

ANZAC DAY 1934. NORTHAMPTON
Address by W.L. Crossing.

Anzac Day 1934! The day has a deeper meaning for us today than it has had for 19 years. We have in our midst the symbol in stone that will endure when we are dust. What does it signify, that obelisk of granite with its tablets of marble? It is at once a memorial and a pledge, as we read on the tablet facing us:

Land of our birth, our faith, our pride,
for whose dear sake our fathers died,
O Motherland, we pledge to thee

Head, heart, and hand through the years to be.

What says the second tablet? The long list of the fallen.
And of the third? Erected by the residents of the
Northampton district.

Let us consider the second tablet - the long list of the fallen. The tears start in my eyes at the familiar names. The brave, laughing faces, which they conjured up and which you and I knew so well, swim into vision. Binyon's lines crowd into memory:

They went with songs to the battle, they were young
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted
They fell with their faces to the foe.

And the day - the great day comes back across the years. More than the day - that wonderful evening before it, when all the world cheered. To me it is not Anzac Day unless those events are recalled. Many heroic events occurred during the war involving greater sacrifices than Anzac. More intensive bombardments than those of Gallipoli thundered and shook our lives in France. But the landing was an epic. Its confidence and its daring gripped the world and a tradition was begun which grew gloriously as the war years rolled on.

Forty miles from Anzac in the great bay enclosed by green rolling hills was the fleet of great ships, nearly 200 of them. And as the sun set over the hills tingeing the scene with its ruddy glow the harbour rumbled with the lifting of anchors and the winding of chains. Slowly ship after ship moved down the bay and as they moved a surge of feeling, an exultation seized all there. From the leading ship welled up a cheer, and it overflowed and excited into cheering every ship and every shore establishment till the wide bay rang and rang again. As the battleships were passed at the harbour entrance the tumult of cheering became a furore, a wild exultation, a tribute of the brave to the brave. Very, very slowly the ships passed singly through the boom into the heave of the open sea. The tumult of cheering lasted a long time; no-one who heard it can ever forget, or think of it unshaken.

At midnight the ships had dropped anchor at Infros Island, the heavily laden men had clambered down from the troopships onto the decks of the destroyers and cruisers, and slowly the warships had faded into the darkness, phantoms of the silent night, to their appointed stations.

And in the faint grey light of dawn there stole from the sides of the cruisers and destroyers tows of boats, crammed with troops, faces bronzed and tense. Slowly the pinnaces, with their heavy freights trailing astern headed for the gloomy heights in front. The dawn was breaking brighter and the wall like cliff, a few yards behind the narrow strip of beach, and the steep hills scrub covered, and the rugged ravines grew clear. But before the beach was reached the cliffs spouted flame and death from rifles and machine guns and from the right, from Gaba Tepe and beyond came the thunder of guns and the scream of shells, answered by the hollow crash of broadsides from the battleships behind. But the tows had cast loose, and already, the attacking troops, leaping waist deep in the sea had rushed ashore and were climbing those steep slopes. Back again went the boats for fresh relays of troops. In groups widely separated by the broken slopes, greatly outnumbered but quite undaunted the few hundred that had landed pressed the attack. Some brave souls pressed far inland over the first line of hills, down into the valley, past the olive grove. There was no surrender when they were surrounded. Outnumbered and overwhelmed they knew one slogan "Fight on! Fight on!" until death had claimed them all. The rest has been told many times - how the attacking troops fought day long, night long until their grip on the peninsula was assured. Truly it was an epic fight.

And that scene of nineteen years ago dissolves into marble tablet on a granite obelisk, and we see the names of those who laid away their lives for us. We look again at the first tablet enshrining Kipling's inspiring words to youth, and we feel the message is not for youth only: it is for all of us.

Land of our birth, our faith, our pride,
For whose dear sake our fathers died,
O Motherland we pledge to thee,
Head, heart, and hand through the years to be.

Whether this be the land of our birth or adoption matters not. This fair land of Australia secured to us by the matchless fortitude and sacrifice of brave men, and women too, is our pride - a god-given heritage for us to develop. "Love of our dear country we cherish, a love that with life can but end" the choir sang in the anthem. Those are not idle words - meaningless, lies, are they? We really mean what we grave on stone and sing in a sacred service of remembrance.

Despite the bitter opposition of fear ridden France to disarmament I cannot believe we will see the madness of war again. The world cannot forget the hideous spectacle of the great war. I believe the mental and spiritual anguish of the world in these times is a sign of social change that will make for a new world. Sanity, work, love and mature judgement is asked of all of us in the formation of the new order. Our country needs our pledge. Let us each in our hearts inscribe our vow:

"O Motherland, we pledge to thee,
Head, heart and hand through the years to be"

And we must remember that the truest service to our Motherland and the great Commonwealth of British Nations is not a narrow national love. Patriotism is not enough. Courage is not enough. Fortitude and endurance coupled with love and good humour provide the key to a safe future.

The same characteristics that were found in the great brotherhood at war are needed in the nations at peace. Only if we possess those can an enduring peace be established. Let these words be our slogan:

"Fortitude and endurance, love and good humour".

Now let us look at the third tablet bearing its note of pride and love: "Erected by the residents of the Northampton District." Years ago a lady had faith in the fellowship of the district and gave that fine park land for a memorial. Her faith was justified. Our noble monument displays the pride we feel in our fallen, a reminder to us to tread like them the path of duty and sacrifice.

Postscript:

This final and third section is incomplete as the last page has been lost somewhere during many moves over the years.