

THE THREE COMPETITIONS

FOR

A DESIGN

FOR

A MONUMENT

TO

GEN. ROBERT E. LEE.

1877 — 1887.

A PROTEST AND A REVIEW.

RICHMOND, VA.:

WHITTET & SHEPPERSON, COR. 10TH & MAIN STREETS.

1887.

RICHMOND, VA., *October 15, 1887.*

From the date of the following article, and of that of the letter copied below when it was mailed to Richmond, will be seen the intention of publication as a prompt rejoinder to the decision of the joint Association announced on the 29th of June last. The article did not meet with publication, although the gentleman, the editor to whom it was addressed, told my friend that it was under careful consideration, treating as it did of a matter very interesting to him. Perhaps it was too much to expect publication in a newspaper of so long an article. Be that as it may, a delay has occurred which the writer regrets. Since his return to Richmond, very recently, the manuscript (now somewhat revised from the originally-intended newspaper article) has become available for publication in the only way remaining open.

2 ELM AVE., TORONTO, CANADA, *Aug. 6, 1887.*

———, Esq., *Editor of "———"*

DEAR SIR: I trust that the accompanying article may appeal to your sense of justice, and perhaps also to your solicitude respecting a memorial to General Lee, so as to appear before the public in the columns of your paper. It was intended to have been sent sooner, as the date shows; travelling and other interruptions have caused the detention. Meanwhile it has been calmly reflected upon, and *all* the sentiments expressed come from mature deliberation. The article is, perhaps, a lengthy one, but still its volume is not a tithe of what has appeared in advocacy of one aspirant. This follows an important subject through a long term of years, and advocates the claims of many.

If necessary, the article may be divided and continued till complete. Three divisions are suggested by brackets in red.

Should the article not be accorded publication, I would ask the favor of its preservation, to be handed to my friend, Mr. ———, whom I will ask to call at your office in my behalf.

I am, very respectfully,

GILBERT R. FRITH,

THE LEE MONUMENT.

“DUNEDIN” ON THE HUDSON, *July 6th, 1887.*

TO THE RICHMOND ——— :

The Richmond newspapers last week had announcements, apparently either written by an authority or authoritatively inspired, that the commission for the execution of a monument to General Lee was to be *given*—for awarded would be an incorrect term—to a French sculptor, Mercie. In all seriousness, soberness, and earnestness, and with all due respect to the authorities, these questions may be asked, and of the authorities, if they will answer: Will such a conclusion be creditable or honorable to the Joint Committee as the commonest justice and fair dealing towards the other contestants? Is there any assurance or guarantee whatever, that the action, if consummated, will result in a worthy and adequate memorial to General Lee? The last question is one of vital importance, and yet the first must take precedence; for what would be any monument to General Lee, whose name is the very synonym of nobility, honor, justice, and right, obtained in a way which is ignoble because not honorable, and which contravenes justice and right? This aspect of the case must have become obscured during divergences of views of the two committees. Surely it is the duty of the Joint Committee now to regard it; and it is to be presumed that the committee will not object to having the matter presented to them from a general standpoint.

The assertion may appear extravagant, but reflection will, perhaps, establish the conviction, that the consummation of a worthy memorial to General Lee is of deeper significance than any merely temporal and transitory object. It is of more importance even than the question of the State's debt. This last will be ultimately settled, and doubtless within a generation, upon whatever may prove to be the equities of the case, unless—and there is plenty of evidence to combat the charge—unless old Virginia is no longer the Virginia of old. Like a nightmare, this incubus will disappear and *be forgotten*. A great monument is, humanly speaking, immortal; for it is the material presentment of a great hero and a great cause. It is not for a generation, but for children and children's children; the perpetuation and con-

tinual reminder of great and noble deeds; the crystalization of the noblest sentiments of veneration and of love. As such it becomes a subject lesson of inestimable value—an incentive to great and noble deeds. How important, then, a monument to General Lee! For in him centre, and he is the exponent of the grandest heroism; the purest patriotism; all that was noblest and best in a cause which, though lost, remains, through its self-sacrifice and heroism, the proud heritage, not of the South alone, but of a happily re-united people. In these qualities the lost cause will ever merit the admiration and excite the emulation of the world. The monument to Lee, *if worthily consummated*, will be the memorial of the hero and of the cause, and one of the representative monuments of the world.

So much for the scope and the sacredness, and the abiding and ever-increasing importance and significance of such a work. How can it be obtained, and what spirit will inspire its accomplishment? Not mainly through the desire for professional credit, or for dollars, or pounds, or francs, or roubles, or lire, although here is advanced no absurd affectation of disdain for what, in the language of the day, is termed "the main chance"; for it is honorable and absolutely essential that art should receive material reward. The inspiration is *in the subject* itself, which has first to be appreciated and revered; and the consummation must be wrought out by patience and earnestness and true and untiring effort, sustained by an enthusiastic belief in the value of what has to be accomplished. Signal success in such a monumental design makes an achievement in art, and, under proper conditions, the honor won and retained outshines that of any secular profession; for the work honors its author in speaking to mankind in the universal language of art, and will declare itself to all the ages. Next to the primal, and far nobler inspiration of the subject itself, the aspiration for such an honor is to the poet, sculptor, or painter the noblest inspiration to work.

The practice generally obtains for the procurement of designs and plans for great national monuments, and indeed it is common in public works the world over, to invite a general or open competition. The more important the work, the more widely diffused are the solicitations to compete. One condition is practically universal—that the names of the competitors and contestants shall be withheld. They are usually required to be veiled under a motto or a sign. The object is obvious—to thwart the disturbing influences of partisanship, and avoid that of "prestige." What is commonly understood as "prestige" is studiously put out of sight, and resolutely ignored. There is wanted something *superior* to prestige,—work that will require no sponsors nor extraneous support, but will speak for itself; that from an inherent strength can

silence adverse criticism, and establish and verify the criticism that is favorable—such a wide extending criticism it is the peculiar province of an open competition to evoke. The desideratum, in short, is a work which will vindicate its right to live. “Prestige,” even when merited by previous achievements, cannot ensure a continuance of the power it has arisen by, and often it proves but a fashion, and perhaps a local fashion, of the day,—a merely ephemeral éclat. Thus miscarriage through the glamour of prestige is generally and rightly deemed too great a risk to be taken in an important work. The noblest monument which has arisen of late years—the “Germania,” commemorative of the victory of Germany over France—has been the result of a competition. If prestige had been regarded, Schilling (ennobled and made Von Schilling for the work) would hardly have been entrusted with the commission. Italy, in seeking for its national monument to Victor Emanuel, upon which two millions of dollars (10,000,000 lire) will be expended, and prizes to the amount of forty thousand dollars (three prizes of 50,000, 30,000 and 20,000 lire at each of the two competitions), have actually been paid, did not call upon Vela or any of her best known men to furnish a design; on the contrary, a competition was invited the world over. Upwards of six hundred works appeared at the two competitions. The sphere from which this host of designs came, ranged from Norway around the globe to Brazil, and from almost unheard of parts; for it is immaterial, providing a fitting conception, the life and spirit which is to animate the work, is obtained, whether it comes from an academy of Europe, from the brain of an art-inspired Esquimaux, or is conceived by the man who is to “sketch the ruins of St. Paul’s.” Finally, in this, the greatest known art contest (at least if cost and numbers are to be counted), to a man heretofore unknown to fame was awarded the palm. France, when she wanted a great monument to honor the establishment of the republic a few years ago, did not call upon Bartholdi or Perraud or Carpeaux, upon Crauk, Etex or Falquiere, or upon Chapu, Barrias, Mercié or Paul Dubois, upon the equestrian sculptor, Fremiet, or the painter sculptor, Meissonier, upon any of the dozen or more of sculptors who are deemed prominent in France; but of most of whom the world at large—the educated world even—knows next to nothing. Bartholdi, is world known through his noble work, “The Lion of Belfort,” and the less artistic, but stupendous “Liberty;” Meissonier, also with whom modelling has of late years been added to the sister art. These two men may certainly claim *prestige*. France called upon none of these, but followed the usual course, and invited an open competition, with invitations everywhere extended. So also Russia, in the great and costly memorial now probably in course of erection at Moscow to the murdered Czar, she has Klödt (the author

of equestrian and other groups adorning St. Petersburg), as well as other sculptors of note, but she sent general invitations to compete to all the world. In this country a great monument is projected to Gen. Grant; it has been clearly indicated that neither Story, nor any American of lesser prestige, will receive the commission, but that an open competition will be called, with the view to obtaining the very best design. England is the only country whence we hear little of competitions; but she has erected no great national monument since the Albert Memorial,—a really grand work, though it be an embellished adaptation of the famous Scott monument, itself the work of a self-taught native artist. The Albert Memorial is embellished with the work of many noted men. In England of late years the sculptor, Boehm, who has attained such eminence in monumental, and especially equestrian portraiture, has been entrusted with the most notable works.

It would seem above argument that open competitions, when properly and judiciously conducted, must lead to the best results. They become failures and scandals in the absence of assiduous care, thorough discrimination and *perfect fairness*. "*Palman qui meruit ferat*;" the best work should receive its merited recognition, and "prestige," as too apt to prove an *ignis fatuus*, may be left for small collections and private galleries, which seek to be magnified in importance by names. Reputation calls for respect, and fame commands veneration; but the name of Michael Angelo himself could not bolster up a work, meant to be important, after the gradual sifting of public opinion,—a consensus of thought, both lay and professional,—had proved it to be inadequate.

For a correct understanding of the present status of the proposed Lee Monument, its past history needs to be rewritten, for this may well be half forgotten by one generation, and almost unknown to a later one, whose term of existence it has nearly occupied. While the matter has been under discussion, such works as the "Germania" and the "Statue of Liberty" have been conceived, executed, and reared, and are beginning to accumulate years. Lack of harmony initiated this obstruction to the Lee memorial, and a partisan *machine* has kept it up. The scheme took shape in 1870, immediately after General Lee's death, when, at a meeting called for the purpose, the most prominent men of the State, with fervid oratory, declared that there should be a great monument to General Lee. The "Lee Monument Association" was the result—created to prosecute the work, with fitting dignity. A little later an association of ladies organized themselves to work for the same purpose, under the name of the "Ladies' Lee Monument Association." It would seem, and most natural it

was that it should be so, that considerable influence was excited during several years to commission a gentleman—Richmond born and a resident of Richmond—one, too, who had already won “prestige” in a monumental work to General Lee. Had this been done, certainly no one not a Virginian or Southern born would ever have had a right, or have dreamed of questioning the act. True art excludes jealousy and fosters fraternal feeling, and the honored one may have felt sure of a godspeed from lovers of the cause and art lovers everywhere. The representative committee or Association, however, took the broader view of its obligations and responsibilities, and conforming to the system most respected, invited, through the public press, a general competition. The sculptor above referred to elected to enter that competition, and entering it, he should have had, as every one else, a “fair field and no favor”—*no more, no less*—from press and people. Since that competition of nearly ten years ago, there has been, in the writer’s opinion (for manufactured by-play of “resolutions” and speeches at gatherings of various kinds go for little), no indications of an undue partiality on the part of the people of Richmond or of the State. Doubtless they would have been pleased to see one of their own countrymen win the honor, but their first thoughts have been to get an adequate work and to see fair play. What of the press! Why, can it be denied that all the older, prominent dailies, with one accord, have worked as partizans? Their zeal for a friend overmastered—and to its deep injury, whatever may be the final result—their zeal for the cause.

In opening a competition the State of Virginia itself, through its Governor and representative officials, became *pledged* to a fair and proper prosecution of it—for the “Lee Monument Association” represented Virginia and the South—elected by the individual State, and acting for the whole.

In response to the call which this Association had publicly made (in the Virginian, American, and European papers) in the early part of the year 1877, some eighteen or twenty works appeared in Richmond in November of that year. Most of the works were accompanied by their authors, and all the models and designs were placed on exhibition in the Senate Chamber of the Capitol. It is common now to hear those works characterised *en masse* as absolutely inadequate. The representative committee did not say so. On the contrary, their published report was generally commendatory, and it referred to some of the works as truly admirable. The committee claimed, too, to have exercised the most careful deliberation, and to have conferred exhaustively on the subject with chosen advisers. To quote from the official report: “Some of the models exhibited great genius on the part of those who made them; but as things turned out, it became un-

necessary for the commissioners to decide between them (italics added), for after examination and reflection, the ladies in possession of the other fund addressed a letter to the commission declining to contribute their money to the erection of any of the models exhibited." It can only be a matter of conjecture now, whether, if it had felt itself in a position to act, it would or would not have made a selection.

As a matter of fact, that first contest of 1877 ended by the humiliating admission on the part of the "Lee Monument Association," that it could not act because of the refusal of that of the ladies to co-operate. The Ladies' Association then made a public announcement that it had been advised not to agree to the adoption of any of the models offered. No prizes had been offered, *and competitors received no compensation or recognition whatever*. The State Board again (with the names of Governor Kemper and other State officials subscribed to the advertisements) called for a competition (under the circumstances it may be termed a renewed competition), to be held just one year later, November, 1878. That call was responded to by four works. Three of these were new works—two being from Italy. One only, Miss Vinnie Rean's, had appeared at the exhibition of the previous year. Notwithstanding the disappointment and mortification to which they had already been subjected, it is probable enough that the majority of the contestants of 1877 would have re-entered the lists, for it was easy for any one to comprehend how differences and disagreements might arise between two committees, each of which had by far too numerous advisers, representatives, and referees. It could not be doubted for a moment that all of these gentlemen and ladies composing the two associations, or representing them, however their views might differ as to the requirements of the work, were actuated by one central purpose—and this singleness of purpose must finally prove a bond of union—to further the object so cherished by each.

The competitors, actuated by zeal and a determination not to be easily daunted, would have accepted the situation that had arisen; and, perhaps, recognizing that no work had as yet made a marked impression above its fellows, each would have striven to surpass what he had already presented. And yet in this respect, asking pardon for the digression, it may be asked of every one who well remembers the first competition of 1877—which called for the equestrian model solely—whether there was *one single* model there presented which was as extravagantly foreign in presentment to all of the attributes of General Lee, and as utterly unsuitable, as the one which the French sculptor, Mercié, sent to the last competition at Washington? Yes, with a reasonable prospect of an adequate and impartial adjudication, many would have re-

entered the contest, but even before the Association reports had been published, there had appeared a powerfully disturbing influence. The press comments, indeed, were few—(and unnecessarily so, for fair and free discussion should be produced by the papers, to indicate the public mind),—but few as they were, there was sufficient to make it apparent that the newspapers intended to permit *no impartial* ventilation of this interesting and important subject; but that the partizan bias, which in the year just passed ceased even to be veiled, was to override all other considerations. More than this, insult almost had preceded injury, for expressions had been permitted to appear in the press which broadly hinted that the competitors at large (who had responded to the invitation of the State Association, made by the Governor of Virginia,) should be regarded in the light of interlopers and intruders! Such ill-mannered and unofficial utterances, of course, merited only contempt; but the power of the press, whether it be on the side of wrong or right, is powerful, and when a combination is effected and *all the machinery held*, it is well-nigh irresistible. The evident hostility of the press, more even than the discord of the two Associations, made the outlook next to hopeless, and most of the competitors left Richmond, and withdrew from the contest with a feeling of outrage and of profound indignation, resentment and disgust.

Because the second competition (of '78) was a small one, it certainly did not relieve the Lee Monument Association of its obligations. One of the contestants in this second competition had accompanied his fresh model all the way from Rome, and he assured the writer that, apart from all the work and thought which he had devoted, his actual pecuniary expenditure had then exceeded two thousand dollars. For the benefit of those who may have regarded such designs in the light of easily-executed toys may be added his statement, that he would rather at any time execute a life size group than one of these small models, which necessitate additional adjustment of proportions and a more minute elaboration in details. From this second formally called competition the Ladies' Association remained entirely aloof. The too numerous judges prescribed by the "Lee Monument Association" rules failed to appear in number sufficient to form a board of arbitrators, and the whole affair resulted again to the contestants, and entirely without fault, or even suggested short-coming of their own, in fresh mortification and disappointment and serious pecuniary loss. The Lee Monument Association (the originally-constituted and representative one) has continued through all this time. Has it a right to ignore what occurred through its own actions in '77 and '78? Will this be ordinary justice—the simplest fair dealing between man and man towards those who have persisted in hones

endeavor to present a worthy conception for a Lee monument? Without any adequate or intelligible judgment at one, two, and, lastly, a third competition, will it satisfy any fair-minded person for this association, now leagued with the other, quietly to ignore and give the go-by to all who have thus devoted their best thoughts, time and means, and to declare in a vague kind of way, "We don't think we want any actual or clear design to go by. We have come to the conclusion that the chief desideratum for a monument to General Lee is (that very shadowy and unknowable quality) "Prestige!" Those interested in the cause, and who are solicitous of seeing a worthy equestrian monument to General Lee, are doubtless now searching for and asking, "Whence this prestige?" Where is the overmastering prestige of this strangely favoured one,—even supposing that the "prestige" and the fame of an Angelo or Canova could countervail the obligations devolving upon the judges of impartial adjudication of a called, and open competition, and make the artists themselves, as competitors, *independent of and superior to* their own submitted works!

All this entanglement (no disrespect is intended, for the aim is a simple statement of circumstances) has arisen apparently from the proceedings and conclusions of the Ladies' Association; aggravated and intensified by the partizan efforts of the press, or of the clique of writers and what not, who have had the control of the press. The Ladies' Association has now become a part of the Joint Association. But why the governing and controlling part? The ladies would appear to have been always impressed with a narrow idea of the indispensability of prestige. After the lamentable fiascos of '77 and '78 the "Lee Monument Association" became apparently only too anxious to forget its misadventures, and miscarriages, and thwarted plans. The public generally, which had eagerly thronged to the first exhibition, and had exhibited themselves a worthy and natural pride and lively interest in the cause, feeling scandalized and bewildered by what had occurred, and despairing of any solution, showed a similar inclination to dismiss a painful topic—no actual cessation of interest, but acute disappointment and wounded pride.

The Ladies' Association, however, had met with no defeat. As opposed to the other, it was unavoidable that their position should appear one of triumph. Its efforts continued until finally it began to take action independently of, and entirely without consultation, it would appear, with the representative association. All credit should be given to the ladies for their untiring persistency. From the first their zeal was not to be doubted. But it may be asked, with all respect, Why could not the combination of the two associations which has lately been effected have been made

ten years ago? Was the question at issue, "Competition" on one side and "Prestige" on the other? If this was the case, then the ladies would appear of late to have come to a compromise upon the two principles. In the summer of '84 a report came to the ears of those previously interested, that the Ladies' Association had advertised in certain European capitals for a competition to be held in Washington. No solicitations to the proposed contest were at that time made in Richmond, or in this country. A European prestige seemed to be sought, but "prestige" was to be brought into competition. It is to be presumed that prestige did not respond to the extent desired; for about a year later programmes for the competition were extended to some in this country who had been in the preceding contests, and perhaps they were more widely diffused. January 1st, '86, was prescribed as the time; the Corcoran Gallery, at Washington, the place for the exhibits. The site of the monument was *positively* defined to be Monroe Park or Libby Hill, *so the provision was absolute that the designs must be prepared for this special locality.*

It was further notified to competitors that the contemplated cost of the work was \$150,000 to \$200,000. During and since that competition, the writer has frequently heard the question asked in Richmond, and with displeasure, Why was it held in Washington? There can be but one rational answer, to avoid partizan influence, and especially of the powerfully disturbing one of the press. The improper bias which had been so clearly foreshadowed to outsiders, of course was most thoroughly gauged by the committee, and naturally enough it sought a location removed from those attacks. For this third competition the models and designs appeared at Washington at the time prescribed, a slight extension having been found advisable to first of February. This thing may be said as the result of the ladies' exertions. A more imposing collection of works appeared at Washington for the Lee Monument than has perhaps ever been exhibited in this country for a similar work. As a collection, it elicited a tribute of high commendation from the judges, which has appeared in their published report. How unfortunate, though, for the cause, for the contestants, and for all concerned, that the verdict and special awards of the judges should have followed so hasty, superficial and perfunctory consideration, as to be denied respect when they came under a critical review. As above stated, the Corcoran Gallery at Washington had been designated for the exhibit. With the number and size of the works which arrived, it proved that they could not there be accommodated; and through Mr. Corcoran's influence a much larger space, Carroll Hall, was obtained. The models, about three times as many as were here afterwards exhibited at the Capitol in Richmond, filled the body of this extensive hall,

while the walls and every available space were covered with the numerous plans and drawings in connection. At the Richmond Capitol there was insufficient space to display the supplementary drawings and plans of the much smaller collection, which formed a portion of this exhibit. In Washington the whole was admirably displayed, it being specially cared for by a gentleman connected with the Corcoran Gallery; under him was a clerk, who seemed in constant attendance, while a skilled workman most carefully repaired every trifling damage, and polished and kept the works in the best possible order. The hall was profusely draped, to afford suitable backgrounds, and the numerous windows were obscured by painting the lower parts, so as to afford a favorable light. All this work on the part of guardians of the most admirable art sanctuary in the United States honoring and showing its appreciation of the works which earnest aspirants had sent from various parts of the world; and then! the whole marred by a precipitate, perfunctory and slovenly adjudication!! Any one who visited the exhibit in the Senate Chamber at Richmond can guess what the larger one must have been, and how impossible it was, even with judges (assuming them to be, for the sake of argument) the most conversant with the subject, the most thoroughly in sympathy and accord with it, the most noted for artistic acumen, to adjudicate upon the relative appropriateness and artistic merits of such an exhibit, without the most mature deliberation. Was there, as a matter of fact, any deliberation whatever? It is a usual and obviously proper provision in important competitions to designate in advance the judges or arbitrators. Competitors of course should know before whom their designs, entailing an immensity of thought and work, shall go. This provision was not followed in the Washington competition—not, the writer believes, from any neglect or oversight, except that with the perplexing question of whom to seek for arbitrators the selection probably became a hasty one at last. Whether this was so or not, the decisions of the selected arbitrators must certainly be admitted to have been a jump at conclusions. By their own report they met and decided the matter in one brief visit! There is probably not a contestant of that exhibit who would hesitate to meet these two artist judges in a similar contest and upon equal terms; and yet designs which had been the result of years of thought and special study and experience, were discussed and passed upon by the tribunal, consisting of two New York sculptors and an architect, with less deliberation than would have been accorded to just so many bottles of wine! The action of this board only escapes the charge of being an absolute impertinence upon the assumption that the two who came from New York were themselves busy men, and could not possibly afford the time requisite for a de-

liberative award; but such being the case, should they have accepted the trust? It is possible enough that their services may have been gratuitous, in which case nothing could be said. The Ladies' Association is amenable to the charge of a lack of foresight in not providing against such a miscarriage as this; and even if it could not be provided against, did it not become a bounden obligation to protect the cause, the works and their authors against the injury which such a miscarriage involved?

In the Victor Emanuel competition, the second one held at Rome (and the first had been equally deliberated over), the originally designated and publicly declared tribunal made the award. That tribunal consisted of the prime minister of Italy as president, and senators and deputies of the parliament, with a technical element of artists, engineers and architects. It was a large commission—twenty-one in all—but it was not unwieldy, for there was no disunion to paralyze its action. First, this commission received and deliberated over the works; next there was a full and free exhibition, and a thorough discussion in the Roman and Italian newspapers,—this with a view to eliciting public sentiment and the opinions pro and con of competent critics who were encouraged thus publicly to pronounce their views. Then the works were withdrawn from the public, and again deliberated over, till finally the selection was determined. The prescribed programme was adhered to throughout, and whatever the views of contestants, after the result was pronounced, there were no grounds whatever for exception or complaint. The Victor Emanuel contest was under the consideration of a tribunal (which all the competitors had accepted) for over six months. The Lee Monument honors were awarded at Washington, to judge from the official report, in hardly as many hours! and by a tribunal of which the contestants had remained uninformed. Could such a decision as this meet with the approbation of any one? Can it now be argued that it was a final one, and that the Ladies' Lee Monument Association discharged its duty, responsibilities and promises to the competitors it had invited, when in deference to the verdict it paid the comparatively trifling premiums of \$2,000 and \$1,000? It was not for such compensation that the majority of the contestants had striven, for there were works presented at Washington which had cost the authors more than the two premiums put together. Only by an adequate adjudication could even the letter of the law have been fulfilled.

To illustrate the ease of that unseemly and precipitate verdict in Washington: Imagine the proposed competition for the great Grant monument completed to the extent of assembling the models. We will assume that years have elapsed; that all the solicitude of a nation has been excited, dampened, and rekindled;

the keenest competition has been adduced, and men have wrought for it as an object at once of ambition and of love. We will imagine that the two sculptors who adjudged the Lee competition at Washington, are themselves in the lists, and that, by the protracted nature of the proceedings, they have been put to immense expenditure of time, thought, and money. It is assumed that this contest is held at Washington to insure an impartial atmosphere. Further, to insure impartiality, the judges are chosen from the South. Meanwhile the contestants have been kept in absolute ignorance as to who were to be the judges, and when the judgment would be. Their inquiries have failed to elicit any information. At last they are treated to a surprise, for newspaper telegrams suddenly enlighten them as to the *personnel* of the jury, and end the matter by stating that it had assembled *that day* in Washington, and had made its award! Imagine, if it is possible, two artists and our worthy City Engineer, running on to Washington from Richmond in the morning—arbitrators in such a contest—and returning by the evening train! In the interim they have examined the collection and adjudicated upon it, and either before they take the train again, or after they get home, they deliver their report, eulogizing the exhibit, and state that they have awarded the honors in such and such a way! A storm of indignation, following so impudently hasty and perfunctory an act, would sweep over the continent, and it would be strange indeed, if the two artists who arbitrated in Washington with such dashing *insouciance* at the Lee contest—now supposed to be in the one to Grant—would not openly protest against the outrage.

Following this "official" report, a selection from the designs at Washington came on to Richmond. The whole exhibit was deemed too extensive and expensive to transport. Those which arrived completely filled the large Senate Chamber of the Capitol, yet, as before stated, the space failed to accommodate and display all the supplementary drawings and plans. It is not within the province of the writer to pronounce as to the general impression which this exhibit created. It is sufficient to say that public opinion neither sustained nor vindicated the utterances of the press. The doors of the Senate Chamber had not been opened to the public a *second* day, before the most prominent journal of the city had led off in an article which, ingeniously worded as it was, was simply a tirade. Void of criticism, it substituted high sounding phrases, which suggested an amazing art knowledge and profundity; but which, carefully scanned, showed reflections singularly inappropriate and big words ludicrously misapplied. Since the first competition of 1877, when this journal (through the same writer, perhaps,) posed with becoming modesty, and professed itself incompetent to criticise, its art editor had apparently be-

come a proselyte to the philosophy of Mr. Bunthorne; so when action was urgent, he proceeded, with a definite object in view, to—

“Get up some long phrases of the Greek and Roman ages,
And plant them everywhere.”

When he hurled the super-ponderous word, “*Cryselephantine*,” at the exhibit, was the art censor aware, like Daniel O’Connell, of the effect often produced by terms appalling in their strangeness and their size? An amusing story is told of an old mammy nurse, returning from a meeting, “enthused” and in a state of exaltation at what she had heard. Her mistress asked her what the preacher had said to impress her so mightily. “Oh! mistis, mistis,” she answered, “it was dat blessed word, *Mesopotamia!*” Probably the censor had heard of “*Mesopotamia*,” but he ought not to have used that even more portentous word “*Cryselephantine*,” when he wished to frighten away his readers from the Lee models. It was contrary to the laws of civilized warfare, and he ought to have respected the defenseless position of the fragile objects of his attack. What reader would get a big dictionary and hunt up the meaning of so alarming a word? Being specially interested, the writer of this article did dig out the monster, and feared that he would find a frozen megatherium. Behold, what! He discovered that the “*Cryselephantine statue*” (which the censor had used, adequately to represent the horrible result of a statue following in design a model in the Capitol), was, as a matter of historical fact, a kind of statue of which there were some rare examples existent in ancient Greece. They were constructed at a vast cost, when it was determined to devote not only the most precious thought and work, but the most precious material even, to the worship of a god, or in homage of a hero. The great *Cryselephantine* statue of Zeus, by Phidias, would appear to have been one of the glories of ancient Greece, and remains recorded in exultant terms “as a work of inspiration—a colossal statue of dazzling glory, and equally splendid and harmonious in form.” Nothing to alarm one after all, it would appear, a *Cryselephantine* statue to General Lee!—if happily the funds of the Association permitted. Ivory and gold—the emblems of purity and worth—were the materials thus employed by the old Greeks. A colossal “*Traveller*” in ivory, and a Lee of gold, can be imagined as truly magnificent, impossible as it is to be realized.

After exciting its readers with such flashes, the prominent city journal concluded with the following fulmination: “*We would rather not see a monument to General Lee for a hundred years, than that any of the models at the Capitol should be adopted!*” This invective was of no special importance in itself, for what-

ever the censor's art discrimination may be, he had no intention of allowing himself a fair chance on this occasion. What he meant was simply this: that he desired to see no monument to General Lee unless his favorite was commissioned to the work. His favorite had kept out of this competition, and therefore the collection in every possible way must be discredited and banned. Worthless in itself as such writing was, it must be remembered what influence a widely read newspaper necessarily exerts. Journalistic brigandage is the only terms to apply to such utterances. The only palliation supposable is blind zeal, and exalted and bigoted estimate of a friend. Friendship like this is worse than highway robbery,—using the power of the press recklessly to discredit in advance a whole exhibit of works which the censor did not dare to criticise,—to write so as to prejudice the minds of those who would see the works, and upon those who would not see them, the readers of the journal throughout Virginia, the South, and elsewhere, to create the impression that the exhibit was an inadequate and a worthless one. In plain terms, the article was a gross libel, and especially to be reprobated, because there was no way of denouncing the calumnies or replying to the attack. The other principal papers seemed in a waiting attitude, ready to follow in the lead of this journal, and, as a matter of fact, they refused all rejoinder in their columns. This is notorious. Article after article was sent to all these newspapers protesting against unscrupulous attacks, and urging a fair discussion and criticism. These articles were refused or pigeon-holed. It would be hazarding little to guess that long and prominent articles which appeared in the *New York Herald*, and other outside papers, had been inspired by the "machine;" nor may it be impertinent to ask of a certain paper why these same articles were copied as authorities and republished *verbatim et literatim*, except that the terms of praise of the designs at the Capitol, which somehow or other did creep in, in spite of the censor and press machine engineer, were most carefully eliminated? He probably acted on the feeling of a proprietary right. Following systematic endeavors to discredit the competitive exhibit, when it was considered that public interest was waning and that public opinion had been sufficiently moulded and cooled down, in a few weeks came a Boom! Boom! Boom! from all the prominent dailies for *their* favorite, and this continued for many months, until the thoughtful public became nauseated, and it defeated its own ends.

Surely such action on the part of the press must be regarded as indefensible, to use its immense power to discredit and ruin works which have been executed by their authors at immense expenditure of time, thought, and money, and presented, in response to authorized solicitations at open competition. To do justice to

the cause, and to those who have wrought for it, the impartiality of the highest law court in the land should obtain. How is this possible under persistent misrepresentations and special pleading to which all rejoinder is denied? The course which has been pursued by the press is absolutely unaccountable, except on the supposition that it, as represented by the leading dailies, and the clique or "machine" which controlled these, instead of adopting a broad and patriotic view, has resolutely retained the petty idea that an injustice was done their favorite when it was decided that *carte blanche* should *not* be given to him. Governor Kemper and his colleagues, representing the Lee Monument Association, were sustained by the wisdom and general practice of the world. The press has all the machinery under its control. Let it argue out and establish how the inauguration of an open competition was improper, and let it vindicate its own course.

The narrative of the competitions would be seriously incomplete without renewed reference to the original Lee Monument Association, which, after its discomfitures of '77 and '78, continued paralyzed until aroused by the galvanic shock of the ladies' called competition and exhibition of '86. The Ladies' Association had at last committed itself to some definite course, and the older and representative body arose and asserted its sovereign rights. It was under the ægis and the auspices of the Lee Monument Association proper that the works from the Washington competition were brought to Richmond and exhibited in the Capitol last year. The ladies had, perhaps, *themselves* experienced by this time the anxieties inseparable from so important a competition; for undoubtedly the control of such a matter does involve serious responsibility. Where the solicitude for the cause is as heartfelt as we all know that of the Ladies' Association to be, it may well be believed that the burden became heavy enough to excite a desire to have it shared. But why, again may be asked, was not this desire evinced long years ago, to lead then to an harmonious work? The writer profoundly honors the earnest solicitude which the Ladies' Association has always displayed. What he calls in question is certainly not their fidelity to, nor appreciation of the cause, but the modes they have adopted in executing their trust. It is with all due respect that he has to state this conviction, that the Ladies' Association has yet to learn, and the Joint Association to appreciate, that no monument they may rear can honor Lee—that type of a pure and noble character—while an injustice, even though it was inadvertent, overlooked through their zeal, or arising from stress of difficulties and perplexities, remains to mar the character of the work. Let not the ladies and gentlemen composing the two associations think too hardly of these strictures; but remember that those who have the

general guidance of such a matter must themselves be guided by what Ruskin calls "*the lamp of self-sacrifice*," and work with *patience*, as well as earnestness and venerating love.

The first thing that was heard when it was determined that the models should be brought from Washington, and when a fusion of the two associations was at last probable, was that Governor Fitzhugh Lee was resolutely opposed to the site which the Ladies' Association had fully determined upon, and for which, in conformity with the prescribed rules of the programme of invitation to the contestants, all of the models and plans had been designed! Thus, again, all consideration of the claims of those engaged in the contest was in the coolest possible manner to be dismissed or ignored. Very properly, the name of Lee is a talisman, and every respect would be paid to the gallant Governor of Virginia; yet was he justified in making this radical change, and throwing into utter confusion the plans upon which, by previously-fixed rules, all the designs had been based? If he had the right, and if it could be shown that his site was a preferable one, then a chance, at least, for reparation should be accorded to those who were so suddenly shunted off the track. They should all have been conceded the right of adapting their designs absolutely to the new location.

It cannot for certain be told what the opinion of the resuscitated board was as to the works which had been brought before it, but it appeared to leak out that it was disposed to adopt one, and then another, and then another. The favorite of one month would be succeeded by another, the next, and so on for six months or more. The newspaper "boom" for the Richmond sculptor, who was not in this competition at all, meanwhile continued with unabated and uninterrupted zeal, and the "machine" seemed at one time indeed to have achieved its purpose; for last autumn it was currently reported, and generally believed, that the commission, with its honors and rewards, would be given to the favorite and protégé of the press. But in what a position would this have placed the Ladies' Association, who had refused his model, with all the others, in the trial of '77? The Ladies' Association would have been stultified, so the conclusion was frustrated, aided also by public opinion, which had become scandalized and nauseated by the newspaper articles, which now made boast of their partisanship and partiality, and claimed for its favorite a pre-eminence over all the world. Curious plight for the two associations truly, now wishing to work together, and not knowing what to do. Finally, this year, has been effected a complete coalition of the Lee Monument Association and the Ladies' Association, with an authority granted by the Virginia Legislature (so far as it was competent for the Legislature to grant such power over a matter

in which not Virginians alone, but the whole South, was interested) to decide the issues.

Here, at last, was an opportunity to right a long series of blunders and of wrongs, and to vindicate the cause before the people of Virginia, the South, the North, and indeed the whole world; for it is a fact that the previous discreditable entanglements and mistakes, and the fillibustering of the press, had attracted attention abroad and elicited very pronounced strictures in European papers. What, so far, has been done with the opportunity, and what wisdom has been shown? With the authority of the Virginia Legislature to back them, the joined Associations seemed to consider themselves vested with plenary and irresponsible powers; and moreover, they must have felt themselves indued, by act of Legislature, with the art acumen and æsthetic ken, of which before they had been unconscious, and had long modestly disclaimed. The old comedy of "She Stoops to Conquer" was repeated. With the Ladies' Association in former days the representative body, the Lee Monument Association, had proved ineffectual to cope. Latterly the ladies had appeared to yield, and indeed did yield (to the amazement and confusion of all competitors, whose rights in the matter should have been loyally and firmly maintained), their prescribed and predetermined site. But now, *place aux dames*, the ladies are to have their say, and "prestige"—portentous, mystifying word—becomes the rallying cry.

M. Mercie, to whom no honor had been awarded, even at the Washington contest, and whose work afterwards afforded to the Richmond papers the one single peg upon which to hang their generally applied strictures of circus-like gyrations and theatric and excessive action—(and in truth, Mercie had represented General Lee as charging ruthlessly as a Cossack over dead and dying men,)—had been invested in some way with a blinding halo of prestige. Months before the announcement of its decision, rumor said that this effulgence was being presented to the eyes of the ladies through the representations and special pleadings by correspondence, of one of the New York sculptors who showed such excessively prompt and energetic action at the Washington exhibit, but who revised his opinion when the opening of the envelopes disclosed a familiar name. There must be prestige! so to M. Mercie, last year, would appear to have been sent solicitations to remodel his work.

Among the contestants was a Virginian, with "prestige" as an artist at least equal to Mercie, yet strange to say the Frenchman was *solicited* to amend his, the other was not solicited, but was denied the privilege—right, should it not rather be called?—to do the same. This statement comes from the pen of the aggrieved one, who said with extreme and natural indignation that his ap-

plication, repeated and reiterated, had never been replied to. How many others, determined not to surrender them, may have claimed the same rights, the writer is unaware. For himself, he knows he solicited a stay of judgment till his own work could be modified to meet the proposed new site, and determined at all events to continue in the contest; he worked for months without receiving any definite reply. His work was completed, ready to be seen the very day that the Committee, by its decision, bolted the door against the deeply injured competitors, while within it raised an exultant shout over its fancied acquisition of "Prestige," which, in this case at least, is "*vox et preterea nihil*"—a shout, and nothing more! What had M. Mercière produced as an amendment upon his first objectionable model? The public has heard little of his second, which reached Richmond about the end of last year; was little heralded, and though seen by many after its appearance in the Senate Chamber with the other works, was probably generally overlooked. It would be a safe venture to say that those who expected great things as the second effort from Paris must have been sadly disappointed. Let any one who has seen and noticed that figure, submitted as an equestrian model of General Lee, candidly answer what he thought of it, and let him say whether it admitted of a description or was a nonentity. This design swung to the other extreme, and was as flat as the original was intended to be exciting.* The writer disclaims any

* P. S.—It is taken for granted that a "model horse," referred to in the 29th June report of the Joint Committee's decision, is in reality this work; for the writer feels quite confident that he has seen all the models. It seems a very equivocal tribute to term an equestrian design simply a horse—important though the charger be, in subjective relation to the hero, whose spirit should manifestly be supreme. The objection is sometimes made to equestrian sculpture, that the horse is the principal object, the rider only secondary. This is true only in relation to size (even where the lineaments and outline forms are to some extent blended in the whole, as in a distant view), if the hero element, control allied with heroic dignity, are instantly and unmistakably presented. In M. Mercière's last model, what of dignity—what of suggested verisimilitude or appropriateness in the group? The model did suggest a fairly proportioned horse standing still; and this was all to it. Even as to the horse model, it is manifestly absurd to call a thing "perfect" which is incomplete; and this was only a sketch, and apparently, too, a hastily executed one. The writer regrets that this last model of M. Mercière's has been sent away, for he would be glad to refer to the work itself for confirmation of what he advances. It had been stated and generally understood through published notices since the report of the 29th June, that Mercière was engaged in another model, to be here some time this autumn. The *Dispatch* of 30th Sept., however, had a notice to the effect that the above mentioned model was about being reshipped to Mercière to be amended, and the impression conveyed was that this would serve as the type to be again submitted, and after which to carry out the work itself. Unless M. Mercière has abandoned the idea of making a third preliminary model, it would seem a pity that this, his second equestrian figure—or horse—had not been retained here; for would it not be well to have at hand for reference some suggestion of what is contemplated?

jealousy whatever of M. Mercière; he has no desire to depreciate him; nothing would he do to assail his rights to "a fair field and no favor"; but when the rule has been violated in his favor, when he feels that he has been unwarrantably placed before all others, the subject becomes not only a fair subject of protest on the part of every one, but it would be weak to allow the matter to go unchallenged. He is no longer to be regarded as a competitor, but, it is claimed, *a favorite without cause*, and both he and his submitted works are fully open to true and fearless criticism. Is M. Mercière a man of pre-eminent ability? The writer confesses his ignorance of so extended a reputation, and would suggest that it takes something more than the utterances of partial admirers or the asseverations of special pleaders to assign a man to the niche of fame. If he is, why could he not present a design for a memorial to General Lee which at least would impress people as something better than offensively inappropriate? Why could he not in his second essay only better his first by sending a design with no character or meaning at all, and without a suggestion even of resemblance either of the hero or his horse—neither presence nor dignity—nor attractive even in the abstract, as the sketch or suggestion of a work of art? Has it been through lack of ability for this particular line of art, or has it been through lack of care? In the announcement made through the press on the 29th of June last, that the commission would go to M. Mercière, the apology was actually offered for him that he *mistook* the character of Lee! Curious, certainly, for a man to go slap dash into a thing of this sort. Hit or miss must have been his motto. Yet a compatriot of his, or at any rate one of a neighboring nationality, who has been ignored with the rest, showed a work remarkable for the appreciation of the characteristics of General Lee, and the evidence of careful study in relation both to the hero and the cause, an admirable equestrian model, and the greatest elaboration of all the details in connection. Understanding, inspiration, everything, is to be furnished to this strangely favored one, while others, who had submitted works which the Monument Association's report said "*did not quite come up to the demands of the critics and the expectations of the people,*" were to be completely ignored. It would seem as if the people have had very little say in this matter; and as to the critics, since the trio that figured at Washington, we have not been told who they are. We *are* told by the report that Mr. Augustus St. Gaudens, who took back his Washington fiat, was their chief adviser, and so the special advocate for a competitor becomes the arbiter-in-chief of the cause! It may be asked, how could those works, which *did not quite* come up to the demands, &c., by any possibility or course of reasoning, be expected

to quite meet the changed condition of site, cost, &c.—matters about which the authors of the works had been vouchsafed no information? The contestants in the last competition, as in the two preceding ones, have been treated in a most extraordinary, cavalier, and unjust manner. Should they now remain silent and satisfied?

The inspiration so gratuitously furnished to M. Mercière for his amended work, which, when it appeared, may have passed more easily, from its listless attitude and lack of individuality, for a waiting applicant at a farrier's door, than for a representation of General Lee, was doubtless "*power in repose*"—a phrase about which we heard so much last summer, autumn, and winter—for it was ground out by the press machine in advocacy then of its special favorite, with a hurdy-gurdy like reiteration. The public was to be indoctrinated with the idea—that part of it at least which takes its ideas from such a source—that repose in a figure of marble or bronze is exceptional and original, and the concomitant of suggested power is of necessity the highest art. Perhaps it may be so, yet the Sphinx is said to impress one almost as a living and terrible power, though there cannot be claimed to be much art, at any rate now remaining, in the Sphinx. M. Mercière sent over his solicited model, showing plenty of *repose*, but no power.

A word or two about this catching phrase of "power in repose." Take an illustration from the brute creation: View in a field, even at a trifling distance, a cow and a horse, grazing or standing in repose. There is little to distinguish them thus; one is almost as uninteresting as the other. Startle and put them into motion. If he is anything like a fair specimen of his kind, the nobler beast displays a grace, spirit, and grandeur which will conspicuously distinguish him, as far as they can both be seen. The horse represented in arrested, restrained, or active motion, as circumstances may require, becomes the fittest, it may be said the indispensable adjunct, in a colossal statue to a military hero. The effigy of the gallant brute thus represented adds power and dignity to the rider, whether the hero himself is to be represented in excitement or repose. Present the charger dead still, and the result is a very different one. "Power in repose" has several examples in equestrian statues. It may be asked, has any of them resulted in success? There is the colossal equestrian statue of General Winfield Scott in Washington. Brown, the best equestrian sculptor America has produced, modeled it. He also modeled the colossal equestrian of Washington which stands in Union Square, New York. The statue of Scott is superior to that of Washington in modeling and technique, yet, viewed at a distance of a few hundred yards, it is awkward to ungainliness, and absolutely ugly, while the Washington statue is a noble and an

imposing work from whatever distance it may be viewed. Look at the other squarely planted equestrian in Washington, General Thomas, by Ward. It is not as well modeled as Brown's work, and it is tame and uninteresting till one gets close up to the figure, to the near side, and a little in front, towards which the charger's head is slightly turned. To this one point, and viewed closely, admirable spirit is displayed. A colossal monumental figure should not, however, need to be approached and inspected like a statnette. Its individuality, character, and spirit should impress the beholder from whatever point and distance it may be viewed, as, for instance, does the Washington figure here in Richmond's Capitol Square. Critics may find flaws in this figure—and what work is absolutely perfect?—but Virginia may well be proud of that work, and there are few equestrian figures that are more effective. The most prominent instance, perhaps, of the "power in repose" equestrian monument—for it is older than the others, possibly the pioneer of this particular style, and the most conspicuous failure because it has been disgraced—is the colossal equestrian of the Duke of Wellington, late of Hyde Park, London. Yet this statue, like Brown's "General Scott," is admirable in technique. It was the work of Wyatt, a prominent sculptor of that day. For thirty years or more it stood a veritable laughing stock, and was cartooned and lampooned, till finally it was taken down and carted off to Aldershot, where doubtless it continues to be guyed as before. It would seem better to have melted it down and done with. *Punch* once had a comical cartoon of this long reviled statue; it was under discussion by Parliament, perhaps about removing it, and the statesmen of the day are represented as street arabs. One looks up at the grim duke, whose whole air is to proclaim a crushing power and a determination not to move, and he pipes with small boy sarcasm, "*Shall I 'old yer 'orse, sir?*" It must have seemed more than an anomaly to have the winner of Waterloo, even in his effigy, "superseded," but that particular presentment was deemed intolerable. His pedestal will soon be occupied by another mounted Wellington. It may be predicted that this work will be a worthy presentment of the great soldier, and not an affectation only of power. It will be the work of Boehm, a sculptor before referred to—a compatriot of Munkacsy's, but one who has become naturalized and adopted in England, and who may safely be called the most celebrated living master of equestrian groups. This sculptor is particularly referred to by the writer because it would have been his preference, as was intimated to the Monument Association, in the event of his own design for the monument gaining the award, and with it also the commission, to have placed the actual execution of the statue, to be brought to perfection in colossal form after the model sketch,

in the hands of one so distinguished and exceptionally experienced in this special and important line of art,—equestrian portraiture in relation to monumental work.* In this regard comparison is challenged between M. Mercié and Mr. Boehm. The latter has become celebrated, and especially through his equestrian works, completed and erected in bronze. Of any completed equestrian work by M. Mercié we have so far not heard, and it is surely doing him full justice to judge him by the specimens which he has himself offered. The writer has a letter from Mr. Boehm, received some time back, in which he expressed his willingness to accept the trust, and the special interest the subject would have for him.

There has recently been unveiled at Providence, Rhode Island, a memorial to General Burnside, and the wood cuts represent the charger as on all fours. If this statue is an impressive one, its author has accomplished more than is usually seen in nature. It matters less with this, however, for it is a comparatively small work—an equestrian portrait rather than a monument—and stands, according to accounts, in a comparatively contracted space in the city. For the memorial monument to General Lee the Washington competition programme prescribed a work of an imposing size, and this undoubtedly should be the character of the work. It was a worthy but not an original idea with General Wolseley—for the thoughtful must have all agreed with him—when in a recent tribute to one of the two heroes whom he had known in a lifetime, he said that the statue of Lee should stand upon as high a pedestal as that of Washington. This literally should be the case, to the extent of securing a work which will bear the proximity, and admit of nothing invidious in comparing the memorials of the two great Virginians.

If Mercié is to be positively commissioned to execute the Lee Monument, is it to be a statue conforming to his last model,—certain to be uninteresting and spiritless, viewed at even a little distance? This would seem to be the idea of the Monument Association: to have General Lee “upon a typical thoroughbred horse standing in perfect repose”—*not* upon “*Traveller*” at all, it would appear, perfected into the typical charger, as the representation of that grand old war horse may be. Should the *amended* model be abandoned there is nothing for it but the rampant, careering style of the first offering. Mercié is limited to one of these

* Objection advanced to co-operation in a work of this description would not be valid, for such co-operation is by no means unusual. The following single instance may be quoted, being the legend or explanation which appears beneath an illustration in a recent French paper: “Statue of Victor Massé—work of M. Antonin Mercié. Inaugurated at Lorient, 4th September. Designed by M. Jules Lavee.”

two styles, unless the Monument Association undertakes to furnish him with a still fresher inspiration, and to establish the charge already made in a European paper of having drawn their own inspiration and deduction, by a sort of evolution process, from the works which, through ten years and three invited competitions, have cost the contestants, in the aggregate, more than the whole amount which has been collected by the two Associations for the prosecution of the work.

It has been before stated, that besides change of site—unjustly affecting the competitors awaiting an adequate judgment—there was also, as it appears, a change in the estimated expenditure. The programme issued by the Ladies' Association inviting a competition to be held at Washington, prescribed a work to cost \$150,000 to \$200,000, and in conformity with this, of course the designs had to be prepared. What the two Associations now estimate upon can only be matter of conjecture, but it was evident, by the announcement of their conclusions in the *Dispatch* of 29th June, that decided retrenchment was contemplated. This spoke of "*bronze castings*" having "*come down very low compared with former prices.*" One is curious to know whether it was an authorized sculptors' and painters' price current which was quoted from, and whether there may not have been some confusion in the writer's mind between machine and art work. In the next day's *Dispatch*, 30th June, appeared the following remarkable notice:

"THE STATUE OF LEE.—It is not stated officially, but it is understood that the cost of the Lee statue, modelling and casting, will only be \$12,000. The Association will also have to pay the transportation from Paris to Richmond. As they have about \$56,000 in money, this will leave a large surplus to go to the building of the granite work."

It was further announced that one of the lady managers was, about to sail for Europe, and would probably give the chosen artist valuable information—instruct him upon the kind of statue &c.

It certainly looks as though the labors of the two Associations had resulted in finding a cheap market in which to purchase equestrian statues. It had been heretofore supposed that an equestrian statue, a worthy work of art and cast of genuine metal, would cost, according to size, \$40,000 to \$50,000. Supposing such a bargain as this to be possible, would not so cheap a tribute be utterly unworthy to be erected to the memory of Lee? How such a suggestion would astonish Ruskin, who thus writes in his "*Seven Lamps of Architecture*": "*Now to define this lamp of spirit of sacrifice* clearly, I have said that it prompts us to the offering of precious things merely because they are precious, not

because they are useful and necessary. It is a spirit, for instance, which of two marbles, equally beautiful, applicable, and durable, would choose the more costly because it was so, and of two kinds of decoration, equally effective, would choose the more elaborate because it was so, in order that it might in the same compass present more cost and more thought. It is therefore most unreasoning and enthusiastic, and perhaps best negatively defined as the opposite of the prevalent feeling of modern times, which desires to produce the largest result at the least cost." Ruskin's idea is old—older than the ancient Greeks—because it is *truth*. He quotes in relation to cost in devotional structures, 2 Sam. xxiv. 24, "Neither will I offer unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing."

A cheap Lee is a revolting incongruity. The managers, if their ideas were anything like correctly given, have certainly determined to keep as far as possible away from the style "*Cryselephantine*." Such mistaken economy as this cannot be sustained. The money requisite to an adequate work will surely be forthcoming when the public—the great public throughout this country—understands and approves what is to be done.

Before concluding, it may be said that the practice of instituting competitions for important works is no new fangled device or modern innovation, but bears the sanction of time and the great masters of art. Witness the following extract from a very interesting epitome, "History of Sculpture of all Countries," published in 1883. Among the sculptors of the Renaissance period it thus treats of

"Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455), who was successful in the competition in which the greatest artists of the day took part, for the designs of the bronze gates for the northern side of the Baptistery at Florence. These gates were subsequently followed by the great western or central gates, which are considered Ghiberti's finest work. The reliefs represent scenes in Old Testament history; and although the subjects are too complicated for sculpture, the fertility of imagination displayed, the sense of beauty, the easy execution, and the life of the whole entitle them to the high praise bestowed on them by Vasari, the great art critic of the sixteenth century, and justify the enthusiastic exclamation of Michel Angelo, that they were worthy to be called the Gates of Paradise."

Thus the principle of competition is endorsed. There have been three competitions held for a memorial statue and monument to General Lee, and extending over a period of ten years. The author of the model *most unsuitable* to the hero, admitted by the representatives of the associations to be a mistake, has been awarded the palm! There can surely be no parallel to this in the whole history of art.

It is not credible that the Joint Association, after a careful review of all the circumstances connected with the Lee monument project, will persist in a course which must perpetuate a grave injustice, and leave an everlasting stigma of reproach upon the work. Will it not be infinitely better to accord to *every* competitor, from the first held competition of 1877 to that of last year (the writer believes that all are living, except Clark Mills, and he has, or had, a successor or representative in a sculptor son) the same privilege which was extended to M. Mercié, that of sending a supplementary sketch or remodelment of his work, giving a period of, say five months for this purpose, and defining the time, say three months (after presentation of the supplementary sketches or new models, as the case may be), within which a final and positive award shall be made? Then, with a competent tribunal which will command the confidence and respect of all—the contestants included—constituted in some such way as the Victor Emanuel monument tribunal, let it be determined whose conception is most adequate for this important and interesting work. *Public opinion* settles all such matters at last—either what is to be done or the value of what has been done; not the popular clamour which may be excited by various causes and then dies out, but the *essence* of public opinion, the *consensus* of thought, which finally arbitrates all matters of art and literature—things of great importance—and yet not demonstrable like a science. Technical counsel (for artists have their strong characteristics as other entities and will follow their bent, whether classic, realistic, pre-Raphaelite impressionist, or what not, and such may or may not be applicable to special cases,) is properly but an ingredient in this *consensus* of public thought.

To conclude, the writer would quote from a letter received from one who has been in all three of the Lee monument contests. He writes: "I have expended more than five thousand dollars of hard-earned money, and years of earnest thought and work, in the endeavor to present a design worthy of General Lee. *All I ask is the opportunity to demonstrate my own ability, or gracefully to yield the palm to the work which shall be declared superior to my own.*" He manfully disclaimed any idea or desire for consideration in an art sense, because he himself is a Virginian, and was a soldier under his great commander. The writer feels proud in endorsing these sentiments, although a Virginian only in sympathy and in veneration of her noble men; so also will every competitor who has felt a reverence for the work, and who has been actuated by a spirit of generous rivalry. Will not the great public approve such sentiments, to the end that, through perfect justice and wisdom of action, may be achieved a fitting consummation to so noble a cause?

Respectfully,

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