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THE AMERICAN NAVY.



The American Navy.

AN ADDRESS

BY

WILLIAM H. LAMBERT.

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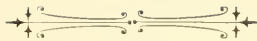
CULBERTSON & BACHE, PRINTERS, 727 JAYNE ST.

1880.

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The following address was delivered before Post No. 2, G. A. R., Department of Pennsylvania, on the Ninth of October, 1879, and that portion of the address comprised on pages 6, 7 and 8, was repeated at the "Camp Fire" given in honor of General Grant, by the Philadelphia Posts of the Grand Army of the Republic, on the night of the Eighteenth of December, 1879, at the American Academy of Music.





The title of our Order, the military character of its organization, the terms of its ritual, and the preponderance in its ranks of those who served in the Army, have in very great degree obscured the fact that our membership comprises many who served in the Navy.

Believing that this Post should give outward sign that it cordially welcomes to its ranks all who aided in the suppression of the Rebellion, whether' on sea or on land, the comrades who served in the Navy desire to present to the Post an appropriate emblem of that branch of the service, and they have therefore requested me in their name and on their behalf to ask your acceptance of this Union Jack.

Why they should honor me with the pleasant duty, instead of selecting from their own number some one of the many better fitted than myself I cannot imagine, unless it is that the innate modesty of the sailor would prevent any one of them from giving due prominence to the merits of the service ; certainly in selecting one whose knowledge of ships is scarcely greater than was his who sang,

“And that junior partnership I ween,
Was the only ship that I ever had seen,”

these comrades have not rendered themselves liable to the charge of choosing an unduly biased advocate.

THE AMERICAN NAVY! Magnificent theme! Associated with the glories of the past, its history is the record of noble daring and of wondrous achievement.

In its beginnings, very little among the great powers of the earth, it soon atoned in gallantry and prowess for its lack of guns and tonnage; carrying the flag of the infant republic into European waters, it flaunted the Rattlesnake Jack and the saucy defiance, "Don't tread on me," and fought and won its early battles in the very face of the mighty mistress of the seas.

Looming into larger life and vast importance in the war of 1812, it compelled England to recognize what it had already taught France and the Barbary States, the existence, the independence and the power of the Nation, and it divided forever that sovereignty of the seas which so long had been the undisputed boast of its haughty adversary.

In later and more peaceful years, in the interests of trade, of science, and of humanity, it penetrated to every clime, maintaining alike in Southern Ocean, in Ægean Sea, on Syrian lake, and mid Arctic ice, its own high fame and the honor of the flag.

And in our own time, amid flame and storm, it has repeated the deeds of its early history, and proven that though the methods and *materiel* of war have radically changed since the days of STEWART and DECATUR and HULL, the strength of the American Navy is now as it was then, in the matchless skill and the dauntless courage of the American sailor.

With vision dimmed by the smoke of the great conflict on land, with ears deafened by the storm raging about us, we of the Army were unable to clearly see or to rightly hear the deeds of the Navy. And our people in their homes absorbed in the terrible struggle

upon their borders, with intensest interest in the Armies to which they had contributed the greater number of their loved ones, failed to appreciate the importance of the work wrought upon the far away coast and gulf.

Now and then, indeed, some thrilling episode at sea—interlude in the tremendous drama on the land—electrified the Nation and made the Navy the theme of every tongue, as when on the March Sabbath morning after a long night of anxious suspense, the Monitor interposed its nondescript form between the Merrimack and its intended victim, and at once revolutionized naval architecture, saved a fleet, and perchance changed the issues of the war; or as when on another Sunday morning, in full view of the countries whose countenance alone gave him life, the pirate went down in the Channel beneath the guns of the Kearsarge.

But after all, we regarded the Navy more as a mere adjunct to the Army than as an important and co-ordinate branch of the service. It is only since the smoke of battle has lifted, and the din of conflict hushed, the pageantry of grand review vanished, and the drum beat of returning regiments stilled, that we of the Army, and our friends at home have been able to appreciate how great was the work, how essential the performance of the Navy.

Blockading a coast greater in extent than the Atlantic shore of Europe, it stood like a wall between the Confederacy and the powers whose professed neutrality would have become open belligerency had not that bulwark of iron and flame interposed, proclaiming from the Potomac to the Rio Grande the purpose and the power to crush domestic insurrection and to repel foreign intervention.

On Western rivers it vied with the Army in securing control of those important highways. Outstripping the troops of GRANT the

gunboats of FOOTE achieved that first great victory which, following the long winter of inaction, imparted new life to the cause. Everywhere its presence was presage of victory to friends, and portent of disaster to foes.

With no enemy upon the seas, it sought on shore and on inland waters opportunity to do its part in the great work. How well it wrought from the initial triumph at Hatteras to the closing triumph at Mobile the long line of captured forts and sealed harbors attest.

And nowhere in the annals of war are recorded prouder deeds than those fights on river and bay, when through burning rafts and armored rams, over bursting torpedoes and 'neath the concentrating fire of a hundred guns, the fleet steamed to victory under command of that grand hero, that noble man, our great first admiral, FARRAGUT.

But time fails me even to outline the story, to tell how PORTER passed the batteries, how CUSHING destroyed the Albemarle, how BOGGS fought the Varuna, how CRAVEN went to the grave confined in his monitor, how with the old flag flying at the main, and guns booming defiance until the engulfing wave quenched their flame, MORRIS went down with the Cumberland.

Worthy compeer of the service on land; it bore no unequal share in the great struggle. The history of the war is the history of the Army and Navy.

“ May the service united ne'er sever,
 And each to our colors prove true,
 The Army and Navy forever,
 Three cheers for the red, white and blue.”

We ask you to accept this Union Jack. We ask you to cherish and honor it as you cherish and honor the battle-scarred banners whose tattered folds hallow your hall. Though its bright silken folds bear no trace of shot or of shell, it is no holiday banner.

It is not the flag of Commodore or Admiral, proud as we would be to tender, proud as you should be to receive the pennant which on Wabash, or Benton, or Hartford streamed in the forefront of battle the signal of victory.

The flag we tender you is the flag of the gunboat, of the monitor, of the frigate; the flag that floated in the weary watches of the blockade, and in the storm of battle; the flag whose stars cheered the sailor in action and whose folds shrouded his hammock in death; the service flag of the American Navy.

We commit it to you, confident that the men who, on a hundred fields, braved death for the flag, will preserve unsullied this emblem of the sister service—this Bonnie Blue Flag that has not lost a single star.



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