

THE LAUNCHING OF THE IOWA.

PHILADELPHIA, PA., March 28, 1896.—At the launching of the new battleship Iowa at Cramps' ship yards this afternoon, the following stirring poem by Major S. H. M. Byers, of Iowa, was read, each stanza being enthusiastically applauded:

Wake, giant of oak and steel,
 Asleep by the yellow sand,
 And give to the sea thy keel,
 And bid farewell to the land.
 At the touch of beauty arise,
 At the words that shall bid thee move,
 At the hand that shall thee baptize,
 And give to the sea its love.

Sail, sail, O ship that is ours,
 New warrant that peace shall be,
 Whatever the cloud that lowers,
 O ship of the western sea!
 To every land of the earth,
 To seas that are fair and far,
 Bear thou the message of worth
 That peace is better than war!

But guard thou ever our fame,
 From gulf to the utmost bay,
 And keep forever thy name
 As fair as it is to-day.
 And if ever grim war should come,
 In spite of the mien we bear—
 With the sound of the hurrying drum,
 And the wail of death on the air—

Then open thy sides of steel,
 And fight with thy thousand men
 Till the ships of the foe shall feel
 There are giants abroad again;
 And thunder with all thy guns,
 And smite with thy lightning stroke,
 Nor stop though thy bravest sons
 Lie bleeding in battle's smoke.

Cry out to them Perry's name,
 Remember how Lawrence fell,
 And the flag that's above the flame,
 In spite of the fires of hell.
 And if ever a foe should bid
 Thee yield to a haughty hand,
 Tell him what our Morris did
 When he sank with the Cumberland.

Far better the ship go down
 And her guns, and her thousand men,
 In the depths of the sea to drown,
 Than ever to sail again
 With the day of her promise done,
 Or the star of her glory set,
 Or a thread from the standard gone,
 That never has yielded yet.

Then wake, O giant of steel,
 That sleeps by the yellow sand;
 Arise from thy dreams and feel
 The thrill of a nation's hand!
 Sail, sail to many a main,
 Strange lands and to trackless ways,
 But ever come back again
 New crowned with the victor's bays.

Your colors already we know—
 The colors our hearts adore,
 The sea wave's white and wine's red glow
 And the blue sky bending o'er.
 Sail, sail, O sail,
 But come to us at the last,
 If from the battle, or from the gale,
 With the old flag at the mast.

NOTABLE DEATHS.

GEORGE W. BASSETT who died at Elsinore, California, on the 6th of February, was an old-time resident of Iowa, and for many years a well known and prominent citizen. He was born in Canada West in 1827. His maternal grandfather was a soldier of the American Revolution and a member of Congress during Washington's administration. He lost an arm at the battle of Bennington. Mr. Bassett's parents returned to the United States when he was a child and settled in the West. He entered Wabash College when a young man, earning money by manual labor to pay his way while pursuing his studies. After finishing his course at Wabash, he entered the law school at Cincinnati. After graduating there he came to Des Moines in 1856, and entered the law office of Hon. John A. Kasson. In 1858 he went to Fort Dodge and formed a law partnership with Judge W. N. Meservey which continued until he enlisted in the Union army, in 1861, in a Fort Dodge company, which was attached to the 11th Pennsylvania Cavalry. He served in the army of the Potomac as a Lieutenant of his company. He was twice wounded in battle, and so disabled that he was mustered out in 1862. His service as a soldier was performed as every other duty by him, faithfully and conscientiously. Though in poor health, he never complained, and was always ready to do his utmost for the noble cause in which he had enlisted. He returned to Fort Dodge, and in the fall of 1863 was elected to the State Senate, representing the 43rd district which then embraced twenty-eight counties of northwestern Iowa—more than one third of the entire territory of the State. His District extended from the east line of Hancock county west to the Missouri river at Sioux City, and from the south line of Harrison county to Minnesota on the north. He served with marked ability in the Tenth and Eleventh General Assemblies, representing the varied interests of his district to the satisfaction of his widely extended constituency. He was for nearly twenty years general agent for the lease and sale of the lands embraced in the Agricultural College grant to Iowa, and conducted that business successfully, handling more than 200,000 acres to the satisfaction of the State and the College. Several years ago his failing health required a milder climate, and he removed to California, marrying late in life. He leaves a widow and a bright little girl of five. A close friend of Mr. Bassett writes of him: "As student, soldier, public

Copyright of *Annals of Iowa* is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.