

NATHAN HALE.

The Two Poems Read by Judge Francis M. Finch at East Haddam.

The following poems by Judge Francis M. Finch, Yale '49, one of which was written forty-seven years, were read at East Haddam, June 6. The occasion was the celebration of the 145th anniversary of Nathan Hale's birth, when a bust of the patriot was unveiled and the schoolhouse he taught in dedicated under the auspices of the New York and Connecticut Societies of the Sons of the American Revolution:

And one there was, his name immortal now,
Star-written on historic roll of stars,
And shining down its patient lesson: one
Who died not to the roll-throbs of the drum,
Or in some swirl or rush of desperate charge
Where storm of all builds bravery of each;
But friendless and alone, in square of guns,
Without least help of tender touch or tear,
Swung off with scandal of a felon's death,
For loving more his native land than life!

Dead in the primal splendor of his youth;
Just come of age to cast one resolute vote
For freedom of a shackled land and law
Although he knew the ballot might be—
death!
Away from sheltering arms of motherhood,
From sister's love swift glooming to despair,
From startled comrades in the shuddering camp,
With even God shut out so far as man
Could bar God's road to Heaven;—so,
he died.

With courage almost solemn in its calm,
Born of that Pilgrim blood which fought the snows
The famine and the Indian hatchet, till
Grim rocks of coast were into gardens ground,
And girt with homes of freemen; valleys tilled,
And filled,—with just such courage, so,
he died.

I do not know what came to him that night,—
Last night of all,—but surely some one came
Down from the sorrowing angels, bringing Peace
That "passeth understanding," Faith and Hope
Plucked from seraphic bloomings of the sky
And filled his soul with fragrance: so
he died.

How much did he foresee? I hope, some gleam
Through dying glaze of eye, some instant flash
As parting soul began to feel its wings,
Of that approaching hour when Victory
Should lay its crown on Freedom's tangled locks,
And smoothing down the furrows of the war,
Make golden all the fields with sheaves of Peace.

Aye, more: perhaps in that last look he saw
Prophetic glories of the nation saved
For which he gave his young life cheerfully.
A rim of States along Atlantic coast;
Then crowding back to Alleghan and lake;
Across brown river sweeping swift to Gulf;
Making the prairie tessellated floor
Of field and farm, till barred by sullen range
That threw down rock and ice as challenge glove
Of knight in granite armor; bursting through
Resistant cliffs; unlocking all their gold;
With cities sowing far Pacific shores;
And swinging bridge on triple island-piers
To reach the Orient;—all along the march
A people free,—self-poised, self-governed,—free
And lifting Freedom as a beacon's blaze!
I do not know if vision such was his
As death threw back the gates eternal,
though

In that last moment of unfettered soul
When out it breaks, exultant, from its thrall
There come all refluents days of weary Past,
And, sometimes, to the Spirit rapt and tense,
Gleam-glories of a Future instant framed
Of years afar as deepest depth of star.

But this I know:—that he who early taught
The children of this village-valley till
The drum of Lexington beat war-alarm
Taught something graver, something else that gave
To simple school-house grand cathedral lift,
And carved his name on column of our dead:—
Taught us the love of country: simple, pure,
Above all else but God: unselfish, swift
To stake not fortune only but the life itself
If that should be sole buckler of the State.

We need to learn the lesson; need to go
Back on our knees to that lone martyr grave
Where lips, though century-silent, yet may teach,
Thro' myrtle lattice and with murmurs low,
Repentance for our load of gathered sins;
Fresh duty of awakened citizen
To tear and rend false mask of party shams,
To lash the bawling demagogue with scorn
Whose thongs cuts deep; to drive the spoilsmen out,
With stolen plunder dripping from their teeth;
About the briber's neck to hang his shame
And burn to blisters hand that sells its vote,
Till that pure patriot love of elder days
Comes back to clean the freedom we have soiled,
Comes back to sweeten all our native air.

And so, in hope the lesson may be learned
And some late love adorn heroic name,
I bring again memorial song of youth,
And in its rhythmic billows drown the years.
June, 1900.

To drum-beat and heart-beat
A soldier marches by:
There is color in his cheek,
There is courage in his eye.
Yet to drum-beat and heart-beat
In a moment he must die!

By star-light and moon-light
He seeks the Briton's camp:
He hears the rustling flag
And the armed sentry's tramp;
And the star-light and moon-light
His silent wanderings lamp.

With slow tread and still tread
He scans the tented line,
And he counts the battery guns
By the gaunt and shadowy pine;
And his slow tread and still tread
Gives no warning sign.

The dark wave, the plumed wave!—
It meets his eager glance,
And it sparkles 'neath the stars
Like he glimmer of a lance;
A dark wave, a plumed wave
On an emerald expanse.

A sharp clang, a steel clang,
And terror in the sound!
For the sentry falcon-eyed
In the camp a spy hath found.
With a sharp clang, a steel clang,
The patriot is bound.

With calm brow, steady brow,
He listens to his doom:
In his look there is no fear
Nor a shadow trace of gloom:
But with calm brow and steady brow
He robes him for the tomb.

In the long night, the still night,
He kneels upon the sod;
And the brutal guards withhold
E'en the solemn word of God!
In the long night, the still night,
He walks where Christ hath trod.

'Neath the blue morn, the sunny morn,
He dies upon the tree,
And he mourns that he can lose
But one life for Liberty:
And in the blue morn, the sunny morn,
His spirit-wings are free.

But his last words, his message words,
They burn, lest friendly eye
Should read how proud and calm
A patriot could die,
With his last words, his dying words,
A soldier's battle-cry!

From Fame-leaf and Angel-leaf,
From monument and urn
The sad of earth, the glad of Heaven
His tragic fate shall learn;
And on Fame-leaf and Angel-leaf
The name of HALE shall burn!
July, 1853.

In Memoriam.

WILBUR R. BACON.

WILBUR R. BACON—born at Middletown, Conn., March 25, 1844—died in New York, May 9, 1900.

If, during our college life, we had been called upon to name the member of our class least likely to die at the early age of fifty-six, we should pretty surely have picked out Wilbur Bacon. Always in the pink of condition, careful in his habits, with the chest, back, neck and arms of a young Hercules, with a strong, level-headed mind, backed by a superb and well-trained body, he seemed to us then the incarnation of mental and physical force and determination. Not alone by his classmates but by all Yale men of his day, Bacon will long be remembered as the man, who, at a time of discouragement and despondency, when, in spite of trial after trial, Yale had never won a university race, and when Harvard seemed everywhere invincible on land and water, "touched the dead corpse of Yale's athletic spirit and it rose upon its feet."

Fitted for college at Russell's School, and already an oarsman, Bacon had the then unusual honor of being put by that stout, keen-eyed, veteran rowing man, Captain Hamilton Wallis of '63, on a Glyuna crew in the very first races in the Fall of Freshman year, being the only one of our class thus distinguished. Taking part in all the regattas of Freshmen and Sophomore year, and successful in all, in Junior year Bacon inspired the confidence necessary to raise and sustain a crew willing to once more tackle triumphant Harvard after a four years' cessation of university racing. Undeniably, a natural leader and captain, asking nothing of his men in the way of either work or self-denial of which he was not more than willing to

be the example, fiercely resolved that Yale should take her rightful place at the front, Bacon trained his men with a spartan rigor, which, so far as I can learn, has not been surpassed in the 36 years since. However different in details may be the training theories of today, Bacon's idea that the best preparation for any specific task was to steadily give a man all the work he could stand without undue fatigue in the line of the feat he was to accomplish, has always seemed to me the correct one in more things than boat races.

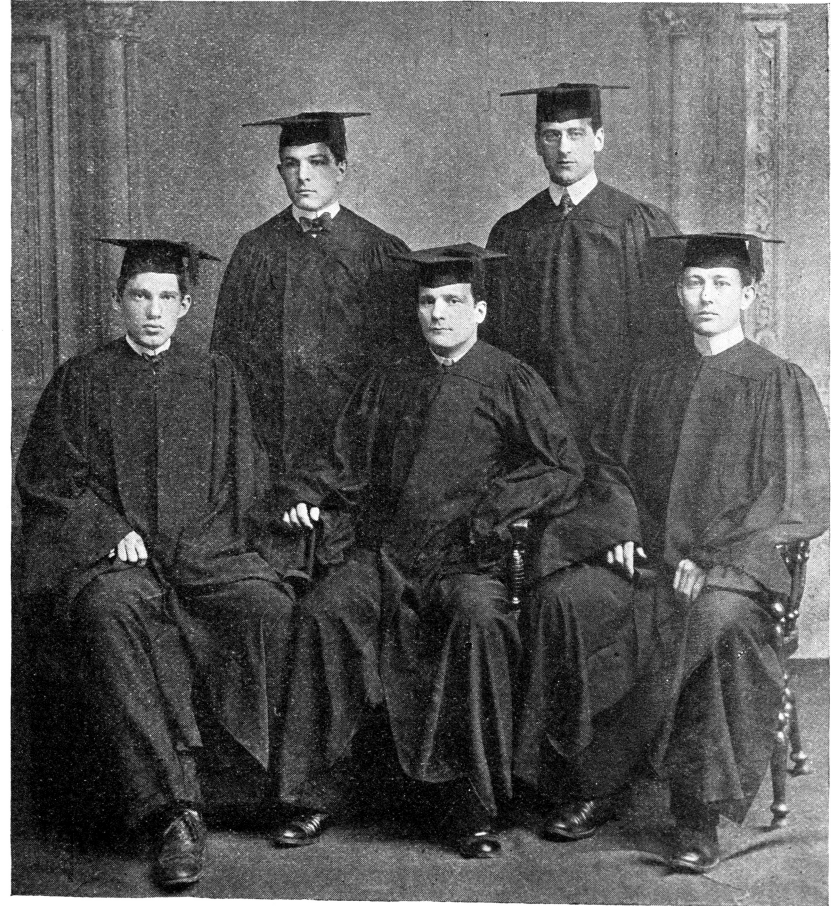
Whatever views we may hold in later life as to the value of the time given to athletics in college, it is certain that Yale's success over Harvard in 1864 and 1865 had an instant effect in increasing the number of students in succeeding classes. And Bacon's taking a Townsend, together with the high stands of Coffin and dear old Stoskopf and the position since of Seymour and Bennett on the bench and of Pierson in the missionary field, show that success in athletics and success in higher things may very well go together. No hero has warmer, more unselfish, more devoted admirers than a college hero among college boys. Who does not remember the pride Yale felt in Wilbur, the high expectations we had for him, our ardent hopes, our generous beliefs? Whether justified by the event or not, who of us would not like to live over again those years of youth and be capable again of the same joyous, loyal, unselfish enthusiasm?

After leaving college, Bacon entered the Columbia Law School, graduated well and was admitted to the bar. For the law he had in many respects a mind well fitted, and it has always been a matter of regret to his friends that apparent opportunities to make money easier and faster in other ways should have made him unwilling to go through the early laborious, unrewarded days incidental to success in that profession. In his later years Bacon saw his classmates little. He died of consumption following a severe attack of grip.

W. W. SCRANTON.

The annual banquet of the Sophomore Wranglers was held, Saturday evening, June 16, at Morris Cove Hotel. I. G. Phillips acted as toastmaster and the following toasts were responded to: "First Wranglers," H. S. Mead; "Second Wranglers," Edward Easton, Jr.; "The Wigwam," Mason Trowbridge; "Criticism," Dixon Boardman.

HISTORIANS OF NINETEEN HUNDRED.



E. B. Hill. A. D. Leavitt. C. H. Draper. C. B. Thompson. M. P. Gould.