

ARTICLE.

No. 11, Vol. 10.

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It is only since our Civil War that medals of honor have ^{properly} been appreciated in America. The prejudices of our people were against them. But since then, in keeping with the provisions of our Government granting medals for extraordinary gallantry in action, for life-saving, ~~and~~ for heroic unselfishness amidst great peril of the ocean; of earthquakes, and of great fires in crowded cities, medals of honor have been granted so generally that the people have become accustomed to them. ^{Yet curiously enough Naval commissioned officers} In 1884 I visited different ^{have been} parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, partly ^{called} by duty and partly on leave for my own pleasure and profit. I noticed everywhere ^{where} the respect paid to the badges of the Legion of Honor of France, ^{of Germany} to the Victoria Cross, ^{of England} and to other medals of recognition, particularly among the officers of the different armies of the world whom I met in the military manoeuvres in France and in Germany. It gave me great satisfaction when the Honorable Levi P. Morton, then Ambassador to France, brought me in Paris the badge and brevet of Commander of the Legion of Honor of France, and hung the badge by a beautiful ribbon about my neck. I was not less gratified when our Congress ^{at last} granted me the privilege of wearing it. It was not simple vanity on my part, for I knew that the badge was given because in my speeches and conversation in dif-

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Not uniformly enough. Most communities have their own medals of honor.

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ferent parts of France, I had warmly acknowledged the help of the French in giving us our independence and had evinced a strong sympathy for a sister republic, a republic which I desired to see as thoroughly permanent as our own, a real republic, by the people and for the people. As I look^{ed} at it, the magnificent badge ^{thus given} ~~was~~ merely a recognition of decided friendship.

Our own medal of honor has for each man who wears it a distinctive meaning. It is a mark of distinction and is so recognized by every man and woman who understands that it was given, not for gallantry, not for bravery, not for continuous good conduct, but for some extraordinary act or acts over and above and beyond the line of duty, a line which includes within it the virtues which I have named. No two recipients have a like record. They vary as the personality of the receivers vary. They usually incline to abnormal generosity, a generosity that will lead a man to expose his life, to endure unusual hardship, or prolonged suffering for the sake of delivering a fellow soldier, for the sake of keeping the flag flying and untarnished, even where you would anticipate ^{his} ~~surrender~~ ^{to a foe}, and a surrender that would not be dishonorable in itself. Many of the cases, as I look them over, bring tears to my eyes and my heart warms toward the generous soul who rises up to ~~such~~ such a high plane of unselfishness.

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In my own case I was not so much pleased to receive the

medal for "Fair Oaks" as I would have been for a charge that my friends wrote about, denominated "The Battle of Bald Hill, Georgia!" But General Schofield, who was on the Committee of Award, said that he thought that "Fair Oaks" would be better, because the work done there was earlier in my career. I had this feeling, that at Fair Oaks I had only done my duty, yet we did meet with *these* great losses; we did have our horses shot, and we did charge through the Confederate lines, and it was there that I was obliged to lay down my right arm. *There was a premonition;* I had had such a strong feeling that something very serious would come to me, most probably the loss of my life, that indeed, I felt very happy to exchange an arm for a *much* life. The most of us would do that without *fl*inching and have a jubilee over it for a reward; so that to receive a medal of honor from my government for my work at Fair Oaks, which did not appear to me to accomplish much, was *gladly received tho.* entirely unexpected. This little story, or better, perhaps, episode, in the Civil War, shows *my* side of the case. My fellow soldiers appeared *to* be satisfied that I received it, and they do me the honor to recognize the beautiful badge with evident pleasure. My family and friends wherever I go, at home and abroad, do the same.

I think in this that I represent every *other* case embraced in our royal society, called the Medal of Honor Legion. I have seen with my own eyes the gallantry, the fearlessness, the generous nobility of other men, which eventuated in putting upon them

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the badge of honor, and I have conceived the idea that every true member of our honor brigade, or honor legion desires to make his life correspond to the genuine nobility which he displayed to make him entitled to the high recognition. Doubtless many of us have pressing needs; have hardships difficult to overcome and

often feel as though our services were not sufficiently cared for. ^{by government people} Money sometimes would be a decided disideratum; but none of us would be willing to exchange our medal of honor for any

pecuniary consideration. It must remain as a tender object of regard, as a precious jewel, not to be parted with ^{to be treasured} for our own sake and for the sake of our children and children's children, and for the sake of others in the community who may know us, or know of us, and will be influenced by the nobility of our example and the generosity of our conduct. ^{II} I have a great sympathy for our

surgeons and assistant surgeons. They often had bloody work, sometimes prolonged, night and day, while their strength lasted.

The most of them were self-denying, brave, able, and successful in their own line of work and it is especially gratifying to see that some of them received recognition rather in proportion to the lives they saved than for simple exposure to danger. This is glorious and I wish that many of those devoted women, who gave all the strength they had, who labored night and day to save life, and who succeeded in an extraordinary way in the work they under-

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To the Treasurer

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