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Fudersville

J. Frank Handy



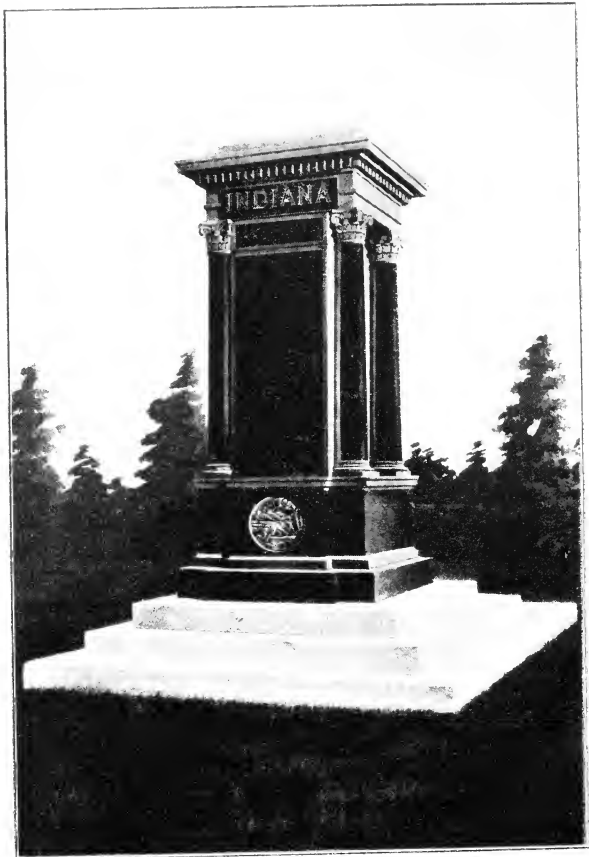
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ANDERSONVILLE



ANDERSONVILLE

By

J. FRANK HANLY



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DEDICATION
OF MONUMENT ERECTED BY
THE STATE OF INDIANA

IN MEMORY OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND
TWO INDIANA SOLDIERS WHO DIED IN
ANDERSONVILLE PRISON, 1864-1865

UNVEILED DECEMBER 26, 1908

J. FRANK HANLY

ANDERSONVILLE

A n d e r s o n v i l l e

*Mr. President and Gentlemen of the
Indiana Andersonville Monument
Commission:*

COMMISSIONED by law and acting under legislative authority duly expressed through the representatives of the people of the Commonwealth in which you live and for which you here suffered and endured almost half a century ago, you have caused to be erected here a monument to the memory of Indiana's soldiers who died here, in prison, during

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the Civil War, and were, and now are, buried here.

You have done your work well. To that we, your fellow-citizens, who are now privileged to look upon it, do with one voice testify. You have built of granite—earth's most enduring substance—after a design so simple as to be impressive because of its simplicity, and so beautiful as to abide long in the memory of those who behold it.

You have rifled the quarries of Wisconsin of their rarest treasures in texture and in color and have brought them here and piled them high in enduring tribute to the dead

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whom in life it was your proud privilege to know and greet as comrades.

What willing hands, what grateful hearts, what purposeful intent you brought to your work this stately shaft of granite long will testify.

With what recollections of a sad and tragic past—a past of which you yourselves were once a part; with what yearnings of affection for those with whom you here shared the storm and stress and want of prison life; with what memories—memories through which the cold, pathetic faces of the dead appear again as when here you looked upon

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them; with what tides of feeling; with what emotions of the soul, you now, by this unveiling, close the holiest service of your lives—let loosed imagination tell. For you the occasion is too profound for words, too deep for speech. Standing here at the grave of the buried valor of the race you touch depths of thought, of feeling, of emotion for which the plummet of human language is and forever must be inadequate—depths which the deeps of silence alone can fathom.

And we assembled here—a mighty multitude—share in high degree your thought, your feeling and your emo-

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tion, and with one accord pause in solemn awe and in breathless hush, and tender the tribute silence alone can pay to sublime and fadeless worth.

You have not built for yourselves alone. You have built for and in the name of all the people of a great and grateful Commonwealth. This beautiful memorial you now tender to the State is but one more evidence that the services, the devotion, the courage, the fortitude, and the sacrifices of her sons who participated in the war for the solidarity of the Union are still held in grateful and abiding memory both by

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their comrades and by posterity. Three million hearts are back of it; three million men and women—men and women who value liberty and love freedom and who revere the cause for which these martyrs died. It represents their sentiments, their aspirations—not languishing, dying sentiments, but virile, living sentiments; not vague, impossible aspirations formed half in doubt and half in fear, but aspirations which are attainable and which they intend shall be realized.

Indiana does not forget her dead. She can not forget them. They are unforgettable. She has builded

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monuments to their memory at Chickamauga and at Gettysburg, at Shiloh and at Vicksburg. She has marked the lines where living they struggled for the mastery of a foe as brave and valiant as human valor ever faced. She holds as sacred all paths their tired feet trod; all soil their spilled blood touched. The place where a Hoosier soldier fell and died was then and there immortalized. Though distant, desolate, and common, it became grander far “than all the snow-crowned summits of the world”—than all the fields baptized by royal blood. She can not forget them. They fought

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against the “buying of maidens,” the “selling of children,” against a cause “that had defenders, but no defense.” They were not ambition’s dupes. They died for elemental truth. They died to save the Union. They died to preserve the Government their fathers founded. They died for man. They died for the human race, for all who were or are to be. They died to save from whip and lash “the naked back of unpaid toil,” to end the traffic in human flesh and blood. They died for the sanctity of woman, for the “sacredness of maternity.” They died for liberty—for liberty for themselves—

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for liberty for an alien, helpless race. They died to give freedom to the slave that the freedom of the free might be secure.

All the Nation's battlefields are sacred. Upon them all, men have died for man, for eternal, elemental truth. This great fact gives them all enduring sanctity. But this memorial stands on holier ground, on soil more sacred than that of any battlefield the nation knows—

“ * * * a sweeter sod

Than Fancy's feet have ever trod ”—

the most sacred spot, save only one, and that in far away Palestine, in

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all the width and length of this sun-encircled earth.

The scenes enacted here—the tragedies—the torture—the sufferings—the wreck—the ruin—the sorrow — the grief — the pathos — the despair—transcend those of all the battlefields of all the earth. Here the limit of human devotion, of human endurance, of human sacrifice was reached—was reached and passed—reached and passed in Freedom's name, in her just cause, that “government of the people, by the people, and for the people should not perish from the earth.”

Here the dead, giving even as

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they died the "pass-word primeval,"
lie in solemn, eternal silence,

"Sleeping the sleep that knows no break-
ing,
Morn of toil nor night of waking."

Among them Indiana counts seven hundred and two of her own. How meet it is that a spot so marked and so immortalized should be sought out by her and a monument raised at public expense to the memory of her brave, intrepid sons who suffered here, endured and died; and that you, who suffered and endured with them, but lived, should be privileged to present it to her as a work begun and completed under your care and

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supervision. I accept it from you with pride and gratitude—accept it in her name and on behalf of her people, and do now dedicate it and declare it forever sacred to the memory of these transcendent dead.

We claim for these dead none of the greatness majorities give or men confer, nor statesmanship, nor genius, nor brilliant parts, nor even learning, beyond the common possession of their countrymen. They were not commanders of armies—nor emperors nor kings. No strain of royal blood or of ancestral distinction gives luster to their names. They were strangers to place and

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power. They bore no titles—wore no rank. Neither badge nor shoulder-strap distinguished them. They were plain and simple soldiers, taken on the field of battle, through war's mischance, with muskets in their hands, wearing only blouse and cap. But within their frail and finite forms there was the endurance of the mountains, the constancy of the stars.

Measured by the standards of an obsequious world, they were not great at all. But measured by the standards of the eternal verities of life, by their love of country, their devotion to liberty, their concept

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of obligation, their capacity for sacrifice, their courage, their endurance, their constancy, they were and are the flower and fruit of all the great that ever were—of the unforgettables of the race. They need no pedigree. Distinction's badge could not honor them. No title could add to their nobility. No rank increase their fame. Inherent greatness was theirs—the greatness of intrinsic worth—the greatness of service—the greatness of sacrifice; compared with which conferred greatness—the greatness majorities bestow—the greatness of place and power—is mean and groveling. The greatness

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of intrinsic worth is true greatness. The greatness majorities confer or men bestow is to it as dross to refined gold, or tinsel's garish light to the diamond's resplendent ray. The robes of place are but the paraphernalia in which mediocrity struts and plays its fool's roll—a livery with which it deceives itself, and losing, falls into oblivion.

Man instinctively clings to life and abhors death. He turns from dissolution with fear and trembling and is prepared to give all material possessions that he may live. And when at last he faces "the inevitable hour," and there is no further

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retreat, no more evasion, he longs to die amid the familiar scenes of the community where he has lived, within the sacred walls of his home, surrounded by trusted friends, by the wife he has loved, by the children he has begotten. In the agony of nature's dissolving ties, ere he gives up the ghost and sinks into the silence of the unknown, he yearns to sense the clinging clasp of friendship's hands, to feel upon his pallid brow affection's falling tear, and upon his livid lips "love's last and holiest kiss."

It is this instinctive love of life, this universal dread of death, this

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longing to die, when die we must, surrounded with familiar scenes and by those we love, that gives distinction to the sacrifice and crowns with glory the vicarious atonement of those who die in battle, amid the tragic scenes of war, in strange lands, on distant fields, for some great cause whose issue involves the destiny of every land and race.

So died our soldier dead on every field from Sumter to Appomattox. Their fame is as fadeless as their death was sublime. Freely do we confess the debt we owe them. Proudly do we proclaim the love we bear them. And yet they were

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less heroic than the dead about us here, their sacrifices less exalted and less agonizing.

They met death amid the crash of arms and the roar of cannon; amid the cries and cheers of fighting, supporting comrades; amid the rush and attack of armies; amid the grandeur and the sublimity of battle; amid the storm and chaos of deadly strife; amid the whirlwind of the frenzied charge; amid war's wild, mad delirium; in the vigor of stalwart manhood; in the flush of a strength new-found, born of the inspiration of numbers, of heroic environment, and of great occasion,

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with power to strike and kill in return for every thrust or wound received.

But they who died here upon this sacrificial altar met death in more hateful, dreadful form than that found on any battlefield—

Death that came of exposure, of cold that froze, of heat that scorched—

Death that came of famine, of hunger unappeased, of thirst unsatisfied—

Death that came of infection from filth, from putrid food, from polluted water, soil, and air—

Death that came of disease and

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pestilence from which there was no flight, no escape, within insurmountable prison walls—

Death that came of cruelties born of sectional hate, cruelties atrocious and indescribable—

Death that came of idiocy and of insanity, of madness begotten by hope sickened into despair—

Death that came to broken bodies, bodies beaten, bruised, and cursed, eaten by scurvy, affected to putrefaction by gangrene—

Death in an abyss of pain—pain of the flesh, of the brain, of the soul!

Here they waited, waited, and endured—they who had known the

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joy of liberty, the ecstasy of freedom—

Waited amid privation profound as want, imperious as hunger, insatiable as thirst—

Waited with cracked and bleeding lips, with parched and swollen tongues, with imploring, tear-filled eyes—

Waited in the lowest depths of misery, amid a festival of death—

Waited through the midnight of despair, amid a gloom into which hope had ceased to come—

Waited with indomitable spirit, with unfaltering front, with constancy unwavering—

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Waited until death, grinning,
mocking death, famine-eyed and
skeleton-formed, became, in the re-
lief it brought, merciful as pity—

Waited when they could have
gone and lived, by simply taking
Treason's offered oath—

Waited and would not go—

Waited and died!

But in dying so they climbed to
the pinnacles of human greatness,
reached heights of character only
touched by holy light, glorified ob-
scurity forever, and "filled oblivion
with honor."

They died, died in prison. Even
the names of many of them are un-

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known. Individual sepulcher was denied them. It was supposed their formless, uncoffined dust would mingle with the elements and their burial-place be forgotten. But the Nation has sought it out and half a hundred monuments mark the spot. "Sown in weakness, raised in power!" At last the glory and the triumph is theirs, theirs forever. The cause for which they died is enthroned; the temple they defended, preserved. Slavery is dead. Freedom lives. The constellation of the Union remains in the sky, its splendor filling the earth. The severed land is reunited. The solidarity of

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the Republic is established; its sovereignty admitted. The Nation sweeps from the smoke and flame of war into the calm of cloudless peace. The flag they loved—grown in beauty and in meaning—flies all the seas and is hailed with acclaim and honor in every land. Beneath its folds ninety millions of people stand secure and free. Wounds are healed; animosities forgotten. Forgiveness reigns in every heart.

Aye, theirs is the glory and the triumph. They held aloft the torch and unfaltering led the way, and the hills, the everlasting hills, lifted up their gates and let them in.

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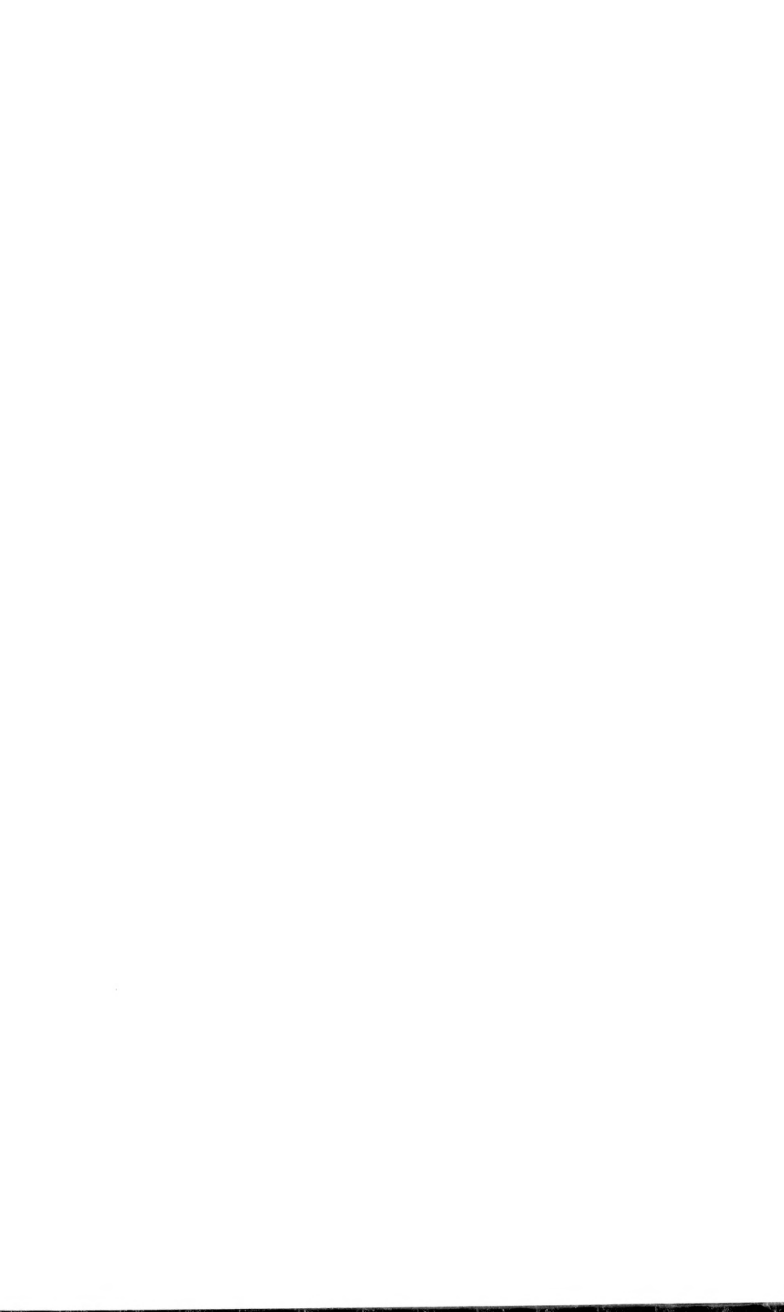
After forty-four years their inanimate dust becomes articulate; their mute lips utter speech; their dumb tongues burst into song; their inspired voices "rise to all eternity." The Nation hears, enthralled; and hearing, interprets the deathless message; and interpreting, rises in character, in concept, and in purpose. All hear—comrades and enemies—friends and foes—the imprisoned and the free—the writers of story, of history, and of song—the learned and great—the humble and the proud—the toilers in mines and fields and shops, on land and sea—all, all beneath the flag—hear and rise in answer. [33]

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Colonel Jones, in behalf of the State of Indiana, a State whose loyalty and devotion to the Union was evidenced by the spilled blood of her children on every battlefield where the Government was attacked—by the more than seven hundred of her dead who lie in graves about you here, unshrouded and unconfined—I present this monument to you—present it to you in her name, in the name of her people, in the name of her soldier sons, living and dead—that it may be kept and maintained while the Union of the States endures, a perpetual memorial to the love she bears the dead ensepulchered here. [34]

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In building it and in presenting it we seek or mean offense to none. We come into this Commonwealth—urn of their consecrated dust—not enemies, but friends; not in anger, but in charity. We know the cruelties out of which their sacrifices came, but we know, too, the pitiless character of the awful war of which these sacrifices were a part—that the times themselves were out of joint—and knowing this, we not only “gratefully remember,” but we “gratefully forget.”







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