

Songs of Labor and Reform

From Volume III., The Works of Whittier: Anti-Slavery Poems and Songs of Labor and Reform

John Greenleaf Whittier

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Volume III., The Works of Whittier: Anti-Slavery, Labor and Reform
#24 in our series by John Greenleaf Whittier

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ANTI-SLAVERY POEMS

SONGS OF LABOR AND REFORM

BY

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

SONGS OF LABOR AND REFORM

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NOTES

THE QUAKER OF THE OLDEN TIME.

THE Quaker of the olden time!
How calm and firm and true,
Unspotted by its wrong and crime,
He walked the dark earth through.
The lust of power, the love of gain,
The thousand lures of sin
Around him, had no power to stain
The purity within.

With that deep insight which detects
All great things in the small,
And knows how each man's life affects
The spiritual life of all,
He walked by faith and not by sight,
By love and not by law;
The presence of the wrong or right
He rather felt than saw.

He felt that wrong with wrong partakes,
That nothing stands alone,
That whoso gives the motive, makes
His brother's sin his own.
And, pausing not for doubtful choice
Of evils great or small,
He listened to that inward voice
Which called away from all.

O Spirit of that early day,
So pure and strong and true,
Be with us in the narrow way
Our faithful fathers knew.
Give strength the evil to forsake,
The cross of Truth to bear,
And love and reverent fear to make
Our daily lives a prayer!
1838.

DEMOCRACY.

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.--MATTHEW vii. 12.

BEARER of Freedom's holy light,

Breaker of Slavery's chain and rod,
The foe of all which pains the sight,
Or wounds the generous ear of God!

Beautiful yet thy temples rise,
Though there profaning gifts are thrown;
And fires unkindled of the skies
Are glaring round thy altar-stone.

Still sacred, though thy name be breathed
By those whose hearts thy truth deride;
And garlands, plucked from thee, are wreathed
Around the haughty brows of Pride.

Oh, ideal of my boyhood's time!
The faith in which my father stood,
Even when the sons of Lust and Crime
Had stained thy peaceful courts with blood!

Still to those courts my footsteps turn,
For through the mists which darken there,
I see the flame of Freedom burn,--
The Kebla of the patriot's prayer!

The generous feeling, pure and warm,
Which owns the right of all divine;
The pitying heart, the helping arm,
The prompt self-sacrifice, are thine.

Beneath thy broad, impartial eye,
How fade the lines of caste and birth!
How equal in their suffering lie
The groaning multitudes of earth!

Still to a stricken brother true,
Whatever clime hath nurtured him;
As stooped to heal the wounded Jew
The worshipper of Gerizim.

By misery unrepelled, unawed
By pomp or power, thou seest a Man
In prince or peasant, slave or lord,
Pale priest, or swarthy artisan.

Through all disguise, form, place, or name,
Beneath the flaunting robes of sin,
Through poverty and squalid shame,
Thou lookest on the man within.

On man, as man, retaining yet,
Howe'er debased, and soiled, and dim,
The crown upon his forehead set,
The immortal gift of God to him.

And there is reverence in thy look;
For that frail form which mortals wear
The Spirit of the Holiest took,
And veiled His perfect brightness there.

Not from the shallow babbling fount
Of vain philosophy thou art;
He who of old on Syria's Mount
Thrilled, warmed, by turns, the listener's heart,

In holy words which cannot die,
In thoughts which angels leaned to know,
Proclaimed thy message from on high,
Thy mission to a world of woe.

That voice's echo hath not died!
From the blue lake of Galilee,
And Tabor's lonely mountain-side,
It calls a struggling world to thee.

Thy name and watchword o'er this land
I hear in every breeze that stirs,
And round a thousand altars stand
Thy banded party worshippers.

Not, to these altars of a day,
At party's call, my gift I bring;
But on thy olden shrine I lay
A freeman's dearest offering.

The voiceless utterance of his will,--
His pledge to Freedom and to Truth,
That manhood's heart remembers still
The homage of his generous youth.
Election Day, 1841

THE GALLOWS.

Written on reading pamphlets published by clergymen against the
abolition of the gallows.

I.
THE suns of eighteen centuries have shone
Since the Redeemer walked with man, and made
The fisher's boat, the cavern's floor of stone,
And mountain moss, a pillow for His head;
And He, who wandered with the peasant Jew,
And broke with publicans the bread of shame,
And drank with blessings, in His Father's name,
The water which Samaria's outcast drew,
Hath now His temples upon every shore,
Altar and shrine and priest; and incense dim
Evermore rising, with low prayer and hymn,
From lips which press the temple's marble floor,
Or kiss the gilded sign of the dread cross He bore.

II.
Yet as of old, when, meekly "doing good,"
He fed a blind and selfish multitude,
And even the poor companions of His lot

With their dim earthly vision knew Him not,
How ill are His high teachings understood
Where He hath spoken Liberty, the priest
At His own altar binds the chain anew;
Where He hath bidden to Life's equal feast,
The starving many wait upon the few;
Where He hath spoken Peace, His name hath been
The loudest war-cry of contending men;
Priests, pale with vigils, in His name have blessed
The unsheathed sword, and laid the spear in rest,
Wet the war-banner with their sacred wine,
And crossed its blazon with the holy sign;
Yea, in His name who bade the erring live,
And daily taught His lesson, to forgive!
Twisted the cord and edged the murderous steel;
And, with His words of mercy on their lips,
Hung gloating o'er the pincer's burning grips,
And the grim horror of the straining wheel;
Fed the slow flame which gnawed the victim's limb,
Who saw before his searing eyeballs swim
The image of their Christ in cruel zeal,
Through the black torment-smoke, held mockingly to him!

III.

The blood which mingled with the desert sand,
And beaded with its red and ghastly dew
The vines and olives of the Holy Land;
The shrieking curses of the hunted Jew;
The white-sown bones of heretics, where'er
They sank beneath the Crusade's holy spear;
Goa's dark dungeons, Malta's sea-washed cell,
Where with the hymns the ghostly fathers sung
Mingled the groans by subtle torture wrung,
Heaven's anthem blending with the shriek of hell!
The midnight of Bartholomew, the stake
Of Smithfield, and that thrice-accursed flame
Which Calvin kindled by Geneva's lake;
New England's scaffold, and the priestly sneer
Which mocked its victims in that hour of fear,
When guilt itself a human tear might claim,--
Bear witness, O Thou wronged and merciful One!
That Earth's most hateful crimes have in Thy
name been done!

IV.

Thank God! that I have lived to see the time
When the great truth begins at last to find
An utterance from the deep heart of mankind,
Earnest and clear, that all Revenge is Crime,
That man is holier than a creed, that all
Restraint upon him must consult his good,
Hope's sunshine linger on his prison wall,
And Love look in upon his solitude.
The beautiful lesson which our Saviour taught
Through long, dark centuries its way hath wrought
Into the common mind and popular thought;
And words, to which by Galilee's lake shore

The humble fishers listened with hushed oar,
Have found an echo in the general heart,
And of the public faith become a living part.

V.

Who shall arrest this tendency? Bring back
The cells of Venice and the bigot's rack?
Harden the softening human heart again
To cold indifference to a brother's pain?
Ye most unhappy men! who, turned away
From the mild sunshine of the Gospel day,
Grove in the shadows of Man's twilight time,
What mean ye, that with ghoul-like zest ye brood,
O'er those foul altars streaming with warm blood,
Permitted in another age and clime?
Why cite that law with which the bigot Jew
Rebuked the Pagan's mercy, when he knew
No evil in the Just One? Wherefore turn
To the dark, cruel past? Can ye not learn
From the pure Teacher's life how mildly free
Is the great Gospel of Humanity?
The Flamen's knife is bloodless, and no more
Mexitli's altars soak with human gore,
No more the ghastly sacrifices smoke
Through the green arches of the Druid's oak;
And ye of milder faith, with your high claim
Of prophet-utterance in the Holiest name,
Will ye become the Druids of our time
Set up your scaffold-altars in our land,
And, consecrators of Law's darkest crime,
Urge to its loathsome work the hangman's hand?
Beware, lest human nature, roused at last,
From its peeled shoulder your encumbrance cast,
And, sick to loathing of your cry for blood,
Rank ye with those who led their victims round
The Celt's red altar and the Indian's mound,
Abhorred of Earth and Heaven, a pagan brotherhood!
1842.

SEED-TIME AND HARVEST.

As o'er his furrowed fields which lie
Beneath a coldly dropping sky,
Yet chill with winter's melted snow,
The husbandman goes forth to sow,

Thus, Freedom, on the bitter blast
The ventures of thy seed we cast,
And trust to warmer sun and rain
To swell the germs and fill the grain.

Who calls thy glorious service hard?
Who deems it not its own reward?
Who, for its trials, counts it less.
A cause of praise and thankfulness?

It may not be our lot to wield
The sickle in the ripened field;
Nor ours to hear, on summer eves,
The reaper's song among the sheaves.

Yet where our duty's task is wrought
In unison with God's great thought,
The near and future blend in one,
And whatsoe'er is willed, is done!

And ours the grateful service whence
Comes day by day the recompense;
The hope, the trust, the purpose stayed,
The fountain and the noonday shade.

And were this life the utmost span,
The only end and aim of man,
Better the toil of fields like these
Than waking dream and slothful ease.

But life, though falling like our grain,
Like that revives and springs again;
And, early called, how blest are they
Who wait in heaven their harvest-day!
1843.

TO THE REFORMERS OF ENGLAND.

This poem was addressed to those who like Richard Cobden and John Bright were seeking the reform of political evils in Great Britain by peaceful and Christian means. It will be remembered that the Anti-Corn Law League was in the midst of its labors at this time.

GOD bless ye, brothers! in the fight
Ye 're waging now, ye cannot fail,
For better is your sense of right
Than king-craft's triple mail.

Than tyrant's law, or bigot's ban,
More mighty is your simplest word;
The free heart of an honest man
Than crosier or the sword.

Go, let your blinded Church rehearse
The lesson it has learned so well;
It moves not with its prayer or curse
The gates of heaven or hell.

Let the State scaffold rise again;
Did Freedom die when Russell died?
Forget ye how the blood of Vane
From earth's green bosom cried?

The great hearts of your olden time
Are beating with you, full and strong;
All holy memories and sublime

And glorious round ye throng.

The bluff, bold men of Runnymede
Are with ye still in times like these;
The shades of England's mighty dead,
Your cloud of witnesses!

The truths ye urge are borne abroad
By every wind and every tide;
The voice of Nature and of God
Speaks out upon your side.

The weapons which your hands have found
Are those which Heaven itself has wrought,
Light, Truth, and Love; your battle-ground
The free, broad field of Thought.

No partial, selfish purpose breaks
The simple beauty of your plan,
Nor lie from throne or altar shakes
Your steady faith in man.

The languid pulse of England starts
And bounds beneath your words of power,
The beating of her million hearts
Is with you at this hour!

O ye who, with undoubting eyes,
Through present cloud and gathering storm,
Behold the span of Freedom's skies,
And sunshine soft and warm;

Press bravely onward! not in vain
Your generous trust in human-kind;
The good which bloodshed could not gain
Your peaceful zeal shall find.

Press on! the triumph shall be won
Of common rights and equal laws,
The glorious dream of Harrington,
And Sidney's good old cause.

Blessing the cotter and the crown,
Sweetening worn Labor's bitter cup;
And, plucking not the highest down,
Lifting the lowest up.

Press on! and we who may not share
The toil or glory of your fight
May ask, at least, in earnest prayer,
God's blessing on the right!
1843.

THE HUMAN SACRIFICE.

Some leading sectarian papers had lately published the letter of a

clergyman, giving an account of his attendance upon a criminal (who had committed murder during a fit of intoxication), at the time of his execution, in western New York. The writer describes the agony of the wretched being, his abortive attempts at prayer, his appeal for life, his fear of a violent death; and, after declaring his belief that the poor victim died without hope of salvation, concludes with a warm eulogy upon the gallows, being more than ever convinced of its utility by the awful dread and horror which it inspired.

I.

FAR from his close and noisome cell,
By grassy lane and sunny stream,
Blown clover field and strawberry dell,
And green and meadow freshness, fell
The footsteps of his dream.
Again from careless feet the dew
Of summer's misty morn he shook;
Again with merry heart he threw
His light line in the rippling brook.
Back crowded all his school-day joys;
He urged the ball and quoit again,
And heard the shout of laughing boys
Come ringing down the walnut glen.
Again he felt the western breeze,
With scent of flowers and crisping hay;
And down again through wind-stirred trees
He saw the quivering sunlight play.
An angel in home's vine-hung door,
He saw his sister smile once more;
Once more the truant's brown-locked head
Upon his mother's knees was laid,
And sweetly lulled to slumber there,
With evening's holy hymn and prayer!

II.

He woke. At once on heart and brain
The present Terror rushed again;
Clanked on his limbs the felon's chain
He woke, to hear the church-tower tell
Time's footfall on the conscious bell,
And, shuddering, feel that clanging din
His life's last hour had ushered in;
To see within his prison-yard,
Through the small window, iron barred,
The gallows shadow rising dim
Between the sunrise heaven and him;
A horror in God's blessed air;
A blackness in his morning light;
Like some foul devil-altar there
Built up by demon hands at night.
And, maddened by that evil sight,
Dark, horrible, confused, and strange,
A chaos of wild, weltering change,
All power of check and guidance gone,
Dizzy and blind, his mind swept on.
In vain he strove to breathe a prayer,
In vain he turned the Holy Book,
He only heard the gallows-stair
Creak as the wind its timbers shook.

No dream for him of sin forgiven,
While still that baleful spectre stood,
With its hoarse murmur, "Blood for Blood!"
Between him and the pitying Heaven.

III.

Low on his dungeon floor he knelt,
And smote his breast, and on his chain,
Whose iron clasp he always felt,
His hot tears fell like rain;
And near him, with the cold, calm look
And tone of one whose formal part,
Unwarmed, unsoftened of the heart,
Is measured out by rule and book,
With placid lip and tranquil blood,
The hangman's ghostly ally stood,
Blessing with solemn text and word
The gallows-drop and strangling cord;
Lending the sacred Gospel's awe
And sanction to the crime of Law.

IV.

He saw the victim's tortured brow,
The sweat of anguish starting there,
The record of a nameless woe
In the dim eye's imploring stare,
Seen hideous through the long, damp hair,--
Fingers of ghastly skin and bone
Working and writhing on the stone!
And heard, by mortal terror wrung
From heaving breast and stiffened tongue,
The choking sob and low hoarse prayer;
As o'er his half-crazed fancy came
A vision of the eternal flame,
Its smoking cloud of agonies,
Its demon-worm that never dies,
The everlasting rise and fall
Of fire-waves round the infernal wall;
While high above that dark red flood,
Black, giant-like, the gallows stood;
Two busy fiends attending there
One with cold mocking rite and prayer,
The other with impatient grasp,
Tightening the death-rope's strangling clasp.

V.

The unfelt rite at length was done,
The prayer unheard at length was said,
An hour had passed: the noonday sun
Smote on the features of the dead!
And he who stood the doomed beside,
Calm gauger of the swelling tide
Of mortal agony and fear,
Heeding with curious eye and ear
Whate'er revealed the keen excess
Of man's extremest wretchedness
And who in that dark anguish saw
An earnest of the victim's fate,
The vengeful terrors of God's law,

The kindlings of Eternal hate,
The first drops of that fiery rain
Which beats the dark red realm of pain,
Did he uplift his earnest cries
Against the crime of Law, which gave
His brother to that fearful grave,
Whereon Hope's moonlight never lies,
And Faith's white blossoms never wave
To the soft breath of Memory's sighs;
Which sent a spirit marred and stained,
By fiends of sin possessed, profaned,
In madness and in blindness stark,
Into the silent, unknown dark?
No, from the wild and shrinking dread,
With which he saw the victim led
Beneath the dark veil which divides
Ever the living from the dead,
And Nature's solemn secret hides,
The man of prayer can only draw
New reasons for his bloody law;
New faith in staying Murder's hand
By murder at that Law's command;
New reverence for the gallows-rope,
As human nature's latest hope;
Last relic of the good old time,
When Power found license for its crime,
And held a writhing world in check
By that fell cord about its neck;
Stifled Sedition's rising shout,
Choked the young breath of Freedom out,
And timely checked the words which sprung
From Heresy's forbidden tongue;
While in its noose of terror bound,
The Church its cherished union found,
Conforming, on the Moslem plan,
The motley-colored mind of man,
Not by the Koran and the Sword,
But by the Bible and the Cord.

VI.

O Thou at whose rebuke the grave
Back to warm life its sleeper gave,
Beneath whose sad and tearful glance
The cold and changed countenance
Broke the still horror of its trance,
And, waking, saw with joy above,
A brother's face of tenderest love;
Thou, unto whom the blind and lame,
The sorrowing and the sin-sick came,
And from Thy very garment's hem
Drew life and healing unto them,
The burden of Thy holy faith
Was love and life, not hate and death;
Man's demon ministers of pain,
The fiends of his revenge, were sent
From thy pure Gospel's element
To their dark home again.
Thy name is Love! What, then, is he,
Who in that name the gallows rears,

An awful altar built to Thee,
With sacrifice of blood and tears?
Oh, once again Thy healing lay
On the blind eyes which knew Thee not,
And let the light of Thy pure day
Melt in upon his darkened thought.
Soften his hard, cold heart, and show
The power which in forbearance lies,
And let him feel that mercy now
Is better than old sacrifice.

VII.

As on the White Sea's charmed shore,
The Parsee sees his holy hill [10]
With dunest smoke-clouds curtained o'er,
Yet knows beneath them, evermore,
The low, pale fire is quivering still;
So, underneath its clouds of sin,
The heart of man retaineth yet
Gleams of its holy origin;
And half-quenched stars that never set,
Dim colors of its faded bow,
And early beauty, linger there,
And o'er its wasted desert blow
Faint breathings of its morning air.
Oh, never yet upon the scroll
Of the sin-stained, but priceless soul,
Hath Heaven inscribed "Despair!"
Cast not the clouded gem away,
Quench not the dim but living ray,--
My brother man, Beware!
With that deep voice which from the skies
Forbade the Patriarch's sacrifice,
God's angel cries, Forbear
1843

SONGS OF LABOR.

DEDICATION.

Prefixed to the volume of which the group of six poems following this
prelude constituted the first portion.

I WOULD the gift I offer here
Might grace from thy favor take,
And, seen through Friendship's atmosphere,
On softened lines and coloring, wear
The unaccustomed light of beauty, for thy sake.

Few leaves of Fancy's spring remain
But what I have I give to thee,
The o'er-sunned bloom of summer's plain,
And paler flowers, the latter rain
Calls from the westering slope of life's autumnal lea.

Above the fallen groves of green,
Where youth's enchanted forest stood,
Dry root and mossed trunk between,
A sober after-growth is seen,
As springs the pine where falls the gay-leafed maple wood!

Yet birds will sing, and breezes play
Their leaf-harps in the sombre tree;
And through the bleak and wintry day
It keeps its steady green away,--
So, even my after-thoughts may have a charm for thee.

Art's perfect forms no moral need,
And beauty is its own excuse;
But for the dull and flowerless weed
Some healing virtue still must plead,
And the rough ore must find its honors in its use.

So haply these, my simple lays
Of homely toil, may serve to show
The orchard bloom and tasselled maize
That skirt and gladden duty's ways,
The unsung beauty hid life's common things below.

Haply from them the toiler, bent
Above his forge or plough, may gain,
A manlier spirit of content,
And feel that life is wisest spent
Where the strong working hand makes strong the
working brain.

The doom which to the guilty pair
Without the walls of Eden came,
Transforming sinless ease to care
And rugged toil, no more shall bear
The burden of old crime, or mark of primal shame.

A blessing now, a curse no more;
Since He, whose name we breathe with awe,
The coarse mechanic vesture wore,
A poor man toiling with the poor,
In labor, as in prayer, fulfilling the same law.
1850.

THE SHOEMAKERS.

Ho! workers of the old time styled
The Gentle Craft of Leather
Young brothers of the ancient guild,
Stand forth once more together!
Call out again your long array,
In the olden merry manner
Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,
Fling out your blazoned banner!

Rap, rap! upon the well-worn stone
How falls the polished hammer
Rap, rap! the measured sound has grown
A quick and merry clamor.
Now shape the sole! now deftly curl
The glossy vamp around it,
And bless the while the bright-eyed girl
Whose gentle fingers bound it!

For you, along the Spanish main
A hundred keels are ploughing;
For you, the Indian on the plain
His lasso-coil is throwing;
For you, deep glens with hemlock dark
The woodman's fire is lighting;
For you, upon the oak's gray bark,
The woodman's axe is smiting.

For you, from Carolina's pine
The rosin-gum is stealing;
For you, the dark-eyed Florentine
Her silken skein is reeling;
For you, the dizzy goatherd roams
His rugged Alpine ledges;
For you, round all her shepherd homes,
Bloom England's thorny hedges.

The foremost still, by day or night,
On moated mound or heather,
Where'er the need of trampled right
Brought toiling men together;
Where the free burghers from the wall
Defied the mail-clad master,
Than yours, at Freedom's trumpet-call,
No craftsmen rallied faster.

Let foplings sneer, let fools deride,
Ye heed no idle scorner;
Free hands and hearts are still your pride,
And duty done, your honor.
Ye dare to trust, for honest fame,
The jury Time empanels,
And leave to truth each noble name
Which glorifies your annals.

Thy songs, Hans Sachs, are living yet,
In strong and hearty German;
And Bloomfield's lay, and Gifford's wit,
And patriot fame of Sherman;
Still from his book, a mystic seer,
The soul of Behmen teaches,
And England's priestcraft shakes to hear
Of Fox's leathern breeches.

The foot is yours; where'er it falls,
It treads your well-wrought leather,
On earthen floor, in marble halls,
On carpet, or on heather.
Still there the sweetest charm is found

Of matron grace or vestal's,
As Hebe's foot bore nectar round
Among the old celestials.

Rap, rap!--your stout and bluff brogan,
With footsteps slow and weary,
May wander where the sky's blue span
Shuts down upon the prairie.
On Beauty's foot your slippers glance,
By Saratoga's fountains,
Or twinkle down the summer dance
Beneath the Crystal Mountains!

The red brick to the mason's hand,
The brown earth to the tiller's,
The shoe in yours shall wealth command,
Like fairy Cinderella's!
As they who shunned the household maid
Beheld the crown upon her,
So all shall see your toil repaid
With hearth and home and honor.

Then let the toast be freely quaffed,
In water cool and brimming,--
"All honor to the good old Craft,
Its merry men and women!"
Call out again your long array,
In the old time's pleasant manner
Once more, on gay St. Crispin's day,
Fling out his blazoned banner!
1845.

THE FISHERMEN.

HURRAH! the seaward breezes
Sweep down the bay amain;
Heave up, my lads, the anchor!
Run up the sail again
Leave to the lubber landsmen
The rail-car and the steed;
The stars of heaven shall guide us,
The breath of heaven shall speed.

From the hill-top looks the steeple,
And the lighthouse from the sand;
And the scattered pines are waving
Their farewell from the land.
One glance, my lads, behind us,
For the homes we leave one sigh,
Ere we take the change and chances
Of the ocean and the sky.

Now, brothers, for the icebergs
Of frozen Labrador,
Floating spectral in the moonshine,
Along the low, black shore!

Where like snow the gannet's feathers
On Brador's rocks are shed,
And the noisy murr are flying,
Like black scuds, overhead;

Where in mist the rock is hiding,
And the sharp reef lurks below,
And the white squall smites in summer,
And the autumn tempests blow;
Where, through gray and rolling vapor,
From evening unto morn,
A thousand boats are hailing,
Horn answering unto horn.

Hurrah! for the Red Island,
With the white cross on its crown
Hurrah! for Meccatina,
And its mountains bare and brown!
Where the Caribou's tall antlers
O'er the dwarf-wood freely toss,
And the footstep of the Mickmack
Has no sound upon the moss.

There we'll drop our lines, and gather
Old Ocean's treasures in,
Where'er the mottled mackerel
Turns up a steel-dark fin.
The sea's our field of harvest,
Its scaly tribes our grain;
We'll reap the teeming waters
As at home they reap the plain.

Our wet hands spread the carpet,
And light the hearth of home;
From our fish, as in the old time,
The silver coin shall come.
As the demon fled the chamber
Where the fish of Tobit lay,
So ours from all our dwellings
Shall frighten Want away.

Though the mist upon our jackets
In the bitter air congeals,
And our lines wind stiff and slowly
From off the frozen reels;
Though the fog be dark around us,
And the storm blow high and loud,
We will whistle down the wild wind,
And laugh beneath the cloud!

In the darkness as in daylight,
On the water as on land,
God's eye is looking on us,
And beneath us is His hand!
Death will find us soon or later,
On the deck or in the cot;
And we cannot meet him better
Than in working out our lot.

Hurrah! hurrah! the west-wind
Comes freshening down the bay,
The rising sails are filling;
Give way, my lads, give way!
Leave the coward landsman clinging
To the dull earth, like a weed;
The stars of heaven shall guide us,
The breath of heaven shall speed!
1845.

THE LUMBERMEN.

WILDLY round our woodland quarters
Sad-voiced Autumn grieves;
Thickly down these swelling waters
Float his fallen leaves.
Through the tall and naked timber,
Column-like and old,
Gleam the sunsets of November,
From their skies of gold.

O'er us, to the southland heading,
Screams the gray wild-goose;
On the night-frost sounds the treading
Of the brindled moose.
Noiseless creeping, while we're sleeping,
Frost his task-work plies;
Soon, his icy bridges heaping,
Shall our log-piles rise.

When, with sounds of smothered thunder,
On some night of rain,
Lake and river break asunder
Winter's weakened chain,
Down the wild March flood shall bear them
To the saw-mill's wheel,
Or where Steam, the slave, shall tear them
With his teeth of steel.

Be it starlight, be it moonlight,
In these vales below,
When the earliest beams of sunlight
Streak the mountain's snow,
Crisps the boar-frost, keen and early,
To our hurrying feet,
And the forest echoes clearly
All our blows repeat.

Where the crystal Ambijejis
Stretches broad and clear,
And Millnocket's pine-black ridges
Hide the browsing deer
Where, through lakes and wide morasses,
Or through rocky walls,
Swift and strong, Penobscot passes
White with foamy falls;

Where, through clouds, are glimpses given
Of Katahdin's sides,--
Rock and forest piled to heaven,
Torn and ploughed by slides!
Far below, the Indian trapping,
In the sunshine warm;
Far above, the snow-cloud wrapping
Half the peak in storm!

Where are mossy carpets better
Than the Persian weaves,
And than Eastern perfumes sweeter
Seem the fading leaves;
And a music wild and solemn,
From the pine-tree's height,
Rolls its vast and sea-like volume
On the wind of night;

Make we here our camp of winter;
And, through sleet and snow,
Pitchy knot and beechen splinter
On our hearth shall glow.
Here, with mirth to lighten duty,
We shall lack alone
Woman's smile and girlhood's beauty,
Childhood's lisping tone.

But their hearth is brighter burning
For our toil to-day;
And the welcome of returning
Shall our loss repay,
When, like seamen from the waters,
From the woods we come,
Greeting sisters, wives, and daughters,
Angels of our home!

Not for us the measured ringing
From the village spire,
Not for us the Sabbath singing
Of the sweet-voiced choir,
Ours the old, majestic temple,
Where God's brightness shines
Down the dome so grand and ample,
Propped by lofty pines!

Through each branch-enwoven skylight,
Speaks He in the breeze,
As of old beneath the twilight
Of lost Eden's trees!
For His ear, the inward feeling
Needs no outward tongue;
He can see the spirit kneeling
While the axe is swung.

Heeding truth alone, and turning
From the false and dim,
Lamp of toil or altar burning
Are alike to Him.

Strike, then, comrades! Trade is waiting
On our rugged toil;
Far ships waiting for the freighting
Of our woodland spoil.

Ships, whose traffic links these highlands,
Bleak and cold, of ours,
With the citron-planted islands
Of a clime of flowers;
To our frosts the tribute bringing
Of eternal heats;
In our lap of winter flinging
Tropic fruits and sweets.

Cheerly, on the axe of labor,
Let the sunbeams dance,
Better than the flash of sabre
Or the gleam of lance!
Strike! With every blow is given
Freer sun and sky,
And the long-hid earth to heaven
Looks, with wondering eye!

Loud behind us grow the murmurs
Of the age to come;
Clang of smiths, and tread of farmers,
Bearing harvest home!
Here her virgin lap with treasures
Shall the green earth fill;
Waving wheat and golden maize-ears
Crown each beechen hill.

Keep who will the city's alleys
Take the smooth-shorn plain';
Give to us the cedarn valleys,
Rocks and hills of Maine!
In our North-land, wild and woody,
Let us still have part
Rugged nurse and mother sturdy,
Hold us to thy heart!

Oh, our free hearts beat the warmer
For thy breath of snow;
And our tread is all the firmer
For thy rocks below.
Freedom, hand in hand with labor,
Walketh strong and brave;
On the forehead of his neighbor
No man writeth Slave!

Lo, the day breaks! old Katahdin's
Pine-trees show its fires,
While from these dim forest gardens
Rise their blackened spires.
Up, my comrades! up and doing!
Manhood's rugged play
Still renewing, bravely hewing
Through the world our way!
1845.

THE SHIP-BUILDERS

THE sky is ruddy in the east,
The earth is gray below,
And, spectral in the river-mist,
The ship's white timbers show.
Then let the sounds of measured stroke
And grating saw begin;
The broad-axe to the gnarled oak,
The mallet to the pin!

Hark! roars the bellows, blast on blast,
The sooty smithy jars,
And fire-sparks, rising far and fast,
Are fading with the stars.
All day for us the smith shall stand
Beside that flashing forge;
All day for us his heavy hand
The groaning anvil scourge.

From far-off hills, the panting team
For us is toiling near;
For us the raftsmen down the stream
Their island barges steer.
Rings out for us the axe-man's stroke
In forests old and still;
For us the century-circled oak
Falls crashing down his hill.

Up! up! in nobler toil than ours
No craftsmen bear a part
We make of Nature's giant powers
The slaves of human Art.
Lay rib to rib and beam to beam,
And drive the treenails free;
Nor faithless joint nor yawning seam
Shall tempt the searching sea.

Where'er the keel of our good ship
The sea's rough field shall plough;
Where'er her tossing spars shall drip
With salt-spray caught below;
That ship must heed her master's beck,
Her helm obey his hand,
And seamen tread her reeling deck
As if they trod the land.

Her oaken ribs the vulture-beak
Of Northern ice may peel;
The sunken rock and coral peak
May grate along her keel;
And know we well the painted shell
We give to wind and wave,
Must float, the sailor's citadel,
Or sink, the sailor's grave.

Ho! strike away the bars and blocks,
And set the good ship free!
Why lingers on these dusty rocks
The young bride of the sea?
Look! how she moves adown the grooves,
In graceful beauty now!
How lowly on the breast she loves
Sinks down her virgin prow.

God bless her! wheresoe'er the breeze
Her snowy wing shall fan,
Aside the frozen Hebrides,
Or sultry Hindostan!
Where'er, in mart or on the main,
With peaceful flag unfurled,
She helps to wind the silken chain
Of commerce round the world!

Speed on the ship! But let her bear
No merchandise of sin,
No groaning cargo of despair
Her roomy hold within;
No Lethean drug for Eastern lands,
Nor poison-draught for ours;
But honest fruits of toiling hands
And Nature's sun and showers.

Be hers the Prairie's golden grain,
The Desert's golden sand,
The clustered fruits of sunny Spain,
The spice of Morning-land!
Her pathway on the open main
May blessings follow free,
And glad hearts welcome back again
Her white sails from the sea
1846.

THE DROVERS.

THROUGH heat and cold, and shower and sun,
Still onward cheerly driving
There's life alone in duty done,
And rest alone in striving.
But see! the day is closing cool,
The woods are dim before us;
The white fog of the wayside pool
Is creeping slowly o'er us.

The night is falling, comrades mine,
Our footsore beasts are weary,
And through yon elms the tavern sign
Looks out upon us cheery.
The landlord beckons from his door,
His beechen fire is glowing;
These ample barns, with feed in store,

Are filled to overflowing.

From many a valley frowned across
By brows of rugged mountains;
From hillsides where, through spongy moss,
Gush out the river fountains;
From quiet farm-fields, green and low,
And bright with blooming clover;
From vales of corn the wandering crow
No richer hovers over;

Day after day our way has been
O'er many a hill and hollow;
By lake and stream, by wood and glen,
Our stately drove we follow.
Through dust-clouds rising thick and dun,
As smoke of battle o'er us,
Their white horns glisten in the sun,
Like plumes and crests before us.

We see them slowly climb the hill,
As slow behind it sinking;
Or, thronging close, from roadside rill,
Or sunny lakelet, drinking.
Now crowding in the narrow road,
In thick and struggling masses,
They glare upon the teamster's load,
Or rattling coach that passes.

Anon, with toss of horn and tail,
And paw of hoof, and bellow,
They leap some farmer's broken pale,
O'er meadow-close or fallow.
Forth comes the startled goodman; forth
Wife, children, house-dog, sally,
Till once more on their dusty path
The baffled truants rally.

We drive no starvelings, scraggy grown,
Loose-legged, and ribbed and bony,
Like those who grind their noses down
On pastures bare and stony,--
Lank oxen, rough as Indian dogs,
And cows too lean for shadows,
Disputing feebly with the frogs
The crop of saw-grass meadows!

In our good drove, so sleek and fair,
No bones of leanness rattle;
No tottering hide-bound ghosts are there,
Or Pharaoh's evil cattle.
Each stately beeve bespeaks the hand
That fed him unrepining;
The fatness of a goodly land
In each dun hide is shining.

We've sought them where, in warmest nooks,
The freshest feed is growing,
By sweetest springs and clearest brooks

Through honeysuckle flowing;
Wherever hillsides, sloping south,
Are bright with early grasses,
Or, tracking green the lowland's drouth,
The mountain streamlet passes.

But now the day is closing cool,
The woods are dim before us,
The white fog of the wayside pool
Is creeping slowly o'er us.
The cricket to the frog's bassoon
His shrillest time is keeping;
The sickle of yon setting moon
The meadow-mist is reaping.

The night is falling, comrades mine,
Our footsore beasts are weary,
And through yon elms the tavern sign
Looks out upon us cheery.
To-morrow, eastward with our charge
We'll go to meet the dawning,
Ere yet the pines of Kearsarge
Have seen the sun of morning.

When snow-flakes o'er the frozen earth,
Instead of birds, are flitting;
When children throng the glowing hearth,
And quiet wives are knitting;
While in the fire-light strong and clear
Young eyes of pleasure glisten,
To tales of all we see and hear
The ears of home shall listen.

By many a Northern lake and bill,
From many a mountain pasture,
Shall Fancy play the Drover still,
And speed the long night faster.
Then let us on, through shower and sun,
And heat and cold, be driving;
There 's life alone in duty done,
And rest alone in striving.
1847.

THE HUSKERS.

IT was late in mild October, and the long autumnal rain
Had left the summer harvest-fields all green with grass again;
The first sharp frosts had fallen, leaving all the woodlands gay
With the hues of summer's rainbow, or the meadow-flowers of May.

Through a thin, dry mist, that morning, the sun rose broad and red,
At first a rayless disk of fire, he brightened as he sped;
Yet, even his noontide glory fell chastened and subdued,
On the cornfields and the orchards, and softly pictured wood.

And all that quiet afternoon, slow sloping to the night,

He wove with golden shuttle the haze with yellow light;
Slanting through the painted beeches, he glorified the hill;
And, beneath it, pond and meadow lay brighter, greener still.

And shouting boys in woodland haunts caught glimpses of that sky,
Flecked by the many-tinted leaves, and laughed, they knew not why;
And school-girls, gay with aster-flowers, beside the meadow brooks,
Mingled the glow of autumn with the sunshine of sweet looks.

From spire and barn looked westerly the patient weathercocks;
But even the birches on the hill stood motionless as rocks.
No sound was in the woodlands, save the squirrel's dropping shell,
And the yellow leaves among the boughs, low rustling as they fell.

The summer grains were harvested; the stubble-fields lay dry,
Where June winds rolled, in light and shade, the pale green waves of rye;
But still, on gentle hill-slopes, in valleys fringed with wood,
Ungathered, bleaching in the sun, the heavy corn crop stood.

Bent low, by autumn's wind and rain, through husks that, dry and sere,
Unfolded from their ripened charge, shone out the yellow ear;
Beneath, the turnip lay concealed, in many a verdant fold,
And glistened in the slanting light the pumpkin's sphere of gold.

There wrought the busy harvesters; and many a creaking wain
Bore slowly to the long barn-floor its load of husk and grain;
Till broad and red, as when he rose, the sun sank down, at last,
And like a merry guest's farewell, the day in brightness passed.

And to! as through the western pines, on meadow, stream, and pond,
Flamed the red radiance of a sky, set all afire beyond,
Slowly o'er the eastern sea-bluffs a milder glory shone,
And the sunset and the moonrise were mingled into one!

As thus into the quiet night the twilight lapsed away,
And deeper in the brightening moon the tranquil shadows lay;
From many a brown old farm-house, and hamlet without name,
Their milking and their home-tasks done, the merry huskers came.

Swung o'er the heaped-up harvest, from pitchforks in the mow,
Shone dimly down the lanterns on the pleasant scene below;
The growing pile of husks behind, the golden ears before,
And laughing eyes and busy hands and brown cheeks glimmering o'er.

Half hidden, in a quiet nook, serene of look and heart,
Talking their old times over, the old men sat apart;
While up and down the unhusked pile, or nestling in its shade,
At hide-and-seek, with laugh and shout, the happy children played.

Urged by the good host's daughter, a maiden young and fair,
Lifting to light her sweet blue eyes and pride of soft brown hair,
The master of the village school, sleek of hair and smooth of tongue,
To the quaint tune of some old psalm, a husking ballad sung.

THE CORN-SONG.

Heap high the farmer's wintry hoard
Heap high the golden corn
No richer gift has Autumn poured
From out her lavish horn!

Let other lands, exulting, glean
The apple from the pine,
The orange from its glossy green,
The cluster from the vine;

We better love the hardy gift
Our rugged vales bestow,
To cheer us when the storm shall drift
Our harvest-fields with snow.

Through vales of grass and mends of flowers
Our ploughs their furrows made,
While on the hills the sun and showers
Of changeful April played.

We dropped the seed o'er hill and plain
Beneath the sun of May,
And frightened from our sprouting grain
The robber crows away.

All through the long, bright days of June
Its leaves grew green and fair,
And waved in hot midsummer's noon
Its soft and yellow hair.

And now, with autumn's moonlit eves,
Its harvest-time has come,
We pluck away the frosted leaves,
And bear the treasure home.

There, when the snows about us drift,
And winter winds are cold,
Fair hands the broken grain shall sift,
And knead its meal of gold.

Let vapid idlers loll in silk
Around their costly board;
Give us the bowl of samp and milk,
By homespun beauty poured!

Where'er the wide old kitchen hearth
Sends up its smoky curls,
Who will not thank the kindly earth,
And bless our farmer girls!

Then shame on all the proud and vain,
Whose folly laughs to scorn
The blessing of our hardy grain,
Our wealth of golden corn.

Let earth withhold her goodly root,
Let mildew blight the rye,
Give to the worm the orchard's fruit,
The wheat-field to the fly.

But let the good old crop adorn
The hills our fathers trod;
Still let us, for his golden corn,

Send up our thanks to God!
1847.

THE REFORMER.

ALL grim and soiled and brown with tan,
I saw a Strong One, in his wrath,
Smiting the godless shrines of man
Along his path.

The Church, beneath her trembling dome,
Essayed in vain her ghostly charm
Wealth shook within his gilded home
With strange alarm.

Fraud from his secret chambers fled
Before the sunlight bursting in
Sloth drew her pillow o'er her head
To drown the din.

"Spare," Art implored, "yon holy pile;
That grand, old, time-worn turret spare;"
Meek Reverence, kneeling in the aisle,
Cried out, "Forbear!"

Gray-bearded Use, who, deaf and blind,
Groped for his old accustomed stone,
Leaned on his staff, and wept to find
His seat o'erthrown.

Young Romance raised his dreamy eyes,
O'erhung with paly locks of gold,--
"Why smite," he asked in sad surprise,
"The fair, the old?"

Yet louder rang the Strong One's stroke,
Yet nearer flashed his axe's gleam;
Shuddering and sick of heart I woke,
As from a dream.

I looked: aside the dust-cloud rolled,
The Waster seemed the Builder too;
Upspringing from the ruined Old
I saw the New.

'T was but the ruin of the bad,--
The wasting of the wrong and ill;
Whate'er of good the old time had
Was living still.

Calm grew the brows of him I feared;
The frown which awed me passed away,
And left behind a smile which cheered
Like breaking day.

The grain grew green on battle-plains,

O'er swarded war-mounds grazed the cow;
The slave stood forging from his chains
The spade and plough.

Where frowned the fort, pavilions gay
And cottage windows, flower-entwined,
Looked out upon the peaceful bay
And hills behind.

Through vine-wreathed cups with wine once red,
The lights on brimming crystal fell,
Drawn, sparkling, from the rivulet head
And mossy well.

Through prison walls, like Heaven-sent hope,
Fresh breezes blew, and sunbeams strayed,
And with the idle gallows-rope
The young child played.

Where the doomed victim in his cell
Had counted o'er the weary hours,
Glad school-girls, answering to the bell,
Came crowned with flowers.

Grown wiser for the lesson given,
I fear no longer, for I know
That, where the share is deepest driven,
The best fruits grow.

The outworn rite, the old abuse,
The pious fraud transparent grown,
The good held captive in the use
Of wrong alone,--

These wait their doom, from that great law
Which makes the past time serve to-day;
And fresher life the world shall draw
From their decay.

Oh, backward-looking son of time!
The new is old, the old is new,
The cycle of a change sublime
Still sweeping through.

So wisely taught the Indian seer;
Destroying Seva, forming Brahm,
Who wake by turns Earth's love and fear,
Are one, the same.

Idly as thou, in that old day
Thou mournest, did thy sire repine;
So, in his time, thy child grown gray
Shall sigh for thine.

But life shall on and upward go;
Th' eternal step of Progress beats
To that great anthem, calm and slow,
Which God repeats.

Take heart! the Waster builds again,
A charmed life old Goodness bath;
The tares may perish, but the grain
Is not for death.

God works in all things; all obey
His first propulsion from the night
Wake thou and watch! the world is gray
With morning light!
1848.

THE PEACE CONVENTION AT BRUSSELS.

STILL in thy streets, O Paris! doth the stain
Of blood defy the cleansing autumn rain;
Still breaks the smoke Messina's ruins through,
And Naples mourns that new Bartholomew,
When squalid beggary, for a dole of bread,
At a crowned murderer's beck of license, fed
The yawning trenches with her noble dead;
Still, doomed Vienna, through thy stately halls
The shell goes crashing and the red shot falls,
And, leagued to crush thee, on the Danube's side,
The bearded Croat and Bosniak spearman ride;
Still in that vale where Himalaya's snow
Melts round the cornfields and the vines below,
The Sikh's hot cannon, answering ball for ball,
Flames in the breach of Moultan's shattered wall;
On Chenab's side the vulture seeks the slain,
And Sutlej paints with blood its banks again.

"What folly, then," the faithless critic cries,
With sneering lip, and wise world-knowing eyes,
"While fort to fort, and post to post, repeat
The ceaseless challenge of the war-drum's beat,
And round the green earth, to the church-bell's chime,
The morning drum-roll of the camp keeps time,
To dream of peace amidst a world in arms,
Of swords to ploughshares changed by Scriptural charms,
Of nations, drunken with the wine of blood,
Staggering to take the Pledge of Brotherhood,
Like tipplers answering Father Matthew's call;
The sullen Spaniard, and the mad-cap Gaul,
The bull-dog Briton, yielding but with life,
The Yankee swaggering with his bowie-knife,
The Russ, from banquets with the vulture shared,
The blood still dripping from his amber beard,
Quitting their mad Berserker dance to hear
The dull, meek droning of a drab-coat seer;
Leaving the sport of Presidents and Kings,
Where men for dice each titled gambler flings,
To meet alternate on the Seine and Thames,
For tea and gossip, like old country dames
No! let the cravens plead the weakling's cant,
Let Cobden cipher, and let Vincent rant,
Let Sturge preach peace to democratic throngs,

And Burritt, stammering through his hundred tongues,
Repeat, in all, his ghostly lessons o'er,
Timed to the pauses of the battery's roar;
Check Ban or Kaiser with the barricade
Of "Olive-leaves" and Resolutions made,
Spike guns with pointed Scripture-texts, and hope
To capsize navies with a windy trope;
Still shall the glory and the pomp of War
Along their train the shouting millions draw;
Still dusty Labor to the passing Brave
His cap shall doff, and Beauty's kerchief wave;
Still shall the bard to Valor tune his song,
Still Hero-worship kneel before the Strong;
Rosy and sleek, the sable-gowned divine,
O'er his third bottle of suggestive wine,
To plumed and sworded auditors, shall prove
Their trade accordant with the Law of Love;
And Church for State, and State for Church, shall fight,
And both agree, that "Might alone is Right!"
Despite of sneers like these, O faithful few,
Who dare to hold God's word and witness true,
Whose clear-eyed faith transcends our evil time,
And o'er the present wilderness of crime
Sees the calm future, with its robes of green,
Its fleece-flecked mountains, and soft streams between,--
Still keep the path which duty bids ye tread,
Though worldly wisdom shake the cautious head;
No truth from Heaven descends upon our sphere,
Without the greeting of the skeptic's sneer;
Denied and mocked at, till its blessings fall,
Common as dew and sunshine, over all."

Then, o'er Earth's war-field, till the strife shall cease,
Like Morven's harpers, sing your song of peace;
As in old fable rang the Thracian's lyre,
Midst howl of fiends and roar of penal fire,
Till the fierce din to pleasing murmurs fell,
And love subdued the maddened heart of hell.
Lend, once again, that holy song a tongue,
Which the glad angels of the Advent sung,
Their cradle-anthem for the Saviour's birth,
Glory to God, and peace unto the earth
Through the mad discord send that calming word
Which wind and wave on wild Genesareth heard,
Lift in Christ's name his Cross against the Sword!
Not vain the vision which the prophets saw,
Skirting with green the fiery waste of war,
Through the hot sand-gleam, looming soft and calm
On the sky's rim, the fountain-shading palm.
Still lives for Earth, which fiends so long have trod,
The great hope resting on the truth of God,--
Evil shall cease and Violence pass away,
And the tired world breathe free through a long
Sabbath day.

11th mo., 1848.

THE PRISONER FOR DEBT.

Before the law authorizing imprisonment for debt had been abolished in Massachusetts, a revolutionary pensioner was confined in Charlestown jail for a debt of fourteen dollars, and on the fourth of July was seen waving a handkerchief from the bars of his cell in honor of the day.

Look on him! through his dungeon grate,
Feebly and cold, the morning light
Comes stealing round him, dim and late,
As if it loathed the sight.
Reclining on his strawy bed,
His hand upholds his drooping head;
His bloodless cheek is seamed and hard,
Unshorn his gray, neglected beard;
And o'er his bony fingers flow
His long, dishevelled locks of snow.
No grateful fire before him glows,
And yet the winter's breath is chill;
And o'er his half-clad person goes
The frequent ague thrill!
Silent, save ever and anon,
A sound, half murmur and half groan,
Forces apart the painful grip
Of the old sufferer's bearded lip;
Oh, sad and crushing is the fate
Of old age chained and desolate!

Just God! why lies that old man there?
A murderer shares his prison bed,
Whose eyeballs, through his horrid hair,
Gleam on him, fierce and red;
And the rude oath and heartless jeer
Fall ever on his loathing ear,
And, or in wakefulness or sleep,
Nerve, flesh, and pulses thrill and creep
Whene'er that ruffian's tossing limb,
Crimson with murder, touches him!

What has the gray-haired prisoner done?
Has murder stained his hands with gore?
Not so; his crime's a fouler one;
God made the old man poor!
For this he shares a felon's cell,
The fittest earthly type of hell
For this, the boon for which he poured
His young blood on the invader's sword,
And counted light the fearful cost;
His blood-gained liberty is lost!

And so, for such a place of rest,
Old prisoner, dropped thy blood as rain
On Concord's field, and Bunker's crest,
And Saratoga's plain?
Look forth, thou man of many scars,
Through thy dim dungeon's iron bars;
It must be joy, in sooth, to see
Yon monument upreared to thee;
Piled granite and a prison cell,

The land repays thy service well!

Go, ring the bells and fire the guns,
And fling the starry banner out;
Shout "Freedom!" till your lisping ones
Give back their cradle-shout;
Let boastful eloquence declaim
Of honor, liberty, and fame;
Still let the poet's strain be heard,
With glory for each second word,
And everything with breath agree
To praise "our glorious liberty!"

But when the patron cannon jars
That prison's cold and gloomy wall,
And through its grates the stripes and stars
Rise on the wind, and fall,
Think ye that prisoner's aged ear
Rejoices in the general cheer?
Think ye his dim and failing eye
Is kindled at your pageantry?
Sorrowing of soul, and chained of limb,
What is your carnival to him?

Down with the law that binds him thus!
Unworthy freemen, let it find
No refuge from the withering curse
Of God and human-kind
Open the prison's living tomb,
And usher from its brooding gloom
The victims of your savage code
To the free sun and air of God;
No longer dare as crime to brand
The chastening of the Almighty's hand.
1849.

THE CHRISTIAN TOURISTS.

The reader of the biography of William Allen, the philanthropic associate of Clarkson and Romilly, cannot fail to admire his simple and beautiful record of a tour through Europe, in the years 1818 and 1819, in the company of his American friend, Stephen Grellett.

No aimless wanderers, by the fiend Unrest
Goaded from shore to shore;
No schoolmen, turning, in their classic quest,
The leaves of empire o'er.
Simple of faith, and bearing in their hearts
The love of man and God,
Isles of old song, the Moslem's ancient marts,
And Scythia's steppes, they trod.

Where the long shadows of the fir and pine
In the night sun are cast,
And the deep heart of many a Norland mine
Quakes at each riving blast;

Where, in barbaric grandeur, Moskwa stands,
A baptized Scythian queen,
With Europe's arts and Asia's jewelled hands,
The North and East between!

Where still, through vales of Grecian fable, stray
The classic forms of yore,
And beauty smiles, new risen from the spray,
And Dian weeps once more;
Where every tongue in Smyrna's mart resounds;
And Stamboul from the sea
Lifts her tall minarets over burial-grounds
Black with the cypress-tree.

From Malta's temples to the gates of Rome,
Following the track of Paul,
And where the Alps gird round the Switzer's home
Their vast, eternal wall;
They paused not by the ruins of old time,
They scanned no pictures rare,
Nor lingered where the snow-locked mountains
climb
The cold abyss of air!

But unto prisons, where men lay in chains,
To haunts where Hunger pined,
To kings and courts forgetful of the pains
And wants of human-kind,
Scattering sweet words, and quiet deeds of good,
Along their way, like flowers,
Or pleading, as Christ's freemen only could,
With princes and with powers;

Their single aim the purpose to fulfil
Of Truth, from day to day,
Simply obedient to its guiding will,
They held their pilgrim way.
Yet dream not, hence, the beautiful and old
Were wasted on their sight,
Who in the school of Christ had learned to hold
All outward things aright.

Not less to them the breath of vineyards blown
From off the Cyprian shore,
Not less for them the Alps in sunset shone,
That man they valued more.
A life of beauty lends to all it sees
The beauty of its thought;
And fairest forms and sweetest harmonies
Make glad its way, unsought.

In sweet accordancy of praise and love,
The singing waters run;
And sunset mountains wear in light above
The smile of duty done;
Sure stands the promise,--ever to the meek
A heritage is given;
Nor lose they Earth who, single-hearted, seek
The righteousness of Heaven!

THE MEN OF OLD.

"WELL speed thy mission, bold Iconoclast!
 Yet all unworthy of its trust thou art,
 If, with dry eye, and cold, unloving heart,
 Thou tread'st the solemn Pantheon of the Past,
 By the great Future's dazzling hope made blind
 To all the beauty, power, and truth behind.
 Not without reverent awe shouldst thou put by
 The cypress branches and the amaranth blooms,
 Where, with clasped hands of prayer, upon their tombs
 The effigies of old confessors lie,
 God's witnesses; the voices of His will,
 Heard in the slow march of the centuries still
 Such were the men at whose rebuking frown,
 Dark with God's wrath, the tyrant's knee went down;
 Such from the terrors of the guilty drew
 The vassal's freedom and the poor man's due."

St. Anselm (may he rest forevermore
 In Heaven's sweet peace!) forbade, of old, the sale
 Of men as slaves, and from the sacred pale
 Hurl'd the Northumbrian buyers of the poor.
 To ransom souls from bonds and evil fate
 St. Ambrose melted down the sacred plate,--
 Image of saint, the chalice, and the pix,
 Crosses of gold, and silver candlesticks.
 "Man is worth more than temples!" he replied
 To such as came his holy work to chide.
 And brave Cesarius, stripping altars bare,
 And coining from the Abbey's golden hoard
 The captive's freedom, answered to the prayer
 Or threat of those whose fierce zeal for the Lord
 Stifled their love of man,--"An earthen dish
 The last sad supper of the Master bore
 Most miserable sinners! do ye wish
 More than your Lord, and grudge His dying poor
 What your own pride and not His need requires?
 Souls, than these shining gauds, He values more
 Mercy, not sacrifice, His heart desires!"
 O faithful worthies! resting far behind
 In your dark ages, since ye fell asleep,
 Much has been done for truth and human-kind;
 Shadows are scattered wherein ye groped blind;
 Man claims his birthright, freer pulses leap
 Through peoples driven in your day like sheep;
 Yet, like your own, our age's sphere of light,
 Though widening still, is walled around by night;
 With slow, reluctant eye, the Church has read,
 Skeptic at heart, the lessons of its Head;
 Counting, too oft, its living members less
 Than the wall's garnish and the pulpit's dress;
 World-moving zeal, with power to bless and feed
 Life's fainting pilgrims, to their utter need,

Instead of bread, holds out the stone of creed;
Sect builds and worships where its wealth and
pride
And vanity stand shrined and deified,
Careless that in the shadow of its walls
God's living temple into ruin falls.
We need, methinks, the prophet-hero still,
Saints true of life, and martyrs strong of will,
To tread the land, even now, as Xavier trod
The streets of Goa, barefoot, with his bell,
Proclaiming freedom in the name of God,
And startling tyrants with the fear of hell
Soft words, smooth prophecies, are doubtless well;
But to rebuke the age's popular crime,
We need the souls of fire, the hearts of that old
time!
1849.

TO PIUS IX.

The writer of these lines is no enemy of Catholics. He has, on more than one occasion, exposed himself to the censures of his Protestant brethren, by his strenuous endeavors to procure indemnification for the owners of the convent destroyed near Boston. He defended the cause of the Irish patriots long before it had become popular in this country; and he was one of the first to urge the most liberal aid to the suffering and starving population of the Catholic island. The severity of his language finds its ample apology in the reluctant confession of one of the most eminent Romish priests, the eloquent and devoted Father Ventura.

THE cannon's brazen lips are cold;
No red shell blazes down the air;
And street and tower, and temple old,
Are silent as despair.

The Lombard stands no more at bay,
Rome's fresh young life has bled in vain;
The ravens scattered by the day
Come back with night again.

Now, while the fratricides of France
Are treading on the neck of Rome,
Hider at Gaeta, seize thy chance!
Coward and cruel, come!

Creep now from Naples' bloody skirt;
Thy mummer's part was acted well,
While Rome, with steel and fire begirt,
Before thy crusade fell!

Her death-groans answered to thy prayer;
Thy chant, the drum and bugle-call;
Thy lights, the burning villa's glare;
Thy beads, the shell and ball!

Let Austria clear thy way, with hands
Foul from Ancona's cruel sack,
And Naples, with his dastard bands
Of murderers, lead thee back!

Rome's lips are dumb; the orphan's wail,
The mother's shriek, thou mayst not hear
Above the faithless Frenchman's hail,
The unsexed shaveling's cheer!

Go, bind on Rome her cast-off weight,
The double curse of crook and crown,
Though woman's scorn and manhood's hate
From wall and roof flash down!

Nor heed those blood-stains on the wall,
Not Tiber's flood can wash away,
Where, in thy stately Quirinal,
Thy mangled victims lay!

Let the world murmur; let its cry
Of horror and disgust be heard;
Truth stands alone; thy coward lie
Is backed by lance and sword!

The cannon of St. Angelo,
And chanting priest and clanging bell,
And beat of drum and bugle blow,
Shall greet thy coming well!

Let lips of iron and tongues of slaves
Fit welcome give thee; for her part,
Rome, frowning o'er her new-made graves,
Shall curse thee from her heart!

No wreaths of sad Campagna's flowers
Shall childhood in thy pathway fling;
No garlands from their ravaged bowers
Shall Terni's maidens bring;

But, hateful as that tyrant old,
The mocking witness of his crime,
In thee shall loathing eyes behold
The Nero of our time!

Stand where Rome's blood was freest shed,
Mock Heaven with impious thanks, and call
Its curses on the patriot dead,
Its blessings on the Gaul!

Or sit upon thy throne of lies,
A poor, mean idol, blood-besmeared,
Whom even its worshippers despise,
Unhonored, unrevered!

Yet, Scandal of the World! from thee
One needful truth mankind shall learn
That kings and priests to Liberty
And God are false in turn.

Earth wearies of them; and the long
Meek sufferance of the Heavens doth fail;
Woe for weak tyrants, when the strong
Wake, struggle, and prevail!

Not vainly Roman hearts have bled
To feed the Crosier and the Crown,
If, roused thereby, the world shall tread
The twin-born vampires down
1849.

CALEF IN BOSTON.

1692.

IN the solemn days of old,
Two men met in Boston town,
One a tradesman frank and bold,
One a preacher of renown.

Cried the last, in bitter tone:
"Poisoner of the wells of truth
Satan's hireling, thou hast sown
With his tares the heart of youth!"

Spake the simple tradesman then,
"God be judge 'twixt thee and me;
All thou knowed of truth hath been
Once a lie to men like thee.

"Falsehoods which we spurn to-day
Were the truths of long ago;
Let the dead boughs fall away,
Fresher shall the living grow.

"God is good and God is light,
In this faith I rest secure;
Evil can but serve the right,
Over all shall love endure.

"Of your spectral puppet play
I have traced the cunning wires;
Come what will, I needs must say,
God is true, and ye are liars."

When the thought of man is free,
Error fears its lightest tones;
So the priest cried, "Sadducee!"
And the people took up stones.

In the ancient burying-ground,
Side by side the twain now lie;
One with humble grassy mound,
One with marbles pale and high.

But the Lord hath blest the seed
Which that tradesman scattered then,
And the preacher's spectral creed
Chills no more the blood of men.

Let us trust, to one is known
Perfect love which casts out fear,
While the other's joys atone
For the wrong he suffered here.
1849.

OUR STATE.

THE South-land boasts its teeming cane,
The prairied West its heavy grain,
And sunset's radiant gates unfold
On rising marts and sands of gold.

Rough, bleak, and hard, our little State
Is scant of soil, of limits strait;
Her yellow sands are sands alone,
Her only mines are ice and stone!

From Autumn frost to April rain,
Too long her winter woods complain;
From budding flower to falling leaf,
Her summer time is all too brief.

Yet, on her rocks, and on her sands,
And wintry hills, the school-house stands,
And what her rugged soil denies,
The harvest of the mind supplies.

The riches of the Commonwealth
Are free, strong minds, and hearts of health;
And more to her than gold or grain,
The cunning hand and cultured brain.

For well she keeps her ancient stock,
The stubborn strength of Pilgrim Rock;
And still maintains, with milder laws,
And clearer light, the Good Old Cause.

Nor heeds the skeptic's puny hands,
While near her school the church-spire stands;
Nor fears the blinded bigot's rule,
While near her church-spire stands the school.
1549.

THE PRISONERS OF NAPLES.

I HAVE been thinking of the victims bound
In Naples, dying for the lack of air

And sunshine, in their close, damp cells of pain,
Where hope is not, and innocence in vain
Appeals against the torture and the chain!
Unfortunates! whose crime it was to share
Our common love of freedom, and to dare,
In its behalf, Rome's harlot triple-crowned,
And her base pander, the most hateful thing
Who upon Christian or on Pagan ground
Makes vile the old heroic name of king.
O God most merciful! Father just and kind
Whom man hath bound let thy right hand unbind.
Or, if thy purposes of good behind
Their ills lie hidden, let the sufferers find
Strong consolations; leave them not to doubt
Thy providential care, nor yet without
The hope which all thy attributes inspire,
That not in vain the martyr's robe of fire
Is worn, nor the sad prisoner's fretting chain;
Since all who suffer for thy truth send forth,
Electrical, with every throb of pain,
Unquenchable sparks, thy own baptismal rain
Of fire and spirit over all the earth,
Making the dead in slavery live again.
Let this great hope be with them, as they lie
Shut from the light, the greenness, and the sky;
From the cool waters and the pleasant breeze,
The smell of flowers, and shade of summer trees;
Bound with the felon lepers, whom disease
And sins abhorred make loathsome; let them share
Pellico's faith, Foresti's strength to bear
Years of unutterable torment, stern and still,
As the chained Titan victor through his will!
Comfort them with thy future; let them see
The day-dawn of Italian liberty;
For that, with all good things, is hid with Thee,
And, perfect in thy thought, awaits its time to be.

I, who have spoken for freedom at the cost
Of some weak friendships, or some paltry prize
Of name or place, and more than I have lost
Have gained in wider reach of sympathies,
And free communion with the good and wise;
May God forbid that I should ever boast
Such easy self-denial, or repine
That the strong pulse of health no more is mine;
That, overworn at noonday, I must yield
To other hands the gleanings of the field;
A tired on-looker through the day's decline.
For blest beyond deserving still, and knowing
That kindly Providence its care is showing
In the withdrawal as in the bestowing,
Scarcely I dare for more or less to pray.
Beautiful yet for me this autumn day
Melts on its sunset hills; and, far away,
For me the Ocean lifts its solemn psalm,
To me the pine-woods whisper; and for me
Yon river, winding through its vales of calm,
By greenest banks, with asters purple-starred,
And gentian bloom and golden-rod made gay,

Flows down in silent gladness to the sea,
Like a pure spirit to its great reward!

Nor lack I friends, long-tried and near and dear,
Whose love is round me like this atmosphere,
Warm, soft, and golden. For such gifts to me
What shall I render, O my God, to thee?
Let me not dwell upon my lighter share
Of pain and ill that human life must bear;
Save me from selfish pining; let my heart,
Drawn from itself in sympathy, forget
The bitter longings of a vain regret,
The anguish of its own peculiar smart.
Remembering others, as I have to-day,
In their great sorrows, let me live alway
Not for myself alone, but have a part,
Such as a frail and erring spirit may,
In love which is of Thee, and which indeed Thou art!
1851.

THE PEACE OF EUROPE.

"GREAT peace in Europe! Order reigns
From Tiber's hills to Danube's plains!"
So say her kings and priests; so say
The lying prophets of our day.

Go lay to earth a listening ear;
The tramp of measured marches hear;
The rolling of the cannon's wheel,
The shotted musket's murderous peal,
The night alarm, the sentry's call,
The quick-eared spy in hut and hall!
From Polar sea and tropic fen
The dying-groans of exiled men!
The bolted cell, the galley's chains,
The scaffold smoking with its stains!
Order, the hush of brooding slaves
Peace, in the dungeon-vaults and graves!

O Fisher! of the world-wide net,
With meshes in all waters set,
Whose fabled keys of heaven and hell
Bolt hard the patriot's prison-cell,
And open wide the banquet-hall,
Where kings and priests hold carnival!
Weak vassal tricked in royal guise,
Boy Kaiser with thy lip of lies;
Base gambler for Napoleon's crown,
Barnacle on his dead renown!
Thou, Bourbon Neapolitan,
Crowned scandal, loathed of God and man
And thou, fell Spider of the North!
Stretching thy giant feelers forth,
Within whose web the freedom dies
Of nations eaten up like flies!

Speak, Prince and Kaiser, Priest and Czar I
If this be Peace, pray what is War?

White Angel of the Lord! unmeet
That soil accursed for thy pure feet.
Never in Slavery's desert flows
The fountain of thy charmed repose;
No tyrant's hand thy chaplet weaves
Of lilies and of olive-leaves;
Not with the wicked shalt thou dwell,
Thus saith the Eternal Oracle;
Thy home is with the pure and free!
Stern herald of thy better day,
Before thee, to prepare thy way,
The Baptist Shade of Liberty,
Gray, scarred and hairy-robed, must press
With bleeding feet the wilderness!
Oh that its voice might pierces the ear
Of princes, trembling while they hear
A cry as of the Hebrew seer
Repent! God's kingdom draweth near!
1852.

ASTRAEA.

"Jove means to settle
Astraea in her seat again,
And let down from his golden chain
An age of better metal."
BEN JONSON, 1615.

O POET rare and old!
Thy words are prophecies;
Forward the age of gold,
The new Saturnian lies.

The universal prayer
And hope are not in vain;
Rise, brothers! and prepare
The way for Saturn's reign.

Perish shall all which takes
From labor's board and can;
Perish shall all which makes
A spaniel of the man!

Free from its bonds the mind,
The body from the rod;
Broken all chains that bind
The image of our God.

Just men no longer pine
Behind their prison-bars;
Through the rent dungeon shine
The free sun and the stars.

Earth own, at last, untrod
By sect, or caste, or clan,
The fatherhood of God,
The brotherhood of man!

Fraud fail, craft perish, forth
The money-changers driven,
And God's will done on earth,
As now in heaven;
1852.

THE DISENTHRALLED.

HE had bowed down to drunkenness,
An abject worshipper
The pride of manhood's pulse had grown
Too faint and cold to stir;
And he had given his spirit up
To the unblessed thrall,
And bowing to the poison cup,
He gloried in his fall!

There came a change--the cloud rolled off,
And light fell on his brain--
And like the passing of a dream
That cometh not again,
The shadow of the spirit fled.
He saw the gulf before,
He shuddered at the waste behind,
And was a man once more.

He shook the serpent folds away,
That gathered round his heart,
As shakes the swaying forest-oak
Its poison vine apart;
He stood erect; returning pride
Grew terrible within,
And conscience sat in judgment, on
His most familiar sin.

The light of Intellect again
Along his pathway shone;
And Reason like a monarch sat
Upon his olden throne.
The honored and the wise once more
Within his presence came;
And lingered oft on lovely lips
His once forbidden name.

There may be glory in the might,
That treadeth nations down;
Wreaths for the crimson conqueror,
Pride for the kingly crown;
But nobler is that triumph hour,
The disenthralled shall find,
When evil passion boweth down,

Unto the Godlike mind.

THE POOR VOTER ON ELECTION DAY.

THE proudest now is but my peer,
The highest not more high;
To-day, of all the weary year,
A king of men am I.
To-day, alike are great and small,
The nameless and the known;
My palace is the people's hall,
The ballot-box my throne!

Who serves to-day upon the list
Beside the served shall stand;
Alike the brown and wrinkled fist,
The gloved and dainty hand!
The rich is level with the poor,
The weak is strong to-day;
And sleekest broadcloth counts no more
Than homespun frock of gray.

To-day let pomp and vain pretence
My stubborn right abide;
I set a plain man's common sense
Against the pedant's pride.
To-day shall simple manhood try
The strength of gold and land;
The wide world has not wealth to buy
The power in my right hand!

While there's a grief to seek redress,
Or balance to adjust,
Where weighs our living manhood less
Than Mammon's vilest dust,--
While there's a right to need my vote,
A wrong to sweep away,
Up! clouted knee and ragged coat
A man's a man to-day
1848.

THE DREAM OF PIO NONO.

IT chanced that while the pious troops of France
Fought in the crusade Pio Nono preached,
What time the holy Bourbons stayed his hands
(The Hun and Aaron meet for such a Moses),
Stretched forth from Naples towards rebellious Rome
To bless the ministry of Oudinot,
And sanctify his iron homilies
And sharp persuasions of the bayonet,
That the great pontiff fell asleep, and dreamed.

He stood by Lake Tiberias, in the sun
Of the bight Orient; and beheld the lame,
The sick, and blind, kneel at the Master's feet,
And rise up whole. And, sweetly over all,
Dropping the ladder of their hymn of praise
From heaven to earth, in silver rounds of song,
He heard the blessed angels sing of peace,
Good-will to man, and glory to the Lord.

Then one, with feet unshod, and leathern face
Hardened and darkened by fierce summer suns
And hot winds of the desert, closer drew
His fisher's haick, and girded up his loins,
And spake, as one who had authority
"Come thou with me."

Lakeside and eastern sky
And the sweet song of angels passed away,
And, with a dream's alacrity of change,
The priest, and the swart fisher by his side,
Beheld the Eternal City lift its domes
And solemn fanes and monumental pomp
Above the waste Campagna. On the hills
The blaze of burning villas rose and fell,
And momentarily the mortar's iron throat
Roared from the trenches; and, within the walls,
Sharp crash of shells, low groans of human pain,
Shout, drum beat, and the clanging larum-bell,
And tramp of hosts, sent up a mingled sound,
Half wail and half defiance. As they passed
The gate of San Pancrazio, human blood
Flowed ankle-high about them, and dead men
Choked the long street with gashed and gory piles,--
A ghastly barricade of mangled flesh,
From which at times, quivered a living hand,
And white lips moved and moaned. A father tore
His gray hairs, by the body of his son,
In frenzy; and his fair young daughter wept
On his old bosom. Suddenly a flash
Clove the thick sulphurous air, and man and maid
Sank, crushed and mangled by the shattering shell.

Then spake the Galilean: "Thou hast seen
The blessed Master and His works of love;
Look now on thine! Hear'st thou the angels sing
Above this open hell? Thou God's high-priest!
Thou the Vicegerent of the Prince of Peace!
Thou the successor of His chosen ones!
I, Peter, fisherman of Galilee,
In the dear Master's name, and for the love
Of His true Church, proclaim thee Antichrist,
Alien and separate from His holy faith,
Wide as the difference between death and life,
The hate of man and the great love of God!
Hence, and repent!"

Thereat the pontiff woke,
Trembling, and muttering o'er his fearful dream.
"What means he?" cried the Bourbon, "Nothing more

Than that your majesty hath all too well
Catered for your poor guests, and that, in sooth,
The Holy Father's supper troubleth him,"
Said Cardinal Antonelli, with a smile.
1853.

THE VOICES.

WHY urge the long, unequal fight,
Since Truth has fallen in the street,
Or lift anew the trampled light,
Quenched by the heedless million's feet?

"Give o'er the thankless task; forsake
The fools who know not ill from good
Eat, drink, enjoy thy own, and take
Thine ease among the multitude.

"Live out thyself; with others share
Thy proper life no more; assume
The unconcern of sun and air,
For life or death, or blight or bloom.

"The mountain pine looks calmly on
The fires that scourge the plains below,
Nor heeds the eagle in the sun
The small birds piping in the snow!

"The world is God's, not thine; let Him
Work out a change, if change must be
The hand that planted best can trim
And nurse the old unfruitful tree."

So spake the Tempter, when the light
Of sun and stars had left the sky;
I listened, through the cloud and night,
And beard, methought, a voice reply:

"Thy task may well seem over-hard,
Who scatterest in a thankless soil
Thy life as seed, with no reward
Save that which Duty gives to Toil.

"Not wholly is thy heart resigned
To Heaven's benign and just decree,
Which, linking thee with all thy kind,
Transmits their joys and griefs to thee.

"Break off that sacred chain, and turn
Back on thyself thy love and care;
Be thou thine own mean idol, burn
Faith, Hope, and Trust, thy children, there.

"Released from that fraternal law
Which shares the common bale and bliss,
No sadder lot could Folly draw,
Or Sin provoke from Fate, than this.

"The meal unshared is food unblest
Thou hoard'st in vain what love should spend;
Self-ease is pain; thy only rest
Is labor for a worthy end;

"A toil that gains with what it yields,
And scatters to its own increase,
And hears, while sowing outward fields,
The harvest-song of inward peace.

"Free-lipped the liberal streamlets run,
Free shines for all the healthful ray;
The still pool stagnates in the sun,
The lurid earth-fire haunts decay.

"What is it that the crowd requite
Thy love with hate, thy truth with lies?
And but to faith, and not to sight,
The walls of Freedom's temple rise?

"Yet do thy work; it shall succeed
In thine or in another's day;
And, if denied the victor's meed,
Thou shalt not lack the toiler's pay.

"Faith shares the future's promise; Love's
Self-offering is a triumph won;
And each good thought or action moves
The dark world nearer to the sun.

"Then faint not, falter not, nor plead
Thy weakness; truth itself is strong;
The lion's strength, the eagle's speed,
Are not alone vouchsafed to wrong.

"Thy nature, which, through fire and flood,
To place or gain finds out its way,
Hath power to seek the highest good,
And duty's holiest call obey!

"Strivest thou in darkness?--Foes without
In league with traitor thoughts within;
Thy night-watch kept with trembling Doubt
And pale Remorse the ghost of Sin?

"Hast thou not, on some week of storm,
Seen the sweet Sabbath breaking fair,
And cloud and shadow, sunlit, form
The curtains of its tent of prayer?

"So, haply, when thy task shall end,
The wrong shall lose itself in right,
And all thy week-day darkness blend
With the long Sabbath of the light!"
1854.

THE NEW EXODUS.

Written upon hearing that slavery had been formally abolished in Egypt.
Unhappily, the professions and pledges of the vacillating government of
Egypt proved unreliable.

By fire and cloud, across the desert sand,
And through the parted waves,
From their long bondage, with an outstretched hand,
God led the Hebrew slaves!

Dead as the letter of the Pentateuch,
As Egypt's statues cold,
In the adytum of the sacred book
Now stands that marvel old.

"Lo, God is great!" the simple Moslem says.
We seek the ancient date,
Turn the dry scroll, and make that living phrase
A dead one: "God was great!"

And, like the Coptic monks by Mousa's wells,
We dream of wonders past,
Vague as the tales the wandering Arab tells,
Each drowsier than the last.

O fools and blind! Above the Pyramids
Stretches once more that hand,
And tranced Egypt, from her stony lids,
Flings back her veil of sand.

And morning-smitten Memnon, singing, wakes;
And, listening by his Nile,
O'er Ammon's grave and awful visage breaks
A sweet and human smile.

Not, as before, with hail and fire, and call
Of death for midnight graves,
But in the stillness of the noonday, fall
The fetters of the slaves.

No longer through the Red Sea, as of old,
The bondmen walk dry shod;
Through human hearts, by love of Him controlled,
Runs now that path of God
1856.

THE CONQUEST OF FINLAND.

"Joseph Sturge, with a companion, Thomas Harvey, has been visiting the
shores of Finland, to ascertain the amount of mischief and loss to poor
and peaceable sufferers, occasioned by the gun-boats of the allied
squadrons in the late war, with a view to obtaining relief for them."--
Friends' Review.

ACROSS the frozen marshes
The winds of autumn blow,
And the fen-lands of the Wetter
Are white with early snow.

But where the low, gray headlands
Look o'er the Baltic brine,
A bark is sailing in the track
Of England's battle-line.

No wares hath she to barter
For Bothnia's fish and grain;
She saileth not for pleasure,
She saileth not for gain.

But still by isle or mainland
She drops her anchor down,
Where'er the British cannon
Rained fire on tower and town.

Outspake the ancient Amtman,
At the gate of Helsingfors
"Why comes this ship a-spying
In the track of England's wars?"

"God bless her," said the coast-guard,--
"God bless the ship, I say.
The holy angels trim the sails
That speed her on her way!

"Where'er she drops her anchor,
The peasant's heart is glad;
Where'er she spreads her parting sail,
The peasant's heart is sad.

"Each wasted town and hamlet
She visits to restore;
To roof the shattered cabin,
And feed the starving poor.

"The sunken boats of fishers,
The foraged beeves and grain,
The spoil of flake and storehouse,
The good ship brings again.

"And so to Finland's sorrow
The sweet amend is made,
As if the healing hand of Christ
Upon her wounds were laid!"

Then said the gray old Amtman,"
The will of God be done!
The battle lost by England's hate,
By England's love is won!

"We braved the iron tempest
That thundered on our shore;
But when did kindness fail to find
The key to Finland's door?"

"No more from Aland's ramparts
Shall warning signal come,
Nor startled Sweaborg hear again
The roll of midnight drum.

"Beside our fierce Black Eagle
The Dove of Peace shall rest;
And in the mouths of cannon
The sea-bird make her nest.

"For Finland, looking seaward,
No coming foe shall scan;
And the holy bells of Abo
Shall ring, 'Good-will to man!'

"Then row thy boat, O fisher!
In peace on lake and bay;
And thou, young maiden, dance again
Around the poles of May!

"Sit down, old men, together,
Old wives, in quiet spin;
Henceforth the Anglo-Saxon
Is the brother of the Finn!"
1856.

THE EVE OF ELECTION.

FROM gold to gray
Our mild sweet day
Of Indian Summer fades too soon;
But tenderly
Above the sea
Hangs, white and calm, the hunter's moon.

In its pale fire,
The village spire
Shows like the zodiac's spectral lance;
The painted walls
Whereon it falls
Transfigured stand in marble trance!

O'er fallen leaves
The west-wind grieves,
Yet comes a seed-time round again;
And morn shall see
The State sown free
With baleful tares or healthful grain.

Along the street
The shadows meet
Of Destiny, whose hands conceal
The moulds of fate
That shape the State,
And make or mar the common weal.

Around I see
The powers that be;
I stand by Empire's primal springs;
And princes meet,
In every street,
And hear the tread of uncrowned kings!

Hark! through the crowd
The laugh runs loud,
Beneath the sad, rebuking moon.
God save the land
A careless hand
May shake or swerve ere morrow's noon!

No jest is this;
One cast amiss
May blast the hope of Freedom's year.
Oh, take me where
Are hearts of prayer,
And foreheads bowed in reverent fear!

Not lightly fall
Beyond recall
The written scrolls a breath can float;
The crowning fact
The kingliest act
Of Freedom is the freeman's vote!

For pearls that gem
A diadem
The diver in the deep sea dies;
The regal right
We boast to-night
Is ours through costlier sacrifice;

The blood of Vane,
His prison pain
Who traced the path the Pilgrim trod,
And hers whose faith
Drew strength from death,
And prayed her Russell up to God!

Our hearts grow cold,
We lightly hold
A right which brave men died to gain;
The stake, the cord,
The axe, the sword,
Grim nurses at its birth of pain.

The shadow rend,
And o'er us bend,
O martyrs, with your crowns and palms;
Breathe through these throngs
Your battle songs,
Your scaffold prayers, and dungeon psalms.

Look from the sky,
Like God's great eye,

Thou solemn moon, with searching beam,
Till in the sight
Of thy pure light
Our mean self-seekings meaner seem.

Shame from our hearts
Unworthy arts,
The fraud designed, the purpose dark;
And smite away
The hands we lay
Profanely on the sacred ark.

To party claims
And private aims,
Reveal that august face of Truth,
Where to are given
The age of heaven,
The beauty of immortal youth.

So shall our voice
Of sovereign choice
Swell the deep bass of duty done,
And strike the key
Of time to be,
When God and man shall speak as one!
1858.

FROM PERUGIA.

"The thing which has the most dissevered the people from the Pope,--the unforgivable thing,--the breaking point between him and them,--has been the encouragement and promotion he gave to the officer under whom were executed the slaughters of Perugia. That made the breaking point in many honest hearts that had clung to him before."--HARRIET BEECHER STOWE'S Letters from Italy.

The tall, sallow guardsmen their horsetails have spread,
Flaming out in their violet, yellow, and red;
And behind go the lackeys in crimson and buff,
And the chamberlains gorgeous in velvet and ruff;
Next, in red-legged pomp, come the cardinals forth,
Each a lord of the church and a prince of the earth.

What's this squeak of the fife, and this batter of drum
Lo! the Swiss of the Church from Perugia come;
The militant angels, whose sabres drive home
To the hearts of the malcontents, cursed and abhorred,
The good Father's missives, and "Thus saith the Lord!"
And lend to his logic the point of the sword!

O maids of Etruria, gazing forlorn
O'er dark Thrasymentus, dishevelled and torn!
O fathers, who pluck at your gray beards for shame!
O mothers, struck dumb by a woe without name!
Well ye know how the Holy Church hireling behaves,
And his tender compassion of prisons and graves!

There they stand, the hired stabbers, the blood-stains yet fresh,
That splashed like red wine from the vintage of flesh;
Grim instruments, careless as pincers and rack
How the joints tear apart, and the strained sinews crack;
But the hate that glares on them is sharp as their swords,
And the sneer and the scowl print the air with fierce words!

Off with hats, down with knees, shout your vivas like mad!
Here's the Pope in his holiday righteousness clad,
From shorn crown to toe-nail, kiss-worn to the quick,
Of sainthood in purple the pattern and pick,
Who the role of the priest and the soldier unites,
And, praying like Aaron, like Joshua fights!

Is this Pio Nono the gracious, for whom
We sang our hosannas and lighted all Rome;
With whose advent we dreamed the new era began
When the priest should be human, the monk be a man?
Ah, the wolf's with the sheep, and the fox with the fowl,
When freedom we trust to the crosier and cowl!

Stand aside, men of Rome! Here's a hangman-faced Swiss--
(A blessing for him surely can't go amiss)--
Would kneel down the sanctified slipper to kiss.
Short shrift will suffice him,--he's blest beyond doubt;
But there 's blood on his hands which would scarcely wash out,
Though Peter himself held the baptismal spout!

Make way for the next! Here's another sweet son
What's this mastiff-jawed rascal in epaulets done?
He did, whispers rumor, (its truth God forbid!)
At Perugia what Herod at Bethlehem did.
And the mothers? Don't name them! these humors of war
They who keep him in service must pardon him for.

Hist! here's the arch-knave in a cardinal's hat,
With the heart of a wolf, and the stealth of a cat
(As if Judas and Herod together were rolled),
Who keeps, all as one, the Pope's conscience and gold,
Mounts guard on the altar, and pilfers from thence,
And flatters St. Peter while stealing his pence!

Who doubts Antonelli? Have miracles ceased
When robbers say mass, and Barabbas is priest?
When the Church eats and drinks, at its mystical board,
The true flesh and blood carved and shed by its sword,
When its martyr, unsinged, claps the crown on his head,
And roasts, as his proxy, his neighbor instead!

There! the bells jow and jangle the same blessed way
That they did when they rang for Bartholomew's day.
Hark! the tallow-faced monsters, nor women nor boys,
Vex the air with a shrill, sexless horror of noise.
Te Deum laudamus! All round without stint
The incense-pot swings with a taint of blood in 't!

And now for the blessing! Of little account,

You know, is the old one they heard on the Mount.
Its giver was landless, His raiment was poor,
No jewelled tiara His fishermen wore;
No incense, no lackeys, no riches, no home,
No Swiss guards! We order things better at Rome.

So bless us the strong hand, and curse us the weak;
Let Austria's vulture have food for her beak;
Let the wolf-whelp of Naples play Bomba again,
With his death-cap of silence, and halter, and chain;
Put reason, and justice, and truth under ban;
For the sin unforgiven is freedom for man!
1858.

ITALY.

ACROSS the sea I heard the groans
Of nations in the intervals
Of wind and wave. Their blood and bones
Cried out in torture, crushed by thrones,
And sucked by priestly cannibals.

I dreamed of Freedom slowly gained
By martyr meekness, patience, faith,
And lo! an athlete grimly stained,
With corded muscles battle-strained,
Shouting it from the fields of death!

I turn me, awe-struck, from the sight,
Among the clamoring thousands mute,
I only know that God is right,
And that the children of the light
Shall tread the darkness under foot.

I know the pent fire heaves its crust,
That sultry skies the bolt will form
To smite them clear; that Nature must
The balance of her powers adjust,
Though with the earthquake and the storm.

God reigns, and let the earth rejoice!
I bow before His sterner plan.
Dumb are the organs of my choice;
He speaks in battle's stormy voice,
His praise is in the wrath of man!

Yet, surely as He lives, the day
Of peace He promised shall be ours,
To fold the flags of war, and lay
Its sword and spear to rust away,
And sow its ghastly fields with flowers!
1860.

FREEDOM IN BRAZIL.

WITH clearer light, Cross of the South, shine forth
In blue Brazilian skies;
And thou, O river, cleaving half the earth
From sunset to sunrise,

From the great mountains to the Atlantic waves
Thy joy's long anthem pour.
Yet a few years (God make them less!) and slaves
Shall shame thy pride no more.
No fettered feet thy shaded margins press;
But all men shall walk free
Where thou, the high-priest of the wilderness,
Hast wedded sea to sea.

And thou, great-hearted ruler, through whose mouth
The word of God is said,
Once more, "Let there be light!"--Son of the South,
Lift up thy honored head,
Wear unashamed a crown by thy desert
More than by birth thy own,
Careless of watch and ward; thou art begirt
By grateful hearts alone.
The moated wall and battle-ship may fail,
But safe shall justice prove;
Stronger than greaves of brass or iron mail
The panoply of love.

Crowned doubly by man's blessing and God's grace,
Thy future is secure;
Who frees a people makes his statue's place
In Time's Valhalla sure.
Lo! from his Neva's banks the Scythian Czar
Stretches to thee his hand,
Who, with the pencil of the Northern star,
Wrote freedom on his land.
And he whose grave is holy by our calm
And prairied Sangamon,
From his gaunt hand shall drop the martyr's palm
To greet thee with "Well done!"

And thou, O Earth, with smiles thy face make sweet,
And let thy wail be stilled,
To hear the Muse of prophecy repeat
Her promise half fulfilled.
The Voice that spake at Nazareth speaks still,
No sound thereof hath died;
Alike thy hope and Heaven's eternal will
Shall yet be satisfied.
The years are slow, the vision tarrieth long,
And far the end may be;
But, one by one, the fiends of ancient wrong
Go out and leave thee free.
1867.

AFTER ELECTION.

THE day's sharp strife is ended now,
Our work is done, God knoweth how!
As on the thronged, unrestful town
The patience of the moon looks down,
I wait to hear, beside the wire,
The voices of its tongues of fire.

Slow, doubtful, faint, they seem at first
Be strong, my heart, to know the worst!
Hark! there the Alleghanies spoke;
That sound from lake and prairie broke,
That sunset-gun of triumph rent
The silence of a continent!

That signal from Nebraska sprung,
This, from Nevada's mountain tongue!
Is that thy answer, strong and free,
O loyal heart of Tennessee?
What strange, glad voice is that which calls
From Wagner's grave and Sumter's walls?

From Mississippi's fountain-head
A sound as of the bison's tread!
There rustled freedom's Charter Oak
In that wild burst the Ozarks spoke!
Cheer answers cheer from rise to set
Of sun. We have a country yet!

The praise, O God, be thine alone!
Thou givest not for bread a stone;
Thou hast not led us through the night
To blind us with returning light;
Not through the furnace have we passed,
To perish at its mouth at last.

O night of peace, thy flight restrain!
November's moon, be slow to wane!
Shine on the freedman's cabin floor,
On brows of prayer a blessing pour;
And give, with full assurance blest,
The weary heart of Freedom rest!
1868.

DISARMAMENT.

"PUT up the sword!" The voice of Christ once more
Speaks, in the pauses of the cannon's roar,
O'er fields of corn by fiery sickles reaped
And left dry ashes; over trenches heaped
With nameless dead; o'er cities starving slow
Under a rain of fire; through wards of woe
Down which a groaning diapason runs
From tortured brothers, husbands, lovers, sons
Of desolate women in their far-off homes,

Waiting to hear the step that never comes!
O men and brothers! let that voice be heard.
War fails, try peace; put up the useless sword!

Fear not the end. There is a story told
In Eastern tents, when autumn nights grow cold,
And round the fire the Mongol shepherds sit
With grave responses listening unto it
Once, on the errands of his mercy bent,
Buddha, the holy and benevolent,
Met a fell monster, huge and fierce of look,
Whose awful voice the hills and forests shook.
"O son of peace!" the giant cried, "thy fate
Is sealed at last, and love shall yield to hate."
The unarmed Buddha looking, with no trace
Of fear or anger, in the monster's face,
In pity said: "Poor fiend, even thee I love."
Lo! as he spake the sky-tall terror sank
To hand-breadth size; the huge abhorrence shrank
Into the form and fashion of a dove;
And where the thunder of its rage was heard,
Circling above him sweetly sang the bird
"Hate hath no harm for love," so ran the song;
"And peace unweaponed conquers every wrong!"
1871.

THE PROBLEM.

I.
NOT without envy Wealth at times must look
On their brown strength who wield the reaping-hook
And scythe, or at the forge-fire shape the plough
Or the steel harness of the steeds of steam;
All who, by skill and patience, anyhow
Make service noble, and the earth redeem
From savageness. By kingly accolade
Than theirs was never worthier knighthood made.
Well for them, if, while demagogues their vain
And evil counsels proffer, they maintain
Their honest manhood unseduced, and wage
No war with Labor's right to Labor's gain
Of sweet home-comfort, rest of hand and brain,
And softer pillow for the head of Age.

II.
And well for Gain if it ungrudging yields
Labor its just demand; and well for Ease
If in the uses of its own, it sees
No wrong to him who tills its pleasant fields
And spreads the table of its luxuries.
The interests of the rich man and the poor
Are one and same, inseparable evermore;
And, when scant wage or labor fail to give
Food, shelter, raiment, wherewithal to live,
Need has its rights, necessity its claim.
Yea, even self-wrought misery and shame

Test well the charity suffering long and kind.
The home-pressed question of the age can find
No answer in the catch-words of the blind
Leaders of blind. Solution there is none
Save in the Golden Rule of Christ alone.
1877.

OUR COUNTRY.

Read at Woodstock, Conn., July 4, 1883.

WE give thy natal day to hope,
O Country of our love and prayer I
Thy way is down no fatal slope,
But up to freer sun and air.

Tried as by furnace-fires, and yet
By God's grace only stronger made,
In future tasks before thee set
Thou shalt not lack the old-time aid.

The fathers sleep, but men remain
As wise, as true, and brave as they;
Why count the loss and not the gain?
The best is that we have to-day.

Whate'er of folly, shame, or crime,
Within thy mighty bounds transpires,
With speed defying space and time
Comes to us on the accusing wires;

While of thy wealth of noble deeds,
Thy homes of peace, thy votes unsold,
The love that pleads for human needs,
The wrong redressed, but half is told!

We read each felon's chronicle,
His acts, his words, his gallows-mood;
We know the single sinner well
And not the nine and ninety good.

Yet if, on daily scandals fed,
We seem at times to doubt thy worth,
We know thee still, when all is said,
The best and dearest spot on earth.

From the warm Mexic Gulf, or where
Belted with flowers Los Angeles
Basks in the semi-tropic air,
To where Katahdin's cedar trees

Are dwarfed and bent by Northern winds,
Thy plenty's horn is yearly filled;
Alone, the rounding century finds
Thy liberal soil by free hands tilled.

A refuge for the wronged and poor,
Thy generous heart has borne the blame
That, with them, through thy open door,
The old world's evil outcasts came.

But, with thy just and equal rule,
And labor's need and breadth of lands,
Free press and rostrum, church and school,
Thy sure, if slow, transforming hands

Shall mould even them to thy design,
Making a blessing of the ban;
And Freedom's chemistry combine
The alien elements of man.

The power that broke their prison bar
And set the dusky millions free,
And welded in the flame of war
The Union fast to Liberty,

Shall it not deal with other ills,
Redress the red man's grievance, break
The Circean cup which shames and kills,
And Labor full requital make?

Alone to such as fitly bear
Thy civic honors bid them fall?
And call thy daughters forth to share
The rights and duties pledged to all?

Give every child his right of school,
Merge private greed in public good,
And spare a treasury overfull
The tax upon a poor man's food?

No lack was in thy primal stock,
No weakling founders builded here;
Thine were the men of Plymouth Rock,
The Huguenot and Cavalier;

And they whose firm endurance gained
The freedom of the souls of men,
Whose hands, unstained with blood, maintained
The swordless commonwealth of Penn.

And thine shall be the power of all
To do the work which duty bids,
And make the people's council hall
As lasting as the Pyramids!

Well have thy later years made good
Thy brave-said word a century back,
The pledge of human brotherhood,
The equal claim of white and black.

That word still echoes round the world,
And all who hear it turn to thee,
And read upon thy flag unfurled
The prophecies of destiny.

Thy great world-lesson all shall learn,
The nations in thy school shall sit,
Earth's farthest mountain-tops shall burn
With watch-fires from thy own uplift.

Great without seeking to be great
By fraud or conquest, rich in gold,
But richer in the large estate
Of virtue which thy children hold,

With peace that comes of purity
And strength to simple justice due,
So runs our loyal dream of thee;
God of our fathers! make it true.

O Land of lands! to thee we give
Our prayers, our hopes, our service free;
For thee thy sons shall nobly live,
And at thy need shall die for thee!

ON THE BIG HORN.

In the disastrous battle on the Big Horn River, in which General Custer and his entire force were slain, the chief Rain-in-the-Face was one of the fiercest leaders of the Indians. In Longfellow's poem on the massacre, these lines will be remembered:--

"Revenge!" cried Rain-in-the-Face,
"Revenge upon all the race
Of the White Chief with yellow hair!"
And the mountains dark and high
From their crags reechoed the cry
Of his anger and despair.

He is now a man of peace; and the agent at Standing Rock, Dakota, writes, September 28, 1886: "Rain-in-the-Face is very anxious to go to Hampton. I fear he is too old, but he desires very much to go." The Southern Workman, the organ of General Armstrong's Industrial School at Hampton, Va., says in a late number:--

"Rain-in-the-Face has applied before to come to Hampton, but his age would exclude him from the school as an ordinary student. He has shown himself very much in earnest about it, and is anxious, all say, to learn the better ways of life. It is as unusual as it is striking to see a man of his age, and one who has had such an experience, willing to give up the old way, and put himself in the position of a boy and a student."

THE years are but half a score,
And the war-whoop sounds no more
With the blast of bugles, where
Straight into a slaughter pen,
With his doomed three hundred men,
Rode the chief with the yellow hair.

O Hampton, down by the sea!

What voice is beseeching thee
For the scholar's lowliest place?
Can this be the voice of him
Who fought on the Big Horn's rim?
Can this be Rain-in-the-Face?

His war-paint is washed away,
His hands have forgotten to slay;
He seeks for himself and his race
The arts of peace and the lore
That give to the skilled hand more
Than the spoils of war and chase.

O chief of the Christ-like school!
Can the zeal of thy heart grow cool
When the victor scarred with fight
Like a child for thy guidance craves,
And the faces of hunters and braves
Are turning to thee for light?

The hatchet lies overgrown
With grass by the Yellowstone,
Wind River and Paw of Bear;
And, in sign that foes are friends,
Each lodge like a peace-pipe sends
Its smoke in the quiet air.

The hands that have done the wrong
To right the wronged are strong,
And the voice of a nation saith
"Enough of the war of swords,
Enough of the lying words
And shame of a broken faith!"

The hills that have watched afar
The valleys ablaze with war
Shall look on the tasselled corn;
And the dust of the grinded grain,
Instead of the blood of the slain,
Shall sprinkle thy banks, Big Horn!

The Ute and the wandering Crow
Shall know as the white men know,
And fare as the white men fare;
The pale and the red shall be brothers,
One's rights shall be as another's,
Home, School, and House of Prayer!

O mountains that climb to snow,
O river winding below,
Through meadows by war once trod,
O wild, waste lands that await
The harvest exceeding great,
Break forth into praise of God!
1887.

NOTES

Note 1, page 18. The reader may, perhaps, call to mind the beautiful sonnet of William Wordsworth, addressed to Toussaint L'Ouverture, during his confinement in France.

"Toussaint!--thou most unhappy man of men
Whether the whistling rustic tends his plough
Within thy hearing, or thou liest now
Buried in some deep dungeon's earless den;
O miserable chieftain!--where and when
Wilt thou find patience?--Yet, die not, do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow;
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies,--
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies.
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

Note 2, page 67. The Northern author of the Congressional rule against receiving petitions of the people on the subject of Slavery.

Note 3, page 88. There was at the time when this poem was written an Association in Liberty County, Georgia, for the religious instruction of negroes. One of their annual reports contains an address by the Rev. Josiah Spry Law, in which the following passage occurs: "There is a growing interest in this community in the religious instruction of negroes. There is a conviction that religious instruction promotes the quiet and order of the people, and the pecuniary interest of the owners."

Note 4, page 117. The book-establishment of the Free-Will Baptists in Dover was refused the act of incorporation by the New Hampshire Legislature, for the reason that the newspaper organ of that sect and its leading preachers favored abolition.

Note 5, page 118. The senatorial editor of the Belknap Gazette all along manifested a peculiar horror of "niggers" and "nigger parties."

Note 6, page 118. The justice before whom Elder Storrs was brought for preaching abolition on a writ drawn by Hon. M. N., Jr., of Pittsfield. The sheriff served the writ while the elder was praying.

Note 7, page 118. The academy at Canaan, N. H., received one or two colored scholars, and was in consequence dragged off into a swamp by Democratic teams.

Note 8, page 119. "Papers and memorials touching the subject of slavery shall be laid on the table without reading, debate, or reference." So read the gag-law, as it was called, introduced in the House by Mr.

Atherton.

Note 9, page 120. The Female Anti-Slavery Society, at its first meeting in Concord, was assailed with stones and brickbats.

Note 10, page 168. The election of Charles Sumner to the United States Senate "followed bard upon" the rendition of the fugitive Sims by the United States officials and the armed police of Boston.

Note 11, page 290. For the idea of this line, I am indebted to Emerson, in his inimitable sonnet to the Rhodora,--

"If eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being."

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