



Young Heroes of the Civil War.

THOMAS HUGHES'S TRIBUTE TO THE YOUNG HEROES IN THE
AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, PUBLISHED UNDER THE TITLE
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The last time that the season of "peace on earth and good will to men" came round, the great struggle between the free and slave powers in America had not yet come to death-grips. Here, at least, many people still believed that the Southern States could not be subdued, and were sure, sooner or later, to establish their independence, and a new policy which would act for the rest of time as a healthy corrective to the dangerously popular institutions and ideas of New England. The year has passed, and the great revolutionary epic of our time has closed. Perhaps some of us may still stop short of Mr. Seward's triumphant summing up. "Death," he says, in his yearly address to his fellow-citizens at Auburn, "death has removed his victims; liberty has crowned her heroes; humanity has crowned her martyrs; the sick and the stricken are cured; the surviving combatants are fraternizing; and the country—the object of our just pride and lawful affection—once more stands collected and composed, firmer, stronger, and more majestic than ever before, without one cause of dangerous discontent at home, and without an enemy in the world." We may think him somewhat too hopeful in the breadth of his assertions, and may have our fears that it may take a generation yet to weld again into one brotherhood all the States of the Union. But, when he predicts so fearlessly that "under next October's sun he shall be able, with his fellow-townsmen in Auburn, to rejoice in the restoration of peace, harmony, and union throughout the land," we cannot but own that earlier prophecies of his, which

seemed at least as rash, have been fulfilled almost to the letter. In any case, we do all willingly now admit, and honor, the marvellous energy and constancy with which the great game has been played out by the American people. As one of the many Englishmen whose faith in that people never faltered during the contest, I do most heartily rejoice to see that all classes of my countrymen are at last not only ready to appreciate, but hearty in their appreciation of, what has been done for freedom in America in this revolutionary war. I am sure that we now only want further knowledge of facts to honor our kith and kin across the Atlantic as they deserve to be honored for the glorious sacrifices which they made of all that was most precious and dearest to them in a struggle upon which not only their own life as a nation, but the future of at least one-third of the world, was at stake.

In this belief, I think that Christmas is the right time for bringing out into somewhat clearer light a side of the drama which has not been as yet fairly presented to us here: I mean, first, the strain on the resources of the Northern States while the war lasted; and, secondly, the heroism of the men of gentle birth and nurture, who, so far from shrinking from the work, and fighting by substitute (as was asserted by some of our leading journals), took at least their fair share of all the dangers and miseries and toils of those dark years.

First, then, as to the people's work; and, highly as we may value the men who have come to the front, and whose names as soldiers and statesmen are now known over the whole world, we must acknowledge that the true hero of the war is, after all, the American people. In proof of this I will take one or two of the Northern States, and look for a moment at what the call was which was made on them, and how they answered to it. Let us look, as a first instance, at the smallest in area of all the States and the smallest in population of all the free States. Little Rhode Island, at the census of 1860, just before the breaking out of the war, contained a population of 174,620. As usual in the Eastern States, the females considerably exceeded the males, and of the latter there were 82,304 altogether. Up to December 1, 1862,—that is to say, in less than two years from the first call of the President for troops,—Rhode Island furnished 14,626 men to the army and 1,400 to the navy, or almost one in five of her total male population, and, of course, far more than that proportion of her men of fighting age, between 18 and 45. In the first enthusiasm, when the call for 500,000 men came in the summer of 1861, the quota of

Rhode Island was 4,057, and she furnished 5,124. I do not give the later returns, because there appears to have been a large number of substitutes amongst her recruits after 1862, and I have no means of knowing whether these were or were not natives of the State. There is no need to overstate the case, and I should on every account shrink from doing so. Rhode Island, though the smallest, is tenth in rank of all the States as a producer, and her people are consequently rich and prosperous. If, in the later years of the war, they found substitutes in large numbers, it must be, at the same time, remembered that they contributed more largely than any other State, in proportion to numbers, to that noblest of all charities,—the Sanitary Commission.

But Englishmen will very likely say, "Give us an instance of any but a New England State: they are exceptional." Let us take Indiana, then, one of the mighty young Western sisters, a community scarce half a century old. A stronger contrast to Rhode Island could scarcely have been found. Indiana in 1860 possessed 8,161,717 acres of improved farming land, Rhode Island but 329,884. Indiana was fifth of all the States in agricultural production, and thirteenth in manufacturing, Rhode Island standing tenth, or three higher than her gigantic younger sister. Yet we find the same readiness of response to the President's call to arms amongst the Western farmers as amongst New England mechanics and merchants. The population of Indiana is returned in the census of 1860 at 1,350,428, and her males at 693,469. On the 31st of December, 1862, she had furnished 102,698 soldiers, besides a militia home-guard when her frontiers were threatened. When Morgan made his raid into the State, 60,000 tendered their services within twenty-four hours, and nearly 20,000 were on his track within three days. I do not happen in this case to have the later returns, and so must turn back to New England, to the old Puritan Bay State, to give one perfect example of what the American people did in the great struggle.

Massachusetts, at the outbreak of the war, held a population of 1,230,000, or thereabouts, out of which there were 257,833 males between the ages of fifteen and forty. The first blood shed in the war against the slave power, as in the Revolutionary War against England, was Massachusetts blood. The Sixth Massachusetts was fired on in the streets of Baltimore on April 19, 1861, and had to fight its way through the town, losing four killed and thirty wounded in the operation. Well, the number of men demanded of Massachusetts during the war was 117,624. The number

furnished by her (reducing all to the three years' standard) was 125,437, being a surplus over all calls of 7,813. Besides these, 6,670 were mustered in answer to a call for three months' men in 1864, which were never credited to her by the government. Look at the meaning now of this other fact, that she has actually sent more men to the war than are now to be found in the State liable to do military duty. How does this tell as to wear and tear of the human material in those Southern campaigns? The last assessors' return gave these at 133,767; while the total number who served (including three and nine months' men, and not adhering to the three years' standard) was 153,486. Out of these, how many does the reader (who has probably heard more or less of "stopping the war by prohibiting emigration from Ireland," and of "New England hiring foreign mercenaries to do the fighting") think were foreign recruits? Just 907. This does not include men born out of the State, but resident or naturalized there before the war broke out. These latter, however, I suppose could not come within the definition of foreign mercenaries; and, of foreigners arriving in America during the war, Massachusetts enlisted, as I have said, 907 out of 150,000. While on this point, I may add that the most reliable statistics as to the whole forces of the North show that of native-born Americans there were nearly eighty per cent., of naturalized Americans fifteen, and of foreigners five per cent. only, in the ranks.

I can honestly say that I have chosen these States at hazard, and that a scrutiny of the remaining free States would give a very similar result. And now let us consider what that result is. Rhode Island, Indiana, and Massachusetts may, perhaps, equal in population this metropolis with its immediate suburbs; while one of them alone actually sent to active service, in the four years of the war, an army equal in numbers to the total volunteer force now under arms in Great Britain. Rhode Island is not so populous as Sheffield; and in eighteen months she armed and sent South 15,000 of her citizens. I know that England, in like need, would be equal to a like effort. Let us honor, then, as they deserve the people of our own lineage, to whom the call has come, and who have met it.

I need scarcely pause to note how the Northern people have paid in purse as well as in person. Let one instance suffice. In 1864 the assessment of Massachusetts for taxes to support the general government amounted to fourteen millions, every fraction of which was collected without impediment or delay. Add to

this the State taxation and the amounts contributed to the Sanitary Commission and other organizations for distributing voluntary contributions in support of the war, and we should reach a figure almost exceeding belief. I have no means of stating it accurately, but am quite safe in putting it as high as twenty-five million dollars, actually raised and paid, by a State with a population less than half of that of our metropolis, in one twelvemonth.

And now for my second point,—the example set by the men of birth, wealth, and high position. Here, too, I feel sure that a few simple facts, taken at hazard from the mass which I have under my hand, will be more than enough to satisfy every just and generous man amongst my countrymen; and I am proud to believe that, whatever our prejudices may be, there are few indeed amongst us to whom such an appeal will be made in vain.

I have said above that the mass of materials is large: I might have said unmanageable. It is, indeed, impossible to take more than an example here and there, and to bring these out as clearly as one can in the limits of an article. Let me take as mine a family or two, with some one or more of whose members I have the honor of friendship or acquaintance. And, first, that of J. Russell Lowell, the man to whose works I owe more, personally, than to those of any other American. It would be hard to find a nobler record. The young men of this stock seem to have been all of high mark, distinguished specially for intellectual power and attainments. Surely, the sickle of war has never been put more unsparingly into any field. First in order comes Willie Putnam, age twenty-one, the sole surviving son of Lowell's sister, a boy of the highest culture and promise, mortally wounded at Ball's Bluff in October, 1861, in the first months of the war, while in the act of going to the help of a wounded companion. At the same bitter fight his cousin, James Jackson Lowell, aged twenty-four, was badly hurt, but, after a short absence to recruit, joined his regiment again, and fell on June 30, 1862. "Tell my father I was dressing the line of my company when I was hit," was his last message home. He had been first in his year at Harvard, and was taking private pupils in the law school when the war broke out. Warren Russell fell at Bull's Run in August, 1862. Many of us here may remember the account, which was reprinted in the "Times" and other papers, of the presentation of colors to the Second Massachusetts Infantry by Mr. Motley, at Boston, in the summer of 1861. It attracted special notice from the fact that the author of the "History of the Dutch Republic" had been

so lately living amongst us, and was so well known and liked here. The group of officers who received these colors were the very *jeunesse dorée* of Massachusetts,—Quincy, Dwight, Abbot, Robeson, Russell, Shaw, Gordon, Savage, Perkins. Such a roll will speak volumes to all who have any acquaintance with New England history. Those colors have come home riddled, tattered, blackened; but five-sixths of the young officers have given their lives for them, and of the one thousand rank and file who then surrounded them, scarcely one hundred and fifty survive. This by the way. I refer to the muster because Robert Shaw was amongst those officers,—a name already honored in those pages, and another nephew of Lowell's. Shaw's sister married Charles Lowell, of whom more presently. We all know how Robert Shaw, after two years' gallant service, accepted the command of the first black regiment raised in Massachusetts (the Fifty-Fourth); how he led them in the operations before Charleston, and was buried with his "niggers" in the pit under Fort Wagner,—the grandest sepulture earned by any soldier of this century. By his side fought and died Cabot Russell, the third of Lowell's nephews, then a captain of a black company. Stephen George Perkins, another nephew, was killed at Cedar Creek; and Francis Dutton Russell at one of the innumerable Virginia battles.

I pass to the last on the list, and the most remarkable. Charles Russell Lowell, the only brother of the James who died "dressing his line," was also the first scholar of his year (1854) at Harvard. He had visited Europe for health, and made long riding tours in Spain and Algeria, where he became a consummate horseman. On the day after the Sixth Massachusetts were fired on in Baltimore streets, Charles Lowell heard of it, and started by the next train to Washington, passing through Baltimore. All communication between the two cities was suspended, but he arrived on foot at Washington in forty-eight hours. In those first days of confusion he became agent for Massachusetts at Washington, and brought order out of chaos, for his own State, before joining the army. His powers of command and organization gained him rapid promotion. He served with distinction in the Peninsula campaigns of McClellan, and, after Antietam, was selected to carry the captured standards to Washington. He raised a second cavalry regiment at home in the winter of 1862. He was placed in command of the cavalry force which protected Washington during the dark days of 1863. In Sheridan's brilliant campaign of 1864 he commanded the cavalry brigade, of four regular regi-

ments, and the Second Massachusetts volunteer cavalry. He had thirteen horses shot under him before the battle of Cedar Creek on October 19; was badly wounded early in that day, and lifted on to his fourteenth horse to lead the final charge, so faint that he had to give his orders in a whisper. Urged by those round him to leave the field, he pressed on to the critical point of attack; and himself led the last charge, which ended one of the most obstinate battles of the war. It is the death of this nephew which wrung from his uncle the lines which occur in one of the last "Biglow Papers" published in one of last winter's numbers of the *Atlantic Magazine*:—

“Wut’s words to them whose faith and truth
 On War’s red techstone rang true metal,
 Who ventured life, an’ love, an’ youth,
 For the gret prize o’ deth in battle?
 To him who, deadly hurt, agen
 Flashed on afore the charge’s thunder,
 Tippin’ with fire the bolt of men
 That rived the rebel line asunder?”

“’Ta’n’t right to hev the young go fust,
 All throbbin’ full o’ gifts and graces,
 Leaving life’s paupers dry as dust
 To try and make b’lieve fill their places;
 Nothin’ but tells us wut we miss:
 Ther’s gaps our lives can’t never bay in,
 An’ *thet* world seems so fur from this,
 Lef’ for us loafers to grow gray in.”

He died next day of his wounds, leaving a widow of twenty, himself not thirty. The gazette, in which his commission as general was published, did not reach the army till after his death. Sheridan, with the generosity which most of the great Northern captains have shown, declared that the country could better have spared himself, and that there was no one quality of a soldier which he could have wished added to Charles Lowell.

My first example, then, gives us one family, in which there was no soldier in 1860, losing eight young men under thirty in little more than three years’ fighting.

I have mentioned the name of Motley above. Let us see how it fared with his circle. He has assured me more than once that of his own immediate family there were fewer than the average in the ranks; but he had at least five near relatives serving,—three Lothrop’s, one of whom was killed in Louisiana; Major Motley, badly wounded in Virginia early in 1864; and Major Stackpole,

another highly distinguished graduate of Harvard, who served through the whole war, and has now resumed his practice as a barrister. Miss Motley married Captain Ives, a gentleman of fortune in Rhode Island, who was travelling in Europe when the war broke out. He volunteered into the navy, commanded the Potomac flotilla, and accompanied Burnside's expedition to North Carolina, where he contracted the illness of which he has since died. His cousin, Robert Ives, also a man of large fortune, volunteered into the army, and was killed at Antietam. I believe they were the two last men who bore the name of Ives in their State.

The name of Wadsworth is better known here than most American names in consequence of its English connection. The head of the family was a country gentleman living on his estates in Geneseo, in New York State, up to 1860, with a family of three sons and three daughters. At the news of the attack on the Union troops in Baltimore he instantly chartered a steamer, loaded her with provisions, and sent her up the Potomac,—a most timely aid to the capital. He acted as aide-de-camp to McDowell, and was his right hand man in the Bull Run Campaign, "his youngest as well as his oldest aide"; was made a general soon afterwards; and after several campaigns was placed in command of Washington. His reputation as an officer had now become such that at the beginning of the last campaign every corps commander of the Army of the Potomac applied to the War Department to have him with them as brigadier. He was killed in the Wilderness in the last advance on Richmond. His three sons have all served, the youngest having enlisted at sixteen. Thus every man in the family served; and the only married daughter is the widow of Colonel Montgomery Ritchie, one of two brothers, both of whom served with distinction, one to the sacrifice of his life by the same subtle disease that struck down Captain Ives.

I could go to any length, for my acquaintance with Americans is large, and I scarcely know a man who has not lost some relative in the war. But apart from one's own acquaintance there is scarcely one of the famous colonial and Revolutionary names which has not been represented. The Jays, Adamses, Schuylers, Livingstons, Van Rensselaers, have not failed their country in her second great need, and have fought well and worked hard, though the present holders of these honored names, mostly quiet young men, have not had time to reach their ancestors' places. The bearers of great names, I take it, do not get such a start in the States as

with us at home. A descendant (grandson, I believe) of Alexander Hamilton, however, became a general, while several of his cousins remained in lower ranks. Colonel Fletcher Webster, only surviving son of Daniel Webster, was killed in Virginia.

Perhaps the man who excited most the hopes and martial enthusiasm of Americans in the first month of the war was Major Theodore Winthrop, a descendant of the famous Governor John Winthrop, scholar, traveller, poet, athlete, who was killed at the disastrous battle of Great Bethel, June 10, 1861. A son of General Porter, who was distinguished in the last war with us, fell as a colonel in the spring campaign of 1864. Even the families famous, as yet, for wealth only have not shrunk from the fighting, one Astor, at least, and Cuttings, Schermerhorns, Lydigs, and others, having held their own in the volunteer ranks.

Or—let us come to names more familiar than any other transatlantic ones to us—the Boston group. Longfellow's young son (Charlie, as I hear all men call him) has managed to fight a campaign, and get badly hit in Louisiana, at an age when our boys are thinking of their Freshman's term at Oxford. Oliver Wendell Holmes (junior), poet, artist, Greek scholar, virtuoso, has been twice—I was going to say killed—well, shot through the body and neck and again in the heel; and, having fought through all to the end of the war, is again busy with brush and pen. Olmstead has fought with mightier weapons than rifled cannon, at the head of the Sanitary Commission. Of four brothers Dwight, two were killed and a third fought his way to General. Whittiers, Appletons, Lorings, Crowninshields, Dehons—but I will tax my readers' patience no longer with rolls of names which perhaps, to most of them, will be names and nothing more. Let this last summing up of the work of men of birth and position in one State suffice (I choose Massachusetts again, because, thanks to Governor Andrew, we have more accurate returns as to her over here than as to any other State): Since the declaration of war, 434 officers from Massachusetts have been killed,—9 Generals, 16 Colonels, 17 Lieutenant-colonels, 20 Majors, 15 Surgeons, 2 Chaplains, 110 Captains, and 245 Lieutenants. Of the 35 General officers from that State, 10 only have escaped wounds.

Of all the living graduates of Harvard (the university of highest repute in America), one-fifth, or, to be as accurate as possible, nineteen and some fraction per cent., have served with the army. At Yale College the percentage has been even higher. Conceive a struggle which should bring one in every five of men who

have taken degrees at Oxford and Cambridge under fire, and which should call on us, besides our regular army, to keep on foot and recruit for three years a volunteer army five times as large as our present one.

Such plain facts and returns as these will, I am sure, convince the last skeptic—if there be one left amongst us at this Yule tide, 1865—that New England has not spared of her best blood in the great day of the Lord, under the burden and heat of which the whole North has reeled and staggered indeed, but without ever bating heart or hope, and always gaining fresh power, through three years of war, which have seemed—nay, which have been—a lifetime. In such crises time is not measured by years or days. The America which looked on paralyzed and doubtful when John Brown prophesied all these things on his way to the scaffold, kissing a negro child as he passed along, while Stonewall Jackson and his pupils guarded the gibbet,—the America of State sovereignty and Dred Scott law, in which the gospel news meant avowedly “good will to *white* men,” and abolitionism was loathed as a vulgar and mischievous fanaticism,—is as far behind us to-day, for all practical purposes, as the England of the Stuarts or the France of the Regency. What this means, for the Old World as well as for the New, I will not pause to consider. My estimate might raise smiles or provoke criticism amongst us, both of which (good as they are in their right time and place) I am anxious here to avoid.

I prefer, at parting, to endeavor to put my readers in sympathy with the spirit, the heart, and conscience of the North, in the presence of their astounding success. I cannot do this better than by a glance at the commemoration of the living and dead soldiers of the Harvard University. Commemoration Day at Harvard, in July, 1865, must indeed have stamped itself indelibly on the memories of all those sons of the first of American universities who were present at the gathering. To me, I own, even the meagre reports one got over here in the American papers were unspeakably touching. The irrepressible joy of a people delivered, after years of stern work and patient waiting, from an awful burden, almost too heavy for mortal shoulders to bear, tempered, as it was, by the tenderest sympathy for the families of the fallen, and a solemn turning to give glory and thanks, with full heart, to that God who giveth victory, and healeth wounded spirits, and standeth above His people as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land,—the mingled cry of triumph and agony,

and trust and love, which went up from the very heart of that meeting,—must ever, to my mind, rank amongst the most noble, the most sublime pieces of history of the century in which we are living. Let the reader consider the following as compared with the ordinary commemoration poetry. The first is the hymn written for the commemoration service, by Robert Lowell:—

“Thy work, O God, goes on in earth,
With shouts of war, and harvest songs;
A ready will is all our worth;
To Thee our Maker all belongs.

“Thanks for our great and dear, who knew
To lavish life great needs to earn;
Our dead, our living, brave and true,
To each who served Thee in his turn.

“Show us true life as in Thy Son;
Breathe through our flesh the Holy Ghost;
Then earth’s strongholds are stormed and won;
Then man dies faithful at his post.

“They crowd behind us to this shade,
The youth who own the coming years;
Be never God, or land, betrayed,
By any son our Harvard rears!”

My second quotation shall be a stanza from the “Commemoration Ode,” by the best known member of the family, James Russell Lowell, author of the “Biglow Papers”:—

“Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast found release!
Thy God, in these distempered days,
Hath taught thee the sure wisdom of His ways,
And through thine enemies hath wrought thy peace!
Bow down in prayer and praise!
O Beautiful! my Country! ours once more!
Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair
O’er such sweet brows as never other wore,
And letting thy set lips,
Freed from wrath’s pale eclipse,
The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,
What words divine of lover or of poet
Could tell our love and make thee know it,
Among the Nations bright beyond compare?
What were our lives without thee?
What all our lives to save thee?
We reckon not what we gave thee;
We will not dare to doubt thee;
But ask whatever else, and we will dare!”

Was ever truer or braver ring struck out of the metal of which English-speaking men are made? If so, I for one have yet to learn when and where. And now, at this Christmas time, when their tremendous storm-cloud has broken up, and nothing but a light streak or two of vapor is to be seen in their heavens, let us seize this precious moment, never to recur again in their or our history, and by graceful and loyal word and deed show them that we honor, as it deserves, the work they have done for the world since the election of 1860, and can sympathize with their high hopes for the future of their continent with no jealousy or distrust, as brethren of the same stock and children of the same Father.

This noble tribute by Thomas Hughes to the young heroes of the American Civil War was felt at the time to be so noteworthy that it was reprinted in the report of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts, January 1, 1866,—which report altogether contains a mass of valuable material relating to the part of Massachusetts in the Civil War, including an account of the impressive military ceremony upon the return of the colors of the different regiments to the State on Forefathers' Day, 1865, with the address by Governor Andrew and poem by General Sargent. Adjutant-General Schouler, in reprinting Mr. Hughes's memorable article, said: "It would be folly to discriminate between the various classes of citizens which have contributed of their members and substance to sustain the Union cause, with men and money, during the Rebellion, when all have done so nobly. No class held back. When the President issued his calls for men, the men came. When the Sanitary and Christian Commissions required contributions, to supply the sufferers in the hospitals with clothing and other necessities, and to furnish good books and religious consolations to our soldiers in the field and elsewhere, the requirements were supplied with unstinted benevolence. There is hardly a family in the Commonwealth that has not furnished a husband, a son, or brother to the ranks, or that has failed to contribute liberally of its substance to their support and comfort when in the field."

Thomas Hughes, known to boys the world over as the author of "Tom Brown's School Days at Rugby," was born at Uffington in England, near Wantage, the birthplace of Alfred the Great, in 1822, and died in 1896. His life was largely passed in London, in the profession of the law; and he was always active in social and political reform, being for a time member of Parliament. He was associated with Maurice and Kingsley in the Christian Socialist movement, and was the founder of the Workingmen's College in London. He was the author of various valuable works, including "Tom Brown at Oxford" and a Life of Alfred the Great. A complete list of his writings may be found in the careful article upon him in the Dictionary of National Biography. There is a fine statue of him in the school-grounds at Rugby. He had a great admiration for the poetry of Lowell, and in 1859, in collaboration with J. M. Ludlow, wrote an introduction for an English edition of the "Biglow Papers." He was one of the most steadfast and outspoken English friends of the Union cause during our Civil War. In 1870 he first visited the United States, and gave two addresses, one in Boston on "John to Jonathan," and one in New York on the Labor Question. He was afterwards interested in establishing an English colony at Rugby, Tenn.

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