

*D. K. Goodrich from his friend*

*Tasker Polk*



# ADDRESS

—OF—

## TASKER POLK, ESQ.,

DELIVERED AT AN ENTERTAINMENT

GIVEN BY THE YOUNG LADIES OF WARRENTON, N. C.,

—FOR THE BENEFIT OF—

“THE WARREN GUARDS.”





With kind regards of your friend  
Aug. E. Polk



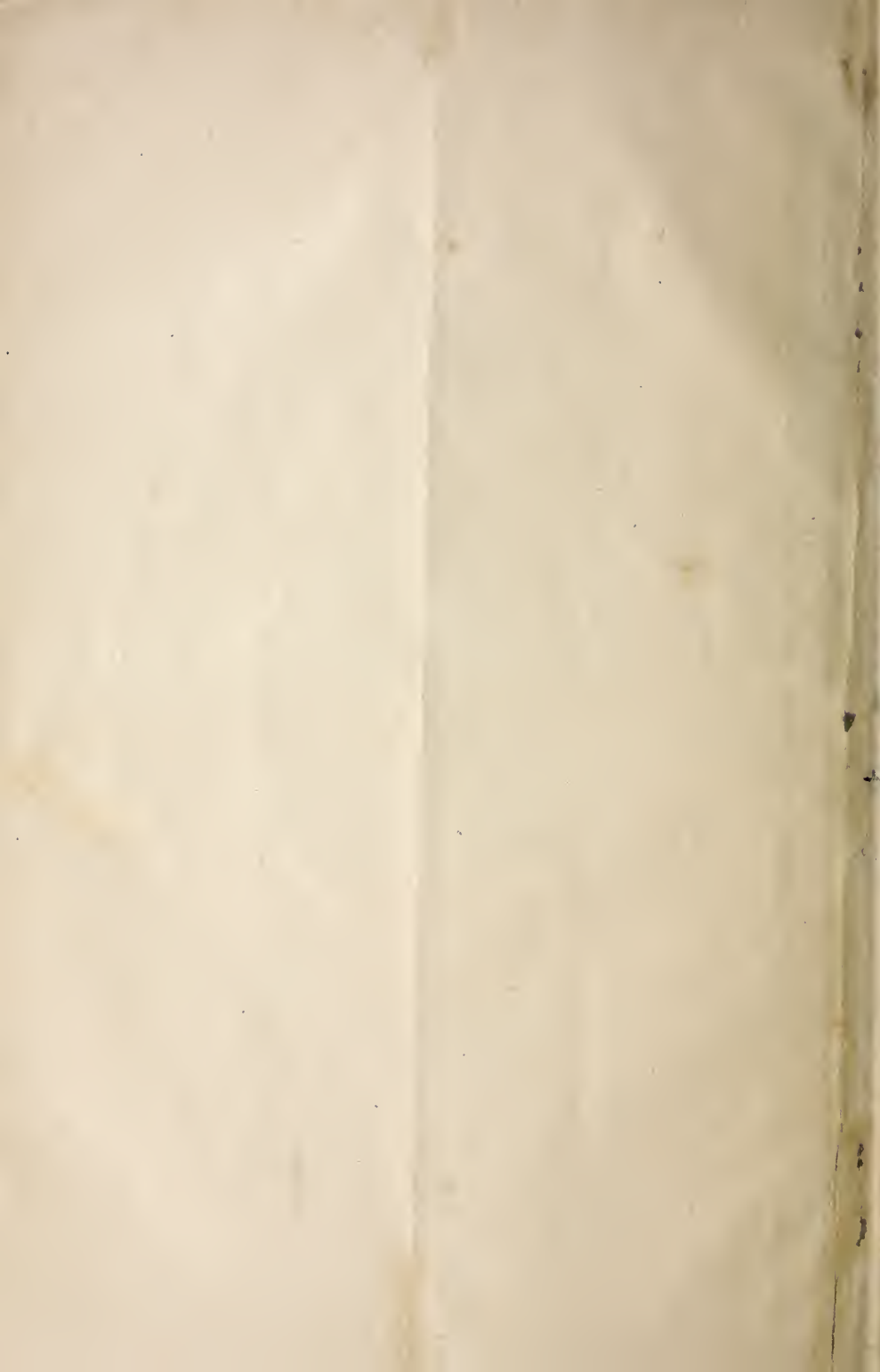
1863.

*On, on we go and hear the waves  
Of Hope's fair mirage lake afar,  
While war's mad desert plain of graves  
Still echoes war's mad crash and jar.*

1887.

*Long years have passed away and fled,  
And war's wild bugle blast is still,  
But mem'ry's star shines o'er our dead,  
And lights each battlefield and hill.*





## ADDRESS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—I greet you in the name of “The Warren Guards.”

When the young ladies, to whose interest and energy this Entertainment is due, asked me to deliver an introductory address, I very naturally enquired, “What shall my subject be?” The reply was, “Choose your own subject.” Left to the guidance of my own taste, and remembering that the object of the Entertainment was to aid our Military Company, my thoughts very naturally fell upon military matters, and my mind instinctively turned to the time when, six and twenty years ago, Warren bade her boys God speed to battle for the South, States’ Rights and their homes. The name of the Company which left Warren upon this mission of glory and patriotism was “The Warren Guards.” The company of to-day has adopted the same name, and by God’s help, under similar circumstances, will pursue the same course. In view of these facts and considerations, I have chosen for my subject a short history of the North and the South and their Civil War, where, “like some prominent thread in an unevenly woven cloth,” I can see the name of Carolina and Warren traced through the fabric of blood. The subject, I admit, is old and threadbare, but never will it be without interest to an honest Southern heart—hence, you see that I have fortified myself behind the breastwork of your Southern love, and have chosen a subject which cannot fail to interest you, no matter how poorly it is handled.

I was but an infant when the great Civil War hung its pall of gloom and death over our divided sections; when brother met brother and father met son upon the gory field of battle’s realm; when our sunny southern sky rained the blood of its best and bravest. But even from my childhood’s earliest days, nothing has

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ever had so much the power to move me to unbounded enthusiasm and fierce delight as those stories of carnage and battle ; and the chord of pride, responsive in my Southern heart, never beats with wilder harmony than when 'tis swept by the historian's hand of truth that renders praise so justly due to our Southern Soldiers, our Confederate Gray. Bear with me a little while as I raise the dark and blood-bespattered curtain of the past, and hastily review the history of our country's beginning, its struggle against English tyranny, its Independence, its Union of States, its Rise, its Fall and lastly its second Union :—"Oh, God of our Fathers, hear us ! we suffer ! let us be free from English tyranny !" was the whispered prayer which ascended from Southern homes and Northern firesides. The untenanted forests of the great far West echoed the prayer, and God in heaven heard. The Goddess of Liberty and Independence appeared in the clouded firmament of our destiny. In her outstretched hand she held the brilliantly burning lamp of *Self-Government*. Alike it shed its rays o'er the hills of the North and upon the vales of the South. Within the circle of its light, upon the gory fields of Revolutionary fame, our forefathers fought and bled and died. The God of eternal Right and Justice smiled down upon their brave and honest zeal. Success was theirs. From the lips of 3,000,000 people rang the joyous cry of freedom. That cry was caught upon the wings of the wind ; it was born aloft, and its whispered echoes floated through the domes of heaven. We were a free country. To God alone we owed allegiance. Time passed. Stars were added to the galaxy of States, and composed a *Union*. We were *one* country with *one* principle, our *Liberty*. We were a Union, united in boundaries, united in brotherly feeling, united in our praise of good, true, honest and just men, and united in our condemnation of evil men—*character*, not *party* then, gave tone to praise. In the North, South, East and West, joy, peace, prosperity and happiness ruled and reigned. The success of the North was the pride of the South ; the prosperity of the South was the joy of the North, and all was peace, quiet and contentment. To the sons of the North were wedded the daughters of the South ; to the daughters of the North, the sons of the South, and all was love and harmony. But time passed on, and differences arose between these beloved sections of our native land. Love for each other gave

place to burning hatred ; and, in the sky of nations, baptized in blood, appeared our Southern Cross, our Confederate Flag. To the cause for which it waved, and upon the altar from which it floated, the sunny South gave all she had. Sad and bitter tears freely flowed ; brave men poured forth their true heart's blood ; the proud lily of the Southern heart was broken at its stem, and dyed in blood to the red hue of the roses, and the rose on the southern cheek was paled by grief and sorrow to the lily's whiteness, and the wails of widows and orphans, and the cries of brotherless sisters were heard and echoed through all the homes of Southland. Such were the scenes, and such the sounds, as heart clashed against heart and State met State in the so-called war of Rebellion : and that war, my friends, has no parallel in history. The recording pages of those four cannon-booming years are printed in letters of blood upon the heart of time—a record that can never fade. Than our southern land, no country ever more bravely fought. Than our southern flag, none was ever followed by braver band. And in this mighty struggle the flags of different states were waving, but none waved higher, more bravely or further forward than the flag that Carolinians bore. Than the blood that Warren County shed in defense of that flag, none was ever truer, braver, purer or nobler. Oh, hearts of the South, hear me ! Oh, my native land, listen ! Your southern soldiers have never had their equals. Fame such as they won can never more be won by men. History records no such sufferings as those they endured ; history tells of no such hardships as those they sustained ; history relates no such victories as those they won, and Time smiles with pleasure and pride as it prints their names upon the stainless pages of everlasting glory.

But a war of such terrible force could not last. The North had the army, the navy, the treasury and the credit of the world at its back : the South had naught but its own brave heart, and that was divided between a sense of duty calling it to the front and the cry of slave-imperiled homes calling it back. 'Twas thus it was as time passed on ; and the hireling eagle of Victory perched itself upon the banner of the Stars and Stripes, and the tattered flag of our Sunny South was furled midst blood and tears. Oh ! what a sight it must have been, a sight to rend a soldier's heart and make the

angels weep in heaven, as the sun on that bright April's morning in 1865 glanced down upon those scarce 8000 men, who, at the command of their white-haired chieftain Lee, laid down their arms and acknowledged that the cause for which they had fought was lost, and that their blessed South, which they had hoped to place among the free, independent and self-ruled nations of the earth, must forever remain a *part* and not become a *whole*. Let me paint you the picture that these surrendering soldiers saw as the bloody hand of time unrolled the panorama of the past: The time is evening; the scene is the field of Appomattox. Stilled is the musket's rattle, and hushed is the beat of drum. If there be soldiers in my audience, I beg them to gaze upon this picture—Lee bowed down with grief, Jackson dead at Chancellorsville, Stewart dead at Yellow Tavern, Johnson dead at Shiloh, Rhodes dead at Winchester, Pelham killed, Ramseur killed, Pettigrew killed, Pender killed, and the dead on Malvern Hill seeming to rise from out their graves, and those who sleep in wakeless death upon the battle fields of Gettysburg, the Wilderness, Seven Pines, Chancellorsville, Sharpsburg, Cold Harbor, Petersburg and Richmond seem to pass in the silent review of death, while rugged Stonewall Jackson, with uplifted hands and prayerful heart, seems to stand guarding the camps of the slain. Behold the companion picture: The scene changes; the war is over; the battle price is paid, and the guardian spirit of Peace smiles in the bleeding heavens. With breaking hearts and weary steps, the soldiers returned to their desolate homes. The news of the great Surrender had reached the remotest parts of the South; and away down yonder in Georgia an old gray-haired mother stood in her cottage door and waited for her soldier son's return; and over there in Tennessee, by the rolling waters of the beautiful Cumberland, a Father waited for his gallant son; and here in Carolina, each evening breeze as it kissed the cheek of heaven, bore upon its wings a loving sister's prayer of "God protect my brother!" But the days passed on, and these beloved ones returned not. A week, a month, a year had passed. Still waited that old Georgia mother, straining her eager ears, to catch each footstep's sound; when one evening, as the shadows of night were falling, steps were heard on the pebbled walk: two voices were heard in earnest talk, "break the news to her gently; remember, friend, she's old and weakly, and—the end, who



knows, may come—she may sink 'neath the blow"—and the words were dropped so soft, so low that the ear of evening itself scarce heard them. But the old mother heard and tottered towards them: "what is it you say? what news do you bring? hold it not back! tell me all, everything! what of my boy? Is it news of him or what?"—and the starlight air of evening seemed to echo the words of her darling's doom: "killed in the last charge at Appomatox." 'Twas a fearful, pitiful, awful sight, as the old mother stood with her up-raised hands and her white hair tossed, swayed and tangled by the breeze: She sunk with a low gasping moan on her knees, and fell forward. They raised her; 'twas an easy task and light, for the soul so weighted with cares had taken its flight.

Scenes such as these occurred all over our Southern land, and pictures such as these hang on the walls of memory. The bloody track of war from the Rio Grande on the South to Gettysburg on the North is strewn with the unmarked and unlettered graves of our unknown heroes; and the bosom of old Virginia is seamed and dotted and gashed with the trenches of our loved ones. Were I allowed to epitaph the graves of these illustrious dead, I would rear a monument in the valley higher than the frowning Blue Ridge, and on it my humble pen should write these words:

Each southern hill is as a vase,  
That's filled with shattered flowers,  
Torn from the garden of our race,  
These beautiful dead of ours.  
Buds of youth and blooms of manhood.  
Gathered by war's resistless hand,  
Left naught but childless widowhood  
In our beautiful southern land.

And now, in conclusion, I have reached the period of our second union, wherein the destiny of our southern land is joined once more to that of her northern sister states; and, right here, I wish to say that the question is often asked, "does the South still cherish hatred towards the North?" My reply is, no! She is too brave and too noble for that. The tears that flowed from northern mothers' eyes, and the tears that coursed the cheek of our widowed southern land rushed together over a score of years ago, and in one grand and mighty stream washed out each stain and each black spot of

hatred. Again we are one country with common and undivided interests ; and should a foreign foe attack our flag, I feel that I have the right to-night to pledge that the "Warren Guards" of 1887 would defend the "Stars and Stripes" as bravely as the "Warren Guards" of 1861 defended the "Stars and Bars." No, there is no feeling of hatred between the North and South. Politicians strive to fan to flames the old dead embers of sectionalism, but the great masses of the people are at peace in the fullest sense of the word. There is nothing to divide us now. The old dissenting questions have died, or, like an Enoch Arden, only return to gaze through the window of our happiness, and then "silently steal away."



Wananton Jan 18<sup>th</sup> 1889.

Sam J. R. Goodloe  
Dr Sir.

Several weeks ago  
Taska received a letter  
from a Publisher in Buffalo  
N. York, asking him for his  
Photograph & some of his  
Poems, together with a short  
Biography of his life to be written  
by a reliable acquaintance.  
Taska complied with request  
& received the publishers ack-  
nowledgement on Monday last.  
& also a request to send him  
the names of some literary  
gentlemen of his acquaintance.  
Taska of course sent you  
name & address with others.  
The Publisher will send out.

his prospectus giving all  
the information desired -  
having for his object the publi-  
cation of a Magazine of Poetry  
which I hope will be a success -  
as he complimented Foster  
by requesting him as a Contributor  
to its pages. I hope you have  
entirely recovered from your  
accident without any serious  
inconvenience, perhaps than the  
confinement in doors this lady  
weather - or how has it been.  
Today the windows & doors open, but  
a fire is comfortable. I received  
a letter from Mrs Brown last  
evening, saying she had the  
pleasure of visiting my good  
Mr Gooden. but she feared  
her excessive deafness the  
difficulty of conversation would  
frighten <sup>him</sup> off - from farther

effort at acquaintance. She is a  
bright intelligent woman -  
She laughed heartily at my efforts  
quit by motion of lips - feet  
fingers & finally pencil &  
paper. I told her in the month  
she spent with me. I had written  
a volume. I have heard  
nothing from my Pension  
yet. I saw in the Post, that  
"Widows were allowed arrears of  
pensions from date of the  
Husband's death." but do not  
know what war it had refer-  
ence to American or Civil. as  
the article did not state.  
I suppose Washington is all  
settled over the outgoing  
& incoming Presidents & the  
many changes incident.  
Trust your fidelity to the  
successful party entitles you  
to



