

THE SHERMAN BANQUET.

Speech of the Hon. James S. Rollins, of Missouri, at the Sherman Banquet in Saint Louis, on the 20th of July, 1865.

The second regular Toast—"The Army and Navy of the United States," was responded to by Mr. Rollins as follows:

MR. CHAIRMAN:—It was but a few moments since that my friend Col. Broadhead informed me that I would be called upon to respond to the sentiment which has just been read. I regret, sir, that this pleasing duty had not devolved upon some one of the distinguished military gentlemen who have honored this occasion with their presence. But, sir, as the duty is imposed upon me, I rise to make a very few remarks.

The dissolution of the American Union, the downfall of the great Republic, if such a thing had been possible, and had occurred, would have been the most distressing catastrophe and the severest blow to the cause of free institutions, that had ever occurred in the history of our race. For the preservation of our Government and this blessed Union, we are mainly indebted to the heroic achievements of the Army and Navy of the United States. (Applause.) The fame of that Army and that Navy has been established by the earnest, unselfish and devoted patriotism of our soldiers and our sailors, and they have added imperishable glory to both these arms of the public service. (Loud applause.)

It is a pleasing reflection to every cultivated and sensitive heart, that during this terrible rebellion—this great ef-

fort to preserve the nation's life—this unprecedented conflict of arms, millions of men engaged upon either side in the conflict, that throughout the struggle, not one single solitary act of insubordination has occurred, or effort been made, on the part of the high military and naval men who have conducted successfully this great revolution with any other view than to promote the glory, the success, and the safety of our free country. With the Army and the Navy, all unworthy ambition, all objects personal and selfish, have given way to a pure and elevated love of country ; these are the motives which have guided our Generals and our Soldiers—and to their unselfish aims are we largely indebted for the triumphant success which crowned their efforts, and which causes the heart of the nation to swell with gratitude to our brave defenders. [Great applause.]

Mr. Chairman, the war is over. [Applause.] It was, sir, a necessary war. It was a war that could not be avoided. In the whole history of our race, no man can point to a single solitary case where a government was attempted to be overthrown, and its territory mutilated, without an effort on the part of that Government to maintain itself. [Loud applause.] Nations fight upon a single point of national honor. Nations often declare war in order to uphold the rights of a solitary citizen. Nations quarrel and sometimes fight to maintain the integrity of their territorial dominion, though barely worth possessing. A few years ago we were almost involved in a war with Great Britain, in reference to a small strip of territory on the northeastern part of our empire, not larger than a few counties. At another time we hear the war cry of "*Fifty-four Forty or Fight!*" And all remember our complications with the same power in regard to a small island on our northwestern coast, the title to which was more than doubtful, and which was hardly worth owning at best. With instances like these before us, how could any man of sense reason for a moment, that a great Government like ours would permit itself to be cut in twain, despoiled of the fair-

est and richest portion of our beautiful heritage, planting upon our border a hostile and powerful people, sweeping from us our commerce, and owning the splendid harbors stretching along our coast for 3,000 miles, from the Chesapeake to the Rio Grande, including the mouth of the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico, without a struggle more persistent and terrible than any hitherto witnessed among men since the "morning stars sang sweetly together?" No, sir, however reluctant the nation felt, we were *compelled* to fight, or to have stood a dishonored and disgraced people; and if from any cause the people had shrunk from the contest, I believe that the gallant Army and Navy would have struck the blow and saved us from the national humiliation and disgrace. But, sir, the people were like the Army and the Navy—they loved their country, and nowhere in human history have any people been so lavish of their wealth, their efforts and their blood, to uphold the right, to maintain our territorial integrity and the national honor. [Applause.]

And now, sir, that the war is over, and the white-winged messenger of peace has again spread his wings across the continent, it is a reflection, no less pleasing than honorable, that the men who have been actively engaged in the war, are the most earnest advocates of peace, and only those would continue the strife who have never fired a musket or seen a fort! [Loud applause.]

The distinguished citizen and soldier whom we all delight to honor on this occasion, has added fresher laurels to his brow, because from the time he accepted a Colonelcy in the Regular Army, until the firing of the last gun, he has been the most consistent, earnest, generous and gracious advocate of peace. [Applause.] He followed war because he was in truth the child of the Republic, because he owed it to his country to sacrifice his life, if need be, in his efforts to save it. He struck no unnecessary or vengeful blow whilst he wielded his sword, and when the enemy succumbed, yielded to his superior prowess, he at once set an example of moderation, of liberality, and of justice in

dealing with a fallen foe, best calculated to ensure an immediate and lasting peace, and worthy the imitation of the most enlightened christian philanthropists and statesmen [Applause.]

Mr. Chairman, I know that I am likely to worry this audience. [Cries of "go on ! go on !"] It would be in bad taste on my part to continue these desultory remarks, when I know that you are all like myself, impatient to hear from Gen. Sherman himself. But, sir, in doing honor to the great and distinguished men who have made the American name still more illustrious amongst men, let us not forget on this festive occasion the rank and file of the American army—the common soldiers—God bless them ! [Applause.] Without them we would have had no Sherman and no Grant. But sustained by them, the military genius of the country has been developed, and our military annals enriched, with names that will never die. As long as free government has a votary upon this continent, and liberty is prized amongst men, besides the great captains whose names I have just mentioned, the recollection of the great services of Thomas and Sheridan, of McClellan and Meade, of Hancock and Hooker, of Pope and Schofield, of Dodge and McPherson, of Blair and Lyon, of Terry and Logan, and a host of other brave officers, will remain ever green and fresh in the memory of the American people. In honoring our illustrious guest to-night, we honor at the same time every officer who has performed well his part in the great struggle, and every soldier who has worn honorably the uniform of the American army. We honor the glorious institution where many of these distinguished officers were so well taught, and we claim that whatever recreancy to country may have been shown by some of the graduates of that Institution, the brilliant conduct and heroic achievements of those who remained true to "the Flag" must ever henceforth make West Point a favorite Institution with the American people. [Applause.] But we honor to-night in a special manner every bronzed man of war, who followed our distinguished friend from Pitts-

burg Landing to Vicksburg, from Vicksburg to Chattanooga, from Chattanooga to Atlanta, from Atlanta to the sea, from Savannah to Charleston, and from Charleston to Washington. Richmond, for a time, was in fact the rebellion. It rested upon the four props—of Atlanta, Savannah, Charleston and Wilmington. And without intending any invidious comparison betwixt our honored guest and others who have performed their part so nobly, it is proper to say that it was in that grand and unprecedented march, a march unequalled in the history of warfare amongst men throughout the world, that these props were displaced, and the infamous rebellion fell, crushed to atoms beneath the weight of wickedness and folly which had inaugurated and sustained it for four long years. [Great applause.] All honor I again say, to the rank and file of Sherman's army.

“The poor, brave soldier ne'er despise,
Nor treat him as a stranger,
Remember he's his country's stay
In the day and hour of danger.”

Nor will we forget on this or on any similar occasion, the great exploits of the American Navy. The Army and the Navy in honor, in fame, in imperishable deeds, must forever be indissolubly linked. You cannot honor the one without at the same time awarding praise to the other. They are our twin defenders. They are the offspring of a common parent; they sprang out of the great and patriotic heart of the American people. In this rebellion, what the Army failed to accomplish, the Navy did! and what the Navy did not do, the army accomplished. The Navy went where the Army could not go, and to do it entire justice, *it went almost wherever the Army did go!* [Applause.] It defied the enemy on the seas, and the music of its artillery drove away the danger along the shores of our great rivers. [Applause.] The common soldier and the common sailor vied with each other in storming fortresses thought to be impregnable, and they often perished side by side in upholding the sacred and beautiful banner

of the Republic. We will not forget to shed a tear of sorrow over the bier of the immortal Foote, who for a while in the early part of the rebellion was a citizen of St. Louis, and by the side of the illustrious names whom I have already mentioned, will stand forever the names of Farragut, of Porter, of Dahlgren, of Dupont, of Worden, and of Winslow, throwing a still brighter halo over each undying page of American history. We will never forget how they have sustained the fame and the power of the American name. Since these great achievements we have a right to dispute the "trident" with that powerful nation hitherto regarded as the mistress of the seas; and in the future it will be for us to appropriate the beautiful couplet of their own immortal bard—

"Columbia needs no bulwark,
No towers along the steep,
Her march is o'er the mountain waye,
Her home is on the deep." [Great applause.]

Mr. Rollins offered the following sentiment, which was cordially responded to.

"The Supremacy of the Civil Law: The surest guarantee of the Liberty and the Safety of the Citizen."

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