Memorial Temple Under Way in Washington

Fund Left by the First President Was Basis of Project for Majestic Structure Which Can Be Utilized as a Joint Monument to the Men of '17 and '76

By RUPERT HUGHES.

The men of 1917 have finished the task begun by the men of 1776, and have paid the debt incurred. The odd coincidence in numbers stands as the symbol of a real bond.

Washington borrowed from France the men and the money that saved the day for the freedom of the colonies. Wilson sent back to France the men and the money that saved the day for the freedom of the nations. We repaid Lafayette with Pershing.

There is a universal movement to build a fitting memorial to the heroes of the war of wars. Memorials are springing up all over the United States to individual men, cities, states, and organizations, but there is a desire for one great memorial.

The proper place for it is, of course, the capital of the country, and Washington has been and will be in a large sense the capital of the world.

No memorial will be appropriate which has not a lasting value and a dignity of usefulness as well as beauty and splendor. No statue or bas-relief could be reared which would express more clearly what this memorial must express.

No column of marble columns, though it be made of steel barrels, a mile high, would convey the meaning of an imperial arch would imply nothing more than a gateway for conquerors and would act simply as an obstruction to traffic.

The right memorial must be a temple, a temple of architectural dignity, a museum for statues, busts, tablets, archives and interesting relics, a place of daily resort, and a hall where meetings can be held.

It is an amazing fact that Washington, the city of monuments, the mecca of congresses, has no large and dignified meeting place, no convention hall of any dimensions.

The memorial described would therefore meet a pressing need.

What idea should this memorial most vividly express? Of what religion should the temple be? Surely the religion of democracy, of freedom, of equality, of opportunity.

It should express the triumph of the ideals of Washington and the founders of this Republic as those ideals have spread throughout the world and united the world in the recent bloody victory over the spirit of autocracy.

The difficulties in the way of erecting such a temple are the expense at a time when the nation is staggering under a heavy debt; the discovery of a proper place to build the temple would be a great problem.

Carried out to the attainment of the noblest memorial imaginable.

The explanation can be briefly made: Given Washington would accept no money for his services, the nation could not afford to do it.

The idea was given to Mrs. Henry F. Dimck, sister of William C. Whitney, who, as Secretary of the Navy, was the son of the first Secretary of the Navy.

With characteristic Whitney energy, Mrs. Dimck set about the accomplishment of the long-neglected idea. Gathering about her many eminent associates, she reported in accumulation of $250,000 in cash, and contingent subscriptions to a still larger amount; and in procuring from Congress the provision for the site, the tract of land formerly occupied by the Pennsylvania Avenue, and now covered by the War Department's buildings, the War Department. This is almost the only desirable site remaining unoccupied in Washington.

Finally, Mrs. Dimck succeeded in arranging a competition of designs by a dozen of the foremost American architects. The Committee of Award selected from their designs a plan of such impressive beauty as to silence critics and unexpected.

This majestic structure is spacious enough to house a multitude. The main auditorium occupies a floor space of 38,000 square feet, with a gallery of 10,000 square feet, giving a seating capacity of 5,000 persons; it would furnish room for educational, national conventions and conferences, orchestral concerts and other meetings. Several smaller halls are grouped about it to accommodate meetings of smaller bodies, military, patriotic, scientific, medical, educational, and the like.

Floor Plan of the Memorial, with Auditorium Seating 7,000 in Centre. (A) Assembly Rooms for Various National Organizations. (B) Reception Rooms. (C) Carriage Passage Through Building.

On the second floor is a banquet hall with serving rooms, seating 600 people. Here also are rooms to be set aside for the permanent headquarters of societies of veterans, of reserve officers and groups of patriotic and other associations. The third and fourth floors would contain a museum and library for the care of the records of the meeting place.

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of precious relics, souvenirs, and books on the art of war, and the histories of our soldiers; and smaller rooms for such special purposes as may arise.

When the United States entered the war, this project was well on its way. The committees had finished the hardest part of the task, securing a grant of land from Congress, an inspired and inspiring design from architects, and a large sum of money. Well begun is half done. But the outbreak of the war and the concentration of the national effort on the one great purpose put a stop to the collection of funds.

The triumphant conclusion of the war sees Mrs. Dimock and her associates at work again with a new zeal because of the enlarged scope of the memorial. The plans have received the indorsement of the highest authorities. President Wilson wrote:

My Dear Mrs. Dimock: I am very much interested in the plans for the George Washington Memorial Building, and hope most sincerely that they will prosper and the memorial be finally built. It is entirely to be desired. Very sincerely yours, WOODROW WILSON.

Committees of prominent women representing patriotic societies are collaborating. Subscriptions in large and small amounts have been received and will be welcomed. Every child who contributes 10 cents receives a button carrying the legend, "This pin means a brick in the Memorial Building." The name of each child and of each donor of any amount will be entered on the records.

The architect of the building, Evarts Tracy of Tracy & Swartwout, is one of America's eminent architects. He has just returned from more than a year of active service in France as a Major of Engineers, and is giving his enthusiastic attention to the development of the plans, which, fortunately, need little alteration. Major Tracy is a great-grandson of Roger Sherman of Connecticut, who was one of the committee to draft the Declaration of Independence. He was technically educated in France, and his wife is the great-granddaughter of one of Napoleon's Generals. In France Major Tracy was at the head of the Camouflage Service. He has designed important buildings, the Missouri State Capitol being one of them.

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