A VISIT TO GETTYSBURG BATTLEFIELD

Automobile Trip to Historic Spot From Chestertown Takes Us Through Country Where One Can Get a Real Estimate of Maryland's Exquisite Beauty.

Through the courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. William Frazier Russell, Jr., Mrs. Polk T. Bramble, Mr. Joseph N. Wheatley and the writer, Polk T. Bramble, had the inestimable pleasure during the past week-end of paying a visit to that wonderful spot of war and romance, sometimes spoken of as the "Waterloo of America," because of the prominent and crucial place it occupies in American history, but better known perhaps as the Gettysburg Battlefield, situated at and around Gettysburg, Penna. To know just what Gettysburg means in our history cannot be accurately and thoroughly described by this pen picture that we will attempt to draw. On the other hand, one must read history thoroughly, from an unbiased authority, and with a mind that will be ready to receive all information that will tend to either make him wiser or to give him a broader national and political outlook, in order to appreciate Gettysburg.

We would like to say, in the beginning, that Gettysburg belongs to America and to the world of heroism, and not to either of the sections that engaged in fraticidal strife 62 years ago in July of this year. It is situated upon soil that was a part of the states that constituted the Union, but that does not necessarily mean that it is a Battlefield of the North. In a broad sense, Gettysburg belongs neither to the North or the South. It belongs to Civilization itself, like Waterloo, and Runnymeade and Verdun. The heroism inspired by valor, of those who wore the Blue and the Gray, exhibited upon that spot on that teeming day in July, 1863, lifts Gettysburg to heights of courage and romance never surpassed upon a field of war and, perhaps seldom equalled. This indescribable valor of American soldiers lifts this Pennsylvania town upon such a pedastal that it will take Civilization itself, and not a single section alone, to give it its place in the world's history.

It was once said of a great man, after his untimely death at the red hand of the assassin, that "he now belongs to the ages." And we say in this article likewise, "Gettysburg belongs to the ages." Far be it for us to attempt to hallow by mere words this great spot. We cannot consecrate it more than has already been done by those brave men who struggled there, each for what he thought was in the defense of the right.

It is well known by all students of history that Gettysburg marked the high tide of Confederate invasion. Everyone knows its place in American history as the crucial battlefield of the Civil War in the eastern part of the United States. The children of our schools are taught how General Lee, idol of the South, realizing the desperate need of his army for supplies and food, resolved to strike out through Pennsylvania for the North—first to Harrisburg; thence to Philadelphia and from there to New York. By striking at these centers of wealth and influence the great Southern general hoped to inspire the Southern people to continue their remarkable support; to inspire feelings of dread in the hearts of the people of the North; and to restore the declining Southern credit in the captials of Europe, where much aid had been given them.

We will not dwell here upon how General Meade, who had succeeded General Hooker as commander of the Union forces in the East but a few days before, met the leader of the hopes of the South at this point, where both sides prepared for what furnished the most sanguinary conflict in our history. It is not our purpose to dwell upon how these two generals threw out their lines in the shape of a colossal fish-hook which embraced over 20,000 acres in its grasp; or how, after three days of battle which shook the whole civilized world, General Lee's stricken army retired once more to the banks of the Potomac to await that tremendous clash of arms which was to come between General Grant and General Lee, which ended only when the South, stricken and bleeding from exhaustion rather than from defeat, came at last to realize the futility of war against forces which outnumbered them and were backed with untold wealth.

We will pass this part of our estimate of Gettysburg by, and will proceed to dwell more upon our trip from Chestertown to that historic spot, and to visualize the greatness and beauty of Maryland, as well as the greatness of our heroes who fought there and who helped by their sacrifices to give this small town its place in history, and to immortalize the name of Americans all over the world. May the Great One, who writes the record of events, look over the monument-studded fields, and inspire all who see the sacred spot, and those who are unable to do so, to higher ideals of living and nobler efforts for right, and even self-sacrifice if need be. No man can stand upon this sacred spot without receiving some inspiration because of what those who sleep there endured, and poor, indeed, is he who stands in the midst of those blood-drenched fields and who receives no thrill of patriotism and no inspiration for nobler endeavors.

So let the heroic dead rest there, "each in his windowless palace of rest." The earth may run red with other wars but they are at peace. In the roar of conflict, in the whirlwind of the charge, they found the serenity of death. We place our tribute upon those who feel in each cause alike—under the laurel, the blue; under the willow, the gray.

When we left Chestertown, the eastern sky, touched by the glorifying rays of the rising sun, was a mass of gold and lavendar as the orb of day, bent upon flooding a peaceful Sabbath with sunshine, began its daily scor through the azure of a hazy August day. The Chester lay like a green serpent, its bosom mirrowing the trees on either side, as it made its noiseless way toward the bay, hardly a ripple stirring its placid waters, which clear almost as a crystal stream, caught now and then a fleecy cloud which made its way across the endless blue of the vault overhead. Chestertown was sleeping its usual morning sleep, with dreams of church spires and Sunday music and sermons that would inspire and help to make life better. Out in the country the cattle, grazing quietly in pastoral valleys, now and then sent plaintive notes out over the peaceful fields, which here and there caught up the delicate blooms of early fall flowers and wafted their faint perfume into the swooning air. Fairlee was asleep, resting from its labors of the week before, while Rock Hall had hardly begun to move about as we made our almost noiseless way toward the Chesapeake, whose blue waters were beginning to catch the reflection of the sun, which was sending mellow beams across its long stretch of waters. No matter how many times one crosses the Chesapeake, it always has its thrill. While the day of the sailboat is almost in the past, yet on Sunday morning the blue waters of the bay were dotted here and there by the white wings of sailing craft, while out toward the mouth of the Chester the smoke from ocean-going liners could be seen showing dark against the cloudless sky.

Baltimore was arousing from its slumbers as we passed through the Maryland metropolis, while the smoke from a thousand stacks began to cloud the sky. Druid Hill Park, one of the most beautiful in the country, was quickly traversed as we made our westward way. A few miles out from Baltimore and the land began to show green and rolling hills and deep indentations between, which grew more pretentious as we began to near the blue, upland shapes, called the Blue Ridge Mountains, which soon began to show dark and sullen against the skyline. Westminster was passed through, with its small streets and its beautiful and pretentious Western Maryland College, the seminary of the Methodist Protestant Church. It was but a few minutes more to the town of Gettysburg, Pa., to which we went, skirting, as we did so, the national park and battlefield of the Civil War, but catching now and then the shining shaft that some state had flung up yonder as a reminder of the courage of its heroic sons.

The Battlefield of Gettysburg contains 18,000 acres of land; 500 memorial shafts and tablets; more than 1000 markers, representing in value millions of dollars, and being constructed of granite, stone and bronze. The Gettysburg National Park includes the Soldiers National Cemetery, both the State of Pennsylvania and the Federal Government creating the place. The positions of the lines of both armies is marked by concrete roads, over which pass automobiles by the thousand from all parts of the country, and which are lined by monuments and markers of many kinds, constructed by the various states, which perpetuate for all time the courage of both Confederate and Union soldiers. There are nearly 100 miles of macadamized road in the National Park for travel, besides several steel towers for observation.

On the Gettysburg Battlefield are many places known all over the civilized world where history is read. Here can be seen the famous Seminary Ridge, guarded by guns and punctuated by granite shafts; Cemetery Hill, with its breastworks yet intact; Culp's hill, with its bullet scarred trees; Cemetery Ridge, with its long line of markers; Little Round Top, with its bronze statue of General Warren; Big Round Top, which served as a signal station; Devil's Den, with its bullet marked boulders; the Peach Orchard; the Wheatfield; the Whirlpool of Death; the Bloody Angle. Each of these well-known places tells its eloquent story of heroism and blood and death, and tells its own tale of historic interest which will ever stir the human heart. Gettysburg itself offers many sites of historic interest. Here Lincoln wrote his famous address which has ever stirred the world by its idealism. To really appreciate the place one must go to the spot, and, with what information he can gather beforehand, see for himself this high-water mark of the Confederate invasion.

When on the bettlefield we stood upon one spot of more than passing interest. It was at the high-tide of the invasion, marked by monuments and slabs of many kinds. The first day's fighting had resulted in a victory for the South, with the Union forces falling back. On the following day the Confederates under Longstreet had attacked the Union left, charged madly across the Valley of Death, drove back Sickles' Corps in confusion, swept across the Devil's Den and up the steep ascent of Little Round Top. For two hours the battle raged, with the blazing crown of victory hovering first upon one side and then the other. But Longstreet's men were driven back by the death fringe of musketry fire. Having gained somewhat the first and second day's fighting, Lee resolved to make a last supreme effort for a decisive victory on the following day. Consequently, on July 3 the Confederate column of assault was led by Pickett in the face of a murderous fire from Union batteries on Cemetery Ridge. Five thousand Virginians marched across half a mile of shot and shell, leaving a ghastly trail of death in their wake. The survivors actually reached the Union works and engaged the Federals in hand-to-hand conflict. Their struggle was in vain, and, attacked on front and flank, they were surrounded and uttered defeated. The annihilation of these men practically lost the battle of Gettysburg for the South and compelled Lee to retreat to the Potomac once more.

After standing upon this historic field one can but pay his small tribute to those who played their parts in the great drama of death which was enacted there. We can in our imagination, see those gray clad men charging desperately up the slopes of those now green hills, where their tide of invasion was crushed against the blue-clad men who stood, with muskets ready to receive them. We can see them in hand-to-hand conflict and in the whilwind of the charge. We can hear the roaring cannon, the cracking of rifles, and the screams and cries of the dying. Smoke is hangling low over the hills. The field has become a blazing sepulchre of all manners of deaths. The carnage grows more intense, then slackens, repeating the process as the battle waxes and wanes. Then night comes on and darkness draws its somber curtain over the blood-drenched sward. Campfires blaze on the hills. An army prepares to depart, expecting an assault upon the rear which never came. The greatest battle on the American Continent is ended. The ones who died and the ones who lived alike are loved and venerated wherever on earth there survives a real lover of honest courage.

Every real American should see Gettysburg. To Marylanders it is only a stone's throw. It is a crucial point in American history, because it marks the turning point in a great war. Gettysburg will ever live in the history of the South and North—a melting pot of American history and a spot which will be cherished as long as our nation stands.

Should sectional strife ever again threaten any portion of our country, or should we, as a nation, ever again need a rebirth of patriotism, we would suggest that we should go once more to the field of Gettysburg, and upon that monument- studded field, consecrated and hallowed alike by the blood of the South and the North, be rebuked by its lessons and inspired by its courage.

Bryan Monument

A nation-wide movement for the erection of an extraordinary memorial to William Jennings Bryan at Clewiston, Florida, was announced recently by Miss Dionessa Bryan Evans, godchild of the late Commoner. Miss Evans, whose home is in Minneapolis, arrived at New York to establish a permanent organization for the project.

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