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THE SPEECH OF LEE

Read at the Reunion of Confederate Veterans

AT BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

The Following Address Was Prepared by the Late General Stephen D. Lee Who Was Commander-in-Chief of the United Confederates.

It is now fourteen years since the Confederate Veterans enjoyed the hospitality of this magic city. We remember gratefully the courtesy of our former unsurpassed welcome, but today we are ready to believe that Birmingham can surpass itself. Then there was with us the incomparable Gordon, soldier, statesman and orator who along with the valorous Longstreet and the gallant Wheeler were Alabama's Paladins in the armies of the Confederacy. It was from Alabama that Yancey's voice, like a silver trumpet, called the South to Arms with an eloquence more potent than Clan-Alpines' fiery cross. Alabama was the cradle of the Confederacy. Here was installed the Provisional Government of the new nation, and here her illustrious chief took the bath of office which no man but himself should ever take. And from Alabama came the great Admiral who floated the stars and bars upon every sea, and single-handed swept the nation's commerce from the waves.

Since the war, I have heard many addresses to Confederate Veterans. Our orators have been rich in arguments to demonstrate the correctness of States Rights views, and the Soundness of the interpretation of the Constitution held by Southern statesmen. They have displayed the firm historic basis of our political faith. They have spoken in comforting words of unexpected beneficent results of the war, of the preservation of the rights of the states in the Union, of the discipline of adversity which prepared us to meet the terrible race problem with unflinching courage, indefatigable patience and united strength. They have taught us that the Lost Cause was not wholly lost, that the best fruits of the great conflict came to the South, when the master was freed from the slave, and the old ice-bergs of sectional hate were set adrift in the warm gulf-stream of a new national patriotism.

Nevertheless it has not seemed the whole truth to me that the Confederate soldier went into battle to vindicate a constitutional argument. He went to war because he loved his people; because his country was invaded; because his heart was throbbing for his hearth stone. Here was the land which gave him birth. Here was the church spire where he had learned it was not all of life to live, or all of death to die. No hostile foot shall ever tread this consecrated ground except over his dead body. It was the prospect of invasion that made the border states with bleeding hearts try to cast their lot with the Confederacy. He who could have expected a Lee to do battle against Virginia, or a Hampton to draw his sword against South Carolina, has never learned the language of the human heart. Nothing but the most devoted love of country could ever had sustained the Confederate soldier in his unequal and terrible struggle.

Neither do I consider it necessary to find a reward for the Confederate soldier in unexpected good results of the great conflict. The reward of noble actions lies in the capacity to do them. The Confederate soldier who fought with unflinching courage had the reward of being a brave man. He who loved his country had the reward of being a true patriot. He who

faced the cannon's mouth for those he loved dearer than life had the reward of being a hero. He who was faithful unto death had the reward of a stainless honor. What other course could a Southerner have taken?

Behind him were the great traditions of his English race—there were Hastings and Cressy and Agincourt, there were Naseby, Blenheim and Quebec, there were King's Mountain and Valley Forge. In his veins flowed the blood of a thousand years of chivalry. He could face the line of fire, but not the shame of standing back.

States are not great, except as men shall make them.

Men are not great, except they do and dare.

These men fell bleeding and with broken swords before the altar of their country. Their reward was the imperishable Knighthood of their service. I imagine that the Knights of the Holy Grail never sought other reward than just to serve. The Confederate soldier was the flower of noble and heroic courage. Duty laid her kiss upon his brow, and Love of Country folded him in her arms. He enriched the world in honor. He added to the spiritual riches of mankind. The memory of his deeds is the treasure of his people, incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeeth not away. No noble action is ever lost, no brave deed shall ever pass away. They are written upon the everlasting pages of the Universe, they are inscribed upon the heart of God.

To those who keep alive in loyal hearts the memory of the Confederate dead, I would say, these men chose the noblest part. This is the best life offers any man, to strive for the highest, the greatest, the bravest he knows. Is it not better to achieve these things, even at the cost of life itself, than to purchase length of days by mean and sordid living, by cowardice or craft, by surrender of the fine ideals of manhood in base compliance to dishonor? In the hearts of every man the Everlasting has made answer. If the cause was lost the men were not. Looking beyond the little span of human life, into the white light of eternity, what better could we have wished for the Confederate soldier than to have played his part as he did? He has left heroic memories that chasten and purify the hearts of all who shall come after him. He has lifted life above the low level of the common-places into the realm of precious and immutable things, into the great spiritual realities which abide above all change, beyond the reach of years.

The story of the dying Sidney who gave his glass of water to a wounded soldier saying, "Thy necessity is greater than mine", is one of the fine memories of the English race. I would than the pen of Milton or Gibbon were mine that I might place beside it the story of Pat Cleburne at Franklin as he drew off his boots to place them on the bleeding feet of a comrade and then rode on to lead the fatal charge. He fell upon the breastworks, saying, "I'm killed boys, but fight it out."

The old masterful type of the Southern statesman passed away with slavery. Whatever may be said of that institution, it trained men for leadership and government. The constant presence of the bindsman wrought in the master a love of freedom and a sense of honor that will never be surpassed. Wonderful men those old Southerners were: great in counsel, great in battle, but greater than all in the integrity which felt dishonor like a wound. They would have fallen upon the sordid plunderers which in later times have infested public life like Elijah upon the prophets of Baal. I cherish the hope that our Southern blood will produce the type again that with renewed prosperity we will again introduce into public life a class of men able and willing to devote themselves with pure and unwavering fidelity to the public service, and free from the all-absorbing struggle for bread, which has been the portion of Southern men for so many years. May it be the lot of our children to perform the duty of freedom in a republic, with its will-



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The reason why I have this hope that the old time Southerner shall live once more is because the Southern boys love and cherish the deeds of their ancestors. They do not forget. The ideals of the fathers are real to the sons. The homage these young men pay to us old Confederates is sweet to our declining years, but sweetest of all, because it bespeaks a love for the dreams which we cherished and a willingness to die for them if need be.

We old soldiers are sitting in the twilight of life waiting for the evening detail; waiting for the shining angel.

"With things Like chevrons on his wings." We are the stragglers in the great march. The victory is already won, and our comrades expect our coming to share the glory of their triumph. In the little time left us before we report to our Great Commander, let us quit ourselves like men. When the pale sergeant comes, we shall listen for voices in the upper air saying "Welcome Comrade. Do they love us still in Dixie."

HAVE 26 ENGAGEMENTS

From June 3 to June 7 113 Killed And 26 Taken Prisoners.

TOKIO, June 9.—A despatch from Seoul dated to-day (June 9) received at Army headquarters reports that from June 3 to June 7 the government troops had 26 engagements with the insurgents.

In these engagements one hundred and thirteen insurgents were killed and 26 taken prisoners.

The recent transfers of Korean cabinet ministers were due to the fact that during a conference of provincial governors a number of cases of negligence of the governors to represent the actual facts concerning the attitude of the Korean government towards the insurgents were overlooked also neglect in failing to correct false and malicious reports concerning Japanese policy thus tacitly encouraging the insurrection. In consequence the minister of agriculture was transferred to the home depart-

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ment and to-day the new home minister announced the removal of seven provincial governors showing a determination to effect many sweeping changes in local officials.

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PRACTICAL POINTS On Banking—No. 5

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