

THE VARSITY

A Weekly Journal of Literature, University Thought and Events.

VOL. IX.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO, MARCH 2, 1889.

No. 14.

“ART THOU WEARY? ART THOU LANGUID?”

Nonne fessus tu, languensque

Multis premeris?

“Ad me veni, veniensque
Quies sis!”

Quid vocantem indicabit

Mihi si sit Dux?

“Manus, pedes, heu! foedavit
Latus Crux.”

Fors corona speciosa

Frontem decorat?

“Immo vero; sed spinosa
Sanguinat!”

Quem inventum si sectabor,

Quid manebit me?

“Multus dolor, multus labor,
Lacrime.”

Illi arcte adherentis

Quæ sit summa sors?

“Luctus et laborum finis,
Victa mors!”

Num repellat me, si velim

Ut recipiat?

“Non dum terra, non dum cælum
Transeat.”

Quærens, sequens, fidens, luctans

An beatus sum?

“Sic testatur cohors lætans
Cælitum!”

W. H. C. KERR.

DECORATION DAY.

Our neighbours across the border, in accordance with a very beautiful custom, set aside and consecrate the 30th of May in each year to the memory of those who perished during the Civil War, and to the decoration of their graves. Last Decoration Day it was our fortune to be travelling in the northern part of New York State and to stop in the afternoon to rest at a small farm house. While chatting with the worthy old farmer and his wife I noticed on the wall opposite me, wreathed in evergreen, a framed document commemorating in brightly illuminated letters the death of a northern soldier. Perceiving that the name differed from the farmer's, for he had told me his, I ventured to ask him if it was a memorial of some cousin or other relative of his. He shook his head and answered in the negative. “A connection of your wife's, perhaps?” I suggested. With a slight tremor in his voice he again said “no.”

Perceiving that the subject was a painful one, I turned to

his wife and was proceeding to address her on some indifferent topic when the old man interrupted me.

“I'll tell you about him, boys,” said he slowly, drawing his sleeve across his forehead. “He was an old schoolmate of mine, and comrade in the ranks. He was shot in the capture of a small rebel fort. When you hear what he whispered to me as he lay dying in the hospital we fixed up for him, perhaps you'll understand why I keep that thing hanging on the wall.” And the poor old fellow narrated the tale, which I have below endeavoured to convey in verse. I am well aware that this vehicle is but a weak substitute for the homely, artless English in which it was delivered, but as my attempt at its reproduction must lack the earnest expressiveness of countenance and the very eloquent huskiness of voice which accompanied the narrative I have chosen to avail myself of the assistance of metre as in some sort supplying the place of these dramatic qualities.

THROUGH THE BREACH.

“I a hero! Nay Tom, never say so;
Though I have a ball in my side,
And was first in the enemy's fortress
And tore down their colours and pride.

“There are twenty of you would have done it
And died so, though eager to live;
For you fellows have wives or have lovers,
And I, why I'd nothing to give.

“Talk of glory! Say suicide rather;
I died to be rid of my pain,
And because I could bear it no longer,—
To perish so soon is a gain.

“Still 'twas splendid! The charge at the double,
The dash, the balls whizzing round,
Then the struggle we had on the earth-works,
The mad tumble and jump for the ground!

“Did you see that damned long-legged rebel,
The officer, close by the mast?
When I'd stabbed him, I jumped for the halcyards
And fell with their flag,—shot at last.

“Tom, you know when we two were young fellows
Both loved her whom you won in the end;
And I said I'd forget and pretended
To be merely comrade and friend.

“But I'd like her to know, now I'm dying,
That I've loved her through all these years.
Don't be jealous, old fellow, now will you,
If perhaps a tear falls when she hears?

“Hold me up, Tom, so—my brain must be dizzy,
The walls, cots and men, how they spin!—
'Twas a glorious fight for the Union!—
Why it's dark—there's last post—time to turn in.

“Tom—come closer—Tom, don't tell her;
It would only give her pain,
And if there's a God and a heaven
I'll tell her some day again.”

J. H. M.