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ADDRESS

BY

GENERAL WILLIAM RUFFIN COX

ARMY NORTHERN VIRGINIA

DELIVERED BEFORE

The Oakwood Memorial Association

RICHMOND, VA., MAY 10, 1911



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HONORS ARE PAID DEAD WAR HEROES.

GENERAL COX PRAISES BRAVE MEN OF BOTH SIDES—A NOTABLE PARADE.

Paying annual tribute to the Confederate dead who lie beneath the sod of Oakwood, the largest gathering of its kind in recent years took part yesterday afternoon in the exercises of the Oakwood Memorial Association. Though the ceremonies were directly under control of the association and R. E. Lee Camp of Confederate Veterans, all Confederate societies of the city were represented in the parade that wound into the cemetery shortly after 4 o'clock. Long before that time the cemetery was thronged with people and the parade passing along the flag-marked walk to the speaker's stand marched between two almost solid walls of humanity.

After the salutes had been fired from the rifles of the First Regiment and the cannon of the Richmond Howitzers, the line was reformed and marched towards the river as the faint sound of taps floated from the band stand. At the Old Dominion wharf the floral flag slipped from the deck of the city tug Thomas Cunningham, Sr.; again the Howitzers' cannon boomed a salute, and as darkness was falling another sound of taps came plaintively from the base of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument on Libby Hill.

GENERAL COX SPEAKS.

General William Ruffin Cox, of North Carolina, the orator of the day, was introduced by Mayor D. C. Richardson. He was not a native of the State, the Mayor said, but no Virginian had ever rendered more valiant service on its soil, he having been wounded five times at the battle of Chancellorsville, besides serving with the greatest distinction in many other engagements.

Though he recounted many incidents reflecting the bravery, self-sacrifice and patriotism of the men and women of the Confederacy, General Cox's speech was one that breathed the peace and prosperity of a reunited country. He spoke with the utmost calmness and impartiality of the men who fought for what they believed right under both flags, and reminded his hearers that even during the most trying times of the struggle there never was any personal animosity between the brave men of the South and the brave men of the North. He himself had fought along with the rest for what he considered right. Now that it was all over, he rejoiced that every section answered to the call of the common flag; that two of the most famous living Confederate generals had taken conspicuous places.

The invocation was offered by Rev. James Power Smith, D. D., and the benediction pronounced by Rev. R. A. Goodwin, rector of St. John's Episcopal Church. Hymns and old war songs were rendered by the High School chorus under the direction of Professor Harwood.

IMPOSING PARADE.

The parade was mobilized by Chief Marshal W. B. Freeman at the corner of Twenty-fifth and Broad streets at 3:30 o'clock. First in line was the chief marshal and staff and mounted police, followed by R. E. Lee Camp, Confederate Veterans, the First Regiment and band, the Richmond Howitzers and carriages containing members of the various Confederate organizations. The line of march lay along Broad street to Oakwood avenue and thence to the cemetery. At the gates, the detachment of mounted police under Sergeant Sowell formed on one side of the avenue and the chief marshal and staff on the other, leaving the parade to pass through with Lee Camp at its head. Here George E. Pickett Camp, Confederate Veterans, was waiting and fell in behind Lee Camp. In this order, they passed around the speakers' stand, where orders to break ranks were given.

The march to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument was in the same order. Only the band and members of the several associations went as far as the wharf. The military stood at attention on the brow of the hill until the sound of the cannon died away.

The Southern Cause Noble and Just

The South in the Making of the Nation—This Now a Reunited Country—The Odds Against the Confederacy—Virginia's Immortal Place

BY WILLIAM RUFFIN COX,

Brigadier-General, C. S. A.

(The following is the oration delivered on Memorial Day at Oakwood Cemetery, May 10, 1911):

It fills me with a noble pride to appear before you on this occasion under the auspices of the patriotic Oakwood Memorial Association, and to co-operate with you in doing honor to those who, for four long weary years, upheld the fortunes of the young Confederacy upon the points of their glittering bayonets until the world was filled with their fame.

It also gives me pleasure to know that these beautiful memorial services were originated by the ministering womanhood of this, our Southland, and that to-day similar celebrations are being observed throughout the South. Not only here, but in many portions of the North, where our friends have gone to seek their fortunes, like observances are taking place, and in some localities the Blue and the Gray are united in paying honor to those who fell in the War Between the States, for between the brave soldiers of the North and the South there was never any personal antagonism during this long and bloody struggle.

You will bear in mind that the shield which was erected at the cross roads was on one side painted white and on the other side black. Those who approached it from the dark side declared it was black, while those beholding it from the other side declared it was white. So in the late war, it depended from which side the question was viewed as to where the duty lay. The North thought they were right; the South believed that they were right.

Both were equally brave, equally determined to uphold the cause they espoused, with their lives if need be. To-day the cause of estrangement being removed, each one recognizes the fact that we are all Americans, and equally proud of our great country; and when she needs our services, it matters not from what section the call may come, the response will be, in the language of Decatur, "Our country; may she always be in the right; but our country, right or wrong."

The war over, nations not familiar with the facts sincerely believed the estrangements still existed. Spain so thought when we desired her to lighten the oppressions she was then inflicting upon Cuba, and was encouraged to resist our demand under the mistaken belief that should war ensue she would have the sympathy of the South. On the contrary, it was an old, grizzled Confederate general on the heights of El Caney who moved the American army to hold their lines until the troops of Spain were overcome.

It is gratifying for us to know that the highest position in this government, not excepting the presidency itself, is filled by a once-private Confederate soldier—the position regulated and established by the great Chief Justice Marshall and adorned by another Southerner, Chief Justice Taney. The world has never known braver, more intelligent nor more superb soldiers than those of the North and South during the War Between the States, and if superiority must be claimed, the fact that with 600,000 men the South successfully struggled against 2,700,000 foes, and resisted their invasions for four years, the laurel must be awarded to her soldiers. At last, not to superiority of arms, but from hunger and overwhelming numbers, at Appomattox they yielded up their arms, their hearts even then resolute and determined to continue the struggle, but their eyes bedewed with tears that fortune had deserted them. Where else can we find soldiers who have displayed such a devotion to duty? It arose from confidence in that leader who often led them to victory, but never to defeat.

Here I am reminded of a bit of humor, perpetrated by Mr. Lincoln when an anxious father who had two sons in the North-

ern army inquired of him how many troops Mr. Davis had. He promptly responded, "Three million men."

His questioner in amazement asked, "How do you know that fact, Mr. President?" "Why," exclaimed Lincoln, "McClellan around Richmond declared he was overwhelmed by superior numbers. Grant, at Shiloh, declared he was greatly outnumbered. Pope said the Confederates had five to one. I know I have a million soldiers in the field, and if our armies have been so greatly outnumbered, why, of course, the Confederates must have three million."

It is not surprising that the Northern commanders, in view of the achievements of the Confederates upon the battlefield, especially during the early part of the war, should have been so forcibly impressed with the apparently overwhelming numbers of their adversaries. Like the blast of the bugle of Roderick Dhu, the presence alone of Stonewall Jackson was worth ten thousand men.

In the Valley of Virginia this incomparable soldier met the three concentrating corps of the enemy. First he struck Shields, and after a severe engagement retired. They said he was lost. Turning back, he met Banks, whom he defeated. Then he was lost again. Again turning back, he defeated Fremont's corps, and was lost again; but while they went towards Washington, he came toward Richmond with his 18,000 heroes, accompanied by a wagon train twenty miles long, filled with commissary stores and hospital supplies much needed for the Confederate army.

We could well afford that he should be so lost. In addition he so alarmed the political powers at Washington as to cause the retention of McDowell, with 70,000 troops, for the protection of the capital.

The war over, the Southern soldiers turned with sad and brave hearts to their desolated homes. Their family altars had been overthrown; the fields had grown up; they were without money and the means to commence the struggle of life again. To the surprise of the outside world, they did not sit down by the rivers and weep, as they remembered the prosperity of former days; but bravely determined to begin life anew, and they accomplished results gratifying to every true man, North or South.

Their magnificent, varied climate and productive soil responded generously to labor. They moved onward bravely in the struggle for life, as in war they had fought fearlessly for weary years.

Here it may not be inappropriate to mention what Virginia, grand and imperial, has done for our great country. Familiar as the facts may be, they cannot be too often repeated. When the conflict began against the infant colonies for the freedom of this fair land she gave to America—aye, to the world—one of the grandest men known in the tide of time. I need not mention his name. The great poet Byron says: "His name will be a watchword for freedom while breath is left to echo it." Phillips, a great crator across the water, declared he was a boon of Providence to the human race, that no one people could claim him, and he surpassed all the great leaders of the world. In victory he was great.

Virginia also gave the world his twin brother in grandeur, our peerless leader who in pursuing his struggle for the South was not only great when the tide of victory arose in our favor, but probably greater still in the hour of defeat. The pages of history will be scanned in vain to discover the equal of the peerless Lee in the hour of adversity.

The great Bill of Rights formulated by your Mason in our Revolutionary struggle, now deposited in your State Library, was the most formidable measure presented during that time. The first declaration for our rights and emancipation from Great Britain was presented by your Colonial Legislature.

The great Declaration of Independence was drawn by a Virginian. The great Northwest was conquered by Virginia militia during the administration of Governor Henry, the man who, in old St. John's Church in your city, made that great speech, which thrilled and aroused the hearts of our struggling patriots that he would have "liberty or death." After seven long years of contest peace was declared. A peace that meant a new nation.

The colonies were separated; the ravages of war and the destruction of property left them greatly impoverished; poverty as usual, brings with it discontent. Enemies were fermenting dissensions, and the question arose, how was it possible to make a united people? Virginia then, generous as she has always been,

magnanimously came forward, and instead of, like Brennus, throwing her sword into the balance to assert her rights, she magnanimously said to her sister colonies, "Take this great territory, which is my own, to relieve your necessities; your country shall be my country, and we will stand together as friends, and not apart as strangers."

The Union was formed. The autonomy of the States was established, and the government moved on in the road of success, until made too confident by her prosperity, from time to time mutterings of discontent and threats of dissolution were prevailing throughout the land.

Who, then, should question Virginia's right to be known as the Mother of States and of Statesmen? With so small a population as she then possessed, the question which has puzzled mankind was how she could furnish within so small a country such a galaxy of distinguished rulers; take charge of the government after the restoration of peace, and for the period of thirty-six years—with the intermission of four—supply the country with presidents and leading public men; thus unifying the government until partisanship had virtually disappeared. The researches of historians discover that prominent among your people were numerous descendents of the dominating Anglo-Saxon race, a race that declared "resistance to tyrants was obedience to God." That wrested from a reluctant King at Runnymede, the great Magna Charta! That executed Charles the First for the invasion of their rights; that gave to mankind the examples of a Hampton, a Marlborough, a Chatham, a Burke, the Virgin Queen for whom this State is named, and many other illustrious examples.

Why then, not ascribe her ascendancy in the colonial struggles, to that ancestry that "doth hedge a King?" It is not surprising, therefore, that Virginia, with sorrow and regret, should view the unnatural contention among the States of the Union which she felt assured must ultimately result in an effort at dissolution. Occupying as she did a position, which in the event of war would make her the Flanders of America, she did all she could to prevent this unrelenting struggle.

Time and again she voted against the ordinance of secession,

and the sister State, North Carolina, stood watchful and faithful by her side. Even when the cause of pacification seemed hopeless, at the instance of her most distinguished citizen, once a President of the United States, a peace conference was suggested and met in Washington, in the hope that the dire disaster of a Civil War might be averted. The surging passions roused by agitators North and South, who, in the words of another, were "invisible in war and invincible in peace," continued to inflame sectional discontent, so that while Virginia might cry, "Peace! Peace!" there was no peace. Therefore when she was called upon by the President of the United States to furnish troops to make war upon her sister States she said, "No; if compelled to fight, I will unite my fortunes with my friends of the South rather with those who invade her soil." Who, then, at this day can but see she acted as her honor, her manhood and her self-respect dictated, and averted a fate which overtook other border States who endeavored in vain to remain neutral.

The institution of American slavery, which, if not the cause, was the occasion of the War Between the States, and which so long vexed the patience of the pseudo-philanthropists of Old and New England, was introduced by those governments into the Colonies against the protest of Virginia. This State from the outset opposed its introduction, and so late as 1831, in a convention comprised of her ablest men, ex-presidents, ex-governors, etc., was called together for the consideration of the emancipation of the slaves. After an able and exhaustive consideration of the subject, the abolition of the slaves was refused by but one vote. What was to be done with the emancipated negro race, living in close conjunction with whites, was the most formidable argument against emancipation. They could but consider that Spain, after a long and bloody war, had defeated and expelled the Moors from her dominions, and from that time commenced the decay of that hitherto formidable nation. France for over a century had not recovered from the expulsion of the Huguenot, and England, after the emancipation of the slaves from her far-off colony of Jamaica, found that this fruitful, tropical island fell rapidly into decay, from which it has never recovered unto this day.

From climate and production New England found the institution unprofitable, and by prospective legislation shifted the onerous burden upon her Southern sisters.

It was not believed that the negro and white races could possibly live on terms of amity and friendship after the freedom of the slaves.

Virginia had the experience of the uprising of the negroes in San Domingo, and the domination of the inferior negro race with its resultant evils; and the Nat Turner insurrection within the borders of Virginia, with all its horrors, was continually before the eyes of the people.

For a time it was supposed the colonization of Liberia and gradual emancipation might possibly prove a satisfactory solution of this formidable question. Some benevolent citizens of this State had their slaves taught trades and educated, to their own impoverishment, and having sent these people to the colony, the cry came back that neither the climate nor the prevailing institutions were suited to their conditions. On the contrary, they were unable to find employment or subsistence. "Send us food and clothing or we perish" came in imploring appeals from them. In the language of another, we had brought the negro from Africa a barbarian and pagan, and we had made him a Christian and a citizen. Notwithstanding the cries of the barbarity of slavery to which this amiable race submissively and uncomplainingly submitted, it seems a much greater hardship to expel him from lifelong friendship and association and drive him back to a condition to which he had become so unsuited. Mr. Lincoln, General Grant and other able men of the North and of the South sincerely believed the two races, with the negro emancipated, could not live at peace in the same country, and therefore they thought the acquisition of the island of San Domingo or other tropical localities indispensable as a place for their colonization.

The invention of the cotton gin by an ingenious Connecticut Yankee, had made the production of cotton a most profitable investment, from which Old England and New England, through the manufacturing of this staple derived far more profit than the owner of slaves did from the production of the raw material.

But the supposed wisdom of man proved in the presence of the Wisdom from on High the folly of human foresight.

The Southern States, which during the war had been so near to gaining their independence, were destined in the end to fail. It seems to me it was this same Wisdom from on High that caused the Indians on this continent to be superceded by a superior race; that brought the African barbarian to be taught by the Christian white man, ultimately to result in his enlightenment; and the Christianization of darkest Africa. Be that as it may, the shackles of bondage are stricken off; the speculations of our wisest publicists have but proved the limits of human foresight.

The foremost man of the negro race was born a slave in Virginia, and, looking to their future good, he advises the people of his race to remain contented among their former owners and engage in the cultivation of our productive soil, for which they had hitherto shown their greatest adaptibility, instead of going off and seeking a home in an uncongenial climate and among people by whom they are not understood.

The result is that this much-abused and misrepresented slaveholder and his descendants, by the aid of the negroes, are raising a single standard staple, which with its products and by-products is now worth over \$800,000,000 annually, which enables this government to balance its trade with the Old World. Phoenix like, the South has arisen from her ashes. Within her borders her laborers are contented; strikes and conflicts between capital and labor are practically unknown, while content pervades her realms. What are her sons doing towards promoting the power and the happiness of this greatest government the world ever knew?

When the war with Spain was flagrant the first American blood, shed at Cardenas, was that of a fair youth, the son of an ex-Confederate. It was the son of an ex-Confederate, who, at the risk of his life, penetrated the lines of the enemy and secured the information most valuable to this government. It was the son of an ex-Confederate, whose father surrendered with me at Appomattox, who volunteered to fire the ships of Cervera, thus causing the commander of fleet to come forth, and made possible the destruction of the same. And it was as flag bearer of Dewey that a Southern youth raised the Stars and Stripes over Manila Bay.

During the present administration of the five judges called to preside over one of the greatest tribunals of the present age, three of that number wore the gray. The Secretary of War is an ex-Confederate soldier. The Speaker of the House of Representatives is of Southern birth. Should I attempt to enumerate all the positions of honor and usefulness that have been filled since the close of the war by ex-Confederates and their descendants, it would be like "piling Ossa upon Pelion." Therefore I conclude by adding: Virginia, leaning with unmailed hand upon her broken staff, may say, "Vidua et victor"—if vanquished I am still victorious. For while, had she loved honor less, she might have bent the hinges of the knee in the hope that thrift might follow fawning, no such dishonor blurs her name.

The feelings of those who participated in the internecine struggle between the States cannot be entered into by those of the present generation. To us it is a grim experience; to you it is a fine legend. To us the 16,000 comrades who rest beneath the dew and sod are present now. The Chimborazo Hospital, with its accommodations for 80,000 maimed and wounded sufferers, looms before us. The strain of a seven days' struggle to preserve your capital, which resulted in the loss of thirty-five thousand men; the Wilderness campaign, which, according to the authority of Northern historians, caused the death and disability of a greater number of the Union troops than constituted the total of Lee's army at the beginning of this scene of carnage, are part of its glory. The achievements of our commander in anticipating and defeating, with his reduced numbers, any movement of his great antagonist, all rise up before us upon this impressive occasion.

The long blue lines seem still moving forward to encounter the gray, the resultant daily conflicts, the rush of artillery, the regular tramp of the cavalry, the undying steadiness of the lines of gray; after all, the Union army is no nearer your devoted city than it might have been by supreme strategy and comparatively small loss of life. Then the intrenchments around this city the vigilant defense of them against overwhelming numbers of well-supplied soldiers by the poorly-fed and less comfortably clad Confederates; the manning of forty miles of breastworks with

50,000 Confederates against the ever-increasing Union troops, come back to us until our lines of supplies being ultimately cut off, we are compelled to withdraw. All these things rise up vividly before us. I will not detain you in recounting the scenes of the battlefields, where the wounded and dying, friends and foes, are lying in close proximity: the ardor of combat over, the hope of life still giving courage for other battles. Let us draw the veil over the dismal part and simply add: No Confederate ever occupied a place in your hospital but felt it glory enough to have struggled to protect and shield such womanhood as ministered out of its very necessity to the wants of the humblest private soldier.

With a pure, incorruptible womanhood—nation-builders—content to rule and be ruled by orthodox standards, and who prize more highly the jewels of noble endeavor planted in the hearts and minds of her offspring than the outward adornment of the “guinea’s stamp,” Virginia is still rich.

As no man can be truly great who has not a good mother, in view of the good and great men she has given to mankind, assuredly no State nor people has had more grand mothers than this old Commonwealth.

While cherishing the memories of the past, we look not to things that are behind, but press on to that high goal that will make this present worthy of her past.

EDITORIAL TIMES-DISPATCH MAY 11, 1911.

TAPS.

Hundreds of people here yesterday wandered back over the years to a nation that was. Enwrapping themselves in sacred memories of the Confederacy, a mere handful of gray-haired veterans and some of those who were the girls they left behind them scattered the purple and white flowers of everlasting remembrance upon the sod where heroes lie sleeping. It was of these dead that Grady said "on every ragged gray cap the Lord God Almighty laid the sword of His imperishable knighthood."

It was an impressive scene—Memorial Day at Oakwood—one that brought a mist to the eyes not only of those of the fading generation, but likewise to the generation that is. It was on such a beautiful day that the very flower of the South marched past the noble womanhood of their country, saluting them with a "mori-turi te, salutamus," that for calm courage has no like in the history of the world. The green fields that lay near Oakwood in the peace and beauty of yesterday afternoon—across those same war-scared fields once rode the gray immortals of Lee.

The band playing softly that majestic anthem, "The Son of God Goeth Forth to War"—the handful of veterans, still erect and still soldiers—"Dixie" fervidly sung by the little descendants—the women of the Confederacy, those who lived in it and those who have learned the undying story at the knee of a remembering mother, those who are still, as they were half a century ago ever alive to the service of their brothers and to the perpetuation of patriotic devotion—the impressive invocation by Dr. Smith, the last survivor of the staff of Stonewall Jackson—the address of General Cox, one of the few surviving Confederate generals, who spoke with a voice that made one imagine what a captain he must have been among the hosts—the salutes of the Howitzers and the First Regiment—the flowers, here a few violets, there a garland of roses, each equal in affectionate memory—and then that sweetest of all the farewells that the soldier knows,

the slow, soft, consoling, "All's well" of taps, sounding through the trees and faintly echoing in the valleys beyond.

Then the tribute to the sailors out on the James, golden with the light of the parting day, with the deafening thunder of the salute of the Howitzers' guns on Libby Hill, filling the slope with the blue haze of artillery smoke, while the sun sank behind the clouds as crimson as the red banner of the Confederacy.

It is such an occasion that causes men to turn reverently to the past and hold in loyal remembrance its lessons of courage, of love of country, of honor, and of patient submission. The passions and the hatreds of that great conflict have passed away; great memories impel us only now to seek to imitate in peace those virtues of which the men and women of the Confederacy gave so luminous an example in war and in the grisly troop of circumstances that followed in its woeful wake.

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