

EULOGY

On the life and character of
GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR.
Ebensburg, July 21st 1850.
R. L. JOHNSTON, Esq.

Dear Sir:—
The undersigned having been appointed a committee, to request of you, a copy of your Oration on the life and services of the late President Gen. Zachary Taylor for the purpose of publication, trust that you will comply with their request.

The committee deem it a pleasant duty to be instrumental in laying before the public, a production of such rare merit on a subject so illustrious.

Your compliance will much oblige your fellow citizens, and particularly
**M. HASSON,
JOHN BRAWLEY, } Com.
JOHN FENLON.**

Gentlemen:

The crude and ill prepared Eulogium of the 20th, owing to want of time, and other causes, was deemed fitting for the ears only of indulgent friends, who know all the circumstances, and who could excuse every short coming. I fear your partiality for the author, has extended to the production.

Hoping, however, that the "rest of mankind" will treat it as indulgently, as the intelligent audience before whom it was delivered, I cheerfully submit it to your disposal.

Most Respectfully Yours,
ROBERT L. JOHNSTON.
M. Hasson, John Brawley, John Fenlon, Esqrs., Committee.

Ladies & Gentlemen:

A second time in the history of our Republic, we are called upon to mourn the death of her Chief Magistrate. An event of such deep solemnity, such painful magnitude, calls upon a nation to assume the habiliments of mourning, and to express in a suitable and becoming manner a sense of the great loss she has sustained.

Zachary Taylor was born in Orange county, Virginia, in the year 1790. The Old Dominion that gave birth to a WASHINGTON, a HENRY, a LEE, a JEFFERSON, a MADISON, and a MONROE, has added to her proud list of heroes and statesmen the name of TAYLOR.

At an early age he embraced the profession of arms, and in the war of 1812, when he had only entered his majority, we find him doing battle in the service of his country. Indeed the conduct of Capt. Taylor, at this period of his life, gave ample promise of the career of glory he has since run on many an ensanguined battle field. His defence of FORT HARRISON in 1812 exhibited in the youthful warrior all the courage, all the prudence, and all the energy of a General. True it is, that had not the mighty General crossed the Rio Grande, the subaltern on the fields of Mexico, the subaltern of Fort Harrison, had never been known to fame. But when brilliant successes on the Rio Grande had raised the question in the mind of the nation, "Who is Gen. Taylor?" a retrospective glance into the military annals of the country, displayed the youthful TAYLOR upon the ramparts of FORT HARRISON;—when first bidden forth those great military qualities, which blossomed in the swamps of Florida and rendered so rich a harvest in the defiles of Mexico.

Taylor was promoted to the rank of Colonel in 1832; and bore a distinguished part in the Black Hawk war—which resulted in the discomfiture and capture of that celebrated Indian chieftain.

We next find the subject of these remarks engaged in an Indian warfare in Florida, whither the U. S. Government had ordered him, in command of the American forces. More fortunate, if not more brave, than most of his predecessors in an Indian warfare, waged on the part of the enemy with more than the usual amount of aboriginal subtlety, desperation and cruelty, Colonel Taylor, on the memorable field of OKEE CHOBEE, triumphed so signally over his savage foe, as to secure their unconditional submission, and restore peace and safety to the Florida frontier.

But the character of this address will not permit me to become circumstantial; and I hasten to a later and more brilliant period in the history of the distinguished dead!

Our difficulties with the Republic of Mexico, commencing with annexation of Texas, aggravated by a dispute as to boundary, rendered, in the opinion of the constituted authorities of the United States, an appeal to arms necessary. GENERAL TAYLOR, (for to this rank he had been promoted,) in pursuance of orders, advanced with the "army of occupation," from Corpus Christi, to the eastern bank of the Rio Grande, opposite the Mexican city of Matamoros.

Here Colonel Cross was assassinated—here the blood of an American citizen was shed—here the first blow was struck by a Mexican arm. Here, that strife commenced, which resulted in two of the most splendid campaigns known to the history of the world; here was struck the first blow in that war which covered our arms with unfading renown, which impressed the character of invincibility upon our soldiers here commenced the war which terminated in the dismemberment of the Mexican States, and added almost boundless territory, boundless resources, and boundless wealth to our own happy country.

The main body of the American army under Taylor had marched to Point Isabel and were now on their return to Fort Brown. The Mexican Commander determined to intercept his return. This was

was not unexpected by Gen. Taylor, who wrote to a friend in his characteristic style "If the enemy meet me, in whatever force I shall fight him." The Mexican force consisted of 6,000 men, the American of 2,300; they met on the field of PALO ALTO. Here, let us for a moment pause! Let us revert to the period immediately preceding the battle of Palo Alto. An American General, as yet unknown to fame, an American Army, as yet untried in the midst of an enemy's country, confronted by nearly three times their number, the flower of the Mexican army, commanded by an experienced General! How dared we hope for success against such fearful odds? Oh! what painful suspense was depicted in every American countenance! how anxiously palpitated every American heart! how many prayers ascended from pure lips and faithful hearts to the God of Battles, for the safety of our gallant little army!

But fear soon gave place to joy—congratulation was followed by congratulations: TAYLOR had triumphed, signally and gloriously. He had defeated the arrogant enemy at PALO ALTO;—he had routed and dispersed them at RESACA de la PALMA. Long and loud pealed the shout of joy, as these glad tidings, borne on the wings of the wind, greeted the ears of the American people.

These ever memorable achievements occurred on the 8th and 9th days of May, 1846. They followed each other in such rapid succession that it might almost be termed the beginning and ending of the same engagement; or rather, in the terse language of Gen. Taylor himself, in speaking of the two battles, "the affair of today may be regarded as a proper supplement to the cannonade of yesterday." The shattered remains of the Mexican army recrossed the Rio Grande;—the American forces marched in safety and in triumph to Fort Brown.

These victories, achieved as they were, under the most unfavorable circumstances, gave an impetus to the American arms, and the American name. It was these victories that lent our forces the charm of invincibility; and was a prestige of success in all the subsequent engagements. It was these victories that gave the army of General Taylor confidence in his consummate skill, unflinching courage, and indomitable energy. In the language of one of his commands, "the standing of the army is at its highest,—it can now accomplish anything, and they would all die for a commander who does not ask them to go where he is not willing to lead, and in whose judgment they fully concur."

Within a very few days of this battle, our victorious General crossed the Rio Grande, took the City of Matamoros, and the stripes and stars are seen to wave for the first time on the western bank of the Del Norte.

Follow us our victorious army to Monterey. The Mexicans have improved their time; a new army has been raised; and within the fortified walls of Monterey are encamped 10,000 strong.—Thus garrisoned—thus armed and prepared, they were in a situation to defend themselves against three times their number.

Taylor's veterans present themselves six thousand strong—the attack is commenced; and the result was not long doubtful. The strongest wall—the most impenetrable fortifications were no barrier to the skill of the General commanding, and the prowess of the army. Monterey fell—and from Bishop's Palace the American Eagle is seen proudly floating over the conquered town.

But the tide of things is changed in Mexico and in the United States—a revolution had taken place in Mexico—a change of policy at home.

Santa Anna had returned from his banishment at Havana, and assumed the reins of the Mexican Government. He had infused life and vigor into the Mexican councils; and renewed courage into the Mexican army. He had, out of his exhausted treasury furnished the "sinews of war," and revived the drooping spirits of the Mexican people. He had inspired them with their wonted enthusiasm; and they were impatient to wipe out the recent disgrace in some well fought field. They were embodied twenty thousand strong, the flower of the Mexican army, at Angostura in the neighborhood of BUENA VISTA.

Nearly as great a change had taken place in the Councils of our own country. The government had changed its method of "conquering a peace" with Mexico; determined to invade her territory, by Vera Cruz, and make a demonstration on her capital city. She had entrusted the command of the invading army to Gen. Winfield Scott.

Shortly after the capitulation of Monterey Gen. Taylor received a despatch from General Scott informing him of these facts and, as Commander-in-chief, addressing him as follows:

NEW YORK, Nov. 25, 1846.
My Dear General: I left Washington late in the day yesterday, and expect to embark for New Orleans the 30th inst.—By the 12th of December I may be in that city. Point Isabel the 17th, and Camargo, say the 23d—in order to be within easy corresponding distance from you.—It is not probable that I may be able to visit Monterey, and circumstances may prevent your coming to me. I shall much regret not having an early opportunity of felicitating you in person upon your many brilliant achievements; but we may meet somewhere in the interior of Mexico.

I am not coming, my dear general, to supersede you in the immediate command on the line of operations rendered illustrious by you and your gallant army.—My proposed theatre is different. You

may imagine it; and I wish very much that it were prudent, at this distance, to tell you all that I expect to attempt or hope to execute. I have been admonished that despatches have been lost, and I have no special messenger at hand. Your imagination will be aided by the letters of the secretary of war, conveyed by Mr. Armitstead, Major Graham, and Mr. M'Lane.

But, my dear general, I shall be obliged to take from you most of the gallant officers and men (regulars and volunteers) whom you have so long and so nobly commanded. I am afraid that I shall, by imperious necessity—the approach of yellow fever on the gulf coast—reduce you, for a time, to stand on the defensive. This will be infinitely painful to you, and, for that reason, distressing to me. But I rely upon your patriotism to submit to the temporary sacrifice with cheerfulness.—No man can better afford to do so. Recent victories place you on that high eminence; and I even flatter myself that any benefit that may result to me, personally, from the unequal division of troops alluded to, will lessen the pain of your consequent inactivity.

In haste, I remain, my dear general,
Yours, faithfully,
WINFIELD SCOTT.

Thus the veterans of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, and Monterey were all withdrawn from the Chief under whose command they had marched on from victory to victory. Taylor's army was thus reduced to six hundred men and these raw troops.

This little band was augmented by fresh volunteers, and Taylor found himself on the 22d day of February A. D. 1847, the birth day of the illustrious Washington, in command of four thousand men, posted at Agua Nueva, not far distant from the command of Santa Anna. General Taylor never entertained the idea of retreating from his insolent foe; and indeed retreat would have certain destruction. Whatever of danger there was in maintaining his position, there was much more in leaving it. He received from Santa Anna the following summons, requiring an unconditional surrender:

"You are surrounded by 20,000 men, and cannot, in any human probability, avoid suffering a rout, and being cut to pieces with your troops; but as you deserve consideration and particular esteem, I wish to save you from a catastrophe and for that purpose give you this notice, in order that you may surrender at discretion, under the assurance that you will be treated with the consideration belonging to the Mexican character, to which end you will be granted an hour's time to make up your mind, to commence from the moment when my flag of truce arrives in your camp.

With this view, I assure you of my personal safety. Camp at Encantada, February 22, 1847.

ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANT ANNA.
To Gen. Z. Taylor,
Commanding the forces of the U. S.

Head-Quarters Army of Occupation,
Near Buena Vista, Feb. 22, 1847.
Sir: In reply to your note of this date, summoning me to surrender my forces at discretion, I beg leave to say that I decline acceding to your request.

With high respect, I am, sir,
Your obedient servant,
Z. TAYLOR,

Major-Gen U. S. Army, Commanding.
Gen. D. Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna,
Commander in-Chief, La Encantada.

Here let us again pause and contemplate the antagonist armies! "Look upon this picture and then on this!"

There marshalled in battle array, are the myrmidons of Santa Anna, the pride of the Mexican army, the hope of the Mexican nation! full twenty thousand strong! led on by their old and favorite chieftain; clad in glittering armour; high in hopes, confident of success.

Here, in a solid phalanx, rested the spartan band of Americans, four thousand in all, conscious of their own superiority, confiding in the prudence and heroism of their leader, and resolved to sustain the name of their revolutionary fathers. Every lip is compressed, every brow frowns defiance, every eye flashes with the bright fire of patriotism. Calmly they await the onset of the overwhelming force by which they are surrounded.

Again, borne on the wings of the wind, the heavy tidings of the desperate situation of our army, reached the United States. The magnetic wires, (always too willing to hasten bad news,) sent the withering intelligence into the bosom of every family. The most sanguine dared scarcely hope for deliverance from the impending calamity. The former successes of Gen. Taylor had almost passed the bounds of credibility, but nothing but a miracle could save him in this extremity. The heart of the nation sickened in contemplation of the inevitable result.

Once more is all expectation baffled.—Once more a general shout of triumph rings thro' the length and breadth of our country. Taylor is victorious!—Santa Anna is vanquished! The American army has defeated five times its number;—the last hope of Mexican resistance is gone.

True it was a fearful victory. The defiles of Buena Vista were ensanguined with American blood; the elite of Taylor's gallant army had bitten the dust; the Clays, and Hardens, and Yells, and M'Kees of our army butchered in cold blood by their semi-barbarian enemies! But what of that? The glory of the American arms was sustained; the honor of the citizen soldiery was vindicated; the insolence of the dastardly foe was chastised!

Such is a very brief account of the battles fought under the command of Zachary Taylor. As this was the closing battle of this campaign, Taylor was permitted to return to the United States.

Previous to his return, however, he had been nominated by mass meetings in different parts of the country, held without distinction of party, for the Presidency.—He, reluctantly permitted his name to be used in connection with that office. One of the great political parties of the country added their nomination, and he thus became a candidate for the chief office in the gift of the people.

He was elected.—The people, by their votes, declared that as, like Washington, he was "first in war," so, like him, he should be "first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

His course as Chief Magistrate was distinguished for the simplicity and honesty of his views; and the firmness with which he enforced them. While many differed widely from him in sentiment, few, if any ever doubted the honesty of his intentions. He had presided over the destinies of the Republic for the brief space of sixteen months, when he was called upon to render an account of his stewardship.

He had attended the festivities of the Great day of our National Independence, from the labors of which ceremony he returned to the white house wearied and debilitated. He soon after experienced the first symptoms of that virulent bilious disease which, in a very brief space of time, removed him from our midst.

A man of a naturally robust and healthy constitution; possessing the virtue of temperance in an eminent degree; a man whose life had been spent on the tented field;—whose frame never knew disease, whether in the wilds of our western frontier, in the swamps of Florida, or amid the arid sands of Mexico;—his sudden illness and death had the most stunning and overwhelming effect on the American people.

The public mind had never contemplated, for a moment, a result so disastrous to the nation. The name of General Taylor had never been connected with death, excepting, indeed, the death of his enemies. It was never imagined that the stalwart frame that had withstood disease and death in all the trials and perils of a soldier's life, would fall a victim to the King of Terrors, in the midst of peace and repose.

But death is no respecter of persons. Nay, he glories in pointing his fatal arrow at a shining mark. "Kings may conquer armies, but they cannot conquer death." He who had vanquished myriads, is himself vanquished! He who never surrendered to a mortal foe, surrenders at discretion to the summons of the destroying angel.

Who could suppose of the proud nation whose arms he had covered with glory;—surrounded by his friends,—in the bosom of his family, lay the dying hero. He had fought his last battle; he had performed his last official function. The cold hand of death lay heavy on him. He knew and felt that he was about to render up his soul to the God that gave it.

There was no aberration of intellect,—no wandering of the senses: his mind remained clear and undisturbed in the midst of his physical prostration. He cast his fading glance far beyond the shores of time, into the limitless regions of eternity. There he lay contemplating his awful change, with as much calmness as he viewed the raging battle on the field of BUENA VISTA. The actions of his life passed in rapid view before the mental vision of the dying patriot. His eye grew brighter, his pulse stronger at the contemplation. Then fell from his parched lips the last words he ever uttered: words that could never be spoken by any but a patriot and a Christian.

"I die—I am expecting the summons,—I am ready to meet death,—I have always done my duty—my only regret is for the friends I leave behind me."

And now that voice is hushed—the silence of death reigns in the apartment—his eye is glazed—his pulse is still—he has ceased to breathe—he is dead. The soul of the just man and pure patriot has gone to meet its final reward.

Oh! the vanity of human greatness! The hero of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey and Buena Vista, lies there a cold and inanimate thing; the Chief Magistrate of the greatest Republic on earth—is a lump of dust;—the ruler of twenty-five millions of freemen is a banquet for the worms of the earth!

We have now taken a rapid glance at a few of the leading incidents in the life of this distinguished man. We find him possessed of all those qualities which constitute the truly great man. As a military chieftain his name will descend to posterity with the greatest heroes of ancient or modern times. It may be presumption to compare his military career with that of Napoleon Bonaparte;—and yet he had all the dazzling success of that great general, without any of his reverses. And if the field of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma will compare with the greatest of Napoleon's triumphs: if the battle of Buena Vista will eclipse them all; there is no Waterloo in the history of General TAYLOR, no disastrous retreat through an enemy's country. If his military race was more brief than that of Napoleon, it was more glorious. Better, far better for the Emperor of the French, better for France, better for mankind, if he had been stricken down before he had planned the conquest of Russia, or seen the battle of Mount St. Jean. The success of TAYLOR placed him at the head of the greatest nation on earth;—the reverses of Napoleon sent him to a

desert rock in the ocean, where he died an outcast and a prisoner.

His private character bore a striking resemblance, in many respects, to that of the Father of his Country. I am not, however, prepared to call him a Second Washington. There is no second Washington; there can be none. And I trust in Heaven, the day may never come when our country, or any portion of it, shall require another Washington.

Still in many traits of character, the hero of the Mexican War, resembled in a remarkable degree, the patriot of the Revolution.

In his habits of Temperance he seemed to have made that great man his model. Living as he did at a period when, unfortunately, dissipation prevailed in high places,—his own life was simple and unostentatious as that of a hermit.

His code of morals seemed also to be modeled after the same great master. At the time of his highest fame a great laxity of morals prevailed, both in the Court and the Camp, yet TAYLOR continued in their midst, a pattern for the most rigid moralist.

In modesty Taylor seems to have copied Washington. In all his distinguished career there is not one instance of vain boasting, or assumed superiority. When his official despatches stunned the ears of the nation with unexpected and incredible triumphs; they contained not one syllable of self commendation. His correspondence with Santa Anna on the eve of the battle of Buena Vista exhibits this virtue in a remarkable degree. The summons of the Mexican General is all bravado—the answer of the American all simplicity.

In firmness in the hour of trial TAYLOR was no unworthy imitator of the immortal Washington. In all his career, military and civil, firmness was one of his greatest characteristics. This feature in his character stands forth in the calmness of council, and in the din of battle. Amid the thickest of the dreadful carnage on the bloody field of Buena Vista, mounted on his noble charger, calm and collected, he views the opposing armies. In vain do his friends warn him that he exposes too rashly, a life whose sacrifice would be the greatest possible calamity! Too unselfish to regard his own safety where all were exposed to danger and death, he remained in his perilous position, calmly issuing his orders, until the tide of victory was rolled back upon the Mexicans, and the stripes and stars of the Union waved gloriously over the conquered field. Then,—and not sooner,—did the rigid countenance of the veteran relax from its steady gaze,—and the heart, too full for words,—found vent in the tears of joy that coursed each other down the weather beaten cheeks of the gallant old patriot.

Washington was magnanimous—so was General Taylor. During the revolutionary struggle Washington unfortunately imbibed a prejudice against General Wayne. Yet he entrusted to him the expedition against Stony Point which resulted in one of the most brilliant achievements of the Revolutionary war. A difficulty between TAYLOR and the gallant and lamented WORTH had prevented the latter from participating in the glories of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma—he had rejoined Taylor's command previous to the battle of Monterey—General Taylor gave him the post of honor in the attack.—WORTH covered himself with glory,—and a lasting reconciliation took place between the two heroes. Gallant—chivalrous WORTH!—thou too hast fallen before the arm of the destroyer! A grateful nation while she remembers TAYLOR will not forget his noble companion in arms!

If the life of General Taylor resembled that of the immortal Washington—his death was scarcely less sublime. The last words of Washington were—"I am not afraid to die"—those of Taylor were—"I am ready to meet death." Both died in the full command of their faculties and in the bosom of their families.

Of General Taylor it cannot be said that "he died and made no sign!" Oh! how consoled as we gather around the couch of expiring humanity, to hear from the lips of the dying, evidences of a life well spent, and hopes of a blissful immortality! How sweetly those whispered accents fall upon the attentive ear that give an assurance of duties performed through life—and hopes beyond the grave. Oh! what peculiar fitness in the words uttered by the dying patriot. "I am expecting the summons—I am ready to meet death—I have always done my duty."

But the scene has closed!—the man of Buena Vista has passed away!

England, proud of her mighty dead as well as her living—has her Westminster, where the ashes of the great are interred—a national mausoleum. There may be seen a lengthened array of Kings, and ministers, and heroes, and statesmen, and poets. The simplicity of our Republican character, as it authorizes no distinctions among the living, neither does it permit them among the dead. The American patriot who would seek the last resting place of the illustrious departed of his own country, must indeed perform a weary pilgrimage. He must traverse the granite hills of New England, the fertile valleys of Pennsylvania, the sandy savannahs of the South, and the green prairies of the West. The ashes of Washington were permitted to remain at his own Mount Vernon;—those of the Adams' repose at Quincy. Jefferson sleeps at Monticello, and the intrepid Jackson at the Hermitage. The grave of Harrison is washed by the Ohio; that of the lamented Taylor will be lavied by the Father of Waters. Far assunder repose the remains of the mighty departed, yet a common fame is theirs. America needs no monumental

inscription to remind her of her mighty dead—they are enshrined in the hearts of a grateful people, and their name and their fame, shall be treasured up, and venerated, and held as a sacred thing,—through all the annals of time—nor cease to be remembered till time itself shall fade away and mingle with eternity.

As a civilian Taylor had not yet acquired the first rank among the statesmen of the country. It was the hope and expectation of many that he would infuse into the administration of the general government much of its pristine purity. The patriarchs of the country—those tried in the fires of the revolution—had left the scene of action. The purity of the rule of WASHINGTON—the simplicity of the administration of JEFFERSON—had become antiquated and unfashionable: and it was confidently expected that General TAYLOR was the man, under Heaven, to restore the early days of the Republic. But he died!

He died at a fearfully interesting period in our history. Treason in one portion of the country,—and fanaticism in another—had done their worst to destroy our fair fabric of Constitutional liberty. Criminality had been followed by recrimination—menace had succeeded menace—until the wisest, and most patriotic had doubts as to the safety of the Republic. The eyes of the nation were turned to President Taylor as the pilot to conduct the ship of state safely through the breakers that surrounded her. At this crisis the pilot falls at his post of duty—the hero is struck down in his harness,—and the ship of state is committed to new hands.

The mantle of the fallen chief may rest upon his successor. The dangers that menace the safety of the nation may pass away. The death of TAYLOR may accomplish all that his life could have done. It has saddened the national heart and disposed it to kindlier feelings. It has awed the voice of treason into silence,—and those who would profane the temple of liberty with their unhalloved footsteps are taught to pause ere they tread upon holy ground. Statesmen seem more solemnly impressed than ever with the importance of the sacred trust committed to their charge. They seem determined to stand by the glorious Union of the states at all hazards. The example of the mighty dead, whose remains they have just seen confined, appeals to their patriotism;—and that appeal is not made in vain. They know that with their best exertions, and the Blessing of the God of Nations, the Union of the States will be preserved inviolate. And they know full well,—that whether enjoying the benefits and blessings of our glorious Republic;—or dragging out a wretched existence amid its ruins;—that there is a time when they, too, shall be called upon to pass that "hour when no traveller returns;" and thus they too shall be required to give an account of their stewardship.

In that dread hour, when the things of this world will be as nothing—when time shall recede and eternity approach—they then can repeat the words of him whose death we this day commemorate, and say, before God, in the words of the lamented TAYLOR: "I am prepared to meet death—I have done my duty."



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