

## A TRIBUTE TO THE BRAVE AMERICAN SOLDIER MEMORIAL ADDRESS AT MASONIC HALL, DECORATION DAY, 1912

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AN AGED American, traveling through the Russian Empire, was arrested and brought before the Czar that his business might be inquired into. As he was led into the presence of the ruler of Russia's countless thousands he seemed unabashed by the magnificent surroundings, but stood erect while his attendants bowed in abject servility. At length a courtier approached and whispered in the ear that he should bend the knee in the presence of the King. Casting a look of disdain at his prompter, the American replied: "In my country every man is king."

This idea so forcibly expressed by the stern old American, was doubtless in the minds of our fathers when they ordained that in this new nation, there should be no distinctions, all should be equal and each should be a sovereign. But nature is stronger even than law and we are accustomed to give distinction to those who have been of special interest to the nation. And to none is more freely granted the highest distinction by their fellow men than the American soldier. Impelled by no selfish motive, led only by love of country, he stood with Washington at Yorktown, with Jackson at New Orleans, followed Taylor to Buena Vista, and fought perseveringly with the "Silent Soldier" at Vicksburg. In more recent times he marched up San Juan Hill in the face of a terrific fire, winning a victory for freedom over Spanish tyranny. These soldier-citizens, soldiers when duty called and citizens always, are the stuff of which America's greatness has been built. It is in honor of the memory of these American noblemen who have given their lives in battle, or who, suffering from the terrific experiences of war, have since passed on to a land of everlasting peace, that we are met here today.

Nearly half a century has passed into history since the events occurred which brought to a close the war in which these members of the Grand Army of the Republic took so valiant a part. In April, 1865, two of the greatest generals of modern times sat face to face at Appomattox negotiating the surrender of the Confederate forces and making the terms of peace; the one, Ulysses S. Grant, whose courtesy to a captured enemy bespoke the true man; the other, Robert E. Lee, who typified the indomitable spirit which made possible the recovery of the south from the terrible results of the war. The last battle had been fought and the vast armies were preparing to disband. The soldier was to become a citizen. He was to turn his energies to the shop and field, long deserted in answer to the call to arms.

And what sort of a man is this soldier as he turns his footsteps homeward? It has been pointed out that war is destructive of morality, that he who has been long accustomed to the military camp becomes as the beast of the field in giving way to the lowest passion of human nature. This was true of the Prussian soldier in the Thirty Years' War. It has been true of the English soldier in India. But the citizen soldier of America showed himself superior to this rule. He had gone to war, not as a professional soldier, cutting loose forever from civil society, but as a man who would protect his home from an impending danger. That danger averted, he expected to return and take up the thread of life where he had laid it down. Through all the long struggle, the anticipation of an early return to home, to mother, to wife, to sweetheart, was constantly with him, combating by its gentle influence, the debasing allurements of the crowded camp. So the American soldier emerges from the war strengthened in character rather than debased, filled with a deeper patriotism because he had offered all he had for his country's life, glowing with a deeper pride in that

country because it had freed itself from an institution on account of which every citizen of the nation had long felt the sting of deep reproach.

So, proud in the possession of an honorable discharge from the grandest army of history, and rejoicing in the successful accomplishment of that for which he had gone forth, the soldier turns homeward. And what are the conditions which he finds? Business destroyed; fields half tilled; a mother whom he had left in the strength of middle age, grown old from suffering greater than any soldier in the field had been called upon to bear; a father with countenance deep chiseled by the hand of care, a vacant chair where once a brother sat, a brother who like himself had gone to war.

These were the conditions met by the soldiers of the north, but what of the soldiers of the south? Let us thank God that the time has come when, even in the north, some sympathy may be offered to the southern soldier in his successful struggle against tremendous odds, to bring again into the southland the sunshine of prosperity. There is none by whom that sympathy is more deeply felt than by the soldier of the north. It remained for a comrade of yours, Maj. William McKinley, to urge that on Memorial Day the grave of every American soldier, whether a wearer of the blue or of the grey, be strewn with flowers. No act has done more to unite the hearts of north and south than this sympathetic suggestion coming from a brave soldier of the Union army. But to return to the southern soldier. Having failed in a mistaken cause, he turned sorrowfully homeward. He too found a neglected homestead, a destitute and depleted family. In addition to this the negroes who, as slaves, had been the creators of his wealth, were now his greatest problem, for they were free with political status undetermined.

But in spite of these disheartening circumstances, the soldier, north and south, faced bravely the task of making this nation greater and better than it had ever been before. His situation is typified by a picture which I recall seeing many years ago. On a high crag stood a young Scot, clear of eye and strong of limb, clad in the plaid and bonnet of his native land. About him were the fragments of bush and shrub, torn asunder by the storm of the preceding night. And as he stood, he looked toward the east where the sun in all his glory burst through the morning clouds. Below the picture were these words: "A better day is dawning." So in 1865 stood the American soldier, happy in the strength of victory, or drinking deep from the bitter cup of defeat, but joyous or sad, of good courage still and, reunited under one glorious flag, looking hopefully toward the dawning of a better day.

Taking his place then, as a private citizen of the nation, the soldier began to exert himself to bring about that better day. Looking backward from this second decade of the twentieth century, we can see

that the results of his efforts have been magnificent. Within a decade after the close of the war, the commerce of the nation, entirely lost during the conflict, had been regained; new manufacturing enterprises had sprung up and old ones had been revived; the soil, poorly tended during the war, was made once more to give abundant harvests. Becoming discontented with his restricted surroundings in the older states, and attracted by the liberal offer of homesteads in the west, the soldier found his way across the plains and wrested from the strong hand of nature, the material for these magnificent western commonwealths. And it is the soldier element in these western states that has made them the most progressive of the whole nation. With a courage developed on a thousand battle fields, new political ideas have had no terror for the soldier. He has met them face to face and tested them out. On intellectual questions the soldier vote has not always been united. On such questions there is room for an honest difference of opinion. But when the issue has been a moral one, the soldiers have stood as a unit. The great problems of government, whether they relate to matters external or internal, are moral, not intellectual. There are indeed purely intellectual problems such as the question between free trade and protection, or between free silver and a gold standard. On these the soldier vote has naturally been divided. But these questions are not the vital ones. "No nation ever yet achieved glory or incurred destruction by taking one course rather than another in a matter of commerce or finance." The crucial questions are moral questions and on such the soldier vote has been unwavering. A generation ago when the voting population of that state was largely made up of veterans, the soldier made of Kansas a prohibition state. Thirty years later with ranks depleted, but with the same earnestness of purpose, he joined with William Jennings Bryan in the fight against the liquor traffic in Nebraska. In settling these several questions, let the individual voter emulate the example of the soldier by voting always according to the dictates of the highest moral judgment and we need have no fear for the perpetuity of our nation, but let him persistently disregard that judgment and

"All our pomp of yesterday  
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre."

Worthy as has been the conduct of the soldier in the capacity of a private citizen—his services to the nation have not ended there. There is scarcely a state in the union that has not, time after time, called him to the highest office. He has been a worthy representative of the republic at the courts of kings, and for four decades his voice has been the very most powerful one in the highest councils of the nation.—Recognizing the wisdom and statesmanship of these heroes of a great war, a new generation has been content to sit silently by while, year after year, the presidential chair has been occupied successively by soldiers: Grant, Garfield, McKinley, each bearing in his princely

personality the highest type of patriotism that the world has seen. Any nation, in a century and from all walks of life, might be proud to have produced three men of equal greatness. Yet these were the product of one generation in this youthful republic. James Russell Lowell says of Abraham Lincoln:

"For him her old world moulds aside she threw,  
And choosing sweet clays from the breast of the unexhausted West,  
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,  
Firm, steadfast in the strength of God,  
and true."

These soldier statesmen were of the Lincoln type, shaped in a like but lesser mould perhaps, and yet distinctively American. Concerning their great work, volumes have been written in deserved praise. Their achievements are familiar to the smallest child. We shall not rehearse them here but shall confine our attention to a more neglected, though no less important, field—the soldier in the common walks of life.

An influence more prominent even than that of the soldier statesman has been exerted by the soldier father, the veteran at the head of a family. Fortunate indeed is that youth whose sire could point with pride to a clean record in his country's service. We hear a great deal these days of the Boy Scouts, an organization which has for its purpose the development of truth, courage and self-reliance among boys. A worthy organization with the highest purpose, but no such organization was needed by the son of the American soldier. So deeply is the soldier imbued with all the elements of the highest manhood that, by example as well as precept, the son is given the severest training in the manly virtues. Having himself been subjected to the severest discipline, essential in an efficient army, the soldier is a stern father. He demands unquestioning obedience. And the boy who has learned to render such obedience to properly constituted authority, has learned a lesson that will stand him in good stead through life.

And then the soldier's experiences have been such as to give him a right perspective of life. To him, large things look large and small things small. Most men are sore afflicted with myopic vision. They see only those things which are near at hand and of personal concern. These they mistake for the great issue of life. But nothing so clears a man's vision as consecration to a great and noble cause. The soldier gave up every hope of the attainment of personal ambition for the preservation of the Union. Consecration more complete for a cause more noble the world has never seen. How unimportant now became to him those things which ordinarily consume the energies of men. The securing of wealth, the acquiring of fame, even the preservation of life itself, were forgotten and honest, clean, unselfish manhood dedicated to a nation's service gained recognition as the grandest thing in life. As months went by amid those scenes where sham and pretense dare not show a face, this readjustment became permanently fixed. The soldier emerges from the conflict a broad minded, warm hearted, clear visioned man. His very presence in the home has been an inspiration to a million American boys.

But in addition to this unconscious influence the soldier has taken delight, by stories of the camp and field, to instill lessons of duty,

honor and patriotism into the bosoms of his children. What child of a soldier father but has listened with undiminished interest to the oft repeated rehearsal of the soldier's experiences. He has been told of the heated discussion among the brothers as to who should be permitted to enlist, and to whom should fall the more prosaic, though no less patriotic, duty of remaining at home to care for the aged father and mother; of the parting from family and friends, a separation which he realized may continue until all shall reunite in a land where wars never come; of how, as he bids farewell to his weeping mother, he tries to be brave and keep back the tears, and succeeds pretty well until someone begins to sing:

"Farewell, mother, you may never  
Press me to your heart again,  
But, oh! you'll not forget me, mother,  
Though I'm numbered with the slain."

And then the pain in the throat becomes unbearable, the tears come in spite of him, and he rushes away to forget the parting grief in the struggle to save his country's life. Then comes the story of the long march beneath the burning southern sun, when every muscle aches and calls for rest. But no rest is to be had, for our soldier is called upon for sentinel duty, and out there alone beneath the shining stars, he marches up and down longing for the hours to pass and fearing lest, in spite of himself, his eyes should close and he be found by the officer of the guard, asleep at his post of duty. But at last the watch ends and he is permitted to rest a few hours before the march is resumed.

Then comes the battle, the first baptism of fire, and the young soldier's only fear is that he may be thought a coward. So he throws himself into the conflict with the valia of the veteran warrior. Not until the battle is ended does the full horror of it come upon him. Comrades, the friends of his childhood, have gone down, some giving their lives for their country. We are told that "hardly for his friend will a man die," and yet here are these men who have gladly given their lives for a nation, prompted to such self-devotion by that sentiment which we call patriotism. There are a few men in this country of ours who, in thought, claim to soar the thin air far above the common crowd, that define "patriotism" as "national selfishness." As well define as "family selfishness," the affection of a mother for her child, or urge some selfish motive for every act of tenderest devotion. Selfishness prompts no heroic deeds, inspires no self-sacrifice, demands no nation's freedom from the hand of tyranny. Patriotism is devotion to a principle embodied in a nation. It flourishes in self-sacrifice and acts of self-devotion. It inspires a Von Wikkereid to bare his bosom to a thousand spears that a path for freedom's cohorts might be made. Implanted in the bosom of a Washington, it leads the wild night banished hosts of liberty to ultimate success. Enthroned in the heart of a Lincoln, it gives a race its freedom, and gives the nation

"A shepherd of mankind indeed,  
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;  
One whose meek flock, the people joyed to be,  
Not lured by any cheat of birth,  
But by his clear grained human worth  
And brave old wisdom of sincerity."

Patriotism savors not of selfishness but is the highest sentiment of the human heart.

But the soldier stops not for an analysis of the sentiments which prompts his acts as the dusk of evening closes over the battle field. He lends such aid as is possible to the wounded, accepts a last message to the folks at home from one whose injuries are mortal, and assists in the hasty burial of those who have answered the last call.

And so the story of the war goes on. The familiar faces in the old company grow fewer and fewer, and at last a bullet comes the way of our soldier, and he is sent to the rear and reported to the folks at home as mortally wounded. But somehow or other, he manages to live through it and comes home at last, alive but bearing deep and

painful scars that will be a constant reminder of the scenes of war. As the child listens to these stories of the great conflict, his heart burns within him and he longs to be of some service to that nation which it has cost so much to save. The magnificent response to President McKinley's call for volunteers in the war against Spain bears witness to the fact that these lessons of the soldier have not been lost. We are sometimes inclined to think that these are decadent days; that real patriotism no longer exists among the men of our nation. But let the flag be endangered and a mighty host will rush to its defense, and foremost among them will be the sons of the American soldier.

If present tendencies are borne out, it is altogether possible that such a test of patriotism will never again be made in this country of ours. The trend of history during the past few years seems to be toward a World State, a Federation of all civilized nations for the promotion of mutual interests and for the preservation of peace. At first the thought of such a federation seems repugnant for we think of it as the tomb of nations, and its organization as the death knell of national patriotism. But let us rest assured that, when the World State is formed, neither this nation or any nation that may become a part of it, will, in so doing, sacrifice a single principle that is cause for honest pride. As each of the diminutive states on the Atlantic seaboard became stronger by uniting with the others in a federal government, so each nation, on becoming a part of the World State, will be stronger as a result of the union; stronger because that energy which is now expended in war or preparation for war will then be employed in the amelioration of those grave social and economic conditions which have become an object of deep concern to every thinking man.

But, to us, the most gratifying thought in connection with this prospective federation, is this, that our great American nation is to be the moulding influence of the organization. This World State will have as its very foundation, the American principle of federation, a principle which was put into successful practice for the first time on American soil. In this federation, Japan and the new republic of China are to bear an important part; nations which another quarter century will show to be completely saturated with the American spirit; for it is to America that these nations look for political inspiration, and it is in the land of the stars and stripes that their leaders of tomorrow are today in training. As he looks out upon this pleasing prospect, as he sees the American principle gaining universal acceptance and the influence of the American nation extending throughout the world, the bosom of the American citizen should swell with patriotic pride; pride in a nation whose sons have shown themselves prepared to fight if need be, in any righteous cause, and yet the first to champion the cause of universal peace.

You who have been soldiers and know the misery and suffering that are the inevitable results of war, cannot but rejoice at the prospect of its permanent cessation. Those soldiers dead in whose memory the nation has set aside this day, would ask no greater honor at our hands than that, in their name, we fervently pray for the early dawning of that day of which Alfred Tennyson was dreaming when he wrote: "I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see; Saw a vision of the world and all the wonders that would be When the war drums throbbed no longer and the battle flags were furled In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the world."

An Observing Youngster  
"Now, Willie," said the superintendent's little boy, addressing the blacksmith's little boy, who had come over for a little frolic, "we'll play 'Sabbath School.' You give me a nickel every Sunday for six months, and then at Christmas I'll give you a ten-cent bag of candy."

## FOREST FIRE PRIZE ESSAY

Coos County School Children to be Awarded Prizes for Essays on "Protection of Our Forests from Fire"

Coquille scholars now have an opportunity of exhibiting their literary talents upon a subject of vital importance, and we have confidence in the ability of our pupils to a degree that they will at least be winners of some of the prizes offered. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Give the topic a trial.

A prize essay contest to secure better cooperation in the preservation of the forest and also to prevent forest fires has been inaugurated by the Coos County Fire Patrol Association. The idea of the contest is to interest the school children of the county and through the contest educate them along this line.

The subject for the essays, "Protection of Our Forests from Fire" is not to exceed 2,000 words in length. The school children will be divided into two classes, one for high school and one for grade pupils. The first prize in the high school contest will be \$10, second prize \$5 and five \$1 prizes will be awarded to the next best papers. In the grades, the first prize will be \$10, the second \$5, the third \$3, the fourth \$2 and ten \$1 prizes will also be awarded, in all a total of \$50.

The essays are to be mailed to W. J. Conrad secretary of the association, Marshfield, before October 1. Dr. McCormac, school supervisor of Coos county, is cooperating in the contest which will be decidedly beneficial to the school children. Several thousand copies of pamphlets entitled "The Ambitious Tree" have been distributed among the schools to give the pupils an idea of what the essays should be like.

## AGATES CONTAIN FINE COLORED SCENERY

Ira Bray of Waldport, Oregon, is owner of one of the finest collection of agates on the coast. His collection contains agates of all kinds peculiar to this climate, such as moss agates, cloud, needle, stick and water agates. Many of them contain miniature reproductions of scenery, trees, animals, etc., that are very striking. Some of these are worth mentioning. One large cloud agate in delicate colors is so blended as to produce an exact reproduction of a portion of the Columbia river with Mt. Hood in the distance. Another contains a landscape in tones of green, with a clear sky and setting sun above. A beautiful moss agate contains a tiny spruce tree.

His collection is valued at over \$1,200, unpolished.

For a number of years Mr. Bray lived on a beach farm a few miles south of the Yachats river and there collected the larger portion of his agates.

He is now located in Waldport and is polishing and setting the stones.

## Oregon Vital Statistics

The Bulletin of the Oregon State Board of Health for the months of January, February and March, 1912, gives the following figures relative to the vital statistics for the months named: January—births, males 371, females 472; deaths, males 204, females 195. February—births, males 436, females 441; deaths, males 257, females 193. March—births, males 454, females 425; deaths, males 209, females 191. There were 1220 marriages during the three months.

## Sweets of Ancient Date

Mrs. Joseph Williams of Gaston has on a shelf in her pantry a jar of wild blackberry preserves that dates from 1876. It is the last of a lot, eight in number, that have been drawn upon quinquennially in the festive observance of Mr. and Mrs. Williams' wedding anniversary.

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