

THE RED CLOUD CHIEF.

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VOL. XI.

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EVERY FRIDAY BY
A. C. HOSMER.

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THE RED CLOUD CHIEF.

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FRIDAY, FEB. 22, 1884.

OUR JIM'S SPEECH.

Mr. Chairman: I move to amend by striking out the last word. Believing as I do that there is no place where the honor of an American soldier ought to be so safe as in the hands of the representatives of the whole American people, I desire to say before this vote is cast that I shall vote first, last, and all the time for the vindication of the honor of General Fitz-John Porter. [Applause.]

And let me remark to the gentlemen who seek to bring the menace of future punishment to bear upon the discharge of present duty that if I knew this act of mine would end my bodily existence as you say it may end my official one, then still would I do it; and I would thank God that my loyalty to my country as I understand her honor, that my loyalty to my general as I understood my duty, that my loyalty to the truth as I know it to be, was strong enough to lift my conduct above the possibility of ignominious change to come from cowardly considerations affecting my life or future condition.

I do this not because I am guided by the judgment of the Schofield board or the statement of Ulysses S. Grant, for I have not read the one and I have never considered the other. Nor are the convictions that I here hastily express the growth of a day; they are as the injustice he has suffered. I do it because I was with Fitz John Porter from the siege of Yorkton until the attack of the enemy across the Chickahominy, from that attack to the battle of Hanover Court-House, from that to Mechanicsville, from that to Gaines Mill, and throughout his career except when I was disabled by wounds [applause]; and I want to say, Mr. Chairman, it is my deliberate judgment, speaking of what I know of Fitz-John Porter, that in all the great battles of the English-speaking race from Banockburn to Gettysburg there has not been made by one soldier a record which demonstrates greater loyalty to the cause of his country than that made by Fitz-John Porter. Having seen him on all his battlefields, I believe it can be said of him in action as was said of the soldier of old, "He was swifter than an eagle; he was stronger than a lion; and from the blood of the slain and the fat of the mighty his sword returned not empty."

Mr. Steele. Does not the gentleman think Porter had his wings clipped at the battle on the 29th of August, 1862? Mr. Laird. At least his wings did not take him to the rear on that day, as it did McDowell, who brought the courage of a quartermaster to bear upon the tasks of a hero; and yet you say McDowell ought to be promoted because he went to the rear, and because Porter did not he ought to be shot.

McDowell was ordered to move on night of the 27th the same as Porter. So were Reno and Kearney. Reno and Kearney did not report until noon; Porter reported at 8 o'clock in the morning; and McDowell did not move at all. The court of inquiry in his case condemned what he did, but excuse it on account of his conduct on the 30th.

You who are so ready to condemn Porter for his delay of two hours on the 27th, why is it you never mention that his corps received orders at Harrison's Landing at 5 p. m. of the 14th of August to join Pope, and at 7 o'clock was under way for Fortress Monroe? At sunrise on the 18th, though delayed forty-eight hours to guard bridges and trains, it encamped after a march of sixty miles at Hampton, having covered sixty miles in thirty-five hours, and by its rapidity reached Fortress Monroe on foot ahead of the divisions of Reynolds, that came by transport.

I will give the gentleman another illustration of what I mean, and it is with pain that I am obliged to refer to the fact that in all this debate there has not been on your side a single mention of the gallant conduct of Fitz-John Porter and his corps on the 30th of August 1863. When the fifth corps, headed by General Porter, moved to the assault of Jackson's troops in the sunken road, and when the effort to deploy, the column had resolved itself into a great rush to get to the front where men could fire—not at the enemy behind earthworks or a railroad embankment, but in a cut where nothing but their heads was visible, and when the column was being cut down,

in platoons by the confederate artillery, firing over the heads of their own men, there came ringing through the din of the battle the order of their general: "Fix bayonets and jump into the ditch and bayonet them," and in a moment more, had not Longstreet swept across our rear, the bayonets of the Fifth Corps would have been warmed in the marrow of the troops of Jackson.

Was that the language and the conduct of a coward? Since the Dutch king proclaimed that he would tear down the dykes and let in the ocean there has not been a braver speech.

On the question of discretion I wish to say a word. I will cite an instance that will perhaps come home to the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. Horr.] He said there is no discretion, and there ought to be none, on the part of subordinate over the orders of superior. When the columns of the confederates at Gettysburg were advancing across the flank of the second brigade of the first division of the Fifth Army Corps, Colonel Jeffers, of the Fourth Michigan, holding the right of the line, asked leave of General Switzer to change front, and Switzer asked General Barnes, commanding the division, and that general sent back word "Tell General Switzer to advance with the second brigade." And when the request was repeated and Barnes had again ordered the advance it did advance, to certain and senseless destruction, for the right of the brigade was surrounded in a minute, and the Fourth Michigan, as brave a regiment as ever leveled a musket, was annihilated without an opportunity to return an effective blow, and Jeffers fell stabbed to death with bayonets while fighting with a naked sabre over his colors.

Let the advocates of "no discretion" tell me if their science of war teaches that subordinates in the face of a better knowledge shall obey murderous orders, and slaughter thousands, and stand guiltless in history. We asked no immunity from death, we did ask that our lives should not be thrown away, and that we be not put where we were to be shot in the back. And when the gentleman from Michigan heard, this did he go and stand before the battle-graves of this regiment, and looking into the gaping bayonet stabs in the body of Jeffers, sing, therein being assisted by the gentleman from Indiana—

Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to question why,
Theirs but to do, and die?

[Laughter and applause.]

One word to the gentleman from Indiana. You say that Lincoln approved the sentence of the court-martial with a full knowledge of all the evidence. I deny it. Abraham Lincoln, "so slow to smite, so swift to spare, so great and merciful and just," never approved that sentence with a knowledge of the evidence. I loved the memory of the dead Lincoln and all who died with him for the greatest cause that ever moved mankind, and I love the honor of the flag and the nation for which they died, and because I do I vote for the passage of this bill. [Applause.]

NOTES.

California is at present producing not far from \$18,000,000 of gold and silver bullion annually.

About 2,080,000,000 feet of lumber were cut by the Northwestern mills handling Minnesota and West Wisconsin pine last year.

Cleveland's population includes 20,000 Bohemians, and no other city in the Union contains so many except Chicago. In the former city they maintain two newspapers, several churches and one theatre.

If the planets are classified in the order of their rising during the present month, Neptune will take first place. The other evening stars during February are Saturn, Jupiter, Mars and Venus, while Uranus and Mercury are morning stars.

California's canned fruit product has largely increased with the last decade. The product of 1875 aggregated in value about \$500,000. In 1878 it had reached \$1,250,000; in 1880, \$1,500,000; and in 1882 the product is set down as worth \$2,500,000.

Four cents a piece was the price promised a sewing girl in Brooklyn for making eight dozen shirts, and then she had to bring suit to get the money, her employer alleging that the sewing was defective. Judgment for the full amount and \$5 costs was rendered in her favor.

R. A. SIMPSON, Notary Public. F. A. SWEETZ, Attorney at Law

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