

E

474

.65

A54

<





Class E474
 .65
Book A54

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

COL. EPHRAIM F. ANDERSON.

AT

Antietam National Cemetery,

MAY 30, 1870.



BALTIMORE:

JOHN COX, BOOK, JOB AND POSTER PRINTER,

Corner of Gay and Lombard Streets.

E 4, 4
65
A 54

*Printed at the request of Samuel I. Piper, Edward M.
Mobley and John Reichard, who were appointed a
Committee to solicit a copy for publication.*

His Excellency
U. S. Grant
with the respect and esteem of
Ephraim F. Anderson

(U. S. Appraiser,
Port of Baltimore)

ADDRESS.

The concourse of people having reached the Cemetery grounds, with quantities of flowers to scatter about the soldiers' graves, they assembled in front of a stand which had been erected, when the exercises were commenced with music and singing, followed with solemn prayer by the Rev. Wm. M. Osborn, after which Col. Ephraim F. Anderson was introduced as the Orator of the day, who spoke as follows :

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

We have come here to-day with evergreens and flowers to decorate the graves of our fallen heroes. The 30th of May, which has been designated as our "Memorial Day," is indeed becoming a national anniversary—the saddest yet the sweetest of all the days we celebrate. These tender observances help to humanize our feelings and purify our patriotism.—Our annual pilgrimages to these sacred little mounds make our hearts better and inspire us with a purer love of country. While people everywhere, both civilized and barbarous, have fondly cherished the memory of their brave ones slain in battle, yet their tributes of sorrow and gratitude have been commemorative rather of their great national triumphs, or lavished upon their victorious chieftains alone. Monuments have been reared to the very heavens to point where battles were fought and won, or to mark where famous leaders fell, and pyramids have been erected for the sepulture of kings ; but the rank and file of armies have passed unnoticed as individuals, and have been allowed to commingle their dust in shallow, evenly covered ditches, in forgotten or unfrequented places.

We are not here to-day to gaze up toward the apex of some proud pillar, as it pierces the sky ; nor are we come where

our sentiment for the dead will be lost in admiration of the splendid mausoleum or costly cenotaph. Within these cemetery walls five thousand of our brave defenders lie slumbering, and we are come to this bivouac of our gallant dead, bringing with us the bloom and fragrance of early spring-time—beautiful flowers, delicate and tender as the emotions which they symbolize—beautiful flowers with which God's love has made our earth smile—beautiful flowers to be arranged by fair hands over each humble yet honored grave. I know not whether the departed turn back to view the honors bestowed upon their remains, but if such be their wont, I imagine the spirits of those whose bones repose here are hovering about these memorial services; and these lovely flowers are only less grateful to them than the nation's starry flag which they hallowed by their blood.

While this occasion is mainly in honor of the cause for which our soldiers gave up their lives, it at the same time engages the tenderest affections of our hearts, for we are sensible that those who sleep here are our sons and our brothers, and we perform, though imperfectly, the sweet offices which their dearer kindred would esteem their sacred privilege.

In all times, it has been a fond desire of the human race to be buried, after death, among their kindred in the family graveyard, where surviving friends might often stray and bestow their tributes of affection.

When Jacob was about to die his last thoughts went back to the field of Machpelah, and, calling his son Joseph to his side, he placed him under oath and said to him—"Bury me not I pray thee in Egypt, but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying-place. * * * There they buried Abraham and Sarah, his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebecca, his wife; and there I buried Leah." And then again, in fulfilment of an oath, the children of Israel took up the bones of Joseph, carrying them all along their forty years' journey through the wilderness in order to give them final sepulture among his people.

Our offerings to-day are for the Union Soldier, who sleeps among strangers far away from the family vault. But it is pleasing to know that, though the mother and sisters may never come to plant the white rose and train the myrtle, yet the Soldier boy's grave is not neglected—with his life's blood he purchased a fond mother and gentle sisters in every home defended by his valor, and *they* will come, by-times, to deck

his modest tomb with choice flowers and moisten its verdure with grateful tears.

As we stand here to-day our minds naturally go back to the sanguinary scene enacted on this field, and also to the events which preceded and led to that memorable struggle. The great battle of Antietam was fought on the 17th of September, 1862, between the Union forces known as the Army of the Potomac, under Gen. McClellan, and the Confederates known as the Army of Northern Virginia, commanded by Gen. Lee.

I shall not commence at the beginning of our military operations and follow the train of events leading up to the one which transpired here.

It may be proper, however, to notice a few leading incidents which may serve as landmarks to show us at what point of the war this battle was fought, and also to glance briefly at the history of the Army of the Potomac up to that period.

One year and a half elapsed between the attack on Fort Sumter and the date of this battle, during the whole of which period hostilities never ceased and the contest widened and grew in magnitude. After several small, though at that time, important actions, including Philippi, Big Bethel and the disastrous battle of Bull Run, Gen. McClellan reported to Washington in July, 1861, and commenced organizing the Army of the Potomac. But it was not until the 1st of April, 1862, that he completed his task and placed that organization in the field at Fortress Monroe. In the mean time large armies were operating in other theatres of the war, and startling results were convulsing the public every day. In the west Grant had given us Fort Donelson, and nearer at home we had fought the first battle of Winchester, while at Hampton Roads our glorious little Monitor, the "Ericson," had cleared out the exultant Merrimac and revealed to the world a proud wonder in naval warfare.

Still another month elapsed before McClellan was prepared to advance up the Peninsula. But the war continued to rage elsewhere with augmented violence, and the country was not without stirring events. The famous battle of Shiloh and the capture of Island No. 10 took place early in the month, and before the close of it Farragut and Butler were in New Orleans.

It was about the 1st of May that the Army of the Potomac entered actively upon its eventful career. As it moved for-

ward towards Richmond, hurling back the enemy from his strongholds at Yorktown, Williamsburg and Fair Oaks, and planting the stars and stripes within plain view of the rebel capital, the eyes of the nation were withdrawn from all other fields, and the loyal heart stood still for the issue.

It was the grandest army that had ever manœvered on this continent, and combined the pride and hope of our trembling cause. It went forth with the oft-repeated "God bless you," and was followed by the prayers of a righteous people; and right nobly did it answer back from more than three score bloody battle-fields, speaking back from Appomattox through the bright rainbow of peace. It has been ascertained that more than one half of all our killed and wounded, both by land and sea, during the entire war, belonged to the Army of the Potomac. But its work was not all victories. It was destined to be tried by many reverses and disasters. Soon came the terrible seven days' battle, which terminated a fruitless and, therefore, disastrous campaign. Though our army failed of its object and withdrew from its advanced position before Richmond, yet it cannot be said to have been whipped. On the contrary, in every collision during the seven days' combat the enemy was handsomely repulsed—signally so in the closing one at Malvern Hill, where he was sent back reeling from the field. I shall not presume to point out where the responsibility of the failure of our Peninsular campaign ought to rest. I prefer to leave that for the future historian, who can weigh the bearings and causes more dispassionately. Thus much I will say—it was no fault of the rank and file of our noble army. The retreat of Gen. Pope from the Rapidan put an end to our offensive operations for the time, and September found the Army of the Potomac back within the defences of Washington, where it had left with such high promise five months before. It was in view of our embarrassing condition at this time that Lee conceived the idea of invasion. Among other reasons assigned by him for advancing into Maryland was, (to use his own language,) "the hope that military success might afford an opportunity to aid the citizens in any efforts they might be disposed to make to recover their liberty." But coming as he did into Western Maryland, the loyal section of the State, he was chagrined to find the people entertaining views on the subject of "liberty" widely different from those held by him and his deluded followers, and by no means disposed to make the "efforts" which he desired. Had he found his way into the lower

counties of the State, or into the city of Baltimore, which was one of the objective points of his campaign, he would have been received by a population more largely impressed with his peculiar idea of liberty, though probably not more disposed to make the expected "efforts" for the recovery of its supposed loss.

In addition to the prospect of inciting insurrection in Maryland and recruiting his forces, he trusted the moral effect of being able to invade the territory of the Union would inspire the rebel cause with new life and hope. He was also naturally ambitious to win for his army the applause of so bold a stroke. At the same time, particular objects were had in view and many grand results anticipated. Disaster was scarcely dreamed of. He had learned to despise his antagonist, and calculated that our army would remain harmlessly defending the capital until reenforced by the draft which had just been ordered, and thus allow him to range very much at his pleasure over the great Cumberland Valley, possessing himself of the fine cattle and newly-reaped harvest. Or, should we attempt to check his advance by throwing our army in his front, thereby uncovering Baltimore and Washington, he thought it would be a light matter to cripple or destroy our forces, and then capture one or both of these great cities.

Having placed his army on the west side of the Blue Ridge, he intended to use that lofty mountain as a curtain, behind which he proposed to execute a series of movements in order to open his communications with Richmond by way of the Shenandoah Valley; all of which, judging from our usual tardiness, he thought might be accomplished almost unobserved, or at least without serious interference. But the brave Potomac Army, that had wrestled with him along the Chickahominy, though wounded and travel-worn, was keeping cautious pace, with one shoulder towards Baltimore and Washington, ready to defend them when necessary, and the other resolutely set against the insolent invader. A copy of Lee's order, setting forth his entire plan of operations, falling into McClellan's hands at Frederick on the 13th, he ordered an immediate advance, and coming upon the enemy at South Mountain, delivered battle on the 14th, and drove the rebels up the rugged steeps and over the crest, gloriously routing them from almost unapproachable fastnesses, and bursting through Turner's and Crampton's Gaps like ocean waves impelled by an earthquake. As those serried files came issuing through the mountain passes and streaming down the slopes,

Lee withdrew his eyes from where they had been resting with such sweet expectation along the beautiful and far-stretching Cumberland valley; for he beheld before him a terrible reality burying all his bright visions. He saw at a glance that the necessities for dropping the offensive were imperious. He had either to shrink back ingloriously across the Potomac, or defend himself on the spot. A portion of his army being distant, operating against Harper's Ferry, the danger of an immediate attack rendered his situation extremely critical.—What he wanted was precious time—time for his detached forces to rejoin him. The desired time was allowed. Harper's Ferry surrendered on the morning of the 15th, which enabled the bulk of those forces to reach Sharpsburg early on the 16th, and the remainder to approach near enough to be relied on as a reserve, and in fact to participate in the closing of the engagement. Hence it cannot be denied that he fought this battle with his entire army, undiminished by any detachment.

From all the facts known it appears that the two armies here engaged were nearly equal in numerical strength—from 30,000 to 90,000 troops participating on each side. If the Federal forces in hand were somewhat the greater, it must be confessed that the advantage of the rebel position infinitely more than compensated for any such disparity. Lee's line of battle extended across the peninsula lying between the Potomac river and Antietam creek, forming a sort of irregular curve, with the flanks drawn backward and resting on those streams. To the heart of the centre of this curve, near the town of Sharpsburg, lay his reserves, where, sheltered by the hills, they could manoeuvre unobserved, and from their nearness to every part of the line, could immediately reinforce any point threatened with attack. On that part of his front which was destined to be the arena of the most terrible encounter, drooped a succession of ridges fringed with tufts of wood, limestone ledges and stone fences, and indented with irregular seams of gully and ravine terminating with the deep sluggish Antietam. On the lofty hill-crests were ranged his grim batteries, frowning over all and trained on every stretch of open ground over which our troops might attempt to advance. McClellan came up with his forces on the east or left bank of the Antietam, which, being fordable only at distant points, presented a most serious obstacle in his way.

On the afternoon of the 16th, Gen. Hooker crossed the stream at the upper bridge and ford, skirmishing and feeling

his way right up to the enemy's battle line, where at night-fall he lay down on his arms. After dark followed Mansfield, who formed on his rear. The evening's work had simply been to prepare for the bloody business of next day. So near were the confronting ranks that night on lying down to rest, that the horse-breathing sleeper might have disturbed the repose of his foe, and

"The fixed sentinels almost received
The secret whispers of each other's watch."

First in the awful pause of that night I imagine many a true heart went back in prayer to cherished ones at home ; while others dwelt on the incidents of the past day and the approaching struggle of to-morrow—then all was hushed in sleep, while the silent cannon loaded with death pointed over the slumbering hosts. All closed their eyes, knowing that the first beams of day would light them to battle—and thus they awaited the dawn.

True to the inexorable purpose, the cannoneers, looking like spectres in the dim gray of the morning, are seen standing ready at their guns ; and as the rays increase above the horizon, revealing and brightening distant objects, they take careful sight of their pieces to reassure themselves that they are accurately aimed at the opposing lines, when suddenly the command is given, and they thunder forth a *reveille* that makes the great earth tremble—the loud notes reverberating from hill-top to hill-top—swelling along the Antietam and the Potomac, and dying on the ear as they roll along the morning air. "Fall in!" says the General, and his words are repeated along the line—"Fall in!!" and like magic four miles of infantry rise up as one man, ready for the onset. From behind ridges, out-cropping ledges of rocks and rifle-pits, frown the jagged rebel front, bristling with defiance.—Along our solid ranks the brightly polished arms glitter in the rising sun, and in the front of each battallion waves the same dear flag which our fathers bore over Saratoga and Yorktown. There is no looking back, for Hooker is there, and in their front to lead them. Still louder and fiercer grows the artillery-roar, as battery answers back to battery, filling the air with screaming and exploding missiles. The desultory popping of rifles along the skirmish front is followed by volleys of musketry that roll from right to left in rapid succession until they flow in one long continuous roar, smothering the voice of the cannon. For one half hour a tempest of lead and iron beats with wasting effect against the

opposing ranks, and awful gaps are made, yet neither side sways. Now the rebels begin to stagger, and quick as thought the advantage is seized, and "FORWARD" is the word.—Meade's Pennsylvania Reserves, that noble division, the parent of so many famous generals, steps out as gallantly as Cæsar's Roman Legion. On they press with a loud cheer—that animating cheer which is alike mysterious in lending invisible wings and courage to the charge, and sending enfeebling apprehensions into the ranks of the assailed. On, through the cornfields, the arena destined for the most bloody carnage—on over fences and road, strewing the earth with the dead and wounded—and on, to the dark woods where the shattered remnants of the rebel columns take refuge. But as they fling themselves against the enemy's cover they are made to shrink back from the murderous fire of his reserves—not in the panic of flight, but stubbornly do they face the unequal encounter, dealing terrible slaughter as they yield and melt away. Now through the cornfield sweep the advancing rebels—but our fresh troops confront them and they yield back in turn, leaving behind them a second harvest of their dead. Thus does the battle surge and recoil over this field of reeking and spouting gore, each moment giving new majesty and horror to the scene. From points on either flank the artillery pour in their enfilading and devouring fire, and above the theatre of bloody strife rests a dense canopy of smoke, through which the sun looks gloomily red in the heavens. Half of the two great armies are drawn to this spot, and by successive divisions plunge madly into the wild battle gorge. Mansfield, that gray-haired warrior, sinks down at the head of his corps; Hooker is hit and turns over his command; Sedgwick, though still animating his broken troops, is bleeding from three wounds; and all around lie favorite officers, half covered among the heaps of slain. Hour after hour the furious combat rages. Now the fresh troops of Franklin come moving up in dark heavy columns. Like an impetuous, gathering storm they hurry forward, sweeping on and bursting over the field, and bearing their resistless front past the outer edge of the battle scene, where they plant their colors victoriously.—Four times has this bloody ground been won and lost; but now it is won to be lost no more this day. Simultaneously our immediate left moves in triumph over the rugged and broken ground, where fiery valor has already tossed in many a fierce charge and countercharge. In the mean time Burnside fights his passage over the lower bridge, investing it im-

perishably with his own name and covering it with a renown like that of Lodi. Our entire front has been advanced, and the battle flashes and smokes for a time along the whole line—now glimmers and fades in the twilight, and dies out with the expiring day—and stillness reigns over Antietam.

Stilled are the loud clamors which have vibrated in awful cadences for fourteen deadly hours, but all is not hushed along the path of havoc. The subdued murmurs of the crushed and wounded, and the hollow groans of the dying load the night air with sickening horrors. As squads of surviving comrades move about in search of the missing, many a stout heart sobs audibly at beholding, in the melancholy starlight, the pale, up-turned face of some dear companion ;

“ And there’s a voice in the wind like a spirit’s low cry,
To the muster-roll sounding – and who shall reply
For those whose wan faces glare white to the sky.”

I shall not attempt to sum up the results and incidents of the battle. All are not agreed as to what was actually accomplished. Viewed simply as a contest for the mastery of the field it is conceded to have terminated in favor of the Union Army ; but the hard won advantage was not crowned with commensurable victory. The vanquished rebels were allowed to remain unharmed in our front for twenty-four hours, and then to withdraw across the Potomac without the slightest interference, or even knowledge on our part ; having suffered a mere chastisement rather than a defeat. Official reports show our casualties to have been about 12,500—more than 2,000 being killed on the field, besides those who afterwards died of their wounds. The rebel losses were about equal to our own.

The magnitude of this engagement may be better comprehended by examining it in comparison with other important battles with which we are more or less familiar. If you will refer to any history of the Revolutionary War, and add up all the killed of the American Army in fifteen of its most important battles, including those of Bunker Hill, Long Island, Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth, you will find that their aggregate will not exceed the Federal killed in this one battle of Antietam. I think it might be safely stated that the Union killed in this single engagement was at least half as great as the entire American loss, in killed, during the eight years’ struggle of our forefathers for independence ; and equal to all our killed in the War of 1812, or in our War with Mexico.

And calling to mind some examples from well known decisive battles of the world, we find that McClellan's sacrifice of life here was ten times as great as that of Miltiades at Marathan, or of Cæsar at Pharsalia, and greater than the British loss at Flodden Field, or that of the French at Valmy. But considered as to the numbers engaged and the duration and fierceness of the fight, the mortality at Antietam does not appear great. Viewed only as a gigantic encounter, and apart from its want of military consequences, it is entitled to rank with Austerlitz, Waterloo and Sadowa, each of which was won at greater cost than Antietam. But when we look at its unimproved and comparatively barren result, we are disposed to count it dearly bought. At Austerlitz Napoleon pressed his advantage to the complete overthrow of the allied armies, and extorted the treaty of Presburg; Wellington carried his victory at Waterloo to the absolute destruction of the French Army, and within fifteen days thereafter, forced the capitulation of the city of Paris; and Bismark followed up his triumph at Sadowa until he crushed the Austrian forces and dictated a new map of the continent; but McClellan remained quiescent for six long weeks upon this hard won field, and allowed the prostrate foe to recover and depart in peace, refreshed and prepared for new campaigns, and other fields.

I am not here, however, to criticise the conduct of General McClellan, or to utter a word with the desire to detract from his fame. There were grave public considerations, far outlying the immediate situation, which he thought proper to regard in determining his course. Owing to our inexperience at that early stage of the war, too many of our military operations were unduly influenced by matters which further progress taught us wholly to disregard. In examining the merits of this battle it would be unfair therefore to apply all the tests which belong to more advanced periods of the war: it would be necessary to take into account all the peculiar circumstances and bearings surrounding the case—a task which this occasion will not indulge.

But if Antietam had no decisive effect upon the relative condition of the armies engaged, it had its important bearing upon the plan of military operations as well as upon the cause of the Union. It sent the insurgent army back from a fruitless attempt at invasion, and brought low the arrogant assumptions of the superior valor of the South. It was such a victory for the loyal North as made the war a national

measure, and emboldened the government to proclaim the policy of emancipation, thereby meeting the real issue of the war. Aided by the prospective of time and the light of subsequent events, we have slavery revealed to us as the great, prime cause of the rebellion. Looking back upon all the alleged causes which were set up, and beholding them as they recede into the past, one after another diminish out of view, while human slavery—the same that was made the corner-stone of the Confederacy—appears to tower above all, overshadowing all.

When the result of this battle reached Mr. Lincoln he immediately concluded his corrected draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, and after submitting it to his cabinet, gave it to the world. Said he, "I made a solemn vow before God, that if General Lee was driven back from Maryland I would crown the result by the declaration of freedom to the slaves." That good man kept his righteous vow, and Lee's retreat across the Potomac was made the signal for letting fall the shackles from the limbs of four millions of our oppressed fellow men. Here, then, on this classic ground, our soldiers stood from the rising to the setting of the sun, pleading, "with arguments of bloody steel" the cause of a helpless race. In answer to the two thousand lives here immolated upon the altar of our country, Heaven's best gift of freedom came down to bless the slave. Who then shall measure the glory of Antietam? It is bounded by neither time nor circumstance; it belongs to Freedom, and will brighten and live while Freedom lives.

It seems that our war had to come. There were certain imperfections and evils existing in our government which the growing enlightenment of our people could not always tolerate. They were not mere blemishes resting upon the surface which might be easily removed by local application. They entered into the body,—into the very life of the government. They formed constituent parts of our institutions, and nothing but the hot crucible of war could purge them away.

When our fathers struck for political liberty, they also aimed at civil liberty. The same inspired instrument in which they declared their right to assume a separate and equal station among the powers of the earth, also asserted that all men were created equal, and endowed with the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But having gained the nominal blessing of political liberty, or national independence, they made that their pride

and their boast, and assigned to the inalienable and priceless boon of civil liberty, or individual freedom, a secondary and limited place. It followed that, notwithstanding the adoption of a Constitution "in order to form a more perfect union * * and secure the blessings of liberty," the doctrine or idea of separate nationalities continued to be placed in the foreground, extending with its increasing power and scope to the commonwealths of the Union, and assuming the name of "State sovereignty," while the nearer and dearer principle of personal liberty, or freedom, was forced into the background, prescribed and narrowed in its application, with its divinity taken away from it and given to slavery.

These tendencies were calculated to destroy both the Federal Government and liberty in America. In fact this deplorable result had been more nearly reached than many of us were willing to admit. Freedom was so far gone in one part of the country that its name could not be mentioned, save at the risk of life. If a citizen from the free North dared to name the name of Freedom in the South, his life might pay the penalty, and the General Government could not save him, or bring his guilty murderers to justice. A government that cannot enforce respect at home, that is too feeble to protect the lives of its citizens under its own flag, can have little to distinguish it from anarchy, and nothing to entitle it to the respect of the world. The firing upon Sumter, therefore, was no sudden outbreak against the national authority. It was only a new step towards a long-pursued end. The elements of destruction had reached that point by a steady progress; and while its new and revolutionary aspect awakened the nation to a sense of imminent danger, it was none the less connected in its natural order with a long line of events running back through many years. The war commenced when the government could not much longer exist with the evils which centered in it, and against its life. If, therefore, our soldiers had bled to save the government as it was, with the forces of destruction still playing at its vitals, their sacrifices would have been without their rich reward. But the government has not only been saved, it has been purified, and changed and made strong. Freedom has been lifted into the foreground, where *national* sovereignty stands, to protect the humblest and most despised citizen in his smallest right, wherever he may be on our wide domain.

The genius of our governmental system has been modified. The so-called sovereign, or reserved, powers of the States,

which had been used to oppress the individual, are being fast swept away. The organic law of the land is being so amended as to extend its mighty arm over all the States, for the equal protection of every citizen. Whereas, the former tendencies were to narrow the enjoyment of popular rights, and to enlarge the independent powers of the States, thus weakening the General Government; the new and more salutary tendencies are to extend the liberties of the masses and to increase the central power of the government. In this last system there is a harmony of parts as well as of purposes. In the enlarged liberties of the people, and the increased powers of the government to protect those liberties, we have the elements which must give security both to the government and to the governed. I am aware that, with the evil work of State sovereignty or secession, still fresh in our minds, there is danger of proceeding too far toward the other extreme of centralization. But I think we have nothing to fear from any steps already taken in that direction.

The good results of our changed condition are already being realized. Notwithstanding the wounds of the war, there is more harmony between the sections of the country this hour than there ever was before the war. Citizens from Massachusetts are not only permitted to sojourn in South Carolina, but they are cordially invited there, with their Yankee enterprise, their capital, and their sentiments, to make it their future home. So you see, the war was not all slaughter and desolation; it meant freedom, harmony and progress. It made the government stronger, purer and better; stronger to command obedience and respect, and better and purer to claim the affections and support of all the people.

The truth of its permanence has already been revolutionizing the sentiment of the old world. The German populations have already sought a more stable and a freer system; England is moving forward in liberal reforms; Spain has been struggling up out of despotism, and popular liberty is rising in the ascendancy everywhere. Since we have become a more consolidated family of States, the world is beginning to respect us, as it never did before. Cuba, San Domingo and the adjacent islands of the sea, look to us for a protector. And with the respectability of our government, also grows the respect of our citizens abroad. The American citizen is acquiring that respect abroad which was accorded to the Roman citizen, when Rome was mistress of the world. On

whatever shores you may be cast, and under whatever suns you may wander, if you have in your pocket an American passport, your life and your liberty are sacred, for the majesty of your country's flag is there to protect you.

In thus referring to some of the good results of the war, I would not be understood to rejoice at that painful event in our history. The war was met by us as a deplorable necessity. All wars, whether foreign or domestic, are descended to us from a barbarous age, and are shameful witnesses against our claims to that genuine Christian civilization after which all nations should aspire. They spring from ignorance and the evil passions. Enlightenment and religion unite in opposing all sanguinary measures. Christ taught "peace on earth and good will toward men," and as men's minds and hearts improve, wars will be less frequent in their occurrence, and less cruel in their conduct; but I doubt whether they can entirely cease this side of the millennium. There will occasionally arise such political and social conditions, such controlling prejudices as possessed our Southern people that nothing but the crushing blows of war will ever subdue. Our war was conceived in ignorance, prejudice, oppression and wickedness, yet God so ruled that great good has come out of it. And there is this consolation following all the wars of the recent past, whether in our own or in other lands, that they have resulted in the interest of humanity and of liberty. Wherever the bursts of war break up the restraints of civil rule which bind a people to old, and frequently barbarous, usages, they move with the spirit of the times and step right up into a higher civilization; we live in an age of progress, and the march is for universal liberty and the brotherhood of mankind.

While we are bestowing these sad rights upon the memory of those who perished in the cause, let us revive our gratitude toward the living, who have returned with shattered forms to spend the remnant of their wasting lives among us. The poor of all classes have claims upon our charity, but the disabled soldier has a demand upon our generosity which should not require the asking. He should not be allowed to beg in the land which he helped to save by his valor and his blood; his wants should be anticipated by a grateful people. It must be hard for one who has been a proud and gallant soldier to be compelled to stoop for alms, and we should not pass indifferently by when such a one needs help, though he may be too proud to ask it.

Admitting that army life too often leads to bad morals and destructive habits, yet I am led to believe that the awful realities of the battle-field strangely dignify the character, and improve the higher manly qualities. The soldier who has faced death in the blaze of battle, where the flight of time is forgotten, and the world seems swallowed up in a kind of electric heat, which appears to glow in a brown-red tint, kindling and quickening his senses into a flame, and lighting up every object with an ineffable brightness—the soldier who has been thrilled by this mysterious fervor and yet stood fearless and god-like, amid the cannon thunder, the howling and crashing of shells, and the gurgling and whizzing of death-dealing bullets, has realized a sort of emotional regeneration, ennobling his nature and making him a truer man. And the soldier who has stooped over his bleeding companion, holding the canteen to quench his burning thirst, and as life ebbed out, bending his ear close to his lips, in order to catch the last whispered word, that he might convey to the loved one far away at home, has felt the vibration of a tender chord lying deep beneath all the common affections of the heart—that sacred chord which links mankind with divinity. Such experience leaves its impress upon the heart and prepares it for more noble and generous impulses; and whatever wreck that man may become in after life, he will still bear in his bosom that fraternal susceptibility which will make him a true friend and very brother in distress.

It is gratifying to know that the government has provided homes or asylums for those who are enfeebled; yet there are many who prefer to struggle for a livelihood in their own way, and when they are overtaken by misfortune or want, a generous hand should be extended. They will not be with us long; they are dropping off like leaves in autumn-time.—Some of them are still wearing the tattered old blue coat, but they will soon put it off and answer to their names at roll-call, with their comrades, on the “eternal camping ground.”

It is also our pleasing duty,—our precious privilege to care for the orphan children of our deceased soldiers. It is stated in history, as proverbially true, that republics cannot stand, and that they are ungrateful. It might as easily be shown that they cannot stand because they *are* ungrateful. If, in our victory over the rebellion, we presented a mighty proof of our stability, it remains for this generation to show to the world that the American republic is not ungrateful. In what more

appropriate and acceptable manner can we show our gratitude, than by evincing an active concern for those left helpless by the war. The tender offspring that has been robbed of the paternal love and protection, should find a sheltering, cherishing home in every household. The child of the patriot martyr has a title to nobility. The daughter should be reared in comfort, and cultured for the rank and station of an American lady, and the son should be educated and trained for some useful and honorable pursuit in life. Whenever you meet a little lad made fatherless by the war, call him to your side, and, smoothing his soft brow, tell him he is your ward, and that you feel an interest in his welfare; it will encourage him to think the world kind and deserving of his best efforts. Tell him he bears a name made honorable among men; recount to him the story of his father's noble deeds and sacrifice; it will swell his young bosom with pride and veneration, and implant there a love of country far more sacred and binding than all the forms of allegiance or oaths of fealty.

I have somewhere read or heard a very tender story, partly incident to this battle, which pictures a most touching instance of orphanage. I will relate it substantially as I heard it, so far as my memory goes, but without pretending to vouch for the correctness of any of its particulars.

Among the thousands of worthy young men who left their quiet homes in the North to join the Army of the Potomac at its first organization, was one, James Bates, who, about the last of December, 1861, took an affectionate farewell of her whom he had led to the altar just one month before, and quitting his village home in the State of New York, proceeded to Washington, where he enlisted as a private soldier. Serving always in the front rank of his regiment, wherever it went, he never asked to be excused from a single hour's duty, until on the morning before the battle of Chantilly, receiving a letter stating that his wife was the mother of a bright, healthy son, the very image of its father, and already named James, after the absent one, he made up his mind to apply for permission to visit home. Fired up with pride, and feeling that he now had something more to live for and dare for, he fought that day with Spartan courage, and performed an act of gallantry which attracted the notice of his commanding officer, who at once promoted him to Sergeant, and promised to procure for him a furlough for one month. But, owing to our perilous situation at that time, and to the exigencies of the service, leaves of absence were not granted

excepting in extraordinary cases, and he did not receive his until the morning after the battle of South Mountain, when he immediately wrote home announcing his good fortune, but stating that he could not think of leaving his colors on the eve of the great battle that was then impending. He assured them, however, that they might look for him in the train on Friday morning, or Saturday morning at farthest. But in the hottest of the fight at Antietam, he was seen to fall, pierced by a half score of mortal wounds, and his body was never identified thereafter. Friday morning came, and at the first sound of the locomotive, the young mother was at the railway station, with her first born, ready to place it in the arms of its father. Wistfully did she gaze upon each passenger as he stepped upon the platform, until finally the train moved off again, and James had not come. Pale and almost fainting, she was about to turn away, when she paused to hear the list of our killed and wounded, which a bystander was reading aloud from the morning paper. At that moment her ear caught the words, "Sergeant James Bates, killed." Claspng her infant to her bosom, she exclaimed, "No! not killed, he'll come to-morrow." When the morrow came she was again upon the platform, with the tender babe in her arms; but as *he* did not come, the second disappointment was too great to bear. She fell into a monomania—and long after his comrades were welcomed home from the war did she continue to rise early each morning, and taking up the child, go out to meet the train, fully confident that James was aboard, and turning away each time with the same sad disappointment, saying, "He'll come to-morrow." And even yet, since eight years of time have breathed over her grief to mollify it, she may be seen occasionally, on a bright morning, hurrying to the depot, leading her flaxen-haired little boy, and telling him his papa is coming on the train. But she watches for the return of one that never will come back, for he carries with his two thousand comrades, who, with him, sunk down to rest on this wide inhospitable couch. Serg't Bates is sleeping within these walls, in an unknown grave, and to-day, you may perchance bestow an extra rose upon his unpretending tomb. *cccy*

Oh! who shall write each separate history of our hecatombs of slain—the heart-breaking disappointment, the melancholy orphanage, the reason-dethroning grief, the crushed and wounded life, the wail of woe that answered each bereavement. Among the unwritten annals of our

war, are tales of pathos and of pity, far more touching, than Romance or Fiction can weave from all the range of Fancy. The graves of heroes slain, and loves departed, wrinkle the faces of our hillsides and vallies. On both sides of the Mississippi and away across to the sea, along the banks of the James and the Potomac, along the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania, and on the mountain crests of Maryland; wherever you wander, there lie the fallen of our hosts, mingling their dust with the soil which they redeemed and saved—

“Four hundred thousand, brave and true,
Lie dead, good friend, for me and you.”

Then let us come here with each returning spring, and wreath their little white head-boards with chaplets of flowers, and place over the chamber of each sleeper a well-assorted bouquet. Let us also weave garlands out of the fragrant heliotrope, the scented rose and the sweet mignonette, that their grateful odors may rise like holy incense above their slumbering ashes. As the bright bloom is emblematic of the lustre of their deeds, let the delicate perfume emblem forth the sweet influences of peace which their pure sacrifices have caused to breathe over our land. For gentle “Peace has come, and come to stay—”

Around the sweeping circle of your hills
The crashing of cannon thrills
Have faded from the memory of the air;
And summer pours from unexhausted fountains
Her bliss on yonder mountains:
The camps are tenantless, the breastworks bare:
Earth keeps no stain where hero-blood was poured:
The hornets, humming on their wings of lead,
Have ceased to sting, their angry swarms are dead,
And, harmless in the scabbard, rusts the sword.”

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00025093550