

Harding's Tribute to Unknown Dead

(Text of President Harding's address in memory of America's unknown dead hero, delivered at Washington, Nov. 11, 1921.)

Mr. Secretary of War and Ladies and Gentlemen: We are met today to pay the impersonal tribute. The name of him whose body lies before us took flight with his imperishable soul. We know not whence he came, but only that his death marks him with the everlasting glory of an American dying for his country.

He might have come from any one of millions of American homes. Some mother gave him in her love and tenderness, and with him her most cherished hopes. Hundreds of mothers are wondering today, finding a touch of solace in the possibility that the nation bows in grief over the body of one she bore to live and die, if need be, for the republic. If we give rein to fancy, a score of sympathetic chords are touched, for in this body there once glowed the soul of an American, with the aspirations and ambitions of a citizen who cherished life and its opportunities. He may have been a native or an adopted son; that matters little, because they glorified the same loyalty, they sacrificed alike.

GLORIOUS DEATH FOR COUNTRY

We do not know his station in life, because from every station came the patriotic response of the five millions. I recall the days of creating armies and the departing of caravels which braved the murderous seas to reach the battle lines for maintained nationality and preserved civilization. The service flag marked mansion and cottage alike, and riches were common to all homes in the consciousness of service to country.

We do not know the eminence of his birth, but we do know the glory of his death. He died for this country, and greater devotion hath no man than this. He died unquestioning, uncomplaining, with faith in his heart and hope on his lips, that his country should triumph and its civilization survive. As a typical soldier of this representative democracy, he fought and died, believing in the indisputable justice of his country's cause. Conscious of the world's upheaval, appraising the magnitude of a war the like of which had never horrified humanity before, perhaps he believed his to be a service destined to change the tide of human affairs.

In the death gloom of gas, the bursting of shells and rain of bullets, men face more intimately the great God over all, their souls are aflame, and consciousness expands and hearts are searched. With the din of battle, the glow of conflict, and the supreme trial of courage, come involuntarily the hurried appraisal of life and the contemplation of death's great mystery. On the threshold of eternity, many a soldier, I can well believe, wondered how his ebbing blood would color the stream of human life, flowing on after his sacrifice. His patriotism was none less if he craved more than triumph of country; rather, it was greater if he hoped for a victory for all human kind. Indeed, I reverse that citizen whose confidence in the righteousness of his country inspired belief that its triumph is the victory of humanity.

FOUGHT FOR WORLD FREEDOM

This American soldier went forth to battle with no hatred for any people in the world, but hating war and hating the purpose of every war for conquest. He cherished our national rights, and abhorred the threat of armed domination; and in the maelstrom of destruction and suffering and death he fired his shot for liberation of the captive conscience of the world. In advancing toward his objective was somewhere a thought of a world awakened; and we are here to testify undying gratitude and reverence for that thought of a wider freedom.

On such an occasion as this, amid such a scene, our thoughts alternate between defenders living and defenders dead. A grateful republic will be worthy of them both. Our part is to atone for the losses of heroic dead by making a better republic for the living.

Sleeping in these hallowed grounds are thousands of Americans who have given their blood for the baptism of freedom and its maintenance, armed exponents of the nation's conscience. It is better and nobler for their deeds. Burial here is rather more than a sign of the government's favor—it is a suggestion of a tomb in the heart of the nation, sorrowing for its noble dead.

Today's ceremonies proclaim that the hero unknown is not unhonored. We gather him to

the nation's breast, within the shadow of the Capitol, of the towering shaft that honors Washington, the great father, and of the exquisite monument to Lincoln, the martyred savior. Here the inspirations of yesterday and the conscience of today forever unite to make the republic worthy of his death for flag and country.

SACRIFICE SHALL NOT BE AGAIN.

Ours are lofty resolutions today, as with tribute to the dead we consecrate ourselves to a better order for the living. With all my heart, I wish we might say to the defenders who survive, to mothers who sorrow, to widows and children who mourn, that no such sacrifice shall be asked again.

It was my fortune recently to see a demonstration of modern warfare. It is no longer a conflict in chivalry, no more a test of militant manhood. It is only cruel, deliberate, scientific destruction. There was no contending enemy, only the theoretical defense of a hypothetical objective. But the attack was made with all the relentless methods of modern destruction. There was the rain of ruin from the aircraft, the thunder of artillery, followed by the unspeakable devastation wrought by bursting shells; there were mortars belching their bombs of desolation; machine guns concentrating their leaden storms; there was the infantry, advancing, firing, and falling—like men with souls sacrificing for the decision. The flying missiles were revealed by illuminating tracers, so that we could note their flight and appraise their deadliness. The air was streaked with tiny flames marking the flight of massed destruction; while the effectiveness of the theoretical defense was impressed by the simulation of dead and wounded among those going forward, undaunted and unheeding. As this panorama of unutterable destruction visualized the horrors of modern conflict there grew on me the sense of the failure of a civilization which can leave its problems to such cruel arbitrament. Surely no one in authority, with human attributes and a full appraisal of the patriotic loyalty of his countrymen, could ask the manhood of kingdom, empire or republic to make such sacrifice until all reason had failed, until appeal to justice through understanding had been denied, until every effort of love and consideration for fellow men had been exhausted, until freedom itself and inviolate honor had been brutally threatened.

PLEA FOR EVERLASTING PEACE

I speak not as a pacifist fearing war, but as one who loves justice and hates war. I speak as one who believes the highest function of government is to give its citizens the security of peace, the opportunity to achieve and the pursuit of happiness.

The loftiest tribute we can bestow today—the heroically earned tribute—fashioned in deliberate conviction, out of unclouded thought, neither shadowed by remorse nor made vain by fancies, is the commitment of this republic to an advancement never made before. If American achievement is a cherished pride at home, if our unselfishness among nations is all we wish it to be, and ours is a helpful example in the world, then let us give of our influence and strength, yea, of our aspiration and convictions, to put mankind on a little higher plane, exulting and exalting, with war's distressing and depressing tragedies barred from the stage of righteous civilization.

There have been a thousand defenses justly and patriotically made; a thousand offenses which reason and righteousness ought to have stayed. Let us beseech all men to join us in seeking that rule under which reason and righteousness shall prevail.

Standing today on hallowed ground, conscious that all America has halted to share in the tribute of heart and mind and soul to this fellow American, and knowing that the world is noting this expression of the republic's mind—falseness, it is fitting to say that his sacrifice, and that of the millions dead, shall not be in vain. There must be, there shall be, the commanding voice of a conscious civilization against armed warfare.

"OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN"

As we return this poor clay to its mother soil, garlanded by love and covered with the decorations that only nations can bestow, I can sense the prayers of our people, of all peoples, that this Armistice day shall mark the beginning of a new and lasting era of peace on

earth, good will among men. Let me join in that prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

DEMOCRATS SEE IN ELECTION RESULTS REBUKE TO REPUBLICANS

A Washington special to The New York World, dated Nov. 9, says: Democratic leaders are elated over the election returns in New York, Kentucky, Maryland and other states. They believe the trend is away from the Republicans and strongly toward the Democrats.

Chairman Cordell Hull of the Democratic National Committee made this statement today:

"Fighting Democrats who captured numerous Republican outposts in Tuesday's elections, have given evidence that the spirit of the party is still militant. Although this was not a general election, a conservative interpretation of the elections held indicates that the people are far enough away from the confusion of war conditions and influences to see the merits of Democratic administration.

"The people now see and are convinced of the increasing demerits of the present Republican administration and realize that the comprehensive program of reconstruction proposed by the Democratic administration following the armistice was obstructed and in chief measure defeated by a Republican congress during 1919 and 1920, with the disastrous results to business which have inevitably followed.

"Apart from the gratifying outcome in Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland and other localities and the tremendous victory in Greater New York, the results upstate, in Bridgeport, Conn., following recent Democratic victories in other Connecticut towns, are particularly gratifying because they have been strongholds of reactionary Republicanism.

"Democratic victories of Tuesday will inspire Democrats everywhere to renewed efforts with increasing expectations of success."

Members of congress believe that the sweeping victories won by candidates of their party in some sections of the country indicate the election of a Democratic congress in 1922.

Representative Montague of Virginia, said: "The election returns indicate a decided reaction against the Republican administration by which I mean to include the legislative department."

"The trend is toward democracy," said Representative Weaver of North Carolina. "That is what the gains in New York, Maryland, Kentucky and Connecticut mean."

Republican leaders in congress, while not willing to be quoted, blame Gov. Miller for the Democratic victories in New York. They assert that he is endangering the party in the nation.

THE IMPORTANT IDEA FOR PUBLIC SPEAKERS

Villa Serena, Miami, Florida, October 13, 1921.—Mrs. Emma G. Wallace, 25 Grover St., Auburn, N. Y. My dear Madam: Replying to your question: I beg to say that one remark made by a visitor to our college made a deep impression upon me. His words were to this effect: "When Cicero spoke people said, 'How well Cicero speaks;' when Demosthenes spoke they said, 'Let us go against Philip.'"

The distinction may not be fair to Cicero but it brought out an important idea, namely, that a public speaker should endeavor to impress his SUBJECT, rather than HIMSELF, upon his audience.

W. J. BRYAN.

BE THE BEST OF WHATEVER YOU ARE

"If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill,
Be a scrub in the valley—but be
The best little scrub at the side of the rill—
Be a bush if you can't be a tree.

"If you can't be a bush be a bit of the grass
Some highway to happier make,
If you can't be a muskie then just be a bass—
But the liveliest bass in the lake!

"We can't all be captains, we've got to be crew,
There's something for all of us here;
There's big work to do and there's lesser to do,
And the task we must do is the near.

"If you can't be a highway then just be a trail,
If you can't be the sun be a star;
It isn't by size that you win or you fail—
Be the best of whatever you are."

P. H. C., Louisville, Ky.