

ORATION.

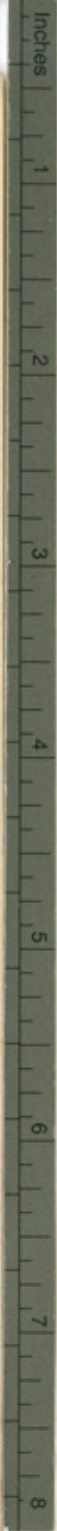
Memorial Day, May 30th, 1903.

Adams, Mass.

No.16, Vol. 9.

SUBJECT:

Sketches of Different Generals.



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Memorial Day, May 30th, 1903.

Delivered at

No. 16, Vol. 2.

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Sketches of Different Generals.

Address at Adams, Mass., May 30, 1903

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Comrades:— It gives me special joy to be with you on an occasion like this. I am glad that Memorial Day has been thus far preserved to us and I hope it will be continued certainly as long as the veterans and the sons of veterans shall live. I have some thoughts on the subject that I will give Sunday night during the church exercises, which tomorrow I understand will be of a memorial nature.

The time has already come with me when I live mostly in the past. I dream of battles which are not always successful, and of struggles which sometimes carry me into the valley of the shadow of death, but I also dream of victories which lead me to the highest reaches of achievement, but no dream on my part or on yours can surpass the reality of our clear cut, indelible recollections. If we begin with General Scott and follow through the commanders of independent armies during our war; for example of the Army of the Potomac, the Army of West Virginia, the Army of the Ohio, the Army of the Cumberland, the Army of the Tennessee, and the armies beyond the Mississippi; we will find twenty-seven such generals. To-day there are but two of them living, General Schofield and myself. Besides these two, there are on the Union side but seven Corps Commanders, and very few Division and Brigade Commanders. Few indeed so far as my observation and knowledge go.

Sometimes I dwell upon General Scott, as tall as Abraham Lincoln and twice as heavy. For a commanding personality and

ADDRESS AT ALBANY, N.Y., 30th OF MAY, 1862.

Comrades:— It gives me special joy to be with you on an occasion like this. I am glad that Memorial Day has been thus far preserved to us and I hope it will be continued certainly as long as the veterans and the sons of veterans shall live. I have some thoughts on the subject that I will give Sunday night during the church exercises, which tomorrow I understand will be of a memorial nature.

The time has givenly come with me when I live mostly in the past. I dream of battles which are not always successful, and of struggles which sometimes carry me into the valley of the shadow of death, but I also dream of victories which lead me to the highest reaches of achievement, and no dream on my part or on yours can surpass the reality of our glorious, patriotic past. Recollections of the battle of Gettysburg and of the battle of Antietam, of the Army of the Potomac, the Army of West Virginia, the Army of the Ohio, the Army of the Tennessee, the Army of the Cumberland, and the Army of the Mississippi; we will find twenty-seven such generals. Twenty-three are dead, two are living, General Robert E. Lee and General George B. McClellan. Besides these two there are on the Union side but seven of our Generals, and very few divisions and brigades remain. Now indeed we are in an extraordinary and interesting position. I think upon General Scott, as well as upon Lincoln and upon the people, for a commanding personality and

dignity of deportment I have never seen his superior. He is my beau ideal of those old generals inclined to a martinetish discipline. No man would have undertaken to be familiar with Winfield Scott.

Next I think of Robert E. Lee, one of the noblest figures as a natural man in our history, but mistaken in his theories of government. His nephew says that General Lee was always too kind in his government of men. ^{In political faith} Lee followed the teachings of his commonwealth and of his father.

Opposed to him on our side I think of McClellan, always a gentleman and always loyal at heart to his flag, but not strong enough, like Lincoln, to be the best guide of men. Still he did a good work in forming and preparing the great human machine, the Army of the Potomac, for the use of his successors.

I think of Joseph E. Johnston with sentiments like those of Lee, throwing himself against the Union, and I believe always sorry that he was doing it. He was a great captain. His presence on the battle field always prevented disaster and he often snatched something equivalent to a victory from defeat.

Opposed to him on the Union side I saw first McDowell, then McClellan and finally Sherman. Sherman was the first one that in strategic conception and performance was equal to Johnston. Stand him at the top of a mountain which overlooked vast spaces and he would tell just what his enemy proposed to do and issue his

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Opposed to him on the Union side I now think of General
Sherman and finally Sherman. Sherman was the first one
that in strategic conception and performance was equal to Johnston.
Stand him at the top of a mountain which overlooked your space
and he would tell you that his army proposed to do and take his

orders accordingly. These two men seemed to have equal power to anticipate, like a skillful chess player, the moves of the other. Sherman had the advantage because with men equally brave the two contended, but Sherman had greatly the majority.

I think of Butler and Banks, your own Generals, patriotic from the start. Who better could have brought New Orleans into line with health and renovation and good government than Butler, and who could harangue the people and fire their hearts with patriotism better than Banks on the rostrum or in the halls of congress?

I recollect also another of your generals, more prominent still so far as the nation is concerned, General Joseph Hooker, a wonderful commander entitled to the sobriquet "Fighting Joe Hooker." In command of a brigade or division or army corps, the enemy soon found that Hooker meant to fight.

At one time I got the reputation of being a fighting man and I understand that General Meade who fought the great battle of Gettysburg, said once that in a council of war my vote didn't count much because I always voted to fight. I think at that time of my life, forty years ago, the statement was true. It therefore probably detracts somewhat from the reputation of Hooker and Howard that they were too ready to fight. Still, the friends of us both in the generations to come will consider it no disparagement that we were always ready to expose our breasts with our men to the shafts of the enemies of our country.

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patriotic ardor better than Banks on the rostrum or in the halls of
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I recollect also another of your generals, more promi-
nent still, who was the victor at Vicksburg, General Ulysses
S. Grant, a wonderful commander entitled to the highest praise
"Unconquerable." In command of a brigade or division or army corps,
the enemy soon found that Grant meant to fight.

At one time I got the reputation of being a fighting
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battle of Gettysburg, said once that in a contest of war my vote
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that time of my life, forty years ago, the sentiment was true.
It therefore properly detracts somewhat from the reputation of
Hooker and Howard that they were too ready to fight. Still, the
friends of the north in the contest are to be commended for no
disparagement that we were always ready to expose our breasts
with our men to the bullets of the enemies of our country.

Again I think of all my intercourse with General U. S. Grant. Modest, retiring, without apparent self assertion, always kind to those about him and thoughtful of the reputation of his officers, he began his career by offensive operations at Belmont and he continued it by offensive movements and attacks from that time for four year until he closed out his offensive record at Appomatox. There he became generous to Lee, his officers and soldiers. Noble in his simplicity, manifesting the highest order of ability to secure beyond peradventure all we had gained and pave the way for the restoration of the American Union without the loss of a single star from the flag of his country.

I think it will be said by and by that there were heroes in those days. It was a great struggle, but the atmosphere was cleared as it is after a great storm where ^{at first} the thunder and lightning seem beyond human endurance. The fruitage that has followed the storms of those times cannot be enumerated to-day. ~~night~~. We are on the front line in everything, in new discoveries, in new developments, in a world wide commerce, in possessions in every sea, and in the vantage ground we occupy as a leader of nations in the settlement of the most important questions that have ever affected the interests of humanity.

Of course the sacrifices have been great, but a singular Providence has followed every step of our progress; but young men and maidens, do not forget us, the few veterans who remain, in our old age. Forgive our weaknesses and our follies and our mistakes as with trembling fingers we try to keep up the business of

Again I think of all my intercourse with General U. S. Grant, Robert, retiring, without apparent self assertion, always kind to those about him and thoughtful of the reputation of his officers, he began his career by offensive operations at Belmont and he continued it by offensive maneuvers and attacks from East to West, until he closed his offensive record at Appomattox. There he became generous to Lee, his officers and soldiers. Gentle in his simplicity, manifesting the highest order of ability to secure beyond peradventure all we had gained and gave the way for the restoration of the American Union without the loss of a single star from the flag of his country.

I think it will be said by and by that there were heroes in those days. It was a great struggle, but the newspapers were silent. It is after a great storm where the thunder and lightning seem beyond human endurance. The struggle that has followed the storm of those times cannot be enumerated to-day. We are on the front line in everything, in new discoveries, in new developments, in a world wide commerce, in possessions in every sea and in the various forms of energy as a leader of nations in the world, with the most important questions that have ever affected the interests of humanity.

Of course the conditions have been great, but a single far Providence has followed every step of our progress, but young men and nations, do not forget that the veterans who remain, in our old age, for the old veterans and our families and our children as with trembling fingers we try to keep up the standard of

in our work of the past, us
 life. Do not forget us who are the representatives of the great
 army that stood so long between this nation and its death. Indeed
 you can sing and ought to sing Gloria in Excelsis when you take
 even the briefest estimate of the veterans' accomplishment.

The Fourth of July heralds the Revolution which made us
 a small nation, governed by true republican principles. Let
 Memorial Day herald the reconstruction without human enslavement
 of that same country, ^{that country} with foundations already laid ^{and preparations made} to extend its
 boundaries far, far beyond the seas and open up a development
 which we cannot describe of the best interests and the best op-
 portunities which the human race has ever enjoyed.

"Sleep, soldiers! still in honored rest,
 Your truth and valor wearing;
 The bravest are the tenderest,-
 The loving are the daring."

~~Bayard Taylor.~~

