

IN MEMORIAM.

THE DEATH OF THE YOUNG PARTIZAN.

BY MRS. CORNELIA J. M. JORDAN.

John T. Waller, of Lynchburg, Va.,

COMPANY A, MOSBY'S COMMAND.

KILLED MARCH 14TH, 1865,

Aged 19 Years, 7 Months and 20 Days.

FROM the accounts that have reached us of the fall of this gallant Confederate, it would seem that the enemy surprised him almost immediately after leaving the presence of a young girl to whom he was betrothed "*until death.*"

The account given in a private letter dated "The Plains, (Fauquier Co., Va.) March 14th," says: "He left us this morning on the alarm of the enemy's approach, hurriedly kissing his hand to —, as he rode off; we saw him soon after waving his hat to a party of Yankees in a woods some distance from him, when he was suddenly surprised by several of them charging up the hill on which he stood. He dashed off and would have escaped but another party came up, cutting off his retreat. He fought them bravely to the last, but they closed in upon him, and one ball struck him passing through the back of his head. After they killed him they took him down to the roadside near the edge of a little stream, and there upon a pretty green spot, under a Hawthorn bush, they laid him, one of the officers covering him with his own blanket. This officer afterwards rode up to the house of one of the neighbors, told them where to find him, and said:

'Let his friends know that he has fallen, that he may have every respect shown him, for he was the bravest soldier I ever fought.'

Among other things taken from his person by the enemy, was the ring — had given him,—a scarf also, and a glove.

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He fell,—not where numbers were falling,
Whose groans with the cannon-peal blend;
His blood with no common stream mingled,
Where legions, with legions contend.
Alone on the hillside they found him,—
With only his charger he stood,
As they leaped from their lairs in the wildwood
Athirst for his innocent blood.

Their party was numbered by dozens,
[He facing the murderous band],
To the roll of their guns he responded
With a wave of his fair graceful hand.

But closer their muskets are flashing,—
Their threats by their frowns are endorsed:
Poor bird!—from the fowlers escape thee!—
Escape!—quick!—no time must be lost.

His hand o'er the trusty rein tightens,
His spur stings the charger,—away!
Ho!—whirl!—But alas! all around him,
The hounds hold their victim at bay.
Did he quail?—not a moment believe me,—
All true to his Truth, to the last,
He fought like a Cæsar, nor paused he,
Till the blow and the anguish had past.

A charge up the hillside!—a volley!—
The horse leaps *his* rider above,—
They rush for the spoils,—their booty,
A Scarf, a Ring, and a Glove.
What matters the story *they* utter,—
Dumb lips you know, make no appeals;
His blood stains the scarf as it flutters,
His hand unresistingly yields.

Thank God!—the worst now is over,
All past is the groan and the pain,—
They may scar, they rob, they may mangle,
But they never can kill him again.
See, see!—they are bearing him gently,—
What matters their gentleness now.—
Ah, cowards!—you dared not dishonor
The halo that circles his brow.

They have laid him down under the Hawthorn,
A Ringdove is scared from her nest,
While the little brook sings in the meadow,
A dirge for the hero at rest.
God's Sun over all too, is shining,—
He looks from His Kingdom of bliss,
On a world that for mercy and kindness,
Gives back a thanksgiving like this.

Oh, Father in Heaven!—befriend us,—
The War—wolves are still on our track;
Our innocents, take to Thy bosom,
But ne'er to the Spoiler give back.
They have laughed at the tears we are shedding,
They have mocked at the prayers that we gave,
Our mother,—*Virginia* is wailing,
Oh Father, deliver and save!

The prayer on the Spring-breezes floated,
The tramp of the foeman was still;
When the Moon in her calm, quiet beauty,
Rose smilingly over the hill.
Who thought in the years that have vanished;
The years of the glad Long Ago,—
That her soft, gentle rays would be falling
To-night on such pictures of woe.

Who yesterday even, would augur
From aught that a prophet could say,
That the fair, boyish brow *then* so peerless,
Would drip with its gore *to-day*.
He sleeps while his comrades are calling
“*To saddle! to saddle! proclaim!*”
He smiles in his sleep but he heeds not
The echo that answers his name.

Oh comrades!—*too late* for the rescue!—
Strike! strike though! with ball and with blade,
For the murderers still howl in the distance,
He lies there asleep in the shade.

They weep—aye, the stoutest and bravest,
Tears fall on, the hillock like rain;
Ha, boys!—quick!—a breath stirs the Hawthorn,
To saddle! to saddle! again.

Oh the Hawthorn, the Hawthorn, who reckoned
That ever the bank where it stood,
Would along with the dews that imperaled it,
Be crimsoned with innocent blood.
Who dreamed as they saw it there, hiding
The nest which a Ringdove had made,
That a fair, fallen son of Virginia
Would sleep in its beautiful shade.

The soft, swaying winds interlacing
The boughs to a self-woven crown,
Sighed low, as upon the green hillock,
They layed the young warrior down.
They laid him there tenderly, *they* who
A moment before saw him fall,—
His locks dripping blood that had followed
The strike of their pitiless ball.

Ah, well may their conscience awaken
Remorse for the merciless deed,—
Each soul has a *judge* to account to,
Each life has its hour of need.
Remember it vandals, remember,
You slew him alone on the hill,
And the God whose commandments you trample
Can be his Avenger, and *will*.

I wonder not that you should cover
His pale, stricken limbs with a pall,—
You could not, you *dared* not encounter
The dumb face that smiled on you all.
'Tis over!—you hurry and leave him,
The blast of your bugle is nigh;
The wind through the Hawthorn is stealing,
The streamlet goes murmuring by.

But a *heart* in the meanwhile is waiting,
Close by where the mansion-lights burn;
An eye o'er the hillside is peering
To see her brave soldier return.
What news shall we give her?—the tidings,
That true to your Leader's command,
You found him alone on the hillside,
And slew,—with a merciless hand?

I'd rather not tell her the sequel
How, gloatingly over your prize,
You stood all amazed at the beauty,
That shone from his dark, dying eyes.
I'd rather not tell how you *hurried*
To tear off the badge from his breast,
Scarcely waiting till God's silent Angel
Might bear the brave soul to its rest.

She tied on that Scarf in the morning,
She gave him the Ring and the Glove,
And about him, a talisman holy,
She threw the bright shield of her love.
'Tis done,—you may go to your Leader
And tell him the glorious tale (!)
That a heart for your bold deed is breaking,
Its sighs floating out on the gale.

It were well for you too, to remember,
Though fallen his bright, laurelled head,
That for one dauntless arm you have smitten
A thousand will spring in its stead.
Yea, a thousand will rise to avenge him,
His name will their war-spirit thrill,—
Ah, 'twas no common prey that you hunted
And slew all alone on the hill.

Those dark eyes you saw were his mother's,
The smile that he wore was her own,
And I know that her spirit from Heaven
Looked down on her pale, murdered son.
And she stretched out her arms to receive him,
When helpless, and pallid, and still,
He lay where your cruel hands left him
Alone, all alone on the hill.

ELK HILL, BEDFORD Co., VA., }
March 31st, 1865. }

*Mr. WALLER was a grandson of Ex-President TAYLOR.

There's another, immortal and glorious,
The *Grandsire who clasped to his knee,
That boy with his baby-locks floating
Around a pure brow, glad and free.
Do you think while *he* stood your Defender,
And labored for Right to the last,
That he thought of an hour when you'd scoff at
The memory of services past?

It is said that the dead do behold us
When Heaven the veil tears away,
And that spirits released, still yearn fondly
For those who are struggling with clay.
Then remember *who* saw you, when pity
Failed wholly your stone-hearts to move,—
When like vultures, with hands red and gory,
You murdered the Child of his love.

Ah, the day will come yet in the future,
When the Country *he* strove to redeem,
Will arise in her strength self-existent
And the Light of her Glory shall beam.
When the Army of Martyrs in Heaven
Will echo her glorious call,
And among them you'll see in its beauty,
The dumb face that smiled on you all.

