



MR. MARCY, introducing the Orator.

The best we have got from the Institute is the hardest to put into words. The formation of our ideals, the effect of tradition on these ideals, and the effect of our ideals on tradition, is a definite subject but difficult of expression.

To say for the Class what each man feels, but cannot say for himself is the task of our Orator, Norman Lombard.



Orator, NORMAN LOMBARD.
MR. MARSHAL, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Few of us realize the part that is played by tradition in our practical every-day lives. From infancy to old age our manners and actions are determined, our ideals are fixed, our moral standards are set by traditional influences. The child on its mother's knee hears the story of "Jack the Giant Killer," and resolves, unconsciously perhaps, to himself become a big, strong, sturdy man, that he may overcome the giants, unshaped as yet even in his own mind, which may try to block his path in life.

When he has grown beyond this delightful age of fairy stories, the influence of family tradition becomes manifest. What boy is not stirred to depths of patriotic resolve upon hearing related the valiant and heroic deeds of an ancestor in a great war for his country's liberty; and what boy, knowing that his family history is replete with instances of exceptionally good citizenship and straightforwardness does not resolve that he, at least, will not disgrace the family name.

At college, tales of the athletic prowess, of the self-forgetful honesty, of the manliness and courage of men who have gone before, have a most wholesome influence in making of the boy a pride to his college, and a manly man. That the governments of our schools recognize the value of these traditions is shown by the constant effort made to foster and perpetuate them.

Upon us collectively, as a nation, even more than as individuals, tradition has a most potent influence. We cannot attribute entirely to foresight the powerful influence which the framers of the Constitution have upon our national policy to-day. No man could foresee the changes of the last hundred years, and tradition is to be thanked for this great service to the country.

As a nation we have numerous traditions which are easily recognized as such. "For the people, of the people, by the people," is a phrase which typifies the help given by tradition to law. Self-seeking politicians of the lower order may for a time obscure the underlying principle of our government, but ere long the people are stirred to action by the sentiment of this tradition, and the reins of government again fall into proper hands. No despot, no dishonest politician, no inefficient executive can long hold power in the face of this tradition.

Another American tradition which

may be cited is that of respect of law. I take the opportunity of mentioning this tradition as it is one which appears to be fading from the consciousness of our people, and yet it is the very corner stone of our government. Without respect of law, our republic cannot endure. "Obey the law, because it is the law" is a sentiment we hear expressed less and less as time goes on. Every American citizen must take unto himself the duty of cultivating in himself this respect of law. Legislatures must cease passing laws of convenience, or laws which are to be enforced only at times. Every law on the statute books must be constantly enforced.

An instance of flagrant disrespect of law is shown in the history of one of Massachusetts' conspicuous sons. This man went into a Civil Service examination, writing on his paper the name of a friend, thus intending to secure for that friend a lucrative position under the government. He was discovered, tried, convicted and sentenced to a term in jail. While serving his time he was elected an alderman of the city of Boston, and upon being freed he was met at the jail by a committee who honored him as a martyr. That night, in a speech to his constituents, he promulgated the policy that if any man thought a law unfair, unjust, or unwelcome he had a perfect right, and in fact was duty bound, to break that law. For this sentiment he was cheered to the echo. Do you not all hold your breaths and say in your hearts that this is a most dangerous policy to have preached to the people? Where would it carry us? say you. But yet, I will venture to say, there is many a person in this room who has committed an offense similar in certain respects. You have violated the law against throwing paper in the street. There is the law compelling teams to keep separated by at least ten feet when

passing crossings, and this you have violated. There is the automobile speed law, and what of the customs duties?

The man who has his bill of lading underwritten, or who does not declare all the goods upon which he should pay duty, or who bribes a customs official is on the level with the man who writes the name of a friend on a Civil Service examination. And does not the man who escapes the customs duties often brag of it to his friends? Wherein is the difference between the two violations of the law? Both men are much more enemies of the republic than is that man who fires a hostile shot in war, and both men should be punished as the law demands.

In future ages when a great historian is relating the rise and fall of the United States of America he will call attention to no great battle on sea or land and mark it as the beginning of the end. This country will never undergo the disgrace of having a conquering army march its soil. Our great historian will call attention to the fact that this nation died, if it ever does die, from internal disintegration due to lack of respect of law.

So we must keep tradition alive. Its influence as an unwritten law aids greatly our written laws. In tradition is the real vitality of the nation, of institutions, and of the individual.

Through the weakness of the human memory for the details which give them life and for the circumstances which gave them their existence, traditions are likely to be perishable and short lived.

A symbol often proves of vital assistance in preserving a tradition. For this reason we have our monuments on our fields of battle and our tablets on spots which are intimately connected with the history of our country. The same for our college.