

THE LITTLE ONES.

BY WALTER.

[“ After the battle of Gettysburg a Union soldier was found in a secluded spot on the field, where, wounded, he had lain himself down to die. In his hands, tightly clasped, was an ambrotype, containing the portraits of three small children, and upon the picture his eyes, set in death rested ”—*Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 19 1863.]

A sound of fifes—a sound of drums—
And swift around the corner comes
The little band of good and brave
Who volunteered their State to save;
While all along the rabble rout
Is raised the noisy, puling shout;
The flaunting flags and burnished guns
Are gleeful to the little ones

By cries and groans, and shrieks appalled,
A wounded man has feebly crawled
Into a little thicket's heart,
And dying, prayeth there apart;
A picture rests within his hand,
By dimming eyes devoutly scanned;
His comrades in distress he shuns
To gather with his little ones.

Among that daring little band,
Proud to assist his native land,
Is one whose heart beats sad and slow,
Yearning, yet sorrowing to go
And leave his treasure-gems behind;
His eyes with tears are almost blind,
As, gazing on his infant sons,
He leaves his precious little ones.

Who shall describe the keen distress
Mingled in that farwell caress!
What though 'tis but a shadow's tint?
His kisses fall devoid of stint;
Their forms are to his bosom pressed;
The lambs are gathered to his breast;
He blesses them in trembling tones:
“God keep ye dear, dear little ones!”

The last farwell he feebly speaks,
And presses hard their rosy cheeks;
They haunt him with their soft blue eyes,
Their childish lips and loving cries;
He fain would list their earnest call,
But love of country passeth all;
From out their sight he madly runs:
“God help you now, my little ones!”

His heart is faint, his pulse beats low;
Death sits in triumph on his brow;
Mid loud victorious hurrahs
He sinks a martyr in the cause;
His life he freely, proudly gave,
And soon shall fill a patriot's grave;
Lone orphans now ere many suns—
Who will protect his little ones?

The State is saved, the battle o'er;
But, reeking in his own heart's gore,
Full many a manly form is laid,
On earth his last petition said;
The rebel fire was deadly aimed,
And some were killed, and some were
maimed;
Fathers and brothers, husbands, sons;
May Heaven protect their little ones!

Look up! look up!—oh! tearful band—
Up to the Saviour of the land!
Above the starry flag unfurled,
Up to the Saviour of the world!
There smiles serenely from His throne,
Jesus, the ever blessed one,
And bids you, in heart-melting tones:
“Come unto me, ye little ones!”

Flag Ship Philadelphia, off Morris Island, October 24, 1863.