

IN MEMORIAM—ROBERT BACON

On the twenty-ninth day of May, 1919, Robert Bacon, a life member of the American Society of International Law, and at one time Assistant, and Secretary of State, Ambassador to France, Major, Lieutenant-Colonel, and Colonel in the American Expeditionary forces in France, died, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, in a hospital in the City of New York.

The thing at hand he did, and did well, in college, in business, in civil life and in the military service of his country.

As undergraduate of Harvard, in the class of his life-long friend Theodore Roosevelt, he was a good student and easily first in athletics.

In business he became the partner and confidant of the late John Pierpont Morgan.

Appointed Assistant Secretary of State by Secretary Root, that great statesman and competent judge of men said of him and to him:

You have proved yourself far more able and forceful than I dared to hope—possessed of courage to take responsibility and conduct great affairs without finching or the loss of judgment or nerve—competent to fill any post of government with distinction and success. More than that, you have had the imagination to realize the ultimate objects of policy, and tireless energy and enthusiasm and self-devotion in pressing towards those objects, and your brave-hearted cheerfulness and power of friendship and steadfast loyalty have been noble and beautiful.

I am sure you have a still more distinguished career before you for all who love you to rejoice in.

I count the day when you were surprised by the offer of the post of Assistant Secretary of State one of the most fortunate of my life.

Of him as Secretary of State, the late British Ambassador to the United States, James Bryce, has written:

How often have I recalled the work we did together for furthering friendship and good relations between America and England, and how pleasant it was to deal with him. Such was the candor of his mind and the earnestness of his wish to settle everything in a way fair and just all round,—the right temper in which a Secretary of State in any country should approach his tasks.

Years after the end of his embassy to France, Saint-Dié, whose scholars gave the name of America to the New World, voted to give the name of America to one of its streets, in commemoration of the Four Hundredth Anniversary of that great event and in further com-

memoration of the entry of the United States into the war; and the committee in charge recalled and reproduced the following passages from Mr. Bacon's address, delivered in French at the Anniversary:

Après que la Lorraine française se fût penchée sur notre berceau pour nous donner un nom, ce fut la plus grande France qui jeta dans la balance son épée pour nous donner une indépendance. Ma présence au milieu de vous, vous prouve que l'Amérique n'oublie pas et conserve à jamais une place à part dans son affection à la jolie cité vosgienne de Sainte-Dié, à la belle France. . . .

Cette vieille et si pittoresque ville de Saint-Dié, où je reçois aujourd'hui une si cordiale et si touchante hospitalité, n'est pas seulement le lieu où furent tenus les fonts baptismaux du Nouveau Monde, elle fut aussi un centre intellectuel remarquable, à une époque où ils n'étaient pas communs, et elle a sa part d'influence dans le grand mouvement d'expansion des lettres au début du XVI^e siècle.

Pour vous, Français, elle rappelle un passé héroïque et brillant dont témoignent tant d'autres villes dans votre beau pays dont la longue existence historique a été si féconde en événements mémorables; mais pour nous, Américains, elle évoque le souvenir d'un fait unique dans son genre et l'image de Saint-Dié, où l'Amérique reçut son nom, prend place dans nos cœurs à côté de celle de Versailles, où l'Amérique contracta avec la France une alliance indissoluble.

On May 1, 1918, General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces, thus wrote of his services as Commandant of Chaumont:

I take this occasion to express to you my earnest appreciation of the whole-hearted way in which you have constantly performed every duty given you since our departure from New York last May. Your enthusiasm, your willingness and singleness of purpose are an example to all of us.

Of his services as Chief of the American Mission with the British and attached to the Staff of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in France, Sir Douglas said in his official dispatch to the British Government:

My thanks are due to Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Bacon, who as Chief of the American Mission attached to my Headquarters has been able to give me advice and assistance of the greatest value on many occasions.

And in a personal letter, Sir Douglas wrote:

We treated him quite as one of ourselves, and indeed I had no Military secrets to conceal from him. . . .

I shall never forget what Robert Bacon did to help me during the last year of the war.

And the Chief of Staff of the British Army in France, General Sir H. A. Lawrence, wrote:

I wish I could make clear the inestimable service which he rendered to the Allied cause by acting as head of the Mission attached to our Headquarters.

His high character and splendid enthusiasm inspired all with whom he came in contact while his great experience made him a guide to whom all of us instinctively turned. . . .

He has given his life to his country just as much as if he had actually fallen on the field of battle, and I can assure you that his memory will long be cherished by the British Army.

On January 26, 1919, he was thus cited by Marshal Pétain, in Special Orders to the French Army:

Officier supérieur de haute valeur professionnelle et morale.—A comme Ambassadeur des Etats Unis en France, puissamment contribué au resserrement des liens d'amitié unissant les deux nations.—Nommé Aide de Camp du Général Commandant en Chef les Forces Américaines au début de l'entrée en guerre des Etats Unis, s'est dépensé sans compter, et par son activité inlassable, et ses qualités d'organisateur a grandement contribué d'abord à la formation, puis au succès des Armées Américaines.

He was also cited and received the Distinguished Service Medal of the United States in the following terms:

For exceptionally meritorious and distinguished services. He served with great credit and distinction as Post Commandant of General Headquarters and as Aide-de-Camp to the Commander-in-Chief. By his untiring efforts as Chief of the American Mission at British General Headquarters, he has performed with marked ability innumerable duties requiring great tact and address.

Finally, the spirit in which he met and performed his duties, whether they concerned his country, the great or the lowly, and the impression left on all who came in contact with him, is evidenced by this little letter written by one Marguerite Gilly, under date of December 1, 1917, and addressed to him as "The Commandant, American Headquarters," at Chaumont:

Pardon me, sir, for the liberty I take in writing to you. Permit me, sir, to send you fifty francs in order to place a wreath on the grave of the little American Soldier who died far away from his country—coming to the aid of France. I did not myself dare to carry it there, else I should already have done so. Do not refuse, sir, the humble offering of a French woman who loves America above all things; who in memory of those dear dead, who have died for their country is proud and happy to offer a wreath to the American Soldier

who died far away from his mother, in order to come to the assistance of the children of France.

I shall always remember, sir, that you gave me permission to set up a little stand opposite the barracks—Thank you, sir. I beg you, sir, not to refuse to place a wreath for this little soldier. I believe it will bring happiness to my husband. I did not dare do it myself.

Thanking you, sir,—accept my sincere good wishes for America and for France.

Of a truth, the bravest are the tenderest.

JAMES BROWN SCOTT.