

## THE BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS

*by: Thomas Dunn English (1819-1902)*

**H**ERE, in my rude log cabin,  
Few poorer men there be  
Among the mountain ranges  
Of Eastern Tennessee.  
My limbs are weak and shrunken,  
White hairs upon my brow,  
My dog -- lie still, old fellow! --  
My sole companion now.  
Yet I, when young and lusty,  
Have gone through stirring scenes,  
For I went down with Carroll  
To fight at New Orleans.

You say you'd like to hear me  
The stirring story tell  
Of those who stood the battle  
And those who fighting fell.  
Short work to count our losses --  
We stood and dropp'd the foe  
As easily as by firelight  
Men shoot the buck or doe.  
And while they fell by hundreds  
Upon the bloody plain,  
Of us, fourteen were wounded,  
And only eight were slain.

The eighth of January,  
Before the break of day,  
Our raw and hasty levies  
Were brought into array.  
No cotton-bales before us --  
Some fool that falsehood told;  
Before us was an earthwork,  
Built from the swampy mold.  
And there we stood in silence,  
And waited with a frown,  
To greet with bloody welcome  
The bulldogs of the Crown.

The heavy fog of morning  
Still hid the plain from sight,  
When came a thread of scarlet  
Marked faintly in the white.

We fired a single cannon,  
And as its thunders roll'd  
The mist before us lifted  
In many a heavy fold.  
The mist before us lifted,  
And in their bravery fine  
Came rushing to their ruin  
The fearless British line.

Then from our waiting cannons  
Leap'd forth the deadly flame,  
To meet the advancing columns  
That swift and steady came.  
The thirty-twos of Crowley  
And Bulchi's twenty-four,  
To Spott's eighteen-pounders  
Responded with their roar,  
Sending the grape-shot deadly  
That marked its pathway plain,  
And paved the road it travel'd  
With corpses of the slain.

Our rifles firmly grasping,  
And heedless of the din,  
We stood in silence waiting  
For orders to begin.  
Our fingers on the triggers,  
Our hearts, with anger stirr'd,  
Grew still more fierce and eager  
As Jackson's voice was heard:  
"Stand steady! Waste no powder;  
Wait till your shots will tell!  
To-day the work you finish--  
See that you do it well!"

Their columns drawing nearer,  
We felt our patience tire,  
When came the voice of Carroll,  
Distinct and measured, "Fire!"  
Oh! then you should have mark'd us  
Our volleys on them pour--  
Have heard our joyous rifles  
Ring sharply through the roar,  
And seen their foremost columns  
Melt hastily away  
As snow in mountain gorges

Before the floods of May.

They soon reform'd their columns,  
And 'mid the fatal rain  
We never ceased to hurtle  
Came to their work again.  
The Forty-fourth is with them,  
That first its laurels won  
With stout old Abercrombie  
Beneath an eastern sun.  
It rushes to the battle,  
And, though within the rear  
Its leader is a laggard,  
It shows no sign of fear.

It did not need its colonel,  
For soon there came instead  
An eagle-eyed commander,  
And on its march he led.  
'Twas Pakenham, in person,  
The leader of the field;  
I knew it by the cheering  
That loudly round him peal'd;  
And by his quick, sharp movement,  
We felt his heart was stirr'd,  
As when at Salamanca  
He led the fighting Third.

I raised my rifle quickly,  
I sighted at his breast,  
God save the gallant leader  
And take him to his rest!  
I did not draw the trigger,  
I could not for my life.  
So calm he sat his charger  
Amid the deadly strife,  
That in my fiercest moment  
A prayer arose from me, --  
God save that gallant leader,  
Our foeman though he be.

Sir Edward's charger staggers:  
He leaps at once to ground,  
And ere the beast falls bleeding  
Another horse is found.  
His right arm falls -- 'tis wounded;

He waves on high his left;  
In vain he leads the movement,  
The ranks in twain are cleft.  
The men in scarlet waver  
Before the men in brown,  
And fly in utter panic --  
The soldiers of the Crown!

I thought the work was over,  
But nearer shouts were heard,  
And came, with Gibbs to head it,  
The gallant Ninety-third.  
Then Pakenham, exulting,  
With proud and joyous glance,  
Cried, "Children of the tartan --  
Bold Highlanders -- advance.  
Advance to scales of breastworks  
And drive them from their hold,  
And show the stanchless courage  
That mark'd your sires of old!"

His voice as yet was ringing,  
When, quick as light, there came  
The roaring of a cannon,  
And earth seemed all aflame.  
Who causes thus the thunder  
The doom of men to speak?  
It is the Baritarian,  
The fearless Dominique.  
Down through the marsh'd Scotsmen  
The step of death is heard,  
And by the fierce tornado  
Falls half the Ninety-third.

The smoke passed slowly upward,  
And, as it soared on high,  
I saw the brave commander  
In dying anguish lie.  
They bear him from the battle  
Who never fled the foe;  
Unmoved by death around them  
His bearers softly go.  
In vain their care, so gentle,  
Fades earth and all its scenes;  
The man of Salamanca  
Lies dead at New Orleans.

But where were his lieutenants?  
Had they in terror fled?  
No! Keane was sorely wounded  
And Gibbs as good as dead.  
Brave Wilkinson commanding,  
A major of brigade,  
The shatter'd force to rally,  
A final effort made.  
He led it up our ramparts,  
Small glory did he gain --  
Our captives some, while others fled,  
And he himself was slain.

The stormers had retreated,  
The bloody work was o'er;  
The feet of the invaders  
Were seen to leave our shore.  
We rested on our rifles  
And talk'd about the fight,  
When came a sudden murmur  
Like fire from left to right;  
We turned and saw our chieftain,  
And then, good friend of mine,  
You should have heard the cheering  
That ran along the line.

For well our men remembered  
How little, when they came,  
Had they but native courage,  
And trust in Jackson's name;  
How through the day he labored,  
How kept the vigils still,  
Till discipline controlled us,  
A stronger power than will;  
And how he hurled us at them  
Within the evening hour,  
That red night in December,  
And made us feel our power.

In answer to our shouting  
Fire lit his eye of gray;  
Erect, but thin and pallid,  
He passed upon his bay.  
Weak from the baffled fever,  
And shrunken in each limb,

The swamps of Alabama  
Had done their work on him.  
But spite of that and fasting,  
And hours of sleepless care,  
The soul of Andrew Jackson  
Shone forth in glory there.

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