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Oliver Otis Howard Collection

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### Poems by or relating to General O.O. Howard

O.O. Howard Collection

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# Gettysburg

This incident of the battle of Gettysburg was related by General Oliver Otis Howard, U. S. Army, the gallant commander of Cemetery Ridge, to whom this poem is dedicated with the sincere admiration of the author.

From the sun-loved southern valley marched  
the war-worn hosts in order  
With their splendid flags above them, stained  
with battle, lit with stars,  
Pressing onward, pressing upward to defend  
the menaced border  
Where their blood should flow more crimson  
than the crimson of the fere.

At a gate a maiden lingered, down the  
dusty highway gazing,  
Saw the lifted banners glowing, saw the  
glint of shining steel,  
And she leaned across the gateway, and her  
snowy kerchief raising,

2

Ward it with her young heart leaping,  
beating high with burning zeal.

Golden-haired among the maples like a  
fair-faced flower toying  
Losing her way through the meadows bound  
beneath the tempest's breath  
So she ward her snowy banner while she  
watched the army evening  
Crossing through the peaceful valley to  
those sunny hills of death.

Bran young eyes met hers in greeting, gray-haired  
then their heads bent low,  
And the gallant leader, smiling, watched  
her with his face alight,  
Till the long blue lines swept onward like  
a torrent's ebb and flow,

And her white-clad figure vanished like  
an angel from their sight.

Ah, there on fonder sun-lit hills the North  
and South are fighting,

And souls are passing forth to God  
 through mortal strife and pain,  
 For Jordan speaks the iron death the  
 fair fountains summer blighting,  
 and the harvest fields are garnered with  
 the garner of the slain.

The shells like fiery javelins round the valley  
 deep with scars

For upon the hill of snow has the fearful  
 storm had birth

And the men are falling, falling, hosts  
 unnumbered as the stars

For the fiend of war possesses the sweet  
 paradise of earth.

Come, O night and spread your shadow, light  
 your candles over the road,

Still the anguish and the aching, breathe  
 the message of release,

light the spirits of the martyrs who have  
 heard the Trump of God,

Trod the short sharp road to glory, 4.  
From the endless camp of peace.

Though the armies long have vanished, deem  
you not the field forsaken.

Though the guns are mute forever, and the  
sword hangs lone and still,

Though they sleep in graves unnumbered, yet  
their spirits shall awaken,

And the mantle of remembrance folds in  
splendor all the hill

Theodora Agnes Peck.

We think this is a poem  
composed by Gen. O.O. Howard  
as it is in his hand-  
writing and is obviously a  
ms. copy.

1.

One year of happy life  
To crown the years preceding  
Without that anxious strife  
Of care & lonely living.

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One year of precious trial  
Of Love & kindness too,  
The great rough world defying  
With fears & pestful boog-aboos.

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One thing - I was almost Heaven,  
A year ago took place.  
It came from "Medal Legion"  
That "Loving-cup" of Grace.

(2)

That Laving-cup meant Love  
Of hearts that <sup>I knew no fear,</sup> meant  
The days before the happy Door  
Brought in her branch of cheer.

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One year you two have passed  
Sweet emblem <sup>bear in mind,</sup> ~~let it stand~~.  
Till years on years are <sup>massed</sup>  
Of joy & hope & peace combined.