

Memorial Address.

Delivered at East Otter, May, 20th 1875, by Rev. Isaac Smith.

There is to us on this occasion, a strong mingling of sorrow and gladness.

Around this day cluster some of the saddest, and sublimest thoughts. On this day arise afresh some of the most painful and the richest recollections that the history of our country can furnish.

It requires no vivid imagination to cause us to hear again the call to arms, or to see again that little group of men we have known for years, mustering for the start; to hear again that sorrowful good-bye, as the mother looks, perchance for the last time, in the eye of her noble boy; or the wife in the eye of her idolized husband; to see the stern resolve stamp itself upon the face of our dear one as the blue sleeve dashes away the tear and they rush to the defense of our noble flag. Some of us see again those little knots of men with flushed and eager faces as the news of a defeat or victory comes over the wires; some of you recollect the eager haste and yet the fear and dread with which you examined the long lists of killed and wounded fearing that the name of some loved one would meet your eye; and some see again the prison, the hospital, the midnight march, that terrible watching in the trenches under the burning sun, the Wilderness lurid as with demon fires and the sickening carnage of the battle field.

To-day as we gather to mark with flowers the resting place of those noble heroes how all of these things come up fresh to us again.

We are but a single drop to-day in the vast ocean of sad and grateful remembrances—a single point in the broad belt of territory stretching from ocean to ocean all through which are gathered loving and sorrowing hearts to decorate the final resting place of those who went down in the most momentous struggle of the Nineteenth Century. It is eminently appropriate that a day be set apart by the nation, that it be made permanent among her institutions, sacred in her calendar and sacred in her love, when this memorial service shall be rendered—when the whole people as with a single hand gathering the flowers from the lap of the opening summer shall cast them upon the graves of those who gave their lives to the land they loved so well.

In that war there was more involved than the present interests of a single nation. When we consider it in its fullest significance it was a test of the efficiency of popular government in great national crises. What popular institutions were able to do for men and to make of men was then put on exhibition and brought to the trial. For fifty years the nation had known no war except that little "brush" with Mexico. With this exception two generations had grown almost from the cradle to maturity in profound peace. But amid all of these peaceful years each man was adding his endeavors towards working out the problem of Republican government. Men were not neglecting their own affairs, but all through the land there were active brains, watchful eyes, attentive ears, and brave, strong hearts ready for the occasion. The cloud was seen to be rising, the wind was heard in the tree tops, and then the muttered thunder. For a moment there was silence in the work-shop, silence in the field, in the counting-room and the office, and men held their breath to listen—and then the stern blast—the whole face of the country was changed as in an hour. Just now all had been quiet and orderly, because there was earnest and self-conscious

grateful and we are proud
but we are sad, for it is such men as these that we mourn. Thousands of these bright lights were in those days extinguished in blood. Thousands of the noblest hearts that beat in the nation are to-day silent in the grave. On the hill-side, in the flowering valley, along the mountain stream, and on the sandy plain they lie, and though dead yet do they speak. Aye! and from those scattered, grass-grown graves there comes a voice louder and more far-reaching than the thunder of all their cannon, calling upon us to revere their memory, to guard well their fame, to be true to their widows and orphans, and, above all to hold sacred and to transmit untarnished to posterity the principles for which they laid down their lives.

In some future day the nation may be able to lift off that part of its debt which is measured simply by dollars, but the tremendous debt of gratitude which the country owes its soldiers it will never—never be able to pay. On hundreds of blood-red fields, for our home and firesides, for national unity, and for the cause of suffering humanity the world over, did they drop their limbs and their lives, as the forest drops the Autumn leaves, and to-day the maimed forms, the orphaned faces and the countless graves so appropriately decked with flowers and wet with a nation's tears, give us some hint of what we owe to the noble men who were able and worthy to rescue the land of Washington from the very cannon's mouth. God help us to be true to those whose natural protectors went out and came back no more.

Memorial Record.

The memorials of the fallen soldiers were compilations of interesting particulars—the names, date of enlistment, nature and time of service, date, place and cause of death, etc., by Mr. GEORGE ANDREWS. Space will not permit us to give the record. Mr. Andrews closed with the following:

Thus have I "called the roll" of our township's honored dead, with no responsive "here" from even one of the voices now forever stilled. But stay—*none* did I say? To the grosser ear of sense comes indeed no audible tone; to the material eye appears no vision of Blue-clad, familiar form; to the outstretched hand approaches no tangible palm; but is there then no *presence*? Does the green turf of yon knoll—the sodden soil of southern swamp—do the leagues of distance—the lapse of time—shut us out from *them* with an impenetrable veil? I trow not! To the sympathetic soul, the ambient air throbs vibrant with the thronging forms; to the ear attuned, voices harmonious are even now thrilling. And what do they seem to say?—"Preserve the priceless heritage our lives have purchased and confirmed to you!"

And when some thoughtless, or vicious man speaks lightly of our free institutions, or compares slightly our condition with that of other nations, let us each ever remember that Fathers, Brothers, Husbands, Sons, went down in the reel and shock of battle; or, worse—succumbed to fell disease, or, worst of all—perished miserably in foul, fetid *loathsome* prisons, for "Union and Liberty, now and forever, one and inseparable—*for us*—FOR US. And though they thought but of duty, and offered their lives heedless of recompense, *we know* that

"On Fame's eternal camping ground,
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory walks with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead."