

OREGON CITY ENTERPRISE.

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Probate court in session first Monday in each month.
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BLOSS'S ORATION.

The War as a Factor of Education.

A GOOD SCHOOL OF EXPERIENCE.

Its Result Was to Give the Greatest Educational Impetus the Country Has Ever Had.

By request of Meade Post No. 2, G. A. R., the ENTERPRISE publishes in full the address made by President Bloss, of the State Agricultural college, on Decoration day in this city. It is an able article well worth reading, for it gives a clear insight into the effects the late war had on developing the wonderful educational system of this country and of its work in raising the plane of intelligence among the masses.

The immediate conditions which made the late war necessary was an attempt on the federal side to enforce obedience to the laws of the nation against those who forced to disrupt it, upon the other.

High moral sentiment, nay, even high religious sentiment and enthusiasm had prevailed in both sections of this country from the earliest settlement. The misguided rebel exhibited in his conversation and in his published statements as much reverence for God and devotion to him, as did his opponent. Their victories were proclaimed with thanks to God, for his mercies equally devout, with those which Cromwell expressed during the English revolution. The nightly prayer meetings just in front of our lines at Atlanta in August, 1864, to the listening federal soldier, showed as much fervor and true Christian devotion as could have been exhibited in the federal camp. While the people of the north and south were divided on the rightfulness of human slavery, on all other great moral and religious truths were practically united. With the exception of the rightfulness of slavery they held to the same religious creeds, and were controlled by the same church discipline. These facts are stated in order that the young men and women, in fact, all under 40 years, may comprehend what the literature of the day but faintly portrays.

The carnage of war is awful—the man who passed through the fiery ordeal of a charge upon the works at Vicksburg, or through the leaden hail which greeted Pickett's men at Gettysburg, or through the equivalents of these on a smaller scale on a hundred other battlefields shudders, even yet, when he thinks of it. But the picture which he sees, of battle and of the contestants on the battlefield are wholly different from that of the average non-combatant. The men who created this carnage were not ideal murderers; they were not desperadoes, cut-throats and robbers. They did not fight in anger, there was little of malice or hatred, it was not a personal dispute, it was almost wholly non-personal; it was the nation on the one side attempting to enforce obedience to law and order, against a brave but a misguided and a rebellious people.

The early volunteer armies were composed chiefly of the very best elements of society—men, the mass of whom had led upright and virtuous lives at home—men, who were neither profane, licentious, nor brutal men, who would have sacrificed their lives in protection of the weak and the innocent. It was this class of men who constituted the mass of that great army, and this is especially true of the part that did the actual fighting on both sides. It is true that liars, and thieves, and cowards, and cut-throats entered the army; but these never remained long in the presence of imminent danger, nor could they withstand real and true discipline—they usually formed the contingent in the rear and thus unfortunately have given non-combatants of the north, distorted ideas of that patriotic army which saved the nation. The men who composed the mass of the army were honest, upright and virtuous; men who would disdain to do a mean thing; men who had wives and sweethearts at home whom they loved and respected, and for whom they would have sacrificed their own lives rather than have brought disgrace upon these loved ones by acts of cowardice or brutality. Nor were these men drunkards, in fact, they used less of liquor than if they had been at home. The grand states of Kansas, and Iowa, and the Dakota's and the states west of the Mississippi, have been peopled chiefly by the families of those gallant men who were fortunate enough to escape the leaden hail of the battlefield. These men have helped to make prohibition states and are ever ready to enforce the law. They are the men who in Wyoming, Montana and Kansas have either partially or wholly removed women from the enthralment of a civilization, which is fast passing away. They are willing to accord her equal rights before the law—equal suffrage and equal rights

in holding and transmitting property. They have upheld by their suffrage the dignity of labor by making it possible for women to enter any and all learned professions, the class room, medicine and law.

Hence, he who would fully appreciate the morale of the army during the civil war, will need to gather his impression from other sources than books detailing the hair-breadth escapes of spies and scouts, the stories of partisan and guerilla warfare, involving its coloring of hate and revenge, the miraculous stories of soldiers who never saw a battle, but whose tongues and pens are no less vigorous than their imagination—men who make oriental estimates upon all that they ever did or saw.

But why these statements in connection with the subject under consideration? Simply to prepare you for the further statement that the federal army in the late war was composed of the true manhood of the nation—an army in which every loyal patriotic citizen, whether a professed Christian or not was represented. The study of this hour is to determine what effect the war of the rebellion has had, through these men, directly and indirectly, in fostering general education. The war of the rebellion as has been said was the outgrowth of the institution of slavery and its attempted extension. To have led to war, there must have been earnest convictions for and against the rightfulness of human slavery. For fifty years the debate had gone on in congress—from the platform and the pulpit—in every school house in the land—and lastly through the greatest of all educators—the public press. The discussion lasted through almost two generations, and however ignorant men might have been of the laws of philosophy or Christian duty none were ignorant of human slavery. Hence, when Abraham Lincoln called for 75,000 men, more than 300,000 men enrolled for duty, men with convictions, men patriotic because they had convictions. But why make these statements? It has been made to show that the nucleus which formed the basis of the great army entered it through a high moral duty.

The army at first was simply a huge well organized mob, composed of men having a definite purpose, but wholly wanting in discipline. We thought that the purpose of the hard drills day after day, and month after month, was to enable us to perform rapid evolutions upon the battlefield, and we looked upon guard duty and camp restrictions as arbitrary and unnecessary. We did not then know that the military drill was necessary in order to educate us to acts of prompt and instantaneous obedience—that the right salute was to train us to recognize and to respect authority—that the camp restrictions were necessary in order to teach us submission to rightful authority as well as to restrain the weak from temptations and the bad from immoral practices—that the long nights upon picket duty tested our courage and self-reliance, and strengthened our fidelity. We recognized the fact that the performance of police duty, the cleansing of the whole camp was necessary, but we did not realize that the habit then so thoroughly instilled would be carried into civil life; that it would end in cleaner homes and cities; that it would educate men as to the causes of diseases; that as a result we should have introduced a system of preventive medicine in every state that would tend to the draining and reclaiming of swamp lands, and in improving the sewerage of towns and cities. That the three years of training in the moral code of the army strengthened and broadened every man is not a myth, it is real. No class of men is today more loyal to duty than the soldier; none more prompt; none who have a higher regard for rightful authority; none more obedient and law abiding as citizens.

When the great army was about to be disbanded in 1864, non-combatants with distorted views of army life, and without a knowledge of the effects of discipline and the education which these men had received, trembled for the safety of the nation. But 1,000,000 men returned to civil life without creating a jar to the state. They returned to civil life the lovers of law and order. They returned strong, self-reliant men. They returned broader, more charitable men, men ready to do more for their fallen and stricken foes than any other class. They had been developed and educated in the great business world by contact with men, and when they were set free they gave an impulse to the business industries of this country such as it had never before seen. The average age of the men who entered the service did not exceed 22 years. They came from the farm, the mechanic's bench, from the store and shop, from every profession, from the school room, the college and the university. They were alike in a lack of acquaintance with the world or a knowledge of their own possibilities. They were brought from the restraint of parental authority to be taught under

military discipline and in contact with men of self-restraint and self-control. In the severe school of experience they were taught endurance, and in it all, they became acquainted with their own moral, intellectual and physical possibilities. There is nothing which in so short a time develops and broadens men as travel. These men traveled thousands of miles on the weary march by the dusty road or the pike, by railroad, by river, on steamboats or by ships on the sea. Men who would have never gone from their own county or state—traveled over a dozen states, saw many of the great cities, and had an opportunity to study the great industries and possibilities of the nation. Nor was this a short holiday trip; it lasted throughout four years and there was time for assimilation of the thoughts suggested. Thus was every man broadened and inspired with new ideas.

These men isolated from their friends began, many for the first time, the work of letter writing and the mails during the continuance of the war were crowded as they never were before. Men who never would have written a letter became expert correspondents, camp life, histories of army movements, descriptions of the country, its people, and its development were all fitting subjects for easy composition. Letters to wives and loved ones afforded an opportunity for grace and beauty in style, while the descriptions of great campaigns and bloody battles gave the highest opportunity for grace and beauty in style, while the descriptions of great campaigns and bloody battles gave the highest opportunity for the grand and sublime. Such letters would furnish a complete history of the war, and in fact, do furnish the basis for much of its history. But the correspondence was not all upon one side. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, wives, and loved ones each did their share. That this could have all been done without creating a desire to know more, to be more, or to be able to express thought better, is not possible. Fathers and mothers were inspired to educate their children, and every girl who had a sweetheart in the army received an impetus to attain higher culture.

One of the incentives, which in this war was most potent in creating a desire for education, resulted from the selecting of the men for special office. In choosing the signal corps from the rank and file, intelligence was necessarily made the chief factor in the selection. Non-commissioned officers were selected on account of their intelligence, culture and fidelity, than because of their superior courage. Men were detailed as clerks in the quartermaster's and commissary department, and received extra pay for their services because of their ability as accountants. Upon the organization of companies men were frequently chosen as line officers on account of their popularity and without reference to their education or fitness for command. Such men through public sentiment were either forced to resign or were passed by, when promotions were to be made. The irresponsible, or incompetent favorite, who secured a commission, met with universal condemnation from rank and file. It was a noticeable fact to every soldier, other things being equal, that the best educated lieutenants became captains; that the best educated captains became majors, and the most brilliant colonels became generals. It was soon discovered that education gave men rank and place, provided they were endowed with courage and fidelity. These facts stimulated every young man who had capacity and ambition, to educate himself as soon as he returned to civil life. Hence, after the war closed the preparatory schools all over the north were crowded with soldiers and our colleges and universities continued to graduate them from their halls as late as 1873. The education of these men was not a mistake. They had already attained a practical knowledge of the world before entering the college and hence after graduation entered upon their life work with a vigor and a power which gave them prestige, and today such men are the leaders in every department of the business and professional world. Hence, I repeat, that the methods upon which promotions were made inspired every soldier with a desire for an education. The stimulation which the war gave to reading has never been equaled in any period of human history. The private who had been in the service for three years was thoroughly intelligent upon what was going on in every department, east, west, central or southern. He was a student of the daily papers, and from his knowledge of military strategy could divine the next movement to be made upon the checker board. The daily paper found purchasers in every company, and every item of army news, the details and description of campaigns, as well as the discussions in congress on questions of the highest interest to the

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