

70 THE PRICE OF VICTORY

"A victory! -- a victory!"
Is flashed across the wires;
Speed, speed the news from state to state,
Light up the signal fires!
Let all the bells from all the towers
A joyous peal ring out;
We've gained a glorious victory,
And put the foe to rout!

A mother heard the chiming bells;
Her joy was mixed with pain.
"Pray God," she said, "my gallant boy
Be not among the slain!"
Alas for her! that very hour
Outstretched in death he lay,
The color from his fair, young face
Had scarcely passed away.

His nerveless hand still grasped the sword
He never more might wield,
His eyes were sealed in dreamless sleep
Upon that bloody field.
The chestnut curls his mother oft
Had stroked in fondest pride,
Neglected hung in clotted locks,
With deepest crimson dyed.

Ah! many a mother's heart shall ache,
And bleed with anguish sore,
When tidings come of him who marched
So blithely forth to war.
Oh! sad for them, the stricken down
In manhood's early dawn,
And sadder yet for loving hearts.
God comfort them that mourn!

Yes, victory has a fearful price
Our hearts may shrink to pay,
And tears *will* mingle with the joy
That greets a glorious day.
But he who dies in freedom's cause,
We cannot count him lost:
*A battle won for truth and right
Is worth the blood it cost!*

O mothers! count it something gained
That they, for whom you mourn,
Bequeathe fair freedom's heritage
To millions yet unborn; --
And better than a thousand years
Of base, ignoble breath,
A patriot's fragrant memory,
A hero's early death!

Sources:

Boston Transcript, February 12, 1863.

Grand'ther Baldwin's Thanksgiving, 1875.

Alger Street, 1964.