

THE EVACUATION OF BATTERY WAGNER,
AND
THE BATTLE OF OCEAN POND.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Confederate Survivors Association

— IN —

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA,

ON THE OCCASION OF ITS TENTH ANNUAL REUNION

— ON —

MEMORIAL DAY, APRIL 26TH, 1888,

— BY —

COL. CHARLES C. JONES, JR., LL.D.

PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION.

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THE ADDRESS.

COMRADES :—

Since the roll was called at our last annual meeting six of our companions have responded to a summons more potent than that which convokes us on this Memorial Day. They have preceded us to that eternal camping ground where all, sooner or later, must pitch their silent tents.

Robert Wallace—Second Lieutenant of the Washington Artillery—died on the 10th of May : *J. C. Allen*, Private in Company A Cobb's Legion of Cavalry—on the 28th of the same month : *William Delane*—Private in Company A Fifth Regiment Georgia Infantry—on the 9th of June : *Charles A. Platt*—Captain of the same Company—on the 21st of July, memorable as the anniversary of the First Battle of Manassas : *Theodore D. Caswell*—Lieutenant Colonel of the Second Battalion Georgia Sharpshooters—on the 1st of August : and Captain *George Schaub*—of the 9th Kentucky Regiment of Infantry—on the 15th of September.

Outside the circle of our Association the hand of death has, during the past twelve month, been laid upon some noted Confederates, among whom will be remembered *William Smith*,—a war-governor of Virginia and a Major General in Confederate service ;—*Robert M. T. Hunter*—a member of Confederate Congress, the successor of Mr. Toombs as Secretary of State in the cabinet of President Davis, a Confederate Senator from Virginia, and a gentleman of inflexible integrity, of great political sagacity, of wise statesmanship, and of national reputation ;—*William Preston*,—accredited by the Confederate Government to Mexico, and a Major General in the army of the Confederacy ;—*John S. Marmaduke*,—Governor of Missouri, and a Major General in Confederate service :—*Robert H. Anderson*—our personal friend and a dashing Brigadier General of Cavalry ;—the venerable philanthropist and benefactor of the impoverished South, Mr. W. W. Corcoran ;—and the Hon. C. G. Memminger, the first Secretary of the Confederate Treasury, and a Signer of the Confederate Constitution.



Thus, one by one, these actors in the Confederate drama glide silently away into the realm of Shadows. Soon all who still survive will be numbered with the dead, and the coming generations will know them only as they appear and have taken their stations in that pantheon which history reserves for the good and the great of every age and people.

Never, my Comrades, can I forget the eventful night of the 6th of September 1863. Its dark and perilous hours were rendered memorable by the evacuation of Morris Island and its defences. It had been demonstrated beyond question that the further tenure of batteries Wagner and Gregg was impracticable. Engineering skill and human endurance had been pressed to the furthest verge. Every resource had been exhausted; and from those who had so long and so bravely bared their breasts to the storm, honor and patriotism could justly claim no greater sacrifice. During the preceding forty eight hours the Confederate garrison had endured a loss, in killed and wounded, of perhaps one hundred and fifty. Our men were exhausted by continued vigils, enfeebled by a scarcity of food and water, and well-nigh stunned by the ceaseless roar of the bombardment. The bomb-proofs had suffered so severely that they were capable of but partial reparation. Outside of them the men could not live. Within, existence was barely tolerable. So persistently had the Federals pushed their sap that it almost crowned the counterscarp of Wagner. Such of the heavy guns of that fort as were still serviceable could not be depressed sufficiently to bear upon the working parties; and the sharp-shooters of the enemy effectually commanded all the embrasures. So violent was the hurricane of bursting shells and impinging solid shot—sweeping the parade at all points and searching even the gun chambers,—and so unremitting was the fire from telescopic rifles, that the Confederates could no longer man their guns, or show their heads above the parapet without incurring the penalty of certain death. Wagner had been practically silenced and was sullenly suffering inevitable demolition.

For some time, even under the shadows of night, great danger and difficulty had been experienced in provisioning and changing the garrison. The land batteries of the enemy, —in association with the Ironsides and the Monitors,—maintained a constant fire not only upon the fort and its dependencies, but also upon the sand hills to the north along which the relieving parties from James Island, having crossed over by boat, were compelled to advance.

For more than fifty days had this earthwork heroically withstood the shock of direct assault, borne the brunt of heaviest bombardment, and successfully resisted the herculean efforts of the Federals for its reduction. Never before in the annals of sieges had guns of such power been employed for the destruction of a fortification. Never had superior engineering skill, or artillery practice of such marvellous accuracy, been displayed. Never had the hearts and hands of bravest defenders been more sorely tried. Time and again, under the tremendous impact of heaviest projectiles and the disintegrating influence of bursting shells, had the outlines of the fort and the covering of its bomb-proof and magazine been well-nigh obliterated. As often was night turned into day by the garrison intent upon the necessary repairs. The bomb-proof, in its ruinous condition, was little else than a charnel house. Its polluted atmosphere almost refused to support life, and its galleries were filled with the groans of the wounded and the dying. The earth was reeking with the shallow graves of the slain. Nearly every gun in fixed position had been disabled. In the midst of this tempest of shot and shell there were hours when even a bird could not have flown with safety across the parade of the fort. Wagner, which had given such heroic memories to this epoch of brave deeds, was literally *in extremis*, and there was no way of averting the impending catastrophe. Realizing the situation, and well knowing that immediate intervention was necessary for the salvation of its garrison, General Beauregard issued an order for the prompt evacuation of the work. Its defenders were to be withdrawn to James Island, and this could be effected only by means of small boats. Under cover of the early night they were concentrated for the

emergency. The enemy evidently suspected that some movement of unusual significance was contemplated by the Confederates. They were not ignorant of the untenable condition of Wagner, and they were resolved to storm that fort on the morning of the 7th. Preliminary to this step, the afternoon and night of the 6th were set apart for a bombardment of surpassing violence. Selecting their positions at short ranges, the Ironsides and the Monitors, without provoking any return fire,—for there were no Confederate guns which could be employed for the purpose,—poured upon the devoted head of Wagner a remorseless stream of nine, eleven, and fifteen inch shells. The Parrott batteries united in an uninterrupted and a most destructive fire which was supplemented by an iron hail storm from Coehorn mortars recently planted in the vicinity of the fort. In exploding, these projectiles, after night-fall, disseminated a continuous light above, around, and within the work. Not infrequently the sand bags upon the parapet, the traverses and the bomb-proof, were ignited; and thus was intensified the lurid glare of time and place. Wagner was little else than a smoking volcano. Calcium lights—flashing from the Monitors and the Federal land batteries,—while veiling the operations of the enemy, uncovered the ragged outlines of the Confederate defences and enabled the artillerists to direct against them a fire remarkable for its accuracy. Than this bombardment nothing of the sort could have been more magnificent or appalling. Morris Island trembled under the shock. Hour after hour the air was dissonant with the screams of projectiles hurled from Parrott guns, and rent by exploding shells. The earth reeled under the reverberations of the thunders of heavy ordnance and the detonations of projectiles. The flight of the mortar shells could be distinctly traced as they sped athwart the field of vision like so many shooting stars, and then, as by common consent, descended upon their mission of death and destruction. The spectacle was grand and awe-inspiring beyond expression. It transcended all exhibitions of like character encountered during the war.

Within the fort silence reigned, interrupted now and then by discharges of musketry and an occasional response from

some siege piece which had not been dismounted. The mind of the beleaguered and wearied garrison was intent upon the consummation of the impending and hazardous movement. The working parties and the advanced detachments of the enemy were so near the fort that its successful evacuation appeared almost impossible.

Shortly after midnight occurred a partial lull in the storm. Improving the opportunity thus afforded, the garrisons of Wagner and Gregg silently withdrew, carrying their wounded with them ; and Morris Island, after a tenure protracted and most valorous, was yielded up to the possession of the United States forces. Through the failure of the slow-matches,—laid and ignited with a view to their demolition,—the Confederate fortifications were not blown up.

Although by a curved fire over the heads of Wagner and Gregg,—a fire maintained with a steadiness and an accuracy most extraordinary and covering a period of more than a month and a half,—the sea face of Sumter which, during Admiral Dupont's attack of the 7th of April 1863, suffered severely, had been pounded into a shapeless mass, the intrepid garrison still retained possession of that fortress and successfully resisted all attempts to compass its capture. The batteries and defensive lines on James Island, the works on Sullivan's Island, and the interior defences of Charleston harbor were still intact ; so that upon the fall of Morris Island the Federals acquired but small advantage in the prosecution of their plans for the capture of the commercial metropolis of South Carolina. With the progress of this memorable siege we are not at present concerned.

Having established garrisons at Wagner and Gregg, and confirmed the Federal occupation of Morris Island, General Gillmore,—an engineer officer of great repute, and an artilleryman of the highest reputation,—finding his land forces largely unemployed, conceived a scheme for the subjugation of Florida. The conduct of the expedition was confided to Brigadier General Seymour, and its avowed objects were fourfold:

I: To procure an outlet for cotton, lumber, naval stores, etc., etc.,

II : To cut off one of the principal sources whence the commissary department of the Confederacy was obtaining its supplies,

III : To secure recruits for the colored regiments in the service of the United States, and

IV : To inaugurate measures for the speedy restoration of Florida to her former allegiance to the Federal Government.

It was believed that little difficulty would be encountered in the accomplishment of these purposes. The expeditionary force, consisting of between six and seven thousand troops of all arms, and conveyed in twenty steamers of various classes and eight schooners, left Hilton Head on the morning of the 6th of February 1864 and arrived, without accident, at the bar off the mouth of St. John's River in the forenoon of the following day. During that afternoon a landing was effected, and the village of Jacksonville, without opposition, fell into the hands of the United States troops.

To oppose this formidable demonstration there was, within the limits of the State of Florida, only a handful of Confederate soldiers organized into a few poorly equipped light batteries, a regiment and a battalion of cavalry, and a battalion or two of infantry. These were posted at detached points, and were not within supporting distance of each other.

Advised of this movement on the part of the Federals, General Beauregard—then in command of the military Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida—ordered Brigadier General A. H. Colquitt with his brigade and the Chatham Artillery from James Island, and such troops as could be spared from the District of Georgia, to repair with all possible dispatch to Lake City, and to unite in arresting the incursion of the enemy.

By the 18th of February a concentration of perhaps forty five hundred Confederates, of all arms, had been effected near Olustee. This position was chosen as affording the best advantages for contesting the Federal advance along the line selected for the invasion of Florida. Looking East, and in the direction of Jacksonville, Ocean Pond lay on the left, stretching away through the low-lying pine barren and constituting a protection

to the Confederate left flank which could not be turned except by a detour of some seven or eight miles. On the right trended, toward the St. John's River, a cypress swamp which, if not impracticable, presented a serious obstacle to the passage even of infantry. The only direct approach was by means of the railway track and the wagon road running parallel with each other over causeways constructed between Ocean Pond on the one hand and the swamp on the other. Between the railway station at Olustee and this crossing, and so near as thoroughly to command the latter, field works were hastily constructed by the Confederates. Behind these it was resolved to dispute the advance of the enemy. Such, in short, was the position selected by the Confederate commander for the anticipated struggle. In every direction the eye rested upon a monotonous, dreary pine barren, interrupted here and there by ponds and small water courses, but offering no advantages for impeding the progress of an invading foe.

The engagement of the 20th, as we shall see, was not fought behind the breast-works near Olustee station, or upon the ground selected by the Confederates, but in the open pine-barren three miles and more in advance of that position, and without the slightest premeditation or protection of any sort. In fact, both armies came into collision with each other in mutual surprise, ignorant of the true state of affairs, upon ground alike favorable to each, and with no plans or combinations other than such as were born of the moment and developed by the necessities of the occasion. The battle of Ocean Pond, or Olustee Station, may therefore be regarded as an unusually fair fight, with the preponderance of men and metal in favor of the Federals. All statements that the United States forces were, on this occasion, drawn into a carefully planned ambush are entirely without foundation.

At the time of its occupation by the Federals, Jacksonville was an insignificant town. With the exception of a few shots fired by a detachment of Confederate cavalry there posted, General Seymour met with no opposition in the debarkation of his command. "We came here," said that officer, "not so much to fight as to conciliate the inhabitants and accept their

homages of loyalty." How vain that anticipation, the sequel will show.

Preliminary to a general movement on the part of the army of invasion, Colonel Henry, with his cavalry and some artillery, was ordered to make a reconnoissance along the line of the rail road and in the direction of Tallahassee. This advance was pushed to within a few miles of Lake City where, encountering determined opposition from a Confederate force rapidly embodied by Generals Finegan and Gardner, the Federals retraced their steps and fell back upon the main body which was moving upon Sanderson. During this raid two twelve-pounder and two six-pounder guns,—belonging respectively to the light batteries of Captains Duuham and Able,—were captured, and several advanced posts of the Confederates were carried.

By the 19th a Confederate army consisting of the 1st Georgia Regulars, the 6th, 19th, 23d, 27th, 28th, 32d, and 64th Regiments Georgia infantry, Bonaud's Battalion of Georgia infantry, the 2d and 6th Battalions of Florida infantry, Clinch's Regiment of Georgia cavalry, Smith's Regiment of Florida cavalry, Wheaton's Georgia Light Battery (the Chatham Artillery) of four guns, one section of Gamble's Florida Light Battery of two guns, and one section of Guerard's Georgia Light Battery of two guns, and numbering in the aggregate some forty five hundred men, had been concentrated at Olustee station, where it was proposed to deliver battle.

The Federal Army, composed of the 47th, 48th, and 115th New York Regiments, the 7th New Hampshire Regiment, the 7th Connecticut Regiment, the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, the 1st North Carolina Regiment, the 8th United States Volunteer Regiment, the 40th Massachusetts Regiment,—mounted infantry,—Steven's Battalion of cavalry, Elder's Battery of Horse Artillery of four guns, Hamilton's Light Battery of six guns, Langdon's Light Battery of four guns, and a section of the 3d Rhode Island Light Battery, of two guns, and numbering between fifty five hundred and six thousand men, about nine o'clock on the morning of the 20th set out in three columns, moving almost parallel with the rail-

road. The column on the right—consisting of the 47th, 48th, and 115th New York Regiments—was led by Colonel Barton. The centre column comprised the Cavalry under Major Stevens, the Mounted Infantry under Colonel Guy V. Henry, the 7th Connecticut under Colonel Hawley, and the 7th New Hampshire under Colonel Abbott. The left was commanded by Colonel Montgomery, and was composed of the 54th Massachusetts, Colonel Hallowell, the 1st North Carolina, Lieutenant Colonel Reed, and the Eighth United States Volunteers, Colonel Fribley.

When within some four miles of Olustee station the heads of these columns struck Colonel Smith's regiment of cavalry deployed as skirmishers. As soon as the firing commenced the enemy halted and preparations were made to deploy in line of battle. The 64th Georgia,—Colonel Evans commanding,—was hastened to the front to support the cavalry. It was at first believed that the enemy was in small force. This impression, however, was quickly dissipated, and General A. H. Colquitt was ordered by General Joseph Finegan, commanding, to move rapidly forward to the scene of action. He was accompanied by the 6th, 28th, 32nd, and 23rd Georgia Regiments, the 1st Georgia Regulars, the 6th Florida Battalion, Captain Wheaton's Light Battery, and a section of Gamble's Battery. These troops, and the 19th Regiment, Georgia Infantry, were placed in position as rapidly as they reached the front, and the action soon became general. The remaining Confederate forces were subsequently advanced from Olustee station at the double quick and, on arrival, reinforced the line of battle. General Colquitt was assigned to the command of the Confederate troops engaged, and conducted the operations on the field with a coolness, judgment, and intrepidity worthy of every commendation.

The battle raged in an open pine barren. It was precipitated without special preparation on either side. All movements were suggested on the moment, and were the offspring of the emergency. There were no natural advantages to be gained, or commanding positions to be contended for.

The Federals did not anticipate serious opposition until they

should have penetrated as far as the vicinity of Lake City; and, when the Confederates advanced beyond Olustee station they were under the impression that they would, at the time, be required simply to drive away a raiding party engaged in tearing up the railway track. That a general engagement was imminent did not enter into the calculation of either army. The affair was therefore unpremeditated, and all formations were, at the outset, limited by the effort on the one side to deploy marching columns into line of battle, and by the endeavor on the other hand to offer an opposing front which was increased to the right or left as reinforcements appeared upon the scene of action.

The details of the battle are simple and unimportant. It was a stubborn fight, at short range, on equal ground, in an open pine barren, without protection of any sort, and, as we have stated, with the preponderance of men and metal in favor of the United States forces.

At one time the situation of the Confederates became critical. The enemy had been pressed back and had formed a new line of battle. At this juncture the supply of ammunition in the hands of our troops was so nearly exhausted that their fire slackened very materially. The ordnance wagons were not up, and for about twenty minutes a considerable proportion of the ammunition expended by the Confederate infantry was gathered from the boxes of the Federal wounded and slain. The arrival of Bonaud's Battalion, of the 2nd Florida Battalion, and of the 27th Georgia Regiment—led by Colonel Zachry—at this opportuue moment restored the fortunes of the day and enable our forces to maintain their advanced position until they could be supplied with ammunition. A galling fire from Wheaton's battery, and from a section of Guerard's battery, under the command of Lieutenant Gignilliat—the field pieces having been well distributed and pushed to the front—checked a general charge for which the enemy was evidently preparing.

So soon as his command could be equipped for the movement, General Colquitt, who had intermediately detailed the 6th and 32nd Georgia Regiments by a detour to fall upon the

Federal right flank,* ordered the Confederate line to press forward. For some time the enemy resisted stubbornly, and the fire was very heavy. The ground was strewn with the dead and wounded. So soon however, as the detached regiments closed in upon the Federal right, under pressure of direct assault aided by this flank movement, the enemy's line began to waver. Taking advantage of this turn in the tide of battle, the Confederates rushed forward and the Federal confusion rapidly developed into a palpable rout. Our infantry pursued until overtaken by darkness. In obedience to orders from Brigadier General Joseph Finegan, who was the ranking Confederate officer, our victorious troops were then halted. A regiment was posted in front as an advanced guard, and our forces returned to their camp at Olustee Station.

Although directed to press the retreating enemy very vigorously, our Cavalry failed to do so. Completely discomfited, the Federals did not pause in their retrograde movement until they had fallen back upon Jacksonville. Nothing save the inaction of the Confederates and the inefficiency of our Cavalry prevented the capture of General Seymour's command. The Federals left their dead and severely wounded upon the field, and in their flight gave every evidence of precipitancy. When passing through Baldwin, they destroyed a large amount of ordnance and commissary stores which they had there deposited. In their haste they made no effort to carry them off, and the line of retreat was cumbered by wagons, equipments, and arms abandoned in the flight.

In reporting upon this engagement Major George G. Grattan—the accomplished and gallant adjutant general of Colquitt's Brigade—who, during the battle was in all parts of the field noting the occurrences of the day and, by his personal experience and accustomed bravery contributing materially to the achievements of the victory, says: "I am well assured that General Colquitt had no anticipation of a serious engagement until after the commencement of the fight, and I believe that General Finegan had no information of the advance of any

*Flank movements on the part of the Confederate Cavalry regiments of Colonels Clinch and Smith had been previously ordered and attempted, but they proved signally abortive.

infantry force. All the movements upon the field were directed by General Colquitt.

The enemy seemed as much surprised as we were at the precipitation of the engagement.—They were on the march to Tallahassee, and did not expect to meet any infantry force before reaching Lake City :—at least so the prisoners reported. I take it that the engagement was a mutual surprise, upon perfectly fair and open ground. Except in numbers, it was the fairest battle I saw or heard of during the whole war.”

During the conflict Colonel George P. Harrison Jr. was assigned by General Colquitt to the command of the left of the Confederate line of battle. With the exception of the Cavalry, the conduct of the Confederate forces merits the highest praise. Four times during the progress of the battle was the Federal line pressed back and partially broken : and as often did the enemy reform under fire in new positions in rear of those from which he had been driven.

The Confederate forces participating in this affair did not, as we have seen, exceed forty five hundred men of all arms; although Lieutenant Eddy, of the Third Rhode Island Battery, reported them at fifteen thousand, and for this reason offers ready excuse for the reverse sustained by the Federals.

From the indications of the field, the report of prisoners, and from statements promulgated touching the strength of the army of invasion, it is believed that the United States troops in line of battle on this occasion did not aggregate less than six thousand.

In the matter of field artillery the enemy held the preponderance both in the number of the pieces and the calibre of the guns employed. Early in the action Gamble's section became disabled and withdrew. For some time Wheaton's right section was the only Confederate Artillery on the field. It was subsequently reinforced by the left section, and towards the heel of the battle a section of Guerard's battery came into action. While therefore the Confederates brought eight guns into play, two of them were quickly withdrawn, other two were effectively handled during the entire engagement, and the other four were served only during a portion of the fight.

Sixteen pieces of Federal Artillery were actively handled during the continuance of the combat.

From the best sources of information the Confederate losses may be reported at ninety five killed and eight hundred and thirty wounded. Of the latter many returned to duty in a short time, and others did not leave their commands. Nearly four hundred Federals, left dead upon the field, were buried by the Confederates: and we captured a larger number, very many of them suffering from desperate wounds. It is admitted by the enemy that over five hundred of their wounded were sent off in transports from Jacksonville, and the aggregate loss sustained by General Seymour in the battle of Olustee has been estimated, by at least one Federal writer, at not less than nineteen hundred. We would probably commit no grave error if we stated it at two thousand killed, wounded, and captured.

"The battle of Olustee" says a Federal War Correspondent, "will take rank among the bloodiest and most fruitless slaughters of the war." Another, writing from "on board Cosmopolitan Hospital ship in transit from Jacksonville Florida, to Hilton Head South Carolina," under date February 22nd 1864, after enumerating various casualties which occurred during the engagement, says: "On board this ship are two hundred and forty brave fellows wounded. About five hundred others are left at Jacksonville in the care of the medical staff. On the battle field are not fewer than five hundred of our dear brothers, most of whom are dead. * * At Sanderson, it is understood, that some wounded had to be left with a surgeon in charge."

The effect of this disastrous and bloody repulse was emphatically to terminate all Federal operations of moment in Florida. The attempt to invade that State was checked upon this battle field, and was not renewed.

As material trophies of the conflict, the Confederates captured three twelve-pounder Napoleon guns* of Langdon's Battery, 1st U. S. Artillery—two ten-pounder Parrotts of Hamilton's Battery, 3rd U. S. Artillery—more than three thousand

*To the Chatham Artillery—as a mark of the commanding general's appreciation of the gallant and efficient conduct of this light battery during the engagement—two of these guns were assigned.

stand of small arms—among them nearly two hundred Spencer rifles—a large amount of ammunition, and a considerable quantity of quarter-master's and commissary's stores. The proximate and legitimate fruits of this victory—which should have been nothing less than the capture of the Federal force—were not reaped because of the inefficiency of the Confederate cavalry. Had the Federals been vigorously pressed during their flight towards Jacksonville, surrender would surely have been yielded. This is not judgment after event, because their published accounts intimate as much, and they express surprise that they were permitted to escape. The line of their march from Olu-tee battle field to the vicinity of Jacksonville was filled with the evidences of precipitate retreat. The guiding spirit and the conspicuous actor in the Confederate lines during this memorable and bloody affray was Brigadier General Alfred H. Colquitt.*

Confined within the limits of Jacksonville and its vicinity, the Federals busied themselves rather with matters appertaining to the security of their position than with preparations for a renewal of their contemplated march through Florida. An expedition, sent up the river St. John, eventuated in an early recall, and in the loss of two steam transports which were blown up by our torpedoes.

After lingering about Jacksonville for some time—the memories of his bloody defeat at Olustee forbidding the hazard of a second passage at arms.—General Seymour abandoned the hope which suggested the expedition, and returned his command to the Carolina Coast.

*The following congratulatory order was issued by General Finegan:
 "HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT E. FLORIDA,
 February 22, 1864. }

General Order No. —.

I. The Brigadier General commanding thanks the officers and men of this command for their bravery and admirable conduct in the engagement with the enemy at Ocean Pond on the 20th inst. The signal victory which their valor achieved will be of great service to their country. To the courage of the men of Georgia and Florida is this victory due, and to their States will its results more especially enure.

II. The Brigadier General commanding acknowledges the distinguished services of Brig. Gen. A. H. Colquitt, commanding in the front, to whom much of the success of the battle is due, and of Col. George P. Harrison, commanding 2d Brigade, both of whom conducted themselves with the highest degree of courage and ability.

III. The Brigadier General commanding also returns his thanks to Brig. Gen. Gardner, commanding Dist. Mid. Fla., and the officers of his staff, for their presence and assistance during the engagement.

IV. The conduct of both officers and men will be noticed in detail in the report of the Brigadier General commanding to Department Headquarters.

W. CALL, A. A. G."

By order of BRIG. GEN. FINEGAN.

During the War between the States it is, I believe, a fact that the victories achieved by Confederates were seldom, if ever, accompanied by the decisive results which were confidently anticipated, and which legitimately appertained to them. They stopped short of an absolute realization of the advantage gained, and did not yield the full measure of benefit to which the successes seemed fairly entitled. In other words, our triumphs, for some reason or other, were not thoroughly pressed. Attacks were gallantly repulsed. Movements of great moment were met and defeated. Armies were pushed back, but they were neither annihilated nor wholly captured. There was generally something wanting to crown the effort with entire success,—some element lacking to consummate the crushing effect of the delivered blow,—some supplemental act omitted which, if energetically expended, would have completely crippled the foe. Whether this repeated failure to reap the full benefits of fortunate passages at arms inhered in the very nature of our defensive operations, in the weakness of our armies when compared with those of the United States, in the lack of suitable transportation, or in the necessities of the case which enjoined upon our leaders the exercise of prudence and a careful husbanding of men and the materials of war, we will not pause to inquire. Nor, ignoring the lesson that success generally follows in the train of the weightier battalions, do we seek an explanation, as some have attempted, by interpreting the designs—if such there were—of that Divinity which is believed to shape the destinies alike of individuals and of nations. Leaving the historical fact as we find it, we hesitate not to affirm that in the long catalogue of Confederate victories we recall none which, in view of the forces engaged and the results achieved, may justly be regarded as more brilliant or decisive than that of Ocean Pond.

Another year, my Comrades, has been enfolded within the womb of an inexorable Past, and this Memorial Day brings us a twelve-month nearer a reunion with those---the good and the brave—who, having fought their last battle, are now reposing in the calm sunlight of peace and rest eternal. Noble and privileged as our association is, beyond the stars is reserved a higher, a holier, a wider companionship far transcending all that has been or that can be here enjoyed. Loyal to the impulses, cherishing the friendships, and guarding the traditions of the days that are gone,—responding, as best we may, to the obligations of the present,—and filled with manly aspirations, let us await with composure the final summons. At this season, consecrated to their memory, again do we reverently uncover our heads in the presence of our Confederate Dead, and repeat the benedictions which have so long rested upon their honored graves.

“The sounds of the tumult have ceased to ring,
 And the Battle’s sun has set,
 And here in the peace of the new-born Spring
 We would fain forgive and forget.

* * * *

Forgive and forget? Yes, be it so
 From the hills to the broad sea waves;
 But mournful and low are the winds that blow
 By the slopes of a thousand graves.

We may scourge from the spirit all thought of ill
 In the midnight of grief held fast,
 And yet, oh Brothers, be loyal still
 To the sacred and stainless Past.

She is glancing now from the vapor and cloud,
 From the waning mansion of Mars,
 And the pride of her beauty is wanly bowed,
 And her eyes are misted stars.

And she speaks in a voice that is sad as death,
 ‘There is duty still to be done,
 Tho’ the trumpet of onset has spent its breath,
 And the battle been lost and won.’

And she points with a trembling hand below,
To the wasted and worn array
Of the heroes who strove in the morning glow
For the grandeur that crowned 'the Grey.'

Oh God! they come not as once they came
In the magical years of yore;
For the trenchant sword and the soul of flame
Shall quiver and flash no more.

Alas! for the broken and battered hosts:
Frail wrecks from a gory sea;
Though pale as a band in the realm of ghosts,
Salute them. They fought with Lee."

* * *



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