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INAUGURATION OF THE SOLDIERS' ORPHANS HOMESTEAD
AT GETTYSBURG, NOV. 20, 1866

Gettysburg, famous forever in the annals of American History, has today witnessed another interesting ceremony, which is a fitting sequence to those which have taken place before in commemoration of the great struggle which, on the field in 1863, sealed the fate of the rebellion. We have already had the laying of the cornerstone of the great monument, and this being appropriately followed by the inauguration of the Orphans' Home, for the care of the children of the heroes of the Republic who gave up their lives for the maintenance of the Union.

By two o'clock a large concourse of people had assembled, numbering several thousand persons, when the procession was formed, composed of officers of the court, the clergy, professors and students of Pennsylvania College and the Seminary, the various Sabbath Schools, citizens and visitors, and proceeded to the Orphans' Home on Cemetery Hill.

Rev. Dr. Mears, of Philadelphia, made the opening prayer, after which Rev. Dr. Read delivered the opening address. He ably and eloquently urged the obligations of the nation to the soldiers of the war for the Union, and especially the fallen heroes; an obligation that could only be partly met by the most ample provision for the support and care of their orphan children.

Rev. Dr. Hay, of Gettysburg, followed and in the course of his address made an eloquent allusion to the pledges made by Governor Curtin to the different Pennsylvania Regiments, as they marched to the field, that the State would care for the dear ones left at home, and provide for the widows and orphans of those who should fall in the struggle. Pennsylvania is fully redeeming these pledges, and is presenting a noble example to her sister commonwealths.

The Sabbath school children united in singing the national hymn, "America", while a select choir gave an ode written by Mrs. Isabella James, of Philadelphia.

The exercises at the "Home" being concluded, the audience was dispersed, and the large concourse separated.

At night a large congregation assembled in the College Church, and the exercises were continued. A large staging was erected at each side and in front of the pulpit, upon which were seated the Orphan Children,

and a number of distinguished visitors from abroad, the speakers, and a few others. The Choir, as a prelude, performed several choice pieces, when the exercises were opened by Rev. Mr. Crever with a prayer.

Rev. Mr. Newton, of Philadelphia, was then introduced, and addressed the meeting alluding in the most feeling manner to the inspiration he had gained by a visit to this great battlefield, the lessons it should teach, and the duties we owed to the Orphan children of the war. The speaker, at times was truly eloquent, and his remarks were practical and to the point. He closed with a strong appeal to those present to sustain, not only with their contributions, but their prayers, the noble institution that day inaugurated.

Rev. Mr. Mears, of Philadelphia, followed with an eloquent address. Warmed up with a subject in which his whole soul seemed to be enlisted, he gave a concise statement of the origin of the Homestead and its progress, and congratulated himself and the audience that success had crowned their efforts and that an auspicious future was before it. It seems that the idea was first suggested by the daguerreotype of the Humiston children, the history of which is familiar to all our readers. His allusion to Sergeant Humiston, who is now buried in the National Cemetery, within sight of the Homestead, and his three orphan children who are now inmates of this asylum, and their mother who is also with them, was thrilling and interesting. Through the agency of himself and Dr. Bourne, the name of the dead Sergeant was discovered by means of this daguerreotype, and which has eventually led to the establishment of a great National Homestead for the dear children of our noble defenders.

The closing address was made by Rev. J. R. Warner, of Gettysburg, who alluded in his usual eloquent style to those memorable days of July 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, 1863, which sealed the fate of the Republic, reciting as he went along many incidents of the battle, among which was the story of General Lee and the dead soldiers by the way side, dressed in army blue. His remarks called forth frequent applause. He also alluded to the Homestead and the children committed to our care.

After the singing of the Ode by the choir, the exercises were closed with the Long Metre Doxology, in which the entire audience joined.

Some thirty orphan boys and girls, already inmates of the Home, neatly and comfortably clad, were on the staging with the distinguished invited guests and attracted much attention.