

THE TITLE OF AMERICAN

THE Legion holds, by righteous conquest, the title of American. There was never reposed in any other military force the proud distinction of so completely representing the whole nation. It is notorious that the people of the colonies were divided. Many of their number, of most respectable attainments and most unquestioned character, doubted the wisdom of the patriot cause. When the Revolution became victorious they left by scores of thousands, or remained silent but unconvinced. In the War of 1812, with its strange commingling of the most ignominious defeats with the most brilliant victories, both by land and sea, there was grave lack of popular approval, which in some sections bordered on open resistance. The war with Mexico was widely criticised. Abraham Lincoln, while withholding no note of support for the army in the field, violently denounced the motives which brought on the conflict. The war between the States needs but to be named to show the complete division of two sections of our people, which even the war with Spain did not completely reunite. The opportunity to make this nation one, the sacrifice which made this nation one, was of your day alone. All the streams of that great spirit are gathered up in you. You represent a new national consciousness. You represent the consummation of those great forces, coming into action in the early days

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of this century, which not only made America more American, but made humanity more humane. The hope of this nation, which more than ever before corresponds with the hope of the world, lies in your power to minister to that spirit, to preserve that consciousness, and to increase those forces.

You saw the mighty urge of all these causes which began on July 28, 1914, and culminated on November 11, 1918. When the Great War broke on an unsuspecting world, few people in Europe, and fewer still on this side of the Atlantic, understood it. Stunned by its reported atrocities, we were principally interested in keeping out of what we believed was no concern of ours. There were those who recognized that it was an attack on all that was represented by our civilization, who declared from the outset that it was an American war, and urged an immediate preparation for a victorious defense. Denounced in official quarters, looked on as jeopardizers of peace, they went, for the most part, unheeded. But there came a day when the violation of our rights, the loss of our property, the destruction of the lives of our citizens, and the assertion that these were to continue left no choice but to declare that all this constituted the making of war upon our country, and that force must be resisted with force.

To meet the requirements of that situation it is scarcely too much to say that the American people presented themselves at the altar of their country with the offering of their every dollar and their every life. The flame of patriotism swept over the whole land, consuming away the dross of all past differences, and fusing the entire people into one common national unity. The army and

navy, forever unmatched among men, born of this new spirit; the money with which it filled the treasury; the gigantic charities which it supported; the stupendous and unending flood of all kinds of supplies that it created; the victory that it made possible—these are now known to all the world. All this gave a new meaning to the life of our country, a new meaning which found its finest expression in a new nationalism, deeper and more fervid than ever before, summed up in one word, American. As the months have passed, as public opinion has found expression, it is more and more evident that the people fought in self-defense; they fought to preserve America, and in that sacrifice found a new life.

The tremendous contribution which our military forces made to this new national spirit can never be overestimated. There were those who saw our country enter the war with great regret. They were willing to sacrifice the undoubted rights of our citizens to the maintenance of peace. There were those who opposed sending an army overseas. They were critical of the purpose of the government. But when once our navy reached the scene of conflict, when once our soldiers and marines were in France, all regret and all criticism ceased in the most loyal support ever given by a people to their forces in the field. Devotion to you and your comrades removed all discord, and out of the intensity of that same devotion was created a new conception of the responsibility and dignity of citizenship and a new national spirit. When the results of winning the war are considered, this stands out most prominently, and for it, as for victory, the chief credit must go to those who bore arms.

This may not be the ultimate result, but it is the result up to this time, and if it become fixed in the life of the nation it is worth all it cost. There may be other steps to take, but this one had to be taken first, for without that unity of purpose that comes from an intense national spirit there can be no permanent progress, no promotion of our domestic welfare, no service to the world.

It is because the American Legion stands in a position, by its broad and representative membership, by its common experience and common sacrifice, which no other organization can occupy that it holds the greatest hope for the maintenance of a true national spirit.

When we consider the service that you and your comrades performed, the stupendous scale of the operations, the wide-reaching results, the courage and devotion constantly displayed, that you saved America and doing it saved the world, we realize something of the gratitude that is your due, something of the glory that you have won. Your countrymen will ever hold these among their choicest treasures.

There are some things that can wait. Others perish in the waiting. The most commanding duty that resulted from the war was the proper relief of all incapacitated veterans. This the last administration attempted to do. The task was large and new. It required law and organization. A generous beginning was made, but the work lagged. There is nothing closer to the heart of President Harding than making this relief absolutely complete. No man not in the service has a deeper appreciation of what that service meant, of the sacrifice made by the veterans,

of the obligations incurred by the country; and no man will go farther to minister to the true welfare of those who have been in the service, and their dependents, than the President of the United States. He will never sacrifice you for his own welfare. He will sacrifice himself for your welfare. He will do all that can be done to prevent the need of your again sacrificing yourselves for your country's welfare.

I know that you are well aware that your glory lies in what you have given, and may give, to your country, not in what your country has or may give to you. But a country which is worth defending takes care of its defenders. You have a right to a report of what your country is doing for your comrades. All relief has been reorganized and consolidated in one department, under a new law passed on the recommendation of the Legion. The Veterans' Bureau and the agencies now included in it, up to October 1 have paid \$71,000,000 for medical and hospital services, \$267,000,000 for compensation, \$254,000,000 for insurance awards, \$582,000,000 for allotments and allowances, \$171,000,000 for vocational education. The amount disbursed by this Bureau in September was \$34,237,000. This reaches a total of \$1,345,000,000, about one-third of all pensions paid by the government from its beginning up to our entry into the World War.

The yearly expenditures of the Veterans' Bureau are running at the rate of about \$411,000,000, which is more than one-half the entire expense of the government before this war.

Every effort is being made to avoid delay in passing on

claims. There have been established 14 district offices, and 140 suboffices, for the presentation and determination of compensation and insurance awards. Late in April there were 200,000 claims pending before the War Risk Insurance Bureau. About 150,000 of these have been adjudicated. Except in cases of dispute, each application secures immediate determination. Out of about 975,000 requested medical examinations there are less than 30,000 claims now awaiting review by the medical department. This includes claims which are up on appeal and which were reopened by the generous provisions of the new law. Seven thousand new hospital beds have been supplied, bringing the total up to 26,750. There is money available and construction is under way which will provide 6,000 additional beds, all under government operation. There are at the present time about 6,000 vacant beds in government-controlled institutions. One of the most promising efforts of rehabilitation has been the establishment of a university at Camp Sherman, Ohio, which will provide an academic, commercial, industrial, and agricultural course. Some idea of the tremendous activities of the Veterans' Bureau can be gained when it is remembered that there are now:

29,000 men in hospitals,
207,000 monthly awards of compensation are being
paid,
140,000 monthly awards of insurance are being paid,
636,000 men are carrying insurance,
\$4,000,000,000 of insurance is in force,
1,200 insurance claims are received per month,

17,000 compensation claims are received per month, 93,000 men are receiving vocational training.

It is the most cherished ambition of President Harding that there may be no veteran or dependent anywhere within our country entitled by law to relief who shall not be able, promptly and adequately, to secure it. This is not done with any purpose of undertaking to pay for that which is priceless, but of undertaking to discharge the most solemn obligation which comes to any government.

You represent every part of this nation, every activity of its citizens. It was under your inspiring example that the two greatest obstacles to our full national life were destroyed—sectionalism and class consciousness. The war was won because each section of our nation, and each class of our citizens contributed its full strength to a common cause. The nearly five millions distributed over the entire country, representing in so great a degree the entire people and their entire interests, cannot be divorced from the public welfare. Whatever works injury to any of the great activities of the land works injury to them; whatever contributes to the general prosperity contributes to their prosperity. They are, at once, the man-power and the material power of the nation. They not only take the field but supply the public treasury.

The prosperity and welfare—yes, more than that, the righteousness—of our country lies in the service which one section can render to another. The East found success in building railroads, opening mines, and developing the resources of the West; the West found success in feeding

the people and supplying the raw products for the factories of the East; the North finds success in the sale of its manufactures in the South; the South finds success in supplying the North with the production of her plantations. This is not competition but co-operation. Fundamentally this process is right. It is the law of service. Practically it should continue because it is the only means to success and prosperity. There is no path to permanent prosperity and success which narrowly excludes any section.

It is always easier to think of the part than of the whole. It is easier for men to remember that they work at the plough, the forge, the drill, the spindle, the bench, the desk, or that they follow transportation, the law, medicine, banking, or the ministry than it is to remember that into the life of every man there goes a part of all these activities, and many more, and that whatever his occupation, each is a part of the whole nation, and that the permanent prosperity of each will stand or fall with the permanent prosperity of the whole. No man is wise enough, no combination is strong enough, to transgress this law and long escape its penalties. All artificial privilege always has and always will destroy itself. The law of service is a law of action. No artifice can long circumvent it; no fraud can long cheat it. The United States Constitution is right. Titles to nobility cannot be granted or seized. They can only be achieved. They come through service, as yours came, or they do not come at all. If men in civil life, in these days of peace, would put their thought and effort into the success of the people of the whole country, as in military life you put your

thought and effort, in time of war, into the success of the whole army, the victories of peace would follow as surely as did the victories of war. Government and industry, locality and society, all need the national outlook you so proudly achieved. It is time in every activity in our land, for men in every relationship, to stop trying to get the better of each other and begin trying to serve each other.

Under these circumstances, considering the great sacrifice you represent, and the great stake you have in the country, it is small wonder that you not only exemplify patriotism in your own actions, but insist, as you have a right to insist, on patriotic action in others. You have great patience with ignorance and weakness, but no patience at all with any informed and powerful attempt to make a mockery of our institutions, defy the execution of our laws, and violate the rights of our citizens. But in resisting all attacks upon our liberty, you will always remember that the sole guarantee of liberty is obedience to law under the forms of ordered government. The observance of the law is the function of every private citizen, but the execution of the law is the function only of duly constituted public authorities.

The last act has been closed in that war which, with the help of your efforts, was brought to a complete victory. A treaty of peace between the United States and the German Empire, made for the purpose "of restoring the friendly relations" formerly existing between the two nations, negotiated late in August, 1920, ratified by both countries, now awaits only the proclamation of the President of the United States. This treaty expressly reserves

to the United States both the rights acquired under the Armistice, signed on that historic date of November 11, 1918, and those rights provided by the Treaty of Versailles. Generally speaking, it grants to the United States all of the privileges which it would have gained had it ratified the former treaty, and imposes none of the obligations, exclusive of all consideration of the rights and duties proposed by the Covenant of the League of Nations. This has brought to a formal close the greatest of all human conflicts. Having accepted it, it becomes our duty to observe not only its letter but its spirit. The position which our country holds in its relationship abroad is shown by the experience of our army on the Rhine. There is every indication that it desires to remain there; it is reported that England and France wish for its continuance, and that most of all Germany is earnestly solicitous that it shall not be withdrawn. The occupation of this army appears to be complete.

But, though the war be done, its results, for good and for all, remain. Its exactions have not yet all been met, nor have its benefits yet all been realized.

There has been appropriated for the support of the National Government for the current political year, approximately, four billions of dollars. Of this amount one and a third billion is on account of the war debt; more than a quarter of a billion goes to pay pensions of previous wars; three-quarters of a billion is required to maintain our present military establishment for our protection on land and on sea. The relief work administered by the Veterans' Bureau reaches nearly one-half billion more. This means that the current cost of previous and prospec-

tive wars is two and five-sixths billions, while the cost of the nation's peace activities is one and one-sixth billions. There are considerable expected savings on these amounts, but the proportion will not be greatly changed. This is a burden nearly six times as great as that which was necessary for the nation to bear prior to the war. It exacts a tribute, directly or indirectly, of about forty dollars from every inhabitant of our country, or about two hundred dollars from the average family. This enormous expenditure the public cannot evade, and cannot shift. It must be met. No one who has observed the diminishing returns from taxation, the acute depression which overtook all business and which has become prominently acute in agriculture, can fail to realize that every possible relief must be sought and applied.

All this is a mighty obligation even for a great people of great wealth. There is no present service that can be performed for those who have so unselfishly and so gloriously sacrificed themselves in the service, or for their dependents, or for the country at large, which in a peculiar and a sacred sense is their country, so important, so considerate of their welfare, so calculated to discharge a part of the great debt which is their due, as to reduce these obligations, reduce the great drain upon the resources of the people which will restore the nation to a state of prosperity, not for an hour or a day, but a lasting and a permanent prosperity for all. This means that economy that comes from a consciousness of peace.

Our own national existence presupposes the national existence of others. Were there no other countries there would be no choice between countries, and therefore no

loyalty to one to the exclusion of others, no patriotism. That virtue we claim for ourselves we must recognize in others. If it be well for America to have a strong national spirit, it must be well for others to cherish the same sentiment. The war did not break this spirit; in any free country it strengthened it, strengthened it for the glory of all. America first is not selfishness; it is the righteous demand for strength to serve. And America has been dedicated to an unselfish service. I weigh my words when I say that both in Europe and in the Orient that service for humanity has not been exceeded by any other nation. It will not be, then, in diminishing but in enlarging the national spirit that true progress for the race will be found. There can be no society without a home, no civilization without citizenship.

But, as a true national spirit calls for a harmonious adjustment of the relationship between all the sections and all the people in the nation, so it calls for a harmonious relationship between the different nations. This is the spiritual lesson of the war.

The work of Washington was not finished at Yorktown, the work of Lincoln was not completed at Appomattox; they live in our institutions, one in the Constitution which his efforts caused to be adopted, the other in the amendments which his sacrifice caused to be ratified. Your work was not all done on the sea or on the fields of France.

In recognition of the solemn obligation to you and to your countrymen of economy and peace, a conference of certain Great Powers, called on the initiative of the President of the United States, is about to assemble at

Washington. It proposes to search for a solution of problems arising from the convergence of many different nations in the Pacific and to provide, by mutual agreement, for a limitation of armaments. I do not understand that this means that any nation is to divest itself of the power to resist domestic violence or suffer any diminution of independence, but out of mutual understandings the great burden, and it may be the menace, of competitive armaments may be removed. That is a new expression of a great hope, all the greater because it seeks the practical. It proposes something that America can do at home. It surrenders no right, it imposes no burden, it promises relief at home and a better understanding abroad. If it be accomplished its blessings will be reflected at every fireside in the land. The economic pressure of government will be lifted, the hope of a righteous and abiding peace will be exalted.

The hour is still with the veterans of the war. The power, but also the responsibility, not only of citizenship, but of inspiring leadership is theirs. Their work goes on. In its process there is no room for discouragement. Steadily, silently, but irresistibly the great principles for which their imperishable sacrifices were made are prevailing over the face of the earth. They have not only overcome the sword of resistance, they have convinced the mind. If anywhere opposing views are held, it is in sullen silence; they dare not be openly declared by any government. They have at once proclaimed a new America, and thereby a new world, to be made secure in mutual understanding and in righteous conduct.