

PATRIOTIC SOCIETIES OF THE CIVIL WAR.

THE FEDERAL VETERANS' ASSOCIATIONS THAT PRESERVE THE MEMORIES OF BATTLE-FIELD AND CAMP FIRE—THEIR NUMBERS AND INFLUENCE, THEIR INSIGNIA, AND THEIR AUXILIARY SOCIETIES.

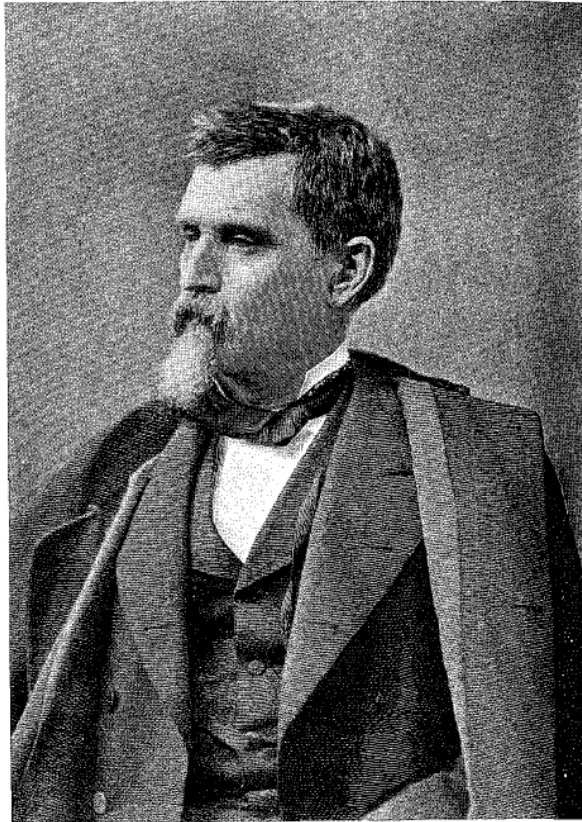
THE 15th of April, 1865, was a sad day in the history of the United States. Grief, deep and earnest, had taken the place of the joy of victory. War's ending was spoiled of its gladness by the cruel blow of an assassin. The nation was in mourning.

It was under such conditions that a small group of army officers met informally in Philadelphia, and after discussing the event uppermost in the minds of the people determined to found a society on the plan of

the Cincinnati, that should hold the same relation to the civil war that the Cincinnati does to the war of the Revolution. "Having aided," as their preamble said, "in maintaining the honor, integrity, and supremacy of the national government at a critical period of its history, and holding in remembrance the sacrifices in common made and the triumphs together shared in discharge of this sacred duty," these officers and honorably discharged officers of the army, navy, and marine corps of the United

States, agreed to unite and establish a permanent association, to be known as the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States.

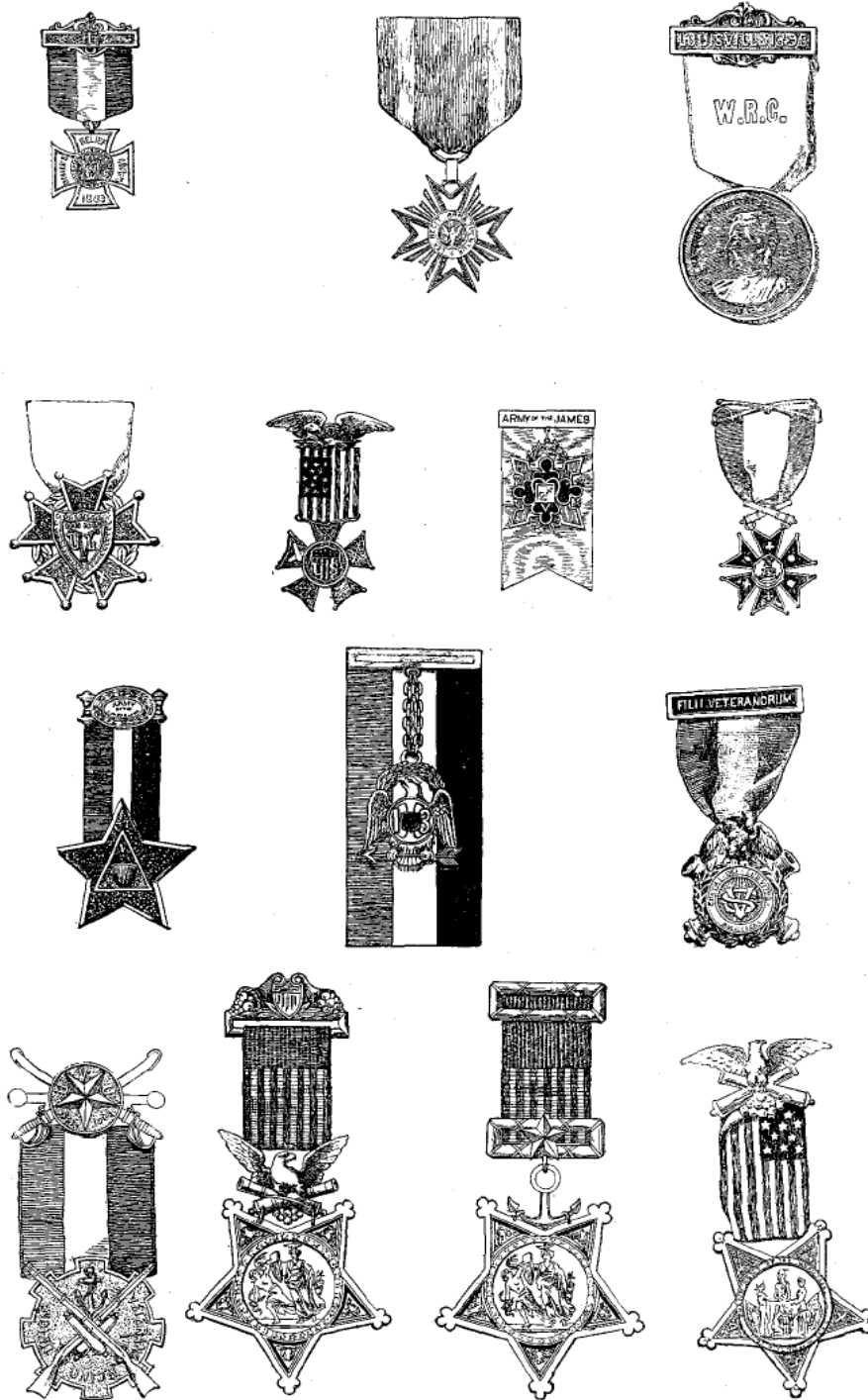
As in the Cincinnati, membership in this, the oldest and most distinguished of the patriotic societies of the civil war, is restricted to commissioned officers who took part in the war, and the eldest male descendants of deceased officers, according to the rules of primogeniture. These constitute companions of the first class, while the eldest sons of living original companions form the second class. A third class, into which elections ceased on April 15th, 1890, was originally created to include "gentlemen who in civil life during the Rebellion were specially distinguished for conspicuous and consistent loyalty to the national government, and were active and eminent in maintaining the supremacy of the same." In the entire order there are only sixty two of these companions; and typical of



The Late General John Gibbon, Commander of the Loyal Legion.

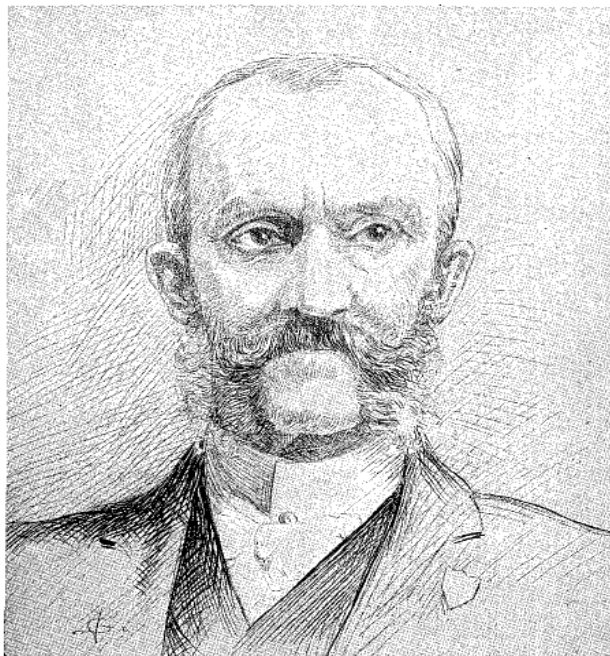
From a photograph by Paet, New York.

Patriotic Societies of the Civil War, *Munsey's Magazine*, June 1896, pp 321- 331.
 by Marcus Benjamin



BADGES OF PATRIOTIC SOCIETIES.

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| Woman's Relief Corps. | Loyal Legion. | Woman's Relief Corps, President's Medal, 1895. | |
| Union Veteran Legion. | Regular Army and Navy Union. | Society of the Army of the James. | Society of the Army of the Potomac. |
| Society of the Army of the Cumberland. | Society of the Army of the Tennessee. | Sons of Veterans. | |
| Union Veteran Union. | Army Medal of Honor. | Navy Medal of Honor. | Grand Army of the Republic. |



Colonel George C. James, Commander of the Union Veteran Legion.

Membership is distributed among twenty State societies (including that of the District of Columbia), which are called *commanderies*. The Pennsylvania commandery, the first to be organized, now has a membership of 1,178. New York, organized in January, 1866, is the largest, having 1,202 members. The total membership was given, on July 31, 1895, as 8,707. At first the order grew slowly, and in 1885 there were but ten commanderies. In that year a commandery in chief was organized, with headquarters in Philadelphia, its members being the principal officers of the subordinate bodies. Its commanders in chief, the executive heads of the order, have included such distinguished veterans as General Winfield Scott

them is Senator John Sherman, who is the only companion of this class in the Commandery of the District of Columbia.

The objects of the Loyal Legion must be given in full. They are: "to cherish the memories and associations of the war waged in defense of the unity and indivisibility of the republic; to strengthen the ties of fraternal friendships and sympathy formed by companionship in arms; to advance the best interests of the soldiers and sailors of the United States, especially of those associated as companions of this order, and to extend all possible relief to their widows and children; to foster the cultivation of military and naval science; to enforce unqualified allegiance to the general government; to protect the rights and liberties of American citizenship, and to maintain national honor, union, and independence."

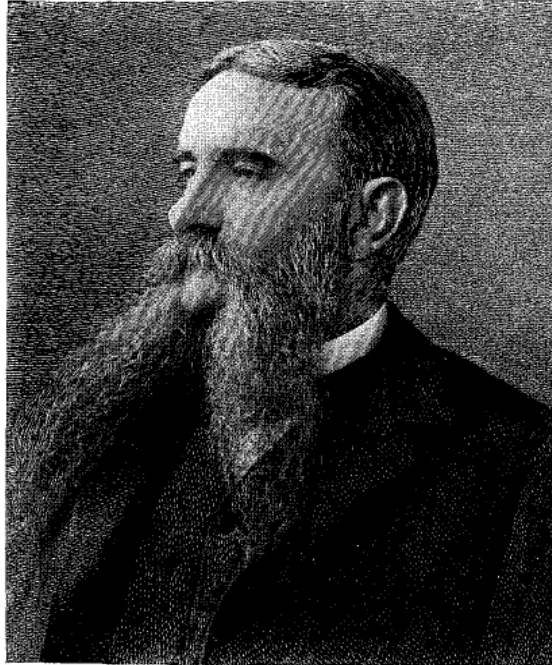
Hancock, General Philip H. Sheridan, General Rutherford B. Hayes, General Lucius



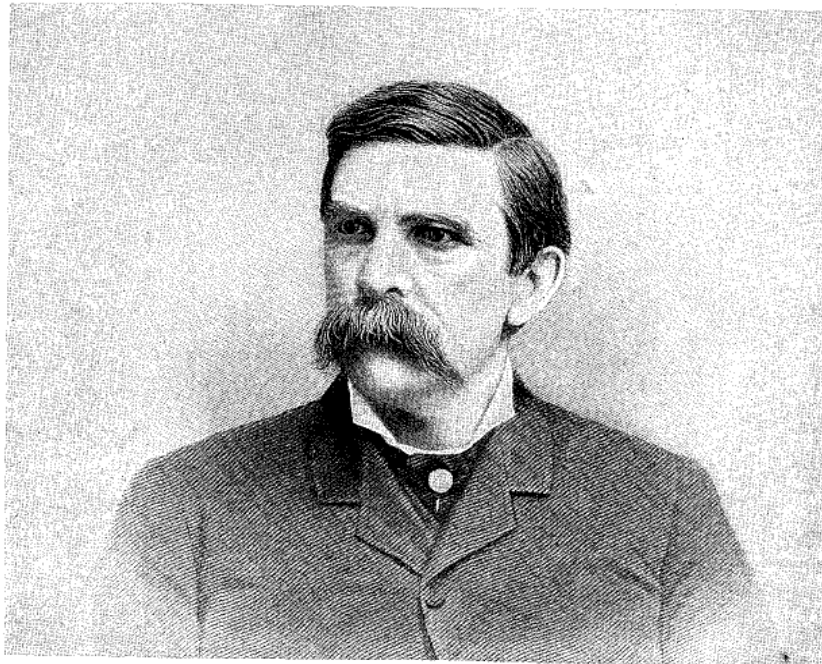
Joseph B. Morton, Commander of the Regular Army and Navy Union.

Fairchild, and the late General John Gibbon, who was elected at the meeting held in Washington in October last. The navy is also represented in this governing body, and Admiral Bancroft Gherardi, the present senior vice commander, by the death of General Gibbon becomes the highest officer.

It is the State commanderies, however, that constitute the life of the Loyal Legion. They meet at regular intervals, and at their gatherings it is customary for some companion to present a paper on a war topic, which is sure to evoke a flood of reminiscences from men who helped to make the history of those eventful days. Many of these papers have been printed and gathered into volumes. Worthy of special mention in this "war series" is "The Other Side of War," in which Miss Katharine Prescott Wormeley, well known for her translations of Balzac, narrates her hospital experiences. It was published



Admiral Walker, Commander of the Naval Legion.
From a photograph by Brady, Washington.



General Grenville M. Dodge, President of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee.
From an engraving by A. H. Ritchie.



Louis F. Ellis, Commander of the Union Veteran Union.

From a photograph by Kruss & Eberste, Lima, Ohio.

rosette of the order, worn in the upper buttonhole of the left lapel of the coat, and varying in pattern according to the class of the wearer, is well known. A joint resolution of Congress permits the insignia of the Loyal Legion to be worn on occasions of ceremony, and at important functions its eight pointed golden cross is sure to be seen on the uniform of those officers who are members of the order.

The Grand Army of the Republic unquestionably takes rank as the greatest and most powerful patriotic organization the world has ever seen, for its latest report shows a membership of 357,639 veterans. Of its State departments, Pennsylvania is the largest, containing 43,213 members, while New York, with 38,036, is a good second. It is worthy of note that in most of the Southern States the Grand Army is well represented. In

in 1888 by the Massachusetts Commandery.

The commanders of the State organizations have been chosen from such eminent veterans as Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Hancock, Farragut, Slocum, Hawley, and Gresham. Like the Cincinnati, too, the Loyal Legion has conferred its membership on foreign officers who fought for the preservation of the Union; and an honored companion of the Pennsylvania Commandery was the late Comte de Paris. He was always proud of his connection with the order, and during his visit to the United States a few years ago he constantly wore the red, white, and blue rosette. Another evidence of his appreciation was shown by the handsomely embroidered banner that he sent to his own commandery from Paris.

The red, blue, and white



General W. S. Rosecrans, President of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland.

From a photograph by Bell, Washington.

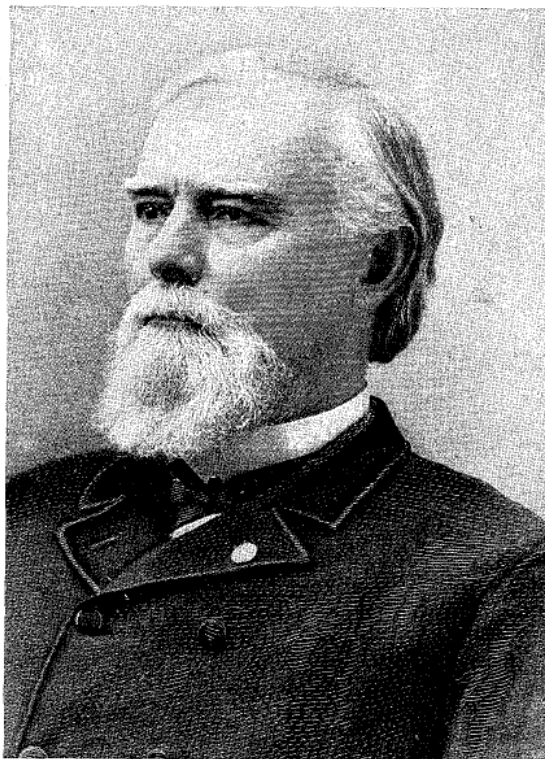
Alabama, for instance, are 243 members, in Florida 550, and in Louisiana and Mississippi 1,129. As yet the four posts in South Carolina have not been organized into a department, but with this exception all the Southern States are provided for.

Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson is accepted as the founder of the Grand Army. He served as a surgeon in the Fourteenth Illinois Infantry, and it was at Decatur, in that State, on the 6th of April, 1866, that he organized the first post, with General Isaac C. Pugh as its commander. A few weeks later a post was formed in Springfield, the State capital. The movement rapidly spread through Illinois, and thence to Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, and all over the country, until at present there are 7,301 posts.



Michael A. Dillon, Founder of the Medal of Honor Legion and of the Union Veteran Union.

From a photograph by Parker, Washington.



Ivan N. Walker, Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic.

From a photograph by Pitter, Indianapolis.

The chief purposes of the "G. A. R." are thus stated: "To preserve and strengthen those kind and fraternal feelings which bind together the soldiers, sailors, and marines who united to suppress the late Rebellion, and to perpetuate the memory and history of the dead. To assist such former comrades in arms as need help and protection, and to extend needful aid to the widows and orphans of those who have fallen." It admits to membership every soldier or sailor of the United States army, navy, or marine corps, who served between April 16, 1861, and April 9, 1865, in the civil war; also any member of a State regiment that was called into active service between the dates mentioned.

Annual meetings of the Grand Army, called national encampments, have been regularly held since 1866, when—on November 20—the first was convened



Charles M. Betts, Commander of the Medal of Honor Legion.
From a photograph by Phillips, Philadelphia.

in Indianapolis. Dr. Benjamin F. Stephenson, the founder, who presided, was succeeded as commander in chief by General Stephen A. Hurlburt. The second encampment met in Philadelphia in January, 1868, when General John A. Logan was elected. It was on this occasion that the 30th of May was set apart "to be observed by the members of the Grand Army in commemoration of the deeds of our fallen comrades." It was from this beginning that the beautiful and now almost universal observance of Memorial Day had its origin. General Logan's successors were General Burnside and General Charles Devens, Jr., of Massachusetts. As might be expected, some of the recent commanders have not been so well known, although the list includes such names as Lucius Fairchild in 1886, and Russell A. Alger in 1889. The badge of the Grand Army is a



Mrs. Elizabeth A. Turner, President of the Woman's Relief Corps
From a photograph by Hastings, Boston.

five pointed bronze star, made from the metal of cannon captured in decisive battles during the war.

Besides the establishment of Memorial Day, the Grand Army has accomplished much towards its specified objects by charity. Sick and suffering comrades receive ample bounty at its hands. Memorial relief committees have been established in some of the leading cities, and the building of State homes for veterans has been largely accomplished by its influence. Thus far it has built no monuments to its own glory or in honor of its deceased heroes; though it contributed generously to the memorial of America's greatest soldier, whose splendid tomb is now rising above the Empire City of the new world. In Washington, the site of its encampment in 1892 has received the name of Grand Army Place, and there, where the flagstaff stood, some day a memorial will be raised in honor of the great host that fought to save the Union.

In July, 1883, the Woman's Relief Corps was organized by the mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters of Union soldiers of the civil war as an auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic. Like the last named, it is divided into departments, of which there are thirty five, and into smaller divisions, called corps, of which there are 3,141. Its membership was reported, last July, as consisting of 140,305 women "of good moral character and correct deportment, who had not given aid and comfort to the enemies of the Union, who believed in the perpetuation of the principles to which the association stands pledged, and who had attained the age of sixteen years."

Besides aiding and assisting the Grand Army, the Woman's Relief Corps states its objects as being "to perpetuate the memory of their heroic dead, to extend needful aid to the widows and orphans, to cherish and emulate the deeds of our army nurses, and to inculcate lessons of patriotism and love of country among our children and in the communities in which we live." In the fulfilment of these purposes, it has endowed and supported, entirely or in part, homes for destitute mothers and widows of soldiers, and for army nurses; has established industrial training schools for girls; has helped to build memorial halls and monuments, and to secure patriotic teaching in the schools, and the raising of a flag over every schoolhouse. In such good causes it has spent, since its organization, more than twelve hundred thousand dollars. It has indeed proved its faith by its works.

The Woman's Relief Corps holds its

meetings at the same time and place as the Grand Army. In Louisville, where it assembled last September, Mrs. Elizabeth A. Turner, of Boston, was chosen to the office of national president. Each delegate to these annual conventions receives a bronze medal bearing a portrait of the retiring president. That issued at Louisville, Ky., in 1895, was made from metal of both Northern and Southern cannon, and showed the face of Mrs. Emma R. Wallace, of Chicago, Mrs. Turner's predecessor.

The character of the society called the Sons of Veterans is indicated by its name. Its membership is designed to be comprehensive, all male descendants of veterans of the civil war being eligible, if eighteen years old, and unless disqualified by moral objections. Its first camp was formed in Pittsburgh, fifteen years ago, by Major A. P. Davis, a member of the Grand Army. The idea proved a taking one, and camps multiplied rapidly. They exist today in every State and Territory, and there is one in Honolulu. At its high water mark, the membership reached almost a hundred thousand; but there has been a great falling off in the last few years, and the latest report shows only thirty five thousand. This is a small percentage of the total number of persons eligible to the society, estimated at more than four millions. The encampment of 1895 was held in Knoxville, Tennessee, and William H. Russell was there elected commander in chief.

The simple requirements for admission to the Grand Army gave rise to the criticism that the substitute, who sold himself for money, and the drafted man, who fought under compulsion, could share the honor of membership with veterans who volunteered for service from motives of pure patriotism. Hence arose a demand for a more restricted association. "It is believed," said the promoters of the movement, "that those who entered the service prior to July, 1863, had but one object in view, and that was the preservation of the Union. There were no bounties prior to that date, nor were there any fears of a draft; consequently, those who shouldered a musket or wielded a saber felt that it was a sacred duty to offer their lives in defense of their country's honor."

For such men the Union Veteran Legion was organized, in Pittsburgh, in March, 1884. Its national organization was perfected two years later. Only those are admitted to membership who volunteered prior to July 1, 1863, and who served their full term of enlistment of two or three years—including, of course, those who were

honorably discharged by reason of wounds received in the line of duty. Its rolls now contain more than eleven thousand names, divided among 144 encampments. The tenth annual meeting, or national encampment, was held in Buffalo, last October, when Colonel George C. James was chosen national commander in succession to the well known Corporal James Tanner of Washington.

Another society organized on lines more or less parallel to those of the Grand Army is the Union Veterans' Union, which admits soldiers, sailors, and marines who served at least six months during the war, part of which service must have been at the front, or who were discharged on account of wounds. Its objects are the same patriotic and charitable duties as those of kindred bodies, and it is organized into departments and precincts, with a national command that meets annually. Its inception dates from June, 1886, and at its first encampment, held in Washington during the following January, Michael A. Dillon, the society's founder, was elected its commander in chief. The present incumbent is Louis F. Ellis, chosen at the encampment held in Rochester last year. The Woman's Relief Union is an auxiliary organization of women, while the Loyal Guard contains the sons of the members of the Union Veterans' Union.

Besides the foregoing there are several societies in which membership is restricted to a more limited class. Conspicuous among them is the Regular Army and Navy Union, composed of some eight thousand honorably discharged veterans of the regular army, navy, or marine corps. Its principal objects are "to reunite those separated by reason of discharge; to preserve and strengthen that fraternal feeling which binds together the regular soldiers, sailors, and marines of the United States who have rendered faithful service to the government; to do all in our power to promote and elevate the social and material standing of the enlisted man, and the man before the mast, and to encourage and abet legislation for his benefit." The membership is distributed among 107 garrisons, many of which are on ships stationed at navy yards. The present national commander is Joseph B. Morton, of Washington, who succeeded James P. Lockwood, of Chicago.

Two orders, both of which are hereditary, and in a general sense comparable to the Loyal Legion, demand brief mention. The first of these is the Medal of Honor Legion, to which are admitted only officers and

enlisted men of the regular army and volunteer forces, or the navy, to whom medals of honor have been presented by the President or the secretary of the navy as having distinguished themselves by acts of special gallantry during the civil war. The order was organized in Washington, six years ago, its first commander being Michael A. Dillon, who was mainly instrumental in founding it. James R. O'Beirne and Charles H. T. Collis, both of New York, were his successors, and at the reunion of 1895, held in Philadelphia, Charles M. Betts of Philadelphia was elected to the command. Besides the members of the first class, the order admits a second class composed of their sons or daughters, who succeed to the first class as vacancies are created by death. There are about three hundred members. The medal itself constitutes the insignia of the order, but a button, on which is the design contained in the center of the badge, is worn as a "recognition pin."

The absence of any distinct order for those connected with the naval arm of the United States led to agitation in favor of the organizing of such a society as early as 1890, but it was not until June 19, 1893—the twenty ninth anniversary of the sinking of the Alabama by the Kearsarge—that the Naval Legion of the United States came into formal existence, at a congress held in Boston. Subsequently the word "Legion" was changed to "Order." A second congress was held in Boston on the 5th of last October, the anniversary of the adoption by Congress, in 1775, of the resolutions formally authorizing the fitting out of the first ships of the American navy. The original constitution was then still further amended, so that at present membership is restricted to surviving officers and "the lineal descendants of commissioned officers, midshipmen, and naval cadets in actual service in the navy, marine corps, revenue, or privateer services under the authority of any of the thirteen original colonies or States, or of the Continental Congress during the war of the Revolution, or of the United States during the war with France, the war with Tripoli, the war of 1812, the war with Mexico, the civil war, or in face of the enemy in any engagement in which the navy of the United States has participated, and who resigned or were discharged with honor, or who were killed in the service." A second class consists of such enlisted men as have received the naval medal of honor. Their membership is for life only. The object of the order is to transmit to posterity

the glorious names and memories of the participants of the memorable conflicts of the navy; to encourage research and publication of data pertaining to naval art and science, and to establish libraries in which to preserve documents and relics of our maritime history. At the congress of 1893, Lieutenant John C. Soley was made general commander. At that time the Massachusetts commandery was the only one in existence, but at last year's gathering, held in October, 1895, delegates from commanderies in Pennsylvania, New York, the District of Columbia, and Illinois were present. They united in choosing Admiral John G. Walker as the second general commander. Captain Henry H. Bellas, who is the only army officer connected with the order, fills the office of general recorder. He is an enthusiastic member or officer of nearly all the patriotic societies of this country.

Many of the larger armies of the civil war have special organizations, notably the Army of the Tennessee, the Army of the Cumberland, and the Army of the Potomac. Of these the Society of the Army of the Tennessee was organized April 14, 1865, in Raleigh, North Carolina. It admits to membership "every officer who has served with honor in that army," and membership may descend to a son or daughter according to the expressed wishes of the member. The total membership is about 460. The society holds annual reunions; that of last year took place in Cincinnati. General Sherman, the army's old commander, was president until his death in 1891, since when General Grenville M. Dodge has filled the office. Through its influence statues have been erected to Generals Rawlins and Macpherson in Washington, and statues of Generals Logan and Sherman are to follow. For the latter, competitive designs have already been submitted by a number of prominent sculptors.

The Society of the Army of the Cumberland was organized in Cincinnati, February 6, 1868. It admits to membership "every officer and soldier who has at any time served with honor in that army." The

present membership is about 600. Annual meetings are held at which an address by some distinguished orator is the conspicuous feature. Statues to Generals Thomas and Garfield have been raised in Washington through its efforts, and funds are being collected for a memorial to General Sheridan. Its first president was General Thomas. He was succeeded by General Sheridan, on whose death the present incumbent, General Rosecrans, was chosen.

The Society of the Army of the James was organized September 2, 1868, and General Charles Devens, Jr., became its president. It held several reunions, and finally, in 1876, was merged into the Society of the Army of the Potomac, which body was organized on February 22, 1869, in New York. It admits to membership "every officer and enlisted man who has at any time served with honor in the Army of the Potomac." More than 2,000 names are on its rolls. Annual reunions are held, at each of which an oration and a poem form conspicuous features. At the meeting held in 1895 General John Gibbon was the orator, and H. C. Bunner was the poet. The officers of the society include a president and a vice president for each of the nine corps, as well as one for the cavalry, one for the artillery, and one for the staff. The first president was General Sheridan, who has been followed by a brilliant galaxy of names, including Meade, Hooker, Burnside, Hancock, Sickles, and Grant. Last year the late General John Gibbon was elected to the presidency.

There are also corps organizations, and many regiments now hold periodical reunions. High on Round Top, overlooking the field of Gettysburg, is the heroic statue of Gouverneur Kemble Warren—the hero of Gettysburg and the victim of Five Forks—which the comrades of his own regiment from the Empire State have raised in his honor. And so throughout this country, in the South as well as in the North, these patriotic organizations have preserved in bronze and stone the records and memories of the heroes of our civil war.

Marcus Benjamin.

