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TOWANDA:

Wednesday Morning, June 11, 1858.

Sketch of the Life and Public Services of GEN. LEWIS CASS.

General Cass was born at Exeter, in New Hampshire, on the 9th of October, 1782. His father, Nathaniel Cass, was a soldier of the revolutionary war, and was killed at the battle of the Clouds. He served in the army till the close of the war, and was in all the important battles of the eastern and middle States, where he was distinguished for his valor and good conduct, and attained the rank of captain. He was afterwards a major in Wayne's army, and died at an advanced age, a life of usefulness and honor, at his residence, near Dresden, in Muskingum county, Ohio. His son, Lewis Cass, the subject of this biography, came to the age of seventeen, to the then northwestern territory, and settled first at Marietta, in the county of Washington. He was thus, as he is usually called by the convention of Ohio, one of the "early pioneers" of that immense western territory, which has already risen to such a magnitude in our days, and is destined to attain one of the greatest hereafter. The country north of Ohio then contained one Territory and about twenty thousand people.

Mr. Cass bore his full share in the toils, privations and dangers, to which the absence of a new and happy abode of civilized man, are necessarily exposed. He read law at Marietta, and was admitted to the bar before the close of the territorial government. He commenced the practice, and, as was the custom then, visited the courts in a large district of country, travelling on horse-back, and encountering many difficulties unknown to the members of the bar at the present day.

In 1806, he was elected a member of the legislature of Ohio, and during the session he took his share of the business of the day. He draughted the act which authorized the designs of Burr, and addressed an address to Mr. Jefferson, which was unanimously adopted, expressing the attachment of the people of Ohio to the constitution of the United States, and their confidence in that illustrious man. In March, 1807, he was appointed, by Mr. Mason, marshal of Ohio. In the execution of duties of that office, and the business of his profession, and in the occupation of a farmer in Muskingum county, where he resided, he passed his time until 1812. Then difficulties with England assumed a portentous aspect. Her multiplied demands left us no recourse but war; and the sternness of the day prepared us with firmness.

As the preliminary arrangements, it was determined to march a considerable force to the northwestern frontier, to be ready for offensive or defensive measures, as circumstances might render it necessary. The command was given to General Hull, a veteran of regular troops, which had fought bravely at Tippecanoe, was assigned to him. He was to be aided by three regiments of Ohio militia. As soon as this demand upon their patriotism was known, the citizens of that State hastened to the call of their country, and the force was assembled without delay or difficulty. Mr. Cass was appointed a volunteer, and was elected to the command of the third regiment. He proceeded immediately with his regiment to Dayton, where the army encamped, and whence it commenced its march in the fall.

The country was a trackless forest, and much of it was low and swampy. Great difficulties were opposed to the advance of the troops by the streams and marshes, and by the necessity of cutting a road. But these were overcome with the usual good will and perseverance of the American soldier. The army reached Detroit on the 4th of July, 1812.

Official information that war would be declared, overtook them in the wilderness, and the declaration itself was not received until they reached Detroit. Mr. Cass was perhaps more urgent for an invasion of Canada than any officer in Hull's army. He was decidedly in favor of making an early and decisive movement, before the British could be prepared for the invasion. We conceive it to be no disparagement to any one to say that it was the master-spirit of that army until the affair at the Canards; after which, it is known, he disapproved of every step taken by the commanding general. There can be no doubt that Hull's army never would have entered Canada but for the persuasions of Col. Cass. So anxious was he to press forward and do something to meet the just expectations of the inhabitants of the country, that he commanded the advance detachment, and was the first man to land in arms in the enemy's country.

ed to the army than was the disgraceful surrender at Detroit without a shot being fired, overwhelming the country.

On entering Canada, Gen. Hull distributed a proclamation among the inhabitants, which, for the eloquence and high spirit that it contained, cannot be surpassed; but it was sadly in contrast with the fulfillment of its professions. Unfortunately for the country, the author of the proclamation, Col. Cass, was not the commander of the army. Had he been so, the country would have been saved the mortification of beholding the beseechment of the promised fulfillment. As it was, he used every exertion to arouse in the commanding general that spirit of patriotism which lathers every line of the admirable paper, but in vain. A spirit of infatuation, or something worse, seized upon Hull, and led him on from one false step to another, until the crowning act, the surrender of Detroit, without firing a gun, completed his own ruin, and brought disgrace upon the arms of his country. It is well known to the country that both Colonel Cass and Colonel M. Arthur were detached from Detroit previous to the surrender, ostensibly for provisions, but, in fact, because they were unwelcome counselors at headquarters. Stung with mortification on hearing of the surrender, Col. Cass, when ordered to deliver up his sword, indignantly severed it in pieces, and threw it to the earth, refusing to surrender it to the enemy.

After the surrender of Detroit, Col. Cass repaired to Washington, to report to the government the whole circumstances attending the expedition. He was exchanged during the winter and in the spring was appointed a brigadier general. Shortly after this, he joined Gen. Harrison at Seneca, where the army was collecting itself to recover the territory of Michigan, and to take possession of the western district of Upper Canada. The preparatory arrangements being completed, and the lake being open to the transportation of our troops by the victory of Perry, Gen. Harrison commenced his movement in September, 1813, and embarked his troops at the mouth of Portage river, whence they moved, and were concentrated at Put-in-bay.

From here they sailed to the Western Sister, a small island off the coast of Canada, where being all collected, the final arrangements were made. The detachment was superintended and directed by General Cass, of the army, and Captain Elliott of the navy; and the troops landed in perfect order, expecting to meet a formidable resistance. But the enemy had fled, after destroying the public buildings at Amherstburg and Detroit, and were in full retreat for Lake Ontario. The American army immediately commenced the pursuit, and after capturing two small detachments, which offered some resistance in favorable positions, overtook the enemy at the Moravian town on the river Thames, about eighty miles from Detroit. The British general, (Proctor) proved himself unequal to his command. Having some days the start, he designed to escape, he should have pushed his retreat as rapidly as possible. But he moved slowly, encumbered with much unnecessary baggage, and finding the American army closing upon him, he prepared for battle. The ground he chose was heavily covered with trees and his left rested upon the river Thames, while his right extended into the woods, terminating in a marsh. This flank was occupied by the Indians, who it was intended should turn the American left wing and attack the rear. The army moved so rapidly that many of its troops were left behind, a small portion only of Gen. Cass's command was in the battle; they were stationed immediately in front of the enemy's artillery, which commanded the road, with directions to charge upon it as soon as the action commenced. Gen. Cass volunteered his services, together with Commodore Perry, to assist Gen. Harrison and at the moment of the charge of Colonel Johnson's regiment, which decided the fate of the day, Gen. Cass took a position with the right wing of it, commanded by Lieut. Colonel Johnson, and accompanied it in its charge upon the British line. It was a dangerous experiment to charge a line of disciplined British soldiers by undisciplined mounted Americans; but valor applied the place of discipline; and notwithstanding the resistance, that brave regiment broke through the line, and instantly the enemy was thrown into confusion, and threw down their arms, happy to escape with their lives. The British general, Proctor, fled almost at the commencement of the action, and was pursued by Gen. Cass, with a detachment of some miles but could not be overtaken.

It is well known that in this important battle General Cass bore a prominent part, fully sharing in the exposure and dangers of the conflict. The battle of the Thames terminated the Northwestern campaign, and put an end to the war in that quarter, but not to the difficulties or importance of that command. The United States being once more in the possession of the Territory of Michigan, and of the province of Upper Canada, General Cass was assigned, temporarily, the command of the district, and Gen. Harrison withdrew with his army.

On the 9th of October, 1813, he was appointed by President Madison Governor of Michigan, at that time one of the most important civil offices within the gift of the Executive. He was the civil as well as military governor of a large territory, having many hundred miles of exposed frontier, filled and almost surrounded with numerous tribes of hostile Indians, in the pay of the British government, and constantly excited to acts of hostility by British agents.

As a proof of the defenceless state of the country, it may be mentioned, that incursions were made by the Indians, and some persons made prisoners, and others killed within sight of the town of Detroit, and three expeditions of mounted militia hastily collected, were led by Gov. Cass in pursuit of the Indians, and some of them were killed within hearing of the town. A single incident will show the nature of these incursions in the forests in pursuit of the Indians. Gen. Cass's servant, who rode immediately in his rear, had a personal encounter with an Indian, who

started from behind a tree, and having discharged his rifle, attacked him with the butt-end, and was killed after a short conflict.

But peace came to put an end to this state of things. The executive power of the Territory was almost unlimited, and the legislative power was in the hands of the governor and judges until 1819. That Governor Cass performed well his highly important and delicate duties, the whole body of the people of Michigan will bear us witness; and the fact of his having been seven times nominated by four successive Presidents, and seven times confirmed by the Senate, without a single vote against him in the body, or a single representation against him from the people over whom he presided—a state of things unexampled in the history of our territorial governments—is a sufficient proof of the wisdom of his administration.

In the discharge of his duties as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Governor Cass was called upon to enter into many negotiations with the Indian tribes, and often under circumstances of great peril and responsibility. He formed twenty-one treaties with them, and distinguished his title to nearly one hundred millions of acres of land—a vast domain acquired for the United States, but upon terms so just and satisfactory to the Indians, that not the least complaint was ever made by them on the subject.

There are two incidents connected with the formation of these treaties, which strongly illustrate Governor Cass's judgment and decision of character. In the expedition of 1820, it became his duty to inform the Indians at Sault de St. Marie of the intention of the government to establish a military post there, and to fix upon the site for the same. The chief of the tribe was openly opposed to the United States, and in the pay of the British government. In consequence of this, they heard the intention of Governor Cass with apparent ill-will, and broke up the councils, with the most hostile feeling. On returning to the encampment, they removed their women and children into Canada; and having prepared themselves for battle, raised the British flag, as a token of defiance. Governor Cass had but a small detachment of soldiers with him, while the Indians numbered eight hundred warriors. Unaccompanied, except by his interpreter, he advanced directly in their midst, and with his own hands pulled down the flag, trampled it under his feet, and afterwards burned it, ordering the interpreter to inform the Indians that "they were within the jurisdiction of the United States, and that no other flag than theirs could be permitted to wave over it."

The moral influence of this bold act had the desired effect, the Indians returned the next day to the council, and the treaty was concluded, without any further threats or insults. On arriving at Green Bay, in 1827, for the purpose of forming a treaty, Governor Cass found that the Winnebago Indians had not yet come in; and as the object of treaty was to settle difficulties among some of the tribes, the non-appearance of the Winnebagoes was an evidence of their desires for war rather than peace. He immediately re-embarked on board his birch canoe, for their camping ground, to prevent any hostilities and to bring them to the treaty ground. He rapidly pursued his voyage up the Fox river, across the portage, and down the Wisconsin, to the place of encampment. Taking with him only his interpreter, where he found them in warlike mood, and determined not to treat. Threats and entreaties were alike unavailable with this exasperated tribe. He left them, and returned to his canoe. As he turned to go to the river, a young warrior raised his gun, and taking deliberate aim at him, pulled the trigger; but, providentially, the gun missed fire.

This is the only instance of violence ever offered to him during the long period of his intercourse with the Indians. He proceeded immediately to Prairie du Chien, where he organized the inhabitants, and placed them in a condition of defence, and returned to the treaty ground. By his prompt and energetic movements he prevented extensive hostilities, the end of which no man could know.

In 1831, Gen. Cass was called by Gen. Jackson to take charge of the War Department, and his removal from Michigan Territory was marked by a universal expression of regret. His colleagues in the cabinet were Mr. Livingston, Mr. McLane, Mr. Woodbury, and Mr. Taney—men who possessed the confidence of the President, and soon acquired that of the country. The characteristic traits of General Jackson's administration have now passed into history. It was bold, prompt, honest, and national. It sought no dangerous constructive powers, and it endeavored carefully to exercise those of which it was the trustee, for the American confederation. The great questions of the bank, of the removal of the deposits, of nullification, of the French indemnity, and of the Creek and Cherokee difficulties—three of which involved delicate points connected with State rights—occupied its attention, and were all happily disposed of. Few, if any, now call in question the wisdom of General Jackson's course upon these important subjects, though it is difficult now to realize the intense anxiety they excited, and the momentous consequences which hung upon their decision. So far as the War Department necessarily took any immediate course in these questions, it was prompt and energetic, and met with the approbation of the country. At the portentous period of nullification, the military orders were firm, but discreet, and it appeared by a message from the President, in answer to a call upon that subject, that no order had been at any time given to "resist the constituted authorities of the State of South Carolina, within the chartered limits of said State." The orders to Gen. Scott informed him that "should, unfortunately, a crisis arise when the ordinary power in the hands of the civil officers should not be sufficient for the execution of the laws, the President would determine the course to be taken; and the measures to be adopted; till then he was prohibited from acting."

The same caution marked the order to the troops when there seemed to be danger of a collision with the authorities of Alabama, arising out of occurrences upon the lands of the United States in that State. In proof of this, we quote the following extract of a letter from the War Department, written by Governor Cass to Major McIntosh, and dated October 29th, 1833.

"Sir—Your letter of 21st inst. to Major General Macomb has been laid before me; and, in answer, I have to inform you that you will interpose no obstacle to the service of legal process upon any officer or soldier under your command, whether issuing from the courts of the State of Alabama, or of the United States. On the contrary, you will give all necessary facilities to the execution of such process. It is not the intention of the President that any part of the military force of the United States should be brought into collision with the civil authority. In all questions of jurisdiction, it is the duty of the former to submit to the latter, and no considerations must interfere with that duty. If, therefore, an officer of the State, or of the United States, come with legal process against yourself, or an officer or soldier of your garrison, you will freely admit him within your post, and allow him to execute his writ undisturbed."

In December, 1841, General Cass returned to the United States. He was received by the citizens of Boston and New York with every demonstration of respect. His bold stand on the quintuple treaty had excited the feelings of the people in his favor, and he was every where hailed as the champion of the freedom of the seas, and the rights of American citizens. At New York he was addressed upon political subjects, to which he furnished a brief reply, stating his unshaken attachment to the principles of the Democratic party, and his hostility to a national bank. On his route to the west, he was received at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and Columbus, Ohio, by the governments and legislatures of those States, who came out to meet him, and escorted him to their towns. At Detroit, the governor, legislature, city authorities, and people came out to welcome him home, as children welcome the return of a long absent father. On the 8th of January he was addressed by a committee of the Democratic State Convention of Indiana, upon political questions; to which he replied at length, declaring himself against a national bank, opposed to the distribution of the proceeds of the public lands to a tariff for protection, "That the revenue should be kept to the lowest point compatible with the performance of its constitutional functions," and opposed to altering the constitution by abolishing the Executive veto; that he should not be a candidate for the Presidency, unless nominated at the Baltimore Convention; and that he would support the nominee of that convention.

In the spring of 1844, Gen. Cass, in reply to interrogatories upon that subject, wrote a letter declaring himself in favor of the annexation of Texas. In the month of May following, the Democratic National Convention met at Baltimore, to nominate candidates for President and Vice President. On the first balloting General Cass received eighty-three votes, and continued to rise till on the seventh, he received one hundred and twenty-three votes. Had another ballot been taken that day, Gen. Cass would, without doubt, have been nominated. Before the assembling of the convention on the following day, Mr. Polk was brought forward as a compromise candidate, and after two ballotings, received the nomination.

On the day that the news of the nomination of Mr. Polk reached Detroit, a meeting of the Democracy was held, at which Gen. Cass, in an able and eloquent speech, gave his warm support to the nomination, and declared his readiness to enter the contest to secure its success. In pursuance of this he accepted the invitation of the Nashville committee and was present at the great Nashville convention in August. His arrival was announced by the firing of cannon, and he was received with every demonstration of popular enthusiasm. General Cass spent some time with General Jackson at the Hermitage. When they parted, the scene was most impressive and affecting. An eye-witness remarks, "the tears of the veterans were mingled together as they bade each other a last farewell."

In compliance with the popular will, Gen. C. took the tour of the States of Ohio, Indiana and Michigan. He everywhere met with the most enthusiastic reception from the people. He was hailed as the father of the west. But a great change had been effected since first he came among them. The lofty towers which he then traversed were now fruitful fields; the lonely cabins which he protected from the firebrand of the savage transformed into populous cities; the Indians war-path was converted into the railroad; the harbors upon the lakes and rivers which he first surveyed now the seats of commerce and the wealth; and the scattered population which he governed were now a great people.

The result of the contest in 1844 is well known. The vote of every western State, save one, and that by a majority margin, was given for Mr. Polk. To the efforts of General Cass, and his great personal popularity exerted in favor of Mr. Polk, much of this is to be attributed. In the following winter General Cass was elected to the Senate of the United States, and took his seat on the 4th of March, 1845. In the formation of the committees of the Senate, General Cass was unanimously tendered the post of Chairman of the committee on Foreign Affairs, which however, he declined. On two subsequent occasions, the same position has been offered him, but he has uniformly declined it.

In December, 1845, General Cass introduced resolutions in the Senate relative to the national defenses, and condition of our affairs with Great Britain, growing out of the Oregon question. These resolutions he supported in a speech, of which the following is an extract, referring to the course which should be pursued in maintaining our rights to the territory in question:

"As to receding, it is neither to be discussed nor thought of. I refer to it but to denounce it—a denunciation which will find a response in every American bosom. Nothing is ever gained by national pusillanimity. And the country which seeks to purchase temporary security by yielding to unjust pretensions, buys present ease at the expense of permanent honor and safety. It sows the wind to reap the whirlwind. I have said elsewhere, what I will repeat here, that it is better to fight for the American bosom. Nothing is ever gained by national pusillanimity. And the country which seeks to purchase temporary security by yielding to unjust pretensions, buys present ease at the expense of permanent honor and safety. It sows the wind to reap the whirlwind. I have said elsewhere, what I will repeat here, that it is better to fight for the American bosom. Nothing is ever gained by national pusillanimity. 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