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## The Fine Oration of Eric Bolt

Marshfield Student at Willamette Had Masterpiece in Newberg Contest

The following is the oration of Eric Bolt, son of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. N. Bolt, the representative of Willamette University of Salem in the Oregon state oratorical contest at Newberg, and while Mr. Bolt did not win the contest, his declamation on "National Vitality" is regarded as a masterpiece at Willamette.

—II—

This land, abundantly endowed by its Creator, has been developed by men into a world power. Upon its soil our forefathers fought and died in the advancement of great principles, forging a nation to stand in the very forefront in this, the most remarkable period of the world's history. Our heritage was conceived in the hearts of these men, born of their life blood and nurtured by their unwavering devo-

tion. Upon such a foundation and with material of the same kind we are developing a race whose hearts throb with patriotic impulse and warm sympathy for mankind. We are justly proud of this nation, which has advanced so far in brief span of existence. But with our pride there comes another thought—must she finally decline? Guarded by the Sphinx and Pyramids there is traced upon the sands of Egypt a civilization once great and powerful but now wrapt in solitude. From the ruin-covered hills of Rome comes the silent testimony, Rome was, but is no more. Thus has history repeated itself.

History is the record of the struggle of nations for perpetuity. It is the story of their groping for some means of averting destruction. Rome relied upon her legions for life, while Greece strove for existence not alone by her soldiers, but by a great wealth of learning. And yet both peoples failed to see that back of war and back of learning there is a factor which must not be ignored by our nation if it is to endure.

### A Wonderful Tonic That Aids Digestion

Thousands are unable to digest certain kinds of food. In most cases it is not the fault of the food, nor the stomach. It is probable that the stomach has been abused. Many resort to pre-digested foods and various kinds of medicines to get relief from dyspepsia, indigestion and heartburn, but without permanent benefit.

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National perpetuity cannot be sustained by war. Though war may be the cause of rapid territorial expansion and materialistic gain it cannot preserve the vital element in the nation. Its greatest evil, however, is in its toll of human lives and the consequent weakening of the nation. Today France stands before the world as an admonition against war. Her soldiers were sacrificed at Magenta until the hue of their blood as it flowed beneath the olive trees gave us our color "magenta." Her heroes lay within the shadows of the pyramids, they rested in thousands at Moscow and Waterloo. While those too weak to represent their country at the front were left to perpetuate the race. The result? Thrice the Napoleonic enlistment standard was lowered until the words "suffer the little children to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of France" have become all too significant. Had war the power to make a nation live, France has laid enough noble lives upon her altar to endure without end.

There came a time in our own history, when, "for every drop of blood shed by the lash another must be shed by the sword." Through the death of over one million of our nation's best, slavery was expunged. To crown this carnival of death the redeemer of the black man died by the assassin's bullet. But an almost severed flag was dipped in his life's blood and made whole again and "Old Glory" once more waved over a united people. Their places seem to be filled now. A new generation guides our national destiny. But can it be as strong as if these million men had never died? We can never measure our loss. We can never know how far the men that are fall short of the men that might have been. War means weakened manhood and weakened manhood means impaired national vitality.

Neither can education achieve permanent progress for the nation. It should be the means of informing and elevating public opinion for a nation never advances beyond the goal of its ideals. The ambitions and achievements portrayed in the art and literature of ancient Greece were but the reflection of her national life. As the Greek declined, the time came when his learning was more than an enfeebled manhood could bear and his

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sceptor passed on to another people more able to wield it. Science tells us man has lived only half of one per cent of time. He is in the early morning of life, yet how far advanced? What would have reached? He has made a slave of the unseen force that propels our motors and flashes our messages; and sails aloft as the birds of the air. He has carved a Venus of Milo, written a Hamlet, painted a Sistine Madonna and composed a Messiah. Such are the fruits of man's genius. Although these achievements are a necessary form of progress they rest upon the quality and the stability of the nation's manhood. Should the race degenerate there will come a time when neither art nor literature nor science can save us.

How, then, may we escape the apparently foreordained fate of nations? Our only hope lies in the culture of national life—in the culture of the race. For, in the final analysis, the nation must be founded upon living men and women and the lives of its citizens determine the life of the nation. The age of Pericles came at the height of Grecian culture; conquering Rome was virile Rome. But when Greece and Rome lost their vision of a more perfect manhood they perished. We have an example, however, of a people that has retained its lofty conception of life through the centuries. A people oppressed on the plains of Siberia and crowded into the Ghetto of our cities; a people without home or country, scorned and despised; a people that witnessed the glory of Greece and saw Rome rise in majestic splendor and sink again beside the Tiber; a people with the same characteristics today that they had then, a living monument to race culture touched by religion.

Race culture is recognized by Burbank as he selects only the constitutionally fit to propagate his species. His master hand causes the castus to shed its prickly spines and forces the plum to yield its seed. These achievements are possible because plants inherit by the traits of their progenitors. The same general laws that are operative among plants obtain in the race of men. Since we inherit by the characteristics of our ancestry advancement must be individual. And the very existence of our nation rests upon its citizens for while race progress is measured through the masses, the family is the spring from which it is nourished. If we are to survive as a nation our manhood must be kept unstained.

A sword of Damocles hangs over our heads. Tolerated by an unwakened public conscience social disease is working destruction. Not only do the guilty suffer, but they defile the purity of our womanhood and lay upon our children the source of their infirmity. And yet, some of us would hesitate to prevent the unfit man from undermining civilization. It is true that has reason which the animal has not, but if his flesh stiffens and controls his reason the law should care for him. The protection of posterity requires such action, the perpetuity of the race depends upon it and the uplifting of mankind demands it.

May the ideal of producing a nation of glowing manhood and womanhood be instilled into the public conscience "like a new religion, lofty and austere, setting before itself a sublime ideal; terrestrial in its chosen theater, but celestial in its theme; human in its means but superhuman in its results." Can you conceive of a more grand, a more sublime religion for the future than that religion which raises man to higher planes of existence and gives him a loftier vision of life? If our nation is to be the beacon light of the world, such service must be its supreme ideal.

Then let us take care lest the nation's veins become choked with yellow dust. Let us awake that mighty giant, public opinion, so that he will dominate our land, demanding that only the best be produced and thus extirpating the unfit. In anticipation of this awakening may there be written in letters of gold above the portals of our legislative hall and emblazoned on the seal of every organization these words, "There is no wealth but life."

When we sound the requiem of war, when we measure the worth of education; when we demand that life be held sacred and realize that "there is no wealth but life," our ideal will become reality—the reality of a more perfect manhood devoted to the uplifting and the perpetuating of the race. Carrying out the sacred obligations which devolve upon us, this ideal of national responsibility we shall leave to our posterity the most glorious heritage of all—an enduring nation.

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