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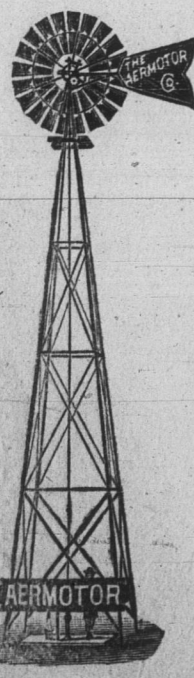
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DECATUR, INDIANA

Rev. W. I. Alexander's Memorial Sermon, as Delivered at the M. E. Church Last Sab- bath Morning.

The sermon preached by Rev. Alexander last Sunday at the M. E. church, has been the cause of some comment. We publish it verbatim, that it may be intelligently understood, and that our readers may know just what it was that he said. His text was: Ex. 12-26. "What Mean Ye By This Service?"

Israel after 400 years of bondage under Egypt, was under the miraculous leadership of Moses, delivered from the taskmasters excessive cruelty and toil. So great was this deliverance that forgetfulness of it was deemed a crime. That it might never be forgotten, an anniversary was instituted for the observance and education of coming generations.

To this day, although 4,000 years have passed away, that anniversary is observed. There are some things in our national history that we dare not forget without being guilty of a treason more odious than that disloyal spirit which struck at the heart of our National Union to rend it in twain. There is no treason to this flag so deep, so black, so execrable as that which is involved in forgetfulness of those 2,000,000 who at the trumpet call of their country, left everything dear to them, to lay their lives down, if need be, in order that their country might live. The highest treason to this flag is the treason which would obliterate the memory of their heroism, or the memory of the 300,000 who died by the bullet, by disease and by starvation.

The ancient Greeks and Romans built temples to Vesta, the goddess of the family and the state considered as a larger family. In the heart of Rome her ancient temple may still be seen. There, burned the sacred and perpetual fire, ministered to by chaste and beautiful vestal virgins. Once a year in solemn procession they entered her temple and purified and replenished the sacred flame. Our loyal patriots have done more for our homes than any mythical goddess ever did for Rome. The grand temple to their memory is the unbroken fabric of a union whose base is a continent and whose dome towers among the stars of heaven. The sacred fires which we dare not let die, is their memory, and next Wednesday as the day of solemn procession to the altars of patriotism; let us go as true-hearted patriots to replenish the sacred flame.

We do not meet to-day as an anniversary day of battles fought or victories won, but as a Memorial day, to recall the memory of a nation's costly sacrifice to save a nation's life. We are the only species of God's creation, who reverence the dead, who examine the present and dare spy into the future. Sacred and imperious as was the trumpet call to arms in 1861, so is the call to which we respond to-day. "What mean ye by this service?" "What good do we hope will come from it?" "Is it for the quick or the dead?"

For the living, not the dead is the memorial service. If we, the living actors here, do not profit by the day's service, it can serve no useful purpose. It is for our enlightenment, not for the repose of our dead.

We need this service for the educational influence on the foreign-born population flocking to our shores. We need to preserve our American spirit. We need to keep in view the patriotism and valor of our fathers who kept our land intact, and left the government supreme in every part of our Republic.

God has given us as nation a high calling. The words of Alex. Hamilton are true. "It is ours to be either the grave in which the hopes of the world shall be entombed, or the pillar of cloud that shall pilot the race onto its millennial glory. Let us not forget our immortal trust." W. D. Owens, the Superintendent of immigration tells us in his report that during the year 1892, 579,683 immigrants came to this country, of whom nearly 3,000 came in violation of law, and were sent back; forty per cent of all that came were Poles, Hungarians, Italians and Russian Jews—men who preserve their old world customs and fashions—resist American institutions and resent all attempts at their betterment as an assault upon their liberties. They come hating the restraint of law, without any means of support, and soon become dependent on public charity for life. They are largely the cause of the difficulty of our laboring classes in finding employment of the growing corruption in politics and of the growth of Romanism which is a menace to the Republic. Vear General Preston said: "The Catholic who will take his religion from Rome and not his politics, is not a good Catholic." That is treason. What is the politics of Rome? Lafayette, a Frenchman and a Catholic, studied well the history of his own country. He saw that when the Romanists of France revoked the edict of Nantes and expelled 400,000 Huguenots, she, that day, slit her veins and let flow her best blood. He saw the result, when the Sabbath was abolished, the Bible was dragged along the streets of Lyons in derision and contempt. Infidelity reigned. Her retribution for the "Massacre of St. Bartholomew" came in the reign of Terror. Every gutter was filled with shreds of human flesh. Property was confiscated. The morning breeze bore across the vine-clad hills of France the cries of suffering and the shrieks of terror.

Lafayette saw all this, and turning to his foster country that he loved, listen what he said: "If the liberties of the American people are ever destroyed, they fall by the hands of the Roman clergy." Understand me, I have not a word of disparagement for the loyal American-born Catholic who loves his country and his God—I speak of those who come to us and make the politics of their despotic native land, their religion, and the Pope at Rome their God. Let us not sleep, the nihilists of Russia, the socialists of Germany, the anarchists of France, and the cut throats of Italy are flocking in upon us. Let us meet this vast host of foreigners by educating them in patriotism and by infusing in them the American spirit. This Memorial day can help to do it. Soldiers and friends there lies before us a marvelous future. The eyes of all the

other nations are upon us. They watched us closely while we were marching through the fires of a wrathful war, and have seen us emerge from the terrific strife chastened and wiser and purer and stronger than before. And I believe that we shall yet under God give to Europe and Asia, yea, to all the world such a sublime view of true republicanism, of American independence and of the royalty of private citizenship as shall lead them up step by step to a civilization, higher, brighter and purer than their statesmen, reformers or poets have ever dreamed. Ours is a godly heritage. How immense in extent! how limitless in resources! But Garfield was right when he said: "Territory is but the body of a nation." The people who inhabit its hills and valleys are its soul and spirit, its life. In them dwells the hope of immortality, and among them, if anywhere can be found the elements of destruction. A land like ours can find a solid foundation only in the intelligence and virtue of the people. The great strength of our nation and her men—you cannot make any fortification high enough to keep out intruders unless there are men within. We would have no king or throne bind our states together, no iron chain of despotic power to enslave them and would bind them together with the golden chain of virtue, affections and universal brotherhood.

I sometime grow timid and tremble as I set the horoscope of our national future and see the great questions of Mormonism, and Romanism and Imperialism and Intemperance, and other questions we must yet settle. I think when the crisis comes, will our Republic endure the strain. Soldiers, when these perplexing problems come to my mind, in my despondency, I walk the plains and battlefields and see what you have done. I look upon the men about Vicksburg while the rebel shot plows up the ground about them and beat it into mortar. I look upon our brave boys at Gettysburg and Shiloh. I march through Georgia and the Carolinas to the sea and back again. I see Hooker fighting above the clouds at Lookout Mountains. Phil Sheridan scaling and breaking through the enemies lines at Cemetery Hill, and Garfield distinguishing himself at Chancellorsville. I listen to Grant's telegram to Burnside from Louisville, "Hold Chattanooga, and the fearless reply as it came flashing back, "I will hold it till we starve." I go to Andersonville and Libby prisons, I see them dying a hundred a day, reduced to cadaverous skeletons, pressed by every want and refused the simplest words of comfort from hearts that were breaking for them in northern homes. I see them watching the path along which their starved comrades are being carried every few moments to fill an unknown grave. I see those brave boys offered food and life and freedom if they would betray the Union. I see them spurn such an offer with contempt and turn away to die in the awful agony and delirium of famine.

When I see this, and more, I know I have touched the utmost limit of human heroism, and I know we belong to an age of heroes and martyrs. There is no measuring the power of such a people. A race of martyrs have made our liberties secure. A baptism of blood has secured our rights, and guaranteed their perpetuation. Again I remember that the blood of those sires is in the veins of the present generation. We who are sons and daughters of veterans are proud of it. I'd rather be the son of a brave veteran than a son of the king of England. Imbue us with the heroism of our fathers and our power is almost infinite, our future is bright with hope and encouragement. Let us sing with Whittier—
"Our fathers God! from out whose hand
The centuries fall like grains of sand,
We meet to-day united, free,
And loyal to our land and thee,
To thank thee for the era done,
And trust thee for the opening one."

O, make thou us through centuries long
In peace secure, and justice strong;
Around our gifts of freedom draw
The safeguards of thy righteous law;
And cast in a diviner mold
Let the new cycle shame the old."

We need fear no problem—no influx from abroad, so long as we cherish and preserve our American spirit.

We need this Memorial day as a reminder of the sacred nature of the Union and its supreme sovereignty. The war had its origin in a condition that could not be fully understood and appreciated by those who were without some personal knowledge of it. It is due to the fact that we had two kinds of civilization fastened upon us at the beginning. One was planted at Plymouth Rock and the other at Jamestown, Va. The one proceeded upon the theory that all men were equal in the presence of the law, and the other thought that only the white men were equal. Both grew and on parallel lines started on a race of extension across the continent.

Rivalries and jealousies were excited, but all differences were subordinated for the common good when we came to the struggle for American Independence. But our constitution adopted by our fathers was a compromise, and a compromise with wrong is never satisfactory, never settles anything. It but prolonged the life of these opposing factions and for seventy years longer these jealousies and rivalries and contention and clashing continued.

The result was a struggle for political supremacy. Slavery at first in the ascendancy, gradually lost ground. This was the cause of the war. Then the sagacious leaders of the South, seeing that soon they could not control the government began planning with reference to that condition in the future. The doctrine of secession was the result. Its teaching was, that the states, not the Union was supreme—that the state when it could no longer rule, they would ruin and that the constitution was not the organic law of the people, but was a mere compact or agreement to be broken at will. Goethe said: "Plant an oak in a vase, and either the vase must burst or the oak die." The tree of liberty was planted here in the vase of our union. The question then was, shall the Union give way, or slavery perish? It will magnify your estimate of what these brave soldiers have done, if you will contrast our condition with what would most

likely have happened had the situation been reversed and instead of Lee surrendering to Grant, Grant had surrendered to Lee. Do you imagine there would have been any talk about the spring plowing—would it not have been about boundary lines war indemnities and stipulations for the protection and perpetuity of human slavery? Instead of a grand, glorious nation, we would have been divided up into numerous little republics, continually fighting for supremacy, and the prey and laughing stock of all nations. We need this day to remind us of the sacred nature of our government and its supremacy. I have no sympathy with the sentiment so often heard, that the Union soldier was half right and half wrong—the cause of union, was entirely right—cause of treason, entirely wrong.

We need Memorial day as a reminder of the slumbering conscience of the nation when it is aroused—as a reminder of the terrific military power, this nation may become by a single call to arms.

Europe pays 900,000,000 dollars to her soldiers every year, but in America at the word, hundreds of thousands rush to arms in defence of country—their homes and right. It is said that in one of the battles of the wilderness when the nation's life depended upon a single battle and a single brigade, that brigade without a leader and riddled with bullets, wavered for a moment preparatory to a crisis.

There suddenly appeared in the front rank an old man, with white hair, who, with a flintlock musket stood his ground loading and firing and the sight of him rallied the brigade. With a deafening cheer the brigade charged and swept the field like a tempest. May such be the mission of this Memorial day to our beloved nation in all its conflicts for liberty for humanity and for God.

Veterans, you have by your sacrifices and heroism and sufferings, given to us and our children the priceless heritage of an undivided nation. The country owes much to you—a debt which it can never repay. Money is no equivalent, or we might possibly meet our obligations to you. This great government borrowed your bodies and kept some part of every body it borrowed. Few of you passed through the dreadful experiences of war unscathed. It robbed some of you of hearing, some of sight. From some it took a foot or a limb, from others an arm or a hand and from all of you it took health in a thousand unnamed ways. It is consummate nonsense to say this country is unable to pursue a generous, open-handed policy toward every veteran that remains. What if the pension bill is a paltry 80,000,000 annually? If free and exact justice was done it would be much more; 80,000,000 would not buy one state you saved to the Union. Would 80,000,000 dollars for the 50 years our veterans will live and which every year grows less, pay for the 2,000,000 precious human lives freely laid as a sacrifice on the nation's altar, for the sacrifices made by loving wives and mothers at home for the years of awful anxiety which plowed the furrows of care in the face—that sprinkled the silver hair over the head that pierced loving hearts with a million pangs, for the waiting and watching and suffering and privation and bitter weeping on the field in the home, and in the horrid prison pen?

No, a thousand times times no. But money can never pay the debt. It requires a currency purer and richer than gold or silver.

Neither will compliments and high-sounding words of praise be a sufficient return. We can only reward you by bestowing upon you, and upon your families, and upon all you love, the true honors you have so nobly won.

There is one thought, soldiers, which brings to all, and especially to the members of the G. A. R., a tinge of sadness. I allude to the fact that whilst almost all other organizations look forward to growth, prosperity and permanence, the G. A. R. can only anticipate a gradual decrease. To-day there are but two divisions of the Grand Army—one of the living the other of the dead—one on the shores of time—the other on the plains beyond the river. One by one the latter division is being re-enforced by accessions from this division whose tents are still dotting the earthward shores. Your days are passing as a tale that is told. Of the two million of men who took up arms for national unity, one-half now slumber in their long sleep, and for the other one-half the shadows; but too long already are still lengthening toward the silence which no earthly sound will ever disturb, and toward the darkness on which no earthly sunrise will ever break. Some 40,000 of your number regiments march down into to-day's valley of Death annually. Forty thousand walked with us a year ago, who, on this memorial day, are with the silent million. And to-day there are 40,000 more of your whole number, bending under the weight of years and infirmities, teased by the ceaseless fretting of the moth that never dies, with eyes so failing and limbs so stiffening that they but grope along the little of travel yet left to them, who, when next we meet again, will have cast all this burden into that eternal oblivion, which flows around us like a ceaseless, shoreless, soundless sea.

Veterans, as I look into your faces I see that Time is writing his autograph on your brows, and in a little while, with all of you, the march will be ended, and you will be stripped of your uniforms, divested of your arms and transferred to your comrades above to receive, instead we trust, the robes of white, the scepter and the crown. How sad it is that in only a few years, at the solemn roll call there will be but a single voice to answer. "Here"—a single foot to step to the beating drum, a solitary soldier left to place flowers on his comrades graves. Soldiers! your own Post has not been left untouched. The icy hand has stillled forever so many hearts that once loyally beat under the coat of blue, has been permitted to enter your camp, and your comrades. Last year on the same day and at the same hour of the 26th Memorial service, was held the funeral of Noah Ainsworth, Isaac Magnus on June 5th, Ira A. Blossom on Aug. 6th, 1893, Daniel Overholser, June 8, 1894, Eli Zimmerman, Feb. 10, 1894, Thomas House, Feb. 13, 1894. All these have obeyed the imperative order of the Divine Commander to pitch their tents on the other shore. They were loyal and brave and have gone to their reward mourned by their comrades.

The last 10 years have seen five of the great Generals of the war cut down by the sythe of time—1895 the invincible Grant, the hero of two wars upon whose brow the laurels of the nation has been placed; at whose feet the world has bowed in homage; whose military genius shall forever associate his name with Hannibal, Alexander and Napoleon, who thought he could conquer the rebel hosts,

was himself compelled to how before the great enemy and now sleeps beneath the lilies on the banks of the Hudson.

1880 the sturdy Hancock, the hero of Gettysburg, who won the most decisive battle of the war, also fell before the onward march of the white horse and his rider.

The same year, brave Logan, the idol of every soldier's heart, fell honored and beloved by the whole nation. On his death bed his last words were: "If this is the end I'm ready." May these be your last words: "I'm ready."

1891 the noble martyr Garfield was sent by the cruel hand of the assassin into the silent death shade while the nation mourned.

1898 the dashing and brilliant Sheridan was raised by cruel death and that heart which had never failed on any battlefield, ceased to beat.

In conclusion, veterans, long long ago you earned to obey orders. See to it that you obey the great marching orders of the Captain of all the earth. His command is "Go and preach, teach, let your light shine, quit you like men, advance, conquer the evil in your own hearts and in the world." You were true to our country, be true to you God, you were loyal to the stars and stripes see that you be loyal to the banner under which the Prince of Peace now asks you to march.

Your excellent services for your country does not absolve you from the services which the great Captain of hosts requires of your hands.

Eschylus wrote much and was justly famous as a leader of thought. This, however, he regarded as a matter of small importance; but he boasted that he had fought at Marathon. By and by every man will see that the only circumstance in human life worthy of emphasis is the fact that they have been engaged in the great battle of truth and righteousness.

Fathers and mothers carry from here to-day patriotic instincts and tender memories to be instilled in the minds and hearts of your children. Train your child in patriotism and manliness and self reliance, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and you are working out better "declarations of independence" than ever came from the pen of a Jefferson. Young men and fair, thoughtful maidens, sons and daughters of America, study well the history of your country and the words of our God and learn from the lives of patriots and scholars and soldiers and martyrs, how best in your turn to serve your country.

Do this and the annual recurrence of this day will be looked forward to, as bringing with it peace and joy, nor shall we have any fear that as long as our country endures Memorial day will be neglected by a people who in the growth and power of their country will find yearly interesting cause to honor and reverse the memories of their patriot dead.

Finally, soldiers of many battlefields, so live your remaining few days that when you one by one lay aside your armor to leave the battlefield of life, you may be worthy to be borne to your graves draped in that flowery flag of beauty and glory, which you and your comrades lying beneath the sod, helped to make more glorious, to be received by the great Captain of the skies, and permitted to join your comrades and loved ones on the peaceful plains of the land immortal.

Not, however, to be armed with sword and spear and shield and helmet, but to be crowned and sceptered, bearing palms of victory as the faithful warriors and conquering heroes of God.

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