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ADDRESS

TO THE

SURVIVORS' ASSOCIATION

OF THE

150th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers.

READ AT GETTYSBURG, SEPTEMBER 25th, 1896.

BY

BREVET-MAJOR R. L. ASHHURST,

FIRST ADJUTANT OF THE REGIMENT.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

PHILADELPHIA
PRINTING HOUSE OF ALLEN, LANE & SCOTT
1211-15 Clover St. and 229-31 S. Fifth St.
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ADDRESS

TO THE

SURVIVORS OF THE 150th REGIMENT.

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HOW widely different are the circumstances under which we now meet, my comrades, from those which marked our first visit to the town of Gettysburg thirty-three years ago.

We had spent the night of June 30th, as you will all remember, at the little hamlet of State Line, just across the Maryland border. We knew we were nearing the enemy, and that a battle was certainly approaching; but we little realized the terrible ordeal which the 1st of July, 1863, had in store for us. We spent the night peacefully, and started on our march northward leisurely enough on that Wednesday morning. It was not until after we had fairly started that the sound of the cannon broke upon our ears, and rumors of the commencing conflict began to meet us on our way. Then the cannon grew louder and news came thick and fast. We heard of the first success and the capture of Archer's Brigade, and then, alas! of the gallant Reynolds' death. Our pace had quickened as the cannons' sound grew louder, and e'er long the order to double quick was given. Then, just before we reached this pretty town, lying white and peaceful in its green meadows, our course was turned to the left, and leaving Gettysburg to the east of us we hastened forward over the hills and vales, where we passed many a gallant soldier stretched upon the ground for his last slumber, to the ridge or hill by McPherson's barn, which we were to make historic ground forever. Gettysburg itself we were not to pass through until, as the afternoon shadows grew long, the broken remnants of our gallant regiment, far more than decimated, since we had left between this old barn and the Seminary more than half our number killed or seriously wounded,

struggled through the streets of this little town, divided but undismayed, to form once more on the hills south of it, and to take that memorable position on Cemetery Ridge, from which no hostile attack could dislodge us.

Now we come into this smiling valley as welcome guests, to partake again its now familiar hospitality, and visit each hallowed spot sacred by the effusion of patriot blood, and renew our memories of those awful and glorious days, which nature in its prodigal growth is doing its best to efface, and which but for the memorials set up by loving hands she would long since have hidden with her green mantle of oblivion.

Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths ;
 Our bruised armes hung up for monuments ;
 Our stern alarums changed to merry making ;
 Our dreadful marches to delightful measures ;
 Grim-visaged Mars hath smoothed his wrinkled front.

These were the words that the immortal bard of Avon placed in the mouth of the Duke of Gloster, when the long civil wars of England had come to an end by the triumph of the white over the red rose, and the establishment on the throne of Edward IV., the representative of the House of York.

Thirty-four years have passed, my comrades, since our ten companies were gathered into a regiment at Harrisburg in the early Fall of 1862, and more than thirty years have elapsed since the smaller band of those who survived and still remained to hold up the flag of the 150th were mustered out of service at Elmira and dispersed to their homes to try to learn again the arts of peace. Thirty-four years have elapsed since many of us met each other for the first time, and began the acquaintance which was to develop into the comradeship which was to unite us in the dear bond of lasting friendship. While all sons of the dear old Keystone State, our different and contrasting origin showed what a Commonwealth and republic within itself Pennsylvania is. Mechanics, clerks, and students from the town and city, farmers from the fertile, rolling fields of the country bor-

dering on the Great Lakes, and woodsmen from the mighty forests of the North, we found ourselves brought together by the exigency of the time into the collocation of companies which ere long was to be welded by the mighty blows of the hammer of war into the indissoluble form of the 150th Regiment. We were from the beginning inspired by the same hopes and motives. We had come to arms from the same patriotic impulse—the same devotion to our State and country, and to the immortal cause of liberty for which our Union was called into being, and with which it grew entwined from boyhood in our hearts. Three years, my comrades, limits the period of our life as soldiers. Within the brief compass of three years is comprised all that story of peril and adventure; of hope and despondency; of victory and defeat; of toil, struggle, and privation; of well-earned rest, doubly enjoyable as a respite from our fatigues; and the renewed encounter of danger and suffering—cruel at the time to endure, yet now precious to look back upon, both in the thought of the triumph of the glorious cause for which the sorrow and suffering were undergone, and in the dear memory of the ties of love and friendship, cemented by the endurance in brave companionship of the same perils and hardships. As we look back upon those days, fellow soldiers, it seems hard to realize the period of our service can have been so brief, and that the time since then covers a period ten times as long. Those eventful years seem to have been the prime of our life, crowded with the incidents and events of march, camp, and battle; while our later years seem, with all the more tedious struggle and labors of civil life, to have passed away smoothly and uneventfully in comparison. Thirty years have passed since then—a time within which a new generation has arisen; within which our sons and daughters have grown up to strong manhood and fair womanhood. A younger generation who have never hearkened to war's alarms or seen battle's magnificently stern array; who know the cannon only as it lumbers through the street in military procession, and the musket only as it glistens in the sunlight on parade, are now coming to the

front—nay, already are there, and are taking upon themselves the work of life and the conduct of affairs, and we begin to feel of ourselves that—

Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage.

Not only are the deeds of the period which fill so large a space in our memories being largely forgotten, but we find growing up around us a spirit which is impatient of any return to the thoughts and feelings of those glorious days. In the rising generation are many who, when they hear and read of deeds of valor and heroism, cry out *cui bono*—for what good? and who measure everything by the yardstick of profit. When any policy or course of conduct is urged as requisite to maintain the honor of the Republic or the public policy of our fathers; when any stir of sympathy is felt for fellow Americans struggling for liberty close to our shores; these so-called enlightened persons forthwith seek to find how it will affect the stock market, or influence the course of business; and if it would appear that the course which far-seeing patriotism indicates, the preservation of America for free Americans, or the extension of a helping hand of sympathy to those, who longing to be free themselves, have dared to strike the blow, may depress trade or lower stocks, loud are the cries which arise against so-called jingoism, and we are admonished by these superior teachers against a bold or bullying disposition, and urged to walk along quietly and submissively and mind our own trade and shop, and leave all great questions and large policies to other nations. We are reminded of the horrors, and, above all, of the cost of war, and our sage critics point out to us that it would be cheaper to pay any damages or give up any claim than run the slightest risk of going to war about it.

Comrades, when we hear these sapient views dinned in our ears does not our memory go back to the dark days of Buchanan's time, in the early part of 1861? Are not these teachings, now commended to us as the sum of human wisdom, the very same cowardly counsels which seemed so likely to prevail over the impulse of patriotism and love of liberty in those perilous days? Have we forgotten the Northern

men with Southern principles? Have we forgotten those who urged upon the Philadelphia merchant silence as to the cruel wrongs of slavery, lest we should lose Southern trade? Does it not seem but as yesterday when we were urged to yield everything in compromise to the fierce and angry Southerner; if he could but be prevailed on to forgive us and stay in the Union; or, failing by submission to placate him, were advised to say to the seceding States, "Erring sisters, go in peace," without striking a blow to save and maintain the union of these American States, the most precious bulwark of liberty in the known world?

Comrades, there was a time in those dark days of 1861 when it seemed as if this cowardly, selfish policy were destined to prevail; when amid doubt, confusion, and treason we knew not whom to trust; when by maladministration, the finances of the country had been brought to such a pass, that the United States had to pay twelve per cent. per annum for money. When armies and fortifications were on every hand surrendered and abandoned by officers trained by the nation's schools, and the Northern arsenals were stripped to supply intending rebellion with the munitions of war.

Which of us does not remember that period of doubt and discouragement? And how did it end? Not by the careful counter teaching of wiser and better and more courageous counsellors, though all honor to those brave teachers who bravely upheld through that gloomy time the cause of eternal right and deathless liberty. But in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all was changed; the plain people of the country awoke, and with that sublime instinct which in great crises illuminates the ordinarily slow minds of plain men, they felt and knew that this was all wrong, that there was but one course for the salvation of the nation, and that, the brave and direct one of fighting to the death for liberty and union, one and inseparable. They realized in an instant that to reckon of profit or loss in such an emergency was the wildest folly.

The Scriptures say: "What shall it profit a man if he gain

the whole world and lose his own soul?" the people realized what would all trade and business gains profit us, if we lost our united country; if we ceased to be Americans and were broken into groups of divided States; and, on the other hand, what other loss of property or of life itself would count in the scale, if we could save and hand down from sire to son citizenship in this great united free American republic?

The first shot fired at Sumter cleared the air of the murky fogs of cowardly and selfish policy, and the great Northern people arose, inspired and enlightened by the divine impulse of patriotic pride. The flag, the immortal Stars and Stripes, which had been but a thing of light estimation to many, shone out in the heavens as a beacon light; and we followed it to toil, suffering, sickness, wounds, and death, eagerly and without reluctance, and through and past all those ills, and the multitudinous woes of war, to victory and the re-establishment on a firmer foundation than ever of our broad Union.

Were we all wrong? Was the game not worth the candle? Was the loss of property and waste of force and energy, the suffering and pain endured by countless thousands, the destruction of so many precious lives, compensated, and more than compensated, as we have always thought and proudly believed, by the splendid results obtained; or would we have done better each to have pursued his own little narrow pathway in life and done the work which lay before him, married his wife and brought up his children without regard to whether he belonged to a great, free nation, the hope of liberty for the world, or not? Was our sacrifice vain? Viewed merely from a prosaic and selfish point of view we did make great sacrifices. Apart from toil and suffering, apart from the suffering of the protracted march, the distress of heat, and wet and cold, the pain of the wound, and the anguish of fever, sacrifices individual to every soldier which his body must remember; there were the pangs of separation from loved ones endured by ourselves in the field, and in yet greater degree by those we had left at home. There was also a great pecuniary sacrifice—when at the critical age of manhood we absented

ourselves from the marts of trade and industry, leaving to those who staid at home the opportunity of seizing every advantage in the race for successful business life; so that when we returned to the walks of peace we found the best places already occupied, and learned by experience that, despite the loudly expressed gratitude to the soldier, we had before us an up-hill struggle for the chance of even making a living in civil life. Then many of us came back maimed and crippled, and we left behind us on hill and plain, in swamp and forest, many who never returned. The sacrifice was enormous, the suffering intense to the individual, and when attempted to be realized in the mass, inconceivable. And our antagonists, our gallant Southern brethren who met us on this field and on so many other fair plains and green hills, and in so many shady woodlands, and by so many a lonely river to be dyed with both our bloods; they and theirs suffered, and deeply suffered, too. They fought, as we believe, in a bad cause, the success of which would have been disastrous for human freedom, but they fought nobly, in a firm conviction of its rightfulness, and with splendid disregard of the sacrifice entailed on themselves and those dear to them. Has all this gone for naught, and are the country and the people only that much the poorer for the precious blood spilt, the salt tears shed, and the wealth consumed and destroyed?

If we were to believe some of our teachers of to-day, such is the case. In a recent glowing and picturesque story, familiar to many of you, "The Red Badge of Courage," we have a most vivid and intense picture of the soldier's toils, sorrows, perils, and sufferings—we are put in his place to feel all he underwent, his agonies of fear and shame, but not a word is told us of the great and glorious object of the sacrifice, nor of the noble glow of true patriotic fervor which, as we know, was the governing note and tone of the chords of the soldier's heart, and without which the story of the American soldier's deeds and endurings is but as a tale told by an idiot—full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. On the contrary, if we knew not better we would

arise from its perusal with the feeling that nothing could justify or compensate the horror and suffering undergone.

Other novels and stories and dramas with which literature abounds at this time tell us of many of the incidents of the war time, and describe to us the course of man's life and love running through that period, and of the warp and woof of human feeling and character in those days; and tell us, too, the harrowing tale of loss and suffering and death, which they often paint as unnecessary and useless. How few of them speak of the lofty ends and sublime purpose, of the devotion and sacrifice called out, or of the ennobling of personal life and character as well as national, by and through that sacrifice. And yet, my comrades, we feel and know that we did not even for ourselves and our own natures fight and suffer in vain. Apart from the sublime achievement of the preservation of our Union and an united free America for ourselves and our posterity, our labors were not, we feel, fruitless to ourselves or to the development of our own characters; and even our Southern brethren, then our gallant foes, who mistakenly fought so superbly in a bad cause—happily a lost one—though they fought in vain as to success, yet their gallant, earnest struggle for a purpose and end they believed just and noble was not unrewarded, in the development, through sacrifice, of a noble type of manhood in themselves.

I have read to you in the beginning of this address some lines from Shakespeare, contrasting the period of peace with that of the bloody war then lately ended in its physical aspects. Let me read you now some verses by England's late laureate, Alfred Tennyson, written in 1854, when the long period of peace which had settled down upon Europe after the termination of the Napoleonic wars was at last broken, and men again put aside the plough and the reaping hook for the musket and the sword:—

It was but a dream, yet it lightened my despair
 When I thought that a war would arise in defense of the right;
 That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
 The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire;
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and peace

Pipe on her pastoral billock a languid note,
 And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
 Nor the cannon bullet rust on the slothful shore,
 And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
 Shall shake its threaded tiers in the wind no more.
 Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
 Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold.

* * * * *

And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd,
 Tho' many a light shall darken and many shall weep
 For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,
 Yet God's just doom shall be wreaked * * *
 And noble thought be freer under the sun,
 And the heart of a people beat with one desire,
 For the long, long canker of peace is over and done.

The poet, in his prophetic vision, saw good, not ill, to come out of war with all its suffering and sacrifice, and looked, as we see, to war to remedy the ills of the canker of peace: that is, the decay and corruption of the character of the nation by reason of the self-indulgence and lust of mere material personal gain and enjoyment—which the laureate deemed the consequence of this long devotion of the people of England to the accumulation of wealth and attainment of pleasure, each for himself, during those thirty years while the drum and cannon were silent.

The ills and horrors of war all can see; it needs no prophet or poet to point them out or make them real to us. The dangers of peace, on the other hand, are more subtle, and it requires the flash of the true poet's genius to bring them before us and make us realize they are not blessings and good things. Let us then, comrades, in the light of the poet's inspiration, as well as in that of our own limited experience, consider what are these treacherous dangers of peace to personal and national character, and why it is that war with all its terrors may yet, like Winter's frosts, be beneficent in the destruction of germs of disease which, if unchecked, might work a moral destruction as compared with which the direst effects of war are but kindly and wholesome surgery.

Perhaps the first and most immediately striking effect of the change from the way men act and feel in time of peace to

their sentiments and conduct in the days which try men's souls, is in the unity, the solidarity of feeling which arises when a great cause stirs into activity the blood of the most torpid, and we suddenly feel ourselves, instead of mere isolated units, members of a great being, knit together by a common patriotism. As Tennyson said, in the lines above quoted, war makes in a moment "the heart of a people beat with one desire."

In peace individualism predominates. It is every one for himself and the devil take the hindmost. We know what that means in war. As soon as the mere individual is thought of and considered, the army becomes a mob. The first stage of discipline is to curb and restrain the fierce individual movement, and to teach man that he is powerless by himself, and that his strength is in unity; the effacement of the individual in the company, the regiment, the brigade, until the whole army becomes a splendid unit, capable of that combined and sustained action which can alone bring victory to its country's banners. Therefore while the essence of a serious and noble war is unity of feeling among the nation in its patriotic support, its success must spring from the united action of its citizen soldiery who learn to stand shoulder to shoulder, and to move as one man in their country's cause. In every way we view it, my comrades, we see in this thought of unity the permeating principle of military life as it should be. How lost and separate each of us felt when we first assembled round our flag. How invaluable were the days when each man learned to know and rely upon the comrade who stood beside him. As the days went by and the overwrought individualism of our modern civilization gave way by degrees to the welding force of discipline, how we grew to feel ourselves one, and our pride and confidence grew and strengthened, not in our individual selves, but in the splendid organization of which we formed a part—the 150th Pennsylvania Volunteers. And from that day to this, my comrades, what unity has there been in our lives like military unity? What friendship like that of comrades tried and found true amid perils and privations which the

peaceful life dreams not of? Although our soldiering was scant three years, and though more than ten times three have since rolled by, have we found in that longer period since, friendships or alliances which can take the place of those cemented in our army days, and now, alas, becoming fewer year by year, as one comrade after another steps from life's ranks at death's imperious summons? Even since our last reunion on this historic field how many names of our comrades have been dropped from the muster roll! As I write I recall those of Gimber, Gutelius, Williams, Yocum, and O'Connor. Friends many and true have we made in these thirty years of peace, but can we in our heart of hearts feel that they are the same to us as the comrade who walked beside us on the march, when mile added to mile seemed to tax human endurance to the utmost; beside whom we lay under the canopy of heaven, or perhaps sheltered by the same blanket from the storm, and who stood shoulder to shoulder with us on the day of battle; who sometimes helped us, and sometimes sought not in vain our assistance, when wounds and sickness overpowered him? No association however intimate in the life of peaceful industry can make such friendship as grows under the tent and to the music of the cannon.

The military virtues which we are considering are nearly connected; and the habit of obedience lies close to the repression of that undue development of the individual which is one of the vices of modern life. Obedience, the repression of the fierce individual will, the habit of readily obeying lawful authority, of giving up for the time the right even of using our own judgment and accepting without question that of our commanding officer, is an element of the first importance in building up the soldier's character. It lies at the root of discipline, and he who would command must learn how to obey. Early civilization has sprung from obedience, and one of the first steps in putting off mere savagery and ascending in the social scale to the condition even of the barbarian, is when man learns to subdue the fiery impulses of his savage nature enough to accept the command of a superior, and to submit to

the bonds of discipline and training to win victory from the common foe.

In thus praising discipline and obedience, let me not be understood as for a moment undervaluing freedom, or confusing the base submission of the serf with the voluntary and proud obedience of the soldier. No two things can be further apart. The obedience I speak of is the voluntary, conscious submission of the freeman to the yoke of authority for the accomplishment of a great purpose, with no trace in it of the element of fear or servility. History shows us that never has there been such superb discipline, never has the spirit of obedience, unity, and order produced such great results as with bodies of intelligent freemen. Where was there a more superb instance of discipline than in the three hundred Spartan freemen who, moving to the sound of flutes and soft recorders, died to the last man in the pass of Thermopylæ? Where could be found more splendid specimens of free manhood than the ten thousand Greeks who, after the defeat and death of Cyrus, whom they had come to support, on the plains of Mesopotamia, cut their way through army after army, crossed one mountain range after another, and many an unfordable river, maintaining an equally bold front to the savage nations who tried to intercept their retreat and to the pursuing Persian hosts seeking to overwhelm them, until at last they emerged, wearied and decimated, but unconquered, on the Black Sea? In the wonderfully disciplined force of Hannibal, the greatest general of antiquity, his Spanish mercenaries were of splendid merit, but his best and finest force, on whom in the ultimate emergency he placed his reliance, was the flower of the youth of Carthage, who followed his standard for patriotism, not for silver. In more modern times what are the most remarkable instances of the triumph of discipline and obedience? At once arises in our memory the picture of the army of Swedes and North Germans, an army of stern, sober, conscientious men, with which Gustavus Adolphus, the hero of the North, broke to pieces the mercenary hosts of Tilly and Wallenstein, until then, with their alternations of partial discipline and fierce license,

regarded as the most formidable forces in Europe: or, turning to England, we think of the regiments of Puritans and Independents whom Cromwell, after the self-denying ordinance, organized from the previously uncertain train bands of the Roundheads—an army against which the cavaliers of Prince Rupert dashed themselves in vain, and which stood like an unassailable rock against every foreign and domestic storm.

Let us take an instance of to-day. But a few years ago the Egyptian, emasculated by centuries of oppression, caring little whether he died by the sword or under the lash of his taskmaster, was called upon to encounter the fierce Arabs of the desert following the standard of the Mahdi. He had hardly courage to flee, but lay down to submit to death at the hands of his enemy. What do we see now, after barely a generation of just rule in Egypt, and the training of the Egyptian soldiery under English officers? The same Egyptian, under General Kitchener, at Firket meets face to face, and overcomes the foe, whom fifteen years ago he had not courage to resist. In modern civil life, comrades, the need of obedience is not often apparent to us; each of us is able to go his own way and follow the course dictated by his interest or pleasure, without immediate or irreparable disaster being apparent as the result of liberty carried to license. It is only in some emergency, or catastrophe in the course of our usually smooth existence, when tempest, fire, flood, or shipwreck breaks down the usual protections of society in modern life, that we see how helpless the disunited efforts of individual man are, and how help and protection must be found in united and disciplined action, based on obedience to some competent guide or leader. But these emergencies, happily, are comparatively so rare that many may go through a peaceful life without meeting one, and when they come they are apt to find men with their character as well as their muscles, flabby and untrained for the exigence of the time. In the shipwreck, when men are crowding into boats, perhaps too few for all, and the loss of those few is threatened by the struggle, what salvation is there, unless there be present, discipline as well as native courage—men trained both to command and to obey? Therefore,

comrades, can we not say that history and experience teach that the lessons of discipline and obedience which we learn as nowhere else in the stern school of war, are teachings well worth a great sacrifice?

What shall I next speak of, my comrades? The education of the quality of valor—courage, that distinguishing manly quality without which character, however beautiful otherwise, is weak and contemptible, and which, in its superb development, so lights up a character as to make us look with admiration even at one who deserves the name of villain. Their splendid valor and gallant death makes us look with admiration even at a Richard the Third or a Macbeth, a Cortez or a Pizarro, despite their crimes. It is often said that courage is a natural quality which one man possesses and another lacks, and that no education or development is needed for it; but history and experience, I think, teach us otherwise, and that for the greater number of mankind this is not the case. There are many splendid cases, and I am glad to say I have seen not a few of them among the ranks of our beloved regiment, of men who seem not to know what fear is, whom danger does but stimulate, and peril delight,—natural-born soldiers, whose valor needs restraint rather than development. But I think we must all agree that this is hardly the common and usual case, among men brought up among the conditions of modern life; whatever it may have been in earlier days, when every man had to look to his good sword and strong right arm for the protection of his family from wrong and insult and his property from spoliation. In these days, when we rightly trust to the law and the police for the protection of our lives and homes, there is danger that the courage of our hearts as well as the muscles of our arms may be atrophied for want of use. Whatever may be a man's native courage, he cannot surely know whether or not he be brave until he has been tried, and therefore cannot have the confidence in his own courage without which the good effect of his valor may be half lost. The man who fears perhaps he may be frightened when danger comes, is half lost already, although a splendid wave of courage may redeem him, when the peril is

present. The habit of courageous action can be developed even in a man nervous and timid at the start, and he may learn he possesses valor from the fact that he finds he can force himself to act bravely. Courage, too, is contagious, and the magnetic touch of elbow of soldier to soldier, and the valorous atmosphere around him may inspire even the timid and weak with the spirit of the soldier. I am speaking now, be it understood, of men who have a true, brave nature essentially, which, although liable to fear from lack of habit of danger, or from physical or nervous infirmity, may be developed and educated into cool and deliberate courage.

And probably this may be justly concluded to be the natural condition of most men who in civil life have never had an occasion of testing their bravery or steadfastness, and who up to the last moment before the ordeal of battle, may in their heart of hearts have entertained a doubt as to how they would meet the crisis when it came. To these the discipline of war, the magnificent example of the old and tried soldier, or of the fortunate natural hero by nature a stranger to fear, is a noble education, and when the essence of the nature is sound and the heart true, this instruction rarely fails to develop and confirm the manly virtues, and perfect the character with a full reliance on its own courage. It only can fail in the few cases where the fibre of the moral character is too feeble to endure and profit by the discipline of the soldier's life. I speak not here of cowards, properly so-called; such were few and far between among the volunteers whom the call of patriotism drew to their country's banner in the early years of the war. There was little temptation for such to seek enlistment in those days, though the case may have been different in the later period of the draft, and of huge bounties. There is always a residuum in every nation, even in ours, of such men, whom no incentive of honor, shame, or feeling can make into soldiers. True cowardice, in my judgment, is not very far removed from that excessive individualism of which I spoke awhile since, and perhaps is the ultimate result of it; that is, it is based on egotism and selfishness. The man truly and absolutely self-

ish and cold of heart, to whom his own ease, comfort, and prosperity, is far more than honor, or the welfare of friends and country, can logically hardly be anything but a coward; though by the strange complexity of human nature he may sometimes be endowed with a recklessness of danger to which his nature has not true claim, and then is apt to become a dangerous wild beast in the community.

The old saying of Satan in the book of Job, "Whatever a man hath will he give for his life," was a hasty and crude generalization, proved untrue in many an instance. The Chinese will sell his life to support his family. In the olden days many a man endured the *peine forte et dure*, with weight after weight piled upon him until he died, rather than plead, in order to save his estate from confiscation, and transmit it to his heirs. The martyr and patriot have shown on the scaffold and at the stake that they willingly surrendered life rather than betray religion, honor, or loyalty. The patriot soldier every day stood ready to risk life for the preservation of his country's liberty and laws; but the saying is true of the class of men of whom I speak, and such have no place among a patriot soldiery. Such a man, the true coward, may indeed fight desperately to save his own life in an extremity, like a rat in a corner. He may even learn by experience that in many cases it is as safe to advance as to run away, since bullets are just as fatal when entering from behind; but he can never become a true soldier. His disease being of the heart, not of the mind or the nerves, cannot be eradicated or cured, and at any time the true ingrained selfishness of his nature may, on a favorable opportunity, assert itself and bring ruin to the army and the cause. And this thought brings me to what I deem the true and complete crown of the soldier's character as developed by the stern discipline of warlike life—it is unselfishness—the abrogation of self; the devotion of life and all that makes life dear to country and nation in the first and highest place, and secondarily to the army, the regiment, the company, the comrade. Our great Exemplar says: "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." The first principle of the volunteer soldier's course, the very reason why he

laid aside the peaceful implements of his trade or husbandry, was the conviction and realization that he was ready and willing to lay down his life for his friends, for his country, the aggregate and sum of those he loved, and whose prosperity and unity were what made the life, the home, the family what they are and have been in our beloved nation.

Therefore, in the very beginning the true soldier undertakes to lay aside egotism, selfishness, and self-seeking, to curb the rampant individualism of our day, and to seek the good of others, of the great mass of his friends and brethren; not in the fierce pride of individual effort, but with patience, temperance, obedience, and steadfast courage, as one unit in the great body of which he is proud to be a part—the patriot army. Even had the end before us been less noble and imperative, even had our success in preserving the Union and the liberty handed down to us by our sires been less complete, who can dare to say that we fought and bled and suffered in vain? The struggle and the endurance, even apart from the achievement, brought to the soldier, and to the nation of which he was a part, its great reward in the development of character, in purging from the body of the people, as through fire, the gross elements of egotism, self-seeking, and corruption; and bringing out of the crucible of toil and suffering the type of perfected manhood—the patriot soldier—patient, true, enduring, obedient, valiant, and merciful—of which our noble volunteer army afforded so many splendid examples.

Comrades, our fighting days are almost over; we are all now beyond the age when we could enlist under our country's banner, save under some terrible emergency which called on every veteran to fire one shot more before surrendering his life for his country.

If again a new danger, whether foreign or domestic, from without or within, to our country's unity or life, or to the nation's honor or honesty threatens, God grant that a new generation of our sons will be found ready and anxious to go forth at the call of duty and rally to the flag of their country with the single-hearted devotion and valor of the volunteers of thirty years ago.

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