

Sharpsburg, however, General Lee hoped to bring on an engagement. The position he chose was not really a strong one, nothing like so strong as that held by Meade at Gettysburg, but General Lee — and so did his army — felt confident of administering a crushing defeat to Meade could he be induced to attack.

General Lee here issued the following order, which set the army wild with enthusiasm :

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA, July 11, 1863.

*General Orders No. 16.*

After long and trying marches, endured with the fortitude that has ever characterized the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia, you have penetrated to the country of our enemies, and recalled to the defenses of their own soil those who were engaged in the invasion of ours. You have fought a fierce and sanguinary battle, which, if not attended with the success that has hitherto crowned your efforts, was marked by the same heroic spirit that has commanded the respect of your enemies, the gratitude of your country, and the admiration of mankind.

Once more you are called upon to meet the enemy from whom you have won, on so many fields, names that will never die. Once more the eyes of your countrymen are turned upon you, and again do wives and sisters, fathers and mothers, and helpless children, lean for defense on your strong arms and brave hearts. Let every soldier remember that on his courage and fidelity depend all that makes life worth having, the freedom of his country, the honor of his people, and the security of his home. Let each heart grow strong in the remembrance of our glorious past, and in the thought of the inestimable blessings for which we contend ; and, invoking the assistance of that benign Power which has so signally blessed our former efforts, let us go forth in confidence to secure the peace and safety of our country. Soldiers, your old enemy is before you. Win from him honor worthy of your right cause, worthy of your comrades dead on so many illustrious fields.

R. E. LEE, *General Commanding.*

For three days General Lee held his army in line of battle, and during these three days he resorted to every means in his power to bring on a general engagement, but in vain. General Meade had had enough, and contented himself with watching and waiting for Lee to move on, when he, too, would resume the monotonous march to the Potomac and slowly follow the Confederate Army into Virginia.

At length, on the evening of the 13th, disgusted with Meade's timidity, General Lee left his position, and on the 14th recrossed the Potomac.

On the 18th of the previous month (June) the Second Maryland Infantry had crossed this same river under vastly different circumstances, and the fact was remarked more than once during the passage across. Then it was a battalion five