

American Board of Criminal Lawyers
THE ROUNDTABLE

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“LEST WE FORGET”

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Lest We Forget

The words "Lest We Forget" from the refrain of "Recessional". The phrase offers a warning about the perils of hubris and the inevitable decline of imperial power. The phrase later passed into common usage after World War I across the British Commonwealth especially, becoming linked with Remembrance Day observations; it came to be a plea not to forget past sacrifices, and was often found as the only wording on war memorials, or used as an epitaph.

Recessional - A Victorian Ode

God of our fathers, known of old—
Lord of our far-flung battle line—
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies—
The Captains and the Kings depart—
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away—
On dune and headland sinks the fire—
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe—
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard—
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not Thee to guard.
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!
Amen.

-Rudyard Kipling (1897)

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Avoid Arrogance



On the morning of the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon Bonaparte smugly assured his generals: "I tell you Wellington is a bad general, the English are bad soldiers; we will settle this matter by lunchtime." Don't be blinded by arrogance. A little humility can help you steer clear of disaster.

Learn from Mistakes