

Our War with Germany

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OUR WAR WITH GERMANY

Address delivered by Dean Max Schoetz, Jr., of Marquette College of Law, at Fox Lake, Kilbourn and Menasha, Wis.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:—

In its selection of speakers to give the memorial address on this grand occasion, your committee has honored me. Whether the selection was wise concerns one not. Responsibility for the speaker selected must be placed with the committee, where it belongs. However, being the chosen one, I shall in my humble way do my bit to try and measure up to this memorial occasion.

How well I remember the first speech I delivered after leaving Law School. It was at Darboy, Wisconsin, on July 4th. I had been invited to speak as here to commemorate the Declaration of Independence. After preparing for the chairman his introduction speech, designed to advertise myself as a lawyer in the community, the chairman and I took our places on the platform. There was a brass band playing on the platform as we entered. Finally, the band stopped. The chairman leaned over to me and whispered: "Will I have the band play another piece and let the people enjoy themselves a little more or will I introduce you right now?" Of course, the chairman showed rare judgment.

Fellow Citizens: It is a noble land that God has given us; a land that can feed and clothe the world; a land whose coast lines would enclose half the countries of Europe; a land set like a sentinel between the two imperial oceans of the globe; a land with a noble destiny.

It is a mighty people that He has planted on this soil; a people sprung from the most masterful blood of history; a people perpetually revitalized by the man-producing working folks of all the earth; a people imperial by virtue of their power, by right of their institutions, by authority of their heaven-directed purposes.

It is a glorious history our God has bestowed upon His chosen people; a history whose keynote was struck by Liberty Bell; a history heroic with faith in our mission and our future; a history of statesmen, who flung the boundaries of the republic out into unexplored lands and savage wilderness; a history of soldiers, who carried the flag across the blazing deserts and through the

ranks of hostile mountains, even to the gates of sunset; a history of multiplying people, who overran a continent in half a century; a history of prophets who saw the consequences of evils inherited from the past and of martyrs who died to save us from them; a history divinely logical, in the process of whose tremendous reasoning we find ourselves today.

Perhaps there never was more privileged people than we are. Yet, we are apt to forget the great responsibilities and obligations that rest upon us as American citizens.

The poorest citizen of the United States can, if he will, read and think the thoughts of the world's greatest man. He may enjoy all the comforts and privileges incident to freedom of worship. He may rise to the highest honor, in the gift of the people, to become a leader of a mighty nation. Behold, Lincoln, the idol and ideal of a people, who rose from the cradle of poverty to be a leader of a people and who stands as a lasting demonstration of the greatness and grandness of our institutions—of our civil structure.

Therefore, in this present crisis of America and of the world, when democracy is put to its severest test by Prussian autocracy, when force is seeking to rule the world, the question for us is larger than an American question. It is a world question. Shall the American people carry out its divine purpose? Shall we live up to our tremendous responsibilities and obligations? Shall free institutions broaden their blessed reign until the empire of our principles is established over the hearts of all mankind?

Have we no mission to perform? No duty to discharge to our fellow-men? Has the Almighty endowed us with gifts beyond our deserts and made us as the people of his peculiar favor merely to rot in our selfishness, as men and nation must who take cowardice for their companion and self for Deity?

Is it any wonder then that we Americans love to recall the deeds and records of the achievements of the defenders of our country on land and sea? We herald the heroism and sacrifices of our Revolutionary fathers who planted free government on this continent and dedicated it to liberty forever. We attest the struggle of our army and the valor of our citizens in all the wars of the republic. We dedicate this day to the memory of the soldiers and sailors who sacrificed their lives to save our country.

Ah! the heroes of Vicksburg, Atlanta, Missionary Ridge, the Wilderness and all those other fields of glory, of suffering and of death.

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Soldiers of 1861, heroes of Santiago and Manila, you are glorified in the hearts of a freedom-loving people, not only at home but in every part of the world. We feel a glowing pride in our martyred heroes.

Sturdy soldiers and sailors of today 3,500,000 strong; we honor you, we adore you. We know you will bring victory to democracy and free institutions. The Germans and German propagandists in America would have the world believe that you are suckling babes and womanish weaklings; that our government in war is a corrupt machine fattening off the sufferings of our armies. Your deeds will make answer. Ere long you will plant on the palace of Potsdam the stars and stripes and demonstrate to the world that America has the best soldiers on the globe. Glorious soldiers.

Think what has been done. Our rights as Americans were assaulted. In a year 3,000,000 men rose up to smite the assailment. Men suddenly called to arms; men unused to the life of camps; uniforms were procured; arms purchased, ammunition bought; men drilled into the finest soldiers on the globe; over 700,000 already sent across the seas striking at the enemy.

Must I speak of patriotism today? Is there a man in America today so ungrateful as to deny his country? Is there a man in America today so base who does not love his country? Devotion to the land that bore us is pressed upon us now as never before, as paramount to every other notion in its claim on head, hand and heart.

Patriotism is a moral virtue that prompts a citizen to give to his country the love, reverence and obedience that are its due. It is part of the virtue of piety that makes it incumbent upon us to honor our parents and our country because of their casual relation to us.

Sentiment and feeling are accompaniments of patriotism but they do not constitute its essence. Moreover, there are many citizens that give utterance to patriotic clamors from the house tops but fail to practice the virtue of patriotism.

A true patriot is willing to die for his country, not because of sentiment or of a desire to have his name inscribed on the scroll of fame, but because he deems it his duty to do so if the supreme test of loyalty is called for.

Practical patriotism may at any hour demand the sacrifice of life in order that the republic may endure.

There are those who condemn the use of arms as immoral. I do not condemn the use of arms as immoral nor do I conceive it profane to say that the King of Heaven—the Lord of Hosts, the God of Battles, bestows his benediction upon those who unsheath the sword in the hour of a nation's peril. From that evening on which in the valley of Bethulia, He nerved the arm of the Jewish girl to smite the drunken tyrant in his tent, down to this day, His Almighty Hand has ever been stretched forth from His throne of light to consecrate the flag of freedom, to bless the patriot's sword. Be it in the defense, or be it in the assertion of a people's liberty, I hail the sword as a sacred weapon; and if it has sometimes taken the shape of a serpent and reddened the shroud of the oppressor with too deep a dye, it has at other times and as often blossomed into celestial flowers to deck the freeman's brow.

Abhor the sword—stigmatize the sword? No, for at its blow a giant nation started from the waters of the Atlantic and by its redeeming magic and in the quivering of its crimson light, the crippled colony sprang into the attitude of a proud republic, prosperous, limitless and invincible.

Abhor the sword—stigmatize the sword? No, for at its blow the world will be made safe for democracy and German autocracy and frightfulness will be swept back out of the fine old towns of Belgium, scourged back, I say, to their own phlegmatic swamps and their flag and their scepter, their frightfulness and their U-boats, their howitzers and their arms will be knocked into the sluggish waters of the Rhine.

Oh mothers of lost soldiers and sailors! Sit not in darkness nor sorrow over those whom a nation honors. Oh mourners of the early dead! They shall live again and live forever; your sorrows and our gladness; the nation lives because you gave it men that loved it better than their own lives. And when the nation shall sit in unsullied garments of liberty with justice upon her forehead, love in her eyes, and truth on her lips, she shall not forget those whose blood gave vital currents to her heart, and whose life given her shall live with her life till time shall be no more and their names shall be kept fresh with reverent honors, which are inscribed upon the book of national remembrance.