

War Journal
1894

*Commandry of Local Legion
State of Minnesota*

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THE ARMY OF THE TENNESSEE
under
MAJOR-GENERAL O. O. HOWARD.

COMMANDER AND COMPANIONS:--

At our last meeting, I was much interested in the very able paper read by Companion E. H. Adams, on the battle fought by the Army of the Tennessee, on the 22nd. day of July, 1864, at which time that Army lost its gallant and beloved Commander, General James B. McPherson, and our country, a noble patriot and soldier.

General Logan being the senior ranking officer with that Army, took command on the field when McPherson fell, and by his presence, courage and heroism, baffled every effort of the enemy under General Hood, to destroy the left wing of Sherman's Army before Atlanta, retrieving the fortunes of the day by causing the enemy to seek refuge behind their works, inside the city.

Major-General O. O. Howard was recommended by General Sherman, and appointed by the President, to take command of this Army; this caused some dissatisfaction. Major-General Joseph E. Hooker, in my opinion, was expecting recognition at that time. He was then in command of the 20th. Army Corp, formerly the 11th. and 12th. Corps, who came to us at Chattanooga from the Army of the Potomac, and who had rendered valuable service to the country at Lookout Mountain, Mission Ridge and the Campaign to Atlanta. He asked to be relieved, which being granted, my Company escorted him back to Marietta. He addressed the Company before leaving for the north, complimenting it very highly for its efficiency, discipline and services to the country, while at his head-quarters. This service had been continuous from the time he had joined us in Lookout Valley, Tennessee, up to this time. From Marietta we returned to the head-quarters 20th. Army Corp, now commanded by General Williams, later by

County of Scott
State of Tennessee

War of 1861-1865
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H. W. Slocum, and after the fall of Atlanta, we were ordered to report to General O. O. Howard, Head-quarters Army of the Tennessee, at East Point, Ga. I had served with this Army some in the earlier part of the War, in Mississippi, then with the Army of the Cumberland at Perryville, Stone River and Chicamauga, then with the 20th. Army Corp up to the first of September, 1864, and from this time till mustered out, with the Army of the Tennessee.

To tell of the noble services rendered to our country by this grand army, will have to be left to abler pens than mine, but I will try to tell you tonight some features of its services from Atlanta to the sea. On the 25th. day of July, 1864, Major-General O. O. Howard was in active command of the Army of the Tennessee, and unknown to this Army; being an eastern man, doubts were entertained in the minds of many, knowing the Army's admiration for General John A. Logan, as to its probable efficiency under its new Commander. Very soon, however, all fears were dispelled.

This Army was moved from the left to the right of Sherman's Army before Atlanta, and on the 28th. day of July fought a battle known as the Battle of Atlanta; in my opinion, this conflict was as severe as that of the 22nd. Six charges were made on the 15th. Army Corp on the 28th; these were met and repulsed with great loss to the enemy. General Howard on this occasion won the respect and esteem of the officers and men of the Army of the Tennessee; this feeling increased by time and service till the close of the War.

Since General Hood had taken command of the confederate Army in and around Atlanta, some very hard fighting had been done; first, at Peach Tree Creek; second, on the 22nd. day of July on our left, and third, on the 28th. again, on our right, as before mentioned. It was said that after the latter engagement, one of our men called over to the enemy, "Say, Johnny, how many have you left?" He

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replied, "Oh, about enough for another killing." The fight was practically out of Hood's Army, and in fact, the Army of the Tennessee never had another good opportunity to get at this Army. We moved onto his lines of communication south of Atlanta, causing him to evacuate the City, and after a hundred and twenty-five days of as hard marching and fighting as apparently could be crowded into that space of time, Atlanta was ours.

On the morning of the 2nd. of September, General H. W. Slocum moved up from the Chattahoochee and entered the City, my men carrying the dispatches to General Sherman, near Jonesboro, announcing the evacuation.

The Army soon returned and went into camp, in and around the city, for a short season of rest. Soon after going into camp, I was ordered to report to General Howard, commanding Army of the Tennessee, at East Point, Ga.

About the 1st. of October, 1864, General Hood started north with his Army, trying to reach our lines of communication. We followed him so closely, that he did not succeed in doing us very much damage. We could neither catch him nor force him into an engagement. General Sherman had conceived the idea of dividing his army, leaving General Thomas to look after the Confederate Army under General Hood. About this time I was detailed for special service in charge of a corp of scouts to keep the General in command advised of the movements of the enemy. When we reported General Hood's Army near Florence, Alabama, our Army turned back, destroying the railroad, severing all our connections with the north, destroying everything in Atlanta which might be of value to the Confederacy, and on the 15th. of November, 1864, started on that memorable march to the sea. Major-General O. O. Howard commended the right wing, composed of the 15th. and 17th. army corps; Major-

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General Slocum the left wing, composed of the 14th. and 20th. army Corps; General Kilpatrick commanded the Cavalry.

After so many hard experiences, from August 1861 to November, 1864, this was the grandest feature of the war. With orders to forage liberally off the country, good roads, pleasant weather and practically no enemy, we had a picnic every day until we arrived before Savannah. Milledgeville, the first objective point, at that time the capital of Georgia, was entered by myself and five men of the corp of scouts. The city was surrendered to me two days before General Slocum arrived with the left wing of our army. The right wing went to Gordon.

Frantic appeals had been made to the people of Georgia to obstruct our advance in every possible way, but there were apparently unheeded; many of them, in my opinion, thinking that self-preservation was the first law of nature, did not stand on the order of going---but went. The obstructions were not found.

My party of scouts entered Milledgeville as confederates, but on seeing the situation, one of my men called my attention to a gentleman on the walk and said, "Captain, that is the mayor;" I rode up to Mr. Mayor, passed the time of day, and introduced myself as Captain Duncan, of General Howard's Staff, Head-quarters Army of the Tennessee. His surprise can better be imagined than described. He said that the city had been left without any defences, and he was prepared to surrender it. I told him very well, I would guarantee him what protection I could until the head of our column arrived. I spent some time in the city. There were nine civil and military officers in the room that we entered, and I was informed by my scouts that there were 250 militia or guards stationed at the Penitentiary. I excused myself to go back to meet our army, and met General Howard next morning about ten o'clock, after an all

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and met General Howard next morning about ten o'clock, after an all

night's ride, reporting to him and going to Gordon with our Army, where one of my scouts had been killed the day that I was in Milledgeville. The rebel papers came out afterwards denouncing their "baby-faced" Mayor for surrendering the city to five "greasy Yanks" in the absence of any Army.

General Howard communicated with General Sherman at Milledgeville on the 23rd. of November, and thus the first hundred miles to the sea had been accomplished without any serious loss to our Army.

Our next objective point was Millen; I started for this place with a detachment of scouts to ascertain the situation, and, if possible, to effect the release of our prisoners. We did some hard riding, but found, on arriving at this place about midnight, that our prisoners had been removed. We captured a rebel Major and two men, and returned with them to our Army. On the 3rd. day of December, General Sherman arrived in Millen with the 17th. Army Corp. General Howard was with the 15th. Army Corp south of the Ogeechee River, opposite Searboro. General Slocum was about four miles north of Millen with the 20th. Army Corp, and General Davis about ten miles north of Millen with the 14th. Army Corp. Thus the second hundred miles to the sea was accomplished with practically no opposition to our Army, and the country rich in supplies. I mention the positions of the different corps at this time, for later I want to mention it as a characteristic of General Howard's with the Army of the Tennessee.

General Howard had his head-quarters with the 15th. Army Corps on the southwest side of the Ogeechee River. I, with my scouts, kept far in advance, reporting to the head-quarters from time to time. During the last hundred miles we occasionally ran onto small detachments of the enemy, that were on their way to join General

night's ride, reporting to him and going to Gordon with our Army, where one of my scouts had been killed the day that I was in Millidgeville. The rebel papers came out afterwards denouncing their "baby-faced" Mayor for surrendering the city to five "crazy Yanks" in the absence of any Army.

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Hardee at Savannah.

We crossed the Ogeechee River at station 4 1/2, swimming our horses, and found the enemy in front of the 17th. Army Corp, with some earth-works, but they fell back to Savannah without offering much resistance.

Our Army soon gathered around Savannah; General ~~xxx~~ Howard and Staff were out in front of our Army, tearing up the Gulf Railroad which leads out of the city. This was the means, later, of my accidentally capturing a train on this road, loaded with people trying to leave the city. The General and Staff were tearing up the rails where the wagon-road crossed the railroad. A short distance up the track was a bridge; I went to burn this bridge, but owing to the lack of material at hand, it took me sometime to get my fire started. In the meantime, General Howard and the rest of the Staff had gone back,; it was getting dark, and I concluded to return to head-quarters also. Just then a train came in sight; I knew of the break in the road between them and myself, but the break was in the road that I had to go back on. The first impression was that they were running troops out to drive us off the railroad. The train stopped before coming to the break; I hesitated at the wagon-road to see what was going to be done, and finally rode up in front of the engine, turned out, and was riding alongside of the cars when Lieut. McQueen, of my Company, called out from the timber on the north side of the railroad, "Hello, Captain, is that you?" I answered, "Yes," and asked him if the Company was there; he said it was, and I told him to bring it over and take charge of the train. I then returned to camp, and that night General Howard got permission from General Sherman to let me try to communicate with our Navy, stationed in the Ogeechee Sound.

Our Army, up to this time, had been very successful in ob-

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taining supplies, but now we had halted behind Savannah, and with the exception of rice --- and the boys had to thrash and hull that --- there was very little left for us in the line of supplies. A "cracker-line" must be opened as soon as possible. Our friends in the north were getting quite anxious about us; the only news they had received since we left Atlanta was through the enemy, and that was neither reliable nor comforting to them.

When General Howard returned from General Sherman's headquarters with permission to let me go, saying that I might get through, General Howard prepared a dispatch to the Secretary of War announcing our arrival before Savannah. I called for two volunteers from the scouts to accompany me; Myron J. Amick and George W. Quimby went with me. We secured a small dug-out on the Savannah Canal and pushed out into the Ogeechee River, depending on the current, and expecting to pass Fort McAllister that night. Our dug-out was a very unsteady craft, and we had to sit very still to keep it from rolling over; in fact, I thought at the time that a wash-tub would have been about as safe, but I don't think that the two men had any more experience on the water than I had, and I did not have any; we knew that people rode in such things, and we ought to. We passed under King's Bridge; the timbers were still burning ---it had been fired by the enemy on our approaching Savannah.

The night was pleasant. The darkies were having a religious meeting; we could hear them very plainly in the stillness of the night, exhorting and singing, as we passed the plantations, and, with the exception of the continual dread, when anyone moved, of having our dug-out roll over, we thought that we were getting along very well.

Along near morning the dug-out came near shore; the river was getting very wide, apparently, and not knowing where we were,

taining supplies, but now we had retired behind Savannah, and with the exception of rice --- and the boys had to thresh and mill that --- there was very little left for us in the line of supplies. A "cracker-line" must be opened as soon as possible. Our friends in the north were getting quite anxious about us; the only news they had received since we left Atlanta was through the enemy, and that was neither reliable nor comforting to them.

When General Howard returned from General Sherman's headquarters with permission to let me go, saying that I might get through, General Howard prepared a dispatch to the Secretary of War announcing our arrival before Savannah. I called for two volunteers from the recruits to accompany me; Byron J. Alick and George W. Gundry went with me. We secured a small dug-out on the Savannah Canal and pushed out into the open river, surrounded on the current, and expecting to pass Fort McAllister that night. Our dug-out was a very makeshift craft, and we had to sit very still to keep it from rolling over; in fact, I thought at the time that the wash-tub would have been about as safe, but I don't think that the two men had any more experience on the water than I had, and I don't not have any; we knew that people rode in such things, and we ought to. We passed under King's Bridge; the timbers were still burning --- it had been fired by the enemy on our approaching Savannah.

The night was pleasant. The banks were having a religious meeting; we could hear them very plainly in the stillness of the night, exhorting and singing, as we passed the plantations, and with the exception of the continual dread, when anyone moved, of having our dug-out roll over, we thought that we were getting along very well.

Along near morning the dug-out came near shore; the river was getting very wide, apparently, and not knowing where we were,

we stopped at some negro-quarters near the river. I woke them up to make some inquiries. They told me the tide was coming in and I could not go any further with this dugout. I also found that I was on McAllister's plantation, and near the Port. We then, by the advice of this old colored man, decided to hide our dug-out and ourselves, and remain over until the next night; we would then have the current in our favor, and time to pass Port McAllister in the dark. A young colored man helped us to hide the dug-out. They got us something to eat, and I found that they knew far more about the river and obstructions than we did. I told this young man to be ready to go with us the next night; he declined, and I rather urged it, which was a mistake on my part, as I afterwards learned.

After getting something to eat, this young man piloted us out into the timber; it was very dark and it seemed as though we had gone a good way. It was quite cold and we started a small fire.

The two men were soon asleep, and just as day was breaking, the rebel guard, sent to relieve the picket that had been on duty over night, passed near us on a road leading north from the Port. After they passed, I woke up the men; we put our fire out, but did not think best to move from where we were. Soon the picket that had been on duty over night rode back past us toward the Port, and we remained without being discovered. We had nothing to eat through the day, and just before sun went down, Myron J. Amick stole up to the negro quarters to have them prepare something for us; he got there but could not find any chance to get back to us. The young darky that I had insisted on going with us had left, and the enemy found out in some way that there were Yankees around.

After waiting for some time, Quimby and myself decided to go and see what had become of Amick; just as we got there, a squad of Confederates started toward the negro quarters; the quarters were

we stopped at some negro-quarters near the river. I woke them up to make some inquiries. They told me the tide was coming in and I could not go any further with this baggage. I also found that I was on McAllister's plantation, and near the fort. We then, by the advice of this old colored man, decided to hide our baggage and ourselves, and remain over until the next night; we would then have the current in our favor, and time to pass Fort McAllister in the dark. A young colored man helped us to hide the baggage. They got us something to eat, and I found that they knew far more about the river and obstructions than we did. I told this young man to be ready to go with us the next night; he declined, and I rather wished it, which was a mistake on my part, as I afterwards learned.

After getting something to eat, this young man piloted us out into the swamp. It was very dark and it seemed as though we had gone a good way. It was quite cold and we started a small fire. The two men were soon asleep, and just as day was breaking, the rebel guard, sent to relieve the picket line had been on duty over night, passed near us on a road leading north from the fort. After they passed, I woke up the men; we put our fire out, but did not think best to move from where we were. Both the picket that had been on duty every night rode back past us toward the fort, and we remained without being discovered. We had nothing to eat through the day, and just before sun went down, three J. Asahs stole up to the negro quarters to have their property searched for us; he got there but could not find any chance to get back to us. The young darky that I had insisted on going with us had left, and the enemy found out in some way that there were Yankees around.

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nicely whitewashed, and were up from the ground, so that we crawled under them. Amick had a tin pail with something in it from the negroes for us to eat; I never knew what it was, but it was good.

While under there, the "rebs" were in the quarters over us, abusing the darkeys and talking about the "Yanks." They soon went away, and after awhile, we crawled from under the quarters. The sun was down, but it was not yet very dark. We could see the "rebs" up at the house, which stood on a beautiful rise of ground. There was an open lawn between McAllister's house and the river, which we had to cross to get to where we had hidden the boat. I asked the old darkey where the young man was who was going with us, and then I learned that he had left the quarters rather than take the risk of getting by Fort McAllister with us. They knew more than we did, and I think that they had a superstitious fear of the torpedoes in the river. We, however, crossed the lawn under the eyes of the "rebs," found our dug-out without much trouble, pushed out into the river and started for the sea. We did not go far before we ran onto a boat on the river; we lay down flat in the bottom of the dug-out and let it drift by. We soon came to the Fort; they had fires on the banks of the river, and stretched across, was piling anchored in the river, with torpedoes fixed, to prevent our boats from passing up the river. We lay down flat in the bottom of our dug-out, and let it float, not stirring until we were at a safe distance past the Fort. We passed along very nicely until after midnight. The river was getting pretty wide, and we began to fear that we might get into the sea and get drowned. We heard a rooster crowing on the left bank, and concluded that we would pull ashore and see if we could not find some darkeys who could tell us where we were. This move came very near proving serious; the tide was coming in again, overflowing the low-lands; we were surrounded by

nicely whitewashed, and were up from the ground, so that we crawled under them. Amick had a tin pail with something in it from the negroes for us to eat; I never knew what it was, but it was good. While under there, the "rebs" were in the quarters over us, abusing the darkeys and talking about the "Yanks." They soon went away, and after awhile, we crawled from under the quarters. The sun was down, but it was not yet very dark. We could see the "rebs" up at the house, which stood on a beautiful rise of ground. There was an open lawn between McAllister's house and the river, which we had to cross to get to where we had hidden the boat. I asked the old darkey where the young man was who was going with us, and then I learned that he had left the quarters rather than take the risk of getting by Fort McAllister with us. They knew more than we did, and I think that they had a superstitious fear of the torpedoes in the river. We, however, crossed the lawn under the eyes of the "rebs," found our dug-out without much trouble, pushed out into the river and started for the sea. We did not go far before we ran onto a boat on the river; we lay down flat in the bottom of the dug-out and let it drift by. We soon came to the fort; they had fires on the banks of the river, and stretched across, was piling anchored in the river, with torpedoes fixed, to prevent our boats from passing up the river. We lay down flat in the bottom of our dug-out, and let it float, not stirring until we were at a safe distance past the fort. We passed along very nicely until after midnight. We river was getting pretty wide, and we began to fear that we might get into the sea and get drowned. We heard a rooster crowing on the left bank, and concluded that we would pull ashore and see if we could not find some darkeys who could tell us where we were. This move came very near proving serious; the tide was coming in again, overflying the low-lands; we were surrounded by

water, and concluded that we could not get to that rooster. We started to return to the dug-out, but the returning tide had come in between us and the boat, and we wandered about sometime before we found it. It was raining very hard by this time, and quite cold. We got into our dug-out, and concluded to wait for daylight. We were suffering from cold and wet, and were very sleepy. We then lay down in the dug-out, after emptying the water out of it, but the rain and cold was too much for us. The tide had risen so that when we woke up, our boat was afloat, and we nearly capsized, but Quimby's legs reached the ground. We soon got righted up, but there was nothing but water in sight. Our situation at this time did not look very encouraging; we had too much water and not enough boat.

We heard roosters crowing on the other side of the river, and concluded to go over and try to get where they were. The wind was blowing quite stiff, and it looked very doubtful as to whether we could cross the river at this point. We thought our chances good to perish where we were, so we started. We got across, just as day dawned. The tide was going out, and I told the boys to pull back into the river and we would go down to the sea. There was a high point of land near the mouth of the river, and apparently, a plantation. We did not dare to trust our dug-out any further. We landed, and I tried to make a fire, but the matches were wet and failed us. Amick, who had gone to explore the neighborhood, returned, and told us that the plantation was deserted and had been for some time. We were quite despondent by this time, and would have been glad to have been captured by anyone. We concluded that it was better to go to sea and trust to Providence than to stay there. We, however, did not realize how near we were to friends, and the glorious old STARS AND STRIPES. We did not go far before we sighted a vessel stationed in the Ogeechee Sound; they saw us, I think, as soon as we saw them. They lowered a boat and pulled

water, and concluded that we could not get to that rooster. We started to return to the dug-out, but the returning tide had come in between us and the boat, and we wandered about sometime before we found it. It was raining very hard by this time, and quite cold. We got into our dug-out, and concluded to wait for daylight. We were suffering from cold and wet, and were very sleepy. We then lay down in the dug-out, after emptying the water out of it, but the rain and cold was too much for us. The tide had risen so that when we woke up, our boat was afloat, and we nearly capsized, but Quimby's legs reached the ground. We soon got righted up, but there was nothing but water in sight. Our situation at this time did not look very encouraging; we had too much water and not enough food. We heard roosters crowing on the other side of the river, and concluded to go over and try to get where they were. The wind was blowing quite a bit, and it looked very doubtful as to whether we could cross the river at this point. We thought our chances good to perch where we were, so we started. We got across, just as day dawned. The tide was going out, and I told the boys to pull back into the river and we would go down to the sea. There was a high point of land near the mouth of the river, and apparently, a plantation. We did not dare to land our dug-out any further. We landed, and I tried to make a fire, but the matches were wet and failed us. A black, who had come to explore the neighborhood, returned, and told us that the plantation was deserted and had been for some time. We were quite despondent by this time, and would have been glad to have been captured by anyone. We concluded that it was better to go to sea and trust to Providence than to stay there. We, however, did not realize how near we were to friends, and the glorious old STARS AND STRIPES. We did not go far before we sighted a vessel anchored in the Openness Sound; they saw us, I think, as soon as we saw them. They lowered a boat and pulled

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toward us. I looked through my field glass at the vessel, and saw that she carried the STARS AND STRIPES. When I told the men this, Amick gave a start that nearly upset our dug-out.

An Ensign and six men pulled up alongside of us, and we jumped in; Amick gave the dug-out a kick, saying, "Goodby, old friend, we are through with you;" but it was taken up with us, and sent to the Navy Department, to be preserved as a relic of that service.

We found Captain Williamson, commanding the U. S. Gunboat "Flag," waiting to receive us, and, Companions, let me tell you that in our circumstances, it is a glorious privilege to fall into the hands of the marines. The changes from despondency, privations and despair were very sudden.

Our object was accomplished; surrounded by friends, and with the United States Flag floating over us, every comfort was provided for us. The steam-tug "Dandelion" was placed at my disposal; I went to Hilton Head, forwarded General Howard's dispatch to the Secretary of War, met General Foster and Admiral Dahlgren, but could not prevail on them to take us back to our Army for two days.

I was below Fort McAllister just before the Fort was taken, and got to General Howard's head-quarters after he and General Sherman had retired. The General was glad to see me back, and I can assure you I was glad to get back, and to get my feet on terra-firma.

This practically settled the Campaign to the sea; we were now in direct communication with the rest of the world, and no question about supplies.

Before closing this paper, I want to call your attention to the Army of the Tennessee under Major-General O. O. Howard. From the time that he took command of the Army up to the present time, the energy and foresight displayed by General Howard had placed and

toward us. I looked through my field glass at the vessel, and saw that she carried the STARS AND STRIPES. When I told the men this, Amick gave a start that nearly upset our dug-out.

An English and six men pulled up alongside of us, and we jumped in; Amick gave the dug-out a kick, saying, "Goodbye, old friends, we are through with you!" But it was taken up with us, and went to the Navy Department, to be preserved as a relic of that service.

We found Captain Williamson, commanding the U. S. Gunboat "Vigil," waiting to receive us, and, upon learning, let me tell you that in our circumstances, it is a glorious privilege to fall into the hands of the marines. The changes from despatch, provisions and gear were very sudden.

Our object was accomplished; surrounded by friends, and with the United States flag floating over us, every comfort was provided for us. The steamship "Henderson" was placed at my disposal; I went to Hilton Head, forwarded General Howard's dispatch to the Secretary of War, met General Foster and Admiral Dahlgren, but could not prevail on them to take us back to our Army for two days. I was below Fort Mifflin just before the fort was taken,

and got to General Howard's headquarters after he and General Sherman had retired. The General was glad to see me back, and I can assure you I was glad to get back, and to get my feet on terra-

This practically ended the campaign to the sea; we were now in direct communication with the rest of the world, and no question about supplies.

Before closing this paper, I want to call your attention to the Army of the Tennessee under Major-General G. O. Howard. From the time that he took command of the Army up to the present time, the energy and foresight displayed by General Howard had placed and

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held it in the fore-rank of our armies on this grand march.

Himself further to the front, many times, than I thought his position as commander justified, a splendid disciplinarian, decisive in action, he governed by example more than by precept. The morale of the army was carefully guarded. Energetic and apparently untiring in his efforts, he kept himself at all times thoroughly informed of the strength and movements of the enemy.

Men of the Army of the Tennessee revere and honor his name, and their children will follow their example for generations to come.

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