

The New Spirit of Memorial Day

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TAPS will sound around the world next Saturday bidding America's soldier dead sleep peacefully on. Hours before America itself has awakened for Memorial day, a solitary khaki-clad bugler, standing over a few graves in the little island of Guam, will start the saddest notes in all music on their long journey.

Fifteen hundred miles to the west, while the smoke from the guns of many a firing squad rolls silently upward above the heads of serried ranks of bronzed men gathered about tropically-decked mounds that mark the spots where heroes lie, bugle after bugle will sing the song of rest in the islands of the Philippines. Then, as the heart-wrung reverberations die away, the tender message of a nation's undying gratefulness will swell out over the narrow homes of its defenders in the Chinese empire.

After that, as the sun goes westward, taps will follow it, for in many legations and in the American colonies of Paris and London the practice of observing the day by sounding the call is followed. So the air will be caught up in Europe and sent on its way to Cuba and Porto Rico. There, instead of a lone bugle carrying the strain, a hundred will take up the burden. This hundred a few minutes later will give way to thousands, for America will be reached, and from countless God's acres in city and town and hamlet will rise the mighty wall of a nation for the legions that have died for its faith and hope.

In an ever swelling chorus the bugle's music will sweep through the land out over the Pacific. Far away Hawaii will honor the heroes slumbering within its soil and, last of all, Samoa, a' most between day and night, will catch up the notes, renew their energy over the graves of a handful of storm-wrecked sailors, and stand at attention while they sink.

The whole world will have been witness to its noblest lesson in national gratefulness and patriotism.

It will have been witness, too, to the new spirit of Memorial day; for it will behold a nation mourning more in the fashion of the first decoration days. Then every noise in the land was hushed except the

tread of millions going cemeterywards, the roll of muffled drum, the voice raised in praise and prayer, the cracking rifles of the firing squad, and the bugle's call. Then no one, as in later years, thought of making the day a holiday.

To many next Saturday will still be in the nature of a holiday pure and simple, but to hundreds of thousands besides the tottering old men who will haltingly march to the graves of their long dead comrades the day will have solemn significance, for it has been brought home to them. They are the men who fought in Cuba, who stormed the Spanish strongholds in Porto Rico, who languished in southern mobilizing camps, and who have known the hardships of campaigning in the Philippines.

They have learned by experience on the battlefield and in concentration camp what Memorial day really stands for, and whenever it recurs they and their kinsfolk keep it with a new spirit which offers refutation to the frequently made statement that, now that the veterans of the civil war are dying off so rapidly, the true purpose of their great day is as speedily being lost in that of the holiday.

Four hundred thousand soldiers served in the Spanish-American and Philippine war. Each soldier that fell had at least ten relatives to mourn him. Each soldier that lives has at least ten kinsfolk to honor him; and so four millions of people—one in every twenty in the country—have leavened the whole body politic and given a more serious note to Memorial day since the late war than was present for many years before on the anniversary of the dead. This is the testimony of Grand Army posts and of Memorial day speakers throughout the country.

Their testimony could not be otherwise. A soldier can never forget the days of his service; he cannot be enlisted a month without hearing in camp or in battle the benediction of the bugle over the body of some comrade-in-arms; and, though unconscious it may be, the thought is never from him that the same call that puts him to sleep nightly with lights out, on the morrow may lull him to his eternal slumber. It is the contact with death and its militant song that brings home to him the deep significance of the Day of the Hero Dead and causes its proper observance by

him and his.

Ask any of these men who are responsible for the new spirit of Memorial day—or the old one revisited—why the day is the most solemn one of the year to him, and the answer very likely will be in the form of an incident of the man's campaigning days. And if a member of a certain regiment that served in Porto Rico is questioned, his reply most probably would contain the following story:

For days the regiment had encamped on the brow of a hill overlooking the sea, waiting for the transport that was to take it home. As the soldiers waited and swept the horizon for their ship they worked in the cemetery that had been laid out to receive the soldier dead from over the island. They were kept busy. A day did not pass without one or more burial squads being detailed to give decent interment to some "poor devil" whose body had been brought on mule back or in army wagon from a camp in the interior, or who had died in the regiment's own hospital on the sun-baked slope. So it came to pass that at any hour of the day during the weeks that the regiment sat on the hill no one was surprised to hear taps come to him through the tropical air from over the grave of a newly laid soldier less than a mile away.

At last, unexpectedly and after the regiment had about given up hope of getting off the island in time to spend Thanksgiving in "God's country," the transport steamed into the harbor, and the order was given to break camp the next morning at 3, that the soldiers might be spared from the beating rays of the sun as much as possible.

It was 9 when camp was broken, everything packed in knapsack and wagon, and everybody, hilarious at the prospect of sailing, lounging and waiting in the shade of piles of baggage for the word of command to fall in in the company streets. And then, when chaff and banter were at their height, word was passed along that up in Company B a soldier, overcome at the thought of seeing his invalid mother, had dropped dead of heart disease just as he had finished packing his knapsack.

A soldier is not afraid of death when the heat of battle is on him, but intruding

when his arms are stacked it sobers him. There was not a sign of merriment over leaving the island, as, shortly after the news had spread, a burial detail started for the cemetery with the man's body in a mule wagon.

It was a solemn-faced regiment that the colonel beheld a quarter of an hour later when it was drawn up before him for the final parade. It was a brighter regiment when the band had paraded and finished playing "The Star Spangled Banner," as the flag came down, and it was almost its normal self when, with the officers of the line and the first sergeants in their places again, it stood expectantly waiting for the word of command that would swing it down the hill—homeward.

The colonel drew his sword and flashed it to position.

"Reg-i-ment—at-ten-tion!" he commanded. "Fours—"

He got no further. That instant there came to him the notes of a bugle—taps was being played over the grave of the comrade who had dropped dead an hour before. And as the call cut short the colonel's order and stopped his mouth, so it wrung an audible gasp of sympathy from the stolid double line of blue.

Not a man moved while the music lasted or its echo could be heard making its way up the mountains at the camp's rear. Nor for almost a minute after the faintest reverberations had died away did officer or private move or look to right or left.

Then the colonel gave the interrupted order, and the regiment swung down to the sea to the strains of "Home, Sweet Home." But intermingled in many a marcher's mind with the bars of the song that has brought tears even to the eyes of savages, were the notes that had sounded over the grave as he had paraded at the top of the hill.

From such incidents the new spirit of Memorial Day has sprung, and by such incidents it will be kept alive until the young men of the Spanish American War organizations, who will decorate the graves of their dead, are as decimated by time as are the ranks of the Grand Army of the Republic that will march behind battle scarred flags next Saturday.

Public Library a Feature in Municipal Organization

THE GREAT majority of cities of 25,000 inhabitants and upwards in the United States have a public library of some sort, and the same is true of many of the smaller cities. Many of these libraries have been founded on gifts of individuals, some have developed from subscription libraries—but the majority are now supported mainly or entirely by funds appropriated by the city government. A considerable number are still in the formative stage, this being true of those for which buildings are being erected from funds provided by Mr. Carnegie—and for several hundred others for which he will probably provide buildings in the near future.

The conditions upon which he provides funds for the erection of municipal library buildings are simple. The city must provide a site, which it may obtain by gift if it can, and it must agree to provide annually for the maintenance of the library a sum equal to at least 10 per cent of the cost of the building. Practically this offer is open to any city which has no public library building, but the length of time during which the offer will thus remain open is unknown. Under these circumstances what is the duty of a city which either has no public library buildings or has one which is inadequate and insufficient for its purpose? Should the municipal authorities take the initiative, decide as to what kind of library building they want, and then make application to Mr. Carnegie for the amount of money required for its construction? The answer to this is not unanimous. Some good citizens think that the city should provide its own building and not ask for it as a gift. Some municipal authorities are willing to accept the buildings as a gift if it is directly offered to them, but are unwilling to ask for it themselves. In such case it has often happened that a few enterprising persons not connected with the municipality have prosecuted the case and asked that the offer be made—at the same time giving assurances that the offer with the usual conditions will be accepted.

In three or four cases, however, when the offer has been made by Mr. Carnegie, on the solicitation of private citizens, it has not been accepted—in at least two cases because of the opposition of leaders of the labor party, who claimed that Mr. Carnegie had no right to the money he offered. It may be that there have been one or two cases in which the offer has been declined because the municipal authorities were unwilling to guarantee the future support of the library to the amount required.

This is really the main point to be considered by a municipality in dealing with such an offer, but I doubt whether in many cases it receives much thought. In order to make the Carnegie library an adornment to the place—a special feature of

the townscape—certain cities have planned buildings which by reason of materials and architectural embellishments, cost about double what the same library accommodations could have been provided for—they spend \$100,000 for the space that could have been furnished for \$50,000. If the city were itself paying for the building this extra expenditure for the art education of the people might be perfectly justifiable, but when these architectural features involve the doubling of the library tax for all future time, their desirability becomes more doubtful.

There may be excessive and unjustifiable taxation for the support of a public library—the amount which the city can afford for this purpose should be carefully considered in connection with its needs for a pure water supply and good sewage disposal, for means of communication, for the care of the sick poor and for public schools. Each case must be judged by itself; the only general rule I have to suggest is that in the Department of Education the claims of the Public Library for support are more important than those of a Municipal College or High school. The people who have no taxable property, and who therefore often erroneously suppose that they contribute nothing towards the payment of the taxes, are usually quite willing to have a higher tax rate imposed for the purpose of securing for themselves and their families free library facilities—although in exceptional cases religious or sociological opinions may lead them to oppose it.

A considerable number of taxpayers, on the other hand, are more or less reluctant to have their assessments increased for this purpose, and their arguments should be considered and met. They say:

First—That they should not be taxed for things they do not want and never use.

Second—That the furnishing free books tends to pauperize the community and to discourage the purchase of books for home use.

Third—That there is no evidence that free public libraries improve the community materially or morally.

Fourth—That the greater part of the books used are works of fiction, and that these are injurious to the readers.

Fifth—That most of the arguments used in favor of free public libraries are merely sentimental and emotional, and that those who urge them most strongly do so for advertising and political reasons, or to make a place for themselves or some of their relatives.

The first of these reasons would apply also to taxes for public schools, street paving, sewerage and many other items of municipal expenditure, and has no weight.

With regard to the second argument it is not a sufficient reply to say that everyone pays through the taxes, for this would

apply equally well to free lodging houses, free lunch rooms and soup kitchens, free fuel, etc., all of which it is generally believed do tend to pauperize a city, except in great and special emergencies. The proper answer is that the free public library is an important and indeed necessary part of the system of free education which is required to secure intelligent citizens in our form of popular government, and that while in a few very exceptional cases free schools and free libraries may tend to improvidence, or indolence, or even to certain forms of crime, these rare cases are of no importance in comparison with the benefits which education confers upon the immense majority of the community, and with the fact that without free schools and libraries a large part of the people will not be sufficiently educated to be useful citizens under our form of government.

With regard to the third count, the public library, again, may be considered, together with the public school. While it is difficult to trace to either specific instances of material or moral improvement, it is certain that the general diffusion of intelligence which both certainly affect, does result beneficially in these directions. Communities with flourishing free schools and libraries are usually more prosperous and better than those without such facilities, and while there is doubtless room here for a confusion of cause and effect, it is probable that there is both action and reaction. Prosperity calls for increased facilities for education, and these in turn tend to make the community more prosperous.

That the majority of books withdrawn from public libraries are works of fiction cannot be denied. Many librarians are wont to deplore this fact, and most libraries endeavor in one way or another to decrease the percentage of fiction in their circulations.

The proportion of recreative reading in a public library is necessarily large. In like manner, the greater proportion of those who visit a zoological or botanical garden, do so for amusement. Yet the information that they secure in so doing is none the less valuable, and both are certainly educational institutions. So, if in the public library a large number of its users get their history, their travel and their biography through the medium of recreative reading, we should not complain. Were it otherwise, these readers would probably lack altogether the information that they now certainly acquire, although perhaps not in the most systematic way.

Taking up the final count in the indictment, it is doubtless true that sentimental and emotional considerations have had much to do with library development. They have furnished the initial motive power, as they have for free schools, for the origin and progress of democratic government, and for most of the advances of

civilization. They often precede deliberate, conscious reasoning and judgment, yet they are often themselves the result of an unconscious reasoning process producing action of the will in advance of deliberate judgment. Sometimes they are pure reflexes, like winking when the eye is threatened by a blow. The free public library can neither be established nor maintained usefully without their aid, but their methods, or want of method, must be carefully guided to produce good results.

The sentiment that we ought to establish institutions for the diffusion of knowledge is the expression of a real economic need and should be directed and encouraged, and not suppressed. Logic is a useful steering apparatus, but a very poor motive power.

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She Would Interrupt

They went down on Twenty-third street the other morning. Each had a bundle and each looked happy. After a few introductory remarks, just to impress each other that they were glad they had met, this conversation ensued:

"Yes, Mollie is down with—"
"Oh, you don't say so!"
"She was taken with—"
"The poor girl!"

"As I was going to say, Mollie is—"
"And she always was delicate."
"Yes; but I was going to say—"
"Give her my love and tell her I hope she will soon be out."

"Pardon me, my dear; but I was going to say—"

"Who's your doctor?"
"Pardon me again; but as I started to say—"

"Oh, you did start to say something; I beg your pardon."

"As I started to say, Mollie is down with her aunt in Hackensack. She was taken with a desire to get to the country, and went yesterday."

And then both went back to the bargain counters.—Detroit Free Press.

Etiquette of the Fued

"There's just one thing, sah," observed Colonel Gore of Kentucky, "in which we are behind Turkey."

"What's that?" Colonel Bullet asked, quickly.

"Well, sah, after a general killin' the porte always sends a polite note of apology to the survivors of the massacre. If we could only end our feuds in that way, sah—"

"But we can't sah," exclaimed Colonel Bullet, excitedly, "for the simple reason, sah, that when one of our feuds ends nobody's left, sah, to apologize to!"—Baltimore American.