Reminiscences of the Civil War.

A trip that didn't pay.

On the 15th day of June 1863, the County Sixth North Carolina Regiment was quietly putting on the heights of the historic old town of Fredericksburg, Va. The long roll of the drum announced to the "soldier boys" that they must take up the time of march again.

The Regiment made a fine appearance as it marched out from its bivouac that beautiful June morning with the men marching in their splendid grey uniforms, the colors flying, and the band playing; everything seemed propitious of success.

On we march, and a few hours later passing the battlefield of Chancellorsville, when six shots later the invincible Stonewall Jackson had fallen mortally wounded.
On, on our tramp, till standing upon an eminence near Culpeper Court House. From here looking away sixty miles to the west we first behold the Blue Ridge Mountains, traced by dark blue outline along the western sky, from South Mountain on the Potomac, till its lost in easy vision at it stretches away towards the south. So near yet so far away. Three days hard work over rough and rugged roads, and our lay down to rest upon its eastern slope amid prismatic forest. As we rest upon another earth and in fitful slumber dream the cattle trample with weird sound its vigilantly kept. At early dawn the boys were up in arms, Chasing in deadly combat the tidings scouting of the night before, being rewarded by several fine specimens which were soon had on exhibition.

Onward, and upward for hours we wound our way through mountain pass amid storm and pain. When nearing the summit our one com-
plenty enveloped in clouds, driven against the mountain side by eastern winds, disgorgeing their contents all around, and speed changing the pass into a mountain torrent.

The summit is reached—clouds are drifting away, and we have a beautiful view of the country around, obscured only here and there by little patches of clouds floating about far down in the valley below.

Looking back over the country traversed, we see undulating field and forest as far as the eye can reach. To the west we look down upon the beautiful Valley of Vir, famed for verdant landscape, gushing fountains, and smooth herbie turf.

down, down the mountain's western slope, and on we march, till reaching the Shenandoah, driven in the valley below.

As we march on through Front Royal, a little town outing a near the foot of the
mountain, "a change comes over the spirit of our dream." Rugged mountain scenes and landscaped sunny smile, fade alike before youth's enraptured vision; as angelic woman with all bewitching graces, fill veranda, porch and lawn. Smiling beaty, with waving banners, cheer us on to deeds of valor. This beautiful section of country has been overrun, and in many places laid waste, by a vandal enemy, which accounts in some measure for the warm reception we meet all along our way.

A few miles beyond Front Royal we spend the night on a wooded hill. We are now getting a long way from our base of supplies, and rations around the camp fires that night consist of a very small quantity of raw beef, with no modern appliance for cooking. We move on down the valley by Charlestown and Harpers Ferry, and have pointed out to
as the gallows on which the notorious John Brown was hanged. We march on up the Potomac to near Shepherdstown, where cross the river in primitive style and stop on the Maryland side to adjust disarranged apparel and get the Regiment in line. While here in waiting, some "soldier boy" strike up the song, "My Maryland," and as by inspiration it is taken up by many voices and sung with much fervor and pathos, this incident has lingered with me all these long years as the sad memory of a troubled dream. Many of my comrades, companions, of my youth, were then looking for the last time upon the receding shores of their beloved Southland, and marching away to meet a soldier's fate and fill an unmarked grave. As the last song floats away and dies in echo, on the bosom of river, we take up the line of march again—"All is quiet along the Potomac."
A few miles on we pass the little village of Sharpsburg, and beyond it, the field of Antietam, where great battles were fought the year before.

On by Harper's Ferry, Md., and we continued the tramp day by day till Sunday the 28th, when we rested beyond the little town of Gettysburg, Pa.

At this place the Chaplains held services.

Alas, the last Sunday on earth to many a noble soul there beating with such high hopes and aspirations.

While here some of the men of our brigade robbed a farmer of a few of his chickens.

This was regretted, for orders had been given by Genl. Lee on this great march into the enemy's country, that nothing must be taken except by order of the quartermaster department for the purpose of supplying the army and then to be paid for in such currency as our trade.
It being suggested that some men of the 26th Regt get a part of the honey, Colonel Burgwyn and Lord sought out the owner and paid him for it.

The farmers along our line of march were quietly reaping and harvesting the crops. They did not, as a rule, seem to be in the least frightened or disturbed by our presence, some were talked to in the quaint and uncivilized phraseology of frontier life.

One old woman, however, who lived in a cabin by the road side did get a little excited least we should disturb her onion patch, and while guarding it as we were passing, anxiously inquired when the soldiers would all get by; and received in reply that "the line of march extended all the way back to North Carolina". Whereupon she exclaimed "Lord bless on soul! I don't know that was half as many men in the world."

On June 20th we halted at a little village named Cashetown on the Chambersburg turnpike about
nine miles from Gettysburg, and were mustered preparatory to payment, and later in the afternoon proceeded to within about three and one half miles of Gettysburg, just this side of a little creek crossed by a stone bridge, when we filed to the right and bivouacked in a beautiful grove. I spent the night on vidette under Lieutenant Colonel Low, who was entrusted with the charge of the picket line. That night the issue of Kit's division quieted down of home and loved ones in blissful ignorance of the momentous fact that Madis's great army was almost within their hearing.

"On July 1st a warning carbin shot from a vidette of Buford's Cavalry on the Bridge over Marsh Creek, in early early morning at the head of a Column of infantry marching rapidly down the Chambersburg Turnpike, was the opening of the battle of Gettysburg."
This infantry column was the head of the 15th Division, marching to "feel the enemy" of whose presence the skirmish of the afternoon before had apprised them.

At one o'clock, the Brigade was filed to the right, formed in line of battle, its left resting on the turnpike, and advanced to the front. Davis' Brigade formed in a similar manner on the left of the pike, with its right resting on the pike.

The Brigades of Otisgrew and Brockemborough following—marching down the turnpike.

As the head of the 26th Regt reached the summit of the hill beyond the bridge crossing Marsh Creek, the enemy opened fire, sweeping the road with their artillery.

There was some little excitement, which however was very soon quieted.

The Regiment filed off to the right about one hundred yards, when Genl Otisgrew and Staff appeared on the field. He was mounted.
on a beautiful dappled grey. Never before
had he appeared to greater advantage. His
command was "behind by battalion, the
26th Regt by the left flank". Col Baraguey
gave his Regt the command to march.
Thus, as each regiment of the brigade marching
to the right uncovered the regiment in its front,
it's commander gave the order "by the left
flank—March", and thus in a few moments
and by the quickest tactical movement the
brigade was in line of battle, marching
to the front in the following order from
right to left—Twenty-fifth Regt, Eleventh
Regt, Forty-seventh Regt and Fifty-second Regt,
each under the command of its respective
Colonel; the four regiments constituting Earl
Petitgrew's Brigade of Ninth Division.
Advancing in line of battle the brigade
was halted to await orders.
Let us turn now. Take our bearings, and see what
the Federals are doing.
In our front was a wheat field about 300 yards wide, then comes a branch (Wiloughby's Run) with thick underbrush and briars skirting its banks. Beyond this ravine was a wooded hill (McPherson's Woods) directly in front of the 26th Regt and about covering its front. Beyond this wooded hill was again an open field.

This wooded hill possessed all the advantages of a redout, and was the key to the battle-ground of that day, July 1st. Skirmishers being thrown out, we still await orders, with the enemy's sharp-shooters occasionally reminding us that we had better cling close to another earth.

Here for hours, of greatest suspense, we kept comfortable as possible, by sending details to the rear for water and watching the enemy. Many words of encouragement were spoken and some jokes were indulged in.
All this time the enemy were moving with great rapidity.

On the wooded hill in our front the enemy placed what we were afterwards informed was their famous "Iron Brigade" its "Cynomen" given by Genl. McClellan for intrepidity in the battle of South Mountain on 15th of Sept. 1862.

They wore tall, bill crowned black hats which made them conspicuous in line. On their left and our right of front and about 500 yards distant from us, was Coopure Battery of six guns of artillery in position to sweep the field in front of us. To the right of this battery was Riddell Brigade of the enemy in line of battle.

The sun was now high in the heavens, Genl. Ewell's Corps had come up on our left and engaged the enemy.

Never had we witnessed so grand a sight, the lines extended more than a mile, all distinctly visible to us.
When the battle raged hot, now one of the armies would be driven, then the other, while neither seemed to gain any decided advantage. The booming of artillery, the rattle and roar of musketry, and the shouts of combatants, added grandeur and solemnity to the scene.

As the hour of 2 o'clock arrived, suddenly there came down the line, the long awaited command, "Attention!"

The command could not have been more important; for our line had inspected the enemy and well knew the desperation of the charge we were to make; but with the greatest quickness the regiment obeyed. All to a man were at once up and ready, every officer at his post, Col. Burgwign in the center, Lieut. Col. Lane on the right, Major Jones on the left. Our gallant standard bearer J. B. Mansfield at once stepped to his position—four paces to the front, and the light color
guards to their proper places. At the command, "Forward March", all to a man stepped off apparently as willing and as proudly as if they were on review. We had not advanced far before the enemy opened fire, killing and wounding some few, but their aim was too high to be very effective. All kept the step and made about as pretty and perfect a line as if on drill parade, every man endeavoring to keep dressed on the Colors. We opened fire on the enemy when within about one hundred and fifty yards of their first line. On, on we went, our men yet in perfect line, until we reach the branch (Willoughby's Run) in the ravine. Here the briars, reeds and underbrush made it difficult to pass, and there was some crowding in the center, and the enemy's artillery (Cooper's Battery) on our right, giving an enfilade fire before us, our loss was frightful, but our own cross-
in good order and immediately came in proper position again, and up the hill we went, firing over with better execution. The engagement was becoming desperate. Bullets rained around like hail in a storm. Leaving his position on the right of the regiment, Lieut Col Lane hurried to the center. As it quit by Col Burgwyn, who informed him, it is all right in the center and on the left we have broken the first line of the enemy, and the reply comes, "we are in line on the right Colonel." At this juncture, the enemy seeing their first line driven back, push forward 151 Pennsylvania Regiment, which is held in reserve, to the support of their second line. At this time the colors have been cut down time times, the color guard all killed or wounded. We have now struck the second line of the enemy where the fighting is fiercest and the killing deadliest.
Suddenly Capt. W. M. McCrung of 2nd Pettigrew's Staff rushes forward bearing a message to Colonel Burgwyn: "Tell him to tell Pettigrew his Regiment has covered itself with glory today. Capt. McCrung, who is a great friend of the Regiment, on seeing the colors down, raises the flag, waves it and attempts to advance and is shot through the heart and falls, bathing the flag in his life's blood. Lt. George Hiles of Co. I rushes forward and pulling the flag from under the dead hero advances with it a few steps and falls also with two wounds in his body. Col. Lane on hearing the words of praise from Genl. Pettigrew rushes rapidly along the line bearing the words of praise from Genl. Pettigrew and cheering the men. The fighting now has become most desperate. On, on we have fought our way. The enemy stubbornly resisting until the two lines are pouring volley after volley, into each other, at a distance not greater than twenty paces.
The lines hesitate; the crisis is reached; victory hangs in the balance; the colors must be advanced. Col. Burgwyn seizes the flag from the nerveless grasp of the gallant Wilcox and advances, giving order, "Dress on the colors." Private Frank Honeycutt of Co. B, rushes from the ranks and asks the honor to advance the flag. Turning to hand the colors to this brave young soldier Col. Burgwyn is shot, the ball passing through both lungs, and in falling is caught in the folds of the flag and carries it with him to the ground. The daring Honeycutt seizes the flag and waves it aloft only for a moment, a ball crashes through his head and he falls lifeless by his Colonel's side, and for the thirteenth time the regimental colors are in the dust.

At this time the enemies line is wavering, some few falling back. The Federal colors are planted at the summit of the hill, and
with all their powers they are rallying
their men for a final stand.
Two thirds of our guns have fallen killed
or wounded, with ranks getting thinner,
moment by moment. We are now fighting
against fearful odds; not less than three to
one. The situation is indeed most desperate.
To add to the horrors of the scene, the smoke
of battle has settled down like a black pall
over the woods and obscured the sun.
The scene grows dark, wind, wild.
At this crisis, Col. Lane on passing the center
learned that Col. Burgwyn has fallen and
finds himself in command of the regiment.
He rushes along the line giving order: "Close
on the center." "I am going to give the enemy
the bayonet."
As this order is passed along the line, I
have fired my fourteenth shot and dropped
my gun to reload, when I receive two wounds
In my body; one of the balls I am carrying today. A comrade, Preston Kingman asks if I am wounded, and on being informed that I am, asks for my gun, a noted rifle which I had carried for more than a year. I pass him the gun. He advances only a few paces and falls mortally wounded. Bob Lam on returning to the center finds the color still down. As he reaches the flag from the ground, Lieut. Blair rushes forward saying, "No man can take these colors and live." Lam replies, "it is my time to carry these colors," and advances waving the flag back and forth from right to left, the signal to charge, and shouts at the top of his voice, "Twenty-Fifth follow me."

Two lines of the enemy have given way, but a most formidable line has been rallied and now confronts us at the summit of the hill. With the "Rebel Yell" the men obey the command
to charge, and rush on and upward to the
summit of the one of the enemy afterwards
said: "Yelling like demons," when the last line
of the enemy gives way and suddenly retires
from the field through the village of Gettys-
burg to the heights beyond the seminary.
Col Lam on reaching the summit of the hill,
and seeing the enemy giving way, turns around
is walking backwards waving the flag and
cheering his men, when a ball strikes him in
the back of his neck just below the brain, which
shatters through his jaw and mouth, and for
the fourteenth and last time the colors are down.
Devil Pettigrew anxiously watching the contest,
while he saw the enemy giving on their last
line before this desperate charge of the Regi-
ment with Col Lam at the head, exclaimed:
"It is the bravest act I ever saw."
Thus closed one of the most dramatic and
bloody struggles of the Civil War.
The field is ours— but at fearful cost.
Of the eight hundred men who started on this desperate charge, only two hundred remain; about six hundred have fallen, killed or wounded. On the third day's charge of changed
height, 130 of the remaining 200 fell. At night
the 26th Regt can muster only 70 men, who
remain to support the artillery all that night
and the following day.

I am inclined to believe that, in coming years,
the historian shall record, with impartial visio
The deeds of Pownhem. The 26th North Carolina
Regiment, first command by the immortal
Vaner, and last by the intrepid Lane, will
become as well known in history as the Light
Brigade at Balaklava.

After being wounded I remain as close to anoth
other earth as possible until the enemy are on
the retreat, when I pull myself together and
attempt to leave for more comfortable qua-
Two. On starting I discover a well filled knapsack dropped by one of the enemy—With a soldier's instinctive desire for plunder I seize it by one of the straps and throw it across my shoulder, when it is struck by a stray ball from the enemy, which lodges within the folds of a blanket, and thus protects me from additional harm. I travel only a short distance when I grow weak, sick and faint from exhaustion and loss of blood.

Later I am picked up by the ambulance Corps and carried to barn on the turnpike where I spend the night on a bed of straw, feeling that I am in the greatest of luck.

On the following morning July 3d I awake feeling very much revived by rest and sleep, though still very weak. During the day a druggist doctor comes around, examining my wounds, and decides to make a few incisions looking for the stray ball. To this, I strenuously
object, plain any reasons. The Doctor, however, still persisted in his murderous designs, and insolently informs me that he proposes to cut out the ball whether I like it or not. By this time I am about mad enough to fight a whole medical with the war of words between us becoming fast and furious: each combatant unable to find adjectives sufficiently strong to express his feelings. The Doctor—finally retires from the field, taking a farewell shot as he leaves that, "a man so obstinate ought to die."

The day is passed in comparative quiet: both armies preparing for the final struggle. July 9th was fairly quiet up to about 10 o'clock, when them was opened up with 218 guns. The heaviest and most terrible artillery fire ever heard upon any battlefield of the American Continent. I was not in position to see the battle, and was glad to be out of the range of the guns.
The town in which I am sitting is now filled to overflowing with wounded soldiers.

E'en and anon, poor poor fellow, came his pitiful cry, "his spirit has fled."

Ere the sun had set on that fateful day, we knew our army had suffered defeat.

All night long was spent in marshalling the shattered ranks of our army in line of battle, expecting an attack by the enemy.

In the early morning of July 4th, the long wagon train was forming and rapidly moving away towards the south, with instructions to carry such of the wounded as were able to get in the wagons. I was assisted into one of the wagons and we soon set off on our perilous journey. After two days travel, by day and by night, through rain and over rough and muddy roads, we were halted on the bank of the Potomac at Williamsport, Md. The Federal Cavalry harried our train most...
of the way, with frequent skirmishes, capturing many of the wagons and wounded soldiers. In passing through Brandywine, some dark-looking citizens armed with apples proceeded to cripple a number of our wagons by cutting the spokes of the wheels. Our escort, however, came up very soon and made prisoners of several of them, and I last saw them tramping away toward the south.

Hundreds of wagons were crow-bunted together on the bank of the Potomac, where the Federal cavalry made their last and final effort to capture them, killing and wounding a number of men in the skirmish that followed.

Heavy rains had swollen the river and the wagons were unable to ford it. While here in waiting I got two or three hard tack, the first thing I had to eat since leaving Gettysburg, this day before. After waiting here three or four days or more by a ferry constructed of large flats and pro-
pulled by current of the stream.
On we now move up the valley by Martinsburg and finally arrive at Winchester and quit the wagon for the first time since leaving Gettysburg one hundred and fifty miles away. After my wounds are dressed at the wayside hospital, I am carried to the African church, a large brick building and with others am given a “high seat in synagogue,” up in the gallery, the lower portion being reserved for those more dangerously wounded. Here for about three days, I held down a whole pew, without rent, bedding or pillow. For dinner the first day we get corn badly cooked, corn bread and poor quality of tea, without cream or sugar. I think the food continued equally good during the remainder of my stay. We had plenty of apple cider, and knew the Federals stolen almost every thing that could be eaten by men or beast, so there was little complaint.
The trip from Kelly's Ford had been such a severe strain upon those who were badly wounded that many of them died while there. At the end of three days an ambulance train, with a surgeon in charge, had been provided to carry the wounded to Staunton. Three of us and a driver were assigned to an ambulance. We very soon learned that our driver, a young soldier, lived in Staunton, and had exchanged with the regular driver for the purpose of visiting his home. The distance is thirty-two miles and the ambulance train will be about five days in making the trip. We are not long in making a deal, by which we abandon the train and drive away with nothing to eat and no food for the horses. At the end of two days we pulled up at a hotel in Staunton kept by the young driver's mother; and for the first time in our long journey get a good "square meal." I remain for only a day. A few hours after leaving, I am assigned
a place in Virginia Hospital, Richmond Va., where for thirty long hot days & remain, with no incident to mar the regular routine. 

Early one morning about the middle of August the warden hands me an official document. Half an hour later I am driving away towards the railway station. I have faithfully tried to tell you of my wanderings the past sixty days in "a trip that didn't pay", but least I have to change my title. I must now bid you adieu. I will only state, in conclusion, that the document I hold in my possession is a farewell to visit the scenes of my childhood among the red, rugged hills of central North Carolina, after an absence of two long, hard years. Respectfully,

[Signature]

Co. G, 26th N.C. Regt.

January 19, 1905.