



Soldiers and Southern Mountains.

AN ADDRESS BY

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Soldiers and mountains were in existence long before my day, and in a short address it would seem unwise to waste ammunition on the origin of either. I beg to be excused also, if these remarks be somewhat personal and disconnected, for how in so short a time, could one tell even a few of the experiences of more than a thousand days, AND NIGHTS TOO, in the front of actual warfare. So I shall tell only of a few things and places that my eyes have seen and upon which my feet have trod.

I was born and reared on land as devoid of mountains as would be the face of a pancake. I had no boyish desire for playing soldier or being one, and yet comrades of the glorious 22d, I call you to witness if ever in those three years you saw me discouraged or dispondent.

The first hills I ever saw, when perhaps 8 or 9 years old, was not far from Rochester where I now reside; their grandeur thrilled me through and through. To me those hills were indeed mountains, grand, glorious, inspiring. The first mountains I saw while soldiering were near Cumberland Gap, in the vicinity of Crab Orchard. Comrade and friend J. H. Canfield and myself secured permits and scaled the summit of one of the peaks; young, lighted-hearted and gay we reveled in the beauties of nature and landscape, and wondered why war should have settled down amid such grandeur.

I think, comrades that most of you can go with me in thought and recollection, as we went together in reality, on a mountain trip when we marched for twenty-eight successive hours, over the Cumberland range, on the south side of the Tennessee river, to Rossville at the foot of Mission Ridge. Do you remember the sudden stone steps in the rocky road, how they jarred our walking slumbers? They were eye openers to some of us. Since that when I wish to take a nap while walking, I prefer a smoother road.

Soldiers and mountains were not far apart when we camped at the foot of Lookout and climbed and climbed repeatedly, half way to the summit for boards from a white house with which to repair our scanty tents. A mountain and a regiment were close friends

when we camped for one happy week on it's summit. Old Lookout then was a friend that we could indeed lean on and re-lie on. Perhaps still closer relations existed, when some of us were in the cave under two thousand feet of rock.

After the battle of Chickamauga, where sixty-six of our then small regiment were killed or mortally wounded, the most of them in as many minutes and scores of others wounded and captured. Some of us were ordered to try the mountains again, this time on the north side of the Tennessee, whose banks are of nearly perpendicular rock a thousand feet high for many miles. Some of us were there with the three thousand SLIGHTLY(?) WOUNDED. How would that sound now-a-days for men who were shot through the arms and legs with balls as large as your thumb? Nine-tenths of whom unguarded, unarmed and nearly rationless, walked, limped and dragged themselves for sixty miles, on wild mountain roads, over steeps and through gulches, to Bridgeport, the nearest usable station, toward the twenty large hospitals in Nashville. Three long trains of freight cars there awaited us and were packed till the smell of wounds was terrible. Two days more of unblanketed joltings, of delays and waiting for orders, brought us on the fifth day from the battle, to the Hospital City. So desperate was the condition of our army at the front, and so numerous were the badly and fatally wounded there, that not a nurse or a physician was seen for five days, with us poor unfortunates. Here are the names and conditions of members of my company, taken from my diary, who were with me on that occasion: Anthony Beach, shot through the arm; Lyman H. Tewksberry, a ball in his arm; S. H. Ballard, shot through the big toe, and D. Arndt with a ball in his shin. After ten weeks in hospital and convalescent camp, wishing ever so much to return to the regiment, Seth Ballard and myself requested and secured passes to Bridgeport, but were not permitted to go further as the wild, unguarded, mountainous route was considered too dangerous. Then, for the second time only, in my soldiering, I disobeyed orders and coaxed Ballard

to go with me to the regiment. Thus two soldiers, perhaps foolishly, unarmed and alone followed the torn-up railroad through the woods and mountains. As darkness overtook us we forgot daring and danger in sleep beside the track. Daylight came before wakefulness and we found our blankets covered with frost, and saw men about forty rods away, by what appeared as an iron foundry or furnace; we thought best to move quickly and quietly away, and before another night fall, after viewing thousands of dead mules that had lost their lives in trying to feed our starving army at Chattanooga, we reached the camp of the little remnant of our loved 22nd, and how rejoiced and sorry we were to see them, and how they greeted us is better remembered than told. Sorry did I say? Yes, "sorry" is a mild word to express our feelings as we looked at the remnant of that once noble regiment and missed friends and comrades, dead, wounded and in prison pens. The men were hungry and destitute and gladly shared with us the little that remained from our lone mountain trip. Maj. H. S. Dean, now Colonel, with his kind but quick and decisive manner, was then in command, and soon found a good deal of extra though pleasant work for me in commanding and drilling recruits, making out company papers, pay rolls, etc.

Soldiers and southern mountains were not far apart at the thunderings of Kenesaw: the mountains trembled, the earth shook; we were called hastily into line of battle one of those terrible nights, but none of us ever knew what a magnificent line of battle we there formed in the woods surrounded by such black darkness that it could only be felt.

The Ringgold mountains looked strange to the boys of the 22nd, after marching in line of battle for hours under Gen. Steadman through woods and fields and finally through a wide creek two feet deep, where we captured a large kettle of boiling mush, but left it untouched and untasted, and coming suddenly out of the forest into the open plain, we saw just before us the alarmed and excited camps of eighty thousand sworn enemies, their

thundering cannons from the mountain sides immediately sending missiles, fortunately over our heads. Four thousand, ten miles from reinforcements, stood face to face with eighty thousand. Having discovered their position and numbers, we fell back slowly into the woods, and then hastily made good our escape, not caring longer to behold that kind of mountain scenery.

One soldier mountain trip, the brightest and best of all, was when eight or ten of us mounted on good horses and armed with revolvers, one fine spring morning, wended our happy way, free from all restraint, from Chattanooga to Lookout Point, thence to Rock City, so called, for there was not a human abode in sight, only immense checker work cracks in solid rocks of a width and depth from ten to forty feet or more, and then back three or four miles further to the completely wild, natural, beautiful Lulu Lake and falls, hid in the rolling forest but placed and surrounded by the Creator in grandeur unspeakable.

How many times have the thoughts of all of us wandered back to the waving signals on Lookout Point, and to how many thousands of soldiers has that lone mountain and its signals been a source of cheer, of hope, of confidence.

I love the mountains in their strength
and grandeur,

Unshaken by the winds and storms
they stand,

Lifting their heads in purer air and
brighter,

They catch the earliest day-dawn
of the land.

I love, in men, that solid, strong endeavor,

Which climbs toward higher, nobler,
purer life,

Their morning and their day is
brighter,

Their sunset golden as they rest
from strife.

Oh, men who dared to stand for right,
For union and for liberty to all,

You climbed the mountains in your
might,

So that our flag should never fall,

Oh, soldiers brave and mountains
grand,

In memory you stand sublime

As monuments, o'er all our land,
Throughout all time.

