



FIRST DAY'S BATTLE.

The greatest battle ever fought on the American Continent, and the most famous of all the battles of the American Civil War, was fought on the soil of the old Keystone State, the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence. Lee's Army was flushed with victory after the battle of Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg, in Virginia. Southern hopes were high, and public opinion was unanimous for an invasion of the North. The army of the Potomac had changed leaders. George Gordon Meade was now its Commander. On the morning of July 1, 1863, the two armies were still scattered, the extremes being forty miles apart. General Reynolds, of the Union Army, a few miles away, was hastening to Gettysburg, while Longstreet and Hill were approaching from the west. In the heat of the first day's battle General Reynolds, one of the bravest and ablest Generals of the Union Army, fell dead, he having received a sharp-shooter's bullet in the brain. The three days' battle of Gettysburg was a crescendo of carnage—each day marked by a special climax more deadly than the preceding one.

SECOND DAY'S BATTLE.

The most desperate struggle of the Second Day's Battle, July 2d, was the fight for the possession of "Little Round Top," held by the Union Army, which was the key to the whole battle-ground west and south of "Cemetery Ridge." Hood's division of Longstreet's corps moved steadily toward the Hill, determined to occupy it. Had Hood succeeded, the result would have been most disastrous to the Union Army. At the summit of the Hill occurred one of the most desperate hand-to-hand conflicts of the war, in which men tore at each other like wild beasts—the Blue and the Gray, grappled in mortal combat, falling dead side by side. "Little Round Top" was saved to the Union Army, but the cost was appalling. Scores of Confederate sharp-shooters, with their unerring aim, spread death and destruction among the Federal officers and gunners. General John B. Reynolds was dead. Colonel O'Rourke and General Vincent were dead. General Weed was dying; and, as Hazlett was stooping to receive "'end's last message, a sharp-shooter's bullet laid him—dead—across the body of his chief. In the valley below, on a more stupendous scale, the battle raged with demon-like fury. General Dan Sickles' leg was shattered by a shell, while scores of his officers and thousands of his men lay on the field of battle. This valley has been appropriately named the "Valley of Death." Valley of Death.

THIRD DAY'S BATTLE-PICKETT'S HEROIC CHARGE-THE TRAP OF DEATH.

The most desperate onset of the three days' battle was yet to come—Pickett's charge up the hill of "Cemetery Ridge," which was preceded by the heaviest canonading ever heard on the American continent. At 1 o'clock, on July 3d, signal guns were fired on "Seminary Ridge"; a few moments later there was a terrific outburst from 159 long-range Confederate cannon. The whole crest of the heights, for two miles, was a flame of fire. The scene was majestic beyond description. General Meade and his staff were driven from their headquarters on "Cemetery Ridge." No living thing could exist on that hillside, swept by cannon that were being handled as fast as human hands could work them. General Lee saw that in this moment the fate of the entire Southern Confederacy hung in the balance. Pickett's division, a body of fifteen thousand (15,000) troops, as yet not engaged, standing in the woods a mile and a half distant, was the force Lee designated for the world's greatest military charge, every man was a Virginian, forming a veritable Tenth Legion in valor.

THE NOW-OR-NEVER CHARGE OF PICKETT'S DIVISION.

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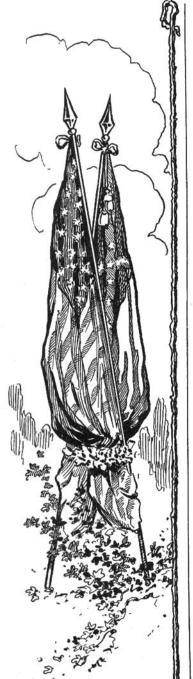
Twice Pickett asked Longstreet if he should go forward. At last Pickett said, "For God's sake, come on!" "Sir, I shall lead my division," and, at the heavy-hearted Longstreet's reluctant nod, the commander led his splendid column of fifteen thousand (15,000) Virginians across the plain in their tragic charge up "Cemetery Ridge." For a mile Pickett and his men kept on in the face of a deadly hail of round shot, canister, and the bullets of Hancock's resolute infantry. Every one of Pickett's brigade commanders went down, and their men fell by scores and hundreds around them. The charge was one of the most desperate and daring ever made in warfare. On across the Emmitsburg road, up the incline, came Pickett's dauntless brigades. From behind a stone wall the Federals hurled death-dealing volleys into the Confederate ranks. Up to the fence, held by Hay's brigade, dashed the first gray line, only to be swept into utter confusion by a cruel enfilading fire. Then the brigades of Armistead and Garnett moved forward. Despite the death-dealing bolts on all sides, Pickett determined to capture the Federal guns; and, at the order, Armistead leaped the fence, and, waving his cap on his sword-point, rushed forward, followed by hundreds of his men, driving Hay's brigade back through the batteries to the very crest of the hill, and, as Armistead shouted, "Give them the cold steel, boys!" he seized one of the guns. For a moment the Confederate flag waved triumphantly over the Federal battery, while the fight raged fiercely at close quarters. General Armistead was shot down beside the gun he had taken, and his men were driven back. General Garnett, heading his brigade, fell dead close to the Federal line. General Kemper sank, wounded, into the arms of one of his men. Pickett, as he looked around the top of the ridge he had gained, could see his men fighting all about with clubbed muskets, and even flag-staffs, against the troops that were rushing in upon them from all sides. Flesh a years later at Appomattox.

Very respectfully,

Note.—In the magnificent edition of the photographic history of the Civil War, published by the Review of Reviews Company, New York City, New York, will be found a complete account of this great battle. The writer is indebted to the Review of Reviews for historical extracts given above.

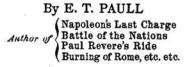
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Battle of Gettysburg

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