

TODAY

Our Dead in France and the War in the Light of Their Sacrifice

EVENTS are moving rapidly to temper the consciousness of America—to interpret us to ourselves. It is impossible, for instance, on this Memorial Day to do otherwise than think first of the men who have died in France. Like the dead of our own wars, they have helped to fix shining traditions that shall challenge and guide all mankind forever. The thought of their peculiar service must move any gallant heart to wonder and to tears—but never to grief. Their end was too proud for that.

To die for one's own country is noble. But to turn from peace to torment, to depart from places and things and people greatly cherished and travel far and die for a strange land is a blessed act even fuller of mystic beauty. The very soil of France must have thrilled when it received these men at the end of their travail. Now they lie in the same earth with those who came to desolate and to plunder, to kill and to destroy. Therein is the whole symbolism of the war.

This should be a day of flowers and memories, of course. But it might also be a day of meditation. The implications of the occasion are like a revealing light on many of our present concerns. The graves of all the various soldiers who have died on the French battlefields cry out with various meanings.

It appears, after all, that the world has been mistaken in the secret conviction that the very noise and glitter and enormity of the German adventure involved somehow a tinge of grandeur.

The humblest private in the American army is nearer eternal knowledge than the German Emperor, nearer wisdom, nearer a gentleman. There is no grandeur in a nation that permitted itself to be drilled and trained and put on display like some great, queer circus to satisfy the vanities of a family of mental defectives. If there is grandeur in the occasion it is with those men who made of pity a moving passion and went out to share the affliction of strangers. They waited long, like patient men. They turned even with something of regret from their familiar affairs because war is not the hope or the desire of any proud or enlightened man. They have died for their race as well as for their country. They shared their strength with the weak. The gods can do no more than that. The principle of such service will yet save mankind. If civilization and all its records were to be obliterated tomorrow, that conviction would be the first to spring automatically from the human sensibility. It is allied with the instinct of self-preservation. And for this principle America is fighting and Americans have died and been buried in the sea and in the troubled earth of other lands.

So they have always fought in every war. And that is why we need not grieve for our dead. They still live and lead us on. They have moved always in our own traditions. Now they cry out in the legends and songs of France and England, Italy and Russia. They will speak to all the world for all time. They are as far away as the beginning of time from the unforgotten dead that the soil of France has claimed from the German army. And it will be well to remember all this—so that we may attend with greater reverence at the graves of the men who pioneered it on the difficult path that they are following toward the stars.

If we were a franker people we should not only take time to think secretly of all the other warriors of ours who are out upon the great mission; we should say what we feel in our hearts. We should say:

"God be with them wherever they are, upon the great waters, flying in the face of the dawn or keeping the vigil of battlefields for the sake of the unborn generations."

President Wilson says we should write not "O. K." but "Oleik," that being the correct Choctaw, but we fear we have got the habit by now. And nobody ever taught us any Choctaw.

THE HOME CENSORSHIP

WHEN you write to your man in France, try to put yourself in his place. Try to imagine the kind of letter that would hearten you most if you were over there on his errand.

Nothing is harder for the soldier to bear than letters that lay poignant and emotional stress on his absence, the distance and dangers that lie between him and his dear ones, the pangs that those at home are suffering while he is far away. Of course, he is homesick; he wouldn't be human if he weren't. But no matter how you yearn for him, it is your plain and patriotic duty to be cheerful in writing to him. Tell him all the good news you can; the little incidents of home and the friendly circle he has left behind. Tell him what you are doing over here to back him up. Tell him about the keels they are laying at Hog Island and the pledges that are rolling in for the War Chest. Tell him about baseball and Cousin Fanny's new baby and the railroad men's raise in wages. Tell him anything but the sorrow and ache that may be so very real in your heart.

The soldier depends on letters from home, but it would be better not to write to him at all than to send him letter after letter that will unman and weaken him. He has a big job on his hands and no energy to spare for sad broodings. Help him to keep cheerful. Censor your own letters, striking out every tendency to morbid fears and gloom.

We hope there's always a bottle of smelling salts handy for a Frenchman when he sees our valiant efforts to convey the pronunciation of French names phonetically.

UNARMED SOLDIERS

In the French war exhibit is a German Albatross plane that was brought down by a French pilot.

HUMOR OF YOUTH

College Jokes and the Cornell Widow's Silver Jubilee

THE "snapper-up of unconsidered trifles," the vaudevillian, the omnivorous exchange editor, the musical-farce librettist and the insistent raconteur who demands that you drop everything and listen to "this new one," should pay their respects. Recognition of journalistic college "jokesmitheries" is in order. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the Cornell Widow lends special propriety to a long-bated tribute.

UNORTHUSIVELY, yet spiritedly, American undergraduates have been tilling a field of publication in which many a professional has found only tares. The list of clever "funny papers" in the country is extremely meager until one encounters the sphere of the university. A flourishing scene there meets the eye. The Harvard Lampoon, the Yale Record, the Pennsylvania Punch Bowl, the Princeton Tiger, the Williams Purple Cow, the Dartmouth Jack O' Lantern, the Cornell Widow, the Michigan Gargoyle, the Stanford Chaparral and many others turn out weekly, fortnightly or monthly a really prodigious quantity of bright quips, graceful verses and droll sketches.

INSPIRED into erudite evidences of ebbing inspiration are of course inevitable, but considering the difficulties of publication the average quality of these "amateur" magazines is surprisingly high. They are quoted often than is generally realized and their jokes have a way of skipping about the country and filling in awkward little corners in the newspapers almost as frequently as the effusions of professional "columnists." The college humorist's paper has indeed become a distinct factor in journalism. Nothing like it has ever developed to such proportions in any other land. It is wholly and refreshingly American.

THE quarter century of the Cornell Widow pretty closely defines the age of the movement. The Harvard Lampoon is more venerable, but that well-edited sheet was for several years held to represent not so much progress as folly. Those were the days of the erratic college magazine, with its discussions of the "Danian Cosmogony" or "Spring Thoughts in the Apennines." The humorous college paper played a dubious role. It had not yet found its true status and its pages were marred by footnotes unintelligible to the layman and often highly irritating to the sensitive teaching staff. These evidences of youth have virtually passed away. Inside tips are decreasingly less necessary to the layman's enjoyment of the college comic magazine.

ON THE business side some formidable obstacles were overcome. The Pennsylvania Punch Bowl, founded in 1900 by "Doc" Kaneher, whose death unfortunately cut short a promising newspaper career, seemed destined for the fate of the two predecessors at this university—"Chief and Franklin." Continuity of the paper's existence was eventually secured by reducing its format to the size of Elbert Hubbard's Philistine, then in the heyday of popular favor.

With a new period of growth the Punch Bowl reverted to normal dimensions, attractive materials and the exploitation of excellent drawings. Thornton Oakley, now a painter and illustrator of distinction, contributed a number of the covers of those early days. At about the same time Penryn Starbuck, on the Princeton Tiger, was developing his fantastic style, since widely known.

AFEW years previous James Montgomery Flagg was inventing the Lampoon with his ludicrous sketches and amusing verses. Barrett-Wendell, William Roscoe Thayer and Owen Wister also once wrote for that paper. Indeed, the amount of budding literary and artistic talent which first found an outlet in the college comes is well worth consideration. Writers destined for wide recognition are perhaps trying their wings in many an undergraduate humorous magazine at the present time.

THE artists suggest an even surer ground for speculation. Many of the colored covers are admirably designed and compare favorably with productions of professional artists in the general magazine field.

IT HAS been a good thing for the Cornell Widow to proclaim its twenty-fifth birthday. That celebration profitably directs attention to a field of art and humor too often cavalierly regarded. The other night during the Red Cross benefit at the Metropolitan Burr Melrose told an army story which won much laughter. The source was not stated. It has since been traced to the columns of the Princeton Tiger, brightly dispensing its undergraduate mirth in wartime.

We would suggest the minting of a new three-cent coin with McAdoo's head on one side and Burlington's on the other, the twin three-centers, who have given us a new railroad fare and a new letter postage rate.

BEEF, IRON AND WINE

A Lighthearted Poem Very Seriously Meant

We're on a ball batted by fate in the field of the stars—New York Sun

THE world is a ball that is battled by fate on the diamond of the stars. And the fellow who's putting us over the plate is the southpaw pitcher, Mars. Life may have a hint that the field gets, or a drive to the outermost air. But the Empire on whom the sun never sets Will see that the game's played fair.

WHEREVER the signs of the Zodiac run And the lonely meters go, Our helpless planet has soared and spun At the crack of the batsman's blow. Though the home team's score may be nothing at all And the bleachers' devil howl, If the pitcher sends over an unfair ball The Empire will call it foul.

Thoughts on Thieves

A man walked into a bank and grabbed an armful of Liberty Bonds. But he will find it pretty hard to redeem them, as every bank in the country has made a note of the numbers. And any bank cashier who has played quarterback on a football team won't have any difficulty in memorizing them.

We nominate that bond swiper as successor to the Kaiser.

He isn't so unlike Wilhelm after all. Wilhelm walked into Belgium when no one was expecting him. But he's going to find it difficult to clip any coupons from his holdings.

Presumably the bond thief will follow Wilhelm's tactics, too; he will cry no annexations, no indemnities and send out a peace feeler.

Why doesn't he devote his talents to some really useful work? Such as swiping Hindenburg's Iron Cross or pocketing some of that debris in the City Hall courtyard.

The Famous Players' Film Corporation announces that it has "rounded up" a lot of clever young writers, whose works are to be transferred to the screen. Among them are Bret Harte and Leo Tolstoy. Congratulations to the Famous Players on encouraging these two promising young men.

THE READER'S VIEWPOINT

Letter From a French Soldier

To the Editor of the Evening Public Ledger:

Sir—Perhaps you will think my letter a liberty, but I venture to write to you on account of an article which I read recently in a paper, The Lion of Arzac, a weekly periodical which is principally concerned with the condition of my unfortunate home town of Arzac. That city, the chief town of the Pans-de-la-Louis province, is today only a heap of ruins, upon which the tocher have for nearly four years vented their hatred and fury.

The article I refer to said that certain cities in America had volunteered to take under their generous guardianship and adoption some of the martyred towns of France, such as Arzac, Rheims, etc. It is a noble gesture of friendship on the part of you, our allies.

I have been at the front since the outbreak of war. In spite of many injuries and privations, home is still with me, the hope of conquering those barbarians who have inflicted so much suffering on you. In spite of the dangers of every day, our morale is good, and we shall win, you may be certain. And what does it matter whether the war lasts one year more, or two, provided we attain victory and the peace that we crave for all. For the honor of France and her Allies, let there be no indecisive peace. We must see it through to the final victory.

The article in The Lion of Arzac said that soon our town would have a godmother city in America which will generally aid us in reconstructing Arzac, as I have said, is only a town of ruins. My home, like so many others, has been the prey of the vandals. I was married and engaged in the mill business in Arzac, happily recovered and was able to take refuge with a relative in Paris. Six months ago, when the situation seemed fairly secure, she returned to our home, which was still half habitable. But at the time of this new invasion she had to be under shell fire, again leaving everything we possess to the mercy of the vandals.

What will happen after the war? Who knows? It has meant ruin for many of us, people of the northern provinces, small merchants and farmers, ruin anyway, even if good fortune spares our lives.

At the bottom of his disgust the French soldier has his periods of thought and meditation. He thinks of his loved ones, of his life in old days—so happy compared to this of today—but in spite of everything he is faithful to his duty. He must be so; it is for France and her Allies.

That is what I am thinking, Mr. Editor, as I write from the bottom of my disgust. Perhaps my letter in its long journey will find among your readers some one who would be sincerely glad to take an interest in the situation of a French soldier, not more worthy than all the others, but who has tried to do his duty as it lay before him. You can imagine the pangs of my condition—my wife a fugitive, my home in ruins.

How I hate them, these "sales boches," when I think of all our suffering, moral and physical. You can tell them in America that we are very happy at the arrival of our American brothers. For our part, we repeat to them our only thought—to go on to the end, to the final victory.

I hope my letter will reach you, and in the hope of some reply please accept, Mr. Editor, my respectful salutations.

THE ORDER OF THE DAY

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Patches of prominence and popularity—war dispatches, potato patches and trouser patches—Nashville Tennessean.

Proof of Sincerity

While Prussia was making peace suggestions she was hard at work on air tanks, super-submarines and seventy-mile guns—Washington Star.

A Decrease of Power

Germany is troubled over the tremendous decline in her birth rate. But when it is remembered that Germany's anxiety just now is based on nothing more than fear that her future armies will suffer from the decrease, the balance of the world is not going to waste such sympathy on Germany's threatened loss in population. When a nation looks upon its growth merely as a military asset, then the more democratic people of the earth can rejoice that the supply of men proves inadequate to meet the ambition of some potentate who would make the entire world his vassals.—Galveston Tribune.

Hard Luck

Wherever I read the glorious news From fields where battles rage, I wish that I could knock a score Of years off from my age. It's tough to stand upon the curb And watch the soldiers go. It's tough to be so doggone old You cannot strike a blow. To sit and wait and ball and fret And grouse and curse and hate, And never get to await the Hun— Believe me, boys—some fate! —Brooklyn Eagle.

What Do You Know?

QUIZ

1. Where and what is the Chemin-de-Dames? 2. Who was Joseph? 3. Who is the German Crown Prince? 4. What is the "national flower" of Ireland? 5. What is a mugwump? 6. Which is the Cotton States? 7. Where and what is the Farthestaway? 8. What is the legend of the Flood Flood of? 9. Who is the legend of the Flood Flood of? 10. Who said, "A Conservative is only a Tory who is ashamed of himself?"



Illustration by Bart Hilly

THE torch our fathers set alight Burns pale and flickers in the breath Of ruthless, autocratic might— The flame of freedom faces death! Men rush across the sea to fling Their bodies in the monster's path; Their eyes grow sick at suffering; Their spirit lashed to Godlike wrath. O thou, that in another day, Of sorrow, soothed and comforted, Thy words remain hope's gleaming ray To those that mourn heroic dead. And when the brutal cables bring The bitter lists of maimed and slain, The echoes of thy phrases ring—"These dead shall not have died in vain!" ICHABOD.

Get in Line Now

The old order passes; who would be a railroad president now?—Baltimore News.

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