

TO SONS OF VETERANS.

A Splendid Address to the  
Nebraska Division by  
Hon. J. E. Frick, of  
Fremont.

"The Tear, the Groan, the  
Knell, the Pall, the Bier, and  
all we Know or Dream or  
Fear, of Agony, Was  
Theirs."

The following beautiful address has  
never before appeared in print. It was  
delivered in Fremont, Neb., three years  
ago by one of Dodge county's most elo-  
quent sons and is so full of feeling, so  
true and so just that it deserves the  
wide circulation which its publication  
in THE AMERICAN guarantees:

Sons of Veterans of the Division of  
Nebraska.—Ladies and Gentlemen: In  
addressing you as "Sons of Veterans,"  
I feel that I am speaking to sons of  
worthy fathers; fathers whose memories  
and deeds are revered not only by one  
nation and one people, but by the  
whole civilized world.

Twenty-eight years have passed  
away since the close of that stupendous  
struggle in which the fathers, of whom  
you are worthy sons, fought, and many,  
very many, bled and died. Effigies of  
many of them are reared all over our  
land. They adorn the avenues of the  
federal capital, and each year, with the  
coming of spring, arises the grateful  
fragrance of the American heart toward  
those who fell in battle, and toward  
those, no less, who since the war have  
been mustered out of the ranks of the  
living and joined the majority beyond  
the grave.

The flowers, those beautiful emblems  
of purity and peace, strewn this season  
upon the graves of those heroes of free-  
dom and equality, have scarcely lost  
form or fragrance, when you, as duti-  
ful sons and patriotic citizens, meet to  
add your tribute of love to their mem-  
ory and pledge anew your devotion to  
the principles they defended, and to  
perpetuate which they surrendered up  
their lives.

The mere trophies of war cannot sur-  
vive for ever. Indeed, under our insti-  
tutions, it is desirable that many may  
soon be forgotten. Ours is a country  
dedicated to the pursuits of peace, and  
not calculated to stimulate the warrior  
by exhibiting to him the mere trophies  
of war. It is, however, peculiarly left  
to you as an organization, to perpetuate  
the principles for which your sires fell.  
The time is not far distant when the  
last veteran of that awful struggle must  
join the ranks of the silent brigade;  
when he must leave the banner of free-  
dom in other hands; when he must en-  
trust the inculcation of patriotism to  
other tongues, and when he must yield  
up the sword of defense to a stronger  
arm. To whom, may I not ask, could  
these things be more fittingly entrusted  
than to the sons of these brave and  
noble sires? It is, therefore, for no  
mean nor idle ceremony that your  
order was called into existence, nor  
yet for any narrow or selfish purposes.  
Upon you falls the sacred duty to keep  
alive and strengthen the valor and pa-  
triotism of your fathers; to carry aloft  
the banner of freedom, and to inculcate  
among men the lessons of fraternity,  
charity and loyalty.

In fostering the lessons of fraternity,  
your abilities for doing good are almost  
boundless. The advantages that you  
possess in the history of the immediate  
past, the past in which your fathers  
lived and which they helped to make  
glorious by their acts, serves you con-  
stantly as an object lesson and as a  
guide. It was the lot of your fathers  
to have to spend their years of early  
boyhood and manhood in a period of  
turmoil, when men were governed and  
controlled too largely by passion and  
prejudice, passions and prejudices born  
from the source of all prejudice, sel-  
fishness, intolerance and ignorance.

It was this spirit of selfishness and  
intolerance that caused men to rebel  
against that banner of freedom, the  
symbol of all we are and all we hope to  
be. The emblem of equal rights. The  
emblem of free hands, free lips, free  
self-government, and true and indi-  
vidual sovereignty. It came from the  
same men whose grandfathers de-  
manded liberty and equality for them-  
selves, and who, to gain it, shared the  
privations at Valley Forge and partici-  
pated in the victory at Yorktown;  
children of such forefathers becoming  
so blinded by self-interest, that they  
were willing to destroy the only con-  
stitution that guarantees like privi-  
leges to all men.

Your fathers saw the danger. They  
realized the consequences to posterity,

and were willing to make any sacrifice  
to avert the disaster. Brave men, in-  
deed! They were willing to undertake  
any task, to suffer any hardship, to  
yield up life itself in defense of that  
emblem, that it might continue to be  
the symbol of liberty and equality, to  
be a protection and a safeguard to their  
posterity; that it might be handed  
down from generation to generation,  
carrying upon its broad folds the his-  
tory of this country.

"The tear,  
The groan, the knell, the pall, the bier,  
And all we know, or dream, or fear,  
Of agony, was theirs."

There is no American school boy but  
who may read the history of his coun-  
try in his country's flag. There are  
thirteen stripes, forever telling friend  
and foe that this country started out at  
its birth with thirteen states. And  
there is the field of blue, which re-  
minds us that we have generously ad-  
ded to that beautiful constellation un-  
til we have reached forty-four, and  
there is room for many more.

Was it not worth something to pre-  
serve that flag? Was it not worth in-  
expressibly more to preserve the prin-  
ciples which it symbolizes? To accom-  
plish this, and to hand down intact,  
both the theory upon which the flag is  
based, and the principles for which it  
stands, under the circumstances  
under which it was done, called for  
brave and patriotic men. Their bravery  
and patriotism are much easier of  
comprehension now than they were  
during the struggle.

By viewing the growth and prosper-  
ity of our country, you, as their sons,  
can form some adequate conception of  
the incomparable loss we, as a people,  
would have sustained had your fathers  
refused to make the sacrifice. By this  
loss, I refer only to the unity and ma-  
terial wealth of our people. The loss  
of life, the destruction of treasure, the  
severing of the ties of friendship and  
brotherly love, and the rude shock sus-  
tained by American patriotism can  
never be recalled, and but few of these  
consequences even in a measure re-  
paired. All this was the result of the  
whirlwind of passion and prejudice. It  
will be your mission in life to avert  
these cyclones of passion. Your noble  
order is dedicated to the dissemination  
of the seeds of friendship, of charity,  
of loyalty, of patriotism and fraternity,  
and which, if carried out according to  
the tenets of your order, will yield the  
blessed fruits of peace, prosperity, of a  
truer and nobler manhood, and above  
and beyond all, will pervade among  
men a spirit of tolerance and forgive-  
ness. The past is full of gloomy repiti-  
tions of the recklessness of men who  
are guided by passion and controlled  
by self-interest. It is much easier to  
start a quarrel than to restore peace.  
It is easier to lead men into doing  
wrong, after having aroused their pas-  
sions, than it is to quell these passions  
by mere argument. Human nature at  
best is but weak; it has changed but  
little when full sway is given to the  
passions.

How important, therefore, does it  
become, in a country like ours, that  
the young men should emulate and  
seek to perpetuate the good and noble  
deeds of their fathers. We have seen  
that equality and justice never are and  
never can be the fruits of passion and  
prejudice; they are the offspring of  
loyalty to principle and of friendship  
to a fellow being.

It is not so strange that men should  
struggle and make sacrifices to gain  
their freedom, but it certainly presents  
to our view one of the grandest and  
noblest traits of human character to  
have men suffer and even die to extend  
the boon of freedom, of equality and of  
fraternity to their fellow men, and  
these men not only strangers to those  
who offer the sacrifice, but strangers  
to and outcasts by their race.

Think, for a moment, of the vastness  
of the conflict. Time will not permit  
of the mentioning of but a few, very  
few, of the great battles fought by  
your fathers to firmly establish a prin-  
ciple. They were with McDowell at  
Bull Run, and there learned the first  
bitter lesson of defeat. They followed  
the fortunes of war with Grant at Don-  
elson and Shiloh, and added fresh glory  
to the 4th of July, 1863, by gloriously  
ending the Siege of Vicksburg. They  
fought a most implacable foe at Chan-  
cellorsville, under Hooker, and turned  
the tide of war under Meade and Han-  
cock at Gettysburg. This battle may  
be said to have been the decisive battle  
of the great rebellion, and time will  
not be long enough to endanger the  
memory of the heroes who fought and  
won the greatest of all modern battles.  
They fought the battles of the Wilder-  
ness, and compelled the enemy to sur-  
render at Petersburg. They suffered  
every privation that man can imagine  
at Andersonville and Libby; went with  
Sherman through Georgia to the sea,  
and finally compelled an unconditional  
surrender at Appomattox, and thus

made it possible that all men could  
claim freedom and equality before the  
law. The Declaration of Independence  
itself was amended by these heroes of  
the past, for we must not forget, that  
up to then the Declaration read, only  
that all men were born equal, and was  
silent as to freedom; but from the sur-  
render forward, and we trust unto all  
time, the Declaration will continue to  
be, that all men are born both free and  
equal.

Is it not worthy of contemplation  
that these men suffered all, risked all,  
and were willing to sacrifice all, not  
for individual gain, nor yet national  
gain or conquest, but to extend the  
blessings of liberty to all men? To my  
mind the noblest thing that can be  
said of a fellow being is, that he has  
done some good unto his fellow man.  
In this view, how much, indeed, is pos-  
terity indebted to your fathers? Re-  
member, too, that it was the contin-  
uation and the extension of the struggle  
for freedom which was first recognized  
at Runnymede, almost 700 years ago.  
The rights demanded there, while not  
as broad as we desired, were never-  
theless broad enough, when planted in  
proper soil, to ripen into the principle  
contended for by your fathers and  
recognized and established by the sur-  
render at Appomattox. What was a  
demand and a promise at Runnymede,  
was made and experiment by the De-  
claration of Independence, and a lasting  
achievement by the victory at Appomattox.

Your fathers, then, contended for a  
principle that was born at Runnymede,  
proclaimed from Lexington to York-  
town, and established by the victories  
of Gettysburg and Appomattox. While  
our flag, from its birth, became the  
symbol of freedom and equality, it was  
such in name merely, and as history  
attests, it required almost unbounded  
faith and love of right and loyalty to  
principle, to make a reality out of what  
might be called a poetic dream.

But while your fathers deserve, and  
rightly deserve, to be honored by their  
countrymen and all the world besides,  
let us remember that they were but  
men, and as men, had not passed the  
stage of imperfection. Do not under-  
stand me as claiming that in accom-  
plishing these things, your fathers  
were free from fault or wrong. It  
would be a matter of utter impossibility  
for a moment to think that they com-  
mitted no wrongs in the name of lib-  
erty. The wrongs they committed,  
however, were the fruits of war, the  
offspring of passion engendered by tur-  
moil and a desire for revenge for what  
they considered an assault and an out-  
rage upon justice and liberty. They,  
themselves, however, recognized the  
fact of having been guilty of wrongs  
toward their fellow men, although  
these men were enemies of our flag and  
enemies of the true principles of liberty  
and equality. That you might profit  
by their mistakes as well as by their  
good deeds, and to obviate as much as  
possible a repetition of their faults and  
a repetition of the things which en-  
gender them, they have wisely be-  
queathed to you, their sons, the car-  
dinal principles of your order—Frater-  
nity, Charity and Loyalty.

In the practice of fraternity, you will  
find a safeguard against many of the  
impulses which lead men to war. In  
inculcating charity, you will bear with  
patience the wrong, or supposed wrong,  
of your opponent, until he will become  
convinced of the justness of your cause,  
and your desire for fair treatment will  
cause him to surrender before the  
battle. While your emulation of loyalty  
to principle and that flag which I  
have already shown symbolizes all we  
are and all we can hope to become, you  
will keep the young and growing gen-  
eration ever interested in the prin-  
ciples of your government, and the more  
they contemplate its beauties and its  
possibilities, the more will they strive  
to maintain its principles.

Keep it before the world, that in  
order to be in favor of liberty and  
equality, one must be loyal to that em-  
blem. No organization, however lofty  
its purposes; no edifice, however sacred  
its precincts, can ever rise above that  
flag. Wherever an American worships,  
wherever he may meet for counsel, or  
wherever he may meet with others for  
enjoyment or recreation, that flag must  
not be forbidden entrance there.  
Should you find any institution, organi-  
zation or association formed, which  
claims that that flag must not enter its  
innermost precincts, you ought, in the  
name of fraternity, to inquire into its  
purposes; you should hear it and judge  
its acts and principles; in the name of  
charity, and in the name of loyalty, in-  
quire that no society, no organization, no  
institution in your country can ever  
rise above the principles symbolized by  
that flag. To so insist is the duty of  
every American. This is the trust  
specially reposed in you by your  
fathers.

As each individual is entitled to the  
protection of his person and property,  
and to the full enjoyment of all rights  
enjoyed by his fellow man, and every  
organization is entitled to the same  
protection and enjoyment, there must  
be a like responsibility by all. As all  
receive and enjoy these sacred rights  
and privileges by and through the  
principles symbolized by that manner,  
so must one and all subscribe to these  
principles, defend and maintain them,  
or become traitors to our country. It  
is plain, then, that to be in love with  
our country means to love its flag, to  
cherish its principles means respect  
for its emblem, and to secure the bless-  
ings of liberty means to stand in de-  
fense of it. Am I not right, then, in  
demanding of you to be ever careful of  
your flag? Follow where it leads, and  
wherever it is forbidden entrance, in-  
sist on learning the cause, and never  
rest until you know it. And when you  
do know it, insist on its presence, re-  
membering only that any place which  
becomes too sacred for that flag is not  
in sympathy with the true spirit of  
liberty; that it has severed the bonds  
of loyalty to its principles and is un-  
American and no longer entitled to  
your protection, to your confidence, or  
to your respect.

If there ever should arise a question  
as to whether that flag should enter  
any place, or whether the organization  
or individual forbidding its entrance  
should be required to quit our shores,  
the question should receive a prompt  
and unequivocal answer, that our flag  
must enter or the individual or organi-  
zation must go. This, and nothing  
short of this, is loyalty to our prin-  
ciples.

But perhaps I have assigned to you a  
duty which it may be claimed you have  
not assumed as broadly as I have stated  
it to be. That there may be no mis-  
take, let us examine your principles,  
let us study your objects.

Section 2 of article 2 of your consti-  
tution, entitled "Principles," reads as  
follows: "True allegiance to the gov-  
ernment of the United States of Amer-  
ica, based upon a respect for and a de-  
votion and fidelity to its constitution  
and laws, manifested by the discoun-  
tenancing of anything that may tend to  
weaken loyalty, incite to insurrection,  
treason or rebellion, or in any manner  
impair the efficiency or permanency of  
our national union."

Section 4 of article 3, entitled "Ob-  
jects," reads as follows: "To inculcate  
patriotism and love of country, not  
only among our membership but among  
all the people of our land, and to spread  
and sustain the doctrine of equal rights,  
universal liberty and justice to all." These  
are grand principles and pure  
and lofty motives, and as we have seen  
are all symbolized by the flag your  
fathers defended and which is now, in  
part at least, under your special care  
and charge. These are principles, too,  
which were sanctified by the treasure  
and blood of your fathers, and made  
dear to us by the blessings they im-  
part. The objects you have set out to  
obtain are, indeed, most worthy, and  
in spreading them among your fellow  
men, your order is best calculated to  
succeed. In your ranks are found men  
of all classes, of all professions, of all  
trades, and it may not be much to say,  
representatives of all countries and peo-  
ple. But while there is such a vast  
diversity in rank, in calling, and in  
creeds, there is unity of purpose and  
harmony of principle. Your ranks  
now exceed 50,000. A membership  
which, considered from the standpoint  
of numbers alone, would command re-  
spect; but when viewed from the stand-  
point of your objects and principles, it  
should and in time no doubt will, re-  
ceive the veneration and blessings of  
all American men and women. How  
vast are your opportunities for good  
among your fellow citizens, and how  
great is the field of your labors. While  
much, very much, has been accom-  
plished by your fathers in making se-  
cure and permanent the principles of  
liberty and equality, the never ending  
changes of civilization and the multi-  
plicity and diffusion of interests are  
ever calculated to make men restless,  
to augment their greed and to stimu-  
late their selfishness. These always  
have grown and I fear always will con-  
tinue to grow, as men entrench them-  
selves behind either supposed or as-  
sumed rights. This leads to a spirit of  
discord and contention among men;  
and while many do not love their coun-  
try and its principles less, they love  
their enjoyments and their property  
more. But be not misled in the thought  
that only rich men are led astray by  
love of wealth and power. Such is far  
from the truth. History is full of in-  
stances where the poor have become  
tyrants, and have totally ignored the  
principle that all men are entitled to  
the full and equal protection of the  
law. In our system of government you  
ought to apply one test to every public  
measure and the same test to every

law. If such measure of law can stand  
the test, the measure is sure to prove  
wholesome and the law just. The test  
that I should apply is simple, and is  
this: Does the measure or the law  
contain the principle of equality? Does  
it meet out rights and impose liabil-  
ities with the same measure to all  
classes of men? If it does, defend it;  
stand by it; it will prove a blessing to  
your country and a blessing to your  
people. The spirit of equality should  
be the guide of every statesman, the  
weapon of every warrior, the aim of  
every party, the object of every citi-  
zen; and thus it will be made and be-  
come the shield for us all. How grandly  
beautiful is the object for yourselves  
in dedicating your order to "spread and  
sustain the doctrine of equal rights,  
universal liberty and justice to all." How  
well are those objects calculated  
to broaden and ennoble your charac-  
ters as men, and what a vast and ben-  
eficial influence you will wield among  
your fellow men; for, in order to gain  
your objects, you must ever be frat-  
ernal, you must always disseminate the  
spirit of charity, and constantly incul-  
cate loyalty to your country and to its  
institutions. The practice of these  
virtues is calculated to cause you to be  
regarded as exemplars among your fel-  
low citizens, leaders in your several  
communities, and you will merit and  
ultimately gain, the esteem and confi-  
dence of all men.

You thus see how admirably the prin-  
ciples and objects of your order, when  
practiced in your daily life, are calcu-  
lated to accomplish the very objects  
and purposes to which a government  
like ours is dedicated. It will thus in-  
fact, as well as in theory, become and  
remain, "a government by the people,  
of the people, and for the people."

Let me admonish you not to expect  
to accomplish all these things in one  
year, nor yet in one generation. Profit  
by the lessons taught you from the  
pages of history. Remember it is a  
long time since the principles of liberty  
and equality were promulgated by our  
forefathers by the Declaration of Inde-  
pendence. It is much longer still,  
since the insurgent barons extorted the  
signature of King John to Magna  
Charta, which event occurred on the  
19th day of June, 1215. Think of the  
time elapsed since then; the struggle  
that millions have passed through, and  
the cost of life and treasure to perpe-  
tuate and to extend the blessings of  
freedom and equality. It is also the  
simple truth when I assert that no men  
or class of men were ever actuated by  
purer motives or by more unselfish pa-  
triotism in extending their blessings  
than were your fathers.

Their liberties, so far as could be  
judged by human foresight, were at  
least secure. No one proposed an at-  
tack upon their individual rights. In  
fact, their rights were freely conceded  
to them. To their lasting glory and  
honor, however, be it said, that they  
had but little admiration for a prin-  
ciple which would guarantee their own  
liberty, while it would enslave a fellow  
being; that they had no sympathy with  
any system which would recognize and  
perpetuate classes and caste in a coun-  
try dedicated to freedom and equality.  
Such a system, in their sight, was but  
a mockery of the sacred principles of  
right and justice; of liberty, "a govern-  
ment of the people, by the people, and  
for the people," in their eyes, com-  
prised all the classes, all creeds, and  
every calling. To their minds, any law  
to be permanent, must afford equal  
protection to all classes, and impose like  
burdens upon all men. The events of  
history simply arrest the correctness of  
their views. The past affords numerous  
and striking examples of the failure of  
governments, when founded on partial  
justice and unequal rights.

Experience has taught that all such  
governments must fail. Neither the  
practice of religion nor the inculcation  
of morals alone can be of any avail  
without liberty, justice and equality.  
History has also demonstrated that the  
applications of the principles contended  
for by your fathers are ever calculated  
to restore peace and happiness among  
men.

It is also to be borne in mind that  
these principles are broad enough and  
strong enough to bring relief and pro-  
tection to those who stood for their de-  
fense, and this, too, without even visit-  
ing upon the destroyer or their chil-  
dren, any punishment, except for the  
violation of personal rights and for the  
infliction of cruelties upon their fellow  
men. It is the fruits these principles  
bear as well as the virtue embodied in  
them which ever must endeavor them to  
every lover of mankind. In not a  
single instance was ever a single one of  
them invoked for revenge, but always  
to mete out justice. Whatever may be  
said of those who sought to invade and  
destroy equality, remember that they  
were your fellow men. Remember that  
they were governed by prejudice and  
guided by passion, and that many, very

many, have long ago atoned for the  
part they took in the struggle against  
liberty, and that time, the leveler of  
all things, will make an atonement for  
them all. Let me remind you, also,  
that the struggle has not ceased; it  
has simply been carried into other  
channels. Your work is by no means  
complete, and no patriotic American  
ever will or ever can rest until liberty  
and equality is secured to all men.

Permit me to suggest that not all  
claims made in the name of liberty and  
equality are either sincere or just.  
Many, very many, appeals made in  
their name, if granted, would entail  
the most flagrant wrongs and violate  
the fundamental principles upon which  
our government is based.

Bear in mind the test to which I  
have directed your attention; laws and  
measures should apply to all interests,  
to all classes and to all persons alike.  
What measure or law is best calculated  
to promote the best interests of all, is  
not a matter to be dogmatically asserted  
nor arbitrarily determined. It is to be  
determined by a full and free discus-  
sion. Freedom of thought and free-  
dom of speech, and a free and unham-  
pered right to disseminate thoughts  
through the freedom of the press, will  
always be found a safeguard against  
tyranny and oppression. By this I do  
not mean that men should possess the  
right to rob others of their reputation  
by the circulation of either slander or  
libel. Such is an abuse and not a use  
of the exercise of free speech or a free  
press.

By the practice of charity against  
your fellow men, you will never com-  
mit the wrong which is so often  
thoughtlessly committed by reckless  
and unfeeling men. You will feel con-  
strained to judge of them and their acts  
in that broad spirit of charity by  
which you desire to be judged, and  
thus your disagreements, if not en-  
tirely overcome, will at least be tem-  
pered, perhaps harmonized, and no  
doubt in most instances will redound  
to the benefit of your fellow men. At  
all events, you will avert dissension and  
strife and make an agreement possible,  
and may avert a destruction of prop-  
erty and of life itself. I pray you not  
look upon what I have said here to-  
day as being mere glittering generalities,  
uttered simply to bring a momentary  
pleasure to your senses, and that the  
objects foreshadowed and the re-  
sults flowing from them are unattain-  
able by man, or merely a poetic fancy or  
the dream of enthusiasts. Such is not  
the case. Nor was it, or is it, my ob-  
ject to please you and entertain you  
for the time-being. I have adverted  
to the slow growth of our principles  
and to their beneficent results to pre-  
pare your minds for the great task be-  
fore you, and to encourage you in the  
attainment of the results, because they  
are worthy of any and every sacrifice  
you may be called upon to make; and  
to quicken your sense of duty to your  
country, and the principles defended  
by your fathers, so that their suffer-  
ings and sacrifices may not prove to  
have been made in vain.

Among other duties, you have also  
assumed the duty of "keeping green  
the memories of your fathers and their  
sacrifices." This you may do best in  
maintaining and defending the prin-  
ciples for which these sacrifices were  
made. You have also promised aid  
and protection to all veterans of the  
Grand Army of the Republic, and to  
extend the same aid and protection to  
their widows and orphans. This trust  
I feel you will ever keep, and with the  
aid and gratitude of a generous gov-  
ernment and a loyal people, I trust  
that none of them will ever be driven  
to penury and want, and I hope, at  
least, will ever be prevented from suf-  
fering from their consequences.

And now, fellow citizens—for we are  
all citizens of a common country, a  
country dear to us all—permit me to  
close this address. While the subject  
is most fascinating and its contempla-  
tion invites me most strongly to pursue  
it to an indefinite length, a just regard  
for your immediate welfare demands  
that I curb my desire to pursue it fur-  
ther, and to obviate becoming wearis-  
ome, to stop it here.

In conclusion I would only admonish  
you to induce, if possible, all sons of  
veterans to join your ranks; impress  
upon them the beauties, the loftiness  
and the beneficent results flowing from  
the practice of your principles and the  
attainment of your objects. Spread  
them not only among your fellow mem-  
bers; teach them to all men, and espe-  
cially to the young and growing gen-  
eration, and if you will fulfill your  
mission in life and keep in view the ob-  
jects of your order, and practice its  
principles, you will make it almost im-  
possible to assail, much less destroy,  
liberty and equality. You will also  
lay the foundation toward realizing  
the desire and hope of all good men—