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## THE VETERANS

THE time is almost here when the veterans will begin to arrive. Think where they will come from. They will be here from Wilson Creek, and some of them will tell how General Lyon on that day led, time after time, those raw Iowa volunteers against a superior force, until, under the storm of war, he went down to death, one of the earliest and grandest sacrifices of the war, for had he lived, it might have been he who would have piloted the armies to victory.

They will be here from Shiloh, to tell of that first heart-breaking day when, taken by surprise, they were rolled back in confusion, notwithstanding that Grant tried to stem the red current, and Sherman, bearing a charmed life, was everywhere trying to stem the cyclone. And then the night came, and with it Buell, and the next day defeat was changed to victory.

They will be here from Stone River, and will tell of that tremendous day, on the night of which Sheridan rode up to Rosecrans, and, saluting, said: "Here are what are left of us. I lost some guns, but did not leave until every horse was killed and all the men save these."

They will be here from Chickamauga, and will tell you how, on that day, the great-souled Thomas earned the title, "The Rock of Chickamauga."

They will be here from Chattanooga, and will tell of that all day's battle until at nightfall everything from Lookout Mountain to Missionary Ridge was carried and the enemy was in full retreat.

They will tell of Vicksburg and their months of waiting without hope, until the sovereign genius of Grant drew a cordon 'round the place that could not be broken.

They will tell of Malvern Hill, with the spires of Richmond in view, and how the way seemed open to them to victory could a Kearney have been in command.

They will tell of Fredericksburg and its gloomy ending.

They will tell of Antietam, how they fought in detachments all day and permitted the enemy to escape at night.

They will tell of Chancellorsville, how the day opened auspiciously; but how, by two or three laches, the advantage was lost, and what should have been a victory was a defeat.

They will tell of Gettysburg, that glory of glories, how, for three days, the awful battle was waged, what prodigies of valor were performed; how, at the opening, Reynolds went down to death; how Howard held at bay the swelling hosts that came against him, until at dusk, Hancock arrived; how the second day the brunt of the war was upon Sickles; of the opening great artillery duel on the third day, and then the charge of Pickett, until he was rolled back and a new splendor came to the flag.

They will tell of the Wilderness and its days and days of battle, but of the steady pressing on until Richmond was environed.

They will tell how Sherman captured Atlanta and then of his march to the sea.

They will tell how Sheridan swept the Shenandoah valley and crowned his career at Cedar Creek.

They will tell how Schofield fought at Franklin, and how the imperturbable Thomas, at Nashville, would not move until ready, but that when he did set his army in array there, it was annihilation for the enemy.

They will tell of the great "River Fight;" the matchless fight at Mobile Bay; the fateful fight in Hampton Roads; and the finish of the Alabama off Cherbourg by the Kearsarge. Right here some veteran will bid his comrades remember that at Mobile the great Farragut made Salamis and Actium read like skirmishes, and inscribed his name in letters of gold upon the immortal heights beside the names of Howard and Drake, of John of Austria, and the invincible Nelson. The methods of sea fighting had changed and become more terrible, but Farragut was equal to the change, and amid torpedos, roaring forts, and a hostile fleet, he rode the awful storm in triumph, and, lashed against the futtock-shrouds caused the old legend of Castor and Pollux to materialize:

"Safe comes the ship to haven through billows and through gales,  
If once the Great Twin Brethren sit shining on the sails."

Then the final great battle of Five Forks and the closing scene at Appomattox.

And all the glorified names will be called over lovingly, those who, like Lyon, and McPherson, and Sedgwick, and Reynolds, and Kearney went down to death, and those who survived, but who since, all save Miles and Howard and Sickles, have passed on.

And maybe some ex-Confederate veteran will be with the Boys in Blue, still wearing his Gray, but with good-will coming to the camp-fire, and he may say: "I do not hear you talking much about either the first or second Manassas; why not make a little note of them?"

"Why not say that you won at Shiloh because our great soldier, Albert Sidney Johnston, was killed early the first day?"

"That at Chancellorsville, we in victory lost more than you did in defeat, for there our right arm was broken when our Stone-wall Jackson received his final call."

Then the answer will be that only a few of the punctuation points of the war are named above.

That they might have included Fort Henry, Fort Donnellson, Belmont, Champion Hills, Perryville, Corinth, Baton Rouge, Peach Tree, all the battles before Atlanta, Winchester, the superb campaigns in Western Virginia, and Missouri, the long bombardment of Sumter, the storming of Fort Fisher, the seven days' fight back from before Richmond, Gain's Mills, and a hundred more.

And the story covers with splendor the men we fought against, for what we won shows what the awful cost was.

Then some maimed veteran may stand up and say: "After all, Union and Confederate soldiers alike, were but creatures of fate.