

MEMORIAL DAY.

A sermon delivered by Rev. W. E. Copeland at Unity church, Salem, Ore., Sunday, May 30.

No other among the days set apart by law as a day of rest and cessation from business is so truly a holiday as is Memorial Day. What we now call a holiday was originally a holy day and was consecrated to the honor of some saint or sacred event. On it the people had a special religious service, as now on Thanksgiving and Christmas, or in Catholic churches on St. John's day, or St. Mark's day. But in the course of time the meaning of the word has changed and a holiday is a day of merriment and festivity, except this which we celebrate to-morrow, which still retains its solemn character and has services of a semi-religious nature. The sober mien, the grave face, befit the holiday; for on it, we call to mind not perhaps saints, but heroes; men, who, for the sake of their imperilled country, took their lives in their hands and went forth to battle, many of them never to return. Some of our comrades were indeed far from saints, as saintship is defined in the churches. Some of them were funny fellows, and we can all of us, who have been in the great army, recall actions and speeches which provoke laughter, even when the tears are in our eyes; others were, what we must in justice admit, rather hard cases; not only swearing and drinking, but not at all unwilling to take what did not belong to them; in civil life this would have been called stealing; but we called it foraging and were not averse to sharing in the benefits obtained by the forager. Indeed, an expert forager was a most excellent comrade to have in the mess, and we asked no questions as to methods.

No, these comrades whom we honor to-day; to recall whose deaths and actions memorial day is set apart, were not saints; they were live, breathing, loving, hating, real men, who had this to commend them, that they were patriots. And say what you please, patriotism is a virtue, which every nation that would be great, must place at the head of all virtues. Whatever may have been the failings of our comrades, and they had fully as many as other men; they were patriotic.

Some tell us that patriotism is a narrow virtue, which just escapes being a vice, which some day we shall outgrow. I suppose we shall, I hope indeed we may, and say with the author hero of our independence, "my country is the world." I hope the time will come, when all the partition walls between nations, and between religions, too, for that matter, shall be broken down and the human race become one grand brotherhood. This is

the end to which all should work.

Meanwhile, we need more and more to cultivate patriotism. We need it now as much as we did in the 60's. Perils threaten us now as they did then, and we need men who can rise above party or sect and think only of their country, now as then. Property is accounted of more value than life, men may go without work, women may dress in rags, children may starve, but property must be protected. Now hot blood seethes through the veins, strong men are ready to use violent measures to right the wrongs, so to-day we need patriots, who will suffer for the sake of their country. That the people are so patient is evidence that we have not yet lost our patriotism; as the years pass, it will be tested harder than ever, so that we need to employ every means which will strengthen it. It has been forgotten even by comrades in the Grand Army, that the great war was fought over the question of property. The most valuable property in the south consisted of Black men and women; the whites of the south believed that they would lose this most valuable possession. The Copperheads waxed rich by commerce with the slaveholders of the south and they say their trade was endangered, their property threatened; so these parties joined to sever the Union and thus preserve their wealth. Of more value to them than the Union, than human freedom and human happiness, was their property. Such men still exist; many are to be found now who value more than human life and human happiness their miserable fortunes. To preserve those fortunes and increase them, they would sacrifice their country, they would side with oppression and barbarism, and so permit Spain to perpetrate atrocities in Cuba, which surpass the cruelties of the savage red man. They would sacrifice the lives and happiness of their fellow-citizens, if so be that they might increase their own wealth: more to be condemned should they be, than the Rebs of the 60's, for they know better. Such men in the 60's manufactured and sold shoddy blankets which the rains and sun made worthless, sent to the front shoes which the first march destroyed, thought it a shrewd stroke of wisdom to furnish weevily biscuit, spoiled beef and other food unfit for dogs, to feed the men who were imperilling their lives to preserve the Union. Such men still live and follow the old game, seeking wealth over the dead bodies of their fellow men. Thank God all rich men are not brutes, else we would be in a hopeless condition. While it is true, that the love of money is the root of all evil, yet men may have great wealth and not love it. But this we want to remember, brought to our minds by our memories of the war: honor,

life, the Union, are of more value than any amount of property.

Wealth is good, I wish we old soldiers had more of it, but virtue, honor, human sympathy are of greater value.

The comrades of the Grand Army and the other comrades, who have never been mustered into the Grand Army, not very much to look at now, worn, poor, many of them; growing old all of them, have a quality which commands respect, and that is patriotism, tested in war. Doubtless among the young men, there are patriots, I cannot but believe that such is the case; but their patriotism has not yet been tried, these old veterans, with all their faults, and again I admit, we have many, have been tried in the fire and their patriotism proved. They have shown by their deeds that they love their native land; they have proved, under fire, their loyalty to the ever-beloved stars and stripes; we have given ourselves, and no man can do more than this to preserve the Union from being shattered beyond the possibility of rejoining.

Think you the trial was easy; how is it comrades? Were the long marches without food, were the fierce charges, were the many hours when we had to stand and one and another was picked off, were the weary days in the hospital or on the battle field before we were taken to the hospital, easy; were the screech of the shell, the zip of the bullet, the boom of the cannon, the rattle of the musketry, lullaby music? It was music, that sometimes terrified and sometimes inspired. Were the sights on battle field and hospital pleasant to look upon? Those, who are so ready for war with foreign powers have not had their patriotism tried as have these veterans. Not but that I believe they are worthy sons. But war is not lightly to be entered upon yet better war than injustice or dishonor. There are times, when peace is no longer possible, and we are compelled to resort to arms. When the time comes; if ever it does, which kind heaven avert, may our sons be as ready as were their fathers, to shoulder the musket and go to the front. Remember that humanity is more precious than property, all men to be more regarded than a few men. That above all else, justice and brotherhood are the most valuable treasure, more to be desired than gold or silver, lands or houses.

Memorial Day calls to mind scenes, such as this nation never witnessed before and we trust may never witness again; scenes whose narration will thrill the patriotic heart of all time. Battles were fought, which have become historic battles known to the whole world. Shall we ever forget those scenes? I think not; today they are as vivid as when we played our part. The

great generals are all gone but we can remember them yet and their names are known to all nations of the world. Some have revisited the historic battle fields on which they did their part and the whole of the eventful day came before the mind. Again we saw our comrades, again we heard the dread noises of the battle, again we heard the commands or gave them as of old. The ranks of the old regiment were full once more; everything appeared as when the day begun. Recalling hour by hour, at last we came to the close and saw the field strewn with the dead and dying. Once more we heard the familiar roll call, and noted how few answered to their names. We who have never been on the old battle-field have oft recalled the events of the past and they were as real as ever. What memories come to us today as our thoughts turn back to those days in the 60's, so big with meaning not only to this nation but to the world, days on which we did our part, each as full of action as are ordinary years.

Memorial day is not, as some imagine, intended only to glorify a few poor old soldiers; to be sure we march to the grave, we stand before the public, it is one day, but one day only, that as visible signs, we may recall to the minds of those about us, the young men and the young women, those dreadful days, when the fate of a great nation hung in the balance and no man could tell which way the scales would incline. When, all over the United States, processions march tomorrow to the cemeteries and comrades visit solitary graves in lonely spots and place on them a flag and a bunch of flowers, we are not merely honoring the dust of the soldier or sailor lying there, we are honoring the country and the flag, we are honoring heroism. These be practical days in which we are intent on caring, each for his own little affairs of business, we buy and sell and earn our bread, if we can. We live in a practical age, when life has been reduced to dead level, and all that interests us is business. The days of adventure and heroic service are passing away. To do, to dare, to die for the right, to suffer for a great cause seldom falls to the lot of American citizens. This day is set apart to commemorate an unexpected heroism, when old men and boys shouldered the musket and marched away, some to come home no more, others crippled for life. Think of the departure of a regiment, with glistening and new equipments, think of the return with rusted bayonets, shabby and ragged uniforms and tattered flags; we went a thousand strong only a few hundred came back. We were baptized in blood and fire; may America never lack brave men, who in the time of need may rise above selfishness and care for the whole