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*Compliments of*

H. A. GILDERSLEEVE.

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ORATION

BY

HENRY A. GILDERSLEEVE,

DELIVERED ON THE

BATTLEFIELD OF GETTYSBURG,

*SEPTEMBER 17th, 1889.*

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ORATION

BY

HENRY A. GILDERSLEEVE,  
II

DELIVERED ON THE

BATTLEFIELD OF GETTYSBURG,

September 17th, 1889,

*On the occasion of the dedication of the Monument erected to the  
memory of the soldiers of "The Dutchess County Regiment"  
(150th New York Volunteer Infantry), who were  
killed in the Battle of Gettysburg.*

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DOUGLAS TAYLOR,  
PRINTER,  
89 NASSAU ST., N. Y.

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## COMRADES AND FRIENDS :

Battlefields are epochal steps in the grand stairways of the Earth constructed of the lives of men. Steps by which altar and throne have often been established and overturned. Steps that have led to the destruction of existing governments and the birth of new.

A careful study of the history of the world, shows that war has been the only final arbiter of nations ; and mankind, even under the benign influences of Christianity, in an enlightened age, have not found a substitute for this terrible tribunal. Our fathers, renowned for wisdom no less than courage, did not stop to estimate the price of human life, when they began the great structure of our national existence, and, laid in blood, the sure foundations of liberty and justice on which it rests. We should have proved degenerate and unworthy sons had we failed to follow their noble example when secession lifted its heretical head, and threatened the destruction of our National Government. The Constitution of the United States of America was ordained and established "in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

Under it the States and Nation had prospered and grown strong as few people have ever prospered. It provided a system which continually drew for its sustenance and growth upon the virtue and vigor of the people—an inexhaustible source where a people remain harmonious and united, but a barren desert in a nation composed of States, "dissevered, discordant and belligerent." Secession, if acquiesced in, made our Union, after all it had cost in blood and treasure, a weak pile of blocks that could at any time be toppled over at the will of a single State. All that was won upon the battlefields of the Revolution was at stake upon the issue of the Civil War ; and in addition thereto, the emancipation of a race. Famous

among men will always be the founders of our Government, and, second to them in lustre, shine the bravery and fortitude of the men who secured the permanence of their noble work.

We stand to-day on ground made famous by the defenders of the Union. Here was fought, more than a quarter of a century ago, the most important battle of our great Civil War. While from other fields may be gathered as appalling records of slaughter by contending armies, Gettysburg was the most decisive in its results, and in history it will be the most conspicuous. On the escutcheon of nations, written with the blood of heroes, France has its Austerlitz, England its Waterloo and the United States its Gettysburg.

The 150th Regiment, New York Volunteer Infantry, were of the troops who fought and won that battle for the United States. It was a victory that insured the perpetuity of the Federal Union; made permanent the establishment of Republican government among the nations of the earth; cast off the fetters from three million bondmen, and abolished slavery in America forever. It has been customary throughout all time to fete and honor soldiers of every country. The return of victorious armies to Rome was the occasion of grand displays and the most sumptuous festivities. The earth's surface is dotted all over with monuments erected to the memory of distinguished soldiers killed in battle, and few indeed are the exceptions when bravery in war has not been recognized and some effort made to pay a suitable tribute to those who have had to fight the battles of their country. In ancient Egypt the soldier shared with the priest the highest consideration. When he fell in battle he was at once transported to the regions of ineffable bliss in the bright mansions of the sun. The Christian Crusader was not only raised to a contempt of danger, but coveted it for the imperishable crown of martyrdom that he was taught to believe awaited him after death. The victories and battles of the Revolution that made our republican form of government possible, we never lose an opportunity to celebrate, and the noble deeds of the heroes of that memorable war

are our choicest heritage, and the subject of constant commemoration. The men who fell upon this field are entitled to no less grateful remembrance than those who fell at Bunker Hill and Valley Forge. We cannot claim originality for the ceremony we now celebrate, but when we look about us and are reminded of the brave men who here gave up their lives, and recall the causes that made the terrible battle necessary, we do proudly claim that for no nobler cause did patriots ever fight, that for no grander country did heroes ever die. Yes, and thank God, they died for the whole country, to-day the home of sixty million freemen. The triumph of the Union armies on this field was a victory for the Constitution and the Union, and took no rights away from the South. The blessings flowing from a preserved Union reach all the States, and the fountains it feeds are those of universal liberty and prosperity, at which the Confederate soldier is as welcome to come and drink as the Union Volunteer.

The State of New York, by its representatives in legislature assembled, in the year 1887, appropriated the sum of \$1,500 to each New York regiment that took part in the battle of Gettysburg, to be expended in providing a suitable memorial to its members who fell in that battle. The survivors of the 150th Regiment and its friends, principally residents of Dutchess County, contributed and added to the \$1,500 given by the State, about the sum of \$3,000, and the manner in which that money has been expended by the faithful and able Monument Committee, of which Gen. Smith is Chairman, is evidenced by the beautiful monument before us which we have assembled to-day to unveil and dedicate.

Let us for a few moments brush up our memories of the past; recall the organization of the 150th Regiment, and follow it to these now historic hills of Pennsylvania, where it became a part of the famous army of the Potomac, and was first bathed in blood.

At the end of June, 1862, the war had been in progress about fifteen months, and over eight hundred thousand volunteers, includ-

ing three-months men, had entered the military service of the United States. The actual strength of the Federal army on duty at this time was about five hundred thousand. In the West the Union forces under Grant, Buell and others had secured very creditable results. Shiloh, Fort Donelson, Pittsburgh Landing, Corinth and other points of strategic importance had been captured by the Union armies. The general result of the campaign in Virginia was not considered to reflect much credit upon the Union army, and in consequence thereof there was a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction in the North. Lukewarm Unionists and Southern sympathizers began openly to proclaim their faith in and announce their adherence to the Southern cause. This unarmed enemy in the midst of us, too cowardly to fight in the open field, and without an excuse for their treachery, retarded enlistments at home, encouraged foreign intervention, and in every way possible gave aid and support to the rebels. I can forgive the Southern rebel for taking up arms against the Union, grasp him warmly by the hand and call him brother; but a Northern copper-head—well, God may have mercy upon him, but I cannot.

On Thursday, June 26th, 1862, the powerful and thoroughly equipped Army of the Potomac was entrenched in works vast in extent and most formidable in character within sight of Richmond, and it was confidently hoped that the battle-cry of "On to Richmond" would soon be realized. Within a few days the remnants of that threatening host were upon the James River, thirty miles from Richmond, seeking to recover, under the protection of their gunboats, from the effects of a series of disastrous defeats. This routing of McClellan's army thoroughly aroused the Government to the danger in which the country was placed, and an earnest determination was manifested to provide against its consequences. On July 2d, 1862, the President of the United States issued a proclamation calling for three hundred thousand men to serve for three years, or during the war. In answer to this call the Dutchess County



regiment was organized. The prompt response of the State of New York, led by the loyal citizens of Dutchess County, to this proclamation of the President in those dark days of the rebellion, gave an impetus to enlistments throughout the whole loyal North, and under the call 431,958 volunteers were mustered into the Federal army. This rush to the standards of the Union was the strongest evidence of the willingness of the Northern people to stand by the Government. It was conclusive proof of their unflinching loyalty and it showed a fixed determination to suppress the rebellion by force of arms. It not only gave great additional strength, but a morale to the armies already in the field, and to the men in high station upon whom rested the grave responsibility of conducting the war, the greatest encouragement. Prior to this, large numbers of Dutchess County men had enlisted in the Union armies. Some marched to the front with the 20th New York, and others followed the colors of the 128th. On Thursday, the 21st day of August, 1862, Mrs. Benson J. Lossing caused to be published an appeal asking for a Dutchess County regiment. Isaac Platt, of the Poughkeepsie *Eagle*, endorsed the appeal by favorable comment, and during that day and the next eighteen young men handed to A. B. Smith of Poughkeepsie, as one of the resident members of the General War Committee, requests to recruit and enter the United States service in a Dutchess County regiment. We have not a complete list of the names of these young men. Among them were Cogswell, McConnell, Gildersleeve, Titus, Woodin, Weekes, Sweet, Gridley, Broas, Cruger, Underwood, Van Steenburg, Van Keuren and Tripp. General A. B. Smith drafted a resolution for the Board of Supervisors of Dutchess County and it was offered by Henry W. Shaw (better known as Josh Billings), who was at that time a member of the Board, and passed unanimously. It read as follows: "Resolved, That the County of Dutchess will pay \$50 bounty to each man who will enlist in a Dutchess County regiment and the Executive War Committee of the County is requested to procure the permission from Governor Mor

gan to raise such regiment, with camp located at Poughkeepsie." Provided with a certified copy of this resolution, and letters of introduction from Congressman Baker and Judge Emott, Gen. Smith, under instructions from the War Committee, went to Albany on August 23d to make application to Governor Morgan for authority to recruit "a Dutchess County Regiment," and returned with the following authorization, viz. :

"To Hon. JAMES EMOTT,  
*Chairman of Executive War Committee*  
*of Dutchess County :*

Permission is granted to your War Committee to raise a Dutchess County Regiment, with camp located at Poughkeepsie.

EDWIN D. MORGAN,  
 Governor.

HILLHOUSE

A. A. G."

Previous to this Gov. Morgan had appointed a General War Committee for the Congressional District, with Wm. Kelly of Rhinebeck as Chairman. From this General Committee an Executive War Committee was chosen, consisting of James Emott, Wm. Kelly, Ambrose Wager, George W. Sterling, Benson J. Lossing, James H. Weeks, Stephen Baker, Joseph F. Barnard and John H. Ketcham, and the work of bringing into life, form and discipline the Dutchess County Regiment was entered upon in earnest. It was then that the home pride was fully aroused and the patriotism of the citizens of Dutchess County reached its climax. Many, who from the first breaking out of the war had felt inclined to enlist, but were restrained by business engagements they could not well forego, or by home ties that were painful to sever, had frequently declared that when a Dutchess County regiment was organized they would join

it. That day had come, and the sons of Old Dutchess, true to their vows, led on by Ketcham, rallied around the American flag, eager to become members of the 150th New York Volunteers. O, the golden memories of those days! The conflicts between love of country and love of kindred: private business interests and public duty, duty in which patriotism triumphed. Sad and distressing were the partings, but comrades, your courage did not fail you in the hour of your country's peril. Resolute and brave, though tender and loving, the good-byes were said with moist eyes and aching hearts. What act of your life would you not now sacrifice to give place to this? Those were indeed busy, anxious, exciting days. Do you recall the duties of the recruiting officers? How the constant explanations necessary to young men contemplating enlistment occupied the days at the several recruiting offices, and war meetings in different parts of the county filled in the nights. Our headquarters were at Poughkeepsie. Four and six horse teams carrying young and enthusiastic men who had already enlisted drove to different parts of the county, with banners flying and bands playing, to attend war meetings and secure enlistments. There was scarcely a place in the county, sufficiently large to support a post office, that did not have its one or more war meetings each week. Washington Hollow, Stamfordville, Bangall, Pine Plains, Dover, Pawling, Amenia, Hyde Park, Rhinebeck, Red Hook, Schultzville and many other places were the scenes of enthusiastic gatherings at which the bands played patriotic airs, and from barrels, stoops, wagons and horse blocks the assembled crowds were harangued with war speeches until the excitement ran high and many names were added to the enlistment rolls. From the sheriff's office in the court house in the City of Poughkeepsie, which was turned into a recruiting office, was displayed a banner bearing these words: "Come in out of the draft." Their significance was apparent and caused no little amusing comment. To the indifferent they were a gentle reminder of what might be expected if a sufficient number of volunteers were not promptly forthcoming; and to

those anxious to enlist, who were restrained by relatives and friends, they furnished a powerful argument in favor of consent. The threatened drafts and liberal bounties undoubtedly brought some men into the service, but pure patriotism was generally the sole moving power. And especially was this true of the 150th Regiment, composed as it largely was of intelligent and thoughtful men. They hastened to the defense of their country with a spontaneous impulse, born of a correct knowledge of the true nature of the cause for which they were to suffer fatigue, exposure, hunger, thirst and the perils of battle; believing that their country's cause was their personal cause, and that the success of the Union arms was a victory for their individual principles.

The Union volunteers were not mere machines, enrolled, disciplined and ranged in living palisades before the enemy, but they were men with ideas, who could, when occasion required, think and act for themselves.

The work of recruiting went briskly on. As soon as eighty were enrolled by any one recruiting officer he went to Albany and received his commission as captain, and also commissions for a first and second lieutenant. The captains took rank according to the date of their commissions, and the companies received their alphabetical designation, commencing with "A," in the order in which their respective captains were commissioned. On the 11th day of October, 1862, at Camp Dutchess, just outside of the City of Poughkeepsie, the regiment was mustered into the service of the United States. It was then we felt that we were real soldiers, and for the first time fully realized the importance of the step we had taken, and imperfectly outlined in our imaginations the life that was before us.

On October 13th we arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, where we remained on guard duty until the following June, with excellent opportunities for drill and instruction in the duties of a soldier. Once during this period, on the 9th of December, we were ordered

out to check an expected rebel raid, and proceeded by cars to Adams Town near Monocacy Junction. We were not permitted the satisfaction of meeting the enemy and returned to Baltimore with virgin swords. The only blood shed on that cold campaign, for the thermometer was at about zero, was from two opossums captured by some men on picket duty.

The battle of Chancellorsville had been fought and lost. Ewell had taken up his march down the Shenandoah Valley ; Milroy had been defeated at Winchester, and the triumphant rebel army, led by General Robert E. Lee, the foremost military officer of the Confederacy, was marching into the State of Pennsylvania, when on the 25th day of June, the Dutchess County regiment moved with the first Maryland Potomac Home Brigade, General Lockwood in command, to join the Army of the Potomac. We had become tired of garrison life in Baltimore and hailed, with delight, the orders that sent us to the field. Thoroughly drilled and disciplined, the 150th with full ranks, in bright uniforms, with unsoiled colors and to the strains of martial music moved out of Camp Belger and turned their faces toward the enemy. For two days our line of march could be easily followed by the surplus clothing, camp and garrison equipage dropped by the way and abandoned. The most intense excitement and alarm prevailed throughout the North, and the authorities at Washington were filled with fear and consternation. It seems a question of a few days only when the rebel host would be sacking the cities of the North ; levying contributions upon its citizens and demanding entrance to the capital of the Nation. All the horrors of civil war were at the doors of the men who were defending the Union. The timid were disheartened and discouraged, but the strong, with full reliance upon the justice of our cause and the valor of our soldiers, nerved themselves for the impending struggle, determined to beat back the invaders. The fate of the Nation rested with the Army of the Potomac, then under the command of a noble son of Pennsylvania, General George B.

Meade. Our regiment reached Monocacy Bridge, near Frederick City, on June 28th, and with Lockwood's Brigade was attached to the first division of the 12th corps, which division at that time was commanded by General Alpheus S. Williams, the corps being commanded by a distinguished soldier from our own State, General Henry W. Slocum. Do you remember our camp on the hill near Monocacy Bridge, from which point we first saw a portion of that great Army of the Potomac of which we had read so much? For the first time we saw them bivouac, and listened to the music from their brigade bands as it pealed forth upon the air on that still and solemn night. What a spectacle for a recruit to look upon! We were amazed at the length of the wagon trains and batteries of artillery as they filed into the valley below us and went into park for the night. Thousands of camp fires lighted up the region around, and we stood spellbound at the sight of the vast engineering of war that was before us. It was in this camp, inspired by this spectacle, we first imbibed the true spirit of war, and nerved ourselves for the trying scenes and desperate deeds we knew we must encounter.

Our cavalry under General Buford had occupied the vicinity of Gettysburg, and the 1st and 11th corps were thrown forward to join the cavalry. The situation indicated to General Meade that it was in the vicinity of Gettysburg that the Confederate commander had decided to concentrate his forces. The first divisions passed through Gettysburg to Willoughby Run, just beyond Seminary Ridge, where they came up with Buford's cavalry and found them hotly engaged with the advance forces of the rebel column. Here a sanguinary conflict ensued in which the 1st corps and a part of the 11th, together with Buford's cavalry, participated. It lasted from 9 o'clock in the morning until late in the afternoon. General John F. Reynolds, the brave and able commander of the 1st corps, was killed in this fight. The first noise of real battle that came to our ears was the boom of the distant cannon as we pressed on to-

ward the battlefield. We did not get in sight of the contending forces that day. Going into camp at a late hour we, for the first time, slept on our arms. It was not daylight when we were in line again and ready to resume the march. Do you remember the voice of Col. Maltby, who commanded the 1st Maryland regiment that had gone into camp adjoining us, as on that morning he told his men of the perils that were before them, and in patriotic words encouraged them to bravely do their duty. We had no speech from our regimental commander. It was not his custom to harangue us with loud-sounding phrases, but he passed quietly down the line and whispered in our ears valuable instruction and sound advice. We moved on in the direction from whence we had heard cannonading on the day previous, and the first unmistakable indications we discovered of a battle were the slightly wounded who were able to get back to the hospitals without assistance. Then we began to encounter ambulances loaded with those who had been seriously wounded. Field hospitals were passed; we could hear the rattle of musketry and see the smoke of the conflict near at hand, and we soon found ourselves a part and parcel of the grand Army of the North, fighting, among these hills, the battle of Gettysburg. The first missiles of war we saw were shells from some rebel batteries passing over our heads entirely too close to be comfortable, and bursting just beyond our line. We were resting on our arms when we first heard the shriek of these flying projectiles, to us a new, ominous and peculiar sound. We turned our heads one side, with eyes upward, trying to see them as they passed, much as a flock of turkeys will do to catch sight of a hawk. The novelty soon wore off, but we never forgot the identity of the sound, and ever after it was readily distinguished.

On the afternoon of that day, July 2d, we were hurriedly moved to the left to reinforce the gallant soldier, Gen. Sickles. As we passed a farmhouse on our line of march we were told that he was inside just undergoing the operation of having his leg amputated.

By this time the killed and wounded were around us on every side. The rapidity of our movement clearly indicated that a sudden emergency had called us to that particular portion of the field, and the scene before us presented all the evidences of disaster to the Federal line of battle. With our full ranks, bright colors and clean uniforms, we were readily distinguished from the veteran regiments of the Army of the Potomac who had shared its fate in manœuvres and battles from the time of the fight at Bull Run to that day. All seemed to know who we were. Can you ever forget the almost fiendish shouts of maimed and dying men who had just fallen in the struggle, as they cried out: "Go in Dutchess County! Give it to them, boys! Give it to them!"

Marching in column, four abreast, we soon swung by the right into line, and, for the first time, were in line of battle, facing the enemy. The fight at this point had been so severe and deadly that but few troops remained on either side. The lines were broken and scattered. Such rebel forces as were at this point must have fallen back on the approach of reinforcements, for we did not come up with them. We captured two cannon, but were not called upon to fire a gun. The artillery fire, however, was constant and terrific. After dark this night we were marched from that portion of the field, and you remember how difficult it was to escape treading on the dead and dying. The cries of the wounded for water, which we could rarely give, constantly fell upon our ears. We heard no complaints, however, and each dying soldier accepted his dreadful fate without a murmur. No sadder spectacle was witnessed than that of a beautiful horse, hobbling about on three legs, having had one leg severed from his body by a cannon ball. The service he rendered will never be known. Of the thousands of dumb brutes that toiled, suffered and died in the war, but one is immortalized, and he is the horse that won the day by carrying Sheridan from Winchester to the battle field.

The following day, July 3d, we had our full part of the fighting.



We were called upon to repel the furious attack of Gen. Ewell, which we successfully accomplished here on Culp's Hill. From this point we were ordered to Cemetery Hill to reinforce the lines upon which the rebel General Pickett made one of the most desperate and famous assaults of the war. While marching rapidly toward the Hill, we noticed a lull in the rattle of musketry—a softening of the din of battle, and then, through the smoke and above the noise of the conflict, came a volume of cheers from the Union troops that proved to be the glad cry of victory for the North. We received orders to halt, and in a few minutes, long columns of Confederate prisoners were seen coming over the Hill.

Our regiment captured that day about two hundred prisoners. Many members of the regiment fired more than two hundred rounds of ammunition each. Our colors were riddled with bullets, and we lost forty-eight men in killed and wounded. Their names are upon the monument.

I shall not undertake to describe the details of the battle nor can I even refer to many instances of our own experience. We witnessed all the horrors of war and found the realization more terrible than the anticipation. Before the sun went down that day the great battle was ended. Every attack had been repulsed. The invasion of the North had failed and the tide of success for the Union arms had set in, never again to be checked. The victory of Gettysburg was a glorious gift to the nation on the anniversary of American Independence, 1863. It was a dear victory, but it was worth the price. The aggregate loss in killed, wounded and missing in this battle was nearly fifty thousand officers and men, almost one-third of the total strength of both armies, indicating most fearful slaughter in all parts of the field. It is said that some of the first corps men, when they entered the field on the first day of the battle, cried out to their comrades: "We have come to stay." Alas, how true the declaration the graves of thousands here testify.

We cannot stop to review the subsequent marches, battles and en-

campments of the Dutchess County Regiment. There was never a blemish on its record; it did its whole duty and was never in a losing fight. Nearly all of its members were from Dutchess County, and it was composed of many who were relatives, friends and acquaintances. It was probably nearer an harmonious family in its composition and feeling than any regiment in the service. There were no jealousies, no selfish rivalries. Col. Ketcham's coolness in times of danger and thorough knowledge of his duty, saved the regiment many lives. His energy, perseverance and tact secured for his men at all times their full share of supplies. If there were only enough shoes for a portion of the command to which we were attached, the 150th was not the organization to go barefooted; if rations were to be had Col. Ketcham secured them for the Dutchess County Regiment. After the capture of Atlanta, in the autumn of 1864, Col. Ketcham was granted leave of absence and was enabled to take part in the great political conflict that was then raging at the North. He was elected to Congress and rejoined us in front of Savannah, the objective point of Sherman's famous march to the sea, before its surrender. Here he received serious wounds that prevented him from doing further military duty. Col. Ketcham always had the entire confidence of his command and was loved by every soldier in the regiment. His parting with the regiment was a scene never to be forgotten. In his address at this time among other things he said: "I should like very much to march with you through South Carolina, which, as it has been the birthplace of treason, seems now most fitly about to become its grave. The thought of separation from you and of leaving the service of my country while she has need of a defender, fills me with sadness. If I should not return, if to day shall sever my relations with you in a military capacity, be assured that day will never come which will sever the ties of friendship and affection which bind me to you." Col. Ketcham has faithfully kept his word. He has been a member of Congress ever since his first election, with the exception of one term, and no matter how hard

pressed for time by public or private duties, no member of the 150th was ever refused an audience by him, and not one ever wrote him a letter and failed to receive a prompt and kind reply. As our commander he won our highest respect and warmest love. We greet him on this memorial day with a renewal of our affection and esteem, and pray that he may live to enjoy many more years of health, prosperity and happiness. I might stop to recount incidents of personal heroism and bestow praise upon individuals who seemed especially deserving, but where all were so faithful to duty it would be difficult to distinguish. One incident, however, is so conspicuous for heroism and Christian fortitude that I must stop to narrate it. Henry L. Stone, of New York City, having originally enlisted in the 145th New York, was assigned to our regiment in January, 1864. While engaged in constructing breastworks in front of Pine Knob, Georgia, a ragged piece of a bursted shell tore out his bowels. The lacerated fragments were gathered together and he was borne by his comrades a short distance to the rear to die. He said, "Major, will you call the Colonel?" Major Smith called Colonel Ketcham to the dying soldier's side. Stone said, "Colonel, have I been a good soldier?" The Colonel replied, "Yes, Henry, you have done your duty." Stone answered, "I am glad to hear you say that. Tell my mother how I did my duty. Form around me, my comrades of Company A." They assembled around him, when this dying patriot said, "My work is done. Stand by that old flag; I give my life for it, and I am glad to do it. Boys, stand by that flag." And with these words his spirit was hushed in that sweet repose from which there is no awakening.

Another incident that brought deep sorrow to us all was the death of Lieut. David B. Slight, who was killed while leading his company in almost the last battle of the war. No officer in the regiment was more highly esteemed, and having so many times escaped the rebel bullets it was hard to be stricken down when the final victory was so near at hand.

We must not allow this opportunity to pass without a grateful allusion to the patriotic women of Dutchess County, who did so much to assist in recruiting the 150th Regiment and properly equipping it for service in the field. You recollect their kind hospitality, their thoughtful charities, the luxuries for camp and hospital, with which by them we were so generously supplied. They buckled on our swords, presented our colors, and sent us to the front with words of encouragement that inspired us with hope and valor.

Upon our return to Dutchess County they were the first to welcome us. They spread a banquet for our entertainment and by what they said and what they did enabled us to forget the pains, sufferings and sorrows of the war and see only its glories. No regiment in the service had kinder friends at home who were ever mindful of its needs. When the time came to erect some suitable memorial to those who were killed on the field they again came nobly to our assistance, and contributed liberally towards the funds necessary to build the monument we now unveil.

We dedicate this monument to the memory of soldiers who died that a Christian Nation might be perpetuated. Soldiers with ideas unswervable concerning the dearest principles of civil and religious liberty. Soldiers who longed to see one flag floating over a people one in civilization, one in national policy, one in every enterprise for the furthering of universal freedom and the happiness of mankind. Like the prophet of old, they "died without the sight." But, thanks to them and their heroic comrades, that flag does float over a people one in civilization, one in national policy and one in every beneficent enterprise, and will so float as long as time endures.

We dedicate this monument to the memory of the soldiers of the Dutchess County regiment who were killed at the Battle of Gettysburg; men who, when their country called for soldiers, volunteered to fight her battles; brave patriots who willingly gave up their lives to prove to the nations of the earth the success of a republican form of government; men who died to free an enslaved people.

We dedicate this monument to the memory of American soldiers, who with their life's blood wrote a law upon the statute book of the United States, declaring that "he who bears arms in a war having for its object the dissolution of the Union is guilty of treason." Alas, that the mortal remains of Gridley, Marshall, Welling, Slaight, Sweet, Stone, Odell, Lovelace, Palmatier, Story and others of the regiment who were sacrificed upon their country's altar, cannot rest beneath this mass of granite, so well calculated to withstand the ravages of time, and thus have their burial places and their names perpetuated throughout the ages to come. The love of kinsmen and the loyalty of affectionate comrades and friends have done for them, as we have here to-day for those who sleep beneath this monument, all that human hands can do to fittingly mark their graves and keep their memories green. There is no difference in degree, time will place all upon a common level. What are these monuments to which we point with pride? Some day they must crumble into dust. No matter how high and strong we build the fortresses of stone over and around the martyred dead—we might build their granite bases as broad as the pyramids and make their shafts touch heaven, yet would there be higher monuments and stronger fortresses built of the hearts of loyal Americans.





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