

MEMORIAL ADDRESS

Delivered May 30, 1925, to the Citizens of Beaufort, S. C. By Dr. D. F. Thompson, of Augusta, Ga.

Army Officers, Ladies and Gentlemen: I assure you there is no purpose, or intention of mine on this occasion, to exploit myself as an orator, but, merely to do honor to those who fought, bled and died for a noble cause, and, whose remains lay here to be honored by us, who are appreciative for the lives of a noble work done.

From time immemorial it has been the custom of the nations of the earth to build monuments, hold services and set aside a special day, known as National Memorial Day. The purpose of this day is to immortalize the memory of the men, soldiers and heroes who made the supreme sacrifice in order that their nation may live and endure.

And why shouldn't we commemorate this day? Why shouldn't we be proud of our heroes? Aren't we men in the image of God as other men? Haven't we played our part on various occasions as other men have?

The Negro, according to the oldest records was brought to this country in 1619 and disposed of at Jamestown, Va., as slaves. It might have been against his wishes, but, the records show that the Negro has been a safe investment. He has never proven disloyal to his country on any occasion.

Negro slaves were introduced into the new world in 1503, when the Portuguese brought a ship load of Negroes to Santo Domingo. Sir John Hawkins, was the first Englishman to bring slaves into the New World, and I shouldn't doubt that DeSoto had Negroes with him on that long and memorable march, when he conquered Florida, marching through Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, until he discovered the Mississippi river in April 1541.

But let us confine our remarks to that group of slaves that landed in Virginia in 1619. And thus you see, that as ages have moved on the Negro has played his part and needs to be considered when it comes to the matter of rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God, the things that are God's.

During the years of the Negro's existence in this country he has contributed more from the standpoint of labor for the upbuilding of this country than any other group. It was he who felled the trees, cleared the forests, planted corn and tobacco and indigo for the first settlers, thereby maintaining their existence.

It is our Tuskegee Institute and Hampton Institute, Voorhees and the Penn School of this Community that revolutionizing the idea of the agricultural life and cause the farmer to think.

Britain was endeavoring to crush out the manhood of the American colonists, the Negroes were just as patriotic and eager to defend the colonists as the white race.

One cause of the Boston Massacre was that a slave out of love for his country insulted a British officer and in that clash on the Boston Commons it was a Negro—Crispus Attucks, who gave the first blood in the behalf of American Liberty.

During the war the colonists did not want the Negro, but, after wards found that they could not get along without them. But, finally after the battle of Bunker Hill and the battle of Charlestown the Continental Congress found it wisdom to utilize this willingness and patriotism on the part of the Negro. Every time a war is launched it is indicated that the Negro is not wanted in the war, strange as it seems, matters are never settled until he gets in it.

There were over 400 Negroes at the battle of New Orleans fighting under the leadership of Gen. Jackson, and they occupied "no mean place and did no mean service."

In the War with Mexico there was not much of a struggle and not much fighting was done, but, the Negro was ready and waiting for the command to go forward.

We come now to the part that we played in the Civil War, from which this day was the outgrowth, say what you may as to the cause leading up to this war and the question of slavery and State Rights being the bone of contention from the very beginning of the Constitution of this Government it is my humble conviction that the three outstanding events of that time which brought on the great struggle were, First, the execution of John Brown at Harpers Ferry, which caused the Shenandoah to run the very best blood of the north; Second, the writing and reading of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" which is a full description of the disgrace of slavery, and the election of Abraham Lincoln to the presidency on the platform of which he ran as a Republican. Of course the war had to settle these disputes and the inevitable had to come and Lincoln had said "this nation, could not endure half slave and half free."

These three events stirred this country and those states that could not stand with the administration and endure sound doctrine seceded from the Union. At the outbreak of this war it was intimated that the Negro's services were not wanted. But, conditions so developed peculiar as they were, that the Negro came in as a matter of serious consideration.

South Carolina and other States having seceded was the signal for war. True to its declaration this state seceded when Lincoln was inaugurated in 1861. Fort Sumter was fired on by the Confederates and captured. The battle of Bull Run was fought and disgracefully to the Union. It took some losses and failures to make the north believe that the south would fight. And finally after the defeat at Bull Run Lincoln issued a proclamation for 75,000 volunteers, but the motto was "no blacks need apply."

The Confederates were already forming Negro companies for the defense of Richmond and built fortifications around it. The third and fourth regiments of Georgia, showed one Negro company as they passed through Augusta enroute to Virginia.

Gen. Hunter stationed at Port Royal, S. C. did not agree with congress nor the president. It was he, afterwards who received instructions from the secretary of the War Department to accept the services of all loyal persons. He seized this opportunity and enlisted a regiment of fugitive slaves. His conduct was inquired into and the resolution to censure was offered. Gen. Hunter replied to the inquiry made in Congress as to his enlisting slaves, that the Negro seemed to be the only loyal people in that locality and that they were anxious to fight for their freedom and gave further evidence of making good soldiers, that they knew the country and were accustomed to the climate. A bill was proposed in Congress authorizing President Lincoln to raise and equip 150,000 soldiers of African descent. In the meantime, Col. Thomas Higginson and Col. Montgomery with a com-

STRAY LEAVES

A Department of Current Poetry By WILLIAM D. ROBINSON.

(All contributions to this Department must be typewritten, "real poetry," accompanied by stamped and addressed return envelope, and sent to 1501 1/2 Taylor St., Columbia, S. C., to the Editor of this column. Allworthy manuscripts will be printed under your own name. Amateurs and poet-aspirants, this is your chance to develop that talent, if you have it.)

TO A FRIEND.

By William D. Robinson.

I shall not say good bye to you, dear friend; For I am sure that neither time nor space Can for a single day between us wend, Or hide from me your sweet, expressive face.

For often I will steal to you in thought, And often seek you in the vale of dreams; Look for you in each flower love has brought; List for your voice in sadly laughing streams.

O will you, busied in life's short career, Steal back to me in dreams and happy hours; And our souls by kindred feelings nearer, Bloom in life's purer sunshine like two flow'rs?

I shall not say good bye to you, dear friend; But may our paths in life often recross; And may our happiest hours have no end, A thousand joys replace each pleasure's loss.

pany of Negro troops ascending the St. John's River in Florida, captured Jacksonville which had been abandoned by white union troops.

In the change the President issued orders to enlist Negroes in defense of the Union Army. Just how well the Negro gave account of himself, I have only to remind you, how he behaved himself at Port Hudson, Milliken's Bend and Fort Wagner, and 20,000 strong marched the Negro troops into the campaign of Virginia. On their way to Virginia, they passed through Washington and the President received them. They fought like Trojans around Petersburg and Richmond and they were with U. S. Grant at Appomattox court house when Gen. Robert E. Lee, the military genius surrendered April 9, 1865. And thus, all history, ancient and modern, pagan and Christian, clearly shows that wherever the darker race had anything to do with soldiery it was well done.

NEGRO LEGISLATORS PUT UNION LABOR ON TRIAL (By The Associated Negro Press.) Springfield, Ill., June—Support from two of the colored members of the state assembly enabled Union labor leaders to put over their anti-injunction bill here last Wednesday when the measure passed the house with one vote to spare.

My friends, this brings me to the recent world war, a conflict which is unparalleled in the annals of history. A catastrophe which rocked the civilized world from the four corners of the earth. A war which in my feeble opinion were more lives lost, more men maimed for life, more children made orphans and more money spent to finance it than all the other wars put together.

The Negro was invited into this war and he played well his part and there is not need to refer to the loyalty of the old 15th Regiment of New York, who distinguished themselves at the front, and the old 8th Regiment that left Camp Jackson at Columbia. It was said by a southern general that the Negroes played well their part and fought like tigers.

What must we do that will show our appreciation for all this sacrifice made for this land of the free and this home of the brave? How much do we appreciate the opportunities made possible for our advancement? Let us as a race and as a nation make new resolutions to make progress along all lines.

First, let us throw all of our forces to wipe out ignorance, and, contend for intelligent leadership. Second, increase all our school facilities. Prepare for various avenues of life.

Third, Let us make a high stand for better homes. Wipe out all forms of prejudice between races.

Fourth, Let us endeavor to work out our own salvation with fear and

trembling.

"IN MEMORIAM" The World has not forgotten us, and the world will not forget: How they fought and died for freedom when her bright stars seemed a set; How they gave their lives for duty, all that heart of man can give, That the tyrant thrall be broken, and that liberty might live.

The World has not forgotten, and the World will not forget, While the rule of Heaven spans it, while the tides of ocean fret; How they dared the serpent waters, How they snatched the scroll of Freedom from the blazing jaws of Hell! The World has not forgotten and the World will not forget For in stars is written the story how the serf and freeman met— When forever and forever Truth was placed upon the throne, And Old Glory, drenched in crimson, made the stars of God her own!

NEGRO LEGISLATORS PUT UNION LABOR ON TRIAL

(By The Associated Negro Press.) Springfield, Ill., June—Support from two of the colored members of the state assembly enabled Union labor leaders to put over their anti-injunction bill here last Wednesday when the measure passed the house with one vote to spare. As a result, labor-chieftains have promised concessions to Negro work men including the use of their influence to lower the bars against colored men which exist in a number of the labor bodies.

The bill which prohibits judges from granting injunctions restraining strikers from engaging in "peaceful persuasion and peaceful picketing," in labor disputes involving terms or conditions of employment has been fought for by the labor circles for years. Observers predict that it will strengthen immeasurably labor unions in the state, while its opponents claim that it spells the death knell of the "open shop" which has been gaining ground steadily of late years.

Three times the bill was up. Twice the four colored members voted solidly against it on the grounds that union labor was unfair to the colored worker. Gov. Small who was committed to the bill called in Committeeman Edward H. Wright, state leader who told him colored people opposed the law and explained their reasons. The Governor expressed surprise that any labor unions did not admit colored men freely and conferred with the labor leaders who then introduced a modified measure.

Mr. Wright called a conference in the offices of the state commerce commission of which he is a member and which was attended by Col. Frank L. Smith representing the governor, Assemblymen William King, S. B. Turner, Warren B. Douglass and Charles Griffin, as well as John Walker and Victor

Oleander, President and Secretary of of the State Federation of Labor, Representative Soderstrom, and others. The labor leaders agree to fight for the removal of all barriers to colored men. Subsequently, twenty-five colored men leaders in those unions which admit men of color called on Mr. Wright to ask him to use his influence for the bill on the grounds that such support would encourage union labor which felt that colored men were opposed to it at every turn. The result of the conference was an understanding that the legislators having seen the matter had drawn the attention of the entire state, from the governor down, and having shown labor that it no longer could practice injustice without expecting retribution on the part of colored men in power had decided to split their votes on the issue. When the bill came up Warren B. Douglas, in a glowing speech assailed union labor for its past attitude and then voted for the passage, Sheardrick B. "Sandbag" Turner opposed it vigorously and then voted against it. Representatives King and Griffin divided their vote and the measure passed. It is predicted that the eye of the colored people of the state will be turned toward ev-

ery act of labor unions in the future in order to see how the effect of this magnanimity on the part of the colored members of the legislature is reflected in the attitude of the labor organizations.

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