THE BURIAL OF LATANE.

BY JOHN B. THOMPSON.

[This poem is simply metrical history, the facts being actually these: In Stuart's celebrated 'Pamunkey Raid' around the rear of McClellan's army, Captain Latane was killed in a skirmish. His brother, Lieut. Latane, carried the body to Mrs. Brokenborough's plantation, and while on this sad mission he was captured by the enemy's scouts and paroled to deliver himself up as soon as he had left his precious charge in Mrs. Brokenborough's care. That lady, a faithful negro slave, the noble Virginia matron read the solemn and beautiful ritual over the dead warrior. For classic purity and beauty of sentiment, we hold this as the most perfect poem of the war:]

Let not weep for him, whose deeds endure
So young, so brave, so beautiful! He died
As he had wished to die; the past is sure;
Whatever yet of sorrow may betide.
Those, who still linger by the stormy shore,
As change can not harm him now, and fortune touch him more.

And when Virginia, leaning on her spear,
Virginia of Virginia—she, conduct low—
Still raise her mailed hand to wipe the tear—
That starts, as she recalls each martyr's son
No prouder memory her breast shall stay
Than thine, our early lost, lamented Latane.

The combat raged not long, but ours the day;
And through the hosts that compassed us around,
Our little band rode proudly on its way,
Leaving one gallant comrade, glory crowned,
Unburied on the field he died to gain—
Singed by all his men, amid the hostile slain.

One moment on the battle's edge he stood.
Hope's halo, like a helmet, round his hair
The next beheld him, dabbled in his blood.
Prostrate in death; and yet, in death so fair!
Then thus he passed through the red gates of strife—
From earthly crowns and palms, to an immortal life.

A brother bore his body from the field,
And gave it unto stranger's hands, that closed
The calm blue eyes on earth forever sealed,
And tended the slender limbs composed.

Strangers, yet sisters, who, with Mary's love,
Set by, their open tomb, and weeping stood above,
A little child strewn roses on his bier—
Pale roses, not more stainless than his soul.

Nor yet more fragrant than his life serene.
That blossomed, with good-a-thousand brief bullets fired
The aged matron and the faithful slave
Approached with reverent feet
The hero's lowly grave.

No man of God might say the burialrite.
Above the "rebel"—thus declared the strange
That blanched before him in the deadly fight,
But woman's voice, with accents soft and low
Trembling with pity-touched
Over his hallowed dust the ritual for the dead.

'Tis sown in weakness, it is raised in power!!
Softly the groans floated on the air,
While the low breathings of the sunset hour
Come back responsive to the mourner's hour.
Gently they laid him underneath the sod,
And left him with his fame, his country and his God!