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1880

Battle of Winchester,



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The following "Poem, or Battle Song," was composed by the late Capt. David D. Bard, Co. I, 104th Regiment, O. V. I., just after the battle of Winchester, while he was a Sergeant of Co. F, 7th Regiment, O. V. I.

A brief sketch of the life of Capt. Bard is appended, believing that it will be found interesting in connection with this poem:

I.

There was a marching of armies, down from the North,
Brought forth by a love for the land of their birth;
The foul breath of destruction, by traitors sent forth,
Must be met at its ebb, and hurled back on the South.

II.

Boldly they fought, those champions of right,
They everywhere kept our fair banner in sight;
Victory on victory their bold efforts crowned,
And the sons of the West by their deeds were renowned.

III.

Then Banks from the East, with his legions came forth,
To be joined by brave Shields, as they marched to the South
Winchester was gained by the flight of the foe,
Breathing curses on Yankees as southward they go.

IV.

On March 22d Jackson returned,
His heart with rank treason now fiercely burned,
Ashby came forward with two thousand men
To spy out the force, ere the battle began.

V.

The shells from his cannon came bursting around,
And brave Shields left the field with a sore bleeding wound;
The night coming soon ended the fight,
Both armies impatiently waited for light.

VI.

The booming of cannon on the clear morning air
Gave proof to our army that the foe was still there
And the strife it grew hot, as the sun climbed the sky,
And the turf was of, dyed with the red crimson dye.

VII.

Kimball and Sullivan were mixed in the fight,
And Tylers' brave columns advanced on the right,
Like speed of the shaft, as it parts from the bow,
So Tyler came down with his force on the foe.

Now the white smoke of battle, rose in clouds from the fight,

Hiding cannons and horses and columns from sight,
And the blaze of the muskets was rapid and hot,
And the blood of our braves covered many a spot.

IX.

The shells and the grape sang hoarse in the wood,
And tore up the ground where the brave warriors stood;

But the bullets and balls and the shells were their scorn,

Proudly we sent them the same in return.

X.

The battle now raged in the height of its tide,
And fast grew the list of the soldiers that died,
And the roar of Daums' cannon was heard on the hill,
Mingled with the shrieks of men that were killed.

XI.

The fight was now fierce from the right to the left,
And Jackson at last on the right threw his heft,
And the balls from his muskets behind a stone wall,
Came down on the 7th like the falling of hail.

XII.

Brave Col. Murry with the bold 84th,
Pressed hard on the foe with his men of the North;
Murry soon fell by the ball of his foe,
And a braver man was never in battle laid low.

XIII.

But Creighton was there, and with firm fearless word,
With an eye that flashed, and the wave of his sword,
He held then bravely, as against fearful odds,
While balls killed his men, and tore up the sods.

XIV.

And the groans of the wounded were loud in the wood,
And the dying were gasping as they lay in their blood,
And the squadrons of cavalry were in haste rushing by,
All eager their sabres with blood to dye.

XV.

Night again came upon them, as to hide from the sight
The horrors and terrors of that desperate fight;
And the blaze of the musket in darkness was seen,
As the parting balls travelled the armies between.

XVI.

The bright Sabbath sun sank low in the west
O'er a field of fierce carnage its parting rays east;
Both armies were reluctant to give up the field,
But a charge from the Yankees caused the rebels to yield.

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XVII.

Many scores of brave freemen were dead on the plain,
From whence they'll ne'er rise to do fighting again ;
Their names shall be cherished around the bright
hearth:

In the land of their home, their choice and their birth.

XVIII

The sons of the West by their valor have proved
That our country and freedom is sacredly loved ;
And the swift shafts of death they'll gallantly meet,
To humble the traitors in shame at their feet.

XIX.

So Shields was victorious, the day he had won,
By the firm fearless bravery of each Northern son ;
Shenandoah, the valley, will ne'er be forgotten,
When the monuments of its heroes are crumbled and
rotten.

Capt. David D. Bard, deceased, late of the 7th and 104th Regiments, O. V. I., author of the poem entitled "Battle of Winchester," was born at Cornwall, Litchfield county, Connecticut, July 23d, 1841, was the great-grandson of a patriot-soldier of the Revolution and was the eldest son of the late Rev. Rodolphus Bard, a Baptist clergyman of Portage county, Ohio.

Early in life Capt. Bard showed a fondness for books and pursued his studies with an energy that gave him great success as a teacher, for the short time in which he was thus engaged. He completed his studies at Hiram Institute, during the year 1860, at which time Hon. James A. Garfield was its honored President. The Institute at that time numbered between three and four hundred students, many of whom were preparing to teach. President Garfield's "lectures on teaching," and other subjects, occupy a large amount of space in the diary of Capt. Bard, and the numerous comments on his mode of teaching, made in the diary, are highly complimentary to Hiram's College President.

After Capt. Bard had successfully conducted a large school at New Philadelphia, Ohio, during the Winter and Spring of 1861, he returned to his home at the commencement of the Rebellion, and on May 31st, 1861, was among the first to volunteer as a soldier, and entered the 7th Regiment, O. V. I., as a private of Co. F, was promoted to Sergeant, and with his Regiment followed its fortunes in Virginia, participating in all of its battles and skirmishes, prominently among which was the famous battle of Winchester, March 22d and 23d, 1862, in which battle he took a prominent part, and in which Stonewall Jackson was defeated,

shortly after which Capt. Bard wrote the poem descriptive of this battle. His diary contains an accurate and vivid description of this and all other battles in which he participated, during a period of over four years.

On the first anniversary day of his enlistment, after just one years service, he was "mustered out" on "Surgeon's Certificate of disability" at "Circle Hospital," Washington, D. C. Much as it was against his wishes, it was deemed necessary in order to save his life. Under skillful home treatment he speedily regained his health and applied to Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War, asking to have his discharge set aside. Finding that under the rules this could not be done, he applied to and received from Gov. David Todd, of Ohio, a First Lieutenant's Commission on the anniversary of his twenty-first birthday. Having raised a company, which became a part of the newly organized 104th Regiment, O. V. I., at the time Capt. Bard took the field with his new command, less than two months had elapsed since his discharge from the 7th Ohio at "Circle Hospital," Washington, D. C.

He was soon after commissioned as Captain of his company, and with them followed the "fortunes of war" through Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and back to Franklin, Tenn., at which place, in one of the most terrific battles of the war, he was called upon to lay down his young life, while in the performance of his duties as A. A. General on the staff of General J. W. Reilly, of the 1st Brig., 3d Div., 23d A. C., under Gen. Thomas.

His record as an officer and soldier I leave to the official records at Washington, and to the brave men who shared with him the dangers and privations of the camp and field.

Thus ended the eventful life of a brave soldier, true patriot and a faithful christian, at the early age of twenty-three years.

IN MEMORY of the author of this poem, to the relatives and friends of his youth, to his highly respected teacher at Hiram Institute, Hon. James A. Garfield, from whose example and teachings he drew much of the inspiration of his young life ; to the brave soldiers and comrades who fell wounded and dying at the battles of Winchester, Knoxville, Lookout and Kennesaw Mountain, Atlanta, Nashville and Franklin, and who shared with him other battles and skirmishes ; and finally to all officers and soldiers of the Union Army who, like him, imperilled their lives in defense of our common country in the suppression of rebellion, and the establishment of the principles of freedom to all men

THIS POEM IS DEDICATED.

RODOLPHUS BARD,

August, 1880.

Meadville, Pa.

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