

South Norwalk Sentinel.

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SOUTH NORWALK, CONN., THURSDAY, JUNE 4, 1874.

WHOLE NO. 186.

Poetry.

DECORATION.

BY LUTHER O. RIGGS.

Bright flowers, fresh flowers, fair;
White roses, red roses, fare,
Today we bring:
Ashen-faced, and dusky and stricken,
Anguished hearts rebound and quicken:
Kneeling down beside our dead,
Who for Freedom fought and bled,
We kiss cold lips whose souls have fled!

Sweet flowers we strew, in all our way—
The buds and blooms of vernal May;
While warm tears flow, for love laid low,
And sad souls sigh, who must die.

We weave great garlands above each patriot head.

A coronet of golden death we wear,
We strew fresh flowers around their conquering dead.

And spicis brise, perfume perfume sweet,
To mingle with the sacred tears that greet
Our sainted dead!

Lilles and roses, violet blue,
Pansies and pink carnations too.
And evergreens, and greenest leaves,
We scatter in these solemn hours:

But sweater than the scented flowers,
That yearn to fill the fragrance rare,
Or rose, or lily fair.

The germs that in our fond hearts live;
Like the dear dreams of vanished years,
That fill our eyes with fresh tears,
The perfume of fond hearts we grieve.

Silent and sad and slow,
We walk the way of woe,
While sorrowing souls, 'mid smiles and tears,
Unearth the smouldering gifts of years.

Dawn sorrow comes, even as the day doth sleep,
Like the dove's flight of fresh fears;

Weep, untempted, undeluded;

Wep not for those, who from the tomb,
Enter repose of Palm-Land's bloom!

And thus in thoughts of those we loved,
Our hearts with joy and grief are moved;
We muse on scenes of by-gone time,
When hours rolled on in rime.

Like singing cadence of sweet song,
That glide in numbers soft along;

And then we hymn the glories divine,
That mark the rank of Time.

In those notes, and sweetest sound,
Which through the ages shall resound;

While brightest angels, 'mote above,
Look down on earth, with yearning love,

And bear our dead to Heaven's clime.

O'er crimson-petaled roses,
Look where Trust and Truth repose!

And, ye patriot heroes martyred,
Count your lives not dearly bartered!

'Twas a costly gift, ye gave!
For us, for us, for us, to save!

From thy grass, voice upspringing,
Through all the land, to day are ringing;

Who died his fellow-man to save,
Still lives in Love beyond the grave!"

ADDRESSES

Delivered at Five Mile River Cemetery,
Sunday, May 31st, by

DR. EMILIE V. PARDEE.

When we sit down at our communion season to partake of the sacrament of our Lord's Supper, it is not that we may taste the emblems of his body and blood, but it is that we may consider the condition of the world under the law; that we may consider what our condition would be now if Christ had not offered his life for us. It is that we may force ourselves to consider his condescension, his wonderful, unchangeable love to a lost world; his terrible sufferings, his dying agonies—all for us. We would not forget Bethlehem, or Nazareth, or Capernaum, or Jerusalem, or Judea, or Galilee, or Gethsemane, or Calvary. We would remember, with love and thankfulness, what our salvation cost.

And so when we celebrate this national holiday, it is not that we may strew these mounds with fading flowers, but that we may remember the condition of our country under slavery before these soldiers died for us; that we may remember the time when our national hymn, "the land of the free," was a bitter satire on the institutions of our land; that we may consider for a moment what our condition would be to-day if these loyal sleepers had not offered their lives for us. It is that we may force ourselves to consider their noble sacrifices, their terrible sufferings, their untimely deaths. We would not forget Sumter, or Newbern, or Antietam, or Chancellorsville, or Gettysburg, or Richmond. We would remember with gratitude and reverence what our freedom cost. We would teach our children the price paid in blood for their present peace and safety.

We stand here to-day among the graves of our Union Soldiers! Our Union Soldiers! There is a depth of meaning in those words. They present to my mind a picture, a poem, and a story. A picture more true to life, than the pencil of a Raphael could paint. A poem set to such music as not even Mozart could imagine. A story by the side of which the ink of a Thackeray might pale. Look back with me at the picture presented by our country before we needed "Union Soldiers." A landscape over which peace has brooded for long years. A country whose devotion is to the arts of industry, to whom patriotism is a word of memory—a thing belonging to the brave old Washingtonian days. A fire quenched and yet of which all secretly and unabashed a spark liveth, ready at a moment's warning to be fanned into a flame which should lay desolation in ashes. The skies of April bend above the scene. The tiny green grass blades are shooting from the unbound earth. The farmer rakes his patient, soft-eyed cattle, and opens the rich soil for the reception of the promising seed. In the distance we see the chimneys of great factories, within whose walls, looms, and spindles, and wheels, and hands are busy, and yet the weavers, and the burnishers, and the engravers, and all the artisans within these great and many storied buildings live in a dream, so quiet do the wheels of their lives go round. Far away we catch a glimpse of the blue sea flecked with the sail of merchant ships, treading silently their path upon the waters. Agriculture, manufactures and commerce, the arts of peace. We see in all plenteous and happy homes, where gentle mothers tend their babes with brows unshaded, make up the picture. The pinwheels move on, and oh how changed the scene! The April skies and the springing grass alone remain the same. The wandering oxen plow their furrows undivided, while yet their work day to day is unmoved. The upturned sod grows dry beneath the idle rusting plow. The farmer! How is this? He moves with a quick fire step, and is clad in the uniform of a soldier! The smoke no longer ascends from the factory chimneys; the looms are still, and the graver's tool is laid aside. Here and there is a lonely workman! The rest have donned the loyal blue and girded on the sword. In place of white sails we see black steaming iron clad engines of destruction, fiercely plowing the water, as if like war horses they scented the battle afar off. Beneath the rootless, tender delicate

women have grown brave; as with a tear thrust back, and with God-like self-abnegation, they gird about their loved ones, the soldiers' belt and fill her knapsack with the smallest and most essential comforts and necessities of life. The very babes have grown sedate and leave their toys to watch the red, white, and blue floating in the breeze. And this is war! Afar toward the south, the guns are booming, and grim-faced, forgotten and unrewarded.

It has been said that a history of the soldiers of Connecticut would present almost a complete history of the war, as they fought under the tri-colored flag in every rebellious state and in almost every important engagement. It is impossible to estimate the number of men, much more the aggregate of power and character, which Connecticut contributed to the war. Men of finest affections, of proud spirit, of brave hearts and mighty intellects. Men of inflexible purposes and undaunted energy. Men of patriotism. Men of God. Men of happiest social relations inspired by deepest love of country, poured out their life blood willingly upon the altar of national liberty.

Connecticut put into the field the first regiment from any state thoroughly equipped and prepared for a fight. Gen. Scott said in reviewing them, "Thank God, we have one regiment ready to take the field." And so Elmer E. Ellsworth, the first heroic brave to yield up his life in defense of his country, was of Connecticut ancestry. Not only Ellsworth, Lyon, Sedgwick, Winthrop, Wadsworth, McClellan, Mewer, Wright and Terry, but Sherman and Grant sprang directly from our own state. In the first battle—Bull's Run, the Connecticut troops fired the first shot in the morning and likewise the last shot in the evening. As they had been first in the advance, so they were last in the retreat.

They fought as soldiers should fight;

They died as soldiers should die;

With their sword in their hand and their face to the front;

And the victory flash in their eye."

"Twas an easy task to entice an active, wise and skillful commander-in-chief—to enumerate brave and heroic generals, to praise the illustrious and efficient officers who were lifted up in the gaze of all the world in our late war; but it is not possible to render justice to the nameless ranks and file who had reluctantly to duty for duty's sake with sublime patience and unexampled heroism. Thus the men who formed a living breast-work between us and an exasperated foe. These men, who, by their untiring perseverance and undaunted bravery, by their acute sufferings under scorching southern suns, by their bitter privations and needless torment in rebel dungeons, by their long and weary marches, fatigued and footsore, have achieved for us the choicest of all national blessings, universal liberty and perpetual peace. These are the true heroes of our war. These men who have crowned the nation with radiant glory. These men whose deeds we remember to-day. These the men who died joyfully that the American Republic might, through baptism of blood, enter upon a second and more glorious birth.

Another scene! The battles are over; the cause is won; the smoke has faded away and the noblest and truest champion of liberty and union passes upward just as the rank grass is springing up on a hundred battle fields.

Abraham Lincoln, than whom none better ever lived, the inspiring genius of the grand army, gave up his life for the same cause as did the common soldiers, though by even a fouler and more base treachery, and then the widow of that grand and noble man plead vainly for months before even the miserable stipend was granted for ample provision than was her possession, and was scoffed and sneered at from the Halls of Congress out through the homes of the nation, so soon did our people seem to forget that, no matter what she was worthy as a woman, she was the widow of the savior of our country, the restorer of union, the emancipator of a vast people, a martyr of the Rebellion, and a ruling spirit of our armies; but while she lacked only the luxuries to which she had been accustomed, there is many and many a widow in our land day overworked to gain for herself and for a dead patriot's children a scanty livelihood, in sickness, poverty, and want.

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Some marked with the name, and regiment, and company of the loyal sieger, and others bearing the one sad word "unknown," and I have asked myself if it was worth the while of these precious fathers, and husbands and sons, to lay down their lives, and for hundreds and thousands of others to lay down health, and limb, and prosperity, unworthy, forgotten and unrewarded.

It has been said that a history of the soldiers of Connecticut would present almost a complete history of the war, as they fought under the tri-colored flag in every rebellious state and in almost every important engagement. It is impossible to estimate the number of men, much more the aggregate of power and character, which Connecticut contributed to the war. Men of finest affections, of proud spirit, of brave hearts and mighty intellects. Men of inflexible purposes and undaunted energy. Men of patriotism. Men of God. Men of happiest social relations inspired by deepest love of country, poured out their life blood willingly upon the altar of national liberty.

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