

## MEMORIAL DAY.

IN EVERY state and territory of the union lie buried the nation's dead, those who gave up their lives that "government of the people, by the people and for the people might not perish from the earth."

Under the auspices of the Grand Army of the Republic the thirtieth of May is observed as a memorial day, except when, as is the case this year, it falls upon Sunday, when the following day is observed.

This beautiful custom was established by General John A. Logan, in 1868, when, as commander-in-chief of the G. A. R. he issued general order No. 11, in which appeared the following paragraph:

"The thirtieth day of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defence of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet church-yard in the land. In this observance no form of ceremony is prescribed, but posts and comrades will in their own way arrange such fitting service and testimonials of respect as circumstances may permit."

This was followed by an eloquent tribute to the memory of the dead comrades whom he thus desired to honor, and with a hope that the observance thus inaugurated would become a perpetual one. At the national encampment held in Washington, May 11, 1870, memorial day was formally established as a perpetual custom. The day selected was chosen simply because it is the time when nature makes her fairest floral offerings. By legislative enactment in several of the states memorial day has been made a legal holiday, and it should also be made a national holiday by congress, to be observed by the nation forever, as are now the fourth of July and the day annually appointed by the president for national thanksgiving.

Memorial day was observed in the various cities and towns of the Northwest on Monday, the thirty-first of May, and the usual ceremony of decorating graves by the G. A. R. and citizens was performed. In Portland, the observance of the day was general. The G. A. R., escorted by the various military companies, paraded the streets and then repaired to Lone Fir cemetery, where the usual ceremonies were conducted, and details decorated the various graves there and elsewhere. In the evening a large concourse of people listened to an oration and the rendition of an appropriate programme of music and reading. Sunday evening the G. A. R. attended the Congregational church in a body and listened to a memorial address by Rev. T. E. Clapp.

The brave are always chivalrous, and the heroes who wore the blue were the first to forgive those who wore the gray, to honor them for their valor and to acknowledge the full measure of their devotion to the cause for which they so bravely but misguidedly fought. With this spirit they have made it a custom to decorate the graves of the few confederate dead who lie in Northern cemeteries, while in the South they formally assist

in the ceremonies held by the wearers of the gray in memory of their fallen comrades. Only a narrow and unforgiving spirit can condemn this graceful and proper act, a spirit not imbued with true patriotism, since it should be the earnest desire of a loyal heart to cement together by every possible means the once hostile sections of the union. Such people are those referred to by General Grant as men "who did not get fairly warmed up to the war until it was over," men who began fighting when words, not bullets, became the missiles of destruction. Happily their numbers decrease yearly, and the spirit of sectional hate is dying with them.

Throughout the Southern states the custom of decorating with flowers the graves of the fallen brave of both the federal and confederate armies, is becoming yearly more general. The people of the South are rapidly learning to look upon the success of the union cause and the complete overthrow of slavery and the secession doctrine as the greatest blessing that could have been bestowed upon them. With the exception of a few, now rapidly passing away, whose disappointed ambition and embittered feelings have blinded their eyes to the benefits their country has reaped from the failure of the cause for which the men of the South so bravely fought and heroically died, the sentiment of loyalty to the restored union has become as deep-rooted and fervent as was that more contracted loyalty which made them take up arms for their native state against the government which alone had made that state possible. With this feeling, while honoring the memory of those who with and for them wore the confederate gray, they also strew flowers on the graves of those who wore the blue. They lie together, the blue and the gray, in the bosom of mother earth; one common sward covers them, one common flag floats over them, and the people of one common and united country gather to honor their memory and seal anew the compact written in their blood, that never again shall the brothers of the union rise up in arms against each other. That the decoration of the graves of fallen soldiers of both armies tends to soften the feelings of hostility, to knit closer the bonds of union and draw nearer in a feeling of common sympathy and brotherhood the people of the North and South is too evident to be denied. Should occasion require it, that same spirit of loyalty, contracted and perverted as it then was, which sent the sons of the South out to fight for their native states, will bring them again to the front, musket in hand, to defend the integrity and honor of the whole union, where shoulder to shoulder with the sturdy men of the North, they will stand as a bulwark of defense against violence from within or without. Let us then, as the years go by and the veterans fall before the sickle of the great reaper, take up their work, and in every city, town and hamlet in the union gather on the thirtieth of each succeeding May for all time to come, and place our floral tributes upon the graves of our soldiers. In doing this we keep alive that spirit of martial ardor and honor to the brave which will be the nation's rock of salvation in times of trouble.