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IN MEMORIAM TRIBUTE OF RESPECT TO THE
MEMORY OF THE DECEASED SOLDIERS OF ADAMS
COUNTY, OHIO EVANS

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IN MEMORIAM.

A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT

TO THE MEMORY

OF THE

DECEASED SOLDIERS OF ADAMS
COUNTY, OHIO.

AN ADDRESS

BY CAPTAIN N. W. EVANS.

Delivered at the Methodist Episcopal Church, West Union, Ohio,
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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST
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RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
TO
THE RETURNED SOLDIERS
OF
ADAMS COUNTY, OHIO.

The Romans, in speaking of the demise of their friends never permitted it to be said, "*oberunt*," or "*perierunt*," "they are dead," "they have perished;" but they whisper solemnly to each other: "*Von sunt*," "they are not;" thus in two words declaring their belief in the immortality of the soul and a future existence. They said: "Our friends exist no longer here," implying, more strongly than an express declaration, that they did exist elsewhere and under other conditions. A sacredness and dignity invest the character and life when once the angel of death has set his seal on them. Let us respect that sacredness and dignity as much as the ancient pagans did. Let it not be said of our fallen heroes, "they have died," "they have perished," but let us whisper reverentially, "They are not."

Our unreturning heroes are not dead! They have not perished, become annihilated. They live as truly and as veritably today as that instant before the angel of the sepulchre claimed them as his own.

"There are no dead! The stars go down
To rise upon some fairer shore,
And bright in Heaven's jeweled crown
They shine forever more.
And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear immortal spirits tread.
For all the boundless universe
Is life. There are no dead."

They live in our memories, and they dwell in the elysium of heroes. Our brothers fell in the vigor of manhood. To us, they will ever flourish in immortal vigor. They will never pass through the different phases of mortality, grow old, and lapse to the grave by reason of the decay of their faculties, but will ever remain to us as they fell—noble, manly souls—immortal men.

Those men, dead and living, who fought so gallantly at Shiloh, Perryville, Stone river, Chickamauga, Atlanta, Nashville and

on other fields, east as well as west, let us consider characters. Let us view impartially what they did, and then let the inferences follow of themselves. A word introductory. We have to consider only their acts. We have nothing to do with their motives. We have no authority, either human or divine, to challenge the motives that caused any man to enter the army. We have neither the right, nor the ability to tear away the veil before the penetralia of the immortal spirit, and to disclose its mysterious workings. That is the province of its author. He alone is judge of the hidden springs of human action. Motives belong only to Him. Actions, *res factae*, things past and done are ours to interpret, to judge, to approve or condemn. To such we confine ourselves.

Many of our heroes were young men. They were inspired with noble hopes, lofty desires, and grand ambitions. The Canaan of the new world was their heritage. Time was theirs in which to achieve, in which to accomplish. All things were before them. The paths of glory opened on every side. The dazzling crowns of honors, dignities, and riches waited to be claimed. In the luminous vistas of the future they saw their aspirations realized. Youth stole into the studio of Time, seized the pencil of Fancy, and on the virgin canvas of the future, depicted scenes not unworthy of its ardent and impetuous genius. *Here* the young man had attained the acme of his hopes. Lovely women were smiling on him and crowning him with wreaths of immortelles. His fellow citizens stood around, proud to honor him. *There* he was in gladsome home. A charming ideal, a womanly divinity, radiant with the approving glances of affection, was by his side. Little cherubs clustered about his knees. The sky was the purest cerulean; the air was odorous with rich perfume and intoxicating with delight; the birds warbled divinely, and the sunlight itself was elixir. He had stolen the joys of paradise and brought them back to earth. But hark! the booming of cannon waked the dreamer

from his reverie. It was the cannon of Smater. Destiny rushed in, and, with the brush of Prophecy, obliterated the fair scenes in the fire and smoke of battle. *There*, in the deep solitude of a southern forest, under the weeping cypress, she painted a neglected tumulus, a nameless grave. Oh, the cruel mockery of ambition! the bitter draught of fate! But our youthful heroes were not appalled. The blood of revolutionary fathers coursed in their veins. They saw the storm approaching, and bared their bosoms to meet it. The crisis demanded sacrifices. They plucked from their hearts each fond hope, each cherished ambition. It was not enough. They tore those bleeding hearts from their breasts, and laid them warm and reeking on the altar of country. They bestowed one last lingering thought on those bright visions of beauty and of glory that had so lately spread out before them and invited them on, and turned away and died: died without a tear, a murmur, or a regret. What for? To give us and our descendants a united, a happy, an illustrious country. They left no progeny to perpetuate their glorious names and more glorious deeds. The Republic shall be their child! She shall embalm their memory and their heroism and hand them down to her latest hour. The walls of Thebes sprang up to the sound of the lyre of Amphion. When our country shall chant the funeral dirge of her fallen sons, walls shall spring up about her which the tyrants of the combined world shall not be able to breach.

Others fell in the meridian of manhood. Their hopes in life, had, in some measure, been realized. They had pleasant homes, cheerful firesides, loving wives, affectionate children. They were endeared to community by all that makes life agreeable and happy. Their country called them. They sundered the silken cords of affection: they staked human interests, social ties, and life itself, on the single throw of a die—and lost: lost for themselves, but won for posterity. They left their homes and sought and found a soldier's sepulchre in a hostile land.

Those homes are now desolate; their light has been extinguished: Those wives are draped in mourning: those children are in tears. The agony of despair has seized the bereaved ones; their bright world has been turned to a bleak and gloomy waste. Henceforth they will pass solemnly and mournfully among us. The human soul has its tendrils as well as the vine. It will cling to the nearest and noblest thing it can make its own. Let the oak be riven by the thunder blast: the vine will fall to the ground; its life will thenceforth be imperfect, dwarfed, stunted. It shrinks from observation, and withers away. The cypress may be hung at almost every door. While we honor the fallen, let us uncover ourselves in the presence of the mourners.

Others were hoary-headed sires, aged and reverend fathers. The sun of their lives had arisen in peace; it set in blood. They had lived for their country; there remained but for them to die: they died for it. They had seen and known the compatriots of Washington, LaFayette, Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson. They had caught the inspiration of these men. The divine afflatus had descended on them. Their lives had been one long testimonial in favor of their fatherland. That testimonial was almost complete. It lacked but the seal. They sealed it with their blood, and "they are not." Let us believe their pure spirits rest in the bosom of God. O, blessed souls of our white-haired martyrs, look down from your thrones in bliss, and let your unction descend on your unworthy children!

These young, middle aged, and hoary martyrs for liberty faced death for us. They placed their bodies, a living barrier, between us and the bullets and bayonets of a cruel foe. What is death? We can readily comprehend its physical phenomena, but what is that terrible, solemn mystery which appals humanity? from which the boldest involuntarily shrinks?

"Dying is nothing; 'tis this we fear.

To be we know not what, we know not where."

Death is the door which opens into another world—a world

which the strongest ray of human light has not yet been able to penetrate. No Columbus can discover it to us. God holds the impenetrable curtain. When he lifts it we shall see. Not before. Tell me not that the grave does not suggest horrors instinctively. What mean the thousands of medicines, nostrums, and panaceas, for preserving and for continuing life? Why are the doors and blinds on our watercrafts hung on open hinges? What mean the life preserver? Why did Ponce de Léon seek the fountain of youth? Why is every medicinal spring in the country crowded with healthseekers? Why do you shudder at that "dry, slight cough?" Why do you scan the heavens, examine the grounds, gauge the atmosphere, before going abroad? Ah! that trifling cold, the insidious harbinger of pulmonary consumption! Why do you involuntarily tremble in the presence of that livid face, those glassy eyes, those pale lips? You perceive your own fate written in unmistakable characters in those melancholy features. You recognize the mark of death. You know that seal is yours also.

The consciousness that we are inevitably to grapple, singly and hopelessly, with the "king of terrors:" that, without pilot, compass, or even friendly star, we must embark on a pathless, shoreless ocean, from whose bosom no traveler has ever returned, from over whose waters no "angel whispers" have ever told us aught of the fate of former voyagers: that we must meet an unknown God, face to face, and account for the "deeds done in the body:" the solemn and awful thought that we must stand revealed in the presence of the Sovereign who guides the universe, who is, "a consuming fire," who holds the lightning in His hands, who controls the devastating hurricane, the raging ocean, the heaving earthquake, the burning mountain, in whose power we are "like clay in the hands of the potter," and by the single breath of whose nostrils we might be annihilated—this is the "sting of death:" this is the invisible spectre which is ever following, chasing, and pursuing us, and from which we are

ever fleeing, but never escaping. Our heroes met and submitted to this terrible affair of death for us. They said: "It is necessary for us to do our duty; it is not necessary that we should live." They not only met death for us; they not only endured it calmly, stoically, heroically; but they sought it, they courted it, they caressed it, they toyed with it, they despised its pangs and mocked its terrors. They did not ask its "tender mercies." They sought it in all its forms; withering, scorching, blighting diseases; the horrible mangling of cannon balls, the excruciating laceration of grape, the speedy death of the bullet, putrefaction of wounds, thirst on the battle field, starvation in prison, famine and pestilence. This is for country. Men of former times have attained such heights of heroism. They could not have attained higher. The Athenian patriot needed but to display his shattered arm to electrify all Attica; the deeds of these men need but to be mentioned to set the country in one conflagration of patriotism.

We might institute comparisons; we might cite examples of ancient heroes and patriots; we might draw parallels between our heroes and those of former times. We could do nothing more. We could not show anything in excess, on the part of former generations. If there be any difference it is in our favor.

The Dutch republicans, the English roundheads, the French revolutionists, fought by the aid of a light that "shone through a glass darkly." The day of liberty was but dawning for them. Light had not yet dispelled the dark clouds of fanaticism, bigotry, hatred, and intolerance. They caught the gleams of reason but occasionally, but fitfully. They fought in the dark. The natural instinct for liberty implanted in the human soul was their guide, their prompter. Our heroes fought in the light of at full blaze of a meridian sun. Their patriotism was not hatred, bigotry, fanaticism; it was reason, conscience. They saw the end from the beginning; they had calculated the cost; they admitted no doubtful issue.

In the spring of 1863 there was a lull in the contest. The champions of truth and error paused for breath. The army had met the shock of the enemy, had received it, but had not repelled it. They had not faltered or wavered; they had held their ground. Some of the people of the North began to hesitate, to doubt, to waver. The Medusa of disaffection reared her horrid head, covered with snaky tresses: the timid began to be petrified: it was an hour of despondency, of darkness and gloom.

Then Company D, Twenty-fourth Ohio, spake forth from the gloom. It seemed the voice of men about to die. Their tones partook of that fearful solemnity and terrible earnestness of those who speak from the portals of the tomb. It was—

“Resolved, That though we deeply regret the existence of the stern necessity that called us from the fond pursuits and happy associations of civil life, we will not exchange the military for the civil until we have conquered a peace, and the stars and stripes are permitted to float from the dome of every capitol in the South.”

This resolution was sublime. Every man of the company subscribed it. It was one of many. The example will serve for the whole army. DRYDEN, OGLE, GUTHRIDGE, ADAMSON, TOLLE, THOMPSON, THOMAS, SCHULTZ, CRAWFORD and POINTER died that this resolution might be accomplished. This same spirit animated these men when they enlisted: it sustained and supported them in the hour of battle: it was the terrible death dealing energy of their powder: it was the force of their bullets, the power of their bayonets: it made the death of those that died glorious, the lives of those that lived sublime.

Adams county honors all her soldier sons. When they triumphed she felt a thrill of joy; when they fell she experienced a pang of grief. But she felt a peculiar interest in Company D. They were her offering of first fruits, her earliest sacrifice for country. The echoes of Sumter had not died away till that company was in the field. They were our first ebullition of patriotism. Their dead were the first-born of liberty. They were the vanguard of Adams county's little army of heroes. Honor them! Honor the whole army! Their laurels will never fade. They

will ever remain perfect green, unfaded as if newly plucked, fresh as if wet with the morning dew. Their deeds, acts of immortality, can not die. The fields where they fought and fell will be the theme of song and story.

If there be an elysium for heroes, McFERRIS is there! ELLIS is there! SUMMERS, CLARK, DRYDEN, THOMAS, BAILEY, POTTER, PUNTENNEY, PARRISH, SHULTZ, CRAWFORD and their comrades in arms are there! They wear crowns of victory. Arm-in-arm they walk there in glory. When the spirits of these men went up, the angels folded their wings and dropped their harp to listen to their story. Farewell, shades of departed heroes! Rest in the isles of the happy! Farewell, fallen brothers! When "life's fitful fever shall be o'er," there, in that celestial country, we shall meet you once more.

And the survivors? What of them? They have returned, bronzed by the fierce heat and fire of many battles. They have brought their honorable credentials—their scars—many of them disabled for life. They constitute the glorious church of heroes. They have received the baptism of blood on a score of battle fields. They have returned to us from the jaws of destruction, from the "mouth of hell." They danced at the high carnival of Death: they sat at his banquet: they drank his health and dashed their goblets in his face. They have fought the demon of darkness, and the deadly arrows have hurtled harmlessly from their armor. They have entered the "valley of the shadow of death," plucked the "olive branch of peace," and brought it back to us. They have earned the gratitude of unborn millions; they have crowned themselves with eternal honors. Since they have passed through the ordeal of fire, and blood, and leaden death, privation and pestilence, they seem to belong to a higher order of beings. Since their return from the Sinais of the Republic, where the Lord of hosts spake great truths amid the thunders of battle, their faces seem to shine with a sacred light. We would do well to heed their teachings.

There are some wearing the guise of men, who, throughout

the course of the war, watched the bleeding agonies of their country with indifference and contempt. Since the return of the soldiers, the human jackals have attempted to defame and villify their characters. We have not words of indignation strong enough for such men. Paris Spinello, the great Tuscan painter, once painted Lucifer in so hideous a manner that the contemplation of the picture rendered him a maniac. If the character of these harpies of mankind could be depicted in all its revolting features, indignation and wrath would make us insane. Such men would have plucked the spears from the Roman soldiers that they might have pierced the body of our crucified Lord. They would erase the epitaphs on the monuments of our fallen heroes, and would write their own blasphemy thereon. They would unearth those sacred ashes and scatter them to the four winds. They would dance in bacchanalian orgies on the grave of Liberty. They would shame the prince of devils, usurp his throne, and drive him to hide his blushes in the deepest and darkest hell in the universe.

Soldiers! Comrades in arms! Repose on your hard earned laurels. Enjoy the peace you have won so nobly. Your friends are legion. Time is a great arbiter. It will do you justice. Those calumnies will die. Another generation will not repeat them. You will be loved and revered when these calumniators shall have filled drunkards' and felons' graves. When you shall have become grey haired and venerable fathers and shall walk with tottering limbs on the brink of life, the children, and young men and maidens will cluster around you to listen to your wonderful story. All men will honor you. They will rise up before you. As you pass along the street they will point you out and say: "That man was at Stone river." "This man fought at Gettysburg." "He was at Mission Ridge." "He was with Sherman." "He was a soldier for the Union." And when you shall have been gathered to your fathers in peace, full of years and of honors, the sons of God shall unite with the sons of men in singing your requiem.

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