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Decoration Day Address

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After a Shower.

We feel no more the gloom and chill of rain;
The skies are clear and calm, and heaven's blue
The dark'ning thunder-clouds is peering through,
And smiling on the green of waving grain.
The lilacs wave their perfume-laden plumes;
The fruit trees, dressed in festive white and red,
Now feel the South wind's gentle breath, and shed
Upon the air their blossoms and perfumes.

O'er hedge and woodland, clad in tender green,
O'er meadowland and blossomed orchard fair,
The brightening sunlight throws its golden sheen,
And bathes in mellow glow the evening air.
A thousand rainbows in the dew-drops gleam,
And through her tears doth nature smiling seem.

D. A.

The Freedom of the Press.

CLEMENT S. BURGER, '91.

This is a reading age; and ours, to a great extent, is a reading country. The public mind, its tastes and morals are formed chiefly by books, periodicals and newspapers. The United States supports more pamphlets or journals than any other country on the globe, and our rising generation devours also more light literature and trashy novels. For many, the newspaper is a criterion. Whatever absurd proposition the newspaper advances is considered by the ignorant classes as truth. This kind of reading is all but universal, and the press is by far the most efficient government of the country. Our government itself practically is little else than public opinion, and public sentiment is, to a great extent, formed by the press. Indeed, the press is not merely a secondary power, but, by the suddenness of its onset and the strength of its forces, it has conquered all the functions of other forces and taken

upon itself the sole direction of the intellectual and moral destinies of the civilized world.

Taken in its largest sense, the press is, after speech—which it repeats, extends and perpetuates,—the most powerful influence that man wields or can wield. If this power is wielded to improve the moral and intellectual faculties of man it becomes a great benefit to a country; but if it is wielded to disseminate false philosophical principles, to undermine the very foundations of society by spreading anarchical and socialistic ideas, or to plant the seed of immorality in the hearts of our youths, it becomes a powerful agent of evil.

In this country we have established the *régime* of liberty; and that *régime*, with its attendant good and evil, must be accepted in its principle and in its logical consequences. Daily we hear the cry of liberty raised by the deep and rolling voice of the street orator and re-echoed in the hearts of the masses; yet how many understand the word? In its fullest sense, liberty means the power of choosing between doing and not doing, or between right and wrong; but true liberty is the power of making a right choice. This power is inherent in our very nature, and no amount of coercion is able to irradicate it. The power of saying "I shall" and "I shall not" has been implanted in our nature by the hand of our Creator to be used at our discretion; and so absolute is this power that not even He Himself can make us say *no* when we wish to say *yes*.

Although we have this power, and on that account cannot morally be compelled, yet we can be restrained from the full exercise of this power. No one can restrain us from entertaining convictions contrary to those of another man; but we can be compelled not to make public our opinions, or, if we do, we can be punished. This is called a free country, not because we

long as we have not learned the source of happiness given by books we are dependent on superficial, trivial things for entertainment....

Books can make us independent of individuals. They bring us into contact with the greatest and the best. A few books make a library. Are there not plenty of books of humor, of travel, of adventure, of popular science? If we once begin to love these books, are we not relieved from tediousness and from ourselves? How seldom do we hear any genuine humor from those around us. Books are companions never weary, never dull. I remember when, as a boy fifteen years old, I found and read Plutarch's Lives, and how they brought to me such a new world as dawned on Columbus; they brought me into contact with Alexander, Demosthenes, etc. Such a book will awaken in you great thoughts. By this kind of reading we are drawn to continue, to go on higher. We learn to know ourselves by knowing what is not ourselves. If a man knew the whole universe he would be in harmony with God. We learn to love ourselves by knowing what is not ourselves. The great thing is to get out of ourselves, to get away from ourselves. This is what we yearn for when we travel, when we seek for variety, amusement, entertainment. And all this we can get in books.... It is not necessary for you to begin with the wild, criminal books—such as the "Life of Jesse James." It is extremely doubtful if you will ever learn to appreciate truly good literature from beginning on trash. Begin with Robinson Crusoe, Don Quixote and the lives of heroes....

We read books not merely to amuse us but to instruct us. The more we know, the better. Only fools are hurt by knowledge. Books of history are more interesting than any fiction. Take Gibbon's Rome, Carlyle's Revolution, the history of our war for independence and the civil war. Take books on popular science. It is of the greatest possible advantage to know some one science thoroughly, but it is impossible to know all thoroughly. Take one of the popular books on astronomy and read of the inconceivable grandeur of the universe. You will find it is not satisfactory to have only a small smattering; then go on, read higher books on the subject. This lighter reading and beginning of the love of books will lift your thoughts above trivial subjects. When you go into society you will have something noble to talk of. In whatever subject is broached, you will be able to appreciate, or to lead as you will be expected to do as students and educated men.... Clothes do not make the gentleman, nor even manner; you may have an uncouth manner, but nothing is so fascinating as a strong mind. Then, cultivate your mind, and remember when reading that books are not only to amuse but to instruct. The aim of your professors is not so much to impart common knowledge as to arouse your minds to activity. This is the great object, to incite an enthusiasm for mental activity. Books, then, are most useful or best

which arouse the imagination and break down the narrow walls of monotony, insulation and ignorance. No boy will distinguish himself until he has mastered some great book. It is easy to procure and read the opinions of others on great books: thousands of volumes have been written on Shakspeare; but it is better to learn one great book than to read thousands. Give me a man who has really mastered one great book. "Fear the man of one book." To know a book of the greatest kind you must read it hundreds of times. Read for yourself, and make notes and opinions for yourself. Learn to love only what you find profitable; what we don't like does not profit us. I think nothing beautiful because others do.... After you have made your own notes and opinions, it is well and necessary for you to compare them with what others have written. Observe well the style in a great book. Style is a part of the very nature of a great man, and we may say that no man who has not a style of his own is fit to be read.... We find in books inspiration for self-activity.... In proportion as a man rises out of himself, and out of the present, he becomes more manly. We must rise above the childish ideas and trivialities of life, in order that God's image may be brought out in us.

Decoration Day Address.

Delivered by PROF. WILLIAM HOYNES *at South Bend, Ind., May 30.*

May 5, 1868, John A. Logan, commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, issued general order No. 11, designating May 30 as an appropriate time for "strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late war." No form of ceremony was prescribed. Posts and comrades were directed to arrange the matter in their own way, and as circumstances might permit. But the duty of steadfastly adhering to the observance was strongly enjoined. It was said that—

"We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. All that the wealth and taste of the nation can add to their adornment and security is but a fitting tribute to the memory of her slain defenders. Let no vandalism, or avarice, or neglect, or ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic.

"If other eyes grow dull, and other hands slack, and other hearts cold in the solemn trust, ours shall keep it well so long as the light and warmth of life remain to us."

And faithfully they have done so. Well have they kept the trust. Every 30th of May since the publication of that timely and patriotic order they have scattered the choicest flowers of spring over the graves of the comrades at rest. They have decorated the tombs of those "mustered out" with the flag under whose folds in common we marched and fought, faced danger and death.

In May, 1870, the national encampment was held at Washington, and on the 11th of that month the beautiful observance was cordially sanctioned. The 30th of May was formally established as a "Memorial Day." The Grand Army of the Republic was directed to celebrate it annually with appropriate exercises in commemoration of the gallant and patriotic deeds of the men that saved the Union.

This day meet our grand army posts in all parts of

the country, and comrades are detailed to visit the cemeteries where sleep our companions in arms and suitably decorate the graves with flags and flowers.

Flowers are the emblems of our love, and we strew flowers on their graves. And pleased I am to acknowledge the fact that citizens generally enter into the spirit of this beautiful custom and come laden with flowers for the resting places of their dead, as well as for the tombs of our soldier brothers. This fact is assuring. It gives us ground for believing that our trust will fall to faithful hands, and that hallowed will remain the ground where our comrades sleep.

"A tomb is theirs on every page,
An epitaph on every tongue;
The present hours, the future age,
For them bewail, to them belong."

The nations of antiquity cherished the memory of their defenders in war, and down through succeeding ages this spirit has found expression in marble, monument and mausoleum—in ballad, tradition and story. Every nation, fit to be ranked as civilized, holds hallowed the ground in which rests the dust of its heroes. The fields where they fell are the shrines of its glory, the pride of its people, the inspiration of its song.

In our own country Memorial Day has come to be regarded as one of the most notable and inspiring of our national holidays. It is observed in every state and county, city and community in which our Grand Army posts have being. From the pine-clad halls of Maine and the shores of the stormy Atlantic to the forest depths of western Oregon and the strands of the mighty Pacific, it is honored with becoming ceremonies. It is observed from the line of the Great Lakes all the way to the waters of the Mexican gulf—to the phosphorescent waters that sparkle under tropical skies in the distant South. To-day almost every cemetery—every God's acre—in the land is decked with the emblems of our national sovereignty. In the shade of the cypress flutter to-day hundreds of thousands of the emblems of our country's independence, peacefully marking the places where rest the brave men to whose valor they owe their proud significance, their glorious distinction as colors of the greatest and freest republic ever established on God's green earth.

Meet it is, then, that the flag of the Republic should mark the graves of our comrades. Without their bravery and courage, their fortitude and sacrifices, the starry flag would to-day have small significance and doubtful authority, if it should even remain to us as our nation's standard. It would mean a union severed, a nation dismembered, a government dependent for existence upon the concurring interests of the states comprising it. Aye, it would mean a national sovereignty so impotent that the states could secede at pleasure. It would mean a government so feeble as to invite the contempt and ridicule of foreign nations. It would signify lines of custom houses along the Ohio and the Potomac to emphasize the completeness and finality of the separation of the South from the North and to restrict intercourse and trade between the two sections. It would signify large standing armies under two flags along the line of those rivers. It would signify a standing military force of more than 200,000 men on territory now amply protected by less than one-eighth of that number. It would suggest the ultimate secession of the Pacific coast states and the formation in that quarter of another government. It would mean heavy taxes, an impoverished nation, a discontented people. It would mean foreign aggression and the domination of foreign influences. It would mean anarchy, decay and subversion for the republics of South America. It would mean that government of the people, for the people and by the people had ceased to be practicable and given ominous signs of perishing altogether from the earth.

By the ceremonies of Memorial Day we testify to our appreciation of the heroic deeds and patriotic services of the men that averted those evils. And meet it is that we should do this; for they deserve well of the country; they deserve well of the people; they earned a debt of gratitude that we can never adequately repay. Never, in all the years of which history takes cognizance, were the services of patriotic men more fruitfully directed to

the accomplishment of results glorious and enduring—results that give free government assurance of uninterrupted perpetuity among men—results that serve to promote the highest interests of civilization and humanity.

But, notwithstanding the glorious events and ennobling patriotism which we celebrate, there is a nameless sadness in many of the incidents of the day. Its recurring observance is attended in increasing measure with a deep feeling of impressiveness and solemnity. We see all too conspicuously and realize all too painfully that every year we have more and more graves to decorate. Never the *reveille* now! Ever the taps! Ever that weirdly familiar call, "Lights out!" So solemn! So suggestive of encroaching darkness, the final "Good night," the last muster out! More than half of those that wore the blue and marched to the grand wild music of war to-day rest in peace under the flag they saved and the flowers appreciatively placed upon their graves by comrades and surviving friends. Hardly a million of all the magnificent armies that fought for freedom still abide with us. Even the youngest who then marched forth to do battle for our country are now well on in the years of matured manhood. While it is true that our armies were very largely composed of the youth of the land, yet those four gloomy, trying and perilous years of rebellion and internecine war passed by with leaden feet and meant in their effects—in the strain incident to their privations and hardships, marches and battles, sickness and wounds—as great a loss of vital power and youthful vigor as would the lapse of a period thrice as long in the civil walks of life. So it is not surprising that the marks of advancing age should become prematurely manifest in the boys that wore the blue? Into the events of their four years of service they wove many years of their lives. And thus it is that so many of them prematurely cross the dark river. It is sad to think that, according to the present rate of mortality, we shall have about 25,000 additional graves to decorate when the next Memorial Day comes.

At that rate of mortality the splendid organization known as the Grand Army of the Republic, so noble in its objects, so trustworthy in its patriotism, so true to its conception of duty, must after a few years disappear forever. In this respect it differs from other organizations. They may continue indefinitely, for their ranks can be filled from year to year, or month to month; but not so with the depleted ranks of the Grand Army of the Republic. When the men who safely bore the nation's banner through the blaze of battle and the hurricane of fire are no more, the Grand Army of the Republic must cease to be. In less than two score years it must be in the keeping solely of history and the grateful remembrance of an appreciative people. But forever must it live in that way! Forever the muse of history must cherish and preserve it as embellishing one of the brightest pages of her luminous annals! Associated with events as grand as ever inspired the hopes of the lowly, as ever limned the bow of promise on the sky, as ever fired the hearts of freemen, as ever nerved the arm of patriotism, as ever thrilled the soul or wrought it to purpose fixed and invincible, the men who did battle for the Union have earned a conspicuous place in history for this soldier organization—an organization so peculiarly and exclusively their own. Let us hope, too, that they have succeeded in infusing its spirit into and impressing its character upon their fellow citizens; for never has existed an organization more loyal or more devoted to the welfare of the country and the maintenance in all integrity of her free institutions. Confidently she may count upon their love, their services, their lives. Not truer points the needle to the pole than does their affection to the flag they saved. For them no compromise with anarchy. For them no indulgence of anything subversive of law and order. For them no toleration of anything that can impair the strength, obscure the glory or retard the progress of our common country. Not one of them—whether highest in the councils of the nation or living upon the crust of charity in the helplessness of unrequited disabilities—but feels proud of the fact that years of his life were identified with and woven into the events that saved the Republic and established the Union upon a firm and enduring foundation.