

Speech

Sons of American Revolution Baltimore

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"Fighters and Writers" is the theme assigned to me.

Rhyme and reason tie them together. They suggest the motto of Maryland:- "Manly deeds" and "gracious words." The world-epics, dramas and histories are full of the deeds of heroes. What is Homer's ever living Iliad but the story of Achilles and Hector? What gives zest to the stately verse of Milton like the contest of Michael and Lucifer? Some fighters are themselves writers. Caesar wrote his Commentaries. Xenophon made notes of the Anabasis in which he took part. Plutarch tells us that during the naval battle of Salamis, Xerxes "took his place upon the hills, where he sat in a chair of gold, with many secretaries about him, to write down all that was done in the fight." Yet many writers have increased the fame of many fighters. Frode in prose and Mitchell in verse have lately told the achievements of Drake. Napoleon composed innumerable despatches,- but is there any better memoir of him than that of Professor Sloane? Nelson has had many biographers, but it was more than ninety years after he died,- with these memorable words upon his lips, "Thank God I have done my duty," - ere his story was told with matchless ability by the prince of naval historians Captain Mahan. The novelist of Indian and of nautical adventures, James Fennimore Cooper, is the historian of the American Navy. The deeds of Washington are kept before our minds by the works of Marshall, Sparks, Irving, and are retold in our day by Senator Lodge. I think I keep close to the record when I add this striking illustration of my theme, that the school at Annapolis, where our brave admirals have studied and taught, was the administrative act of George Bancroft the historian.

These are the days when the Czar, at the head of a fighting government, is summoning a congress of disarmament and when wise men at home and abroad are pleading for arbitration and for a permanent international tribunal. If the Writers will now be as earnest in promoting these tendencies to Peace as they have been in extolling the achievements of War, they will win new laurels and more enduring gratitude.

The fighters, you may observe, are never the provokers of combat. They know its direful meaning. It is the writers and speakers, the diplomatists and law-makers who appeal to arms. Congress declares war. The fighters come forward when the issue is made up, and the call of patriotism and duty resounds o'er land and sea. In the history of the American navy, from the days of Paul Jones onward, I do not believe that there has been a single commander who encouraged war, or a single mariner, from seaman to admiral, who shrank from responsibility or from danger as the trial came.

When the life of our brave guest is fully written - long distant be that day - it will not be restricted to the events of a single year, however fruitful. He has fought against ice as well as fire, for he penetrated the Arctic seas long before the Flying Squadron sailed for the tropics. It is a noteworthy coincidence that the head of the signal service, by whose ingenuity and energy the despatches from our fleets in the Cuban waters were brought to Washington, was that same Lieutenant Greeley who was rescued from impending death, with six exhausted companions, by the wise, the fearless and the successful Schley and his relief expedition. "More caution and less

daring on his part would have proved fatal to us", - were the words of Greeley, prophetic as well as historical.

Let me conclude with a reference to the writers who have told the story of the war, day by day, and hour by hour, as the transactions took place, to the newspapers of the world. The enterprise, the sagacity, the patience, and the skill of the American press, unsurpassed in any land, was never so brilliantly shown, and the reporter never rose to such heroism or rendered such acceptable service, as during the summer of 1898, when despatches, flying swifter than the wind, told seventy millions of people of the victories at Santiago. It is equally marvellous to observe how well the writers wrote in the very excitement of battle, and with what extraordinary expenditure of money and skill the story of the fighters was repeated throughout the land.