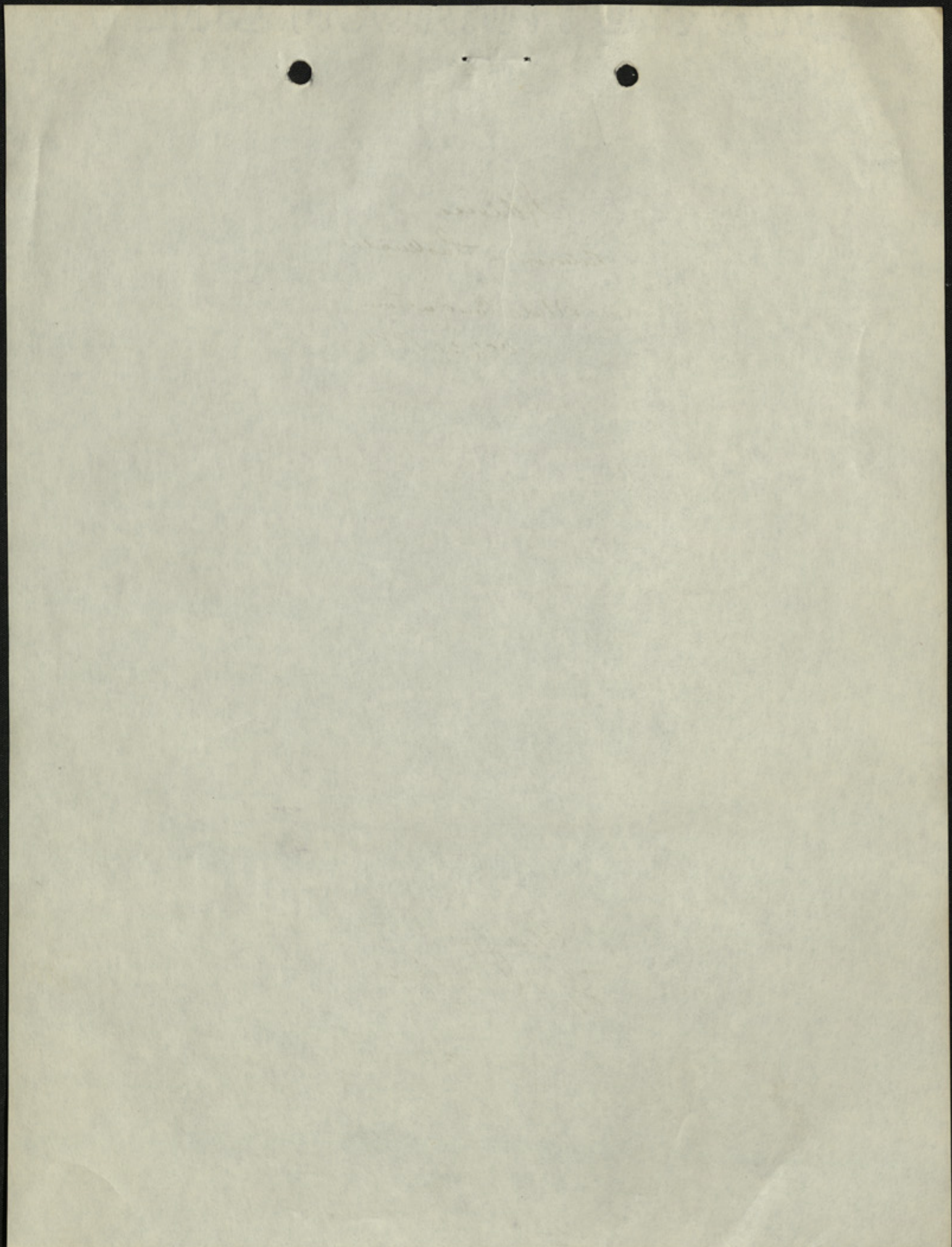
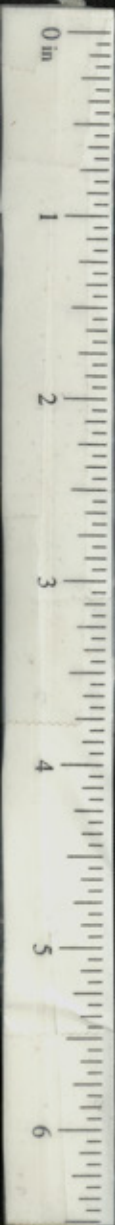


Address  
Delivered in Los Angeles  
at  
State Convention  
Oct. 21 1886

No 60

Subject  
Y. M. C. F.







6 Address of Gen. O. O. Howard

Delivered in Los Angeles at State Convention

Oct. 21/86.

Page 1.

My first real acquaintance with the Y.M.C.A. as a society, began in the fall of 1861. After the first battle of Bull Run, I received a commission of Brigadier General, which detached me from the troops in Virginia, and then while awaiting orders, I was ~~delayed~~ obliged to remain some weeks in Washington. The city, at that time was filled with a restless changing population, and there was much suffering among those who had hastened to the Capital, <sup>(many)</sup> hoping as ~~the~~ the work of the army and the treasury expanded, to get remunerative employment, and, as is too often the case with such seekers, nine out of every ten were disappointed.

At the first meeting of the Y.M.C.A. which I attended, held in a small upper room-- these and like cases were presented.

I remember now a most enthusiastic minister from Massachusetts, who suddenly arose in the meeting and plead for agents to be sent out <sup>to be distributed among the volunteer soldiers</sup> with books and papers to the surrounding camps; and how he showed the need of <sup>(sending)</sup> christian <sup>books and</sup> instruction to the numerous hospitals which were fast filling with the wounded from Ball's Bluff, <sup>who were coming in from the advanced lines</sup> and the patients, suffering with malarial attacks, typhoid fever and measles.

Shortly after the meeting, the celebrated "Christian Commission", <sup>in New York & Philadelphia</sup> which was but a branch of the Y.M.C.A., was set on foot, and entered upon its famous work of benevolence. It drew funds from the people by the millions, and was the peoples almoner, extending the hand of sympathy ~~and~~ and love to any and all of the patriotic sons who could be reached by its kindly agencies.

At the close of the war, in 1865, writing to the Hon. Geo. H. Stuart President of the "Commission", I used the following words: "You always had my hearty approval and sympathy in the work of the Christian Commission. Your work of physical relief is so connected



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in my recollection, with that of the Sanitary Commission, and that of special benevolent associations, that I will only say that, wherever I found your agents, either in the Army of the Potomac, of the Cumberland, or of the Tennessee, I found them faithful in such things, to the important trust committed to them. I have seen them among the soldiers in prayer-meetings, Sunday-schools, and at Sunday services, and, without exception, they were full of zeal and energy in the Master's service. Their spiritual work, encouraging chaplains and aiding them with books, Bibles, Testaments, and with themselves, ready to speak of Christ crucified, at all times and in all places, bringing to us professing christians, cheerful faces and warm pressure of the hand, with a "God bless you and protect you", and following us to every hospital and battle-field, to point to the only Name whereby a soldier can be saved, though he may be ever so brave and patriotic, --- it can never be estimated here below. God will reward you, my dear sir, for the impulse you gave to the great work of the Christian Commission, and for your indomitable energy, displayed in perpetuating it till the end.

With your strong faith in Christ you took officers, soldiers, and citizens in the arms of your love, and bore them right on, to work for our God and for humanity.

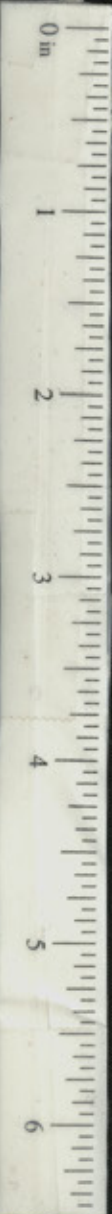
The Christian Commission has written its record on the tablets of thousands of precious souls, and needs nothing to render it perpetual, for its influence is eternal".

One or two instances will show a phase of the work not often referred to. -- In the Army of the Potomac a delegate, Mr. Williams, reported to his headquarters, as follows:

"One evening we were sitting around the fire, discussing various subjects, and among them the best way of reaching the soldiers. A soldier, who had come in unobserved with one of the delegates after the evening meeting, and had sat in silence, listening to



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our conversation, started up with energy and great determination and trembling in every limb, stepped forward, placed both hands upon the table, looked us full in the face, and said, with the deepest feeling, "Well, Christian brethern, I have come in to ask you to pray with me." We dropped upon our knees at once, rebuked in our hearts that we had not, some of us, noticed his anguish and spoken to him before. Every member of our circle besought God's spirit and then he who had asked our prayers, prayed for himself. One of our number went with the young man to his tent, and the next day he was rejoicing in his new-found hope.

Not long after, about two o'clock in the morning, the Delegates were aroused by a loud knocking at the door of their tent. One of them arose, and found two men in deep distress for their soul's salvation, anxious to have the brethern pray for them. Candles were lighted, and the morning hours were away in earnest supplication with God that he would give peace to these earnest seekers. Peace came, and through their influence many others were brought to Christ, till the number of conversions at the station exceeded a hundred. Nor was the interest confined to the meetings in our chapel, but extended to regiments which had chaplains, who held religious services among their own men.

One evening a man belonging to a battery, three-fourths of a mile from our chapel, strayed over to <sup>our</sup> meeting. He became greatly interested in the services. When about half way home, he knelt by a stump and prayed. The next night, with a companion, he sought the meeting again. The stump saw two praying souls that night, and upon their return to camp they began to work for Christ, and in a few weeks forty men out of that battery alone found peace in believing."

When the war <sup>had</sup> ~~was~~ closed, my duties again brought me to Washington. Here both remembrance and gratitude led me to the Young Men's Association, which I served in various capacities.



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4 9 in Washington

4# We were among the first to undertake to erect a suitable building. For this we formed a special company, of which the Hon. Salmon P. Chase was the President, and I the Vice President. We built the structure near the heart of Washington, but like some other mistaken folk, we allowed debt and mortgage to be saddled upon it, and this finally lost that building to the young men and their friends. Yet for years <sup>within its walls,</sup> we had a model institution. Fortunately, the Association elected a superb secretary. He would do more work <sup>in a given time,</sup> than any five other men I ever saw.

The gymnasium for those who must have physical exercise; the Library and Reading-Room <sup>the library and</sup> for the intellectual; evening classes, for the many day-workers both in ordinary studies and in music; the parlors where members came for <sup>social</sup> solid and business conference.

<sup>where</sup> The rooms earnest ministers had their weekly gatherings and took counsel of each other and of God. The committee rooms where the lively secretary brought his committees together like companies to the drill-ground; the daily meetings for reading the divine Word, and for prayer; the gathering of Delegates before they went out to the jail and the alms-house, the hospital, the neighborhood meetings, <sup>to</sup> or the larger assemblies, like those on the Delta at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and Penn<sup>a</sup>. Avenue. Where a short prayer, a few verses

and spirited songs and exhortations called in the curious moving multitude. Who can tell <sup>all</sup> it! -- men and women often like those on the day of Pentecost, inquiring the way out of discontent into content, out of great sin and heavy sorrow into cleansing and great

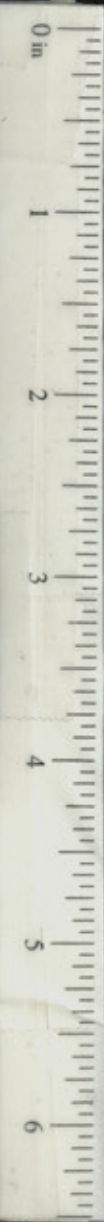
joy. Yes, for six years I saw the churches in Washington working well through this agency. The <sup>constant</sup> delegates from our own active church to the Y.M.C.A. went to the Young Men's rooms when their own church-deers were shut, -- but they were the most faithful to their own

home-duties when the church doors were open and the bell called <sup>back</sup> them to services there. You could feel the presence of those who were trained in Association work wherever you found them.

Prompt to speak; brief and clear in utterance; always exhibiting a deep and earnest spirit, -- the Pastor rejoiced to have a few of them step into his Wednesday evening



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Lowell Mass. and Portland Me. each enjoyed a similar occasion.

Great numbers of the young men of different lands filled these cities. Bold, strong intensely active they were welded together by the Spirit, in brotherly love. Their speech was eloquent, their appeals tender, their faith wonderful. Who could help bidding them "God speed".

After my Washington experience I was sent <sup>in 1874</sup> by the War Dept. to the North-west. At Portland, Oregon, we found a

small society, <sup>which</sup> in the few years of my residence there ~~it~~ grew mightily. <sup>it had a most efficient secretary & working members,</sup> It was the means of saving a large number of poor

blinded men, giving them by the Divine help, <sup>a</sup> clear spiritual

change. <sup>The</sup> Gambler brought <sup>his</sup> ~~their~~ implements and surrendered them to be kept as memorials of God's deliverance. Drunkards were thoroughly reformed. Infidels, fixed and rigid in their long unbelief,

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7.13  
When abroad in 1881, I was a delegate to the general international conference at Berlin. Then the best thing that happened to me among other excellent things, was the beginning of a personal acquaintanceship with George Williams of London. He with a few associates <sup>were</sup> the originators of this remarkable agency and organization for the salvation of young men. Small of stature, gentle

of manners, and rather retiring withal, you would not at first apprehend the power of the man. But his glowing face, eloquent speech and large liberal soul soon possess and charm you. He is a merchant who devotes his earnings to this channel; and not only that; ~~but~~ he watches over the Y.M.C.A. work as a loving father over his precious child. He was when I saw him in Berlin and afterwards in London contributing all he could spare from his income to build up new associations <sup>of this kind</sup> in France. It would do anybody good to have met there in Berlin delegates from the four corners of the globe, - all men of faith and of prayer. I do not think any of our men ~~from~~

from the United States were abreast of the English, German or French in education, but they deferred to our people greatly for their clear exhibition of practical talent. <sup>and energy</sup> It was an interesting incident to hear them put secretaries Morse and McBurney of New York on the platform and question them earnestly as to <sup>just</sup> how this work was done in America. our following up the young men so extensively on our railways; and our penetrating so successfully into the very halls of college and university life, gave them particular satisfaction. Our parlor conferences where business-men were made acquainted with the wants of a community, and from which Young Men's buildings had sprung, were very suggestive.

I have detained you long enough, I think, in presenting to you in a sort of personal-historic way, the aims of our Young Men's Christian Associations. Our San Francisco Secretary, has his own fashion of condensing. He wrote me a few days ago a few pregnant sentences, which he will forgive me, I know, for adopting.

Speaking of the associations, he says: "Their growth has been more rapid in this country than in any other part of the world."



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This organization has a larger following ~~th~~ of business men than any other of the church, and receives the support and endorsement of all who are interested in the moral and spiritual elevation of young men. In nearly all of the larger cities of America, magnificent buildings have been erected by interested citizens and philanthropists, in which to carry on more efficiently, the business of the Association, and our aim is to benefit young men, spiritually, socially, intellectually and physically. Spiritually, by intelligently organized meetings, Bible-classes, song-services, and other similar means; intellectually, by evening educational classes, well selected libraries, and well stocked reading-rooms; socially, by social gatherings for young men where the best companionship is found; physically, by well equipped gymnasiums and other proper provisions for amusements. In fact, they are christian homes for young men just so far as it is possible for us to make them so. The railroad companies are interested in the work to the extent of contributing \$70,000.00. a year. We have now <sup>(in the United States)</sup> over 60. railroad secretaries. The work is organized among German young men, commercial travelers, colored young men and 800,000. railroad young men. It is the most thoroughly organized work in existence systematically done and carried forward in the most business like manner. In fact, it has been denominated by eminent men as the gigantic religious movement of the 19th century. There is no place in the world where the work is more needed than in California. It is estimated that there are 300,000. young men between the age of 16 and 25 in California, a great majority of whom are away from home and home influences. Only about 5 per cent of this number attend any church regularly and only about 2 per cent <sup>(professed)</sup> are christians. It is a rare thing to find a native son of this state who is an active <sup>christian member.</sup> ~~man.~~ It is sad but it is true.

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according to its population in this country; more temptations to allure young men in California than in any other state of its population. Hence, the importance of our work is apparent.

Well, then, my brethren, in view of this condensed statement, the needs are evident. First more consecrated, effective workers in each existing association; and secondly, more associations. For the individual associations we earnestly count <sup>on</sup> the strong sympathy of the men and women who love what is honest, what is pure, what is of good repute. A young man once a drunkard has little to recommend him; once given up to dishonest practices neither merchants nor mechanics can trust him. Fathers and mothers want sons that are good and true. Poor men in these days organize for <sup>self</sup> protection against the rich; labor against capital: my heart often sympathizes with the former more than I can tell. I do honestly believe that the common platform is to be found right here <sup>in a truly catholic association</sup>. When a rich man begins to be the recognized steward of the Lord, he becomes the avowed friend of the Lord's children. He is no longer "The Rich Man" but the Lord's steward. When the poor man becomes the steward of the Lord he has a bank to draw from that cannot fail. Enmity and hostility and all hatred are slain. But <sup>some of the people</sup> say, "General, you are not practical." The rich will not become unselfish christians; monopoly does exist and thrive; and the poor are made poorer. Yes, but with God's help how much can be done? If we cannot cure all these ills, we can mitigate them. "Fret not thyself because of evil doers. Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." For somehow if we give ourselves unreservedly to our Master's service, <sup>in his own way</sup> He will ~~somehow~~ lead our wise men into better wisdom and certainly He will bring just measures to pass. There is no substantial relief and never will be, from the ills that afflict us, <sup>found</sup> in ~~indulging~~ or cherishing what every honest heart knows to be wrong. Let us then, my brethren and friends, reassert the true platform for every soul on earth; <sup>viz</sup> love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thy self. Equal



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