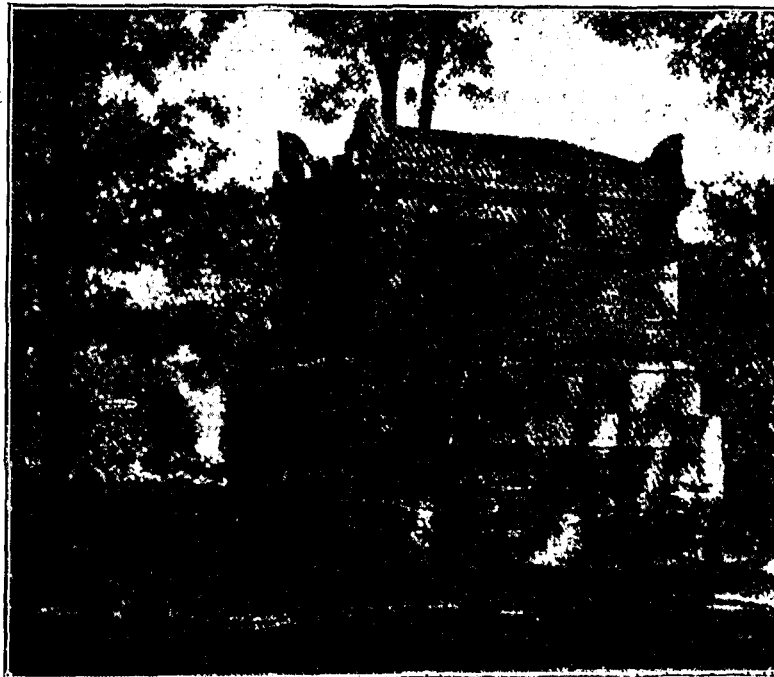


THE FIELD OF THE DEAD.

The most impressive sight at Arlington is that of the field of the dead, on the level plateau, where the headstones stretch away in lines endless to the vision. The stones are set in rows, uniform in distance one from the other, arrayed in order and marshalled as battalions for review, a silent army of 16,000 strong. The headstones are of a simple pattern. On each marble or granite slab is inscribed the name of the soldier whose grave it marks, with his State and the number by which he has been enrolled in the Roll of Honour—the roster kept by the War Department of those who died in the service of the country, and contains the records of 250,000 deceased Union soldiers.

Of the unknown dead, two thousand one hundred and eleven nameless soldiers are gathered here in one common grave, deprived of the individual measure of fame which each one by his daring and dying merited, and denied the poor desert of recognition, even of identification. Their names, their homes, their friends, all were unknown. The simple story is told in the letters chiselled on the monument's granite face:—



GRAVE OF THE UNKNOWN DEAD.

BENEATH THIS STONE
REPOSE THE BONES OF TWO THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED
AND ELEVEN UNKNOWN SOLDIERS GATHERED
AFTER THE WAR FROM THE FIELDS OF
BULL RUN AND THE ROUTE TO THE RAPPAHANNOCK.
THEIR REMAINS COULD NOT BE IDENTIFIED, BUT THEIR
NAMES AND DEATHS ARE RECORDED IN THE ARCHIVES OF
THEIR COUNTRY AND ITS GRATEFUL CITIZENS HONOUR
THEM AS OF THEIR NOBLE ARMY OF MARTYRS. MAY THEY
REST IN PEACE.
SEPTEMBER A. D. 1866.

How touching is this reverent care of the dead American soldier man. How consolatory to the women who loved him; the children deprived of his strength and care; his brothers in arms from generation to generation, who ask nothing more of fate than to rest side by side with him.

The great Lincoln, who died a hundred deaths for the Union ere yet that dastard steel pierced his heart, has voiced finely in his Gettysburg Address the pure tenderness and glory of a Field for the Dead:—

“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that the nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

“But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow this ground.

The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract.

“The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did, here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause to which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

ETHEL G. FENWICK.

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