

COMPANION DOETS for
the People. Illustrated.

NATIONAL LYRICS.

BY
JOHN C. WHITTIER.



TICKNOR & FIELDS PUBLISHERS

BOSTON:

1865.

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BY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

With Illustrations by

GEORGE G. WHITE, H. FENN, AND CHARLES A. BARRY.



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NOT unto us who did but seek
The word that burned within to speak,
Not unto us this day belong
The triumph and exultant song.

Upon us fell in early youth
The burden of unwelcome truth,
And left us, weak and frail and few,
The censor's painful work to do.

Thenceforth our life a fight became,
The air we breathed was hot with blame ;
For not with gauged and softened tone
We made the bondman's cause our own.

We bore, as Freedom's hope forlorn,
The private hate, the public scorn ;
Yet held through all the paths we trod
Our faith in man and trust in God.

We prayed and hoped ; but still, with awe,
The coming of the sword we saw ;
We heard the nearing steps of doom,
And saw the shade of things to come.

In grief which they alone can feel
Who from a mother's wrong appeal,

With blended lines of fear and hope
We cast our country's horoscope.

For still within her house of life
We marked the lurid sign of strife,
And, poisoning and embittering all,
We saw the star of Wormwood fall.

Deep as our love for her, became
Our hate of all that wrought her shame,
And if, thereby, with tongue and pen
We erred, — we were but mortal men.

We hoped for peace : our eyes survey
The blood-red dawn of Freedom's day ;
We prayed for love to loose the chain ;
'T is shorn by battle's axe in twain !

Not skill nor strength nor zeal of ours
Has mined and heaved the hostile towers ;
Not by our hands is turned the key
That sets the sighing captives free.

A redder sea than Egypt's wave
Is piled and parted for the slave ;
A darker cloud moves on in light,
A fiercer fire is guide by night !

The praise, O Lord ! be Thine alone,
In Thy own way Thy work be done !
Our poor gifts at Thy feet we cast,
To whom be glory, first and last !

NATIONAL LYRICS.



STANZAS.

OUR fellow-countrymen in chains!
Slaves — in a land of light and law!
Slaves — crouching on the very plains
Where rolled the storm of Freedom's war!

A groan from Eutaw's haunted wood —
 A wail where Camden's martyrs fell —
 By every shrine of patriot blood,
 From Moultrie's wall and Jasper's well !

By storied hill and hallowed grot,
 By mossy wood and marshy glen,
 Whence rang of old the rifle-shot,
 And hurrying shout of Marion's men !
 The groan of breaking hearts is there —
 The falling lash — the fetter's clank !
Slaves — *SLAVES* are breathing in that air,
 Which old De Kalb and Sumter drank !

What, ho ! — *our* countrymen in chains !
 The whip on *WOMAN's* shrinking flesh !
Our soil yet reddening with the stains,
 Caught from her scourging, warm and fresh !
 What ! mothers from their children riven !
 What ! God's own image bought and sold !
AMERICANS to market driven,
 And hartered as the brute for gold !

Speak ! shall their agony of prayer
 Come thrilling to our hearts in vain ?
 To us whose fathers scorned to hear
 The paltry *menace* of a chain ;
 To us, whose boast is loud and long
 Of holy Liberty and Light —
 Say, shall these writhing slaves of Wrong,
 Plead vainly for their plundered Right ?

What ! shall we send, with lavish breath,
 Our sympathies across the wave,
 Where Manhood, on the field of death,
 Strikes for his freedom, or a grave ?
 Shall prayers go up, and hymns be sung
 For Greece, the Moslem fetter spurning,
 And millions hail with pen and tongue
Our light on all her altars burning ?

Shall Belgium feel, and gallant France,
 By Vendome's pile and Schoenbrun's wall,
 And Poland, gasping on her lance,
 The impulse of our cheering call?
 And shall the SLAVE, beneath our eye,
 Clank o'er *our* fields his hateful chain?
 And toss his fettered arms on high,
 And groan for Freedom's gift, in vain?

Oh, say, shall Prussia's banner be
 A refuge for the stricken slave?
 And shall the Russian serf go free
 By Baikal's lake and Neva's wave?
 And shall the wintry-bosomed Dane
 Relax the iron hand of pride,
 And bid his bondmen cast the chain
 From fettered soul and limb, aside?

Shall every flap of England's flag
 Proclaim that all around are free,
 From "farthest Ind" to each blue crag
 That beetles o'er the Western Sea?
 And shall we scoff at Europe's kings,
 When Freedom's fire is dim with us,
 And round our country's altar clings
 The damning shade of Slavery's curse?

Go — let us ask of Constantine
 To loose his grasp on Poland's throat;
 And beg the lord of Mahmoud's line
 To spare the struggling Saliote —
 Will not the scorching answer come
 From turbaned Turk, and scornful Russ:
 "Go, loose your fettered slaves at home,
 Then turn, and ask the like of us!"

Just God! and shall we calmly rest,
 The Christian's scorn — the heathen's mirth —
 Content to live the lingering jest
 And by-word of a mocking Earth?

Shall our own glorious land retain
 That curse which Europe scorns to bear ?
 Shall our own brethren drag the chain
 Which not even Russia's menials wear ?

Up, then, in Freedom's manly part,
 From gray-headed old to fiery youth,
 And on the nation's naked heart
 Scatter the living coals of Truth !
 Up — while ye slumber, deeper yet
 The shadow of our fame is growing !
 Up — while ye pause, our sun may set
 In blood, around our altars flowing !

Oh ! rouse ye, ere the storm comes forth —
 The gathered wrath of God and man —
 Like that which wasted Egypt's earth,
 When hail and fire above it ran.
 Hear ye no warnings in the air ?
 Feel ye no earthquake underneath ?
 Up — up — why will ye slumber where
 The sleeper only wakes in death ?

Up *now* for Freedom ! — not in strife
 Like that your sterner fathers saw —
 The awful waste of human life —
 The glory and the guilt of war :
 But break the chain — the yoke remove,
 And smite to earth Oppression's rod,
 With those mild arms of Truth and Love,
 Made mighty through the living God !

Down let the shrine of Moloch sink,
 And leave no traces where it stood ;
 Nor longer let its idol drink
 His daily cup of human blood :
 But rear another altar there,
 To Truth and Love and Mercy given,
 And Freedom's gift, and Freedom's prayer,
 Shall call an answer down from Heaven !

CLERICAL OPPRESSORS.

JUST God! — and these are they
 Who minister at thine altar, God of Right!
 Men who their hands with prayer and blessing lay
 On Israel's Ark of light!

What! preach and kidnap men?
 Give thanks — and rob thy own afflicted poor?
 Talk of thy glorious liberty, and then
 Bolt hard the captive's door?

What! servants of thy own
 Merciful Son, who came to seek and save
 The homeless and the outcast, — fettering down
 The tasked and plundered slave!

Pilate and Herod, friends!
 Chief priests and rulers, as of old, combine!
 Just God and holy! is that church, which lends
 Strength to the spoiler, thine?

Paid hypocrites, who turn
 Judgment aside, and rob the Holy Book
 Of those high words of truth which search and burn
 In warning and rebuke;

Feed fat, ye locusts, feed!
 And, in your tasselled pulpits, thank the Lord
 That, from the toiling bondman's utter need,
 Ye pile your own full board.

How long, O Lord! how long
 Shall such a priesthood barter truth away,
 And, in thy name, for robbery and wrong
 At thy own altars pray?