National Republican
THURSDAY MORNING, APRIL 7, 1870.

# THE DEAD HERO

## GEORGE H. THOMAS

## GRAND ARMY'S TRIBUTE.

### HIS COMRADES HONOR HIS MEMORY.

## Masonic Hall Filled with Veterans.

## GEN'L SCHENCK'S TRIBUTE TO THOMAS.

### GEN'L JOHN A. LOGAN'S ORATION.

**Speeches of Secretary Belknap, Vice President Colfax, Governor Fairchild, of Wisconsin; Secretary Cox, Senator Thayer and Hon. H. Hayward.**

The Department of the Potomac, Grand Army of the Republic, in accordance with arrangements previously made, paid their tribute of respect to the memory of Gen. George H. Thomas by appropriate exercises last evening in the hall of the new Masonic Temple.

The committee on decorations—Messrs. Wright, Dingman and James T. Smith—had arranged the speaker's stand at the east end of the hall, the front being festooned with flags and bunting. The wall in the rear was tastefully decorated with the regimental and national colors belonging to the quartermaster's forces organized for the defense of Nashville, while around the hall was hung the emblems of mourning. To the right of the portrait of Washington were suspended finely executed photographs by Brady of the late Gen. Thomas and Secretary Stanton, and on the left of the late Secretary Rawlins and President Lincoln.

The frames of these pictures were draped in black, beautiful natural flowers ornamenting each. Beneath the photograph of General Thomas were also regimental and national colors, while from the gas bracket was suspended a sword. The gas brackets around the hall were surrounded with evergreens and small flags, and the gallery in the rear of the hall also decorated with battle flags. Near the stand, on either side, were photographs of President Grant and Gen Sherman.

The exercises were announced to commence at 8 o'clock, and long before that time every seat in the house had been filled, and there was scarcely standing room left. On the platform were seated Vice President Colfax, Secretaries Belknap and Cox, Gov. Fairchild, of Wisconsin, Gen. Robert C. Schenck, General John A. Logan, Hon. Wm. Dennison, of Ohio; Hon. William H. Kelsey, New York; Hon. Horace Maynard, Tennessee; Hon. E. R. French, second auditor; Gen. N. P. Chipman; Gen. P. A. Starring, Dr. M. T. Collins, and Gen. Samuel A. Duncan, etc.

In the audience were a large number of distinguished officers of the army and navy, representatives of the civil departments of the Government, and a highly intelligent assemblage of ladies and gentlemen. The full Marine band occupied the gallery in the rear of the hall.

At the time announced, the meeting was called to order by Col. T. Lubey, commanding the Department of the Potomac, and prayer was offered by Rev. Dr. Rankin.

Col. Lubey then stated that by the unanimous vote of the Potomac Encampment, Grand Army of the Republic, Gen. Robert C. Schenck, a distinguished comrade of the order, had been chosen to preside over the meeting, and with much pleasure he would introduce the chairman of the evening.

Gen. Schenck then came forward, and applause, and said:

**Remarks of General Schenck.**

Comrades, ladies and gentlemen: It is needless for me to explain the occasion which has brought us together this evening. You all know and feel why we are here to-night. The whole country is in mourning, and this meeting, held under the auspices of the Grand Army of the Republic, is one of the many occurring throughout our land to give expression to the grief which pervades the hearts of the whole people of America.

We have lost a great, good man, General Thomas, so united in himself the qualities of the best citizen and soldier that it is not wonderful that his military friends and the people at large were found uniting their tears together in common sorrow at the announcement of his sudden and unexpected decease. He so filled and illustrated the character of both citizen and soldier that all men of all classes felt that the loss has been not one to the country at large, but a loss to each and to every person of the nation.

It was never my fortune to serve in or under the command of General Thomas. What little part I had in the late unfortunate rebellion was in Western Virginia, along the Rapidan and Rappahannock rivers, and the country bordering on the Potomac. But I did have the good fortune to make his acquaintance at the close of the war, an acquaintance that led to some degree of intimacy afterwards, and I can never forget the impression he made upon me.

He was a man of calm exterior, yet such a man as made you feel that in that quiet manner was hidden a great force. He was a man of remarkable modesty; yet you knew that his modest demeanor covered a wonderful force if occasion demanded the exercise of that quality. He appeared to me to be a sort of magazine of reserved force—something that could be called into action as duty or occasion might require.

But I must not forget that I am not here to night to speak of the life, the services, the character, virtues or qualities of Gen. Thomas. That is a duty and privilege devolving upon a brave and gallant soldier who knew him well, and who will address you presently. It remains for me only to announce and carry out the order of exercises prepared for the occasion. This I will do by inviting you to listen to the resolutions reported by the Grand Army of the Republic, which will be offered by Gen. Duncan, and which are intended to embody some expressions of the feeling which is felt at the loss they have sustained. Before the resolutions are read the band will play.

The Marine Band then performed the "Miserere," from the opera of "Il Trovatore."

Gen. Samuel A. Duncan then, with a few pertinent remarks, submitted the following resolutions:

**The Resolutions.**

Whereas it has pleased Almighty God to remove another of the country's heroes from his high sphere of usefulness; and whereas it is fitting that the members of the Grand Army of the Republic and all who served or sympathized with him in the war should give expression to their profound sorrow at the sad event, and pay their tribute of respect to the memory of the departed veteran; therefore be it—

*Resolved*, That in the death of Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas the nation has lost a citizen of eminent virtue and a soldier whose ability, bravery and integrity have rarely if ever been equalled.

*Resolved*, That the loss sustained by the Republic in the death of this great leader is deeply felt by every soldier who shared in his renown, whether by service under his immediate command or in other divisions of the great army of patriots.

*Resolved*, That throughout his whole career his untarnished honor, his unswerving loyalty and his entire consecration to duty entitle him to the respect and loving admiration of the army and the people.

*Resolved*, That his laurels as a military chieftain were won by his wise foresight, his cool and gallant conduct in action, and the courage and willing devotion inspired in his followers by their implicit confidence in one whose leadership was ever the assurance of victory.

*Resolved*, That the brilliant record of our late comrade in arms, presents him as a grand example of the patriotic soldier, who knew no divided allegiance, who, when tempted by the allurings offered from traitors, spurned all compromises with rebellion, who gave himself, head, heart and hand, to the work of crushing out armed insurrection and preserving the Union. Meeting treason with a purpose hatred, his blows were struck with stern determination, and his achievements, under Providence, were among the most potent instrumentalities in securing the triumph of the nation's cause.

The chairman then said, before the vote is taken on the adoption of the resolutions a soldier, doubtless well known to you all, whose deeds of valor are written in the history of the nation, who led the gallant fifteenth army corps to many a victory, will address you. I have the pleasure of introducing General John A. Logan.

General Logan was received with prolonged applause.

**Gen. John A. Logan's Oration**

Again the grave opens to receive another from our midst. And this time death, ever choice in the selection of his victims, plucks from our national crown of glory one of its brightest jewels; a gem whose radiance I say truly any was not dimmed by a single flaw, whose splendor was not tarnished by a single blot.

The grim messenger seems of late to be busy at work among the great of our land. But a few short months ago he came and took from the counsels of the nation a Rawlins; then a Mower was selected, and the ermine had just been honored by the presence of that sturdy old patriot Edwin M. Stanton, when he was laid aside for the cold habiliments of the grave; and now we are called upon to mourn the loss of Gen. George H. Thomas, the pride of the army, the model soldier.

While it is a painful duty to announce that he has departed from our midst, it is a pleasure to know that in recounting the incidents of his life there is no part that we desire to avoid, no scene over which we would heat a veil. Like all else connected with him, his history, too, is homogeneous. Nature seems to have cast him in one of her most symmetrical moulds. And while we briefly sketch his history we shall fail to see the blazing meteor shooting up into the skies and setting all the heavens aglow with its brilliancy, then as suddenly sinking back into obscurity. He belonged not to this type; his progress was not spasmodic; but like the new moon, at first a narrow, slippery hand, gradually expanding at each return of love, until with full rounded orb it faces the sun; so was it with Gen. Thomas. Relying upon his own efforts, prompt in every duty, punctual in every promise, steady in purpose, he gradually ascended the hill of fame.

And although we may not see any of those brilliant flashes, yet, what is of far superior value, we shall find him always rising up to the emergencies of the moment.

He was born July 31, 1816, in Southampton county, Virginia; his father being of English descent, his mother a Huguenot. The boy, it is said, is father to the man, and the proverb failed not in this case. The lad exhibited the character of the fruit. The facilities afforded him were properly and profitably used, and we learn that at an early age he had acquired a good education, and thus laid well the foundation of his after usefulness. Being practical and industrious as well as systematic, he immediately accepted the position of deputy under his uncle, who was then county clerk. But this was only a temporary resting place in his history, which was of short duration, for in 1835, at the age of twenty, he received an appointment as cadet, and entered the Military Academy at West Point. Here the path of life was opened to him for which he seems to have been peculiarly fitted by nature.

Entering upon it with all the zeal of his youth, four years afterwards he graduated as twelfth in his class of forty-five, and immediately after went into the service as brevet second lieutenant of the Third artillery.

For gallant conduct in the Seminole war, prompt discharge of the duties assigned him, and evidences of talent and adaptation to the service, he was rapidly promoted, yet ascending step by step, having reached, on the 17th of May, 1861, the position of lieutenant colonel of artillery. But I cannot in one short address attempt to give a complete outline of his history. I will select a few of the more prominent incidents of his military career; and when we have learned his military career we have learned the history of his life, for he was all a soldier; the army was his home; soldiers were his companions; military matters his study, and military duties his entire occupation.

When the clouds of war began to settle down on our Southwestern borders in 1845 and 1846, he was ordered with his company to Texas to report to Gen. Taylor. And from the battle of Palo Alto to the fields of Resaca de la Palma, Fort Brown, and Monterey, his name come up with honorable mention, and his gallant deeds write themselves on the pages of our national history. At Monterey, he wrote more than his State or his nation claimed, and without delay threw his sword into the scales of the Union, and with it his whole soul and energy. Though habitually quiet and deliberate in his decisions, yet when once made they were made to a and, and with his decision in this case went the whole man.

From May until July, 1861, he commanded the first brigade of Major General Patterson's army in northern Virginia, and subsequently under General Banks, until August 26 of the same year, when, as brigadier general of volunteers, he was transferred to Kentucky. He was ordered to Louisville, where he was heard from. At Mill Spring, the 19th of January, 1862, he struck the first of that series of sturdy blows which finally crushed the rebel power in the West. The news of this victory was by him he sent back to the East served as an antidote to the disaster of Bull Run. Timid spirits, which had dropped because of a reverse, again arose at the news of success. As has been stated by the historian, the brilliant strokes at Mill Spring checked the Confederate incursions into northeastern Kentucky, and there General Thomas first chained a victory to the Union standard, and began that series of solid and substantial achievements with which his name was associated, and, I may add, with the history of which they will go inseparably linked down to posterity.

I could go on and recite to you some of all his brilliant achievements, but they are too numerous; therefore I must leave unnoticed many points of this campaign in which he comes prominently forward. Suffice it to say, however, I cannot pass by without recalling its thrilling scenes to mind—the battle of Chickamauga.

Here all the powers of his nature were brought into action in their full strength. Here was one of those occasions where we see him rising like a giant just in proportion to the imminent danger and the emergencies of the case.

Here we see that self-reliance, clear comprehension and prompt decision which characterized him presented in all their perfection. Amid the fierce conflicts that raged around Chickamauga, he stands as one of the prominent figures of the scene; I might say, without disparagement to others, the most prominent. Amid the wildest scenes of carnage, the severest trials and most critical moments, cool, collected and decisive, he wore the same calm and deliberate countenance as when sitting by the evening camp-fire.

During the severe conflicts of the 19th of September, when Bragg attempted to throw an overwhelming force between Rosecrans and Chattanooga, Thomas was the strategic point, and his firmness and fortitude were the means under God by which we that prevented the accomplishment of this design. All the efforts of the enemy to dislodge him were in vain. And on the morning of the 20th, when the army was again attempted, with increased energy and fury, it was again thrown back. "For Thomas and his veterans stood like a wall in the way;" and though wave after wave dashed against him, he stood immovable as the rock against the storms of the ocean. And when the Union right had given way before the innumerable force massed against it, and was falling back on Chattanooga, Thomas, surrounded by the rebels, was gallantly maintaining his position, little suspecting that soon he would have to confront the greater portion of Bragg's army. Having massed his artillery on the side of Missionary Ridge, where he had left it, battle sweeping round him in all its fury, he withdrew thither from his breastworks and concentrated his forces for the onset. Soon the storm burst upon him; the flower of the rebel hosts, flushed with the prospect of victory, was repeatedly hurled against him, but as often recoiled before the terrific fire of his veteran band. Assault after assault was repelled, and he was left master of the situation and closer of the contest. He lost no position he undertook to hold, but remained victor wherever he planted his banner.

Shall I stop and attempt to describe that soul-inspiring scene at Missionary Ridge, where, inspired by the spirit of their leader, his forces, sweeping the enemy before them, like chaff before the wind? I would, but my powers of description would prepare but a tame picture to those who were eye witnesses to the sight.

When the army swung loose from its moorings at Atlanta, to sweep across the plains of Georgia, Thomas was left behind to be placed under command of General Thomas to hold in check the enemy in Tennessee. And here, in some respects, was perhaps the most trying position he had to occupy. Greatly tried but on Nashville to prevent the enemy from cutting off his communications, concentrating his forces and strengthening his cavalry arm, his delay and apparent inaction was misunderstood and he was interrogated. The news of Hood's rapid and persistent advance into Tennessee, and apparently no strong effort on the part of Thomas to check him, was a riddle for a time even at the headquarters of the army. Sensitive to every insinuation against his honor or his integrity, as one of his nature must ever be, it required all his self control to keep his own counsel. But he was equal to the task, and moved steadily onward, perfecting his plans, he waited patiently the moment at which to strike the decisive blow. When it arrived it came like a thunderbolt upon the enemy.

Hood's army, shattered and broken, was scattered to the four winds, never to be again reorganized.

This cleared away effectually the cloud which for a moment had obscured his fame, and his star shone forth with increased splendor.

It was not long after this until victory crowned our arms in the East, and the rebellion ended. He had entered the struggle at the very commencement, and had done his duty nobly throughout in every position assigned him; universally honored and esteemed by officers and privates, he had acquired the title of "Father Thomas," in many a campaign, "Pap Thomas," by which he was familiarly known to the day of his death, at which time he was in command of the division of the Pacific.

His exterior was a type of the internal man; the casket was molded in symmetry with the jewel. Majestic in appearance, noble in bearing, and manly in his proportions, each lineament was well and fully developed, and perfect in contour. His movements were easy and graceful, and although strict to the letter in his apparel and bearing as an officer, yet courteous and kind to all around, from the highest to the lowest. He carried with him a dignity that his superiors in position respected and his equals emulated, yet the subaltern officer or private soldier felt no hesitancy in approaching him, for each felt that in his presence they were safe to find a friend ready to lend a listening ear.

Yet with all this he was modest and unassuming, avoiding all unnecessary display and never assuming the haughty demeanor of independence which caused him invariably to refuse any material tokens of public esteem. Fame sought him and honored him, not because he had struggled to gain her favors, but because in the performance of his duty he had won them. The chaplet was more honored by resting upon his noble brow, than the brow by being encircled by the chaplet. Devoted singly to his profession, he permitt no higher ambition than faithfully and worthily to perform the duties of that station in life into which his country had called him. This being done, he asked no other meed or praise than the simple recognition of the fact. With him this was esteemed of far greater worth than all the gaudy tinsel with which fulsome praise could deck his name.

His social qualities strictly conformed to the rest of his being. Although not possessed of that peculiar phase of intellect which develops itself to a vast extent in some single thing, astonishing the world, yet he sank to mediocrity in none. He brought no peculiar trait into stronger relief than another, but blended them all into one harmonious whole. If there was any exception to this, any feature that predominated over others, it was the power of his will, especially its power over himself—self-control. And this, united with his uniform urbanity, was doubtless the secret of that facility with which he acquired control over the troops under his command, who seemed to obey, not more because duty compelled them, than because they loved to execute the orders of their general. It was the secret of that power he possessed of infusing into his men his own indomitable and deliberate courage that won him the sobriquet of the "Rock of Chickamauga."

Intellectually he was peculiarly fitted for military life; the very harmony of his nature (legal system) and possessing strong comprehensive powers, he readily grasped the points of his situation, and deliberate judgment concentrated the advantages and matured his plans, and energy executed them.

His heart, was that of a giant, and swelled and palpitated with none but the noblest impulses. Sincere in all his words, his unreserved frankness and evident truthfulness in all his reports and communications extorted admiration even from those who love to assure. Strict conscientiousness and punctual fidelity marked all his actions. "Not taint of sordid selfishness, no miserable captious, no stain of dishonor, ever soiled his fair escutcheon." His name will go down to posterity without a blot upon his character as a soldier, a patriot, or a gentleman.

Envy and jealousy will seek in vain for a flaw or defect upon which to hang a doubt or fix a criticism.

With his private life I was personally but little acquainted, yet with such a noble soul, kind disposition, and warm affection, his little family circle must have been truly a happy one. And she who has been deprived of that strong arm, on which she leaned with trusting confidence, has truly lost the sunlight of her life. We, as comrades with him in arms, feel keenly the weight of this blow. A thrill of sorrow and pang of grief ran through every soldier's breast when the lightning messenger flashed the news across the continent to us that Gen. Thomas was dead. Yes, even the nation felt the gloomy thrill through all its members. But oh! how much keener the pang of grief that pierced that heart whose every tendril had wound itself around the soul of her heroic husband. May He who rules the destinies of all, who holds the nations and holds the universe in His hands, pour the balm of consolation into her wounded spirit.

Let us pause for a moment, that we as a people may contemplate the full extent of our loss. Soldiers and comrades:

"Bethink ye of the day
When to the field the hero led the way;
In all the pride of manhood's noblest prime,
Illumed by memory, and matured by time;
Glad, active, vigorous—who, in age or at rest?
How he gazed round him with his eagle eye,
Leaps the dark rocks that frowned against each,
Grasped the bright sword and entered the passing
sleed,
(Whose nerves all quivered with his heading
speed)
As his military of danger smiled in scorn,
And rushed to battle at break of the morn."

But alas!

"Low lies the hero now, whose spoken name
Could fire with glory—with mute infamy
Low lies the arm of might, the form of pride,
While comrades and are weeping by his side."

He is gone! the hero of many a hard-fought battle has laid down his armor and retires to take them up no more; his furlough is one for eternity. With him the battle for universal freedom and the battle of life closed almost simultaneously. He fought both nobly, and can I believe he entered upon eternity, when the messenger came swiftly, suddenly, and unexpectedly, and he was summoned to enter the dark valley without a moment's warning. Yet, I trust and believe, not unprepared, never taken by surprise in martial strife, we have every reason to believe he was equally prepared in the battle of life.

He is gone! Grief sits visibly on every soldier's brow, and pervades the inmost heart of the nation. His noble form lies low, ready to be committed to its kindred dust. Earth never received into her bosom a mailier form or a nobler breast. The halo of his deeds and the brilliancy of his achievements may almost be said to illumine the grave into which his body descends, and that the fragrance of his acts of kindness perfume the sepulchre.

He has gone to his rest, but he will live from our hearts and our memory; there his name must live on, embalmed by our love and garlanded with our affections, growing brighter and brighter as time rolls on. The cold marble often bears to posterity a false epitaph, but for the letters chiseled on the icy slab, it cannot be so with the name of General George Henry Thomas; it is chiseled on the tablets of two nations, and has added the aid of marble or bronze to perpetuate it.

"As a soldier, a gentleman, a patriot, a man, his memory will go down to future generations, emblazoned upon the pages of history, pregnant with a lesson and a warning, consolation to those who shall in the future lead armies to battle, not alone in this republic, but throughout the civilized world."

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking!
Dream of battlefields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.

In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands are on the coach are a-weaving,
Fairy scenes of music fall,
Where you lie, a stately sleeper dewing.

Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking,
Morn's toil, nor night's of waking.

At the close of General Logan's address, he was honored with enthusiastic applause.

General Schenck then said they would be gratified to hear from other speakers; and that I would especially extend this invitation to the distinguished gentleman who served his country well during the late war, and who is now attached to the executive Department which has so recently lost one of its best officers, I mean our honored Secretary of War.

Warm applause which greeted General Belknap's advance had subsided, he addressed the audience as follows:

**Remarks of General Belknap.**

Within the past week the soldiers who served with one of their most honored comrades, and the civilians who, knowing him by reputation, have always respected his name, have met to do homage to the memory of the dead, and you, his companions on many a hard fought field, reverencing the memory of a commander whom to know was to love. We meet to-night to cast our tribute of affectionate regard upon the grave of George H. Thomas.

Actual hostilities ceased, and he came home with death as it came to the soldier amid the havoc of battle; you have seen it in the field hospital, when the hands of the loved ones were there to smooth the dying pillow, and when the tender words of affection were not heard to cheer his departing spirit. You have met it on the field where shot and shell screamed out the only requiem for the dying hero, and the sacrifice seemed all the more as it gave no moment for regretful remembrance. But intervening years have made you forgetful of the terrible realities of the field; and now when death comes to the veteran, not amid the dangers and alarms of numberless conflicts, the lip will tremble and the expression of manly regret will tell of the sorrow of the parting. Not a true heart in this land failed to heat more quickly when the telegraph wires told the sad message of the sudden death of General George H. Thomas.

Those who served with him in council, where on the decision of the moment hung the fate of the country, remember his sagacity and his solid worth. Those who had been with him on the field of battle, where musketry crashed and the awful destruction of war was in riot, remember the imperturbable bravery of this iron man as he stood amid the contending armies, and never by any seeming appearance of a perturbation expressed a doubt of the result. Those who had been companions of his camp-fire, where his soldiers loved him for his unassuming manners, and kept in reverence and love him, and kept when they recalled his genial presence and the words of him whose hardest words were ever kindly spoken.

The men of his command, now scattered in all callings everywhere—those men who carried the musket and bore the heat and burden of the day; the men upon whose support he invariably rely, who knew his voice in council, and the sound of whose voices pelting the hurrahs and then went into action, was music to his ears. They gave to his memory the testimony of their reverential love; they told of his kindness, his generosity, his wonderful patience, his plodding, persistent energy, and his fatherly care of his troops, and among all who lament the suddenness of his departure, none will gather around his grave with more sincere sorrow and sacred grief than the private soldiers who have no word for him but that of the most affectionate remembrance.

Those, too, who never knew him in military life, but who read of his exploits and heard recounted the stories of his grand career, unite with his brothers to arms in honoring his memory and with them in doing homage to his name. The gatherings of public men at the dedication of the grounds which Thomas fought to save, and the meetings occurring in all parts of the land, most truly attest that our loss is one whose magnitude is beyond ordinary grief. Four years ago Gen. Thomas, happening in the Capitol, was called into the hall, and in eloquent and fitting words from the Speaker introduced to Congress. Cheer after cheer arose from the members and galleries in honor of the hero whom all delighted to receive with their most earnest exhilarations.

He acknowledged the compliment, and modestly expressed his grateful thanks. As I looked on his manly form and listened to his willingly added my voice to the shouts of those who welcomed the coming of this heroic soldier, as an American citizen I rejoice that our country has among its sons one who brought from the field so many of the attributes of strength and power and modesty and heroic virtue, which history tells us adorned the person and increased the fame of Washington.

Like Washington, he was firm and decorous—like him he was dignified and decided—like him he gave his time and talents to his country, modestly doing his duty and asking no reward beyond that given him by the consciousness of right and the satisfaction of unselfish motives.

Pure minded as a child and tender hearted as a woman, firm as the everlasting hills, rigidly faithful to his devotion to duty, earnest in action, yet merciful in victory; among those happy influences which cluster around the fireside and add to the pleasure of social companionship, contact with our hero warmed into life the kindly feelings of his heart. Intentions of his manly heart he offered to all a welcome so purely cordial that all felt the cheerful influence of his courteous presence and felt that darling was he as an accomplished soldier among the more quiet scenes of genial life. He was the faithful friend everywhere and always he was the noble gentleman. Eulogy can never say too much for him. No words can reveal and express can be made too beautiful to surround his brow. Living, he won the affections of the people of the nation; dead, he commanded their willing and devoted homage.

The teachers we hope will hereafter to the youth of the land the patriotic singles of the Republic's Heroes, will point to his life as full of examples of that strong patriotism which guided him as it did the Fathers of the land to final victory. And the record of his life will be looked to for illustrations of many virtues long after the last actor in the war has gone from earth.

Repeated calls were made for Vice President Colfax, who responded amid cheers and was greeted with marked applause from all parts of the hall.

**Remarks of the Vice President.**

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: When my friend, the gentleman who is presiding, spoke to me this evening and asked me if I would say a few words of respect in unison with that of the soldiers and citizens who had assembled, I thought it unfair that one who had been only in civil life should say anything on this occasion. But I cannot reasonably refuse to respond to your call and speak a few words, and they shall be very few.

While I was listening to the analysis of the character of the model soldier, by one who distinguished himself in battle in that eventful and unhappy war, I knew that the words he uttered came from his heart, and they were spoken with such beauty, force and clearness that I did not believe that another word could be added in honor of that great soldier, who, living, needed no praise, and dead, no eulogy, however eloquent, could fittingly bespeak his great worth.

Of all those who have passed from among us there is but one my memory can call to mind over whose bier tears have been so freely shed as over the remains of General George H. Thomas, and that was our martyred President, who fell by the hand of the assassin in this very city. Both will live hereafter in history, side by side, and if it were left to the nation to group together the statues of the greatest men, side by side would be found those of Abraham Lincoln and George H. Thomas.

Need I add a word in praise of that great soldier whose life was delineated by his comrade in arms. I knew but very little of General Thomas personally, but I remember the scene alluded to by the speaker when he preceded me. I remember when General Thomas came to the Hall of the House of Representatives and was so enthusiastically greeted, and as presiding officer, on the motion of General Schenck, I was called on to introduce him to the body. I did so, and when General Thomas advanced he was greeted with tumultuous applause; and when that brave General gave me his hand it shook like an aspen leaf. He could stand the shock of battle, but not the applause of his fellow men.

I remember, while returning from California, it was my privilege to cross the Sierra Nevada in company with Gen. Thomas. Passing from the West to the East I conversed with him upon some of the great events of the war, but he would never let me speak of himself or any of the battles in which he was prominently engaged. I asked him if, at any time, he had any doubt of the success of the Union forces. He answered: No, sir, never. I believed we were right, and if we were right God would be on our side; that He would bless our efforts and give us the victory at last.

Modest as a woman, he had the courage of Richard of the Lion Heart. He was wonderfully endowed with energy equal to every emergency, no matter what the peril; calm, active, vigorous—who, in any at rest! How he gazed round him with his eagle eye, leaps the dark rocks that frowned against each, Grasped the bright sword and entered the passing sleed.

"Low lies the hero now, whose spoken name
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He is gone! the hero of many a hard-fought battle has laid down his armor and retires to take them up no more; his furlough is one for eternity. With him the battle for universal freedom and the battle of life closed almost simultaneously. He fought both nobly, and can I believe he entered upon eternity, when the messenger came swiftly, suddenly, and unexpectedly, and he was summoned to enter the dark valley without a moment's warning. Yet, I trust and believe, not unprepared, never taken by surprise in martial strife, we have every reason to believe he was equally prepared in the battle of life.

He is gone! Grief sits visibly on every soldier's brow, and pervades the inmost heart of the nation. His noble form lies low, ready to be committed to its kindred dust. Earth never received into her bosom a mailier form or a nobler breast. The halo of his deeds and the brilliancy of his achievements may almost be said to illumine the grave into which his body descends, and that the fragrance of his acts of kindness perfume the sepulchre.

He has gone to his rest, but he will live from our hearts and our memory; there his name must live on, embalmed by our love and garlanded with our affections, growing brighter and brighter as time rolls on. The cold marble often bears to posterity a false epitaph, but for the letters chiseled on the icy slab, it cannot be so with the name of General George Henry Thomas; it is chiseled on the tablets of two nations, and has added the aid of marble or bronze to perpetuate it.

"As a soldier, a gentleman, a patriot, a man, his memory will go down to future generations, emblazoned upon the pages of history, pregnant with a lesson and a warning, consolation to those who shall in the future lead armies to battle, not alone in this republic, but throughout the civilized world."

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking!
Dream of battlefields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.

In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands are on the coach are a-weaving,
Fairy scenes of music fall,
Where you lie, a stately sleeper dewing.

Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking,
Morn's toil, nor night's of waking.

**Remarks of Secretary Cox.**

Mr. Chairman, as I took part in a similar meeting last evening, I thought perhaps I might be excused from speaking to-day, and excuses to-night. If I could say anything that would be interesting or acceptable to you, it would perhaps be in presenting the man himself. To speak of him as we used to see him and know him.

There are a great many present, doubtless, who knew him, and there may be many who never saw General Thomas, and for such the question is one of interest. How he looked? How does a truly great man look? How does a truly great man act? That, I say, is a natural question for all of us to ask. When we hear of a man renowned for remarkable traits of character, one who has distinguished himself in a commendable manner, and he comes into our midst, we all like to go and see him, to learn how he looks, to judge for ourselves whether the ideal compares with the reality.

General Thomas was a model man—not only in word, act and character, but in his person. He appeared to be a man that was made to do great deeds. He possessed a physical form that towered above all others; yet, apparently there was no waste of material. In his youth he was a heavy, lumbering, bulky person, and him for the labor of an athlete. But in all this there was no pride of strength, and a total unconsciousness that he was qualified for doing anything that required great physical force.

Let me call your attention to one or two incidents which came under my personal observation, which will give you some insight into his character. The number of blood-stained days of Rosecrans, in northern Georgia. Our army lay on two sides of a small stream called Camp creek. Before us were the lines of the enemy, lying on the heights commanding our position, and the lines of the enemy were visible from every part of the valley below, and Gen. Thomas, who commanded all the troops composing the left, under Gen. Sherman, sat quietly waiting for the troops to get into position.

Presently the staff officers reported that some brigades which had been assigned to a certain position, which for some reason had been delayed, had not come up, and were not ready for further commands. With all the quietness that any of you would turn aside to make an ordinary remark, and I am sure with less emotion than I am now speaking, Gen. Thomas said, "The line may advance." There was no flashing of swords, no waving of plumes, no standing in stirrups, in fact nothing that makes war dramatic, but there was something that inspired us that the lines would advance until something broke.

I saw him again one day where everything seemed to surround us with difficulties, where one obstacle was only surrounded to find another, and where our troops apparently lost their mountable, and where every advance involved us in a maze of complication, from which it seemed almost impossible to extricate our army. To the front of us were the serried lines, of the rebel hosts, entrenched behind earthworks and timbers. It became necessary to see what was to be done before a forward movement was made—a time for reconnoitering rather than action. In a word, it was a time when the judgment and wisdom of the commander was of vital importance. It was necessary to scan the enemies lines, to scan the weak points to ascertain whether the projected movements of Generals Sherman on his left could be made to turn the rebel lines, or only stumps of fallen trees, or piles of dead leaves. In a word, it was a time when knowledge was most necessary.

A number of officers were with General Thomas on the summit of Orchard Knob church. The hill where they were was covered with woods, while immediately in front were rolling hills, which were cleared, on which no one could hide. Again, in that same quiet way, like the act of some sturdy person going forth, he gave the order to the officers with him to remain under cover of the trees, while General Thomas walked quietly into the open space, and, with field glass in hand, deliberately began to examine the position held by the enemy.

It was but a moment before we heard the whiz of the bullet of the sharpshooters, and it is useless for me to say that those who were watching fell very uneasy for fear some shot might prove fatal. But still he went on with the examination, I could not say with indifference but rather I should say as one ignorant that there could be any danger in the discharge of his duty. He walked back as quietly as he left, and on returning there was no flush to indicate that he was aware that his life had been imperilled.

I saw him again at the close of the war at the decisive battle of Nashville. One day's fighting had gone on, some advantages had been gained, but nothing to show for it. The next morning we rose rather for choice of position. Our lines had been extended, and the army was ready to move at the command of its general. General Thomas had been along the whole line for the purpose of making observations.

The difficulties of the situation in which he was placed can perhaps be understood when to the opposing forces may be added the feelings of the loyal people, represented by the telegraphic correspondence which had been going on for several days. We can all remember the anxiety that was felt for fear that there would march by Nashville and outflank the army of Thomas, and what steps had been taken to supersede him in his command. You can judge what must have been the feelings of his sensitive nature when he knew that the nation was impatient at his delay.

Without anything to indicate the conflict in his mind he quietly rode down to where General Schofield was in command, and seeing the centre was in place, he knew the different troops were ready, and again said, "You may advance General."

Here was a man to whom the country was looking with almost breathless anxiety to see whether their confidence was to be sustained and the movements of General Sherman in his march to the sea protected. Through all these trials General Thomas was thinking of but one thing, and that was how the opposing forces could be broken, how Hood's army could be beaten. Again the order was given, and a great army rushed to victory.

There were some men capable of rousing to enthusiasm their troops. Some who possessed the dash of a Murat or a Ney, and we have had those among our generals who could rival them. No one who wears the uniform will disparage them for this. Glory to them for it, and when their time comes they shall have their meed of praise but for them. Thomas we glory that he went, like a bomb shell, crushing through everything, unconscious of its own weight.

**General Thayer's Remarks.**

Mr. Chairman. It is the only duty of a soldier to be prepared to respond to every call, but it was not until this very moment that I expected I should be called upon for remarks, and I am wholly unprepared to address you, but I will unite with you in paying this last tribute of respect over the mortal remains of Gen. George H. Thomas.

He lives no longer on earth. His life has ceased. No longer is he numbered with the national officers of our army. No longer will his marshal battalions in battle array. No longer will he unite with the Grand Army of the Republic in celebrating their victories. He has gone to Heaven, and his spirit is numbered among the celestial host. But he has left us his name and his fame that will become immortal. He has left a name that will ever be a precious legacy to the patriots of the country. Thus honored be the name of the great hero, George H. Thomas.

**Remarks of Hon. Horace Maynard.**

I feel a degree of embarrassment in being called upon at this time and to this order of succession to speak of one whom I have no right to speak, save that which every citizen has, to add his humble tribute to the memory of a friend. It so happened that I was thrown much into the society of General Thomas from an early day in his war career. I feel that it is much that is interesting that ought to be narrated, but I will forbear trespassing upon your patience at this time.

I cite but a few incidents that came under my observation.

At the time when the citizens of East Tennessee, on account of their loyalty, were compelled to seek refuge in the State of Kentucky, leaving there to find a flag under which they could rally in the service of their country, they found they had no one to marshal their ranks. The name of General Robert Anderson, who had commanded Fort Sumter, and a Kentuckian by birth, was suggested, and it was thought he was the one most suitable to organize them into a command.

I came to this city in their behalf, and applied to him to see if he would take the command. The pleas of ill-health first urged was overruled. Finally he said, "If my personal presence among them, or anything that can be done in my name, will aid them, I am ready to do it but I must have the men to sustain me in that command, and on no other condition will I assume the responsibility."

I stated to the President what he had said, and he made the proper conditions.

General Anderson said, for my second in command I must have General W. T. Sherman, who is the best officer I know; I must have General Burnside, who has scarcely a second in the service. Then there is a Colonel of Cavalry in Shenandoah Valley inferior to neither. I refer, he said, to Col. Thomas, and it was in this way that the latter was sent to Kentucky as a brigadier General of Volunteers. He was first stationed at Camp Dick Robinson, and served in that section to the close of the war.

Reference has been made to the battle of Nashville as the finishing campaign in the West. When the movement was made by which Sherman marched to the sea, Gen. Thomas remained, with orders to oppose the advance of Hood's army, who was marching northward to the Tennessee.

At that time General Thomas had scarcely 2,000 effective men to resist his march. Getting together as best he could the material at his command, he met Hood, and, as you have fought the battle of Nashville, by which our lines were preserved, and which sent an elec tric glow all over the land.

It was in Nashville at that time in a civil capacity, that I was intimately associated with the march and around the family altar.

The introduction of this resolution caused some merriment. The motion to refer to a special committee was lost, and it was finally adopted unanimously.

Dr. Purvis obtained the floor and said he wanted but one Republican party, and he wanted it to go forth from this meeting that we do not want distinct organizations. He did not want Irish or Dutch or Black Republican clubs. He wanted all to come in with us. (Applause.) He did not find fault with Irishmen because they had been democrats and had been the deadly enemy of the negro.

If they were true Republicans now, he wanted them to come in and help on the great work of progress. If they did not, if separate nationalities will not come in with us they are hypocrites. All Irishmen who claim now to be Republicans, a year ago voted against me. Voices, "That's my case." The Irish Republican clubs. They are seeking to take the bread out of your mouths. (Applause.) Let them come in with us. I hold that an Irishman is as good as a black man.

A voice. Not quite. (Laughter.)

If they are really with us, let them come with us and go round among the hovels, and get out men for the registration. He offered the following:

*Resolved*, That this club does not countenance any separate Republican organization.

Adopted.

Major Morse being called for spoke at some length in favor of the mixed school question. His remarks on this subject were received with great applause. He further said efforts were made to sow dissensions in the party which it might be feared. The Baltimore and Ohio railroad was scattering money over the city to defeat the Republican party.

The meeting then adjourned to hold a mass meeting in Washington city on the evening for the celebration in honor of the passage of the fifteenth amendment.

Thomas W. Chase was chosen chief marshal, Robert Brooks and John Barker assistants.

The five delegates selected to join in the central convention to prepare for the celebration were: James A. Nelson, Thomas Chase, Jos. Brooks, Henry Beuerly, and Washington Waller.

## THE IRISH REPUBLICANS.

*Meeting of the Bowen Wing of the First and Second Wards—A Difference of Opinion—Denunciation of the Irish Republican Executive Committee—The Wills' Hall Irish Republicans Repudiated—Colored Irish Republicans—Commission er Hinter Defends the Mayor and says he