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Greatest Living American

(Continued from first page.)

turns instinctively to them. In this column, vast and solid, is a majority so overwhelming that the scattered squads in opposition can hardly raise another army. The enemy has neither guns nor ammunition, and if they had they would use them on each other. Destitute of the weapons of effective warfare, the only evidence of approaching battle is in the tone and number of their bulletins. There is discord among the generals; discord among the soldiers. Each would fight in his own way, but before assaulting his Republican adversaries he would first destroy his own comrades in the adjoining tents. Each believes the weapons chosen by the other are not only wicked but fatal to the holder. That is true. This is the only war of modern times where the boomerang has been substituted for the gun. Whatever fatalities may occur, however, among the discordant hosts now moving on St. Louis, no harm will come this fall to the American people. There will be no opposition sufficient to raise a conflict. There will be hardly enough for competition. There are no Democratic plans for the conduct of the fall campaign. Their zeal is chiefly centered in discussion as to what Thomas Jefferson would do if he were living. He is not living, and but few of his descendants are among the Democratic remnants of today. Whatever patriotism of wisdom emanated from that distinguished man is now represented in this convention.

The public mind is awake both to its opportunities and its dangers. No where in the world, in any era, did citizenship mean more than it means today in America. Men of courage and sturdy character are ranging themselves together with a unanimity seldom seen. There is no excuse for groping in the dark, for the light is plain to him who will but raise his eyes. The American people believe in a man or party that has convictions and knows why. They believe that what experience has proved it is idle to resist. A wise man is any fool about to die. But there is a touch with good fortune may guide the living and the strong. That wisdom springs from reason, observation and experience. Guided by these things this thing is plain, and young men may rely upon it, that the history and purposes I have described, rising even to the essence and aspirations of patriotism, find their best concrete example in the career and doctrines of the Republican party.

But not alone upon the principles of that party are its members in accord. With the same devotion which has marked their adherence to those principles, magnificent and enduring as they are, they have already singled out the man to bear their standard and to lead the way. No higher badge was ever yet conferred. But great as the honor is the circumstances which surround it make that honor even more profound. You have come from every state and territory in this vast domain. The country and the town have vied with each other in sending here their contributions to this splendid throng. Every highway in the land is leading here and crowded with the members of that great party which sees in this splendid city the symbol of its rise and power. Within this unexampled multitude is every rank and condition of free men, every creed and occupation. But today a common purpose and desire have engaged us all and from every nook and corner of the country rises but a single choice to fill the most exalted office in the world. He is no stranger waiting in the shade to be called suddenly into public light. The American people have seen him for many years and always where the fight was thickest and the greatest need was felt. He has been alike conspicuous in the pursuits of peace and in the arduous stress of war. No man now living will forget the spring of '98, when the American mind was so inflamed and American patriotism so aroused; when among all the eager citizens surging to the front as soldiers, the man whom this convention has already in its heart was among the first to hear the call and answer to his name. Preferring peace but not afraid of war; faithful to every private obligation yet first to volunteer at the sign of national peril; a leader in civil life and yet so quick to comprehend the arts of war that he grew almost in a day to meet the high exactions of command. There is nothing which so tests a man as great and unexpected danger. He may pass his life amid ordinary scenes and what he is or does but few will ever know. But when the crash comes or the flames break out, a moment's time will single out the hero in the crowd. A flash of lightning in the night will reveal what years of daylight have not discovered to the eye. And so the flash of the Spanish war revealed that lofty courage and devotion which the American heart so loves and which you have met again to decorate and recognize. His qualities do not need to be retold, for no man in that exalted place since Lincoln has been better known in every household in the land. He is not conservative, if conservatism means waiting until it is too late. He is not wise, if wisdom is to count a thing a hundred times when once will do. There is no regret so keen, in man or country, as that which follows an opportunity unembraced. Fortune soars with high and rapid wing, and whoever brings it down must shoot with accuracy and speed. Only the man with steady eye and nerve and the courage to pull the trigger brings the largest opportunities to the ground. He does not always listen while all the sages speak but every day at nightfall beholds some record which if not complete has been at least pursued with conscience and intrepid resolution. He is no slender flower swaying in the wind, but that heroic fibre which is best nurtured by the mountains and the snow. He spends little time in review, for that he knows can be done by the schools. A statesman grappling with the living problems of the hour he gropes but little in the past. He believes in going ahead. He believes that in shaping the destinies of this great republic, hope is a higher impulse than regret. He believes that preparation for future triumphs is a more important duty than an inventory of past mistakes. A profound student of history, he is today the greatest history maker in the world. With the instincts of the scholar, he is yet forced from the scholar's pursuits by those superb qualities which fit him to the last degree for those great world currents now rushing past with larger volume and more portentous aspect than for many ears before. The fate of nations is still decided by their wars. You may talk of orderly tribunals and learned referees; you may sing in your schools the gentle praises of the quiet life; you may strike from your books the last note of every martial anthem, and yet out in the smoke and thunder will always be the tramp of horses and the silent, rigid, upturned face. Men may prophesy and women pray, but peace will come here to abide forever on this earth only when the dreams of childhood

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It is a sad day for any party when its only means of solving living issues is by guessing at the possible attitude of a statesman who is dead. This condition leaves that party always a beginner and makes every question new. The Democratic party has seldom tried a problem on its own account, and when it has its blunders have been its only monuments. Its courage is remembered only in regret. As long as these things are recalled that party may serve as ballast but it will never steer the ship.

When all the people have forgotten will dawn a golden era for this new Democracy. But the country is not ready yet to place a party in the lead whose most expressive motto is the cheerless word "forget." That motto may express contrition, but it does not inspire hope. Neither confidence nor enthusiasm will ever be aroused by any party which enters each campaign uttering the language of the mourner.

There is one fundamental plank, however, on which the two great parties are in full agreement. Both believe in the equality of men. The difference is that the Democratic party would make every man as low as the poorest, while the Republican party would make every man as high as the best. But the Democratic course will provoke no outside interference now, for the Republican motto is that of the great commander, "never interrupt the enemy while he is making a mistake."

In politics as in other fields, the most impressive arguments spring from contrast. Never has there been a more striking example of unity than is now afforded by this assemblage. You are gathered here not as factions torn by discordant views, but moved by one desire and intent, you have come as the chosen representatives of the most enlightened party in the world. You meet not as strangers, for no men are strangers who hold the same beliefs and espouse the same cause. You may separate two bodies of water for a thousand years, but when once the barrier is removed they mingle instantly and are one. The same traditions inspire and the same purposes actuate us all. Never in our lives did these purposes stand with deeper root than now. At least two generations have passed away since the origin of that great movement from which sprang the spirit which has been the leading impulse in American politics for half a century. In that movement, which was both a creation and an example, were those great characters which endowed the Republican party at its birth with the attributes of justice, equality and progress, which have held it to this hour in line with the highest sentiments of mankind. From these men we have inherited the desire, and to the memory we owe the resolution, that those great schemes of government an humanity, inspired by their patriotism, and established by their blood, shall remain as the fixed and permanent emblem of their labors, and the abiding signal of the liberty and progress of the race.

There are many new names in these days, but the Republican party needs no new title. It stands now where it stood at the beginning. Memory alone is needed to tell the source from which the inspirations of the country flow. A drowsy memory would be as guilty now as a sleeping watchman when the enemy is astray. The name of the Republican party stands over every door where a righteous cause was born. Its members have gathered around every movement, no matter how weak, if inspired by high resolve. Its flag for more than fifty years has been the sign of hope on every spot where liberty was the word. That party needs no new name or platform to designate its purposes. It is now as it has been, equipped, militant and in motion. The problems of every age that age must solve. Great causes impose great demands, but never in any enterprise have the American people failed, and never in any crisis has the Republican party failed to express the conscience and intelligence of that people.

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(Continued on sixth page.)