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COMPLIMENTS OF GEO. SAVAGE.

IN MEMORIAM

THE BARON DEKALB.

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

GEORGE SAVAGE ESQ.,

BEFORE THE

UNITED GERMAN SINGERS OF BALTIMORE.

August 12th, 1886.

POEM

COMPOSED BY

JOHN STRAUBENMUELLER OF NEW YORK,

AND RECITED BY

WILLIAM ECKHARDT ESQ.

BALTIMORE:

FROM THE PRESS OF JAMES YOUNG,

No. 114 South Street.

1886.



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No. 56 South Street.

1886.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

BALTIMORE. July 14, 1886.

GEORGE SAVAGE, Esq.

DEAR SIR:

The United German Singers of Baltimore will, on the 12th of next month, hold, in the hall of the Germania Mænnerchor Society in this City, a celebration in memory of the Baron DeKalb, and we take pleasure in cordially inviting you, in their name, to deliver an address on that occasion.

Your well known interest in whatever concerns American citizens of German birth leads us to believe that you will heartily unite with us in honoring a hero of the Revolution.

With high regard, we are,

Very Respectfully Yours,

JOHN HOFFMEISTER, CHAIRMAN.
Of The Germania Mænnerchor.

OTTMAR MERGENTHALER,
Of The Baltimore Liederkranz.

HERMAN BAAKE,
Of The Arion.

ROBERT D. BOSS,
Of The Baltimore Liedertafel.

A. BRUNIER,
Of The Frohsinn.

E. KOESTER,
Of The Arbeiter Liedertafel.

ANTON REICH,
Of The East Baltimore Liedertafel.

JACOB KLEIN,
WM. ECKHARDT,
Of The Germania Mænnerchor.

HENRY THOMAS, SECRETARY.
Of The Harmonie.

FRED. SCHEIDT,
Of The Arbeiter Mænnerchor.

BALTIMORE. July 17, 1886.

MESSRS. JOHN HOFFMEISTER (CHAIRMAN),
OTTMAR MERGENTHALER, HERMAN BAAKE,
ROBERT D. BOSS *and others.*

GENTLEMEN:

I am in receipt of your complimentary invitation to address the United German Singers of Baltimore on the occasion of a celebration to be held by them in memory of the Baron DeKalb, and I accept it with pleasure. I hope I may be able to recall to all Americans who may be present the rare nobility of life and character which the heroic DeKalb illustrated to his last hour.

I am, Gentlemen,

Very Truly Yours.

GEO. SAVAGE.

ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

It is patriotic, instructive and inspiring to recall our country's heroic past and to review the lives, the characters and the services of the heroes who have illustrated, by their valor and self-abnegation, the proudest pages of American history. We owe to the memories of all who fell in the long and desperate struggle of the Colonies for Independence the sacred duty of repeating and perpetuating the story of their sacrifices and achievements and commemorating their love of liberty. Though more than a century has rolled over their graves their examples, written in blood and consecrated by death, remain to guide, encourage and inspire us and those who will come after us. It is not enough that enduring memorials should attest our gratitude; we should tell again and again to each other and to mankind how they labored, fought and died that this nation might exist and that the inestimable blessings of free government might be the priceless heritage of this great people.

I would now direct your attention to a conspicuous and highly admirable soldier who gave his all in that most important and eventful war for self-government which began amid many and darkest clouds, and was continued for seven years with varying success, but ended, at last, in glorious victory at Yorktown, and was fitly closed with the exultant words of Washington: "It is done, and it is well done!" Let us pause to note that the limits of the application of the principles of self-government first asserted and successfully defended by the American Colonies, and for which DeKalb died, have not yet been reached, that at this time the British Parliament and public are deeply agitated by their discussion, and

that a vast number of the suffragists of Great Britain, following the lead of her foremost statesman, Mr. Gladstone, deliberately and with deep earnestness reassert them.

I have been highly honored by your invitation to address you, and I join heartily with you in paying a well deserved tribute to the memory of John Kalb who is better known as the Baron DeKalb. Neither the time kindly allotted to me nor even your generous patience will permit a presentation of the many interesting facts of his life, and my object will have been accomplished if, happily, I succeed in outlining the most prominent in sufficiently bold relief. I come not to unduly praise him; it would be presumption to attempt to add to the laurel-wreath which encircles his brow. He was a German. Let that fact be remembered not only with heartfelt pride by all who have German blood in their veins and who are among us and of us, but by all who honor the noblest qualities and are grateful to the soldiers of the Revolution, and especially to those who, though foreign-born, gave their lives in support of the Revolutionary cause. He was born on the 29th of June, 1721, at Huettendorf, now embraced in the Bavarian District of Erlangen. His father was John Leonard Kalb, son of Hans Kalb, yeoman, of Leimburg, near Altdorf, and is mentioned in the church records of the parish of Frauenaurach as "sojourner and peasant of Huettendorf." His mother was Margaret Seitz, whose birthplace was Eschenbach. He was the second of three sons and received his earliest schooling at Kriegenbronn. It is to be regretted that of the boyhood and early manhood of DeKalb no records exist. The story of his early ambitions, trials and struggles will never be told; but we know that his pathway was a rugged one; that he was compelled to wring from the reluctant hand of fortune all that he gained; and that he owed everything to his exertions, character and talents. How consonant with the opinion of highest merit which prevails in this land is the subject of my eulogy to-night! In the truest sense he was self-made. "The accident of birth" was against him, but steadfastly relying on his own heart, and hand, and head, he carved his way from poverty and obscurity to power and

fame. Well may the youth of America seek to emulate him! His early life was more or less adventurous, but he must have borne himself well, for at the age of twenty-three he became a lieutenant in the famous Loewendal regiment of French infantry, a corps which though enlisted under French colors was officered almost exclusively by German noblemen. It has been alleged against him that he was a soldier of fortune, but in the language of his most faithful and discriminating biographer, "throughout the last century more than at any other time the line of distinction between an adventurer and a hero was very dim, often scarcely discernible, and the antecedents of many a man who at a subsequent stage of his career scaled the heights of fame were checkered with alternate displays of either character." In France he accepted the title of the Baron DeKalb. In the language of another, "regarding this step in the light of his time it cannot be judged too mildly. The title of nobility was simply the password which unlocked the world to him, the indispensable starting point for all future operations; one more scruple on his part and the world would probably have gained a sturdy yeoman but lost a hero!" Let it not be a matter of surprise that DeKalb entered the military service of France; it was the goal of the ambition of many of the best and bravest at that period. His native land afforded him no opportunity for distinction; the absolutism which prevailed there would have subjected him to the iron will of the ruler of a petty State and he would have been treated as a plebeian. France offered every inducement to men of his stamp. Marshal Saxe, one of the greatest military leaders of his day and a German by birth, had risen to the command of the French army, and it was well known that the Bourbon Kings were partial to the foreign-born officers who served them faithfully. History records that in 1748 the foreign troops, who followed the fleurs de lys of King Louis the 15th, numbered 52,315, that among them were nineteen German infantry battalions with 525 officers and 17,604 of the rank and file and three regiments of cavalry numbering 78 officers and 1440 troopers; and that, in addition, thousands of Ger-

mans were in the thirteen Swiss regiments of the French army. As late as 1776 the Germans in the army of France comprised eight regiments of foot with 448 officers and 12,032 privates and three cavalry regiments numbering 96 officers and 2,520 men. I rejoice with you that to-day the world sees, with admiration and fear, that Germans are all for their Fatherland!

The occasion will not admit of more than a brief mention of the military services rendered by DeKalb to his adopted country. They were distinguished and valuable. In the war declared by France in 1744 against Great Britain and Austria he showed such personal bravery, endurance and energy, united to aptitude for the profession of arms, and so occupied all his leisure in study, principally of the modern languages and the higher branches of mathematics and the internal organization of troops, that he soon attracted the attention of his superiors. He was promoted rapidly and was assigned to posts of importance. In less than four years he was made a captain and adjutant and was charged with the responsible duties of an officer of detail. He was noted also for his executive ability and humanity. In the Seven Years' War DeKalb actively participated on the side of the French with the Loewendal regiment which was conspicuous for its gallantry, and especially at Rossback where Frederick the Great gained a decisive victory. DeKalb won during that time the lasting friendship of the Duc DeBroglie, one of the ablest of the generals of France and who Jomini declared was the only French general engaged in the Seven Years' War who was capable on all occasions. In 1760 he was appointed by Marshal Duc DeBroglie assistant quartermaster general with the Army of the Upper Rhine, and in 1761 he was made a lieutenant colonel. I cannot follow him step by step, but DeKalb displayed accomplishments of such a high order that he was selected, without consultation with him, by the Duc DeChoiseul, then at the head of the direction of the French Government and who has been truly called "one of the greatest if not the greatest French statesmen since the days of Richelieu," to visit this country on a

secret mission. The farsighted and alert French minister was determined to be prepared for the war between the Colonies and the mother country which he foresaw and to avail himself of the opportunities it would afford France to humble England. DeKalb was at first averse to the service. But the Duc DeChoiseul insisted, and added: "Do not decline the mission with which I have entrusted you; I know it is difficult and requires great sagacity. But I have fixed my choice on you after much deliberation. Ask of me the means which you think necessary for its execution; I will furnish you with them all." DeKalb was instructed to inquire into the intentions of the Colonists; to ascertain their need of good engineers and artillery officers or other individuals, and whether they should be supplied with them; to inform himself of their facilities for procuring supplies and their ability to procure munitions of war and provisions; to acquaint himself with the greater or lesser strength of their purpose to withdraw from the English Government; to examine their resources in troops, fortified places and forts; and to seek to discover their plan of revolt and the leaders who were expected to direct and control it; and the Duc DeChoiseul added: "Great reliance is placed in the intelligence and address of Monsieur DeKalb in the pursuit of a mission requiring an uncommon degree of tact and shrewdness." I well know that you will welcome the insight into the private life of DeKalb as a most affectionate husband and father which is afforded by the concluding sentence of his letter to DeChoiseul, written from London in 1767, on the eve of his departure for Philadelphia. He wrote: "In conclusion, Monseigneur, I would recall to your mind the promises kindly made me on my departure from France, beseeching you to be a father and protector to my wife and children if it should be written in the book of fate that the journey upon which I am setting out should lead directly to my final resting place." Truly wrote Bayard Taylor:

The bravest are the tenderest,
The loving are the daring.

It would be very profitable to recall the state of feeling

here at that time and to give lengthy extracts from DeKalb's reports, but I can only say that they were remarkable for their calmness, accuracy and fullness and the foresight shown by their author. Let me delay you with a few lines from his pen written nearly ten years before the 4th of July, 1776. DeKalb wrote: "All classes of people here are imbued with such a spirit of independence and freedom from control, that if all the provinces can be united under a common representation, an independent state will soon be formed. At all events it will come forth in time. Whatever may be done in London this country is growing too powerful to be much longer governed at so great a distance." An incident of DeKalb's journey from Philadelphia to New York, in January 1768, must be related to illustrate his self-reliance and common sense. In those days the marvels of steam and electricity were not dreamed of. DeKalb's trip from Philadelphia to a point opposite Staten Island occupied four days. He there took a ferry boat between seven and eight o'clock at night to cross the Kill van Kull. The frail craft was driven by the wind and ice upon a little island and there sank, the passengers being obliged to save themselves by swimming and by wading through mud and ice. The island was without any inhabitants or shelter. Cries for help were unheard, and the unfortunate travelers, nine in number, were obliged to huddle together, exercise and keep watch in order to keep alive. Several died during the night. Relief did not come until morning. DeKalb then bathed his feet and legs in ice-cold water, took refreshments, went to bed and slept until evening. When the surgeon who had been summoned was told what he had done he refused to look at him, and declared that a man who had so maltreated himself must be lying dead in his bed. But DeKalb was the only one of the party who escaped without injury.

Let us come, without delay, to the year in which DeKalb joined his fortunes to a cause in which he was destined to yield up his life. The commencement of hostilities between England and her American Colonies found DeKalb in the enjoyment of honor, wealth and the best prospect of

continued success. It had been his good fortune to marry in 1764 the beautiful and accomplished daughter of Mons. Peter van Robais, a wealthy retired cloth manufacturer, who lived near Paris. One of his biographers thus writes of his married life: "In marked contrast to the dissolute manners of the time, DeKalb lived exclusively for his family, while his wife, in her turn, was no less devotedly attached to her husband than solicitous of the welfare of her children. The warmth of this attachment remained unaltered to the hour of DeKalb's death, and his last letters to his wife breathed the same fervor which had inspired the first and all the others." His wealth enabled him to live in luxury with his wife and three children. He had reached the age of fifty-five years. His friends were among the best known and most influential leaders in France. But he determined to offer his services to the new born nation that had thrown down the gauntlet to the most powerful in the world. Mr. Silas Deane, the American agent in France, gladly accepted DeKalb's offer, and wrote to his government: "Count DeBroglie, who commanded the army of France during the last war, did me the honor to call on me twice yesterday with an officer who served as his quarter-master-general in that war and now has a regiment in this service, but being a German—the Baron DeKalb—and having traveled through America a few years since, he is desirous of engaging in the service of the United States of North America. I can by no means let slip an opportunity of engaging a person of so much experience, and who is by every one recommended as one of the bravest and most skillful officers in the kingdom." And with a just appreciation of DeKalb's motives he added: "This gentleman has an independent fortune and a certain prospect of advancement here, but being a zealous friend to liberty, civil and religious, he is actuated by the most independent and generous principles in the offer he makes of his services to the States of America." Mr. Deane engaged DeKalb as a major-general, his seniority to date from the 7th of November, 1776, and the formal contract was signed by both parties soon after, DeKalb signing for himself and fifteen companions, among whom were the

Vicount DeMauroy, major-general; Dubuysson, afterward his aide and major, and VonHoltzendorff, a Prussian lieutenant-colonel. DeKalb then held a commission as a brigadier-general in the service of France. On the 7th of December, 1776, a new agreement with Mr. Deane was concluded, and it bore the additional signature of Lafayette, then in his twentieth year. It is important to call attention to the relations which existed between the veteran who had been so warmly welcomed by Mr. Deane and the young nobleman of whom it has been well said that "he was filled with youthful enthusiasm for America and a burning desire to flash his sword in a transatlantic crusade." Lafayette was a kinsman of the Count DeBroglie, DeKalb's warm friend, and was by him referred to DeKalb for counsel and protection. It was indeed fortunate for the ultimate success of the American arms that DeKalb and Lafayette were sincere friends and were heartily in accord. DeKalb keenly appreciated the great importance of enlisting in the cause of American Independence the sympathies of the nobility of France, and he used, before leaving for America, every influence to that end. Subsequent events showed how farseeing and astute he had been and how invaluable were his personal efforts. He introduced Lafayette to the American agent, and doubtless urged acceptance of his services. It is too much a matter of detail for me to recite the difficulties which immediately beset those who longed to follow Washington. They were many, and arose from the remonstrances of Lord Stormond, the English prime minister, the prohibitory order of the French government, the necessity for secrecy in every movement and the open opposition of Lafayette's father-in-law. It was not until the 13th of June, 1777, that, after a voyage of forty-five days, DeKalb, Lafayette and their companions beheld from the deck of La Victoire the shore of South Carolina at Georgetown. After being hospitably entertained by Major Huger, they rode to Charleston and there began their preparations for their journey to Philadelphia, setting out on the 27th of June. Owing to the excessive heat they did not reach Philadelphia until thirty

days had elapsed. En route they passed through Annapolis. Doubtless DeKalb saw the spot where, in a few days, another lasting memorial, erected by a grateful nation to commemorate devoted valor and love of liberty, will be dedicated with imposing ceremonies, and thousands will hail, with a glad acclaim, the statue and the name of DeKalb.

A reception of a character very different from that which they had a right to believe awaited them was given DeKalb, Lafayette and the foreign-born officers with them when they presented themselves, on the day after their arrival in Philadelphia, to the President of the American Congress. They were not welcomed, but were coldly received. Jealousy of foreigners as commanders was then rife in the American army and Congress. The claims of Coudray, a French officer, who had reached Philadelphia a few weeks previous to the coming of DeKalb, Lafayette and DeMauroy, founded on an agreement with Mr. Deane, to the rank of a major-general and the command of both the artillery and the engineers of the Continental army, had aroused much indignation, and so violent and unreasoning had the feeling become that three American generals—Knox, Greene and Sullivan—had tendered their resignations on the mere rumor that Coudray's demands had been granted. Congress was much annoyed and embarrassed by the situation; on the one hand was the open opposition to foreign officers—the more strongly evidenced by those American officers who were notoriously incompetent—and on the other the just claims of soldiers of experience and capacity. Thirteen foreign officers were entitled to appointments, and three of them, DeKalb, Lafayette and DeMauroy, to the rank of major-generals. Congress finally refused to ratify the contracts made by Mr. Deane and declared that he had exceeded his powers. The dilemma was a most painful one to the noble spirits who had made such sacrifices for the cause of the Colonies. Influenced by a desire to take advantage of the special influences which it believed would follow the appointment of Lafayette because of his great family connections and wealth, Congress, on the 31st of July, 1777, appointed him a major-general. That act, however viewed,

was almost an affront to DeKalb. But it only strengthened the friendship between DeKalb and his youthful protege. Lafayette, with proper delicacy, assured DeKalb that he would decline the proffered rank unless the same was given to him. In the generosity of his nature DeKalb declined Lafayette's proposal and advised him to accept the commission. Lafayette sensibly followed DeKalb's excellent advice and soon after was slightly wounded in the battle of Brandywine. DeKalb could not but keenly feel the wrong which had been committed, and he was made of "sterner stuff" than to quietly submit. The day after Lafayette's appointment he wrote to the President of Congress, strongly setting forth his claims and protesting against the injustice which had been done him. Be it remembered that DeKalb was the more valuable as an officer and the better able to assert and defend himself inasmuch as he spoke and wrote English with fluency and accuracy whereas all other officers born in France or Germany, and then in America, could make themselves understood only with difficulty. In his letter of August 1, 1777, to the President of Congress he wrote: "I was vastly surprised at my being introduced to Mr. Lowell to hear him (almost in public) exclaim loudly against Mr. Deane's proceedings, and disapprove all the conventions that agent has made with several officers as contrary to his powers. To this I answer that a public man ought to know what powers he hath from his constituents or hath not; that Mr. Deane is generally esteemed to be a candid man and a man of sense; that whatever he may have agreed to with others and this too in a language he did not understand, mine is in English and so very plain that it can admit of no various interpretations;" and he added: "As I have now fulfilled my part of that agreement, I wish Congress would do theirs, without loss of time, and let me hear of their resolution; I would not be a simple spectator in the scenes preparing for opening."

In the same letter, referring to Lafayette, he wrote: "I am very glad that you granted his wishes; he is a worthy young man and no one will outdo him in enthusiasm in your cause of liberty and independence. My wishes will always

be that his success as a major-general will equal his zeal and your expectations. But I must confess, sir, that this distinction between him and myself is painful and very displeasing to me. We came on the same errand, with the same promises,* and as military men and for military purposes. I flattered myself that if there was to be any preference it would be due to me. Thirty-four years of constant attendance on military service, and my station and rank in that way, may well be laid in the scale with his disinterestedness and be at least of the same weight and value!" With thoughtfulness of the effect in France of such action in regard to himself and Lafayette he added: "It would seem very odd and ridiculous to the French minister and experienced military men to see me placed under the command of the Marquis de Lafayette." On the 8th of September Congress declared, by resolution, that the contracts made by Deane were not binding, and it returned its thanks to the gentlemen who had come, and offered to pay their expenses to and from America. A week later DeKalb and his companions started for France. He journeyed by way of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in order to visit his Moravian countrymen there, but a messenger from Congress overtook him and informed him that on the day of his departure from Philadelphia he had been elected a major-general. A new major-generalship had been created for him. His commission was dated October 4, 1777, but Congress ordered his seniority to date from the 31st of July, the date of Lafayette's commission, and even offered to ante-date his commission to the 7th of November, 1776. DeKalb was, however, satisfied to have his commission bear the same date as Lafayette's. I have been thus explicit in dealing with this period of DeKalb's life in order that his disposition, trials and sacrifices may be the better understood and appreciated.

On joining the American army, then north of Philadelphia and near Germantown, DeKalb was cordially received, and was assigned, early in November, 1777, to the command of a division formed of New England regiments. Let us now look at DeKalb as he was in appearance, manners and

habits when he wielded his sword for the liberties of the Colonies, and we are fortunate in having a most interesting account of him from the pen of Col. Nicholas Rogers, of this city, who served for a while as one of his aids. He wrote of him: "In size he was a perfect Ariovistus, being upwards of six feet, and fully equal to the fatigues of a soldier. He would often walk twenty or thirty miles a day without a sigh or complaint, and indeed often preferred that exercise to riding. His complexion and skin were remarkable, being as fair and fresh as those of a youth. Besides his extreme temperance, sobriety and prudence, with his great simplicity of manners which highly fitted him for his undertaking, he had also many of the other qualifications for a soldier such as patience, long-suffering, strength of constitution, endurance of hunger and thirst, and a cheerful submission to every inconvenience in lodging, for I have known him repeatedly to arrange his portmanteau as a pillow, and, wrapping his great horseman's cloak around him, stretch himself before the fire and take as comfortable a nap as if upon a bed of eider-down." Col. Rogers also records that he was in the habit of rising before daylight and at once commencing his work, and that his favorite drink was—water. General Henry Lee, who is known as "Light Horse Harry," and was the father of the late General Robert E. Lee, wrote of him: "No man surpassed him in simplicity and condescension which gave to his deportment a cast of amiability, extremely ingratiating, exciting confidence and esteem;" and he added: "Such had been the temperance of his life, that he not only enjoyed to the last the finest health, but his countenance still retained the bloom of youth." He was prompt and methodical, gave his personal attention to every detail, and performed, with the most conscientious fidelity, every duty. He wrote almost daily to his wife and friends.

I am admonished by the length of time already occupied of the impossibility of following his career in the American army or even of recalling his connection with the events and the men of that period. I must content myself with a cursory statement, and must avoid even the most interesting

details. But let me express the hope that you will seek in the pages of history, and especially in his numerous letters to his wife and the Duc DeBroglie, the essential facts of his life and of the times which I must deny myself the pleasure of relating.

On the 30th of December, 1777, DeKalb was made Inspector-General of the army. He shared the hardships of the winter at Valley Forge. He commanded the centre of the army in the grand manœuvre made in celebrating the conclusion in 1778 of the alliance between France and the United States. He was continually kept in important positions in the field and rendered most valuable services. There is every reason to believe that he approved himself and was regarded as one of the ablest commanders. In 1779 he was assigned to the command of one regiment from Delaware and seven from Maryland. It was divided into two brigades which were commanded by Gens. Smallwood and Gist, both of Maryland. A military critic of the Revolutionary war gives this just praise to the Maryland and Delaware patriots: "One fact in the struggle for American Independence should have specific notice. From 1776, before Boston and through the entire war the States of Maryland and Delaware were represented on nearly every battlefield. Although their troops were few in numbers they were distinguished for valor, so that their failure in an emergency was a sign of great peril or of some over-mastering superiority or panic."

We will now go with DeKalb to his last battle field. The order of the 3d of April, 1780, directing DeKalb to march to the relief of Gen. Lincoln, then besieged by Gen. Clinton, at Charleston, S. C., showed the confidence of Washington in him and his troops. When it was issued DeKalb, having relieved Gen. St. Clair, was performing with a corps the very difficult task of guarding and defending Washington's headquarters at Morristown, protecting the country bordering on the British line, ascertaining and reporting the strength and movements of the enemy along the coasts of New Jersey and Staten Island, and securing, in the advance with an inadequate force, the safety of the American army. It had required

the utmost vigilance and had subjected him and his officers and men to great hardships. Charleston had fallen and the victorious regulars of King George were free to make battle in the interior and to reduce the Carolinas to submission. Gen. Lincoln was a prisoner, and Gen. Horatio Gates, who had won a great reputation with Congress and the masses by the capture, in October, 1777, of Gen. Burgoyne and his whole army, was appointed by Congress commander-in-chief of the Southern army. General Gates was dictatorial, haughty, conceited and incompetent. In his own opinion he was superior to Washington in generalship, and he had actually intrigued for the command of the American army. He was on his farm in Virginia when intelligence of his appointment reached him. "Take care," said an old friend, Gen. Charles Lee, "lest your Northern laurels turn to Southern willows." The words were prophetic. Gen. Gates reached his army on the 25th of July, and to the amazement of DeKalb, who he had succeeded, and of his troops, he issued the next day, to what he called his "Grand Army," orders to march on Camden, a town in South Carolina. He thereby betrayed total ignorance of his surroundings and of the condition of his troops who had been but one day under his command. Gen. Henry Lee thus criticises him: "Calculating proudly on the weight of his name, he appears to have slighted the prerequisites to victory, and to have hurried on to the field of battle with the impetuosity of youth; a memorable instance of the certain destruction which awaits the soldier who does not know how to estimate prosperity." In vain did DeKalb and the leading officers set out in writing the dangers which would inevitably surround him, the necessity for at least a brief delay, and the advantages of marching towards Salisbury, North Carolina. Gates promised to consult with his best officers at noon of the first day's march but never did. Ignorant of the position and movements of his enemy, and supposing that he would be opposed by Lord Rawdon alone when in fact Lord Cornwallis, alarmed at Gates's audacity, had hurried from Charleston to Lord Rawdon's support, and despite the fact that his total force was nominally only three thousand

and fifty-two men, of whom about fourteen hundred were good troops and well officered, while the remainder were raw militia hastily collected from Virginia and North Carolina, who did not know how to use the bayonets they had only just received and many of whom had never been under fire, Gates, on the 15th of August, ordered his army "to march promptly at ten o'clock that night." Lord Cornwallis was a capable commander who had served under the Duke of Brunswick in the Seven Year's war, and he commanded over two thousand men, a majority being the best troops in the British army. He, too, had determined to make a night attack, and he set out, at the same hour as did Gates, for Clermont, where Gates had arrived, about twelve or thirteen miles from Camden. About two o'clock on the morning of the 16th of August, the British and Americans met, and after some sharp fighting with the advantage to the British, both sides, as if by common consent, suspended hostilities until daybreak. Gen. Gates then learned for the first time, from prisoners, that Cornwallis was himself in command, and that his army was within five or six hundred yards of his front. He called a council of war, and when DeKalb was invited to it and told of what had been ascertained, he immediately inquired: "Well, did not the Commanding General immediately order a retreat?" thus indicating his opinion. But it does not appear that DeKalb at the conference which was thereupon held without delay, and at which the unwelcome news of Lord Cornwallis's presence was communicated to the generals and the regimental commanders, opposed the impetuous Gen. Stevens, who, when he saw that no one, not even the Commanding General, had any proposition to submit, exclaimed: "We must fight, gentlemen; it is not yet too late; we can do nothing else; we must fight!" Lord Cornwallis kept his ground and his flanks were well protected by impassable marshes. The American line was formed with the Virginia militia on the left under Gen. Stevens; the North Carolina militia in the centre under Gen. Caswell; and the right wing, consisting of the Second Maryland Brigade and the Delaware Regiment under Gen. Gist, commanded by DeKalb. The

First Maryland Brigade, under Gen. Smallwood, occupied the second line as a reserve. Two pieces of artillery were placed on Gist's right flank, and two on the right and one on the left of Caswell's command. The Americans were practically without cavalry, Armand's mounted legion of sixty men having fled at the first attack during the night. Gen. Gates took his position about six hundred yards in the rear to overlook the struggle. At dawn the battle opened. The British regulars under Lt. Col. Webster advanced with closed ranks and impetuously upon the Virginia militia, and, panic stricken, they fled almost without firing, despite prayers, entreaties, appeals and threats. The panic soon involved the North Carolinians, and, excepting four hundred of Dixon's regiment, who fired several times, they too abandoned the field. Gen. Gates, in his report, calls the militia "a torrent," and he was a part of it, for he slept that night in Charlotte, sixty miles from the battle-field, and four days later he was at Hillsborough, one hundred and eighty miles from Camden, without so much as an escort. While disaster and dishonor held sway on the left and in the centre, DeKalb and the men of Maryland and Delaware were performing feats of bravery. DeKalb ordered Smallwood's brigade to form a junction with Gist's, and did all that was possible to retrieve the fortunes of the day. Inspiring officers and men with his own dauntless spirit, he not only successfully resisted the furious onslaught of Lord Rawdon on his right, but drove the enemy with the bayonet and took prisoners. But in the meantime Smallwood's brigade had been outflanked, overpowered and forced back. It soon rallied and renewed the fight there, but without avail. DeKalb fought at the head of Gist's Marylanders and the Delaware regiment. He advanced three times, and maintained his ground before superior numbers. A sabre cut laid open his scalp, and his horse was shot under him. Jaquette, the Adjutant of the Delaware regiment, hastily bandaged the wound with his scarf, and besought DeKalb to retire. But the lion-hearted warrior heeded him not, and on foot led his brave Marylanders to the charge. Every foot of ground was contested, and DeKalb and his men performed prodigies

of valor as they fought hand to hand with the British. Cornwallis now concentrated all his force on DeKalb's weakened and wavering ranks, and Tarleton's irresistible troopers fell upon his flanks. Then the day was lost. But again did DeKalb, heading a handful of the bravest of the brave, rush upon the foe, waving his sword and calling on his men to follow. Several balls pierced his body, and blood streamed from his wounds. Still he had strength to cut down a Britisher who had a bayonet at his breast. The enemy now recognized him by his epaulets and pressed upon him, crying: "The rebel General! The rebel General!" Bleeding from eleven wounds he fell upon the field of battle. His ever faithful aid, Dubuysson, imploring the British to "save and spare the Baron DeKalb," and protecting him as best he could, received in his own body the thrusts intended for his chief. The British soldiers raised DeKalb to his feet and stripped him to his blood-dyed shirt. Cornwallis, happening to ride past, inquired who he was, and when told he said: "I regret to see you so badly wounded, but I am glad to have defeated you." He then ordered that the wounds of his distinguished prisoner be dressed and that proper attention be shown him. DeKalb was thereafter treated with marked kindness and humanity.

In all the annals of our country there is no story of battle more replete with pathos and inspiration than the one which I have, in the simplest words, recited to you. It has its dark side, but it tells also of all that honor could demand and self-sacrifice could avail; and when DeKalb fell on the fatal and bloody field of Camden he presented to the world a spectacle such as had not been witnessed since Leonidas, obedient to the laws of the Lacedemonians, died at Thermopylæ, and Winkelried, receiving in his breast the spears of his country's invaders, made way for liberty. Foreign-born, leaving all behind him, having much, very much, to make life dear to him, with other fields of honor and success open to him, in the maturity of his mental and physical powers, and worthy of higher command than had been given him, he was true and steadfast unto death. When we hear, as

sometimes we may from the lips of those who know not the whole truth of history, the opprobrious word "Hessian," we may well point to Camden and pronounce the blessed name of DeKalb. We may add, too, the honored name of Von-Steuben.

Let us return to him, who was the luminous figure where all was lost save honor. The strong man, though in his sixtieth year and bearing in his body so many grievous wounds, bore up against death for three days. Dubuysson was with him to the last, and British officers helped to soothe him. What thoughts of his wife and children must have come to him ere his eyes closed forever! What distress of mind must have been added to bodily pains! But the dying hero met the last enemy as well became him. His mind turned to the battle-field and the brave men who had fought with him. Dubuysson wrote to Gens. Gist and Smallwood: "It is with particular pleasure I obey the Baron's last commands in presenting his most affectionate compliments to all the officers and men of his division. He expressed the greatest satisfaction in the testimony given by the British army of the bravery of his troops, and he was charmed with the firm opposition they made to superior force when abandoned by the rest of the army." The British officers buried DeKalb with military and masonic honors. Gen. Gates wrote to Washington: "Too much honor cannot be paid by Congress to the memory of the Baron DeKalb; he was everything an excellent officer should be, and in the cause of the United States has sacrificed his life." Gen. Gates also, by letter, urged Congress to declare to the world its high estimate of his services and sacrifices. Washington was also sensible of what was due to DeKalb, and declared that he had fully justified his high opinion of him, and that his memory must ever be precious to all Americans. On the 14th of October, 1780, Congress passed a resolution directing that a monument be erected at Annapolis to his memory, and that it bear this inscription: "Sacred to the memory of the Baron DeKalb, Knight of the Royal Order of Military Merit, Brigadier of the Armies of France, and Major-General in the service of the

United States of America. Having served with honor and reputation for three years, he gave at last a glorious proof of his attachment to the liberties of mankind and the cause of America, in the action near Camden, in the State of South Carolina, on the 16th of August, 1780, where, leading on the troops of the Maryland and Delaware lines against superior numbers and animating them by his deeds of valor, he was pierced with many wounds, and on the 19th following expired in the 48th year of his age. The Congress of the United States of America, in gratitude to his zeal, services and merit, have erected this monument." At the time of the passage of the resolution, it was supposed, owing to DeKalb's comparatively youthful appearance, that he was in his 48th year, whereas he was in his 60th year. The monument was not erected; the nation was still struggling for existence; peace found its treasury empty; and subsequently that lack of ardent, active interest which causes so many good works to be deferred, operated to postpone to this month the payment by the nation of the debt it owes to DeKalb's memory. But he was not forgotten, and our immortal Washington, standing in the spring of 1791 by the little turf-clad mound that rose above his grave, said: "So here lies the brave DeKalb, the generous stranger who came from a distant land to fight our battles and to water with his blood the tree of our liberty. Would to God he had lived to share with us its fruits!" And to the citizens of Camden he said: "Your grateful remembrance of that excellent friend and gallant officer, the Baron DeKalb, does honor to the goodness of your hearts. With your regrets I mingle mine for his loss, and to your praises I join the tribute of my esteem for his memory." Still his resting place remained unmarked, save by a single tree, until 1825, when his admirers in Camden and throughout the State which has the honor to preserve and cherish his ashes erected a suitable monument to mark the hallowed spot and tell of his virtues and heroism. Lafayette, bent with years, reverently laid the corner-stone, and said: "His able conduct, undaunted valor and glorious fall in the battle of Camden form one of the remarkable traits of our

struggle for independence and freedom. He was cordially devoted to our American cause, and while his public and private qualities have endeared him to his contemporaries, here I remain to pay to his merits, at this tomb, the tribute of an admiring witness, of an intimate companion, and of a mourning friend."

At last the American people stand ready to demonstrate, in the capital of our State, that they are not ungrateful to the Baron DeKalb. The skillful hands of a Baltimore-born sculptor, who we welcome here, have well perpetuated in bronze the hero as he led the sons of Maryland and Delaware in his last battle; the nation will, by its final action and through its representatives, testify its faithful and dutiful memories of him; and Maryland, represented then, as we recognize, with much pleasure, that she is among us, by her worthy Governor, and remembering him with special pride and affection, will add a full share to his memorial honors.

Another shrine has been reared upon American soil! There Liberty may worship, Patriotism rekindle its fires, and Freedom offer prayers and benedictions! Let it stand forever, inspiringly typical of a hero's sacrifice! Let it make its silent but eloquent appeal to the homage of every citizen of the Republic! Let it tell of the storied past, enrich the present, and sentinel the future! And let patriots everywhere rejoice that, although all that was mortal of DeKalb long since mouldered into dust and 'his good sword is rust,' he lives in the hearts of a free, happy and grateful people, and that for him the years to come contain

The thanks of millions yet to be.

Baron de Kalb. + 1781.

(Gedichtet von Johann Straubenmüller.)

Baron de Kalb, ein Bayer,
Schlagfertig immerdar,
Verließ die Fürstendienste
Und trat zur Bürgerkrieger.

Im Waffenspiel erfahren,
Gewöhnt an Pulverdampf,
Trat er mit ganzer Seele
In den Befreiungskampf.

Als Fremder hier umgeben
Von Eifersucht und Neid,
Ging er wie der Spartaner
Leonidas in Streit.

Held Washington zur Seite
Stand er in mancher Schlacht,
Bis Kalb zuletzt im Süden
Erlag der Niedertracht.

In Süd-Carolina's Gauen,
Wo's wüß noch war und leer,
Da jagten sich die Blauen
Und Rothen hin und her.

Die Yankee-Truppen hatten
Nicht Nahrung, Kleidung, Sold,
Und auch der Gott der Schlachten
Schien ihnen nicht mehr hold.

Gates möchte einen Schlag thun,
Doch war die Lage schlecht,
Er zog trotz Widerspruches
Bei Camden in's Gefecht.

Weil Kalb ihm als Strategie
Mißrathen seinen Plan,
Brummt er ihn als „Verräther“
Und „feigen Fremdling“ an.

„Ich siege oder falle!“
Antwortet Kalb voll Muth,
Und brav sind seine Truppen,
Das Marylander Blut.

Die Briten sind im Vortheil
Und schlagen tapfer los,
Da wird bald die Verwirrung,
Der Schrecken rie' engroß.

Schon weicht die linke Flanke,
Virginien kneift aus,
Doch unerschüttert stehen
Kalb's Truppen in dem Strauß.

De Kalb trifft eine Kugel,
Er trieft vom Blute roth,
Doch reitet er noch vorwärts
Und vorwärts bis in Tod.

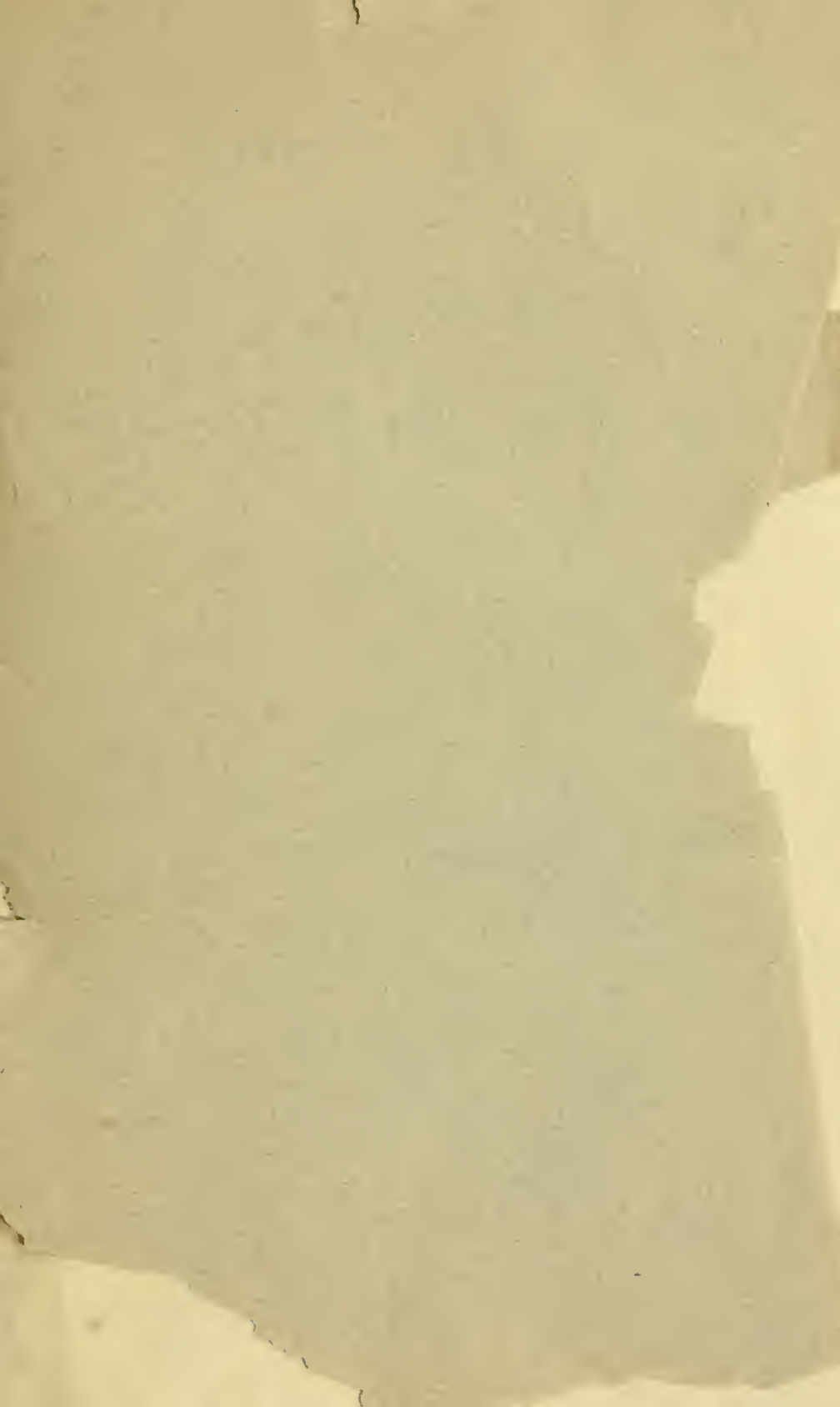
Kalb blutet aus elf Wunden,
Dann sinkt er erst vom Roß,
Und mit ihm, schwer getroffen,
De Buiffon, sein Genoß.

De Kalb wird nun gefangen,
Er stirbt im Britenzelt,
Doch träumte von gold'ner Freiheit
Noch sterbend unser Held.

Aus freiem Bürgerblute
Sieht er ersteh'n ein Reich,
Dem keines auf der Erde
In Glanz und Freiheit gleich.

Der Traum ist wahr geworden!
Und heute wird enthüllt
Nach hundert und fünf Jahren
Des edlen Helden Bild!

O, bleibe unvergessen,
Du Opfer jener Zeit,
Und weck' noch manchen Helden
Der Unabhängigkeit!



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