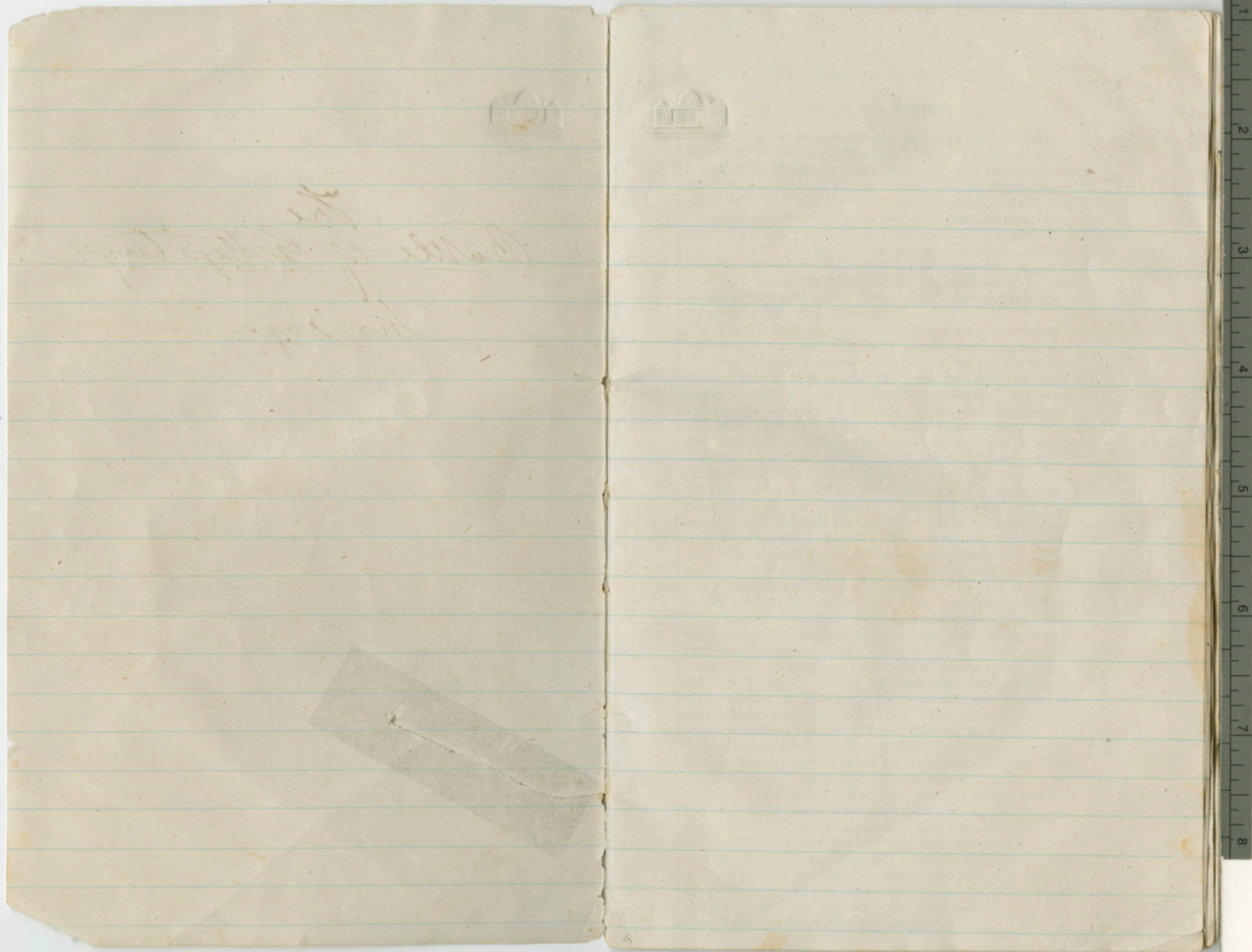


The
Battle of Gettysburg
Two days

(by Rev. R B Howard)



THE STORY OF GETTYSBURG.

BY AN EYE-WITNESS.

It was on a pleasant June morning in 1863 that I came out of Secretary Stanton's office at Washington armed with a "pass" to enable me to join the Army of the Potomac, then at Goose Creek, Va., as it was moving slowly and almost fearfully northward. Lee was westward of the mountains, marching parallel with Gen. Hooker's force, repulsed and demoralized by the campaign which ended at Chancellorsville with defeat. Meade, who had been named for commander, was unknown. McClellan was beloved and regretted by the soldiers, who greeted no news more uproariously than a rumor of his reinstatement.

For convenience I mounted the precious-freighted mail-wagon of the Eleventh Corps, and started for General Howard's headquarters in the field. An arrest by a captain of a Michigan regiment was the only lively incident of the trip toward Leesburg. We were released with an apology when we showed our passes. The camp fires were burning brightly at evening when we reached the forest encampment, and the soldiers flocked to see their letters from home. I slept underneath the shelter tent of Gen. Howard, and he lay on the ground by my side. Gen. Shurz, then commanding a Division of the Eleventh Corps, came around and smoked and chatted pleasantly with us. There were orders for an early march. The camp noises died away. The wind sighed in the branches overhead, and thousands slept restfully on the ground. At day-break the camp was broken up, the baggage was loaded, the companies and regiments fell into line, the bands played lively airs, the drummer boys beat merrily. The General and staff took their places at the head of the corps, and the "citizen in the linen coat" rode alongside. When the morning sun shone the trumpets sounded and the march began. There was more of "the pomp and circumstance of glorious war" than one sees either on a parade ground or a battle-field. There was the tragic feeling without the horrid realization of war.

We breakfasted under a shady tree near Leesburg and just before we crossed the Potomac on pontoons. The "blessing" was brief, but never omitted at that table. "Hard tack," coffee and pork tasted good after the morning's ride. Just above us the bloody height of Balls Bluff frowned upon the deep stream, and over in Maryland we saw the scarcely deserted winter quarters at Poolesville. Tramp! tramp!! tramp!! across the bridge, the soldiers breaking rank and step to prevent accidents, and we tread upon the soil of Maryland, so fondly sung by both its loyal and disloyal sons and daughters as, Maryland, *my* Maryland!"

2

We turn to the left and march towards Harper's Ferry till news from a reconnoissance sent out towards evening changes our direction northward. After a rainy day we lay down to grateful rest upon the floor of a farm-house, and in the sunlight of the following day passed on up Pleasant Valley, rich in farms with their acres of rolling wheat just "filling," and walled in by the hills at the west, where I could watch each gap with expectation of puffs of smoke, to mark the course of our cavalry under Buford pressing close upon the Confederates in the next valley beyond. The great body of Lee's army was ahead of us, already raiding upon the rich fields and towns of central Pennsylvania, but his communications with Virginia via the Shenandoah Valley were vigorously maintained by a strong force in his rear.

A Sabbath at Middletown, restful and religious as we could make it, a night at Emmettsburg just suffering from a terrific fire, and where we shared the hospitality of the President of the Jesuit College, are about all I can recall of the northward march. As we passed out of Emmettsburg on the morning of the ever memorable first day of July, 1863, a rough looking figure in a rubber coat saluted us from the piazza. A friend said, "That is Gen. Reynolds, of the First Corps," who are partly ahead of us. A mile further on and a Yankee cheer from a regiment encamped in a field near by

brought out the fact that the Sixteenth Maine were there with many a dear friend in its ranks. Reynolds, brave man, never saw another sun rise, and the full ranked and veteran Sixteenth came back from the first battle-shock, that evening, a poor, shattered wreck of itself; "killed," "wounded" and "missing," (prisoners) the dreadful words which described the condition of many a brave and beloved soldier. But I must not anticipate.

We were riding along a pleasant road and had reached the summit of a little hill, when there came to my ears the dull, heavy report that sounded like the blasting of rocks in my father's field in my boyhood's home. Alas, it was men who were being blasted! In a moment we saw the repeated puffs of smoke beyond the distant woods, each time followed by the report which told that Buford's cavalry, which were one day ahead of us, had engaged the enemy. Gen. Howard put spurs to his horse, and leaving orders for the troops to follow as quickly as possible, rode ahead with all dispatch, followed by his staff and a small escort of cavalry. We approached the little city by the Emmettsburg road, laid down distinctly on Bachelder's Chart. To our left were the plains and valley fought over the following days, and on our right rose the ridge, crowned by the peaceful dwellings of the dead, which has become historic.

Gen. Reynolds had preceded us with his advanced column by not more than an hour. He had sent a part of the First Corps through the town to the right of the seminary and college and near the depot of the branch railroad which connects with the Pennsylvania road at Hanover Junction. How still the town was as we rode in! The painted wooden shutters so universal in this part of the country were closed; hardly a person did we see in the broad street along which the Confederate Gen. Early's raiding force had ridden the day before. The people were in their cellars. The doors were locked, and naught was to be heard but the *boom, boom, boom*, of the cannon. Our first inquiry was for Gen. Reynolds. The road by which he rode to the front less than an hour before was pointed out to us. He was the senior officer, and in command, and Gen. Howard, turning to me with a kind word of leave-taking, spurred on toward the point where the engagement was going on. Left alone by my military friends, I turned my horse's head to the green slope of the untrampled ridge below the cemetery, and dismounting sat upon a stone, allowing my horse to crop the unmown hay, while I tried to take in the situation. In front of me at this hour, about noon, lay the silent town with its cobblestone streets and brick buildings. The theological seminary was half a mile further north. The white walls of Pennsylvania (Lutheran) College rose nearer the town. The gap caused by the unfinished railroad was also north of the town. To the right I saw fruitful fields, orchards, and forests, and the buildings of the Poor Farm. Hon. Edward McPherson's house, ~~afterward burned~~, was straight ahead on the road leading northward. While sitting there I saw the First Corps taking position on the right. A division of the Eleventh Corps under Gen. Steinweher, with the artillery reserve, by Gen. Howard's orders passed to the top of Cemetery Ridge and prepared to hold it, as they did with signal advantage for the next three days. Gen. Schurz followed the First Corps through the town to render such support on the right as his Division could. Just then I saw two or three staff officers riding swiftly in my direction. Among them I recognized Gen. C. H. Howard. He said to me quietly and quickly, "Reynolds is killed. Otis (Gen. Howard) is in command. There will be a battle!" "May I join the staff?" "Yes, for the present." Gen. Howard himself soon appeared, rapidly giving orders for hurrying up and locating the troops.

May - afternoon

needed

The whole of the First and Eleventh corps, numbering together about 20,000, were now on the ground. The enemy had appeared in force on our right and as we sat on our horses and looked over toward the Poor Farm we saw him slowly forming his lines and unlimbering his guns. He had already attacked the troops nearest to him with vigor, and pretty soon the unearthly and indescribable howl of the whizzing shells told us that one of his batteries had our range. I dodged involuntarily, and was reminded by a comrade that the shell was some fifty feet above my head! As my friends did not seem disposed to retire, by their advice I rode back to the great gate of the cemetery. Some of the people were hurrying from the town into the country along the Baltimore turnpike which passes the cemetery gate. Gen. Slocum with the Twelfth Corps was back on that road, his head of column about three miles distant, in hearing of the guns. He was senior to Gen. Howard, and declined though repeatedly solicited by Gen. H., to come up and take the responsibility of the hour. His troops were greatly needed to strengthen our thin line and meet the reinforcements which the enemy had begun to bring up. I never hear that General's name since but I think how much he and his troops were needed and how slow he was to come (*Slo-cum*).

In the meantime the battle became general beyond the town. Schurz, with two divisions of the Eleventh Corps made a brave defense against overwhelming numbers on the right, and Gen. Doubleday of the First Corps who succeeded Gen. Reynolds, held out on the left. Several hundred prisoners were captured by cutting them off from the main body in the deep cut of the unfinished railroad. I saw them as they came marching up the Baltimore 'pike, going to the rear.

They were strong, healthy-looking fellows, in good spirits, boasting of the victory to come. Their clothes, of the color of dried grass in the autumn, were in good order, and they seemed more like a picnic excursion than a band of prisoners. It was now nearly 2 P. M. The musketry reminded me of the explosion of fire-crackers. There would be a few scattering shots and then a general fire.

4

After hearing the reports of aids and the requests for reinforcements from Schurz and Doubleday, Gen. Howard rode to the front himself. I was left alone by the cemetery gate in one tower of which lived the German family of a grave-digger. The Union wounded, who were able to walk came limping up the hill with bandaged arms and cut faces, finding their way painfully to the rear. I saw that the time had come when I could work. I unstrapped my bottle of brandy and bundle of rags, and as I had eaten nothing since breakfast, went into the gate-house and asked the good German woman for food. She kindly gave me the remains of a custard pie and although it had soured in the sultry air of that July day, I did not refuse it. I left my soiled clothing with her to be washed, and rode back to a house on the left of the "pike" where some wounded men lay upon the grass of the yard and the piazza.

The Baltimore turnpike runs from Gettysburg to Baltimore in a direct line—fifty miles. The completion of railroads has, in recent years, greatly diminished the travel. It is not kept in first-class order, but for the purposes of an army its hard surface is infinitely superior to the "dirt roads" of the vicinity. The little white house to your left, after leaving the cemetery gate, now used as a toll-house, has a piazza in front and a tall, old-fashioned wooden pump on the left. I dismounted from my "condemned" army horse, who did me noble service in these days of haste, long distances and "cross-lots" trips. On the piazza lay a Union captain with a broken leg. He had hobbled back to a resting-place, and gratefully welcomed the cold-water bathing of the wounded limb. What was my surprise to see him spring up, as if with a paroxysm of pain, drag his wounded leg after him to the yard-gate, and with angry denunciations begin to belabor a soldier lying there on the grass, with the flat side of his sword! "You miserable, lazy coward! Get up! Go back, or I'll break every bone in your rascally body!" The poor bummer, who was a deserter and unwounded, gathered himself up with a cowed look, and, followed at every step with language more forcible than polite, and blows that made the metal ring, took his way back to the post he had deserted. He was a member of the captain's own company, and a well-known coward and shirk, as the former explained apologetically as he painfully dragged himself back for further surgical treatment.

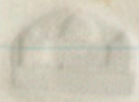
Others of the same class would pretend to be wounded, but with the captain's aid I would detect the imposture and order them back to their posts on pain of arrest. None of them questioned my authority or rank, though I wore only a badge of the Christian Commission!

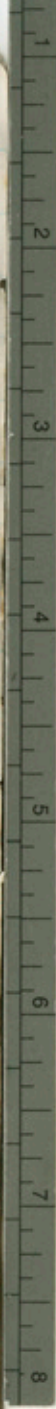
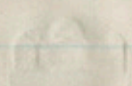
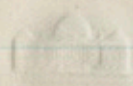
✓ 5

The sun was slowly sinking, and the distant sounds of the guns on the battle-field were dying away as I left Mrs. Peiffer's to help relieve other wounded who had dropped down along the turnpike, or gathered about the houses and barns as far as the foot of the hill where Rock Creek is bridged. As it grew dark the firing ceased. I concluded from the fact that there were no signs of retreat, that our forces held Cemetery Hill. I had learned of the terrible fight of the Eleventh Corps in the open fields, at the right of the alms-house beyond Gettysburg, from the returning wounded. Outflanked on both sides, the First and Eleventh Corps had been crushed back into the town, and had been compelled to take refuge behind Gen. Steinwehr's works on the summit of Cemetery Hill. In that fight Gen. Barlow, commanding a division, had been terribly wounded, and left within the enemy's lines. His heroic wife had gone to him, and his life was not despaired of. (He lived to do good service against the "Tweed Ring" in the city of New York.) The story of the probably fatal wound of this pale, almost beardless, young officer, a Harvard college graduate and a young lawyer of New York who had been my companion a few days before; the heroism of his wife, who had marched from Maryland with us and given her gracious presence to our religious services, made me feel as if I ought to be with them.

Gen. Schimmelfennig, who commanded the other division, and who was also an acquaintance of mine at Gen. Howard's headquarters, was reported killed. But on the retreat of his men he had hidden himself in a pile of lumber and had managed to escape and rejoin his command. He was a brave German, spare, sinewy form, a splendid horseman and a popular officer, whose men received him back with glad shouts of welcome. He was as one risen from the dead. As our soldiers passed through the town there was fighting in the streets. Most of the citizens were in their cellars with their families. My friend Dr. Charles Alexander, Surgeon of the Sixteenth Maine Regiment, of the First Corps, was wounded as he was crossing the street to a temporary hospital in a church.

When night fell, Pennsylvania College, the Theological Seminary, and many of the houses, were occupied by the rebels. The Union and rebel wounded were mingled together. Some of the former in the fields and





groves north of the town lay uncared for till the three-days' fight was over. What that means in hot weather, and when often they are unable to move to any place to obtain water, never can be described. Our own surgeons, taken prisoners, did what they could to relieve the wounded, who were carried into the Court House, churches and houses of the town. No more came up over the hill and along the road where I was. I was very weary with the work and excitement of the day. I rode back to the second bridge and entered a two-story brick house on the right, just across the creek, and asked for a place to sleep. The people were very kind, and I was allowed to occupy a chamber where various followers of the army, Jew-traders, teamsters, gamblers and others already had quarters for the night. My little bundle of clothing had been stolen from theommel of my saddle in the afternoon, while my horse was tied to a fence; my pocket-book was about empty; still I was a little nervous in that strange company. The night was hot. Unceasingly the heavy wagons of the artillery rumbled along the "pike." I slept little. Looking out of the window about midnight, I saw the yard filled with men and horses, and the well surrounded by thirsty travelers. The road was full of horsemen, who marched by in full ranks until morning. Gregg's cavalry, of nearly 5,000 men, were on their way to defend our right flank. It was a hot, hazy morning. When I went down stairs I found the well drunk dry, and nothing left of the little creek but muddy puddles. The kind people prepared a breakfast of bacon, bread and coffee, for which I was glad to pay.

All night long, on all the roads leading from the South, as on ours, the Army of the Potomac had been marching—concentrating on Gettysburg. Many of those who fought hardest, on the Southern slope of the ridge, in the groves, or on the right or left flanks, never saw the town from whence the battle takes its name. They died on the field. They were wounded and taken back miles in ambulances to field hospitals in the rear. Or, at the close of the battle, they marched directly back over the same route by which they came. A soldier, and indeed nearly all subordinate officers who are faithful to individual and local duties, can tell you little of a battle but what happens under their own eyes.

2 d 5 as

After a visit to some of the wounded who had fallen to my care on Wednesday, and a word or two, some nourishment for new cases, or a few words jotted on my note book to be written to friends when I should get a chance, I began to long to be again on the summit of the ridge, to feast my eyes upon the grand prospect that opens from the Cemetery towards the cool, free fields and mountains northward. I was anxious also to say to the sentinels up upon that fortified and guarded height. "Watchman, what of the night?" What forces have arrived? Where are they posted? What do you hear from the town below? What can be seen over and beyond the Seminary ridge? How many are the enemy? Who is in command? Will there be another fight? Pondering such questions till I grew uneasy, I mounted my horse and rode away two miles to the gate-house of the cemetery.

It was about noon. I had no eyes for the northern prospect. How the scene at my feet had changed! The gate-house of the good German family was filled with soldiers. The iron-fences around the graves had some of them been broken. A few white stones, marked with the names of the sleeping dead, had been broken. Others by the thoughtful kindness of Gen. Howard had been taken up and laid carefully aside. An old stone wall stretched from the turnpike to the left as far as I could see. Behind it lay several regiments of the Eleventh corps. Beyond them, down the slope to the Emmitsburg road, up which we had first ridden, and on the very spot where the day before I had sat while my horse fed upon the unmown grass, an irregular line of skirmishers was stationed—now lying quietly in the grass, now moving about uneasily and watchfully. I could hear occasionally the sharp crack of a rifle as some sharp-shooter would fire from an attic window of the higher houses. Once in a while an explosion, louder because nearer, told me that one of our own riflemen had the range of some rebel's hiding place. A white hospital flag floated over Pennsylvania College and another from the cupola of the Theological Seminary where Gen. Lee reconnoitered our position. Gen. Howard, who had commanded the field during the first day and who now held with the Eleventh Corps the key to the whole position, which he had seized and fortified at the opening of the battle beyond the town, was seated on one of the graves eying the field before him with his glass. His clothing was somewhat soiled. His sleeve that was emptied at Fair Oaks dangled in the wind. He was quiet and self-possessed, but simulated no *nonchalance*. His quick eye roved everywhere. His interest in the scene before and around him was evidently intense. I sat down with Major Charles H. Howard of his staff, and talked over the events of yesterday, last night and this morning. While there were some personal details, of course, still, the location of the troops, the position of the rebels, the repulse of the day before,

8

and the prospect of victory in the coming struggle, were the points carefully canvassed. As I had looked over the country in our rear it seemed to me that once driven from Cemetery Hill, there was no point as defensible to the Maryland line, or indeed to the Potomac itself.

I pointed out the sharp outline of Powers Hill, a mile in the rear, not as high as this ridge, but a point that could be easily seized and strongly defended by any retreating army not panic stricken. From where we sat we saw Round Top two miles away at the left. Gen. Mead's headquarters were on the Taneytown road, half way from the cemetery to the conical-shaped and wooded height thus named. We could see the far advanced line of General Sickles of the Third Corps on the level between. Gen. Warren, chief engineer, had his signal flags flying from a staff on the summit of Little Round Top, since called Weed's Hill, because Gen. Weed was killed there. On our right the Baltimore turnpike, with a battery defending it, came first. Then came East Cemetery Hill, defended by Barlow's Division of the Eleventh Corps, now commanded by Gen. Ames.

The same gentleman who was afterward Governor of Mississippi and then United States Senator. What was of the First Corps occupied the next point, and the slow-coming, but entire and brave, Twelfth Corps stretched away across the narrow valley, and at summit of the steep and heavily wooded Culps and so down to Rock Creek. Gen. Slocum's headquarters were just behind, on Powers Hill. There, the Fifth Corps encamped in reserve, ready to help when most needed. One needs a map to see all distinctly, unless, as in my own case, it was indelibly photographed on his memory during the white heat excitement of those and the following days.

*f Miss-
left
doubt
the
Heed
help
of this
by
he at*

9
Time flew so swiftly that it did not seem as late
4 P. M., when the rebel batteries from the ridge oppos-
and clear around to the far right, opened a tremendous
fire on the very spot where we were sitting. It was to
cover an infantry attack on Sickles's protruded line, on
the plain between us and Round Top. But no one on
our side knew where, in the din, dust and smoke caused
by this cannonade, the blow was about to fall. The
men, lying along the old stone wall, (now replaced by
the beautiful hedge of the United States Cemetery)
sprang to their guns as if each had received a shot at
the same instant. Gen. Howard's voice rang out loud
and angrily, "Lie down! Down!" and they dropped
suddenly behind their defense as they had

Where were the enemy? A dark and heavy body of
men were seen debouching from the town
from a skirting of woods, and hastily pressing their
way across our front towards the wheat field and
peach orchard at the left, where the troops of the Third
and part of the Second Corps lay. Gen. Howard com-
manded the artillery to fire. Gen. Ames touched his
hat as politely as if on parade, pressed my proffered
hand, hurried away, and instantly from Culps Hill across
the turnpike along the cemetery, and far away towards
Round Top, the Union artillery roar out a defiant and
thunderous reply. I was but little startled by the sound
of the rebel guns, many of them two miles away. Nor
did I get as nervous as yesterday at the howling of the
shells overhead, but when our heavy guns opened in
front of me, firing as fast as they could load, first
the rebel artillery and then, by command of Gen. How-
ard, at the advancing foe, the horrible, frightful, dis-
tracting noise was too much for my nerves, and I was
glad to take a hint from Major Howard and retire.

10

The *dictum* of my friends, the dictate of prudence, and the instinct of fear, all combined to hasten my flight. An unexpected obstacle arose. Whether from the unaccustomed din of those heavy guns, the awkwardness of his rider, native obstinacy, or reminiscences of previous and futile retreats, my poor old horse refused to budge. To leave him, would insure his destruction, possibly mine. To increase my trepidation, a sentinel at the cemetery gate told me I had better not pass through that to the turnpike, as every horse had been shot by rebel sharpshooters for hours, whenever they saw one pass the gate-post. I then determined to go directly over the hill and get into the road through the broken fence behind it. Finding it useless to scold, kick and cane the animal, as I am ashamed to say the excitement of the moment led me to do, I mounted him, and by dint of spur and voice, we soon disappeared from the dangerous height on which my head was very unwillingly the highest point.

What a ride it was! Thousands were of my mind, and were seeking some place of safety from the fearful rain of shot and shell. Some had been visiting friends. Others had been up as guards to trains of ammunition. Some were ordered to another point in the field. Teamsters returning to their wagons; wounded men limping to the rear; hucksters who had carried cigars, *et cetera*, to the soldiers on the hill; all were pouring back, pell mell, frightened, hurrying, panicky. Had I not been on the summit so recently, I should have said the entire army was struck with panic and were in retreat. People coming up the hill were mercilessly trodden under foot. A shell bursting by the roadside would cause an eddy in the crowd and hasten the flight. Horses were killed and men wounded as these shells burst among us. I made my way across the crowded pike and galloped in the pasture beside the woods some mile and a half with whatever speed my horse was capable of. Stopping at a brush fence, I refreshed the dryness of my mouth, by chewing a leaf and having got beyond danger, rode slowly out to the road, tied my horse to a tree, and endeavored again to do my appointed work.

The thundering cannonade was succeeded by a silence even more terrible, and that by rattling volleys of musketry. Again the less seriously wounded began their sad procession to the rear, many weak from the loss of blood, thirsty and in pain, covered with perspiration and dust, their clothing soiled, torn or thrown away in the fight, there was not wanting relief that kindness, even with limited resources, could afford.

There was no more opportunity for me to look at the battle on that Thursday, the second day of the conflict. But the stories of wounded men and officers and the sounds of the conflict did not leave me in ignorance of the result.

I met Gen. Sickles as he was carried back, one leg amputated. His pale face had lost nothing of its cheerful courage by the suffering he had endured. He lay on his back on a stretcher, greeted me with great kindness and inquired for an officer, a mutual acquaintance, at the front. His cool, unflinching manner and self-forgetful words won my respect for the one-legged veteran. His bravery on the field, his fortitude in the hospital, and his faithful service as minister to Spain have done much to redeem some errors of his earlier public life. His position may have been ill-chosen, but he and his grand old Third corps made a heroic fight that day.

Longstreet made his terrible onslaught on Sickles'

corps at 4 P. M. This was covered by the cannonade before described. Gun after gun had to be abandoned to the enemy. Sixty horses belonging to one battery were killed. Men fell like grass before a scythe. Reinforcements from the Fifth corps, till then unengaged, went to Sickles' help. Crawford's Pennsylvania Reserves, some of whose homes were near the battlefield, threw themselves into the fight. It is estimated that 70,000 men were contending on that narrow plain. At the left Weed's Hill or "Little Round Top" was persistently held against the rebel attack that found its way through the rocks of that singular valley, called the Devil's Den. Gen. Chamberlain with the 20th Maine Regiment held the extreme left on Round Top with unexampled heroism. His brother was my companion and co-worker that day among the wounded. Like so many whose sufferings we strove to relieve, he has since gone where

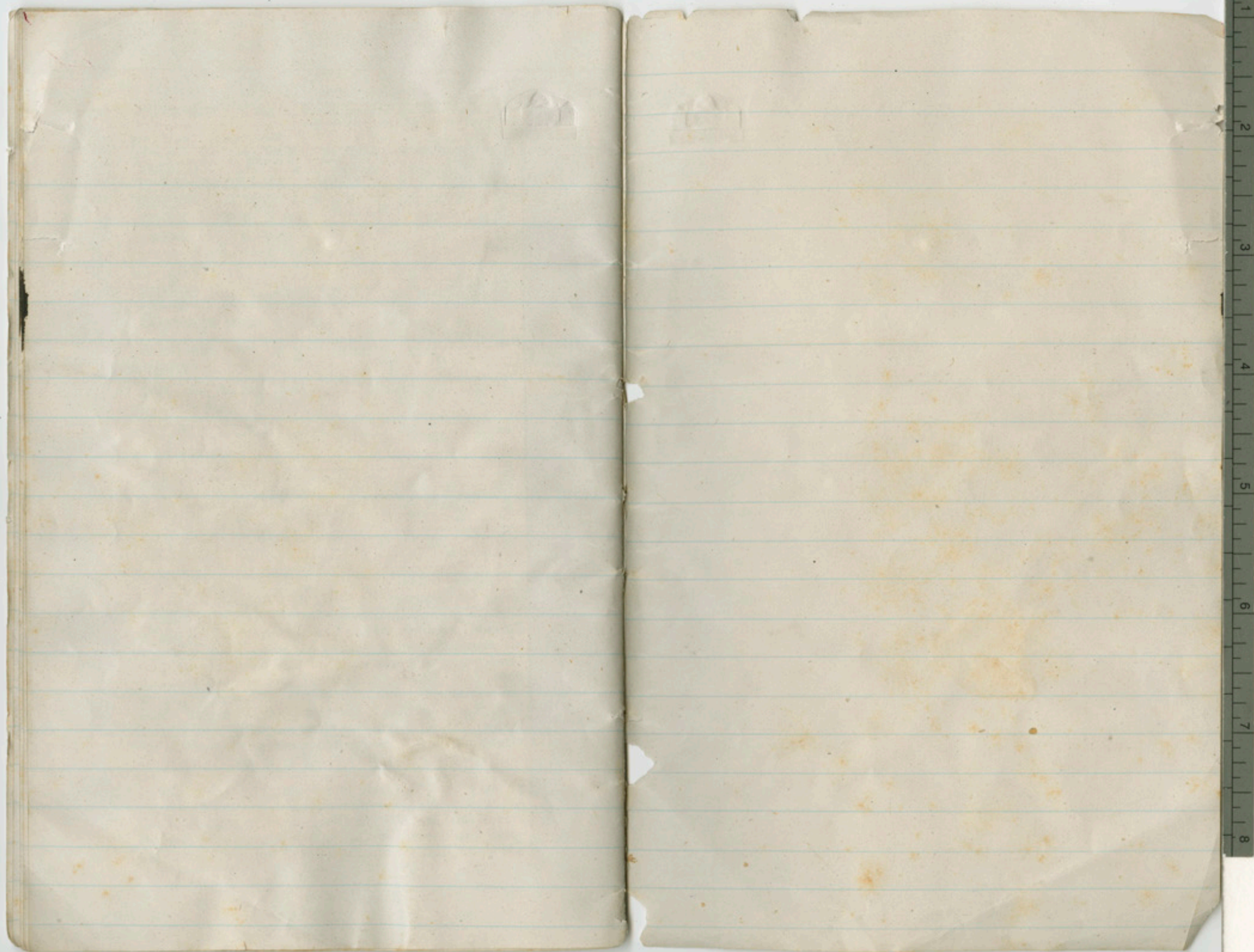
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more.

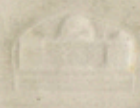
12

In spite of re-inforcements from Hancock, the rebels seemed to gain. A part of the 12th corps under Slocum, was then ordered across the Baltimore turnpike to assist Sickles. At six o'clock the roar of the battle was unabated. I noticed the head of a column marching up the pike from towards Baltimore. I rode down to meet it and recognized an officer. It was the veteran Sixth corps which after a forced march of thirty-five miles were coming to our relief. Their sweaty faces and weary limbs spoke of the hard march, but their bright guns and un-torn uniforms bore a striking contrast to those around me. They moved up into the woods on the southern slope, and their wagons and artillery filled the open fields behind them. The Vermont men, under Stannard made a charge. The Sixth corps, with full ranks and a hearty cheer, joined their comrades near Weed's hill, and at sunset Longstreet could go no farther. He had forced back our line, captured some batteries and prisoners, but had received a check that hastened the close of the fight.

Just as the firing died away on the left, the "Louisiana Tigers" and Hoke's North Carolinians, creeping across Spangler's farm, suddenly charged up the northern slope of Cemetery hill on our right. At first they surprised the Fifth Maine battery and other troops under Gen. Ames of Gen. Howard's command. But our men rallied, the guns were depressed to their range, and the enemy were hurled back in confusion and death. The intrenchments left by Slocum when he went from Culp's hill to the help of Sickles, had quietly been occupied by Gen. Ewell's men! When the men of the Twelfth Corps returned by moonlight and were about to cheer, to make themselves recognized by their comrades, they were received with a volley! A soldier told me that three of his companions fell.

Thus closed the second day. It was not decisive. Men and horses lay everywhere around me, dead and dying. Half clothed rebel prisoners were marching to the rear. The artillery wagons went up past us all night to the front and the weary armies lay resting where they fought. How still the heavens and how brilliant the stars! It seemed to me, as I rode slowly along, turning my horse here and there to avoid the corpses of the dead whose white faces and sightless eyes were turned toward the heavens, as if the peace of God had withdrawn to the pure, unspotted sky, and the wrath of man reigned alone upon the blood-stained earth.





MAZ
4:3

• • • • •

• AT GETTYSBURG •

• — •

BY ROWLAND B. HOWARD.

• • • • •

A BATTLE

AS IT APPEARED TO AN EYE-WITNESS.

BY ROWLAND B. HOWARD.

I was at Gettysburg July 1-4, 1863, with my brother, Gen. O. O. Howard, but not as a soldier. It was my first and only battle-field. I received there, not my first impressions, but by far my deepest conviction as to the real and essential character of war. The "pomp and circumstance" were not wanting as we broke camp at Leesburg, Va., and marched to the sound of music and under waving banners towards Pennsylvania. The report of the first gun following a distant flash and the slow rising of a puff of smoke over the woods excited a thrill of patriotic emotion. Our reinforcements hurrying beyond the town to repel attacks already begun, and others hastening to gain and hold important positions on Cemetery Ridge, roused my honest sympathy. But when the first broken line of limping, bleeding "wounded" halted along the Baltimore turnpike, and I attempted, almost alone, the work of relief, I felt as never before war's cruel sacrifice of blood and limb and life. On the second evening of the battle the moon rose as peaceful-faced as ever, and the silent stars looked down unchanged on the upturned, ghastly faces of our dead; the otherwise noiseless night resounded with cries of mortal agony from the dying around me. I said to myself, "O God, the moon and the stars

Thou hast made, but not this miserable murder and mangling of men." It is not like nature: it is anti-natural; it is of the pit. On the third afternoon I went up, weary with hospital work, for a few moments' rest to the cupola of a farm-house. The thin line of blue-coated soldiers seemed to waver along the summit of the ridge. I involuntarily prayed for their safety, my country and for the right. Just then, above the rattling of musketry and the roar of artillery, there came a clap of thunder from a rapidly rising cloud. For a moment no other sound was heard. It was as if God were saying, "I am mightier than ye all! Hear my voice. Cease your mad and tumultuous strife!" Here the question came to me as never before, "Is this the work of God or of Satan? Is there no other way of settling human differences, establishing and confirming human rights? Do union, liberty, and law lie along no other road?" Then, as the roar of battle was renewed and volley succeeded volley, it seemed to me that each bullet was hungry for a life. Some lives, dear to me personally, rose in their noble manliness before me. I spoke imagined farewells to the dying. I seemed to look upon dead faces only too familiar. I heard in each discharge the possible knell of friend or brother. Oh, wicked extravagance and waste of most precious things! That young man has, with vast expense of time and toil, trained his bullet-pierced brain for great intellectual attainments. The other has had such gracious spiritual experiences as to be divinely marked as an exemplar and teacher of religion. Learning,

skill, wisdom, piety, and moral power were won by him by years of toil, self-denial, and consecration. Ability was thus acquired for which the world has a thousand aching voids. Alas! his body affords less an obstacle to the passage of a bullet than that of a horse or even a senseless stone. Surely here is a wicked waste.

What effect has all this had on such as come away unslain, unwounded?

Does not this work seem too like that of wild beasts or bull-dogs and prize fighters? Separate the military hero himself from his bloody deeds; forget for a moment the cause of the war in which he fights—what are the personal motives, impulses, and passions roused into life and energy by fighting? A Christian soldier once said to me confidentially, "I cannot bear to go into the presence of God so angry as I always become in battle." Gen. Sherman wrote, "*War is cruelty. You cannot refine it!*" It is that and worse. It lacks not only kindness and humanity; it lacks mercy, righteousness, justice—it is a moral monster. However justifiable we may think its alleged cause, however beneficent its results, its facts are hideously wicked. In a divinely created and ordered universe there is, there *must be*, a better way. *It is our duty to find it.*

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY,
No. 1 Somerset Street.
1887.

Thomas Todd, Printer, Congregational House, Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

192
4.3

AT GETTYSBURG.

By ROWLAND B. HOWARD.

A BATTLE

AS IT APPEARED TO AN EYE-WITNESS.

BY ROWLAND E. HOWARD.

I was at Gettysburg July 1-4, 1863, with my brother Gen. O. O. Howard, but not as a soldier. It was my first and only battle-field. I received there, not my first impressions, but by far my deepest conviction as to the real and essential character of war. The "pomp and circumstance" were not wanting as we broke camp at Leesburg, Va., and marched to the sound of music and under waving banners towards Pennsylvania. The report of the first gun following a distant flash and the slow rising of a puff of smoke over the woods excited a thrill of patriotic emotion. Our reinforcements hurrying beyond the town to repel attacks already begun, and others hastening to gain and hold important positions on Cemetery Ridge, roused my honest sympathy. But when the first broken line of limping, bleeding, "wounded" halted along the Baltimore turnpike, and I attempted, almost alone, the work of relief, I felt as never before war's cruel sacrifice of blood and limb and life. On the second evening of the battle the moon rose as peaceful-faced as ever and the silent stars looked down unchanged on the upturned, ghastly faces of our dead; the otherwise noiseless night resounded with cries of mortal agony from the dying around me. I said to myself, "O God, the moon and the stars Thou hast made, but not this miserable murder and mangling of men." It is not like nature: it is anti-natural; it is of the pit. On the third afternoon I went up, weary with hospital work, for a few moments' rest to the cupola of a farm-house. The thin line of blue-coated soldiers seemed to waver along the summit of the ridge. I involuntarily prayed for their safety, my country and for the right. Just then, above the rattling of musketry and the roar of artillery, there came a clap of thunder from a rapidly rising cloud. For a moment no other sound was heard. It was as if God were saying, "I am mightier than ye all! Hear my voice. Cease your mad

and tumultuous strife!" Here the question came to me as never before, "Is this the work of God or of Satan? Is there no other way of settling human differences, establishing and confirming human rights? Do union, liberty, and law lie along no other road?" Then, as the roar of battle was renewed and volley succeeded volley, it seemed to me that each bullet was hungry for a life. Some lives, dear to me personally, rose in their noble manliness before me. I spoke imagined farewells to the dying. I seemed to look upon dead faces only too familiar. I heard in each discharge the possible knell of friend or brother. Oh, wicked extravagance and waste of most precious things! That young man has, with vast expense of time and toil, trained his bullet-pierced brain for great intellectual attainments. The other has had such gracious spiritual experiences as to be divinely marked as an exemplar and teacher of religion. Learning, skill, wisdom, piety and moral power were won by him by years of toil, self-denial and consecration. Ability was thus acquired for which the world has a thousand aching voids. Alas! his body affords less an obstacle to the passage of a bullet than that of a horse or even a senseless stone. Surely here is a wicked waste.

What effect has all this had on such as come away unslain, unwounded?

Does not this work seem too like that of wild beasts or bull-dogs and prize fighters? Separate the military hero himself from his bloody deeds; forget for a moment the cause of the war in which he fights, — what are the personal motives, impulses, and passions roused into life and energy by fighting? A Christian soldier once said to me confidentially, "I cannot bear to go into the presence of God so angry as I always become in battle." Gen. Sherman wrote, "*War is cruelty. You cannot refine it!*" It is that and worse. It lacks not only kindness and humanity, it lacks mercy, righteousness, justice, — it is a moral monster. However justifiable we may think its alleged cause, however beneficent its results, its facts are hideously wicked. In a divinely created and ordered universe there is, there *must be* a better way. *It is our duty to find it.*

THE PEOPLE'S SONG OF PEACE.

BY JOAQUIN MILLER.

(Except the final couplet.)

The grass is green on Bunker Hill,
The waters sweet in Brandywine;
The sword sleeps in the scabbard still,
The farmer keeps his flock and vine;
Then who would mar the scene to-day,
With vaunt of battle-field or fray?

The brave corn lifts, in regiments,
Ten thousand sabres in the sun;
The ricks replace the battle-tents,
The bannered tassels toss and run,
The neighing steed, the bugle's blast,—
These be the stories of the past.

The earth has healed her wounded breast,
The cannons plough the fields no more;
The heroes rest: oh, let them rest
In peace along the peaceful shore;
They fought for peace, for peace they fell;
They sleep in peace, and all is well.

The fields forget the battles fought,
The trenches wave in golden grain;
Shall we neglect the lesson taught
And tear the wound agape again?
Sweet Mother Nature, nurse the land,
And heal her wounds with gentle hand.

Lo! peace on earth! Lo! flock and fold,
Lo! rich abundance, fat increase,
And valleys clad in sheen of gold;
O rise and sing the song of peace
With Christmas Angels as of yore.
The Prince of Peace is at the door!

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY,
NO. 1 SOMERSET STREET.
1887.

J. E. Farwell, Printer, 45 Pearl St., Boston.

WAR AS IT APPEARS TO AN EYE WITNESS.

BY K. B. HOWARD.

I was at Gettysburg but not as a soldier. It was my first and only battlefield. I received there, not my first impressions, but by far my deepest convictions as to the real and essential character of war. The "pomp and circumstance" were not wanting as we broke camp at Leesburg and marched to the sound of music and under waving banners towards Pennsylvania. The report of the first gun following a distant flash and the slow rising of a puff of smoke over the woods yonder excited a thrill of patriotic emotion. Our reinforcements hurrying beyond the town to repel attacks already begun, and others hastening to gain and hold important positions on Cemetery Ridge, roused my honest sympathy. But when the first broken line of limping, bleeding "wounded" halted along the Baltimore turnpike, and I attempted, almost alone, the work of relief, I felt as never before war's cruel sacrifice of blood and limb and life. On the second evening of the battle the moon rose as peaceful-faced as ever and the silent stars looked down unchanged on the upturned, ghastly faces of our dead; the otherwise noiseless night resounded with cries of mortal agony from the dying around me. I said to myself, "O God, the moon and the stars thou hast made, but not this miserable murder and mangling of men." It is not like nature; it is anti-natural; it is of the pit. On the third afternoon I went up, weary with hospital work, for a few moments' rest to the cupola of a farm-house. Our thin line of blue-coated heroes seemed to waver along the summit of the ridge. I involuntarily prayed for their safety, their success and for victory. Just then, above the rattling of musketry and the roar of artillery, there came a clap of thunder from a rapidly rising cloud. For a moment no other sound was heard. It was as if God were saying, "I am mightier than ye all! Hear my voice. Cease your mad and tumultuous strife!" Here the question came to me as never

before, "Is all this strife the work of God or of Satan? Is there no other way of settling human differences, establishing and confirming human rights? Do union, liberty, and law lie along no other road?" Then, as the roar of battle was renewed and volley succeeded volley, it seemed to me that each bullet was hungry for a life. Some lives, dear to me personally, rose in their noble manliness before me. I spoke imagined farewells to the dying. I seemed to look upon dead faces only too familiar. I heard in each discharge the possible knell of friend or brother. Oh, wicked extravagance and waste of most precious things! That young man has, with vast expense of time and toil, trained his bullet-pierced brain for great intellectual attainments. The other has had such gracious spiritual experiences as to be divinely marked as an exemplar and teacher of religion. Learning, skill, wisdom, piety, and moral power were won by him by years of self-denial and consecration. Ability was thus acquired for which the world has a thousand aching voids. Alas! his body affords less of an obstacle to the passage of a bullet than that of a horse or even a senseless stone. Surely here is a wicked waste. And what shall we say of such as come away unslain, unwounded? ~~And~~ they renew their work does it not seem too like that of wild beasts or bull-dogs and blood-hounds? Separate the military hero himself from his bloody deeds; forget for a moment the cause of the war in which he fights,—what are the personal motives, impulses, and passions roused into life and energy by fighting? A Christian soldier once said to me confidentially, "I cannot bear to go to God so angry as I always become in battle." Alas! war is more than Gen. Sherman's epithet implies, "barbarism." It lacks not only refinement, it lacks righteousness, justice, mercy,—it is a moral monster. However justifiable we may think its alleged cause, its facts are hideously wicked. In a divinely created and ordered universe there is, there *must* be, a better way. It is our duty to find it.

HOWARD, Rowland Bailey.

At Gettysburg. A battle as it appeared to an eye-witness.

N. p. [1887.] (4) pp. 16°.

AL. 1855

