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The Practice of Leadership: The Life and Times of Joshua L. Chamberlain

Patrick W. Carlton

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Patrick.carlton@unlv.edu

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE PRACTICE OF LEADERSHIP : THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOSHUA CHAMBERLAIN

The document explores the life and achievements of Brevet Major General J.L. Chamberlain, the "hero of Little Round Top", describing his activities as pre-war professor, Civil War leader, and post-war governor, college president and federal official. Chamberlain, a military novice at the beginning of the war, was appointed second-in-command of the 20th Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment, in August, 1862. Quickly learning the soldier's craft, Chamberlain was promoted to Colonel and regimental commander in June, 1863, just prior to the battle of Gettysburg. There the unit, profiting from Chamberlain's inspired and creative leadership, is credited with preventing the extreme left flank of the Union line from being "turned" by Confederate forces on July 2, 1863. For this feat Chamberlain later received the Medal of Honor.

Chamberlain next commanded a brigade and, near the close of the war, a division in the Fifth Corps. Desperately--it was thought mortally--wounded in June, 1864, near Petersburg, Va., he nevertheless returned from convalescence in time to participate with conspicuous bravery in the Appomattox campaign and was named to receive the surrender of a portion of Lee's army on April 12, 1865. By orchestrating a military salute to these former enemies, Chamberlain gained military immortality and the undying gratitude of the southerners.

Following an account of Chamberlain's post-war activities, including his service as four term governor of Maine, President of Bowdoin College, and Commissioner of the Port of Portland, the document compares and contrasts his behavior and deportment with the tenets of the Kouzes and Posner leadership model, suggesting that Chamberlain intuitively applied the principles set forth therein. This model, which employs the Leadership Practices Inventory as its data gathering instrument, is composed of 5 major behavioral components: Challenge the process; Inspire a share vision; Enable others to act; Model the way; and Encourage the heart. The author concludes that Chamberlain was both an American hero and a prototypical leader of the type who might well be emulated by those seeking to learn such skills.

THE PRACTICE OF LEADERSHIP: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
JOSHUA L. CHAMBERLAIN (Revised Edition)

By

Patrick W. Carlton, Ph.D.

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CHAPTER ONE

A TRUE AMERICAN HERO

*Through our great good fortune, in our youth
our hearts were touched with fire.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.¹

Much has been written about the nature of heroes, both in American literature and in that of the rest of the world. Each culture employs the heroic device as a means of reminding itself of those characteristics and attributes of humanity that it values most. Heroes provide a handy vehicle for exemplifying in a concrete and practical manner these cherished values. Usually, the prototypical hero participates in a journey, or odyssey, commencing at the threshold of innocence and ending in more mature years with the hero's return to his birthplace. Throughout the journey, the hero is challenged in successive episodes to demonstrate the manly virtues, overcoming fearful obstacles arising both from within and without, and eventually returning, older, wiser and greatly strengthened by these trials, to the point of origin.²

This simple thematic structure has supported dozens of literary classics, including Beowulf, The Song of Roland, Pilgrim's Progress, The Wizard of Oz, Le Morte D'Arthur and Huckleberry Finn, as examples. The technique has also been employed in this country in recent times to document the activities of living and deceased Americans whose behavior, explicating the finer qualities of manhood, can serve high moral purposes. This despite the claims of some cynics that the age of the hero in American life has passed. The celebrated Western author, Louis L'Amour, had "this to say about that:"

Some have said this is the age of the nonhero, that the day of the hero is gone. That's nonsense. When the hero is gone, man himself will be gone, for the hero is our future, our destiny. . . . Cynicism is ever the outward face of emptiness."³

¹ Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. Speeches (Boston: Little, Brown, 1913), 11.

² Thomas Carlyle, On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1907), passim.

³ Louis L'Amour, Yondering (New York: Bantam Books, 1980), xi.

This narrative, following the traditional heroic model, will explore the life and contributions of a great American, describing his personal qualities and professional contributions with the express purpose in mind of demonstrating the correlation between his beliefs, practices and values and present-day thinking on leadership within American society. While not claiming that the hero of this narrative lived a perfect life--he endured his share of difficulties and possessed his share of weaknesses-- the positive qualities he exhibited and good deeds he did during his life far outweigh those deficiencies "that flesh is heir to."⁴

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, of Brewer, Maine, lived a life, which exhibited the stuff of which heroic sagas are made. Born in September 1828, he was the son of a tolerant Puritan father and a loving French Huguenot mother. From his father he learned the virtues of hard work, family loyalty, and an appreciation of the military. From his mother he gained a love of learning and of things spiritual.⁵ At an early age he acquired intellectual and spiritual discipline through intensive studies of language and religion. By the time he entered the Union Army in 1862, he had mastered seven languages, in addition to English.⁶

Chamberlain's father apparently favored a military career for his son, as evidenced by his sending the boy, at the age of fourteen, to Major Whiting's Military and Classical School, in Ellsworth, Me., for one year. Here he was first exposed to the military mysteries of "the drill". His mother, however, had her heart set upon his entering the ministry. Lawrence, as he was called throughout his life, was willing to accede to his mother's desire, provided he could become a missionary. As it turned out, Chamberlain did become a Christian soldier, but his "missionary" work was "confined to the bloodied hills and plains of Virginia and Pennsylvania."⁷

Those who took his measure came to ascribe to J.L. Chamberlain the qualities of wisdom, courage and principle--traits that would stand him in good stead both on the campus and the battlefield. A quick study, Chamberlain also demonstrated the qualities of persistence and disciplined application to any topic with which he was engaged. He entered Bowdoin

⁴ William Shakespeare, "Hamlet", Act III, Scene I.

⁵ Colby H. Chandler, "Chamberlain's Odyssey: A Study in Heroism, 1983", (Typescript), 5, Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, ME.

⁶ Richard L. Sherman, Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain: A Sesqui- centennial Tribute (Brunswick, ME: Brunswick Publishing Co., 1978), 7.

⁷ Ibid.

College, in Brunswick, Maine, at the age of 19 and rapidly demonstrated that he was a brilliant student. Graduating in 1852, he then attended the Bangor (ME) Theological Seminary, studying theology and church history for three years. During this time he courted Caroline Frances Adams, adopted daughter of the Congregational Minister in Brunswick and married her in December 1855, having overcome the initial objections of her father, who thought the young people ill-suited for one another. She was two years his senior. The marriage produced two children, Grace and Harold. Three other infants died at or shortly after birth.⁸

In 1855, Chamberlain joined the faculty at Bowdoin College as instructor of logic and natural theology, succeeding Professor Calvin Stowe, who had taken another position. After only a year he was appointed to a professorship of rhetoric and oratory. In 1861 he once again advanced by being named professor of modern languages, assuming the chair originally created for Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1829.⁹ Clearly, Professor Chamberlain was making excellent career progress.

The years just preceding the Civil War constituted a period of profound change in American society. The formal values of Puritanism were eroding; the anti-slavery movement was receiving popular support; Science was increasingly gaining a hold on the popular mind; and a new spirit of inquiry was emerging within the intelligentsia of the nation.

Chamberlain heartily disapproved of slavery. As a member of the same Congregational Church as Harriet Beecher Stowe, wife of professor Calvin Stowe, he was influenced by her thinking on the issue and by the publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin, that heart-rending tale of Southern woe. He became acquainted with Mrs. Stowe during meetings of the Round Table, a literary group that met bi-weekly to discuss books and to critique one another's writings. Chamberlain, who was a student of Professor Calvin Stowe, Harriet's husband, was greatly impressed with this famous husband and wife team, saying that "...a great new orb has risen on the eastern horizon in the person of Professor Calvin E. Stowe, with his Hebrew literature, and his genius of a wife--surely a double star this."¹⁰

⁸ Alice R. Trulock, In the Hands of Providence: Joshua L. Chamberlain and the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 509. Hereafter "Providence." Trulock states that: "The census of 1900 shows the number of children born to Fannie as five. Grace and Wyllys lived to adulthood; the others were the boy who was born and died in October 1857; Emily Stelle, born and died in 1860; and Gertrude Loraine, born and died in 1865. The names of the two baby girls are on a marker in the family plot in Pine Grove Cemetery....The boy's name, if he had one, is unknown."

⁹ Willard M. Wallace, Soul of the Lion (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1960), 29-30. Hereafter "Soul."

¹⁰ Joshua L. Chamberlain, "Early Memoirs", *Bowdoin*, 64(1) (Spring/Summer 1991), 10.

As the debate over secession escalated, Chamberlain found that he disapproved still more of that drastic political act, feeling that it constituted an abrogation of a solemn compact which the residents of the Southern states had pledged themselves to sustain.¹¹ Although during the Civil War he came to admire the manly qualities of Southern soldiers and officers, he consistently denounced the South's attempted withdrawal from the Union throughout his life, stating that " . . . the best of virtues may be enlisted in the worst of causes."¹²

With the firing on Fort Sumter by Rebel forces on April 12, 1861, and the call by President Abraham Lincoln for military volunteers, Chamberlain's career took an irrevocable turn, one that set the pattern for the remainder of his life. This thirty-three year old father of two children found himself increasingly drawn toward the ranks of the Union army. By 1862, a steady stream of Bowdoin students, whose numbers would total almost 25% of the student body by war's end,¹³ were volunteering and Chamberlain was quietly initiating inquiries with his state governor concerning a commission for himself in one of the new volunteer regiments. It should be pointed out that this appointment procedure violated all accepted principles of military form and process but that, all things considered, it worked rather well in the end. Large numbers of talented and capable civilians--along with an unfortunate number of misfits, soon weeded out-- were drawn by this process into what soon became a largely civilian army. As Williams put it:

Only a society of immense innocence could have sanctioned such methods of providing military leadership and only one of infinite vigor and diversity could have produced such abundant and able officer material. These men were the good colonels, and without them the nation could not have officered its armies."¹⁴

In August, 1862, the Governor of Maine offered Chamberlain the Lieutenant Colonelcy of the newly forming 20th Regiment of Infantry, Maine Volunteers. Despite the vehement objections and attempted intervention of his colleagues at

¹¹ Wallace, "Soul", 35.

¹² Address of GEN Joshua L. Chamberlain at the Dedication of the Maine Monuments on the Battlefield of Gettysburg (Augusta: Farmers' Almanac Press, 1895), 6.

¹³ A plaque in Bowdoin's Memorial Hall lists 290 students who fought for the Union. Another, somewhat similar, plaque lists the names of 18 students who fought for the South during the Civil War. Clearly, honest differences of opinion were present.

¹⁴ T. Harry Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-Third(New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 21. Hereafter "Hayes."

Williams points out that in 1861 the regular army contained about 440 graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. Another 508 who had previously left the army returned upon the onset of hostilities. About 400 of these officers took command of one of the approximately 2000 volunteer Army regiments created during the conduct of the war. Men with little or no military background, then, initially commanded the remaining 1600 regiments. Williams, "Hayes," 21.

Bowdoin; an attempt by the attorney General of Maine to derail the appointment through defamation of Chamberlain's character and,¹⁵ it can be imagined, the fears of his wife, Chamberlain said his goodbyes and reported for active duty to Camp Mason, at Portland, ME. This same arrival scene was being reenacted in dozens of locations throughout the various states of the Union, as men from all walks of American life donned the uniform of the United States Army, most for the first time. "Thus," Wallace said, " began the active military career of one of the most remarkable officers and the hardest fighters ever to serve in any American Army."¹⁶ In this assessment Wallace was entirely correct.

¹⁵ The Attorney General, Josiah Drummond, wrote a letter to Governor Israel Washburn on July 21, 1862, in which he commented: "Have you apptd [*sic*] Chamberlain Col. of 20th? His old classmates & c. [*sic*] here say you have been deceived: that C. is nothing at all: that is the universal expression of those who know him." It is unclear just what Drummond's motives were. One theory is that Drummond had candidates of his own to promote for these highly sought after positions and, consequently, found Chamberlain a "fly in the ointment". Alternatively, he may have been influenced by Chamberlain's Bowdoin colleagues who, anxious to retain his services to the college, are reported to have suggested his unfitness for such a command appointment.

Also of interest is the fact that Drummond was, in 1862, also serving as Grand Master of Masons in Maine, in which capacity he granted a "dispensation" (deviation from general practice) which allowed Chamberlain to be made a Master Mason in just three days. Drummond granted large numbers of such dispensations to deploying soldiers which, then, suggests nothing particularly unusual. It is of note, however, that following the war Chamberlain, the consummate joiner and organizational participant, (his memberships were "legion") appears to have taken no part in Masonic activities, although he retained membership in United Lodge #8, Brunswick, ME, until his death.

Discussions with the Secretary of that Lodge elicited no information on Masonic activities. Indeed, the only record of his connection with the Craft was a Grand Lodge membership card listing his dates of joining and of demise. Also of significance is the fact that no Masonic services were held in connection with Chamberlain's burial. Such services were common practice among the Masonically-connected in those days. It would be interesting to know whether Drummond's 1862 behavior became known to Chamberlain and whether these actions could have "soured" him on Freemasonry.

¹⁶ Wallace, "Soul," 36.

CHAPTER TWO

A TIME OF LEARNING

*We fight not to enslave, but to set a country
Free, and to make room upon the earth for honest
men to live in.*

Thomas Paine¹⁷

Making his way to Camp Mason, near Portland, Chamberlain was mustered into military service and proceeded with the organization and recruitment of the 20th Maine Regiment until the arrival of the regimental commander, Colonel Adelbert Ames, of Rockland, ME, late in August, 1862. As was true of all of the scores of newly created organizations reporting for duty at that time, the regiment was completely unschooled in the ways of the soldier, a matter of great personal exasperation to COL Ames, who is reported to have taken one look at the 20th and to have exclaimed pejoratively that it was "a hell of a regiment".¹⁸

The unit, composed initially of approximately 979 men, enrolled men from throughout the state: the lumber camps, the fishing villages, the farms and the rural communities scattered across Maine. Consequently, the unit initially lacked cohesiveness or a sense of group identity. Chamberlain said that the Twentieth ". . . was not one of the state's favorites; no country claimed it; no city gave it a flag; and there was no send-off at the station."¹⁹

After only a few days of initial entry training, the unit was ordered to proceed by train and ship to Washington, D.C., where it was assigned to the Third Brigade, First Division, and Fifth Corps, of the Army of the Potomac, then commanded by the ill-fated MG Fitz-John Porter.²⁰ Having been held in reserve at the battle of Antietam, on 17-18 Sep

¹⁷ Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis*, Sept. 12, 1777, Ib.

¹⁸ John J. Pullen, *The Twentieth Maine: A Volunteer Regiment in the Civil War* (Dayton: Morningside Bookshop, 1980), 2. Hereafter "Twentieth." Pullen said, ". . . Maine had entered the war in a woeful state of unpreparedness. . . . musters and other training had long since been discontinued and the militia was little more than a memory of plumes and epaulettes As John Hodsdon, Maine's Adjutant General, put it, 'Long years of uninterrupted peace had led us to believe that it was our privilege to enjoy all the advantages of a free government . . . without adopting any measures for its protection and perpetuity, just as we might enjoy the light and heat of the sun.'" Pullen, "Twentieth", 7.

¹⁹ Trulock, "Providence", 21-22.

²⁰ MG Fitz-John Porter had come under sharp criticism from MG John Pope, commanding the Union forces during the battle of Second Manassas for, as Pope alleged, "shameful misconduct and failure to obey MG Pope's orders." He was relieved of his duties as Corps Commander on November 10, 1862, and replaced by MG Daniel Butterfield. William H. Powell, *History of the Fifth Army Corps (Army of the Potomac): A Record of Operations*

1862, serving as support for an artillery battery, the unit first came under fire as a unit at Shepherdstown Ford, MD, on the 20th, fighting a rear guard action against a unit commanded by MG A.P. Hill during the final stages of the Confederate withdrawal from Maryland. During the action Chamberlain had the first of a succession of six horses shot from under him as he directed the withdrawal of unit personnel from the Rebel side of the Potomac.²¹ He returned to the Maryland shore wet but fully satisfied with the performance of the troops, as was the commander, COL Ames.

COL Adelbert Ames, a recent West Point graduate and, subsequent recipient of the Medal of Honor, was eager to bring his regiment "up to the mark" in military proficiency.²² The volunteer system then in effect having ensured that virtually none of the officers of the regiment knew anything about war or about their military duties, Ames was faced with the task of personally training his civilian lieutenant colonel, majors, staff officers, company commanders and non-commissioned officers. These men, in turn, had the awesome responsibility of training the 1000 or so civilian soldiers with whose care they were charged. In effect, the regiment became a blue-coated school with, as Williams put it, ". . . faculty members teaching each other and each trying to stay ahead of his students."²³

COL Ames and LTC Chamberlain spent the slack period between the Battle of Antietam and the movements preceding the Fredericksburg, VA, campaign in drilling the men for extensive periods of time in the "school of the soldier, company drill, battalion maneuvers, loading and firing by the numbers, endless marching and continued lessons in military courtesy."²⁴ This regimen inspired inevitable soldierly grumbling. There is every indication that COL Ames was "right

during the Civil War in the United States of American, 1861-1865. New York: G.P. Putnam and Sons, 1896, 322-329.

²¹ Wallace, "Soul," 42.

²² Ames received the MOH for gallantry in action with the Fifth US Artillery during the first Battle of Manassas, or Bull Run, on July 21, 1861. He received the award in 1894. The citation reads: "Remained upon the field in command of a section of Griffin's Battery, directing its fire after being severely wounded and refusing to leave the field until too weak to sit upon the caisson where he had been placed by men of his command." *United States of America's Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients* (Columbia Heights, MN: Highland House II, 1994), 701.

At Manassas, Ames' battery Commander was CPT Charles Griffin, who later served as Joshua Chamberlain's Division and Corps Commander. It is virtually certain that Ames' good opinion of Chamberlain was communicated to Griffin, which may have accounted for Griffin's unflagging interest in and stalwart support of Chamberlain's military progress.

²³ Williams, "Hayes," 29.

²⁴ Wallace, "Soul," 44.

well hated by his troops" in those days. One of his sergeants wrote home: "I swear they will shoot him the first battle we are in," that Ames was " . . . hated beyond all description COL A. will take the men out to drill and he will damn them up hill and down." He stated a fervent wish that COL Ames receive either a state's prison sentence or a brigadier-generalship--anything to get him "off the back of the regiment."²⁵

Nevertheless, Ames' efforts succeeded, and the 20th Maine became a disciplined and militarily effective organization in a surprisingly short period of time. As Samuel Miller, the unit historian, stated: "COL Ames was an educated soldier and a rigid disciplinarian, and although at times his orders were severe in the extreme, yet the soldierly bearing of the regiment soon became conspicuous" ²⁶

With the exception of COL Ames himself, it is unlikely that anyone in the regiment worked harder than LTC Chamberlain. Writing to his wife, Chamberlain indicated that he was studying every military work he could find. He said that it was no small labor to master the evolutions of a battalion and brigade and that he felt compelled to "understand everything". He asked Fanny to send him Jomini's Art of War at once, an indication of his then-current scholarly pursuit of the martial arts!²⁷

Each evening Chamberlain would go to the Colonel's tent, or Ames to his, and Ames would pour into Chamberlain's mind everything of the art of war that he had acquired at West Point and since then. As the modern biographer of the 20th Maine Regiment, John J. Pullen said: "Ames apparently took a keen interest in Joshua Chamberlain . . . On many nights after taps had sounded and the men were all asleep, a solitary candle burned in the headquarters tent where Ames was giving his lieutenant colonel a special course in tactics."²⁸ Senior by virtue of rank and Command, Ames was almost six

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Samuel L. Miller, "Address Given at Second Reunion at Portland, August, 1881", Reunions of the Twentieth Maine Press, Regiment Association (Waldoboro, ME: Samuel L. Miller 1881), 13. Ames was apparently intensely proud of the early work he performed in Command of the 20th, and kept in touch with the unit and its survivors throughout his life. He also knew full well that his early reputation had been one of a martinet, writing to Chamberlain during the latter part of the Civil War that the 20th had been fortunate to have at its head "...two such hard-hearted men...as you and I." (Letter from Ames to Chamberlain, 18 October 1864. Chamberlain Papers, Container #1, Library of Congress.)

²⁷ Ibid. A typical fledgling colonel's military library of the period would have included: Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1861; H.L. Scott's Military Tactics; a translation of Napoleon's Maxims; and William J. Hardee's Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics or Silas Casey's Infantry Tactics. The latter was a revision of the Hardee work in three diminutive volumes.

²⁸ John J. Pullen, The Twentieth Maine: A Volunteer Regiment in the Civil War (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside

years Chamberlain's junior in age and was, of course, less highly educated in the classical sense of that term than the former professor. Be that as it may, Chamberlain obviously felt a need to master the military arts and sciences quickly in order to avoid making unnecessary mistakes that could cost lives. Young Ames was glad to help his older subordinate master these necessary skills.²⁹

During this period Chamberlain established a close bond with COL Ames, who was obviously pleased with his new second-in-command. This is a classic example of what is presently called a "mentoring relationship". In a letter home Ames commented: " I like my Lieut. Col. very much. He is my best officer."³⁰ Chamberlain also obviously admired and respected the more experienced Ames, and patterned many of his newly acquired military beliefs and behaviors on those of his mentor/commander.

Ames reported that, at the battle of Fredericksburg, " . . . I was the only Colonel in the brigade who went in front of his Regt. and led his men into the fight. All of my men who were killed or wounded . . . were in rear of me when struck. My men now have confidence in me"³¹ R.G. Carter, of the 22nd Massachusetts Infantry, described Ames' behavior that day: " . . . a tall, slim colonel coolly walked over our bodies, 'Who commands this regiment?', he asked. Our colonel responded. 'I will move over your line and relieve your men', he quietly rejoined. It was Colonel Adelbert Ames"³² Chamberlain, a keen observer and quick learner, never forgot this lesson in leadership and made it his practice, upon being named regimental and, later on, brigade commander, to routinely lead his troops from the front. Indeed, among the premier qualities that regimental and brigade commanders of the period had to exhibit in battle was sheer physical courage displayed coolly and consistently. As Williams said:

Bookshop, 1980), 37-38. Hereafter "Twentieth."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Jessie Ames Marshall (ed.) Chronicles From the Nineteenth Century, 2 Vols. (Clinton: Colonial Press, 1957), 16. Ames and Chamberlain remained in touch throughout the war and afterward. The warm feelings Ames felt for Chamberlain are apparent in his letter of 18 Oct 1864 in which, referring to Chamberlain's recent wound, he comments that "...I feared that that 'streak' of daylight throu(gh) you' might unfit you for all active outdoor duty. Let us rejoice...." (Letter from Ames to Chamberlain, Chamberlain Papers, Container #1, Library of Congress.) As stated earlier, Ames clearly had an influence on the good opinion MG Charles Griffin, Ames' former Commander, held of Chamberlain.

³¹ Ibid.

³² R.G. Carter, "Four Brothers in Blue--Battle of Fredericks- burg", Maine Bugle, 5(3), July, 1898, 236. Hereafter "Four Brothers."

The men would follow an officer who led them and try to execute his orders, not because of his rank but because they accepted his leadership. But even a general who showed signs of fright would lose control of his troops.³³

³³ Williams, "Hayes," 25-26. Another notably successful regimental commander, Colonel Rutherford B. Hayes, USV, 23rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry, further exemplifies the qualities of cool leadership being discussed: "In one engagement Hayes with the regimental colors and a portion of the regiment somehow got beyond the formed line of battle and to the extreme front. An officer who ranked him called: 'bring the colors back to the line of the brigade.' Hayes turned and shouted: 'Bring the brigade up to the colors.' Without any orders the brigade sprang forward with cheers to the advanced position." Proceedings of the twenty-seventh Annual Encampment, Grand Army of the Republic (Sandusky Ohio, 1893), 239.

CHAPTER THREE

ATTACK AT FREDERICKSBURG

Now is the winter of our discontent.

William Shakespeare³⁴

The first major engagement in which the 20th Maine participated took place from 12-14 December 1862, at Fredericksburg, VA. The newly appointed commander of the Army of the Potomac, MG Ambrose E. Burnside, had initiated a campaign, which had as its strategic objective the Confederate capitol, Richmond, VA. Hoping to "steal a march" on GEN R.E. Lee, Burnside moved south in mid-November, 1862, arriving on the banks of the Rappahannock River on the 17th, well in advance of the arrival of Confederate forces. Had Burnside taken advantage of his position, the battle of Fredericksburg would not have taken place. Unfortunately, plans to lay pontoon bridges for passage of the troops went awry when this equipment failed to arrive in a timely manner. Thus, the Army of the Potomac camped quietly upon the Northern bank of the river until the 10th of December, 1862. By this time the weather had turned exceedingly cold and snowy. Two members of the Twentieth Maine froze to death during the night of December 6-7. Meanwhile, the Army of Northern Virginia had arrived and entrenched itself on the southern banks of the Rappahannock, with the avowed intention of providing the northerners a "warm reception."³⁵

This ill-fated and poorly coordinated attack by the Army of the Potomac, ordered by MG Burnside, resulted in many thousands of unnecessary Union casualties. The ground over which the Fifth Corps was ordered to advance was open, relatively flat, and sloped gently upward to a sunken road and low stone wall, at the base of a commanding hill, Marye's Heights.³⁶ A Confederate officer serving on LTG T.J. "Stonewall" Jackson's staff said that ". . . if the world had been searched by Burnside for a location in which his army could best be defeated and where an attack should not have been

³⁴ William Shakespeare, Richard III, Act 1, sc. I.

³⁵ Trulock, "Providence", 87-88.

³⁶ The family name is pronounced "Marie." The Marye house on top of the hill now serves as the residence of the President of Mary Washington College.

made he should have selected this very spot."³⁷

GEN R.E. Lee and his subordinate commanders had employed the days preceding the battle to develop a virtually impregnable defensive position consisting of successive lines of troops supported by many batteries of artillery. As described by Blackford, Union forces attacking the Marye's Heights portion of the line ". . . had to encounter the fire from the artillery and infantry on top of the hill, and the more deadly discharges from the men in the road."³⁸

As part of a series of somewhere between seven and thirteen frontal assaults, the Third Brigade and its constituent regiments, among which was the 20th Maine, was ordered to advance across a gently rising and undulating open plain some one-half mile in width, toward a stone wall at the foot of a Marye's Heights. Beyond the wall, and at the base of the heights, was a sunken road, part of the Telegraph Road extending from Washington, DC, in which two Confederate infantry brigades had been stationed.

Their advance was observed by Carter, of the 22nd Massachusetts Infantry, already pinned down a few hundred yards in front of the Confederate line.

"I saw the Twentieth Maine, which was in our division, coming across the field in line of battle, as upon parade, easily distinguished by their new state colors, the great gaps plainly visible as the shot and shell tore through the now tremulous line. It was a grand sight, and a striking example of what discipline will do for such material in such a battle." ³⁹

The Twentieth was eventually forced by the heavy fire to take cover within a pistol shot of the Confederate lines, being subjected, as a soldier from another unit described it, to ". . . the constant swish and screaming, grating sound of the projectiles as they burst accurately in front and over our lines, knocking the dirt and sand into our very eyes." ⁴⁰ Here the unit lay throughout the night of December 13th and all day on the 14th, crouching behind protective barriers built of the dead bodies of their comrades and listening to the ". . . dismal thud of the bullets into the dead flesh of our life saving bulwarks." After dark the soldiers, officers and enlisted alike, covered themselves with the clothing of the deceased as a

³⁷ Charles M. Blackford, in Susan Colston Blackford, Letters from Lee's Army (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), 146. Hereafter "Letters."

³⁸ Blackford, "Letters", 147.

³⁹ Carter, "Four Brothers", 236.

⁴⁰ Carter, "Four Brothers", 234. Some idea of the condition of the battlefield from an artillerist's perspective can be drawn from a conversation held between Confederate artillery battalion commander LTC E. Porter Alexander and MG James Longstreet. Having reviewed the artillery preparations in front of Marye's heights, Alexander commented that "a chicken could not live on that field when we open". Quoted in Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamieson, Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1982), 113.

defense against the intense December cold.⁴¹

Withdrawn on the evening of the fourteenth, the Twentieth was soon recommitted as part of a picket force far in advance of the Union line, with Chamberlain commanding the regiment in Ames' absence. Late that night they were once again withdrawn, a ticklish situation in that the picket lines of the opposing armies were within a few yards of one another. It was uncertain for a time whether or not it would be possible to disengage from the enemy and to retreat without bringing on a "fire fight". Fortunately, Chamberlain was able to accomplish the movement through employment of "withdrawal by elements", in which a portion of the unit fell back approximately one hundred yards while the remainder held the line. The withdrawn personnel then established a defensive position while the "stay behind" party, in turn, fell back through their line of battle. Several repetitions of this maneuver enabled the 20th to break contact and stage a relatively uncontested retreat.⁴² They were among the last units to cross the Rappahannock River prior to disassembly of the pontoon bridges by Army engineers.⁴³

Following the battle Chamberlain had an uncharacteristically sharp confrontation with the Grand Division Commander, MG Joseph Hooker, describing the assault as ill-managed and the 20th Maine as having been ". . . handed in piecemeal, on toasting forks."⁴⁴ Chamberlain later commented that

". . . the commander of the center grand division did not put his men in. They were sent by superior orders, in detachments, to support other commands, or as a "forlorn hope", at various times and places during the unexpected developments--or rather the almost inevitable accidents--of the battle."⁴⁵

Chamberlain was deeply dismayed and depressed by what had just occurred and can, perhaps, be forgiven his oral

⁴¹ J.L. Chamberlain, "My Story of Fredericksburg", *Cosmopolitan*, LIV (1913), pp.156. Hereafter "My Story." The author examined the battlefield in early August, 1991. Due to expansion of residential sections of the town of Fredericksburg, it is no longer possible to find any trace of the areas described by Chamberlain or depicted in contemporary pictures taken immediately after the battle.

⁴² Chamberlain reported that ". . . the enemy, after a short, puzzled hesitation, came out from their entrenchments and followed us up as closely as they deemed safe, the same traits of human nature in them as in us causing a little "nervousness" when moving in darkness and in the presence of an alert enemy, also moving." No fighting occurred, however. Chamberlain, "My Story", 158.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* The Grand Division was a non-standard organization composed of two corps. Each corps, in turn, contained three divisions. This model was abandoned in 1863, soon after the battle of Fredericksburg, the traditional corps organization being retained.

⁴⁵ Chamberlain, "My Story", 159.

indiscretions at this juncture. He once indicated that " . . . in general [I] disciplined myself in self-control and the practice of patience, which virtue was not prominent among my natural endowments." ⁴⁶ In this instance the "natural man" appears to have triumphed over the "educated man." Chamberlain never forgot the appalling sacrifice of human life at Fredericksburg, characterizing the slopes before Marye's Heights as " . . . death gardens, haunted by glorious ghosts."⁴⁷

Chamberlain, who had been nicked in the cheek, the first of six wounds he would sustain during the war, was rapidly learning his grim trade, but apparently not rapidly enough to suit himself. In winter quarters following the battle,(early 1863) his predilection for the academic approach came to the fore, and he prevailed upon the West Point officers in the Brigade to conduct three months of intensive classes in military tactics for the citizen-soldiers of the 20th Maine.⁴⁸ This period of relative inactivity was not to last long.

On April 27, 1863, MG Joseph Hooker led his new command in a twenty-five mile sweep to the west from Fredericksburg in an attempt to place his army south of GEN Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. During this action, which lasted from April 27 until May 5, the Twentieth Maine was withheld from action due to an outbreak of over eighty cases of smallpox in the ranks. While the unit was ultimately allowed to guard the Union's telegraph line from Falmouth to MG Hooker's headquarters, no direct action was undertaken. LTC Chamberlain and COL Ames both sought some form of active service during this time, with Ames attaching himself to MG George Meade's staff and Chamberlain joining BG Charles Griffin's First Division, participating in a counterattack against Confederate forces under MG J.E.B. Stuart.⁴⁹ Chamberlain, characteristically in the thick of the action, had a horse shot from under him and, later, performed well during the Fifth Corps' rearguard action in defense of the retreating Northern army. His service that period was viewed with soldierly approval by BG Griffin and COL Ames, both of whom recommended him for command of the Twentieth Maine and promotion to Colonel, upon Ames promotion to Brigadier General and reassignment to a brigade in the

⁴⁶ Joshua L. Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Press, 1974), 255.

⁴⁷ Chamberlain, "My Story", 158-159. The Union army losses at Fredericksburg were 10,884 out of 100,007 engaged, or 10.9% Confederate losses totaled only 4646 of 72,497 engaged, or 6.4% MG Ambrose E. Burnside was relieved, upon his own request, as Commander of the Army of the Potomac on January 20, 1863. His replacement was MG Joseph Hooker.

⁴⁸ Sherman, J.L. Chamberlain, p.8.

⁴⁹ MG J.E.B. Stuart assumed temporary command of Confederate forces in the battle of Chancellorsville following the mortal wounding of LTG T.J. "Stonewall" Jackson.

Eleventh Corps. Chamberlain's took command in May and his promotion to Colonel was effective as of June 23, 1863.⁵⁰

During the latter days of May, Chamberlain was faced with an unforeseen and somewhat perplexing leadership challenge. It concerned dealing with a group of veteran infantrymen from the recently disbanded Second Maine Infantry Regiment, an organization composed primarily of men from the Bangor area who had served for the past two years. Through a series of administrative mishaps some (some said misrepresentations) 120 of the men had been mustered into the U.S. Army for *three* years, while the majority of their comrades had signed up for only *two* years. When, in May, 1863, the two year men were released from duty and departed for home, the three year men cried "foul", claiming the right to accompany their compatriots and refusing to serve any longer than, in their opinion, "the law should require." This view, while reasonable in a civilian and democratic context, was viewed by the U.S. Army as a clear case of mutiny.⁵¹

The 120 2nd "Mainers" were delivered to COL Chamberlain by a guard force from a Pennsylvania regiment, along with orders from the Corps Commander to conduct a wholesale execution if the troops continued to refuse to serve. This put Chamberlain in a delicate situation. Should he carry out these orders he would not only lose a group of badly needed replacements, but he would also forfeit any chance of returning to his native state upon cessation of hostilities. Chamberlain sought, and received, permission to handle the matter in his own way. He then had the men, who had not eaten for three days, fed and assigned them to the various companies of the Twentieth as a way of breaking up the "mass spirit of mutiny." He then met with their leaders and, later, with the entire body of troops, at which time he quietly explained to them that they were entered on his muster rolls by authority of the United States government; that he could not maintain them as civilian guests of the command; that he would treat them in the correct manner to which soldiers are entitled; that they would forfeit no rights or claims by obeying orders; and that he would do what he could to settle their claims against the government. 114 of the men subsequently returned to duty, the remaining six traveling with the regiment to await court-martial.⁵² This feat of leadership was accomplished through force of character alone, and without

⁵⁰ Wallace, "Soul", 66-67. In Army parlance of the day, donning the eagles of a full colonel was called "going buzzards up."

⁵¹ Pullen, "Twentieth", 79-80.

⁵² Ibid. Two of the six mutineers joined the fighting during the Battle of Gettysburg, greatly impressing COL Chamberlain, who vowed to pardon them if he survived.

threat or coercion. Chamberlain convinced the soldiers of his sincerity, trustworthiness and sense of honor, appeals that went directly to the hearts of these untutored, but solid American citizens. Pullen, an early chronicler, said:

"... leadership is a quality that is complex and not too well understood. Yet a great deal could be learned about the subject from a study of Chamberlain's life in the army. Leadership in military affairs I ordinarily thought of as the clarion shout, the waved sword, the 'Follow men men!' But it is also the right word, spoken quietly, at the right time. In addition, leadership is many other things, and whatever these attributes are, Chamberlain seems to have had most of them. And he would soon have ample opportunity to prove it."⁵³

⁵³ Pullen, "Twentieth", 80-81.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEFENSE AT GETTYSBURG

*It is not unseemly for a man to
die in defense of his country.*

Homer⁵⁴

Within a few weeks GEN R.E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was on the move again, headed north for the second time in less than a year. Lee, having determined the desirability of drawing MG Hooker's army out of Virginia, planned a movement toward Harrisburg with the intention, if possible, of capturing Pennsylvania's state capitol. Such a move would allow for ample foraging in the unspoiled Pennsylvania countryside, untouched by the war up to that time and, it was hoped, strike terror into the heart of federal administrative officials, always nervous about the safety of Washington, D.C. Lee also entertained the vain hope that such a campaign would serve both to invigorate the northern peace party under Horatio Seymour and to encourage formal British recognition of the Confederate States. In these hopes he was to be disappointed.⁵⁵

Colonel Chamberlain led the regiment during the exhausting marches and series of skirmishes preceding the battle of Gettysburg, which commenced on July 1 and extended through July 3, 1863. It has been argued that it was on July 2, 1863 that Chamberlain was to make his greatest contribution to the winning of the Civil War. Arriving in the vicinity of the little Pennsylvania town early on the morning of July 2, the unit was placed in reserve until mid-afternoon, at which time they moved to the support of units of the Third Army Corps, then engaged in the Wheatfield and Peach Orchard on the left of the Union line and in great danger of being overrun. As they reached the area of fighting, a courier sent by BG Gouverneur Warren, Chief Engineer of the Army, arrived seeking troops to occupy a small, rocky, hill now called Little Round Top, located on the extreme left of the line and, at that time, completely devoid of defensive troops. Thinking quickly, MG Warren dispatched several aides to seek any available units for the protection of this strategic eminence.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Homer, *The Iliad*, Bk. XV, 496.

⁵⁵ Sis Deans, *His Proper Post* (Kearney, N.J: Belle Grove Press, 1996), 40. Hereafter "Post". Wallace, "Soul", 69.

⁵⁶ Warren reported that he had been surprised to find no Union troops on the small hill and, with an engineer's

One of the aides encountered units of the First Division, Fifth Corps, moving to the support of MG Sickels' beleaguered Third Corps, then engaged just to the North and West of Little Round Top. Near the front of the Fifth Corps column was the Third Brigade, which included the Twentieth Maine. The Brigade Commander, COL Strong Vincent, accepted the mission on his own authority in the absence of the division commander and, at approximately 4:30 p.m., moved his brigade onto the hilltop, arriving fifteen minutes later.⁵⁷

Committed at Little Round Top at approximately 5:45 p.m.

the Twentieth was assigned to the southern end of the Brigade line, their left flank "in the air", which gave it the dubious distinction of being the last unit in the Union Army's defensive position. In modern parlance, the Twentieth was "hanging on the end of the line and turning slowly in the breeze!" COL Vincent explained to COL Chamberlain that ". . . a 'desperate attack' was expected at any moment to turn that position. He concluded, intensity giving emphasis to his words, 'Hold that ground at all hazards.'"⁵⁸

Within a matter of minutes the Brigade was assailed by elements of BG E.M. Law's brigade, part of Confederate MG John B. Hood's Confederate Division, plus two regiments from BG J.B. Robertson's brigade. Law's 15th and 47th Alabama Regiments made a series of vigorous attacks on Chamberlain's Regiment, which was composed of 358 troops and 28 officers at the beginning of the fight. As biographer Sherman stated, the Twentieth ". . . found themselves

good eye for terrain, had quickly calculated that danger might well lie in the band of woods to the left front (Southwest) of that position. He asked that a nearby artillery unit fire a shot over those woods. This being done, Warren observed a great deal of movement and the gleam of bayonets in that area, suggesting the presence of a large body of Confederate troops. Warren saw in his mind's eye that the right of a Confederate attack launched from those woods would outflank the Union left as it advanced, sweeping over Little Round Top and probably rolling up the Union line from South to North and causing wholesale disaster. It was on the strength of these hurriedly developed observations that he issued his plea for troop support on that part of the battlefield. Pullen, "Twentieth", 107.

Desjardin disputes Warren's claim, saying that the Confederate assault troops under Law and Robertson were then "doublequicking(jogging) across the area under fire from artillery at Devil's Den and the Peach Orchard. " Thomas A. Desjardin, *Stand Firm Ye Boys from Maine* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1995), 211, note 9.

⁵⁷ Pullen, "Twentieth," 109. COL Strong Vincent, from Erie, Pennsylvania and former commander of the 83rd Pennsylvania Infantry, a part of the Brigade, was a Harvard graduate, practicing attorney and, like Chamberlain, a citizen soldier. He enjoyed an excellent reputation among the troops.

⁵⁸ U.S. War Department. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Officials Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington,DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.) OR 27(1):623. Hereafter "OR's."

These were the last words Chamberlain heard from Vincent, who was mortally wounded a short time later that evening. Hit in the left groin while rallying troops on the right flank of the brigade, he was carried from the field and died on July 7, 1863. COL Vincent was posthumously promoted to Brigadier General.

dangling at the end of the Federal line and staring down the musket barrels of a horde of tough and resolute [Confederate] campaigners" ⁵⁹

COL Chamberlain, having examined the terrain, said that his line

" . . . faced generally toward a more conspicuous eminence southwest of ours, which is known as . . . Round Top. Between this and my position intervened a smooth and thinly wooded hollow. My line formed, I immediately detached Company B, Captain Morrill commanding, to extend from my left flank across the hollow as a line of skirmishers, with directions to . . . prevent a surprise on my exposed flank and rear." ⁶⁰

Pvt. Elisha Coan, a member of the 20th's regimental color guard, reported that the unit did not have long await the arrival of the enemy:

Soon scattering musketry was heard in our front. Then the bullets began to clip twigs and cut the branches over our heads and leaves began to fall actively at our feet. Every moment the bullets struck lower and lower until they began to take effect in our ranks. ⁶¹

. . . but still I could not see them and all I could do was to bite my lips and nerve myself to the coming contest and when at length some caught glimpses here and there and began to fire away at them, still I reserved my fire until I saw something to fire at, and when at last I could see through the trees, the rebels dodging behind rocks and every available cover, then I knew it was my turn . . . then I plunked it to them , loading and firing, entirely uncovered by rock or tree and it is the greatest wonder that I was not hit . . . ⁶²

COL Chamberlain reported that an initial "constant and heavy" artillery barrage was soon replaced by an attack all along his front. The action was described as " . . . quite sharp and at close quarters." ⁶³ In the midst of this attack Chamberlain Was informed by one of his officers that " . . . some important movement of the enemy was going on in his front, beyond that of the line with which we were engaged." From the top of a strategically place boulder, Chamberlain determined that a flanking column was moving across his front from right to left, with the obvious intention of gaining the regiment's left flank, from which position it could "roll up" his line with devastating results to all concerned. Thinking quickly,

⁵⁹ Sherman, LL Chamberlain, 10.

⁶⁰ OR 27(1):623. These quotations are taken from Chamberlain's After Action Report, dated July 6, 1863.

⁶¹ Elisha Coan, "The 20th Maine at Gettysburg." Undated manuscript, 2, Special Collections Department, Bowdoin College Library.

⁶² Letter from Elisha Coan, Aug 5, 1863, 3-5. Special Collections Dept., Bowdoin Library.

⁶³ OR 27(1):623.

Chamberlain immediately stretched his regiment to the left, by having the men take intervals by the left flank, and at the same time `refusing' [bending back] his left wing, " so that it was nearly at right angles. . . . " with the right wing.⁶⁴ He stated that this action came in the nick of time, since the Confederate flanking column attacked almost at once, coming on with an impetuosity uncommon in the experience of the Maine men. It was Chamberlain's judgment that the Alabamians probably expected to assail an unprotected flank. In this belief they were sadly and tragically mistaken.

The Twentieth opened a "brisk fire" at point blank range, which stunned the attackers and soon drove them back. They quickly reformed and assaulted again, keening the psychologically debilitating "rebel yell" and advancing to within a dozen yards of the nervous but grimly determined Maine men. "They pushed up to within a dozen yards of us before the terrible effectiveness of our fire compelled them to break and take shelter." After a brief pause the Alabamians renewed the assault, continuing their relentless pressure for an hour or more. Chamberlain reported that the fighting was, at times, hand to hand and that the fight "rolled backward and forward like a wave." At times the dead and wounded were in front of their line and at times in the rear thereof. In the intervals between charges the Mainers moved their wounded to the rear and collected ammunition from the cartridge boxes of the fallen, both friend and foe. Ever practical in nature, even under the stress of battle, some of the men traded their Enfield rifles for the Springfield weapons dropped by Confederate troops, judging the latter to be more serviceable.⁶⁵

Chamberlain, in his role as regimental commander, placed himself behind the line of troops and moved from point to point, monitoring the action, responding to queries from the company officers, and giving necessary instructions and orders. Always aware of the impact that a good example on the part of senior officers made, he was careful to be both active and visible, letting all subordinates know that he was with them and active in the fight. At one point he was struck in the left thigh by an incoming bullet which, fortunately, hit his metal sword scabbard, denting it badly and giving Chamberlain a bad bruise. A little later a rock sliver chipped off by another bullet pierced the instep of his right boot, causing bleeding and, it can be imagined, some pain. Thereafter the Colonel limped about as he performed his command responsibilities. Neither wound was sufficiently crippling to take him out of action.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ OR 27(1): 623-624.

⁶⁶ Dean, "Post," 49.

After more than an hour of fighting, Chamberlain found himself with his ammunition exhausted and with no prospect of timely reinforcements. It appeared that further resistance would be impossible. The psychological moment had arrived, of which General U.S. Grant once spoke, suggesting that in every battle there comes a moment when both sets of combatants being nearly exhausted, the one who can make a final effort, or holds his own a moment longer by sheer force of will, will likely be the winner.⁶⁷ Chamberlain reported that the Confederates emerged from the woods below in two heavy lines of attack. Looking around, he realized that, with approximately one-third of his troops dead or wounded, ammunition practically exhausted, and no reinforcements in the offing, the time had come for innovation. He said:

It was imperative to strike before we were struck by this overwhelming force in a hand-to-hand fight At that crisis, I ordered the bayonet. The word was enough. It ran like fire along the line, from man to man, and rose into a shout, with which they sprang forward upon the enemy now not 30 yards away.⁶⁸

The immediate effect was psychologically devastating. Many of the enemy's first line dropped their weapons and surrendered. A Confederate officer fired his pistol at Chamberlain's head with one hand (fortunately missing)) while he handed over his sword in surrender with the other. Holding fast by the right flank and swinging forward the left wing, the 20th made what amounted to an extended 'right wheel', before which the rebels' second line broke and retreated, fighting for a time from tree to tree, many being captured during this action.⁶⁹ About this time Co. B, under CPT Walter

⁶⁷ Howard L. Prince, "Address", Dedication of the Twentieth Maine Monuments at Gettysburg, Oct. 3, 1889, 22.

⁶⁸ OR 27(1): 624. Years later some controversy arose concerning whether or not Chamberlain ordered the charge. He said: "I stepped to the colors. The men turned towards me. One word was enough--'Bayonet!'-- It caught like fire and swept along the ranks. The men took it up with a shout-- It were vain to order 'Forward' No mortal could have heard it Nor would he wait to hear." Chamberlain, "Through Blood and Fire at Gettysburg" *Hearst's Magazine*, June 1913, 906. Hereafter "Blood and Fire." In truth it matters little whether they heard their commander of "anticipated the command." They knew what he wanted; what they had to do; and they "got the job done."

⁶⁹ Norton, "Attack and Defense," 214-215. There is some uncertainty concerning the direction in which the rebel forces retreated. As reported in the text, Chamberlain's official report states that the 20th "swept the valley and cleared the front of nearly our entire brigade." A few lines later he states that he got his men into good order after "...having thus cleared the valley and driven the enemy up the western slope of the Great Round Top." Chamberlain's draft report, never filed, states that, during the charge, the right flank company kept close to the 83rd PA, next in line, "...thus leaving no chance of escape to the enemy except to climb the steep side of the mountain or to pass by the whole front of the 83rd PA." (From a copy in possession of Dr. Jay Luvaas, US Army War College). Desjardin quotes Ellis Spear as reporting that some rebel troops fled directly to the East down a farm lane leading to the Weickert farm, directly in rear of Little Round Top, where they were either killed or captured. Thus it appears that

Morrill, did its part to "seal the victory." Morrill's unit had been sent out as skirmishers when the regiment took its original position.⁷⁰ Having been forced to move to the left and rear by the appearance of the Confederate assault column, Morrill and Co.B took position behind a handy stone wall some 150 paces from the 20th's "refused left flank" and awaited his chance to "do something".⁷¹ In his words

We remained in that position until the enemy made its [sic] appearance to the right of us and at the edge of the woods, and about the time your regiment charged them, at which time we opened fire on them, at the same time giving loud commands to charge, in order to have them think I had a large body of troops there. At which time they broke and run . . .⁷²

With troops being struck from both front and rear--sometimes both, COL William Oates, the commander of the 15th Alabama states that " . . . we ran like a herd of wild cattle."⁷³

Almost four hundred Confederate prisoners, including two field and several line officers, were taken and one hundred

enemy troops fled in "all directions", as opportunity presented itself. Thomas A. Desjardin, *Stand Firm Ye Boys From Maine* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1995), 71-73.

⁷⁰. There is some question concerning Morrill's original charter and subsequent behavior. COL Chamberlain prepared two reports on the battle, a draft which was never submitted and a final document which appears in the Official Records. The draft document includes a statement that Chamberlain "...sent out...a company of skirmishers on my left to guard against surprise on that unprotected flank". The official report, submitted later, states that "...the line (of battle) faced generally toward a more conspicuous eminence Southwest of ours, which is known as...Round Top. Between this and my position intervened a smooth and thinly wooded hollow. My line formed, I immediately detached Company B, Captain Morrill Commanding, to extend from my left flank across this hollow as a line of skirmishers with directions to act as occasion might dictate, to prevent a surprise on my exposed flank and rear."

These two statements suggest that Morrill was assigned classic "flank guard" duty. However, then-current tactical doctrine called for the dispatch of skirmishers to the front, their mission being to act as an "early warning" system in time of attack. At first glance, it would appear that Chamberlain violated this doctrine. The matter becomes clearer, however, when one examines a letter (after action report) filed by CPT Morrill on 8 July 1863 and included in the Bachelder Papers. Morrill states that "In compliance with orders from you to take my Co. B and cover your front and left flank at the time your regiment went into position, I immediately deployed my men as skirmishers and *moved to the front and left*, ordering my men to connect on the right with the 16th Michigan skirmishers." (Walter G. Morrill, letter dated July 8, 1863. John B. Bachelder papers. Copies held at US Army Military Institute, Carlisle, PA.) Hereafter "Morrill letter."

⁷¹ Morrill was joined by a dozen or so soldiers and a non-commissioned officer from the 2nd U.S. Sharpshooters, who had become separated from their unit. These men participated in the defeat of the Confederate force. "Morrill letter."

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷³ William C. Oates, The War Between the Union and the Confederacy and its Lost Opportunities(New York: The Neale Publishing Co., 1905), 220.

and fifty of the enemy were found killed and wounded in the regimental front.⁷⁴ COL Oates believed that his unit was being surrounded by Union forces and that blue-coat cavalry had infiltrated his rear. This belief convinced Oates of the need to pull his forces out of the fight in an immediate "sauve qui peut" maneuver.

The Twentieth Maine had sustained substantial casualties, 130 out of 358 soldiers engaged, or 34%. While many other Civil War units suffered far greater losses, as a percentage of the total number engaged this is an impressive figure.

Reflecting on the action years later, Chamberlain seemed, almost, to be shaking his head in wonder. He mused:

*It was certainly a narrow chance for us Had we not used up our ammunition, and had we continued to meet the enemy to musket to musket . . . or had the Fifteenth Alabama continued their onset not regarding our preposterous demonstrations, they would have walked over our bodies to their victory. . . . It was a psychological success--a miracle in the scheme of military science. Those brave Alabama Fellows--none braver or better in either army--were victims of a surprise, of their quick and mobile imagination.*⁷⁵

The Fifth Corps historian, William Powell, gave Chamberlain credit for dynamic leadership in his account of the battle:

. . . the self-sacrificing valor of the Twentieth Maine, under the gallant leadership of Joshua L. Chamberlain . . . saved to the Union arms the historic field of Gettysburg. Had they faltered for one instant . . . there would have been no grand charge of Pickett and 'Gettysburg' would have been the mausoleum of departed hopes for the national cause"⁷⁶

On August 11, 1893, Chamberlain was awarded the Medal of Honor in belated recognition of his contribution to victory at the Battle of Gettysburg. The official notice cited him " . . . for distinguished gallantry at the

⁷⁴ The 20th Maine entered the fight with 358 muskets--or "shooters". Fifty of these personnel, members of Co. B, took only a minor part in the action. Thus, 308 personnel were in the main line of defense during the action. Each man had been issued 60 rounds of ammunition prior to the start of the battle. Chamberlain reports that the men had only one or two rounds per man remaining when he ordered the fateful bayonet charge. For all practical purposes, they had expended their "basic load" of ammunition, a total of 18,480 rounds. After action reports indicate that approximately 150 of the enemy's dead and wounded were found on the ground in front of the battle line following the charge. Simple arithmetic suggests that for each Rebel soldier hit, 123 rounds were expended by the Union troops. Such statistics show that the quality of marksmanship displayed in this fire fight was quite limited.

⁷⁵ Chamberlain, "Blood and Fire", 908-909.

⁷⁶ William H. Powell, History of the Fifth Army Corps (New York: G P. Putnam and Sons, 1896), 531.

battle of Gettysburg, July 2, 1863."⁷⁷ It is apparent that the medal meant a great deal to Chamberlain who, upon learning of a change in the design of that award in 1907, petitioned the War Department for, and received, a medal of the new design. In his letter of petition, Chamberlain asked that he not be required to return the 1893 medal which, he said "...I value on account of the inscription on it. . . . The new medal was issued on Sept. 30, 1907."⁷⁸

It was now after 6:30 p.m. The fighting had ended on that front for the day, and those troops not engaged in guarding prisoners or caring for the wounded took what rest they could get, some dropping in place and falling asleep, completely exhausted by the events of the preceding hours. The day was not, however, over for the 20th Maine. Knowing that the Rebels had troops on Big Round Top, and fearful that they would strongly reinforce that position if "left alone" all night, the new Brigade Commander, Col James Rice, directed Chamberlain to seize the heights at once. Chamberlain states in his draft after-action report that his troops had received a resupply of 3000 rounds of ammunition during the lull in the fighting.⁷⁹ In his official report, however, he states that they advanced " . . . without waiting to get ammunition".⁸⁰ He explained that, in view of the greatly reduced size of his unit, now numbering a few more than 200 men, he ordered that there be no firing as they moved uphill. They were to rely on stealth and on the bayonet for this offensive action. It was after 9 p.m. when Chamberlain and the 20th moved out. His plan worked well. As the 20th, in greatly "extended order" (this means they were spread out) advanced through the woods, parties of Confederates fell back before them. In his draft after-action report Chamberlain indicates that the darkness concealed their size and their location from the Confederates who, understandably nervous about being assailed by superior forces, retired before the advancing Union troops. The 20th secured the summit, capturing 25 of the enemy during the silent advance, and was

⁷⁷ National Archives File No. C411(CB) 1866 relating to the service of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain includes the following citation: "Daring heroism and great tenacity in holding his position on the Little Round Top against repeated assaults, and carrying the advance position on the Great Round Top." *United States of America's Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients* (Columbia Heights, MN: Highland House II, 1994), 736.

⁷⁶ Joshua Chamberlain, "Letter of Petition for Medal of Honor" addressed to MG Ainsworth, Adjutant General USA, 24 Sep 1907. Special Collections Branch, Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, Me. Although the library holds the "new pattern" medal, the writer has been unable to determine the whereabouts of the 1897 version.

⁷⁹ "Draft Report of Battle of Gettysburg," dated July 6, 1863, "Field near Gettysburg", 5.

⁸⁰ OR, 27(I), 625.

soon reinforced by the 83rd PA and the 44th NY, dispatched after two reinforcing units of Fisher's Brigade, having been fired upon the Confederates, retreated in some disorder. Chamberlain diplomatically comments that the fire " . . . disheartened the supports themselves so that I saw no more of them that night."⁸¹

Some military traditionalists must question Chamberlain's judgment in undertaking so hazardous an enterprise armed only with bayonets and, at most, a few thousand rounds of ammunition, (depending upon which version of Chamberlain's report one accepts.) Given the success of the venture, it seems reasonable to credit Chamberlain with excellent insight into soldier psychology and the influence of terrain and darkness on operations. Willard Wallace, Chamberlain's biographer, gives apparent benediction, stating that "Chamberlain felt that to go up the mountain with only the bayonet was hazardous but that, without the means to fire, his troops would expose neither their movement nor their few numbers."⁸² In the final analysis Chamberlain, as the officer on the ground, was in the best position to judge appropriate tactics for his organization. Since he was successful, history must award him high marks for leadership and tactical judgment.

Many years later Charles Mero, an amateur poet of the Twentieth Maine, described in verse the important events in which his unit engaged on July 2, 1863:

At Gettysburg once more we met, both armies fresh and strong, with open fields between us, ah! The fight was fierce and long; but when we gained those Round Tops from that fierce and hungry throng, and turned the tide against them there, they sang a different song."⁸³

⁸¹ *Ibid.* The two regiments involved were the 5th and 12th Pennsylvania Regiments, both part of the 3rd Bde, 3rd Division, 5th Corps, under COL Fisher.

⁸² Wallace, "Soul," 105.

⁸³ Charles H. Mero, "The Twentieth Maine in Rhyme", *The Maine Bugle*, April 1894, 1(2), 142.

CHAPTER FIVE

PETERSBURG AND A TERRIBLE WOUND

Shortly after Gettysburg Chamberlain was assigned by BG Griffin to command the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, 5th Corps. His appointment was met with approbation by the men since, as Private Theodore Gerrish commented, " . . . Colonel Chamberlain had, by his uniform kindness and courtesy, his skill and brilliant courage, endeared himself to all his men" ⁸⁴ From this comment and that of others, it is apparent that Chamberlain had not fallen victim to "...the delusion that strength of purpose demands an arrogant and even insufferable deportment", as GEN Dwight Eisenhower described the behavior of some 20th century officers. ⁸⁵

With this Brigade he participated in the Culpepper and Centreville campaign and the battle of Rappahannock Station, November, 1863. Following a bout of malarial fever, he participated in the engagements on the Totopotomy, the North Anna, Bethesda Church, and Cold Harbor. On June 5, 1864, COL Chamberlain was assigned command of the new First Brigade, First Division, Fifth Corps, composed of six Pennsylvania regiments. ⁸⁶ It was this unit that Chamberlain led into battle on June 18, 1864, at Rives Salient, outside Petersburg, VA. Leading from the front, as was his wont, he directed the assault against, first, a Confederate outwork and then, upon orders of MG Meade himself, the main line near Fort Mahone on foot, his horse having been wounded by a shell. When his brigade flag bearer fell, Chamberlain took up the banner and commenced directing the men into attack position using sword and flag to indicate required directions. At this point Chamberlain was struck by a .58 caliber lead minie ball (. . . one of the ten thousand

⁸⁴ Theodore Gerrish, Army Life, A Private's Reminiscences of the Civil War (Portland, Maine: Hoyt, Fogg & Dunham, 1882), 122.

⁸⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977), 75.

⁸⁶ The Pennsylvania regiments were the 121st, 142nd, 143rd, 149th, 150th and the 187th. The latter was a new unit.

that were darkening the air . . .)⁸⁷ in the right hip. The conical bullet passed completely through his body, smashing and tearing as it went, stopping under the skin on his left side. Chamberlain, shocked into immobility, was able to continue directing his troops for a short time, leaning with both hands upon his sword, which had been thrust point first into the ground.

I knew that if they saw their leader fall it would discourage them, so with rigid features I held myself up although helpless in all other ways. They saw me standing there like a statue . . . but did not dream that I had received a mortal wound . . . they swept past me while I was standing rigidly erect as if inspecting them.⁸⁸

After all had passed he went down, bleeding heavily.

Medical personnel despaired of his life, and a death notice was issued. "The New York papers the next morning printed long notices and editorials giving full description of how I died. It was quite cheerful reading for a live man I can assure you."⁸⁹ However, Surgeons Abner Shaw of the 20th Maine, and M.W. Townsend of the 44th New York, both of whom had served on Little Round top, were determined to save their old commander if medically possible. Joining the medical staff at the field hospital where stretcher-bearers had carried Chamberlain, they worked feverishly to keep him alive. After several agonizing hours of surgery under exceptionally primitive conditions, " . . . severed parts were artificially connected, and to the great joy of patient and surgeon, there was a possibility of recovery."⁹⁰

Chamberlain's superiors, receiving reports of the type and seriousness of the wound, were certain he would die. MG Warren, now the Fifth Corps Commander, made a strong plea to MG Meade, Commander of the Army of the Potomac, that Chamberlain be promoted to Brigadier General. LTG Grant, military Commander-in-Chief, having been informed of the situation, took the matter out of their hands, issuing a promotion order dated June 20, 1864.⁹¹ Grant stated, in his Memoirs, that:

"COL J.L. Chamberlain, of the 20th Maine, was wounded on the 18th. He was gallantly leading his brigade at the time, as he had been in the

⁸⁷ Portland Journal, September 1-6, 1900, n.p.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Wallace, Soul of the Lion, p.134.

⁹¹ Official Records, Vol. XL, Part II, pp. 216-17.

habit of doing in all the engagements in which he had previously been engaged. He had several times been recommended for a brigadier-generalcy for gallant and meritorious conduct. On this occasion, however, I promoted him on the spot, and forwarded a copy of my order to the War Department, asking that my act might be confirmed . . . without any delay. This was done, and at last a gallant and meritorious officer received partial justice at the hands of his government, which he had served so faithfully and so well."⁹²

This is supposedly the only instance in which LTG Grant promoted an officer to the rank of general on the field of battle. The terrible wound, having damaged Chamberlain's urinary system, bothered him for the remainder of his life and did, eventually, cause his death--in 1914! It also placed Chamberlain on the sidelines for several months. Given the primitive state of medicine at that time, his very survival is testament to his constitution, determination and, probably, lofty and spiritual conception of life, which seems to have become even more evident following his wounding. Pullen comments that Chamberlain's "account of the final 12 days of the Civil war and the events immediately following . . . seem to be imbued with such . . . a strong sense of other-worldliness--of spirit rising above flesh not only to endure but sensitively to record" ⁹³

Chamberlain was offered opportunities for staff duty and for civilian employment during his convalescence. His mother begged him to consider his own best interests, urging him to consider immediate retirement from military service. Chamberlain responded:

I owe the Country three years service. It is a time when every man should stand by his guns. And I am not scared or hurt enough yet to be willing to face the rear, when other men are marching to the front. . . . there is no promise of life in peace, & no decree of death in war. And I am so confident of the sincerity of my motives that I can trust my own life & the welfare of my family in the hands of Providence. ⁹⁴

⁹² Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant(New York: Charles L. Webster & Co. 1894), p.517.

⁹³ Joshua L. Chamberlain, The Passing of the Armies(Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Press, 1974), ii.

⁹⁴ Joshua L. Chamberlain letter to his father, Feb. 20, 1865, Special Collections Department, Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, ME.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FINAL CAMPAIGN

*War involves in its progress such a train
of unforeseen and unsupported circumstances
that no human wisdom can calculate the end.*

Thomas Paine⁹⁵

Back with the troops for the final campaign, although quite weak and sore, BG Chamberlain found himself in the thick of the March 29, 1865 fight on the Quaker Road, near Five Forks, VA. MG Meade ordered the Fifth Corps to mount a vigorous assault in an attempt to break Lee's lines and cut off retreat from Petersburg. Chamberlain's First Brigade was well to the front. During a charge, his horse, Charlemagne carried Chamberlain beyond the infantry line and directly into the fire of the defending Confederate forces. Chamberlain checked his progress, which caused the horse to rear, just in time to receive the shot of a Confederate marksman. Charlemagne was pierced through the neck, the ball then striking Chamberlain a stunning blow on the chest. The bullet, deflected by a brass hand mirror and leather dispatch case, as he says, ". . . followed around two ribs so as to come out at the back seam of my coat. The horse was bleeding profusely and my falling on his neck brought a blood relationship of which I was not ashamed."⁹⁶

Rather than leaving the field to nurse his wound, BG Chamberlain rose in the saddle after a moment of unconsciousness and dashed off to rally one of his regiments, which was falling back. He arrived among the men, in his own words, ". . . tattered and battered, bareheaded and blood-smeared . . ." musing in his report that the men might well have mistaken him for ". . . a messenger from the other world."⁹⁷ Having successfully rallied the regiment, in cooperation with its Commander, BG Chamberlain rode back to the center of the line and was ". . . astonished at the greeting of cheers which marked my course." Strangest of all to him was that as he emerged to the sight of the enemy, they also took up the cheering. Bemused, Chamberlain reported "I hardly knew what world I was in."⁹⁸ This report

⁹⁵ Thomas Paine, *Prospects on the Rubicon*, 1787.

⁹⁶ Chamberlain, *Passing*, p. 47.

⁹⁷ Chamberlain, *Passing*, 47.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

suggests that the Confederate troops, recognizing the exceptional gallantry being exhibited by Chamberlain, were paying tribute to a brave American and fellow soldier--albeit of the "opposite persuasion."

The fighting continued sharp for some little time, with the issue more than once in doubt. Chamberlain's personal moral example clearly had a profound influence on the willingness of the men to "stand to their work" under these desperate circumstances. He suggests that, at the crucial moment, ". . . a spirit as it were superhuman took possession of minds and bodies; energies of will, contradicting all laws of dynamics reversed the direction of the surging (enemy) wave, and dashed it back" ⁹⁹ He is describing exceptional personal motivation engendered at least in part by an absolutely inspiring leadership performance. Such valor was not lost upon the division and corps commanders, who had come more and more to depend upon Chamberlain's personal example in times of desperate need.

Following the battle, Chamberlain's philosophical and religious attributes gained the ascendancy. Walking out alone over the battlefield to visit the "unreturning brave", he was struck by the awful reality of the carnage wrought that day. He described the wounded, the ". . . more than five hundred bruised (wounded) bodies of men--men made in the image of God, marred by the hand of man . . . and where is the reckoning of such things? And who is answerable? . . . Was it God's command we heard (to attack) or His forgiveness we must forever implore?" ¹⁰⁰

In a scene which provides insight into Chamberlain's basic decency and sense of caring compassion, we find that, in passing among the wounded he ". . . came upon brave old Sickel [regimental commander] lying calm and cheerful, with a shattered limb . . . I sat down by him to give him such cheer as I could. He seemed to think I needed the comforting. 'General', he whispers, smiling up, 'you have the soul of the lion and heart of the woman'. For so it is: might and love--they are the all;--fatherhood and motherhood of God himself, and of every godlike man." ¹⁰¹ Such sensitivity in a hard-charging and aggressive warrior is, indeed, impressive.

Chamberlain performed good service on March 31st following a Confederate surprise attack that drove a wedge through the Union line of battle and sent elements of the Fifth Corps streaming to the rear in disarray. Chamberlain, still stiff and sore from his wounds of the 29th, led a desperate counterattack at the request of MG Warren and MG Griffin,

⁹⁹ Chamberlain, Passing, 51.

¹⁰⁰ Chamberlain, Passing, 55.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

his superiors, to " . . . save the honor of the Fifth Corps" ¹⁰² The counterattack was successful, enabling the Union forces to capture the White Oak Road, a vital artery of retreat for the Confederate forces. For this successful action and for his heroic role in the battle of Five Forks the following day, BG Chamberlain was honored with the title of Brevet Major General of U.S. Volunteers, effective March 29, 1865. ¹⁰³

¹⁰² Chamberlain, Passing, 72.

¹⁰³ Official Records, Vol.46, Part III, 730-31.

CHAPTER SIX

APPOMATTOX: HONOR ANSWERING HONOR

*"Forward still-forward to the end,
forward to the new beginning; forward
to the nation's second birth."¹⁰⁴*

The next several days were a whirl of excitement and great physical exertion for BG Chamberlain and the men of the Fifth Corps. As part of the force pursuing GEN Lee's army in its retreat toward Lynchburg, Chamberlain's brigade was well to the front, close behind the cavalry forces of MG Philip Sheridan, who now commanded the entire pursuing column.¹⁰⁵ Following a series of unsuccessful rear guard actions in which considerable numbers of troops were captured, GEN Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was brought cut off at Appomattox Court House on the evening of the eighth of April, 1865. Union cavalry had managed to position themselves across the roads leading from Appomattox toward Lynchburg. Chamberlain's brigade, having executed an exhausting night march, along with elements of other federal Corps, arrived at first light and filed into line as support for the cavalry units.¹⁰⁶

At daylight on the morning of the ninth of April, 1865, Palm Sunday, MG John B. Gordon led his corps forward in an attempt to break through the Union lines west of the town. Encountering cavalry units backed by Chamberlain's brigade and other federal units, he sent a message saying "Tell General Lee I have fought my corps to a frazzle, and I fear I can do nothing unless I am heavily supported by Longstreet's corps." The message was delivered to GEN Lee, who is reported to have remarked "There is nothing left me but to go and see General Grant, and I had rather

¹⁰⁴ Chamberlain, "Passing", 242.

¹⁰⁵ Chamberlain's unit accompanied elements of the Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-fifth Corps, the latter being a division of U.S. Colored Troops under Birney. OR 46(1): 841, 1161-1162.

¹⁰⁶ Chamberlain reported that, during the night march ". . . for the first time in my life my eye caught the glimmer of black soldiers trotting along our left, eager for the front, faces all lighted up. The sight thrilled me. Was it patriotic justice or was it the irony of history or of fate, those black men pressing their way to the front, eager to get into the fray which was to make a white man's republic a free country? Joshua Chamberlain, "Not a Sound of Trumpet," Unpublished paper presented to the Bowdoin Club, 1901, Special Collections Dept., Bowdoin College, 9.

die a thousand deaths."¹⁰⁷

Arrangements were made and, in the early afternoon GEN Lee proceeded to the McLean House, in the village of Appomattox, to meet with LTG U.S. Grant, Commanding U.S. Forces, to execute the terms of surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. Lee wore his best uniform, to the astonishment of artillery commander, BG W.N. Pendleton:

To my surprise he was dressed in his neatest style, new uniform, snowy linen, etc. On my expressing astonishment at this, considering the hour and circumstances, and asking what it meant, he said "I have probably to be General Grant's prisoner, and though I must make my best appearance."¹⁰⁸

As GEN Lee proceeded to his final meeting with LTG Grant he passed behind the position at which Chamberlain was stationed. Chamberlain reported feeling

. . . a strange sense of some presence invisible but powerfulDisquieted, I turned about, and there behind me, riding in between my two lines, appeared a commanding form, superbly mounted, richly accoutred,[sic] of imposing bearing, noble countenance, with expression of deep sadness overmastered by deeper strength. It is no other than Robert E. Lee! Not long after . . . appeared another form, plain, unassuming, simple and familiar to our eyes, but to the thought as much inspiring awe as Lee in his splendor and his sadness. It is Grant. . . .He seemed greater than I had ever seen him--a look as of another world upon about him.¹⁰⁹

Musing later upon the tragic circumstances confronting the professional and personal life of GEN Robert E. Lee, Chamberlain wrote that

". . .it was reserved for Lee to be confronted by a man as magnanimous as himself, and guided by a better star. He had to go down, honored and beloved indeed for the man he was, but the more lamented for the unhappy choice he made when he cast in his lot with those who forsook the old flag for a new one, which did not recognize that fact that old things had become new. . . ."¹¹⁰

Lee and Grant conferred for an extended period of time, eventually producing a set of terms that were viewed by all as exceedingly generous. GEN Lee is reported to have been appreciative of the courtesy shown and the

¹⁰⁷ John B. Gordon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 438. Cauble argues that Gordon actually made this observation before the attack began, based on the degraded condition of his corps, worn down by several days of continued marching and fighting. Frank P. Cauble, The Proceedings Connected with the Surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, April, 1865, (photocopy), Appomattox Court House National Historical Park, 1975,34-36. Hereafter "Proceedings."

¹⁰⁸ W.N. Pendleton, "Personal Recollections of General Lee," *The Southern Magazine* ,15 (1874): 634.

¹⁰⁹ Joshua L. Chamberlain, "Appomattox", Paper read before the New York Commandery, Loyal Legion of the United States, October 7, 1903, 12. Hereafter "Appomattox."

¹¹⁰ Chamberlain, "Passing," 218.

magnanimous approach taken by LTG Grant. Following the meeting Lee returned to his headquarters and, the following day, issued General Order, No. 9:

After four years of arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources. . . .

With an increasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous considerations for myself, I bid you all an affectionate farewell.

R.E. Lee
Genl.¹¹¹

Immediately following the surrender meeting Grant and Lee appointed commissioners to attend to the details of parole and equipment turn-in. MG Griffin, Chamberlain's commander, was one of those so chosen.¹¹² Griffin recommended that Chamberlain be placed in charge of the ceremony at which the infantrymen would turn in their weapons and flags.¹¹³ It seemed appropriate that this citizen soldier, veteran of so many battles, should oversee the symbolic return of the Confederate troops to national control. As one veteran who served with Chamberlain put it "If any one in the Fifth Army Corps maintained a spotless name and won enduring fame during the operations of that corps from the 29th of March to the 9th of April, 1865, more than commensurate with the range of command he held, that one was Joshua L. Chamberlain."¹¹⁴

Chamberlain was deeply touched by this recognition, both of his personal contributions and of those of the Fifth Corps. He was given instructions by MG Griffin that " . . . the ceremony (was) to be as simple as possible, and that

¹¹¹ Cauble, "Proceedings", 149-150. The order was received with great emotion by the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia, some of whom preserved copies of the document until their deaths, as reported by Cauble. (151).

¹¹² The other Union officers were MG John Gibbon and Bvt. MG Wesley Merritt and, for the Confederate army, LTG James Longstreet, MG John B. Gordon, and BG W.N. Pendleton. Cauble, "Proceedings," 122-123.

¹¹³ Chamberlain reported that he was informed that evening that General Grant had appointed him to accept the surrender of the Confederate infantry's equipment. The ceremony, set for April 12, was preceded on April 11 by the surrender of the artillerists' and of the cavalymen's equipment. "Late that night [April 9] I was summoned to headquarters, where General Griffin informed me that I was to command the parade on the occasion of the formal surrender of the arms and colors of Lee's army. Chamberlain, "Appomattox", 14.

¹¹⁴ Trulock, "Providence," 300.

nothing should be done to humiliate the manhood of the Southern soldiers . . . ".¹¹⁵ By his subsequent actions Chamberlain established his undying place in the annals of military and professional chivalry.¹¹⁶

The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia had surrendered on April 9, 1865--Palm Sunday. To Chamberlain that day seemed similar to the original Palm Sunday, when the Prince of Peace was met by rejoicing multitudes crying "Peace in Heaven; glory in the highest."¹¹⁷ LTG Grant, having accorded the Confederates liberal terms, including the retention of horses owned by individual cavalry and artillerymen for use in farming and having authorized officers to retain their side arms (swords and pistols), nevertheless insisted upon a formal surrender ceremony in which the weapons of the army were turned over to the Federal Army. This was, as can be imagined, an extremely painful experience for the Confederates who petitioned, unsuccessfully, to be spared this psychological trial.

In order to add dignity to what could have otherwise been an altogether humiliating circumstance Chamberlain, his diplomatic and philosophical skills operating at their best, felt " . . . impelled to render some token of recognition; some honor also to manhood so high."¹¹⁸ He was impressed deeply by the symbolic meaning of the occasion and determined to mark it by a salute of arms. He indicates that he was aware of the " . . . responsibility assumed and of the criticisms that would follow" ¹¹⁹ but determined to press on, it being his view that the salute was not to the Confederacy, but " . . . to its going down before the flag of the Union."¹²⁰ He indicated that the troops of the Confederacy, standing before the US forces were, in their very humiliation, the embodiment of American manhood; worthy men whom neither toil nor tribulation could bend from their resolve. He found the thin, worn figures pathetically appealing and worthy of great respect.¹²¹

The morning of the 12th of April dawned gray and chill. Chamberlain was allowed to place the entire First

¹¹⁵ Chamberlain, "Appomattox," 14.

¹¹⁶ Wallace, "Soul," 185-86.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Chamberlain, "Appomattox", 16.

¹¹⁹ Chamberlain, "Passing," 260.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

Division, Fifth Corps, on line to await the approach of the Confederate force, which soon made its appearance, a long, gray march column approaching with the " . . . old swinging route step and swaying battle flags. In the van the proud Confederate ensign . . . the regimental battle-flags with the same escutcheon following on, crowded so thick, by thinning out of men, that the whole column seemed crowned with red."¹²² BG Chamberlain stationed himself, mounted, at the right of the union line beneath the banner of the First Division of the Fifth Corps, white with a red Maltese cross in the middle. His words best describe ensuing events.

Instructions had been given; and when the head of each division column comes opposite our group, our bugle sounds the signal and instantly our whole line from right to left, regiment by regiment in succession, gives the soldier's salutation, from the "order arms" to the old "carry"--the marching salute.¹²³ Gordon at the head of the column, riding with heavy spirit and downcast face, catches the sound of shifting arms, looks up, and . . . wheels superbly, making with himself and his horse one uplifted figure, with profound salutation as he drops the point of his sword to the boot toe; then facing to his own command, gives word for his successive brigades to pass us with the same position of the manual--honor answering honor. On our part not a sound of trumpet more . . . nor word nor whisper . . . nor motion of man standing again at the order, but an awed stillness rather, and breath-holding, as if it were the passing of the dead!"

Chamberlain reports that each arriving Confederate unit, in turn, faced the union line, stacked arms, hung cartridge cases on the stacks, and laid down its battle flag prior to marching back to camp for final dismissal and the long trip home. Surrendering the banner was generally the most difficult act of all, and Chamberlain describes the troops' " . . . agony of expression . . . some frenziedly rushing from the ranks, pressing them to their lips with burning tears."¹²⁴ One Confederate said, unashamedly weeping as he delivered his flag, " . . . Boys, this is not the first time you have seen that flag. I have borne it in the front of battle on many a victorious field and I had rather die than surrender it to you". Chamberlain responded: "My brave fellow, I admire your noble spirit, and only regret that I have not the authority to bid you keep your flag and carry it home as a precious heirloom."¹²⁵

Chamberlain reported that many bare flagstaffs were placed on the stacked arms, the battle flags having been removed and divided among the soldiers, but could not find it in his heart to blame them too much for this unauthorized

¹²² Chamberlain, "Passing," 259-260.

¹²³ At the position of the "carry", soldiers stood with the musket held by the right hand against and parallel to the body, trigger guard to the front with fingers wrapped around it, and the rifle barrel cradled against the shoulder.

¹²⁴ Chamberlain, Passing, 261-262.

¹²⁵ Wallace, "Soul," 189.

behavior. Chamberlain took the view that the Southerners had fought for their beliefs and ideals. He found himself unable to look upon these people with thoughts of personal hatred or revenge, but rather felt a sense of respect and gladness at welcoming them back into the Union.¹²⁶

The response of the Confederate leaders was one of manly acceptance and appreciation. "General, this is deeply humiliating; but I console myself with the thought that the whole country will rejoice at this day's business", commented one officer. "You astonish us by your honorable and generous conduct", another is reported to have stated. A third said, "I went into that cause . . . and I meant it . . . we have lost. Now that is my flag (pointing to the flag of the Union) and I will prove myself as worthy (of it) as any of you."¹²⁷

MG John B. Gordon, CSA, later described BG Chamberlain " . . . as one of the knightliest soldiers of the Federal army." ¹²⁸ As an effective public speaker and, for a number of years, President of the United Confederate Veterans, Gordon told this story throughout the South. He and Chamberlain became good friends, staying in touch in the years following the war, and both doing much to reconcile the sections, healing the wounds left by the war.

Writing years later, GEN Morris Schaaf summed up Chamberlain's participation at the Appomattox proceedings:

I believe that the selection of Chamberlain to represent the Army . . . was providential in . . . that he, in the way he discharged his duty, represented the spiritually-real of the world. And by this I mean the lofty conceptions of what in human conduct is manly and merciful, showing in daily life consideration for others and on the battlefield linking courage with magnanimity and sharing an honorable enemy's woes . . . I firmly believe that Heaven ordained that the end of that epoch-making struggle should not be . . . commonplace; . . . and out of love for (both armies) saw to it that deeds of enduring color should flush the end.¹²⁹

Here ended the most significant events in Chamberlain's military career. He was, as previously mentioned, brevetted Major General for his heroism in the last campaign and was assigned command of the First Division for the

¹²⁶ Chamberlain, "Appomattox", 20-21.

¹²⁷ Chamberlain, *Passing*, 266.

¹²⁸ Wallace, "Soul," 190.

¹²⁹ Morris Schaaf, quoted in Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, "Tribute to the Memory of Companion Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain", Portland, ME, May 6, 1914, 7-8.

last two months of the Army of the Potomac's existence. In that capacity he oversaw the mustering out the troops in Washington, D.C., and handled a myriad of administrative matters connected with Army life. He was privileged to lead the division in the Grand Review of the Armies of the Union, held in May, and was invited to sit on the reviewing stand with President Andrew Johnson's party after the division had passed that point in the parade route. A later paper on the grand review provides, perhaps, the best account of that event extant. The account is flowery, philosophically deep, and shot through with personal allusions and lofty sentiments--vintage Chamberlain!

On the 1st of July, 1865, Chamberlain received a deeply moving communication, the first paragraph of which stated that: "By virtue of special orders, No. 339, current series, from the Adjutant General's office, this army, as an organization, ceases to exist."¹³⁰ It was over at last.

Chamberlain, ever the thoughtful philosopher and keen observer of Man's activities, soon set down his assessment of the uses and abuses of war. As an indication of the depth of his thinking, it is worthy of quotation, in part:

In the privations and sufferings endured as well as in the strenuous action of battle, some of the highest qualities of manhood are called forth--courage, self-command, sacrifice of self for the sake of something held higher--wherein we take it chivalry finds its value; and on another side fortitude, patience, warmth of comradeship . . . War is for the participants a test of character; it makes bad men worse and good men better."¹³¹

In the final analysis, however, he concludes--"War!--nothing but the final, infinite good, for man and God, can accept and justify human work like that!"

¹³⁰ Chamberlain, *Passing*, 391.

¹³¹ Chamberlain, *Passing*, 385-86.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GOVERNOR OF MAINE

The war had ended for Bvt MG Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, but his life had been irrevocably altered. From this point on he would pursue an interesting, if not quite so overtly heroic, career. Following further surgery on his old wound and discharge from the Army in early 1866, he returned to Bowdoin College for the remainder of academic year 1865-66, serving as professor of rhetoric and oratory, and apparently finding the life of a small town college professor somewhat unchallenging after brigade and division command with the Army of the Potomac. Indeed, it is likely that, had other employment options been available to him, a return to academe would have not been considered. Chamberlain had matured greatly, gaining in personal confidence and having learned skills of leadership far in excess of those required by a college professor. Chances are he found the professorial role rather quiet after the high drama and opportunities offered by active military service during combat operations.

He was able to generate a bit of local excitement by helping to persuade Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant to attend and participate in the 1865 Commencement exercises and to receive the honorary degree of LL.D.¹³² The college outdid itself in lavish preparation for the event. Following the exercises and a meal, Chamberlain offered brief remarks, during which he stated that General Grant had declined to speak to the group. Grant is reported to have stated: "I continue to fight it out on that line."¹³³ It will be remembered that Grant was well known for his public reticence.

Within a few months Chamberlain was being mentioned as a potential gubernatorial candidate. The editor of the Bangor Daily Whig and Courier wrote that Major General Chamberlain would make ". . . a most popular and

¹³² Chamberlain had a flair for the dramatic. During his closing weeks with the Army of the Potomac he had orchestrated a ceremony honoring MG Charles Griffin, then the Fifth Corps Commander. It included a torchlight parade and ceremony attended by most members of the corps. During the ceremony Chamberlain presented Griffin a pin depicting the Fifth Corps Battle flag, rendered in red enamel on a white field and bordered by small diamonds. Tiffany's, in New York, produced the pin. Chamberlain, "Passing," 320.

¹³³ Louis C. Hatch, A History of Bowdoin College (Portland: Loring, Short and Harmon, 1927), 122. Cited hereafter as "Bowdoin".

excellent chief magistrate.¹³⁴ Detailed accounts of his life, which emphasized his personal bravery, leadership ability and general fitness while serving in the Union Army, were published in several other newspapers. Upon being approached about his willingness to stand for election as a Republican, Chamberlain willingly acquiesced.

The issue of appropriate reconstruction measures for the South was, at the time, a topic of great public interest. President Andrew Johnson and his "liberal" allies were arrayed against the "radical" Republicans who, at the time, had control of Congress. The "liberals" favored the line taken by martyred President Abraham Lincoln, which called for moderate measures designed to quickly restore the Union with a minimum of acrimony. The "radicals" favored harsher terms designed to guarantee the civil rights of the freedmen and stricter treatment of rebellious White southerners. After a period of doubt and soul-searching, Chamberlain placed himself solidly behind the Congressional radicals.¹³⁵ His public comments were sufficiently staunch that the Whig characterized his position as ". . . squarely upon the most advanced grounds occupied by Union men of the North."¹³⁶

The key issue that set Chamberlain apart from his opponents was his pristine war record. Maine had sent over 70,000 of her sons to fight for the Union at a time when the entire population of the state was roughly 600,000.¹³⁷ Consequently, the war and its heroes were very important to local citizens, a condition that redounded to Chamberlain's benefit. One newspaper stated:

It is not extravagant to say that General Chamberlain will get ten thousand more votes in Maine than almost any man who could have been nominated That mystic chord of memory, stretching from a hundred battlefields of the war, will draw thousands to the polls that they may deposit for Joshua L. Chamberlain.¹³⁸

Chamberlain was elected in September, 1866 by the largest majority ever received by a candidate until that time, nearly 28,000 votes out of 111,892 cast.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Editorial, Bangor Daily Whig and Courier, March 14, 1866. Hereafter noted as Whig.

¹³⁵ George T. Barton, "Joshua L. Chamberlain: Governor of Maine, 1867--71." Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Maine, May 1975, 11-12. Cited hereafter as "Governor".

¹³⁶ Whig, April 22, 1866.

¹³⁷ Barton, "Governor," 1.

¹³⁸ Portland Star, quoted in Whig, June 25, 1866.

¹³⁹ Maine, 46th Legislature, House, Journal of the House of Representatives (Augusta: Owen and Nash, 1867), 13.

Ever the forward-looking thinker and visionary, Chamberlain set about improving economic, legal, and social conditions within the state. He vigorously supported development of the new agricultural college at Orono, designed to provide solid vocational training for Maine's young people, too many of whom were leaving the state in search of more remunerative employment. With both shipbuilding and lumbering on the decline in Maine, Chamberlain saw the need to develop new fields of employment and to attract more workers to the state. He proposed: a program designed to attract immigrant farmers from Scandinavia; a hydrographic survey of the principal rivers as a precursor to the development of "natural advantages" resident therein; the extension of the railroad system; a plan to encourage the State to consider making public loans to likely industries as an inducement to relocation to Maine; and ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment.¹⁴⁰

He became a supporter of educational reforms, improvements in the penal system, expansion of the mental hospital, and provision of decent care for the orphans of the state, many placed in that condition by the recent war. He felt that such improvements were directly linked to his economic development program, in that all such initiatives targeted the goal of keeping the citizenry at home and happy in Maine. He said:

I wish that the result of all our efforts will be that we can keep our young men and women at home, and rear up a generation just and fearing God. . . and doing good works to their fellow man.¹⁴¹

Central in Chamberlain's thinking was the improvement of both public and higher education within the state. Speaking of needed improvements in the common schools, he stated that the literally hundreds of small schools scattered throughout the state constituted the bedrock of high quality education for the citizens of Maine and suggested that such institutions were the basis upon which general improvement of the citizenry must stand. He characterized conditions in the schools of 1867 as deplorable, two major problems being a dearth of qualified instructors and an almost total lack of uniform qualitative standards.¹⁴²

As a means of enhancing the quality of instructors, Chamberlain supported plans to increase the number and sophistication of the state Normal Schools. During his first year in office, the state legislature provided funds for the

¹⁴⁰ Wallace, "Soul," 208-210.

¹⁴¹ Maine, Governor, (Chamberlain), "Annual Message", 48th Legislature, Senate, Journal of the Senate (Augusta: Owen and Nash, 1869), 38. Hereafter cited as 3rd Inaugural.

¹⁴² Maine, Governor (Chamberlain), "Annual Message", 46th Legislature, House, Journal of the House of Representatives (Augusta: Owen and Nash, 1867), 30. Cited hereafter as 1st Inaugural.

expansion of the Normal School in Farmington, ME and for the opening of a second institution in Castine.¹⁴³ A State Board of Education, created in 1868, set attempts at central direction of local schools in motion. The first State Superintendent of Schools proposed many reforms designed to increase state influence over local schools and, working through county instructional supervisors, to provide more uniform standards. Governor Chamberlain was an enthusiastic supporter of the Superintendent's efforts in this area.¹⁴⁴ During the next several year a number of improvements in the schools were implemented. Speaking on educational progress at a point close to the end of his gubernatorial service, Chamberlain commented:

Not that any striking changes or brilliant results have as yet appeared, but . . . we are set upon right ways. . . and appropriate means have been set in motion which can scarcely fail to work salutary and permanent effects. . . . [The system] no longer seeks to cram the mind with strange forms and aggregated facts . . . it now teaches the mind from the start to observe, compare, analyze, assimilate--to master and make its own--in fact it is an education--the training, unfolding, leading and fashioning forth of the mind.¹⁴⁵

Some of the newly installed reforms were, unfortunately, short-lived. The office of county supervisor was abolished in 1873. Advocates of local control of the public schools defeated proposals for standardized textbooks and uniform curriculum.¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the Chamberlain administration had set a standard for future administrations to consider and, in some cases, to emulate.

Also interested in the expansion of higher education, Governor Chamberlain supported the creation of the College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts, in Orono, now called the University of Maine. The institution opened its doors in late 1868, with the mission of providing practical education for young men who would carry on agricultural and industrial pursuits in generations to come. Chamberlain stated that its role was " . . . not to educate people out of their sphere, but into it."¹⁴⁷ That is, he wished the college to offer an education, which would fit young people for the pursuit

¹⁴³ Barton, "Governor", 41-42.

¹⁴⁴ Third Inaugural, 25.

¹⁴⁵ Maine, Governor (Chamberlain), "Annual Message", 49th Legislature, Acts and Resolves (Augusta: Sprague, Owen and Nash, 1870), 154-155. Cited hereafter as 4th Inaugural.

¹⁴⁶ The Eastern Argus, (Portland), May 4, 1870. Cited hereafter as

Argus.

¹⁴⁷ 1st Inaugural, 32.

of a livelihood within the state; not to prepare them for careers in other parts of the country.

There were other accomplishments. Commissioners of Banking and Insurance were created, along with the State Superintendent of Education. The state militia was reorganized, with all equipment furnished by the state. In the area of finance, reimbursements were obtained from the federal government for costs incurred in the raising of military forces for service in the Civil War. In addition, payment of joint war claims of Massachusetts and Maine for expenses incurred on behalf of the nation during the War of 1812 was obtained, a signal accomplishment indeed!¹⁴⁸

Elected to three additional one-year terms of office, Chamberlain continued his policy of forthrightness and principled action. Never a "good" politician, he tended to say exactly what was on his mind, much to the chagrin of more pliable colleagues. He took a number of unpopular positions, including opposition to the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson in 1867 through support of the position taken by Maine's Senator William Pitt Fessenden on the matter. Fessenden cast the deciding negative vote, which which prevented the two-thirds majority required for impeachment. This act destroyed Fessenden's career. It also brought great criticism upon Governor Chamberlain's head, much of it from within the local Republican Party, the leaders of which were solidly in favor of impeachment. Indeed, as Wallace indicates, so bitter was the feeling of some citizens that Chamberlain's friends " . . . feared not simply for his career but for his life as well."¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, this consistent placement of principle ahead of politics worked in his favor with the people, and he was overwhelmingly reelected in 1868.¹⁵⁰

In another area Chamberlain deeply offended many citizens, who were staunch advocates of prohibition and opponents of capital punishment, by opposing the establishment of a State Constabulary to enforce prohibition by Search and Seizure, and by insisting on the execution of a Negro man who had been convicted of several atrocious crimes. As Roberts says,

. . . Unscrupulous misrepresentation was followed by furious attacks, both open and secret; by denunciations from churches and religious societies; by anonymous threats of assassination; but he stuck to his guns and never wavered.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Barton, "Governor", 27-28. War claims for Maine alone amounted to \$700,000. The total state budget for 1868 was \$1.3 million.

¹⁴⁹ Wallace, "Soul", 216-221.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Kenneth Roberts, Trending Into Maine (Boston: Little, Brown Co., 1938), 50. So great was the turmoil over temperance that the Methodist Conference passed a resolve censuring the governor and legislature for

Chamberlain's positions in these matters provide examples of his strong-willed individualism. He proved himself to be a powerful political force motivated by conscience and not by expediency. However, Chamberlain's personal popularity with the voters was offset to a large extent by growing disenchantment among the Republican Party bosses with this "man of principle", who refused to "play the traditional political game". They were somewhat discomfited by Chamberlain's fourth nomination for governor, it having been planned by the party managers to run another candidate for office in 1869. Chamberlain had been toying with the idea of standing for election to the US Senate seat occupied by Senator Lot Morrill. However, upon determining the strong opposition to his candidacy being expressed by Republican leaders, he withdrew his name and appears, as of that time, to have set aside further aspirations for higher political office.¹⁵² Chamberlain left office in January, 1871, a man of principle who had refused to use the powers of his office for any purpose other than the good of the citizens of Maine and who had refused to act the part of a "regular" party man. Chamberlain's moral and social sense is of vital importance in understanding his life, for he governed his actions by a definite moral code. There were some things that he simply would not abide--one of them being overt self-seeking behavior. It seems apparent that this philosophy constituted an obstacle to a successful political career. Wallace states:

. . . he showed a most apolitical reluctance to speak and work for his own advancement . . . Chamberlain, for a person who often had political aspirations, suffered from excessive modesty . . . (which) sprang . . . from a profound distaste for self-adulation and a realization that there is no such creature as the indispensable man.¹⁵³

It is reported that the party chiefs were not sorry to see him leave the State House--nor was he necessarily sorry to be leaving!¹⁵⁴ By the time of his retirement, however, his consistency of action had won him the respect of many citizens. One newspaper wrote of his many attempts at positive change:

Governor Chamberlain has served the state faithfully [for] four years, and leaves

"crippling the prohibition law." Kennebec Journal, May 19, 1869.

¹⁵² Barton, "Governor", 92-93. Chamberlain had alienated a large portion of the Republican Party not only by standing for election to a fourth term as Governor in 1869, but also by toying briefly with the idea of running for the Senate as a Democrat. He soon realized the unacceptability of engaging in such a party switch, but damage had already been done to his campaign chances.

¹⁵³ Wallace, "Soul", 293.

¹⁵⁴ Wallace, "Soul," 223-224.

the impress of his administration in the greater efficiency of our school system and the improvement of our teachers and schools; the deeper interest awakened in the development of railroads, the use of our water power, the encouragement of manufacturing, the settlement of the northern part of the state, and the promotion of agriculture. He deserves well for his efforts in behalf of the state, and will retire with the respect to which they as well as his personal services entitle him." ¹⁵⁵

Chamberlain, himself, was philosophical about his accomplishments. While he felt that his efforts had not been nearly so successful as he would have desired, he was optimistic about the future and clearly proud of those things that had been accomplished. He said:

The task is done. Or rather I have done. The thought I saw before me--to set Maine in her true light--is but half attained. Like all our human endeavor the end disappoints the hope--or rather the end is never reached. ¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Daily Kennebec Journal (Augusta), January 4, 1871.

¹⁵⁶ Joshua L. Chamberlain, Maine: Her Place in History (Augusta: Sprague, Owen and Nash, 1877), 96-99.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PRESIDENT OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE

In the rare man, the hero and leader, the child of genius and the heir of fame, imagination colors fact with a light that never was on sea or land, and reflects it back transformed into words that cannot be forgotten, and deeds the world will not willingly let die.

William DeWitt Hyde¹⁵⁷

Following the Governorship, Chamberlain took a brief and well-earned vacation from public life, followed in early 1871 by his unanimous election as President of Bowdoin College, a choice pleasing to the alumni association, which is reported to have broken into applause when the announcement, made during a meeting at which Chamberlain was presiding, reached their receptive and approving ears!¹⁵⁸ In commenting on the early departure of the former President, Dr. Samuel Harris, one commentator reported that it was felt, at the time, that ". . . Bowdoin needed a President who was not only a ripe scholar but a successful beggar. . . ."¹⁵⁹ Chamberlain was to be successful in this quest for funds, overseeing the accumulation of an endowment in excess of \$200,000.

Undoubtedly, Chamberlain's return to academic life and to full-time living in Brunswick was pleasing to Fannie, who had felt increasingly isolated from her husband during his sojourn in the state capitol. Indeed, it was during the gubernatorial period that the Chamberlains came closest to marital dissolution. Upon the general's release from active military service in 1866, Fannie had assumed that her husband would return to a normal family existence. This development was disrupted as a result of Chamberlain's being catapulted almost immediately into public political life. Fannie, ever impulsive and strong-willed, (her foster father called her "flighty"), had declined to accompany Chamberlain to Augusta, remaining in the Brunswick house throughout his four years as governor. Undoubtedly, this

¹⁵⁷ Hatch, "Bowdoin," 131; Portland Eastern Argus, Feb.28, 1914.

¹⁵⁸ Hatch, "Bowdoin", 129-30.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

was a source of embarrassment to the governor, who was forced to commute on weekends to see his wife and children during his four-year term of office. She, in turn, felt abandoned and neglected, becoming moody, depressed and suspicious in the absence of the attention that she so desired from Chamberlain. Resenting both his absence and, it might be surmised, the political "cronies" with which he was thrown during that period, she came to believe that he no longer cared for her and talked indiscreetly and publicly of a possible divorce.¹⁶⁰

Chamberlain, greatly distressed when he heard these things, wrote to Fannie that they were two intelligent persons who could work out the terms of separation without "making their families wretched." He asked that she keep her own counsel and that she avoid "going public" with her grievances and plans; otherwise, she would make a hell of both their lives."¹⁶¹ It should be noted that Chamberlain had returned from the war both restless and disturbed by the horrors to which he had been exposed, uncertain of the meaning of it all and how he should spend the rest of his life. In addition, he suffered the burden of a painful wound that never completely healed and which, due to its nature, almost certainly altered his capacity for marital intimacy. None of these things helped the family situation.¹⁶²

Fortunately, the two were able to work out their differences, building a firmer bond than before. Chamberlain's return to academic life removed one barrier to their happiness, long periods of separation. Chamberlain vowed never again to allow their marriage to be "placed in such jeopardy."¹⁶³

Chamberlain assumed his presidential responsibilities at a time when the winds of change were beginning their sweep through American higher education, long the preserve of traditional classicism and resistance to modification. Old-time colleges were faced with decisions concerning whether or not to become "agents of the future" and how they would strive to meet the needs of an expanding industrial nation and developing international power. Post-war industry was dynamic and expansionary, placing a premium on the acquisition of new scientific knowledge. The proliferation of canals and railroads, along with the invention of the telegraph increased the need for ever-greater numbers of technically trained managerial personnel, a demand that traditional colleges were failing to meet.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Wallace, "Soul," 226-227.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Deans, "Place," 88-89.

¹⁶³ Wallace, "Soul," 228.

¹⁶⁴ R.Lewis McHenry, "Dawning of a New Elizabethan Age: The Presidency of Joshua Lawrence

F.A. Barnard, then President of Columbia University, in New York, pointed out that colleges of the period were failing to meet the needs of the community, noting that the exception, Harvard College, had adopted a posture of flexibility, ". . . more and more completely identifying herself with the cause of industry, science, and the new education."¹⁶⁵ During the same period, the Morrill Act of 1862 placed significant amounts of federal money at the disposal of the several state governments, thereby assisting in the development of a new type of institution with a singularly practical and scientific orientation, the land-grant college. The "A & M's" were to have a profound impact on the shape of higher education during the next 100 years.

A new and dynamic type of educational leadership was manifesting itself, implemented by such far-sighted presidents as Charles William Elliott of Harvard; Andrew D. White of Cornell; James B. Angell of the University of Michigan; and William B. Rogers of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As Rudolph states, these men responded positively to new social and economic impulses, the emergence of a more democratic personal philosophy, which stressed individual differences and needs, and to a world view that recognized the right to learning and character building of women, farmers, mechanics, and the aspiring middle class in general. These visionary leaders recognized that the newly emerging American society required modified agencies of instruction, cohesion and control.¹⁶⁶ Clearly, in the eyes of the educational reformers of the time, the old ways and old curricula were excessively superficial, narrow and elementary in scope. Traditional instructional approaches gave scant attention to the emerging ideals of freedom in teaching, study and research based upon the German model of higher education. Colleges of the period were, the reformers argued, generally too sectarian and too undemocratic in nature.¹⁶⁷ This was the intellectual milieu into which Joshua L. Chamberlain, newly chosen president of Bowdoin College, was thrust in July 1872. The campus waited to see just how this dynamic and powerfully intellectual man would respond to the situation. They had not long to wait.

At his inauguration, Chamberlain set the tone for his presidency by posing the question, ". . . Should the College conquer or should it die?" then arguing that Bowdoin should adjust its programs and procedures to meet the

Chamberlain,"(typescript), Special Collections Department, Bowdoin College, 1977, 3.

¹⁶⁵ In Richard Hofstadter and C.D. Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 29.

¹⁶⁶ Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 243-244.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

challenge of the times. While not advocating the abandonment of an admittedly glorious academic past, he argued that it would be wise to apply the best of the past to the conditions of the present. He suggested that the college of the 1870's presented an inappropriate image, somewhat monastic in tone,

. . . with its tendency away from life and its exclusivist attitudes." He observed that Bowdoin students of the day were " . . inmates, separate, secluded, grown abnormal and provincial, strangers to the world, and in the world's own simple phrase, fools. Now that is not exactly what the college wants to make of men." ¹⁶⁸

Chamberlain argued that changes of an appropriate nature must be made, but that there was no need to fear the times. Indeed, he suggested that all should welcome the "new Elizabethan age", one that would be full of discoveries in the sciences and arts, dazzling in the rapidity of positive change.¹⁶⁹ He went on to extol the virtues of the times, seeking to establish a positive vision for the future: " I say this is a good age, and we need not quarrel with it. We must have the spirit of reverence and faith, we must balance the mind and heart with God's higher revelation, but we must also take hold of this which we call science . . . " ¹⁷⁰

Chamberlain argued that adjustments should be made in the curriculum to render it more practical and utilitarian for the "new breed" of student. He recommended that Greek and Latin should, for most students, be replaced with French and German, since modern languages were essential to effective career progress. He recommended that the ancient classics continue to be taught, but only in translation. He indicated that the students, by and large, wanted

to acquire discipline through studies which take hold on present activities, and whose results. . . can be turned to use. They do not wish to practice with masks and foils that must be thrown away in the field of action, but with the edge and point with which they are to win their way.

Life is short and Art is also short in these days of the world, and men must be walking in the ways in which they would go; they must be learning the instruments they are to use, they must be disciplined for the life they are to build. ¹⁷¹

"Altogether," Wallace states, " it was a remarkable address, particularly for its era. Certainly Bowdoin was never the

¹⁶⁸ Joshua L. Chamberlain, The New Education--Inaugural Address(Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 1872), 4. Cited hereafter as "Inaugural".

¹⁶⁹ Chamberlain, "Inaugural," 7-10.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

same after Chamberlain's arrival; the modern college dates from him."¹⁷² Hatch suggests that it was the only serious attempt made by Bowdoin to become a university.¹⁷³

Chamberlain accepted the presidential role on the condition that the Trustees and Overseers of the college agree to certain reform measures that he would suggest. Chamberlain had in mind three major areas of college reform: a relaxation of student discipline; a substantial revision of the curriculum with greater emphasis to be placed on science and modern languages and the initiation of a graduate program leading to the Master of Arts degree; and the introduction of military drill for all. As it developed, changes in the first area were the easiest to implement--all agreed that the code of discipline, installed during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, was due for modification.¹⁷⁴

An honor system was installed.¹⁷⁵ All classes were rescheduled to the morning hours following the 1872 school term. Saturday classes were abolished. Morning chapel exercises were moved to a later hour and the afternoon exercises were abolished. Library hours were extended for the benefit of the student body. More money was allocated to support of that resource-starved entity, which had been reduced to such straits in prior years that the librarian himself had been forced to support some magazine and book purchases from his personal funds. As Cross stated: "Recognizing the value of the library as the center academic life, Chamberlain made efforts to bring it up on at least an equal footing (sic) with the professorships."¹⁷⁶

The long winter vacation was reduced so as to allow for a June graduation. It was decided that, henceforth, housing fees would be set and assessed on the basis of the desirability of each room, rather than on a fixed-rate basis.¹⁷⁷ Another innovation concerned the "decoupling" of student conduct from academic performance as one of the criteria for the award and distribution of annual college prizes. Prior to Chamberlain's arrival, the two were closely tied

¹⁷² Wallace, "Soul," 234.

¹⁷³ Hatch, "Bowdoin", 153. Hatch frowned on the attempt, characterizing such a move as "degenerative" in nature.

¹⁷⁴ R. Lewis McHenry, "Dawning of a New Elizabethan Age: The Presidency of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain", (Typescript), Special Collections Department, Bowdoin College, 1977, 8. Cited hereafter as "Dawning".

¹⁷⁵ Cross states that the honor system ". . . appeared to work satisfactorily only when the college authorities closed their eyes to mischief. When students were caught in pranks, they tried to lie their way out in a very disconcerting and dishonorable way." Robert M. Cross, "Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain", (Typescript), Special Collections Department, Bowdoin College, 1945. Cited hereafter as "JLC".

¹⁷⁶ Cross, "JLC", 60.

¹⁷⁷ Wallace, "Soul," 229-230

together. If two men achieved identical academic rank and one was unfortunate enough to have received demerits for campus rule infractions, he was placed below the individual building a more pristine behavioral record. Chamberlain immediately discontinued the practice, indicating that this new approach would aid " . . . the mischievous who might be scholastically inclined and the scholars who might be mischievously inclined."¹⁷⁸

The second set of Chamberlain's initiatives, that of overhauling the curriculum and creating a graduate school, was met with less than universal approbation. Despite the adverse opinions expressed within conservative campus groups, Chamberlain pressed on in implementation of his academic vision. In addition to realigning the general curriculum, adding courses in science and modern languages and mandating the reading of the classics in translation, Chamberlain established a scientific department and a course in engineering. This department awarded the Bachelors of Science degree. (Sc.B.)¹⁷⁹ He also established a two-year Masters of arts degree in science, letters and philosophy. This program was to be financed by a newly established College endowment, something previously unknown at Bowdoin. As McHenry said:

Besides lending a certain fashionable prestige to the institution, Chamberlain thought that the graduate program would in the long run enhance the college's ability to procure and keep able faculty. Instructing also would improve, he reasoned, since creative teaching derives from research that tends to flourish more in a graduate school.¹⁸⁰

Several years later he introduced a summer school of science in chemistry, mineralogy and zoology for teachers, college graduates and others--both women and men.¹⁸¹ (Probably the forerunner of the NDEA summer institutes for teachers so successful during the 1960's). Chamberlain indicated that the purpose of the summer school was to make a place where " . . . anyone, in whatever stage or situation in life. . . might . . . profit by our facilities to pursue their studies . . . I want this to be a people's university."¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Cross, "JLC", 59.

¹⁷⁹ The Bachelor of Science degree included courses in: French, Mathematics, English, History, Chemistry, Logic, Botany, Mineralogy, German, Physics, Zoology, Physiology, Astronomy, Geology, Philosophy, Political Economy, and Constitutional and International Law. McHenry, "Dawning," 9-10.

¹⁸⁰ McHenry, "Dawning", 10-11.

¹⁸¹ McHenry, "Dawning", 10.

¹⁸² Roland O'Neal, "Bowdoin Under Chamberlain and Hyde", (Typescript), Special Collections Dept., Bowdoin College, 1959, 17.

Not surprisingly, such sweeping innovations shocked the conservative alumni. The more liberal-minded and many students approved of the measures, which were clearly designed to reduce financial difficulties by increasing enrollments, which at the time hovered around 150.¹⁸³ Nevertheless, enough faculty members and townspeople, along with a few students, opposed the new programs that Chamberlain began to consider offering his resignation. This was about the time that Professor D.R. Goodwin, a former faculty member, speaking at the Spring Commencement exercises, commented to the group assembled that

it would be little less than a breach of trust to use money that had been given to a classical and mathematical institution for the new departments and that the demand for them should be measured by the contributions for their special purpose.¹⁸⁴

There was sufficient opposition to Chamberlain's innovations that he felt constrained to report to the governing Boards that there had

. . . been underhand work--students had received letters encouraging disorder; there had been captious opposition to men recommended for positions on the faculty; that teachers had dropped off; that subscriptions had been withdrawn; that students had been kept away from Bowdoin by a fear, due to the vacillation of the Boards, that the new policy would be abandoned. . .¹⁸⁵

While addressing a convention of the Boards that Spring, Chamberlain tendered his resignation, which was promptly rejected by the college trustees, who stated " . . . that while engaged in this grand experiment . . . the President and faculty are entitled to moral support . . . until such time as the boards authorize the discontinuance of the experiment."¹⁸⁶ It may be argued that Chamberlain, in thus exposing himself to professional ruin, was "leading from the front," a habit developed during the Civil War.

In 1874 President Chamberlain encountered another series of difficulties, these connected with the conduct of military exercises at Bowdoin. The Civil War had convinced the federal and state governments that there was need to

¹⁸³ Bowdoin also operated a small medical school, with an enrollment at this period of approximately 125 students.

¹⁸⁴ Hatch, "Bowdoin", 158. However, apparently uncertain about the College's proper future course, Goodwin went on to indicate his belief that endowments for support of a scientific curriculum should probably be sought, and that scientific and technological instruction should find its place in the curriculum.

¹⁸⁵ Hatch, "Bowdoin", 159.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

provide proper military instruction for American youth before the requirement for their services which, history suggested, would continue to occur with some regularity. As repositories of America's youthful "best and brightest", the colleges were thought to offer an ideal setting for the offering of such training. Pursuant to this train of thought, the federal government offered to furnish arms and to assign a competent officer to conduct the training associated with the program. Since President Chamberlain was an accomplished soldier, Bowdoin was selected as the site for a student military unit.¹⁸⁷

At the same time, it must be kept in mind that Americans in general, and youth in particular, have an aversion to the strict discipline and subordination of personal will characteristic of the military "way of life" and, by extension, militarism as a philosophy. These contrasting and potentially volatile worldviews, were combined in a potent "witches brew" during President Chamberlain's tenure, providing the basis for Bowdoin's "Great drill rebellion of 1874."¹⁸⁸

The "Drill Rebellion" has been characterized as "the chief student rebellion in the history of Bowdoin."¹⁸⁹ Under the tutelage of Professor of Military Science J.P. Sanger, instruction had proceeded smoothly during the first year, but by 1873 the novelty had worn off and students, chafing under normal military discipline, were complaining that this activity was wasteful of student study time, was unpopular with all, and was "driving off" students.¹⁹⁰ After it was announced that all students would be required to outfit themselves with proper uniforms, at a cost not to exceed six dollars, a "drill revolt" developed. Student opposition initially took the form of graffiti writing on the walls of the drill hall, the dismounting of one of the artillery pieces, a brass Napoleon, and the carrying off of "breech blocks".¹⁹¹ Later the juniors engaged in shouting and profanity upon being dismissed from Artillery drill. At a subsequent formation, the students reacted to the announcement that future disturbances would be treated as serious offenses by engaging in loud cheers and groans of a distinctly uncomplimentary tone.

As a result of this disorderly conduct, five of the students were suspended until the end of the term and one was

¹⁸⁷ Hatch, "Bowdoin," 133.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Hatch, "Bowdoin," 132.

¹⁹⁰ Cross, "JLC", 62-63.

¹⁹¹ Hatch, "Bowdoin", 137. Hatch's reference to "breechblocks" is puzzling, since the Napoleon cannons referred to were muzzle loading, Civil War vintage pieces which lacked breeches.

dismissed from the College. Within days the three lower classes had signed petitions supporting a total boycott of the drill. Chamberlain, who was a firm believer that military exercise helped to build both physical wellbeing and good character, was perplexed at these developments, so out of keeping with his experiences in active military service. On the recommendation of the faculty, Chamberlain suspended all students involved and threatened to permanently expel those who did not pledge to conform to college requirements in this regard. All but three of the students complied, and the Board moved shortly thereafter to make the drill "elective". Never popular after that time, the program languished and was abolished in 1882.¹⁹² Chamberlain admitted that "The experiment has not been so successful as I could wish, and perhaps it is impracticable to bring such exercises into a regular college with traditions such as ours."¹⁹³ Nevertheless, he was greatly disappointed at having to discontinue the program, feeling that the training provided was absolutely necessary in order to prepare American youth to defend the nation in time of national crisis. He was, of course, correct in this assessment. For a former military man such a defeat was, indeed, a bitter pill to swallow.

The difficulties surrounding the military program were accompanied by increasingly virulent attacks on the newly established scientific program, and upon the President's de-emphasis of religion on campus. Clearly, these pressures rendered it ever more difficult for Chamberlain to maintain his equanimity. In 1878, Chamberlain admitted that, despite his best efforts, the scientific department was not financially viable and it was inactivated in 1880. In the following year the engineering department was likewise discontinued. His innovative attempts had one lasting effect, in that science courses were given a more prominent place in the curriculum, as were the Modern Languages. History and English also became more popular under Chamberlain's tutelage.¹⁹⁴ Chamberlain commented: "We may console ourselves with having made an earnest effort to meet what was a demand of the times, with having done good work and earned a good fame".¹⁹⁵

In 1883 Chamberlain resigned from the presidency of the college. The faculty journal for March 12 notes: "The President announced today that the condition of his health made it imperative for him to be absent for the remainder of

¹⁹² Hatch, "Bowdoin", 137-139.

¹⁹³ Wallace, "Soul." 240.

¹⁹⁴ Cross, "JLC", 59.

¹⁹⁵ Hatch, "Bowdoin," 160.

the term." Six months later he resigned the presidency, holding his last meeting of the faculty on September 10, 1883.¹⁹⁶ He apparently resigned for a variety of reasons. In addition to the constant pain of his war wound, which never properly healed and which, at times, affected his ability to perform his presidential duties, Chamberlain had come to believe that the increasing criticism of his administration by Bowdoin alumni, who blamed him for reduced student enrollments, coupled with the carping of his political and personal enemies, might do serious damage to the prospects of the college.

One writer suggests that Chamberlain may have offended the more conservative Congregationalists in Brunswick. He was not, after all, a member of the First Parish Church, retaining his membership in Brewer.¹⁹⁷ Some may have felt that he was irreligious. Yet, his public comments reveal a depth of piety, albeit not necessarily of an entirely orthodox strain. In one speech he is quoted as saying:

This is the only [country] in history which may be said to have been founded in the spirit and on the precepts of the Bible. Hence has grown, I believe, the peculiar prosperity of our country It is not our broad territory, not our rapidly increasing population, not our vast and growing wealth, not the multiplicity and extent of our industries, which will save the Republic. It is not this or that distinguished man in the highest place . . . which will enable us to meet the ends of organized society, which is the well being of the people. It is rather by carrying into practical effect in all our human duties the teachings of the sacred Revelation--that there are different gifts indeed and many members, but one body, and Christ the head.¹⁹⁸

In any event, it may be surmised that Chamberlain sensed, as have so many capable and sensitive administrators before and since, that he had exhausted his "political currency", and that it was unlikely that he would be able to make many additional significant contributions to institutional progress. He was tired and disheartened by the opposition and lack of cooperation to which he was continually being subjected. Clearly it was time to go.

In a letter to a friend written some years after his resignation, Chamberlain described his decade at Bowdoin as "thankless and wasteful." While it is true that most of the programs he introduced fell by the wayside, he did make a lasting mark. He established a permanent endowment of over \$200,000, oversaw the construction of new buildings, facilitated the enlargement of the faculty and of the student body, introduced elective courses and encouraged the

¹⁹⁶ "Bowdoin College Faculty Minutes, 1876-1883."

¹⁹⁷ Hatch, "Bowdoin", 179-80.

¹⁹⁸ "Proceedings at the Wycliffe Semi-Millennial Celebration by the American Bible Society", (New York: American Bible Society, 1881), 11-12.

offering of a number of so-called "modern" subjects.¹⁹⁹ As President William Hyde stated, many years later:

His views of educational policy were broad and progressiveHe advocated the very reforms . . . that are now the commonplaces of progressive educational discussion. (But he) . . . had the misfortune, or rather the glory, to advocate these expensive reforms before the college had the funds to make them completely effective²⁰⁰

The Boards accepted his resignation "with complimentary resolutions, [and] asked him to sit for his portrait. . . ." Following his resignation, Chamberlain was offered, and refused, the Presidencies of several small colleges. He did continue to lecture on political economy and constitutional and international law at Bowdoin for several years and served on the Board of Trustees until his death in 1914, a total of almost 47 years.²⁰¹

CHAPTER NINE

THE ELECTION CRISIS OF 1879

*You wish to kill me, I hear. Killing is no new thing to me. I have offered myself to be killed many times ... I am here to preserve the peace and honor of this state until the right government is seatedIf anyone wants to kill me . . . here I am.*²⁰²

While still at Bowdoin Chamberlain engaged in one of more dramatic confrontations of his career--the great election crisis. The 1879 state elections resulted in charges of rampant fraud on the part of both Democrats and Republicans, with vote buying, intimidation, and tampering with returns being the most common of charges. This was not unusual in those days, it having been estimated by various newspaper editors that, in a typical election, as many as 25% of the votes cast might be "bought". From time to time, spokesmen for each party admitted to vote buying, their

¹⁹⁹ McHenry, "Dawning", 16.

²⁰⁰ "President William DeWitt Hyde's Eulogy", quoted in Bowdoin Orient, 13, 80.

²⁰¹ Hatch, "Bowdoin," 179.

²⁰² Wallace, "Soul," 264.

explanation being that such practices were necessary in order to neutralize the excesses of the other party. Thus, had the Democrats limited their activities in this manner, chances are that the situation would not have become tense.²⁰³

However, a particularly innovative form of political chicanery, apparently imported from Louisiana and Florida, marked the election of 1879. In those states, the 1876 election of President Rutherford B. Hayes, formerly a General Officer in the Union Army, had been marred by serious improprieties. "Returning boards", created by carpetbag Republican governments, had found many legal technicalities upon which to invalidate Democratic ballots, thus giving the election in those two states to Hayes. Profiting by this example, Maine's Democratic Governor Alonzo Garcelon directed his Council to examine the election returns closely for any apparent irregularities. The result was that thirty-seven Republican "winners" in both houses of the Maine state legislature were declared "losers", tipping the balance of power in both houses of the 1880 legislature in favor of the Democrats. As might be imagined, the Republicans were furious.²⁰⁴ Angry words and threats were bandied freely about for several days, their tone becoming more strident with the passage of time.

Violence seemed imminent and Joshua Chamberlain, who had been appointed Major General (MG) of Maine Militia several years earlier, was " . . . authorized and directed to protect the public property and institutions of the State until my successor is duly qualified" by Governor Alonzo Garcelon, who was clearly becoming worried about the possible consequences of the situation.²⁰⁵ Chamberlain, quickly assessing the situation, made needed military-related arrangements and then announced that he would recognize no Governor or Legislature that had not been declared legal by the state Supreme Court; this despite a number of attempts by members of each party to secure his support by promises of appointment to the U.S. Senate during the following year.²⁰⁶

Soon thereafter, rumors began to circulate concerning a plot to kidnap Chamberlain and another to burn the homes of some prominent politicians. In January, 1880, an angry mob descended on Augusta, the state capital. Chamberlain

²⁰³ John Graham, "Month of Madness: Maine's Brush with Civil War". Masters Thesis in History, University of New Hampshire, 1981, 27. Cited hereafter as "Madness".

²⁰⁴ Graham, "Madness", 44-49.

²⁰⁵ Cross, "JLC", 73.

²⁰⁶ Graham, "Madness", 79.

carefully kept his troops out of town and appeared alone and in uniform at the capital building. It had been rumored that the crowd meant to kill him for obstructing their wishes, and Chamberlain, never one to step back from a physical challenge, was equal to the test. He confronted the surly crowd, composed of rougher elements of the community, outside the State House on the evening of January 12, 1880. The crowd demanded that Chamberlain remove Republican legislators from the building, where they were then holding a strategy session. Chamberlain indicated that his duty was to keep the legislative chambers free for the use of the members, at which point the crowd became abusive and threatened his life.²⁰⁷

You wish to kill me, I hear', he stated in a strong voice. 'Killing is no new thing to me. I have offered myself to be killed many times, when I no more deserved it than I do now. Some of you have been with me in those days . . . I am here to preserve the peace and honor of this State, until the rightful government is seated . . . it is for me to see that the laws of this State are put into effect . . . I am here for that, and I shall do it. If anyone wants to kill me . . . here I am. Let him kill'²⁰⁸

At this point he tore open his coat in a dramatic gesture and waited for the crowd's reaction. After a few moments it is reported that a Civil War veteran in the crowd stepped forward and said that he would kill anyone who offered violence to General Chamberlain. After a few more tense minutes and considerable grumbling the mob disbursed and order was restored in Augusta. Chamberlain's personal courage, obvious sincerity and sense of the dramatic had saved the day. He won popular acclaim for his firmness and impartiality throughout the crisis. Within a few days order the Supreme Court of Maine reached a decision favorable to the Republicans and a new governor, Daniel F. Davis, was swiftly confirmed by the legislature. Order had been restored and Chamberlain went on to "his next challenge."²⁰⁹ He had conducted himself with characteristic "sang froid" and ability, winning popular acclaim for his firm, yet impartial, behavior during the crisis.

²⁰⁷ Graham, "Madness", 85.

²⁰⁸ Wallace, "Soul," 264.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER TEN

THE LATER YEARS

From 1883-1900, Chamberlain participated in a number of business ventures which, although engaging his considerable administrative talents, offering outlets for his ever-fertile imagination, and providing temporary prosperity, ultimately failed to provide the long term financial security that would have provided peace of mind in his later years. In 1885 he found that the long strain of work and wounds demanded a season of complete change of occupation, and he went to Florida as president of a railroad construction company. [the Florida West Coast Improvement Company.] This involved some new experiences such as raising money on Wall Street, New York, and acting as master and pilot of a steamboat running between Cedar Keys and Homosassa, the first terminal of his road on the Gulf of Mexico . . . he returned to Maine much improved in health.²¹⁰

Undeterred by his financial setbacks, Chamberlain continued to act as a symbol of Maine's military past as well as the state's educational present. He wrote, spoke and participated in the activities of a variety of philanthropic, educational, and patriotic groups. As an example of the diversity of his interests, it should be pointed out that he served as: Vice-President of the American Huguenot Society; President of Alpha Delta Phi Fraternity; President of the Artist-Artisan Institute of New York; President of the Society of the Army of the Potomac; Department Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic; Department Commander of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States; and a Vice-President of the American Bible Society--among others! He also held memberships in the American Historical Association, the American Geographical Society, and the Maine Historical Society.²¹¹ Chamberlain was

²¹⁰ "Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain", a sketch prepared for the report of the Chamberlain Association of America. (n.a.; n.d).

Cross states that "many Civil War generals became presidents of such companies, for they provided an air of solidity and respectability for enterprises that all too often were the opposite of solid and respectable. Unfortunately, the Florida West Coast Improvement Company has survived neither as a good nor as a bad example of industrial enterprise. The natural conclusion to draw is that the company must not have been particularly corrupt, or it would have become better known. "Cross, "JLC", 77.

²¹¹ Cross, "JLC", 80.

apparently exercising the time-honored American custom of being "a joiner", and then doing what he could to actively support the organizations with which he affiliated.

In 1900 Chamberlain's friends, aware of his then-precarious financial situation, petitioned the federal government for some form of appointment for the old General. Consequently, President William McKinley (formerly Bvt Major, U.S.V.) appointed him Surveyor of Customs at the Port of Portland, ME. Since the job made few demands on his time, Chamberlain was able to visit with friends, travel and enjoy the final years of his long and eventful life. Apparently a bit embarrassed by the sinecure that had come his way, he described the job a bit wryly as somewhat like " . . . a free bed in a hospital."²¹²

Having been preceded in death by Fanny in 1905, Chamberlain spent a great deal of time with his son Wyllys, sister Sadie, niece Alice, daughter Grace and the three granddaughters. These children, Eleanor, Beatrice, and Rosamond, called their grandfather "Gennie", their interpretation of the military title "General" used by others in addressing the old hero. Between Chamberlain and these little girls there existed a mutual adoration society of immense proportions, and they spent countless hours together during the last years of his life.²¹³

Although regularly bothered by his old wounds, Chamberlain remained quite active throughout his life. His appearance did not markedly change with age, although his hair and mustache turned white. He was quite recognizable in his 75th year as the soldier who defended Little Round Top as a 33-year-old Colonel. He maintained his figure, neither overly slim nor stout, and carried himself like a soldier at all times--a "fine figure of a man." He is said to have retained his reputation as a strict disciplinarian--calm but not necessarily mild. He continued to work until his death, having adopted the philosophy that he must drive himself always onward.²¹⁴

Following a period of illness, Chamberlain passed away on February 24, 1914, as a result of complications arising from the wound he had received fifty years earlier at Petersburg, VA. He was in his 86th year. The hero had completed his odyssey, having traveled his prescribed journey, conquered foes and hardship, endured great personal pain and, in the process it seems virtually certain, having become a better man. In the end he had returned to the familiar

²¹² Wallace, "Soul," 294.

²¹³ Wallace, "Soul,"

309.

²¹⁴ Cross, "JLC", 82 and 86.

places of his childhood and "finished the course" as a respected and widely loved community figure.

Dual funeral services in Portland and in Brunswick, ME, were arranged by the Maine Commandery of the Loyal Legion of the United States and were attended by over two thousand persons, including Dr. Abner Shaw, the former military surgeon who had helped to save the General's life in 1864, along with a number of prominent officials, including the Governor of Maine and several representatives of the state of Massachusetts.²¹⁵

Following a moving ceremony held at the Portland City Hall, the body was moved by train to Brunswick, where an additional service was held in the Congregational Church where Chamberlain has married Fanny so many years ago, the casket resting below a stained glass window that Chamberlain had dedicated to the memory of his father following that gentleman's death.

In the funeral oration, delivered by President William Hyde of Bowdoin College on February 27, 1914, it was stated that General Chamberlain had never "hailed down his flag to the low level of what he or any man could easily do or habitually be. In every great crisis his idealism not only held him true; but [also] became a contagious inspiration to lesser men."²¹⁶ The words of Hyde, an insightful man who was known to be a good judge of character should, as Cross suggests, ". . . be taken as a fair estimate of Chamberlain's idealism and the limits to which it extended."²¹⁷

Chamberlain, in his 61st year, had spoken words that seem to encapsulate his philosophical as well as his behavioral views of life. Speaking at Little Round Top, he said:

"We know not of the future and cannot plan for it much. But we can hold our spirits and our bodies so pure and high, we may cherish such thought and such ideals, and dream such dreams of lofty purpose, that we can determine and know what manner of men we will be whenever and wherever the hour strikes that calls to noble action."²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Massachusetts Governor David Walsh asked former Governor John C. Bates to represent that state, along with two former General officers of the Union Army, Morris Schaaf and Henry Higginson, both prominent in their own right.

²¹⁶ Quoted in Cross, "JLC," 88.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ "General Chamberlain's Speech", Dedication of the Maine Monuments at Gettysburg, Oct 3, 1889 (Waldoboro,ME: News Steam Print Job, 1891), 30.

Faced with such clarity of thought and loftiness of expression the scholar, the citizen and the soldier, each in his turn, must simply nod quiet and thoughtful assent-- and murmur a heartfelt "Amen."

PART TWO -- MODELING LEADERSHIP

"Leaders come in many forms, with many styles...some find their strength in eloquence, some in judgment, some in courage."

John Gardner²¹⁹

Management theorists have contended for many years about "nature versus nurture" in the development of leaders, with one camp taking the position that leaders are "born"--that is, imbued by nature with certain qualities that insure their emergence at the top of their professions or trades; and the other group avowing that leadership skills and characteristics can be acquired through proper training. While no final resolution to the argument has been reached to date, it is generally accepted that Truth probably lies somewhere "between the horns of the dilemma"--a combination of the two approaches. Modern military theorists have tended to concentrate on psychological characteristics of their subjects, suggesting that it is possible to identify good leaders by their exhibition of appropriate personal qualities.²²⁰

In recent years the US Army has taught budding officers and non-commissioned officers that the good leader exhibits: bearing, courage, decisiveness, endurance, initiative, integrity, judgment, justice, loyalty, tact and unselfishness.²²¹

Presumably, erstwhile leaders are encouraged to develop and demonstrate these characteristics as they achieve successively more responsible positions within the military hierarchy.

Another approach to leadership currently enjoying considerable celebrity is predicated upon observed behavior. One such model, promulgated by Kouzes and Posner, comprises a framework composed of five sets of readily observable behaviors: Challenge the process; Inspire a shared vision; Enable others to act; Model the way; and Encourage the heart. These five sets of practices will be discussed, very briefly, in turn.

Challenging the process refers to a leadership mind-set which involves the constant search for new

²¹⁹ John Gardner, On Leadership (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 5.

²²⁰ General Sir Frank King, "Thoughts on Leadership", The Army Quarterly and Defense Journal, Fall 1984, 136.

²²¹ Ibid.

opportunities to improve organizational procedures. Integral to the process is the willingness to take risks, innovate and experiment with new approaches to problem resolution. Effective leaders make their contribution through the continual recognition, support and adoption of good ideas.²²²

Inspiring a shared vision refers to the development and communication of a coherent organizational mission, purpose, goal, or agenda for the future. Effective leaders develop a picture of a desirable future state, based upon their own inspiration and that of other organizational members, and then breathe life into that picture by, first of all, believing in the dream and, secondly, communicating their vision through the use of passionate and vivid language. They enable others to see the exciting organizational possibilities that lie ahead.²²³

Enabling others to act refers to the fostering of cooperation among those who must be involved in order for a project to succeed. Good leaders help their associates feel capable, strong and committed. They "empower" others by vesting them with organizational decision power, thereby demonstrating trust and confidence in the competence of these individuals. Effective leaders also enable other people to get their jobs done by facilitating, "running interference", and strengthening others in their resolve to succeed.²²⁴

Modeling the way has to do with acting in ways that are consistent with one's beliefs in pursuit of the organizational mission. Effective leaders set a good example, never asking their subordinates to do those things that they are unwilling to do--or try to do-- themselves. They "lead from the front."

In modern parlance, they "walk like they talk," showing the way through personal example and competent performance.²²⁵

Encouraging the heart involves the recognition of individual contributions to the organization's mission and the urging of subordinates to continue "the good fight". It is characteristic of the human condition that employees arrive at places in their lives and careers where they feel discouraged and unsure of the value of past contributions and of their potential for continued success. The effective leader "holds up the mirror" of positive personal feedback for his subordinates, celebrating their past successes and urging new efforts designed to insure further organizational progress.

²²² Kouzes and Posner, "Challenge," 10.

²²³ Kouzes and Posner, "Challenge," 11.

²²⁴ Kouzes and Posner, "Challenge," 12.

²²⁵ Kouzes and Posner, "Challenge," 13.

These leaders employ recognition to visibly and behaviorally link rewards with desired organizational performance, making sure that those whose behavior is aligned with organizational values and behavior are rewarded for their efforts.²²⁶

Application of the Kouzes and Posner paradigm can yield useful insights into the nature of leaders and leadership. It is the writer's contention that the nature of human beings has not changed significantly during the time since Joshua Chamberlain departed the human scene, and that many valuable lessons can be learned from analyzing his behavior as it relates to the K-P theoretical model. It should be kept in mind that Kouzes and Posner's model is empirically based, being predicated upon observation and interviewing over an extended period of time. Thus, it tends toward the pragmatic, rather than toward the theoretical. Perhaps surprisingly, Chamberlain's outlook on management and leadership also tended toward the pragmatic. Far from being influenced primarily by irrelevant and high-flown notions based upon "book learning", Chamberlain learned through study and application, as well as by working with mentoring associates, to put theory into practice, discarding those approaches which proved non-useful and carefully preserving those precepts and practices which had been successfully applied in both military and civilian settings.

As mentioned, the K-P model includes five sets of practices attributed to the most effective leaders. Each will be considered in turn in the next section.

²²⁶ Kouzes and Posner, "Challenge," 14.

Challenge the Process

Chamberlain was an acute observer and quick learner, one who spent much time seeking the most expeditious and efficient manner in which to achieve his daily goals. As a highly trained intellectual, he was able to conceptualize with the best thinkers of his time but developed, by mid-thirties, a practical turn of mind. Consequently, he came naturally to that openness of perspective that allowed him to accept the best of current thought while constantly seeking ways to improve on practice. He recognized that some routines are necessary to an efficient and relatively predictable operation, but also understood that, absent an appropriately questioning attitude, the "system" almost unconsciously conspires to foster a comfortable status quo. Chamberlain was attuned to the searching out of opportunities to change, grow, innovate and improve; and to experiment, take risks and to treat his mistakes as learning experiences. He developed a sharply attuned ability to scan the environment for new conditions and ideas, employing what is sometimes called "outsight". Those practicing the process keep their eyes and ears open, constantly monitoring the environment for relevant "input" which can contribute to a clearer understanding of current operating conditions. Leaders operating under rapidly changing circumstances must constantly seek more sources of information and spend time in direct contact with more knowledgeable people.²²⁷

Pullen described Joshua Chamberlain as a "scientific worrier", an indication of his ability to challenge the process during the normal, day-to-day, course of events. He said of Chamberlain that

While seeking or awaiting contact with the enemy he had a habit of studying all the features of the terrain, meanwhile continually posing himself a series of problems. What would he do, if suddenly attacked by a dash of cavalry from that screen of woods ahead? Or take that defile on the right, where infantry might well be hidden; what would be the proper course of action if Confederate riflemen fired from there? And so on.²²⁸

One of the most dramatic instances of this day-to-day ability not only to innovate, but also to think quickly under extreme pressure occurred during the battle of Gettysburg on 2 July, 1863, when Chamberlain's 20th Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment was assigned the mission of defending the extreme left end of the Union line on Little

²²⁷ Kouzes and Posner, "Challenge," 18 and 44-48.

²²⁸ Pullen, "Twentieth," 203.

Round Top against the determined attacks of elements of at least two Confederate regiments. Having seen his own unit reduced to approximately 200 combat effectives by an hour or more of fighting, Chamberlain ordered a bayonet charge as a way of gaining the moral (psychological) ascendancy and bringing to culmination a battle that his unit was in imminent peril of losing.

Throughout the battle Chamberlain sought information, both from the oral reports of his subordinates and through the testimony of his own eyes. He was constantly moving along the line of combat, watching, assessing, weighing the situation. As more and more of his troops called for ammunition, having exhausted their individual supply of sixty rounds per man, and looked meaningfully to Chamberlain for guidance, the Colonel assessed his alternatives. He realized that the Confederates were reforming for an additional assault and that his troops could not withstand another charge; he knew that he could not withdraw, since Colonel Vincent's last orders had been to hold the ground at all costs. At the same time, his men could no longer fire in the absence of a supply of ammunition. He decided that the only course of action remaining was to stage a "preemptive strike", a bayonet charge which he hoped would disrupt and demoralize the rebel attack. These thoughts occurred to him and were processed rapidly, very likely the product of his "scientific worrying" activities.²²⁹

Once having made his decision, he moved rapidly to put it into effect. To implement the plan, apparently formulated in a matter of minutes, Chamberlain was able to convey to his unit officers his desire to have the unit conduct a "wheel to the right," designed to sweep the Confederate forces down the Plum Run Valley toward the position of the Eighty-third Pennsylvania. This procedure would have been difficult of execution even under parade ground conditions. Amid the noise, smoke and confusion of battle it can be imagined just how hard it must have been to communicate his desires accurately. Little time remained to the unit and there was no room for mistakes, since the Confederates were in the process of launching another in a series of vigorous assaults. Chamberlain successfully conceived the idea, communicated it to his subordinate company commanders under fire, and facilitated its execution, totally routing the enemy regiment in his front. For that day's work he would receive the Medal of Honor in 1893.

Kouzes and Posner's work sheds light on Chamberlain's success. They state:

1. People who become leaders don't always seek the challenges they face. Challenges also seek leaders.

²²⁹ Pullen, "Twentieth," 123.

2. Opportunities to challenge the status quo and introduce change open the door to doing one's best. Challenge is the motivating environment for excellence.
3. Challenging opportunities often bring forth skills and abilities that people don't know they have. Given opportunity and support, ordinary men and women can get extraordinary things done in organizations.²³⁰

Examined critically, one must conclude that Chamberlain was able, having received his assignment for the battle, to draw upon existing doctrine--both bayonet charges and "right wheels" had been used many times in the past--and to apply it in an innovative manner under extraordinarily stressful circumstances. Explained after the fact, his behavior seems almost self-evident. This was not the reaction of regular army superiors present on the field, however. To them, Chamberlain's behavior smacked almost of genius, as well as of extraordinary courage. Warren Bennis argues that this type behavior demonstrates a willingness on the part of leaders to trust what Ralph Waldo Emerson called the "blessed impulse"--the hunch or vision that comes to an astute person in times of need. Bennis suggests that at such times the leader knows "in a flash" the absolutely right thing to do.²³¹

Chamberlain had obviously studied his unit and knew what he could expect of them. They, in turn, had taken his measure, decided they liked what they saw, and were willing implicitly to trust his judgment--even unto death. Many of the men were so in tune with their leader's thinking that they could almost "read his mind", thus allowing them to "anticipate the command", in modern parlance. This is the kind of bonding that successful leaders often inspire.

Following the war Chamberlain gave many additional evidences of his willingness to challenge the process. As Governor of Maine he introduced a number of initiatives designed to attract new industry and to improve commerce and trade within the state of Maine. While President of Bowdoin College, he introduced significant curricular innovations, including a scientifically oriented program of study leading to a Bachelor of Science degree; study of the classics in translation, and student military instruction. These ideas were considered heretical at the time by various segments of the academic community.

The fact that most of the programs were eventually dropped in no way lessens their validity as further examples of Chamberlain's fertile and forward-looking leadership and his moral courage in the face of opposition. Indeed, one is tempted to suggest that, to a Civil War hero who had fought in twenty-one battles, been wounded six times and had at

²³⁰ Kouzes and Posner, "Challenge," 53.

²³¹ Warren Bennis, On Becoming a Leader (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1989), 104-105.

least five horses shot from under him, the opposition of petulant faculty members and immature juveniles may well have been both frustrating and puzzling.

In sum, it appears that Chamberlain had the ability to absorb large amounts of information rapidly; to quickly assess the utility thereof and to save that which was useful while discarding the rest; to draw upon these bits of data at will in the formulation of his plans of action; and, once committed, to vigorously pursue his innovative approach(es) with zeal and steely determination. It would be less than totally truthful to suggest that Chamberlain was invariably successful in his efforts at leadership, however. He made his share of mistakes during his long and eventful life.

As an example, during the assault on Rives Salient, near Petersburg, Va., on 18 June 1864, Chamberlain recovered the brigade banner dropped by his wounded flag bearer and attempted to employ it and his saber as signaling devices--part of his command and control of the developing charge--a moderately innovative approach. Unfortunately, the flag, along with the presence of the sword and shoulder straps of a Colonel of Infantry attracted the attention of Confederate sharpshooters, at least one of whom made it his personal challenge to render the vigorously gesturing Colonel hors de combat.

Chamberlain was quickly shot down with a grievous and near-mortal wound--the one that resulted in his battlefield promotion to Brigadier General and in the printing of his obituary in the New York newspapers! One imagines that the mission-oriented Chamberlain spent little, if any, time counting the potential personal cost of his actions prior to taking up the banner, so intent was he upon facilitating the troops' accomplishment of their immediate tactical goal. Despite this instance and other obvious miscalculations occurring in later life, Chamberlain's track record was sufficiently pristine that his memory as leader is revered throughout the region and within the ranks of the US Army.

Inspire a Shared Vision

Inspiring a shared vision, the second of the observed behaviors in the K-P paradigm, refers to the ability of effective leaders to conceive of a desirable future state based upon the best that circumstances will allow. Having done so, the leader is able, through eloquence, sincerity, determination, and personal zeal, to communicate his views to potential followers in a manner designed to enlist their support and assistance. Such persons are often described as "forward looking" or as having "a calling." As Kouzes and Posner state, " . . . if a leader displays no passion for a cause, why should others?"²³²

Joshua L. Chamberlain was both an impassioned advocate of great causes and an eloquent proponent of strongly held intellectual positions. Throughout his life observers remarked upon the General's strong sense of morality and principle, almost certainly the product of early religious training, and his willingness to tackle tough problems head-on, as when in serving as Maine's militia commander following the Civil War, he confronted an angry mob, offering his life as forfeit in a gesture apparently designed to appeal to their moral sensibilities. Fortunately, the mob thought twice about killing the "hero of Little Roundtop" and disbursed--albeit grudgingly. Clearly, Chamberlain had a well-developed sense of the dramatic, having learned from his years of military service how to appeal to the temperament of rough-hewn and disgruntled men.

In his role as Governor of Maine, Chamberlain proposed a number of forward-looking projects based on his ideas of a desirable and prosperous future for the state. To cure the manpower shortage he proposed importing Scandinavian immigrants to augment the farming population, improving the facilities for the insane, strengthening the agricultural and mechanical college at Orono, and instituting a program of publicly financed loans to businesses and industries interested in locating in Maine. In each instance he eloquently advocated his position, explicating his vision of a brighter and more prosperous future for the state. Blessed with a strong, resonant and pleasing voice, he was able to instill in his speeches a sense of poetic idealism while at the same time communicating a sense of action and of the practical that was thrilling to his audiences. He was rather successful in "selling" his programs during his four years as Governor.

²³² Kouzes and Posner, *Challenge*. 21.

During the Civil War itself, Chamberlain had many opportunities to demonstrate his vision--his firm commitment to the Union cause, a number of these opportunities involving exposure to bodily harm. At Little Round Top he realized early in the fight a need to extend his lines to the left while engaged in close combat with the Confederates, then to "refuse" his left flank in order to prevent an attack from that quarter. Finally, after over an hour of combat he realized the need to stage the famous bayonet charge, which earned the 20th Maine's place in history. In all these instances he was able, under extremely unfavorable conditions, to communicate his mission/vision to his subordinate company commanders, who quickly accepted the necessity for these actions and hastened to carry them out. In the case of the bayonet charge, the soldiers in the ranks saw the appropriateness of this move and made the charge almost "on their own". In fact, one of the subordinate commanders claimed, many years later, that the unit did, in fact, charge without orders. This prompted an oral reclama from Chamberlain, who hastened to point out that he commanded his unit on that occasion!²³³

In his later years Chamberlain embellished his reputation as a skilled and inspiring public speaker, one who always brought a useful message to the audience. He seemed to take as his mission the interpretation of the meaning of the Civil War, seeking to help his fellow veterans draw some greater sense of purpose and worth from those difficult days. Chamberlain held up the mirror of "constructive feedback" to his audiences, helping them to define themselves and their contributions to the nation. In this capacity he made a significant and long-lasting contribution.

At the 1896 reunion of the Twentieth Maine Association, Chamberlain tied the great sacrifices of the veterans to "home and hearth", a favorite theme of his: "The great force which inspired the Northern Soldier was the elevating and holy inspiration of the home which he had left behindwith its attachments, its memories and its loved ones . . . it was our homes for which we were fighting."²³⁴ While historians might well take issue with the verisimilitude of these

²³³ Chamberlain, "Dedication", 29. Major (later Colonel) Ellis Spear, second in command at Little Round Top, provided a letter to John Bachelder in 1892 in which he suggests that GEN Chamberlain did not, in fact, issue the order to charge. In what is clearly a carefully contrived attempt to impugn Chamberlain's veracity, Spear says "...I do not vouch for this myself, I only say that was the talk among the men. My own recollection is simply this, I heard the shout on the right and I saw the center and the colors move to the front...and I joined in the shout, and the left moved at the same time...I believe it is not wholly in accordance with the fact(s) as related by GEN Chamberlain, and of course what GEN Chamberlain says must be taken as history." The old comrades had come to an "intellectual parting of the ways" by 1892! Following Chamberlain's death in 1914, Spear issued an even more scathing denunciation of Chamberlain's motives and character. (Letter to COL John B. Bachelder, Nov. 15, 1892. The letter appears in the collection of the US Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA.)

²³⁴ Joshua L. Chamberlain, "Speech at the Twentieth Maine Reunion", The Maine Bugle (Rockland, ME: The Maine Association, 1896), 69.

pronouncements the sentiments were, at the time, both appropriate to the purpose intended and well received by the audience.

It is reported that Chamberlain's addresses were logical and well constructed, containing frequent references to nature, patriotism, and to God. A contemporary sketch said of him: "His writings and addresses show a tendency to reaches of thought somewhat abstruse. They are, however, suffused with a certain poetical idealism, and in religious conceptions with a spirituality almost mystical. But on themes relating to practical life and action he comes to the front with a power that is thrilling."²³⁵

Wallace points out that " . . . there are too many testimonies from contemporary individuals and newspapers for one not to realize that between this man . . . and his audiences there passed a kind of magnetic sympathy. Normally reserved . . . Chamberlain often became impassioned before an audience . . . the General's intellectual power, his utter sincerity , and his love of God and his fellow men invariably moved people."²³⁶ His power to reduce strong men--the hardened veterans of the Union Army--to tears was legendary. Consequently, he was in great demand as speaker and served as Commander of the Maine Commandery of the Grand Army of the Republic, President of the Society of the Army of the Potomac, and as Maine's Department Commander of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States.²³⁷ His speeches and writings for these organizations are both informative and inspiring.

To summarize, effective leaders practice their oral and written skills, seeking always to communicate more effectively in their encounters with constituents. This is a prerequisite since, " . . . if someone is to lead us, that person must be able to stand before us and confidently express an attractive image of the future, and we must be able to believe that he or she has the ability to take us there."²³⁸ Chamberlain possessed this capacity in large measure and employed it freely and often throughout his life.

140 Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain: A Sketch. Prepared for the Report of the Chamberlain Association of America, no author, place or date, 23.

²³⁶ Wallace, Soul of the Lion, 282.

²³⁷ Wallace, Soul of the Lion, 287.

²³⁸ Kouzes and Posner, Challenge, 25.

Enable Others to Act

Effective leaders must "enable others to act", to carry into effect the visions/missions/designs promulgated by the leader. In this regard Chamberlain was both successful and unsuccessful in turn. As a combat leader he was exceptionally successful in motivating his subordinates to go well beyond their conception of the possible. He accomplished this through careful training prior to the event, by on-the-spot coaching during the various actions, by providing a good role model, as will be discussed below, and by providing appropriate and judiciously applied feedback after-the-fact as a way of insuring that the appropriate behaviors he had elicited were repeated in future engagements.

He describes one instance (March, 1865) in which he came upon a soldier cowering on his hands and knees behind a stump during a sharp fire-fight near Five Forks, Va. Approaching the man and urging him to move to the front, he was asked by the man what a single person could accomplish--"I can't stand up against all this alone"--it all seemed so hopeless and confusing to him. Chamberlain quickly assured the man that they were planning an immediate unit rally and needed brave fellows such as he to form the nucleus of the formation and that he wanted the soldier to serve as "guide center." This convinced the cowering man of his duty. "Up and out he came like a hero," Chamberlain reported, assisting materially in rebuilding the fighting team by helping with the rallying of a broken unit. Chamberlain indicated that he had helped restore the man's self-respect and confidence and that, in giving the soldier a clear sense of what was required in order to accomplish the mission, had cleared the confusion and fear from his mind. "He was proud of what he did, and so I was for him".²³⁹ Clearly, he had empowered that individual by helping him to feel stronger, more capable and committed to the mission--stemming the tide of Confederate advance.

Chamberlain's major failures in enabling others to act came later in life. One of his most difficult experiences dealt with the implementation of military drill at Bowdoin College during his tenure as President, from 1871-83. Despite his best efforts at communication of his goal/vision, and the initial enthusiasm of the students for this novel activity, within a year the "bloom was off the rose" and the program was in trouble. Chamberlain was unable to sustain the students' understanding of the desirable future state represented by military drill (ie. disciplined and trained citizens prepared to protect their nation from all enemies, foreign and domestic.) After the students staged a minor demonstration

²³⁹ Chamberlain, *Passing*, 130.

against further conduct of drill, Chamberlain apparently lost patience and ordered the immediate suspension of all involved, followed by threats to expel the malefactors. While he "won the skirmish", he definitely "lost the war" in this instance. The students, along with some faculty members and many townspeople, came to view his actions as peremptory and, perhaps, as an arbitrary exercise of power. "His starchy, unbending attitude generated resistance..." according to Graham.²⁴⁰ He had learned and adopted as his own the habits of command routinely employed within military circles. Applied in a military setting they were both appropriate and acceptable. Not so at Bowdoin, a liberal arts oriented college campus where vigorous and continued debate traditionally characterized the decision-making process.

Hersey and Blanchard speak of situational leadership, described as depending upon the interaction of the leader; the followers; and the situation. They state that:

"... leaders may ... not be effective unless they can adapt their leadership style to meet the demand of their environment. ... If the needs and motives of ... subordinates are different, they must be treated differently."²⁴¹

Failing to adapt one's leadership style in order to address the prevailing situation, according to the situational leadership model, foredooms the efforts of the leader to failure, as illustrated by Chamberlain's difficulties and eventual resignation. It is all too easy to forget the first and all-encompassing need, which is that leaders need followers. As George Will states:

"When those are lacking, the best ideas, the strongest will, the most wonderful smile have no effect. When Shakespeare's Welch seer, Owen Glendower, boasts that 'I can call spirits from the vasty deep,' Hotspur deflates him with the commonsense answer: 'Why, so can I, or so can anyone. But will they come when you do call them.' It is not the noblest call that gets answered, but the answerable call."²⁴²

Chamberlain, it may be imagined, was "sadder but wiser" following that episode. By failing to correctly diagnose the leadership situation in which he found himself, he lost the ability and opportunity to inspire, communicate, and sustain a shared vision and to enable others--the students-- to act in accordance with what he believed to be their best interests and those of the greater society of which they were a part.

²⁴⁰ Graham, "Month of Madness", 60.

²⁴¹ Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, Management of Organizational Behavior. Fifth edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1988), 169.

²⁴² Garry Wills. Certain Trumpets: The Call of Leaders (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994,) 13. The Shakespeare citation is found at Henry IV, Part One 3.1.50-53.

Model the Way

Modeling the way is the K-P model's fourth behavioral premise. Showing one's subordinates what is required of them, demonstrating that the leader is aware of what they are going through and that he will not ask them to do anything he is unwilling to attempt himself are central to this mode of action. The phrase "walk like you talk", which came into vogue during the Vietnam War, encapsulates this concept rather concisely. It has been pointed out that one's job provides authority, but that one's behavior earns respect. This is so because, while leaders are appraising their subordinates they, in turn, are "sizing up" their leaders. As Kouzes and Posner suggest, subordinates apply a simple test: "Does my leader practice what he preaches?"²⁴³ They indicate that leaders may speak with great eloquence, but that if their behavior isn't consistent with their stated beliefs, followers soon lose respect for them. As Tom Peters says, " . . . the only magic is brute consistence, persistence, and attention to detail."²⁴⁴

Chamberlain was masterful in his practice of this precept. He consistently "led from the front", whether it was in the learning of unfamiliar military tactics and movements, sharing the privations of the march and the camp, or assuming a forward and exposed position in time of battle. Clearly, his actions had a positive effect. The regimental historian's description of Chamberlain's demeanor during the battle of Gettysburg suggests the deep impression his behavior made upon the troops:

" . . . up and down the line, with a last word of encouragement or caution, walks the quiet man, whose calm exterior concealed the fire of the warrior and the heart of steel, whose careful dispositions . . . unswerving courage and audacious nerve . . . are to crown himself and his faithful followers with victory"²⁴⁵

Another writer described Chamberlain's instinctive understanding of the need to model cool behavior under fire, stating that he:

" . . . considered it an essential part of his duty to project a mannequin-like image of coolness and courage that would inspire the hard-pressed riflemen. . . . He stood near the regimental colors, sword

²⁴³ Kouzes and Posner, *Leadership*, 11.

²⁴⁴ Tom Peters and Nancy Austin, *A Passion for Excellence* (New York: Warner Books, 1985), 178.

²⁴⁵ Howard L. Prince, " Captain Howard L. Prince's Address", in *Dedication of the Twentieth Maine Monuments at Gettysburg, Oct 3, 1889* (Waldoboro, ME: News Steam Job Print, 1891), 17.

in one hand, pistol in the other, a solitary figure."²⁴⁶

Chamberlain had fourteen horses shot from under him during Civil War, and was wounded a total of six times. He sustained his near-fatal wound at Petersburg, Va., while leading an infantry charge. Following this event he remained in convalescence for a brief time and then returned to his troops, probably too soon to suit his doctors and definitely so sore that he had to be lifted into the saddle for a time. During the Five Forks Campaign in March, 1865, he repeatedly exposed himself in an effort to provide command and control and to inspire wavering groups of troops in the heat of battle.

During the battle he was struck in the chest by a ball that had passed through his horse's neck and which bruised him badly. He fell forward on his horse's neck, temporarily unconscious. When he revived his division commander, MG Charles Griffin was supporting him in the saddle. Griffin, observing the profusion of blood staining Chamberlain's chest, commented " . . . my dear General, you are gone". Chamberlain had at that instant heard the sound of the Rebel yell and observed one of his regiments starting to drift to the rear. He immediately spurred his horse away from the astonished Griffin in an attempt to rally these flagging souls. This rapid departure demonstrated that he really was "gone"---gone to help those troops who needed his support.²⁴⁷

In time of battle Chamberlain, like many effective Civil War leaders, seems to have concentrated so completely on the performance of his mission-related duties that he became almost totally oblivious to personal danger, an exceptionally useful psychological quality--one which enabled him to provide the kind of personal example so necessary to the "validation of his leadership credentials". MG Griffin, deeply impressed with Chamberlain's leadership abilities and his impact upon the soldiers, commented that it was always an inspiration to watch Chamberlain dashing from flank to flank of his brigade as he managed the battle and inspired his troops by personal example.²⁴⁸

Part of modeling the way involves breaking large and seemingly insuperable tasks down into readily understandable portions--reducing them from "porterhouse steaks into bite-size chunks." In modern parlance this is referred to as setting objectives or, at a still more specific level, assigning tasks. Effective leaders are masters of this

²⁴⁶ Michael Golay, To Gettysburg and Beyond (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1994), 160.

²⁴⁷ Chamberlain, Passing, 46.

²⁴⁸ Wallace, Soul of the Lion, 126.

process which, in the final analysis, often involves convincing subordinates that they can do more than they believed possible. Peters and Austin refer to this process as "planning small wins". In business successful leaders "unravel bureaucracy, put up signposts, and create opportunities."²⁴⁹

Chamberlain demonstrated his grasp of the "small win" concept during the battle on the Quaker Road, near Five Forks, Va., just described. Under heavy pressure from counterattacking forces, he moved along the lines, encouraging and cajoling his troops. Having been told by his superior, MG Griffin, that a battery of artillery would be coming to his support within the next ten minutes, Chamberlain approached COL Gustavus Snipe, the commander of his New York regiment (185th N.Y. Volunteer Infantry) and shouted in his ear in a voice the men would be sure to hear: "Once more, try the steel! Hell for ten minutes and we are out of it!" He states that the New Yorkers charged and that ". . . a spirit as it were superhuman took possession of minds and bodies . . . reversed the direction of the surging (Confederate) wave, and dashed it back upon the woods and breastworks" ²⁵⁰

Chamberlain had, through the simplicity of his explanation and the dramatic mode of its delivery, reduced a dangerous, complex and confusing set of circumstances to a level easily comprehended by men of normal intelligence and of good will--men looking for leadership and prepared to do their duty if properly directed.

The key to Chamberlain's success lay in personal attention and personal presence, coupled with a phenomenal ability to capture the imagination and enthusiasm of his troops--even when it involved them in activities that resulted in death or maiming. The credibility that he established with the troops did not come overnight. He worked hard at it, was tested on a number of occasions by the men themselves, and was never found wanting. His actions as well as his motives were invariably pristine, a fact which made its way through the Army and was well known to superiors and subordinates alike. Thus, Chamberlain gained a certain moral superiority and influence within the Army of the Potomac, a situation which rendered him increasingly useful to the command structure, which was frequently willing to assign him the command of a "forlorn hope", sending him into the hottest part of a failing fight in an attempt to stabilize the line and to salvage the situation. Semper paratus, always prepared, Chamberlain invariably performed "to specification", even when he was in a weakened physical state.

Apparently drawing on his deep spirituality and religious commitment, he was able to rise to each challenge

²⁴⁹ Peters and Austin, Passion, 178-9.

²⁵⁰ Chamberlain, Passing, 50-51.

and, through his "modeling" behavior and the empowerment of his troops, was able to orchestrate their repeated triumphs over the enemy. Far from being isolated phenomena, his heroic performances came with remarkable consistency and in substantial quantities during the Civil War. It would not be inappropriate to describe him as "driven" by his conception of duty, which resulted in his outstanding performances, often at considerable personal discomfort.

Kouzes and Posner indicate that effective leaders: have a high degree of personal credibility; are effective in meeting job-related demands; are successful in representing their units to upper management; and have higher performing teams than less effective leaders.²⁵¹ Clearly, Chamberlain excelled in all four areas, exemplifying the model beautifully.

²⁵¹ Kouzes and Posner, *Challenge*, 281.

Encourage the Heart

Encouraging the heart refers to those activities engaged in by leaders which help their subordinates keep hope and determination alive, raising their spirits and generally "bucking them up" in times of discouragement, despair, and frustration. Easy to describe, this activity requires great tact, persistence, and patience in the face of adversity. Success in this area requires that the leader have a positive and buoyant outlook on life in general and on the prospects for immediate success in particular. This perspective is communicated to the subordinates in a form of behavior sometimes called "cheer leadership", a combination of coaching and counseling designed to "bind up the broken heart" and to lend strength and determination to him who "faileth in the race." Successful practitioners of "cheer leadership" tend to take the perspective that it is "better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness." That is, they do what they can to bring cheer into cheerless situations and tend to "look upon the bright side".

Chamberlain was possessed of a pleasant and positive disposition. He learned early in life to engage in the practice of "encouraging the heart" and is reported to have been exceptionally well respected and liked by the officer and enlisted personnel who served with him in the Union Army. It was his practice to move through the camp after duty hours talking with the troops, bringing cheer to those who were unwell, and lending a judicious but sympathetic ear to those who had complaints to make against the Army, other individuals, or life in general.

Just prior to the battle of Gettysburg, the 20th Maine was assigned a group of around 120 soldiers from the 2nd Maine Volunteer Infantry, soldiers who had been led to believe that their term of enlistment would expire at the end of June, 1863, as was the case with the remainder of the unit. Through a mix-up in enlistment procedures they had been mustered for three years, rather than the two-year enlistment agreed upon by the rest of the unit. They had been informed that they would not be released and would be required to serve out the full term of their enlistment, a matter of considerable annoyance to the those affected. Many of the men had expressed mutinous sentiments, and they had been marched to Chamberlain's unit under guard. An emissary from MG George Meade, the division commander, informed Chamberlain that he was free to shoot any man refusing to do his duty. Chamberlain, exercising his usual tact, civility, and genuine concern for all soldiers, assured these men that he would do what he could to have their grievances addressed on the condition that they perform their regular military duties in the meantime. Over the space of a few days

Chamberlain's quiet comments and "firm but fair" behavior convinced all but six of the "mutineers" to accept his offer, and most of these men gave a good account of themselves at Little Round Top on July 2, 1863.²⁵²

At Rives Salient, outside Petersburg, Va., June 18, 1864, Chamberlain demonstrated by his actions the spirit of caring and concern evident among great leaders in all walks of life. The unit had moved into an advanced position and was awaiting attack orders, exposed both to the fire of the Confederates and to the hot Summer sun. Chamberlain asked a staff officer for a drink of water. In the words of a member of the 143rd Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, writing many years after the war, " . . . during the time you were waiting . . . you asked one of your staff for a drink of water . . . I handed (my) canteen to you saying 'Colonel, here's a drink'. You would not take it . . . 'keep your water, you may need it. My staff will get me a drink', you said. It impressed me wonderfully with the kindness of heart and thoughtfulness for the boys that was so manifest on your part."²⁵³ Chamberlain felt that caring for the comfort of others was part of "encouraging the heart."

After he was wounded on the same day, Chamberlain was moved to a field hospital in the rear area. When he was carried in Pvt James Stettler, a member of the 143rd PA was on the amputation table. He later testified that among Chamberlain's first words were a request to " Lay me (to) one side. I am all right. Go and take care of my dear boys." This statement from a dying man--or so all thought at the time--made a deep impression on the soldiers, no doubt adding greatly to the "Chamberlain mystique" and his subsequent effectiveness.²⁵⁴

Following the action on March 29, 1865, on the Quaker Road, near Petersburg, VA., in which Chamberlain received additional personal wounds, he spent some time at the end of the day walking among the wounded, bringing such cheer as he could to the fallen. Pausing by BG Horatio Sickel, commander of Chamberlain's Pennsylvania regiment, (198th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry), whose arm had been shattered by a ball, he sat down and commiserated with his subordinate. Chamberlain reports that Sickel expressed his appreciation for his commander's solicitude by indicating that Chamberlain had "the soul of the lion and the heart of the woman". Chamberlain characteristically urged Sickel to "take the benediction to yourself, since you could not have thought that if you had not

²⁵² Pullen, Twentieth Maine, 77-80.

²⁵³ Affidavit by P.D. DeLacy, President of 143rd PA Infantry Association. (n.d.). Chamberlain Papers. Library of Congress.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

been it."²⁵⁵ His tendency was, obviously, to do all in his power to uplift the spirits of those for whose welfare he was responsible.

At Appomattox, he went beyond the normal responsibilities of a commander by lending cheer and comfort to the defeated Confederate troops who laid down their weapons and flags on April 12, 1865. Chamberlain arranged a soldierly salute to these troops as they passed before their conquerors, adding a measure of dignity to what would otherwise have been, at best, a humiliating experience. He is reported to have spent the day conversing with the officers and enlisted men of the Confederate Army, doing what he could to cheer them up and to provide them with hope for the future. His attitude was buoyant. " It was our glory . . . that the victory we had won was for country, for the well-being of others, of these men before us as well as for ourselves and ours. Our joy was a deep, far, unspoken satisfaction"²⁵⁶

Following the war and for the rest of his life Chamberlain was a major spokesman for reconciliation, for bringing the sections back together again and for working in harmony. As early as February, 1866, in an address on loyalty given before a Union veterans organization, Chamberlain set a high moral tone: "There are many things to be forgiven . . . We must be charitable toward those who did not see as we did . . . We must be `kindly affectioned one toward another, we who are to live and work together for the good of all. Those who erred . . . we will walk with heartily under the light that reveals our onward way"²⁵⁷

Chamberlain appears to have felt that his mission in "encouraging the heart" should be extended to the entire nation! He and MG John B. Gordon, of Georgia, Chamberlain's former enemy and now lifelong friend, were among the most articulate "reconcilers" in the country, doing much to heal the bitterness engendered by four years of fratricidal combat. Both men exhibited inspirational qualities and forward-lookingness, the ability to put the past behind and to look for brighter days in the future, characteristics common to most effective leaders, both then and now.

It is reported that Chamberlain, upon being notified of Gordon's death in 1904, " . . . went out into the stairway, sat down and wept bitterly . . . " in grief for his old friend, an indication of the mutual attachment they had formed for one another. The account continues "The bravest of the brave, it could be said of him, as Thackeray said . . . `His heart

²⁵⁵ Chamberlain, *Passing*, 57.

²⁵⁶ Chamberlain, *Passing*, 271.

²⁵⁷ Joshua L. Chamberlain, "Loyalty", Address delivered before the Commandery of the State of Pennsylvania, February 22, 1866, Military Order of the Loyal Legion. (Typescript).

was like that of a little child".²⁵⁸

Throughout his long speaking career, Chamberlain presented and emphasized the idea of altruism --of giving of oneself in support of a great cause and for one's fellow men. In many of his speeches to Union veterans he suggested the true nobility of self-sacrifice. " . . . greatness is not in nor of the single self; it is of that larger personality, that shared and sharing [of] life with others in which, each giving of his best for their betterment, we are greater than ourselves; . . . self-surrender for the sake of . . . belonging is . . . true nobility."²⁵⁹

Chamberlain spoke of a " . . . mysterious law of nature . . . " to the effect that, when one holds membership in and participates in a group or cause," . . . the spirit rises to a magnitude commensurate with that of which it is part." That is, men tend to rise to the occasion and the challenge presented. He suggests that " . . . the greatness of the whole passes into the consciousness of each; the power of the whole seems to become the power of each, and the character of the whole is impressed upon each."

He further suggested that " . . . the consciousness of belonging . . . to something beyond individuality . . . greatens the heart to the limits of the soul's ideal"²⁶⁰ Thus, participation in events of " . . . great pith and moment"²⁶¹ ennobles the individual actor and provides him with a sense of great and long-lasting personal satisfaction.

Chamberlain went to great lengths to maintain the connection between the living veterans in attendance at his talks and their comrades who had previously "crossed the river". "There is a beautiful belief that, corresponding to the mortal body there exists another, spiritual . . . which preserves our real identity--dimmed and veiled to mortal view. He indicated that, as he gazed upon his audience " . . . this living and firm array melts into the vision of that other army, which was the Army of the Potomac . . . it rises and stands before me . . . the ranks are full--you the living, they the immortal . . . that great company of heroic souls that were, and are, the Army of the Potomac."²⁶²

²⁵⁸ Portland Daily Press, Wednesday, Feb. 25, 1914, 3.

²⁵⁹ Joshua L. Chamberlain, "Abraham Lincoln". War Papers Read Before the Commandery of the State of Maine, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (Portland, ME, 1915), 3.

²⁶⁰ Joshua L. Chamberlain, Address of GEN Joshua L. Chamberlain at the Dedication of the Maine Monuments on the Battlefield of Gettysburg, October 3, 1893 (Augusta: Maine Farmers' Almanac Press, 1895), 8-9.

²⁶¹ Hamlet 3.1.86.

²⁶² Joshua L. Chamberlain, "The Army of the Potomac". Address to the Organization of the Society of the Army of the Potomac (New York: n.p., 1869), 6.

It is apparent that Chamberlain was attempting, in his inspiring manner, not only to connect the living with the heroic dead, but also to lift the spirits of the former, helping them to identify with the important contributions made by Union soldiers during the War of the Rebellion.

His discussions of the bond between the living and the dead emphasized a continuing common relationship that transcended even the seemingly terminal experience of death. It is the writer's belief that, as Chamberlain developed the introspective/reflective characteristics that come with advancing age, he came to believe that the setting forth of this psycho-philosophical construct was of great benefit to his audiences, the members of which was rapidly approaching that " . . . undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns" ²⁶³ A sensitive and astute speaker, Chamberlain capitalized upon the need for personal reassurance apparent in the reactions of these aging veterans while at the same time giving them hope for still better days ahead. Such a message, regrettably unacceptable in today's more sophisticated times, was quite in harmony with the spirit of Chamberlain's age. As a man of the times he seized upon this transcendently oriented theme and conveyed it repeatedly and effectively to his listeners. This was characteristic of the man who served in the multiple roles of leader, informal spiritual advisor and teacher in his long-standing relationship with old comrades. In his daily behavior he "encouraged the heart" abundantly.

²⁶³ Hamlet 3.1.79-80.

Analysis and Reflections

In a study conducted during the 1980's, Kouzes and Posner sought to determine the personal traits or characteristics that 2600 top-level managers ascribed to effective leaders. The list which evolved suggested that the majority admired leaders who are: Competent; Honest; Inspiring; and Forward-looking.²⁶⁴

It is contended that Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain exhibited all these qualities in abundance. He was competent at what he did. He was honest and honorable in his dealings with superiors, peers, and subordinates--a man to count on. He was inspiring both in speech, writing and action, a person who captured the imagination and quickened the heart. Chamberlain was blessed with both good nature and good nurture. He seems to have inherited "good genes". He certainly received excellent training, both as a youth and as a young man. He had the good fortune to be born at the "right time", one in which there were numerous opportunities to excel--to "make a mark".

In addition, Chamberlain determined early in life to develop within himself the ability to confront life's challenges directly, and to perform high quality work in all his varied endeavors. He "did things right", never compromising strongly held principles for the sake of bureaucratic advantage--and he "did the right thing", demonstrating both intellectual acumen and "the right instincts". He seemed determined always to be an "event maker", rather than one upon whom events acted.

Another characteristic, commented upon by a number of writers, is the nearly palpable goodness one senses as he learns more about the man. Throughout his long and eventful life he seems to have intuitively shown to others that gentle sympathy and empathy that all with whom he came in contact came to value and appreciate. He seems to have accepted and understood that all human beings share a universal experience--a journey that leads to a common ending. It seems likely that he would have argued that the journey, for all its trials and tribulations, is a good one, full of excitement and opportunity--and one that he would not have wished to forgo.

Chamberlain did not capture the nation's highest offices following the Civil War, perhaps because of his constant physical afflictions, but more likely because of his unflinching commitment to a stern code of ethics and high morality that made most politicians of the period turn away sorrowfully. Further, he was much opposed to self-aggrandizement--a man of humble spirit. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in the inscription on his gravestone in

²⁶⁴ Kouzes and Posner, Leadership, 16.

the Pine Grove Cemetery, Brunswick, ME, next to the Bowdoin College campus. Almost certainly by his instruction, the engraving on the stone includes only his name and dates of birth and death, 1828--1914. All indications of his temporal fame have been omitted. Such a self-effacing approach to life is both refreshing and impressive to many of today's scholars, accustomed as they are to coming in contact with the pronouncements of far less reticent persons of that period!

To a greater extent than most people of his time, Chamberlain was able to achieve a level of "self actualization", in Maslow's terms, a transcending of personal desires in service of the general welfare. It was clear from his public statements as well as his writings that he had a lofty vision of the public good and of his place in it. In a 1909 speech to the Loyal Legion he revealed this vision:

True greatness is of that larger personality, that shared and sharing life with others, in which, each giving of his best . . . we are greater than ourselves; and self-surrender for the sake of that great belonging, is the true nobility.²⁶⁵

Contemporary scholars, both military and civilian, have found Chamberlain to be both an appealing and intriguing personality.²⁶⁶ He was forward-looking, constantly reexamining the status quo ante, challenging the process, looking for a "better way", seeking the common good. He was not always successful, but was always "in the game", doing what he could to make his world a better place to live. In these characteristics, Chamberlain typifies, to a large extent, that spirit and character exhibited by so many men of his time, both those who wore the blue and those who wore the gray during the Civil War, and who returned to pick up the strands of their interrupted lives when that great conflict ended. Many, if not most, of these men probably never knew for sure just what the war had meant in "the greater scheme of things." Fortunately, they had far-seeing and philosophically inclined comrades such as Chamberlain to interpret past times and events in ways that were clearly discernable.

100 years later Bruce Catton wrote poignant words that seem to characterize precisely Chamberlain's life and

²⁶⁵ "Abraham Lincoln", in "Ceremonies in Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Abraham Lincoln." A Paper read before the Pennsylvania Commandery of the Loyal Legion, February 12, 1909, 53.

²⁶⁶ As an "unobtrusive indicator" of his recent popularity, note the fact that Chamberlain has been featured in successive editions of the U.S. Army's FM 22-100, Military Leadership; has had a street at Ft. Gordon, Ga., dedicated to him by the Secretary of the Army (1986); is the subject of a new biography by Alice R. Trulock published by the Chapel Hill, N.C., Press in 1992--this in addition to the well known work by Willard Wallace, Soul of the Lion; and was a leading character in Shaara's The Killer Angels. His home in Brunswick, ME, has been turned into a museum and the Pejepscot Historical Society engages in the constant promotion of his "good name." In 1994, Ted Turner released a movie version of The Killer Angels, called "Gettysburg."

contributions:

. . . these heroes of ours, who lived so long ago, and who struggled so greatly against something greater than themselves, were part of an undying procession, men who marched bravely on the undiscovered road to tomorrow; and as they marched, they marched to the sound of trumpets.²⁶⁷

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²⁶⁷ Bruce Catton, The War of 1861-1865: Virginia and the War (Richmond: Richmond Newspapers, 1961), 39.

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