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COMMODORE PHILIP INCH.

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MEMORIAL WORDS,

October 21, 1898,

BY

PRESIDENT J. E. RANKIN.

PSALM cvii: 29, 30. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they are quiet; so He bringeth them unto their desired haven.

The Bible might almost be called a seaman's manual. The Master chose most of His disciples from the seaside; from sea-surroundings. One of His most majestic and significant miracles was wrought upon the waters when he said, "Peace, be still." It was to troubled seamen that He said, "It is I, be not afraid." It was a seaman who loved Him so much and revered Him so much, though he so often grieved Him, who, after another miracle which startled His material nature to such a degree, cried out, "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." It was a seaman who

girt on his fisherman's coat and swam out to meet Him, crying, "It is the Lord." The great Teacher once made a boat His movable pulpit, put out to sea in it, and spoke to the people on the shore.

There is nothing so much like human life in its tempests, its calms, its beauty, its solemnity, its mystery and majesty, as the ocean. It might be the best theological school in the world. It ought to make thoughtful seafarers, Christians. God is there in all His power and godhead. "The sea is His, for He made it." "They that go down into the sea in ships, that do business on the great waters, these see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep." It is often said that apprenticeship in a printing office is as good as a liberal education. It might be said of the life of a seaman, and especially of a seaman in the United States Navy. We have lately seen where the correct decision of great questions of international law, as well as magnificent management of great warships may be expected. This is a sample of the men of the United States Navy—heroic, tender, chivalrous seamen; yes, statesmen.

It was in such a school that Philip Inch was educated. For forty-one years he has followed the sea. What a word is that word follow. The sea will have no rival. By slow and sure degrees he has gone up from the place of a boy to the rank of a commodore. His work was not the brilliant work of a fighting man. He did not leap at once from obscurity to glory. It was

by patient continuance in well-doing, by being always in his place and always meeting the conditions of his situation, that he purchased his good degree. Naval service has many departments. A Naval Constructor, with a quick and inventive genius, in war-time may do what Hobson did in Santiago harbor; what he is doing there today. He must understand all the great forces of nature, indeed, but also how science has applied them. He must know hydrostatics and hydraulics; he must know steam power and lightning power. A Naval Engineer, such as was Philip Inch, is the guardian of the ship's machinery, its vital forces. It is the Naval Engineer that makes sea victories possible. A modern warship is a school of applied mechanics, on whose construction has been an outlay of millions of dollars, and whose proper care in a fleet of ships is like the care of an army. Just as the competent engineer on a railroad religiously cares for his locomotive, so must the Chief Engineer of the Navy care for the bones and sinews and lungs of these great leviathans of the deep. To know one of them thoroughly in its machinery is in itself an education.

An observing man, like Philip Inch, visits foreign lands, studies the character of their inhabitants, of their institutions; is liberalized, is humanized; comes to feel the blood-beat of humanity keeping time with his own; comes to see what it means when it is said that "God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times

before appointed and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from any one of us." He appreciates, therefore, the work of foreign missionaries. He gives them a warm greeting and a benediction. He brings home a kind word of them. It was Philip Inch's good fortune to marry the daughter of a foreign missionary, and to have in his household for many years, the late Mrs. Dibble, the missionary's widowed wife. How could he doubt the foreign missionary? It is scarcely too much to say that the mother-in-law, anticipating him there only a twelve-month, was one of the first to give him Heaven's welcome last Tuesday.

Philip Inch came into the Christian church like a man; like the man that he was. It was after a sermon by his pastor on the text "Many of the Pharisees believed on Him, but did not confess Him; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." The subject was "Suppressed Religious Convictions." He had been impressed on his last home visit, but he had gone back to the sea and had allowed his convictions to be silenced. On his return home they were again awakened, and so, virtually alone, he came forward, the next Communion, and entered into covenant with his Lord. His home life was sweet and beautiful, his hospitality generous and free. He was the center of social attraction there. He was playful, genial and appreciative with his children, whose honors and successes were always his delight.

It was his fond thought that now, having completed his naval career, having reached the highest station possible for him, having been put upon the retired list, crowned with deserved honors, he might secure for himself and his dearest ones that seclusion from public service which he so richly merited. But the "Well Done" of his Master quickly followed that of his country. His battle with the great Conqueror was short and severe, but God's grace was sufficient for him. Almost before his watchers knew it, as though he had seen some signal unseen by them, his barque slipped her cable and was out upon the great sea, whose outward tide knows no return.

When I lose Christian friends—and, alas! they go very fast now—I often apply to them, or to their manner of departure, some passage of the Bible. "So he bringeth them unto their desired haven." This for Philip Inch. None but a seafaring man, or one waiting for his return, can know the meaning of these words "their desired haven."

"How may he know the haven's peace,
Who never fared the sea?
Little recks he, who bides on shore
What tides and winds may be.
How the blue day drops down the sky
And night creeps stealthily.
Little recks he the joy that comes
When 'gainst the sunset sky,
Dark headlands and the grey old town
In the waiting welcome lie;

While harbor-lights a greeting flash,
And homing sea-birds cry.
These be for him who far hath fared,
For him alone they be."

"So he bringeth them unto their desired haven." There were short, chopping seas in the harbor when our brother went in, but he rode in triumph over them. It was the haven his soul desired; not that he loved this life less. He knew whose hand was on the wheel. He knew the harbor-lights. He knew the city-towers, though it was a capitol he had not seen. He went in as a ship does, furling sail after sail, until the last one is ruffled no more, and she drops to her anchorage in peace. If we knew what he knows we should say, "This was the sweetest homecoming of all." Henceforth he kindles a signal there for us who have known and loved him here; for by God's grace we have shipped for the same port.

"On Tuesday, October 18, 1898, at Saratoga Springs, N. Y.,

PHILIP INCH,

Chief Engineer, United States Navy."

This is the earthly record. And here today, as is fitting, are the representatives of the Government and of the Loyal Legion. His casket is wrapped in that flag under which he has sailed many a sea. That is the earthly side, all beautiful and glorious as it should be: "Honor to whom honor is due." This is the heavenly side: "And they shall see His face, and His name shall be in

their foreheads. And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.”

O! living, reigning brother, here beside thy dust we greet thee, we bid thee farewell.

HAIL, AND FAREWELL.

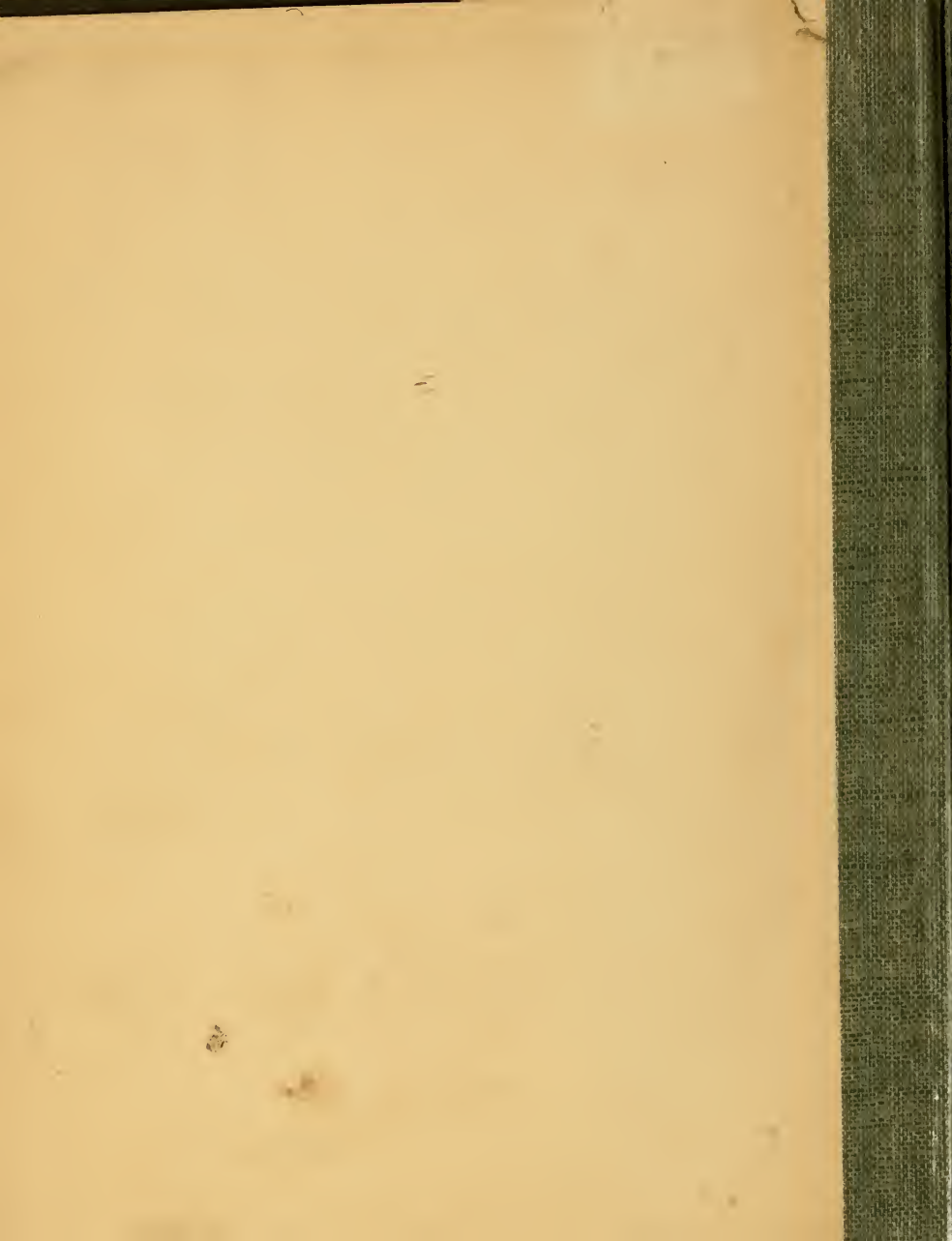
One signal from a greeting band,
A fragile barque strikes out from land.
Earth's task complete, sink thou to rest,
The peace of God within thy breast.
The ebb-tide lifts the lone buoy-bell,
Hail, and farewell.

A white wing on th' horizon's edge,
A tiny speck, to sight a pledge.
Thy passage safe, thy passage short,
God's angels greet thee at the port.
The ebb-tide lifts the lone buoy-bell,
Hail, and farewell.

The sunset gun! Life's colors down,
A new star set within Night's crown.
Thou triumph of God's love and grace,
With saints and martyrs take thy place.
The ebb-tide lifts the lone buoy-bell,
Hail, and farewell.







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