TWO ADDRESSES BY COL. H. L. HIGGINSON

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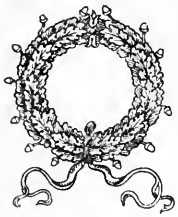
ADDRESSES
BY
HENRY LEE HIGGINSON
ON
THE OCCASION OF PRESENTING
THE SOLDIERS' FIELD AND THE
HARVARD UNION TO HARVARD
UNIVERSITY



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THE SOLDIERS' FIELD

JUNE 10, 1890

H. L. H.
1863

THE SOLDIERS' FIELD

Over four hundred students and graduates of Harvard University assembled in Sever Hall on the evening of June 10, 1890, to hear about "The Soldiers' Field," which had been given to the University by Mr. Henry L. Higginson.

President Eliot spoke as follows:— Gentlemen: At a meeting of the Corporation yesterday, the following letter was presented:

Boston, June 5th, 1890.

To the President and Fellows of Harvard College, Cambridge.

Gentlemen: The deeds of Miss Willard's estate will be passed to you to-day, and with them my wish in regard to it.

The estate henceforth belongs to the College without any condition or restriction whatsoever, and for use in any way which the Corporation may see fit.

My hope is that the ground will be used for the present as a playground for the students, and that, in case you should need the ground by and by for other purposes, another playground will be given to the students.

But the gift is absolutely without condition of any kind.

The only other wish on my part is that the ground shall be called "The Soldiers' Field," and marked with a stone bearing the names of some dear friends,—alumni of the University, and noble gentlemen,—who

gave freely and eagerly all that they had or hoped for, to their country and to their fellow-men in the hour of great need—the war of 1861 to 1865 in defence of the Republic.

James Savage, Jr., Charles Russell Lowell, Edward Barry Dalton, Stephen George Perkins, James Jackson Lowell, Robert Gould Shaw.

This is only a wish, and not a condition; and, moreover, it is a happiness to me to serve in any way the College, which has done so much for us all. I am, with much respect,

Very truly yours,
HENRY L. HIGGINSON.

You are too young to remember these men, but I remember them all. They were all young,—the youngest about twenty-six,—about the same

age as the men in our professional schools. They were all schoolmates, college classmates, or intimate friends of Mr. Higginson. He who gives you this field was at college here, and afterward studied in Europe. He enlisted in the infantry at the breaking out of the Rebellion, was transferred to the cavalry, and, after serving faithfully, had to leave the service in 1864 from the effects of his wounds. His six friends died; he lived, became a successful man of business, and has made the best possible uses of his money. He has promoted music in Boston as no other man ever has. This gift which he now makes to you is very near his heart, for, in giving you this land, he feels that he is doing what his friends would have liked

to have him do. He wishes to promote manly sports among you and to commemorate the soldier of 1861. He has come here to-night to tell you of his wish and his hope.

Mr. Higginson then said:—

I THANK you for receiving me here to-night, and I thank President Eliot for his kind words. I have come to tell you of my reasons for helping you to a playground, and of my wish to link with it my thoughts of the past and my hopes for your future. The story which I have to tell is moving to me, and, if my voice fails, I can only ask you for a hand.

It has been evident for some time that the college playgrounds were too small, and therefore the Corporation of the University and your

Athletic Committee have sought to enlarge them. Just across the river, towards Brighton, lie some beautiful marshes in a lovely surrounding of hills, woods, and water, in which Mr. Longfellow used to delight as he gazed at them from his windows; and which he and other friends gave to the College, with the provision that they should be kept open and used for play, if wanted for that purpose. Last summer these marshes were surveyed in order to learn the practicability of draining and using them. But, the other day, when an approach to them was needed, the owner of the adjoining estate refused to sell the right of way. So the Corporation looked at the land of this recalcitrant owner, and considered its

value for your games and for its own future needs. The estate lies just across the Brighton Bridge, to the right, and takes in about twenty-one acres of upland pasture, and about ten acres of marsh—in all about thirty-one acres—with a couple of houses. The Corporation approved of the land and has acquired it. Do you approve also? I hope so, and, if it suits you, one point will have been gained. You will have a walk to it, but not long enough to weary strong men. Try the ground and see if it is good for your uses.

It is very pleasant to do you a kindness, and every one is glad of a chance to serve the dear old College. She needs help, and thought, and devotion, and gratitude from us

all, for she has given us and our land more than any one of us will give back. She will keep on giving; and I now ask a kindness of her.

This field means more than a playground to me, for I ask to make it a memorial to some dear friends who gave their lives and all that they had or hoped for, to their country and to their fellow-men in the hour of great need—the War of the Rebellion. They gave their lives in the cause of virtue and good government, and to save our nation from the great sins of disunion and of slavery. This is what we claim for our Northern men.

These friends were men of mark, either as to mental or moral powers,

or both, and were dead in earnest about life in all its phases. They lived in happy homes and were surrounded with friends, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sweethearts, —had high hopes for the future and with good cause, too; but, at the first call of our great captain, Abraham Lincoln, they went at once, gladly, eagerly to the front, and stayed there. Not a doubt, not a thought of themselves, except to serve: and they did serve to the end, and were happy in their service.

They were men of various talents and they had various fortunes.

One of them was first scholar in his class—thoughtful, kind, affectionate, gentle, full of solicitude about his companions, and about

his duties. He was wounded in a very early fight of the war and, after his recovery and a hard campaign on the peninsula, was killed at Glendale on the fourth of July, '62. Hear his own words: "When the class meets in years to come and honors its statesmen and judges, its divines and doctors, let also the score who went to fight for their country be remembered, and let not those who never returned be forgotten." If you had known JAMES LOWELL, you would never have forgotten him.

Another I first saw one evening in our first camp at Brook Farm—a beautiful, sunny-haired, blue-eyed boy, gay and droll, and winning in his ways. In those early days of camp-life, we fellows were a bit

homesick and longed for the company of girls—you know how it is yourselves—and I fell in love with this boy, and I have not fallen out yet. He was of a very simple and manly nature—steadfast and affectionate, human to the last degree—without much ambition except to do his plain duty. You should have seen Robert Shaw as he, with his chosen officers, led away from Boston his black men of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts amid the cheers of his townsmen. Presently he took them up to the assault of Fort Wagner, and was buried with them there in the trench.

Still another fine, handsome fellow, great oarsman, charming companion, wit, philosopher, who delighted in intellectual pursuits, and

in his fellow-creatures, whom he watched with his keen eyes and well understood, was killed in a foolish, bloody battle while stemming the tide of defeat. He was at this time too ill to march; but, with other sick officers, left the ambulances because he was needed in this fight. I well remember almost our last day together—sitting on a log in a sluggish stream in Maryland, washing ourselves and our clothes, and then drying ourselves in the sun,—and his wonderful talk of the delights of an intellectual life. That was his realm, and no one in our young days did more to mould his mates than STEPHEN PERKINS did.

Yet another—a first scholar, because he could n't help it—full of

thought, life, and intense vigor—brimful of ideas—brilliant and strong beyond compare—had soon after leaving college exhausted himself by overwork. After distinguished service with his regiment and on the staff of General McClellan, who singled him out for honor, he led his troopers of the Second Massachusetts cavalry in the Shenandoah campaign of '64, was always in the front, lost thirteen horses in his daring efforts to win success, and at last, when so wounded that he could not speak, rode forward in his last charge, when Sheridan had come back to win the battle of Cedar Creek. Read the story of that splendid campaign and see how even there the figure of CHARLES LOWELL stands out.

These friends were men of unusual powers, but they all bowed down to the goodness and the purity of one other—JAMES SAVAGE. He also was an enthusiast, and had little health and no words,—but ate himself up with his thoughts and his fiery wishes —sometimes as gay as a lark and then depressed from ill health and disappointment with himself—very fond of his books and of nature—much given to games and a great rusher at football from pure will-power and enthusiasm—courageous to the last degree. We two fellows went to Fitchburg just after war was declared, to recruit a company for the Second Massachusetts infantry, and when our regiment was ready to march, the colors were intrusted to

us. This recruiting was strange work to us all, and the men who came to our little recruiting office asked many new questions, which I did my best to answer; but often these recruits would turn to the "captain," as they called him, listen to his replies and then swear allegiance, as it were, to him. He, the quietest and most modest of men, was immensely impressive, for he was a real knight—just and gentle to all friends, defiant to the enemies of his country and to all wrong-doers. He also fell wounded in that most foolish battle, where his regiment lost fourteen out of twenty-two officers, and was sacrificed to the good of the army. He died in the hands of the enemy, who tended him kindly and

were deeply moved by his patience and his fortitude.

The last was a physician, by choice and by nature, if intelligence, energy, devotion, and sweetness can help the sick. After various services from the outstart till '64, he was put by General Grant in charge of the great hospital camp at City Point in Virginia, where ten thousand sick and wounded men lay. Here he worked out his life-blood to save that of others. If I may turn to football language, he played "full-back," and no one ever reached the last goal if human power could stop him.

After the end of the war, New York City needed a vigorous medical officer to cleanse it and guard it against a threatened epidemic, and

leading men turned to our friend for this work. General Grant was then in command of the army, and was asked to recommend this physician. But the General was weary of such requests, and refused without even knowing who the candidate was.

"But hear his name, at least," these citizens said; and they told it to him.

Grant at once wrote: "Dr. EDWARD DALTON is the best man in the United States for this place." And Dr. Dalton did one more public service and then settled into private life. Presently he died of disease brought on by exhaustion during the war.

All these men were dear friends to me; and with three of them I

had lived from childhood on the most intimate terms, doing and discussing everything on earth, and in heaven, as boys will,—living, indeed, a very full life with them, and through them,—so full were they of thoughts, and hopes, and feelings, about all possible things. These men are a loss to the world, and heaven must have sorely needed them to have taken them from us so early in their lives. And now I ask to mark their names and memories on our new playground. Shall we call it "The Soldiers' Field"? Of course, thousands and thousands of other soldiers deserved equally well of their country, and should be equally remembered and honored by the world. I only say that these

were my friends, and therefore I ask this memorial for them.

Mr. James Russell Lowell has, at my request, given me a few words of his own for the stone to be put up on this field, and also some lines of Mr. Emerson. I will read them to you:—

To the Happy Memory of James Savage, Jr., Charles Russell Lowell, Edward Barry Dalton, Stephen George Perkins, James Jackson Lowell, Robert Gould Shaw,—Friends, Comrades, Kinsmen,—who died for their Country, this Field is dedicated.

"Though love repine, and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply,—
'T is man's perdition to be safe,
When for the truth he ought to die.'"

And let me say here that the war was not boy's play. No men of any country ever displayed more intelli-

gence, devotion, energy, brilliancy, fortitude, in any cause than did our Southern brothers. Hunger, cold, sickness, wounds, captivity, hard work, hard blows,—all these were their portion and ours. Look at the records of other wars and you 'll nowhere find examples of more courage in marching and fighting, or greater losses in camp or battle, than each side showed. We won because we had more substitutes and more supplies; and also from the force of a larger patriotism on our side. We wore them out. Let me tell you of just one case. A friend and comrade, leading his regiment in the last days of the war into Richmond, picked up a voluntary prisoner, and this is the conversation between them: —

"Why did you come in?"

"Well, me and the lieutenant was all there was left of the regiment, and yesterday the lieutenant was shot, and so I thought I might as well come in."

It was not boy's play; and to-day these Southern brothers are as cordial and as kindly to us as men can be, as I have found by experience.

Now, what do the lives of our friends teach us? Surely the beauty and the holiness of work and of utter, unselfish, thoughtful devotion to the right cause, to our country, and to mankind. It is well for us all, for you and for the boys of future days, to remember such deeds and such lives and to ponder on them. These men loved study and work, and loved

play too. They delighted in athletic games, and would have used this field, which is now given to the College and to you for your health and recreation. But my chief hope in regard to it is, that it will help to make you full-grown, well-developed men, able and ready to do good work of all kinds,—steadfastly, devotedly, thoughtfully; and that it will remind you of the reason for living, and of your own duties as men and citizens of the Republic.

On you, and such as you, rests the burden of carrying on this country in the best way. From the day of John Harvard down to this hour, no pains or expense have been spared by teachers and by laymen to build up our University (and pray remember

that it is our University—that it belongs to us—to you and to me), and thus educate you; and for what end? For service to your country and your fellow-men in all sorts of ways—in all possible callings. Everywhere we see the signs of ferment,—questions social, moral, mental, physical, economical. The pot is boiling hard and you must tend it, or it will run over and scald the world. For us came the great questions of slavery and of national integrity, and they were not hard to answer. Your task is more difficult, and yet you must fulfil it. Do not hope that things will take care of themselves, or that the old state of affairs will come back. The world on all sides is moving fast, and you have only to accept this fact,

making the best of everything,—helping, sympathizing, and so guiding and restraining others, who have less education, perhaps, than you. Do not hold off from them; but go straight on with them, side by side, learning from them and teaching them. It is our national theory and the theory of the day, and we have accepted it, and must live by it, until the whole world is better and wiser than now. You must in honor live by work, whether you need bread or not, and presently you will enjoy the labor. Remember that the idle and indifferent are the dangerous classes of the community. Not one of you would be here and would receive all that is given to you, unless many other men and women had worked

hard for you. Do not too readily think that you have done enough, simply because you have accomplished something. There is no enough, so long as you can better the lives of your fellow-beings. Your success in life depends not on talents, but on will. Surely, genius is the power of working hard, and long, and well.

One of these friends, Charles Lowell, dead, and yet alive to me as you are, wrote me just before his last battle:—

"Don't grow rich; if you once begin, you 'll find it much more difficult to be a useful citizen. Don't seek office; but don't 'disremember' that the useful citizen holds his time, his trouble, his money, and his life al-

ways ready at the hint of his country. The useful citizen is a mighty, unpretending hero; but we are not going to have a country very long unless such heroism is developed. There! what a stale sermon I 'm preaching! But, being a soldier, it does seem to me that I should like nothing so well as being a useful citizen."

This was his last charge to me, and in a month he was in his grave. I have tried to live up to it, and I ask you to take his words to heart, and to be moved and guided by them.

And just here let me, a layman, say a word to you experts in athletic sports. You come to college to learn things of great value beside your games, which, after all, are secondary

to your studies. But, in your games, there is just one thing which you cannot do, even to win success. You cannot do one tricky or shabby thing. Translate tricky and shabby—dishonest, ungentlemanlike.

Princeton is not wicked; Yale is not base.

Lately I travelled with an ex-Southern artillery officer, and was rather glad that I did not try a year or two ago to take his guns. I asked him of his family, and he said: "I 've just sent a boy to Yale, after teaching him all in my power. I told him to go away, and not to return with any provincial notions. Remember," I said, "there is no Kentucky, no Virginia, no Massachusetts, but one great country."

Mates, the Princeton and the Yale fellows are our brothers. Let us beat them fairly if we can, and believe that they will play the game just as we do.

Gentlemen, will you remember that this new playground will only be good if it is used constantly and freely by you all, and that it is a legacy from my friends to the dear old College, and so to you?

THE HARVARD UNION

OCTOBER 15, 1901

H. L. H.
1900

MR. PRESIDENT, Teachers, Graduates, and Students of Harvard University, — Friends All.

This house is finished and you all are welcome to its halls. Of its origin and history you have known something, and now will you listen to a few facts about it, and to a few thoughts concerning it, which have come to me during the past summer?

For several years men have dreamed of and striven for such a plan, and thus have laid the foundation for it. Two Harvard Professors especially have given it much thought and labor, and a large committee of students, with the help of other teachers and gradu-

ates, have threshed out the constitution and selected the books. When the building was set on foot, three graduates at once asked to furnish the house. Mr. James H. Hyde of '98 has given us the library—both fittings and books. Mr. Francis L. Higginson of '63, and Mr. Augustus Hemenway of '75, old and proved friends of the University, have given us the furniture.

These carved panels, these mantelpieces and coats of arms at either end of the hall, as well as the brass wreath in the floor yonder, are gifts of various graduates, students, and friends. The bust of John Harvard is the work and the gift of the distinguished sculptor, Mr. Daniel C. French, and the bust of Washington together

with the eagle and the stag-horns we have from the hands of our great architect.

The chief happiness of this architect seems to lie in the beautification of our college grounds, and with the help of his able lieutenant, a late graduate, he has made this building a labor of love. He has outdone even himself.

Thus you see that our house springs from the imagination and the work of many men, and you may be sure that the work and the joy of building it have gone hand in hand.

It is pleasant to record such an united effort in behalf of Mother Harvard, for she exists only through the constant labor and bounty of her friends. It is her whole mission in life

to pour out her blessings on us, and we as grateful children can do no less than hold up and strengthen her hands, thus emulating the example of her friends outside, who have of late showered her with gifts in so splendid and thoughtful a fashion.

Wandering through Europe during the last six months I have again been deeply impressed by the wonderful beauty of the Gothic cathedrals with their noble architecture, their windows of splendid colored glass, their numberless memorials to men and women of all degrees for public services and private virtues, to children, to rich harvests, to plagues, to victories; and I have again been filled with awe and with admiration of their builders.

The architects and rulers planned, the stonecutters and masons wrought, the peasants put in their pennies, the old guilds of workmen and of tradesfolks, the kings, the bishops, the gentry,—all bore a hand, and the cathedrals arose.

This fine idea running through them all struck me forcibly, viz., the great house of meeting built by many men for all men, where they together might sing praises to God and join with each other in friendly intercourse and mutual help.

The same idea presents itself to us of this century also in the shape of schools and colleges founded and carried on by the many for all—a true democracy.

Some Harvard graduates conceived

a meeting-house for Harvard students, joined heads and hands, and the house is here—a house open to all Harvard men without restriction and in which they all stand equal—a house bearing no name forever except that of our University.

Harvard students, you come here to be educated in the lecture-room and in the laboratory by your teachers, and to be educated by your daily life with each other; and it is a question which form will profit you more.

With the former part of your education, we laymen may well be content, trusting to your own zeal for work and to the powers of this chosen band of teachers.

For the latter part of your education the chances are less because the

opportunities of free social intercourse among yourselves have not kept pace with the increasing number of students.

Excellent as are the existing clubs, they do not furnish the required field, for by their very nature they are limited in numbers and restricted by elections. Hence the need to you of this house for meeting each other, for meeting your teachers, who would gladly see you more freely, and for meeting the older graduates, who ask for the sunshine of your young, fresh years. One common meeting-ground we already have.

Yonder on the Delta stands a hall built in memory of Harvard men, who gave all they had or hoped for in this life that their country should

be one, and should be ruled in the spirit of a broad and generous democracy. So high were the hopes of these men, so strong were their wishes, so firm their resolve, that our land should be the home of a free, united people, a field for the full development of the human race, that they thought no price too great to pay for that end.

Such was their problem and such their spirit, and in future years you will meet your great questions in the same spirit.

It is much to give up home, health, even life, in order to carry out one's national ideal, and yet it is the plain, over-mastering duty of the citizen in a free land. It is much for the loser in such a fierce struggle as our Civil

War to give up the idea for which he has paid the last price, and to accept the outcome with a fine magnanimity as our brothers of the South have done. They have recognized that this whole country is theirs as well as ours.

We older men can hardly enter the cloister of Memorial Hall without a quickening of the pulses and a moistening of the eyes, without a feeling of sadness at the loss of our comrades and of gladness that they never hesitated in their course.

But it is not the memory of these men alone, whose names stand there on the roll of honor for all time, which moves us. We think of other friends who have run equal chances of danger, and have fought the long

battle of life as bravely; men who have made this University what it is, or who have rendered distinguished services to their fellow-citizens and their country—we think of the many men who, leading useful lives in the background, are rarely mentioned, but whose memories are cherished by their classmates.

We think of all these comrades with equal tenderness and respect, and as one after another, worn out with work or by the hard blows of life, drops, we close up the ranks, and drawing nearer to each other, we move on. It is the record of deep mutual trust and friendship, and such a boon we would pass on to you.

Our new house is built in the belief that here also will dwell this same

spirit of democracy side by side with the spirit of true comradeship, friendship; but to-day this house is a mere shell, a body into which you, Harvard students, and you alone can breathe life and then by a constant and generous use of it educate yourselves and each other.

Looking back in life I can see no earthly good which has come to me so great, so sweet, so uplifting, so consoling, as the friendship of the men and the women whom I have known well and loved—friends who have been equally ready to give and to receive kind offices and timely counsel.

Is there anything more delightful than the ties between young fellows which spring up and strengthen in

daily college life—friendships born of sympathy, confidence, and affection, as yet untouched by the interests and claims of later life?

We older men would offer to you a garden in which such saplings will grow until they become the oaks to whose shade you may always return for cheer and for rest in your victories and your troubles. Be sure that you will have both, for the one you will win and the other you must surely meet; and when they come, nothing will steady and strengthen you like real friends who will speak the frank words of truth tempered by affection—friends who will help you and never count the cost.

Friendship is the full-grown team-play of life, and in my eyes there is

no limit to its value. The old proverb tells us that we have as many uses for friendship as for fire and water. Never doubt it, for you know all these things, and by and by you will feel them all around you—in your hearts.

It is this education, this joy which we would bring to you with your new house. We hope that in years to come you, on returning to Cambridge, will experience the same feelings that we have in Memorial Hall, when you think of your comrades here, who in due course will have done nobly their part in life.

Already on these walls stand tablets to great sons of Harvard, whose memories will ever be green, and much space remains for others who deserve well of their fellows. It may

be that you will wish to record in this house the names of our young brothers who went to the Cuban war and never came back. Perhaps you may establish here, as at Oxford, an arena, where you can thresh out the questions of the day, and learn to state on your feet your opinions and the reasons for them.

One point pray note. The house will fail of its full purpose unless there is always a warm corner for that body of men who devote themselves to the pursuit of knowledge and to your instruction—the whole staff of Harvard University, from our distinguished and honored President, the professors, librarians, and instructors to the youngest proctor. And if you see an older graduate enter the

hall, go and sit beside him, tell him the college news, and make him a welcome guest, for this is the house of friendship. He wants your news and he likes boys, else he would not have come. Old men are more shy of boys than boys of old men. I have been one and am the other—and ought to know. Like the Arabs, nail wide open your doors and offer freely to all comers the salt of hospitality, for it is a great and a charming virtue.

Harvard students, we older men ask for you every joy and every blessing which has fallen to our lot, and we ask of you higher aims and hopes than ours, together with better work and greater achievements, for your problems will be harder, and your tasks greater than ours have been.

Remember that our University was founded for the public good and that it has a great history—that steady progress is essential to its moral and intellectual health and that the health and true welfare of our University and our country go hand in hand. Thus have they been made and thus only shall they endure.

Henceforth the government of this house is in your hands. May it be used only for the general good, and may private ends never be sought here!

In these halls may you, young men, see visions and dream dreams, and may you keep steadily burning the fire of high ideals, enthusiasm, and hope, otherwise you cannot share in the great work and glory of our new century. Already this century is bring-

ing to you younger men questions and decisions to the full as interesting and as vital as the last century brought to us. Every honor is open to you, and every victory, if only you will dare, will strive strongly, and will persist.

Ours is the past and to you the future, and I am sure that the welfare and the honor of Harvard is as safe in your hands as it has been in those of your forbears.

Let Memorial Hall stand a temple consecrated to the spirit of large patriotism and of true democracy.

Let this house stand a temple consecrated to the same spirit and to friendship.

One word more to you future citizens of the United States.

We as a nation have suffered a terrible blow, aimed at our national life, which, while resulting in the death of our chief magistrate, leaves our country absolutely unhurt, because we have a government of laws and not of men, and because our people are sound and true.

No one in his senses will for a moment offer any palliation of the cowardly, treacherous crime.

We reply by a renewal of our confession of faith, and by a stern resolve to square our daily thoughts and acts with our national faith and polity.

While we recognize that normal social conditions must constantly change, we meet such false and fatal insanity of thought and of deed by a noble sanity of thought and conduct,

for ours is a government of healthy progress and not of anarchy.

May God keep safe and guide aright our fellow-graduate, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, President of the United States.

THE END