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TICKNOR AND FIELDS, Publishers.



# POEMS OF THE WAR

BY

GEORGE H. BOKER.



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# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INVOCATION . . . . .	7

## POEMS OF THE WAR.

THE RIDE TO CAMP . . . . .	13
UPON THE HILL BEFORE CENTREVILLE . . . . .	30
ZAGONYI . . . . .	48
ON BOARD THE CUMBERLAND . . . . .	51
THE SWORD-BEARER . . . . .	61
THE BALLAD OF NEW ORLEANS . . . . .	66
THE VARUNA . . . . .	80
THE CROSSING AT FREDERICKSBURG . . . . .	82
HOOKER'S ACROSS ! . . . . .	88
ERIC, THE MINSTREL . . . . .	90
THE BLACK REGIMENT . . . . .	99
BEFORE VICKSBURG . . . . .	104
THE BATTLE OF LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN . . . . .	107
IN THE WILDERNESS . . . . .	116
ODE TO AMERICA . . . . .	120
OREMUS . . . . .	129
AD POETAS . . . . .	133
THE FLAG . . . . .	136

DRAGOON'S SONG . . . . .	138
LANCER'S SONG . . . . .	140
CAVALRY SONG . . . . .	142
MARCH ALONG . . . . .	144
THE FREE FLAG . . . . .	147
SONG FOR THE LOYAL NATIONAL LEAGUE . . . . .	150
A BATTLE HYMN . . . . .	153
HYMN FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1863 . . . . .	156
SONNETS.	
"BLOOD, BLOOD!" . . . . .	160
"OH! CRAVEN, CRAVEN!" . . . . .	162
"BRAVE COMRADE, ANSWER!" . . . . .	164
GRANT . . . . .	166
DIRGE FOR A SOLDIER . . . . .	168

## MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

PRINCE ADEB . . . . .	173
ABON'S CHARITY . . . . .	186
IDLENESS . . . . .	191
WINTER WINDS . . . . .	194
ELISHA KENT KANE . . . . .	196
DIRGE . . . . .	200

## INVOCATION.

O COUNTRY, bleeding from the heart,  
If these poor songs can touch thy woe,  
And draw thee but awhile apart  
From sorrow's bitter overflow,  
Then not in vain  
This feeble strain  
About the common air shall blow.

As David stood by prostrate Saul,  
So wait I at thy sacred feet :  
I reverently raise thy pall,  
To see thy mighty bosom beat.  
I would not wrong  
Thy grief with song ;  
I would but utter what is meet.

Arise, O giant ! Lo, the day  
Flows hither from the gates of light.  
The dreams, that struck thee with dismay,  
Were shadows of distempered night.  
'T is just to mourn  
What thou hast borne ;  
But yet the future has its right.

A glory, greater than the lot  
Foretold by prophets, is to be ;  
A fame without the odious blot  
Upon thy title to be free, —  
The jeer of foes,  
The woe of woes,  
God's curse and sorrow over thee.

Above the nations of the earth  
Erect thee, prouder than before !  
Consider well the trial's worth,  
And let the passing tempest roar !

It spends its shock  
Upon a rock :  
Thou shalt outlive a thousand more.

Through tears and blood I saw a gleam,  
Through all the battle-smoke it shone ;  
A voice I heard that drowned the scream  
Of widows and the orphans' moan :  
An awful voice  
That cried, " Rejoice ! "  
A light outbreaking from God's throne.





POEMS OF THE WAR.



## THE RIDE TO CAMP.

WHEN all the leaves were red or brown,  
Or golden as the summer sun,  
And now and then came flickering down  
Upon the grasses hoar and dun,  
Through which the first faint breath of frost  
Had as a scorching vapor run ;  
I rode, in solemn fancies lost,  
To join my troop, whose low tents shone  
Far vanward to our camping host.  
Thus as I slowly journeyed on,  
I was made suddenly aware  
That I no longer rode alone.

Whence came that strange, incongruous pair ?

Whether to make their presence plain

To mortal eyes, from earth or air

The essence of these spirits twain

Had clad itself in human guise,

As in a robe, is question vain.

I hardly dared to turn my eyes,

So faint my heart beat ; and my blood,

Checked and bewildered with surprise,

Within its aching channels stood,

And all the soldier in my heart

Scarce mustered common hardihood.

But as I paused, with lips apart,

Strong shame, as with a sturdy arm,

Shook me, and made my spirit start,

And all my stagnant life grew warm ;

Till with my new-found courage wild,

Out of my mouth there burst a storm

Of song, as if I thus beguiled

My way with careless melody :

Whereat the silent figures smiled.

Then from a haughty, asking eye

I scanned the uninvited pair,

And waited sternly for reply.

One shape was more than mortal fair ;

He seemed embodied out of light ;

The sunbeams rippled through his hair ;

His cheeks were of the color bright

That dyes young evening, and his eyes

Glowed like twin planets, that to sight

Increase in lustre and in size,

The more intent and long our gaze.

Full on the future's pain and prize,

Half seen through hanging cloud and haze,

His steady, far and yearning look

Blazed forth beneath his crown of bays.

His radiant vesture, as it shook,

Dripped with great drops of golden dew ;

And at each step his white steed took,

The sparks beneath his hoof-prints flew ;

As if a half-cooled lava flood

He trod, each firm step breaking through.

This figure seemed so wholly good,  
That as a moth which reels in light,  
Unknown till then, nor understood,  
My dazzled soul swam ; and I might  
Have swooned, and in that presence died,  
From the mere splendor of the sight,  
Had not his lips, serene with pride  
And cold, cruel purpose, made me swerve  
From aught their fierce curl might deride.  
A clarion of a single curve  
Hung at his side by slender bands ;  
And when he blew, with faintest nerve,  
Life burst throughout those lonely lands ;  
Graves yawned to hear, Time stood aghast,  
The whole world rose and clapped its hands.  
Then on the other shape I cast  
My eyes. I know not how or why  
He held my spell-bound vision fast.  
Instinctive terror bade me fly,  
But curious wonder checked my will.  
The mysteries of his awful eye,

So dull, so deep, so dark, so chill,  
And the calm pity of his brow  
And massive features hard and still,  
Lovely but threatening, and the bow  
Of his sad neck, as if he told  
Earth's graves and sorrows as they grow,  
Cast me in musings manifold  
Before his pale, unanswering face.  
A thousand winters might have rolled  
Above his head. I saw no trace  
Of youth or age, of time or change,  
Upon his fixed immortal grace.  
A smell of new-turned mould, a strange,  
Dank, earthen odor from him blew,  
Cold as the icy winds that range  
The moving hills which sailors view  
Floating around the Northern Pole,  
With horrors to the shivering crew.  
His garments, black as minéd coal,  
Cast midnight shadows on his way ;  
And as his black steed softly stole,

Cat-like and stealthy, jocund day  
Died out before him, and the grass,  
Then sere and tawny, turned to gray.  
The hardy flowers that will not pass  
For the shrewd autumn's chilling rain,  
Closed their bright eyelids, and, alas !  
No summer opened them again.  
The strong trees shuddered at his touch,  
And shook their foliage to the plain.  
A sheaf of darts was in his clutch ;  
And wheresoe'er he turned the head  
Of any dart, its power was such  
That nature quailed with mortal dread,  
And crippling pain and foul disease  
For sorrowing leagues around him spread.  
Whene'er he cast o'er lands and seas  
That fatal shaft, there rose a groan ;  
And borne along on every breeze  
Came up the church-bell's solemn tone,  
And cries that swept o'er open graves,  
And equal sobs from cot and throne.



Against the winds she tasks and braves,  
The tall ship paused, the sailors sighed,  
And something white slid in the waves.

One lamentation, far and wide,  
Followed behind that flying dart.

Things soulless and immortal died,  
As if they filled the self-same part ;  
The flower, the girl, the oak, the man,  
Made the same dust from pith or heart.

Then spoke I, calmly as one can  
Who with his purpose curbs his fear,  
And thus to both my question ran.  
“ What two are ye who cross me here,  
Upon these desolated lands,  
Whose open fields lie waste and drear  
Beneath the tramlings of the bands  
Which two great armies send abroad,  
With swords and torches in their hands ? ”

To which the bright one, as a god  
Who slowly speaks the words of fate,  
Towards his dark comrade gave a nod,

And answered : " I anticipate

The thought that is your own reply.

You know him ; or the fear and hate

Upon your pallid features lie.

Therefore I need not call him Death :

But answer, soldier, who am I ? "

Thereat, with all his gathered breath,

He blew his clarion ; and there came,

From life above and life beneath,

Pale forms of vapor and of flame,

Dim likenesses of men who rose

Above their fellows by a name.

There curved the Roman's eagle nose,

The Greek's fair brows, the Persian's beard,

The Punic plume, the Norman bows ;

There the Crusader's lance was reared ;

And there, in formal coat and vest,

Stood modern chiefs ; and one appeared,

Whose arms were folded on his breast,

And his round forehead bowed in thought,

Who shone supreme above the rest.

Again the bright one quickly caught  
His words up, as the martial line  
Before my eyes dissolved to naught :  
“ Soldier, these heroes all are mine ;  
And I am Glory ! ” As a tomb  
That groans on opening, “ Say, were thine, ”  
Cried the dark figure. “ I consume  
Thee and thy splendors utterly.  
More names have faded in my gloom  
Than chronicles or poesy  
Have kept alive for babbling earth  
To boast of in despite of me. ”  
The other cried, in scornful mirth,  
“ Of all that was or is thou curse,  
Thou dost o’errate thy frightful worth !  
Between the cradle and the hearse,  
What one of mine has lived unknown,  
Whether through triumph or reverse ?  
For them the regal jewels shone,  
For them the battled line was spread ;  
Victorious or overthrown, .

My splendor on their path was shed.

They lived their life, they ruled their day :

I hold no commerce with the dead.

Mistake me not, and falsely say,

‘ Lo, this is slow, laborious Fame,

Who cares for what has passed away : ’ —

My twin-born brother, meek and tame,

Who troops along with crippled Time,

And shrinks at every cry of shame,

And halts at every stain and crime ;

While I, through tears and blood and guilt,

Stride on, remorseless and sublime.

War with his offspring as thou wilt ;

Lay thy cold lips against their cheek.

The poison or the dagger-hilt

Is what my desperate children seek.

Their dust is rubbish on the hills ;

Beyond the grave they would not speak.

Shall man surround his days with ills,

And live as if his only care

Were how to die, while full life thrills

His bounding blood ? To plan and dare,  
To use life is life's proper end :  
Let death come when it will, and where ! ”

“ You prattle on, as babes that spend  
Their morning half within the brink  
Of the bright heaven from which they wend ;  
But what I am, you dare not think.  
Thick, brooding shadow round me lies ;  
You stare till terror makes you wink ;  
I go not, though you shut your eyes.  
Unclose again the loathful lid,  
And lo, I sit beneath the skies,  
As Sphinx beside the pyramid ! ”

So Death, with solemn rise and fall  
Of voice, his sombre mind undid.  
He paused ; resuming : “ I am all ;  
I am the refuge and the rest ;  
The heart aches not beneath my pall.  
O soldier, thou art young, unpressed  
By snarling grief's increasing swarm ;  
While joy is dancing in thy breast,

Fly from the future's fated harm ;  
Rush where the fronts of battle meet,  
And let me take thee on my arm !”  
Said Glory, “ Warrior, fear deceit  
Where Death gives counsel. Run thy race ;  
Bring the world cringing to thy feet !  
Surely no better time nor place  
Than this, where all the Nation calls  
For help ; and weakness and disgrace  
Lag in her tents and council-halls ;  
And down on aching heart and brain  
Blow after blow unbroken falls.  
Her strength flows out through every vein ;  
Mere time consumes her to the core ;  
Her stubborn pride becomes her bane.  
In vain she names her children o'er ;  
They fail her in her hour of need ;  
She mourns at desperation's door.  
Be thine the hand to do the deed,  
To seize the sword, to mount the throne,  
And wear the purple as thy meed !

No heart shall grudge it ; not a groan  
Shall shame thee. Ponder what it were  
To save a land thus twice thy own ! ”

Use gave a more familiar air  
To my companions ; and I spoke  
My heart out to the ethereal pair.

“ When in her wrath the nation broke  
Her easy rest of love and peace,  
I was the latest who awoke.

I sighed at passion’s mad increase.  
I strained the traitors to my heart  
I said, ‘ We vex them ; let us cease.’

I would not play the common part.  
Tamely I heard the Southern’s brag :  
I said, ‘ Their wrongs have made them smart.’

At length they struck our ancient flag, —  
Their flag as ours, the traitors damned ! —  
And braved it with their patchwork rag.

I rose when other men had calmed  
Their anger in the marching throng ;  
I rose, as might a corpse embalmed,

Who hears God's mandate, 'Right my wrong!'

I rose and set me to his deed,

With his great Spirit fixed and strong.

I swear that when I drew this sword,

And joined the ranks, and sought the strife,

I drew it in thy name, O Lord!

I drew against my brother's life,

Even as Abraham on his child

Drew slowly forth his priestly knife.

No thought of selfish ends defiled

The holy fire that burned in me;

No gnawing care was thus beguiled.

My children clustered at my knee;

Upon my braided soldier's coat

My wife looked — ah, so wearily! —

It made her tender blue eyes float.

And when my wheeling rowels rang,

Or on the floor my sabre smote,

The sound went through her like a pang.

I saw this; and the days to come

Forewarned me with an iron clang,



That drowned the music of the drum,  
That made the rousing bugle faint,  
And yet I sternly left my home.  
Haply to fall by noisome taint  
Of foul disease, without a deed  
To sound in rhyme, or shine in paint ;  
But oh, at least, to drop a seed,  
Humble but faithful to the last,  
Sown by my Country in her need !  
O Death, come to me, slow or fast ;  
I 'll do my duty while I may.  
Though sorrow burdens every blast,  
And want and hardship on me lay  
Their bony gripes, my life is pledged,  
And to my country given away !  
Nor feel I any hope, new-fledged,  
Arise, strong Glory, at thy voice.  
Our sword the people's will has edged,  
Our rule stands on the people's choice.  
This land would mourn beneath a crown,  
Where born slaves only could rejoice.

How should the Nation keep it down ?

What would a despot's fortunes be,  
After his days of strength had flown,  
Amidst this people, proud and free,

Whose history from such sources run ?  
The thought is its own mockery.

I pity the audacious one

Who may ascend that thorny throne,  
And bide a single setting sun.

Day dies ; my shadow's length has grown ;

The sun is sliding down the West.

That trumpet in my camp was blown.

From yonder high and wooded crest

I shall behold my squadron's camp,  
Prepared to sleep its guarded rest

In the low, misty, poisoned damp

That wears the strength, and saps the heart,  
And drains the surgeon's watching lamp.

Hence, phantoms ! in God's peace depart !

I was not fashioned for your will :

I scorn thy trump, and brave thy dart !”

They grinned defiance, lingering still.

“I charge ye quit me, in His name

Who bore his cross against the hill! —

By Him who died a death of shame,

That I might live, and ye might die, —

By Christ the martyr!” As a flame

Leaps sideways when the wind is high,

The bright one bounded from my side,

At that dread name, without reply.

And Death drew in his mantle wide,

And shuddered, and grew ghastly pale,

As if his dart had pricked his side.

There came a breath, a lonely wail,

Out of the silence o'er the land ;

Whether from souls of bliss or bale,

What mortal brain may understand ?

Only I marked the phantoms went

Closely together, hand in hand,

As if upon one errand bent.

UPON THE HILL BEFORE  
CENTREVILLE.

JULY 21, 1861.

I 'LL tell you what I heard that day :  
I heard the great guns far away,  
Boom after boom. Their sullen sound  
Shook all the shuddering air around,  
And shook, ah me ! my shrinking ear,  
And downward shook the hanging tear  
That, in despite of manhood's pride,  
Rolled o'er my face a scalding tide.  
And then I prayed. O God ! I prayed  
As never stricken saint, who laid  
His hot cheek to the holy tomb  
Of Jesus, in the midnight gloom.

“What saw I?” Little. Clouds of dust;  
Great files of men, with standards thrust  
Against their course; dense columns crowned  
With billowing steel. Then, bound on bound,  
The long black lines of cannon poured  
Behind the horses, streaked and gored  
With sweaty speed. Anon shot by,  
Like a lone meteor of the sky,  
A single horseman; and he shone  
His bright face on me, and was gone.  
All these, with rolling drums, with cheers,  
With songs familiar to my ears,  
Passed under the far hanging cloud,  
And vanished; and my heart was proud!

For mile on mile the line of war  
Extended; and a steady roar,  
As of some distant stormy sea,  
On the south wind came up to me.  
And high in air, and over all,

Grew, like a fog, that murky pall,  
Beneath whose gloom of dusty smoke  
The cannon flamed, the bomb-shell broke,  
And the sharp rattling volley rang,  
And shrapnel roared, and bullets sang,  
And fierce-eyed men, with panting breath,  
Toiled onward at the work of death.

But when the sun had passed his stand  
At noon, behold ! on every hand  
The dark brown vapor backward bore,  
And fainter came the dreadful roar  
From the huge sea of striving men.  
Thus spoke my rising spirit then :  
“ Take comfort from that dying sound,  
Faint heart, the foe is giving ground ! ”  
And one, who taxed his horse's powers,  
Flung at me, “ Ho ! the day is ours ! ”  
And scoured along. So swift his pace,  
I took no memory of his face.

Then turned I once again to Heaven ;  
All things appeared so just and even ;  
So clearly from the highest Cause  
Traced I the downward-working laws, —  
Those moral springs made evident  
In the grand, triumph-crowned event.  
So half I shouted and half sang,  
Like Jephtha's daughter, to the clang  
Of my spread, cymbal-striking palms,  
Some fragments of thanksgiving psalms.

Meanwhile a solemn stillness fell  
Upon the land. O'er hill and dell  
Failed every sound. My heart stood still,  
Waiting before some coming ill.  
The silence was more sad and dread,  
Under that canopy of lead,  
Than the wild tumult of the war  
That raged a little while before.  
All nature in the work of death

Paused for one last, despairing breath ;  
And cowering to the earth, I drew  
From her strong breast my strength anew.

When I arose, I wondering saw  
Another dusty vapor draw,  
From the far right, its sluggish way  
Towards the main cloud, that frowning lay  
Against the westward sloping sun ;  
And all the war was re-begun,  
Ere this fresh marvel of my sense  
Caught from my mind significance.  
And then — why ask me ? Oh ! my God !  
Would I had lain beneath the sod,  
A patient clod, for many a day,  
And from my bones and mouldering clay  
The rank field-grass and flowers had sprung,  
Ere the base sight, that struck and stung  
My very soul, confronted me,  
Shamed at my own humanity.



O happy dead, who early fell,  
Ye have no wretched tale to tell  
Of causeless fear and coward flight,  
Of victory snatched beneath your sight,  
Of martial strength and honor lost,  
Of mere life bought at any cost,  
Of the deep, lingering mark of shame  
Forever scorched on brow and name,  
That no new deeds, however bright,  
Shall banish from men's loathful sight!  
Ye perished in your conscious pride,  
Ere this vile scandal opened wide  
A wound that cannot close nor heal ;  
Ye perished steel to levelled steel,  
Stern votaries of the god of war,  
Filled with his godhead to the core !  
Ye died to live ; these lived to die  
Beneath the scorn of every eye !  
How eloquent your voices sound  
From the low chambers under ground !

How clear each separate tittle burns  
From your high-set and laurelled urns !  
While these, who walk about the earth,  
Are blushing at their very birth ;  
And though they talk, and go and come,  
Their moving lips are worse than dumb.  
Ye sleep beneath the valley's dew,  
And all the nation mourns for you.  
So sleep, till God shall wake the lands !  
For angels, armed with fiery brands,  
Await to take you by the hands.

The right-hand vapor broader grew ;  
It rose, and joined itself unto  
The main cloud with a sudden dash.  
Loud and more near the cannon's crash  
Came towards me, and I heard a sound  
As if all hell had broken bound, —  
A cry of agony and fear.  
Still the dark vapor rolled more near,

Till at my very feet it tost  
The vanward fragments of our host.  
Can man, Thy image, sink so low,  
Thou who hast bent thy tinted bow  
Across the storm and raging main, —  
Whose laws both loosen and restrain  
The powers of earth, — without whose will  
No sparrow's little life is still ?  
Was fear of hell, or want of faith,  
Or the brute's common dread of death,  
The passion that began a chase  
Whose goal was ruin and disgrace ?  
What tongue the fearful sight may tell ?  
What horrid nightmare ever fell  
Upon the restless sleep of crime,  
What history of another time,  
What dismal vision, darkly seen  
By the stern-featured Florentine,  
Can give a hint to dimly draw  
The likeness of the scene I saw ?

I saw, yet saw not. In that sea,  
That chaos of humanity,  
No more the eye could catch and keep  
A single point, than on the deep  
The eye may mark a single wave  
Where hurrying myriads leap and rave.  
Men of all arms and all costumes,  
Bare-headed, decked with broken plumes ;  
Soldiers and officers, and those  
Who wore but civil-suited clothes ;  
On foot or mounted, — some bestrode  
Steeds severed from their harnessed load ;  
Wild mobs of white-topped wagons, cars  
Of wounded, red with bleeding scars ;  
The whole grim panoply of war  
Surged on me with a deafening roar !  
All shades of fear, disfiguring man,  
Glared through their faces' brazen tan.  
Not one a moment paused, or stood  
To see what enemy pursued.

With shrieks of fear, and yells of pain,  
With every muscle on the strain,  
Onward the struggling masses bore.  
O, had the foemen lain before,  
They 'd trampled them to dusty gore,  
And swept their lines and batteries  
As autumn sweeps the windy trees !  
Here one cast forth his wounded friend,  
And with his sword or musket end  
Urged on the horses ; there one trod  
Upon the likeness of his God  
As if 't were dust ; a coward here  
Grew valiant with his very fear,  
And struck his weaker comrade prone,  
And struggled to the front alone.  
All had one purpose, one sole aim,  
That mocked the decency of shame,  
To fly, by any means to fly ;  
They cared not how, they asked not why.

I found a voice. My burning blood  
Flamed up. Upon a mound I stood ;  
I could no more restrain my voice  
Than could the prophet of God's choice.  
" Back, howling fugitives," I cried,  
" Back, on your wretched lives, and hide  
Your shame beneath your native clay !  
Or if the foe affrights you, slay  
Your baser selves ; and, dying, leave  
Your children's tearful cheeks to grieve,  
Not quail and blush, when you shall come,  
Alive, to their degraded home !  
Your wives will look askance with scorn ;  
Your boys, and infants yet unborn,  
Will curse you to God's holy face !  
Heaven holds no pardon in its grace '  
For cowards. O, are such as ye  
The guardians of our liberty ?  
Back, if one trace of manhood still  
May nerve your arm and brace your will !

You stain your country in the eyes  
Of Europe and her monarchies !  
The despots laugh, the peoples groan,  
Man's cause is lost and overthrown !  
I curse you, by the sacred blood  
That freely poured its purple flood  
Down Bunker's heights, on Monmouth's  
plain,  
From Georgia to the rocks of Maine !  
I curse you, by the patriot band  
Whose bones are crumbling in the land !  
By those who saved what these had won !—  
In the high name of Washington ! ”

Then I remember little more.  
As the tide's rising waves, that pour  
Over some low and rounded rock,  
The coming mass, with one great shock,  
Flowed o'er the shelter of my mound,  
And raised me helpless from the ground.

As the huge shouldering billows bear,  
Half in the sea and half in air,  
A swimmer on their foaming crest,  
So the foul throng beneath me pressed,  
Swept me along with curse and blow,  
And flung me — where, I ne'er shall  
know.

When I awoke, a steady rain  
Made rivulets across the plain ;  
And it was dark, — O, very dark !  
I was so stunned as scarce to mark  
The ghostly figures of the trees,  
Or hear the sobbing of the breeze  
That flung the wet leaves to and fro.  
Upon me lay a dismal woe,  
A boundless, superhuman grief,  
That drew no promise of relief  
From any hope. Then I arose,  
As one who struggles up from blows



By unseen hands ; and as I stood  
Alone, I thought that God was good,  
To hide, in clouds and driving rain,  
Our low world from the angel train  
Whose souls filled heroes when the earth  
Was worthy of their noble birth.  
By that dull instinct of the mind  
Which leads aright the helpless blind,  
I struggled onward, till the dawn  
Across the eastern clouds had drawn  
A narrow line of watery gray ;  
And full before my vision lay  
The great dome's gaunt and naked bones,  
Beneath whose crown the nation thrones  
Her queenly person. On I stole,  
With hanging head and abject soul,  
Across the high embattled ridge,  
And o'er the arches of the bridge.  
So freshly pricked my sharp disgrace,  
I feared to meet the human face.

Skulking, as any woman might  
Who 'd lost her virtue in the night,  
And sees the dreadful glare of day  
Prepared to light her homeward way,  
Alone, heart-broken, shamed, undone,  
I staggered into Washington !

Since then long sluggish days have passed,  
And on the wings of every blast  
Have come the distant nations' sneers  
To tingle in our blushing ears.  
In woe and ashes, as was meet,  
We wore the penitential sheet.  
But now I breathe a purer air,  
And from the depths of my despair  
Awaken to a cheering morn,  
Just breaking through the night forlorn,  
A morn of hopeful victory.  
Awake, my countrymen, with me !  
Redeem the honor which you lost,  
With any blood, at any cost !

I ask not how the war began,  
Nor how the quarrel branched and ran  
To this dread height. The wrong or right  
Stands clear before God's faultless sight.  
I only feel the shameful blow,  
I only see the scornful foe,  
And vengeance burns in every vein  
To die, or wipe away the stain.  
The war-wise hero of the West,  
Wearing his glories as a crest  
Of trophies gathered in your sight,  
Is arming for the coming fight.  
Full well his wisdom apprehends  
The duty and its mighty ends ;  
The great occasion of the hour,  
That never lay in human power  
Since over Yorktown's tented plain  
The red cross fell, nor rose again.  
My humble pledge of faith I lay,  
Dear comrade of my school-boy day,

Before thee, in the nation's view ;  
And if thy prophet prove untrue,  
And from our country's grasp be thrown  
The sceptre and the starry crown,  
And thou and all thy marshalled host  
Be baffled, and in ruin lost, —  
O, let me not outlive the blow  
That seals my country's overthrow !  
And, lest this woful end come true,  
Men of the North, I turn to you.  
Display your vaunted flag once more,  
Southward your eager columns pour !  
Sound trump and fife and rallying drum ;  
From every hill and valley come !  
Old men, yield up your treasured gold ;  
Can liberty be priced and sold ?  
Fair matrons, maids, and tender brides,  
Gird weapons to your lovers' sides ;  
And, though your hearts break at the deed,  
Give them your blessing and God-speed ;

Then point them to the field of fame,  
With words like those of Sparta's dame !  
And when the ranks are full and strong,  
And the whole army moves along,  
A vast result of care and skill,  
Obedient to the master will ;  
And your young hero draws the sword,  
And gives the last commanding word  
That hurls your strength upon the foe, —  
O, let them need no second blow !  
Strike, as your fathers struck of old,  
Through summer's heat and winter's cold ;  
Through pain, disaster, and defeat ;  
Through marches tracked with bloody feet ;  
Through every ill that could befall  
The holy cause that bound them all !  
Strike as they struck for liberty !  
Strike as they struck to make you free !  
Strike for the crown of victory !

## ZAGONYI.

SPRINGFIELD, OCTOBER 25, 1861.

**B**OLD Captain of the Body-Guard,  
I 'll troll a stave to thee !  
My voice is somewhat harsh and hard,  
And rough my minstrelsy.  
I 've cheered until my throat is sore  
For how Dupont at Beaufort bore ;  
Yet here 's a cheer for thee !

I hear thy jingling spurs and reins,  
Thy sabre at thy knee ;  
The blood runs lighter through my veins,  
As I before me see

Thy hundred men with thrusts and blows  
Ride down a thousand stubborn foes,  
The foremost led by thee.

With pistol snap and rifle crack —  
Mere *salvos* fired to honor thee —  
Ye plunge, and stamp, and shoot, and hack  
The way your swords make free ;  
Then back again, — the path is wide  
This time, — ye gods ! it was a ride,  
The ride they took with thee !

No guardsman of the whole command  
Halts, quails, or turns to flee ;  
With bloody spur and steady hand  
They gallop where they see  
Thy daring plume stream out ahead  
O'er flying, wounded, dying, dead ;  
They can but follow thee.

So, Captain of the Body-Guard,  
I pledge a health to thee !  
I hope to see thy shoulders starred,  
My Paladin ; and we  
Shall laugh at fortune in the fray,  
Whene'er you lead your well-known way  
To death or victory !



## ON BOARD THE CUMBERLAND.

MARCH 8, 1862.

“**S**TAND to your guns, men!” Morris cried.  
Small need to pass the word ;  
Our men at quarters ranged themselves  
Before the drum was heard.

And then began the sailors’ jests :

“ What thing is that, I say ? ”

“ A long-shore meeting-house adrift  
Is standing down the bay ! ”

A frown came over Morris’ face ;  
The strange, dark craft he knew ;  
“ That is the iron Merrimac,  
Manned by a rebel crew.

“ So shot your guns, and point them straight ;  
    Before this day goes by,  
We ’ll try of what her metal ’s made.”  
    A cheer was our reply.

“ Remember, boys, this flag of ours  
    Has seldom left its place ;  
And where it falls, the deck it strikes  
    Is covered with disgrace.

“ I ask but this ; or sink or swim,  
    Or live or nobly die,  
My last sight upon earth may be  
    To see that ensign fly ! ”

Meanwhile the shapeless iron mass  
    Came moving o’er the wave,  
As gloomy as a passing hearse,  
    As silent as the grave.

Her ports were closed ; from stem to stern  
No sign of life appeared.

We wondered, questioned, strained our eyes,  
Joked, — everything but feared.

She reached our range. Our broadside rang,  
Our heavy pivots roared ;  
And shot and shell, a fire of hell,  
Against her sides we poured.

God's mercy ! from her sloping roof  
The iron tempest glanced,  
As hail bounds from a cottage thatch,  
And round her leaped and danced ;

Or when against her dusky hull  
We struck a fair, full blow,  
The mighty, solid iron globes  
Were crumbled up like snow.

On, on, with fast increasing speed  
The silent monster came,  
Though all our starboard battery  
Was one long line of flame.

She heeded not, no gun she fired,  
Straight on our bow she bore ;  
Through riving plank and crashing frame  
Her furious way she tore.

Alas ! our beautiful, keen bow,  
That in the fiercest blast  
So gently folded back the seas,  
They hardly felt we passed !

Alas ! alas ! my Cumberland,  
That ne'er knew grief before,  
To be so gored, to feel so deep  
The tusk of that sea-boar !

Once more she backward drew a space,  
Once more our side she rent ;  
Then, in the wantonness of hate,  
Her broadside through us sent.

The dead and dying round us lay,  
But our foemen lay abeam ;  
Her open port-holes maddened us ;  
We fired with shout and scream.

We felt our vessel settling fast,  
We knew our time was brief,  
“Ho! man the pumps!” But they who worked,  
And fought not, wept with grief.

“O keep us but an hour afloat!  
O, give us only time  
To mete unto yon rebel crew  
The measure of their crime!”

From captain down to powder-boy  
    No hand was idle then ;  
Two soldiers, but by chance aboard,  
    Fought on like sailor men.

And when a gun's crew lost a hand,  
    Some bold marine stepped out,  
And jerked his braided jacket off,  
    And hauled the gun about.

Our forward magazine was drowned ;  
    And up from the sick bay  
Crawled out the wounded, red with blood,  
    And round us gasping lay.

Yes, cheering, calling us by name,  
    Struggling with failing breath  
To keep their shipmates at the post  
    Where glory strove with death.

With decks afloat, and powder gone,  
The last broadside we gave  
From the guns' heated iron lips  
Burst out beneath the wave.

So sponges, rammers, and handspikes —  
As men-of-war's-men should —  
We placed within their proper racks,  
And at our quarters stood.

“ Up to the spar-deck ! save yourselves ! ”  
Cried Selfridge. “ Up, my men !  
God grant that some of us may live  
To fight yon ship again ! ”

We turned, — we did not like to go ;  
Yet staying seemed but vain,  
Knee-deep in water ; so we left ;  
Some swore, some groaned with pain.

We reached the deck. There Randall stood :

“ Another turn, men, — so ! ”

Calmly he aimed his pivot gun :

“ Now, Tenny, let her go ! ”

It did our sore hearts good to hear

The song our pivot sang,

As, rushing on from wave to wave,

The whirring bomb-shell sprang.

Brave Randall leaped upon the gun,

And waved his cap in sport ;

“ Well done ! well aimed ! I saw that shell

Go through an open port.”

It was our last, our deadliest shot ;

The deck was overflown ;

The poor ship staggered, lurched to port,

And gave a living groan.



Down, down, as headlong through the waves  
Our gallant vessel rushed,  
A thousand gurgling watery sounds  
Around my senses gushed.

Then I remember little more.  
One look to heaven I gave,  
Where, like an angel's wing, I saw  
Our spotless ensign wave.

I tried to cheer. I cannot say  
Whether I swam or sank ;  
A blue mist closed around my eyes,  
And everything was blank.

When I awoke, a soldier lad,  
All dripping from the sea,  
With two great tears upon his cheeks,  
Was bending over me.

I tried to speak.    He understood  
    The wish I could not speak.  
He turned me.    There, thank God ! the flag  
    Still fluttered at the peak !

And there, while thread shall hang to thread,  
    O let that ensign fly !  
The noblest constellation set  
    Against our northern sky.

A sign that we who live may claim  
    The peerage of the brave ;  
A monument, that needs no scroll,  
    For those beneath the wave.

## THE SWORD-BEARER.

MARCH 8, 1862.

**B**RAVE Morris saw the day was lost ;  
For nothing now remained,  
On the wrecked and sinking Cumberland,  
But to save the flag unstained.

So he swore an oath in the sight of Heaven, —  
If he kept it the world can tell : —  
“ Before I strike to a rebel flag,  
I ’ll sink to the gates of hell !

“ Here, take my sword ; ’t is in my way ;  
I shall trip o’er the useless steel ;  
For I ’ll meet the lot that falls to all  
With my shoulder at the wheel.”

So the little negro took the sword ;  
    And O with what reverent care,  
Following his master step by step,  
    He bore it here and there !

A thought had crept through his sluggish brain,  
    And shone in his dusky face,  
That somehow — he could not tell just how —  
    'T was the sword of his trampled race.

And as Morris, great with his lion heart,  
    Rushed onward, from gun to gun,  
The little negro slid after him,  
    Like a shadow in the sun.

But something of pomp and of curious pride  
    The sable creature wore,  
Which at any time but a time like that  
    Would have made the ship's crew roar.

Over the wounded, dying, and dead,  
Like an usher of the rod,  
The black page, full of his mighty trust,  
With dainty caution trod.

No heed he gave to the flying ball,  
No heed to the bursting shell ;  
His duty was something more than life,  
And he strove to do it well.

Down, with our starry flag apeak,  
In the whirling sea we sank,  
And captain and crew and the sword-bearer  
Were washed from the bloody plank.

They picked us up from the hungry waves ;—  
Alas ! not all ! — “ And where,  
Where is the faithful negro lad ? ” —  
“ Back oars ! avast ! look there ! ”.

We looked ; and, as Heaven may save my soul,  
I pledge you a sailor's word,  
There, fathoms deep in the sea, he lay,  
Still grasping his master's sword !

We drew him out ; and many an hour  
We wrought with his rigid form,  
Ere the almost smothered spark of life  
By slow degrees grew warm.

The first dull glance that his eyeballs rolled  
Was down towards his shrunken hand ;  
And he smiled, and closed his eyes again  
As they fell on the rescued brand.

And no one touched the sacred sword,  
Till at length, when Morris came,  
The little negro stretched it out,  
With his eager eyes aflame.

And if Morris wrung the poor boy's hand,  
And his words seemed hard to speak,  
And tears ran down his manly cheeks,  
What tongue shall call him weak ?

## THE BALLAD OF NEW ORLEANS.

APRIL 24, 1862.

**J**UST as the hour was darkest,  
Just between night and day,  
From the flag-ship shone the signal,  
“Get the squadrons under way.”

Not a sound but the tramp of sailors,  
And the wheeling capstan's creak,  
Arose from the busy vessels  
As the anchors came apeak.

The men worked on in silence,  
With never a shout or cheer,  
Till 't was whispered from bow to quarter,  
“Start forward! all is clear.”



Then groaned the ponderous engine,  
Then floundered the whirling screw ;  
And as ship joined ship, the comrades  
Their lines of battle drew.

The moon through the fog was casting  
A blur of lurid light,  
As the captain's latest order  
Was flashed into the night.

“ Steam on ! and whatever fortune  
May follow the attack,  
Sink with your bows all northward :  
No vessel must turn back ! ”

'T was hard when we heard that order  
To smother a rising shout ;  
For it wakened the life within us,  
And we burned to give it out.

All wrapped in the foggy darkness,  
Brave Bailey moved ahead ;  
And stem after stern, his gunboats  
To the starboard station led.

Next Farragut's stately flag-ship  
To port her head inclined ;  
And midmost, and most in danger,  
Bell's squadron closed behind.

Ah ! many a prayer was murmured  
For the homes we ne'er might see ;  
And the silence and night grew dreadful  
With the thought of what must be.

For many a tall, stout fellow  
Who stood at his quarters then,  
In the damp and the dismal moonlight,  
Never saw the sun again.

Close down by the yellow river  
In their oozy graves they rot ;  
Strange vines and strange weeds grow o'er them,  
And their far homes know them not.

But short was our time of musing ;  
For the rebel forts discerned  
That the whole great fleet was moving,  
And their batteries on us turned.

Then Porter burst out from his mortars,  
In jets of fiery spray,  
As if a volcano had opened  
Where his leaf-clad vessels lay.

Howling and screeching and whizzing  
The bomb-shells arched on high,  
And then, like gigantic meteors,  
Dropped swiftly from the sky.

Dropped down on the low, doomed fortress  
A plague of iron death,  
Shattering earth and granite to atoms  
With their puffs of sulphurous breath.

The whole air quaked and shuddered,  
As the huge globes rose and fell,  
And the blazing shores looked awful  
As the open gates of hell.

Fort Jackson and Fort Saint Philip,  
And the battery on the right,  
By this time were flashing and thundering  
Out into the murky night.

Through the hulks and the cables, sundered  
By the bold Itasca's crew,  
Went Bailey in silence, though round him  
The shells and the grape-shot flew.

No answer he made to their welcome,  
Till abeam Saint Philip bore,  
Then, O, but he sent them a greeting  
In his broadsides' steady roar !

Meanwhile, the old man, in the Hartford,  
Had ranged to Fort Jackson's side :  
What a sight ! he slowed his engines  
Till he barely stemmed the tide ;

Yes, paused in that deadly tornado  
Of case-shot and shell and ball,  
Not a cable's length from the fortress,  
And he lay there, wood to wall.

Have you any notion, you landsmen,  
Who have seen a field-fight won,  
Of canister, grape-shot, and shrapnel  
Hurled out from a ten-inch gun ?

I tell you, the air is nigh solid  
    With the howling iron flight ;  
And 't was such a tempest blew o'er us  
    Where the Hartford lay that night.

Perched aloft in the forward rigging,  
    With his restless eyes aglow,  
Sat Farragut, shouting his orders  
    To the men who fought below.

And the fort's huge faces of granite  
    Were splintered and rent in twain,  
And the masses seemed slowly melting,  
    Like snow in a torrid rain.

Now quicker and quicker we fired,  
    Till between us and the foe  
A torrent of blazing vapor  
    Was leaping to and fro ;

While the fort, like a mighty caldron,  
Was boiling with flame and smoke,  
And the stone flew aloft in fragments,  
And the brick into powder broke.

So thick fell the clouds o'er the river,  
You hardly could see your hand ;  
When we heard, from the fore-mast rigging,  
Old Farragut's sharp command :

“ Full head ! Steam across to Saint Philip !  
Starboard battery, mind your aim !  
Forecastle there, shift your pivots ! Now,  
Give them a taste of the same ! ”

† Saint Philip grew faint in replying,  
Its voice of thunder was drowned ;  
“ But, ha ! what is this ? Back the engines !  
Back, back, the ship is aground ! ”

Straight down the swift current came sweeping  
A raft, spouting sparks and flame ;  
Pushed on by an iron-clad rebel,  
Under our port-side it came.

At once the good Hartford was blazing,  
Below, aloft, fore and aft.  
“ We are lost ! ” “ No, no ; we are moving ! ”  
Away whirled the crackling raft.

The fire was soon quenched. One last broadside  
We gave to the surly fort ;  
For above us the rebel gunboats  
Were wheeling like devils at sport.

And into our vacant station  
Had glided a bulky form ;  
’T was Craven’s stout Brooklyn, demanding  
Her share of the furious storm.



We could hear the shot of Saint Philip  
Ring on her armor of chain,  
And the crash of her answering broadside,  
Taking and giving again.

We could hear the low growl of Craven,  
And Lowry's voice clear and calm,  
While they swept off the rebel ramparts  
As clean as your open palm.

Then ranging close under our quarter,  
Out burst from the smoky fogs  
The queen of the waves, the Varuna,  
The ship of bold Charly Boggs.

He waved his blue cap as he passed us ;  
The blood of his glorious race,  
Of Lawrence, the hero, was burning  
Once more in a living face.

Right and left flashed his heavy pieces,  
Rams, gunboats — it mattered not ;  
Wherever a rebel flag floated  
Was a target for his shot.

All burning and sinking around him  
Lay five of the foe ; but he,  
The victor, seemed doomed with the vanquished,  
When along dashed gallant Lee.

And he took up the bloody conflict,  
And so well his part he bore,  
That the river ran fire behind him,  
And glimmered from shore to shore.

But while powder would burn in a cannon,  
Till the water drowned his deck,  
Boggs pounded away with his pivots  
From his slowly settling wreck.

I think our great captains in Heaven,  
As they looked upon those deeds,  
Were proud of the flower of that navy,  
Of which they planted the seeds.

Paul Jones, the knight-errant of ocean,  
Decatur, the lord of the seas,  
Hull, Lawrence, and Bainbridge, and Biddle,  
And Perry, the peer of all these !

If Porter beheld his descendant,  
With some human pride on his lip,  
I trust, through the mercy of Heaven,  
His soul was forgiven that slip.

And thou, living veteran, Old Ironsides,  
The last of the splendid line,  
Thou link 'twixt the old and new glory,  
I know what feelings were thine !

When the sun looked over the tree-tops,  
    We found ourselves — Heaven knows how —  
Above the grim forts ; and that instant  
    A smoke broke from Farragut's bow.

And over the river came floating  
    The sound of the morning gun ;  
And the stars and stripes danced up the halyards,  
    And glittered against the sun.

O, then what a shout from the squadrons !  
    As flag followed flag, till the day  
Was bright with the beautiful standard,  
    And wild with the victors' huzza !

But three ships were missing. The others  
    Had passed through that current of flame ;  
And each scar on their shattered bulwarks  
    Was touched by the finger of Fame.

Below us, the forts of the rebels  
Lay in the trance of despair ;  
Above us, uncovered and helpless,  
New Orleans clouded the air.

Again, in long lines we went steaming  
Away towards the city's smoke ;  
And works were deserted before us,  
And columns of soldiers broke.

In vain the town clamored and struggled ;  
The flag at our peak ruled the hour ;  
And under its shade, like a lion,  
Were resting the will and the power.

## THE VARUNA.

SUNK APRIL 24, 1862.

WHO has not heard of the dauntless  
Varuna ?

Who has not heard of the deeds she has done ?  
Who shall not hear, while the brown Mississippi  
Rushes along from the snow to the sun ?

Crippled and leaking she entered the battle,  
Sinking and burning she fought through the  
fray,  
Crushed were her sides, and the waves ran  
across her,  
Ere, like a death-wounded lion at bay,  
Sternly she closed in the last fatal grapple,  
Then in her triumph sank grandly away.

Five of the rebels, like satellites round her,  
Burned in her orbit of splendor and fear ;  
One, like the Pleiad of mystical story,  
Shot, terror-stricken, beyond her dread sphere.

We who are waiting with crowns for the victors,  
Though we should offer the wealth of our  
store,  
Load the Varuna from deck down to kelson,  
Still would be niggard, such tribute to pour  
On courage so boundless. It beggars possession,  
It knocks for just payment at heaven's bright  
door.

Cherish the heroes who fought the Varuna ;  
Treat them as kings if they honor your way ;  
Succor and comfort the sick and the wounded ;  
Oh ! for the dead, let us all kneel to pray !

# THE CROSSING AT FREDER- ICKSBURG.

DECEMBER 11, 1862.

I LAY in my tent at mid-day,  
Too full of pain to die,  
When I heard the voice of Burnside,  
And an answering shout reply.

I heard the voice of the General,—  
'T was firm, though low and sad ;  
But the roar that followed his question  
Laughed out till the hills were glad.

“ O comrade, open the curtain,  
And see where our men are bound,  
For my heart is still in my bosom  
At that terrible, mirthful sound.



“ And hark what the General orders,  
For I could not catch his words ;  
And what means that hurry and movement,  
That clash of muskets and swords ? ”

“ Lie still, lie still, my Captain,  
’T is a call for volunteers ;  
And the noise that vexes your fever  
Is only our soldiers’ cheers.”

“ Where go they ? ” “ Across the river.”  
“ O God ! and must I lie still,  
While that drum and that measured trampling  
Move from me far down the hill ?

“ How many ? ” “ I judge, four hundred.”  
“ Who are they ? I ’ll know to a man.”  
“ Our own Nineteenth and Twentieth,  
And the Seventh Michigan.”

“ O, to go, but to go with my comrades !  
Tear the curtain away from the hook ;  
For I ’ll see them march down to their glory,  
If I perish by the look ! ”

They leaped in the rocking shallops.  
Ten offered where one could go ;  
And the breeze was alive with laughter  
Till the boatmen began to row.

Then the shore, where the rebels harbored,  
Was fringed with a gush of flame,  
And buzzing, like bees, o’er the water  
The swarms of their bullets came.

In silence, how dread and solemn !  
With courage, how grand and true !  
Steadily, steadily onward  
The line of the shallops drew.

Not a whisper ! Each man was conscious  
He stood in the sight of death ;  
So he bowed to the awful presence,  
And treasured his living breath.

'Twixt death in the air above them,  
And death in the waves below,  
Through balls and grape and shrapnel  
They moved — my God, how slow !

And many a brave, stout fellow,  
Who sprang in the boats with mirth,  
Ere they made that fatal crossing  
Was a load of lifeless earth.

And many a brave, stout fellow,  
Whose limbs with strength were rife,  
Was torn and crushed and shattered, —  
A helpless wreck for life.

But yet the boats moved onward ;  
Through fire and lead they drove,  
With the dark, still mass within them,  
And the floating stars above.

So loud and near it sounded,  
I started at the shout,  
As the keels ground on the gravel,  
And the eager men burst out.

Cheer after cheer we sent them,  
As only armies can, —  
Cheers for old Massachusetts,  
Cheers for young Michigan !

They formed in line of battle ;  
Not a man was out of place.  
Then with levelled steel they hurled them  
Straight in the rebels' face.

“ O, help me, help me, comrade !

For tears my eyelids drown,  
As I see their starry banners  
Stream up the smoking town.

“ And see the noisy workmen

O'er the lengthening bridges run,  
And the troops that swarm to cross them  
When the rapid work be done.

“ For the old heat, or a new one,

Flames up in every vein ;  
And with fever or with passion  
I am faint as death again.

“ If this is death, I care not !

Hear me, men, from rear to van ! —  
One more cheer for Massachusetts,  
And one more for Michigan ! ”

## HOOKER 'S ACROSS.

MAY 1, 1863.

**H**OOKER 's across ! Hooker 's across !  
Standards and guidons and lance-pen-  
nons toss

Over the land where he points with his blade,  
Bristle the hill-top, and fill up the glade.

Who would not follow a leader whose blood  
Has swelled, like our own, the battle's red  
flood ?

Who bore what we suffered, our wound and  
our pain, —

Bore them with patience, and dares them again ?

Hooker 's across !

Hooker's across ! Hooker's across !  
River of death, you shall make up our loss !  
Out of your channel we summon each soul,  
Over whose body your dark billows roll ;  
Up from your borders we summon the dead,  
From valleys and hills where they struggled  
and bled,  
To joy in the vengeance the traitors shall feel  
At the roar of our guns and the rush of our  
steel !

Hooker's across !

Hooker's across ! Hooker's across !  
Fears to the wind, with our standards, we toss,  
Moving together, straight on, with one breath,  
Down to the outburst of passion and death.  
O, in the depths of our spirits we know  
If we fail now in the face of the foe,  
Flee from the field with our flag soiled and dim,  
We may return, but 't will not be with him !

Hooker's across !

# ERIC, THE MINSTREL.

A PARABLE.

MAY 7, 1863.

**I**N a great ring the Danish barons sat ;  
Their bitter hearts were cold within their  
breasts ;

For all that day the fortunes of the fight  
Had gone against them, and the Saxon axe  
Had hewed their faces, driving them perforce  
Back to their moated camp beside the sea.  
So in the evening, one by one, they came,  
Unsummoned, to the presence of the Prince  
For further counsel ; though no word as yet  
Broke the dark circle, where they brooding sat  
With their brown chins upon their sinewy  
hands.



Much they bemoaned their lot with muffled  
groans,

And hard, deep-chested spasms of wordless  
pain ;

And many an eye rolled from the piléd arms  
To the small harbor, where the rocking ships  
Flashed their long spars against the setting sun,  
And seemed to beckon them away. Of all  
Ragner, the Prince, was gloomiest. His eyes  
Were dull and filmy, as a slaughtered wolf's,  
Turned up to wither in the staring moon.

His grizzly beard hung down across his knees,  
So low he bent, and his great, open face  
Was void and stagnant ; not a ray of thought  
Glimmered upon it. Had not, now and then,  
His thick breath hissed between his grinding  
teeth,

Or a deep groan surged, like a breaking wave,  
Through his whole form, none would have said  
he lived.

He had staked all upon one fatal fight.  
Loud had he boasted of his strength and skill,  
His men, his weapons, and his discipline,  
That bound them all together in one will.  
Much had he sneered at other chiefs, whose  
deeds  
Had failed before the foe, through lack of wit ;  
Vaunting himself, and stamping on their wrecks.  
Was this the issue ? — this sad, woe-begone,  
Fear-strickén huddle of disheartened men ?  
His hopes had failed him. A despiséd foe,  
Famished, half-clad, unsandalled, scanty armed,  
With torn and bleeding hands had struck his  
swords,  
His cunning engines and far-flying shafts,  
Down to this ruin : with them, too, the crown,  
Growing in fancy o'er his princely house.  
Ragner said naught ; for there was naught to  
say,  
That babbling gossips might not say as well,

Years hence, above the embers. So he turned  
His brow against the hide-walls of his tent,  
And almost wept for shame. The curtains  
shook :

A face as brilliant as the evening-star,  
And cheerful as an angel's that has looked,  
A moment since, upon the light of heaven,  
Shone steadily above that darkened group,  
And drew their eyes together towards its beams.

Eric, the minstrel, entered in the tent,  
And softly stepped before the wretched chiefs,  
With the bard's license. "Ragner," he began,  
" And you, pale comrades of his misery,  
Is this a time for weakness ? this a time  
To drop your manhood, and to change your  
sex,

Now while ye need a double share of strength,  
Of skill and courage, to make good the loss  
That fell upon you in to-day's mishap ?  
Is this a time for gloomy brows, dead brains,

Slack hands and failing hearts ? Is this a time  
To empty memory of its olden stores,  
And turn your backs upon your history ?  
Is this a time for sheep to nibble grass,  
And fatten for the butcher, while the plain  
Is red with corpses, only fit for wolves  
And the swart ravens' talons ? If there was  
Ever to Danish men the sudden need  
Of all God's best endowments, it is now.  
Rise, or your lives are forfeit for your sloth ! ”  
They bounded up, as if they felt the foe  
Already hacking at their cowering backs,  
And bent their glances towards the distant  
ships,  
With sullen meaning. “ Rise, rise higher yet !  
And turn your faces frowning on the foe ;  
Or you lose more than life, your honor, chiefs ;  
The fame that made you, when yon sun arose,  
All that you were.” Then, with a feeble groan,  
They all sank down upon the ground again.

Scorn flashed o'er Eric's features a hot light,  
Like that which pulses in the summer nights,  
Ruddy and frequent. But he calmed himself;  
And with a sigh, he took from off his arm  
His Norman harp; and whispered to himself,  
In tones as tender as his mother used,  
"This is the time to sing." He wound his  
hands

Round the long wires, and every warbling string  
Flickered before him, like a jet of flame  
That leaps along the darkness. And he sang  
His nation's birth, its growing infancy,  
Rocked on the billows in long, pointed ships.  
And then he sang how tribe was joined to tribe  
In the dark forests, falling with the growth  
Of gathered people, till the teeming land  
Waved yellow grain, and smoked with forges.

How

The streams turned round upon the wheels in  
foam,

And ground and hammered slavishly for man.  
Then he struck out in triumph from the cords,  
And raised his voice, accordant to the theme,  
The glory of his nation. How she warred  
With neighboring powers, and spread her  
tongue and laws,  
From the cramped borders where her strength  
was nursed,  
Up towards the ice, and downward towards the  
sun.

The sea became her highway. Here and there  
She set her foot upon far distant shores,  
And founded other nations. On the name  
The Norman carried to the Pyrenees,  
He hung in rapture. O'er and o'er again  
He sang of Charlemagne and all his peers ;  
Of Roncesvalles, and of Roland's horn,  
Until the horn seemed peeling in their ears ;  
Or sinking fainter with the hero's breath,  
Lower and lower, till the dismal night

Sank down and settled upon Roland's corse.  
Then he sang other fields, of happier fate ;  
Drawing his pictures on the painted air  
With harp and voice, as plainly to the sense  
As any since have wrought with tinted brush ;  
And snorting steeds and mail-clad men, in  
square,  
In line, in column, thundered past their eyes ;  
And banners waved, and lances splintered up  
On ringing shields and hauberks ; till there  
came  
The serious press, at arm's length, of the swords ;  
When the foe paused, shook, wavered, turned,  
and fled,  
With all the Norman barons, at his heels,  
Shouting their triumph in the hot pursuit.  
By this, the chiefs had started from the ground,  
With the grand light of battle flaming out  
From their red eyeballs ; and outside the tent,  
A murmur circled from the listening host, —

A murmur ending in a shrill, wild cheer,  
That made the blood fly leaping through the  
veins,

And sent the right hand seeking for the sword.  
Then Ragner strode from out the tent, and saw  
His hurrying soldiers buckling on their arms ;  
And heard the tested bow-strings snap and  
twang,

And sheaves of arrows rattling as they swung ;  
And all the sounds a forming army makes  
Came up, like music, to his wondering ears.

So he drew forth his sword amidst his chiefs,  
And their swords followed. Then the minstrel  
stole,

Unthanked, away, to weep beside his harp,  
Dejected, prayerful : but that field was won.



## THE BLACK REGIMENT.

PORT HUDSON, MAY 27, 1863.

**D**ARK as the clouds of even,  
Ranked in the western heaven,  
Waiting the breath that lifts  
All the dread mass, and drifts  
Tempest and falling brand  
Over a ruined land ; —  
So still and orderly,  
Arm to arm, knee to knee,  
Waiting the great event,  
Stands the black regiment.

Down the long dusky line  
Teeth gleam and eyeballs shine ;

And the bright bayonet,  
Bristling and firmly set,  
Flashed with a purpose grand,  
Long ere the sharp command  
Of the fierce rolling drum  
Told them their time had come,  
Told them what work was sent  
For the black regiment.

“ Now,” the flag-sergeant cried,  
“ Though death and hell betide,  
Let the whole nation see  
If we are fit to be  
Free in this land ; or bound  
Down, like the whining hound, —  
Bound with red stripes of pain  
In our old chains again ! ”  
O, what a shout there went  
From the black regiment !

“ Charge ! ” Trump and drum awoke,  
Onward the bondmen broke ;  
Bayonet and sabre-stroke  
Vainly opposed their rush.  
Through the wild battle’s crush,  
With but one thought aflush,  
Driving their lords like chaff,  
In the guns’ mouths they laugh ;  
Or at the slippery brands  
Leaping with open hands,  
Down they tear man and horse,  
Down in their awful course ;  
Trampling with bloody heel  
Over the crashing steel,  
All their eyes forward bent,  
Rushed the black regiment.

“ Freedom ! ” their battle-cry, —  
“ Freedom ! or leave to die ! ”

Ah ! and they meant the word,  
Not as with us 'tis heard,  
Not a mere party shout :  
They gave their spirits out ;  
Trusted the end to God,  
And on the gory sod  
Rolled in triumphant blood.  
Glad to strike one free blow,  
Whether for weal or woe ;  
Glad to breathe one free breath,  
Though on the lips of death.  
Praying — alas ! in vain ! —  
That they might fall again,  
So they could once more see  
That burst to liberty !  
This was what “ freedom ” lent  
To the black regiment.

Hundreds on hundreds fell ;  
But they are resting well ;

Scourges and shackles strong  
Never shall do them wrong.  
O, to the living few,  
Soldiers, be just and true !  
Hail them as comrades tried ;  
Fight with them side by side ;  
Never, in field or tent,  
Scorn the black regiment !

## BEFORE VICKSBURG.

MAY 19, 1863.

**W**HILE Sherman stood beneath the hottest fire,

That from the lines of Vicksburg gleamed,  
And bomb-shells tumbled in their smoky gyre,  
And grape-shot hissed, and case-shot  
screamed ;

Back from the front there came,  
Weeping and sorely lame,  
The merest child, the youngest face  
Man ever saw in such a fearful place.

Stifling his tears, he limped his chief to meet ;  
But when he paused, and tottering stood,

Around the circle of his little feet

There spread a pool of bright, young blood.

Shocked at his doleful case,

Sherman cried, "Halt! front face!

Who are you? Speak, my gallant boy!"

"A drummer, sir: — Fifty-fifth Illinois."

"Are you not hit?" "That's nothing. Only  
send

Some cartridges: our men are out;

And the foe press us." "But, my little  
friend —"

"Don't mind me! Did you hear that shout?

What if our men be driven?

O, for the love of Heaven,

Send to my Colonel, General dear!"

"But you?" "O, I shall easily find the rear."

"I'll see to that," cried Sherman; and a drop,

Angels might envy, dimmed his eye,

As the boy, toiling towards the hill's hard top,  
Turned round, and with his shrill child's cry  
Shouted, " O, don't forget !  
We 'll win the battle yet !  
But let our soldiers have some more,  
More cartridges, sir, — calibre fifty-four ! "



# THE BATTLE OF LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN.

NOVEMBER 24, 1863.

“GIVE me but two brigades,” said Hooker,  
frowning at fortified Lookout ;

“And I’ll engage to sweep yon mountain clear  
of that mocking rebel rout.”

At early morning came an order, that set the  
General’s face aglow :

“Now,” said he to his staff, “draw out my  
soldiers ! Grant says that I may go.”

Hither and thither dashed each eager Colonel,  
to join his regiment,

While a low rumor of the daring purpose ran  
on from tent to tent.

For the long roll was sounding through the  
valley, and the keen trumpet's bray,  
And the wild laughter of the swarthy veterans,  
who cried, " We fight to-day ! "

The solid tramp of infantry, the rumble of the  
great jolting gun,  
The sharp, clear order, and the fierce steeds  
neighing, " Why's not the fight begun ? "

All these plain harbingers of sudden conflict  
broke on the startled ear ;  
And last arose a sound that made your blood  
leap, the ringing battle-cheer.

The lower works were carried at one onset ;  
like a vast roaring sea  
Of steel and fire, our soldiers from the trenches  
swept out the enemy ;

And we could see the gray-coats swarming up  
from the mountain's leafy base,  
To join their comrades in the higher fastness,—  
for life or death the race!

Then our long line went winding up the moun-  
tain, in a huge serpent-track,  
And the slant sun upon it flashed and glim-  
mered as on a dragon's back.  
Higher and higher the column's head pushed  
onward, ere the rear moved a man ;  
And soon the skirmish-lines their straggling  
volleys and single shots began.

Then the bald head of Lookout flamed and  
bellowed, and all its batteries woke,  
And down the mountain poured the bomb-shells,  
puffing into our eyes their smoke ;

And balls and grape-shot rained upon our  
column, that bore the angry shower  
As if it were no more than that soft dropping  
which scarcely stirs the flower.

O, glorious courage that inspires the hero, and  
runs through all his men !

The heart that failed beside the Rappahannock,  
it was itself again !

The star that circumstance and jealous faction  
shrouded in envious night

Here shone with all the splendor of its nature,  
and with a freer light !

Hark, hark ! there go the well-known crashing  
volleys, the long-continued roar

That swells and falls, but never ceases wholly  
until the fight is o'er.

Up towards the crystal gates of heaven ascend-  
ing, the mortal tempest beat,  
As if they sought to try their cause together  
before God's very feet.

We saw our troops had gained a footing almost  
beneath the topmost ledge,  
And back and forth the rival lines went surging  
upon the dizzy edge.

We saw, sometimes, our men fall backward  
slowly, and groaned in our despair ;  
Or cheered when now and then a stricken rebel  
plunged out in open air,  
Down, down, a thousand empty fathoms drop-  
ping,— his God alone knows where !

At eve thick haze upon the mountain gathered,  
with rising smoke stained black,  
And not a glimpse of the contending armies  
shone through the swirling rack.

Night fell o'er all ; but still they flashed their  
lightnings and rolled their thunders loud,  
Though no man knew upon which side was  
going that battle in the cloud.

Night — what a night ! — of anxious thought  
and wonder, but still no tidings came  
From the bare summit of the trembling moun-  
tain, still wrapped in mist and flame.  
But towards the sleepless dawn, stillness, more  
dreadful than the fierce sound of war,  
Settled o'er Nature, as if she stood breathless  
before the morning star.

As the sun rose, dense clouds of smoky vapor  
boiled from the valley's deeps,  
Dragging their torn and ragged edges slowly  
up through the tree-clad steeps ;

And rose and rose, till Lookout, like a vision,  
above us grandly stood,  
And over his bleak crags and storm-blanch'd  
headlands burst the warm golden flood.

Thousands of eyes were fixed upon the moun-  
tain, and thousands held their breath,  
And the vast army, in the valley watching,  
seemed touch'd with sudden death.  
High o'er us soared great Lookout, robed in  
purple, a glory on his face,  
A human meaning in his hard, calm features,  
beneath that heavenly grace.

Out on a crag walk'd something — what? an  
eagle, that treads yon giddy height?  
Surely no man! but still he clamber'd forward  
into the full, rich light.

Then up he started, with a sudden motion, and  
from the blazing crag  
Flung to the morning breeze and sunny radi-  
ance the dear old starry flag!

Ah! then what followed? Scarred and war-  
worn soldiers, like girls, flushed through  
their tan,  
And down the thousand wrinkles of the battles  
a thousand tear-drops ran.  
Men seized each other in returned embraces,  
and sobbed for very love;  
A spirit, which made all that moment brothers,  
seemed falling from above.

And as we gazed, around the mountain's sum-  
mit our glittering files appeared,  
Into the rebel works we saw them moving;  
and we — we cheered, we cheered!



And they above waved all their flags before us,  
and joined our frantic shout,  
Standing, like demigods, in light and triumph  
upon their own Lookout !

## IN THE WILDERNESS.

MAY 7, 1864.

[The incident contained in the following poem is narrated by a correspondent of the New York Tribune in a letter from the battle-field, dated "Wilderness, May 7, 1864."]

MANGLED, uncared for, suffering thro'  
the night

With heavenly patience the poor boy had  
lain ;

Under the dreary shadows, left and right,

Groaned on the wounded, stiffened out the  
slain.

What faith sustained his lone,

Brave heart to make no moan,

To send no cry from that blood-sprinkled sod,

Is a close mystery with him and God.

But when the light came, and the morning dew  
    Glittered around him, like a golden lake,  
And every dripping flower with deepened hue  
    Looked through its tears for very pity's sake,  
        He moved his aching head  
        Upon his rugged bed,  
And smiled as a blue violet, virgin-meeek,  
Laid her pure kiss upon his withered cheek.

At once there circled in his waking heart  
    A thousand memories of distant home ;  
Of how those same blue violets would start  
    Along his native fields, and some would roam  
        Down his dear humming brooks,  
        To hide in secret nooks,  
And, shyly met, in nodding circles swing,  
Like gossips murmuring at belated Spring.

And then he thought of the beloved hands  
    That with his own had plucked the modest  
        flower,

The blue-eyed maiden, crowned with golden  
bands,

Who ruled as sovereign of that sunny hour.

She at whose soft command

He joined the mustering band,

She for whose sake he lay so firm and still,

Despite his pangs, nor questioned then her will.

So, lost in thought, scarce conscious of the deed,

Culling the violets, here and there he crept

Slowly, — ah! slowly, — for his wound would  
bleed;

And the sweet flowers themselves half smiled,  
half wept,

To be thus gathered in

By hands so pale and thin,

By fingers trembling as they neatly laid

Stem upon stem, and bound them in a braid.

The strangest posy ever fashioned yet

Was clasped against the bosom of the lad,

As we, the seekers for the wounded, set  
His form upon our shoulders bowed and sad ;  
    Though he but seemed to think  
    How violets nod and wink ;  
And as we cheered him, for the path was wild,  
He only looked upon his flowers and smiled.

## ODE TO AMERICA.

MARCH 7, 1862.

**N**O more of girls and wine,  
No more of pastoral joys,  
No after-sighing for some antique line  
Of bearded kings, who, at their nation's birth,  
As children play with toys,  
Made merry with our earth :  
No more, no more of these !  
The girls are pale ;  
The wine is drunken to the lees ;  
Still are the bleatings of the woolly fold ;  
The olden kings look thin and cold,  
Like dim belated ghosts  
That hurrying sail  
Towards their dark graves,

Along the brightening coasts,  
And sapphire hollows of the crested waves,  
Chased by the golden lances hurled  
From the young sun above his cloudy world.

My country, let me turn to thee,  
With love and pride that glow  
Pure as twin altar-fires which blow  
Their flames together to one Deity.

Look where I may,

O land beneath the iron sway

Of the strong hand ; —

O land gored through and through

By thy own faithless brand ;

Land of once happy homes,

To whose now darkened doors

The hand of sorrow comes,

Early and late, and pours,

With no soft prelude, or no warning beat,

Her urn of bitter tears before thy feet !

O suffering, patient land,  
Thou bearest thy awful woe  
So grandly, with such high command  
Of tears, that dare not flow  
For the great godlike smile  
Which crowns thy lips the while,  
And stills thy mighty heart to move  
As calmly on as when the hand of love  
Guided thy peaceful realm,  
And idly swung the almost useless helm ;  
That I, who, in my erring thought,  
Have often wronged thy fame,  
By sneers and taunts of blame,  
Bow down with penitence o'erfraught,  
And pangs of reverent shame.

Thy rulers put aside thy rights ;  
Thou murmurest not :  
They waste thy gold ;  
Still thy great cause is not forgot.  
Thy ancient foe grows loud, and bold



To proffer counsel, jeers, and spurns ;  
The swaggering coward burns  
With new-found courage ; England smites  
Thy sensitive, proud cheek, —  
Smites, like a craven, when she deems thee  
weak !

Thy pale, stern features blush,  
Thy passionate arteries gush  
With hot rebellious blood :  
But thou stillest the raging flood ;  
Thou seemest to listen, in a patient hush,  
To the audacious kings,  
As they prattle empty things.  
Thy pale, stern features blush  
From thy heart the churl is spurned ;  
But thy ready sinews pause,  
Remembering thy holy cause,  
And the blow is not returned !

Not yet, not yet ! O, bear,  
As the lion in his lair,

Whetting his teeth and gathering all his  
strength,

Bears the insulting cry

Of hunters drawing nigh

The dreadful door of his invaded home :

Whence, with a roar and bound, at length —

With bristling hair, with mane that rolls

Above his fiery eyes,

Like the tumultuous vapors of the skies,

Above the piercing lightning — he shall come,

The lordly beast, whose lifted paw controls

The fatal ends of life, and, in his wrath,

Sweep from his onward path

The awe-struck phalanx of his enemies !

I saw thy many squadrons file and form ;

I saw them driving through a deadly storm

Of shot and shell,

Where thousands fell ;

But who survived, ah ! they, indeed,

Were soldiers true ; a race to breed

Avenging warriors, ripening for the day  
When thou shalt cast thy shame away.

I saw thy mail-clad fleets, whose ponderous arms

Laugh at the toys of Europe, daily grow

By stream and silent lake.

I saw them glide and take

The sheltered waters, as the wild swan glides,

With scarce a ripple at their moulded sides,

To mar the current in its onward flow.

Swiftly they gathered, by the rising walls

Of arméd ports ;

Hither and thither at prodigious sports,

To try their watery wings, they sped ;

Then snuffed a welcome from the briny  
breeze,

And, with one will, away they fled

To join their dusky sisters of the seas !

I saw it all ; and bending low,

My lips against thy ear I set,

With " Hist ! a hope begins to grow !

Bear on, bear on ! Not yet, not yet ! "

O glory of our race,  
Long suffering guardian of the free,  
Thou who canst dare to be,  
For a great purpose, in a lowly place! —  
Thou who canst stretch the olive o'er the wave,  
And smite the master of the slave,  
Yet wisely measure all  
That might and must befall  
Ere the great end shall crown the thing to be! —  
How shall I honor thee?  
How shall I fitly speak,  
In song so faint and weak,  
Of majesty and wisdom such as thine?  
For now the scales, so long  
Held on the side of wrong,  
To thee again incline;  
And thou mayst lift thy radiant head,  
And bind thy ring of re-appearing stars  
About thy forehead, and forget thy scars  
In joy at holding that for which they bled!

Resume thy place, unchallenged now,  
Nor bow thy glories to the haughtiest brow  
That wears a royal crown !  
False prophets scowled thee down,  
And whispered darkly of thy coming fate :  
The cause, the way, the date,  
They wrote for thee with the slow augur's  
hand. —  
Their lies were scrawled in sand !  
They perished utterly !  
What is the splendor of the diadem,  
The gilded throne, the broidered carpet-hem,  
The purple robe, the sceptre, and the strain  
Of foregone kings, whose race  
Defies the herald's trace,  
Before thy regal steps on land and main ?  
There are some deeds so grand  
That their mighty doers stand  
Ennobled, in a moment, more than kings ;  
And such deeds, O land sublime,  
Need no sanctity from time ;

Their own epoch they create,  
Whence all meaner things take date ;  
Then exalt thee, for such noble deeds were  
thine !

Envy nothing born of earth,  
Rank nor wealth nor ancient birth,  
Nor the glittering sorrows of a crown.

O Nation, take instead  
Thy measureless renown,  
To wrap thy young limbs like a royal stole,  
And God's own flaming aureole,  
To settle on thy head !

## O R E M U S .

**W**E will not raise, O God, the formal prayer  
Of broken heart and shattered nerve ;  
Thou know'st our griefs, our wants, and what-  
soe'er  
Is best for those who serve.

Before Thy feet, in silence and in awe,  
We open lay our cause and need :  
As brave men may, the patriot sword we draw,  
But Thine must be the deed.

We have no pageantry to please Thy eye,  
Save marshalled men, who marching come  
Beneath Thy gaze in arméd panoply ;  
No music save the drum.

We have no altar, builded in Thy sight,  
From which the fragrant offerings rise,  
Save this wide field of hot and bloody fight ;  
These dead, our sacrifice.

To this great cause the force of prayer is given,  
The wordless prayer of righteous will ;  
Before whose strength the ivory gates of heaven  
Fall open, and are still.

For we believe, within our inmost souls,  
That what men do with spirit sad  
To Thee in one vast cloud of worship rolls, —  
Rolls up, and makes Thee glad.

O God, if reason may presume so far,  
We say our cause is also Thine ;  
We read its truth in every flashing star,  
In every sacred line.



By Thy commission freedom first was sent,  
To hold the tyrant's force at bay ;  
The chain that broke in Egypt, was not meant  
To bind our shining day.

Freedom to all ! in Thy great name we cry,  
And lift to heaven Thy bloody sword ;  
Too long have we been blind in heart and eye  
To Thy outspoken word.

Before the terrors of that battle-call,  
As flax before the gusty flame,  
Down, down, the vanquished enemy shall fall,  
Stricken with endless shame !

Here let division cease. Join hand with hand,  
Join voice with voice ; a general shout  
Shall, like a whirlwind, sweep our native land,  
And purge the traitors out !

Fear not or faint not. God, who ruleth men,  
Marks where his noble martyrs lie :  
They shall all rise beneath His smile again ;  
His foes alone shall die.

## AD POETAS.

O BROTHER bards, why stand ye silent all,  
Amidst these days of noble strife,  
While drum and fife and the fierce trumpet-call  
Awake the land to life ?

Now is the time, if ever time there was,  
To strike aloud the sounding lyre,  
To touch the heroes of our holy cause  
Heart-deep with ancient fire.

'T is not for all, like Norman Tailleferre,  
To sing before the warlike horde  
Our fathers' glories, the great trust we bear,  
And strike with harp and sword.

Nor yet to frame a lay whose moving rhyme  
    Shall flow in music North and South,  
And fill with passion, till the end of time,  
    The nation's choral mouth.

Yet surely, while our country rocks and reels,  
    Your sweetly-warbled olden strains  
Would mitigate the deadly shock she feels,  
    And soothe her in her pains.

Some knight of old romance, in full career,  
    Heard o'er his head the skylark sing,  
And, pausing, leaned upon his bloody spear,  
    Lost in that simple thing.

If by your songs no heroes shall be made  
    To look death boldly eye to eye,  
They may glide gently to the martyr's aid  
    When he lies down to die.

And many a soldier, on his gory bed,  
    May turn himself, with lessened pain,  
And bless you for the tender words you said,  
    Now singing in his brain.

So ye, who hold your breath amidst the fight,  
    Be to your sacred calling true :  
Sing on ! the far result is not in sight  
    Of the great good ye do.

## THE FLAG.

SEPTEMBER 22, 1862.

SPIRITS of patriots, hail in heaven again  
The flag for which ye fought and died,  
Now that its field, washed clear of every stain,  
Floats out in honest pride !

Free blood flows through its scarlet veins once  
more,  
And brighter shine its silver bars ;  
A deeper blue God's ether never wore  
Amongst the golden stars.

See how our earthly constellation gleams ;  
And backward, flash for flash, returns  
Its heavenly sisters their immortal beams  
With light that fires and burns, —

That burns because a moving soul is there,  
A living force, a shaping will,  
Whose law the fate-forecasting powers of air  
Acknowledge and fulfil.

At length the day, by prophets seen of old,  
Flames on the crimsoned battle-blade ;  
Henceforth, O flag, no mortal bought and sold,  
Shall crouch beneath thy shade.

That shame has vanished in the darkened past,  
With all the wild chaotic wrongs  
That held the struggling centuries shackled fast  
With fear's accursed thongs.

Therefore, O patriot fathers, in your eyes  
I brandish thus our banner pure :  
Watch o'er us, bless us, from your peaceful skies,  
And make the issue sure !

## DRAGOON'S SONG.

**C**LASH, clash goes the sabre against my  
steed's side,

Kling, kling go the rowels, as onward I ride ;  
And all my bright harness is living and speaks,  
And under my horseshoes the frosty ground  
creaks ;

I wave my buff glove to the girl whom I love,  
Then join my dark squadron, and forward I  
move.

The foe, all secure, has lain down by his gun ;  
I 'll open his eyelids before the bright sun.  
I burst on his pickets ; they scatter, they fly ;  
Too late they awaken, — 't is only to die.



Now the torch to their camp ; I 'll make it a  
    lamp,  
As back to my quarters so slowly I tramp.

Kiss, kiss me, my darling ! your lover is here.  
Nay, kiss off the smoke-stains ; keep back that  
    bright tear ;  
Keep back that bright tear till the day when I  
    come,  
To the low wailing fife and deep muffled drum,  
With a bullet half through this bosom so true,  
To die, as I ought, for my country and you.

## LANCER'S SONG.

A SIGH to the lips that we love from the  
heart,

A scowl to the foe that is moving before us ;  
Then mount, slacken reins, and spur hard for  
the start,

With our pennons blown out, and our spears  
slanted o'er us !

Who feels not his spirit mount up for this deed  
Is a wretch, — in the soul of our souls we  
abhor him ;

May he fall, like a dog, in the path of his steed,  
And our close trampling hoofs in a torrent  
sweep o'er him !

But who for his country shall fall on the field,  
O God, take his soul, if thou wilt not restore  
him ;

Make thy presence around him his comfort and  
shield,

And gather thy angels, and spread their  
wings o'er him !

We have sighed our last sigh, we have prayed  
our last prayer :

O country, the best of the life that's before us  
We give thee ungrudging, in hope, not despair ;  
And we ask but thy tear when the volley  
rings o'er us.

## CAVALRY SONG.

**D**RAW your girths tight, boys :  
This morning we ride,  
With God and the right, boys,  
To sanction our side,  
Where the balls patter,  
Where the shot shatter,  
Where the shells scatter  
Red death far and wide.

Pause not to think, boys,  
Of maidens in tears ;  
Only this drink, boys,  
Let 's toss to our dears :

Then O for the battle,  
The mad charging rattle,  
The foam-snorting cattle,  
The victors' wild cheers !

Look to your arms, boys,  
Your friends tried and true :  
How the blood warms, boys !  
The foe is in view !  
Forward ! break cover !  
Ride through them ! ride over  
Them ! baptize the clover  
With blood as with dew !

## MARCH ALONG.

**S**OLDIERS are we from the mountain and  
valley,

Soldiers are we from the hill and the plain ;  
Under the flag of our fathers we rally ;  
Death, for its sake, is but living again.

Then march along, gay and strong,

March to battle with a song !

March, march along !

We have a history told of our nation,

We have a name that must never go down ;  
Heroes achieved it through toil and privation ;  
Bear it on, bright with its ancient renown !

Then march along, etc.

Who that shall dare say the flag waving o'er us,  
Which floated in glory from Texas to Maine,  
Must fall, where our ancestors bore it before us,  
Writes his own fate on the roll of the slain.  
Then march along, etc.

Look at it, traitors, and blush to behold it !  
Quail as it flashes its stars in the sun !  
Think you a hand in the nation will fold it,  
While there 's a hand that can level a gun ?  
Then march along, etc.

Carry it onward till victory earn it  
The rights it once owned in the land of the  
free ;  
Then, in God's name, in our fury we 'll turn it  
Full on the treachery over the sea !  
Then march along, etc.

England shall feel what a vengeance the liar  
Stores in the bosom he aims to deceive ;  
England shall feel how God's truth can inspire ;  
England shall feel it, but only to grieve.  
Then march along, etc.

Peace shall unite us again and forever,  
Though thousands lie cold in the graves of  
these wars ;  
Those who survive them shall never prove,  
never,  
False to the flag of the stripes and the stars !  
Then march along, gay and strong,  
March to battle with a song !  
March, march along !



## THE FREE FLAG.

JANUARY 1, 1863.

O HOLY ensign ! symbol fair  
And unpolluted, save by those  
Whose crimes have made themselves thy foes,  
Kiss with true love the taintless air !  
Lay all thy starry clusters bare  
Beneath the heavenly stars ; secure  
That, as their own, thy light is pure !

No more at thee the world shall sneer ;  
No more beneath thy shade shall flash  
The terrors of the tyrant's lash ;  
Nor a whole race be bowed with fear,  
As widens out thy grand career ;

Nor shalt thou shield from righteous scorn  
The guilt thy virtue has forsworn !

Where'er thy marshalled lines advance  
The shattered chain shall fall behind ;  
And in sad eyes, half blank, half blind,  
The light of liberty shall dance ;  
And the imbruted countenance  
Shall warm with knowledge in the rays  
That break on thy regenerate days !

Now thou hast purpose, strong and high,  
Who doubts that right's assured success,  
If not from man, from God, shall bless  
Thy suffering fidelity  
With more than mortal victory, —  
With peace whose heart no more shall quake  
Whene'er a loosened chain may shake ?

Fly on, fly on! All hail to thee,  
Flag whose fair folds thy children's blood  
Has washed as in a running flood!  
And may thy war-cry's burden be,  
Alike to all, "Be free, be free!"  
Perish the wretch who 'd see thee wave  
Again above the shrinking slave!

## SONG

FOR THE LOYAL NATIONAL LEAGUE OF NEW YORK,  
ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATTACK ON  
FORT SUMTER,

APRIL 11, 1863.

WHEN our banner went down,  
With its ancient renown,  
Betrayed and degraded by treason,  
Did they think, as it fell,  
What a passion would swell  
Our hearts when we asked them the reason?  
O, then, rally, brave men,  
To the standard again,  
The flag that proclaims us a nation!  
We will fight, on its part,  
While there 's life in a heart,  
And then trust to the next generation.

Although causeless the blow  
That at Sumter laid low  
That flag, it was seed for the morrow ;  
And a thousand flags flew,  
For the one that fell true,  
As traitors have found to their sorrow.

O, then, rally, brave men,  
To the standard again,  
The flag that proclaims us a nation !  
We will fight, on its part,  
While there 's life in a heart,  
And then trust to the next generation.

'T was in flashes of flame  
It was brought to a shame  
Till then unrecorded in story ;  
But in flashes as bright  
It shall rise in our sight,  
And float over Sumter in glory !

O, then, rally, brave men,  
To the standard again,  
The flag that proclaims us a nation !  
We will fight, on its part,  
While there 's life in a heart,  
And then trust to the next generation.

## A BATTLE HYMN.

**G**OD, to Thee we humbly bow,  
With hand unarmed and naked brow ;  
Musket, lance, and sheathéd sword  
At Thy feet we lay, O Lord !  
Gone is all the soldier's boast  
In the valor of the host ;  
Kneeling here, we do our most.

Of ourselves we nothing know :  
Thou, and Thou alone, canst show,  
By the favor of Thy hand,  
Who has drawn the guilty brand.

If our foemen have the right,  
Show Thy judgment in our sight  
Through the fortunes of the fight !

If our cause be pure and just,  
Nerve our courage with Thy trust :  
Scatter, in Thy bitter wrath,  
All who cross the nation's path :  
May the baffled traitors fly,  
As the vapors from the sky  
When Thy raging winds are high !

God of mercy, some must fall  
In Thy holy cause. Not all  
Hope to sing the victor's lay,  
When the sword is laid away.  
Brief will be the prayers then said ;  
Falling at Thy altar dead,  
Take the sacrifice instead !



Now, O God, once more we rise,  
Marching on beneath Thy eyes ;  
And we draw the sacred sword  
In Thy name and at Thy word.  
May our spirits clearly see  
Thee, through all that is to be,  
In defeat or victory !

## H Y M N

FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1863.

**L**ORD, the people of the land  
In Thy presence humbly stand ;  
On this day, when Thou didst free  
Men of old from tyranny,  
We, their children, bow to Thee.  
Help us, Lord, our only trust !  
We are helpless, we are dust !

All our homes are red with blood ;  
Long our grief we have withstood ;  
Every lintel, each door-post,

Drips, at tidings from the host,  
With the blood of some one lost.  
Help us, Lord, our only trust !  
We are helpless, we are dust !

Comfort, Lord, the grieving one  
Who bewails a stricken son !  
Comfort, Lord, the weeping wife,  
In her long, long widowed life,  
Brooding o'er the fatal strife !  
Help us, Lord, our only trust !  
We are helpless, we are dust !

On our Nation's day of birth,  
Bless Thy own long-favored earth !  
Urge the soldier with Thy will !  
Aid their leaders with Thy skill !  
Let them hear Thy trumpet thrill !  
Help us, Lord, our only trust !  
We are helpless, we are dust !

Lord, we only fight for peace,  
Fight that freedom may increase.  
Give us back the peace of old,  
When the land with plenty rolled,  
And our banner awed the bold !  
    Help us, Lord, our only trust !  
    We are helpless, we are dust !

Lest we pray in thoughtless guilt,  
Shape the future as Thou wilt !  
Purge our realm from hoary crime  
With Thy battles, dread, sublime,  
In Thy well-appointed time !  
    Help us, Lord, our only trust !  
    We are helpless, we are dust !

With one heart the Nation's cries  
From our choral lips arise :  
Thou didst point a noble way  
For our Fathers through the fray ;

Lead their children thus to-day !  
Help us, Lord, our only trust !  
We are helpless, we are dust !

In His name, who bravely bore  
Cross and crown begemmed with gore ;  
By His last immortal groan,  
Ere He mounted to His throne,  
Make our sacred cause Thy own !  
Help us, Lord, our only trust !  
We are helpless, we are dust !

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**B**LOOD, blood ! The lines of every printed  
sheet

Through their dark arteries reek with  
running gore ;

At hearth, at board, before the household  
door,

'T is the sole subject with which neighbors  
meet.

Girls at the feast, and children in the street,  
Prattle of horrors ; flash their little store  
Of simple jests against the cannon's roar,  
As if mere slaughter kept existence sweet.

O, heaven, I quail at the familiar way  
This fool, the world, disports his jingling  
cap ;

Murdering or dying with one grin agap !

Our very Love comes draggled from the fray,  
Smiling at victory, scowling at mishap,  
With gory Death companioned and at  
play.

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O H! craven, craven! while my brothers  
fall,

Like grass before the mower, in the fight,  
I, easy vassal to my own delight,  
Am bound with flowers, a far too willing  
thrall.

Day after day along the streets I crawl,  
Shamed in my manhood, reddening at the  
sight  
Of every soldier who upholds the right  
With no more motive than his country's  
call.

I love thee more than honor; ay, above  
That simple duty, conscience-plain and  
clear  
To dullest minds, whose summons all men  
hear.



Yet as I blush and loiter, who should move  
In the grand marches, I cannot but fear  
That thou wilt scorn me for my very love.

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**B**RAVE comrade, answer ! When you  
joined the war,

What left you ? “ Wife and children,  
wealth and friends,

A storied home whose ancient roof-tree  
bends

Above such thoughts as love tells o’er and  
o’er.”

Had you no pang or struggle ? “ Yes ; I bore  
Such pain on parting as at hell’s gate rends  
The entering soul, when from its grasp  
ascends

The last faint virtue which on earth it  
wore.”

You loved your home, your kindred, children,  
wife ;

You loathed yet plunged into war's bloody  
whirl! —

What urged you? "Duty! Something  
more than life.

That which made Abraham bare the priestly  
knife,

And Isaac kneel, or that young Hebrew  
girl

Who sought her father coming from the  
strife."

## G R A N T .

**A**S Moses stood upon the flaming hill,  
With all the people gathered at his feet,  
Waiting in Sinai's valley, there to meet  
The awful bearer of Jehovah's will ;  
So, Grant, thou stand'st, amidst the trumpets  
shrill,  
And the wild fiery storms that flash and  
beat  
In iron thunder and in leaden sleet,  
Topmost of all, and most exposed to ill.  
O, stand thou firm, great leader of our race,  
Hope of our future, till the times grow  
bland,  
And into ashes drops war's dying brand :

Then let us see thee, with benignant grace,  
Descend thy height, God's glory on thy  
face,  
And the law's tables safe within thy hand !

## DIRGE FOR A SOLDIER.

IN MEMORY OF GENERAL PHILIP KEARNY.

KILLED SEPTEMBER 1, 1862.

CLOSE his eyes ; his work is done !  
What to him is friend or foeman,  
Rise of moon, or set of sun,  
Hand of man, or kiss of woman ?  
Lay him low, lay him low,  
In the clover or the snow !  
What cares he ? he cannot know :  
Lay him low !

As man may, he fought his fight,  
Proved his truth by his endeavor ;

Let him sleep in solemn night,  
Sleep forever and forever.  
Lay him low, lay him low,  
In the clover or the snow !  
What cares he ? he cannot know :  
Lay him low !

Fold him in his country's stars,  
Roll the drum and fire the volley !  
What to him are all our wars,  
What but death bemocking folly ?  
Lay him low, lay him low,  
In the clover or the snow !  
What cares he ? he cannot know :  
Lay him low !

Leave him to God's watching eye,  
Trust him to the hand that made him.  
Mortal love weeps idly by :  
God alone has power to aid him.

Lay him low, lay him low,  
In the clover or the snow !  
What cares he ? he cannot know :  
Lay him low !



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.



## PRINCE ADEB.

**I**N Sana, O, in Sana, God, the Lord,  
Was very kind and merciful to me !  
Forth from the Desert in my rags I came,  
Weary and sore of foot. I saw the spires  
And swelling bubbles of the golden domes  
Rise through the trees of Sana, and my heart  
Grew great within me with the strength of God ;  
And I cried out, “ Now shall I right myself, —  
I, Adeb the despised, — for God is just ! ”  
There he who wronged my father dwelt in  
    peace, —  
My warlike father, who, when gray hairs crept  
Around his forehead, as on Lebanon  
The whitening snows of winter, was betrayed  
To the sly Imam, and his tented wealth

Swept from him, 'twixt the roosting of the cock  
And his first crowing, — in a single night :  
And I, poor Adeb, sole of all my race,  
Smeared with my father's and my kinsmen's  
          blood,

Fled through the Desert, till one day a tribe  
Of hungry Bedouins found me in the sand,  
Half mad with famine, and they took me up,  
And made a slave of me, — of me, a prince !  
All was fulfilled at last. I fled from them,  
In rags and sorrow. Nothing but my heart,  
Like a strong swimmer, bore me up against  
The howling sea of my adversity.

At length o'er Sana, in the act to swoop,  
I stood like a young eagle on a crag.  
The traveller passed me with suspicious fear :  
I asked for nothing ; I was not a thief.  
The lean dogs snuffed around me : my lank  
          bones,

Fed on the berries and the crusted pools,

Were a scant morsel. Once, a brown-skinned  
girl

Called me a little from the common path,  
And gave me figs and barley in a bag.

I paid her with a kiss, with nothing more,  
And she looked glad ; for I was beautiful,  
And virgin as a fountain, and as cold.

I stretched her bounty, pecking like a bird,  
Her figs and barley, till my strength returned.

So when rich Sana lay beneath my eyes,

My foot was as the leopard's, and my hand

As heavy as the lion's brandished paw ;

And underneath my burnished skin the veins

And stretching muscles played, at every step,

In wondrous motion. I was very strong.

I looked upon my body, as a bird

That bills his feathers ere he takes to flight, —

I, watching over Sana. Then I prayed ;

And on a soft stone, wetted in the brook,

Ground my long knife ; and then I prayed

again.

God heard my voice, preparing all for me,  
As, softly stepping down the hills, I saw  
The Imam's summer-palace all ablaze  
In the last flash of sunset. Every fount  
Was spouting fire, and all the orange-trees  
Bore blazing coals, and from the marble walls  
And gilded spires and columns, strangely  
wrought,  
Glared the red light, until my eyes were pained  
With the fierce splendor. Till the night grew  
thick,  
I lay within the bushes, next the door,  
Still as a serpent, as invisible.  
The guard hung round the portal. Man by  
man  
They dropped away, save one lone sentinel,  
And on his eyes God's finger lightly fell ;  
He slept half standing. Like a summer wind  
That threads the grove, yet never turns a leaf,  
I stole from shadow unto shadow forth ;

Crossed all the marble court-yard, swung the  
door,

Like a soft gust, a little way ajar, —

My body's narrow width, no more, — and stood  
Beneath the cresset in the painted hall.

I marvelled at the riches of my foe ;

I marvelled at God's ways with wicked men.

Then I reached forth, and took God's waiting  
hand :

And so He led me over mossy floors,

Flowered with the silken summer of Shiraz,

Straight to the Imam's chamber. At the door

Stretched a brawn eunuch, blacker than my  
eyes :

His woolly head lay like the Kaba-stone

In Mecca's mosque, as silent and as huge.

I stepped across it, with my pointed knife

Just missing a full vein along his neck,

And, pushing by the curtains, there I was —

I, Adeb the despised — upon the spot

That, next to heaven, I longed for most of all.

I could have shouted for the joy in me.

Fierce pangs and flashes of bewildering light

Leaped through my brain and danced before

my eyes.

So loud my heart beat, that I feared its sound

Would wake the sleeper; and the bubbling

blood

Choked in my throat, till, weaker than a child,

I reeled against a column, and there hung

In a blind stupor. Then I prayed again;

And, sense by sense, I was made whole once

more.

I touched myself; I was the same; I knew

Myself to be lone Adeb, young and strong,

With nothing but a stride of empty air

Between me and God's justice. In a sleep,

Thick with the fumes of the accursed grape,

Sprawled the false Imam. On his shaggy

breast,



Like a white lily heaving on the tide  
Of some foul stream, the fairest woman slept  
These roving eyes have ever looked upon.  
Almost a child, her bosom barely showed  
The change beyond her girlhood. All her  
          charms

Were budding, but half opened ; for I saw  
Not only beauty wondrous in itself,  
But possibility of more to be  
In the full process of her blooming days.  
I gazed upon her, and my heart grew soft,  
As a parched pasture with the dew of heaven.  
While thus I gazed she smiled, and slowly raised  
The long curve of her lashes ; and we looked  
Each upon each in wonder, not alarm, —  
Not eye to eye, but soul to soul, we held  
Each other for a moment. All her life  
Seemed centred in the circle of her eyes.  
She stirred no limb ; her long-drawn, equal  
          breath

Swelled out and ebbd away beneath her breast,  
In calm unbroken. Not a sign of fear  
Touched the faint color on her oval cheek,  
Or pinched the arches of her tender mouth.  
She took me for a vision, and she lay  
With her sleep's smile unaltered, as in doubt  
Whether real life had stolen into her dreams,  
Or dreaming stretched into her outer life.  
I was not graceless to a woman's eyes.  
The girls of Damar paused to see me pass,  
I walking in my rags, yet beautiful.  
One maiden said, "He has a prince's air!"  
I am a prince; the air was all my own.  
So thought the lily on the Imam's breast;  
And lightly as a summer mist, that lifts  
Before the morning, so she floated up,  
Without a sound or rustle of a robe,  
From her coarse pillow, and before me stood  
With asking eyes. The Imam never moved.  
A stride and blow were all my need, and they

Were wholly in my power. I took her hand,  
I held a warning finger to my lips,  
And whispered in her small, expectant ear,  
“Adeb, the son of Akem!” She replied  
In a low murmur, whose bewildering sound  
Almost lulled wakeful me to sleep, and sealed  
The sleeper’s lids in tenfold slumber, “Prince,  
Lord of the Imam’s life and of my heart,  
Take all thou seest, — it is thy right, I know, —  
But spare the Imam for thy own soul’s sake!”  
Then I arrayed me in a robe of state,  
Shining with gold and jewels; and I bound  
In my long turban gems that might have  
    bought  
The lands ’twixt Babelmandeb and Sahan.  
I girt about me, with a blazing belt,  
A scimitar o’er which the sweating smiths  
In far Damascus hammered for long years,  
Whose hilt and scabbard shot a trembling light  
From diamonds and rubies. And she smiled,

As piece by piece I put the treasures on,  
To see me look so fair, — in pride she smiled.  
I hung long purses at my side. I scooped,  
From off a table, figs and dates and rice,  
And bound them to my girdle in a sack.  
Then over all I flung a snowy cloak,  
And beckoned to the maiden. So she stole  
Forth like my shadow, past the sleeping wolf  
Who wronged my father, o'er the woolly head  
Of the swart eunuch, down the painted court,  
And by the sentinel who standing slept.  
Strongly against the portal, through my rags, —  
My old base rags, — and through the maiden's  
    veil,  
I pressed my knife, — upon the wooden hilt  
Was "Adeb, son of Akem," carved by me  
In my long slavehood, — as a passing sign  
To wait the Imam's waking. Shadows cast  
From two high-sailing clouds upon the sand  
Passed not more noiseless than we two, as one,

Glided beneath the moonlight, till I smelt  
The fragrance of the stables. As I slid  
The wide doors open, with a sudden bound  
Uprose the startled horses ; but they stood  
Still as the man who in a foreign land  
Hears his strange language, when my Desert call,  
As low and plaintive as the nested dove's,  
Fell on their listening ears. From stall to stall,  
Feeling the horses with my groping hands,  
I crept in darkness ; and at length I came  
Upon two sister mares whose rounded sides,  
Fine muzzles, and small heads, and pointed  
ears,  
And foreheads spreading 'twixt their eyelids  
wide,  
Long slender tails, thin manes, and coats of silk,  
Told me, that, of the hundred steeds there  
stalled,  
My hand was on the treasures. O'er and o'er  
I felt their bony joints, and down their legs

To the cool hoofs ; — no blemish anywhere :  
These I led forth and saddled. Upon one  
I set the lily, gathered now for me, —  
My own, henceforth, forever. So we rode  
Across the grass, beside the stony path,  
Until we gained the highway that is lost,  
Leading from Sana, in the eastern sands :  
When, with a cry that both the Desert-born  
Knew without hint from whip or goading spur,  
We dashed into a gallop. Far behind  
In sparks and smoke the dusty highway rose ;  
And ever on the maiden's face I saw,  
When the moon flashed upon it, the strange  
smile  
It wore on waking. Once I kissed her mouth,  
When she grew weary, and her strength re-  
turned.

All through the night we scoured between the  
hills :

The moon went down behind us, and the stars

Dropped after her ; but long before I saw  
A planet blazing straight against our eyes,  
The road had softened, and the shadowy hills  
Had flattened out, and I could hear the hiss  
Of sand spurned backward by the flying  
mares. —

Glory to God ! I was at home again !  
The sun rose on us ; far and near I saw  
The level Desert ; sky met sand all round.  
We paused at mid-day by a palm-crowned well,  
And ate and slumbered. Somewhat, too, was  
said :

The words have slipped my memory. That  
same eve

We rode sedately through a Hamoum camp,—  
I, Adeb, prince amongst them, and my bride.  
And ever since amongst them I have ridden,  
A head and shoulders taller than the best ;  
And ever since my days have been of gold,  
My nights have been of silver, — God is just !

## ABON'S CHARITY.

**P**OOOR, very poor had Abon Hassen grown ;  
Of all the wealth his fathers called their  
own

To him remained two sequins. These he gave  
To a low wretch, a miserable knave ;  
As full of sin and falsehood as the brain  
Of the big-eared and red-faced rogue, whose  
gain  
Grew from long tables, heaped with bills and  
gold,  
Beneath whose shade the loathsome beggar  
rolled,  
And whined for alms, to every passer-by,  
In Allah's name. Young Abon's tender eye



Shone, like the morning sun, upon the place  
Where lay the beggar ; and a regal grace  
Crowned his fair forehead, as he quickly cast  
His sequins down, and, blushing, onward passed,  
With " Take them, then, in Allah's holy name :  
Thy greater need, poor soul, puts mine to  
shame ! "

The youth passed quickly ; but the lying tongue  
Of the vile wretch pursued, and round him rung  
The old, stale blessings that for years had paid  
Such simple victims, glib words of his trade ;  
As bare of meaning, in their prayers and praise,  
As to the parrot is the parrot's phrase.

But Abon paused, as if the seventh heaven  
Before his eyes its ivory gates had riven ;  
Paused with a strange, sweet warmth about his  
heart,

With music in his ears, and far apart  
From this rough world one moment he was  
caught,

Beyond the bounds of sense or farthest thought,  
Into the depths of an ecstatic trance ;  
And there he reeled till rapture verged on pain.  
Then slid he gently from that eminence ;  
And Abon whispered, as he woke again,  
“ Surely the hand of Allah touched me then ! ”

Out of the distance suddenly arose  
A cry of terror ; then the rapid blows  
Of flying hoofs, along the stony way,  
Broke on his ears. The crowd, in pale dismay,  
Pressed back against the houses, leaving clear  
The middle street ; down which, in mad career,  
A furious horse, whose meteor mane and tail  
Blew straight behind him, on the roaring gale  
Of his own speed, rushed headlong. And there  
                  clung  
To the wild steed a form that toppling swung  
Hither and thither in his giddy seat,  
Helpless and failing. An old man, more meet

For propping cushions on the soft divan,  
Than that fierce throne, was he. No venturous  
man,

Of all the throng, essayed to stop the course  
Of the swift steed. Now Abon knew a horse  
As well as one may know his own right hand.  
No breed or cross betwixt the sea and sand,  
Syrian or Arab, but young Abon knew ;  
And all their points of difference could view  
In one quick glance. So Abon, without heed  
Or thought of danger, towards the maddened  
steed

Sprang, as the leopard bounds, and caught the  
bit.

Borne from his feet an instant, he alit  
With his firm hand still on the golden shank  
Of the long curb ; till on his haunches sank  
The astonished horse, wide-eyed, subdued to  
naught.

Then from the saddle agile Abon caught

A mass of silks and jewels, falling prone  
On his strong breast ; and he who filled the  
                  throne

Of fair Damascus, without scratch or harm,  
Lay safely panting upon Abon's arm.

When Abon Hassen, whom men call "the  
                  good,"

Years after, the Pasha, in counsel stood  
With holy men before the mosque he raised  
To hold his master's bones ; and Osman praised  
The glories of the temple ; Abon told  
The story of the beggar and the gold,  
The trance, the flying horse ; and how he  
                  stepped,

Watching the kingdom while his master slept,  
Through actions spotless in the people's sight,  
By slow advances to his princely height ; —  
Said Osman, holiest of the holy men,  
" Surely the hand of Allah touched thee then ! "

## IDLENESS.

**I**F I do no more than this,  
I do something grand, I wis.  
If I do no more than slumber  
Where these locust-blossoms cumber  
The young grass, while in and out  
Voyage the humming bees about ;  
And the fields of new-turned land,  
In long brown waves on every hand,  
Mix their strong life-giving smell  
With the violets of the dell,  
Till I, half drunk with country gladness,  
Forget the moody city-sadness ;—

If I do no more than gaze,  
Through the flimsy spring-tide haze,

Far into the sapphire deeps,  
Where white cloud after white cloud creeps ;  
Or watch the triumph of the sun,  
When his western stand is won,  
And crimson stain and golden bar  
Are drawn across the evening-star ;  
And slowly broaden on my sight  
The glories of the deeper night,  
Till I, o'ertaken with boding sorrow,  
Shrink from inevitable to-morrow ;—

If I do no more than look  
Into that dark and awful book  
Which, like a prophet's fatal scroll,  
Lies open in my deathless soul ;  
Whose pictured joy and pictured woe  
Mean more than any man may know ;  
Close secret, hidden in death and birth,  
Reflex and prophecy of earth ;

With earth's sweet sounds and scented blooms,  
Its splendors and its solemn glooms,  
All things the senses care about,  
As clear within us as without ;  
As if from us creation grew  
In some strange way, we one time knew : —  
If I do no more than this,  
I do something grand, I wis.

## WINTER WINDS.

O WINTER winds, your mournful roar  
Is burden of the song I sing ;  
An everlasting dirge ye pour,  
A restless pain that beats the door  
Of heaven with its wounded wing.

Grief has no faith ; the common woe  
That sees a future hope unfold,  
Draws comfort thence ; but as ye blow,  
O winter winds, a grief I know  
That cannot, would not be consoled.

Ye wail o'er earth left desolate,  
O'er beauty stricken with decay ;



Ye howl behind the path of fate,  
Deaf to the voice that bids you wait,  
Ye cry for what has passed away.

And I who stand with drooping eyes,  
What heart have I to rise and greet  
The beckoning hopes, that dimly rise,  
While all I loved and trusted lies  
In ashes at my faltering feet ?

O winter winds, add moan to moan !  
For though ye give me no relief,  
Ye sound a fitting undertone,  
A dreary note whose heavy drone  
Keeps measure with my shriller grief.

ELISHA KENT KANE.

FEBRUARY 27, 1857.

O MOTHER Earth, thy task is done  
With him who slumbers here below ;  
From thy cold Arctic brow he won  
A glory purer than thy snow.

Thy warmer bosom gently nursed  
The dying hero ; for his eye  
The tropic Spring's full splendors burst, —  
“ In vain ! ” a thousand voices cry.

“ In vain, in vain ! ” The poet's art  
Forsook me when the people cried ;  
Naught but the grief that fills my heart,  
And memories of my friend, abide.

We parted in the midnight street,  
    Beneath a cold autumnal rain ;  
He wrung my hand, he stayed my feet  
    With "Friend, we shall not meet again."

I laughed ; I would not then believe ;  
    He smiled ; he left me ; all was o'er.  
How much for my poor laugh I 'd give ! —  
    How much to see him smile once more !

I know my lay bemeans the dead,  
    That sorrow is an humble thing,  
That I should sing his praise instead,  
    And strike it on a higher string.

Let stronger minstrels raise their lay,  
    And follow where his fame has flown ;  
To the whole world belongs his praise,  
    His friendship was to me alone.

So close against my heart he lay,  
That I should make his glory dim,  
And hear a bashful whisper say,  
“ I praise myself in praising him.”

O gentle mother, following nigh  
His long, long funeral march, resign  
To me the right to lift this cry,  
And part the sorrow that is thine.

O father, mourning by his bier,  
Forgive this song of little worth !  
My eloquence is but a tear,  
I cannot, would not rise from earth.

O stricken brothers, broken band, —  
The link that held the jewel lost, —  
I pray you give me leave to stand  
Amid you, from the sorrowing host.

We 'll give his honors to the world,  
We 'll hark for echoes from afar ;  
Where'er our country's flag 's unfurled  
His name shall shine in every star.

We feel no fear that time shall keep  
Our hero's memory. Let us move  
A little from the world to weep,  
And for our portion take his love.

## DIRGE.

A. W. NOVEMBER 20, 1863.

**A** NNIE'S dead, Annie's dead !  
In that sentence all is said.  
Lily form and rosy head,  
Still and cold, yet half divine ;  
Though the lights no longer shine  
Whence her gentle soul looked through  
Its clear essence, calmly true :  
Ah ! the solemn inward view  
Those inverted eyeballs cast,  
Ere her spirit heavenward passed !  
Annie's dead !

Annie's dead, Annie's dead !  
Sister angels, overhead,  
Have your greeting hands outspread ;

Let a welcome cry be given,  
As she treads the skirts of heaven ;  
For a soul from earth more free,  
More of your own purity,  
Never joined your company.  
Match her ye of heavenly mould,  
Even thus, thus mortal cold !

Annie 's dead !

Annie 's dead, Annie 's dead !  
Why should this be oversaid ?  
Why should I abase my head ? —  
I who loved her from afar,  
As the dreamer may the star ;  
I who bowed my humble eye,  
Scarcely bold enough to sigh,  
When she chanced to pass me by ;  
Trembling lest a word might stir  
The high calm that reigned in her.

Annie 's dead !

Annie 's dead, Annie 's dead !  
But a gleam of light hath sped  
Through death's shadow close and dread ;  
For wherever such as thou  
Wanderest, must be sunshine now.  
Dweller of some aery isle,  
Floating up to God the while,  
If I read aright that smile ;  
Hear aright my heart that saith,  
“ Shall I fall in love with death ? ”  
Annie 's dead !

THE END.











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CONTENTS

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