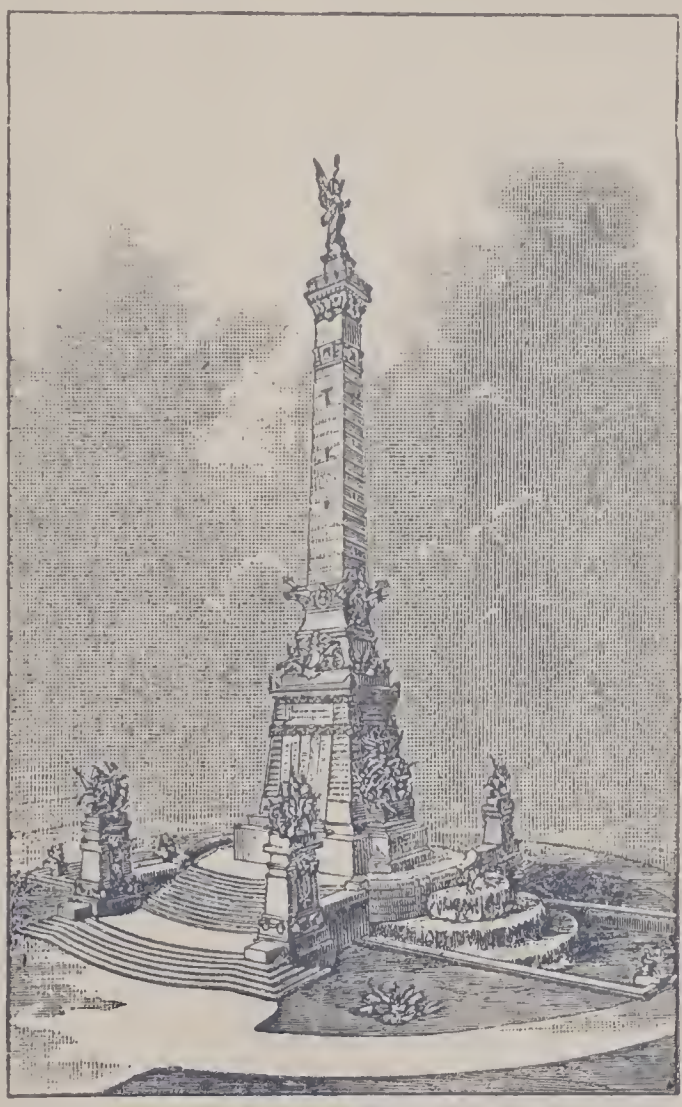


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A Soldier's Farewell to His  
Old Flag.



INDIANA SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' MONUMENT.

PRICE, 10 CENTS.

*Bridges*







A Soldier's Farewell to His  
Old Flag.

*Albert  
Bridges*  
BY A. F. BRIDGES.

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BRAZIL, INDIANA.

THE REGISTER, PUBLISHER.

1889.

P31150  
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DEDICATION.

TO THE UNPENSIONED UNION SOLDIERS,  
As well as to their Comrades generally, in the  
hope that the Republic will soon recognize their  
services with becoming gratitude.

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## AN UNKNOWN HERO.

**T**HE day was a perfect day in June. Nature was exuberant of life in green fields, gay with myriad flowers, swift streams, the melody of birds, while over all bent an unclouded sky—a sky of promise and of prophecy. Everywhere there was life — nowhere was there a hint or suggestion of death. Seated in the front room of a suit then occupied by the State Library, at the corner of Tennessee and Market streets, in Indianapolis, I was reading from *The North American Review* for September, 1817, the original "Thanatopsis." The venerable janitor was busy in the opposite end of the room. The doors were open look-



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ing out on the State House grounds, then overgrown with abundant shrubbery, whence came cool airs stirred with melody, and fragrant. Suddenly two figures stood in the doorway. They wore the blue uniform of privates of the late war. One, emaciated, with a hectic flush on his cheeks, leaned heavily on his comrade's arm. They proceeded slowly to the room where were stored mementoes and trophies of the war, including numerous battle-flags. The janitor followed, being beconed. Laying aside the poem, I also followed. The invalid soldier was dying of a consumption, doubtless the result of exposure in army life, though fifteen years had passed since the war closed, and he had come evidently from a distance to see his old flag for the last time before he died. The janitor very tenderly untied and shook out the tattered and torn folds of the flag from the splintered staff—it had led one of Indiana's many brave regiments through focal fires at the front, what one I did not note, nor does it matter. Removing his cap, the soldier bowed his head reverently in the presence of his old flag, nor could he suppress the tears and the



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emotion called up by the recollections of the past, and the sadness of the parting. The affecting scene lasted for some minutes, though scarcely a word was uttered, when the two soldiers quietly left.

I could not forget the scene—the devotion to the old flag—the self-sacrificing love of country—the brave soldier dying in defense of human liberty, though years after the victory had been won, just as truly as if he had been shot down on the field of battle. I only wish that this tardy attempt to preserve in verse the incident and its lessons was more worthy.

I regret that I can not embellish the verse with the hero's name. In some lowly, perhaps unmarked grave, he is sleeping to-day with the great army of the Unknown dead.

He was a typical Union soldier, with a record somewhat broadened to admit of detail, and yet perhaps not an impossible record. There are thousands like him yet living, or rather dying—dying from battle wounds, disease contracted during army life, exposures, hardships. They falter in mid-life, or in premature age,

while others for whose sake they are now worn-out and broken-down, out-distance them in the race of life. They should be pensioned, every one of them, not as charity, but in payment of a debt that the Government owes to them as its saviours. Then, as one by one, they join the rapidly-swelling ranks of comrades and old commanders in an eternal bivouac, let their memories be kept evergreen, and let monuments worthy of those who build --for what monument can be worthy of those who die for the freedom of the human race? be erected in their honor as a reward to loyalty, and to show that Republics are not always ungrateful.

A SOLDIER'S FAREWELL TO HIS OLD  
FLAG.

---

Blanched was his cheek but not with fear, that  
pleasant morn in June.

Death's hand was on his manly brow—dire fate  
that came too soon

To one who, when the war clouds lowered,  
amid the shot and shell,

Quick answered to his country's call and did  
his duty well.

He followed far the flag he loved. Its folds to  
him divine

Gleamed ever on the battle's front of victory.  
the sign.

He saw it fall with Sumter, when the South  
her challenge flung,

And all the startled Northland sons to arms  
indignant sprung.

From Bull Run's rout to Malvern Hill he  
followed where it led,  
When Little Mac, all gallantly, rode at the  
army's head.  
From splintered masts with Farragut he saw  
its bright folds fly  
Till o'er the South's fair Queen they streamed  
beneath a peaceful sky —

The Mississippi owned no more the traitor's  
armed fleet,  
But underneath its folds benign the rippling  
wavelets beat.  
He saw it wave from Round Top, amid the  
flame and smoke,  
Where Lee's invaders courted death beneath  
Meade's lightning stroke,

On bloody field of Gettysburg, now Freedom's  
rallying place,  
Where North and South as brothers meet and  
hatred's scars efface.  
Up through the clouds he followed it on Look  
Out, bathed in blood,  
Where gallant Hooker won the day and on the  
summit stood.

Or with bold Sherman to the sea, a bumper  
true and brave,  
Through grim war's very fastnesses his coun-  
try's flag to save.  
With Logan, lion-hearted, into the thickest  
fray,  
Or in the charge with Little Phil, the charge  
that saved the day.

With Grant at Shiloh, or within the Wilder-  
ness most dire —  
Storming beleagured Richmond through length-  
ened siege of fire —  
Till Grant returned to Lee his sword and bade  
the South go free,  
A knight of royal knighthood and Christian  
chivalry.

Ah, those were days heroic, the souls of men  
that tried —  
Days iconoclastic unto grim idols big with  
pride;  
They lifted the old world sunward, they brake  
the gyves of man,  
They won for Freedom once again the fight.  
Republican.

All honor to the brave who fell. Unto remotest time  
Green be the memory of their deeds, heroic  
and sublime!  
But not alone fall martyr hosts on fields of  
bloody wars—  
Death reaps a bounteous harvest yet from  
those who won but scars.

The prison pen, the long forced march, exposures manifold,  
Bent strong forms long before their time and  
made the young men old,  
Brought lingering death to thousands, who, as  
past the swift years by,  
Still follow their old commanders—to the bivouac on high.

Following his old commander from ranks thinned  
with each day  
Of scarred and war-worn veterans still tramping  
life's highway,  
He came that pleasant morn in June to bid  
his flag good-bye  
Before he joined his comrades slain the day  
whose dawn was nigh.



War's trophies and mementoes ranged, historic  
sight to see  
That brought the dead past back again, looked  
down all orderly  
Upon a soldier leaning on a comrade's proffered  
arm,  
His sunk cheek touched with tell-tale flush  
shrivelled and shrunk his form.

He faltering told his story. A few words uttered  
all.  
Kindly the gray-haired sexton, from its place  
upon the wall,  
Lifted the colors, rent and torn, of the soldier's  
regiment,  
Unfurled it to the eager gaze upon it sadly  
bent.

Head uncovered, bent in reverence; eyes dimmed  
with burning tears;  
Form shaken with emotion strong with strength  
of patient years,  
He cast his last sad look upon the flag he followed  
far,  
His day-dawn all resplendent throughout the  
night of war.



All hearts owned the holiness that awed that  
silent hour,  
That touched all hearts to tenderness with its  
subduing power,  
For a gallant soldier bade farewell to a flag he  
died to save,  
That its bright folds might float above the  
home of free and brave.

He came so like a visitant, that pleasant morn  
in June,  
From out the Past's dim portals, with memor-  
ies all atune,  
No word profaned the silence that asked from  
whence he came,  
And silence guards the secret well that hides  
his honored name.

Unknown he sleeps, with countless hosts a  
martyr brother true,  
Whose warm heart's blood in sacrifice encrim-  
soned coats of blue.  
Green be the turf above them all, these hosts  
of Freedom's braves,  
And, reared to heaven, rise the shaft above  
their lowly graves.

Aye, reared to heaven let it rise to tell remotest time  
Of willing lives in sacrifice to principle sublime —  
Of lives that piled the altar fanes for Freedom's glorious sake,  
And man's, and God's, that earth at last, all disenthralled, might wake —

Might wake to greet the dawning day of Liberty serene,  
From out the night of ages, bright with un-borrowed sheen,  
The flower of all the centuries, the foremost in the van,  
Its creed, the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man.

THE END.

INDIANA SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' MONUMENT.

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Total hight, including statue, 233 feet; diameter at base of terrace 63; estimated cost not to exceed \$200,000; architect, Bruno Schmitz, of Berlin, Prussia.





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