

Address to the B. P. O. E.

By Hon. A. J. Weaver at the Memorial Services Last Sunday Evening

Brother Elks and our Friends: After listening to the eloquent eulogy of our Exalted Ruler setting forth so beautifully the full significance of this occasion, after listening to the beautiful songs and witnessing the simple yet impressive ceremonies of this order, I feel as though there is little which I could add to this memorial service. However, in attempting a brief address, I shall feel amply repaid for any effort of mine if I impress you even to a small degree the real purposes and high ideals of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, which not only subscribes to the beautiful doctrine of brotherly love and commemorates its dead, but also teaches the living true lessons of benevolence, justice to each other, fidelity to the home and loyalty to our country's flag.

As stated by our Exalted Ruler, the first Sunday in December of each year is designated and dedicated as a day on which shall be commemorated, by every lodge of Elks in sacred session, the memories of departed brothers. In conformity of this law of our order, for these services are obligatory upon every lodge, we have met today in behalf of the Falls City lodge to perform this sacred duty.

What a sacred privilege it is to honor our dead. In the mad rush of life, of our modern life, when men sometimes forget the simplicity and good old fashioned ways of the fathers, and all because of the power, or perchance the reputation or dollars ahead, it is meet and proper, that society occasionally stop and ponder other things besides business, think of other things than dollars and trade. So last week this great nation according to ancient custom paused in its busy course and observed a day of thanksgiving, thanksgiving to the great God for the increased strength and power of the American nation; for the continuance of our liberty; for our material growth in wealth and population, and our progress also in moral and spiritual affairs.

Once a year also the great American people from Arlington, our beautiful national cemetery, nestling in the hills of Virginia and looking across the beautiful Potomac River upon our National Capitol, to the other cemeteries of the nation in city and hamlet and country side listen to patriotic addresses, march to the muffled drum, and mourning their dead, strew flowers over the graves of the known and unknown soldiers of the Republic. Once a year, if not more often, families and societies also, in pursuance of this beautiful custom of Decoration day, cover with beautiful flowers the tombs and graves of their dead.

And this is the Memorial day of the Elks, an American organization with eleven hundred and fifty lodges and three hundred thousand members. Today these lodges and this membership are mourning the brothers

who have passed into the great beyond and,

"In unison Elks everywhere turn back the clock to the hour of eleven, That they may think of those on earth and those in heaven, And bow in reverence to sisters, wives and mothers, And kneel in silence for their absent brothers.

To our order it is the greatest of all days, for upon this day we turn our thoughts from the busy routine of life with its successes and failures, its sunshine and shadow, and proclaiming the pure and noble principles of Elksdom, pay a sincere tribute of love and respect to the absent members of our order, to those who have answered the final roll call and who dwell with us only in pleasant memory. And my friends I desire to emphasize the thought, that if this order and the other great fraternal orders of America which are likewise promoting the cause of fraternity and brotherhood throughout the world, served no other purpose than to adequately remember their dead, they would not have been established in vain. Whether by public ceremony, marble shaft, green mound, or silent tear, we speak and think of our loved ones, it matters not, but it matters much that we do think and speak of them in some way, and the great order of Elks will live longer because of these beautiful annual services commemorating its virtues and characters of deceased brothers.

Some of these brothers succeeded better than others. Some of them reached a higher round on fame's ladder and some of them did not ascend at all. Some of them were bigger and stronger in every way than others. Some of them battled against greater odds than others and some of them handicapped, perchance by heredity, early training or the lack of it, floundered along with the many weaknesses that flesh is heir to, and finally either conquer or capitulate. In short, among the men of our order, who have passed away, we will assume that the average of human life prevailed. But whether distinguished or unknown by worldly honor, whether rich or poor in worldly effects, we loved them all the same because they were our brothers and today we honor them alike. They were all Elks and as Elks they all stood on the level. They all subscribed to the same beautiful teachings of our order and their hearts were all filled with that loyalty and fraternity an Elk gives to his brother. They all recognized, as every good citizen should, the existence of a Supreme Being, of a higher power, the great God who moves and rules the world. At the sacred altar of our order they were taught that justice, even handed justice, is the rock of Gibraltar and that there can be no permanent greatness in nation or state or civic order without it. And at the sacred altar of our order they also learned the beautiful lessons of brotherly love and charity.

These noble principles made our order in a sense, a religious order, not in the holy sense of the great church of God, which has been the one great power for good in all times and among

all people, and which is today the vanguard in civilizing and christianizing the world; but in the sense of doing good by striving for a higher plane of morals, for better citizenship and the universal brotherhood, which begins in the small circles represented by our fraternal orders.

To be sure ours is a cheerful religion, but it is not a requirement of holy writ or of the best christian precepts that one should always be solemn or straight faced to be good. The Elks believe in the laugh and the smile, and particularly in the smile that don't come off. Yes, it is a cheerful religion, but it is a religion that believes in taking care of its own and in this country tonight there is not an Elk in good standing who is hungry, or ragged, or forsaken. There are no Elks who are public charges and none of our absent brothers sleep in the potter's field.

It is a religion that gives to the poor. Last year the public charity of the Elks lodges of America was the magnificent sum of four hundred thousand dollars; and this my friends from one of the small fraternities of America. This generosity is public charity for last year alone, if there was none before or yet none to come after, is another justification for the existence of this order.

How beautiful it is to live in the present and to live up to the opportunities of the hour and this thought as to the active charities of the Elks is nowhere more beautifully illustrated than in the little poem, "What Have we Done Today."

We shall do so much in the years to come, But what have we done today? We shall give our gold in a princely sum, But what did we give today? We shall lift the heart and dry the tear, We shall plant a hope in the place of fear, We shall speak the words of love and cheer, But what did we speak today? We shall be so kind in the after while, But what have we been today? We shall bring each lonely life a smile, But what have we brought today? We shall give to truth a grander birth, And to steadfast faith a deeper worth, We shall feed the hungry souls of earth, But whom have we fed today? We shall reap such joys in the by and by, But what have we sown today? We shall build us mansions in the sky, But what have we built today? 'Tis sweet in idle dreams to bask, But here and now do we do our task, Yes, this is the thing our souls must ask, What have we done today?

Charity is one of the great virtues that makes of us all one great family for the common good and in no fraternal order of America is this virtue emphasized more than it is in the Elk's lodge of America.

It is an order that teaches Brotherly Love, that spirit which makes us less interested in self and more interested in others. It has been said many times and in many ways that the three greatest words of language are God, Home and Brotherhood, and we want these services to emphasize the influence and power of this sacred trinity. God the Father of us all, and the giver of every good and perfect gift, it is proper that these simple annual services should be held in this house. Home, that sacred and tender spot where clings strongest of all earthly place, the human affections. Brotherhood that great arm which reaches out and includes us all, makes us all akin, and strews with roses the rough and thorny places of this old world.

In the great God may we put our trust and our hopes. In our homes may we develop the high ideals of life and citizenship. In our fraternities, in our fraternal greetings and fraternal intercourse, may we draw

closer to each other, understand each other better and make each other better.

It is an order that teaches hospitality. Many a boy away from home has been saved by the hospitality of the Elk's Lodge, by the friendly interest of men who have traveled the same road as the young stranger. Here the young man finds excellent reading rooms, the papers from his home city, current magazines and a library of good books and in the cheerful club rooms, mingling with the members of this order who come from all honorable walks of life and who almost without exception are virile active American gentlemen he learns the great lesson of brotherhood and whether he becomes a member of our order or not the lesson so taught goes with him through life and thereafter he believes in that scriptural teaching that every man is "His Brother's Keeper." Our order is also hospitable in the sense that its club rooms and houses, and in some cities these rival the finest public buildings and private residences in elegance and arrangement, are given over for the use of charitable, church and literary organizations. I recall one instance in Omaha last year where the club rooms were given for the use of the Clarkson Memorial Hospital Association and in our own city time and again our club rooms have been used for public purposes. Thus in this way our order exerts another influence for good.

It is an order that teaches equality, the equality of all right thinking and right living men and women, that principle of democracy which must be kept alive in state and church and lodge if the dream of universal brotherhood is ever to be realized.

And no where in this great country does the flame of equality burn brighter than in the order of Elks for every Elk takes home with him from the initiatory service the best badge of equality the human race has ever known, the American flag. In presenting this beautiful emblem to every member what a lesson in patriotism and love of country our order instills.

"Breathes there a man, with soul so dead, Who never to himself hath said, This is my own, my native land."

My friends, The "Lay of the Last Minstrel" has quickened the feeling of patriotism among all peoples since the days of Sir Walter Scott, and that American flag, the emblem of Liberty and Equality and justice which tells of heroic deeds and heroic men, has quickened the sense of patriotism, loyalty and good citizenship in the three hundred thousand American Elks.

And what do we need in our land today more than spirit of freedom, we who have progressed so rapidly that many new and complicated questions confront us as a people. We are in new seas because we have drifted so fast and we anxiously inquire, "Watchman, what of the night?" Which is the course of National honor, national prosperity, and civic righteousness? What shall our answer be to the faint cry of socialism arising in our midst? How shall we solve the trust question involved in the gigantic combinations of capital which in recent years have been perplexing us? What also of the rights and duties of labor? What of the increasing difficulties of municipal govern-

ment? How shall we ourselves our families and the state best settle the liquor question?

These and other questions in due time must be answered and in the answers is involved in large measure the strength and permanency of the Republic. Therefore, the church the home and the lodge can perform no greater service to humanity than keep the fires of patriotism lighted in every American heart. These fires of patriotism, which are nothing more than love of country and zeal for good government, constitute the torch of American Liberty which is enlightening the world.

Let us hold this torch higher and higher every year so that it will not only light up the dark recesses of our own country but sheds its beneficent light in the dark places of the whole world. Patriotism such as the Elk order teaches, means not only patriotic precept but patriotic example, not only patriotic sentiment but patriotic service. It means that same interest and service in the affairs of the state that a man gives to his home and to his business.

Sometimes I think that the present generation is too indifferent to governmental affairs, that we are unappreciative of the blessings we enjoy and of the sacrifices that gave us this great heritage. It is said that Confucius the great Chinese statesman once traveled in a distant part of the Empire which was infested by ferocious wild beasts. One day he came upon a woman weeping bitterly and stopping to inquire the cause of her grief learned that her husband had recently been killed by a tiger. Why, asked the great Chinaman, do you remain in a province infested with such danger? "We have a good government here," was the woman's reply. Behold! exclaimed the sage, "A bad government is more to be feared than the rapacious tiger."

Thus, my friends the full duties and high ideals of citizenship should be taught in every lodge, at every altar and at every fireside in America. And I am one of those cheerful Americans who believe that these sacred duties are being very creditably performed by our churches homes and lodges; that while we have large responsibilities we have large capabilities and that our magnificent ship of state, freighted with the legacies of the centuries that are gone, will pass the rocks and shoals and enter the harbor of safety.

There is a line in one of the classics which says "The frozen river and the leafless trees do not complain. They wait for the sunshine of spring and summer." What a beautiful thought that after death is a new life; that the sun will shine again and dispel even the gloom of the grave; the thought that while we have our sorrows and our trials it is not all sorrow and grievous burden; the thought that if the warmth of the returning springtime brings new life to the frozen river and the leafless trees, there must be as much for the human soul after life's winter is ended.

Yes, the law of compensation runs through everything. It's majesty is supreme because it is a divine law, and tonight in our sorrow for our absent brothers, let us not forget that our living brothers are assembled here in strength and health and to them I would say, while dropping a tear at the bier of your dead brother, like the frozen river and

leafless tree, do not complain, your brother will live again, and if you are worthy in the light of the teachings of the great order to which you belong, worthy in the light of the teaching of the great church, in whose beautiful edifice we are assembled tonight, you will see Him again.

But while here remember the duties of the present and the duties to the living and in performing these sacred duties I ask you to carry with you through all the years the following beautiful sentiment:

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths; in feelings, not in figures on a dial. We should count time by heart throbs. He most lives, who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."

Report of the Condition

THE BANK OF SALEM

Table with financial data for THE BANK OF SALEM, including assets like Loans and Discount, and liabilities like Capital stock paid in.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, County of Richardson. I, R. B. Huston, Cashier of the above named bank, do swear that the above statement is a correct and true copy of the report made to the State Banking Board.

Report of the Condition

Farmers State Bank

Table with financial data for Farmers State Bank, including assets like Loans and discounts, and liabilities like Capital stock paid in.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, County of Richardson. I, Clyde Thacker, cashier of the above named bank, do hereby swear that the above statement is a correct and true copy of the report made to the State Banking Board.

Report of the Condition

Falls City State Bank

Table with financial data for Falls City State Bank, including assets like Loans and Discounts, and liabilities like Capital stock paid in.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, County of Richardson. I, W. A. Greenwald, cashier of the above named bank, do hereby swear that the above statement is a correct and true copy of the report made to the State Banking Board.