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A TRIBUTE TO POSEY

By S. M. Rutherford

By invitation I am invited to give expression at this time to such sentiments as occur to me concerning our friend, Alex Posey.

While I confess it is a labor of love, yet at no time have I ever felt such embarrassment or assumed a task with greater misgivings. Such occasions are always attended with sadness but they should at the same time be embraced as opportunities to consecrate our lives anew to the higher vital purposes of life. We have met here as friends to pay respect to the mortal remains of Alex Posey; but what we mourn in this mass of clay let us remember is not Posey, but the workshop, the tenement of clay in which he developed and cultivated those qualities of heart and mind which alone move us to this devotion. Alex did not observe the conventionalities of religion, refusing to subscribe to what he considered idle ceremonies; his house

of worship was all nature and was as broad and comprehensive as nature itself. He loved nature and in the silence of his own heart and in his own way worshiped nature's God. Like all original thinkers he sought in the solitude of his own mentality solution for the truths that are wrapped in the mysteries of nature, stripped of the ceremonial and glamor with which so many surround their devotion. He lived and was educated in a school of thought that combatted and resisted superstition in every form. His ideals were drawn from that school of vigorous French writers producing the anticlerical agitation that sprang up in the early part of the 16th century and has continued to grow in potency and influence to the present time. In all his thoughts and expressions, however, he disclosed a belief of and a reliance in a universal religion, comprehensive enough for the whole human race. In his philosophic way of thinking he assumed the responsibilities of life and courageously accepting them. He saw and acknowledged in them all the hand of divinity. To him life was not vouchsafed as a period for selfish indulgences nor to be regarded as a void in the

cycle of eternity but rather as an earthly sojourn of probation full of life and consequences for which he was to answer at the last day. Ever showing reliance and an abiding faith in the words and promise of the Savior that he gave his life as a propitiation for the sins of the children of men. How sweetly does he thus assure us when he says:

"When Death has shut the blue skies
out from me, Sweet Daffodil,
And years roll on without my memory,
Thou'lt reach thy tender fingers down
to mine of clay,
A true friend still,
Although I'll never know thee till
the judgment day."

No man with such a mind and heart as Alex Posey ever lived who did not acknowledge the omnipotence of God; who did not realize and expect that merciful treatment comprehended in the words of the Savior. Nor did he. His life was serene and beautiful; in his home markedly so; he was a devoted husband and a loving father; to his friends sincere, and to his acquaintances everywhere a considerate and exemplary man. To his own people he was ever looked up to as a comforting guide and to none will his death be a greater blow. He was born and lived through all his life amongst

his own Creek people whom he loved and protected. He lived to see but the beginning of the end of that once proud and courageous nation, however, and in the dim distance clearly saw the result, the absolute absorption and changing of his people and his people's institutions by the resistless onward sweep of that higher and nobler civilization of this Christian age. Alex did not resist this change, for to his enlightened mind and broader view it was inevitable; but his whole life was wrapped up in the work of aiding and helping his people to surmount the difficulties with which this change had strewn their path, using his own language in the song of Oktahutche:

"My life was through field and vale, green
because of me, I wandered, wandered, wandered to
the distant sea:

"Though I sing my song in a minor key,
Remember lands and attest the good I do
Though I carry no white sails to sea,
Towns nestle in the vales I wander through
And quail are whistling in the waving grain,
And herds are scattered o'er the plains."

His life was a sweet song of hope and encouragement to all with whom he came in contact and to his own people a comfort and inspiration.

And so strong was the influence of his personality and so deep the impress made that we can hardly realize that the mortal part even of Alex Posey is no more. Let us remember, and it is a happy thought, that the bounds of his usefulness and beauty of his example is limited only by the bounds of the sphere of human thought and activity.

I shall not believe that his life is extinguished or that his influence for good is gone. In the language of another, "If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless buried acorn and make it burst forth from its prison walls, will he leave neglected in the earth the soul of man who was made in the image of his Creator? If he stoops to give to the rosebush, whose withered blossoms float upon the breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He withhold the words of hope from the sons of man when the frosts of winter come? If matter, just and inanimate, though changed by the forces of nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the imperial spirit of man suffer annihilation after it has paid a brief visit, like a royal guest, to this tenement of clay? Rather let us believe that

He who in His apparent prodigality wastes not a rain-drop, a blade of grass or the evening's sighing zephyr, but makes them all carry out His eternal plans, has given immortality to the mortal and gathered to Himself the generous spirit of our friend. Instead of mourning, let us look up and address him in the words of the poet:

"The day has come, not gone,
Thy sun is risen, not set,
Thy life is now beyond
The reach of death or change
Not ended, but begun,
Oh, noble soul, oh gentle heart,
hail and farewell."