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Choice Poetry.

(From the Pittsburgh Chronicle.)

OUR DEFENDERS.

The following noble poem of Thomas Buchanan Read, which fits the hour like the blast of a trumpet, and which is equal in effect to Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," was recently recited in Altoona, Pa., by Mr. Nardoch, and more lately by the author himself. It was written for the Americans of Rome, and was first read to them in the ruins of Titus' Baths, as they were gathered to celebrate last Fourth of July. We would like to see the words set to music:

Our flag on the land and our flag on the sea,
An Angel of Peace wherever it goes,
Notly sustained by Columbia's devotion,
The Angel of Death it shall be to our foes.
True to our native sky,
Still shall our eagle fly,
Casting his scintillating gleam
Through the olive branch,
Still in his talons staunch,
Grasping the bolts of the thunders of War!
Hark to the sound, there's a foe on our border,
A foe striving on the gulf of his doom;
Free men are rising, and marching in order,
Leaving the plow and the harrow behind,
Must dim the harvest sheen
Of scythe and of sickle keen.
The axe steps in power by the tree it would mar,
Veteran and youth are out,
Swelling the battle shout,
Grasping the bolts of the thunders of War!
Our brave mountain eagles swoop from their eyrie,
Our little panthers leap from forest and plain,
Out of the West flash the flames of the prairie,
Out of the East roll the waves of the main!
Down from their Northern shores,
Lead us Niagara pours,
They march and their tread wakes the earth with its jar,
Under the Stars and Stripes,
Each with the soul of a hero,
Grasping the bolts of the thunders of War!
Spice of the sword or assassin's stiletto,
Which a heart in the breast of the brave,
The oak of the North or the Southern palmetto
Shall shelter no foe except in his grave!
While the Gulf hallow breaks,
Echoing the Northern lakes,
And ocean replies unto ocean afar,
Yield we no inch of land,
While there's a patriot hand
Grasping the bolts of the thunders of War!

Select Miscellany.

MY CAPTURE AND ESCAPE!

AN INCIDENT OF THE WAR.

In the ranks of my regiment I arrived in Washington City, in June, 1862, and was soon after sent out to the sacred soil of Virginia. Our regiment was sent to the advance of the Federal lines, and portions were sent out on picket duty. When it came my turn to advance near the enemy's lines, I felt some apprehensions for my safety, and though I was a soldier, I must frankly confess I feared the rifles of the Confederate sharpshooters. Near where our pickets were stationed, was a little, old-fashioned log house, that looked comfortable and cheering, and often made me feel sad, when seated in some nook or corner of the bushes, watching the enemy. How that old log house made me heart palpitate, and drew from me deep and heavy sighs. Not that I had lost one particle of my patriotism, or felt any the less brave and willing to fight for my country; but it would bring to my mind pictures of home, and of the many pleasant scenes I had passed with sisters and brothers around the family board. I noticed that the house was occupied, and fair forms fitted in and out, and one in particular that drew my attention. I became deeply interested in the inmates of the house—and, as I thought the matter over, it seemed as if I could not restrain my curiosity, but I must visit it. Standing as it did, between two hostile armies, what could induce its inmates to remain, with destruction visible all around them.

It was a beautiful afternoon, in the latter part of June, that I was again on picket duty in the vicinity of the log house. I was determined that day to satisfy my curiosity and visit the house. Leaving my companions, I stole across a field or two, watching with a vigilant eye every bush and fence to prevent surprise. As I approached the house I heard a plaintive song, but sung so sweetly that I wept, though I felt ashamed of myself as a soldier for my weakness. I drew close up beside the house, and in a crouching position I silently listened. The song ceased, a heavy, hasty step sounded on the floor.

"Father, what is the matter?" I heard a voice exclaim, that was mingled with an agitated and mournful quiver.

"My dear, dear daughter, you and your mother must depart at once. You must go to Washington, and from thence you can find your way to Massachusetts, where your uncle lives. Tell him that I, his brother, implore him to protect you until I too can reach you. Our country is torn and distracted, and utter ruin seems to hang over it. Oh, God, when will all this end?"

"And you, George," I believed this was the voice of his wife, "where are you going?"

I had now approached a crevice through which I could see the interior of the house, and when the question was asked, I could see the man start, and look at his wife in mute astonishment. His face turned white, then scarlet, then dark blue; his eyeballs seemed to start from their sockets, and the veins on his neck swelled to an enormous size; he trembled and reeled, and down he sat upon a chair.

"Where am I going?" he gasped, "God only knows!"

"Why, what on earth do you mean?" fairly screamed his wife.

"I mean this," said he, more calm: "I am going into the Confederate army, not from my own free will but from compulsion, to save my property from confiscation, to save a home for you and Jenny."

"Oh, father, do not join the confederate army, but fight for the old stars and stripes, and for the country you so long loved," and Jenny caught her father about the neck, and kissed him.

I could get but a single glance at her face, but how lonely she looked, pleading for her country and her father's honor.—The mother was standing beside him, and the great tears flowing down her cheeks and dropping on his head.

"Come, dear father, let us go North; Uncle David is a good man, and we can live in safety there."

The father sat listening to the pleadings of the daughter, and these were joined by the wife with such stirring pathos that he yielded, and consented to leave immediately for Washington and join the Federal army.

"You have decided me; I will go," he exclaimed, and the terror that agitated him before had entirely fled.

"Bless you, father!" exclaimed Jenny, as she drew back an old board that was against the wall, over the mantel-piece, and from its secret hiding place drew out a small, beautiful Star-Spangled Banner.

"There, my father, under the folds of that flag you must fight, if you will go to war, but not beneath the Palmetto, the Pelican, and Serpent;" and she threw it around his shoulders, while his stalwart form braced up, and his eyes brightened, as he pressed the Stars and Stripes to his bosom.

How I loved that girl, as she stood there in all the majesty of her pride, gazing on her father. I could have fought a regiment of rebels at that moment, or as many more as might have been brought against me. Had I been ready to marry at that moment, I would have made that girl my wife at least a dozen times. But my thoughts upon that subject were of short duration, for just as the father was about to make preparations to start from his home, in stepped four rebel troops, under the command of a corporal.

"Well, sir, we have called for you," said the corporal, "and I don't think we came any too soon;" and he snatched the Star-Spangled Banner from off the shoulders of the man, threw it upon the floor, and stamped upon it. "That is the way we will set our heels on the necks of the Yankee invaders."

How my blood foamed, it didn't boil, but raved through my veins as if it would burst them. Suddenly Jenny sprang forward, and pushed the corporal back with such force that he almost fell to the floor, and snatched up the flag and flaunted it in his face.

"As under its folds tyranny was driven from the land, so shall traitors be driven out or hung; and if I were a man I would punish you for the insult you offered this dear flag of mine."

"I didn't come here to fight the women," said the corporal doggedly. "Come, Mr. Davis, you have been drafted, and must go to the army."

"I will not fight against my will," exclaimed the man, exhibiting some signs of resistance.

"But you shall. Seize him, men!"

The rebels sprang forward and caught Davis, but being a strong man, he hurled them from him. Again they set upon him with more success, and was proceeding to bind him. I could stand it no longer. I rushed to the door, screaming—

"Come on boys; we have them now!"

I dashed into the house, and just at that moment down went one of the rebels, leveled to the floor by a chair in the hands of Jenny. Again the chair whirled in the air, and came down on the head of the corporal. The rebels were frightened and fled from the house; but seeing I was alone, returned to the combat. Davis was still bound, and could afford no assistance. The fight was unequal, and I was overpowered and taken prisoner. Davis and myself were marched off to the enemy's camp, while Jenny and her mother were left alone in the house.

For two days I was a prisoner in the enemy's camp, near Fairfax Court House. What had become of Davis I knew not, and what would become of me I cared not, and I had lost the brave girl I had learned to love. The day had passed gloomily away, and night was come again. I was seated in a sort of brush tent, with a guard pacing up and down in front of it, paying more attention to me than I thought absolutely necessary. While lost in happy thoughts of home and Jenny, I heard a rustling noise beside me, and a delicate hand was laid on my arm.

"Follow me, quickly, and I will save you," she whispered in my ear, and placed her hand over my mouth.

She then withdrew, and I, snake-like, crawled out of the tent after her. Cautiously we moved along until we came to the guard.

"Who goes there?" came quickly, and down we dropped upon our faces.

The guard passed on, and we crawled forward, stopping to listen. The guard was returning, and we lay still until he had again passed, and we then passed forward more rapidly.

"We are now beyond the camp, but we have the pickets to pass yet. My father is waiting for us just yonder," said she, turning a little to the left.

"You are a brave girl," I ventured to say, and there is no knowing what else I might have said, but she placed her finger on my mouth, with a gentle "Hush!"

Secreted in the bushes was her father, who firmly grasped my hand as we joined him. Jenny then placed a musket in my hands, and I could see by the dim light that her father was provided with one, and she carried one, though, I must confess, rather awkwardly. I was all curiosity and anxious to know how she, the little, frail creature, could accomplish so much.

"I am afraid we'll have to fight the pickets," said her father; "but it's life or death, and if we can scare them we are safe."

In perfect silence we approached the locality of the picket guard, and thought we had eluded their vigilance, when a quick and frightened challenge burst upon us. This was followed almost instantly by a flash, and a bullet whizzed close to my head.

"Charge on them, boys," shouted Davis, as he fired, and I quickly sent a bullet in the direction of the rebel picket. I saw Jenny's musket come to her shoulder, and as it was discharged she reeled and would have fallen to the ground, but I caught her, and in a moment she recovered from the shock.

We heard the enemy's pickets retreating in alarm, and making the most of their confusion we dashed toward the Federal lines, some half a mile distant.

I had made my escape, but not through my own stratagem or skill, but by the constant work and energy of a young and brave girl, whose patriotic heart would not forsake her honored and beloved government, and whose determination rescued her father from the hand of the oppressor. The muskets she provided us with were secreted in her father's house. She had loaded them, and at night eluded the vigilance of the enemy's guard, and deposited them where she delivered them to us. She bid us a touching farewell, and in company with her mother, proceeded to the State of Massachusetts.

Her father enlisted in the Federal army, and now, side by side, we are fighting to deliver his home from the hand of the oppressor, while I look forward with pleasure to the day when I shall be awarded the hand of Miss Jenny, as a reward for my efforts to save her father.

A HINT TO YOUNG LADIES.—Loveliness! It is not your costly dress, ladies, your expensive shawl, or gold-laden fingers. Men of good sense look far beyond these. It is your character they study—your deportment. If you are trifling and loose in your conversation, no matter if you are as beautiful as an angel, you have no attractions for them. If it is the loveliness of nature that attracts the first attention, it is the moral and mental excellence and cultivation that wins and continues to retain the affection of the heart. Young ladies sadly miss it who labour to improve their outward looks, while they bestow little or no thought on their minds and hearts. Fools may be won by gewgaws, and fashionable and showy dresses, but the wise, the prudent and substantial, are never caught by such traps. Let modesty and virtue be your dress. Use pleasant and truthful language, study to do good, and though you may not be courted by the fop, the truly great will love to linger in your steps.

EARLY INFLUENCES.—There can be no greater blessing than to be born in the light and air of a cheerful loving home. It not only insures a happy childhood—if there be health and a good constitution—but it also makes sure a virtuous and happy manhood, and a fresh young heart in old age. I think it the duty of parents to make their children's childhood full of love and childhood's proper joyousness; and I never see children destitute of them through the poverty, faulty tempers, or wrong notions of their parents, without a heartache. Not that all the appliances that wealth can buy are necessary to the free and happy unfolding of childhood in body, mind and heart—quite otherwise, God be thanked! but children must at least have love inside the house, and fresh air, and good play, and some good companionship outside; otherwise young life runs the greatest danger in the world of withering or growing stunted, or at best prematurely old and turned inward on itself.

A married monster said that he lately dreamed that he had an angel by his side and upon waking up found it was nobody but his wife.

A sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use.

COL. WILLIAM GRAY MURRAY.

William Gray Murray was born in Longford county, Ireland, July 17, 1825. At a very early age he was brought to this country by his father, who settled in New York city, and there engaged in the mercantile business. From New York the family moved to Lancaster city, Pa., where the elder Murray resumed his mercantile pursuits. In a few years the family again moved, and settled in Harrisburg, Pa., which city always afterwards was considered the family home, and where the mother and sister of the deceased now reside.

From Harrisburg, in December, 1846, young Murray volunteered as a private in the Cameron Guards, and went to Mexico as 3d sergeant. While in Mexico he was appointed 2d lieutenant in the 11th Infantry U. S. A., and served gallantly in that position during the war. His qualities as a soldier were intuitive, and he seemed never so well satisfied as when engaged in military pursuits. A daring spirit, joined to a frame of great physical strength, made him a formidable foe and a desirable friend in any contest; yet, in the walks of private life, few men spent their years with less antagonism; and few of the positive nature of that which once animated the deceased had a happier faculty than he of winning and retaining friends.

After the close of the war with Mexico young Murray left the army, at the earnest solicitation of friends and his family to engage in a business which was deemed more desirable and less dangerous. He settled in Hollidaysburg, Pa., and at once took an active part in the general business of that locality. Attaching himself to the Democratic party with his first vote, he soon won the confidence of the prominent men of that organization, and was made Postmaster of Hollidaysburg by President Pierce. He retained this position during the administration of James Buchanan, and in every respect was esteemed a diligent, impartial, and just official.

At the first outbreak of the rebellion, the deceased expressed a determination to enter the service of his country, and was offered a captain's commission in the regular army, but was compelled by the severe illness of his wife to decline the position. On a sudden, the brightest link in his affections was severed, and thus bereaved by death, and left alone with a household of young children, his first impulse was the arrangement of his business with the amplest and most affectionate provisions for the care of his children, when he proclaimed his intention of recruiting a regiment for the war. His regiment was composed chiefly of the hardy and intrepid mountaineers and farmers of Blair and Clearfield counties—men inured to danger and like the colored under whom they marched, they entered the contest for the purpose of fighting for the Union and the Constitution.

It is useless, in this brief sketch, to enter on a repetition of the details of the battle in which Col. Murray lost his life. The events of that fight have already been impressed on the history of the struggle for the Union, and no action will hereafter shine with a greater splendor than that in which the 84th Pennsylvania Regiment, at Winchester, on Sunday, March 23, 1862, advanced with such gallantry. Col. Murray had two horses shot under him, and it was while on foot, side by side with the color-bearer, at the head of his regiment, that he received his fatal wound. He was cheering his men on to the charge, urging them as only a soldier can urge forward brave men, when he fell pierced in the forehead by a Minnie ball, and also wounded in the thigh.

Col. William Gray Murray has made his own epitaph. He has earned a juster meed of praise than we can offer to his memory, and when the deeds of the bravest who participated in that struggle are recounted, his name will find that honorable mention which must make it immortal in the annals of chivalry.—*Forney's War Press.*

THE BEAUTIFUL.—Beautiful things are suggestive of a purer and a higher life, and fills us with mingled love and fear. They are a graciousness that wins us, and an excellence to which we involuntarily do reverence. If you are poor, yet modestly aspiring, keep a vase of flowers on your table, and they will help to maintain your dignity, and secure for you consideration and delicacy of behavior.

The Providence Press says that one night lately, when the streets were a glare of ice, a citizen was accosted by an Irishman, who desired to be put on the road to Woonsocket.

"Woonsocket!" said the astonished gentleman, "whom do you want to see in Woonsocket in this kind of going?"

"An' faith," says Pat, "it's meself I want to see there, sure."

Pat received the necessary directions.

Why are two young ladies kissing each other an emblem of Christianity? Because they are doing unto each other as they would men should do unto them.

HOW MORTARS ARE LOADED.

I took a position on shore, near the point and along side the mortars, to witness their practice. The firing of a mortar is the very poetry of a battle. A bag of powder weighing from eighteen to twenty pounds is dropped into the huge monster. The derrick drops the shell in; the angle is calculated; a long cord is attached to the primer; the gunner steps out upon the platform, and the balance of the crew upon the shore. The Captain gives the word, the gunner gives his cord a sudden jerk, a crash like a thousand thunders follows, a tongue of flame leaps from the mouth of the mortar, and a column of smoke rools up in beautiful feecy spirals, developing into rings of exquisite proportions.

One can see the shell as it leaves the mortar, flying through the air, apparently no larger than a marble. The next you see of the shell, a beautiful cloud of smoke bursts into sight, caused by the explosion. Imagine ten of these monsters thundering at once, the air filled with smoke clouds, the gun-boats belching out destruction and completely hidden from sight in whirls of smoke, the shells screaming through the air with an unearthly sound, and the distant guns of the enemy sending their solid shot and shell above and around us, dashed the water up in glistening columns and jets of spray, and you have the sublime poetry of war. An incident, however, will show how completely the battle may lose its poetry and develop into a stern and suggestive reality.

Impatient of being at a distance, and wishing to witness the effect of our shells, which were playing upon the head of the island, in company with one or two others I strolled round the point until we came in full view of the enemy's lower forts.—We kept along the banks until we passed our pickets, and then took to the cornfields and behind fences, until we reached an old deserted mill, where we emerged in plain sight of the floating battery. No sooner had our party come in sight than a flash of light shot from its sides, and a shell came screaming like a fiend over our heads bursting a short distance behind us. The poetry of shells suddenly changed with a double retrograde process.

ORDER.—Never leave things lying about—a shawl here, and a pair of slippers there, and a bonnet somewhere else—trusting to a servant to set things right. No matter how many servants you have, it is a miserable habit, and if its source is not in the intellectual and moral character, it will inevitably terminate there. If you have used the dipper, towel, tumbler, etc., put them back in their places and you will know where to find them when you want them again. Or if you set an example of carelessness, do not blame your servants for following it. Children should be taught to put things in their proper places as soon as they are old enough to use them; and if each member of the household would observe this simple rule the house would never get much out of order, and a large amount of vexation and useless labor would be avoided.

The mind of children is the tenderest, holiest thing this side of Heaven. And it is not to be approached with gentleness, with love, yes, with a heart-worship of the great God from whom, in almost angel innocence, it has proceeded?—A creature undefiled by the taint of the world, unweakened by its injustices, unwearyed by its hollow pleasures. A being fresh from the source of light, with something of universal lustre in it. If childhood be this, how holy the duty to see that, in its onward growth, it shall be no other! To stand as a watcher at the temple, lest any unclean thing should enter it.

POINTS OF HONOR.—Meredith P. Gentry told Parson Brownlow that he only accepted a seat in the rebel Congress to show that he was not afraid of McClellan capturing Richmond. It was a point of honor with him.

"Yes, Gentry," replied Brownlow, "and there is another point of honor, which you have failed to mention. Duell and his army are at Nashville, and are therefore nearer to Bedford county than General McClellan is to Richmond. You are like a pismire on a chunk fired at each end; you have a point of honor on either side of you." Gentry acknowledged the corn.

Smith once met two editors who had always been at "outs" walking arm in arm in the streets.

"Hillo," said Smith, "the lion and lamb lie down together, do they?"

"Oh, yes," said editor No. 1, "Jones here did the 'lyin,' and I did the 'lammin,' and of course we came down together."

EXTENT OF THE UNION LINES.—A Secessionist of rather an amiable turn of mind, accosted a United States officer lately at Nashville, and in a jovial manner interrogated him as to how far the Union line extended. "To the North Pole," replied Stars and Stripes, "and when I left, there were two regiments there waiting for arms."

CHANGING STEP.—What is more ludicrous than an awkward couple walking arm in arm and failing entirely to keep step? It is suggestive of a heavy wagon jolting over a rough road, or music played badly out of tune, or anything else most disagreeable to sensitive nerves, and is altogether most wretched and uncomfortable both for the spectators and the parties concerned. Occasionally, by accident they fall into keeping step for a while, and for a time they move harmoniously and with graceful identity of motion. But for the most part their progress consists of a ludicrous joggly jerk, fearfully trying to comfort and temper. This is but an illustration of the discomfort which some men endure through life, merely for ignorance of knowing how to "keep step." Man and wife have need particularly of learning this accomplishment. As long as they jog along life's road in the double harness of matrimony, "keeping step," they are happy and comfortable. Suddenly some little eccentricity—a foible in one or the other—interferes with the pleasant concert. Now is the time to "change step," by yielding a little on both sides to restore the harmony which was lost. But if both hold out stubbornly, and refuse to make allowances for the difference of opinion and feeling, then all peace is forever banished from the family circle, and unless one party can brow-beat the other into submission, there must always be bickerings, jealousies and petty conflicts, which will make home—which should be the happiest spot on earth—the most wretched.

SCENE AT A REVIEW.—There was a beautiful instance of fine horsemanship displayed at a late review held at Vienna, upon the occasion of the military order of Maria Theresa, when some thirty thousand cavalry were in line. A little child in the front row of the spectators, becoming frightened, rushed forward just as a squadron of huzzars were charging at full tilt—swooping down with maddening velocity, nay, almost on the child. Terror paralyzed alike the spectators and the mother of the child, while the lovely and amiable Empress almost fainted with horror, for the child's destruction seemed inevitable. The little one was almost under the horse's feet—another instant would have sealed its doom—when a huzzar, without lessening his speed or loosening his hold, threw himself along his horse's neck, and seizing the child placed it in safety in front of his saddle without so much as changing the pace or breaking the alignment in the least. A hundred thousand voices hailed with pride and joy the deed while but two voices could sob their gratitude—the one a mother's other that of her sympathizing and beloved Empress. A proud moment that must have been for the huzzar, when his Emperor, taking the enameled cross of merit, attached it to his breast—a proud monument alike for the sovereign and the man.

DESTRUCTION OF WAR.—A correspondent of a Western paper, who has lately visited New Madrid, says, that the town presents a very sad spectacle. Whole blocks of houses have been destroyed by the rebels in order to obtain a clear sweep for their guns; and even this wholesale destruction of property does not appear so badly as the buildings which are partially destroyed, bored through and through with shot and torn with shell, leaving just enough of them to show what they once had been. There are none of its inhabitants left—not one—and many years will elapse before the town will be what it once was.

When a person is very ill, he says, "God has afflicted me;" but if he feels very happy, and very well, how rarely does he say "God has made me happy." How prone are we to think God is at burials, but not at weddings; how prone to think God is in all that is dark, apocalyptic and gloomy, but not in the midst of all that is bright, giving it greater brightness and in all that is joyful adding to its intensity and its purity.

A gentleman once said to his son, who used to stay in bed late in the morning, "Your brother got up this morning at five o'clock, and found on the sidewalk a purse of gold." "Very well," replied the lazy young man, "if the poor fellow to whom it belongs had remained in bed all day, he probably would not have lost it."

Here is a cringling story reported by an African traveler: "A wealthy Arab, residing near the frontiers of Morocco, lately paid his first visit to Algeria, and was present at a ball. On his return home he said to his wife:—'What strange creatures these French women are!—Would you believe if they absolutely carry an open umbrella under their petticoats!' Such was the idea of the 'mad of crinolines' by the son of Mahomet."

Sam.—"Gumbo, what are you live, now, eh?"

Gumbo.—"I doesn't live no more now. I gib up residing three weeks ago, and moved off on account of de weather."