


My Fellow Countrymen, Comrades and Friends:-

Vermillion County here pours forth from all her homes her
people old and new. the living and loving,
We arise, [^] encircled close at hand by the
soldier dead; raising our eyes we see where marbles gleaming through
the trees mark the resting places of others, and far beyond vision,
we know where throughout her prairies and woods, the old County guards
many more of the sleepers in whose honor to-day she unveils this
solemn shaft of granite and of bronze.

Most fitting is this day for the grand rites we perform.

In the American calendar it is the day of days - the day of the

 and the people and it yet will be the Sabbath of the whole
people of the world. For its dawning, humanity waited through the cen-
turies. On it, one hundred and twenty-five years ago, were promulga-
ted the great truths of man's rights in government. To maintain ar
advance those truths we have waged wars and concluded peace, and

have our efforts prospered that the little fire the fathers set alight in an obscure room in a quiet town in Pennsylvania, on obscure altars, has enkindled the torch of Liberty in whose superb radiance the world to-day is marching on. Those truths the Fathers pledged with life and fortune and sacred honor, now are the universal creed, as acknowledged as the tides or the courses of the seasons.

Those who sleep here, and their comrades, in their time gave their years and their blood, to make those truths triumphant; and well may Honor pause to say, "These are my beloved". Well may the country lay her choicest laurels on these ranked graves. Well may we all here join in true and loving and exalted tribute.

All that we shall say in behalf of these sleepers, and the cause for which they died, will be without bitterness for those whom they faced; for the conflict in which they engaged was inevitable. It had come on through the ages. It was a portion of that eternal strife between right and wrong, which has ever been in progress and which will continue until this earth shall become a new

earth and the heavens above us a new heaven. It was a section of that gigantic , long enduring struggle in which feudalism had perished, form after form of oppression had passed away to be succeeded by others;and where, at last, slavery grappled with liberty. There was but one right side in the ensuing contest. Through all the four years. from 1861, Right was arrayed against Wrong,

Slavery against Freedom. These final antagonists had threatened each other over the cradle of the Union in its infancy, had postponed their strifes through the fourscore intervening years, until in the fullness of time,the hour came when compromise was no longer possible and war alone could settle issues as old as the Republic.

In vain,in that hour did Peace plead; in vain,did statesmen offer their measures of conciliation; in vain,were the prayers of age and the sorrows of patriots; in vain,appeals to a common ancestry, a common country, a common heritage. Slavery raised the cup of

delusions to its lips and toasted the sword! Drunk with its own
excesses, blind to all but its own purposes, relying on the
strength of its selfish interests, believing that with its wealth and
its diplomacy it could purchase or cajole the support of all organized
Europe, disdaining labor as^a a curse, avowing that mastership and manhood
were one and the same, slavery compelled the conflict - Slavery
defeated in public discussion, condemned at the bar of justice,
while its garments were red and its lash dripping with the blood of
the weak^{dared} to invoke combat with freedom and the final judgment of
arms - and some there were who knew that it was an appeal to the
just judgment of Almighty God; that which they wrote upon their flags,
which they proclaimed to the world, which they declared by solemn
ordinances to be the issue of war was their right to destroy the
Union and back of that, their purpose to establish a government whose
corner stone should be human slavery.

The issue thus made and thus tendered was accepted by the

nation and its loyal sons; and these were bounded by no geographical lines and held within no Sectional divisions. They were North and South and East and West.

"Yes, and there were loyal men who wept with joyful tears

When they saw the honored flag they had not seen for years."

And to these wherever situated, the call of the Country was like the voice of God; and nowhere in all this land was there a warmer or deeper response than came from the midst of this honored county. As one present with them in the hour of their uprising, and when those that sleep here were burning with the high enthusiasms of their cause, it is mine to say of them, that they battled not for fame and not for honor and not for gain and not for material reward; but their sole majestic purpose was that the Union should be preserved. To them it was the most sacred thing of earthly existence; it was the union of the fathers. Wide scattered over its broad territories

were the cradles and the graves of our generations. They believed that the Almighty had made this a place for carrying on the last and mightiest experiment of self-government; they believed that here was man's best hope, his highest opportunities; that here there was no bound to just exertions but the limits of natural power; that here was prepared a place where the greatest happiness came to all, the least of misery and discontent to the few; that here was the place where the poor boy had the open field before him; that here was the place where the poor mother could rear her sons to highest destinies; that here was the place where the poor father might hope that from his ashes would rise a race of lovers of liberty, the honored of mankind. They believed that this great land was and reserved specifically conformed_A for such purposes; that the great river, draining the heart of the continent and emptying into its embracing seas, marked but one land and never should be divided in its rolling majesty. They had heard their sires tell of Yorktown and Saratoga

and Trenton and Bunker Hill and the far away struggle on King's Mountain; they had learned to look up to where the figure of Washington towered in transcendent majesty among the great. They had listened to Lincoln and Douglass in the debate of the ages; they were a pioneer people and there dwelt amongst them veteran survivors of all our wars, who told the tales of their days to their children, how through war after war the people had won; how after each struggle and reverse, the flag had been still further advanced; they had learned the poetry of that flag and all its precious symbolism.

So from the prairie and the woodland, from the farm and the village, from arms of mothers and blessing hands of sires, and from the weeping faces of wives, they came trooping to uphold that Flag and its Government.

Oh, the pathos, the poetry, and the awful splendor of those succeeding four years of war! When battle thunders never ceased; when the voice of the bugle forever fell upon attentive ears; when the earth and the sea were red with the blood of the brave; when the

vast land was empalled with the mourning of the survivors; when wives and sweethearts and little children, wept for the unreturning brave; when the sword and the rattling gun devoured, and the noisome pestilence laid low its myriads, and the prisons gripped with terrors the uncomplaining patriots; when manhood, rising to its last awful endeavor, after two thousand fields of strife had been memorized by heroic deeds, at last lifted the flag of the Union above a united country and welcomed back Peace, while high into the heaven arose the battlements of the ^{rescued} ~~restored~~ Union, and round about its deep set walls stood on guard the living and the dead and all the American people yet to be.

I will not dwell on battle scenes, on march and triumphs. At the end God reigned in Heaven and the government was safe. But surely, my countrymen, we know now that no drop of blood, no tear that fell in that contest, was wasted. Thanks to Almighty God and his blessings upon the labors of these men and their comrades, we today enjoy a land of liberty, of education,

of religion, of power, and of peace; a land from which discordant elements being vanished, arises a more perfect Union, a greater citizenship, a wider destiny; a land wherein the great principles for which our race has contended prevail, and where well balanced purposes of liberty and law, of freedom and government, subserve each other and advance the rights of the citizen. My soul perceives its future grandeur, its extended purposes, its widened power, its regnant influences in the hearts and minds of men, compelling by its majesty and its purity the devotion and regard of the world, until at last a great republic, embracing all people, may be among the fruits of the preservation of the American Union.

Was it not worth while, my countrymen, to have lived and struggled and died to attain these great results? Then let no man come here with idle tears; heaven's sparkling showers long since have changed to rainbows over these grassy barrows and gone back to His hand who holds the treasures of the rain. Rather let us come

where our comrades sleep on beds of honor, with our heads uplifted, our eyes beaming, our hearts full of thanksgiving that these, being called to a great work, were strong in its doing; that hearing the voice of the Dear Mother land they sprang to her rescue; that recognizing their duty, they trod the high path of sacrifice; and that so they have come to be the best beloved; and so thinking as the years go by and we that linger join them, THE SOLDIERS' CIRCLE shall become not a place of lamentation, but holy ground to which youth shall resort with joy, and manhood with pride, and women with affection, while over and about them the ever burning flag shall be lifted, and the nation through happy tears and smiles shall rejoice in the shadowy presence of our comrades.

Thirty-eight years ago yesterday and volunteers from Vermilion were listening to the big guns that thundered at Vicksburg and watching the vast panorama at Gettysburg. Before and after that date they pierced the defiles of the Ozarks at Pea Ridge

and Prairie Grove. They stood with the great commander at Donaldson when he spoke the words of doom, they went with the great river to the sea; they fronted the alien, and held the borders of the Republic along the Rio Grande and saw the false eagles of a false empire wing their wild flight back to a dishonored throne; they died at Shiloh and Iuka; at Perryville and by dread Chickamaqua's river of death; they saw the flag outride the clouds at Lookout and charged the rocky heights of Mission Ridge; they marched with Sherman to the sea, and at awful Kenesaw poured the dread libation of blood. On sea and land in a myriad strifes they cheered with the long blue lines; they charged with the cavalry and they stood amidst the thunder of the guns; they died on the ocean and laid down in the long trenches on the land. The face of this monument would scarce contain the blazon of their battles.

How precious the names of the dead. Yonder I see the monument of Harmon and therethe stone that marks where Chandler

lies and near them are Abdill, and ^{Mann and} _A Bandy and Frazier, and Kingsbury and Fellows and farther away are Lee and Swannell and Kirkland.

Your hearts name a thousand more. Oh, these groves, while leaf waves to leaf, will be filled with the majestic shades of the heroic dead, those alike for whom the monumental marble rises and those whose names pass to gentle oblivion, kept only by the governmental marker.

To them all, this shaft arises, firm based in the deep bosom of the earth, its enduring granite lifting to the gaze of all, the sublime figure of the American Volunteer on duty.

I saw that figure molded. From the fiercest heats, the various blended material poured in one fiery torrent, into the mold, and then there was time for solidifying, and then the outer encumbrances were stripped off, and then the hammers smote the clinging sand and clay until at the last that which the little child's hand has just revealed, stood forth perfected.

I could not help but think how like in process was the development of the great original, for into the fiery crucible, seven times heated, America, Illinois, Vermilion, each cast freely of all her sons. They melted into the mass; they were poured by the hand of destiny into the matchless figure of the American Volunteer, distinct yet blended; many in one, the latest, ^{greatest} _A figure that time has framed. Whether we remember him as in the brave days of old or as we have later seen him in the seas of the East and the seas of the West, he is of knightly magnanimity; the woman and the child are safe under his sword; the blood spots on his uniform are not those of captives and non-combatants, but of heroic foemen fallen in heroic strife; he is all conquering; Abroad, the Islands own his prowess and the Seas bear his conquering keel; whether where wide jungles, tangle, or cities stretch their crowded ways, or mighty mountains uplift their palmy heads, there he rushes, he spreads the banner of glory to the breeze and ^{pointing to this} _A as to the uplifted brazen serpent

says, "look on this and live - be at peace and be free."

I am an American. For more than four years of my youth I was an American soldier. I may have had kindled in my breast then, too deep a reverence for the flag of the Union. I have known it carried to the farthest North and to the farthest South. I have known it spread over the ships that bore relief to starving mankind. I have seen it wave over a continent; carried through valleys; over broad plains; up to the tops of the mountains. I have seen it wave over processions of pleasure and lines of fighting men; in the lazy airs of peace and floating in the midst of awful battle. Women's sacrifices are offered to it, men die for it and freemen stand up before it; under it all chains are broken. Law and order rise beneath its folds; knowledge spreads her ensign by its side. It is always the sign of triumph - always the emblem of security - always the glorious flag of the free. Let it wave 'round the world, rainbowing the storms and beaming through the quiet airs, - the flag

of the country! Who shall dare to limit its dominion or circumscribe its radiance? If I have too highly prized it, may I die while the dear delusion rules my heart, my brain, my being!

And now this occasion, like the sun in heaven, climbs to the meridian and we will soon all go hence and leave this shaft to solitude and night. It may be that in a few generations, love and care will find so much of other occupation that this monument, fallen to the ground, will but cumber the sad earth and furnish the playthings for the little ones who, with curious hands, will part the grass about its ruins and with tiny fingers trace the brave words

The earth is full of such other monuments. engraven on its tablets. [^] But whatever may befall it in the physical world, its great lessons will survive to us and to our children, while Liberty abides and the Union endures. We leave it with the dead it commemorates and those, their comrades, who shall yet lie down beside them. We know that while sacrificial love kindles returning love; that while valor is admired and patriotism is honored these dead will not have died in vain.

Yet as I close, let me say a final word of those to whom we owe that which we have here dedicated. This is the work of long enduring, loving comradeship. Toiling on for years, two men more than all others, patiently wrought and saved for this purpose and this day - one, Edward C. Adbell, brave heart, true friend, unfaltering patriot, sleeps where the sentinel shadow cast from on high sweeps daily over his low green tent - the other, William R. Jewell, is with us still and views with proud and tender glance the crowning work of their joint labors. Long be their names cherished in the memories and records of this region. They loved their comrades, they wrought for their remembrance. Behold what they have done!