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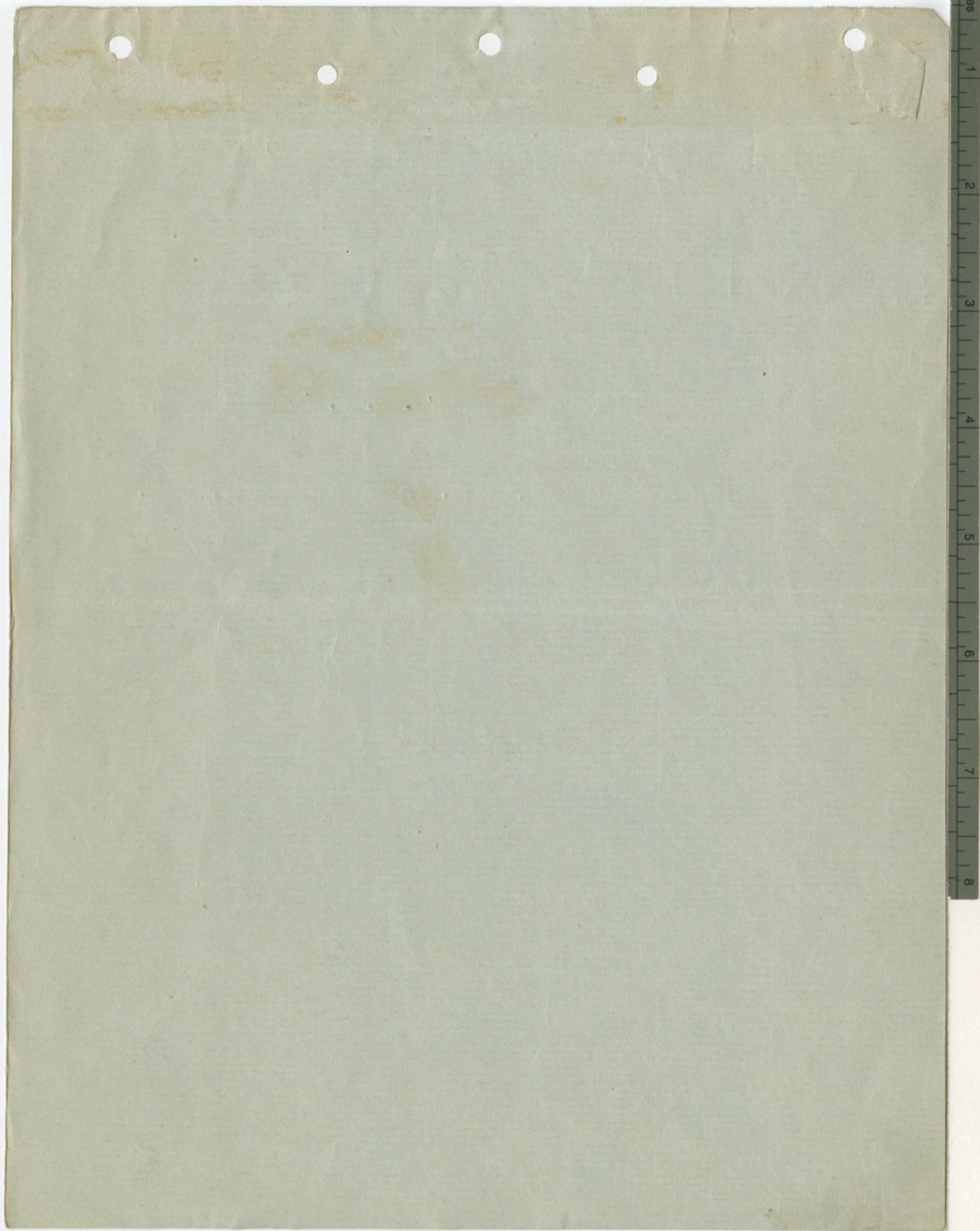
ORATION delivered by Gen'l. O. O. HOWARD,

at NEW BEDFORD, Mass. on MEMORIAL DAY, 1893.

No 34

One extra copy filed with
Application M.S.S.
"No 34 C.S."

Subject
The American Volunteers



(1)

O R A T I O N delivered by General O. O. H O W A R D , U.S.A.
at N E W B E D F O R D , Mass. on M E M O R I A L D A Y
1893.

L A D I E S and G E N T L E M E N , C o m r a d e s :-

Par. 1st. SLIGHT REMINISCENCE.

It begins to be a trying question with me when Memorial Day is approaching, to determine just what to say on such an occasion. The next year after the war, I was asked to give an oration at the Laying of the corner stone of the great Monument on the Cemetery Hill at Gettysburg, which was to mark the resting place of the thousands who, in the words of Mr. Lincoln " THERE LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES, THAT THE COUNTRY MIGHT LIVE. "

at the time
The temptation came to me ^{at the time} to make that address a personal vindication of the part, which providentially I had played there in the great battle-drama but two years before. Hosts of friends were greatly disappointed that I did not at least attempt an account of that extraordinary engagement, which was the turning point of the Rebellion. But the sacredness of the Great Cause, for which Comrades you had struggled so hard, and at such an enormous cost had won finally a victory, so pressed itself upon my heart that, I said to myself, "NO."

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LADIES and GENTLEMEN, Comrades :-

1893.

at NEW BEDFORD, Mass. on MEMORIAL DAY

ORATION delivered by General O. O. HOWARD, U.S.A.

(1)

(2)

" By God's help, we will try to rise above self- assertion, self- vindication, and endeavor to look at the struggle of four long years as a whole." So I headed my subject,

THE AMERICAN VOLUNTEER.

I know one, a God-fearing, conscientious, devoted son of NEW ENGLAND; one born on a farm, and trained to all the handiwork of farm life; later an academic student, a teacher of youth, a college graduate, and then lastly a theological student.

Here at a Seminary the War found him, with a handsome, health-ful figure, a smiling face, a noble specimen physically, mentally, morally and spiritually of our best American life as

can be found in New England. He volunteered at the first call,

as a private soldier, carrying the musket, as we did in those *days*, carrying the piece in the left hand. He passed through every

grade, 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Lieutenant, Captain, Major, Lieut.

Colonel, Colonel, and finally a brevetted Brigadier General.

He was engaged in more than 20 of the big battles of the War,

and saw at times conflicts like that near Culp's Hill at

Gettysburg, the Stone Bridge at Antietam, the showering of

bullets at Fair Oaks, the dreadful slaughter at Fredericks-

burgh, Jackson's flank attack at Chancellorsville, the pierc-

ing of the clouds at Lookout Mountain, the night fight at

Wauhatchee, and the death scramble for the crest of Mission-

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(3)

Hill, not far from Dalton, Ga.

He scaled Rocky Face Ridge, penetrated Buzzard's Roost Gap. He bore his part in the two days of Resaca, the double and twisted skirmishing of Adairsville, the half fledged battles of Kinston and Cassville; he went blindly through the mud and ugly dry forest of Northern Georgia, to be with Hooker's assault against the shaggy abattis of Joe Johnston at New Hope Church. No man worked more than he did at the bloody evening entertainment at Pickett's Mill. He worked all night with his comrades at the trenches, which kept back Joe Johnston in the morning, and preserved Sherman's left. He had a sight at Pine Top, where the Military Bishop, like some old master of Santiago, was surveying his forces, but yet was forever stopped, while doing so, by a shrieking Yankee shell. He saw the Charge at Muddy Creek, where breastworks, well manned, were wrested from brave foes, thing almost never done. He was in the midst of the fearful slaughter and sad repulse of Kennesaw. He knew General J. M. Cors, whose indomitable spirit kept him at his work, after losing part of his ear and right cheek bone, and who, hero-like, with the courage of Joshua, made the few defeat and put to rout ^{the} many. He witnessed that remarkable 4th of July, celebrated with ~~double~~ shotted guns, where Stanley's double skirmish line, swept the field, and both sides fired more than 44 cannons, a veritable Union salute. He barely escaped capture at Pace's Ferry over the Chattahoochee, but

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(4)

was all himself, as he pressed forward into action, where Thomas and Newton fought with fury and persistency for a flank. The flank was saved, for here, at Peach Tree Creek, the celebrated Hood, mighty in attack had abutted against ^(Gen Thomas) the Rock of Chickamauga. He participated in the bloody, shifting terrific strife of Hood again, where Logan, Blair and Granville M. Dodge with their never beaten corps, forced him back, back into the citadel of Atlanta. A little later in the night, he was in the columns of General Howard, which were pulling out from the Atlanta works, was saluted with only one shrieking shell, that fortunately fell into an empty space, and merely said, "GOOD BYE." He swung with the column a circuit of 25 miles, he charged with Captain Estie ^{against} the Confederate Cavalry at a run for 6 miles ^{and} more, and helped to stamp out the fire over the Flint River Bridge. He guided the men who crowned the unfriendly heights of Jonesboro, where the skirmishing was incessant. Here he beheld Hardee's defeat. Here too, he heard the rumbling of the exploding magazines of Atlanta evacuated, and he got a glimpse of Sherman's dispatch about Hood going out and Slocum coming in into the long coveted citadel, a dispatch where-in the fiery Sherman proclaimed "ATLANTA OURS, and FAIRLY WON." The further battlings he shared on front, flank, and rear over the Atlanta bone already in our teeth, till Thomas went back to Nashville, and like a loadstone drew on Hood to himself and to destruction, till Sherman was

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reorganizing into Howard, Slocum and Kilpatrick with 65,000 comrades for a seaward-march,- these he watched with interest and wrote concerning them to his mother, ^{as} yet so far off in the North. With a good horse to ride, for promotion has brought it, he faces Macon; he fights at Griswoldsville; he forages along the route freely on the country; and at last he comes up between the Ogeechee and Savannah, where for a time he tarries, till every body was made to feed on rice alone, Hardee accomplished a noisy and bothersome resistance. The Savannah being crossed, hurried the Confederates out into Carolina, and our young friend rode cheerily into the City the day before Christmas 1864.

ON DETACHED DUTY.

But now, while these comrades are crossing the arms of the Sea and the Cotton Islands of South Carolina, while they are scrambling on, leaving their dead and wounded at Pocotaligo Rivers, and Binakers Bridges, Orangeburg, Congaree Creek, and elsewhere up to Columbia, ~~haughtily~~ ^{haughtily} beholding the burning of that great city, our young friend has gone away ~~from there~~ to the coast to discipline, drill and bring to our support a thousand black men.

GOOD NEWS.

His comrades roll along through Cheraw, the battles of Averysboro, the skirmish of Fayetteville, up to the final stubborn fights of Joe Johnston again, at Bentonville, and are quietly

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(6)

waiting for a final settlement of all national trouble, when anxious to bear a part in the terminative conflicts, the young soldier breaks the seal of an apparent order, to find the refreshing news of Lee's surrender; then shortly another dispatch reveals to him, now in camp at Newburn, the story of Johnston's capitulation, ^{and} of Jefferson Davis's capture. The young Colonel has never been happier.

UNWELCOME TIDINGS.

The cheers of his black troops are only excelled in melody by their Jubilee songs; when, like an unexpected thunder cloud, full of lightning flashes and startling reverberation the Nation's sky is overcast, with indescribable blackness, while the saddest messages import nothing but sorrow and impending trouble. Who can describe it?

ABRAHAM LINCOLN IS DEAD- ASSASINATED - MURDERED by an enemy of the country, nay, by an enemy of mankind. There was intense national grief in which the young volunteer with his new soldiers bore their sad part. But the sources of joy that were flowing from the very fountain-head of the great peace, were rolling down the mountain sides, and filling the valleys of the Land.

HOMEWARD MARCH & GRAND REVIEW.- PEACE.

Our young friend beheld Sherman's men marching at 25 miles a day on to Richmond redeemed, and to Washington forever

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relieved. He sat on his noble horse, and participated in the Grand Review, lingering at the President's stand to behold the very last of the Armies of the East and West, as they passed the Executive platform in their triumphant tread. The words were not said, but the meaning of them swelled every heart, penetrated to every home in the land; " THE COUNTRY IS OURS, AND FAIRLY WON. " Slavery is dead and liberty forever enthroned. It was accomplished by our young friend and his comrades of different hues from various climes. ^{It was} An accomplishment, synthetically condensed for the benefit of the human memory ^{Three words} into: THE AMERICAN VOLUNTEER.

Comrades I did not mean to worry you with so old an acquaintance, so familiar a face, so faulty a hero, so magnificent a patriot, so persistent a warrior, and so fair a citizen, this AMERICAN VOLUNTEER. It is almost 30 years since he was mustered out from the United States Service.

THE VOLUNTEER A VETERAN. - PENSIONS.

^{But} Let us take a look at him as he now appears. He does not seem so tall, only about 5 feet, 10 inches; rather thin of flesh; a little stooping in the shoulders; his hair and beard much sprinkled with gray; he halts in his gait.

How are you Comrade? Very well thank you, but I suffer good deal from these wretched old wounds; I have worked hard since I saw you; Yes, I have a good home and fine family ; the girls

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help their mother, and the boys, bless their hearts, help me; yes, yes, I am rather poor, have been forced at last to ask for a pension against the old days.

How about this pension business, Comrade? Well, I did without it as long as I could, but thought that when the weakness and suffering came, initiated by the wounds and swamps of the War, that I deserved just a little help; guess it wont break up the dear old government to help the disabled and the needy? Surely our unselfish Volunteer is modest, seeing that the rich old government itself owes its very existence to his suffering and sacrifice. But brave men and true, ^{have} who laid ~~down~~ their lives on the altar of their country, are ^{aye, even} the most modest of men, when asking ~~even~~ for their dues.

A REMARKABLE RE-UNION .- PHILADELPHIA.

Near the time when I met our friend again after the years had elapsed, he and I received an invitation to a banquet in Philadelphia on the birthday of our most successful general, General U. S. GRANT. It was given by the Union League Club of that city, and I assure you it ~~was~~ a remarkable gathering, Union and Confederate Officers of high rank were invited to ~~me~~ meet there, the 27th of April 1893, to do honor to the memory of our patriot hero, the acknowledged leader of leaders in the salvation of the land. Longstreet, Alexander, Mahone, Latrobe, Confederate Volunteers, facing our Volunteer and his comrades,

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(9)

they ^{took} ~~take~~ hold of hands, tears and gladness mingled in their faces, as they repeated together the pregrant phrase of Grant, which ^{was} said at the War's close: " LET US HAVE PEACE. "

The union Leaguers cheered and cheered as speech after speech was delivered, glorifying Columbia prosperous , Columbia uniting the hands of her children, Columbus blessing her unique, essential, perpetual institutions, Columbia holding aloft a new copy of the Stars and Stripes, Columbia with gleaming eyes and fervent patriotic songs pointing to the number-44-, ^h the present gallaxy , the emblem of the unbroken number, the enlarged union of States. Amid a ~~forest~~ forest of flowers, more than 600 men of Philadelphia, the very best types of American manhood, sealed anew the peace and union of this land in their shouts of joy at the ^{new} spectacle of North and South, joining hands and hearts in fraternal promise.

THE RE- UNION .- GETTYSBURG.

The next day the Vice-President of the Reading R.R., Colonel John Russell Young, who at one time, as will be remembered had taken General Grant and his family around the world, transferred the new scene, from the Union League of Philadelphia to the Heights of Gettysburg. Carriages and an eloquent guide bore the party, our Volunteer among them, over the great field of strife, along the Seminary or Oak Ridge, where the gallant Reynolds fell, along the divisions of Doubleday,

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(10)

Wadsworth, Robinson, Schimmelpfennig and Barlow, along the Confederate lines that enveloped them from the left of Ewell, past A.P.Hill, to the right of Longstreet. The party grew more animated as they broke into the conflict of Sickles' divisions of Humphrey and Birney, as they jolted over the rough roads of Devil's Den, and listened to a speech of the guide near the monuments ^{to} over Warren, Vincent, Weed, Hazlett, eloquently trying to put into words, the fierce battlings of strong men there in sight. We stood where Slocum and Green and Geary and Williams and Ruger and Wadsworth had for five mortal hours met the desperate fighting of Ewell till they secured McAllister's Mill, Culp's Hill and the intervening Baltimore Pike, which both ^{sides} appeared to covet with a strength stronger than life. We gathered, for the photographer to make a mixed picture of Northern and Southern men, at the very place where Howard and Meisenburg ^{had} sat on their horses and deliberately chose the Cemetery Ridge for the first Day's reserves, and for the second day's occupancy. It was raining fast, but nobody minded the rain when we gathered for a last address to portray the charge of Pickett's Confederate division, and Hancock's glorious counter-defence. What a field, five miles following the sinuosity of the fish-hook ~~line~~ ^{cemetery} curve from McAllister's Mill, via Culp's Hill, the Cemetery Ridge, Ziegler's Grove, Little Round Top, on as far as the base of Big Round Top; five miles

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(11)

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A CONVERSION.

It is said that the battle of Gettysburg, while the strain was on, was felt by Abraham Lincoln's soul more deeply than if he had been present, and that it was the means of a spiritual changewrought in him, which ever after gave him more complete

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consecration of himself to the will of the Lord, his God.

Similarly

My last visit, comrades, to the field of Gettysburg, in connection with a thorough revival in my mind of the details of the events connected with that greatest battle of the war, ~~was~~ taken in connection also with a friendly intercourse with representative men who had been opposed to us on that ground, ~~he~~ has changed my attitude, if not my conviction of right, towards the Confederates, who fought us. I was looking into Gen'l. Longstreet's face, while Gen'l. Sickles was leaning, supported by his crutches, against an enormous rock, when I said something concerning the demands of duty, Gen'l. Longstreet answered me reflectively: " We must be guided by the light within us; I have tried to stand firm to my convictions of duty, according to the light I have had." These may not be his exact words; they are the substance; they set me to reflecting upon the counterpart of our American Volunteer namely the Southern Volunteer. He was educated from babyhood in certain political doctrines, certain interpretations of the Constitution, ^{of our country} he was bred in the heart of slavery, he was part and parcel of it. ^{True} We, champions of a free Republic, could not allow him with his comrades even to follow the logic of his convictions, because they led to the destruction of the Union, the breaking up of our country, the ~~perpetual~~ perpetuation not of human liberty, but of human slavery.

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(13)

We ourselves, however, did not ~~see~~^{see} at the outset, it all with Divine clearness. It took a clarification of storm and disaster; yea, it seems ^{to have been} as necessary, as that Christ should die on the cross for the redemption of men, that our land should have been baptized in the blood of her sons.

SIGNS OF PROGRESS.

I have lately compared notes with a prominent Confederate leader, and find that we have come together, unconsciously, I know. Here is, where we now agree. The War was a necessity. Nothing humanly speaking, could have ward~~ed~~^{ed} it off.

Slavery was the cause of division. It was necessary that it should be completely rooted out. The Providence of God went far beyond the projects of men in its destruction. Every thing in our political method, in all parts of the country, is ^{not} yet allright. There are ballot stuffings; there are corruptions in office; there is bribery in elections; there is cheating in legislation; there is selfishness in great monopolies, and there are political dangers; but the fundamental institutions remain, namely a Church, or a set of churches, where every man is free to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience; a School, or set of schools, adequate to the necessities of a Great People, well established and free to every child; and an American Home, which in its purity and simplicity can not ^{be} surpassed by any other people on the globe.

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(14)

These ^{are} our peculiar institutions, they constitute the nucleus from which radiate untold blessings, and almost limitless developments. And we will preserve them.

VOICES FROM THE NORTH & SOUTH. - HARMONY.

Two months ago I stood again in Atlanta, our Comrades of the War, gave me a reception, among them a Confederate leader, bearing the historic name of Calhoun, with the Mayor came to the hall and spoke words of welcome. He said among other things " General, however different our feelings and our sentiments may be on some topics, please understand this fully, that we, who once fought against you, are not meditating another Rebellion. We now have a common interest, a common country, and a common flag. Should these be in danger, should their honor be in question, so that Columbia would be constrained to call men to arms, we would all be side by side with you in the common defence." These were his words insubstance as nearly as I can recall them, spoken with all the feeling of a strong man of noble heart and all the eloquence of a Southern orator like Calhoun.

The 5th Virginia met one of our regiments, the 28th ~~of~~ New York, at Niagara Falls, by invitation of the latter, Captain Flagler of that regiment used these words: " And we feel that in thus coming together we do no dishonor to the memory of our dead comrades or, our cause. From the battlements of Heaven

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(15)

there look down upon us to-day the spirits of both the Union and Confederate dead, and I believe that they rejoice in a reunion like this, and that the issue of the War was national unity.-----It should now be our aim to obliterate all sectional lines. Let there be no North, South, East, or West, but one country and one people."

Colonel E.E.Stickely of Woodstock, Va., a one armed Southern man replied. Here are some of his words: " We are brothers, of one flesh, one blood , one manhood, having one Heavenly Father and one common country, wide enough, broad enough, rich enough for all to inhabit. We are to show you that we can march side by side with our former enemy, and to demonstrate how perfectly too, we can rise above the animosities of those years of blood and carnage, and recognized you as our brothers and friends, of a common brotherhood.-----Does not this august spectacle, this magnificent scene, this magnanimous manifestations of peace, here so beautifully presented under the thunders of Niagara, suggest to our hearts that the War is over, the contest ended, the battle done?"

It is coming into my heart this year as it came into the heart of Gen'l. Grant, near the close of his life to speak only kindly words. Lest, we might injure the manhood of the noblest men of the South, I would not press even the chalice of exaction to their lips; I would not boast of a victory, which cost ^{us} so

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(16)

dearly to win; I could not impute bad intentions to any but known wrong doers; and I would^{do} and say those things which are tender and kind, which I know our Lord through his Spirit would smile upon. The black men are advancing; the schools are almost universal; his home is being improved, wherever vital religion and knowledge found their way.

THE GREAT BATTLE FOR THE RIGHT. OUR REWARD.

yes, in general the battle for the right so hard to wage is steadily pressing back the hosts which are opposed to Truth. Sometimes it seems amid our aches and pains and sicknesses and weaknesses as if our young people had almost forgotten us; did not half appreciate our work, our sacrifice, our suffering, our principles and our hopes. NO, they can not do so my comrades. This is part of what we gave, in order to transmit a magnificent heritage to children, and children's children. God alone makes up the difference, God alone adjusts the balances of justice, and He only is able to fill the soul of every waiting comrade with fulness from his own abundant, majestic fountains. I covet for you especially above all things, something that is beyond the love of wife and children, beyond the appreciative sympathy of grandchildren, yea, much more, namely: a life invisible but immortal, born within the soul, a life which shall have a power to make our companionship perpetual, complete; which death can not dim; and which will expand with

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(17)

the ages. It is not a dream; it is described by the Apostle John in the Revelation, in these words: " I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END? I WILL GIVE ~~UNTO~~ HIM THAT IS ATHIRST OF THE FOUNTAIN OF THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY. HE THAT OVERCOMETH, SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS, AND I WILL BE HIS GOD, AND HE SHALL BE MY SON. "

Hundreds of thousands of comrades have gone on before. Let us have the safe shield, bright and glistenning as CHRIST can make it, ^{as he will make it} when we join him there.

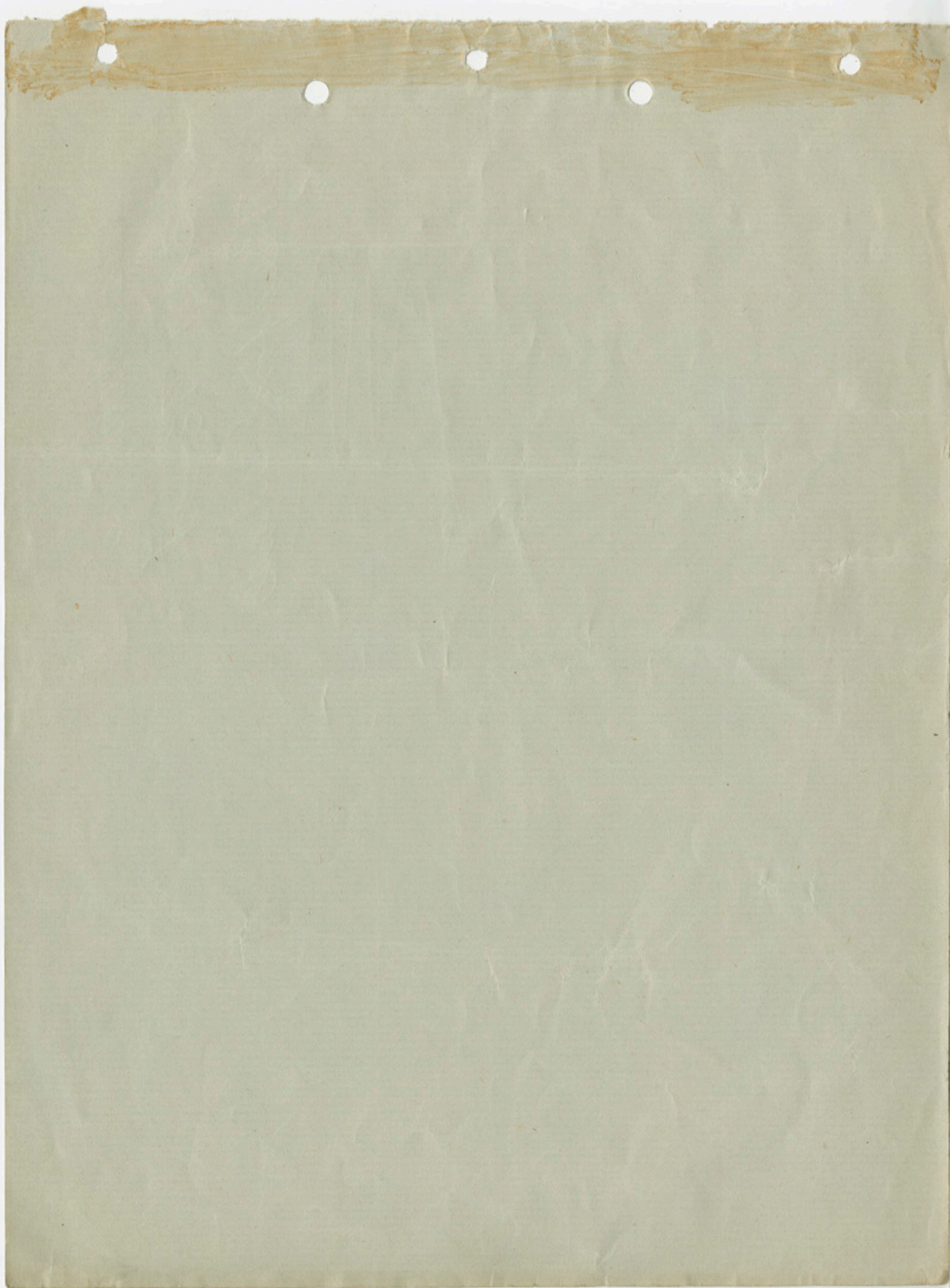
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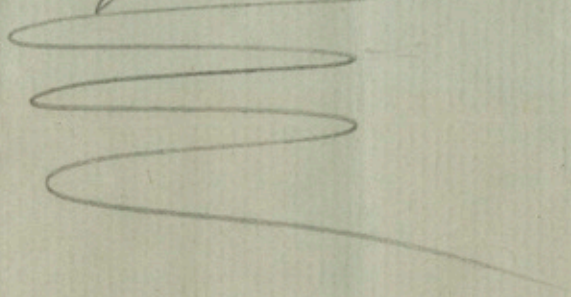
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