

PERSONAL AND POLITICAL BALLADS

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PETER HART:

A BALLAD OF THE SIEGE OF SUMTER.

BY EDWARD S. RAND, JR.

TWAS when the rebel batteries were firing
shot and shell,
When thick round Sumter's battlements the
deadly missiles fell,
Where worn and weary from the siege the gal-
lant little band,
Gainst countless and o'erwhelming odds right
nobly made their stand.

Then spake our gallant Anderson: "Stand forth,
my fearless men,
And give the traitors one more round, and man
the guns again;
The flag that floats above our heads was raised
with tears and prayer:
God willing, its bright starry folds shall float
for ever there."

Then at the word stood forth the men, bold-
hearted, brave, and true,
Shame on procrastinating rule, alas! they were
too few!

And with a cheering, ringing shout, 'mid shot
and bursting shell,
Right manfully they serve the guns, and do their
duty well.

Yet one remains! say, can it be amid that little
band,
A traitor lurks, to plot and bring woe on his na-
tive land?
Not so! with half-averted eye, tears streaming
down his cheeks,
From quivering lip and faltering tongue, a pat-
riot soul out-speaks:

“Where broad Hudson’s swelling tide drives back
the ocean’s foam,
In the great city of New-York, I have my little
home;
But chance from all I hold most dear has borne
me far away,
And the same chance has watched my steps and
brought me here to-day.

“But when in Charleston’s streets I stood amid
the rebel crew,
They made me swear a solemn oath e’er they
would pass me through,

That come what might, though wrong or right,
on water or on land,
Against the Southern foe in fight I'd never lift
my hand.

"I took the oath, with faltering tongue, but 'twas
to save my life,
And came—it might be I could aid a little in the
strife :
I cannot join to man the guns, the solemn oath
I spoke,
And Peter Hart thus far in life his promise never
broke.

"But on the battlements I'll stand, and call aloud,
'Beware !'
And watch to tell when shot and shell come
darting through the air,
That all take warning : Peter Hart must to his
oath be true,
But for his country he will dare all that a man
may do."

And there upon the battlements through all the
siege he stood,
All ready, if it need be, to baptize them with
his blood ;

And as the rebel port-holes flashed, called loudly,
“ Shot ! ” or “ Shell ! ”

And when it struck, then came the word :
“ Thank God, for all is well ! ”

Why tell how traitor force prevailed ? each child
through all the land
Can lisp the story of the siege, tell how the little
band,
’Mid blazing barracks, bursting shells, fasting and
weak and worn,
Fought till their failing strength gave out, till
every means was gone,
And then in honor, with their flag, marched from
the stronghold forth,
Leaving the rebels blackened walls, sailed for the
loyal North.

O loyal city of New-York ! be proud, as well
you may,
That yours divide with Anderson the honors of
that day ;
We loved you as the mighty one, the country’s
boast and pride,
But a bond now knits us unto you that nothing
may divide.

Away with petty rivalry, with every vain dispute,
 In the country's song of Freedom, let jarring notes be mute!
 New-England sends thee greeting, in love extends her hand,
 And we swell the cheers for Union which are echoing through the land.

And not in vain 'gainst Sumter's walls the waves of rebel ire
 Broke in a storm of shot and shell, and sheets of smoke and fire;
 And not in vain the starry flag bowed to a traitor band;
 It has roused to life the spirit of a mighty loyal land.

Already on the eastern hills the dawn of Freedom's day
 Tells that the plague-spot of our land shall soon be purged away;
 That the down-trodden shall be raised, and ours shall truly be,
 As often vainly vaunted, land of the brave and *Free!*