

were the sisters and the other relatives, and the aunts! I confess it shook me up a bit to remember that there were more women than men in Massachusetts. And the very thought of all they had feared and felt; of the heavy, sore hearts, and the weary, willing feet, was appalling. It reminded me of the verse David sings:

"The Lord giveth the word. The women that publish the tidings are a great host."

What a "host" of women there were enlisted during the war in the triple service of waiting and suffering and working! If men were the sinews and backbone of war, the women were the pulse and breath.

Your committee asked me to speak to-night — ex-officio — for woman — in her relations to the comrades. Why, I could not do it. Though I spoke with the tongue of Angels, I could not. There is no vocabulary rich enough, there is no tone dulcet enough for the work.

The stories of Comrades are being told in many a Post room, at many a Camp fire, by the hearthstone, and in the social circle, and gaping boys and girls listen, bewitched with the adventure and romance of camp life. Their deeds have been set to rhyme and beautified in song. Pictures have been painted and books printed, embalming the story of their war; but — the story of the women must be sung by seraphic choirs in the music of the spheres.

"An angel writing with a pen of gold" has inscribed it in living characters. Its key is the minor of wailing; its rhythm is the anniversaries of painful days, its time beaten in heavy heart-throbs.

But a new song is on our lips; the song of peace and prosperity, and while we venerate and touch with sacred hand the sufferings of our sisters, let us be, for these piping times of peace, ever grateful to the Comrades — all of them — but especially so, to those of them who were fortunate enough, or discreet enough, to bring themselves home safely — marry us, "and live happy ever after."

Most of us are like the French girl in the song:

"If I were Queen of France,
Or still better, Pope of Rome,
I'd have no fighting men abroad,
No weeping maids at home.
All the world should be at peace,
Or if kings would show their might,
Why let those who make the quarrels
Be the only ones to fight."

*This has been stoutly paid &
sent all over the world by the
"Geneva Order of the Red Cross"*

READ BY

MRS. W. M. SCOTT,

President O. M. Mitchel No. 2, Atlanta, Ga.,

ON THE

25th Anniversary of the Organization of the Grand Army
of the Republic, held in Atlanta.

It has been said that woman, in the person of our Mother Eve, first got man into trouble, and ever since has been trying to get him out of it. Judging by the average masculine appetite, it was no difficult task to induce him to eat an apple — or any thing else. So getting him into — and getting him out of — trouble, are tasks of infinitely different proportions. It is safe to express the opinion that man needs no woman to get him *into* mischief. He has boundless capabilities for that work himself. Fortunately for the women, saying a thing is so, even for thousands of years, does not make it true; and a very respectable fraction of the thinkers in the world are forever through with using that time-honored indictment of our sex, except to point a moral or adorn a tale. Even if we *had* gotten man into trouble, surely we have displayed, during all the ages known to us, infinite wit, courage and devotion in extricating him. Is there any deed, needing for its achievement the highest powers of humanity, woman has not essayed for man?

During the Civil War, what did the women not do; what did they not suffer?

There is one thing about the war that is making it obnoxious. It is too far away. The lines of perspective are too long; the focal distance too great. It has come to the point, that to admit that one remembers things that happened during the war — is to admit the objectionable impeachment that the dew of youth no longer sparkles on your brow. It is becoming as literal as the family record in the big bible. However, we are laying all on the altar of patriotism, to-night. So let it be said, with closed doors, that I remember something that came to my notice "endurin' o' the war."

I saw an old woman, in a somber dress, sitting, as I thought, stupidly knitting a blue yarn sock, in a dull little home, in a dull little town, and with the pertness of youth I expressed an opinion, half pity, half disgust, at her poor life, characterizing it as vegetating. Life, to me, was something gay and energetic, full of doing and going; and this — this — *was* vegetating. And my friend turned to me and said gently:

"Do you call it vegetating to rear four sons; to have them — one after another, go away — away to the war? To hear of one, in hospital; another, in an unmarked grave; another, in a prison pen? The last, her baby boy, afloat in a gun boat? Do you think *she*, as she sits there alone, ever knows the passive peace of vegetating? Can you imagine what it is to a mother heart to ache in inactivity over such woes? Does not she loathe her food, because Charlie never has a comfortable meal? Is not her bed a rack of torture because Tom, her boy, whom she tucked up in bed till the night he enlisted, and kissed and cuddled; — her Tom — has no bed — no cover — no comfort — out in a stockade —? Does not she start in a spasm of despair from dreams both waking and sleeping, of seeing Jack, who was but yesterday a fatherless babe in her arms, drowning in a vortex of fire and water? Do you think she ever ceases to longingly wonder, *is* her first born really dead, buried in a pit? May he not be alive, and if alive — Ah! — Vegetating?"

And I, remembering of what toys I made my joys, how little understood the griefs of motherhood — I held my peace. If to suffer incessantly — in dread — knowing "the constant anguish of patience" — learning how sublime a thing it is to suffer and be still — was *not* "life" — then — let me, indeed, pray to be delivered from "Vegetating."

Some one has said that we suffer many things in our lives, but few of them ever happen.

It was somewhat thus in the war time, when the women suffered very much for things that had being only in their loving, smitten hearts.

A soldier went forth with the activity and bustle of journey — and the diversion brought by the pomp and circumstance of glorious war. For days and weeks he would be exempt from danger or distress — but the risk and pain took no armistice in the heart of mother or wife. It is one of the incomprehensible things in life, to observe what a small specimen of a man it takes to keep a mother, as good as gold, a fairly nice wife and two or three splendid sisters, not to mention an A No. 1 mother-in-law, in a perfect ferment of excitement and tribulation, but so it is; and so it seemed that seven women grieved after every man.

Mr. Kingsley has set it forth as an axiom that "men must work and women must weep," and in that normal condition no one can doubt as to which party has the best of it — but how about the women who, especially during the war, had both to work *and* weep? The women who followed their husband's fortunes in the army had much less to bear in the way of actual heart-ache than did those who "staid by the stuff" and kept the children in order alone. The women at the front had their husbands to do them honor, and as ladies were few in number, they could always have friends and escorts to make things pleasant, while the lonely wives at home, in the hum-drum of life, had to go to a Sanitary Fair, or an occasional concert, in a squad, for mutual protection, or take their small boy as a reluctant and ungallant cavalier to the weekly prayer meeting.

But what of those who gave up all and went as army nurses? Is there a halo bright enough to crown them? There are several things

that happen in the national convention of the W. R. C. each year that form the high lights of the meeting. One is when Paul Vander Voort, our "sister Paulina," the man, who as Commander in Chief of the G. A. R., brought to a successful issue the organization of the Relief Corps, comes in and is formally introduced from the stand. Every one of the hundreds of ladies waves her handkerchief and beams upon him, being proud and fond of him. Another, is when Mrs. John A., or as we know her, Mrs. Mary A. Logan, Chairman of the committee on pensions for army nurses, is presented, and whom all delight to honor. But each and all of such scenes were eclipsed at Boston, last summer, when the President, Mrs. Wittenmeyr, herself an army nurse all during the war, said, "I have the pleasure and the honor to introduce to you" — and turning, put her arm lovingly around a little woman and lead her forward. And a thrill of love went all over the vast throng, who needed no one to pronounce that name, second to none of all woman-kind, for every thing that is glorious in its unselfishness and purity. Hundreds of lips involuntarily ejaculated — CLARA BARTON!

And did the Convention smile? Oh, yes! And wave its handkerchiefs? Yes, indeed; waved them, and then wiped away loving little tears of tenderness, for no one loves a self-sacrificing woman as well as — all the other good women. And it goes without saying, that those of the W. R. C. are the "good-est" women! No prince or potentate could stand before that assembly of women and kindle such a glow of enthusiasm as Clara Barton does, for the reason that she is an epitome, in her character and life, of all that is best in woman. She *is*, what we all would like to be, and it was as an army nurse that she did her most heroic work.

She came to us last summer, fresh from a meeting with the brigade with which she served during the war. She said (her voice tremulous): "They showed me wounds they said I had helped to heal, and stumps of limbs they said I had tried to save, and they clustered around me like loving boys, and I — I cried, and they cried, too; and we talked of those terrible times, and then of those glorious times. They were grateful to me for what I had done for them, and I was grateful that I had had the privilege of doing it." And every one of us women, gazing at her, thought that if we did not have a sweetheart or husband at that time for her to nurse, well — we wished we had.

We looked a little more lovingly at the modest badge of our order for seeing its fellow resting over that noble heart, and that it gave us the right to call Clara Barton — sister.

As I sat on the stand erected by the Corps of Boston for the delegates to the convention, I was amazed at the Mass. contingent. Rank upon rank, hundreds upon hundreds; yea, thousands upon thousands, of the finest type of manhood. It was a great, grand army by itself. And it flashed across me — Here are the men from this one State, left after all these years. What of the women? What a company of weepers were here, to be sure! Even if some of these men were unregenerate enough not to have wives, why, they had mothers and grandmothers, and there

Genl. Howard, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Among such an array of gallant knights, as we have here this evening, it seems almost out of keeping that a woman should take her place in the line of succession-- We have almost been able to hear the clatter of accoutrements, and to see "the pomp and circumstances of glorious war," so thick is the air with the thought of Soldiers, and their *efficiencies*. You might infer that I had been selected to perform this function, because I was the biggest woman here? No. Because I am the most war like?--Not that. Because my voice would be more stirring and mandatory? That is not the reason.

It is only because the ladies of the Relief Corps have chosen me, for a time, to be their President, and so, ex-officio, I voice their sentiments to you--and I represent, a class, than whom none is more revered by the soldiery of America, let their uniform have been blue, or grey--those whose part it was, during the war, to wait in an anguish of fear and hope and longing, and to show "how sublime a thing it is, to suffer and be strong" the women.--

I doubt if there is a woman of us all, who could give even the merest outline of what part this evenings guest played in the Civil Strife. What he did, ^{where} was the arena of his experience, what part of the Federal forces he commanded, all such fact and data are to us as unknown as though they had never been. The contemptuous question. What does a woman know about war, can be promptly answered by a single negative--Nothing. And yet, his name is perfectly familiar to us all. We could any of us tell that he was a humanitarian, a philanthropist, a Christian; that he had stood on the side of suffering humanity--always, and the name, O.O. Howard, is a savor of good things to us. The Comrades here, Sir, know all your history as a man and a soldier, and they delight to honor you--your career is almost as familiar to them as their own;

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but though banners were waved over you, and praise heaped upon you, it would count for nothing, if it were mis-bestowed. Men though they love and extol their fellow cannot add one cubit to his stature--to the stature of his real self.

In this day of enlightenment it has come to be very well understood, that it is not the color of a man's plume that establishes his status; that it matters little, what he subscribes to or believes, or even says. It is what his motives are, what the impulse of his life is--what he thinks, and as the results of his thinking; what he does.

Victor Hugo says, "Our acts make or mar us." We are the children of our own deeds--and from a still higher stand point, one of whom Victor Hugo learned much of his philosophy, gave the axiom, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." And from this stand point, from the side of the women, who turn instinctively toward the man, who, with strength has gentleness; who to power adds mercy; who in authority shows love to his fellows; and whose life is one of high endeavor; I offer you, Sir, welcome. I congratulate you, that your name is enshrined in women's hearts.

Perhaps you have discovered, that at least in America, the women count for considerable, and for a man to be thus enshrined as a brave soldier, a humane fellow man, and a follower of the Elder Brother "who was as meek as he was mighty"--is to be endowed with a great blessing.

Instead of offering you a chaplet of distinction, or a crown of valor, I give you from my dear sisters, the imperishable diadem of this assurance of their confidence and regard--won for you by your own life. I need not add, that we too, are happy to have you with us in this dear beautiful city that is such a good foster-mother to us, where we love and are loved.

As time goes on we shall hope to see you often, with ever renewing health and vigor--for you will doubtless demonstrate, as another Sir Galahad did, that "his strength was as the strength of ten,--because his heart was pure."

Harriet K. Scott
Christian Scientist.

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Yours truly
Charles Christian Smith

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