

George of Mayville, N. Y.,  
was introduced and pronounced  
the following oration.

ORATION BY JUDGE ROUGER.

There are few men to whom  
it has come to live two lives  
upon earth; one that precedes  
that act, that scene which we call  
death; and one which comes after  
death, which we sometimes call fame.  
The life that has passed that point is  
worthy of much or little value, accord-  
ing as that fame becomes an active in-  
strument in the world's betterment, or  
not; the achievements of life—what a  
man does, is of little moment unless it  
carries with it to the future a lesson in-  
spiring to greater endeavor, to nobler  
accomplishments, not in one day but  
in many days thereafter.

You remember that Antony, when  
he would sing the praises of the great  
dead to the Roman populace, said, hold-  
ing up the parchment, Caesar's last  
testament, "If I should read this the  
very stones of Rome would rise and  
cry out." It was Caesar's last bequest.  
And, yet, when, after many delays, it  
was finally read, how weak, how mean,  
how utterly unworthy of any great life,  
of any of the great ages which latterly  
have crowned the world's life, was that  
last testament of Rome's greatest  
soldier; a few paltry coins to every man  
of Rome, and the parks and walks on  
this side of the Tiber to be for them in  
common forever.

Our greatest soldier lies dead to-day;  
he has bequeathed to us, the American  
people, to us, his comrades in arms, not  
to us, but to all the world in all the  
ages yet to be, a priceless testament; a  
testament not of gold, not of walks  
within the Tiber's limits, not of any  
earthly possession. Stripped as to that,  
he passed from earth as he entered.  
Even the poor privilege of giving into  
his country's keeping the trophies of  
his renown, a sad fate snatched from  
his dying hand. But he left us some-  
thing infinitely more precious, infinite-  
ly more worthy of the age in which he  
lived, infinitely more worthy of the  
land he loved, infinitely more worthy  
of that future to which it must descend,  
he left us the name and memory of a  
man; a man taking up a mighty duty,  
a man born to a great destiny, a man  
rich in wonderful resources, a man for-  
getful of himself, a man seeking not  
his own glory, but remembering only  
the dictator of duty, and of honor, and  
of right.

Let us for a few brief moments, in  
memory of our great dead, in respectful  
consideration and acknowledgment of  
this grand testament that he has be-  
queathed to us, let us, as part of the ben-  
e-diction of his fame, consider some  
of the elements on which it is based,  
and why it is that in the future the  
name of Grant will be grander and  
stronger than in the past.

He has left us a fame that ought to be significant and especially dear to every American heart, because he came out of our American life. In some stages of earth's existence it may be, in some other greater and better world it may be, in some coming millenium it is possible that there may be found a nobler and grander, and more worthy descent for a hero, for a great man devoted to duty, than to come out of the loins of the American people, of that people consecrated to God, consecrated to liberty, consecrated to truth and justice, from the very hour of its founding, and representing in its history a new open book of human right and liberty. But if there ever shall be any nobler or grander pedigree for such a man, God has not yet revealed its place; it has not yet appeared upon the earth. Kings may reach back, and trace their royal blood back to robber clans and magnificent manhood; culture may reach back through its ages of refinement, until the man quivers with the accuracy and cleanness of finish; but God tempers his own swords, he tempers them in his own way, takes them out of his own mine, and puts before them the path of duty, where they are to cleave all obstacles, and establish right and justice.

Our dead, whom we mourn to-day, came not out of the top of life. In our common home, nursed by the Puritan traditions of two hundred years, nursed by the traditions of heroic sires, and reared under the tender and glorious influence of actual personal religious conviction, it was a splendid place, it was a splendid pedigree, it was a magnificent origin for a great American man. For after all that may be said and done, it is manhood that counts in the world's life. We may put up any specific, fictitious differences that we choose, but when we come down to the accomplishment of great purposes, the doing of great acts, it is the man whom God has forged that constitutes the motive power of progress. I am glad, and I know every one must be glad to-day, that out of our common American homes came this dead hero whom we mourn. He is a type of our life, and all the more a type of that life, as well as its product, because he came into its significant operations by a preparation as strange as it was effective. I said that God tempered his own swords. He prepares men in a peculiar manner for the performance of great and mighty functions. It was no ill preparation for the doing of a soldier's and a hero's task, that that youth got that preparation on the Ohio farm, nursed by the forest about him, nursed by the rude life of which he was a part, nursed by that struggle for the daily bread that go with the effective prayer, nursed by all those elements which we count, and rightly count, as the growing glory of American life. And when, by and by, he parted from the humble home, and came under the influence not merely of educational forces, but of patriotic thought, of patriotic remembrance, and patriotic aspiration, in that school of the republic at West Point, unknown to him, unknown to the world, he was taking the form and shape which divine preparation demanded, and, as he wrote to his mother, he hoped that in some future day he might do something that should make him worthy to be remembered, and to be spoken of side by side with Gen. Scott. It was a good thing that this young boy with his clean life, out of the country, in the shadow of the forest...

And... beautiful in its promise, grand in its indications of the mass, future power, that wonderful struggle of wrong, and of evil, and of invasion, which our Republic... in which... tempered... life whom... splendid tribute to... unknown, without... without self-seeking, without anything but the half recognition of a brevet second lieutenant, he went through that war, was four times mentioned in general orders, was...

And he showed, too, the qualities of a man when that last struggle came, and this young man, recently promoted to the quartermastership, wrote home to his mother a letter: "I have just received this promotion which my friends congratulate me upon, because it takes me out of the front, away from active service in the field; but I remember, mother," thank God he reached back in his memory always to mother or wife, or home, "but I remember, mother, that you have taught me that a soldier's place in battle is at the front, and there I shall be found."

When that last struggle came, there that quartermaster himself was, without command, without rank, without right. Ah, comrades, some of you have seen quartermasters not so anxious to be at the front. There he was, not merely at the front, doing not merely a soldier's duty, but duty that belongs to the born genius, to the born hero and commander, taking away from another his command, taking that little howitzer up into the steeple of the church, enforcing his command when he had no right to command, and when the general commanding saw that he had struck the salient point of the enemy's line, having under him three officers, his superiors in rank, one a captain in the regular army, the general was making his way through the body to the surface.



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But we wait, and there is no change. But by and by there comes a roar of terrible convulsion, sweeping over the land, and the citizens of the town in which he dwells, meeting together, call upon him for a speech. It is wonderful how we Americans do prize tongue rather than brain or even muscle. We must have it, raw or pickled, it matters not. Tongue is a part of our intellectual nutriment. They called upon this man for a speech. He said, "I know nothing of speech making, but we are raising a company, and whatever I can do for that I will." That was all. But in the very first hour that hand which wrote its own orders a few days afterwards, and wrote so many thousands of them that it has been said that no general on earth ever left with his own hand such a record of his own acts, this man wrote to the head of the army of the Republic, "I stand ready to serve in any capacity that may be of value to the country," and stated his education. And that man standing at the head of the army of the Republic had no time to answer the letter of U. S. Grant. He went again, upon his own expense, to the headquarters of one of his old classmates, hoping to be asked to serve upon his staff, but was not, and came back again disappointed.

I remember the story told, and was with him at the time, how he, a few days after by a strange coincidence, got into the command of a post, and went to the post to which he had been assigned without waiting to put on his uniform, a piece of which went a long way in those days. He went without any military insignia, wearing a battered plug hat, and sat down and took command of the post.

Grant  
We need not consider the matter of preparation any further. It was done. The sword was forged; the hammer was welded; and we came upon the day of achievement. We find this man, yet unconscious of power, this Cromwell just out of the fen, this power of God waiting for the work before him, eager for it, yet not assuming. We find him later making a reconnoissance, and turning it into an attack, and a few days after asking permission to visit his commanding officer, and when he received leave, going at night, and calling the next morning, and being calmly informed that the commander needs no advice. Going back to his command, he urged an attack upon Fort Henry. Again three days afterward; again four days afterward; again on the 28th, begging Commodore Foote to join with him and finally, seven days after, telegraphing the commander at St. Louis: "If not forbidden, I shall advance upon Fort Henry to-night," and then intimating to the telegraph operator that he would not be needed at the office any more that night. (Laughter.) At ten o'clock that night he left for Fort Henry. Two days afterward this wonderfully forged hammer reported the victory under his command, saying: "In two days from now I will take Fort Donelson." It would take two days to get a message from St. Louis, and two days to get a reply, he would be there before Fort Donelson in his hands.

As he goes across the muddy country, fourteen miles to the attack, and there he brought his little army face to face with a greater army behind in trenches. Day after day he stubbornly held his grip, and the commander at St. Louis dared not order him back, but said all the time, "Be cautious; prepare Fort Henry for an attack; see it is fitted on the land side; be very careful." And he was careful, because by and by, when the imprisoned enemy came out and made an attack on his own lines, in his absence on the gun-boats to confer with Commodore Foote, as he came back his officers told him, "They certainly expected to overpower us; for their knapsacks were full." "Were they? That settles it." That was all he wanted to know. The general was born in that man. He knew it was an escape, not an attack. He said at once to his subordinate, Gen. Smith, "Attack immediately with your whole force."

We know the story well. We know how the news of victory rang through the North for the first time, a substantial triumph for our arms. Ah, the sword was forged, but it was not complete. There came a time when obscurity had to teach him a farther lesson. The soldier had to yield his laurels into another's hand. He did it cheerfully, magnificently. Month passed after month, yet Grant was in his quarters, no command, no power, no opportunity for achievement. Did any of you ever know the reason? Twenty-two years passed by before his lips breathed the story of the terrible insult put upon him. Who, but Grant, in honor of the land he loved, could wait twenty-two years in silence under injustice? But he would not utter a single word that should impair the success of the great cause. But God brought the time when his sword was again unsheathed.

Hour after hour through the terrible ordeal of Shiloh, he fought until Buell came to his relief. He was asked: "What is the line of your retreat?" "I have none." "There are the gun-boats; if you are defeated, they will not take ten thousand." "If I am defeated, I shall not need transportation for ten thousand."

Then comes the struggle at Vicksburg. How our hearts thrill as we remember the terrible struggle above the place; how he took the advice of his subordinates; how he passed down the Yazoo at the suggestion of a government officer; how he made a canal at the suggestion of another; and then, by and by, setting them all aside, took his own way, and one dark night, when the thunder-cloud veiled the face of the river with its mantle, Porter's boats shot by. Then we have Fort Gibson, with the wonderful march to Jackson, with the two armies in his front, united, constituting a force more than double his own, pushing them back and back and back, the one in seven days of ceaseless marching and constant fighting, wheeling like a thunderbolt, striking the other back and back, and Vicksburg was hemmed in. When the nation's birthday came, the greatest army that ever surrendered to any man since the invention of gunpowder bowed its head and passed under the yoke. Ah, we can wait.

Then come the wonderful columns of Chautauque with its steel-clad array, stretching mile after mile, like this amphitheater in which we are, bordered with steep, shingly hills, and there comes that sunny December afternoon; when the sinking sun lay upon the long lines, as three signal guns were fired, and a hundred battle flags contended with each other in the strife to reach that wonderful natural fortress. It was a miracle a man never forgot, a miracle that stood by him in memory.

When he came to take command of that brave, but hitherto unfortunate army of the Potomac, he found an army struggling with peculiar difficulties, and which offered peculiar difficulties to him, a strange army, a dispirited army, and a suspected commander, suspected of loyalty to him and of jealousy among themselves. And then we have day after day the struggle of this man who even in his boyhood would not go back on his track, but if he must return, pursued another. Edging by, fighting, forcing, it is not this one man against another, but it is this one man against the power of a nation. All the time he kept in view that his purpose was not the mere forcing back of Lee, or the capture of the rebel capital, but the destruction of the Confederacy, the destruction of the power that possessed the nation's power. And by and by when he had moved the pieces, Sheridan in the valley, Thomas at Nashville, Sherman on the way to the sea, and all was ready, and the bright April morning came after the terrific storm, the word was given, and this man passed on to the achievement of his great purpose.

We need not follow him further. The picture changes now to this man as a man. The work was done. The army of Lee surrounded, pursued, beaten back at every point, was compelled to yield, and the commander of the confederate forces, arrayed in his most gorgeous robes, came forward to surrender to this typical man of our northern life. They faced each other, the one unconscious of anything except the performance of duty, the other sadly conscious of the humiliation of defeat. Without a moment's preparation the victor leaped from his horse, covered with the stains of the campaign, and met his great adversary. Not by a word, not by a look, not by a hint even, did he wound the feelings of that man. Courteous in all things, without claiming the credit of his services, he made it smooth and easy for him to yield. And when he came back to his own, and the plaudits were beginning to ring along the line, for once Grant gave an order himself. Raising his hand, he said, "No more, no more; they are our comrades now."

I would say a word, if time permitted, of the fact that we have neglected the intellectual qualities of this man.

I wish to say one word in regard to that other career that opens now before him. It has been customary with some, who have spoken upon him better than I can, to pass by this without significance. But I tell you, my friends, the man's work was not ended. The natural debris, the natural friction of opposing forces, left a terrible residuum in our whole nation, and this man's sword was yet a power. It was because Grant was President that no further touch at any time of civil struggle was felt. And it was because the sword of Grant went into the scabbard, that England was willing to submit to the arbitration of the Alabama claims.

Let me call to your minds another thing that no one in Chautauque, no American citizen should ever forget, that this man, first of all men in our land, publicly called the attention of the Congress of the United States, of the people of America, to the fact that emancipation devolved upon us the greater fact of preparation, and urged that this nation stretch out its hand to the impoverished South, and give to them the hand which had unrelentingly oppressed them. It is because of this that we have numbered and placed upon our walls the noblest of our men.





I say he was modest. Once when some friends were gathering together, and were asking him (he was not silent with his friends), were asking him for some accounts of his triumphs that he had witnessed abroad; after describing one of them, he said, "I felt all the time that it was not for me, but for my countrymen and that wonderful army that came out of our American homes, and through whose courage and effort I won whatever of distinction I have."

I would call attention if time permitted, to the fact that among all his subordinates there is hardly one that did not feel that no more than justice had been accorded him. Any one that will read that wonderful array of brave and unmistakable reports that he has furnished to our history, will notice the fact that he always put forward the subordinates, except in cases of disaster, in which he would always take the blame upon himself. There is one that has, perhaps, stood nearer to him for the past twenty years, longer than any other, who said not long since with falling tears, "I never heard him speak ill of any man, except on two occasions a simple sentence slipped his lips and then he seemed humiliated." There are many who stood near him who never heard those lips utter any words in derogation of friend or foe.

But I must pass to that last grandest scene, that theater of accomplishment, in which we may all be prouder of him than in any other. When men have passed the age of sixty-two, when men have reached that advanced period in life, in development, when the hand of disease is upon them, when accident has broken the powers, then we say that a man has a right to cease from exertion. But it was under such circumstances, smitten not only by disease, prostrated by accident, but also smitten by that terrible humiliation which came from undeserved obloquy, and the weight and burden of poverty falling upon a burdensome and active life, it was at that time that this great suffering man took in his hand the pen of record, and for the sake of the loved ones in his home, said, "I will accomplish one more victory; stay thou grisly shade, and let me accomplish my task." Day after day he put back the footsteps of death; day after day he wrought as few men have wrought, until he brought comfort and independence to that home again.

We may well be proud of this man, but we do not know his greatness; the ages that are to come will determine that. When our land has grown to know from what it was saved; when our people have become millions more, and have learned what it was that he achieved, then there will come a time when tongues more eloquent than any that can now be found, when hearts inspired by a fuller knowledge of the worth of that life, shall lay upon his grave fitting chaplets of eulogy.

Since that terrible day at Mt. McGregor, there has been ringing through my head day after day the refrain of a poem, a part of which many of you may remember, a refrain saddened by peculiar thought, which it seems to me deserves to be sanctified to this soldier's memory.

Grant

With drum beat and heart beat,  
A soldier passeth by;  
While hearts beat and drums beat,  
And tears bedim the eye,  
Our quivering lips breathe soft the name,  
How we consecrate to fame,  
A name that ne'er shall die.

With drum beat and heart beat,  
A nation bows its head;  
Drum beat and heart beat,  
The sorrowing comrades tread,  
While still he leads who led of yore,  
Leads up to the sunlit shore  
Where sleep the e'er undying dead.

With drum beat and heart beat,  
He climbed the heights of fame;  
When drums beat and swords beat,  
He won a glorious name,  
While trembling millions waited,  
While doubting souls debated,  
When boastful treason prated,  
Because with steel he smote them,  
Upon the sky we wrote them,  
The letters of that name.

To drum beat and heart beat,  
We sound his praise to-day;  
And on his tomb, with loving hands,  
Our tear-gemmed offerings lay,  
But in the ages yet to be  
The race his mailed hand made free,  
Dark younger sons of liberty,  
With heart beat and drum beat,  
Shall noble tribute pay.

With heart beat and drum beat  
We lay the warrior low,  
To drum beat and heart beat,  
Friend marches now with foe,  
And boastful treason wonders,  
While the battered cannon thunders,  
Of the time it still remembers,  
Of the Nation's dark Decembers,  
In the wondrous long ago.

With drum beat and heart beat,  
Toss we the banner high;  
While drums beat and hearts beat  
Beneath its starry sky,  
The patriot who adored  
The soldier who restored  
The hero simple-hearted,  
Our Grant, shall never die.