

CHAPTER XIV.

The March to Gettysburg, and the Battles of the 2d and 3d of July. Death of General Strong Vincent.

It was now ascertained that the main body of Lee's army had crossed at Williamsport and Shepherdstown, and made their way into Pennsylvania. His whole army was in camp at Chambersburg the day after we reached Frederick, and the indications were that he was on his way to Baltimore. On the morning of the 28th we were again in motion. We made a detour towards the Northeast, so as to intercept him on his way between Chambersburg and that city. On the night of the 30th we encamped at Union about three miles from the Pennsylvania line. During the whole march the spirits of the men of the Eighty-Third had increased in confidence as they neared the boundaries of Pennsylvania, and when they found that they were about to enter the threshold of their native State and fight upon her soil, their enthusiasm knew no bounds. The next morning when crossing the line, Col. Vincent sent back word to the Regiment that we were now on the soil of old Pennsylvania—to hang out the banner on the outward wall, and let our march be accompanied by the sound of the ear-piercing fife and spirit stirring drum. In a moment Sergeant Rogers had unfurled the flag of the Eighty-Third to the winds. The drum corps struck up our thrilling old national air of Yankee Doodle, and as the glorious old banner, shattered and rent by the shocks of a dozen battle fields, floated once more proudly upon the inspiring breezes of the old Keystone State, long and loud shouts of joy from ten thousand iron throats broke upon the morning air. The enthusiasm was contagious. In a few moments it had spread from regiment to regiment, and from brigade to brigade, until every banner was flying, every fife screaming, and every drum beating. For the first time had those peaceful vallies been awakened from their quiet slumbers by the heavy tramp of armed legions about to engage in a death grapple with the foe, who had invaded and desecrated their soil. We pressed forward rapidly for a fight was already going on at Gettysburg. The enemy was concentrating, and it was necessary that the whole army should reinforce our advance corps without delay. Late in the afternoon we reached Hanover. Here we found that but a few hours before Kilpatrick had encountered the enemy's cavalry and driven them back in disorder. We halted but two hours and then pressed on; for here we received the intelligence that the First Corps had encountered a superior force of the enemy, with unfavorable results, and that Gen. Reynolds was killed. Night soon settled around us. Passing through the villages on the way, the women came out and sang the Star Spangled Banner and other national airs, and were cheered in return by the soldiers. At two o'clock that night we halted in the woods, three miles from Gettysburg, and after a scanty meal, laid down to rest. By daylight we were up again and on the march. Early in the morning we reached the field and found a line of battle supporting the artillery. Here we formed, too, in order of battle, and laid down to rest, and were held as reserves until the arrival of the Sixth Corps.

About ten o'clock the Sixth Corps came up, after a heavy march of thirty-six miles, and we then moved towards the centre. It is said that we were ordered to the left. I do not know what became of the Second and Third Divisions (the Regulars and the Pennsylvania Reserves), but the position which the First Division took was nearer the centre than the left of the line. We moved very leisurely towards the place, and on the way were once halted and drawn up by brigades in columns of division, on the banks of a stream where stood a mill. Remaining there awhile we moved forward by the flank over the stream and up a hill, and there, having formed again in columns by division, we again halted and laid down to rest. All this while skirmishing was going on at the front. At four o'clock in the afternoon the Third Brigade was detached from the division, and moved at a double quick for over a mile to the extreme left. There we found that the Third Corps were already engaged with the enemy, and that they were being hard pressed. The Third Division might have arrived before us, as we joined on their left after we had formed in line of battle. The first and second brigades must have followed soon after, as they took a position somewhere between the Third Corps and the Pennsylvania Reserves.

The position to which we marched, on the extreme left, was what was afterwards known as Little Round Top. It was an irregular rocky rise of ground, sloping down on two sides, (the front and rear) to low marshy ground, and might have been a hundred feet above its level. It consisted of a huge, solid rock, covered over with a thousand other loose boulders of every size and shape, and was most admirably adapted for a defensive position. Upon the top of the solid rock, the access to which was very steep and difficult, several of our batteries had been hauled and planted. On the left was Big Round Top, a high, rocky hill, covered with woods and overlooking Little Round Top. Between the two hills there was a small vale (not a ravine as it is commonly called,) about a hundred feet in width, and covered with trees, but rather open and underbrushed. This vale might now be appropriately named the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

On reaching the ground, Col. Vincent proceeded at once to post the brigade in line of battle. The regiments were ordered to take their places just as they had come in the order of march; the Forty-Fourth, under Col. Rice, on the right, the Twentieth, Col. Chamberlain, on the left, the Sixteenth, Lieut. Col. Welch, on the right centre, and the Eighty-Third, Capt. Woodward on the left centre. Seeing that the Sixteenth would thus intervene between the Forty-Fourth and Eighty-Third, Col. Rice rode up to Vincent and said, "Colonel, the Eighty-Third and Forty-Fourth have always fought side by side in every battle, and I wish that they may do the same to-day." Colonel Vincent immediately ordered Colonel Welch, of the Sixteenth to take his position on the right of the brigade, thus placing the Forty-Fourth on the immediate right of the Eighty-Third. This order was at once executed. The line now formed by the brigade was a quarter circle, lapping around the base of the hill and fronting Big Round Top and the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The right of the Sixteenth was more exposed than the rest of the brigade and, as the event proved, they had a difficult position to maintain. Skirmishers were sent to the front—those of the Eighty-Third under command of Capt. D. P. Jones, and those of the Forty-Fourth under the command of Capt. Larrabee.

This was but the work of five minutes' time, and scarcely had the troops been put in line, when a loud, fierce, distant yell was heard, as if all pantomimism had broken loose and joined in the chorus of one grand, universal war-whoop. On looking to the left and front, we saw Hood's whole division, of Longstreet's corps, over a quarter of a mile off, charging in three lines on a double-quick, and, with bayonets fixed, coming down upon us. The enemy had had his eye upon this position, but he was too late. He was now determined to atone for the loss by driving us out of it. He saw that it was the extreme left of our line, and a strong position to attack, and could he, by an overwhelming force, dislodge us from it, he would have a splendid field of operations on the left flank and in the rear of our army. The moment the enemy had emerged from the woods and begun the charge, the batteries posted on Little Round Top opened upon them. We could see men, at every bursting of the shells, drop from the ranks. The moment, too, that Col. Vincent saw the enemy's force he fully comprehended the danger. We had less than eleven hundred men. We were about to sustain the shock of a whole division. Turning to Adj't. Gen. Clark, "Go," said he, "and tell Gen. Barnes to send me reinforcements at once: the enemy are coming against us with an overwhelming force." Dismounting from his horse, and sending him to the rear, he mounted a rock that he might overlook and direct the operations of the impending battle. On came the enemy, running and yelling like fiends, the artillery on Little Round Top making huge gaps in their ranks at every step. They soon neared our position, and our skirmishers were driven in, the enemy following closely in their rear. They at once attacked the whole line, but threw the weight of their force against the centre where lay the Eighty-Third and Forty-Fourth. In an instant a sheet of smoke and flame burst from our whole line, which made the enemy reel and stagger, and fall back in confusion. But soon rallying they advanced again to the assault. Taking position

behind the rocks, they poured in a deadly fire upon our troops. Hundreds of them approached even within fifteen yards of our line, but they approached only to be shot down or hurled back covered with gaping wounds. It was a death grapple in which assailant and assailed seem resolved to win or fall in the struggle. The enemy had everything to gain if they carried the position; everything to lose if they failed, and they fought most desperately, and determinedly. Perhaps the whole history of the war does not present a more desperate or heroic struggle for the mastery than the little valley between those hills presented on that day. But the men of the Eighty-Third and Forty-Fourth stood as firm as the rocks by which they fought. The drummers had thrown aside their drums, seized the musket, and taken their place in the ranks. The color-bearer planted his color in the crevice of a rock, seized a musket, too, and fought like a hero. "For a whole hour," says Col. Rice, in his official report, "the enemy tried in vain to break the lines of the Forty-Fourth and Eighty-Third, charging again and again, within a few yards of those unflinching troops: but every charge was repulsed with terrible slaughter."

Despairing of success at this point, he next made a desperate attack upon the extreme right of the brigade. The Sixteenth, though a valiant regiment, not having the same protection and more exposed to their fire, became somewhat thrown into confusion, and a portion of them ran to the rear. At this moment the One Hundred and Fortieth New York, who had been sent as reinforcements, appeared on the brow of the hill and receiving a volley from the rebels, which killed their Colonel, O'Rourke, and a number of other officers, were also thrown into confusion. The danger was now pressing, and in a moment more the rebels would have broken through and perhaps have driven our troops from the ground and swung around upon the rear of the army. Seeing the danger Col. Vincent descended from the rock, and with the most superhuman exertions of himself and his officers, drove the men to the front, and again the onward surge of the rebel host was checked. But Col. Vincent's valor on this occasion cost him his life. He had become a prominent mark for the sharpshooters of the enemy, and he fell mortally wounded by a minnie bullet in the left groin. "This is the fourth or fifth time they have shot at me," said he, "and they have hit me at last." In a few moments he was laid upon a stretcher and carried to the rear.

The command of the brigade now devolved upon Col. Rice, of the Forty-Fourth. That officer passed at once along the line and notified the officers and men of his own regiment, that he was about to assume command of the brigade and that they must hold the position to the last. The command of the Forty-Fourth was then assumed by Lieut. Col. Conner.

The enemy having been repulsed on the right, the fury of his attack, in that quarter had partially subsided, although a brisk firing was still kept up, both there and along the whole line. His force had become scattered in the onset and had posted themselves behind trees and rocks without regard to order or line of battle. He had not yet discovered our extreme left, that portion of the line being partially concealed by the undergrowth of trees, by rocks and by the broken nature of the ground. After a good deal of exertion he got his troops

into line again and marched by the right flank through the little valley and suddenly halting, faced to the front and made a desperate charge upon the Twentieth Maine, the Eighty-Third and Forty Fourth giving them a volley as they passed. The Twentieth also gave them a volley as they approached, which staggered, but did not check the fury of their onset. This regiment had been firing rapidly during the fight and did not have their bayonets fixed; and such was the rapidity of the enemy's movements that they did not have time to fix bayonets before the assailants were upon them. But when the enemy fell upon this regiment they counted without their host. The Twentieth, undaunted and undismayed, in a twinkling clubbed their muskets, brained a number of their assailants on the spot, and drove the rest back into the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Having again reformed they still kept pressing to the left and were now in rear of the brigade. This was one of the most critical periods during the whole engagement.

Col. Chamberlain had, during the early part of the battle, with commendable prudence, bent his left around at right angles to the rest of the line, so as to protect as much as possible, the rear of the brigade, should the enemy succeed in getting around too far to the left. They now opened a severe fire upon this left wing, and the bullets began to come into the rear of the Eighty-Third and the other regiments of the brigade. Capt. Woodward immediately sent Lieut. Gifford, the acting Adjutant, to Col. Chamberlain, to ascertain if the enemy were turning his left. In the meantime, fearing that in case the enemy continued to press back the left of the Twentieth, he would close up the only avenue of escape (a small space of ground between his line and the large rock in his rear), he ordered the centre of the Eighty-Third, which the reader will recollect was posted in shape of a quarter circle, to fall back some ten or fifteen paces. This movement straightened his line and brought him into a position where he could better command the passage, in case the enemy attempted to gain it. At the same time the regiment kept firing at the enemy in their front.

Gifford went through a storm of bullets with the greatest coolness and courage, and executed his commission to Col. Chamberlain. The Colonel sent back word that the enemy were pressing his left and had almost doubled it back upon the right, and wanted to know if he could send him a company. Woodward returned an answer that as his front was also hard pressed he could not spare a company, but that if Col. Chamberlain would move his right to the left he would move the Eighty-Third also and fill up the gap. Col. Chamberlain at once moved his regiment to the left, so that the Twentieth now occupied a line perpendicular to what it had at first, and protected fully the right flank of the brigade. This baffled the attempts of the enemy to turn our left, and in fifteen minutes their fires began to slacken. The favorable moment had now arrived, and Col. Chamberlain seized it ere it had passed. The Twentieth now became the assailants in turn. Their ranks had become so thinned by the battle that they had but a little more than a strong skirmish line with which to attack the faltering columns of the enemy. But yet Col. Chamberlain determined to make the attempt. At the word of command the Twentieth rushed down upon the rebel host

with a yell, broke their lines, captured a number, and drove the rest from his front. As he was driving them, five regiments of the reserves, conducted by Lieut. Gifford, who had gone for reinforcements, came up under the command of Col. Fisher, and joined in the battle cry. This was taken up by the rest of the brigade, and the enemy seeing that we were reinforced, fell back in great disorder. The Twentieth continued the pursuit, their line swinging around upon a moving pivot, like a great gate upon a post, until its left had swept down through the valley and up the sides of Big Round Top. The skirmishers of the Eighty-Third also dashed forward in the pursuit and captured seventy-four prisoners and about three hundred muskets. The whole brigade captured, in all, over five hundred prisoners, including two colonels and fifteen other commissioned officers, and over one thousand stand of arms.

While the Twentieth were driving the rebels over Round Top, an incident occurred not unworthy of notice. An officer and two men belonging to that regiment had, while in pursuit, got separated from their command, and just as the officer was turning the brow of the hill he discovered before him a rebel officer and fifteen men. He at once called upon him to surrender, and they threw down their arms. He then ordered them to march towards our line, which they promptly did; and when they had reached the ravine near where our troops lay, the rebel officer turned and asked him where were his men? He told him that he would soon come to them. The rebel officer beginning to suspect that he had been outwitted, exclaimed, "That is a Yankee trick, sure enough; three men to capture fifteen!" He was struck with so much admiration of the exploit that, taking from his haversack a silver cup he presented it to the officer as a compliment to his strategy in capturing so many with so small a force.

At this time, also, occurred an instance of bravery and humanity in one of the men of the Eighty-Third. A member of company H—I cannot learn his name; if I could I would blazon it in letters of gold*—went out alone and soon returned, supporting a wounded rebel soldier. The wounded man was laid on a stretcher and carried to the hospital. Our hero went out the second time and brought in another in the same way, and being fatigued from his exertions, asked some of his comrades to go along and assist him in bringing in others. They went out a piece with him and seeing the rebels posted behind the rocks, firing at them, refused to go any further. The brave fellow went on alone, telling them to come on, that there was no danger. Just as he was in the act of raising another rebel soldier, he was shot dead by the very comrades of the man he was attempting to succor. The next day our hero and the rebel soldier were both found dead, lying side by side. The wounded rebel had died during the night. A more sublime instance of courage and humanity was perhaps never before exhibited upon the battle field.

The Twentieth kept up the pursuit, followed and supported on its right by a heavy line of skirmishers from the Eighty-Third and the rest of the brigade, until they had carried the

* I have since learned that his name was Philip Grine, Joseph G. Nellis of company G. was also wounded in the hand while in the act of assisting a wounded rebel soldier off the field.

heights of Round Top and driven the fleeing rebels down the other side. But not deeming it prudent to remain longer without more support, Col. Chamberlain ordered the regiment back again into their old position; for the rebel prisoners had already stated that but one brigade of their division had made the attack, and that they were supported by two or three more brigades who were then forming for another attack, and that they wanted to be taken to the rear as quickly as possible. But the expected attack never came, and about dark the Twentieth, with two regiments of the Reserves, went up again, took position and threw up breastworks of the rocks. About ten o'clock the Reserves moved out, and the Twentieth remained there alone about an hour, when Col. Chamberlain sent word to Col. Rice that he wanted the Eighty-Third. About midnight the Eighty-Third went up, took position on the right of the Twentieth, and commenced also throwing up breastworks of stone. Shortly afterward the Reserves were moved forward to the base of the Big Round Top, joining the right of the Eighty-Third, and commenced fortifying themselves in the same manner. So that when morning came, the left of the line of battle was advanced, running from Little Round Top through the valley to the Summit of Big Round Top, and we now held the ground that the enemy had held the day before.

Thus ended, and ended gloriously, the second day of the battle of Gettysburg. The field, and the day, and the enemy, too, were ours. A small brigade of four regiments, scarcely numbering eleven hundred and fifty men,* had resisted and hurled back the best part of a division of the enemy's chosen troops, and had saved the army from rout and perhaps the nation from disgrace. It has been asserted that the Reserves carried Round Top, and did the heavy fighting on the left of the army on that day. But this is not the truth of history, as more than a thousand eyes have borne witness. The Pennsylvania Reserves have done too much splendid fighting, to stand in need of claiming a victory that does not belong to them. Their presence undoubtedly did, at the favorable moment, add a moral weight to the enemy's overthrow; but his overthrow would have been accomplished without the aid of either the Reserves or any other reinforcements whatever.

The rebel forces engaged on this occasion were principally Alabama and Texas troops. Several of the prisoners boasted that this was the first time they had ever been whipped. Among the prominent prisoners were Colonel Belger, and a Colonel Powell. Belger was a small, bald headed man, apparently between fifty and sixty, and had formerly been a member of Congress from Texas. He had received a severe wound, I think in the breast, and spoke and acted as if he was evidently tired of the war. He was pleasant and courteous in his manners and conversation, and this moved in us a feeling of strong sympathy for his sufferers. As I sat and looked upon that deluded old gentleman, who had once occupied the proud and comfortable position of a member of the Congress of the United States, now lying at midnight upon the bare ground, with nothing to shield his aged and shivering limbs from the cold, his wound gaping and his frame writhing

in the tortures of that wound, afar from his family and children—I could not but reflect upon his folly in this his attempt to overthrow the government of his fathers and to engage in the vain pursuit of military glory. The other Colonel, Powell, was a man of quite a different stamp. He was one of your morose, sullen men, who imagine that to be insolent in the hour of defeat and humiliation is to be brave and resolute. "You have peppered us pretty badly," he observed with an air of self-satisfaction to Captain Woodward, "but you'll get the worst of it yet before it's over!" He had been wounded in the breast and was sent back to the hospital where the other rebel wounded lay. It was afterwards reported that he attempted to get up a conspiracy among the rebel wounded at the hospital, and was sent to Washington in chains. For the truth of this story, however, I cannot vouch.

In this battle the Eighty-Third lost only eight men killed upon the field and thirty-eight wounded, of whom six afterwards died of their wounds.* Such a disparity of loss, compared with the amount of fighting done, was unprecedented in the annals of that regiment; and can only be accounted for on the supposition that each man availed himself of the ample protection afforded by the rocks and by the nature of the ground. These brave men have the glory of having laid down their lives on the soil of old Pennsylvania, in protecting her hearth-stones from the tread of the invader, and in one of the fiercest and most sanguinary battles which the history of this or any other war has recorded. Let their names forever live in the hearts of the people of Northwestern Pennsylvania.

The only line officer belonging to the Eighty-Third who fell upon this day was Capt. John M. Sell. He was not on duty with the regiment at the time. He had been acting as Provost Marshal of the division since the May previous and on this occasion was engaged in taking charge of prisoners and preventing stragglers from going to the rear. At one time the First and Second Brigade were hard pressed by the enemy, and it became necessary to send everything to the front that carried a musket. Capt. Sell was ordered to the front with the Provost Guard, and before they had reached there he was struck in the left leg by a solid shot which shattered the limb so badly as to render amputation necessary. From the effects of the amputation he died the next day, and in his death the Eighty-Third lost one of its best officers and most exemplary men.

Early in the evening detachments had been sent out from the brigade to bury the dead and bring in the wounded on both sides. Some idea of the slaughter made of the enemy may be formed from the fact that over fifty of their dead were counted in front of the Twentieth Maine alone, and judging from the usual proportions of five wounded to one killed, that regiment had probably inflicted a loss upon the enemy of over three hundred men. In front of the Eighty-Third, along the Valley of the Shadow of Death, they were strewn as thickly. And further still to the right, in a more open space, where the

* The exact number of muskets in each regiment was as follows: 20th Maine, 358; 44th N. Y., 321; 83d Penna., 274; 16th Mich., 188; total, 1141.

* The names of those killed and died of wounds were Robert Griffin, Co. A; Birchard E. True, Samuel A. Barnett, Chas. Grossett, Wm. Mozier, Co. B; James A. Lewis, Chas. Groger, Co. D; Eli Berlin, Co. G; Philip Grine, Stephen W. Warner, Co. H; Robt. Thompson, Foster Rockwell, Geo. W. Stalker, Co. I; John Greenwald, Co. K.

right of the Forty-Fourth and the left of the Sixteenth had fought, I counted several days afterwards over forty dead bodies within a circle of fifty feet in circumference. They laid in every conceivable position among the rocks in that low swampy ground, some crouched behind the rocks as if about to fire, some lying upon their faces, and some stretched upon their backs, like corpses laid out for a funeral, as if they had determined to observe the propriety of attitude even in the hour and article of death. The rains had, during the interval, descended and the hot sun had beat down upon them, and they were now swollen and turned black with mortification, and millions of maggots could be seen rioting upon their flesh. Ah me! thought I, could the fathers, the mothers, and the wives of these unfortunate men suddenly appear and gaze upon the forms they had once fondled in their arms, they would curse to the bitter end the traitors who had brought the desolations and miseries of this war upon their once happy households.

By ten o'clock the detachments had buried most of our own dead, and brought in our wounded, and a greater portion of the rebel wounded. A number of the latter, however, laid between our line of skirmishers and that of the enemy. As the enemy fired in the dark, upon every object they saw approach, our men could not render assistance to as many as they would otherwise have done. Many had received severe and painful wounds, and their ceaseless cries for help, breaking upon the stillness of the night, sent a thrill to the heart of many a brave soldier of the Eighty-Third: for I have always noticed that the men of that regiment, although they never had any compunction of conscience in their treatment of an attacking foe, yet the moment the foe were prostrate and helpless at their feet, they would throw away their guns and everything else to render them assistance. Among the number brought in, I remember a fine looking young rebel sergeant who had had the bone of his right thigh broken by a minnie bullet. Our men had, at the risk of their lives, ventured out and brought him and another wounded rebel soldier in their arms, and laid them down under some trees upon a rise of ground some fifty yards from where I was resting. As no stretchers were left upon the field, they could not carry them back to the hospitals, which were two or three miles to the rear. Their wounds were torturing them, and, attracted by their groans, I went towards the spot and found them lying upon their blankets in a pool of blood, their limbs shivering with the cool night air, and the young sergeant incapable of moving without wrenching his broken bone, so as to send a thrill of agony through his whole body. He was a manly young fellow, of finely moulded features, and well shaped limbs, apparently about twenty-one, and evidently, descended of gentle blood. "Oh, sir," he exclaimed brokenly, "I am glad you have come to my assistance; will you please give me a drink of water and help me to turn over; I am lying on my broken limb, and cannot help myself." Fortunately I had a canteen of water by my side, and applied it to the lips of these suffering men. I then went in search of help, for I could not lift them alone. Having found a soldier to assist me, we returned and did the best we could for them. We made a nice, soft bed of leaves, large enough for both and then bathed, and bound up their wounds with our handkerchiefs. We then took one of the blan-

kets of his comrade, which was not so bloody, and spread it upon the bed of leaves, and put their knapsacks at the head for pillows. As we took hold of the young man to lift him to his new bed, he shrieked in agony, "Oh men, for God's sake, do be careful. Oh my mother!" That appeal was enough to rife the heart of a stone, but we performed the office as carefully as we could, being obliged to support his mangled limb without jarring it, at the same time that we lifted his body from the ground. We succeeded in laying him down in an easy position, upon the bed of leaves, and he seemed to feel at once that his sufferings were relieved. We then laid his comrade, who was wounded in the breast, by his side, and covered them both with a clean blanket which we found lying near. The wounded men seemed to feel grateful, and expressed their sense of gratitude for the treatment they had received; for they had not expected it from those whom they supposed to be their enemies. We told them that they need not feel themselves under obligations for anything we had done, for though we might be foes on the field of battle, yet it was no more than the duty of every soldier to give assistance to a fallen foe in the hour of his misfortune. We then offered them some rations from our haversacks, such as we had, but they were in no condition to eat them. The sergeant said he would ask one more kindness of us, and that was to get them carried to a hospital, as soon as possible, where their wounds might be attended to. We promised to do so, and at once started off on our mission. "Thank you, gentlemen!" said the young man gratefully, as he fell into a fitful slumber, while we moved away. It was sometime before we could accomplish this mission, and I returned several times during the interval to administer draughts of water to them, and to assure them that they would be attended to before long; and I had the satisfaction of knowing that before an hour elapsed they had both been carried to a hospital, where I trust their wounds were properly taken care of, and that they lived to repent and abandon the errors of their ways.

We left the brigade, some pages back, securely entrenched upon the rocky fortress of Big Round Top, awaiting the approach of morning, and another attack from the rebel host. The morning came, but the enemy came not with it. One trial, at passing through the Valley of the Shadow of Death had satisfied their thirst for military glory, and they never made the attempt again. During the morning the First Brigade came to our relief; they took our places in the line, and we marched out and took a position in the rear of the left centre, still in sight of Little Round Top, and laid down to rest. We lay there during the day, in reserve, and under one of the heaviest artillery fires, that ever was heard in any battle. The rebels had massed both their artillery and infantry on our right, and centre, and were about to make a grand desperate and final struggle to break our lines. But they found our army prepared at every point. All at once five hundred cannon opened on both sides, and for two hours, without cessation, the earth shook like an earthquake, and the air was filled with missiles of death, screaming, hissing and whirling in every direction over the field. Hundreds of the enemy's shells which failed to explode, flew shrieking through the skies, for a half and three quarters of a mile to the rear of our lines of battle. Those striking nearer would plow a huge fur-

row in the ground, and then ricochetting and leaping upward to the height of a hundred feet, could be seen whirling away for a quarter of a mile in the distance, before again falling to the earth. Hundreds burst over and around us, hurling their fragments in every direction. One shell burst so close to Gen. Barnes and his staff, as they were riding along the line of our brigade, that one officer had his face filled with powder, and the General himself received a wound in the leg. Strange to say, that under all this fire, only one man in the Eighty-Third was wounded. During the cannonading our attention was frequently directed to the operations of our artillery posted on Little Round Top. Mount Sinai in all its glory, never thundered, nor belched forth such volumes of smoke and lighting, as did that grand little citadel upon this memorable day. The shouts of our artillerymen were heard at intervals, above the roar of battle, and, attracted by the excitement of the occasion, I rode up to Little Round Top, and witnessed the grandest artillery duel that I had ever witnessed before. I found two batteries of rifled Parrott guns at work, and, on looking a mile to the right and front, saw two batteries of the enemy grinning most horribly in our direction. Our artillery surpassed that of the rebels in precision of firing and in execution. They had sent our shells with such accuracy that they had already blown up two or three of the enemy's caissons. Every time our men blew up a caisson, they raised a shout of triumph. We were fast silencing their guns. The rebel gunners replied vigorously, but ineffectually. Their solid shot and shell struck savagely against the rocky walls of this little Gibraltar and then bounded off harmlessly in another direction. At the same time a most terrible struggle between the infantry of the opposing forces was going on. I could see the long lines of the enemy advance over the fields to the assault, seemingly hesitating and wavering as they went, when suddenly a sheet of flame would burst from our line, and their broken and flying columns would be lost in a cloud of smoke. Then fresh supporting columns could again be seen pressing forward to the work of death, rallying the fugitives and sweeping them up again into the fire, and themselves advancing into the very crater of the volcano. Then would come a hand to hand encounter; and gazing on it from that distance, scarcely able to distinguish the combatants in the thick, dim smoke, that enveloped them, once or twice my heart beat with apprehension for the result. But soon the sight of the fugitive assailants running to the rear assured me that all was right, and that the hosts of freedom were destined to prevail over the dark hosts of slavery and rebellion. Then came a lull over the whole field of battle. The silence of the grave reigned along the whole line for the space of two hours; but it was a momentous silence, portending the more terrible storm that was to follow. The enemy, broken and driven back on the right, was again massing his columns for another desperate assault on the left and centre. The assault at last came. With a line of battle extending as far as the eye could reach, with banner flying and with two hundred and fifty cannon belching their fiery meteors right over their heads, into the faces of our men, they advanced close up to the line of the Union hosts and were again driven back discomfited and shivered into fragments. Again the bull-dogs of war were let loose from our line, and again the

heavens were rent and the air filled with the screaming messengers of death. The batteries on the fortress of Little Round Top were again on the trail of their old enemy, and again sending iron compliments into their midst. At four o'clock the firing began to slacken. Their batteries had been silenced, and the dark hosts of rebellion, torn into a thousand fragments, suddenly left the field of carnage. Their ninety thousand chosen veterans had failed to conquer the sixty thousand heroes that stood before them. Thus ended the memorable day of the 3d of July. I passed over the field a few days afterwards and counted fifteen dead horses lying in a circumference of fifty feet, together with innumerable fragments of artillery carriages where the batteries stood that had dared to take up the gauntlet and to fling it in the faces of the cannoners who had shaken the field with their thunders from the heights of Little Round Top.

Before closing the final act and scene in this greatest drama of the war for the Union, let us return to the hero of Little Round Top, who with the less than twelve hundred men under his command, had saved the left on the day of the 2d, and who in offering up his life has stamped his character with the seal of the sublimest heroism. On being taken to the rear, Col. Vincent was carried to the farm house of Mr. Wm. Bushman, about two miles from Round Top and four miles south east of Gettysburg. Although the bone had been broken, the wound was one of those singular ones which inflict less pain than those which often prove less dangerous. The bullet had passed clear through the left groin and lodged in the right, and his case was at once discovered by those near him to be past all surgery. On the morning of the 3d Gen. Butterfield came to see him, and to announce that he had already, by direction of Gen. Meade, telegraphed for his appointment as a Brigadier General. It was Col. Vincent's desire, not yet being aware of the mortal nature of his wound, to leave for home at once, and accordingly the General gave written permission to two of his staff officers to proceed home with him without delay. But on consulting the Brigade Surgeon, who came in a few hours afterwards, he was told that his removal was entirely impracticable, and was advised to dismiss the idea at once from his mind. "Then," said he, "I want you to send for my wife as soon as possible." His Adjutant Gen'l, Lieut. Clark, mounted a horse without delay, rode to Westminster, a distance of forty miles, and telegraphed home. Another officer went to Hanover and telegraphed to the same effect. But in the confusion and press of business which prevailed, neither of these messages reached home in time. In the meantime Col. Vincent kept slowly but gradually sinking away. He became conscious of his situation, but never uttered a groan nor complaint, and said repeatedly that he suffered no pain. The only times he suffered was when he was moved from one side to the other, and his broken limb was jarred by the operation, although he was handled with all the care and delicacy that it was possible to exercise. Even then he would suppress the outbursts of agony that his pain seemed to bring forth as if he thought the outward manifestation of suffering was unworthy a soldier and a hero. He was visited from day to day by Gen. Sykes, Gen. Barnes and other prominent officers who had already learned to respect his character as a man and his gallantry on the field of battle. "I presume," said he, "I have

done my last fighting," as several officers, standing by his bedside one day, were speaking of the late battle, and congratulating him upon his well earned promotion. He seemed inclined to talk but little after the first two days of his illness. So deadening, indeed, had been the blow he received, that he had not the strength to engage in conversation for any length of time. He was constantly attended by Dr. Burchfield, Surgeon of the Eighty-Third, by Lieut. Clark, and by several other members of the regiment who bestowed upon him all the care and attention that the opportunities of the occasion afforded. On the 6th he became so weak as to be scarcely able to utter a word above a whisper, and on the 7th it was evident that his last moments were approaching. At that last moment a tender recollection of the christian education he had received seemed to come over him, and while the feeble effort to repeat the Lord's Prayer was still lingering upon his lips the soul of this young hero passed away to another world. The next day Lieut. Clark proceeded with his remains to his home in Erie, where, attended by a large concourse of citizens, they were buried with all the honors of war.

Such was the glorious death of Brigadier General Strong Vincent. He was born at Watertown on the 17th of June, 1837, and was consequently a few days past the age of twenty-six at the time of his death. Of his character as a man, and a soldier, it is unnecessary for me to speak in any terms of eulogy or admiration, for his fame is more widely known already than this book will ever be, and his name will be remembered when these pages shall have passed into oblivion. I have no practice in the language of eulogium, and I am not aware that my humor ever ran in that direction. But there have lived and died men of such a stamp as must extort praise from even the most critical. When the regiment first went out, his style, as it was called, was not much admired by the men. But when they came to learn that his bearing was the result not of superciliousness, but of a noble dignity of character, they fell into an admiration of him, and this admiration grew and expanded day by day. And when they came to witness his skill in hand-

ling the regiment, and the brigade, on the field of battle, and how he fought side by side, and shared all the dangers equally with them, the seal of his superiority became stamped upon their hearts. He had none of that tender regard for the safety of his own person when the occasion called for his services at the front, which I have seen some general officers manifest; none of that cunning strategy that would sneak for shelter behind a rock, a quarter of a mile to the rear, under the plea that the life of a commanding officer was of more importance than the lives of his men; none of that love of life, that would ask others to go where he dared not go himself. Yet his bravery had nothing of rashness in its composition. If he was always first and foremost on the field of battle it was because his sense of duty took him there, and if he became animated in the excitement of the fray, it was the result of a glorious enthusiasm which rose higher and higher as the joy of battle swelled in his breast and inspired him to dare and to do all that might become a man. In camp and in private life, his manners were those of a gentleman. He associated with the highest officers in the army, and I always noticed on such occasions that when in his company they behaved as if they felt themselves in the presence of a *Man*. But perhaps the greatest thing that can be said in his favor is that amidst all the unfavorable influences in the life of a soldier he never forgot the religious training he had received in his early years. I have frequently known him, after coming in from business at the front, at bed-time, to put out the light and kneel by his little cot and spend a few moments in silent prayer before retiring to rest. But I have done with what some may deem the language of adulation. Personally I am not a professed admirer of any man, living or dead; but I cannot let this opportunity pass without giving the result of my observations on the character of one with whom I have been associated in arms. To sum up the character of Gen. Strong Vincent in three words, I can only say that he was a gallant soldier, a fine scholar and a christian gentleman, and when you say this you have said all that can be said of any man.

Battlefield of Manassas, 1878; of Rock Island Bridge across the Mississippi, 1870, of the fortifications of New London and New Haven, Conn., 1870-'74; of the improvement of certain rivers and harbors on Long Island, 1870-'74; of construction of Block Island Breakwater, R. I., 1870-'82.

"He was a member of Commission to examine Union Pacific Railroad and Telegraphic Lines, 1868-'69, and Member of many important Boards of Officers of the Corps of Engineers organized for the consideration of the plans and the execution of the works of the Corps, among which were the Board on Improvement of the Des Moines Rapids, 1867; Board on Bridge across Niagara River, at Buffalo, N. Y., 1870-'71; on Bridging the Ohio River, 1870-'71, and 1878-'82; on plan for docks constructed for Breakwater at Chicago Harbor, Ill., 1871; on the completion of Cincinnati and Newport Bridge over the Ohio, 1871; on the harbors of St. Louis, Mo., and Alton, Ill., and Banks of the Mississippi, 1872; on Bridging the channel between Lake Huron and Lake Erie, 1873; on Ship Canal from the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, 1873-'74; to examine the St. Louis Bridge across the Mississippi, 1873; on the reclamation of the Alluvial Basin of the Mississippi, 1874-'75; on Mississippi Bridges between St. Paul, Minn., and St. Louis, Mo., 1876, and on the improvement of the Mississippi River, from the Falls of St. Anthony to Rock Island Rapids, 1878. He was engaged in the survey of the Battlefield of Groveton, Va., and in the preparation of campaign maps of certain operations in 1862-'63 of the Army of the Potomac in Virginia.

"He was appointed a Member of the Advisory Council of the Harbor Commissioners of the State of Rhode Island, 1878.

"In 1870 General Warren was assigned to the charge of the surveys and improvements of various rivers and har-

bors in southeastern Massachusetts; and in Rhode Island and Connecticut, on which duty and in the supervision of the construction and repair of the fortifications of New Bedford, Mass., of Narragansett Bay and of Newport, R. I., he remained until the time of his death.

"In scientific investigations General Warren had few superiors; and his elaborate reports on some of the most important works which have been confided to the Corps of Engineers are among the most valuable contributions to its literature.

"In the field, in the late civil war, he was a brave and energetic officer, and in the high command to which he attained by his patriotic valor and skill he merited the admiration of the army and the applause of his country.

"He was kind and considerate in all the relations of life, and his family in its affliction will have the hearty sympathy of the Corps of Engineers.

"As a testimonial of respect for the deceased, the officers of the Corps will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days.

"GEORGE H. ELIOT,
Major of Engineers.

"By command of BRIG.-GEN. WRIGHT."

STRONG VINCENT, BRIGADIER-GENERAL VOLUNTEERS

Strong Vincent was born at Waterford, Erie County, Pennsylvania, June 17, 1837. He was the son of B. B. Vincent and Sarah Ann Strong Vincent. As the name indicates, Strong Vincent was of English Puritan and French Huguenot ancestry. During his childhood his father removed from Waterford to Erie, Pennsylvania, engaging in business there as an iron-founder and banker. He was also largely interested in grain elevators in Chicago.

Strong Vincent entered the Erie Academy in 1843, remaining there until 1850; learned the trade of iron-moulder

in his father's foundry 1850-1852; was a clerk in the foundry office 1852-1854; entered Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, 1854; entered Harvard College 1856, and was graduated at Harvard in 1859. He read law in Erie 1859-1860, with W. S. Lane, Esquire; was admitted to the Erie Bar in December, 1860, and practiced law until he entered the Army in 1861.

In April, 1861, he married Elizabeth H. Carter of Newark, New Jersey, to whom he had been engaged since his college days.

MILITARY RECORD.—Upon the call of the President in April, 1861, for volunteers for three months' service, he enlisted in Colonel John W. McLane's Erie Regiment of Volunteers; was elected second lieutenant of his company; was promoted to first lieutenant and adjutant of the regiment, serving as such until the muster out of the regiment at the close of its service in July, 1861.

Colonel McLane received an order from the Secretary of War, dated July 24, 1861, authorizing him to raise a regiment of volunteers to serve for three years or during the war. About half the three months regiment re-enlisted and by the end of August the full complement of men and officers had been secured. The regiment was mustered into the service of the United States, September 14, 1861, as the Eighty-third Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, with John W. McLane as colonel and Strong Vincent as lieutenant-colonel, to rank as such from July 24, 1861.

Colonel McLane was killed at the battle of Gaines' Mill, Virginia, June 27, 1862. Vincent was promoted to be colonel of the regiment, ranking as such from June 27, 1862. When Colonel Stockton (who as senior colonel had commanded the brigade after General Butterfield's promotion) resigned, soon after the battle of Chancellorsville, Vincent, who was next in rank, was assigned to the command of the brigade and continued in command until he

was wounded at the battle of Gettysburg July 2, 1863. In consideration of his distinguished service at this battle General Meade telegraphed that night to President Lincoln, requesting that he be promoted to be brigadier-general. The President sent the commission at once by special messenger, but Vincent's wound was fatal, and he died a few days later.

Vincent without previous military training showed at the outset an appreciation of the need of discipline, precision, and accuracy in all military matters. My first recollection of him is his appearance as adjutant in forming the line of the regiment for its first dress parade. As I stood, a private in the ranks, and heard his command on the right, "To the rear open order, March!" and saw the line officers step to the front in an irregular line and heard him correct their faults, then saw him march to the center, halt, turn on his heel, face the colonel, who stood like a statue at some distance with his arms folded, gauntlets reaching near to his elbows, salute with his sword and report, "Sir, the parade is formed," I confess my first impression of him was not favorable. I thought him a dude and an upstart. I soon came to know that he wished to impress on that mob of green country boys, by example as well as precept, the proper way for a soldier to stand and to move. It was the beginning for that regiment of its military education. By the end of its three months' service spent in continual drill and practice in all the duties of a soldier, that part of this regiment which re-enlisted for three years formed a trained nucleus for the Eighty-third Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, which placed it in the front rank of volunteers for the war, and kept it there. Vincent had demonstrated his fitness for a higher position. McLane had seen service in the Mexican war and had kept up his training by the command of a militia company for several years in Erie. He was a tall, commanding figure,

he was looking for Birney. Having explained to him the need for troops on Little Round Top, Sykes agreed to send one of Barnes' brigades. Mackenzie then returned to Warren and reported. Sykes immediately sent one of his staff to direct Barnes to send one of his brigades. Barnes had not returned to the division. Vincent was sitting on his horse at the head of the column, waiting orders. Seeing Sykes' aide approaching, he rode forward to meet him. I followed with the flag, and distinctly heard the following conversation: "Captain, what are your orders?" The captain replied, "Where is General Barnes?" Vincent said, "What are your orders? Give me your orders." The captain answered, "General Sykes told me to direct General Barnes to send one of his brigades to occupy that hill yonder," pointing to Little Round Top. Vincent said, "I will take the responsibility of taking my brigade there." Returning to the brigade, he directed Colonel Rice, the senior colonel, to bring the brigade to the hill as rapidly as possible, then rode away toward the northwest face of the hill. I followed him. Reaching the foot of the hill and finding it impossible to ride up to the top in that direction, owing to the steepness of the ascent and the loose stones which covered the surface, he turned to the left and, skirting the northern foot of the ridge, turned into the woods behind the ridge on the eastern side. He rode on until we reached the south end, where the line of great rocks which form the summit suddenly terminates by an abrupt descent of perhaps fifty feet. From the foot of this rock the ground slopes to the east, south, and west on a spur which is partly covered by scattered boulders and smaller rocks. At the southern extremity of this spur is a ridge running east and west for a distance of about three hundred feet. From this ridge southward toward Big Round Top extends a sparsely wooded valley which runs along the northern side of the mountain its whole length. There

are many rocks and boulders scattered over the surface of this valley, far enough apart, however, to afford room between them for the passage of troops.

Vincent rode around this big rock and halted a few paces to the west of it, at the place which was occupied a few minutes later by the Sixteenth Michigan. I sat on my horse behind him with the flag. Almost immediately a shell exploded to our right, followed by another just to our left. Vincent said to me, "They are firing at the flag, go behind the rocks with it." I rode behind the rock and stopped. Almost immediately he came and, dismounting, gave me the bridle of his horse. He then went down among the rocks, selecting a position for the brigade. In a few moments the brigade arrived, with the regiments in the following order: Forty-fourth New York, Sixteenth Michigan, Eighty-third Pennsylvania, and Twentieth Maine. The field officers dismounted, leaving their horses with the mounted orderlies behind the rock. Vincent said to Colonel Rice, "Form your regiment here, Colonel, with the right against the rock." Rice replied, "In every battle in which we have been engaged the Eighty-third and Forty-fourth have fought side by side. I wish it might be so to-day." Vincent understood and sympathized with this feeling. He replied, "All right, let the Sixteenth pass you." The Sixteenth came forward and was placed in the position which Vincent had designated for the Forty-fourth. The ground was too rough for much precision in movements, but the men came forward in as good order as possible. The Forty-fourth formed along the western edge of this spur, with its right joining the left of the Sixteenth Michigan, the Eighty-third next, with part of its line facing west, and the remainder facing south on the east and west ridge. The Twentieth Maine continued this line toward the east. Skirmishers were sent out by the Forty-fourth and Eighty-

third down the valley toward the west, and a company from the Twentieth Maine toward the southeast to guard against an approach from that quarter. I think no skirmishers were sent out from the Sixteenth. The ground in their front was open to the foot of the hill, and an advance of the enemy from that direction could be plainly seen from the main line.

The position chosen by Vincent for his brigade was the best possible for preventing the Confederates from turning or capturing the hill. Had he placed his men on the crest of the ridge the enemy could have turned his flank and attacked from the rear. Or having opened the way, they could have held it for Hood's whole division to follow, cutting Meade's communications, capturing his trains, and forcing him to leave his strong position and attack the Confederates in the open. Not all the troops that could have been placed on the crest of Little Round Top could have prevented this if the spur occupied by Vincent's brigade and the valley along the north side of Big Round Top had been left open.

In two respects justice has never been done to Vincent. He would have gone with his brigade wherever he was ordered. He was thoroughly alive that day. A glance at Little Round Top was enough for him to realize its importance in relation to the field of battle and the necessity of occupying it without delay. Minutes were precious. In spite of all that Warren, Sykes, and Barnes did, it would have been too late had not Vincent moved without waiting for an order from his immediate superior. The instant he knew that Sykes had sent an order to Barnes to send one of his brigades, without designating any special brigade, he took the responsibility of taking his brigade there without waiting for the order to reach him through the ordinary channel. Had he waited for that, it would have been too late. He gave the order to Rice to bring

on the brigade as rapidly as possible. He did not march at the head of the brigade, but preceded it, and when it arrived he had already selected its position.

The second respect is in not giving him the credit due for his knowledge and skill in the choice of a position. No general or staff officer directed or accompanied him. He knew only that Sykes had sent an order to Barnes to send one of his brigades to occupy that hill. Half the brigade commanders in the Army of the Potomac, if they received such an order, would have construed it as a direction to place their troops on the hill, where at that moment they would have been useless. Vincent used his discretion as to the manner of its occupation. The event proved that his instinct for the point of vantage was of the highest order. The historians have vied with one another in telling how it was not done. Nearly all of them have credited Warren with taking the responsibility of detaching Vincent's brigade and placing it where it fought. In doing this they have relegated Vincent to the place of an officer who obeyed orders and stayed where he was put. Warren performed most important services that day. I yield to no man in my admiration and gratitude for what he did, but that is no reason for others to claim for him acts which he disclaims for himself, as I will show later by his own words. If I can show that the retention by the Union army of this key to the battlefield on July 2, 1863, is due primarily to Strong Vincent and his gallant brigade, aided at the supreme moment by O'Rourke and his regiment, I shall feel that Vincent, O'Rourke, and the men of their commands who gave up their lives in that supreme effort did not die in vain.

In describing the Confederate attack it has been impossible to separate from it the action of the Union troops in repelling it. After the Union skirmishers retired to their line, followed by the advance of the Confederates

in line of battle, Vincent's brigade, with the exception of the charge by the Twentieth Maine at the close of the fight, confined itself until after dark to maintaining its strong position. It was there to hold Little Round Top, and it held it. It is doubtful whether any good could have been accomplished by following up the Confederate retreat. The failure of the repeated Confederate assaults, and their ultimate withdrawal, is sufficient justification, if any is needed. The time soon came for taking the offensive. The attack against the left of the brigade, under Chamberlain, had been vigorous and persistent.

Time and again the Confederates had succeeded in driving back Chamberlain's men a few paces, only to be forced to retire in their turn. The rocks where the Twentieth Maine was posted were smaller and less numerous than those behind which the Forty-fourth New York and Eighty-third Pennsylvania fought. At one time Chamberlain asked Captain Woodward if he could spare a company to enable him to close up toward the left his depleted ranks. Woodward could not do this; but, by taking advantage of the rocks and thinning his line in places where it was safe to do so, he extended it to the left enough to give material assistance to Chamberlain. Finally, with his ammunition exhausted and with no prospect of reinforcements, the psychological moment arrived, and Chamberlain seized the opportunity. He ordered a charge with the bayonet. I have described this in my statement of the attack. Its success put the finishing touch to the Union victory.

Colonel Rice, who assumed command when Vincent fell, had not been idle. After the temporary break on the right had been checked by the arrival of the One Hundred and Fortieth New York, order was restored on that part of the line. Realizing the perilous situation of the Twentieth Maine, and the impossibility of sparing any men from other parts of the line, Rice sent an officer (not named

in his report) to the corps commander to ask for reinforcements. Vincent had previously sent Captain Judson of his staff for the same purpose. While Vincent's brigade was fighting in this isolated position, the remainder of the Fifth corps had come up. The brigades of Sweitzer and Tilton, of Barnes' division, had been fighting along Barney's line. The two brigades of Regulars in Ayres' division had been sent to the vicinity of the Devil's Den. Weed's brigade of this division had been ordered by Sykes to Little Round Top, but by some misunderstanding of orders it went to the front to reinforce Sickles, except the One Hundred and Fortieth New York, which Warren detached as the brigade was passing.

When Sykes returned from the rear, where he had been to order up more troops, and found that Weed had gone to the front, he ordered him back to Little Round Top. The three regiments of this brigade, Ninety-first Pennsylvania, One Hundred and Forty-sixth New York, and One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Pennsylvania, finally got into position along the crest of the ridge on the right of the One Hundred and Fortieth New York, but they did not arrive until all the close fighting on that part of the line was done. Following Ayres, General Crawford, commanding the Third division, came up with two brigades of the Pennsylvania Reserves under McCandless and Fisher. McCandless' brigade, with one regiment of Fisher's, the Eleventh Pennsylvania Reserves, was sent to the front in the vicinity of the wheat-field. Fisher had five regiments in his brigade. He was sent with the remaining regiments to the support of Vincent, but did not arrive until the fighting was all done and the Confederates had disappeared from that vicinity.

About nine o'clock in the evening Rice sent Chamberlain with the Twentieth Maine to the summit of Big Round Top. They climbed the steep ascent directly south of the

LETTERS ABOUT VINCENT AND HIS BRIGADE AT
GETTYSBURG

In 1901 the compiler of this book, in response to his inquiry as to the character of General Vincent, his conduct at Gettysburg, and its effect in determining the result of the battle, received letters from the following gentlemen, with permission to publish them. Extracts from which are subjoined.

(*From Major-General DANIEL BUTTERFIELD, Chief of Staff, Army of the Potomac at Gettysburg.*)

"HOTEL ROYAL PALM, MIAMI, FLORIDA,
February 19, 1901.

"No man who lived and fought in the battle of Gettysburg did more for his country than Vincent. I knew the whole matter from beginning to end. He was a magnificent soldier, a gentleman of high education and great ability.

"General Tremain brought messages to General Meade and to me from the field, describing the exigency and great need for the immediate occupation of Round Top, and authority was given him to send the troops there. In my judgment there was not another command on the field which could have been more effective in the matter of time and rapidity of movement in getting to the spot in time to have saved the day, owing to its wonderful efficiency, drill, and discipline under Vincent, who had been trained and educated with it."

(*From JOSHUA L. CHAMBERLAIN, Brevet Major-General U. S. V., Colonel Commanding Twentieth Maine Volunteers at Gettysburg.*)

"PORTLAND, MAINE, November 18, 1901.
"Colonel Vincent's conduct in taking his brigade to

Little Round Top and placing it in position, and in throwing his great personal energy and determination into the fight there, are personally well known to me. I regard the timely occupation of that position, which was at that stage of the battle the key of the Union defense, as due to the energy and skill of Colonel Vincent."

(*From CHARLES W. ELLIOT, President of Harvard University.*)

"CAMBRIDGE, MASS., November 27, 1901.

"I am, of course, incompetent to express an opinion about the precise value of Colonel Vincent's energetic action at Gettysburg; but I remember him as a student in Harvard College with perfect distinctness, and I should like to testify to anybody who wants to know what manner of man he was—that he was one of the manliest and most attractive persons that I ever saw. I remember thinking that his death was an unspeakable loss to the army on which the hopes of the country rested at the time, and to the country which he would have greatly served if his life had been spared."

(*From General ELLIS SPEAR, Major Twentieth Maine Volunteers at Gettysburg.*)

"WASHINGTON, D. C., November 23, 1901.

"I have read carefully the foregoing statement in regard to General Vincent's services at Gettysburg. As to the greater part of the statement, I know of my own knowledge that it is strictly accurate. What happened on the right of the brigade when Vincent was mortally wounded I did not see, being then with the Twentieth Maine closely engaged on the left, but it was a matter of common report at the time, and beyond question the statement is strictly accurate. I had seen General Vincent in battle before and knew what he would do then. He was a very valuable of-

feer and of great promise, and his death was a great loss to the army; but the success he achieved in averting the imminent and great danger on the left at Gettysburg on the second day of the battle, was worth what it cost, though the price was great."

(*From General JAMES LONGSTREET, C. S. A.*)

"WASHINGTON, D. C., December 6, 1901.

"It gives me pleasure to state in reference to the worth of Little Round Top to the Union Army at Gettysburg, it was everything to the success of the Union battle. General Vincent's prompt action in moving to save that point held it, and was the means of getting the battle to his side. Many minutes' delay would have given the Confederates the field."

SKETCH OF COLONEL PATRICK H. O'RORKE

By CAPTAIN PORTER FARLEY

Colonel O'Rorke was born in County Cavan, Ireland, on March 28, 1836. He was brought to America when he was only one year old. His parents settled for a year or so in Montreal, Canada, then moved to Ogdensburg, New York, where they remained about two years, when they moved to Rochester, New York, where they established their permanent home and where the survivors of the family still abide. Young O'Rorke attended No. 9 public school, and therein obtained such schooling as he had enjoyed previous to his entrance at the Military Academy at West Point.

About the year 1855 the University of Rochester established two free scholarships open on competition to the boys of the public schools of the city. O'Rorke competed with others, and stood first on the list at the close of the examination. His parents were devoted Roman Catholics, and

objected to the denominational control of the Rochester College. On this account he had to forego the educational advantages which were thus open to him. Soon after graduating from the public school he began to learn the trade of his father, which was that of marble cutter.

His general ability had by this time become well recognized and had attracted the attention of the congressman from the Rochester district, who obtained for him an appointment to a cadetship at West Point. He entered the Military Academy in June, 1857, with the class which was graduated in June, 1861. From the first O'Rorke took a high stand in his class and finally was graduated at its head, in a class of thirty-four. Among his classmates the two best known for distinguished services during the Civil War were Lieutenant Alonzo H. Cushing, killed on July 3 at Gettysburg, and General George A. Custer, who fell in the massacre on the Little Big Horn in 1876.

Immediately upon his graduation O'Rorke was commissioned as second lieutenant of Engineers. He served on the staff of General Tyler at the Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861. Later he acted as assistant engineer on the defenses of Washington and at Fortress Monroe. In October, 1861, he went to Port Royal as one of the staff of General W. T. Sherman. For his services on this occasion he received the brevet of captain. In September, 1862, he was commissioned colonel of the One Hundred and Fortieth New York Volunteers. During all the service of Colonel O'Rorke as commander of this regiment it formed a part of the Third Brigade, Second Division, Fifth Army Corps. It was due to O'Rorke's devotion and skill that this regiment attained an efficiency which was a source of pride to him and to the men who served under him.

During the Chancellorsville campaign O'Rorke was in command of the brigade, as our brigade commander, General Warren, had been assigned to duty as chief engineer

Erie Honors Gen. Strong Vincent

ERIE, Pa.--As part of the city's bicentennial Erie remembered its most famous Civil War hero, Strong Vincent of the United States Volunteers, with a grave rededication in conjunction with Memorial Day in May and a recent military parade.

General Vincent was buried in the Erie Cemetery "amid much pomp and ceremony" by a military escort which had brought his body home after he had died from wounds received during the defense of Gettysburg's Little Round Top on July 2, 1863.

The Vincent plot is rather modest and many residents were unaware that the general was buried in Erie. The Strong Vincent Commemorative Committee's goal was to bring this site to the attention of the community during this bicentennial year, with an eye on future improvements which might include a larger grave marker. Landscaping has already been done with the permission of Vincent's survivors who live in California, and are unable to care for the site on a personal basis.

A highlight of the grave rededication was the participation of the students from the high school bearing the Strong Vincent name. One

of the committee's goals was to reintroduce Vincent to the student body. Few students knew why a school was named for Vincent or what part he played in the Gettysburg battle.

The high school band practiced period music to play for the short parade to the cemetery, and the Army Junior ROTC unit acted as the honor guard. It carried the replica of the Vincent 3rd Brigade flag, as well as the 35-star American flag flown at the time of the battle. Students were in military garb for the occasion.

The United States Marines Drum and Bugle Corps were given special permission to play at the grave site. The Marines were in Erie for a special show the night before, and participated in their red show uniform jackets, playing Sousa music, as well as the National Anthem.

The student body purchased a wreath stating "Never Forgotten" which was placed on Vincent's grave during the firing of a military salute by the reenactors from the 111th and 83rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiments. Taps followed. The crowd sang "America" to close.

Speakers included Bud Dever, chairman of the Strong Vincent

Commemorative Committee; Congressman Philip English; Mayor Joyce Sovachio; Dr. William P. Garvey, historian and chair of the Bicentennial Commission. James Wright Esq., an expert on the life of Vincent, gave the eulogy. Myra Wright placed the wreath.

The parade route was the same used by the military escort which removed the Vincent coffin from a military train stopped nearby, and transported it to the family plot in Erie Cemetery.

The Vincent Commemorative Committee completed its projects on Sept. 10 at a large military parade during which Pennsylvania Gov. Thomas Ridge presented the posthumous "Cross for Valor" to the Rev. B.B. Vincent Lyon, great-grand-nephew of General Vincent, who accepted for the Vincent family. The medal was presented back to the Erie community to go in a Civil War Heritage Room in a new library being constructed.

The Vincent committee has artifacts relating to Vincent for display. Included will be the original Keith Rocco oil painting "Hold The Ground." Proceeds from print sales is being used to cast a full-size bronze of Vincent which will be donated to the community early next year.

For information about the Strong Vincent committee contact chairman Bud Dever, 214 Old Main, Glenwood Hills, 501 E. 38th St., Erie, PA 16546.



Jim Wright eulogizes Strong Vincent during program in Erie, Pa.

It's not too early to set your dates for 1996 events, seminars, tours, programs, etc. Deadline for the Civil War News' 5th Annual Calendar of Events & Recruiting Directory will be early December.

FAVORITE CAMPFIRE SONGS & CIVIL WAR NORTH SOUTHERN SONGS AS PLAYED & SUNG BY THE 2ND SOUTH CAROLINA STRING BAND

