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**“THE CONFEDERATE MONUMENT  
IN FOREST PARK, ST. LOUIS.”**

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A PAPER BY

COMRADE GEO. W. BAILEY

Ex-Capt. 6th Infantry Mo. Vols. U. S. A. and A. D. C.  
2d Div. Staff, 15th Army Corps.

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# "THE CONFEDERATE MONUMENT IN FOREST PARK, ST. LOUIS."

By COMRADE GEORGE W. BAILEY

Ex-Capt. 6th Infantry Mo. Vols. U. S. A. and A. D. C. 2d Div.  
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## I.

I. Upon the back part of the Confederate Monument in Forest Park, unveiled December 5, 1914, appears the following inscription:

*"To the memory of the soldiers and sailors of the Southern Confederacy who fought to uphold the right declared by the pen of Jefferson and achieved by the sword of Washington."*

Assuming that inscriptions purporting to proclaim historical truth and displayed in public places are proper subjects of public criticism, and lest public silence might be construed to evidence public assent thereto, the following observations—made in response to numerous requests therefor—are respectfully submitted:

The manifest object of this inscription, and as it will be generally accepted and understood, is to proclaim to the present and future generations that the **cause** for which the Confederates fought had been approved in advance by Jefferson and Washington. To be more specific, that the Confederates who fought to destroy the Union and for secession in the interest of human slavery were in the right, and, by necessary implication, that those who fought to preserve the Union in the interest of human liberty were in the wrong—according to Jefferson and Washington.

While this inscription appears true only in a mere abstract sense, or as to the immediate object to be attained—**independence**—precisely as Grant and Lee fought for the same immediate object, **Success**—it appears far away from truth as to the ultimate objects to be attained by the American Revolutionists and the Confederates, respectively. Their respective **causes**, like those of Grant and Lee, were as irreconcilable and antagonistic as **freedom and bondage**—as a declaration of independence founded on human liberty and a Confederacy whose boasted corner-stone was human slavery.

What signifies it that the Confederates fought for an immediate object that Jefferson and Washington approved when at the same time, and by the same act, they fought for an ultimate object which both Jefferson and Washington had, in the strongest possible language, severely condemned? Did the pen of Jefferson ever "declare," or the sword of Washington ever "achieve," the right of secession from the American Union? Were Jefferson and Washington secessionists, as this inscription plainly assumes, and practically proclaims? Happily, both have answered this question for themselves. In his first inaugural address in 1801, Jefferson states as a main essential of our government: "The preservation of the national government in its whole constitutional vigor as the sheet anchor of our peace at home and of our safety abroad." Also, "Absolute acquiescence in the decision of the majority—the vital principle of Republics from which there is no appeal but to force—the vital principle and immediate parent of despotism." Is this the language of a secessionist?

In his farewell address Washington states: "The unity of government which constitutes you one people is the main pillar of your real independence. You should properly estimate the immense value of your National Union, and cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it as the palladium of your political safety and prosperity, watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety, discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can, in any event, be abandoned and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties that now link together the various parts." Is this the language of a secessionist? If not, then how are the Mighty Spirits of our national unity crucified on a granite cross of Monumental Misrepresentations!

Whether the right of independence of Great Britain involved "the right" of independence of the American Union—the constitutional obligations of the states to the contrary, notwithstanding, as assumed by this inscription—constituted, of course, the main issue of the Civil War, and upon this question the Confederates appealed for judgment to the highest tribunal known among men—the same tribunal by decision of which independence was won from Great Britain—and, after a hot trial extending through four years, a decision was obtained whereby "the right" proclaimed by this inscription—the right of secession—was repudiated and denied. This inscription, therefore, presumes to overrule and repudiate the decision of the Confederates' own chosen highest human tribunal. But this is not all. Manifestly to make assurance doubly sure, the Confederates also appealed for judgment upon their cause to the Supreme Ruler of the universe—whose decrees the Confederate chieftains—civil and military—so often publicly declared "must always be for the just cause."

But this inscription, according to the concessions of the highest Confederate authority, presumes also to overrule the decree of the Su-

preme Ruler of the universe and to still proclaim "the right" which both God and man, and the highest possible standards adopted to determine the right, have united to declare never existed!

But there are presumptions so ridiculous, and opinions so absurd, in the language of Jefferson uttered, substantially, in kindred circumstances, "should be permitted to stand undisturbed as monuments of the safety with which error may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat and expose it." While it is true, as we are often reminded, that mere "might does not make right," it is equally true that in a Republic the majority, of necessity, establishes the standard of right to which all must conform. The only appeal therefrom is to arms and the verdict of battle is final. Unquestionably, in the last analysis, "the right" proclaimed by this inscription is the impossible right in a Republic of minority rule. Is the public proclamation of the existence of such a "right" either patriotic or true?

II. The inscription continues:

*"With sublime self-sacrifice they battled to preserve the independence of the states which was won from Great Britain."*

This inscription appears indefinite and unsatisfactory, as stating but half the truth, or as a mere conclusion from connected facts not stated, and apparently well calculated to confuse rather than to educate. It ignores utterly all the essential facts and circumstances inseparably connected with the subject-matter and a consideration of which is absolutely necessary to an intelligent comprehension of the same.

A fair analysis thereof in the light of conceded history will disclose that "independence" is only another name for State Sovereignty and that the only portion of state sovereignty or independence involved and which "they battled to preserve" was that portion which the states had respectively reposed in the Constitution of the United States, and which the Confederates battled to forcibly retake and withdraw therefrom, but which the Union Armies "battled to preserve" and retain therein where, the states concurring, "We, the people of the United States," had reposed it, in the Federal Constitution.

In the light of conceded historical facts, had this inscription stated the whole truth—the real objective—would it not have necessarily also proclaimed: "Repudiating and denying any Constitutional obligation to the contrary they battled to establish and enforce the right of secession in order to better secure the perpetuation of human slavery." Was it suspected that a proclamation of the whole truth, in plain language, might have proved distasteful to a patriotic community? Indeed, there seems to have been some misgivings as to the propriety of these inscriptions as they now appear. Why is it that in all the numerous publications descriptive of the design, the erection, and dedication and presentation of this monument, we have seen no reference whatever to these in-

scriptions which are declaratory of its object and purpose? Why have they apparently been so studiously withheld from public notice?

III. The inscriptions conclude with:

*"They battled to perpetuate the Constitutional Government which was established by the Fathers."*

This proclamation carries with it the necessary implication that Lincoln and the Union Armies battled to overthrow the Constitutional Government of the Fathers.

This permanent public proclamation in a patriotic city constitutes, of itself, perhaps, a worthy monument to the patience and forbearance of a patriotic people. Such a statement, publicly taught, would be a very serious matter, were it not so supremely ridiculous that even the school children that read will readily recognize it as either some sort of a joke, or a laughable historical blunder. A few conceded historical facts will readily dispose of it.

Jeff. Davis in withdrawing from the United States Senate in 1861 said: "We have been brought to stand before the alternative of the destruction of state independence or the destruction of the Union **which our Fathers made.**"

Alexander Stephens, Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy, publicly repudiated and expressly denounced "The Constitutional Government established by the Fathers" and the whole theory on which it rested—"equal natural rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"—as "fundamentally wrong," proclaiming that the "new Confederate government is founded upon exactly the opposite theory," and "that its corner-stone is human slavery," and "that slavery is the natural and moral condition of the negro."

In "battling to perpetuate" this new government the Confederates necessarily battled to destroy the old. This inscription, therefore, coupled with familiar history, and the highest Confederate authority, presents the rather amusing and grotesque proposition that "the Confederates battled to perpetuate what they fought to destroy!"

The inscriptions also proclaim "the purest patriotism" and "defeat by overwhelming numbers."

The proposition that self-refuting inscriptions merit no challenge cannot apply where mystic or enigmatical language in the form of mere abstractions or conclusions must be unraveled and properly connected in order to discover and expose the hidden thing to be refuted. Inscriptions purporting to proclaim historical facts, yet reflecting only mere individual opinions or conclusions and of no historic value whatever, may yet confuse, mislead, or "educate" the unsuspecting or uninformed. It may be safely assumed that it is the duty and privilege of any so disposed to admonish such as he would warn those who—yielding to attractive proclamations—were about to purchase or accept Confederate bonds or bank notes at their face value.

## II.

As this beautiful and imposing structure was erected in a public park, in a patriotic city of a Union State by permission of a patriotic people and for public instruction, may not we, with propriety, inquire why a monument to Confederate valor which would appeal to a united public sentiment, and be a graceful recognition of a public favor, has been studiously perverted into a mere shrine where only a select coterie of mourners for the Lost Cause may appropriately pay tribute? But patriotic people who would enjoy the "peach" must swallow the stone.

But by what authority, may we inquire, are the old past issues of the Civil War publicly revamped by these inscriptions and the old dead things practically imposed as present living conditions of acceptable tribute to Confederate valor? Did the surviving Confederates who gallantly fought to a finish and were compelled to surrender and abandon such issues revamp and impose the same anew?

Did they, either collectively or individually, ever suggest the absurd proposition that general friendship manifested for them in peace involved an acknowledgment of the justness of their cause in war?

Was general amnesty and general good will extended to the surviving Confederates in peace because their cause was considered just in war? If the dividing Lost Cause of the dead past has no place among the living, why should it be obtruded between the living and the dead? Again we ask by what authority—beyond themselves—do "unconquerable spirits" who never fought and never surrendered practically impose conditions barring patriotic tribute to the heroic Confederate dead which the heroic Confederate living have practically repudiated?

## III.

Doubtless it is generally well understood that former foes who wore the Blue yield to none in their approval of public recognition of Confederate valor which they had ample opportunity to observe and admire as well as to dread and which has so richly contributed to their own in obtaining world-wide recognition of the fidelity, the heroic sacrifices, and the sublime courage of the American soldier. Enemies in war, the Blue and the Gray have continuously fraternized as friends in peace, and it will doubtless be deeply regretted by many, as an unpatriotic blunder, that they cannot unitedly bow their respects to this splendid monument because that which they so cordially and unitedly approve has been inseparably linked and entangled with that which patriotic people will unite to condemn.

Were all of the defeated former armed enemies of the United States Government treated alike, what would our people think of the spectacle of monuments erected in our public parks to gratify our British, our Mexican, and our Spanish citizens and proclaiming and teach-



ing that in the wars with their respective countries the respective causes of our enemies were just and necessarily implying that our government was wrong in defending itself against those who would defeat or destroy it! Should our former foreign enemies who fought only to defeat be less privileged than our former domestic enemies who fought to destroy? Yet, in behalf of the latter, such a monument has been presented to the patriotic people of St. Louis, erected on territory that never for one moment ceased to be under the flag and authority of the government of the United States—a secession monument in a Union state and city!

However, in spite of criticisms, there remains the hope that this monument, with its inscriptions, may indeed be truly educational far beyond the most ardent expectations of its founders, from the very fact that the indefinite and vague character of its inscriptions may excite sufficient curiosity or interest to lead many to a studious investigation of the indisputable facts and circumstances upon which these monumental abstractions and conclusions are predicated. And all such amongst the declared purposes and objectives of the Confederates, will search in vain to discover any "right" they fought to uphold which Jefferson and Washington approved, or otherwise. They will search in vain to discover how "the independence of the states which was won from Great Britain" was, in the slightest degree, involved in the attempt to secede from the American Union! They will search in vain to discover how "they battled to perpetuate the Constitutional Government established by the Fathers" by battling to establish a slavocracy on its ruins! or to discover how the proclaimed "purest patriotism" was limited to eleven states of the American Union; or to discover, regardless of the merits of the proposition, why the lamented defeat "by overwhelming numbers" did not sooner happily suggest the supreme folly of so hopeless a minority, in a Republic, attempting to enforce its decrees against a majority so "overwhelming.

Undoubtedly the delay of half a century in these proclamations has served to soften opposition in many who will now regard the same as mere literary curiosities or ancient delusions more amusing than harmful, for it is manifestly too late in this day and generation to "stuff" any considerable portion of our patriotic people with the justness of the Lost Cause, however imposingly or attractively presented, because it is now a matter of public conviction—both North and South—that successful secession could have resulted only in dire national disaster and interminable border wars between the states. To this large and growing class, living in the atmosphere of Twentieth Century civilization, and in the glowing light that reflects the strength and beauty and national grandeur of the living present, and which will cause this beautiful structure to cast a dark shadow backward to the dead past of 50 years ago—to this class no monument, however massive or imposing, can ever dignify, and no high sounding inscriptions, however finely spun or delicately woven or artistically and deceptively entwined with the illustrious names of the foremost apostles of human liberty and popular constitutional

government, can ever commend, or glorify, the vital principles of the Lost Cause—secession and disunion—the bondage of the slave, and the baser bondage of the Master!

#### IV.

If the proclamations of this monument be true; if Lincoln, Grant, and the Union armies fought to defeat, and did defeat, the principles of Jefferson and Washington, and battled to defeat, and did defeat, the constitutional independence of the States of the American Union, and battled to defeat, and did defeat, and overthrow the Constitutional Government established by the Fathers, then, indeed, should no time be lost in publicly correcting some of the most stupendous historical blunders ever committed in the history of the world! Every encyclopedia and every standard history that have been published and distributed throughout the civilized world during the last half century should be immediately recalled and revised and made to conform to the "truth" as sanctified and certified by a select little coterie of individuals on a Confederate Monument in St. Louis!

If it be an object of this imposing structure to clothe with the virtue of Confederate valor the principles of the Lost Cause, or to present the former as a passport for the latter to the favorable consideration of patriotic people, can there be any reasonable doubt as to the result of such an experiment when such object shall be made manifest?

We may fairly assume that if there be one thing above all others that the American people of every patriotic community will ever abhor and can never overlook, it is that institution which was the underlying **cause** of all the sacrifices and sufferings of the Civil War. Accompanied by the valor of the battlefield it will humiliate its escort; wafted on the wings of poetry and song it will prove an unworthy subject; cradled in a bed of roses it will be recognized coiled beneath its fragrant surroundings; in any attractive "Make-up" its "stage name" will never be mistaken for the real. The plea for the mercy of forgetfulness in the glowing light of 20th Century civilization would only render its blackness the more conspicuous. Let it be wreathed with the approving smiles of "some of the loveliest and fairest and sweetest flowers of all the land," yet none can clothe with their loveliness, nor cover or conceal with their beauty, nor sweeten with their fragrance, the inhuman **Cause** of the Slave Holders' Rebellion!

#### V.

From the standpoint of patriotic philosophy what is the true significance of this, and similarly inscribed monuments scattered throughout the Southern section of our country, and that attempt to justify the Lost Cause, and to glorify the attempt to destroy the Union? In the



progress of human events, and in the light of national grandeur of the living present, what *must* they before the nation, and the world, of necessity, signify? Are they mere "mile stones" to indicate how far backward the nation has receded or remained during the last half century, or are they more properly to be considered mere "head stones" erected over the remains of the dead past to mark the distance this great nation has progressed during the last 50 years?

Build them where they may, they can neither escape nor defy the inexorable logic of events. The more massive or imposing they are the more typical of the weight of woe brought upon this nation by Civil War. The broader and deeper their foundations will demonstrate the more significantly the dependence of even such monuments upon the free soil of a free Republic. Their splendid shafts of marble or granite may tower majestically into the heavens, but only through an atmosphere that no longer gives breath to a slave. The Battle Flags of the Rebellion petrified thereon in marble or granite will only serve to remind the world of their proud originals which were humbled and furled and surrendered fifty years ago.

Monuments of the dark past they must always stand estranged from the glowing light of the living present, and "Old Glory," the flag and the pride of Washington and Jefferson and of Lincoln and Grant and the mighty mass of patriotic American people, everywhere, must, of necessity, ever cast upon all such a Reproving Shadow.

G. W. B.

St. Louis, February, 1915.