

A DAY OF BLOOD.



ROANOKE, VA.,
September 20, 1893.



Dedicated Respectfully to the
Citizens of Roanoke,



By E. H. D.

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Hark! to that scream, a woman's voice
Some one has injured been,
Some poor misguided woman too—
Made victim of the scene.
Do hasten for a Doctor, sir,
Oh heavens! see the gore
Coming from that ghastly wound,
As she lay upon the floor.

The deed was in a cellar grim;
Done by a negro ghoul,
Who knocked her down, and stoned her,
And tried to do her foul,
To rob her was his purpose,
Then murder brutishly,
And this occurred September
Eighteen hundred and ninety-three.

Soon, soon, the news around is spread,
The fleeing negro chase,
And men on horseback, and on foot
Rush out with hastening pace,
Away o'er hill and dale he flies,
Pursued by men so true,
And caught before the ebbing blood
Had closed his victim's view.

Tis he, he comes on horseback
Behind a daring man,
And here and there the angry crowd,
Rush forward, him to scan,
Before the door, and in the house
He's led, and there is known,
And once again by valiant men,
Through crowded streets he's going.

Away to jail, the fiend is rushed,
And round the jail a guard
Is placed to keep the negro safe.
But vengeance won't retard,
His blood is asked, and well it may,
And thousands hoarse with ire
Demanded his body for the rope,
And then consume with fire.

Still, still, they come, there is dismay
Amidst the surging throng.
And word goes thro' the mountains
Of this fiendish deed of wrong,
Officials stand in mute despair,
They fear a bloody fight,
As men in whispered menace are
Preparing for the night.

The Soldiers stand as sentinels,
To guard the well-barred pile,
Their orders are to keep from harm,
This fiend so grim and vile
The fury of the people here
Will not succumb an inch,
For they demand the negro Smith,
To try him by Judge Lynch.

There is a rush upon the doors,
The stones fly round like hail,
A warning voice demands them cease,
But not one step they quail.
Oh God! they shoot upon the crowd;
See, the flashes bright and red,
And eight good citizens, and true,
Are numbered with the dead.

To arms men! we must avenge,
The murderous volley there;
We must have Smith the negro fiend,
For vengeance boys prepare,

And to the nearest stores they go—
And get well armed too—
But to come back in anger wrath,
To scan the bloody view.

The jail is searched, the negro gone,
The soldiers, gone away.
The dead and dying are amongst
The sorrows of the day.
The scouts are out, to follow;
And e're the birds have sung,
They find the fiend in police hands,
And to a tree he's swung.

“Vengeance is mine, so saith the Lord.”
Out sung the surging throng,
Procure a rope, there is no hope.
The dastard done a wrong.
What! bury him in native soil,
Oh no! we'll trail him through
The city's angry murmuring streets,
A ghastly sight to view.

A hundred voices ring aloud,
A hundred hands lay hold,
And drag his lifeless corpse across
The street, where young and old
Assembled are, to see the sight.
But there is one, proclaim,
Entreating them to still forbear,
This guilty deed of shame.

“We'll drag him through our city,”
Still the cry in maddening rage,
As the man of God with upraised hands
Endeavours to assuage.
One pull more, the rope is held—
A brave one rushes there,
And says again, if ye be men,
For God sake this forbear.

“If you have sisters and mothers dear,”
Who'd see this ghastly sight,
How many lives you put in fear,
How many lives you blight,
No, no, it cannot be, forbear!
Be good men brave and true,
For if ye still persist and dare,
“You'll drag my body too.”

The crowd's appalled and speechless
At this heroic game.
We'll hasten then to burn him,
Without the dragging shame.
The cart's procured, the body's in,
And with the mad desire,
With oil and wood they cover him,
And set the fiend a fire.

Brave George Kreps who nobly kept
The angry crowd at bay,
Was one amongst the hundreds
That stood alone that day.
The other Dr. Campbell,
Who pleaded in the right,
And tried by acts and deeds of love,
To crush the awful sight,

Oh! shield us from such sights again.
Thy mercy Lord we crave,
And those that fell, we knew so well,
In thy sweet goodness save.
And those that stood by valour,
To stem that awful sight.
Be honoured by a people's praise,
And blessed by tribute's right.

