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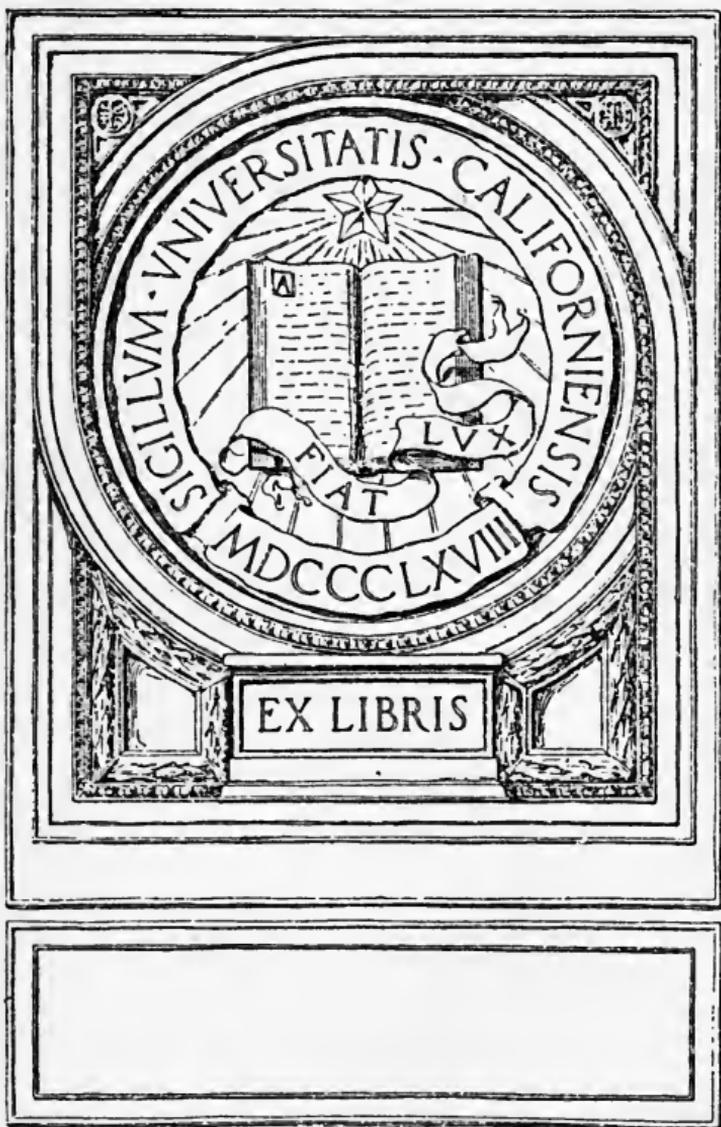
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## NOTE

AFTER lying buried for almost three quarters of a century in the columns of a single newspaper, unknown even to Lincoln specialists, this eulogy on President Zachary Taylor was discovered by sheer accident. It was then brought to the attention of Rev. William E. Barton, D.D., of Chicago, who has long been an ardent student of Abraham Lincoln and has published several books about him. By diligent searching he was able to gather the many details which he has embodied in his Introduction to the eulogy, and the publishers have gladly coöperated with him for the preservation of all the material in a worthy and attractive form.

4 PARK STREET, BOSTON

*September 1, 1922*







**THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF  
GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR**

THIS EDITION IS LIMITED TO FOUR HUNDRED AND  
THIRTY-FIVE COPIES, PRINTED AT THE RIVERSIDE  
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THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF  
GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR

AN ADDRESS

BY

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY  
*The Riverside Press Cambridge*  
1922

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## INTRODUCTION

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## INTRODUCTION

THE discovery of an unknown address by Abraham Lincoln is an event of literary and historical significance. Various attempts have been made to recover his "Lost Speech," delivered in Bloomington, in 1856. Henry C. Whitney undertook to reconstruct it from notes and memory, with a result which has been approved by some who heard it, while others, including a considerable group who gathered in Bloomington to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its original delivery and of the event which called it forth, declared their conviction that "Abraham Lincoln's 'Lost Speech' is still lost." So far as I am aware no one now living remembers to have heard Lincoln's address on the death of President Zachary Taylor. Lincoln's oration on the death of Henry Clay is well

known, and his speech commemorative of his friend, Benjamin Ferguson, also is of record. His eulogy on President Zachary Taylor, however, appears to have been wholly overlooked by Lincoln's biographers and by the compilers of various editions of his works. Nicolay and Hay make no allusion to it, either in their "Life" of Lincoln or in their painstaking compilations of his writings and speeches. I have found but one reference to it, that in Whitney's "Life on the Circuit with Lincoln."

Lovers of Lincoln are to be congratulated upon this discovery, of which some account is to be given in this introduction. The address was delivered in the City Hall in Chicago on Thursday afternoon, July 25, 1850. It was printed in one Chicago paper. It was set up from Lincoln's original manuscript, furnished for the purpose.

President Taylor died at Washington on

July 9, 1850. The disease was diagnosed as cholera morbus. A number of other distinguished men were sick in Washington at the same time and apparently with the same disease. The death of Taylor was a hard blow to the Whig Party. Of its seven candidates for the Presidency, it succeeded in electing only two, William Henry Harrison and Zachary Taylor, and each of these died not long after his election.

Lincoln arrived in Chicago two days before the President's death. The "Chicago Journal" of Monday evening, July 8, 1850, reported:

Hon. A. Lincoln, of Springfield, arrived in town yesterday to attend to duties in the United States District Court, now in session in this city.

A meeting was held in Chicago on the night of the President's death, Tuesday, July 9, 1850, and arrangements were made for a memorial service. In accordance with the

journalistic methods of the times, the daily papers reported the proceedings entire.

The committee appointed evidently acted promptly, for the same issue records that the committee had selected Lincoln as the eulogist, and that he had accepted. The formal acceptance, however, was not published until two weeks later, and just before the address itself was delivered. The occasion for the delay would appear to have been that the Common Council of the City of Chicago had started independently a movement for a Memorial Service, and that the two committees after some conference had agreed to combine in one service to be held in the City Hall. The following correspondence was published on Wednesday evening, July 24:

#### EULOGY UPON THE LATE PRESIDENT

The following is a copy of the correspondence between the Hon. A. Lincoln and the Committee of Arrangements, for paying a suitable tribute of respect to the late President of the United States:

A. LINCOLN, Esq.

Sir: — We, the undersigned Committee, appointed at a meeting of our fellow citizens, to act in conjunction with the Committee appointed by the Common Council of this city, to select a suitable person to deliver an address to our citizens at the City Hall upon the life of Z. Taylor, deceased, late President of the United States of America.

We have, with great unanimity of feeling and sentiment of both Committees, selected yourself for the purpose named — and desire that you will be kind enough to accept thereof and to name the time when you will perform that duty, of addressing your fellow-citizens of Chicago, at the place named.

With sentiments of high esteem

Your fellow-citizens

L. C. KERCHEVAL

B. S. MORRIS

G. W. DOLE

J. H. KINZIE

W. L. NEWBERRY

CHICAGO, ILL., *July 24, 1850*

GENTLEMEN: —

Yours of the 22nd inviting me to deliver an address to the citizens of this city upon the life of

Z. Taylor, deceased, late President of the United States, was duly received. The want of time for preparation will make the task, for me, a very difficult one to perform, in any degree satisfactory to others or to myself. Still I do not feel at liberty to decline the invitation; and therefore I will fix to-morrow as the time. The hour may be any you think proper, after 12 o'clock M.

Your Ob't. Serv't

A. LINCOLN

Messrs. L. C. KERCHEVAL  
 B. S. MORRIS  
 GEO. W. DOLE  
 JOHN H. KINZIE  
 W. L. NEWBERRY

Formal announcement of the time and place appeared in the papers of Thursday, July 25.

#### EULOGY

The Eulogy upon General Taylor will be delivered at 4 o'clock this afternoon at the City Hall, by A. Lincoln, Esq., in obedience to the request of the Council, and of citizens.

The Committee of Arrangements took action immediately following the address and on the same day made formal request of Mr.

Lincoln for a copy of the address for publication. The committee's letter and Lincoln's reply were both printed in full:

CHICAGO, *July 25, 1850*

DEAR SIR: —

Having listened with great satisfaction to the chaste and beautiful eulogism on the character and services of Zachary Taylor, late President of the United States, pronounced by you before the citizens of Chicago, and desirous that the public at large may participate in the pleasure enjoyed by those who had the good fortune to be present on the occasion, we respectfully request that you will furnish a copy of your address for publication.

With great regard

Your obedient servants

L. C. KERCHEVAL, *City Committee*

RICHARD J. HAMILTON,

*For the Committee Common Council  
City of Chicago.*

TO HON. A. LINCOLN

CHICAGO, *July 26, 1850*

GENTLEMEN: —

Your polite note of yesterday, requesting for publication a copy of the address on the life and public services of Gen. Taylor, is received; and I

comply with the request very cheerfully. Accompanying this I send you the original manuscript.

Your ob't serv't

A. LINCOLN

Messrs. L. C. KERCHEVAL  
R. J. HAMILTON

As was fitting, the committee turned over the manuscript to "The Journal," a Whig paper, and "The Journal" undertook to furnish the address to its readers on Saturday, July 27. It found itself under the necessity however, of printing only part of the address in that issue, and apologized with a statement that postponement of the remainder was due to illness among its workmen. On Monday the address was printed complete. The type used in the Saturday issue remained standing and the remainder of the Eulogy was set up, and joined to it.

My attention was called to this report by Hon. Edward W. Baker, of Barry, Illinois, who having undertaken to discover in the

Chicago Historical Society another matter relating to Lincoln, in which we were both interested, found this address and reported it to me, with an inquiry whether I had knowledge of it. I made search of the daily papers of the period and found not only the address, but the correspondence and notable items as here given.

Lincoln must have been glad of this opportunity to speak out of his heart his words of sincere admiration for a man whom he had helped to elect President of the United States. From the outset Lincoln had believed in Taylor, while many other Whigs refused to support, or supported with languid interest, a candidate who was a slave-holder and who had borne a conspicuous part in the Mexican War.

Taylor was nominated by a Whig Convention, which met in Philadelphia, June 7, 1848. The party was so divided that it could

not put forth a distinctive platform. Even an attempt to unite upon an expression concerning the Wilmot Proviso was regarded as so divisive that it was not permitted to come to a vote. The real platform was General Taylor, and his popular nickname, "Old Rough and Ready." Although Taylor was no politician and a stranger even to the ballot-box, he regarded himself as a Whig, but he took pains to explain that he was not an "ultra Whig." Daniel Webster called him "an ignorant old frontier Colonel," but not only Webster, but Clay and Seward, joined in his support. Many a Whig who voted for Taylor accepted him as the choice of two evils. Lincoln, however, was enthusiastic in his support of the nominee. He went into the campaign, as Nicolay and Hay remind us, with "exultant alacrity." They say :

He could not even wait for the adjournment of Congress to begin his stump speaking. Follow-

ing the bad example of the rest of his colleagues, he obtained the floor on the 27th of July and made a long, brilliant and humorous speech, upon the merits of the two candidates before the people. — (*Abraham Lincoln: A History*, vol. 1, p. 279.)

This was Lincoln's noted "coat-tail speech," in which he paid his respects to General Cass, the candidate of the Democrats.

Immediately after the adjournment of Congress, Lincoln went to New England, where he delivered speeches in favor of Taylor, and opposing not so much the Democrats as the Free-Soilers, whose hostility was weakening and threatening to defeat the Whig Party.

Lincoln fully expected that Taylor when elected would remember and reward him for this service. What Lincoln wanted, inasmuch as he was not permitted to return to Congress, was an appointment as General Commissioner of the United States Land Office in Washington. To his bitter disappointment Taylor did not appoint him, but

gave the position to Justin Butterfield, of Chicago, who was said to have been favored by Daniel Webster.

Although Lincoln's chief activity in the Taylor campaign was outside the State of Illinois, it happened that he delivered one notable stump speech for Taylor in the city of Chicago. It was while he was on his way back from the East, coming in part by the Great Lakes, and making his visit to Niagara, that he stopped in Chicago, Friday, October 6, 1848. The "Evening Journal" announced that "Hon. A. Lincoln, M.C., from this State, and family, were at the Sherman House." The same issue called upon the friends of Taylor and Fillmore to rally that evening at the Court-House and hear Mr. Lincoln on the issues of the campaign. "The notice is short," said the "Journal," "but Old Zack's soldiers are all minute men." The papers next day announced that although

there was scant notice, only six hours, the Court-House was overcrowded, and adjournment had to be taken to the park, where Lincoln spoke for two hours in what the editor declared was one of the best political speeches which the editor had ever heard or read.

When General Taylor died, it was eminently fitting that Lincoln, as the one Whig member from Illinois of the last Congress before the election of Taylor, should have been invited to deliver the Eulogy upon him. His arrival in Chicago, two days before the death of President Taylor, furnished a convenient opportunity for the people of the city to hear him. If Lincoln had any feelings, as he may well have had, that General Taylor did not sufficiently recognize Lincoln's activities in the campaign that led to his election, the address portrays nothing of his disappointment. Though the address was hastily pre-

pared in the midst of duties which kept him more or less busy in court, he accepted the invitation gladly and improved the occasion to the satisfaction of his hearers.

In a number of respects the address of Lincoln presents points of interest. First of all, it is notable in its biographical character. It presents in outline a fairly complete account of the life and service of General Taylor. Lincoln doubtless availed himself of such biographical data as the campaign had recently produced and which Lincoln found at hand in Chicago after the invitation had been received by him to deliver the address.

It is noteworthy that in speaking of Taylor's invasion of Mexican territory, Lincoln takes pains to state that he did it under orders. It was this fact that enabled Lincoln and other Whigs who were opposed on principle to the Mexican War to support Taylor for the Presidency. They were particular to

explain that he performed that act as a soldier, under orders, and that the Polk Administration was responsible, and not their own candidate. In this address Lincoln did not enlarge upon that fact, but he did not fail to state it.

His favorable comment upon the fact that Taylor had not engaged in dueling is the more notable because Lincoln had himself been an unwilling participant in what had threatened to be a duel — a fact of which he was never very proud.

It is notable that he speaks of Taylor's freedom from ambition to be President until the position came within the range of possibility, and then became possessed of a "laudable ambition" to secure the position. Lincoln had not as yet precisely an ambition of that character, but there always lurked in his mind the possibility that he might rise to that high position. Even in 1848, when he had not

been reëlected to Congress, and had been disappointed in his remaining political ambition, he still thought the desire to become President a "laudable ambition."

We note in the oration one or two studied attempts at eloquence, such as characterized the earlier oratory of Lincoln, but which disappeared wholly from his later and more chaste style. The description of the mutual solicitude of the garrison of Fort Brown and the party of soldiers outside the fort, and of the relief that was succeeded by a cry of "Victory," must have been dramatic, and it shows at its best that earlier vein of Abraham Lincoln's studied attempt at oratorical effect.

One of the most interesting because most characteristic qualities of the address is the appreciation of the magnanimity of General Taylor, as exemplified in his treatment of Colonel Worth. This I regard as one of the

best things in the address, because it was an example of what was best in that bluff and sensible and generous old soldier, Zachary Taylor, and because it was so nobly characteristic also of Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln emphasized that quality in Taylor, because he unconsciously sought out in him what was most truly like to his own noble nature.

Orations by one President upon another are none too common in American literature; and this by Lincoln upon Taylor is of value in its estimate of the best in Taylor as discerned by one in whom the same quality was worthily present. Lincoln would have done for Worth what Taylor did. He treated in similar fashion the men who opposed him.

One feature of the oration has remarkable interest. It appears to have been the only address of Lincoln's in which he made use of his favorite poem, —

“Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?”

This poem he quoted so often to his friends that some of them supposed him to have been its author, but so far as a search of his published works can show, he did not use it in any other formal address.

Lincoln often inquired of his friends whether any of them knew the author of this poem. So far as is known, he never learned. Herndon, in his lecture which has served as the basis of all the literature concerning Lincoln and Ann Rutledge, informs us that, after the death of Ann, Lincoln formed an attachment for this poem. It has been affirmed that he learned it from Ann. I have inquired of Mrs. Sarah Rutledge Saunders, surviving <sup>1</sup> sister of Ann Rutledge, whether her mother knew this poem and taught it to her daughters, Ann included. She replied:

Yes, Mother knew the poem, "Oh, why should

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Saunders was living when this Introduction was written, but died May 1, 1922.

the spirit of mortal be proud." But she did not teach it to Lincoln. The girls and Mother learned it from Lincoln. They always called it Lincoln's song.

The first allusion made to this poem in any of Lincoln's letters, that I have seen, was in April, 1846, when he was writing some verses of his own, and comparing them with those of another budding poet, William Johnson. Johnson had sent to Lincoln a poem which he had written, a parody upon Poe's "Raven." Lincoln had never read the "Raven," but he sent to Johnson some lines of his own, composed after his visit to his old home in Indiana in the fall of 1844. Subsequently, in September, 1846, Lincoln sent him additional lines suggested by the same visit. It is in the letter of April 18, 1846, that Lincoln refers to the poem, "Oh why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" He says:

I have not your letter now before me; but from memory, I think you ask me who is the author of

the piece I sent you, and that you do so ask as to indicate a slight suspicion that I am the author. Beyond all question, I am not the author. I would give all I am worth, and go in debt, to be able to write so fine a piece as I think that is. I met it in a straggling newspaper last summer, and I remember to have seen it once before, about fifteen years ago, and this is all I know about it.

The statement that he first had seen the poem about fifteen years before 1846 — that is, about 1831 — carries his acquaintance with it back to the period of his friendship for Ann Rutledge, and it is not at all improbable that she learned it at the same time.

After Lincoln had become President, he is said to have made one or more copies of this poem for personal friends; but I have not seen any of these copies. It would be interesting to know whether he ever knew the whole poem.

Literary critics have not shared his high estimate of the composition. In general they have esteemed it a rather mediocre

piece. But its rhythm is accurate, and its rhyme is good, and its plaintive sentiment accorded with the melancholy of Lincoln and of his social environment. It is not the only poem of no great literary merit which became popular in that period; and it would have been forgotten with the rest but for the association of its lines with the name of Abraham Lincoln. He gave to it and its author their chief claim to immortality.

During his Presidency, Lincoln said:

There is a poem which has been a great favorite with me for years, which was first shown me when a young man, by a friend, and which I afterwards saw and cut from a newspaper and learned by heart. I would give a good deal to know who wrote it, but I have never been able to ascertain.

The author of the poem, "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" was William Knox, who was born at Firth, in the parish of Lilliesleaf, in the county of Roxburghshire, in Scotland, on the 17th of August, 1789,

and who died at the age of thirty-six. From his early childhood he wrote verses, and he attained sufficient prominence to win the attention of Walter Scott, who encouraged him and loaned him money. What he might have done had he lived, we do not know; but this is the only poem of his that has any claim to distinction, and that not for its own outstanding merit, but for its association with Abraham Lincoln.

Knox's earliest volume, "The Harp of Zion," was published in 1825, and does not contain this poem. What appears to have been an inclusive volume of the poems of Knox was published in London and Edinburgh in 1847, and bore the title "The Lonely Hearth, The Songs of Israel, Harp of Zion, and Other Poems." This includes the poem which bears the title "Mortality." It is interesting to recall that it has sometimes been printed with the title "Immortality." To

that title, however, it can bear no claim.

It will be of interest to compare the poem in its entirety with the stanzas which Lincoln quoted on the occasion of his oration in memory of the deceased President, General Zachary Taylor.



## MORTALITY

BY WILLIAM KNOX

OH, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?  
Like a swift flying meteor, a fast flying cloud,  
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,  
Man passeth from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,  
Be scattered around and together be laid;  
And the young and the old, and the low and the  
    high,  
Shall moulder to dust and together shall lie.

The infant a mother attended and loved;  
The mother that infant's affection who proved;  
The husband that mother and infant who blessed,  
Each, all, are away to their dwellings of rest.

The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow, in  
    whose eye,  
Shone beauty and pleasure, — her triumphs are  
    by;  
And the memory of those who loved her and  
    praised,  
Are alike from the minds of the living erased.

The hand of the king that the sceptre hath borne;  
The brow of the priest that the mitre hath  
worn;

The eye of the sage and the heart of the brave,  
Are hidden and lost in the depth of the grave.

The peasant whose lot was to sow and to reap;  
The herdsman who climbed with his goats up  
the steep;

The beggar who wandered in search of his bread,  
Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

The saint who enjoyed the communion of heaven;  
The sinner who dared to remain unforgiven;  
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,  
Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.

So the multitude goes, like the flower or the  
weed,

That withers away to let others succeed;  
So the multitude comes, even those we behold,  
To repeat every tale that has often been told.

For we are the same our fathers have been;  
We see the same sights our fathers have seen, —  
We drink the same stream and view the same  
sun,

And run the same course our fathers have run.

The thoughts we are thinking our fathers would  
think;  
From the death we are shrinking our fathers  
would shrink;  
To the life we are clinging our fathers would  
cling;  
But it speeds for us all, like a bird on the wing.

They loved, but the story we cannot unfold;  
They scorned, but the heart of the haughty is  
cold;  
They grieved, but no wail from their slumbers will  
come;  
They joyed, but the tongue of their gladness is  
dumb.

They died, ay! they died: and we things that are  
now,  
Who walk on the turf that lies over their brow,  
Who make in their dwelling a transient abode,  
Meet the things that they met on their pilgrimage  
road.

Yea! hope and despondency, pleasure and pain,  
We mingle together in sunshine and rain;  
And the smiles and the tears, the song and the  
dirge,  
Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.

'T is the wink of an eye, 't is the draught of a  
breath,

From the blossom of health to the paleness of  
death,

From the gilded saloon to the bier and the  
shroud, —

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

**THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF  
GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR**



## EULOGY

PRONOUNCED BY HON. ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
ON THE LIFE AND SERVICES OF  
THE LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR, the eleventh elected President of the United States, is dead. He was born, November 2, 1784, in Orange County, Virginia; and died July 9, 1850, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, at the White House in Washington City.

He was the second son of Richard Taylor, a Colonel in the Army of the Revolution. His youth was passed among the pioneers of Kentucky, whither his parents emigrated soon after his birth; and where his taste for military life, probably inherited, was greatly stimulated. Near the commencement of our last war with Great Britain, he was appointed, by President Jefferson, a Lieutenant in the Seventh Regiment of Infantry. During the war, he served under General Harri-

son in his North-Western campaign against the Indians; and, having been promoted to a Captaincy, was entrusted with the defense of Fort Harrison, with fifty men, half of them unfit for duty. A strong party of Indians, under the Prophet, brother of Tecumseh, made a midnight attack upon the Fort; but Taylor, though weak in his force, and without preparation, was resolute and on the alert; and after a battle, which lasted till after daylight, completely repulsed them. Soon after, he took a prominent part in the expedition under Major-General Hopkins against the Prophet's town; and on his return, found a letter from President Madison, who had succeeded Mr. Jefferson, conferring on him a Major's brevet for his gallant defense of Fort Harrison.

After the close of the British war, he remained in the frontier service of the West, till 1818. He was then transferred to the

Southern frontier, where he remained, most of the time, in active service till 1826. In 1819, and during his service in the South, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. In 1826 he was again sent to the North-West, where he continued until 1836. In 1832 he was promoted to the rank of Colonel. In 1836 he was ordered to the South to engage in what is well known as the Florida War. In the autumn of 1837 he fought and conquered in the memorable Battle of Okeechobee, one of the most desperate struggles known to the annals of Indian warfare. For this he was honored with the rank of Brigadier-General; and in 1838 was appointed to succeed General Jessup in command of the forces in Florida. In 1841 he was ordered to Fort Gibson to take command of the Second Military Department of the United States; and in September, 1844, was directed to hold the troops between the Red

River and the Sabine in readiness to march as might be indicated by the charge of the United States, near Texas. In 1845 his forces were concentrated at Corpus Christi.

In obedience to orders, in March, 1846, he planted his troops on the Rio Grande opposite Matamoras. Soon after this, and near this place, a small detachment of General Taylor's forces, under Captain Thornton, was cut to pieces by a party of Mexicans. Open hostilities being thus commenced, and General Taylor being constantly menaced by Mexican forces vastly superior to his own in numbers, his position became exceedingly critical. Having erected a fort, he might defend himself against great odds while he could remain within it; but his provisions had failed, and there was no supply nearer than Point Isabel, between which and the new fort the country was open to, and full of, armed Mexicans. His resolution was at once

taken. He garrisoned Fort Brown (the new fort) with a force of about four hundred; and, putting himself at the head of the main body of his troops, marched forthwith for Point Isabel. He met no resistance on his march. Having obtained his supplies, he began his return march, to the relief of Fort Brown, which he at first knew would be, and then knew had been, besieged by the enemy, immediately upon his leaving it. On the first or second day of his return march, the Mexican General, Arista, met General Taylor in front, and offered battle. The Mexicans numbered six or eight thousand, opposed to whom were about two thousand Americans. The moment was a trying one. Comparatively, Taylor's forces were but a handful; and few, of either officers or men, had ever been under fire. A brief council was held; and the result was the battle commenced. The issue of that contest all remember — remember with

mingled sensations of pride and sorrow, that then American valor and powers triumphed, and then the gallant and accomplished and noble Ringgold fell.

The Americans passed the night on the field. The General knew the enemy was still in his front; and the question rose upon him, whether to advance or retreat. A council was again held; and it is said, the General overruled the majority, and resolved to advance. Accordingly, in the morning, he moved rapidly forward. At about four or five miles from Fort Brown he again met the enemy in force, who had selected his position, and made some hasty fortifications. Again the battle commenced, and raged till nightfall, when the Mexicans were entirely routed, and the General, with his fatigued and bleeding and reduced battalions, marched into Fort Brown. There was a joyous meeting. A brief hour before, whether all within had perished, all

without feared, but none could tell — while the incessant roar of artillery wrought those within to the highest pitch of apprehension, that their brethren without were being massacred to the last man. And now the din of battle nears the fort, and sweeps obliquely by: a gleam of hope flies through the half-imprisoned few; they fly to the wall; every eye is strained; it is — it is — the Stars and Stripes are still aloft! Anon the anxious brethren meet; and while hand strikes hand, the heavens are rent with a loud, long, glorious, gushing cry of Victory! Victory!! Victory!!!

Soon after these battles, General Taylor was brevetted a Major-General in the United States Army.

In the meantime, war having been declared to exist between the United States and Mexico, provision was made to reinforce General Taylor; and he was ordered to march into the interior of Mexico. He next marched

upon Monterey, arriving there on the nineteenth of September. He commenced an assault upon the city, on the twenty-first; and on the twenty-third, was about carrying it at the point of the bayonet, when General Ampudia capitulated. Taylor's forces consisted of four hundred and twenty-five officers, and nine thousand two hundred and twenty men. His artillery consisted of one ten-inch mortar, two twenty-four-pound howitzers, and eight field batteries of four guns, the mortar being the only piece serviceable for the siege. The Mexican works were armed with forty-two pieces of cannon, and manned with a force of at least seven thousand troops of the line, and from two to three thousand irregulars.

Next we find him advancing farther into the interior of Mexico, at the head of five thousand four hundred men, not more than six hundred being regular troops.

At Agua Nueva, he received intelligence that Santa Anna, the greatest military chieftain of Mexico, was advancing after him; and he fell back to Buena Vista, a strong position a few miles in advance of Saltillo. On the twenty-second of February, 1847, the battle, now called the Battle of Buena Vista, was commenced by Santa Anna at the head of twenty thousand well-appointed soldiers. This was General Taylor's great battle. The particulars of it are familiar to all. It continued through the twenty-third; and although General Taylor's defeat seemed inevitable, yet he succeeded by skill, and by the courage and devotion of his officers and men, in repulsing the overwhelming forces of the enemy, and throwing them back into the desert. This was the battle of the chiefest interest fought during the Mexican War. At the time it was fought, and for some weeks after, General Taylor's communication with

the United States was cut off; and the road was in possession of parties of the enemy. For many days after full intelligence of it should have been in all parts of this country, nothing certain concerning it was known, while vague and painful rumors were afloat, that a great battle had been fought, and that General Taylor and his whole force had been annihilated. At length the truth came, with its thrilling details of victory and blood, — of glory and grief. A bright and glowing page was added to our Nation's history; but then, too, in eternal silence, lay Clay and McKee and Yell and Lincoln, and our own beloved Hardin.

This was also General Taylor's last battle. He remained in active service in Mexico till the autumn of the same year, when he returned to the United States.

Passing in review General Taylor's military history, some striking peculiarities will

appear. No one of the six battles which he fought, except, perhaps, that of Monterey, presented a field which would have been selected by an ambitious captain upon which to gather laurels. So far as fame is concerned, the prospect — the promise in advance — was, “You may lose, but you cannot win.” Yet Taylor, in his blunt, business-like view of things, seems never to have thought of this.

It did not happen to General Taylor, once in his life, to fight a battle on equal terms, or on terms advantageous to himself — and yet he was never beaten, and he never retreated. In all, the odds were greatly against him; in each, defeat seemed inevitable; and yet in all he triumphed. Wherever he has led, while the battle still raged, the issue was painfully doubtful; yet in each and all, when the din had ceased, and the smoke had blown away, our country's flag was still seen, fluttering in the breeze.

General Taylor's battles were not distinguished for brilliant military maneuvers; but in all he seems rather to have conquered by the exercise of a sober and steady judgment, coupled with a dogged incapacity to understand that defeat was possible. His rarest military trait was a combination of negatives — absence of excitement and absence of fear. He could not be flurried, and he could not be scared.

In connection with General Taylor's military character may be mentioned his relations with his brother officers, and his soldiers. Terrible as he was to his country's enemies, no man was so little disposed to have difficulty with his friends. During the period of his life, dueling was a practice not quite uncommon among gentlemen in the peaceful avocations of life, and still more common among the officers of the Army and Navy, yet, so far as I can learn, a duel with

General Taylor has never been talked of.

He was alike averse to sudden and to startling quarrels; and he pursued no man with revenge. A notable and a noble instance of this is found in his conduct to the gallant and now lamented General Worth. A short while before the battles of the eighth and ninth of May, some question of precedence arose between Worth (then a Colonel) and some other officer, which question it seems it was General Taylor's duty to decide. He decided against Worth. Worth was greatly offended, left the Army, came to the United States, and tendered his resignation to the authorities at Washington. It is said, that in his passionate feeling, he hesitated not to speak harshly and disparagingly of General Taylor. He was an officer of the highest character; and his word, on military subjects, and about military men, could not, with the country, pass for nothing. In this absence from the

Army of Colonel Worth, the unexpected turn of things brought in the battles of the eighth and ninth. He was deeply mortified — in almost absolute desperation — at having lost the opportunity of being present, and taking part in those battles. The laurels won by his previous service, in his own eyes, seemed withering away. The Government, both wisely and generously, I think, declined accepting his resignation; and he returned to General Taylor. Then came General Taylor's opportunity for revenge. The Battle of Monterey was approaching and even at hand. Taylor could, if he would, so place Worth in that battle, that his name would scarcely be noticed in the report. But no. He felt it was due to the service to assign the real post of honor to some one of the best officers; he knew Worth was one of the best, and he felt that it was generous to allow him, then and there, to retrieve his secret loss. Accordingly,

he assigned to Colonel Worth in that assault, what was *par excellence* the post of honor; and the duties of which he executed so well and so brilliantly as to eclipse, in that battle, even General Taylor, himself.

As to General Taylor's relations with his soldiers, details would be endless. It is perhaps enough to say — and it is far from the least of his honors that we can truly say — that of the many who served with him, through the long course of forty years, all testify to the uniform kindness, and his constant care for, and hearty sympathy with, their every want and every suffering; while none can be found to declare that he was ever a tyrant anywhere, in anything.

Going back a little in point of time, it is proper to say that so soon as the news of the battles of the eighth and ninth of May, 1846, had fairly reached the United States, General Taylor began to be named for the next

Presidency, by letter writers, newspapers, public meetings and conventions in various parts of the country.

These nominations were generally put forth as being of no-party character. Up to this time I think it highly probable — nay, almost certain — that General Taylor had never thought of the Presidency in connection with himself. And there is reason for believing that the first intelligence of these nominations rather amused than seriously interested him. Yet I should be insincere, were I not to confess that, in my opinion, the repeated and steady manifestations in his favor did beget in his mind a laudable ambition to reach the high distinction of the Presidential chair.

As the time for the Presidential canvass approached, it was seen that general nominations, combining anything near the number of votes necessary to an election, could

not be made without some pretty strong and decided reference to party politics. Accordingly, in the month of May, 1848, the great Democratic Party nominated as their candidate an able and distinguished member of their own party [General Cass] on strictly party grounds. Almost immediately following this, the Whig Party, in General Convention, nominated General Taylor as their candidate. The election came off in the November following, and though there was also a third candidate, the two former only received any vote in the electoral college. General Taylor, having the majority of them, was duly elected; and he entered on the duties of that high and responsible office, March 5, 1849. The incidents of his administration, up to the time of his death, are too familiar and too fresh to require any direct repetition.

The Presidency, even to the most experienced politicians, is no bed of roses; and

General Taylor, like others, found thorns within it. No human being can fill that station and escape censure. Still, I hope and believe, when General Taylor's official conduct shall come to be viewed in the calm light of history, he will be found to have deserved as little as any who have succeeded him.

Upon the death of General Taylor, as it would be in the case of any President, we are naturally led to consider what will be its effect, politically, upon the country. I will not pretend to believe that all the wisdom, or all of the patriotism of the country, died with General Taylor. But we know that wisdom and patriotism, in a public office under institutions like ours, are wholly inefficient and worthless, unless they are sustained by the confidence and devotion of the people. And I confess my apprehensions, that in the death of the late President, we have lost a degree of that confidence and devotion which

will not soon again pertain to any successor. Between public measures regarded as antagonistic, there is often less real difference in their bearing on the public weal, than there is between the dispute being kept up or being settled either way. I fear the one great question of the day is not now so likely to be partially acquiesced in by the different sections of the Union, as it would have been could General Taylor have been spared to us. Yet, under all circumstances, trusting to our Maker and through His wisdom and beneficence to the great body of our people, we will not despair, nor despond.

In General Taylor's general public relation to his country, what will strongly impress a close observer was his unostentatious, self-sacrificing, long-enduring devotion to his duty. He indulged in no recreations, he visited no public places seeking applause; but quietly, as the earth in its orbit, he was

always at his post. Along our whole Indian frontier, through summer and winter, in sunshine and storm, like a sleepless sentinel, he has watched while we have slept for forty long years. How well might the dying hero say at last, "I have done my duty, I am ready to go."

Nor can I help thinking that the American people, in electing General Taylor to the Presidency, thereby showing their high appreciation of his sterling, but inobtrusive qualities, did their country a service, and themselves an imperishable honor. It is much for the young to know that treading the hard path of duty as he trod it will be noticed, and will lead to high places.

But he is gone. The conqueror at last is conquered. The fruits of his labor, his name, his memory and example, are all that is left us — his example, verifying the great truth that "he that humbleth himself, shall be

exalted" — teaching that to serve one's country with a singleness of purpose gives assurances of that country's gratitude, secures its best honors, and makes "a dying bed, soft as downy pillows are."

The death of the last President may not be without its use, in reminding us that we, too, must die. Death, abstractly considered, is the same with the high as with the low; but practically we are not so much aroused by the contemplation of our own mortal natures, by the fall of many undistinguished, as that of one great and well-known name. By the latter, we are forced to muse, and ponder sadly,

"O, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

So the multitude goes, like the flower or the  
weed,

That withers away, to let others succeed;

So the multitude comes, even those we be-  
hold,

To repeat every tale that has often been told.

54      LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF

For we are same that our fathers have been;  
We see the same sights our fathers have  
    seen, —

We drink the same streams, and see the same  
    sun,

And run the same course our fathers have run.

They loved, but the story we cannot unfold;  
They scorned, but the heart of the haughty is  
    cold;

They grieved, but no wail from their slumbers  
    will come;

They rejoiced, but the tongue of their glad-  
    ness is dumb.

They died! Aye, they died. We, things that  
    are now,

That work on the turf that lies on their brow,  
And make in their dwellings a transient abode,  
Meet the things that they met on their pil-  
    grimage road.

Yea! hope and despondency, pleasure and  
    pain

Are mingled together in sunshine and rain —  
And the smile and the tear, and the song and  
    the dirge

Still follow each other like surge upon surge.

'T is the wink of an eye, 't is the draught of a  
breath,  
From the blossom of health, to the paleness of  
death —  
From the gilded saloon, to the bier and the  
shroud,  
O why should the spirit of mortal be proud?





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