

FOOTFALLS OF LOYALTY

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Footfalls of loyalty by Mrs. Mary W. Westcott

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MRS. MARY W. WESTCOTT

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OF LOYALTY**

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OF

LOYALTY.

BY

MRS. MARY W. WESTCOTT,

SWANTON, VER.

"He turned and left the spot,
Oh, do not deem him weak,
For dauntless was the soldier's heart,
Though tears were on his cheek,
Go to the foremost rank
In danger's dark career,
Be sure the hand most daring there
Has wiped away a tear."

LINCOLN

JOURNAL COMPANY, STATE PRINTERS.

1866.

2751

PREFACE.

This work has been compiled to save to history the purest sentiments of loyalty ever uttered and to raise something for the relief funds of the G. A. R., a large share of the sale being devoted to such use. If our purpose meets with approval we shall continue to collect war letters and diaries with this end in view.

These letters came from the heart and must go to the heart of him who fought on the same ground in the same way, inspired by the same love for home and country, as well as to those who hold them in patriotic reverence. Libby's Bright Side shows what brave men did to forget the misery that surrounded and crushed them, when to have foresworn their defense of the old flag would have given them the best that rebeldom afforded. And now when the limbs crippled by prison gangrene or the more merciful shell are ordered to "leave" to give place to the old prison guard and flag traitor, and when the stars and bars are waved over the ground once covered by the "march to the sea," seems a most fitting time to bring these loyal mementoes to the light.

MRS. MARY W. WESTCOTT.

Swanton, Nebraska.

ms. 2.1.1, 127

LETTERS OF GOLD.

BY HARRY BURNS, CO. H, 4TH PA. CAVALRY.

(Written especially for this work.)

A bundle of letters tied 'round with a string,
Some sad and some joyous—what mem'ries they bring!
Some well-worn with reading—my eyes fill with tears
At words that to others so foolish appears.

Worn letters, old letters, sweet words of the past,
When our nation lay clouded, with hopes overcast;
Mid thunders of war, with its turmoil and pain,
Bringing answers and sweet loving words back again.

Only letters, old letters—ah, me, how I sigh!
As I read them they bring back the old days so nigh,
When we climbed o'er the mountain and swam through the flood,
And lived four long years in a lava of blood.

Yes, letters, old letters, we love them now well
For the mem'ries they bring and the stories they tell;
Some twenty years after what pleasure they yield,
For they tell of our marches, the camp, and the field.

Old letters, fond letters, bedewed once with tears,
The older they grow the more precious appears;
For they came from the field and the foul prison den,
And the loved homes of true and courageous men.

From the daughters and sons, from the mothers and sires,
Whose words built and lighted up liberty's fires;
What hopes were awaked by those grand words of cheer
To the loved ones at home and the brave volunteer.

vi.

Letters written by men in the vigor of life,
Written by sister, son, father, and wife,
Written by patriots loyal and free,
Who stood by the Union and loved liberty.

Last words of those heroes who never returned,
Those sacrificed lives whom the nation has mourned,
Whose bones were left whitened on fair freedom's shore,
Their letters we'll treasure and prize evermore.

Old letters, fond letters, tho' ages march on,
Tell their story of trials and victories won,
Tho' the hearts of the writers lie listless in death,
To a pulsating world they are freedom's fond breath.

Old letters, old letters, bright garlands of gloom,
Full of hope, full of peace, tho' they speak from the tomb,
Storied words that will live to be told and retold,
Our footfalls of loyalty—Letters of Gold!

Pittsburg, July 1862.

FOOTFALLS OF LOYALTY.

AUSTIN J. LAKIN,
7TH ILL. INFY. AND CO. B., 2D ILL. CAV.
TO HIS FRIENDS.

CAMP DEFIANCE,
CAIRO, ILL., June 14, 1861. }

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER—This beautiful day finds me seated in my little tent to write you a letter, and I will try to give you an idea of my situation at present. I enlisted in the service of the Union army the 22d of April, and started the same evening for Springfield, stopped in Camp Yates about a week, then took the train for Alton, stopped there a month, and took passage on steamboat for Cairo, and this day finds me one among 8,000 brave men. It is a fine sight to see seven or eight thousand soldiers on the field mustering. There are more than one hundred men at work here building batteries. There are six cannon planted here that throw 36 pound balls, and lots of smaller ones throwing from 6 to 24 pound balls.

The talk is that we will start for Memphis, Tenn., soon; vessels are standing ready to start at any hour, five or six of the best boats that run on the river. They belong to

the government. The "City of Alton" started out yesterday, came back in the evening with a secession flag. The boys saw it in Columbus, Ky., as they were going up the river; they landed, went over and cut the flag down and brought it home with them; not a man raised a hand to save the banner of rebeldom.

We sleep in our tents on a little hay, a blanket and oil cloth cloak to every man.

I hope I will be the lucky boy to get back home to see my relatives and little wife—she is the flower of the West.

PITTSBURG LANDING, TENN., }
April 28, 1862. }

I yet have a place among the living. While others around me fall I am spared. Since I last saw you I have witnessed the battle-field at Fort Donaldson and the battle at this place, where many of my acquaintances fell; some of them that were with me in the three months service. Many a brave man fell here, leaving wife and children to mourn the loss of husband and father. Thousands of promising young men went down pierced to the heart with the rude rifle ball, others with their heads shot off by the cannon, some literally torn to pieces with cannon ball and shell. There are different reports of the killed and wounded, but from what I have seen and heard, our loss is from 10,000 to 12,000 killed and wounded, and 3,000 or 4,000 taken prisoners. The Secesh lost more than we did, at least