, and it had been chosen, I suppose, because while within a three minutes' gallop of the Cemetery, or the hither portion of the left, it seemed comparatively protected by its situation. The choice was a bad one. Next to the Cemetery, it proved the hottest point on the field.

[44] The Leister farmhouse on the eastern slope of Cemetery Ridge.

General Meade had finished his arrangement of the lines. Reports of the skirmishing were coming in; the facts developed by certain reconnaissances were being presented; the trim, well tailored person of Major General Alfred Pleasonton[45] was constantly passing in and out; the cavalry seemed to be in incessant demand. General Williams and Major Simon F. Barstow, the Adjutant Generals, were hard at work sending out the orders; aids and orderlies were galloping off and back; General G. K. Warren, Acting Chief of Staff, was with the General Commanding, poring over the maps of the field which the engineers had just finished; most of the staff were stretched beneath an apple tree, resting while they could.[46]

It seemed that a heavy pressure had been brought to bear for an attack on the enemy by the heads of columns in divisions, pouring the whole army on the enemy's centre, and smashing through it after the old Napoleonic plan; but Meade steadily resisted. The enemy was to fight him where he stood, was to come under the range of this long chain of batteries on the crests. Wisely decided, as the event proved.

The afternoon passed on in calm and cloudless splendor. From headquarters I rode down the left, then back to Slocum's headquarters on a high hill,[47] half or three quarters of a mile south from the Cemetery, on the Baltimore pike. Everywhere quiet, the men stretched lazily on the ground in line of battle, horses attached to the caissons, batteries unlimbered and gunners resting on their guns.

The thunderbolts were shut up, like Aeolus's winds;[48] it seemed as if the sun might set in peace over all this mighty enginery of destruction held in calm, magnificent reserve.

[45] Maj. Gen. Alfred Pleasonton, born in Washington, D.C., commanded the Cavalry Corps in the Army of the Potomac. His extensive postwar writings about Gettysburg and other aspects of the war are highly unreliable.

[46] An admiring fellow staff officer remarked that Maj. Simon Forrester Barstow discharged his duties "with the offhand way of an old workman." On June 28, 1863, Maj. Gen. Gouverneur Kemble Warren of New York, the chief engineer in the army, had turned down Meade's invitation to become chief of staff. Reid erred in calling him the acting chief of staff; Maj. Gen. Daniel Butterfield, also a native of New York, had been Hooker's chief of staff and retained his position under Meade.

[47] Slocum's headquarters was on Power's Hill.

[48] In Greek mythology, Aeolus was the god of the winds.

Figure 10 Meade's Headquarters at the Leister House, Taneytown Road to the Right

The Rebel Attack on the Left

But unseen hands were letting loose the elements. General Meade had not failed to see the comparatively exposed position of our left; and between three and four the order was sent out for the extreme left – then formed by Sickles's (Third) corps – to advance. If the enemy was preparing to attack us there, our advance would soon unmask his movements.[49]

It did. The corps moved out, spiritedly, of course – when even in disastrous days did it go otherwise to battle? – and by four o'clock had found the rebel advance.[50] Longstreet was bringing up his whole corps – nearly a third of the rebel army – to precipitate upon our extreme left. The fight at once opened with artillery first, presently with crashing roars of musketry, too. Rebel batteries were already in position, and some of them enfiladed Sickles's line. Our own were hastily set to work, and the most dangerous of the rebel guns were partially silenced. Then came a rebel charge with the wild yell and rush; it is met by a storm of grape and canister from our guns depressed to rake them in easy range. The line is shattered and sent whirling back on the instant. Long columns almost immediately afterward begin to debouch from the woods to the rear of the rebel batteries – another and a grander charge is preparing. General Warren who, as Chief of Staff, is overlooking the fight for the Commanding General, sends back for more troops. Alas! Sedgwick's corps is not yet available. We have only the Fifth for the reserves. Howard and Hancock are already at work on the centre and left centre. But Hancock advances, and the fire grows intenser still along the whole line of the left.

[49] On July 2, Sickles decided to advance without Meade's approval, an action that triggered a longstanding controversy. Sickles would argue that his movement saved the Army of the Potomac; others insisted that it nearly cost the North a victory. For two opposing views, see Richard A. Sauers, *A Caspian Sea of Ink: The Meade–Sickles Controversy* (Baltimore: Butternut and Blue, 1989), and William Glenn Robertson, "The Peach Orchard Revisited: Daniel E. Sickles and the Third Corps on July 2, 1863," in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *The Second Day at Gettysburg: Essays on Confederate and Union Leadership* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1993).

[50] The next several paragraphs describe action at the Peach Orchard salient, in the Wheatfield, and at Devil's Den and Little Round Top.

Meantime, Cemetery Hill is raked at once from front and left, and the shells from rebel batteries on the left carry over even into the positions held by our right. The battle rages on but one side, but death moves visibly over the whole field from line to line and front to rear. Trains are hurried away on the Baltimore pike; the unemployed *debris* of the army takes alarm, a panic in the rear seems impending. Guards thrown hastily across the roads to send the runaways back, do something to repress it.

The rebel lines we have seen debouching behind their batteries on Sickles's front slowly advance. The fight grows desperate, aid after aid is sent for reinforcements; our front wavers, the line of flame and smoke sways to and fro, but slowly settles backward. Sickles is being – not driven – but pushed back. At last the reserve comes in; the advance of the brigades of the Fifth wind down among the rocks and enter the smoke, the line braces up, advances, halts soon, but comes no more back. The left is not overpowered yet. We had had two hours of exceedingly severe artillery and musketry fighting. The enemy still holds a little of the ground we had, but the chances seem almost even.

One Phase – A Type of Many

I cannot trace the movements further in detail; let me give one phase of the fight, fit type of many more. Some Massachusetts batteries – Captain John Bigelow's, Captain Charles A. Phillips's, two or three more under Captain Freeman McGilvery of Maine[51] – were planted on the extreme left, advanced now well down to the Emmitsburg road, with infantry in their front – the first division, I think, of Sickles's corps. A little after five a fierce rebel charge drove back the infantry and menaced the batteries. Orders are sent to Bigelow on the extreme left, to hold his position at every hazard short of sheer annihilation, till a couple more batteries can be brought to his support. Reserving his fire a little, then with depressed guns opening with double charges of grape and canister, he smites and shatters,

[51] Capt. John Bigelow's 9th Battery of Massachusetts Light Artillery and Capt. Charles A. Phillips's 5th Battery (E) of Massachusetts Artillery were part of Lt. Col. Freeman McGilvery's 1st Volunteer Brigade of Artillery. These cannon supported Sickles's infantry near the Peach Orchard.

but cannot break the advancing line.[52] His grape and canister are exhausted, and still, closing grandly up over their slain, on they come. He falls back on spherical case, and pours this in at the shortest range. On, still onward comes the artillery-defying line, and still he holds his position. They are within six paces of the guns – he fires again. Once more, and he blows devoted soldiers from his very muzzles. And still mindful of that solemn order, he holds his place. They spring upon his carriages and shoot down his horses! And then, his Yankee artillerists still about him, he seizes the guns by hand, and from the very front of that line drags two of them off. The caissons are further back – five out of the six are saved.

That single company, in that half-hour's fight, lost thirty-three of its men, including every sergeant it had. The Captain himself was wounded. Yet it was the first time it was ever under fire! I give it simply as a type. *So* they fought along that fiery line!

The rebels now poured on Phillips's battery, and it, too, was forced to drag off the pieces by hand when the horses were shot down. From a new position it opened again; and at last the two reinforcing batteries came up on the gallop. An enfilading fire swept the rebel line; Sickles's gallant infantry charged, the rebel line swept back on a refluent tide – we regained the lost ground, and every gun just lost in this splendid fight.

Once more I repeat, this is but a type.

Reinforcements Called in from the Right

Slocum, too, came into the fight. The reserves were all used up; the right seemed safe. It was believed from the terrific attack that the

[52] Here and below, Reid mentions different types of artillery ammunition. Grape shot was a round made up of 9 to 21 large balls attached to a core of wood or metal; a round of canister consisted of a tin cylinder filled with 27 to 48 cast iron shot. Especially deadly at a range of 300 to 600 yards, both types of rounds when fired broke apart into a pattern similar to that of a shotgun. Spherical case (or Shrapnel) was a hollow cast-iron container filled with lead musket balls and designed to explode above ground, sending missiles down into the target. With an effective range of 500 to 1,500 yards, spherical case probably would have been fired before grape or canister. Gun carriages, made of wood and iron, supported the tube or barrel of a cannon; caissons were two-wheeled, horse-drawn vehicles that carried artillery ammunition.

whole rebel army, Ewell's corps included, was massed on our centre and left; and so a single brigade was left to hold the rifle-pits constructed through the day along the whole line of the Twelfth on the right; and the rest of the corps came across the little neck of land to strengthen our weakening line. Needful, perhaps, but perilous in the extreme.[53]

The Close

At six the cannonade grew fiercer than ever, and the storm of death swept over the field from then till darkness ended the conflict. In the main our strengthened columns held the line. At points they were forced back a little; a few prisoners were lost. On the whole the rebels were unsuccessful, but we had not quite held our own.

Some caissons had been blown up on either side; a barn on the Emmitsburg road was fired by the rebel shells, and its light gave their sharpshooters a little longer time at that point to work. Both sides lay on their arms exhausted, but insatiate, to wait for the dawning.

Results and Doubtful Issue

The Third and Second corps were badly shattered. The Eleventh had not been quite so much engaged – its artillery had kept the rebels at a greater distance – but it had behaved well. Sickles was wounded – a leg shot off; General Samuel K. Zook was killed; our own old townsman Colonel Edward E. Cross was killed; the farm houses and barns for miles were filled with the wounded. The rebels

[53] Slocum dispatched Williams's division and two brigades of Geary's division to assist hard-pressed Union defenders in the area of the Wheatfield; only the brigade of Brig. Gen. George Sears Greene, a 62-year-old Rhode Islander who was among the oldest field commanders in Federal service, remained on Culp's Hill to resist the assaults of Ewell's corps during the evening of July 2.

had left us William Barksdale, dying; what other losses they had met we could only conjecture from the piles of dead the last rays of the sun had shown along their front.[54]

And so, with doubtful prospects, darkness came like a wall between us, and compelled nature's truce.

From the right there came sudden, sharp volleys of cheers; Ewell had *not* gone; a hasty rush had carried some of Slocum's rifle-pits, protected only by the long drawn out line of a single brigade. It was a gloomy close. That was our strongest point, where Jackson's men had gained their fortified foothold.[55]

Now, indeed, if ever, may the nation well wrestle with God in prayer. We have fought but three hours and a half; have lost on both flanks; have called every reserve we had on the field into action, and with daybreak must hold these shattered columns to the work again. Well may the land take up the refrain of George Henry Boker's touching hymn for the Philadelphia Fourth.

"Help us, Lord, our only trust!
We are helpless, we are dust!
All our homes are red with blood;
Long our grief we have withstood;
Every lintel, each door post,
Drips, at tidings from the host,
With the blood of some one lost.
Help us, Lord, our only trust!
We are helpless, we are dust!"

[54] Brig. Gen. Samuel Kosciuszko Zook, a Pennsylvanian, fell leading his 3rd Brigade of Caldwell's division of the Second Corps in fighting at the Wheatfield; Col. Edward E. Cross, a native of New Hampshire whose colorful prewar career included duels fought in Arizona and Mexico, commanded the 1st Brigade in Caldwell's division and also received his mortal wound in the Wheatfield. On the Confederate side, Brig. Gen. William Barksdale, a native of Tennessee long associated with Mississippi and a brigade commander in Longstreet's First Corps, was mortally wounded in the vicinity of the Trostle farm.

[55] Reid must have considered Culp's Hill, held by Greene's brigade of Slocum's corps, as the strongest Union point because its elevation exceeded that of Cemetery Hill. He referred to Ewell's soldiers as Stonewall Jackson's men because the Confederate Second Corps originally had been Jackson's.

The Opening – Friday Morning

I must be pardoned some egotism in what remains. It is easiest to narrate what one has seen, and undue prominence may thus come to be given to certain points, for time and space press me more and more.

At day break crashing volleys woke the few sleepers there were. A fusilade ran along the line – each had felt the other, then came cautious skirmishing again.

But on the right there was no cessation. Ewell's men were in possession of part of our riflepits, and sought to gain the remainder; Slocum must defend the one part and regain the other at every hazard. They were fighting Stonewall Jackson's men – it might well be desperate work.

I had gone down the Baltimore pike at night to find a resting-place – coming up between four and five, I heard clearly on the right the old charging cheer. Once, twice, three times I counted it, as my horse pushed his way for less than a mile through the curious or coward throng that ebbed and flowed along the pike. Each time a charge was made, each time the musketry fire leaped out from our line more terrific than before, and still the ground was held. To the left and centre, firing gradually ceased. All interest was concentrated on this fierce contest on the right; the rest of the line on either side was bracing itself for still more desperate work.

From four to five there was heavy cannonading also, from our batteries nearest the contested points, but the artillery fire diminished and presently ceased. The rebels made no reply; we were firing at random, and it was a useless waste of ammunition. A cloud of smoke curled up from the dark woods on the right; the musketry crash continued with unparalleled tenacity and vehemence, wounded men came back over the fields, a few stragglers were hurried out to the front, ammunition was kept conveniently near the line.

In the fields to the left of the Baltimore pike stood the reserve artillery, with horses harnessed to the pieces and ready to move on the instant. Cavalry, too, was drawn up in detachments here and there. Moved over already within supporting distance of Slocum's line stood a part of Sedgwick's corps, (the reserve of today,) ready

for the emergency that seemed likely soon to demand it. Occasional bullets from the rebel front spattered against the trees and fences. Now and then a Minie went over with its buzzing hiss, but the pike was too nearly out of range to be cleared of the watching throng.

General Sickles

Through this throng with slow tread there came a file of soldiers, armed, but marching to the rear. It was a guard of honor for one who well deserved it. On a stretcher, borne by a couple of stout privates, lay General Sickles – but yesterday leading his corps with all the enthusiasm and dash for which he has been distinguished – today with his right leg amputated, and lying there, grim and stoical, with his cap pulled over his eyes, his hands calmly folded across his breast, and *a cigar in his mouth!* For a man who had just lost a leg, and whose life was yet in imminent jeopardy, it was cool indeed. He was being taken to the nearest railroad line, to be carried to some city where he could get most careful attendance; and the guard that accompanied him showed that already there was some apprehension for the rear.

There was reason for it. Less than an hour later orders were issued from Pleasonton's headquarters, a mile or so further back on the Baltimore pike, for Colonel J. Irvin Gregg[56] to take his cavalry force and guard against a dash down the valley of Rock Creek into the rear and centre. The rebels met the preparation and drew back to try it soon again further out the line.

The Battle on the Right[57]

I rode up the high hill where General Slocum's headquarters were established; but though it afforded an excellent view of most of our

[56] Col. John Irvin Gregg led the 3rd Brigade of Brig. Gen. David McMurtrie Gregg's 2nd Division of the Union Cavalry Corps. Both Pennsylvanians, the Greggs also were distantly related.

[57] Reid terms the climax of the struggle for Culp's Hill on the morning of July 3 "The Battle on the Right."

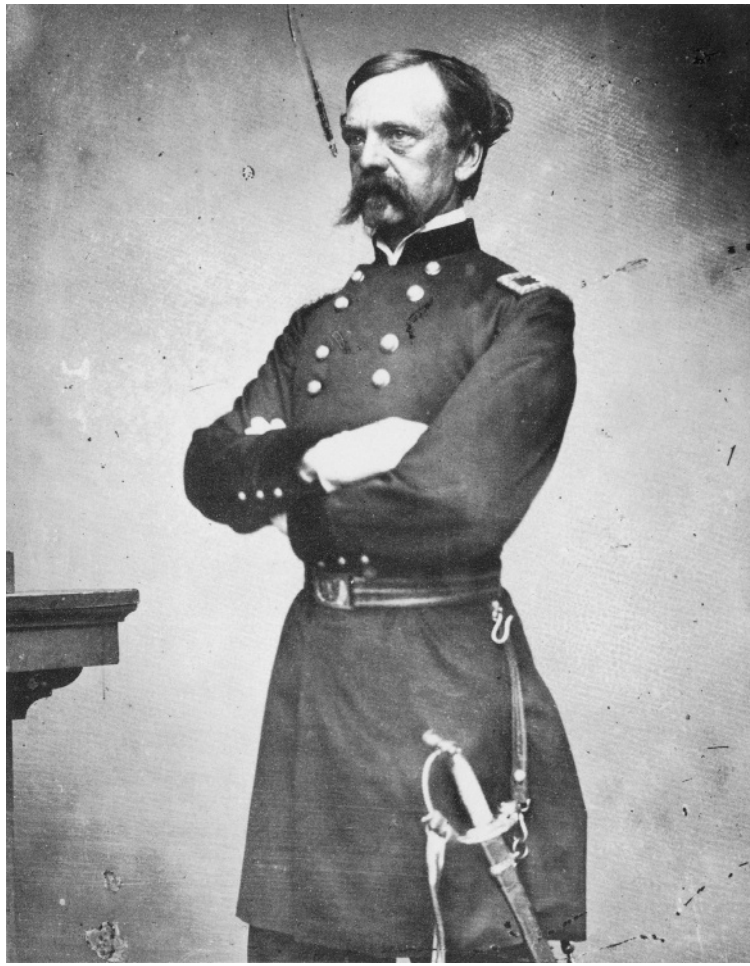


Figure 11 Maj. Gen. Daniel Edgar Sickles, Commander of the Third Union Corps

positions, the fight going on was concealed by a mask of woods on the distant hills. The Rodman guns[58] on the hill were all manned, and the gunners were eager to try their range, but it still seemed useless. Firing in the woods, they were as likely to hit friend as foe. Signal officers here were in communication with general headquarters, with Howard on Cemetery Hill, Hancock next [to] him on the right, and one or two of the headquarters on the left. There was no fear of lack of certain communication between the different portions of the field, let the fortunes of the day go what way they would.

As I rode down the slope and up through the wheat fields to Cemetery Hill, the batteries began to open again on points along our outer line. They were evidently playing on what had been Slocum's line of yesterday. The rebels, then, were there still, in our rifle pits. Presently the battery on Slocum's hill gained the long-sought permission, and opened, too, aiming apparently in the same direction. Other batteries along the inner line, just to the left of the Baltimore pike, followed the signal, and as one after another opened up, till every little crest between Slocum's headquarters and Cemetery Hill began belching its thunder, I had to change my course through the wheat fields to avoid our own shells.

Still no artillery response from the rebels. Could they be short of ammunition? Could they have failed to bring up all their guns? Were they, perhaps, massing artillery elsewhere, and only keeping up this furious crash of musketry on the right as a blind?

By eight o'clock I had reached Cemetery Hill. Yesterday's conflict was more plainly inscribed on the tombstones than the virtues of the buried dead they commemorated. Shells had ploughed up lately sodded graves; round shot had shattered marble columns; dead horses lay about among the monuments, and the gore of dead men soaked the soil and moistened the roots of flowers on the old graves.

This morning it was comparatively quiet again. Sharpshooters from the houses in the town were picking off officers who exposed themselves along the crest. They knew that we did not want to shell the place, and presumed upon the forbearance of our artillery. The

[58] Rodman 3-inch rifles were cast-iron cannon with a maximum range of approximately 2,800 yards.

annoyance had at last become too serious, and one of our guns had been directed to dislodge a nest of the most audacious and the surest aimed by battering down the house from which they were firing. It was the only house in Gettysburg we harmed throughout the battles.

To the front skirmishers were still at work, but in a desultory way. All eyes were turned to the right; where now that our artillery had taken its share in the contest, its intensity seemed but redoubled by Ewell's men. Distinctly, even amid all this roar, there came up the sound of another of those ominous cheers; and the hurricane of crashing sound that followed seemed tearing the forest trees and solid hillside asunder. It was another rebel charge. Standing by the gatekeeper's lodge, with a glass I could distinctly see our shattered line swinging irregularly and convulsively back from those death-bearing woods. The rebel yells redoubled, but so did our artillery fire, now that the gunners saw exactly where to throw. The retreat lasted for but a moment, the line straightened, rallied, plunged into the woods again.

A Tried General

All this while – the fire gradually getting a little hotter on the hill, and an occasional shell from the rebel guns, now beginning to open, coming over – General Howard was calmly reclining against a hillock by a grave stone, with his staff about him. One or two he kept constantly watching the right, and occasionally sweeping the whole rebel line with their glasses; the rest were around him, ready for instant service. I have seen many men in action, but never so imperturbably cool as this General of the Eleventh corps. I watched him closely as a Minie whizzed overhead. *I* dodged, of course; I never expect to get over that habit; but I am confident he did not move a muscle by the fraction of a hair's breadth.

Progress on the Right

About a quarter after nine the conflict in the woods to the right seemed to be culminating. Clouds of smoke obscured the view, but beyond that smoke we knew that our noble line – the Twelfth and a part of the First with some reserves were now engaged – was

Figure 12 Maj. Gen. Oliver Otis Howard, Commander of the Eleventh Union Corps

holding its ground; the direction of the sound even seemed to indicate that it was gaining, but of course that was a very uncertain test. "Ride over to General Meade," said Howard to one of his aids, "and tell him the fighting on the right seems more terrific than ever and appears swinging somewhat toward the centre, but that we know little or nothing of how the battle goes, and ask him if he has any orders." In a few minutes the aid galloped back. "The troops are to stand to arms, sir, and watch the front."

Meantime there was a little diversion away down toward the extreme right. A brigade had been thrown east of Rock Creek to watch the possible attempt at repeating the effort to get down the valley into our rear. Finding a good opportunity, it began to pour in its volleys upon Ewell's flank. The audacity of a single brigade attempting such a thing was beyond rebel suspicion; they naturally thought a heavy force was turning their flank, and were less inclined to push on Slocum's sorely pressed men in front.

Nothing seemed to come of Howard's "watching the front"; the fire of skirmishers revived occasionally and then died away again; and finally, about a quarter before ten, I started over to general headquarters. In descending the Cemetery Hill and crossing the intervening fields, I noticed that some bullets were beginning to come over from our left, but supposed them of course to be merely stray shots from the rebel skirmishers.

The Commander-in-Chief at Headquarters

Headquarters presented a busy scene. Meade was receiving reports in the little house, coming occasionally to the door to address a hasty inquiry to some one in the group of staff officers under the tree. Quick and nervous in his movements, but calm, and as it seemed to me, lit up with the glow of the occasion, he looked more the General, less the student. Polished, fashionable looking Pleasonton, riding whip resting in the leg of one of his jackboots, and neatly fitting kids drawn over his hands, occasionally put in some earnest remark. Warren, calm, absorbed, earnest as ever, was constantly in consultation with the Commander.

In all matters of detail, Williams or Major Barstow was referred to as to an encyclopedia. Orderlies and aids were momentarily

dashing up with reports and off with orders; the signal officers were bringing in the reports telegraphed by the signal flags from the different crests that overlooked the fight. The rest of the staff stood ready for any duty, and outside the little garden fence a great group of horses stood hitched.

Headquarters Under Fire

Wilkeson, my original companion from Baltimore, was up at last and very sad. His son, a gallant young lieutenant of regular artillery, had had his leg shot off in Wednesday's disastrous fight, and whether living now or dead he could not tell; he was a prisoner (or a corpse) in Gettysburg.[59]

We walked around to the east of the little house and lay down on the grass. Others were there; there was much comparison of views, talk of probabilities, gossip of the arrival of militia from Harrisburg. The fight still raged furiously on the right. Headquarters were under a slight fire. The balls from the left seemed to increase a little in number; a few came over from the front; we saw no damage that any of them did.

Close by our heads went one, evidently from some kind of small arm that had an unfamiliar sound. "That," said Wilkeson, aesthetic always or nothing, "that is a muffled howl; that's the exact phrase to describe it." We discussed the question.

Wh-r-sh-shh! A sudden exclamation and start all around the group. "Jove!" exclaims one, impulsively; "those fellows on the left have the range of headquarters exactly." It was a round shot that had passed not two feet from the door and buried itself in the road three or four yards in front of us. In an instant there was another and another. General Meade came to the door, told the staff that they manifestly had our range, and that they had best go up the slope fifteen or twenty yards to the stable. As they started, a couple of shells came, then more from a different direction, and a sharp fusillade broke out just behind us on the left. Two rebel batteries

[59] Lt. Bayard Wilkeson, commanding Battery G, Fourth U.S. Artillery in Howard's Eleventh Corps, was mortally wounded almost immediately after entering the battle north of Gettysburg on July 1.

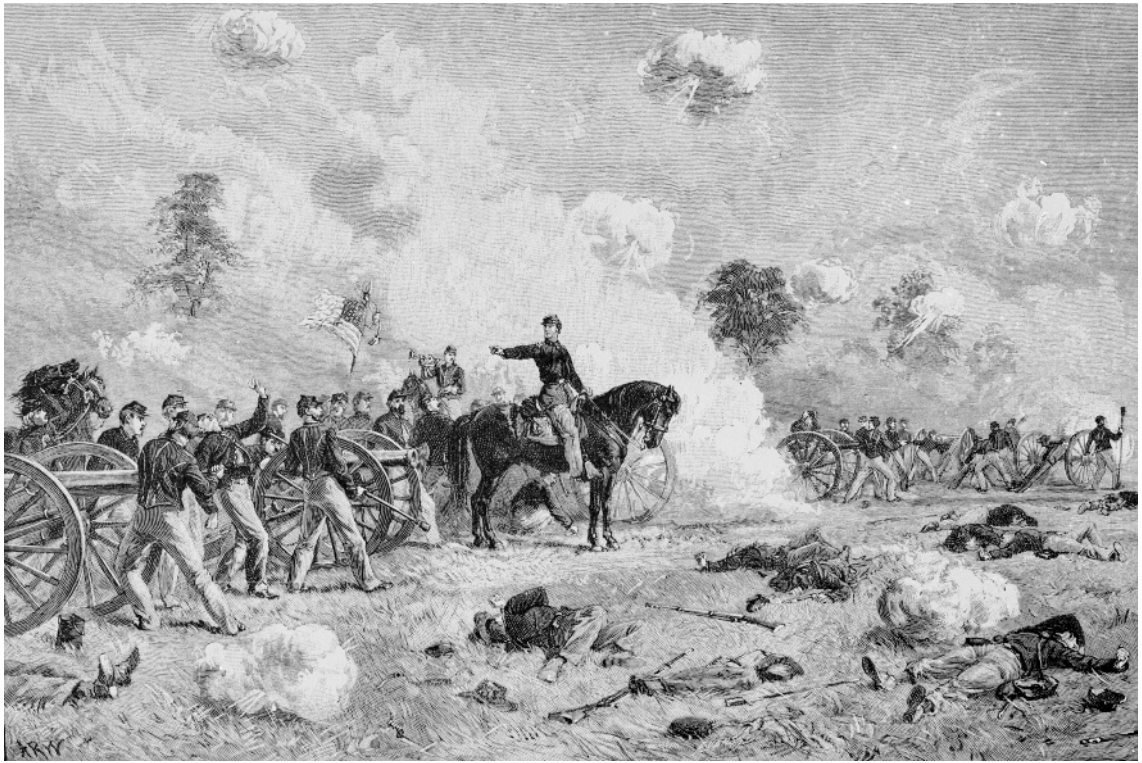


Figure 13 Lt. Bayard Wilkeson and His Artillery Battery in Action on Barlow's Knoll North of Gettysburg on July 1, 1863

clearly had our range, and the fight seemed opening up on the field of last night's bitterest contest.

A few minutes before, I had been talking of going down to look at Barksdale's corpse – there was other work to do than looking at dead men now. Leaving the late headquarters to the shells, I galloped out the Taneytown road along the left. For three quarters of a mile the fire was bursting out.[60]

The air was alive with all mysterious sounds, and death in every one of them. There were "muffled howls" that seemed in rage because their missile missed you, the angry buzz of the familiar Minie, the *spit* of the common musket ball, hisses, and the great whirring rushes of shells. And then there came others that made the air instinct with warning, or quickened it with vivid alarm; long wails that fatefully bemoaned the death they wrought; fluttering screams that filled the whole space with their horror, and encompassed one about as a garment; cries that ran the diapason of terror and despair.

Rise and Ebb of the Tide of Battle

It had been a sudden concentration of terrific artillery fire on our left, with a view to silence our batteries and sweep resistance from the slopes before they charged. But they did not find us unprepared. The tornado of death that swept over the fields levelled much before it, but not all. After an hour or two it was found that the obstinate defenders still clung to their positions; and the rebels saw they must reserve their energies for the more determined and persistent effort the afternoon was to bring. On it, as on the last toss of the dice, they had staked their all. In an hour or two the left was silent again; on the centre there was but the accustomed straggling shots.[61]

[60] The artillery fire Reid describes here was that of Confederate batteries directed against Cemetery Ridge preparatory to Pickett's and Pettigrew's assault on the afternoon of July 3. It compelled Meade, his staff, and orderlies to abandon the Leister house and killed at least sixteen of their horses.

[61] For an excellent account of the Confederate bombardment by the officer who directed it, see Edward Porter Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander*, ed. Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 247–62.

The Right Victorious

Meantime on the right, the fierceness of Ewell's attack had dashed itself out, and but feeble surges came up now against our line. Leaving the left as the attack there was dying away, I rode over again to Slocum's Hill on the Baltimore pike. From this high eminence we could only make out that the line seemed in its old place, and so the officers said it was. The rifle pits had been regained; Ewell's corps had been substantially repulsed. The musketry still flickered sharply up occasionally, but the fire had gone out of it. We were practically victorious on the right. It was a quarter past eleven – seven hours and a quarter of desperate fighting! The old Jackson corps had not given up without an obstinate struggle.

Cavalry – A Lull

Away down from the extreme right, and apparently beyond it, there came a ripple of musketry. It was said to be William F. Smith's division from Major General Darius N. Couch's Harrisburg force, coming in on Ewell's flank or rear. I have not yet been able to satisfy myself whether the report was true or not.[62]

A quarter of an hour later Pleasonton's scouts reported rebel cavalry coming in on the Bonaughtown road on the right to strike the Baltimore pike in our rear. Gregg was instantly sent off to meet them, with orders merely to hold them in check, and not to bring on a close engagement if he could avoid it. At the same time Brigadier General Judson Kilpatrick was ordered to the extreme left to harass the enemy's flank and rear and look after his trains.

[62] Maj. Gen. Darius Nash Couch of New York commanded the Department of the Susquehanna, in which thousands of militia, emergency troops, and other second-line units provided indifferent support to the Army of the Potomac. Brig. Gen. William Farrar Smith, a Vermonter known as "Baldy" in the Union army, led several thousand of the untried troops in Couch's department. On July 8, Smith described his force as an "incoherent mass" with which he could accomplish nothing. The report that Couch and Smith were coming in on Ewell's flank or rear was not true.

"Good!" exclaimed Kilpatrick, rubbing his hands, and in a moment was hurrying gleefully to execute the order.[63]

Gregg threw his force up a little brook that comes down between Rock Creek and the post village of Two Taverns. The rebel cavalry no sooner saw their plan detected than they retired. But their effort was not over, and fortunately Gregg understood it. Under cover of the woods, they moved still further south, in a direction parallel with the Baltimore pike; but Gregg was moving too, and when they started out toward the pike, they were again confronted. There was a little carbine firing now, and some sharp shelling, and the rebels again retired. Once more they came out, almost opposite Two Taverns, late in the afternoon, but Gregg was still on the watch for them, and they at once and finally retired without a shot.

There was a lull from a quarter past eleven to about one. Fitful firing broke out and died away again here and there, but the lines were mainly silent. The rebels were not yet defeated – except for the hour's sharp work on the left, two of their corps with their reserves had not been engaged at all today. Some final desperate effort must be maturing. Shrewd officers predicted that it would be a massing of all their troops on the left. But Ewell's corps could not possibly be brought over in time for that; its work for the day must be nearly done.

The Last Desperate Attack

Pretty soon the attack came[64] – sooner, indeed, and wider than was expected. About one the rebel movement was developed in a thunder of cannonading that rolled over our army like doom. They had concentrated immense quantities of artillery – "two hundred and fifty pieces, at least,"[65] some of General Meade's staff-officers said, on our centre and left, and those devoted lines were to bear the last, fiercest shock, that, staunchly met, should leave the exhausted rebel

[63] Brig. Gen. Hugh Judson Kilpatrick of New Jersey led the 3rd Division of the Union Cavalry Corps. On the afternoon of July 3, troopers under his command launched a futile attack against Confederate infantry on the southern end of the battlefield.

[64] Reid here refers to Pickett's and Pettigrew's assault, which marked the grand climax of the battle of Gettysburg.

[65] This estimate is too large by approximately one hundred guns.

army drifting back from its supreme effort, a defeated host. Longstreet and A. P. Hill were to support and follow up the artillery attack, and the reserves were with them.

Soon, from the Cemetery hill, (I did not see this, but tell it as actors in it told me,) could be seen the forming columns of Hill's corps. Their batteries had already opened in almost a semicircle of fire on that scarred hill front. Three cross fires thus came in upon it, and today the tracks of shells ploughing the ground in as many directions may be seen everywhere among the graves. Howard never moved his headquarters an inch. There was his Eleventh corps, and there he meant to stay and make them do their duty if he could. They did it well.

When the fierce cannonade had, as they supposed, sufficiently prepared the way, down came the rebel lines, "dressed to the right" as if for a parade before some grand master of reviews. To the front they had a line of skirmishers, double or treble the usual strength, next the line of battle for the charge, next another equally strong in reserve, if the fierce fire they might meet should melt away the first.

Howard sent orders for his men to lie down, and for a little our batteries ceased firing. The rebels thought they had silenced us and charged. They were well up to our front when that whole corps of concealed Germans sprang up and poured out their sheet of flame and smoke, and swiftly flying death; the batteries opened – the solid lines broke, and crisped up into little fragments, and were beaten widely back. Our men charged; company after company, once at least a whole regiment, threw down their arms and rushed over to be taken prisoners and carried out of this fearful fire.

Simultaneously, similar scenes were enacting along the front of the Second, Third, and Fifth corps. Everywhere the rebel attack was beaten back, and the cannonade on both sides continued at its highest pitch.

When this broke out, I had been coming over from the neighborhood of Pleasonton's headquarters. Ascending the high hill to the rear of Slocum's headquarters, I saw such a sight as few men ever hope to see twice in a lifetime. Around our centre and left, the rebel line must have been from four to five miles long, and over that whole length there rolled up the smoke from their two hundred and fifty guns. The roar, the bursting bombs, the impression of magnificent power,

"all the glory visible, all the horror of the fearful field concealed," a nation's existence trembling as the clangor of those iron monsters swayed the balance – it was a sensation for a century!

About two the fire slackened a little, then broke out deadlier than ever, till, beaten out against our impenetrable sides, it ebbed away, and closed in broken, spasmodic dashes.

The great, desperate, final charge came at four.[66] The rebels seemed to have gathered up all their strength and desperation for one fierce, convulsive effort, that should sweep over and wash out our obstinate resistance. They swept up as before, the flower of their army to the front, victory staked upon the issue. In some places they literally lifted up and pushed back our lines, but, that terrible "position" of ours! – wherever they entered it, enfilading fires from half a score of crests swept away their columns like merest chaff. Broken and hurled back, they easily fell into our hands, and on the centre and left the last half-hour brought more prisoners than all the rest.

So it was along the whole line; but it was on the Second corps that the flower of the rebel army was concentrated; it was there that the heaviest shock beat upon and shook and even sometimes crumbled our line.

We had some shallow rifle pits, with barricades of rails from the fences. The rebel line, stretching away miles to the left, in magnificent array, but strongest here – Pickett's[67] splendid division of Longstreet's corps in front, the best of A. P. Hill's veterans in support – came steadily and as it seemed resistlessly sweeping up. Our skirmishers retired slowly from the Emmitsburg road, holding their ground tenaciously to the last. The rebels reserved their fire till they reached this same Emmitsburg road, then opened with a terrific crash. From a hundred iron throats, meantime, their artillery had been thundering on our barricades.

Hancock was wounded; Gibbon succeeded to the command – a proved soldier and ready for the crisis.[68] As the tempest of fire

[66] Reid places the time of the assault at least an hour too late.

[67] Maj. Gen. George Edward Pickett, a native of Virginia, commanded a division in Longstreet's corps that made up less than half of the Confederate attack column but nonetheless has come to be synonymous with the famous assault.

[68] Brig. Gen. John Gibbon, a native of Philadelphia reared in North Carolina, led the 2nd Division of the Second Corps.

approached its height, he walked along the line and renewed his orders to the men to reserve their fire. The rebels – three lines deep – came steadily up. They were in point blank range.

At last the order came! From thrice six thousand guns there came a sheet of smoky flame, a crash, a rush of leaden death. The line literally melted away; but there came a second, resistless still. It had been our supreme effort – on the instant we were not equal to another.

Up to the rifle pits, across them, over the barricades – the momentum of their charge, the mere machine strength of their combined action swept them on. Our thin line could fight, but it had not weight enough to oppose to this momentum. It was pushed behind the guns. Right on came the rebels. They were upon the guns, were bayoneting the gunners, were waving their flags above our pieces.

But they had penetrated to the fatal point. A storm of grape and canister tore its way from man to man and marked its track with corpses straight down their line! They had exposed themselves to the enfilading fire of the guns on the western slope of Cemetery Hill; that exposure sealed their fate.[69]

The line reeled back – disjointed already – in an instant in fragments. Our men were just behind the guns. They leaped forward upon the disordered mass; but there was little need for fighting now. A regiment threw down its arms, and with colors at its head rushed over and surrendered. All along the field small detachments did the same. Webb's brigade[70] brought in eight hundred taken in as little time as it requires to write the simple sentence that tells it. Gibbon's old division took fifteen stand of colors.

Over the fields the escaped fragments of the charging line fell back – the battle there was over. A single brigade, Brigadier General William Harrow's, (of which the Seventh Michigan is part,) came

[69] Enfilading fire hits a defensive line from the side or end rather than from the front. It is especially effective because shots that miss the initial target may strike soldiers farther down the line; defenders, moreover, cannot return the fire effectively because they run the risk of hitting their own comrades.

[70] Brig. Gen. Alexander Stewart Webb was a New Yorker whose brigade was the 2nd of Gibbon's division.

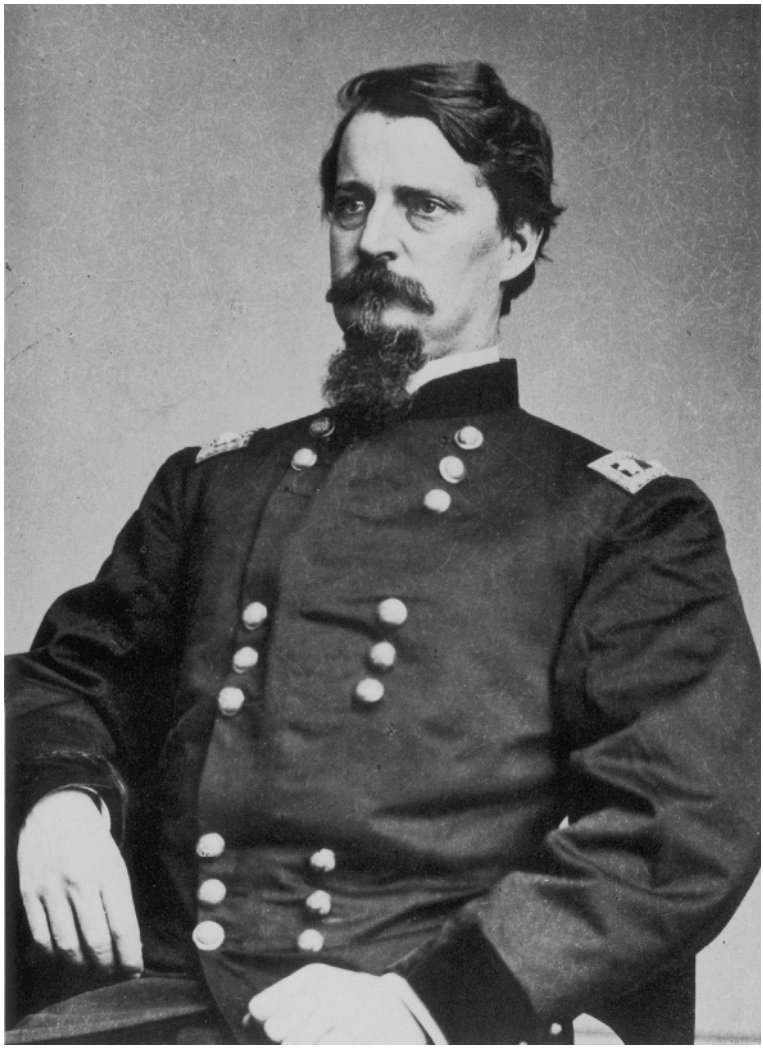


Figure 14 Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock, Commander of the Second Union Corps

out with fifty-four less officers, seven hundred and ninety-three less men than it took in![71] So the whole corps fought – so too they fought further down the line.

Finis

It was fruitless sacrifice. They gathered up their broken fragments, formed their lines, and slowly marched away. It was not a rout, it *was* a bitter crushing defeat. For once the Army of the Potomac had won a clean, honest, acknowledged victory.

Yet we were very near defeat. Our ammunition had grown scant; the reserve ammunition train had been brought up and drained; but for that we should have been left to cold steel.

Brigade after brigade had been thrown forward to strengthen the line; as the rebel attack drifted back over the fields there stood in the rear just one single brigade that constituted the entire reserve of the Army of the Potomac. Forty thousand fresh troops to have hurled forward upon that retreating mass would have ended the campaign with the battle; but, for forty thousand we had that one wasted brigade! The rebels were soon formed again, and ready for defence – the opportunity was lost!

Shells still dropped over the Cemetery, by the headquarters and in the wheat fields toward the Baltimore pike; but the fight was over.

Headquarters were established anew under the trees in a little wood near Slocum's Hill. General Meade rode up, calm as ever, and called for paper and aids; he had orders already to issue. A band came marching in over the hillside; on the evening air its notes floated out – significant melody – "Hail to the Chief."

"Ah! General Meade," said W., "you're in very great danger of being President of the United States." "No," said another, more wisely, as it seems. "Finish well this work so well begun, and the position you have is better and prouder than President."

[71] A native of Kentucky reared in Illinois, Brig. Gen. William Harrow led the 1st Brigade of Gibbon's division and took over the division when Gibbon replaced the wounded Hancock in corps command.

After the Battle

Our campaign "after the invaders" was over. There was brief time for last glances at the field, last questions after the dead and dying – then the hurried trip west, and the misery of putting together, from the copious notes taken on the field, on swaying railroad cars, and amid jostly crowds, the story of the day.

The morning after the battle was as sweet and fresh as though no storm of death had all the day before been sweeping over those quiet Pennsylvania hills and valleys. The roads were lined with ambulances, returning to the field for the last of the wounded; soldiers exchanging greetings after the battle with their comrades and comparing notes of the day; officers looking after their wounded men or hunting up the supplies for their regiments. Detachments of rebel prisoners every few moments passed back under guard; the woods inside our line had been full of them all night, and we were just beginning to gather them up.[72] Everybody was in the most exuberant spirits. For once this army had won a real victory – the soldiers felt it, and the sensation was so novel, they could not but be ecstatic.

The Field

Along the lines on the left a sharp popping of skirmishers was still kept up. I rode down over the scene of yesterday's fiercest conflict, and at the cost of some exposure, and the close passage of a couple of Minie balls, got a view of the thickly strewn rebel corpses that still cast up to heaven their mute protest against the treason that had made them what they were. But the details of these horrible scenes are too sickening, and alas! too familiar; I must be excused from their description.

[72] Casualties for the three days were enormous. The Confederates lost between 23,000 and 28,000 men, of whom more than 5,000 were prisoners; the Union army counted more than 3,000 dead, more than 14,500 wounded, and nearly 5,500 missing or captured.

Figure 15 Confederate Prisoners Marching South under Union Guard on the Baltimore Pike

At Headquarters

Headquarters – still over in the woods near Slocum's Hill – were in bivouac. The General had a little wall tent, in which he was dictating orders and receiving despatches; General Ingalls, the Chief Quartermaster,[73] had his writing table in the open of a covered wagon; the rest, majors, colonels, generals and all, had slept on the ground, and were now standing about the campfires, hands full of fried pork and hard bread, making their breakfasts in a style that a year ago would have astonished the humblest private in the Army of the Potomac.

The cavalry generals were again in request, and heavy reconnaissances were ordered. The bulk of the rebel army was believed to be in full retreat; one strong corps could still be seen, strongly posted on well chosen heights to the northward and drawn up in line of battle to repel any attempt at direct pursuit.

The casualties on the staff were wonderfully small. General Warren, acting Chief of Staff, had a remarkable escape. A Minie ball passed directly under his chin, cut his throat in a little line that, with half an inch's motion in his head, or change in the direction of the ball, would have been converted into a deathly wound. As it was, his shirt was stained with the blood that trickled down, but he did not think the wound worth binding up.

It has been telegraphed and re-telegraphed and telegraphed again from headquarters, that General Butterfield was badly wounded. He received a slight blow on the back Friday afternoon from a spent fragment of shell, I believe; but it did not even break the skin.

These, with the wounding of Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Dickinson, Aid to General Meade, constituted the only casualties on the staff.[74]

[73] Brig. Gen. Rufus Ingalls of Maine. The quartermaster was responsible for the clothing, food, and other equipment exclusive of ammunition and arms needed by the army.

[74] Lt. Col. Joseph Dickinson had served on Joseph Hooker's staff, and, like Daniel Butterfield, may not have been a favorite of the new army commander. Neither Meade nor any other Federal officer mentioned the wounded Dickinson in his official report.

Major Barstow, the efficient Adjutant-General, received fragments of shells on both sides of his saddle but escaped unhurt.

The Fire at Headquarters

It was not, however, because they had little exposure that their losses were small. How we were nearly all driven away from headquarters Friday forenoon by the furious cannonade has already been told; but my friend and companion on that morning, Mr. Samuel Wilkeson of the New York *Times*, has so vividly described the scene that I must be allowed to reproduce it:

"In the shadow cast by the tiny farm house, sixteen by twenty, which General Meade had made his headquarters, lay wearied staff officers and tired correspondents. There was not wanting to the peacefulness of the scene the singing of a bird, which had a nest in a peach tree within the tiny yard of the white washed cottage. In the midst of its warbling, a shell screamed over the house, instantly followed by another and another, and in a moment the air was full of the most complete artillery prelude to an infantry battle that was ever exhibited. Every size and form of shell known to British and to American gunnery, shrieked, whirled, moaned, and whistled and wrathfully fluttered over our ground. As many as six in a second, constantly two in a second, bursting and screaming over and around the headquarters, made a very hell of fire that amazed the oldest officers. They burst in the yard – burst next to the fence on both sides, garnished as usual with the hitched horses of aides and orderlies. The fastened animals reared and plunged with terror. Then one fell, then another – sixteen lay dead and mangled before the fire ceased, still fastened by their halters, which gave the expression of being wickedly tied up to die painfully. These brute victims of a cruel war touched all hearts. Through the midst of the storm of screaming and exploding shells, an ambulance driven by its frenzied conductor at full speed, presented to all of us the marvelous spectacle of a horse going rapidly on three legs. A hinder one had been shot off at the hock. A shell tore up the little step at the headquarters cottage, and ripped bags of oats as with a knife. Another soon carried off one of its two pillars. Soon a spherical case burst

opposite the open door – another ripped through the low garret. The remaining pillar went almost immediately to the howl of a fixed shot that Whitworth[75] must have made. During this fire the horses at twenty and thirty feet distant were receiving their death, and soldiers in Federal blue were torn to pieces in the road, and died with the peculiar yells that blend the extorted cry of pain with horror and despair. Not an orderly – not an ambulance – not a straggler was to be seen upon the plain swept by this tempest of orchestral death, thirty minutes after it commenced. Were not one hundred and twenty pieces of artillery trying to cut from the field every battery we had in position to resist their purposed infantry attack, and to sweep away the slight defences behind which our infantry were waiting? Forty minutes – fifty minutes – counted watches that ran, oh! so languidly! Shells through the two lower rooms. A shell into the chimney, that daringly did not explode. Shells in the yard. The air thicker and fuller and more deafening with the howling and whirring of these infernal missiles. The Chief of Staff struck – Seth Williams – loved and respected through the army, separated from instant death by two inches of space vertically measured. An aide bored with a fragment of iron through the bone of the arm. And the time measured on the sluggish watches was one hour and forty minutes."

How the Correspondents Faced Death

To this vivid description, in justice to its author, let me add that Mr. Wilkeson stayed at the house during the whole terrible cannonade. Mr. Frank Henry, also of the *Times*, likewise stood it out. Their accounts may well be said to have the smell of fire upon them![76]

C. C. Coffin, of the Boston *Journal*, and L. L. Crounse, of the New York *Times* as well as several other journalists of whom

[75] The Whitworth Rifle was a British-made cannon with a range of more than 5,000 yards. A breechloading weapon, its ammunition was loaded not from the muzzle but from the back. In a war dominated by muzzle-loading cannon with much shorter ranges, the Whitworth stood out as an exotic weapon. The Confederate army had two Whitworths at Gettysburg; the Federal artillery none.

[76] Frank Henry also stayed at the Leister house through the bombardment.

Figure 16 The Gatekeeper's House on Cemetery Hill after the Battle

I knew less, were at different times under almost equally heavy fire. Mr. Crounse had his horse shot under him during Thursday's engagement. Such perils are they compelled to face who would be able to say something more of a battle than what those who are first out of it, can tell.

Once More on Cemetery Hill – Departure

We could linger no longer on the field. My companion for the last day or two, Mr. Coffin, and myself, resolved on reaching Baltimore that night. The Northern Central Railroad was still broken, and from Baltimore my shortest road west lay *via* Philadelphia. With such a circuitous route ahead, there was no time to spare.

We rode up the Cemetery Hill for a last look at the field. It was ploughed and torn in every direction by the fierce crossfires of artillery that had spent their force upon it. Dead men, decently laid out, were in the gate keeper's lodge. Upturned, swollen horses lay among the tombs, where the sudden shot or shell had stricken them down. Batteries still frowned from the crest; away to the front of the rebel line (a strong rearguard only now) could still be distinctly seen. Howard, Carl Schurz, Steinwehr,[77] and two or three others of lesser rank, were watching the movements through their glasses and discussing the probabilities.

There was a rush of letters to be mailed and telegraph messages to be sent. Among the number came Henry Ward Beecher's son, a bluff hearty looking youth. He had a despatch to Mrs. Stowe he wanted me to send, announcing that her son, too, was among the wounded and would soon be sent home to her.[78]

[77] Brig. Gen. Adolph Wilhelm August Friedrich, Baron von Steinwehr, was a native of the Duchy of Brunswick who commanded the 2nd Division of the Eleventh Corps.

[78] Henry Ward Beecher of Connecticut, a prominent Congregationalist minister and antislavery speaker, was the brother of novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe, whose *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had deepened northern antipathy toward slavery in the 1850s. Brig. Gen. von Steinwehr's official report of the battle mentioned Mrs. Stowe's son: "Capt. F. W. Stowe, assistant adjutant general of this division, was on the last day severely wounded in the head by a piece of shell."

On an old grave that a shell had rudely torn, while a round shot had battered down the iron railing about it, were still blooming the flowers affection's hand had planted in more peaceful times – not a petal shaken off by all this tempest that had swept and whirled and torn about them. Human blood watered the roots – patriot blood that made them doubly sacred. I stooped and gathered them – roses and columbine and modest, sweet-scented pinks, mingled with sprigs of cypress – they are my only trophy from that glorious field.

Good-by to Gettysburg – a mad gallop to Westminster, (which brought our day's ride up to nearly fifty miles,) to catch a train that after all, loaded with wounded soldiers as it was, spent the whole night backing and hauling on side tracks and switches; and so at last to Baltimore; and out of the field once more. May it be forever.

Effect of Lee's Escape

1863, July 17

"This puts us back into next year." Such was Vice President Hamlin's[79] exclamation as the escape of Lee's army was announced to him. That was in the midst of our forces and under all the influences that always exist there favorable to delay and apologetic for disaster. Here the feeling seems to have been at once more decided and more bitter. The President declares Lee's escape the greatest blunder of the war. Others are not wanting to cry already for some man who can pursue and fight.[80]

[79] Hannibal Hamlin of Maine was vice president during Lincoln's first term.

[80] Meade's failure to follow up his victory at Gettysburg with a rapid pursuit of Lee's retreating army caused controversy at the time and continues to generate debate among historians. In a letter dated July 14, 1863, but never sent to the general, Lincoln congratulated Meade for "the magnificent success" at Gettysburg, yet expressed deep regret that Lee had escaped greater punishment: "I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape," wrote Lincoln. "He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with our other late successes, have ended the war. As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely." For an able discussion of this topic, see the Epilogue in Sears, *Gettysburg*.

Justice to a man who needs all he can get of it requires me to add that, in persistency of urging action at least, General Halleck was not this time to blame. Whether he was equally energetic in furnishing and directing aright the means of action is another question. General Meade telegraphed him that there was a difference in his Council of War, and that he was hesitating about making an attack. Halleck replied: "It is proverbial that Councils of War never fight, attack the enemy at once, and hold Councils of War afterward." The order was good; but, by the time it arrived, the enemy had escaped by a pontoon bridge, which Halleck had not prevented from being sent up the south side of the Potomac.

Today it is rumored that Meade has asked to be relieved of command. It is certain that the old swarm of personal imbroglios in the Army of the Potomac has broken out again. Meantime we have crossed the river, but the indications do not foreshadow a very vigorous pursuit.[81]

[81] The Army of the Potomac was the most intensely political of the major Union field armies. For much of the first two years of the war, its high command had been plagued by factions maneuvering for advantage, often with the help of politicians in nearby Washington. George Meade shunned such activity. Although after Gettysburg he received much criticism, on January 28, 1864, Congress thanked him for the "skill and heroic valor which, at Gettysburg, repelled, defeated and drove back, broken and dispirited, beyond the Rappahannock, the veteran army of the rebellion."

Figure 17 Arthur James Lyon Fremantle in the Civilian Dress He Wore During His Trip through the Confederacy