

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

THIRD ANNUAL REUNION

OF THE SOCIETY OF THE

TWELFTH REGIMENT NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEERS

HELD AT WOODBURY, FEBRUARY 22, 1877.

The Third Annual Reunion of the Society of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers brought together a larger number of survivors of that Regiment than had attended the previous Reunions, many meeting with the Society for the first time. All assembled at the dépôt, and after an exchange of kindly greetings, formed in line and marched to the City Hall.

Vice-President John F. Meley presided, in the absence of the President, and congratulated the Society on the increased number present.

Prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Green, of Woodbury.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

The following communications were read by the Secretary:

BRIGHTWOOD P. O., D. C., February 19, '77.

MY DEAR MAJOR,—I am in receipt of your kind note of the 15th inst., conveying an invitation to the annual Reunion of the Twelfth New Jersey, and regret that circumstances will prevent my acceptance of their kind invitation. I beg, however, that you will assure them I would be present if I possibly could; that I remember their gallantry and good behavior under all circumstances, and that it affords me great pleasure to be remembered by them as a comrade in the good cause. Assuring them and yourself of my highest esteem,

I am truly your friend,

S. S. CARROLL, U. S. A.

To Major N. M. Brooks.

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 21, 1877.

To the President, Officers and Members of the Associated Survivors of the late Twelfth N. J. Vols.:

COMRADES,—I regret exceedingly that the press of business precludes the possibility of my being present at the annual Reunion of the Twelfth New Jersey Volunteers, which takes place at Woodbury to-morrow.

I would say, however, to all who may be present on that occasion, that, if spared, I hope to meet with them a year hence, if it shall be considered desirable to continue these annual Reunions—and I trust that they may be continued.

Hoping that a large number of our former comrades may be present to-morrow, and wishing you much enjoyment on that occasion,

Believe me, yours truly,
 JOS. BURROUGHS,
Late First Sergeant Co. A, Twelfth New Jersey Vols.

Roll called and dues collected—eighty-eight responded.

Captain Newton M. Brooks, the Orator of the Day, was introduced, and met with a hearty reception. He spoke as follows:

Mr. President and Comrades: When, fifteen years ago, at Camp Stockton, any of us were detailed for guard or police duty, we never asked why some one else had not been detailed, but immediately obeyed the order, and repaired to the designated spot to report for duty; or later, at the front, when our names were reached on the roster, we did not suggest that some other man were better fitted for the post, or ask the reason why we were selected, but at the first tap of the assembly were ready to march to the parade ground, fully armed and equipped, prepared to do our share of the work and take our share of the danger; or, if we were called to a post of unusual peril, on the outpost picket in the immediate presence of the enemy, on the skirmish line, or for a charge, as on the barn at Gettysburg, no one stopped to reason about the matter, but each one went forward, determined to do the duty to the best of his ability; and if his selection for the particular station was injudicious, upon those who had the authority to make the detail must rest the blame, if he should be found incapable for the task assigned him and disaster should result from his incompetency. So, having been notified through your Executive Committee that my name has again been reached on the duty roster of the Twelfth Regiment, I appear to-day, on our old camp ground, to report myself "present for duty;" and upon your committee must rest the responsibility of the detail, for I freely confess that I had fewer misgivings in reporting for any duty that was assigned me in the field, than I have as to my ability, successfully and worthily, to accomplish the present one.

I would not have you think; however, that I came from a sense of duty merely, for I assure you that nothing could give me more pleasure than to greet old friends and comrades-in-arms,—men whom I know to be true and brave; men who to my certain knowledge stood undaunted amid a perfect hailstorm of bullets and explosions of artillery that seemed to shake the earth to its very foundations, many of whom bear in their bodies the marks of the missiles, and for the bravery of those who were more fortunate and came unscathed out of the baptism of fire, we can all vouch; men who, as they advanced to meet the enemy, saw their comrades carried past them by hundreds, maimed and dying, sometimes torn almost to shreds by the shot and shell, the grape and canister of the foe, on the very

spot which they were hastening to occupy, and yet advanced without the quiver of a muscle to take the places made vacant by the fallen, and apparently to meet the same fate. To be acknowledged as a worthy comrade of such men—the honorably discharged survivors of the Twelfth New Jersey Volunteers—is a meed of praise of which any man may well be proud; for it speaks of real dangers bravely faced; arduous duties nobly done; perilous obstacles heroically surmounted; fatigue and exposure cheerfully submitted to, and even death himself faced with a countenance as calm and fearless as his own, until the grim and all-powerful enemy passed them by, leaving them to find, when the smoke of battle had rolled away, that a thousand had fallen at their side, and all this without the hope of higher reward than the gratitude of their countrymen, and the satisfaction of knowing that it was their exertions that helped to preserve to their posterity the matchless fabric of the Republic. So that, in responding to your call, the question of duty sinks almost out of sight, and the post of duty becomes the post of honor.

These occasions, our annual Reunions, are not, as I understand them, to afford opportunities for the display of rhetorical powers; or for grandiloquent speeches abounding in carefully rounded periods and classical allusions, exhibiting the fruits of deep research into the arts and sciences, philosophy and religion, politics or the isms of the day; but simply to keep alive the memory of scenes and incidents that transpired during our life at the front. They are eminences occurring along life's highway, from each of which a clear and uninterrupted view of the whole road may be obtained, and as we reach them, one after another, we pause a moment and glance back over our pathway. From the height which we occupy to-day—almost fifteen years' journey distant from our starting-point—what a varied scene presents itself! What reminiscences come crowding upon us! For long stretches the road is barren—nothing is seen but hardship and privation; miles and miles where we stagger along, blinded and suffocated by the dust of tramping thousands, and not a drop of water for our parched throats. Here we see grouped together mounds of earth and heaps of bleaching skeletons, telling us where comrades fell, overcome by the exposure and fatigue of the march, stricken down by diseases incident to camp life, or hurled into eternity without a moment's warning, in the shock and turmoil of battle; there, some green and shady spot suggests thoughts of a quiet camp, where we passed pleasant days recuperating after an arduous campaign, and gaining fresh strength and vigor for another attack on the enemy; spending our leisure in writing letters to our families and friends at home, interspersed with an occasional game of euchre, seven up, bluff, or draw-poker; taking our regular tours of police, guard, or picket duty, the only excitement being a scout or reconnoissance in force, to let the enemy know that our "flag was still there," and to see that he did not take advantage of our inactivity to slip silently away and strike us in some vulnerable point.

Memory recalls, with a vividness that makes it seem but as yesterday, those hot days in August, 1862, when from the field, the work-shop, the store and the counting-room, as well as from the school and the home fireside, all over the State, bearded men and beardless boys left their various avocations, their labors and their pleasures, and with a thorough forgetfulness of self, hurried to our camp to offer their services to their country in the hour of her need, and don the honorable uniform of the "Boys in Blue;" leaving their loved ones to the care of friends and neighbors, asking no bounty, making no inquiries in regard to pay, but anxious only that their names might be numbered in the throng which, at the call of our President, was mustering three hundred thousand strong to sustain the honor of our flag against the schemes of traitors, willing to endure all hardships and risk their lives in the struggle to preserve the Union of our forefathers, in all its beauty, from those who with bloody hands were trying to obliterate every trace of its stately symmetry, so that not one stone of the magnificent structure should be left upon another.

At that time there had been no grand successes of arms to stimulate our hopes or encourage the people to renewed efforts; on the contrary, disaster had followed disaster with sickening monotony, and the prospect was that still harder blows must be given and received, and that many more brave hearts must have their life beat stilled ere we would be able to say our work was done. From that time to the scene under the apple tree at Appomattox Court House, where the final act in the grand drama took place which gave us liberty to turn our faces homeward and surrender to our countrymen, with our arms and tattered colors, the Union of States, with not one star the less in the glorious constellation, although all were red with the bloody baptism through which they had passed, every incident in the history of the regiment is as clear to my mind and as fresh to my remembrance as though it were photographed on yonder wall.

Time seems to roll backward in its flight, and brings before me that bright Sabbath morning in September, 1862, when we took up our line of march for the front, and I recognize in the faces of those who surround me now, my comrades then, notwithstanding the passing years have left their indelible mark upon all, covering with heavy beards cheeks that were then clothed only with the bloom of youth, tracing lines upon brows that were then unfurrowed by care, streaking with silver heads that were then in the fresh vigor of young manhood; some have no longer the hand that grasped the musket, and others who marched with a firm tread and a bounding step to the music of the fife and drum, now limp along on crutches; telling as no words can, that the promise then given, to do or die in defence of the Union, was no idle boast, but was faithfully fulfilled; yea, even to the dying, for on yonder monument, carved in enduring granite, are the names of many who answered with a hearty "here" at the roll-call that morning, who will answer no more until awakened by that reveille that shall summon them to prepare for the last general muster, when all must be "present or accounted for."

I can almost hear again the order to "strike tents" and "fall in," and can see the smiling maidens and fair women who crowded the railroad stations as the train rushed by, or lined the streets of Philadelphia, as we marched through that city, bidding us God speed on our journey, and calling for a blessing upon our efforts with those of their brothers, lovers, husbands and fathers already in the field; while we responded with cheers and ruthlessly seized every waving handkerchief we could reach as the cars dashed past the platforms, to be exhibited in camp as our first capture of the war, and if found to contain a lady's name, to be carefully preserved through many a long march, to be restored to the fair owner when the "cruel war was over," or perhaps to be found on the battlefield by the burial party when they placed in his unmarked grave the body of a comrade whose fate was never known, whose military history was closed with the single word "missing" written opposite his name on the rolls.

All signs of approval and popular favor ceased as we approached Baltimore, and we passed from the midst of cheering and admiring friends into the presence of scowling foes, to whom the sight of our uniforms was gall and wormwood, and whose hostility was prevented from breaking into acts of open violence only by a wholesome respect for the arms we bore, and by a knowledge of the fact that the guns of Fort McHenry were trained on their disloyal city, ready at a moment's notice to quell the slightest exhibition of their treasonable desires and purposes by a shower of shells. The blessings which had thus far followed us were here replaced by curses, not loud but deep, and we were glad when we lost sight of the gloomy visages of the would be rebels, and were again on our way to pitch our camp at Ellicott's Mills, where months of drill and discipline were to make us fit to take our place alongside of the veterans of the Army of the Potomac, and where we imagined that our service in the field commenced in earnest. For we had an idea that upon us was devolved the duty of protecting Baltimore; upon the pickets at Ilchester, Helltown and along the pike a *frightful* responsibility rested, for if they should be taken prisoners without giving the alarm, the enemy could surprise our camp, capture our whole command, march without molestation to the sack of the city of Baltimore, thence to New York and Philadelphia, in fact the whole North would be open to them and the success of the Rebellion assured! We stood aghast at the immensity of the interests entrusted to our courage and fidelity, yet no one shrank from the duty, but each was eager to prove that the confidence reposed by the government in him individually was not misplaced, and took his position on the *perilous* outpost, determined to let no living object pass his station without close scrutiny. No rebel spy should elude his vigilance, be he never so cunningly disguised or concealed. At the approach of a covered wagon or load of hay the whole guard was turned out, and stood under arms while the wagon was carefully searched and the load of hay closely inspected and thrust through with swords and bayonets in the hope of discovering a second Andre, loaded down with treasonable dispatches. Every

man that approached was promptly challenged, and if he had failed to halt at the word of command would probably have paid for his temerity with his life. Fortunately, no one attempted to defy our authority, and the only blood shed was that of the pigs and chickens in the neighborhood, which, after mature and careful deliberation, we decided to be giving aid and comfort to the enemy, and were declared to be "contraband of war," to be taken dead or alive, wherever found. The disloyal residents of the vicinity said that we robbed their hen-roosts and killed their hogs, and were no better than common thieves, plunderers and tramps, but we bore them no malice on that account, and freely forgave them the foul slander, for they were only *civilians*; they had not been instructed in the art of war, could not appreciate the military necessities of the situation, or know that to destroy the enemy's supplies, or anything that can give him aid or comfort, is a fundamental principle of civilized warfare, and lies at the basis of military science. They were not slow to learn, however, for we were there but a few days when they established juvenile videttes to give timely notice of the approach of a soldier, in order that all "contraband of war" might be secreted.

We thought then that we were seeing service in the field, and that our trip to Frederick City to bring to the rear the prisoners captured at Antietam was an expedition worthy to be talked about, and to form the theme of many letters sent home in envelopes half covered with loyal devices and patriotic sentences, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against rebels and traitors; but what a change came over the spirit of our dream when we at last joined the Army of the Potomac in front of Fredericksburg, and how our eyes were opened to the real nature of campaigning after our experience in Burnside's Mud Campaign! How our stay at Ellicott's Mills, with its innumerable parades and drills; its play at picket duty; its flirtings with the girls in the village; its dances and frolics at Union, with a trip to Baltimore now and then, came to mind as we waded through the mud in and around our old camp at Falmouth, or stood shivering in the icy blast as sentinels along the Rappahannock opposite Fredericksburg, where no fires were allowed even on the coldest nights; or crouched around the handful of coals that tantalized us on "the reserve;" or burned our boots in the vain attempt to warm our almost freezing feet at the laurel bush fire at "the grand reserve," in the ravine; or tried without success to shield ourselves from the piercing north winds that whistled through the rooms—without windows or doors—of the old Lacey House, as we hugged the smouldering fire of gum chips and tried to convince ourselves that it gave out some heat. We found full play on the Lacey House picket line during the bitter winter of 1862-3 for all the latent patriotism that had made us restive at our previous inactivity, and it will never be forgotten by those who stood its posts, yet even it had its bright sides; and while we still shiver when we think of standing unprotected on the river bank during the blinding storms of hail, snow and sleet, or when the cold was so intense that our hands almost froze to the butts of our muskets, and we were in

imminent danger of freezing to death, we smile when we remember the sunny days when we sent our little shingle boats loaded with coffee and sugar across to the other side (contrary to orders), and received them back loaded with tobacco. And the remembrance of those nights of terrible suffering by cold and exposure is always followed by the recollection of those true-hearted patriotic women who met us in the morning with a warm drink and a cheerful word and smile. Every soldier who ever did duty on that picket line cannot fail to remember with blessings those noble ladies who, forsaking their luxurious homes, devoted their time and their means, without compensation, to alleviate the sufferings of the pickets of the Army of the Potomac; and every man will raise his hat and utter a fervent "God bless them!" at the mention of the names of Mrs. Harris, of Philadelphia, and her noble companions. I have always regarded the duty on that hill as severe as any we were called upon to perform during the war; but *just how* severe it was is best appreciated when we recollect that we left at our old Camp Falmouth the graves of thirty-nine comrades who fell victims to the exposure and hardships we endured while picketing along the Rappahannock.

It is no wonder, therefore, that we welcomed all indications that active operations were about to commence, and experienced a feeling of relief when we crossed to the other side of the river on the road to Chancellorsville, in an aggressive march on the enemy; for while we could not forget "that many brave boys must fall" in the impending conflict, we had confidence in the courage of our companions and the ability of our leaders, and were anxious to measure strength with our opponent, to prove to him that we were foemen worthy of his steel; and to the veterans of our own army, who looked upon us as untried recruits, our right to be acknowledged as worthy members of the Second Corps.

Crossing at United States Ford, we were soon on the actual battlefield of Chancellorsville, where our first blood was shed, but our Corps being in reserve, we did little during the first day, or until the evening of the second, except march and countermarch from one point of the field to another, while the skirmishing was going on briskly all around us accompanied by the explosions of shells thrown into the woods to "feel for the enemy." Occasionally there would be a volley of musketry, as bodies of the enemy's troops were seen marching into position; and then a long rattle of small arms mixed with the sharp crack of the field pieces in rapid succession at different points told us that the enemy was testing the strength of our line along its entire length, and that we might expect him in a short time to mass his forces and strike a crushing blow at what seemed to be our weakest spot. As soon as these assaults were repulsed aides and couriers were seen galloping in all directions, carrying instructions to division, brigade and regimental commanders; bodies of troops rapidly changed their stations; batteries thundered at full speed to the front, and the wounded, in ambulances,

on stretchers and on foot, came painfully and wearily to the rear. Yet we were not called upon to advance; and we began to think that the battle would be decided without our firing a gun, when, just as the dusk of evening was gathering over the landscape, orders were received for our division to take position in line of battle, to receive—so far as we were concerned—for the first time the fire of the foe.

Who of us will ever forget his emotions as the column slowly and steadily in the twilight marched down the road past the Chancellorsville House and was enveloped in the smoke of our batteries, which kept up a continual roar, and belched forth volumes of flame as they hurled their defiance to the enemy! The shots of the skirmishers grew each moment more distinct, and the shell and solid shot of our batteries passed harmlessly over our heads as we pressed onward, apparently without attracting the attention of the enemy; but, suddenly, in the distance, directly in our front, we saw a little flash of fire, and in a second something came whizzing through the air towards us. Before we had time to realize that it was a missile sent by the enemy, another and another followed with the rapidity of lightning, some ploughing up the ground to our right, some throwing up the dust of the road to our left as they ricocheted along the whole length of the line, others, exploding in air, scattering their death-dealing fragments all around, while still others seemed intent upon frightening us, as they skimmed along just over our heads, twisting a bayonet here and there, and then with a fiendish shriek continued their flight to bury themselves in the earth far in our rear. How they shrieked and screamed as they hustled by, and how we instinctively dodged and crowded together as each man imagined that the fire of all the Confederate batteries was directed in point blank range on him, and him alone; and how the regiment wavered and halted at the unexpected attack; for it was our first experience under fire, and the assault was as unlooked for as it was fierce. No foe was in sight, and yet "the Johnnies" seemed to have us in full view, for their range was perfect, and their shot and shell rained around us like hail as we stood there in the road completely bewildered.

It was a severe test of the courage and discipline of veterans; but raw recruits, as we were, could not be expected long to receive such a fire without flinching,—for it requires fewer attributes of the good soldier to rush on the enemy in the excitement of a charge, than to stand and receive his assault and not fire a shot until he is at close range, where every cartridge will prove to be an executioner, and the effects of a volley may be seen in the gaps cut in his ranks as he approaches. But here we had not even the satisfaction of seeing our assailant; our own batteries, too, ceased firing (in order to get a better range, as we learned afterwards, but then to our inexperienced ears silenced), and we seemed to be standing there a passive target for the fire of the enemy, to be slaughtered at his pleasure. There is no doubt that we were scared, badly scared, just then, and each of us was probably in the condition of the recruit at the battle of Chapul-

tepec, who, when asked on the eve of battle by a veteran at his side why he was trembling, replied, "My friend, if you were half as badly frightened as I am, you would run like the devil;" but, like that recruit, we were not frightened enough to run, and our colors were kept flying through it all. Our batteries were silent but a moment, when from all sides they broke forth with a roar that caused the earth to quake, lighting up the gathering gloom with the flash of their discharges, and filling the heavens with bombs as the fire of the whole park was concentrated on a single point of the enemy's line and effectually silenced his batteries, when we resumed the march, and in a few moments filed into the woods and took our position in the line of battle, with as little trembling and as much confidence as any veterans on the field.

Then came the order "rest," and pulling the capes of our overcoats over our heads, we threw ourselves upon the ground—our muskets in the hollow of arm ready for instant use—to take what rest we could ere we should be called upon to engage in that inevitable and deadly struggle which we felt assured could be postponed at the latest only until morning dawned. Through the darkness came the order, "fire by file," the last I heard given in the field by our gallant Colonel, and then silence reigned, notwithstanding tens of thousands of armed men lay all around us in the woods, and our sleep was disturbed no more during the night, except when the enemy at long intervals threw a solitary charge of grape, canister or shrapnel among us, which rattled like pebbles in the dry leaves, and drew a response in the shape of six-pound shells, or caused the Seven Sisters to rouse from their slumbers, and with a deep *boom* that reverberated through the woods and wakened the echoes for miles, toss their thirty-pound solid shot over our heads to the enemy, with their compliments.

So the night wore away, and the chill that heralds approaching day awoke us with chattering teeth and limbs that shook as with an ague to prepare to strike our first blow in defence of our Union and our flag. Nor had we long to wait, for with the first gray gleams of morning began again the fire of the skirmishers, which in less time than it takes to tell developed into a heavy fusilade, and then into one continuous roll and rattle of small arms, showing that the business of the day had commenced. There was no trembling then, but men fell in with teeth firmly set, and belts were tightened, and cartridge boxes and cap pouches brought to the front and buttoned open, and pieces were carefully reprimed, and every man was on the alert. Presently bullets commenced to whiz past us, or struck with a dull *thud* in the trees or in the body of a comrade at our side, and the fire of the musketry grew fast and furious, accompanied by the reports in quick succession of field pieces, as the rebels, with their well-known yell, rushed upon the line in our front, completely surprising the Eleventh Corps and driving them in confusion through the woods; our first intimation of disaster being the sight of our own men coming towards us in wild disorder, totally demoralized and fleeing as for their lives, closely pressed by the enemy, who advanced at the

double-quick, flushed with apparent victory, yelling like devils and darkening the air with bullets. Without a moment's warning the wave of battle surged upon us, overwhelming and crushing some to the earth with wounds, bearing some upon its crest into eternity, and plunging us into the crash and turmoil, the uproar and the whirlpool of a deadly engagement.

Who shall attempt to describe it, or his sensations under the circumstances? The pen and pencil in the hand of the ablest masters alike fail to convey an adequate idea of the scene. How tame the most vivid description and the truest picture of a battlefield when compared with the reality! To my mind the word *chaos* best describes the scene where two mighty armies, locked in a deadly embrace, struggle for the mastery.

After the first volley the smoke hung over us like a curtain, effectually concealing the enemy and enveloping us in its folds, while comrades "dying made no sign" as they dropped beside us, or sank to the earth with a groan of agony, or dashed to the rear, mad with pain, the blood flowing in streams from their wounds, while the conflict still raged and the carnage went on as fiercely as ever. The advance of the enemy was checked, but the roll of the musketry did not cease, nor did the artillery slacken its fire, and the armies remain stubbornly confronting each other, pouring death and destruction into the opposing ranks, neither giving ground, but each delivering its withering fire directly into the face of the foe. How well we stood our ground is attested by the fact that we left lifeless on the field forty-seven of our number (including Lieutenant Pierson), to say nothing of the wounded who escaped with their lives, among whom was our gallant Colonel.

In the decimating fire of the enemy we stood and gave him as good as he sent, until he succeeded in outflanking us, when we slowly and sullenly fell back out of the woods, back over the field we had marched down the evening previous, where we received the shelling, now strewn with broken drums, the arms and accoutrements of the wounded, dead and dying men and horses; back through the smoke of our retreating batteries, which were stubbornly disputing every inch of ground they were compelled to abandon; back through throngs of wounded making their way to the field hospital, some, unable to rise, dragging themselves along the ground by their hands, some trampled to death under the hoofs of riderless horses, that, frantic with wounds or the noises and smoke of the contest, dashed snorting in all directions across the field; some blown to atoms by a hostile shell when almost out of range, while others, utterly unable to proceed further, had at last given up all hope and lay in the last agony, their life with their blood fast ebbing away; back through scenes that make the heart sick to think of—leaving to the tender mercies of the enemy wounded comrades who were unable to follow us; compelled by stern military necessity to turn a deaf ear to the cry for help, or to the appeal, "for God's sake," not to leave them to be captured—we retraced our steps with powder-grimed faces and despondent

hearts, all the way back to the position we occupied on the first day, to form a new line of battle in the rear of the Chancellorsville House. For, while we had abandoned our position, it was through no fault of ours; we had not been *driven* from it, nor had the enemy advanced a step in our front after our division opened fire upon him until our flanks were turned and we were obliged to retire to escape capture, so that we were not disheartened or demoralized, and in a few hours presented again an unbroken front behind a line of earthworks bristling with artillery, and were ready either to defend our position or advance against that of the enemy.

Some of us were of the squad that sallied beyond the breastworks to where we left our knapsacks "piled" when we took our place in line of battle on the evening previous, and brought in for the benefit of the regiment as many blankets as we could carry, the shots of the skirmishers whistling around us all the while. And who has forgotten the last attack made on us there? When, after a sharp fire of a few minutes, our skirmishers rapidly retired from the woods opposite, across the field in our front, and came directly towards our breastworks, firing as they fell back; the enemy's skirmishers, supported by a line of battle, closely pressing them. We quickly fell in, without waiting for orders, and from behind our earthworks watched them as they came in full view across the clearing. Our men, continuing to retreat, had come more than half way across the field, when they suddenly ceased firing and broke into a run, upon which the rebels gave the well known yell and followed at the double-quick; but our boys took only a few steps when the artillery bugle sounded the call, "commence firing," and they fell flat on the ground, and over their heads there belched forth from the iron throat of each rifled piece within range a double charge of canister right into the face of the advancing foe, cutting terrible gaps in his columns. That settled it! The enemy, with thinned ranks, went flying to the friendly cover of the woods, hotly pursued by our skirmishers, who quickly resumed their former positions. It was our parting salute at Chancellorsville, for the battle was over, and it had been decided to retreat to the north bank of the Rappahannock, whither we crept sullenly and stealthily on the following night, our tin cups and canteens packed away so that they would make no noise; wading knee deep in the mud of the new road cut for us by the pioneers through the woods; without a sound, save a muttered curse when a comrade, tripping over one of the numerous little stumps left in the road, would stumble headlong into the mire, bringing the barrel of his musket, with a sounding "thwack," on the head of the man in his front, causing millions of stars to dance before his astonished vision in bold relief on the black darkness of the surrounding woods. The night seemed interminable, as we stumbled along in the darkness and mire, now double-quickening to "close up," and anon huddled together in a confused mass, as the head of the column encountered an obstacle, and those in the rear came plunging blindly forward; but at length we were all safely across the river,—the campaign of Chancellors-

ville ended,—and on our way to our old camps, with one more piece of artillery than we had when we started, notwithstanding our defeat.

Time fails me to tell of our pleasant quarters at “New Camp Falmouth;” of the long stern chase after Lee through the wastes of Virginia, made barren by war’s desolation; of the old battlefields of the Army of the Potomac that we marched over, where ghastly relics of the conflict were still to be seen in piles of skeletons visible through the heaps of brushwood with which only they had been covered, or a hand or a foot protruding from the shallow trenches into which the dead had been cast in the hurried burial after the fight, or the grinning skulls that unburied lay bleaching in the hot summer sun; through the fruitful fields of Maryland, where the valleys groaned with their luxuriant crops, and scenes of peace and plenty on every hand presented to our eyes, accustomed to the havoc and carnage of war at Gettysburg, a very paradise of calm and smiling repose; of our finally overtaking the enemy, and our complete and glorious victory there that sent him whirling back to his much vaunted sacred soil, with decimated regiments, and our hot pursuit until he was again behind the Rapidan; of his advance on Washington in the fall of 1863, and our attacks on his marching columns at Auburn and Bristow Stations, and his speedy retreat (without risking a general engagement) to his fortifications on the south side of the Rapidan; of the Mine Run campaign in December of the same year, where one company of our regiment, acting as rear guard of the army, when we retired, was the last to cross the pontoon bridge, and narrowly escaped capture; of our winter quarters at Stevensburg and Stony Mountain, and the affair at Morton’s Ford in February, 1864; of the Wilderness campaign, when, commencing on the 4th of May, we fought by day and marched by night until the battle of Spottsylvania Court House on the 12th, in which we lost Lieutenant-Colonel Davis, who fell in the forefront of the engagement while gallantly leading the regiment in our assault on the enemy’s line when we surprised him before daybreak at Spottsylvania Court House; in which campaign also we lost Sergeant Cheesman, he who had carried our colors on so many hard fought battlefields, and who, at Gettysburg, leaped over the stone wall—the famous stone wall behind which we stood—and, amid our cheers, himself unarmed, took a Confederate battle flag from the rebel color bearer in our front—one of the seven stands of colors that our regiment took in that action. In fact, of all the marches and engagements of the Army of the Potomac until the enemy laid his arms at our feet in unconditional surrender at Appomattox Court House, and our task was pronounced by our countrymen well done. Nor is it necessary to dwell upon them, for their mere mention will recall to every mind a thousand pleasant associations and a myriad of reminiscences that we would not barter away, and any one of which is worth all the hardships, suffering and blood they cost, and which will ever gleam out like threads of gold in the web of our life; not only so, but at the second Centennial our posterity will point with as much pride to our deeds that preserved the life of the nation in the war

of the Rebellion, as we, at the first Centennial, in prose and verse told of the exploits of our forefathers in the war of the Revolution that established it.

Comrades, ours was a glorious privilege, to be permitted to participate in the struggle involving the life of the nation; to be allowed to act in deeds that go to make up its history; to be called upon to perform the grandest duty that can be demanded of a freeman—that of defending on the battlefield the honor of his flag and the institutions of civil and religious liberty. And we point to our record in the war, the record of the grand old Twelfth Regiment, not, in the spirit of idle boasting and braggadocia, but with an honest pride at having contributed our humble services to the success of a cause so holy, in which were involved the destiny of a nation and the principles of free government; and of thankfulness that our efforts were crowned with success and the approbation of our countrymen, and that no stigma was cast upon the fair escutcheon of our State by a single act of treachery or cowardice on the part of any member of our regiment. We did nothing but our duty, and lay no claim to be considered any braver than our comrades from other states, but we feel a peculiar satisfaction in the thought that the troops of New Jersey never lost a gun, and that their State flag never graced a triumph of the enemy. We cannot say that we never lost our colors, for of the stand that was entrusted to our regiment when we left for the seat of war, we deposited at the State Capitol only the bare poles; the silken flags were left upon the battlefields of Virginia; shred by shred they were torn from us by the bullets of the enemy as they defiantly waved in the thickest of the fight, and their fragments lie scattered over every battlefield of the Army of the Potomac, where, let us trust, they will prove good seed, and, nourished by the blood of the noble dead who fell around them, bring forth an abundant harvest of loyalty in a soil tainted with treason, but redeemed and made sacred by the graves of the patriots who, at the call of their country, gave their lives as a free will offering on her altar.

Our marches and campaigns are over, our bivouacs and actions are ended, but the duty for which we enlisted still remains, and will while life lasts, only the scene of our endeavors is shifted; it is still ours to defend the Union and the Constitution; not now, thank God, amid the confusion and bloodshed of the battlefield, but henceforth at the polls, where in time of peace the freeman's ballot is as necessary and effective in preserving his liberties as were his weapons in suppressing armed resistance to constitutional authority. And as we have a double claim to the protection of our flag, first by right of birth or adoption, and then by having defended it in the hour of its peril, so we have a two-fold incentive to maintain by our ballots the principles it represents; in addition to "securing the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity," we are in honor bound to see to it that the principles of free government for which our fallen comrades gave their lives are not surrendered or sacrificed by neglect of duty on our part.

No more are we called upon to "rally around the flag" half concealed by the smoke of deadly combat, but whenever we see it floating on the breeze, our hearts swell within us as we remember that it still waves o'er the land of the free through our efforts and those of our comrades, and the flash of the artillery's discharge and of the bursting bombs mingling with the musketry's smoke of the battlefields of the Civil War light up, as with a halo of glory, our star spangled banner, and across its broad stripes and bright stars we see indelibly written, as with a pen of fire, that sentiment,—made a living principle and an incontrovertible fact by the achievements of the Union Volunteers,—"The Union now and forever, one and inseperable!"

The foregoing was listened to with rapt attention, the Captain calling vividly to mind the scenes through which the Regiment had passed from the time it left Woodbury to the battle of Spottsylvania, where he lost a leg.

On motion of Colonel Stratton, a vote of thanks was extended to Captain Brooks for his able and interesting address, and he was requested to furnish the Secretary a copy for preservation.

The Committee on Constitution and By-Laws reported the following, which was read and adopted:

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS.

CONSTITUTION.

This Association shall be known by the name and title of THE REUNION SOCIETY OF THE TWELFTH REGIMENT NEW JERSEY VOLUNTEERS.

ARTICLE I. The objects of the Society shall be to keep alive a spirit of patriotism; to imbue our posterity with a love of country, which shall at all times rise paramount to the ties of party; to revive and strengthen the ties of fraternal fellowship formed by the companionship in the Regiment; to recall to mind the many trials of our late struggle; to perpetuate the names and fame of those who have fallen in battle, or in the line of duty, and to collect and preserve for our children a record of the many well-contested battles, marches, campaigns and skirmishes which the Regiment passed through so honorably.

ART. II. The officers of the Society shall be a President, four Vice-Presidents, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Executive Committee of six, who shall be elected at each annual meeting, and hold their respective offices one year, or until their successors are elected.

ART. III. Any surviving member of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers, who has been honorably discharged therefrom, shall be eligible to membership upon giving his assent to the Constitution of the Society, by the signing the roll thereof, and the payment of one dollar to the Treasurer.

ART. IV. The annual meeting of the Society shall be held on the 22d day of February of each year, except when the 22d of February falls upon Sunday, in which event the annual meeting will be held on the 23d of February.

ART. V. Twenty members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

ART. VI. This Constitution may be altered or amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting; *Provided*, due notice of the contemplated change shall have been given at the previous meeting.

BY-LAWS.

ARTICLE I. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Society, sign all drafts on the Treasurer for the payment of money, when so ordered by the Society, or the Executive Committee, and appoint all committees not otherwise provided for by the Society. In the absence of the President, his duties shall be performed by one of the Vice-Presidents; and in the absence of the President and Vice-Presidents, a President *pro tempore*, with like powers, may be chosen.

ART. II. The Corresponding Secretary shall, at the expense of the Society, notify the members of the Society of the time and place of holding the annual meeting, by public notice. He shall also correspond with the members or other kindred associations whenever so directed by the Society or Executive Committee. He shall attend all meetings of the Society or Executive Committee.

ART. III. The Recording Secretary shall attend all the meetings of the Society or Executive Committee, and record all their proceedings in a book or books provided for that purpose, and preserve the books and papers belonging to the same. He shall draw upon the Treasurer for such sums of money as may be ordered by the Society or the Executive Committee, and perform such other duties as may be required of him; and at the expiration of his term of office deliver all books and papers belonging to the Society in his possession to his successor in office.

ART. IV. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive all monies due the Society, and pay the same out upon the order or orders of the Recording Secretary, countersigned by the President, and at each annual meeting make out a detailed report to the Society of his receipts and expenditures; and at the expiration of his term of office deliver all monies, books, and papers in his possession belonging to the Society to his successor in office.

ART. V. It shall be the duty of the Executive Committee to make all necessary arrangements for the annual meetings of the Society. They shall annually, or oftener, audit the accounts of the Secretaries and Treasurer, and perform such other duties as the Society may require of them. The President, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer, shall be, *ex-officio*, members of the Executive Committee. Five members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

ART. VI. Every officer and soldier of the Twelfth Regiment New Jersey Volunteers, who was honorably discharged therefrom, desiring to become a member of the Society, shall, upon giving his assent to the Constitution and By-Laws, pay to the Treasurer the sum of one dollar, and each year thereafter the sum of one dollar, as annual dues, and shall thereupon be entitled to a copy of the proceedings of the Society, when published, free of charge, and to all the other privileges of members. No member in arrears for annual dues shall be entitled to vote for officers.

ART. VII. The order of business at the annual meetings shall be as follows:

1. Meeting called to order.
2. Prayer.
3. Reading of the Minutes.
4. Collection of Dues.
5. Reading Communications.
6. Address.
7. Reports of Committees.
8. Unfinished Business.
9. New Business.

ART. VIII. These By-Laws may be amended, altered, or repealed, by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting.

Nomination and election of officers being in order, the Society proceeded to the same with the following result:

President, First-Sergeant George C. Sithens.

Vice-Presidents, Sergeant Charles Padgett, Lieutenant Elwood Griscom, Sergeant George R. Danenhower, Sergeant Arthur Stanley.

Recording Secretary, Sergeant John Tonkin.

Corresponding Secretary, Lieutenant J. Morgan Barnes.

Treasurer, Captain Charles D. Lippincott.

Executive Committee, Colonel H. F. Chew, Corporal Isaac A. Dubois, Corporal Henry M. Avis, Sergeant Virgil Willetts, Captain Frank M. Riley, Sergeant David Borton.

On motion, the Executive Committee was ordered to engage a band of music for the next Reunion.

The Society resolved to meet at Woodbury Hall next year.

On motion, the By-Laws were amended by striking out so much of Article II. as requires the Secretary to notify members by mail of the annual Reunion.

Major S. S. Carroll, U. S. A., now on the retired list on account of wounds received in action, was elected an honorary member of the Society, and the Corresponding Secretary directed to notify him of the same.

A vote of thanks was tendered the Woodbury Hall Association for use of hall.

No further business being presented the Society adjourned.

The members of the Society formed in line outside the hall, and marched to the Soldier's Monument, where a dirge was played by the band; thence to Paul's Hotel, where the annual dinner of the Society was served.