

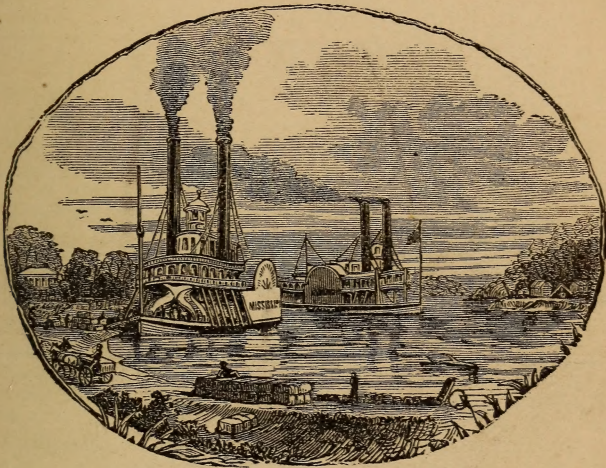
33  
2  
STERLING'S

SOUTHERN ORATOR:

CONTAINING

STANDARD LECTURES IN PROSE AND POETRY FOR DECLAMATION  
AND RECITATION IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

944  
1223



BY  
✓  
PROF. RICHARD STERLING, A.M.,

PRINCIPAL OF EDGEWORTH FEMALE SEMINARY.

Library of Congress

1867

City of Washington

New-York:  
OWENS AND AGAR, 110 WILLIAM ST.

GREENSBORO, N. C.:

R. STERLING & SON.

1867.  
✓

PN 4217  
59

---

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1866, by

**RICHARD STERLING,**

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the District of  
Cape Fear, of North-Carolina.

---

Summoned the god of war. Doubly exposed,  
 He stood unharmed. Like eagles tempest-borne  
 Rushed to his side his men; and had our souls  
 And arms with twofold strength been braced, we yet  
 Had not withstood that onset. Thus does he  
 Keep ever with occasion even step—  
 Now, warily before our eager speed  
 Retreating, tempting us with battle's promise,  
 Only to toil us with a vain pursuit;  
 Now, wheeling rapidly about our flanks,  
 Startling our ears with sudden peal of war,  
 And fronting in the thickest of the fight  
 The common soldier's death, stirring the blood  
 Of faintest hearts to deeds of bravery  
 By his great presence; and his every act,  
 Of heady onslaught as of backward march,  
 From thoughtful judgment first inferred.

---

 CCCXLV.

THE COLOR-BEARER.—MRS. M. J. PRESTON.

THE shock of battle swept the lines,  
 The wounded men and slain  
 Lay thick as lie in summer fields  
 The ridgy swaths of grain.

The deadly volleys belched their fire,  
 The raking cannon pealed;  
 The lightning-flash of bayonets  
 Went glittering round the field.

On rushed the gallant "Twenty-fourth"  
 Against the bristling guns,  
 Whose blaze could daunt or dazzle them  
 No more than could the sun's.

It mattered not though heads went down,  
 Though stately steps were staid—  
 Though rifles dropt from bleeding hands,  
 And ghastly gaps were made.

“Close up!” was still the stern command,  
And with unwavering tread  
They held right on, though well they knew  
They tracked their way with dead.

As fast they pressed, with laboring breath,  
Clinched teeth, and knitted frown,  
The sharp and sudden cry rang out,  
“The color-bearer’s down!”

Quick to the front sprang eagerly  
The youngest of the band,  
And caught the flag still tightly held  
Within the fallen hand.

With cheer he reared it high again,  
Yet claimed an instant’s pause  
To lift the dying man, and see  
Whose pallid face it was.

“Forward!” the captain shouted loud,  
Still “Forward!” and the men  
Caught madly up the shrill command  
And shrieked it out again.

But moveless stood the fair-faced boy  
Without a foot’s advance,  
Until the captain shook his arm,  
And roused him from his trance.

His home had flashed upon his sight,  
That blest and sunny spot;  
He did not hear the crashing shells,  
Nor heed the hissing shot.

He saw his mother wring her hands,  
He heard his sister’s cries;  
And tears were on his girl-like cheeks,  
And grief was in his eyes.

The touch dissolved the spell—he knew,  
He felt the fearful stir;  
He raised his head, and softly said,  
“He was my brother, sir!”



Then grasping firm the crimson flag,  
He flung it free and high,  
While patriot passion stanch'd his tears  
And drank his sorrow dry.

Between his close, set teeth he spoke—  
And hard he draw his breath:  
"I'll bear this flag to victory,  
Or bear it, sir, to death!"

The bellowing batteries thundered on,  
The sulph'rous smoke rose higher,  
And from the columns in the front  
Poured forth the galling fire.

But where the bullets thickest fell,  
Where hottest raged the fight,  
The steady colors tossed aloft  
Their trail of crimson light.

Firm and indomitable still  
The "Twenty-fourth" moved on—  
A dauntless remnant only left—  
The brave threescore were gone!

And now once more the cry arose,  
Which not the guns could drown:  
"Ho, boys! up with the flag again!  
The color-bearer's down!"

They sought to loose his grasp, but fast  
He clung with iron will:  
"The arm that's broken is my *left*,  
So I can hold it still!"

And "Forward! forward! Twenty-fourth!"  
Rang out above the roar,  
When suddenly the guiding flag  
Sank, and was seen no more.

And when the fiery fight was done,  
And from the bloody field  
The battered "Twenty-fourth" withdrew,  
Because they would not yield,

They found a boy whose face still wore  
 A look resolved and grand—  
 A rent and riddled flag close clutched  
 Within his shattered hand!

---

 CCCXLVI.

## RAPHAEL'S ACCOUNT OF CREATION.—MILTON.

HEAVEN opened wide

Her ever-during gates—harmonious sound—  
 On golden hinges moving, to let forth  
 The King of Glory, in His powerful Word  
 And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.  
 On heavenly ground They stood; and, from the shore,  
 They viewed the vast, immeasurable abyss,  
 Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,  
 Up from the bottom turned by furious winds  
 And surging waves, as mountains to assault  
 Heaven's height, and with the centre mix the pole.

“Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou deep, peace!”  
 Said then the Omnific Word; “your discord end!”  
 Nor staid, but, on the wings of cherubim  
 Uplifted, in paternal glory rode  
 Far into Chaos, and the world unborn;  
 For Chaos heard His voice: Him all His train  
 Followed in bright procession, to behold  
 Creation, and the wonders of His might.  
 Then staid the fervid wheels, and in His hand  
 He took the golden compasses prepared  
 In God's eternal store, to circumscribe  
 This universe, and all created things:  
 One foot He centred, and the other turned  
 Round through the vast profundity obscure,  
 And said, “Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,  
 This be thy just circumference, O world!”  
 Thus God the heaven created, thus the earth,  
 Matter unformed and void; darkness profound