

## The Maine 20th at Gettysburg.

GENERAL CHAMBERLAIN'S LECTURE.

General Chamberlain on being introduced by Ex-Governor Washburn, as one whom he had the highest authority for saying was the first General in military science which New England had contributed to the war, was greeted with hearty applause and spoke substantially as follows:

*Ladies and Gentlemen:*—The manner in which I have been introduced to you I confess has thrown me entirely off my guard. I did not expect my friends to place me to this disadvantage. I am to give you to-night some reminiscences of the battle of Gettysburg. It is an old and perhaps to many a too familiar story, but I think it is due to a Regiment of troops from your own State, whose services on that occasion have not been fully understood before, and I feel that it is my own duty to give some distinct account of their conduct. I desire to do justice to that little command which constituted, it is true, but a small portion of our gallant Army at the battle of which I was necessarily cognizant. I may be able to throw a little more light upon the story of what I myself witnessed upon that field. Not wishing to bring myself into particular notice, I will only say that I believe I stood by my men, but I think it a still higher compliment that my men stood by me on that occasion. The reward is due to them because perhaps the fault is my own that their fame is not better known among their friends, as it is among their foes. Having no private Secretary in the field, my Reports were not made up with the accuracy of some other officers, and it happened that other troops who staid so far in the rear of the battle that they thought themselves in the front ranks, received much of the credit which belongs to the Maine 20th. I am glad of this opportunity to do what I can that Maine may hear the story of her sons.

I consider the battle of Gettysburg an accident, and by that I mean the ground was not selected beforehand. The heads of the two great armies met on a hill, and the main bodies of the armies sprang forward to the rescue. It was a question of life and death. There was less of strategy than of tactics. We were resting on the last of June 1863 near the bank of a small stream near Fredericksburg. This day of quiet was in connection with General Meade's appointment to the command of the Army of the Potomac. General Lee put his army in motion for an invasion of Pennsylvania the following morning. By hard marches, owing to a continuous rain for twenty days previous, the Union army advanced rapidly and always kept on the flank of Lee. In crossing the Pennsylvania line, flags of welcome were thrown out by the citizens. Approaching Hanover we found signs of the enemy. Kilpatrick had met Stuart and discomfited him on the battlefield. The town was now clear of rebels and the troops were preparing their first meal since daylight, and making ready for a night's rest, when rumors came of the commencement of the battle at Gettysburg, that Reynolds had fallen and our own gallant Howard was defeated. In a moment the whole corps was on its feet, rivals on the road. The sanctity of domestic relations was forgotten. All was animation. The colors were unfurled though in the darkness. Rumors of all kinds added fuel to the flame, among others the report that McClellan was in command, and had been seen at Gettysburg. Enthusiasm for an old and beloved commander gave new zeal to our troops, together with the idea of fighting the enemy on our own soil. Forgetting their hunger and fatigue, and with willing hearts, they pushed forward as if to a festival. Never was a forced march made more enthusiastically than this, knowing full well that they were marching to a field of death. At seven o'clock in the morning we reached Gettysburg. At first our corps (the 5th) was placed at the extreme right of the line, and afterward in the centre. While Gen. Meade was in consultation with some of his commanders, the enemy opened the battle at the extreme left, and we were ordered with our Brigade to that vulnerable point which we reached between four and five in the afternoon. In describing the topography of the battlefield of Gettysburg, we may liken it to a flat-iron—Round Top Mountain constituting the sharp point or apex, and Cemetery hill the right corner. Little and Great Round Top must be distinguished. They are two separate Mountains, some three quarters of a mile apart. The strategical point of the former was of great importance. Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania and Maine stood side by side. Hazlett, with his horses unhitched, was dragging his guns up the steep rocky mountain. Placing them at once in position, streams of smoke shot out from this mountain gorge. The enemy rallied forward with no disposition of faltering, and burst upon us with a thundering of musketry like "the voice of many waters." Like the resurgent waves of ocean along our rock bound coast, they reach the rocky barrier of Little Round Top and there stop. The first shock fell upon the 3d corps under General Sickles, and immediately extended along the line to the left. It was a heavy blow but firmly withstood. Anderson's brigade of Texan troops was immediately in front of us, and McLaws Alabama brigade on our left. From a high rock, a body of rebel troops could be seen approaching slowly and stealthily, and one of our scouts returned bringing the same information. Our color was withdrawn and placed on the left to mark a new centre for future operations. Captain Clark of Waldoboro, Capt. Spear of Warren, and Capt. Morrill of Williamsburg were in command of the Regiment during this attack, each of whom rose to the rank they had won, and left the service as field officers of the Regiment. We opened upon them as they approached. Hesitatingly they replied, and finally came within twelve yards of us, and then the bloody struggle ensued. Union troops and rebels mixed promiscuously together in the conflict. Inch by inch the ground was contested, and marked by lines of blood. We were forced entirely from our position, and had nearly got out of reach of the brigade. All had been done that men could apparently do. When reason said all was lost, love for the fallen said, "Forward to the rescue." The sight of our dying comrades formed that line quicker than ever the bugle or the drum! They dashed into the face of the foe and hurled them from our front to the farthest extreme. The field was ours, but a new line hurled itself upon our palpitating ranks from the right. The ground was lost almost as soon as gained, but our men knew no retreat.

There was no facing about, but rather the face was still toward the foe. Driven back, and falling back upon the rocks, they rebounded as before successfully. Once more the proud lines of our antagonist were rolled from the field. It was a moment of animation. Our ammunition being exhausted, orders were received to seize the cartridge-boxes from the dead and dying, whether friend or foe, and reinforcements were sent for. The drum of the musician was exchanged for the musket. We had in our regiment several mutineers from the 2d Me., and among the number was one James R. Martin, who was tried and not found wanting. Generosity on the part of the Government had reacted on himself. He was seen fighting in the foremost ranks, and one hour after, a ghastly wound in the head laid him low. "My mother will not know," said he. "Tell her I do not die a coward." A beautiful sight here presented itself. The clouds of smoke were lifting from the field, and through the mist of battle could be seen our colors, planted in the ground, and held firmly by our sergeant, with musket in his hand. That color-sergeant was Andrew Jackson Tozier, of Plymouth, the man and place well named. Seeing two companies falling back in the rear, my orders partook of a parental nature. My sabre may have fallen upon the shoulder of some good man, but they were kind enough not to court-martial me. If in the excitement of the moment I did say "For God's sake hold that front!" as has been attributed to me, I must believe that the recording angel, as it bore the oath to

the word and blotted it out forever. (Applause.) Our line the second time stood firm. At this moment there was a roar of battle to the right, and we thought that the enemy might be gathering for a fresh assault from that quarter, but once more they burst upon us from the left. They stood back this time and fired, rather than again meet our men. Already, at the lowest estimation, fifty thousand bullets had been showered upon our Regiment, and every officer and every man could show some torn garment. Reinforcements though sent for, could not be expected. Our men forgot the rear, save their dead comrades lying there, and rushed forward at the order to "charge." The bayonet swept along the line, the clash of steel bracing the soldier's heart. The left leaps forward, and the right joins in the attack. That little handful of one hundred and ninety-eight men fought thousands of the enemy's Brigade. The enemy threw down their arms and cried, "we surrender; dont kill us." Officers even surrendered before the orders to surrender had reached them. If our whole brigade could have joined in the charge, I doubt not Hood's whole brigade would have fallen. Our men were exultant. They were on the road to Richmond, and could not be stopped. Our captures numbered over four hundred prisoners, from four different regiments, and two colors lay upon the ground in our front, together with one hundred and fifty of the enemy's dead. The dead of both armies were gathered and buried. Small breastworks were then thrown up, but the assault was not renewed. Fisher's Brigade of Pennsylvania Reserves came to our support, also a request was brought by Col. Rice from General Sykes to take and hold Great Round Top Mountain three quarters of a mile distant. My reply was "the 20th Me. will carry the heights." It was now evening of a hot July day. Our men were thirsty and exhausted. Many had fallen asleep the moment the conflict ceased. I merely said to the few around me, "the Colonel of the 20th Me. will go, and none need follow unless they want to." It was needless. They all went, and that little handful of men pushed forward for the enterprise, straight out into the darkness which seemed to favor our movements. I directed that no firing be done. At the crest of the hill we could hear the tramp of troops on the right of us. Determined not to have an unfortunate firing upon friendly troops, we ordered a halt, and asked what regiment was there. It proved to be the Pennsylvania Reserves who had been ordered to our support, and were floundering about in the darkness, scarcely knowing their front from their rear. The enemy opened the assault. Bullets were decidedly intrusive to our conversation. The enemy were found in our front under arms and under cover of the woods not over three hundred yards distant. Their firing ceased. The 83d Pa. regiment reported to us and were stationed on our right. Pickets were kept out all night, reporting to me every half hour. Thus ended the fight on our left. On the right, in the thickest of the fight was your 3d Me., and on the left the gallant Me. 17th. Longstreet's attack, I think, was not at all strategical or he might have met with a better result. Our army was absolutely stronger the next day than it was the day before. Among those who mingled in this mad affray was the Garibaldi Guard. At a critical moment your own General Ayers had swept down from the right of Little Round Top to the gorge below. He seemed as if caught in the vortex of a whirlwind on the desert. It was only by ordering his men to face about at "double quick" that he cut his way through. He seemed overwhelmed, but he brought back his command as the lion rescues his young. Again gaining the heights of Little Round Top, we gazed back upon a field of glorious death and victory.

Thus ended the third day's fight at Gettysburg. General Crawford in his report says, "For the brilliant success of the conflict this day, history will give credit to the Maine 20th more than to any other Regiment." In the National Cemetery at Gettysburg are many graves marked—"Unknown, supposed Me. 20th." Better to have left them in their graves on the rocky sides of Little Round Top, where it was known the Regiment fought, than thus to have removed them and marked them "unknown." As I walked over the battle ground the day succeeding the conflict, viewing my fallen comrades, my horse followed me with his head bending downward as if recognizing the faces of those who often followed him to battle. The Me. 20th numbered three hundred and eighty officers and men at Gettysburg. It was not one of your favorites. It was made up of the surplus recruits, drifted together, the last of a call for "three hundred thousand more."

It was without local pride. No county claimed them. No city gave them a flag. They received no words of farewell on leaving your State, no words of welcome on their return. But their name is known in other climes, and their fame is owned by their enemies. In the hour of battle they knew the meaning of "Dirigo" on your State escutcheon, and their record is as unsullied as your fame; may their memory be as green as your Pines.