

THE  
DEATH OF JACKSON,

BY

H. M. THOMPSON.

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Oh! for the tuneful lyre of him who sang  
The fallen fortunes of our hapless race,  
Who with the winged Seraph could ascend  
To Zion's lofty star-bespangled dome,  
And there with pen inspired, record for man  
The councils of Jehovah and the Son;  
Such tribute would I pay to Jackson's name,  
As would befit the ardent, lofty theme.  
T'was Spring time, and on Rappahannock's shore  
Opposing legions with their glittering arms,  
Had met to swell the angry tide that flows  
To Lethe's banks from fair Columbia's strand.  
Along the Northern shore extended thousands  
Decked in war's panoply and gay attire,  
Befitting liv'ry of a tyrants train,  
Stood like leashed hounds round Freedom's covert.  
No martial ardor there, no battle light  
Shone in the faces of that brutal throng;  
But sad and sullen was the hireling mien.  
And many a cheek was blanched with craven fear  
Oft and again they'd quailed before the shock  
Of Southern patriots fighting for their soil.  
Once more the palsied slaves were urged to cross

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The stream, which Freedom's champions guarded :  
 A motley crew from many a shamble,  
 Lured by instinctive lust and hopes of spoil,  
 Column on column pass the river's bank,  
 And on the spanning pontoon roll along  
 The black mouthed engines of revolting war.  
 Caisson on caisson bears its sulphurous load,  
 While high above the rattling din is heard  
 The neigh of maddened steed, the driver's shout,  
 The wild and reckless imprecation of  
 The heaven-doomed, heaven defying race.  
 But hark! didst hear that sound of muttered thunder?  
 'Twas but the echo of our coursers' tramp  
 Upon the frail and sounding bridge,' says one.  
 Or at the most, the clouds look angry, and  
 The passing storm will soon retire abashed  
 Before the deafening roar of Northern wrath.  
 Ah, vain young man! an aged soldier said,  
 Had'st thou with me beheld this gloomy stream  
 A few short months ago, dyed with the blood  
 Of friend and brother struggling in its tide.  
 Had'st thou beheld that mighty field of carnage,  
 Around fair Richmond's oft beleaguered walls,  
 Too well thou'dst know the import of that sound,  
 Whose dull refrain mayhap ere evening fall,  
 Will ring thy death knell in still louder tones.  
 Nearer and nearer still rages the strife;  
 Now on the right the rifle lends its din  
 To the loud cannon's guttural chorus;  
 Wave upon wave of banded warriors,  
 Dimly as yet through war's grand canopy,  
 Surmount the summit of yon distant knoll,  
 Where every engine of destructive force

Pours forth a torrent of defiant wrath.  
 How gaunt and grim these gallant men appear!  
 No gaudy trappings mark the musketeer,  
 Who in the court of kings on marble stalks  
 His measured stately course of pride,  
 And to the passing maid or matron grave  
 Leers insolently his amorous consequence.  
 Way-worn and haggard, stained with battle's toil  
 The gallant garb of grey besoiled and old  
 Still marks the cause the wearer loves so dear  
 Through many a rent the piercing night wind  
 Chilly and damp invades the soldier's limbs;  
 Ah! who can tell how many briny tears  
 Flowed from the eyes of far off loved ones  
 As the busy needle plied its task of love  
 And fair hands labored on the soldier's garb  
 Homely it is, but ne'er a belted knight  
 Wore on his coat of mail a pledge more dear  
 In scarf or gauntlet of some courtly dame,  
 These are your soldiers, Ye Confederate Powers,  
 Whose martial fame has dimm'd the Bourbon lily  
 Mounted on high above the far famed Eagle  
 Which imperial France carried aloft  
 O'er conquered nations humbled in the dust;  
 Ta'en from the Rose of England's pride and power  
 The dewy freshness of its past renown,  
 And taught the world when God defends a cause  
 He arms the feeble with a giant's might.  
 The struggle's past the bristling crest is worn  
 Now down the slope the broken routed foe  
 In hideous ruin rushes towards the stream,  
 While tearing through his ranks, with vengeful scream,  
 The angry missiles cut a ghastly way.

Cheer upon cheer now rends the vaulted air,  
 And 'Stonewall comes!' is heard along the line,  
 And 'Stonewall comes!' is borne upon the breeze;  
 While from the gory field midst death and pain,  
 The wounded soldier lifts his pallid brow  
 And, to the joyful strain, responsive cries,  
 'Our Stonewall comes!' and yields his latest breath.  
 Now sinks the warrior on the hard won field,  
 And midst the dire companionship of death,  
 Where friend and foe in mangled heaps are blent,  
 He woos the soft and balmy hand of sleep;  
 While round the bivouac the nightly guards  
 In many a circle count their hair-breadth 'scapes,  
 Or scan the morrow with prophetic eye.  
 Far to the front the watchful chief repairs,  
 Where the flushed brow of battle still denotes  
 The sullen vengeance of the baffled foe.  
 Pensive and slow the patriot warrior rides  
 Amid the fire of still contending lines;  
 Where from his covert peeps the stealthy scout,  
 Or watchful picket scans the skulking foe.  
 To-morrow's sun will see again renewed  
 The horrid harrowing carnival of death.  
 Sadly he views the wide ensanguined field  
 While deep emotion rends his manly breast,  
 And thus he breathes to Heaven this secret prayer:  
 'God of Sabbaoth! let this warfare end.  
 'The sword again into the ploughshare turn,  
 'And let the Prince of Peace once more dethrone  
 'Usurping Moloch, rampant in the land.  
 'How long, oh Lord! shall war's imperious law  
 'Forbid th' observance of thy holy day,  
 'And impious fury, rapine and revenge

' Choke human progress and the spread of grace.  
 ' Oh! once again delight thy servant's ear  
 ' With the sweet music of the Sabbath bell.  
 ' Most awful thought! to-morrow's dawning rays,  
 ' Which saw the Son from Death and Hell arise  
 ' With Sin in captive chains triumphant led,  
 ' Shall see his creatures, ransomed with his blood,  
 ' Deface the image which the Father gave.  
 ' Father of mercies! spare the chastening rod  
 ' For him who died, for him who pleads above'  
 Thus the christian soldier, and the face  
 Of inward joy and love divine now wears  
 The sharp quick pang of nature's agony;  
 Unto his nearest aid, he faintly says,  
 ' My friend, I'm wounded, help me to dismount  
 Slowly they bear their well loved fallen chief  
 From his last field of never dying fame.  
 All art is vain. The dying hero bows  
 With meek submission to his Maker's will—  
 Breathes forth a prayer and heaves his latest sigh  
 How ripe in glory! yet how green in years!  
 The rich, luxuriant fruit our country bore;  
 Time's envious hand, alas! has plucked too soon  
 And garnered in the storehouse of our grief.  
 Ah! heard ye the wail throughout yon bannered host,  
 So late triumphant o'er their country's foe.  
 No pean sounds with spirit-stirring note  
 To nerve the warrior for the deadly fray.  
 But sad and solemn beats the muffled drum --  
 The gloomy legions file, with downcast eye,  
 Before the marble form now cold in death,  
 Whose clarion voice, amidst the shock of war,  
 Swelled Southern hearts to deeds of high renown,

And, with the force of the magician's spell,  
 Congealed with terror ev'ry Northern foe.  
 'Is Jackson dead?' the Southern mother said,  
 And to her heart more closely clasped her child;  
 'Is Jackson gone? Oh God! it cannot be  
 Our country's stay thus numbered with the dead!  
 In many a household through the Sunny South  
 Is heard the bitter sob—the cry of grief.  
 The earnest supplication for support  
 From Him who gives, from Him who takes away.  
 The costly mausoleum may ascend  
 With stately pomp in many lettered praise,  
 The monumental brass, th' impassive marble  
 And the plastic mold, may each in turn  
 Its silent tribute pay to him that's gone.  
 These too, with servile adulation, have  
 A tyrant's praises blazoned to the world,  
 And oft have lent their meretricious aid  
 To snatch the fawning, pliant courtier's name  
 From dark oblivion's unrelenting hand.  
 The tide of Time may backward roll its waves  
 Defacing every foot-print of our race,  
 Until the refluent billow is received  
 In that dark gulf—primeval chaos,  
 From whose vasty depths creative power  
 Brought forth a world of teeming, living things:  
 But while a leaf of human record stands,  
 And virtue claims the tribute of a tear,  
 Amidst the wreck of Empires and of States,  
 Great Jackson's fame shall still unceasing glow,  
 In bright refulgence, to its noon-tide blaze.  
 Let every mother in our sunny land,  
 Before the entrance of the household porch,



With careful hand, the gloomy cedar plant.  
And when in after years, with curious eye,  
The now unconscious babe shall wondering look  
Upon its dark umbrageous foliage,  
And ask the grey-haired sire with lisping tongue  
Why, like grim sentinel, it sadly stands  
As if to guard the entrance to his home.  
Tell him it wears the livery of the day  
Its tender roots were planted in the soil.  
It marks the year of mighty Jackson's fall,  
Who backward drove the surging tide of war ;  
And from the ruthless hand of vandal foe  
Rescued the home that guards his tender years.  
Teach him the virtues of that great, good man,  
His self-devotion to his country's cause,  
And from the lesson inspiration draw  
Of Virtue, Honor, Piety and Truth.

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