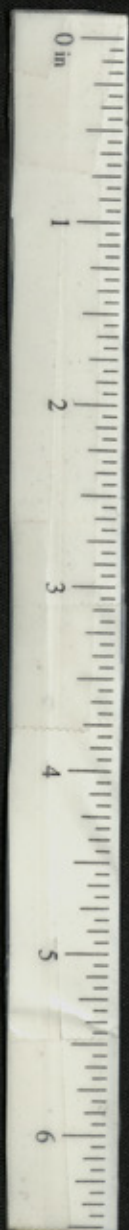


Address
delivered at
Council Bluffs, Iowa
Oct. 4, 1894

No 1. Vol. 8

Subject
Society, Army of the Tennessee
Ezra Chapel



Crystal

Crystal

*Retained for file with
General Howard's M.S.*

ADDRESS delivered before the meeting of the Society of the

ARMY of the TENNESSEE, at COUNCIL BLUFFS, Iowa,

Banquet Grand Hotel
October 3rd and 4th 1894.

I. INTRODUCTION.

HOW PATRIOTS LIVE.

Comrades:-

How the years roll around ! Grant, Sherman, McPherson and Logan,- successive Commanders of the Army of the Tennessee,- have passed on to the other shore of immortal life. I am the only one of that series of commanders left to meet and address you to-night.

You may say that is not a cheerful chord to touch. Why not ? I often mingle in my dreams with these old friends and intimates. I never meet them in the tomb; but in some active sphere correspondent to the old places. Grant is earnest; Sherman gay and off hand; McPherson quietly happy, and Logan electric!

My own part in a given dream may be slightly depressing,- often shame-producing or ludicrous, or to coin a word, defeatfull! But their parts in the drama of the night-visions are now fraught with the triumphs only,- whethervthey be of War or Peace!

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October 3rd and 4th 1884.

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ADDRESS delivered before the meeting of the Society of the

General Sherman's
Return for his work

carpet much soiled from use. Sherman appeared to be standing not far off and talking rapidly in a most animated style to a host of companions. I called out to him, "General, let me bathe my carpet in your tub."

He had a quizzical look as he removed his cigar and lifted one of his brows after the old fashion.

"Put that carpet in my tub?" "All right Howard,- do what you like". This was said with the same old trombone voice and joyous manner which we never forgot.

So you perceive, my comrades, these friends and many others who leave us one by one, are not really dead,- but living entities not far off from our thoughts night and day.

II. EZRA CHAPEL.

A WORD FOR MC PHERSON.

You have given me "EZRA CHAPEL". All right.

But few days before that battle, the 22nd of July¹⁸⁶¹ in the morning, all these commanders were here in bodily presence living; during that day, as you, Mr. President, too vividly remember, one of them, McPherson, the young man of finest talent and brightest earthly prospect fell in battle. I have visited his singular tomb set up there on the field,- also the statue in Washington, and have had a description of the other erected in Clyde, Ohio. His history, however, is everywhere, and his name does not need monuments of iron, stone and marble to keep fresh

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his memory in the minds and hearts of the thousands who knew and loved him ! !

On the 27th of July, five days after the death of McPherson, I assumed command of the Army of the Tennessee. There is something a little remarkable in the sequence of his work and mine at the points where they came in contact.

He entered the Military Academy in 1849; Howard in 1850. He graduated in 1853; Howard in 1854. He was Cadet Quartermaster Sergeant during his second class-year; Howard the same, succeeding him. He was Cadet Quartermaster in his graduating year; Howard the same in his. He was President of the Dialectic Society at West Point in 1852-53; Howard was his immediate successor also in this.

I did not seek the field-command which McPherson had vacated. No friends pressed my name upon General Sherman and so it was, is, and ever will be a special gratification to my military pride that I was selected for the high position.

You will agree with me that by the time it had been occupied by so many generals of distinction,- some whose ability and reputation the world will have difficulty to match,- that it was a great honor and enhanced with unusual responsibility.

III. HOW THE ARMY MARCHED and TO NEW GROUND.

The very day I passed from the 4th Corps to the new command, I set

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the army in motion and we proceeded, General Dodge's Corps leading, Blair's and Logan's following in order, from the field of their bloody triumph, now called the Battle-field of Atlanta, around in rear of the Armies of the Ohio and the Cumberland to and beyond the then extreme right of Thomas' position. We were to go across Proctor's Creek, and Sherman desired me to march in the usual order of columns of four stretching out as far as I might, so as to encompass the Confederate works of Atlanta and gain, if Confederate Hood would allow me to do so, his southbound railroad track, and thus cut his vital communication. I demurred a little at the manner of going, and so with Sherman's assent changed the order of coming into line. General Dodge had hardly passed Thomas' flank when, ~~with~~ General Corse being on the lead, Dodge began skirmishing with the Confederate pickets and advance-guards, driving them back. They gave way step by step as our men advanced. General Dodge handsomely swung up into line, - brigade by brigade coming into deployment, as we would say with smaller fronts, by division on the left into line, - each successive brigade covered and protected the rear and then the flank of its predecessor. General Blair in the same orderly manner passed beyond Dodge and came nearly into position, curving up toward the Confederate intrenchments; but he waited for complete adjustment till the daylight of the following morning. Logan unrolled in a similar manner, except that he deployed nearly his entire corps during

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the night, forming a large angle at the junction with Blair. Wood's division was near Ezra Church, and then came Harrow's and then last on the extreme right Morgan L. Smith's, commanded in this battle by Lightburn, whose own brigade was on the extreme right of Smith's division. Each corps had its own artillery, but there was no cavalry, except a small escort at army headquarters.

~~General~~ Sherman, with the view of protecting our general communications, caused General Thomas to send Morgan's division to Turner's Ferry at the same time that we were moving. To the same end, I had General Dodge re-enforce Morgan with the 9th Illinois Mounted Infantry. *so helped by mounted men,* Morgan was to watch all the roads to our right and rear, and after his reconnaissance, come back as rapidly as possible to my right flank. It should be observed that the Confederate works in front of Thomas, Dodge, and Blair were held in force by Hardee's Corps.

IV. A GLANCE AT THE CONFEDERATE SIDE.

Now in order to make this battle as plain as possible, we can do at this time what we could not do on the 27th or 28th of July 1864. We can step over to the other side and see what our opponents were doing. I cannot do better, perhaps, than to give you what our good General Cox has ferreted out from Confederate reports.

" He (Hood) determined upon another effort to crush Sherman's flank; and since the thing was to be again tried, it must be admitted that he

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was wise in determining to strike Howard's right while in motion, and before he could intrench. He withdrew Loring's and Walthall's divisions of Stewart's corps, to support General S.D. Lee, who with his corps (lately commanded by Cheatham) was ordered to move out on the Lickskillet road, attack Howard, and drive him from that road and the one by Ezra Church. Stewart's orders directed him to remain in support of Lee near the fortifications till needed, and next morning (29th), re-enforced by his other division (French's) to move beyond Lee and turn completely the flank of Howard, attacking him in the rear. Hardee's corps and Smith's Georgians were ordered to occupy the works in front of Thomas and Schofield."

V. HOOD'S ACCOUNT.

Perhaps General Hood himself makes it even plainer. His official statement is as follows:-

" Sherman began to mass his forces in that quarter. On the 28th it became manifest that the enemy (Howard) desired to place his right on Utoy Creek. I determined to hold the Lickskillet road, and accordingly ordered Lieutenant General Lee, who on the 26th relieved Major General Cheatham from command of the Corps formerly commanded by myself, to move his forces so as to prevent the enemy from gaining that road. He was ordered to hold the enemy in check on a line nearly parallel with the Lickskillet road, running through Ezra Church. General Lee finding that the enemy had already gained that position, engaged him with the intention to recover that line. This brought on the engagement of the 28th", to wit, the Battle of Ezra Church.

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It is yet difficult to estimate the numbers which General Hood brought to bear mainly upon the 15th Corps, which constituted my right flank.

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My old classmate General S. D. Lee, whom our men reported as riding in the thickest of the fight a white horse all that exciting day, says of his movement:-

"The (Confederate) army was then in position and intrenched around Atlanta, daily shifting its position to meet the flank movements of the enemy. On the 27th Hindman's and Clayton's divisions were withdrawn from the trenches and massed on the Lickskillet road. On the 28th, about 11 A.M., I received orders to move out on the Lickskillet road, and check the enemy (Howard) who was then moving to our left, ~~As~~ it was desirable to hold that road, to be used for a contemplated movement, I soon found that the enemy (Howard's skirmishers) had gained that road and was gradually driving back our cavalry. Brown's division was at once formed on the left of and obliquely to the road, and Clayton's division on the right, connecting by a line of skirmishers with the main works around the city. As soon as Brown ~~was~~ was formed, he moved forward, handsomely driving the enemy (Lightburn's men) across the road and to a distance half a mile ~~more~~ beyond, where he encountered temporary breastworks, from which he was driven back with considerable loss. Clayton's division moved forward as soon as formed, and about ten minutes after Brown's advance, and met with similar results. I found it difficult to rally Brown's division, and moved it against the enemy a second time. The consequence was that one or two brigades of this division, as also of Clayton's division, sustained heavy losses because of the failure in the attack of portions of their lines. Walthall's division, of Stewart's Corps, had moved out on the Lickskillet road, while Brown's and Clayton's divisions were engaged with the enemy. At my suggestion this division was thrown against the enemy where Brown had attacked. The enemy (Logan's line) was still within easy range of the Lickskillet road, and I believed that he would yield before a determined attack. The effort was however a failure."

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VII. OUR OWN VIEW.

As Dodge and Blair were occupied with the Confederate forces inside of the Atlanta works, it is evident that the moving Confederate column greatly outnumbered our men, who were engaged at the points of attack.

Some writers think that Hood after his sad experience at the two battles of *the 22^d of July and* Peach Tree Creek, should have managed to stand on the defensive and waited for our coming. If he had done so, we would have had his railroad communications cut off by two hours after sunrise of the 28th. Once there, he could not have dislodged us and the siege of Atlanta would soon have ended in prompt abandonment or surrender. Certainly our movement would have forced even Johnston to have attacked us as Hood did.

VIII. HOW THE ACTION BEGAN.

All the morning of the 28th, Logan kept moving steadily forward, well covered by his skirmish line. With my staff and small escort I kept him in sight, following up the movement. Between seven or eight, Sherman joined me as we were passing through a heavily wooded country. As we were conversing, the skirmishing became more brisk and what I took to be grape-shot, cut through the trees over our heads breaking off the limbs. We both felt that the enemy was becoming more obstinate. I said:- "General Hood will attack me here!"

I guess not; he will hardly try it again," Sherman replied.

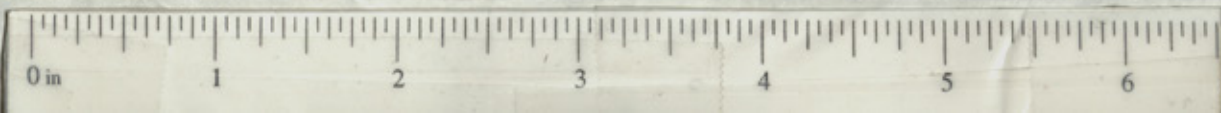
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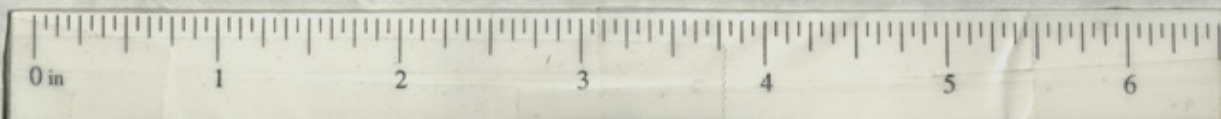


I then remarked that I was three years at West Point with Hood, and pronounced him "indomitable in heart".

Now as the sounds of battle kept on increasing, Sherman turned back to Thomas, probably having a double motive; first to be where he could best re-enforce, and second to let me ^e exercise my new command without embarrassment. On many occasions, I noticed that Sherman took this course with subordinates in who⁴ he had confidence.

From the direction of the enemy's firing, I had no great fear for my right flank, and knew from the shape of my position, that I could easily and largely re-enforce the right, if necessity should require. I watched Logan as he gained the higher ground and saw with satisfaction thousands of men running forward with rails and such logs as they could seize upon, with which they were making the continuous pile. The shelter at best was but little, but was a fair one to men when kneeling and better when lying down; of course it was too late for intrenching.

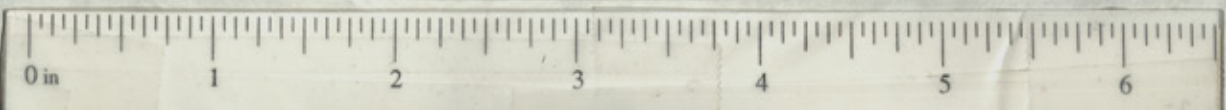
It did not take long to verify my prediction. That shrill, terrifying yell,- who can ever forget it!! Hood's men charged and fired as they came. All along the lines our men remained in place. I saw that a few straggled back from one cause or another, but not many. These few Logan and officers who were with him rushed to meet; and back they went to duty, impelled by the shrill fierceness of his indignant voice. Though it seems hardly possible that so much time had passed



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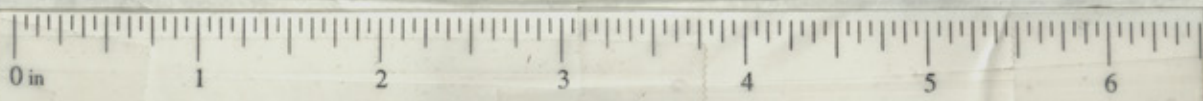
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From Harrow's and Smith's front, the first charge was met with rapid and well directed firing. Nothing could stand against it, and the most of the Confederates either fell to the ~~ground~~^{earth}, or turned and fled protecting themselves as best they could by the trees and the incidents of the ground. Our right was slightly overlapped, and a number of the enemy appeared beyond us. Permit me to repeat an account I gave some years ago of this part of the battle when it was fresher in my memory than now.

To withstand them, four regiments came from Dodge; Inspector General Strong led thither two from Blair, armed with repeating rifles, and my chief of artillery placed several batteries so as to sweep that exposed flank. These were brought in at the exact moment, and after a few rapid discharges, the repeating rifles being remarkable in their execution, all the groups of flankers were either cut down or had sought safety in flight. This battle was prolonged for hours. We expected help all that day from Morgan's division of Palmer's corps, coming back from Turner's Ferry; but the Confederate cavalry kept that division in check. Our troops exhibited nerve and persistency; Logan was cheerful and hearty and full of enthusiasm. He stopped stragglers, as we have seen, and sent them back, and gave every needed order. Blair was watchful and helpful, so was Dodge. After the last charge had been repelled I went along my lines, and felt proud and happy to be entrusted with such brave and efficient soldiers. Hood, having again lost three times as many as we, withdrew within his fortified lines. Our skirmishers cleared the field, and the Battle of Ezra Church was won; and with this result I contented myself. One officer who was a little panic-stricken, ran

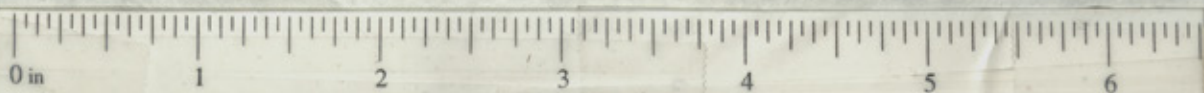


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Sherman said: "Is General Howard there?"

"Yes, I suppose he is."

"Well, I'll wait before taking action till I hear from him."

So Sherman sustained and trusted me, and I was content.

IX. CONCLUSION.

When the war-spirit is upon us, as it must be when we return to our fields of conquests, we do not, I think, enough emphasize what was gained by the War.

It is not enough to cry out that slavery was abolished. All our institutions covered by the Constitution of the United States and still developing under its nourishing sunshine more and more year by year, were then at stake.

What were those institutions? I love to reckon among them ~~the~~

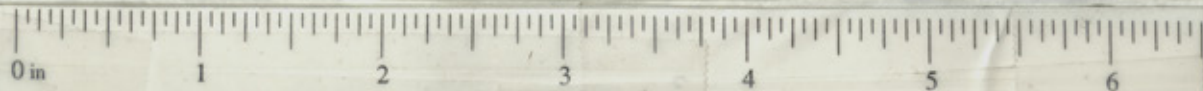
The American family &

The American School !

The American Churches &
and !

The American Ballot!

We, my comrades, have given these; completed, rounded out, intact to our children, and I hope we have given to our children also, we veterans, the energy, the patriotism, the spirit of self-sacrifice and the fearless



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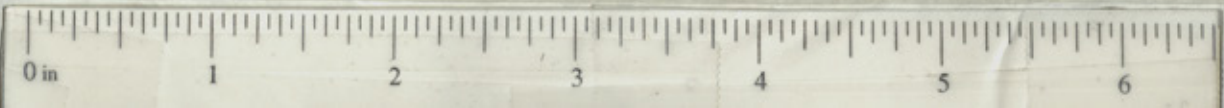
Wm. L. G.
American family?

The American School;

The American Churches;
and

The American Ballot!

We, my comrades, have given these; completed, rounded out, intact to our
children, and I hope we have given to our children also, we veterans,
the energy, the patriotism, the spirit of self-sacrifice and the fearless



loyalty, which inspired and animated ourselves from 1861 to 1865.

The storms come even in time of peace; they come from all quarters and in all shapes, and they will continue to come as long as selfishness and greed are found in the breasts of mean men, whether their positions in society be high or low ! !

So comrades, at times we may tremble and fancy that the very foundations of the Government are being shaken to its fall.

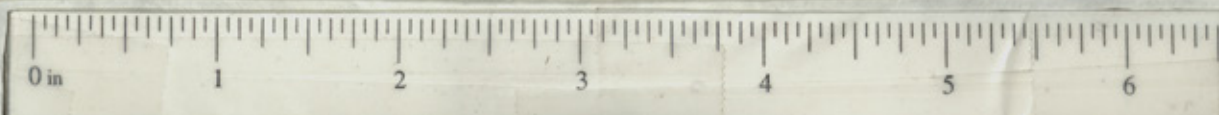
But not so! No, not so !! The children are worthy of their parents.!! The very institutions we have given them prepare them for a struggle against every opposing foe.

They learn,- they think,- they watch,- they work ever with increasing energy and skill, and they will , if need be, even fight, as we did, to preserve to this country, to this continent and to mankind this glorious Government of ^{a free,} ~~an~~ enlightened and virtuous people.

My soul's inmost thought is, that this Nation, as Abraham Lincoln defined it, is itself a plan of God which wicked men will not be allowed to destroy ! !

Governor's Island, N.Y.,
September 23th 1894.

Original Signed O.O. Howard
Major General,
U. S. Army.



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Governor's Island, N.Y.,
September 28th 1864.

Original signed
Major General,
U. S. Army.

