



[1823—1873]

W. GORDON McCABE

JOHN R. THOMPSON was born in Richmond, Virginia, October 23, 1823. He received his preparation for college in an excellent school at East Haven, Connecticut, entered the academic department of the University of Virginia in the autumn of 1840, in which he successfully pursued his studies for two years, then joined the law school and was graduated before he was twenty-one, taking a good degree.

After practising law in Richmond for a little more than two years, contributing, meanwhile, in prose and verse to various journals, North and South, he finally determined to follow the path that inclination had early marked out for him by devoting himself chiefly to literature. To this end he purchased and assumed editorial control of *The Southern Literary Messenger* (then known by the somewhat cumbrous title of *The Southern and Western Literary Messenger and Review*), in November, 1847. That he felt at first, young as he was, some trepidation at giving up the profession for which he had been trained and embarking upon the uncertain sea of editorial life, is shown by his "Announcement to the Public" (published in the October number of the *Messenger* for 1847), in which he says: "It is not my intention to abandon my profession, but to continue, as heretofore, a practitioner of the law."

But he very soon recognized the truth of the trite aphorism that "the law is a jealous mistress," and there is no evidence in his letters, or elsewhere, that his desertion of Themis for the Muses cost him any real pang.

His heart was now thoroughly in his work and the result was that under his management, for nearly thirteen years, the *Messenger* held an unchallenged place in the front rank of American magazines. In July, 1854, still retaining titular editorship of the *Messenger* (though the year before he had sold the proprietorship to its publishers), he sailed for Europe, whence he contributed regularly to its pages during his absence, a series of always clever and often brilliant sketches of travel. Apart from the mere delight of intelligent "sight-seeing," during this visit he formed some of the pleasantest and most lasting friendships of his life, his refinement, genial-

ity, keen observation, and exquisite culture drawing to him many of the foremost men of letters in England and on the Continent.

At this time he renewed a slight acquaintance with Charles Dickens (though they never became really friends) and for the first time met Bulwer, who greeted with unwonted graciousness the young American *littérateur*; he saw much of Macaulay, not only in society, but in easy intercourse in the latter's bachelor quarters in The Albany, which he afterward made the setting for a wonderfully vivid and charming sketch of the great essayist and historian, and became an ever welcome guest of the Brownings at Casa Guidi in Florence.

Now, too, began an acquaintance with Carlyle and Tennyson, destined in both instances to ripen into hearty friendship; while with the greatest humorist of the century, "good old Thackeray," whom he had entertained in Virginia, there were "free quarters" for him at No. 36 Onslow Square, boyish rambles together from Highgate to Houndsditch, jolly nights over pipes and foaming tankards at "Evans's" in Covent Garden ("The Cave of Harmony" of 'The Newcomes'), and more than one cosy dinner at "The Ship" at Greenwich, or "The Star-and-Garter" at Richmond-on-the-Hill.

On his return to America, after six halcyon months abroad, Thompson collected his sketches of travel, from which he had scrupulously omitted all mention of the distinguished people he had met, and the volume, entitled 'Across the Atlantic,' had already been printed and was in the hands of the binders, when the great New York fire of 1856 occurred, in which the establishment of his publishers, Messrs. Derby and Jackson, was burned, and the entire edition destroyed.

Years afterwards he would relate to his friends, in his inimitably droll fashion, how the news of the fire came to him in Washington just as he was mounting the rostrum to lecture before the Smithsonian Institution—how ghastly seemed all his jokes—how dreary all his *jeux d'esprit* in the light of that disastrous conflagration; and how there finally came into his possession the only copy of the book that was saved—a complete "final revise" of proof-sheets that had been accidentally left in a desk (fortunately rescued) belonging to a member of the firm—a volume, he was wont to declare with mock gravity, that should fetch as great a price as the 'Mazarin Bible' or the famous 'Il Decamerone' from the press of Messer Cristoforo Valdarfar, in that it was beyond cavil of captious bibliophile one of the very few really "unique books" to be found in the world.

In January, 1855, he resumed active editorial control of the *Messenger* (relieving his intimate friend, John Esten Cooke, whom

he had appointed "acting editor" during his absence); and once more, by the incisive brilliancy of his literary criticisms, the charm of his genial sympathy, and by that generous and hearty recognition of merit which he was ever ready to accord the humblest aspirants in letters, he drew around him the best literary talent in the South and not a few of the cleverest men and women further afield.

The jealousies of literary men have passed into a proverb—a *genus irritabile*, like the cooks in DeQuincey's 'Murder as One of the Fine Arts'—but it is noteworthy, as illustrating how truly genuine kindness of heart and an inimitable sweetness of disposition dominated Thompson's character, that of the great number of men and women he gathered about him in his long editorial life, many became his life-long friends, and so far as can be now recalled, he left no enemy behind.

During these four or five years (1855 to 1860), he also contributed to various Northern magazines some of his most charming *vers-de-société*, pronounced before various literary and college societies several odes of occasion of marked distinction as to finish and mastery of flexible metrics, and delivered in the chief cities throughout the South a series of admirable lectures, of which those on "European Journalism" and "The Life and Genius of Edgar Allan Poe" were so exquisite in point of style, yet so thoughtful and just in sympathetic criticism as to create a great hope in those who knew the real abilities that lay behind the mere transient cleverness of much of his work that he would set to himself some task worthier of his wide and solid acquirement and conspicuous literary accomplishments.

That he felt this himself in his modest fashion there is no sort of doubt, a critical history of English poetry, with copious illustrative selections, from Chaucer to "the Victorians" (on the same lines as those followed twenty years later by Professor Humphry Ward), being the work most to his liking. But when his friends gently chided him because of delay, confident of their recognition of his prodigious industry and scrupulous punctuality in performing his editorial work, he would make some cheery remark about the *res augusta domi* and force them to confess that, with so many dependent on the earnings of his pen (for he was the most generous of sons and of brothers), he had reason on his side and must needs bide his time.

In May, 1860, he resigned the editorship of the *Messenger* after nearly thirteen years of faithful and brilliant service, being succeeded by Dr. George W. Bagby, our Virginia "Elia."

Despite the fact that he had worked with rare devotion born of a genuine enthusiasm for letters, that he had not only held the

best of the old contributors, but had enlisted the services of fresh talent, North and South—Poe contributing (under Thompson's editorship) his definitive "Rationale of Verse," and a new series of his scathing "Marginalia" (which ran through six numbers), in addition to some exquisite critiques, while of the *dii minores* we find prose or poetry by Owen Meredith, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, R. H. Stoddard, Mrs. Sigourney, Frances Sargent Osgood, George P. Morris, William Gilmore Simms, Moncure D. Conway, Commodore Maury, Philip Pendleton Cooke, G. P. R. James, Paul Hayne, Henry Timrod, James Barron Hope, John Esten Cooke, George W. Bagby—this quite apart from the complete works, of which, to mention but three out of a goodly number, Ik Marvel's 'Reveries of a Bachelor,' Tuckerman's 'Characteristics of Literature,' and Baldwin's inimitable 'Flush Times in Alabama' were first given to the public in the pages of the *Messenger* under the Thompson régime—despite all this, the magazine had not been liberally supported by the Southern people; and, as Mr. Thompson was poor, he felt that in justice to those dependent on him, though the decision cost him many a pang, he ought to accept a very liberal offer made him at this time to assume editorial charge of *The Southern Field* and *Fireside*, recently established at Augusta, Georgia.

In this position he remained about a year, making, as was his constant good fortune, many warm friends and admirers among the more cultured classes of the far South.

Then burst the storm of war. In the clash of arms, letters, like laws, were in great measure silent, and Mr. Thompson at once returned to Virginia. His health, even then precarious, prevented his serving his State in arms, but his heart was thoroughly in the cause and his patriotic enthusiasm found fitting expression in prose and verse. Despite his duties as Assistant-secretary of the Commonwealth (a position which had been tendered him on his return), he contributed steadily to the columns of the daily and weekly press and wrote stirring battle-lyrics, which won instant applause at home and across the seas.

At the beginning of July, 1864, he embarked from Wilmington for England, *via* Nassau and Halifax, to take up a position on the editorial staff of *The Index* (the official organ of the Confederate States in London), being at the time so prostrated in health that his nephew and a friend had to carry him in their arms on board the blockade-runner, in which he was sailing for Bermuda. The voyage was safely made, and once more settled in London in cheery quarters at No. 17 Savile Row (the old residence of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, and within a few minutes' walk of his beloved Piccadilly), with kind friends and compatriots about him, he soon re-

gained his health and spent what were perhaps, the happiest months of his maturer years. Idleness was always irksome to him, and returning health, with consequent high spirits, soon gave the impulse for accomplishing some excellent literary work. His editorial articles in *The Index* more than once received the very unusual honor of being copied into *The Times* (which was at that time the greatest power in Europe of "the fourth estate"), he, meanwhile, finding leisure to contribute "leaders" to that sturdy old Conservative organ, *The Standard*, whose "American Correspondent" he remained, on his return home, to the day of his death.

He went much into London society, was elected a member of the famous "Travellers Club," and had the *entrée* into the most distinguished literary circles of the capital. True, death had been busy during the ten years that had elapsed since his former visit—Macaulay was dead—Mrs. Browning was dead—and, sharpest pang of all, he missed the hearty grasp of the master-hand that had penned 'The Newcomes.' But, as is the beneficent "way of the world," new faces had come to take the place of the old ones passed away, and now began between himself and Kinglake (whose 'Eothen' had long been one of his favorite books), Dean Stanley, Francis Palgrave, Lord and Lady Donoughmore, and the Stuart Wortleys, much pleasant friendly intercourse; while Thackeray's accomplished daughter Anne (now Lady Ritchie), whom he had last seen as a young school-girl, gave him warmest welcome in the new home which she and her sister Minnie (afterward Mrs. Leslie Stephen) had made for themselves after their father's sudden death.

With Tennyson and Carlyle, as has been stated, his acquaintanceship soon ripened into friendship; the Laureate he saw often in town (you will find him mentioned in the 'Life' as "Thompson, the Confederate,") and occasionally at Farringford, while on any fine day he might be seen in Battersea Park or St. James's, pacing slowly arm in arm and deep in converse with the venerable philosopher of Chelsea, who, as is well known, took the keenest interest to the very end in the triumph of Southern arms.

For more than a year after the disastrous end of the war, he continued to reside in London, eking out a livelihood by contributions to the daily and weekly press, as chance offered, and by writing for *Blackwood's Magazine* from Major Heros von Borcke's note-books the experiences of that gallant officer as chief-of-staff of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia.

In the autumn of 1866 he returned to America, and was connected for a short time with *Every Afternoon*, a high-class journal somewhat after the style of the *Pall Mall*, or *St. James's Gazette*, established by William Young, formerly editor of *The Albion*, a fast

friend of Thackeray, and chiefly remembered now as the translator of Béranger's lyrics. But New York was not yet ripe for such an ambitious venture, and the paper had but a brief existence.

Finally, through the kindly efforts of an influential man of letters, books were sent to Thompson at odd times to be reviewed in the columns of the *Evening Post*. The veteran editor-in-chief of that scholarly journal, William Cullen Bryant, was at once impressed with the literary distinction of the critiques, made inquiries as to the writer, and, perhaps, remembering Thompson's generous words in the *Messenger* in the very heat of acrimonious sectional discussion: "The sins of Bryant, the editor, have not deadened us to the beauties of Bryant, the poet," after a brief interval offered him the position of literary editor on the staff of the *Post*.

With that scrupulous honesty and keen sense of personal honor which characterized him in things small and great, Thompson went at once to the proprietors of the paper, in view of its pronounced political attitude, and stated frankly his course during the war and his abiding sympathies with the people of his section, then struggling for their very existence under the curse of the detestable "Reconstruction Acts."

In turn, Mr. Bryant and his son-in-law and associate editor, Mr. Parke Godwin, in a manner highly honorable to their good sense and good feeling, declared that they should consider only the quality of his work, and with rare delicacy, on which Thompson often dwelt, and which no Southern man of letters should ever forget, carefully refrained from putting into his hands for review any book dealing with the civil conflict that could possibly wound his feelings.

The four or five years spent in this dignified and congenial employment were, despite his rapidly failing health, not without much genuine, if subdued, pleasure. He accomplished much literary work outside his regular duties on the *Post*, contributing not infrequently to *Harper's Weekly*, *Scribner's* and the *Galaxy*, and beguiling his *horæ subsicivæ* with some exquisite translations from the French and German, notably from Béranger and Heine.

In the North, as in the far South years before, Thompson made not a few friends (chief among them Edmund Clarence Stedman and Richard Henry Stoddard), of whom he always spoke with hearty admiration and generous warmth of affection—sentiments which, if one may judge from the noble tribute paid him in the leading article in the *Post* on the day following his death, were returned to the full by those with whom he spent these last years of his life.

In the spring of 1873, through the liberality of his friend, Mr. Isaac Henderson, one of the chief owners of the *Post*, he went to

Colorado in the hope that the progress of the pulmonary disease that held him in its grip might be stayed for a time. But within a few weeks he recognized the hope to be vain, and he returned to New York, where he passed away, April 30, 1873. His constant prayer met fulfilment, and, laid to rest on the bosom of his mother State, he now lies sleeping on a lovely spot overlooking the city of his birth, whose fame and beauty and heroism he had so often celebrated in song and story.

We may be reasonably confident that as a writer of pure and graceful prose, charming in its delicacy of touch, apt literary allusion and felicity of epithet, John R. Thompson will rank high on the roll of American men of letters of his time. As a poet, he shared with Henry Timrod, Paul H. Hayne and James Barron Hope the foremost place among the singers of whom the South can be justly proud. Even the coldest must allow that Thompson was possessed not seldom of true vatic fire, to which was added a marvelous mastery of technique, and that, in his wide range, he did many things with consummate grace and finish. Endowed by nature with keen sensibility and with a rare and delicate fancy, he had a genuine vein of lyric passion, and it is upon his lyrics that his reputation as poet must chiefly rest.

In considering the results of his unceasing literary activity, we may with perfect justice apply to him the criticism made on Goldsmith: "When we reflect upon the amount of hack-work that he was forced to do, we are astonished at the high excellence he actually attained in many departments of literature. . . . His place in literature is not the highest, but it is secure. He did not compete for the greatest prizes, but what he attempted, he accomplished, and the things he did best could hardly be done better. His ideals are sweet and wholesome; his humor gracious and free from malice; his work full of ease and naturalness, and pervaded by an indefinable and enduring grace and charm."

W. B. Anderson

THE WINDOW-PANES AT BRANDON

[Upon the window-panes at Brandon, on the James River, are inscribed the names, cut with a diamond, of many of those who composed the Christmas and May parties of that hospitable mansion, in years gone by.]

As within the old mansion the holiday throng
Reassembles in beauty and grace,
And some eye looking out of the window by chance,
These memorial records may trace—
How the past, like a swift-coming haze from the sea,
In an instant surrounds us once more,
While the shadowy figures of those we have loved,
All distinctly are seen on the shore!

Through the vista of years, stretching dimly away,
We but look, and a vision behold . . .
Like some magical picture the sunset reveals
With its colors of crimson and gold,
All suffused with the glow of the hearth's ruddy blaze,
From beneath the gay "mistletoe bough,"
There are faces that break into smiles as divinely
As any that beam on us now.

While the old year departing strides ghost-like along
O'er the hills that are dark with the storm,
To the New the brave beaker is filled to the brim,
And the play of affection is warm:
Look once more . . . as the garlanded Spring reappears,
In her footsteps we welcome a train
Of fair women, whose eyes are as bright as the gem
That has cut their dear names on the pane.

From the canvas of Vandyke or Kneller that hang
On the old-fashioned wainscoted wall,
Stately ladies, the favored of poets, look down
On the guests and the revel and all;
But their beauty, though wedded to eloquent verse,
And though rendered immortal by Art,
Yet outshines not the beauty that, breathing below,
In a moment takes captive the heart.

Many winters have since frosted over these panes
With the tracery work of the rime;
Many Aprils have brought back the birds to the lawn
From some far-away tropical clime:
But the guests of the season, alas! where are they?
Some, the shores of the stranger have trod,
And some names have been long ago carved on the stone,
Where they sweetly rest under the sod.

How uncertain the record! the hand of a child
In its innocent sport, unawares,
May, at any time, lucklessly shatter the pane,
And thus cancel the story it bears;
Still a portion, at least, shall uninjured remain
Unto trustier tablets consigned,
The fond names that survive in the memory of friends
Who yet linger a season behind.

Recollect, O young soul, with ambition inspired!
Let the moral be read as we pass;
Recollect, the illusory tablets of fame
Have been ever as brittle as glass;
Oh! be not content with the name thus inscribed,
For as well may you trace it in dust;
But resolve to record it, where long it shall stand,
In the hearts of the good and the just.

WRITTEN ON THE DEATH OF PHILIP PENDLETON COOKE

One gifted child thou hadst who reached in vain
The vast propylon of the gleaming fane,
'Twas his to see the columns pure and white
Of marble and of rangèd chrysolite—
The lines of jasper through the golden gates—
Alas! no more was suffered by the Fates—
Like Baldur, fairest of the sons of morning,
The halls of Odin lustrously adorning,
He early caught the pale, blue, fearful glance
Of shadowy Helas' awful countenance.

Lamented Cooke! if all that love could lend
To the chaste scholar and the faithful friend,
If all the spoiler forced us to resign
In the calm virtues of a life like thine
Could bid him turn his fatal dart aside,
From our young Lycidas, thou hadst not died.
Peace to the Poet's shade! His ashes rest
Near the sweet spot he loved on earth the best—
The modest daisies from the surface peeping
As from the sod where Florence Vane lies sleeping,
While his own river murmurs as it flows
Perpetual requiem o'er his soft repose.

DEDICATION HYMN

(Written for the Dedication of the First Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Va., 1851.)

Lord! Thou hast said when two or three
Together come to worship Thee,
Thy presence, fraught with richest grace,
Shall ever fill and bless the place.

Then let us feel, as here we raise,
A temple to Thy matchless praise,
The blest assurance of Thy love
As it is felt in realms above.

Lord! here upon Thy sacred day
Teach us devoutly how to pray,
Our weakness let Thy strength supply,
Nor to our darkness light deny.

Here teach our flattering tongues to sing
The glories of the Heavenly King,
And let our aspirations rise
To seek the Saviour in the skies.

And when at last in life's decline
This earthly temple we resign,
May we, oh, Lord! enjoy with Thee
The Sabbaths of eternity.

THE WANDERER

Translation from the German of Heine

Where shall yet the wanderer jaded
 In the grave at last recline?
 In the South by palm-trees shaded?
 Under Lindens by the Rhine?

Shall I in some desert sterile
 Be entombed by foreign hands?
 Shall I sleep beyond life's peril,
 By some sea-coast in the sands?

Well! God's heaven will shine as brightly,
 There as here, around my bed,
 And the stars for death-lamps, nightly
 Shall be hung above my head.

CARCASSONNE

Translation from the French of Gustave Nadaud

"I'm growing old, I've sixty years;
 I've labored all my life in vain:
 In all that time of hopes and fears
 I've failed my dearest wish to gain.
 I see full well that here below
 Bliss unalloyed there is for none.
 My prayer will ne'er fulfilment know
 I never have seen Carcassonne,
 I never have seen Carcassonne!

"You see the city from the hill,
 It lies beyond the mountains blue,
 And yet to reach it one must still
 Five long and weary leagues pursue,
 And to return as many more!
 Ah! had the vintage plenteous grown!
 The grape withheld its yellow store!
 I shall not look on Carcassonne,
 I shall not look on Carcassonne!

"They tell me every day is there
Not more nor less than Sunday gay:
In shining robes and garments fair
The people walk upon their way.
One gazes there on castle walls
As grand as those of Babylon,
A bishop and two generals!
I do not know fair Carcassonne,
I do not know fair Carcassonne!

"The vicar's right; he says that we
Are ever wayward, weak and blind,
He tells us in his homily
Ambition ruins all mankind;
Yet could I there two days have spent
While still the autumn sweetly shone,
Ah me! I might have died content
When I had looked on Carcassonne,
When I had looked on Carcassonne!

"Thy pardon, Father, I beseech,
In this my prayer if I append:
One something sees beyond his reach
From childhood to his journey's end.
My wife, our little boy Aignon,
Have traveled even to Narbonne;
My grandchild has seen Perpignon,
And I have not seen Carcassonne,
And I have not seen Carcassonne!"

So crooned one day, close by Limoux,
A peasant double-bent with age;
"Rise up, my friend," said I; "with you
I'll go upon this pilgrimage."
We left next morning his abode,
But (Heaven forgive him) halfway on,
The old man died upon the road;
He never gazed on Carcassonne,
Each mortal has his Carcassonne!

THE BATTLE RAINBOW

[On the evening before the battles before Richmond, a magnificent rainbow, following a thunder-storm, overspread the eastern sky, exactly defining the position of the Confederate Army, as seen from the Capitol.]

The warm weary day was departing, the smile
Of the sunset gave token the tempest had ceased,
And the lightning yet fitfully gleamed for awhile
On the cloud that sank sullen and dark in the east.

There our army, awaiting the terrible fight
Of the morrow, lay hopeful and watchful and still;
Where their tents all the region had sprinkled with white
From river to river, o'er meadow and hill.

While above them the fierce cannonade of the sky
Blazed and burst from the vapours that muffled the sun,
Their "counterfeit clamours" gave forth no reply;
And slept 'till the battle, the charge in each gun.

When lo! on the cloud a miraculous thing!
Broke in beauty the rainbow our hosts to enfold;
The centre o'erspread by its arch and each wing
Suffused with its azure and crimson and gold.

Blest omen of victory, symbol divine
Of peace after tumult, repose after pain,
How sweet and how glowing with promise the sign
To eyes that should never behold it again!

For the fierce flame of war on the morrow flashed out,
And its thunder peals filled all the tremulous air
Over slippery entrenchment and reddened redoubt
Rang the wild cheer of triumph, the cry of despair.

Then a long week of glory and agony came,
Of mute supplication and yearning and dread;
When day unto day gave the record of fame,
And night unto night gave the list of its dead.

We had triumphed!—the foe had fled back to his ships,
His standards in rags and his legions a wreck,
But alas! the stark faces, and colourless lips
Of our loved ones gave triumph's rejoicing a check.

Not yet, oh, not yet, as a sign of release,
Had the Lord set in mercy his bow in the cloud,
Not yet had the Comforter whispered of peace
To the hearts that around us lay bleeding and bowed.

But the promise was given . . . the beautiful arc,
With its brilliant confusion of colours, that spanned
The sky on that exquisite eve, was the mark
Of the Infinite Love overarching the land . . .

And that Love, shining richly and full as the day,
Through the tear-drops that moisten each martyr's proud
pall,
On the gloom of the past the bright bow shall display
Of Freedom, Peace, Victory, bent over all.

ASHBY

To the brave all homage render,
Weep, ye skies of June!
With a radiance pure and tender,
Shine, oh saddened moon!
Dead upon the field of glory,
Hero fit for song and story,
Lies our bold dragoon.

Well they learned, whose hands have slain him,
Braver, knightlier foe
Never fought with Moor nor Paynim
Rode at Templestowe;
With a mien how high and joyous,
'Gainst the hordes that would destroy us
Went he forth, we know.

Nevermore, alas! shall sabre
Gleam around his crest;
Fought his fight, fulfilled his labour;
Stilled his manly breast:
All unheard sweet nature's cadence,
Trump of fame, and voice of maidens:
Now he takes his rest.

Earth, that all too soon hath bound him,
Gently wrap his clay,
Linger lovingly around him,
Light of dying day,
Softly fall the summer showers,
Birds and bees among the flowers
Make the gloom seem gay.

There, throughout the coming ages,
When his sword is rust
And his deeds in classic pages,
Mindful of her trust,
Shall Virginia, bending lowly
Still a ceaseless vigil holy
Keep above his dust!

THE BURIAL OF LATANÉ

["The next squadron moved to the front under the lamented Captain Latané, making a most brilliant and successful charge with drawn sabres upon the enemy's picked ground, and after a hotly-contested hand-to-hand conflict, put him to flight, but not until the gallant Captain had sealed his devotion to his native soil with his blood."—Official Report of the Pamunkey Expedition by General J. E. B. Stuart, C.S.A.]

"Lieutenant Latané carried his brother's dead body to Mrs. Brockenbrough's plantation, an hour or two after his death. On this sad and lonely errand he met a party of Yankees, who followed him to Mrs. Brockenbrough's gate, and stopping there, told him that as soon as he had placed his brother's body in friendly hands, he must surrender himself prisoner. . . . Mrs. Brockenbrough sent for an Episcopal clergyman to perform the funeral ceremonies, but the enemy would not permit him to pass. . . . Then, with a few other ladies, a fair-haired little girl, her apron filled with white

flowers, and a few faithful slaves who stood reverently near, a pious Virginia matron read the solemn and beautiful burial service over the cold, still form of one of the noblest gentlemen and most intrepid officers in the Confederate Army. She watched the clods, heaped upon the coffin-lid, then sinking on her knees, in sight and hearing of the foe, she committed his soul's welfare, and the stricken hearts he had left behind him, to the mercy of the All-Father."—Extract from private letter.]

The combat raged not long, but ours the day;
And through the hosts that compassed us around
Our little band rode proudly on its way,
Leaving one gallant comrade, glory-crowned,
Unburied on the field he died to gain,
Single of all his men amid the hostile slain.

One moment on the battle's edge he stood,
Hope's halo like a helmet round his hair,
The next beheld him, dabbled in his blood,
Prostrate in death, and yet in death how fair!
Even thus he passed through the red gate of strife,
From earthly crowns and palms to an immortal life.

A brother bore his body from the field
And gave it unto stranger's hands that closed
The calm, blue eyes on earth forever sealed,
And tenderly the slender limbs composed:
Strangers, yet sisters, who with Mary's love,
Sat by the open tomb and weeping looked above.

A little child strewed roses on his bier,
Pale roses, not more stainless than his soul,
Nor yet more fragrant than his life sincere
That blossomed with good actions, brief but whole:
The aged matron and the faithful slave
Approached with reverent feet the hero's lowly grave.

No man of God might say the burial rite
Above the "rebel"—thus declared the foe
That blanched before him in the deadly fight,
But woman's voice, in accents soft and low;
Trembling with pity, touched with pathos, read
Over his hallowed dust the ritual for the dead.

" 'Tis sown in weakness, it is raised in power,"
Softly the promise floated on the air,
And the sweet breathings of the sunset hour
Came back responsive to the mourner's prayer:
Gently they laid him underneath the sod,
And left him with his fame, his country, and his God.

Let us not weep for him whose deeds endure,
So young, so brave, so beautiful, he died;
As he had wished to die; the past is sure,
Whatever yet of sorrow may betide
Those who still linger by the stormy shore,
Change cannot harm him now nor fortune touch him more.

And when Virginia, leaning on her spear,
Victrix et vidua, the conflict done,
Shall raise her mailed hand to wipe the tear
That starts as she recalls each martyred son,
No prouder memory her breast shall sway,
Than thine, our early-lost, lamented Latané.

MUSIC IN CAMP

Two armies covered hill and plain,
Where Rappahannock's waters
Ran deeply crimsoned with the stain
Of battle's recent slaughters.

The summer clouds lay pitched like tents
In meads of heavenly azure;
And each dread gun of the elements
Slept in its hid embrasure.

The breeze so softly blew it made
No forest leaf to quiver,
And the smoke of the random cannonade
Rolled slowly from the river.

And now where circling hills looked down
With cannon grimly planted,
O'er listless camp and silent town,

When on the fervid air there came
A strain, now rich, now tender,
The music seemed itself aflame
With day's departing splendor.

A Federal band, which eve and morn
Played measures brave and nimble
Had just struck up with flute and horn
And lively clash of cymbal.

Down flocked the soldiers to the banks
Till, margined by its pebbles,
One wooded shore was blue with "Yanks,"
And one was gray with "Rebels."

Then all was still, and then the band
With movements light and tricky,
Made stream and forest, hill and strand,
Reverberate with "Dixie."

The conscious stream, with burnished glow,
Went proudly o'er its pebbles,
But thrilled throughout its deepest flow
With yelling of the Rebels.

Again a pause, and then again
The trumpet pealed sonorous,
And "Yankee Doodle" was the strain
To which the shore gave chorus.

The laughing ripple shoreward flew
To kiss the shining pebbles,
Loud shrieked the crowding Boys in Blue
Defiance to the Rebels.

And yet once more the bugle rang
Above the stormy riot;
No shout upon the evening rang,
There reigned a holy quiet.

The sad slow stream its noiseless flood
Poured o'er the glistening pebbles ;
All silent now the Yankee stood,
And silent stood the Rebels.

No unresponsive soul had heard
That plaintive note's appealing,
So deeply "Home, Sweet Home," had stirred
The hidden founts of feeling.

Or Blue or Gray the soldier sees,
As by the wand of fairy,
The cottage 'neath the live-oak trees,
The cabin by the prairie.

Or cold or warm his native skies
Bend in their beauty o'er him,
Seen through the tear-mist in his eyes
His loved ones stand before him.

As fades the iris after rain
In April's tearful weather,
The vision vanished as the strain
And daylight died together.

But Memory, waked by Music's art,
Exprest in simplest numbers,
Subdued the sternest Yankee's heart,
Made light the Rebel's slumbers.

And fair the form of Music shines,
That bright, celestial creature,
Who still 'mid War's embattled lines
Gave this one touch of Nature.

GENERAL J. E. B. STUART

We could not pause, while yet the noontide air
Shook with the cannonade's incessant pealing,
The funeral pageant fitly to prepare,
A nation's grief revealing.

The smoke, above the glimmering woodland wide
That skirts our southward border with its beauty,
Marked where our heroes stood and fought and died
For love and faith and duty.

And still what time the doubtful strife went on,
We might not find expression for our sorrow,
We could but lay our dear, dumb warrior down,
And gird us for the morrow.

One weary year ago, when came a lull
With victory, in the conflict's stormy closes,
When the glad spring, all flushed and beautiful,
First mocked us with her roses.

With dirge and minute-gun and bell we paid
Some few poor rites, an inexpressive token
Of a great people's pain, to Jackson's shade,
In agony unspoken.

No wailing trumpet and no tolling bell,
No cannon, save the battle's boom receding,
When Stuart to the grave we bore, might tell
Of hearts all crushed and bleeding.

The crisis suited not with pomp, and she
Whose anguish bears the seal of consecration,
Had wished his Christian obsequies should be
Thus void of ostentation.

Only the maidens came sweet flow'rs to twine
Above his form so still and cold and painless,
Whose deeds upon our brightest records shine,
Whose life and sword were stainless.

They well remembered how he loved to dash
Into the fight, festooned from summer bowers,
How like a fountain's spray his sabre's flash
Leaped from a mass of flowers.

And so we carried to his place of rest
All that of our great Paladin was mortal
The cross, and not the sabre, on his breast,
That opes the heavenly portal.

No more of tribute might to us remain—
But there will come a time when Freedom's martyrs
A richer guerdon of renown shall gain,
Than gleams in stars and garters.

I claim no prophet's vision, but I see
Through coming years, now near at hand, now distant,
My rescued country, glorious and free,
And strong and self-existent.

I hear from out that sunlit land which lies
Beyond these clouds that gather darkly o'er us,
The happy sounds of industry arise
In swelling, peaceful chorus.

And mingling with these sounds, the glad acclaim
Of millions, undisturbed by war's afflictions,
Crowning each martyr's never-dying name
With grateful benedictions.

In some fair future garden of delights,
Where flowers shall bloom and song-birds sweetly
warble,
Art shall erect the statues of our knights
In living bronze and marble.

And none of all that bright, heroic throng,
Shall wear to far-off time a semblance grander,
Shall still be decked with fresher wreaths of song,
Than the beloved commander.

The Spanish legend tells us of the Cid,
That after death he rode erect, sedately
Along his lines, even as in life he did,
In presence yet more stately;

And thus our Stuart at this moment seems
To ride out of our dark and troubled story
Into the region of romance and dreams,
A realm of light and glory.

And sometimes when the silver bugles blow,
That radiant form, in battle re-appearing,
Shall lead his horsemen headlong on the foe,
In victory careering!

LEE TO THE REAR

An Incident of the American War.

Dawn of a pleasant morning in May,
Broke through the Wilderness, cool and gray,
While perched in the tallest tree-tops, the birds
Were carolling Mendelssohn's "Song without Words."

Far from the haunts of men remote,
The brook brawled on with a liquid note,
And nature, all tranquil and lovely, wore
The smile of Spring, as in Eden, of yore.

Little by little, as daylight increased
And deepened the roseate flush in the East,
Little by little, did morning reveal
Two long, glittering lines of steel!

Where two hundred thousand bayonets gleam,
Tipped with the light of the earliest beam,
And the faces are sullen and grim to see,
In the hostile armies of Grant and Lee.

All of a sudden, ere rose the sun,
Pealed on the silence the opening gun,
A little white puff of smoke there came,
And anon the valley was wreathed in flame.

Down on the left of the rebel lines,
Where a breastwork stands in a copse of pines,
Before the rebels' thin ranks can form,
The Yankees have carried the place by storm.

Stars and stripes o'er the salient wave,
Where many a hero has found a grave,
And the gallant Confederates strive in vain,
The ground they have drenched with their blood to regain.

Yet louder the thunder of battle roared,
Yet a deadlier fire on their columns poured,
Slaughter, infernal, rode with despair,
Furies twain, through the smoky air.

Not far off, in the saddle there sat,
A gray-bearded man, with a black slouch hat;
Not much moved by the fire was he,
Calm and resolute, Robert Lee.

Quick and watchful, he kept his eye,
On two bold rebel brigades close by,
Reserves, that were standing (and dying) at ease,
Where the tempest of wrath toppled over the trees.

For still with their loud, bull-dog bay,
The Yankee batteries blazed away,
And with every murderous second that sped
A dozen brave fellows, alas! fell dead.

The grand old gray-beard rode to the space,
Where Death and his victims stood face to face,
And silently waved his old slouch hat—
A world of meaning there was in that!

"Follow me! steady! We'll save the day!"

This was what he seemed to say:

And to the light of his glorious eye

The bold brigades thus made reply:

"We'll go forward, but you must go back,"

And they moved not an inch in the perilous track;

"Go to the rear and we'll send them to h—"

Then the sound of the battle was lost in their yell.

Turning his bridle, Robert Lee

Rode to the rear. Like the waves of the sea

Bursting the dykes in their overflow,

Madly his veterans dashed on the foe;

And backward in terror that foe was driven,

Their banners rent and their columns riven,

Wherever the tide of battle rolled

Over the Wilderness, wood and wold.

Sunset, out of a crimson sky,

Streamed o'er a field of a ruddier dye,

And the brook ran on with a purple stain,

From the blood of ten thousand foemen slain.

Seasons have passed since that day and year,

Again o'er the pebbles the brook runs clear,

And the field in a richer green is drest

Where the dead of the terrible conflict rest.

Hushed is the roll of the rebel drum,

The sabres are sheathed and the cannon is dumb;

And Fate, with pitiless hand has furled,

The Flag that once challenged the gaze of the world.

But the fame of the Wilderness fight abides,

And down into history grandly rides,

Calm and unmoved as in battle he sat,

The gray-bearded man in the old slouch hat.

NOTE:—General Gordon was in command of the reserves and he it was who rode forward and addressed General Lee in the words quoted.

A VINDICATION OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

From a Lecture on "Fools."

BUT not only do nations appear as fools, certain large divisions of time may be called such. The Dark Ages were foolish as most of us would admit, and Mr. Carlyle has taken occasion to arraign the Eighteenth Century as a fool of the first water. I trust I may have your indulgence while I attempt for a little space to inquire with what justice this wholesale accusation is made, and, so far as I can, to vindicate the age of a not remote ancestry from his bitter and characteristic reproaches.

* * * * *

Nothing grand in the Eighteenth Century, Mr. Carlyle! There was a countryman of yours, who passed his whole life within the limits of that century and rose to a blessed immortality ten years before it came to its close, the glorious example of whose works would alone redeem the age from the hasty and sweeping censure you have bestowed upon it. He was born in 1726 and died in 1790, so that his experience embraced nearly two-thirds of that Century and whatever he did for humanity belongs wholly to its annals. His was indeed, an unpoetic nature and the peculiar field of his exertions was removed from the range of heroic life. No ray of fancy brightened his practical mind, no ambition for vulgar fame impelled him to startle the world by brilliant achievement. But he followed, with resolute step and cheerful spirit, the star of duty shining for him in the gloom of prisons, from the mournful precincts of the Marshalsea to the noisome dungeons of St. Petersburg, and falling at last a victim to a virulent and infectious fever, he asked for no pompous mausoleum to enshrine his remains, simply saying "Lay me quietly in the earth, place a sundial over my grave, and let me be forgotten." Shall John Howard ever be forgotten? Hero-worshippers like Mr. Carlyle may forget him, for he flourished neither the baton of Cromwell nor the rattan of Frederick; his mission was one of philanthropy, not conquest, but so long as true grandeur shall be admired among men, his name and his works shall be held in honorable remembrance.

Nothing grand in the Eighteenth Century! Was it nothing that while poor Burns, around whose urn the freshest flowers of poesy and eloquence have been entwined so recently, was singing the songs which will forever touch the world's great heart, the Wesleys and Whitefield were laying broad and deep the foundations of that system of religious polity which is now a part of the fabric of the two greatest nations of the earth? We cannot expect Mr. Carlyle to trace with enthusiasm the progress of these reformers upon their journeyings through the wilderness, to mark them undergoing with patience and fortitude the contumely of wits, the violence of mobs, the privations of hunger, the disasters of the sea, to carry onward the great movement to which their lives were devoted, now rousing the careless multitude by the loftiest eloquence and now cheering the despondent few with the tenderest of hymns; these men were not after the historian's heart, they bore aloft no pennons red with the blood of slaughtered victims, they seated themselves upon no thrones erected upon the liberties of mankind, and yet if the records of the past contain anything of real grandeur since centuries began to roll it may be found in their lives.

Nothing grand in the Eighteenth Century! What does Mr. Carlyle think of American progress during those eventful hundred years, nearly rounded into a hundred, which elapsed between the death of William III and the death of Washington? Was there nothing grand in the subjugation of a vast continent; in that onward march of the European race, now under the cross of St. George and now under the lilies, from the waters of the Atlantic to those of the Mississippi; sowing the germs of rising states from line to line of fifteen degrees of latitude; in the heroism of the pioneers, the self-sacrifice of the Christian missionary, the daring of the undaunted navigator, the sufferings of delicate women; was there nothing grand in the spectacle of thirteen little Colonies contending for their freedom against a power which had overrun India, humbled the pride of Spain, and illustrated the fields of Continental Europe by her victories, and lastly in the establishment of a Republican form of government, the freest the world had ever seen, in the wilds of the Western Hemisphere? Were the elements of grandeur wanting in a life

which was the wonder of contemporaries and which has been and will be the admiration of all succeeding generations of men? Washington was the child of the Eighteenth Century, he expired amid the lamentations of his countrymen as that Century was drawing rapidly to an end; and hereafter when Fredericks and Louises shall have been forgotten or remembered only as the mad victims of ill-regulated ambition, the Century shall stand out prominently to distant ages relieved against the lustre of his fame. Surely we must conclude that in arraigning this period of time as a foolish one, he was betrayed into the commission of a folly himself.