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"The tooth often bites the tongue, and yet they keep together in harmony when work is to be done for the good of the whole body."—*Danish proverb.*

"Be sure you're right, then go ahead."—*Davy Crockett.*

SPEECH

OF

HON. PETER J. OTEY,
OF VIRGINIA,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Tuesday, April 12, 1898.



WASHINGTON.

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SPEECH
OF
HON. PETER J. OTEY.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the House amendments to the bill (S. 924) to authorize the Washington and Glen Echo Railroad Company to obtain a right of way and construct tracks into the District of Columbia 600 feet—

Mr. OTEY said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I shall endeavor to confine my remarks to the bill now before the House, as no one has referred to it so far. [Laughter.] And so, in considering this railroad bill, I desire to say that this House is practically without any detailed official information which in my opinion enables it at this moment to act promptly and discreetly, decisively and patriotically, on the Cuban question. [Laughter.]

This essential information will not be given us until the Committee on Foreign Affairs sees fit to do so.

In the meantime, Mr. Chairman, that side of the Chamber—the majority of this body—will, in my opinion, do absolutely nothing. [Applause.] What I will do when all the facts are before us—what course I will pursue when we are possessed of the knowledge now in possession of the Foreign Affairs Committee, I can not now say. But I do not believe that there is a member of this body who, when the supreme hour comes, will shirk his duty to his country—aye, to his God. [Applause.]

But, Mr. Chairman, the question then will be, What is his duty? [Laughter.]

In his novel, *The Fair God*, Gen. Lew Wallace, a gallant Federal officer, puts into the mouth of Itzell, the Tezcucan warrior, the following words, as he addressed Montezuma:

I intend my words to be respectful, mighty King. A common wisdom teaches us to respect the brave man and dread the coward. * * * A throne may be laid amid hymns and prayers, but to endure it must rest on the allegiance of love.

The scene witnessed on this floor a few days ago, when with unprecedented unanimity this body voted \$50,000,000 as an emergency fund, was, to my mind, one that touched the American heart as no other scene has in the last third of a century; and with that fresh in my memory, and in view of the grave and solemn responsibility which we must very soon meet, it is, I hope, not out of place in me to speak, from a Virginian standpoint, as a Southern man, as a former rebel soldier, and to raise my voice in commendation of the brave, to ignore the coward, and to mani-

fest my great joy at the testimony already given by this body that the foundation of our great Republic rests on the allegiance of love. [Loud applause.]

Mr. Chairman—

The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore.

And I am sure there is not a patriot on this floor who would not prefer peace to war.

In the language of Tennyson, we would all prefer to extend our dominion of peace—

Till the war drum throb'd no longer, and the battle flags were furl'd
In the parliament of man, the federation of the world.

But, Mr. Chairman, events have been crowded upon us, and I fear that we have exhausted all demands on patriotic patience and forbearance, on justice and on humanity. It appears to me that the time for diplomacy has passed, and that the time for action, as grave and as serious as it is, is upon us [applause], Mr. Chairman.

War is a cruel monster. It is the desolator and destroyer of homes and happiness. Its course is marked by the silent sentinels of devastation, standing amid the sighs of widows and the tears of orphans.

The splendor of our nation may dazzle us, but we have only to look back upon the ruins of Babylon, Carthage, and Rome to show us that war corrupts, enervates, and destroys nations, while peace is the great conservator of power, of happiness, of civil and religious liberty.

My voice and my pen have been for peace, and I am still for peace, if war can be averted with honor. [Applause.]

War is a mad game, at which the rich will play to profit by it. It enriches the few and bleeds the millions. We have forty-five stars, representing forty-five States, each an empire within itself, and within our borders there are others asking to be added to this glorious constellation and appealing in vain, while some look with eagerness to adding the lone star of Cuba.

We have the greatest and most continuous and most unsevered empire of civilized, enlightened, and progressive people on earth, and the real development of our resources has hardly yet begun.

Four-fifths of our arable land are not yet under cultivation and a still larger proportion of our mineral wealth is undeveloped, and there is no limit to our manufactures except the needs of the world. We are untrammelled by the enervating effect of a large standing army.

There is room in one State (Texas) for over 50,000,000 of people, and so far from population being then as dense as it is to-day in England, there would be sufficient fertile land on which to raise all the cotton used in the world and to supply the entire food product necessary for the United States of America. Our streams penetrate all sections of our land, laden with our domestic commerce, giving more miles of navigation than the whole of Europe. We have more railroads than the balance of the world combined, and if projected on a single track would reach from here to the moon.

We of the South know something of the ravages of war; our brethren of the North do not know, for they have never experienced it. And if war come, we of the South know that we have nothing to gain in a commercial way—we have everything to

lose. Every man taken from our producing capacity will lessen our material advancement. A generation has passed away since our great struggle, and yet we of the South have not yet recovered from its blighting effects. Our Southland, which to-day should be blossoming like a rose, is yet in the midst of suffering.

No people have ever manifested such manhood and courage in adversity, no people have ever had to fight uphill as they have, and none have ever merited triumph more; and now, as light begins to penetrate the long night of our discomfiture, we ought to hesitate to go to war as long as peace, with honor, is possible. Our martial fervor will be no less emphatic, our patriotic zeal will be no less pronounced, if war must come.

But we will face it as we have always done, yet knowing that it means more taxes, more oppression, more pensions, more privileged classes, more misery and less happiness, more concentration of power in the hands of the few—all for what? To preserve untarnished the honor of our country, to avenge the death of our citizens. [Applause.] Mr. Chairman, the destruction of the battle ship *Maine* has

Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory images and precious thoughts
That shall not die, and can not be destroyed.

The diplomacy of Spain will now perhaps be in vain. In the future (if war must come) it will be your joy to recall, and your children and your children's children will be proud to read in the history of their country, that you met the issue as Americans. It will be the pride of posterity to know that you promoted and protected the honor of their great country. It will honor you for the step which perhaps you are soon to take. [Applause.]

Mr. Chairman, I may be pardoned for some reflections and observation which may interest the young men who are to fight the battles of our country. The proud and awful names of Grant and Lee may well be coupled together, having been left to us as lights for after times. A third of a century ago, in this very month, after a prolonged and bloody civil strife, we of the South laid down our arms. To have doubted our courage, endurance, prowess, self-abnegation, would have been to belittle these very virtues in the gallant soldiers who overcame us.

Greatness consists in the achievement of great deeds, and who will deny that our brothers in blue achieved them? To underestimate them would be to underrate ourselves. A victory won without struggle is won without merit; then so much the greater honor to the victor who must struggle to accomplish it. No greater tribute can be paid to the military renown of the Northern generals than the admission of great military qualities of those who surrendered to them.

To say that Lee, Jackson, and Stewart were great military leaders and had no superiors adds luster to the American name, and but sheds greater splendor on the renown of Grant, Sherman, and Thomas. To admit that Pickett's charge at Gettysburg was equaled by no charge of modern times, but adds glory to the brave men that withstood and repulsed it. [Applause.]

History records no such defense as that of Fort Sumter, which only adds fame to the navy that reduced it. [Applause.]

Miltiades, freedom's best and bravest friend, was the greatest of generals, and yet he did not disparage the courage and the fame of Datis and his Persian army. Had he done so he would have

dimmed his own luster and lessened the splendor of his great achievements and deprived his gallant men of the immortal name justly earned by them on the field of Marathon over two thousand years ago.

If you treat the military renown of Cornwallis and Burgoyne with contempt, you sully the glory of Washington. Wellington would be shorn of his laurels but for the admitted greatness of Napoleon. General Grant might have received the surrender of a million Chinese and it would not have added one-thousandth part of the luster to his name as did the surrender of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox. [Applause.] While St. Helena is a blot on the name and fame of Wellington, Appomattox is the brightest gem in the crown of U. S. Grant. [Applause.]

His great achievement was equaled only by his magnanimity. He spoke of us before the surrender at Appomattox as we are now spoken of by all men. When at Vicksburg, he wrote General Pemberton:

Men who have shown so much endurance and courage as those under your command in Vicksburg will challenge the respect of any adversary.

He knew them as it was expressed by Charles Francis Adams when he was minister to England, as related by my friend Mr. LACEY of Iowa, in an address made last May, at the encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic at Des Moines. After the first battle of Manassas, Mr. Adams was at a reception when the news of the Confederate victory was first announced. A courtier said tauntingly to Mr. Adams: "These Confederates fight well, at any rate." "Yes," said Mr. Adams, "of course they do, sir; they are my countrymen." [Applause.] Gen. U. S. Grant felt and recognized this. After the fall of Richmond he declined to enter it in triumph or even without pomp and parade, and when asked to do so said:

No, I do not care to go. These people feel too keenly already the injury of war, and I do not intend, even by my presence, to seem to them as one who finds pleasure in viewing the wreck of their beloved capital and country.

So, too, when he was at Atlanta and was asked to ride over the fields that marked his triumphs, he said:

I can not bear to go and view these fields where so many heroes on both sides have fallen.

Mr. Speaker, this honored American said, "Let us have peace," and my voice would echo his words to-day if there was such a thing with honor. The clouds of prejudice necessarily engendered by our civil strife have now happily given way to the bright sunshine of magnanimity and good feeling.

In view of the impending war, it is, I hope, not asking too much that I may

Wet with unseen tears
Those graves of memory where sleep .

those of glorious deeds who fought in 1861-1865, in order that those who are to follow on other fields may be stimulated to emulate their example.

In doing so I shall refer to some records which can not be equalled for heroism and matchless courage and may prove a useful lesson to our young men who to-day are stirred with commendable martial fervor and laudable patriotic zeal.

I want our young men to study the history of the four years, 1861 to 1865. Without being invidious, I shall call attention to some examples of heroism which may be useful lessons to them in this day and generation. History records no such loss as is recorded of the Twenty-sixth North Carolina at Gettysburg of 87 per cent, and the First Minnesota on the same field of 82 per cent, and it is simply one of the many pages emblazoned with American valor, audacity, and courage. [Applause.] When we see the First Texas holding its position at Antietam with a loss of 82 per cent, and the First Massachusetts standing firm under a loss of 68 per cent, no man can doubt how the sons of these men will stand together now.

When the One hundred and first New York at Manassas, in changing its position in good order, sustained a loss of 74 per cent, and the Twenty-first Georgia followed the movement with a depletion of 76 per cent; when at Shiloh the Ninth Illinois was immovable under a fire that placed 63 per cent of its men hors de combat, while only a few hundred feet in its front stood the Sixth Mississippi, sustaining a loss of 70 per cent; when the One hundred and fifty-first Pennsylvania inflicted a loss of 708 on the Twenty-first North Carolina, itself sustaining a loss of 355 of its own men, no one can doubt that immortality is written on the name of the American soldier. No one will doubt that to-day, joined together in the same cause under the same flag, the sons of those who fought for as well as of those who fought against the Stars and Stripes in 1861-1865 will be invincible, whether on land or sea, and Spain would do well to beware of them. [Loud applause.]

Mr. Chairman, your son or your grandson will read or perhaps has read of when you participated in the bloody charge at Cold Harbor; or the heroism you displayed at the bloody angle at Spottsylvania; or how you scaled the rocky cliffs of Lookout Mountain. And yet on the same page he will read how another grandfather (for his mother, perhaps, was the daughter of a rebel like myself) was in the forefront of Pickett's charge at Gettysburg, at which the whole world stood spellbound in admiration; or perhaps he was one of those who made the name of the American soldier immortal by his participation in the defense of Fort Sumter. Will the grandson think less of his grandfather that wore the gray than of the one that wore the blue? [App'ause.] Some of you may have daughters who perhaps have married the sons of a gallant rebel (and I like the name rebel, for I was one myself). [Laughter.]

Should the son of the veteran of the First Minnesota marry the daughter of the veteran of the First Texas, or vice versa, their children would boast that they had a grandfather in each regiment, both renowned for their fighting qualities, the one having lost 82 per cent at Gettysburg, and the other 82 per cent at Antietam. The grandson of a veteran of the One hundred and first New York will ever be proud that his paternal grandfather belonged to that splendid regiment, while he would look with equal pride on the page of history that recorded the gallant deeds of the Twenty-first Georgia, in which, perchance, his maternal grandfather fought, each regiment having lost 76 out of every 100 of their men on the historic field of Manassas.

I think it a useful lesson to call attention to these things. Let us look at the losses here tabulated, and then ask if it does not make every American heart throb with pride, and whether these

figures of themselves do not give assurance of the invincibility of the American soldier of to-day. Here are a few instances of losses in Confederate and Federal regiments during the war:

FEDERAL.

Name of regiment.	Battle.	Loss.
		<i>Per cent.</i>
First Minnesota.....	Gettysburg.....	82
One hundred and forty-first Pennsylvania.....	do.....	76
One hundred and first New York.....	Manassas.....	74
Twenty-fifth Massachusetts.....	Cold Harbor.....	70
Thirty-sixth Wisconsin.....	Bethesda Church.....	69
Eighth Vermont.....	Cedar Creek.....	68
Twenty-fourth Michigan.....	Gettysburg.....	64
Fifth New Hampshire.....	Fredericksburg.....	64

CONFEDERATE.

Name of regiment.	Battle.	Loss.
		<i>Per cent.</i>
Twenty-sixth North Carolina.....	Gettysburg.....	87
Twenty-first Georgia.....	Manassas.....	76
Twenty-sixth North Carolina.....	Gettysburg.....	72
Sixth Mississippi.....	Shiloh.....	71
Eighth Tennessee.....	Stone River.....	68
Palmetto Sharpshooters, South Carolina.....	Glendale.....	63
First Alabama Battalion.....	Chickamauga.....	65
First Texas.....	Antietam.....	82

Posterity will be gladdened when they read that the sons of such heroes joined together to sustain the honor and dignity of their great nation. And to-day as we look at the flag of our common country, and as we recognize that the honor of the nation is threatened, the sons of the boys who wore the blue and those of the boys who wore the gray will salute it and join us as we say to that flag, in the language of Ruth:

Whither thou goest we will go; where thou lodgest we will lodge; thy people shall be our people, and thy God shall be our God. Where thou diest we will die and there will we be buried.

[Long and continued applause.]



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