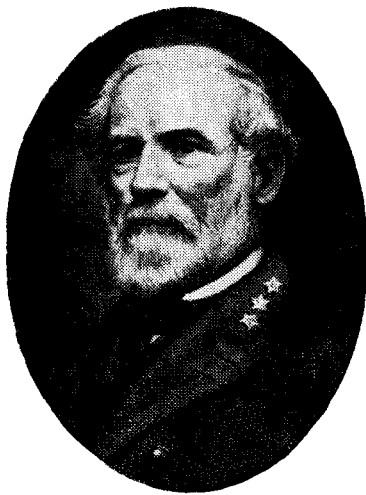
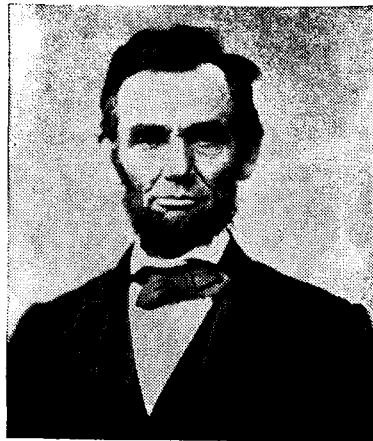


WHO REALLY WON AT GETTYSBURG?

By BRUCE CATTON



Robert E. Lee.



Abraham Lincoln.

Both Robert E. Lee and Abraham Lincoln are revered as American heroes, although they tried for four years to destroy each other. For the former, neither the logic of geography nor the moral appeal of Negro emancipation outweighed his loyalty to the state of Virginia. For the latter, the grand mystical vision of a free man's Republic stretching from ocean to ocean transcended every other issue. The two ideals—one parochial, the other continental—clashed in the great battle at Gettysburg, which symbolizes, if it did not decide, the direction of the American dream.

TWO SOLDIERS of distinguished reputation have publicly testified that Generals Robert E. Lee and George Gordon Meade should have been sacked for their respective performances at Gettysburg. Since the battle took place very nearly a century ago, and since everyone involved is safely under the sod by this time, probably the whole fuss should be allowed to rest. It only remains to be said, however, that neither President Dwight D. Eisenhower nor Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery seems quite to understand what Gettysburg was all about.

For Gettysburg was more than just a battle. It was both an act of faith and an act of fate. It was, and is, pre-eminently the great American symbol, and it is not to be touched lightly. It has overtones.

Even minus the overtones, it was a pretty grim affair. Approximately 150,000 young Americans fought here for three days, and at the end of the third day substantially more than 40,000 of them had become casualties. Since every weapon that was used at Gettysburg (with a very few unimportant exceptions) was a muzzle-loader which could be fired, re-loaded, and then fired again only after a fairly substantial lapse of time, and since a great many thousands of the young men concerned did not even know how to accomplish this primitive feat, this horrifying casualty list indicates that a good deal of determination and primeval savagery were involved. At Gettysburg they played for keeps.

So we have made a national shrine out of Gettysburg, and the field there is presently encumbered by scores and scores of monuments—everything from the rather pretentious “eternal flame” on Oak Hill down to crudely-chipped stone markers stating the position, and losses, of individual regiments, like the 35th North Carolina and the 16th Maine. Here American manhood proved itself, and if any lasting values can be drawn from meditation on that fact some hundreds of thousands of American citizens visit the area every year to think about it.

Beyond all of this, however, there

is the fact that Gettysburg is overloaded with intangibles. It may well be, as it is often argued, that this was the great turning point of America's greatest war—although Vicksburg might have something to say about that—and it is quite true that a survey of the field led Abraham Lincoln to put into words the noblest statement yet made of what Americans really hope that they are up to. But Gettysburg has grown with the years, and to reduce it all to terms of who made the worst mistakes there is to miss the real point of it.

MISTAKES were made, beyond question, and both Lee and Meade made their share of them. Yet one of the curious things about Gettysburg is the fact that for two generations people have argued about who lost it, without stopping to realize that in plain fact somebody won it. Far beyond anything the generals could do, Gettysburg finally was in the hands of the private soldiers. Both North and South, these young men did what was asked of them. As Lincoln remarked, they reached here the last full measure of devotion, and the reaching of it was not easy. In the end Gettysburg was a victory rather than a defeat, and the victory was won by a good many thousands of sweaty young men in blue uniforms who dug their toes in on various rocky heights and vowed that they would not be driven away.

They won, and their brethren from the South lost, and somehow after ninety-odd years it appears that the real victor was the nation as a whole, North and South together. The human spirit itself, the dreams it has dreamed and the hard thoughtless courage which it relies upon—these, at last, were the victors, and both sections are the gainers. In a queer way this battle was an act of faith, and the faith has perhaps been justified by its fruits.

But there was also something fated about Gettysburg. Of no other event in American history is one so much tempted to say: it had to go this way, it was in the stars, nothing could have changed it. You keep tripping over historical accidents. Change any one of them and you change the outcome; add all of them together and you get what you see. Were they accidents, or were things bound to happen that way? It is this sort of thing, of course, that leaves an inviting way open for all of the critics, from armchair theorists on up to commanding officers of the Second World War.

Begin at the beginning. Lee concludes that he must invade Pennsylvania and he takes his army north, specifying that Jeb Stuart, once the troops are north of the Potomac, must keep his cavalry screen in close contact on the army's front and on its right. This is routine: the Yankees must be kept in the dark, but the invading army must also be kept in-

formed about the Federal Army's movements and probable intentions. Stuart is very good at this sort of thing. Until he sends word, Lee will know that his movement north and then east will not be interrupted.

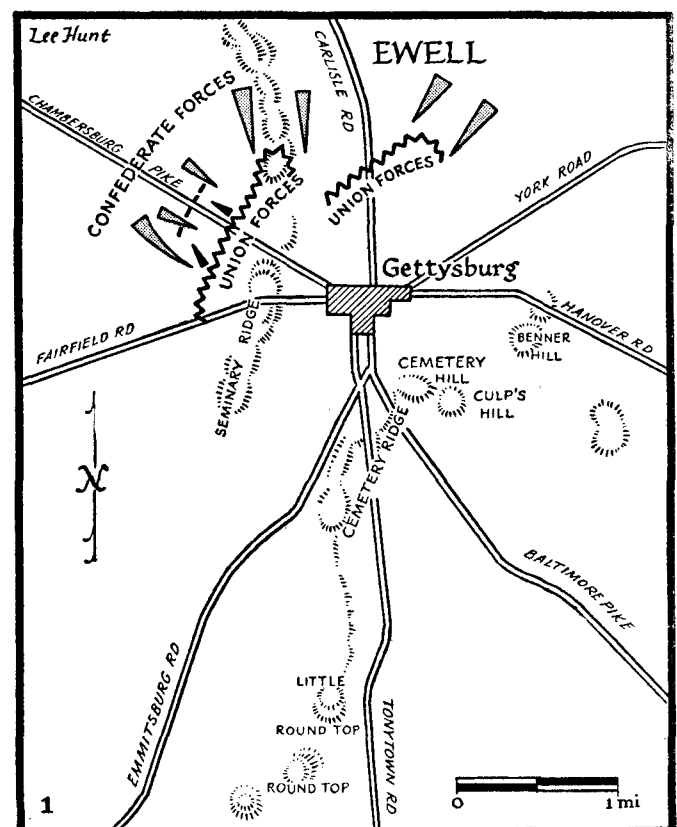
BUT he gives Stuart an order vaguely worded. Stuart (somewhat vain, and smarting because Yankee cavalry has recently jumped him at Brandy Station) wants to perform a minor feat of arms: he will ride across the Federal rear, rejoining Lee's army as soon as he crosses the Potomac. Lee, in effect, tells him that he can do it if he thinks he can get away with it, and confident Stuart does think so. He cuts across the Federal rear and is unable to get back. As a result, Lee enters Pennsylvania without his eyes. But Lee does not know that Stuart is cut off. He can only conclude, in the absence of word from him, that the Army of the Potomac has not yet crossed the Potomac to bring the Army of Northern Virginia to battle. When he learns, suddenly, on June 28 (he himself at Chambersburg, his advance guard almost on the edge of Harrisburg) that the opposing army, now under Meade, is gathered near Frederick, Maryland, looking for trouble, he is compelled to concentrate immediately, and the handiest concentration point is Gettysburg, where all the roads meet. Going there in a hurry, his army collides with Meade's

GETTYSBURG—DESTINY IN THREE DAYS

1. JULY 1: In the summer of 1863 Lee invaded Pennsylvania. The commander of his leading corps, Ewell, got as far as Carlisle, but on June 29, when they learned of a large Federal army moving out, he was ordered to march south again for a concentration at Gettysburg with the other two Confederate corps. Lee had to leave all the details to Ewell, who at this point turned cranky and over-cautious. On July 1 Ewell's men ran onto the outskirts of a Federal force. After some hot fighting they pushed them off Seminary Ridge and back through the town to the eminences beyond. But Ewell failed to take the all-important Cemetery Hill while the enemy was thus on the run.

2. JULY 2: In the night the Federal Army moved up, entrenching itself in the famous "fishhook" that runs from Culp's Hill in the north to Round Top in the south. As Lee's supplies were in no shape for a waiting game, he planned to attack both Union flanks simultaneously, overruling the suggestions of his principal subordinate, Longstreet, who had designed a defensive strategy for the Confederacy. Although scholars have ascertained that the Round Tops were not undefended on the morning of the 2nd, as Longstreet's critics long charged, it remains that this general's sulk, which delayed his attack until late afternoon, did wreck whatever chances he ever had had in his sector. Ewell's operations on the left were equally ineffective.

3. JULY 3: For this day Lee personally ordered a frontal attack on Cemetery Ridge, center of the Union position. He also appointed Longstreet to command the assault, although this general was entirely opposed to it, was "depressed" on the field, and was preoccupied by his own plan, the "right hook" around the Round Tops at the Union's left flank. When it came the attack itself was poorly organized and without proper artillery support. A few Confederates bulled their way to the top of the ridge, but they could hold only for seconds before falling or retreating. The next day the great Army of Northern Virginia began its withdrawal.



advance echelon, and the battle of Gettysburg begins without being willed by anyone.

The first day goes beautifully, as far as Lee is concerned, with the Federals driven off of the fields and ridges north and west of the little town and forced to dig in on Cemetery Hill and the high ground immediately around it. Only a part of the Federal army is on hand, and that part has been very roughly handled. One hard smash, and it can be driven away from the Cemetery Hill complex—in which case the invasion will have begun with a stunning, probably decisive victory. Lee instructs his corps commander, Richard Ewell, to make that smash if he thinks it practicable.

Vagueness, again. Ewell is used to Stonewall Jackson (six weeks in his grave, now, as a result of Chancellorsville) and the "if practicable" business confuses him. Jackson never gave orders like that. Ewell pauses, reflects, figures, fidgets, and at last makes no attack. By next morning the Yankees are in force and it is too late. One more accident.

NOW comes another. Lee determines to smite both ends of the Yankee line at once—the right, on Culp's Hill, and the left, in front of the Round Tops, with Ewell hitting the right and James Longstreet hitting the left. Longstreet objects bitterly, urging instead a swing far around the Federal left—back of

the Round Tops, or even farther down. With Stuart still absent, Lee cannot consent, simply because he has no way to know that half of Meade's army may not be waiting for him if he tries it. He insists on going through with his own plan. Longstreet sulks and delays (giving Meade more precious time to concentrate) and when the fight takes place the attacks on the two wings are not co-ordinated. Failure again, with victory still to be won on the third day.

All of this sets the stage for July 3, the climactic day. Lee has hit both flanks and has failed; now he will hit the center, and Pickett's charge is the result. Again Longstreet urges a move by the flank (he would have agreed, beyond question, with Ike and Monty) and again he is over-ruled. The attack is made, and it has no chance of success. Go along with Field Marshal Montgomery and call it "monstrous," if you will—or, as an alternative, take the view of the waiting Federals, who when they saw the Confederates moving up to make a head-on smash at a powerful position, exultantly murmured "Fredericksburg!" recalling the day seven months earlier when they themselves had been whipped trying a similar assault. Or, if you wish, repeat what Lee himself said, after it was all over and the assaulting column had been wrecked: "It is all my fault. I thought my men were invincible." Whichever comment

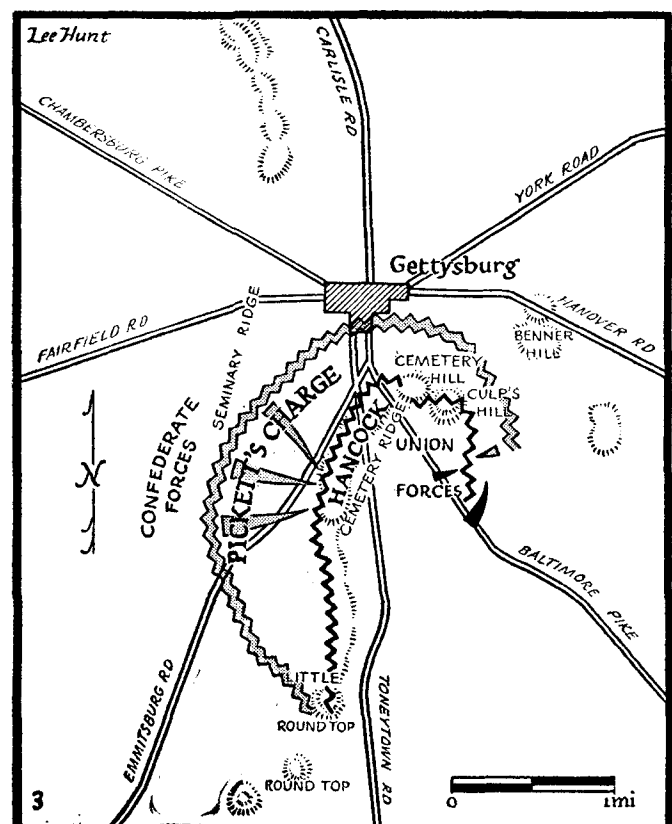
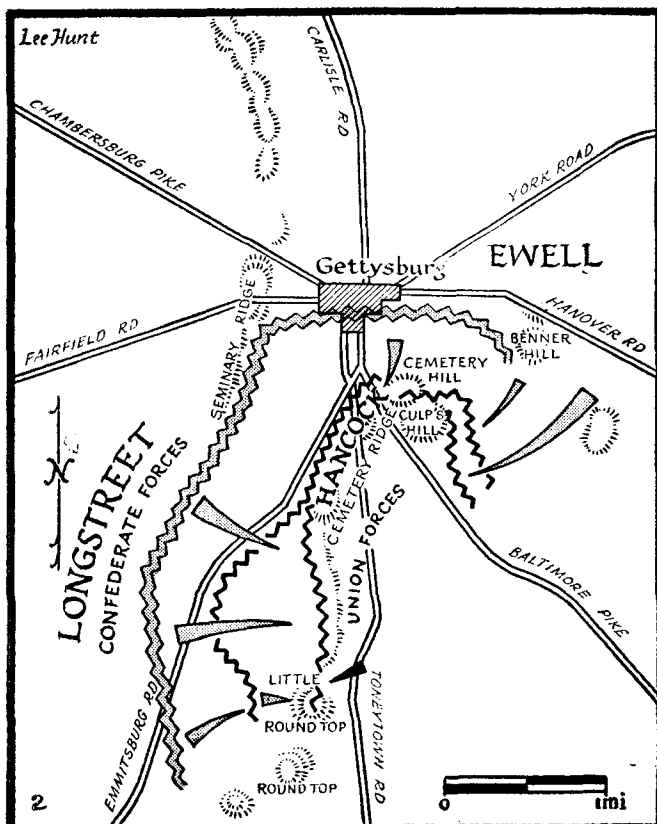
you choose, the business fails. Lee has lost the battle, and now he has to get back to Virginia as quickly as he can.

Now it is Meade's turn for criticism. He let Lee get away. His own view, afterward, was that he could not help himself, that he had pursued as energetically and as aggressively as was proper—the Army of Northern Virginia, after all, could be in the last degree dangerous even after a licking, and Meade and all his subordinates were painfully aware of the fact. Lincoln felt that with a little more drive and determination, Meade could have brought the army to battle, and destroyed it, before it could get south across the Potomac; Marshal Montgomery and President Eisenhower seem to have agreed. Meade, who had a good first-hand view of the whole situation, always held a contrary view. You can take your choice.

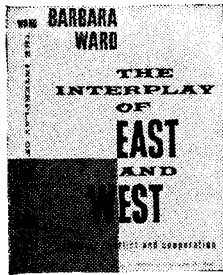
Those are the bare bones of the business, and it is easy enough to see why it is all interpreted, many decades later, in terms of missed opportunities. The "ifs" are numerous and fascinating; change one and you change the whole picture. People have been playing with them ever since, and they probably always will.

Note that in all of this Lee is the central figure. Gettysburg is *his* battle, even though he lost it. He dominated the minds of his opponents at the time,

(Continued on page 48)



—Maps by Lee Hunt, after those in Lt. Col. Joseph B. Mitchell's "Decisive Battles of the Civil War" (Putnam).



Spotlight on the World:

“THE INTERPLAY OF EAST AND WEST”

Author: Barbara Ward

By AUGUST HECKSCHER, *director, Twentieth Century Fund.*

THE INTERESTS of the average American have been hugely expanded over the past generation. The First World War brought a fresh consciousness of Europe. The Second World War made Russia an overriding preoccupation. When Wendell Willkie spoke of “One World” he meant mainly a oneness between the West and Russia; it remained for the Cold War (and for Adlai Stevenson, who first spoke, I believe, of “the uncommitted nations”) to make of vital concern the relations between the West and the whole vast sweep of the East.

Across this enlarged stage Barbara Ward, through her new book “The Interplay of East and West” (Norton, \$3.50), now offers herself as a guide. It would be hard to imagine one more lucid, more eloquent, or more charming. Her small volume, a gathering of lectures delivered at McGill University, yields many fresh insights into the way the two halves of the globe have reacted upon each other in the past and how they can be of help to each other in the crisis through which the whole twentieth-century world is passing.

A quick survey of former centuries reminds us that the interplay of the two strains of civilization is not new. What is new is the rapidity of change and the intensity of the relationships brought about by modern transport and communication. When Marco Polo first visited the East, he found a civilization more advanced than the Europe of his day, and far richer in all the current forms of wealth. Europe was then a have-not nation—yet rich in the gifts of mind and spirit which were to make the age of iron more productive in human well-being than the age of gold and spice had ever been. Today East and West confront each other on new terms; and the East, says Miss Ward, has no choice but to imitate the West and to industrialize as quickly as possible.

It must industrialize because only by this means can it have power, and it is no longer content to remain in a subservient position. Moreover, the immense increase in its population,

brought about by the beginnings of economic progress, compels it to go the whole way if its civilization is not to perish in war and disease. Faced by this necessity, the East has two alternatives. It can follow the way of Russia or the way of the free West. There is no question but that the example of Russia, which in a generation has shaped an economy of vast productive capacity, is in many ways attractive. But Miss Ward is convinced that forty years of experience with Communism has disillusioned those who might be her followers. Not only is lack of freedom a deterrent, but failure to deal effectively with the agricultural problem shows that the system has grave practical shortcomings.

The free West has its chance—but only if it acts with vision. It begins with the handicap of long association in the mind of the East with colonialism and aggression. It suffers today from the immense disproportion between its wealth and the poverty of the lands which it seeks to influence. In the end, Miss Ward is convinced, the West will have to accept in regard to the world community what it has made fundamental at home: the idea that great poverty and great wealth cannot safely exist side by side. Within national boundaries it has been recognized that all benefit

when well-distributed purchasing power and a rising standard of living provide a solid base for the economy. How this shall be accomplished on a world scale Miss Ward does not indicate. Evidently it will require something more than the limited economic and technical aid which the United States has been providing.

The necessity for vision applies to the East as well as to the West. The danger is that nationalism will be pursued in an extreme form, at the very time when its absurdity as a practical doctrine has been uncontroversially demonstrated. It is difficult for the West to overcome the virus of nationalism; for the East it may be even more so. Miss Ward, who has always combined a knowledge of economics with a sensitiveness to spiritual forces, argues that it will be subdued only by a greater force; and this force, she suggests, must be essentially religious in nature. The meaning of science, when apprehended in all its implications, will strengthen religion in the West; it may be given a vitality and power which permits it to illumine the nations struggling toward industrial and technological advance. Thus the East, Miss Ward proposes, can learn from us; it will be saved from the materialism through which it might pass in its search for material growth.

The book is wise in its understanding of Western strength as well as Western weakness; it reminds us of our opportunities even while it warns us against self-righteousness. If the next chapter in history is to avoid the overwhelming tragedy of a world divided and of civilizations at odds, it will be because men and women have taken thought in time. Miss Ward is one of the most eloquent of those in the vanguard.



ABOUT BARBARA WARD: “The Interplay of East and West” is a gathering of lectures that Miss Ward delivered at McGill University in the autumn of 1955. More than 2,500 people—students, professors, and other citizens of Montreal—turned up on three evenings in singularly wintry weather and sat silently attentive on the hard temporary seats that had been installed in the gymnasium armory because none of the lecture halls in the university was large enough to hold the audience. All this was testimony to the wit and charm of Miss Ward (or more

formally, Lady Jackson, for she is the wife of Sir Robert G. A. Jackson), who became foreign editor of the *Economist* of London at the age of twenty-six. Her reputation was initially confined to Britain’s serious classes, but she caught on among the man- and woman-in-the-street in the early Forties when she joined the panel of BBC’s “Brains Trust,” a kind of “Information, Please.” She has five previous books to her credit, of which “The West at Bay” and “Policy for the West” are perhaps best known in this country. Now, at the age of forty-three and the mother of a small son, she is winding up a lecture series at Harvard. Soon she will be heading back to England to join her husband, who recently completed a tour of duty as adviser to the government of the Gold Coast, the British colony in Africa that recently became independent Ghana.

—ARCHIBALD VAN VORHEES.