

**THE COLOR-GUARD; BEING
A CORPORAL'S NOTES OF
MILITARY SERVICE IN THE
NINETEENTH ARMY CORPS**

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The color-guard; being a corporal's notes of military service in the Nineteenth army corps by
James K. Hosmer

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JAMES K. HOSMER

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THE
C O L O R - G U A R D :

BEING

A CORPORAL'S NOTES OF MILITARY SERVICE
IN THE NINETEENTH ARMY CORPS.



JAMES K. HOSMER,

OF THE FIFTY-SECOND REGIMENT MASS. VOLUNTEERS.

" Till we called
Both field and city ours, we never stood
To ease our breasts with panting."

CORNELIUS, Act II. Scene 2.

BOSTON:
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THIRD THOUSAND.

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No. 5, Water Street.

TO

HALBERT STEVENS GREENLEAF,

LATE COLONEL OF THE FIFTY-SECOND REGIMENT MASS. VOLUNTEERS,

A Resolute Soldier and Noble Man,

This Book is respectfully Inscribed

BY

ONE WHO HAS WITNESSED HIS COURAGE, AND EXPERIENCED
HIS GOODNESS.

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INTRODUCTION.

As this volume sees the light at the instance of the author's friends, and with much diffidence and reluctance on his part, it may not be inappropriate for one of those friends to give a brief statement of the history of the work, and of the reasons why its publication has seemed desirable.

In September, 1862, Rev. JAMES K. HOSMER, pastor of the First Church in Deerfield, Mass., having but recently entered on his chosen profession with ardor and with rich promise of success, heard, in the needs of his country, a higher call of duty; and with every motive of interest and personal feeling opposed to the measure, but with a sense of obligation which his conscience would not set aside, he enlisted as a private in the Fifty-second Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers. He entered the service with the determination to evade neither labor, hardship, nor peril; to devote whatever there was in him of capacity and vigor to the public cause; and to do what he might, not as a clergyman, but

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as a Christian man, to minister to the physical and moral welfare of his fellow-soldiers. His ability and culture early procured for him the offer of a safe and easy post in the military family of Gen. Banks. This he declined; accepting no preferment, save a place, in the fore-front of peril, as one of the corporals intrusted with the defence of the colors of his regiment. During his term of service, he prepared letters, in the form of a journal, with no thought of their publication, but solely for the perusal of his father's family and of certain intimate friends, to whom they were sent in turn. They were read with vivid interest; and there gradually grew, among several of those through whose hands they passed, a strong desire that the pleasure and benefit derived from them should be extended to a larger circle. It is in deference to their judgment that he consented to revise the journal, and to commit it to the press.

We have urged the publication of this record on the following grounds:—It is the narrative of one who gave every possible proof of disinterested patriotism. The writer had large and varied opportunities of observation; and with them he possessed keen, quick, and accurate discernment, and, as we think, a superior power of life-like description and narration. His journal gives a faithful picture of the privations, sufferings, and perils of those whose living and dying sacrifice is the costly price at which we are purchasing the redemption of our country from dismemberment and ruin; and it can hardly fail to do its part in awakening the gratitude we owe to those who have gone forth in the defence of our liber-

ties and institutions. It commends our army to our warmest sympathy, and to those offices of relief and comfort by which we may lighten the burdens of our soldiers, and solace those who return from the camp or the battle-field maimed, crippled, and invalids. It is also the journal of one who carried with him to the service tender and humane fellow-feeling for his companions in peril; and we prize it for the unostentatious benevolence and kindness which it breathes, and which made the author's life as a soldier parallel and congenial with the quiet scenes of pastoral duty from which only the imperative demands of a holy cause could have led him to turn aside. While the work, on these grounds, proffers high claims on the public regard, it is believed that its literary execution is worthy of the reputation which the author has already attained, and will hereafter realize, in the sacred calling to which he has consecrated his powers and his life.

Less than this we could not say; more than this we need not; so much as this the author's modesty would not suffer, were this Introduction to meet his eye before it becomes indelibly a part of his book.

A. P. PEABODY.

CAMBRIDGE, Oct. 22, 1863.