

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED
BEFORE THE UNION LEAGUE OF
PHILADELPHIA ON SATURDAY
EVENING, JANUARY 20, 1906**

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An address delivered before the Union League of Philadelphia on Saturday evening, January 20, 1906 by Joseph Adams Smith

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JOSEPH ADAMS SMITH

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KEARSARGE AND ALABAMA

AN ADDRESS

Delivered before
The Union League of Philadelphia

on
Saturday evening, January 20, 1906

By
Rear Admiral Joseph Adams Smith, U.S.N., Retired

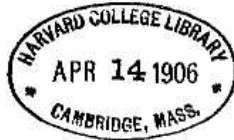
At the presentation by the Art Association
of the painting representing the
battle between the

Kearsarge and Alabama



Philadelphia 1906

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The Union League.

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AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE
THE UNION LEAGUE OF PHILA-
DELPHIA, SATURDAY EVENING,
JANUARY 20th, 1906.



ON. EDWIN S. STUART, President, called the meeting to order. Rear Admiral Joseph Adams Smith, U. S. N., Retired; the Secretary, Mr. William H. Lambert; and Mr. Abraham Barker also occupied the platform. COLONEL R. DALE BENSON was recognized

by the Chair and said:

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of The Union League: A pleasant and agreeable duty comes to me this evening, though it is to be regretted that this is through the absence from the city of Mr. E. Burgess Warren, President of the Art Association of The Union League of Philadelphia, at whose request I am acting as a representative of its membership.

This Association in 1881 was conceived by our late lamented fellow member, Joseph Storm Patterson, whose interest in and devotion to The Union League was markedly conspicuous; and to commemorate that devotion, his widow has placed the beautiful marble statue of *Abdiel* in your Reception Room. The mission of the Art Association is to enhance the attractiveness and adornment of your Club House by the purchase and presentation of paintings and sculpture and other works of art.

It was recognized at that time that it might be a questionable policy to draw upon the exchequer of the League for such purposes, while a bonded indebtedness remained upon the property, and this Association stepped into the breach. The encouragement and endorsement of the successive Boards of Directors has always been accorded to it in most generous terms, and this has acted as an inspiration to continue its existence.

For a quarter of a century its work has been prosecuted unostentatiously and unselfishly, and with a goodly measure of success, as your walls and halls will testify. The membership is voluntary—a small annual subscription is all that is required for enrollment.

It is not expected that I shall enter into details on this occasion, but may I not state that its organization has been the incentive to the formation of similar organizations in many other institutions in this country; its expenditures have aggregated tens of thousands of dollars; and its aim has always been in its purchases, that they shall be truly artistic, characterized by a chasteness, culture, and refinement, that the result might not only be a means of education, but might also bring pleasure to donor and recipient.

If you can mentally picture the effect that would be produced in your beautiful Club House, should all the works of art presented by the Art Association be removed therefrom, the appearance of the walls and halls would then enable you to estimate to some extent what has been quietly accomplished by this Association.

Tonight it comes forward, in conformity with the traditional lines of The Union League, with a historical canvas for presentation to your patriotic institution—an institution that contributed so largely to the maintenance of the Union of States in the dark period of the Civil War. The canvas exhibits the master hand of the marine painter, Mr. Xanthus Smith, who is your guest tonight. Before its purchase it had the careful scrutiny of the Art Association, aided largely by, and finally with the full approval of, a participant in the scene depicted, as to its accuracy.

It may be interesting to the membership to hear a sketch of the artist, who is not only a native of our city but served in the United States Navy during the Civil War.

Xanthus Smith, the artist, is well known in Philadelphia as a marine painter. He belongs to a family of artists, his father being Russell Smith, the famed scenic artist, and his sister, Mary Smith, who won a reputation in oils. He was born in Philadelphia, and is identified in his work with his native city. His chief branch has been marine painting, and having during the war of the Rebellion served in the navy, on the staff of Admiral Du Pont,

and in Admiral Lee's and Admiral Farragut's squadrons, has been well qualified to paint the naval engagements of that war. He was busy with his sketch-book and pencil at all times that permitted during his service, and thus acquired the necessary material to give accurateness to his paintings. Some of his principal works are "The Battle of Fort Fisher," in the permanent collection of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; "The Sinking of the Cumberland" and "Battle with the Ram Tennessee," in the Harrison collection; "Admiral Farragut entering Mobile Bay," Agnew Collection; and many others; in addition to the "Monitor and Merrimac," long the property of The Union League; and the "Kearsarge and Alabama," now also to have the distinction of a place in this patriotic and honored institution.

It will not be my province to attempt to detail the incidents that the picture presents, as you are to be honored with the historical facts by one of our members who was a participant in the action, and today the only living commissioned officer of the United States Navy that stood upon the deck of the American ship.

Mr. President, I have the honor of presenting through you to The Union League of Philadelphia, on the behalf of the membership of its Art Association, a painting which represents the valor and a notable achievement of the American navy. (Applause.)

On Sunday, June 19th, 1864, off the harbor of Cherbourg, France, was fought that "great naval duel" between the cruiser Alabama, representing the Confederate States of America, and the sloop of war Kearsarge, representing the navy of the United States of America. Previous to and incident to the battle, not only this nation, but the world at large, awaited the issue with bated breath—portentous in result in the event of the defeat of the Kearsarge. The cause of right won—the Kearsarge was victorious.

May The Union League of Philadelphia ever be true to that patriotism espoused in 1862, and may Providence continue to smile upon and prosper the United States of America as a world power. (Applause.)

NOTE. (The painting of the "Kearsarge and Alabama" had been placed on the mantel above the platform, and draped with a large American flag. At the close of Colonel Benson's remarks, the flag was raised, unveiling the painting, amidst continued applause.)

PRESIDENT STUART: I accept with great pleasure in the name of, and for The Union League, the painting the "Kearsarge and Alabama," which has just been presented on behalf of the Art Association.

I find, since the formation of the Art Association in 1881, it has expended upwards of \$80,000 upon works of art, which add so materially to the adornment of The Union League House. That the splendid work accomplished by this Association is appreciated, is evidenced by the presence of so many members tonight, and will be an incentive, not only to the Association to continue the work, but to the members to assist them in every way possible.

It seems particularly appropriate that a picture of this historical character should hang upon the walls of The Union League, of which Captain Winslow, the commander of the Kearsarge, was an honorary member, and to whom The Union League presented, shortly after that great battle, a silver medal in commemoration of his victory.

We have upon our roll of membership the only surviving commissioned officer of the Kearsarge, who stood upon the deck of that glorious ship on that memorable June 19, 1864, and who will tell of the cruise of the Kearsarge in search of the Alabama and the story of the conflict as he saw it.

It is with pleasure I present to you Rear Admiral Joseph Adams Smith, U. S. N., Retired.

ADDRESS OF REAR ADMIRAL SMITH



R. PRESIDENT and members of The Union League: As has been suggested, I propose, this evening, to attempt a sketch of the cruise of the United States sloop of war Kearsarge, during the great Rebellion, and her fight with the Confederate States steamer Alabama, in 1864. I deem it an honor and a privilege to appear before you on this occasion—an honor to myself, because I appear before an organization of men distinguished for their loyal