An Heroic Defence.

It was a wild, tempestuous night; the inky blackness of the cloud-daubed firmament was broken only by the blinding flash of the lightning, which, with the deafening roll and crash of the thunder, seemed at each discharge to rend the pall of the heavens as though it were of stone, and through the fissures thus torn by the fury of the elements there was given for an instant a glimpse as of some terrible and infernal region filled with liquid fire.

The rain fell in torrents, the wind, almost a hurricane, howling and tearing across a dark stretch of inland waters, then rushing across the bleak land that was gradually pushing itself out into the watery waste, beat and roared with demoniac glee around a long, low building that reared itself across its path. Well might the awful battle of the elements inspire terror in the inhabitants of this building; but let us enter and look about us.

The blackness inside is intense. We grope our way to one corner, and about a dying, fire in a tall stove we see a number of forms with blanched faces, yet withal possessing a determined expression, which tells of firm and high resolves and noble natures framed for daring deeds. Little they care for the elemental strife without though the building shake and rock at every blast they fear not, they have but one thought: ’t is of their duty.

We approach nearer, and perceive that these bold hearts are soldiers, veterans of many wars they must be, to preserve in such a crisis so dauntless a demeanor. We see their arms stacked near them, with bayonets glancing in the lightning’s flash; their drawn swords lie beside them; around them are conical heaps of bullets, piles of shot, flasks of powder, cartridges, torpedoes, packages of dynamite, bales of gun-cotton, and near by we dimly see the black muzzles of guns, mounted pieces, howitzers, mortars, Gatling guns. All seems prepared for a terrific strife.

Do these unconquerable heroes expect to be attacked? Have they the fear of human strength and hatred added to the terrors of nature without? Can heart be found that will not quail before all these? Brave men indeed, worthy they to be ranked among the world’s heroes! Let us honor them. But why are they here? Whom do they fear? For what reason do they prepare to defend this building to the death? Let us await in patience.

They sit in silence, listening in the lulls of the blast for the sound of their approaching foes. Now they start and whisper, glance towards their arms, but in a moment sink back reassured,—a false alarm.

We wait in the darkness. Hour after hour passes, but still the valiant sentinel hold their posts. At last the wished-for light of morning breaks in upon the scene, the storm abates, the wind sinks, and the weary night is passed. We watch intently, and gradually make out the forms before us. We see the silver ornaments upon their caps, their dark, finely fitting uniforms, their dark buttons that give no glitter to warn their foes. Do we recognize them? But, before we have a chance to speak, one of the heroes rises, lifts his arms towards heaven, and, fetching a yawn that would do credit to an alligator, says: "Fellows, the gymnasium is safe! The dance can now go on! No Soph. or Senior has dared disturb us! They are cowards! We have conquered! Here comes the janitor!"

ALL HAIL.

In days of old, when knights were bold,
The brave Horatius fought for Rome;
In days of new, when knights are few,
We find as bold a deed near home.

"T was bold, no doubt, the foes to flout,
And from the Tiber be fished out;
But bolder yet, on night so wet,
To guard the gym. from such a set.

All honor be to such as he,
Who saved old Rome, but soused his pants;
And honor him who kept the gym.
The night before the Freshman dance.

Considerable interest is being developed on the subject of an Institute base-ball team for this year.