

AT ARLINGTON

AT ARLINGTON

On the day that the graves of the Federal soldiers buried at Arlington were decorated, in 1869, a number of ladies entered the cemetery for the purpose of placing flowers on the graves of thirty Confederates. Their progress was stopped by bayonets, and they were not allowed to perform their mission of love. During the night a high wind arose, and in the morning all the floral offerings that had been placed the day before upon the Federal graves were found piled upon the mounds under which reposed the thirty Confederates.

The broken column, reared in air
To him who made our country great,
Can almost cast its shadow where
The victims of a grand despair,
In long, long ranks of death await
The last loud trump, the Judgment-Sun,
Which come for all, and, soon or late,
Will come for those at Arlington.

POEMS OF JAMES RYDER RANDALL

In that vast sepulchre repose
The thousands reaped from every fray ;
The Men in Blue who once uprose
In battle-front to smite their foes—
The Spartan Bands who wore the grey ;
The combat o'er, the death-hug done,
In summer blaze or winter snows,
They keep the truce at Arlington.

And almost lost in myriad graves,
Of those who gained the unequal fight,
Are mounds that hide Confederate braves,
Who reckon not how the North wind raves,
In dazzling day or dimmest night,
O'er those who lost and those who won ;
Death holds no parley which was right—
Jehovah judges Arlington.

The dead had rest ; the Dove of Peace
Brooded o'er both with equal wings ;
To both had come that great surcease,
The last omnipotent release
From all the world's delirious stings.
To bugle deaf and signal-gun,
They slept, like heroes of old Greece,
Beneath the glebe at Arlington.

AT ARLINGTON

And in the Spring's benignant reign,
The sweet May woke her harp of pines;
Teaching her choir a thrilling strain
Of jubilee to land and main,
She danced in emerald down the lines.
Denying largesse bright to none,
She saw no difference in the signs
That told who slept at Arlington.

She gave her grasses and her showers
To all alike who dreamed in dust;
Her song-birds wove their dainty bowers
Amid the jasmine buds and flowers,
And piped with an impartial trust;
Waifs of the air and liberal sun,
Their guileless glees were kind and just
To friend and foe at Arlington.

And 'mid the generous spring there came
Some women of the land, who strove
To make this funeral-field of fame
Glad as the May-God's altar-flame,
With rosy wreaths of mutual love—
Unmindful who had lost or won,
They scorned the jargon of a name—
No North, no South, at Arlington.

POEMS OF JAMES RYDER RANDALL

Between their pious thought and God
 Stood files of men with brutal steel ;
The garlands placed on "Rebel sod"
Were trampled in the common clod,
 To die beneath the hireling heel.
 Facing this triumph of the Hun,
Our Smoky Cæsar gave no nod,
 To keep the peace at Arlington.

Jehovah judged—abashing man—
 For in the vigils of the night,
His mighty storm-avengers ran
Together in one choral clan,
 Rebuking wrong, rewarding right ;
 Plucking the wreaths from those who won.
The tempest heaped them dewy-bright
 On REBEL graves at Arlington.

And when the morn came young and fair,
 Brimful of blushes ripe and red,
Knee-deep in sky-sent roses there,
Nature began her earliest prayer
 Above triumphant Southern dead.
 So, in the dark and in the sun,
Our Cause survives the Tyrant's tread,
 And sleeps to wake at Arlington.