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## Poem "Me Empty Sleeve" by David Barker

O.O. Howard Collection

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From the "Whig and Courier". The author of this poem-  
David Barker of Exeter, Maine, was a lawyer and a poet. The  
following is copied from the Daily Whig and Courier in July, 1862.

THE EMPTY SLEEVE

By the moon's pale light to a gazing throng,  
Let me tell one tale, let me sing one song;  
'Tis a tale devoid of an aim or plan,  
'Tis a simple song of a one arm man.  
Till this very hour I could ne'er believe  
What a tell-tale thing is an empty sleeve-  
What a weird, queer thing is an empty sleeve.

It tells in a silent tone to all,  
Of a country's need and a country's call,  
Of a kiss and a tear for a child and a wife,  
And a hurried march for a nation's life;  
Till this very hour who could e'er believe  
What a tell-tale thing is an empty sleeve-  
What a weird, queer thing is an empty sleeve.

It tells of a battle-field of gore-  
Of the sabre's clash-of the cannon's roar-  
Of the deadly charge-of the bugle's note-  
Of a gurgling sound in a foeman's throat-  
Of a whizzing grape-of the fiery shell-  
Of a scene which mimics the scenes of hell-  
Till this very hour would you e'er believe  
What a tell-tale thing is an empty sleeve-  
What a weird, queer thing is an empty sleeve.

Though it points to a myriad wounds and scars,  
Yet it tells that a flag with the stripes and stars,  
In God's own chosen time will take  
Each place of the rag with the rattle-snake,  
And it points to a time when that flag shall wave  
O'er land where there breathes no cowering slave.  
To the top of the skies let us all then heave  
One proud huzza for the empty sleeve-  
For the one arm man with the empty sleeve.

Note:-

General O.O. Howard lost his arm in the Battle of Fair Oaks  
in May, 1862; while in New England he made speeches to get volunteers  
to join the Army before he returned to serve during the rest of the  
Civil War. Speaking at a meeting in ~~Exeter~~ <sup>Bayport, Me.</sup> in July, 1862, he was  
heard by the Poet David Barker who then wrote the above poem;  
dedicating it to General Howard.



# THE EMPTY SLEEVE.

BY DAVID BARKER.

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Mr. Barker was in the city (Bangor, Me.) when Gen. O. O. Howard made his effective speech at the War Meeting and the "silent eloquence of that empty sleeve" made such an impression upon him that he felt an inspiration to write.—COURIER.