

To the
CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE
on
MILITARY AFFAIRS

On the resolution of Hon. Hamilton Fish regarding the burial of the unidentified soldiers.

Gentlemen:

We are beginning to realize that our great material achievements are not our sole measure of civilization - to realize that civilization is more a matter of the heart than of the head and that sympathy is the raw material from which it is made. If the material, the solemn rights, and the burial place, proposed in Mr. Fish's resolution will create and keep vivid our sense of the sufferings of others, it will subserve a great public use and a thousand perhaps indirect but nevertheless beneficial effects will come from this one cause. The test of real progress is the rate by which our sympathy for our fellow citizens is strengthening and it is in such ways as the resolution suggests that the soul of goodness in things evil may come from the sufferings of the frightful war.

If the carrying out of the resolution were only an expression of national sympathy for the families of the unidentified soldiers I think it would be justified. Those who were obliged to endure the long period of agony before learning the fate of their relatives in the army in France suffered more than any of the others who were grief stricken with losses in the war. Time which usually assuages the grief of most only kept theirs more keen. It is human to believe what we fervently wish. Trifles often suffice to revive our hopes and it is painful for us to contemplate the strain under which many American families were kept when their hopes were constantly revived that their loved ones would return to the fireside and again occupy the vacant chair, only in the end to have the sickening conviction driven upon them that they were lying in a foreign land in an unmarked grave.

Unlike many vain-glorious memorials seen both in Europe and in this country which only tend to revive in us the dormant instincts of the savage and act as a stimulus to our fighting propensities, this monument will arouse sentiments of an entirely different kind; I believe it would be well worth the public money expended upon it.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed) Truxtun Beale