

Gen.
James
Johnston
Pettigrew
C. S. A.



Address by
CHIEF JUSTICE WALTER CLARK
of the Supreme Court of North
Carolina, at Bunker Hill, W.
Va., September 17, 1920

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GEN. JAMES JOHNSTON PETTIGREW, C. S. A.

ADDRESS BY CHIEF JUSTICE WALTER CLARK, OF NORTH CAROLINA, AT THE UNVEILING OF THE MEMORIAL MARBLE PILLAR AND TABLET TO GENERAL PETTIGREW NEAR BUNKER HILL, W. VA., SEPTEMBER 17, 1920.

Near this spot died James Johnston Pettigrew, a native of North Carolina and brigadier general in the armies of the Confederate States, who commanded Heth's Division in the memorable assault on Cemetery Ridge at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863. Wounded fatally on the retreat at Falling Waters, Md., on July 14, 1863, he died here on the morning of July 17. His remains were removed to Raleigh, N. C., where they lay in the rotunda of the Capitol, surrounded with due honor, and were interred in the cemetery at the capital of his native State. After the war they were removed to the spot where he first saw the light in eastern Carolina, where the earliest rays of the rising sun greet the shaft that marks his grave.

One who was more than man said: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John xv. 13.)

It is for this reason that men visit with awe and veneration the great fields where man has died for men and with bared heads stand at Bunker Hill, at Saratoga, at Yorktown, and on the great fields of the War between the States.

Dr. Johnson said: "That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon or whose piety would not grow warmer amid the ruins of Iona."

Whether the existence of those who have passed beyond the veil is but a fond dream of hope, as some say, or whether they live again, as we believe, "far advanced in state in the lives of just men made perfect," it is certain that what they have been here, what they have done here, what they have said abides with us and is a living influence moving upon our lives to-day. In a recent speech by D'Annunzio at Rome he

NOTE.—Chief Justice Clark was attached to the 22d North Carolina Regiment when commanded by Pettigrew.

moved his audience by asking: "Do you not hear the tramp of the army of the dead on the march? All along their route they find the footprints of the marching legions of Cæsar and hear the distant tread of those who went before."

It is said that in the most desperate hour of Verdun a wounded Frenchman called out madly: "Arise, ye dead." His appeal galvanized into supreme resistance the wounded and shattered columns of France. The message spread throughout the French army, and the German advance was stayed at the very moment when it seemed about to become victorious.

The same thought was with the prophet Ezekiel (xxxvii. 9) when he said: "Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live, * * * and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army." There was no actual physical resurrection, but the prophet was calling upon the influence of their deeds upon the living.

The example of those who have sacrificed life for their country and liberty is an appeal which never dies and rings down the ages whenever a column has faltered or a loved leader has fallen. The memory of such sacrifices moves the hearts of men.

"Mid Jersey snows, the march it led,
The moor at Marston felt its tread."

No Confederate soldier ever failed to be impressed with the cordial hospitality and loyalty of Virginia. Time has not obliterated this recollection nor dulled these qualities in the people of this great State to this day.

We are here to-day to bear tribute to the memory of a brave officer, a leader among the gallant men of the South in one of the greatest struggles of all time. It is fit and proper that we should make some brief note upon the career of the gallant, talented, and distinguished young officer to whom we place this tablet in perpetual memorial.

James Johnston Pettigrew was born at Bonarva, on his family estate at Lake Scuppernong, in Tyrrell County, in

Eastern North Carolina, on July 4, 1828. His family was of French origin, but in the fifteenth century removed to Scotland, where they held an estate near Glasgow in 1492, the year Columbus discovered America. A branch of the family later removed to North Ireland, whence the great-grandfather of General Pettigrew in 1732, the year of Washington's nativity, came to Pennsylvania and twenty years later to North Carolina. His son, the grandfather of General Pettigrew, was the first bishop elect of the Protestant Episcopal Church in North Carolina. Bishop Pettigrew's son, the General's father, was elected to Congress in 1835, receiving the rare compliment of every vote in his county except three out of seven hundred cast.

General Pettigrew had the misfortune to lose his mother when he was two years of age. Educated at Hillsboro under the well-known instructor, Mr. Bingham, he entered the University of North Carolina in 1843 and graduated at the head of his class in June, 1847, achieving the reputation of being the most talented youth who has ever graduated at that historic institution. His class, of which he was easily the leader, was one of the most distinguished that the university has ever graduated, and it was a singular coincidence that side by side at recitation there sat in alphabetical order four men who later attained the highest honors: Brig. Gen. James Johnston Pettigrew; John Pool, who became United States Senator; Matthew W. Ransom, brigadier general in the Confederate army and later for twenty-three years a Senator of the United States; and Alfred M. Scales, also a brigadier general in the army of the Confederacy, a member of the United States Congress, and for four years Governor of his native State. Of such men the university can say, like the mother of the Gracchi: "These are my jewels."

At the commencement at which he graduated there was in attendance President Polk, who was himself a graduate of that institution; United States Secretary of State James M. Mason; and Lieut. Matthew Fontaine Maury, of the National Observatory, who, impressed by the homage universally paid to the talents of the young student, offered him a position in the observatory, which he accepted.

Later he obtained license for the practice of law and located in Charleston, S. C. On the advice of friends he soon after proceeded to Berlin and other universities in Germany to perfect himself in the study of the Roman civil law. He remained three years in Europe, where he traveled extensively and acquired the faculty of being able to speak at ease German, French, Italian, and Spanish. For a while he then became secretary of legation to Hon. D. M. Barringer, of North Carolina, who was then our Minister to the Spanish Court, and wrote a delightful volume, "Spain and the Spaniards."

Returning to Charleston, his success at the bar was brilliant. He was elected to the legislature in 1855 and achieved distinction.

In 1859 he went to Europe to offer his services to Count Cavour to serve in the Italian army in the war with Austria, but the battle of Solferino put an end to that struggle before his services could be accepted.

Pettigrew was colonel of a South Carolina rifle regiment when Fort Sumter was fired on, April 12, 1861. As such he received the surrender of Castle Pinckney. Failing later to have his regiment promptly sent to the army in Virginia, in his impatience he resigned and enlisted as a private in Hampton's Legion, which he accompanied to Virginia. Passing through Raleigh, he was recognized by friends, and a few days later was surprised by a telegram announcing his unsolicited election as colonel of the 22d Regiment of North Carolina Troops, which was being organized at Camp Ellis, near Raleigh.

I was at that time attached to the regiment and saw Colonel Pettigrew for the first time on his arrival in Raleigh. Some description of his appearance may not be without interest. He was slender of build, swarthy of complexion, dark hair and mustache, and with dark eyes the most brilliant and piercing. He was quick in his movements and quick in perception and in his decision. For several months, and until I was transferred to another command, I occupied a tent near to his and saw him daily. His habit was to pace rest-

lessly up and down in front of his tent with a cigar in his mouth which was never lighted.

Later I served on the staff of Gen. Matthew W. Ransom, who had been his competitor for honors at the university, and thus had the good fortune of knowing them both.

As gentle and modest as a woman, there was an undoubted capacity to command, which obtained for Pettigrew instant obedience, but a kindness and bearing which won affection and chivalry and courtesy which marked him as every inch a gentleman.

Ordered to Virginia in July, 1861, our regiment was encamped at Rocketts, just below Richmond, whence in the fall of 1861 the regiment was ordered to Acquia Creek; thence we were sent up to Quantico and stationed near Dumfries in the rear of the batteries at Evansport, which were erected to impede the navigation of the Potomac by the Federals.

In the spring of 1862 he was tendered the appointment of brigadier general in another brigade, but he declined to accept the promotion because it would separate him from his regiment. A little later, being offered the command of brigadier general of the brigade to which his regiment belonged, he accepted. He was on the Peninsula under Gen. Joseph E. Johnston and shared in the retreat to Richmond in May, 1862.

On June 1, 1862, in the battle of Seven Pines, he was severely wounded in a charge which he led with great gallantry, and, left for dead upon the field, he fell into the hands of the enemy. It is not generally known that after he was shot down and left unconscious on the field General Pettigrew was bayoneted by the enemy. This must have been one of the very few occasions on which this occurred in our war. Yet it is attested by a letter from General Pettigrew to his adjutant general, Capt. John W. Hinsdale, a gallant Confederate soldier, who had his horse killed under him and who was later colonel of the 72d North Carolina Regiment and is one of the most distinguished lawyers in North Carolina and now living in Raleigh. The following is a verbatim extract from the original which Colonel Hinsdale has in his possession: "Major Lacy told me you were all disturbed at not bringing me off the field. You could not possibly have changed it. At the time I entered the wood none of the staff

were with me, all having been sent off. I did not expect to be in the woods more than ten minutes, but I was unfortunately shot while attempting to ascertain the position of the enemy. The ball entered the lower part of the throat, striking the windpipe, glanced to the right, passed under the collar bone, struck the head of the shoulder, and glanced again upward, tearing the bones. It unfortunately cut an artery, and I would have bled to death had it not been for Colonel Bull. I became entirely unconscious. I subsequently received another shot in the left arm and a bayonet in the right leg, spent the night on the battle field, and a little before day was carried to a Yankee camp. My right leg is still partially paralyzed, but I am recovering the use of it."

On his exchange, his brigade having been placed under the command of the lamented General Pender, he was given the command of another brigade, with which he repelled the Federal raid into Martin County in the fall of 1862 and participated in the defeat of Foster's expedition in December, 1862, against Goldsboro. In the following spring he was under Gen. D. H. Hill in his attack upon Washington, N. C.

When Stoneman made his raid on Richmond, General Pettigrew was sent with his brigade to the protection of that city and was stationed at Hanover Junction. Later his brigade was assigned to Heth's Division, A. P. Hill's corps, in the Army of Northern Virginia, and was in the advance to Gettysburg. His brigade, one of the largest and best in the army, at that time consisted of the 11th North Carolina, commanded by Col. (later Gen.) Collett Leventhorpe; the 26th North Carolina, commanded by Col. H. K. Burgwyn, the gallant young soldier who laid down his life at Gettysburg in a most gallant charge when only twenty-one years of age; the 44th North Carolina, Col. Thomas C. Singletary; the 47th North Carolina, Col. G. H. Faribault; and the 52d North Carolina, Col. J. K. Marshall. This brigade had originally contained the 17th North Carolina, commanded by Col. W. F. Martin; but when, after the battles around Richmond in 1862, Gen. James G. Martin returned to North Carolina, he took with him his brother's regiment, and it was replaced by the transfer to Pettigrew's of the 26th North Carolina, then commanded by Col. (later Gov.) Z. B. Vance, from

Ransom's Brigade. This was later commanded, after Vance's election as Governor, by that gallant young soldier, Col. Harry K. Burgwyn.

On the advance into Maryland the 44th Regiment was left to assist in guarding Richmond; but the ranks of the other four regiments were full, and the brigade presented a superb appearance with the distinguished commander at its head. The loss of the brigade in the battle of Gettysburg was the heaviest of any in the army, and one regiment, the 26th, suffered the heaviest loss of any regiment on either side in any one battle during the entire war.

On the third day at Gettysburg, General Heth having been wounded, the division of four brigades was commanded by General Pettigrew, who went forward on horseback, riding close up behind his men. His horse was killed under him, and the General himself was wounded near the stone wall, which was the Ultima Thule of the Confederate advance. This wound in his hand and his death not long after prevented his writing his report of the charge, which would have prevented the subsequent controversy.

The gallantry of Pettigrew's Brigade is most eloquently told by the official returns, which show that on the opening of the battle on July 1 its four regiments reported present for duty three thousand men, of whom on the morning of the 4th only nine hundred and thirty-five were left. General Pettigrew himself was wounded, and all of his field officers were killed or wounded except one, who was captured, and the brigade was commanded by Major Jones, of the 26th, who had been wounded. Two of General Pettigrew's staff were killed. In the battle on July 1 Captain Tuttle's company, of the 26th North Carolina Regiment, of three officers and eighty-four men were all killed and wounded except one. On the same date Company C, of the 11th North Carolina, lost two officers killed and thirty-four out of thirty-eight men killed and wounded. Its captain, Byrd, brought off the regimental flag, the flag bearer being shot.

The official reports of the battle of Gettysburg show that 2,592 Confederates were killed and 12,707 wounded. Of the killed, 700 were from North Carolina, 435 Georgians, 399 Virginians, 258 Mississippians, 217 South Carolinians, and 204

Alabamians. The three brigades that lost the most men were Pettigrew's North Carolina (190 killed), Davis's Mississippi, in which there was one North Carolina Regiment, the 55th (180 killed), and Daniel's North Carolina (165 killed). Pickett's Division of three brigades had 214 killed.

The historic charge made on the 3d of July was composed of Pickett's Division on the right, of three brigades, Garnett's and Kemper's, with Armistead's in the second line. On the left of Pickett's was Heth's Division, composed of Archer's, Pettigrew's, Davis's, and Brockenbrough's Brigades. This division was led by Pettigrew, General Heth having been wounded. In the rear of this division marched Lane's and Scales's Brigades, both from North Carolina.

The stone wall which Pickett and Pettigrew were sent forward to take had a reëntrant angle in front of Pettigrew's part of the line. Owing to this, some of Pickett's men, striking the wall first, passed over it at the angle, and General Armistead was killed forty yards on the other side, but too few got over to hold the ground beyond the wall. The wall in front of Pettigrew being eighty yards farther on, Capt. E. F. Satterfield, of the 55th North Carolina Regiment, was killed, and others were killed or wounded at the wall in their front and thus fell farthest to the front, though on this side of the wall. While General Armistead and others of Pickett's men were killed or wounded on the other side of the wall, they fell not quite so far to the front.

This states fairly the evidence in the generous controversy between the two States as to whose troops went farthest to the front at Gettysburg. There was glory enough for all where all did their duty. General Pettigrew himself had his horse killed under him, but continued to advance on foot and was wounded near the wall in his front.

In this historic charge there were "eighteen regiments and one battalion from Virginia, fifteen regiments from North Carolina, three from Mississippi, three from Tennessee, and one regiment and one battalion from Alabama." (Judge Charles M. Cooke, in "Clark's North Carolina Regimental Histories," Vol. III, page 300.)

On the retreat from Gettysburg, when A. P. Hill's corps crossed the Potomac at Falling Waters, General Pettigrew

was placed in charge of the rear guard. A small squad of the enemy's cavalry made a reckless and unexpected charge. One of the enemy's troopers fired at the General, who fell mortally wounded. The trooper was killed, but the loss which he had caused to the Confederacy was irreparable. General Pettigrew was conveyed to this spot, where, lingering, he died in the early morning on the 17th of July, 1863.

When he awakened out of his sleep that morning he said: "It is time to be going." He heard the roll call of the Great Commander and answered, "Adsum."

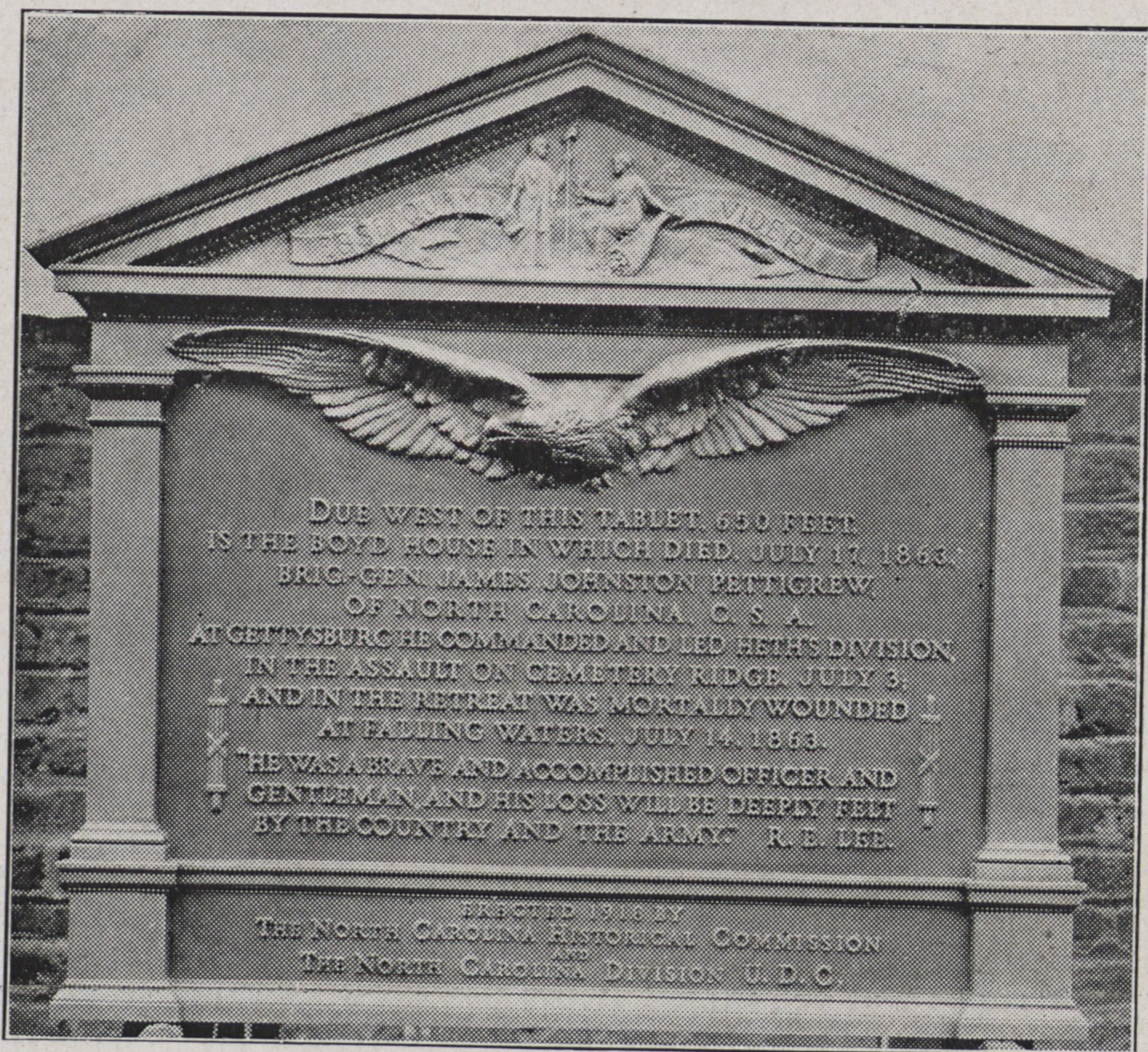
Such is the brief summary of the career of one of the most talented men, one of the bravest spirits that this country has produced.

On the death of Pettigrew it might well have been said in the language of Milton: "Young Lycidas is dead and hath not left his peer."

On the soil of Virginia, which State bore the severest strain of four years of a great war and which saw the fall of so many who died for their duty and their country, there passed away no braver, purer, or more patriotic spirit.

"On Fame's eternal camping ground
His silent tent is spread,
And glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead."

NOTE.—Pettigrew commanded a front of four brigades, with two brigades in the second line. Pickett commanded a front of two brigades, with one in the second line—just half as many. Pickett personally (not as a reflection on him, but as a historical fact) stopped at the Cadori House, six hundred yards from the stone wall, and did not cross the Emmettsburg Pike. Pettigrew went forward in person with his command and was wounded near the stone wall. It was, in fact, "Longstreet's assault," being under his command; and the phrase, "Pickett's charge," is a misnomer, due to the fact that the Richmond papers were boosting Pickett for promotion to lieutenant general.—*W. C.*



DUE WEST OF THIS TABLET 650 FEET
IS THE BOYD HOUSE IN WHICH DIED, JULY 17, 1863,
BRIG-GEN. JAMES JOHNSTON PETTIGREW,
OF NORTH CAROLINA, C. S. A.
AT GETTYSBURG HE COMMANDED AND LED HETH'S DIVISION
IN THE ASSAULT ON CEMETERY RIDGE, JULY 3,
AND IN THE RETREAT WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED
AT FALLING WATERS, JULY 14, 1863.
HE WAS A BRAVE AND ACCOMPLISHED OFFICER AND
GENTLEMAN, AND HIS LOSS WILL BE DEEPLY FELT
BY THE COUNTRY AND THE ARMY. R. E. LEE.

ERECTED 1916 BY
THE NORTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
AND
THE NORTH CAROLINA DIVISION U. D. C.