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West Virginia's Greatness

Speech of

Stuart F. Reed

Clarksburg, W. Va.

West Virginia University

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at the

Annual Banquet of the

University Club

PITTSBURG

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Pittsburg Dispatch

"Anyone who doubted the greatness of West Virginia could have learned of his mistake, at the annual banquet of the West Virginia University Club, of Western Pennsylvania, held at the Schenley last evening. The guest of honor, former Senator S. F. Reed, of Clarksburg, delivered a most eloquent address, telling of the celebrated sons and daughters of the State, famed in story, song and history, as well as of the great natural resources, educational and scientific advancement and patriotism for which West Virginia deservedly gets credit from those familiar with the truth."

WORTH READING AND PRESERVING.

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who to himself hath never said
This is my own, my native land?”

The address delivered at Pittsburg by Hon. Stuart F. Reed is well worth reading and preserving. It makes the red corpuscles chase each other at a more rapid pace to read such literature. Mr. Reed is an eloquent speaker and he has made a special study of what West Virginians have accomplished at home and abroad. It is encouraging to catch a glimpse of the great part that is being played in the affairs of the world by the boys who first saw the light among the “West Virginia Hills.”—Fairmont West Virginian.

WEST VIRGINIA TAKES THE INITIATIVE.

Mr. Reed tells the story of the greatness of his State in an eloquent and brilliant manner. There are few who will not be surprised at the initiative part West Virginia has taken in the advancement and progress of the civilized world.—Philippi Republican.

A NOTABLE ADDRESS.

Mr. Reed showed that West Virginia has claims to distinction other than her boundless resources of natural wealth. His speech would bear repeating. As a literary production it was well up to his high standard. In thought, arrangement, conception and data it was a man's size and we congratulate him heartily upon the reception which has been deservedly given it.—Charleston Gazette.

MR. REED'S ADDRESS

I esteem it an honor and a privilege to be with you tonight and I thank you for your most generous and amiable welcome. I recognize among those assembled about this festal board a part of that magnificent army that West Virginia has sent beyond her confines to sail oceans, explore continents and build cities.

You have asked me to bring you a message, tonight, from the old home state—the state that holds and nourishes your alma mater.

In traveling about the country a few years ago I found that strangers had rather vague ideas about West Virginia. Classed as a mining state we were accredited with an atmosphere that was not conducive to the highest moral intellectual and social development. This was not pleasing to me, and that I might be able to better defend the reputation of my state and her citizens against such imputations, I have found delight in delving into the history of a people who rose up in the midst of their war-wasted homes and proclaimed themselves advocates of freedom. Their defiant call for statehood reached the ears of the immortal Lincoln, and West Virginia, the "war-born state," the last and brightest gem that was plucked from Virginia's crown, was given a new setting in the "royal diadem of Columbia."

Much is being said and written about West Virginia today, and she is rapidly gaining a prominent place in the galaxy of States. It seems to be generally understood that our state is great because of her untold mineral resources. But, my friends, it takes more than these to make a

great state. It requires an army of thinkers. It takes the wealth of character and the riches of intellect as well as the opulence of soil.

A Patriotic People.

Some one has said that an essential element of greatness is patriotism. If this be true, let it be not forgotten that upon the soil of West Virginia was struck the earliest blow for freedom. She gave the first soldier of the Union to offer a libation of his life blood upon the altar of his country. The first battle of the Civil war and the last of the Revolution were fought within her borders, and soldiers from her territory were upon almost every battlefield of liberty. It is a well authenticated story that when Washington was asked what would have been the consequences had the Patriots failed at Yorktown, he replied that with but a banner left and the means to reach West Augusta he would have "rallied around him the men who would lift their bleeding country from the dust and set her free."

A West Virginian took the native ore from our mountains and made the cannon balls with which Commodore Perry smashed the British fleet on Lake Erie, and in that same battle, Captain Elliott, a former Wheeling boy, commanded the Niagara, to which Perry transferred his flag when his own vessel, the Lawrence, was wrecked and at the mercy of the waves. Captain Chadwick, a Morgantown boy, commanded the flagship New York, when the Spanish fleet went down at Santiago. It was a West Virginian in command of an American war vessel, cruising in Chinese waters, dur-

ing the late conflict between Russia and Japan, who stood sentinel at his guns, under the flag of the Union and compelled the belligerents to respect the law of nations and the rights of neutrals.

Letting Their Light Shine.

Again, it has been held that a great people must be propagandists, diffusing the blessings of Christianity and the light of knowledge. Let the roll of West Virginians be called. A minister from Pocahontas county preached the first Protestant sermon beyond the Sierras, and the Reverend Andrew Monroe, who went from Hampshire county is called the "Father of Methodism beyond the Mississippi." Alexander Campbell, who established Bethany College, was the leader of a successful religious reformation and the founder of the Christian church. Mary McFarland went from Brooke county and established the Missions of ice-bound Alaska. We gave the Methodist Episcopal church two of her most brilliant bishops, and the late Dr. John W. Carter, a West Virginia Baptist, was often called the Spurgeon of America. Dr. John Mitchell, whose name is familiar to the medical fraternity of two continents, lived in Jefferson county.

A West Virginia scholar was selected as tutor for a crown prince of Italy, and Dr. Humphreys, from Greenbrier county, is considered one of the world's most eminent philologists. Maxon Sommerville, formerly of Clarksburg, who died at Paris a few years ago, was reputed to have been one of the world's greatest archaeologists. Joseph Ray, the Ohio county mathematician and author of Ray's Arithmetics, has been "ciphered" into the lasting affections of half the states of the Union. Dr. I. C. White, of Morgantown, is today regarded as one of the most eminent scientists in America,

and among the first citizens of the Republic, stands our own renowned soldier, statesman and jurist, Nathan Goff. Dr. Frank Carpenter, America's leading genealogist and a noted Denver mineralogist, was reared in Harrison county. Ida L. Reed, a Barbour county girl, is the author of "Christmas Bells," a song that has floated on the air from Maine to California. Prof. Dolbear, in his room at Bethany, first worked out the principle by which the telephone was afterward made practical by Alexander Graham Bell, and it is said that Dr. Nicklin, of Tyler county, gave to Prof. Morse a most valuable suggestion and discovery in connection with the perfecting of the magnetic telegraph.

James Rumsey, of Morgan county, constructed the first boat in the world to be propelled by steam, and Washington witnessed its trial trip on a West Virginia river, ten years before Fulton's boat was built. Graham Hamrick, of Barbour county, discovered a method of embalming which seems a near approach to the lost method of the Egyptians. It won for him an honorary membership in the Inventory's Academy of France and a gold medal from Paris. Frank Holme, founder of the Chicago School of Illustration and an artist and cartoonist of world-wide fame, was once the printer's "devil" of the Keyser Echo, in Mineral county.

Breaking Records.

There are others who tell us that to be classed as a great state, we must "break records," and that is the very thing our state has been doing for several years. At the Paris Exposition, West Virginia, in competition with the nations of the earth, was given the highest award on wool grown by a Brooke county farmer. We hold first place in America in the production of petro-

leum; first in the production of natural gas; and first in the supply of hardwoods. The largest zinc reduction plant in the world is located at Clarksburg.

The first electric railroad in the world, equipped in a real engineering spirit as a commercial enterprise, was constructed on West Virginia soil by home capital, and operated between Huntington and Guyandotte. The largest axe factory in the world is located at our State capital. The axe is a tool about which clings the romance of development. It was the chief implement used by our forefathers in conquering the wilderness and constructing their first habitations, and it is one of the pleasing anomalies of our history that we are today making over one-half of the axes used by the world.

A three-year-old colt owned by General Watts, of Charleston, has broken all the trotting records of the world, giving him a standing without precedent in the history of the turf and putting him above every other colt of his age, that ever raced in harness. Recently in New York City in a competition at Madison Square Garden, in which the world's most noted driving horses were entered, the highest award, the gold cup and the fluttering ribbon, went to the West Virginia span driven by Mrs. Clarence Watson, and today in their cosy Fairmont stables, these horses proudly wear the badge that attests their equine aristocracy.

On Life's Great Stage.

West Virginia has sent many famous actors to the great stage of life who cannot be mentioned in the time at my command. Our state sent Ohio four of her wisest and best governors. Alabama, Kansas, North Dakota and Maryland have each received from us an able chief executive.

Beneath the creeping ivy in the old cemetery at Clarksburg, sleep

the first lovers married in the White House, the bride being a sister of Dolly Madison, the bridegroom the Hon. John G. Jackson, a one time gallant congressman from Harrison county.

Felix Grundy, the great jurist of Tennessee, Theodore Laidley, the artillerist of the Mexican war, John Stephenson, founder of Portland, Ore., James Farley, the California United States Senator, Jesse Thornton, the Oregon Chief Justice, and Stonewall Jackson, were all at one time West Virginia boys. Andrew Rowan, of Monroe county, who carried President McKinley's message to Garcia in Cuba, performed an act of heroism, says General Miles, "unequaled in the annals of warfare." The story of Rowan's courage was printed in nine languages and had a circulation of 16,000,000 copies in three years.

Dudley Evans, now president of Wells-Fargo's, one of the largest express companies of the world, still owns his old home farm in West Virginia. Under the general management of Thomas Fitzgerald, a former Fairmont boy, the great B. & O. railroad reached the highest point in its history as measured by its earnings and equipment for service. John Brisben Walker was unsuccessful as a West Virginia politician, but going to New York and getting control of the "Cosmopolitan," he set a new pace for the magazine editors of the world. Henry Bigler, the explorer, who was with the party that discovered gold in California, was a Harrison county boy.

Iowa is indebted to Monongalia county for her gifted United States Senator Johnathan P. Dolliver, and to Wetzel county for Jno. F. Lacey, one of her most brilliant congressmen. Booker T. Washington, the greatest leader and reformer the colored race has produced, was rear-

ed by his ex-slave mother among the West Virginia hills.

Of World Wide Renown.

A West Virginian organized the Egyptian army and drilled the soldiers of the Khedive on the soil over which the sphinx and the pyramids cast a halo of mystery. Pennsylvania's distinguished senator, Philander Knox, the choice of his party in his state for the presidency, and Governor Odell, of New York, who has helped to make presidents, were formerly school boys in West Virginia, and it would be hard to persuade us that this experience could have been omitted in their preparation for great careers. We have sent many of our bravest and best to other states and other lands but we have yet at home an army of noble men and beautiful women—intellectually and morally the equal of any—who will guide our ship of state in the pathway of progress, honor and righteousness. And shall I tell you how generous Pennsylvania and the other states have been with us? They have sent us splendid citizens, men of brains, brawn and wealth upon whom it was an honor to pin the badge of West Virginia citizenship.

Pittsburg is indeed a fitting place to tell the story of West Virginia. This magnificent city which welcomes the waters of the Monongahela that come, and gives a Godspeed to the waters of the Ohio that go, occupies a position, strategic and unique among all the cities of the world. Whether we ascend one river or descend the other, history at once begins to unroll her time-stained scrolls and recite the fascinating story of a people whose ancestors were wise enough to choose from all nature's domain the richest and most wonderful of the habitations at the disposal of the human family. One of these rivers penetrates to the

very heart of West Virginia, the other sweeps around her western border, past the historic island of Blennerhassett, and forms her boundary for nearly 300 miles.

The story of the world's development is for the most part the history of its great river valleys and the civilizations that flourish in them. Such is true of West Virginia; these rivers have been more than flowing streams. On their surface have been mirrored the enthusiasm, the courage and the tragedy of life. Hedging in the valleys are the mountains, nature's archaeological curiosity shops, which have preserved the records of human history just as fossils proclaim the evolution story of the earth.

Nature's Sublime Lessons.

Man is a creature of environment and the physical character of the country has much to do with his progress and development. The mountains of West Virginia seem to have given the people lofty aspirations, grandeur and stability of purpose, while the moving river currents suggested action and progress.

I was once with a friend in Colorado, who pointed to a peak of the Rocky Mountains, wrapped in eternal snow, and asked me if that scene did not represent the sublime in nature. I replied that it was truly sublime, but I preferred our West Virginia hills, which wore the same white emblem of purity at the joyous Christmas time, and then lifting their coronets of snow, and revealing the fragrant flowers of spring, represented not only the sublime in nature but the Divine drama of the resurrection.

The early inhabitants of our state were without educational advantages and had but little time for meditation. They were an out-of-doors people as all great peoples have been, trained for the battle of life by a strenuous conflict with nature. They

wore jeans and linsey woven beneath the blue sky and ate johnny-cake, sweet flavored by the hickory embers. "They did not read romance, they made it; nor poetry, they lived it."

It was a land peculiarly fashioned to become the home of a great people. The first settlers found the hills covered with splendid forests and along the streams grew fragrant flowers, and many kinds of fruits, nuts and berries. The soil was fertile, the climate salubrious and from the mountain sides gushed hundreds of mineral springs with health-giving properties. Here they lived and loved, toiled and dreamed.

The years sped by until the descendants of the pioneers had to meet new conditions. The hitherto undreamed of wealth of mountain and valley had been discovered. Capital was knocking at the door and the line of cleavage between the old and new was clear and distinct. The leisurely march of events was accelerated by the force of irresistible destiny.

Growth and Development.

In forty years we have added almost one million souls to our population and almost eight hundred million dollars to our taxable wealth. Forty years ago we had about 400 schools in the state; today we have 7,000 schools and 8,000 teachers to whom are paid annually two million dollars.

The world's greatest coal field is the Appalachian, and the heart of this area is West Virginia. Great Britain, Germany and France combined have 14,000 square miles of coal. West Virginia has three times as much. Were it possible to capitalize the coal values of West Virginia at ten cents a ton, it would represent a wealth of ten thousand millions of dollars or three times as much as the gold and silver coin of all the world, a sum vast enough to

pay the national debts of England, France and the United States.

As I have already said, we are regarded as a mining state, and people are enthusiastic about the forty-five million tons of coal we are producing annually, but let me tell you something else. We have brought under cultivation 100,000 farms which produced values last year aggregating over \$70,000,000. West Virginia has over five million acres of agricultural and fruit lands not yet utilized and it is reasonable to expect that within a few years, following improved methods, our agricultural and fruit products will be over \$300,000,000 annually.

The distinguished congressman from my district, once boasted that if West Virginia were to be set as an island in the midst of an impassable sea, its inhabitants would never want for houses, food, clothing, fuel or education. That statement was not overdrawn. Sir, it would indeed be a land splendid in its exclusiveness, in which poetry, music, literature, philosophy, science and Christianity would be perpetuated in institutions and temples wherein "the scholar would trim his lamps and contemplation would prune her wings," and though unheard should be the drum traps of other marching civilizations, we would still hold our place in the triumphal procession of the quickening ages.

What Makes a State.

In natural resources, West Virginia is equaled by few states and surpassed by none. No other state so epitomizes the prodigious energy and mighty potentialities of this wonderful age.

Our situation is ideal. With the great state of Pennsylvania on the north, Ohio on the west, Virginia, our mother state, on the south, and the orchards and gardens of the Shenandoah almost under the shadow

of the dome of the Capitol at Washington, we modestly but unhesitatingly lay claim to the most cosmopolitan location in America.

Great natural wealth and expanding commerce may inspire us with exalted ideas of our importance, and set the imagery of our brains to erecting phantom pedestals upon which our vanity may pose, but, Mr. Toastmaster, these things never made a state.

“What constitutes a State?

Not cities proud with spires and
turrets crowned * *

No! Men, high minded men—
Men who their duties know—
Who know their rights,
And knowing, dare maintain.”

Memories of Home.

In conclusion, friends, I must give my parting message. It is an invitation to you to come home occasionally. No matter how far ambition or duty may take you from West Virginia, her blessing and benediction will follow you. If you have been away long you must be prepared for changes. You may not be pleased

with them at first, but at home we are growing accustomed to the new order. You may find that the cascade now turns a wheel or furnishes water for great steam leviathans. That the vine covered ledge you once loved has been transformed into a stone quarry, and the wild bird has flown in search of some place where the solitudes are tenantless and the forces of nature are not in harness. That the old strawberry patch has been destroyed by the new railroad, and vast structures of iron and concrete rise up from the old meadows.

You will resent this desecration of the places that you once knew, for they breathe to you the tender story of a sweet and sacred past. But do not let these things keep you away, lads, for we love you. Come back and we will help you find some of the old paths in which you may stroll in retrospective reverence, or pilot you among

“The West Virginia hills,
So majestic and so grand,
With their summits bathed in glory,
Like the Prince Immanuel's land.”

