

AMERICA

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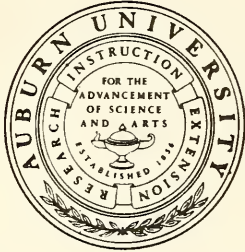
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AMERICA:

A DRAMATIC POEM.


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NEW-YORK:

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH,

683 BROADWAY.

1863.



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DENDY

SEP 30 '74

## P R E F A C E .



This little poem was chiefly written in the beginning of the year 1862, and reflects events and feelings more peculiarly belonging to that epoch of the terrible and momentous struggle which still convulses our land. But though its particular form may retain the impress of that moment, yet it is hoped that it will not on that account be found destitute of power to recall the magnitude of the issue, the awful solemnity of the crisis.

Some allusion is made to the unfriendly attitude of Europe. While, however, we dwell sadly on the disappointment occasioned by encountering a spirit of hostility, where the most opposite sentiment had been anticipated, let us still remember that the heart of humanity every where beats with us whether consciously or not.

In this faith let us strengthen ourselves. And let us recall with gratitude the names of some even beyond the ocean, who have not hesitated to speak for us in this our time of trouble; above all, that of Count Gasparin, who, with such unwearied patience, such earnestness of affection, has studied into the spirit of our history and national life, and following us in every step of this painful struggle, has plead our cause so nobly and so faithfully before the tribunal of public opinion in Europe.

May the hope and expectation of such friends meet with no disappointment through our unworthiness of the part we are called to play in the destinies of mankind.

# AMERICA.

—◆—  
Mountains of Virginia—Night—Genius of America—Alone.  
—◆—

## AMERICA.

WEEP! weep! my clouds, drench the dull night  
with tears,

Ye winds of heaven, from every quarter come  
Shriek forth my pain, and with your outcry wild  
Let thunders mix their voice: let all the hills  
Ashamed of dumbness, send some echo back  
Responsive to my grief. — But though ye poured  
Your fountains dry, O heavens! though ye should  
rage,

Ye thunders, till no sound were left to shake  
The groaning sphere, yet would ye suit no more  
Than summer dews, or birds that sing at dawn,

To speak the measures of mine agony.  
Well dost thou sit, O darkness! on these hills,  
Well dost thou clothe about with robe obscure  
The soil once glorious, now with shame defiled,  
Disowned of all her heroes, and by doom,  
Just as the nod of heaven, condemned to drink  
The poisoned cup that to the mother's lips  
The daughter's hand upheld. — Lo! in mine ears  
The battle sounds afar. I hear the shock  
Of arms, the deadly clash of meeting foes.  
The hoofs of war tear up the sacred sod  
That bore the common sires. The bullet flies  
By brother aimed at brother. They that fed  
As one upon my breast, each to this heart  
Dear as the inmost currents of its life,  
Wrestle together in the mad embrace  
Not loosed till death for one or both divide  
The firm-strung sinewy strength, with palsying  
hand  
Smite down a crown of manhood in the dust.

O heavens! O earth! look on, and see what  
grief

Provokes my bitter outcry!—unto mine  
Compare not yours, O mothers that do sit  
Gazing, with eyes that can not see for tears,  
On faces of dead offspring, — not with yours  
I count my sorrows, — but if one there be,  
One miserable mother in the land  
Against whose life the nursling of her love  
Hath lifted murderous hand, — against the life  
That was its source and fount, hath lifted up  
The thrice accursed parricidal stroke,  
Then let her come, for she hath known my woe,  
Then let her sit and mix her tears with mine.  
—Yet she, mayhap, would be some mother stern,  
Some cruel stepdame, and no tender care  
Had taught more reverence, — but a thorny bed  
Her bosom proved, nor could they learn so late  
A better lore, who from her lips had heard  
No word of pity drop, no lesson mild

Swaying to tempers sweet their tender age.

But such unto my favorite sons was I?

Who whispered—who—the fierce and dreadful doubt

That so it had been better—that less love

Had wrought less hate?—What fiend now shakes  
my soul

Accusing weak indulgence of this fruit

Bitter to taste as ashes of the grave?

Ah! woe is me! my children, woe is me!

Before whose eyes is set from day to day

This piteous sight, than which I think the earth

Hath none more piteous, where of those who  
formed

One prosperous household, one fraternal band,

Part stand around the mother to defend

With sword and blood, part spurred with impious  
rage

Press on to take her life. Woe! woe! is me,

Who brings me comfort? O ye winds of night!

Ye that have searched earth's utmost corners out,

And spoiled them of their secrets, let some word  
Fall with sweet healing on my burning wound!

## VOICE OF THE SOUTH WIND.

What wilt thou have, O melancholy one!  
What wilt thou learn of me?

## AMERICA.

Sweet is thy voice,  
Sweet in mine ears, O South!

## SOUTH WIND.

No happy word  
Is set unto its music.

## AMERICA.

Say not so.  
Thou on whose dewy wings is lingering still  
The scented breath of gardens far away  
That never cease to bloom, but month by month  
The rose unfolds her heart, and woos the sun  
To hide amid her robes more splendid rays

Of crimson or of gold. Methinks I hear  
Beneath thy sigh, the rustling sound that creeps  
Among the tall magnolias, that reflect  
From burnished leaves, like shields, the moon's pale  
gleam.

I hear the myriad voices that ascend  
From pathless forests, silent all the day,  
But when the night his sudden mantle flings,  
Begins tumultuous revel,—nature's joy  
Unchecked, exultant, and until the dawn  
The wild vociferous uproar doth not cease.

## SOUTH WIND.

So, could I heal thee!

## AMERICA.

Through the dull lagoons  
I hear the waters, sobbing as they go,  
And from the sand-bound coasts whose whitening  
line



Wearies from day to day the straining sight  
Of lookers, out at sea, mine ear there greets  
An echo, as of thunder, where his rage  
The vexed Atlantic pours, and seeks to draw  
Back to his yesty deep the groaning shores,  
Where yet his restless fury heaps amain  
The spoil of deep sea-bottoms, and builds out  
The habitable land with increase got  
Out of the bosom of his hungry wave.

## SOUTH WIND.

How like wind-harassed waves, the stormy sighs  
Chase one another through thy laboring breath!

## AMERICA.

Methinks I see the broad and whitening fields,  
Dumb in the starlight, ripe, but not for food,  
Snowy, but not with cold. Betwixt their rows  
Shall busy feet be moving, on the morn,  
And sable hands be thrust in contrast strange

Amid the stainless fruit, to gather in  
The harvest pure, whereof the world is glad.

## SOUTH WIND.

Alas! for this the world shall ne'er be glad.

## AMERICA.

O vexing wind! the voices of my sons,  
My well-beloved! I hear amid thy sighs.  
My fair and noble sons, on whom have fallen  
All bounties of my love, the chosen gifts  
Of earth and heaven—I hear, but not discern  
The pleasant sounds. Interpret thou for me.

## SOUTH WIND.

Thou hearest, O thou mother, sad! too well.

## AMERICA.

My proud and beauteous race, for whom I bore  
A thousand sorrows, whom to spare one fear

I gave my strength, my glory, and my hope,  
Yea, but to shield them when their summer blood  
Welled up within them as a fount defiled  
Of tyrannous design, and purpose fixed  
On wild and barbarous use of savage right;  
Lent them, while all the world looked on and  
frowned,

The bright and stainless honor of my name,  
To shield them from their shame, nor gave one  
thought

That so on me its blackening guilt must fall,  
To be washed out in blood—their blood and mine.  
Tell me not now, thou false, deceitful breath,  
All are against me, all; that not one voice  
Is raised to plead in presence of the rest  
The dear and filial claim, to noble souls  
Sacred forever, last to lose its hold  
On those most reckless of all law beside,  
That not one heart beats quicker, when some word  
Stirs the old memories of those happier days,

When, from our seat, in union and in pride,  
We scoffed at danger and defied the world.

## SOUTH WIND.

Not one! Not one!

## AMERICA.

Thou art too deaf to hear.  
How canst thou know what thoughts in silence  
brood  
Where fear is master, and the uttered word  
Were like a solemn sentence, bearing death  
Home to the speaker's heart, e'er yet his lips  
Had ceased their motion? Many now do wait,  
Faithful in voiceless patience, many more  
To dull despair have yielded up the truth  
That yet is mine, though hope be stifled long  
Beneath the weight of grief. Ah! me, ah! me,  
My heart is racked with anguish, and anew  
My wounds are felt to bleed. — Ill-omened voice

I'll no more of thee; from the East there comes  
A cooler breath; unto my burning brow  
It brings a freshening moisture from the deep;  
Unto my heart, some message good and pure,  
Conferring strength, and bracing up to deed  
Heroic, urging on the fainting soul  
To hope, to nobler zeal, to victory.  
Some message from the shores beyond the sea,  
From sisters well beloved, and honored well,  
Who, having known in part what grief I bear,  
Put forth a hand, or, if not so, a voice  
To cheer me, that not utterly I fail.  
Answer! swift messenger of rising suns,  
What happy omens of a coming morn  
Their loving eyes have seen, who watch for me  
All through this murky night, in watch-towers set  
Of ancient days in heights beyond the clouds.

## VOICE OF THE EAST WIND.

No happy omen do their eyes discern

Whose eager looks another way are bent  
 Than where the dawn, if such remain for thee,  
 Shall lift the dusky edges of thy night ;  
 Whose glances drink the blackness of thy shame  
 With more delight than ever fairest rays  
 Of crowned Auroras in the flaming east.

## AMERICA.

What is this word, what is this note of ill?  
 Prithee shrill blast, blow shriller, that mine ear  
 May not mistake thine import.

## EAST WIND.

Dost thou mark  
 How flies the shout of triumph still, as flies  
 Across your billowy waste some fresher tale  
 Of sorrow that hath met thee, some new stroke  
 That bows thy head to earth?

## AMERICA.

I hear, I hear

Strange sounds of exultation, what they mean  
I know not.

## EAST WIND.

Flatter! flatter not thine heart,  
Helpless art thou, and hopeless, if thy help  
Or hope from other than thyself must come.  
Alone thou standest in thy bitter need,  
Alone and friendless. Scoffed at by the world,  
By saints unpitied, for thy sin that brought  
This evil on thee, and by sinners scorned  
For that thy pride had lifted thee too high  
For brooking of their own, and now, that fallen,  
The sweetness of revenge, without the cost,  
Rewards the long impatience of their wish.

## AMERICA.

Tell me of her, the noble one that sits  
Alone amid the seas, her from whose breast  
I drew my heart's best life, whose tongue is mine,  
Whose glories are my glories, whom to owe

All that has lifted me above the rest,—  
 Save that I dared to claim my separate right,  
 And claiming hold it—is my willing boast.  
 Tell me that word which now to all the rest  
 She adds at such an hour, when peril hangs  
 So deadly, threatening all to both most dear,  
 Tell me the word in that beloved tongue  
 Whose accents yet shall ring, clear, bold, and  
     sweet,  
 The world around, and all its sleepers wake.  
 So her own lark at morn, up springs and leaves  
 The misty ground, and soars and sings so loud,  
 Up! up! for now the sun has left his bed,  
 No time for dreams and dewy slumbers more,  
 Up! up! with me, to meet the golden morn.

EAST WIND.

Alas! alas!

A M E R I C A .

Hast thou no more reply?



England is of her many conquests sure,  
Who, in the girdle of her rule, includes  
The habitable earth, and makes the sea  
Her highway. England sits with blindfold eyes,  
Like justice, and the even balance holds  
Which, who by bold rebellious act dares move  
Straight downward goes and settles his own doom.  
Happy! thrice happy land, of all I know!  
Who, in the dear affection of her sons,  
Makes chiefest boast, nor shall she ever blush  
To name her noble offspring, stout and brave:  
For her they count no drop of blood too dear,  
And she their love with equal love repays.  
Yet has she tasted sorrow, so can know  
Part that I prove, and from her happy lot  
By contrast guess the rest.

EAST WIND.

But not to mourn,

Rather with hideous mockery to deride  
Of rude and tuneless laughter.

## A M E R I C A.

It is well !

But there was yet another, one whose hand  
Placed firm on mine when there was bitter need,  
Once nerved me for my conflict. She whose step  
Once in this race was foremost,—from whose lips  
Went forth that clarion note of “Liberty,  
Equality, and Brotherhood,” for man.  
It sounded far, its echoes have not died,  
Not even to her own hearing, though she close  
Reluctant ears, for still it shall return  
Thrown back in myriad voices from all shores  
That men inhabit, till the time shall come,  
That she hath learnt once more to sing and shout,  
And join with clearer notes that chorus sweet,  
Knowing the meaning now, which once unknown  
And from her thought far absent, when her call

Was loudest, was not claimed at such demand.  
Then in its stead came horror, blood, and death,  
Reason's unthroning; then old tyrannies  
Bound on with bands of iron, forged anew  
In that fierce fire of horror; then a seal  
Set on despair for many weary days  
Wherein the light is hidden, though the sun  
Lives still amid the heavens. Tell me of her,  
Though scarce I hope, for those are passed away  
Whose names are in my heart, when with my  
tongue  
I utter hers.

## EAST WIND.

Why shouldst thou further ask,  
Since none stand with thee?

## AMERICA.

Yea! for of them all  
These two, the first and noblest, lead alone  
The van of nations. Silence, O my heart!

Silence! keep down my tears. I shall not weep,  
Nor fail, but gather up my single might,  
And dare the hour alone. Once, once I stood  
In joy upon my solitary shore.  
Fearless I stood, nor did I seek their love,  
Strong in the might within me, strong in these,  
These household traitors, then I called aloud  
The world was silent listening for the voice  
That signalled joy and hope to all the race.

## EAST WIND.

Now to thyself returns thy boastful shout  
In drear reverberations. Lo! the fruit  
Of all thy sowing, while the seed is known  
In this rank poisonous crop, that kills the air  
And with its exhalations foul defiles  
The very heavens.

## AMERICA.

Mock on! mock on! 'tis meet

That scorn be joined to sorrow, and my heart  
By one more stroke be proved, that men may  
    know

What stuff 'tis made of, whether this, or that,  
Shall force it to its breaking; yet I think  
There's something in it yet that shall survive  
A longer crushing. Though the weight of years,  
Packed full of grief, should hinder every throb,  
And make it beat in time with funeral bells  
That toll the sleeper's way, when loving friends  
Bear him to his low chamber in the dust;  
Yea! though 'twere buried, buried in a grave  
As deep as to the mountain's steadfast roots,  
And with the mountains hurled like monuments  
To mark its hope as ended; yet I think  
'Twould beat beneath them still, and on a day,  
In one great act upgathering all the force  
Matured in silence, startle dreamers round  
With throes of resurrection. In my soul  
I hear the whisper of a secret voice,

The prophecy of life. No hand profane  
Shall quench in utter night that fire divine,  
Which for the world's deliverance in me burns.

## EAST WIND.

Strange hope thou utterest, and a bolder scope  
Hast set unto thy thoughts than suits the bounds  
And destinies of nations.

## AMERICA.

I will speak  
Of former things, and will recall the days  
Of youth, now far behind me, by a gap  
As wide as death, cut off from that which is.  
When thus I stood, and cried with voice as clear  
As bugles, or as trumpets, that cheer on  
To victory; Lo! I wait, I wait to know,  
Ye lands, the high decrees of destiny.  
The glorious offspring I of all your strength  
And heir of all your greatness, yea than all

More nobly portioned, where I stand alone  
Betwixt these oceans, whose wide rolling waves  
Are servitors to me, to bring me spoils  
Of many isles; whereon I well shall feed  
With inward wealth, unsummed and measureless.  
Rich in all bounties I, of generous heaven,  
And earth beneath, and of the flowing deep,  
But most in hope, that to your wearied age  
But faintly comes. All hail! ye golden years,  
All hail! thou wondrous future that is mine,  
Since light is yours, and wisdom without end,  
Prosperity and joy. Through all my veins  
The bounding pulses play, my heart is set,  
My eye is fixed on summits yet unclimbed,  
Blue in the misty distance, shining fair  
In all soft glories of the morning sun.  
There, there await my eager, panting steps,  
The unknown splendors of the great "to be."  
Farewell! farewell! old champions in this race,  
Your time is passed. O sisters! ye did well,

But now your time is passed. Here where I  
stand

Bounteous and full, I call, I shout aloud,  
My voice to earth's remotest bound goes forth;  
Ho! all ye poor, who have no food nor rest,  
Ye to whom life is bitter, ye for whom  
There seems on earth no room. Lo! here is  
room,

Food, freedom, rest. See how they leave your  
arms,

Your unfed children, with their hunger weak,  
Your persecuted wanderers—they to me  
Come flying in their need, and I for all  
Have ready welcome and a full supply.

I who have broken for myself the yoke  
That once your tyrants forced my neck to bear,  
Have such a heart as beats in sympathy  
With all that suffer wrong, and loves the slave,  
(Save that upon one neck I place my foot  
And hold it firm, wherein my will or right



Let no man question,) therefore, when ye see  
My starry banner floating to the wind  
Rejoice ye lands, and shout for liberty.

## VOICE OF THE NORTH WIND.

Lo! I, the rapid messenger of storms,  
With face set Southward, whose wide whirling  
wings  
Shake down amid their motion flights of rain,  
Cold dews of night, sharp frosts, and mantling  
snows,  
And with a touch, in many a torpid brain  
Quicken the stagnant life, and set in flow  
The sluggish blood in many a drooping heart.  
I bid thee hail, O glorious hope of men!  
And bring thee loyal greetings, love, and faith,  
From sons that fly to aid, with weaponed arm,  
And lavished blood, and treasure without stint,  
The mother's desperate need.

## AMERICA.

Sons against sons,

My sweetest tidings.

## NORTH WIND.

Who shall dare to weigh

Claims filial and fraternal? who shall see

The brother's hand, if in its frenzied grasp

Glistens the accursed blade of parricides?

These ponder not in unresolved despair

The question's awful terms, but seeing clear,

Through all dim clouds of horror, fear, and doubt,

The one solution, push aside with scorn

Revolting thoughts, and make their shuddering

wills

Leap forward to that fixed and holy work,

Sole hope and sole deliverance.

## AMERICA.

Is it so?

O fate! not yet, not yet my heart accepts  
 Thy hard decree, but like a stormy deep,  
 Lashing its rocky barriers, so my soul  
 Spends its own strength in wild and fierce dissent,  
 Not breaks nor alters thine.

## NORTH WIND.

What further word  
 Of mine can bring thee comfort?

## AMERICA.

Yet speak on.  
 For what if all were traitors? Though in part  
 The house be fallen, yet that some pillars stand  
 To hold the whole from ruin—it is well.

## NORTH WIND.

Faint is thy voice, and joyless, yet not faint  
 Their hearts who love thee. All thy mighty  
 North

Moves as a single man, swayed by one thought,  
Led by one counsel, to retrieve thy doom,  
Even though at cost of all. Who treasured once  
Their hard-earned gold, now cast it down, with  
scorn

Uncounted, in thy service; who loved life,  
Love it the more, that they may sell it dear,  
Offering the price to thee. Here lovers miss  
The eyes that were their morning, brothers press  
A last dear kiss on sisters' cheeks, and sons  
Turn not again at hearing that God-speed  
From mothers' lips, that falter not though pale;  
No doubt nor murmur's heard, only each one  
Asks his own heart the question, "What have I?"  
How shall my little strength be made to serve  
The moment's solemn uses? So thy thought  
Controls all motions, sways with force supreme  
Each warm heart's leaping impulse, guides and  
thrills  
Fingers, that over slender to uplift

The heavy sword that must undo thy wrong,  
Are all the fitter for a meeker toil,  
That helps thy helpers, comforts those who give  
Their manhood and their all, to comfort thee.  
And be not hopeless, for where faith is found  
Strength also dwells, and fullness. Turn and look;  
Know thy true-hearted North, her step is firm  
Though light and buoyant, through the tide of  
youth

That swells her veins, the measure of glad hope  
That in her heart she bears. Her brow is clear,  
Open as heaven, with majesty there writ  
Of purpose measured still with love and truth,  
And in her gentle eyes the steady fire  
Burns tender, deep, and true. Oh! trust her well,  
While with slow aim, deliberate, one by one  
Her giant blows descend to cut thy way  
Straight on to victory, while that loyal faith,  
Like leaven, shall work from hers to hearts less  
firm,

Her courage high inspire the feebler breasts,  
 Till with the subtle force that ever lives  
 In noble deeds, she win the recreants back,  
 And former days return, to crown thy brows  
 With more than former glories.

## AMERICA.

Can it be ?

Yet less than this were nothing.—For their hearts  
 That hate me, for these only do I pine ;  
 No other victory, other were defeat.  
 How can I make my children to my slaves ?

## NORTH WIND.

Yet force must be first winner, strike the sword,  
 Whose sight still maddens, from the mad one's  
 grasp,  
 Release some true hearts from the spell of fear ;  
 Some that of truth or treachery make a badge  
 According to the fashion, giving leave

That to unpin and this to fasten on  
A sleeve that matches either.

## AMERICA.

Heaven speed

My champions, for their own cause, and for mine,  
And for my lost ones.

## NORTH WIND.

Hear the tramp of feet

That breaks the night. Her gathering thousands  
march,

Their horses' hoofs make music on the ground  
That shakes beneath them. In the midst is heard  
The rumbling of her dread artillery,  
Whose flaming mouths e'er long shall hold dis-  
course

Than reason's self more potent, while on high  
Above the whole, its sign and argument,  
That banner floats, out of whose starry heaven

No missing orb is dropped, but perfect still  
Its constellations shine, and with the past  
Link on a glorious future.

## AMERICA.

Yet, on these  
I did not pour my favors. They it seems  
Are prosperous,—feel within their honest hearts  
The swelling, grateful tide, whose wealth must pour  
About my feet, as author of their good.  
And yet methinks, 'twas but a meagre choice  
I left these brave ones, when my best was set  
At service of my darlings. Rough the ways  
I taught their feet to walk in from the first,  
And on a hard, scarce cultivable soil,  
Bade them with sweat of brow, and calloused  
hands,  
Exact therefrom their portion. Rude the storms  
That vexed their coasts, or through their valleys  
bleak



Swept chill and void of pity, while the snows  
Covered for many months their scanty fields,  
And summer's proper measure ever lacked  
When longest. If they found upon my thorn  
Some flowers, I knew it not, and if the flower  
Into such fruit has ripened as I see,  
Let them their own good hearts and steadfast  
    wills,  
Their days and nights of cheerful labor thank,  
And leave to me my wisdom and my choice,  
To smell my rose, — my rose, that dropping now  
Its petals one by one, leaves me to feel  
On torn and bleeding lips, what stays behind,  
That sweet show perished, and that fragrance fled.

## NORTH WIND.

They will not hear thee, but with shouts and joy,  
And loyal love, and numbering one by one  
The blessings got through thee, repeat thy name,  
Calling on all to know, and to confess

No bands of duty and of faith so strong  
 As those which unto thee thy children bind.  
 Nor will they hear dispraised that sterner lot,  
 Whose helpful hardness braced their sinews up  
 To manlier vigor—braced their minds within  
 To choose from day to day the nobler part,  
 And by the needful discipline of pain  
 Taught to discern 'twixt pleasures false and true,  
 'Twixt boasts of present power, and that whose  
     base  
 Eternal, shall not shake; 'twixt license wild,  
 Or willful mastery, and the glorious use  
 Of freedom, whereunto the soul is born.

## AMERICA.

Yet have I robbed them, with unwilling eyes  
 Beheld their growing wealth, and saw them claim  
 The larger place in counsel. Soon, I said,  
 These will stand foremost to uphold my name  
 In sight of men; their choice too much prevail,

Changing a thousand customs, dear through use,  
Whether for worse or better. Fool! to see  
So far, and not what now I see too well  
Too late, what black and infamous abyss  
Already yawned to swallow all my pride,  
Unless these loving hands prove strong enough  
To hold me up from ruin. So I mocked,  
Reproved, and checked them, ever more pushed  
back

Their forward steps, but still within the code  
Of that most perfect, just, and balanced law  
That over me and them I set at first  
Our safeguard, and our warranty of good.  
That bound I never passed, nor these approached  
Its sacred limits, but with holy awe  
Inviolable held what they the bulwark deemed  
Of human liberties and natural right.  
But those have laughed at love alike, and fear,  
Me, and my highest gift at once they spurn,  
And by one bold, high-handed act of crime,

With treachery for its warrant, will undo  
The whole world's history, turn the ages back  
On their slow march, to find again that night,  
Whence in slow pain, at price of toil and blood,  
Earth's heroes had released them, scorning life,  
For happier men to purchase better days.

## VOICE OF THE WEST WIND.

I bear thee from thy children of the West  
Victorious greetings, and outrun with news  
Their loyal feet, who haste to crown thy brows  
With earliest laurels of this fateful strife.

## AMERICA.

What word hast thou?

## WEST WIND.

Forth from their prairies rushed  
The gallant bands, soon as the tidings came  
Of laws reviled, and fealty despised,

And danger threatening through a treacherous blow  
All that uplifts with thee thy faithful sons  
Above the common lot. With valiant hands,  
Armed or unarmed they came, with hearts on fire,  
And brave intent to rescue or to die.  
So furnished, swept they down upon thy foes,  
And from Virginia's western quarter first  
Banished the fell invader, drove him well  
Within his rebel bounds. On flying feet  
Of consternation, strewing as he went  
Arms, baggage, tents, and furniture of war,  
He shunned the furious onset, and defeat  
Still marked from field to field his way in blood.  
Now from his lair beyond the ridgy hills  
With greedy disappointment still he eyes  
The rescued booty, and but waits the hour,  
To spring again, and seize on all he's lost.  
While faithful still the saviours of the soil  
Stand watching to defend, and from his rear  
He yet may hear a shout more terrible

Than first dismayed him, then with vain attempt  
 Strive to elude his captors, but their bands  
 Shall hold him fast, and lead him to thy feet.

## AMERICA.

Glad news of sorrow! joy whose welcoming  
 Is bitter with my tears,—but not with mine  
 For many, counting life itself too cheap  
 To buy such tidings, hearing, with no smile  
 Reward the bringer, but, as David, cry,  
 My son! my son! my brother! would to God  
 That I had died for thee.

## WEST WIND.

Art so displeased?

## AMERICA.

But black should be my triumph's livery,  
 And solemn funeral marches usher in  
 My pageant, when with spoils of victory

I enter at the gates, this contest done.  
Strange contest where the conqueror gains in loss,  
The conquered lose to gain, and I their woes  
Must weep, while they, by chastisement made wise,  
Receive the forfeit love once more, and care  
And privilege of sons.

WEST WIND.

No welcome hast  
For happy tidings?

AMERICA.

Yet through all its pain  
Doth not my heart leap up to hear these deeds  
Of my last born, my warrior of the West?

WEST WIND.

Expect more glorious things, for now their foot  
Stands planted where the giant waters meet,  
That bear the commerce of their golden soil

Down to the Southern sea. Thence shall they  
hold

That mighty border, on whose shifting line  
Rebellion's stormy waves now surge and lash,  
Bidding the firm hills tremble. These shall make  
Their hearts the barrier, and with strong advance  
Drive the proud billows backward, till they meet  
The nether sea, and in its depths be lost.

## AMERICA.

Yet who assures me? Who discerns the end?  
What sign rebukes my fear, or promised grace  
Gives me an anchor through this night of storm,  
A hold upon the heavens, which now no voice  
Permit to hear, but such as smites my soul  
With wrathful accents, and imports despair?  
How shall I, gallant sons, cry, "Lift your hearts,  
Courage!" "God speed ye well," while still re-  
turns,  
As if my voices echo from all lands,



The inauspicious cry, "'Tis done, and fallen  
The glory of thy greatness; know it well:  
Being fallen, aspire no more, nor think to mend  
With rivets new the broken chain that held  
Thy destinies from shipwreck, or cement  
A violated league, that was no more,  
With vain expense of blood."

## VOICE OF THE RIVERS.

Ah! me. Ah! me.

I wonder and cry out with thee,  
New and unthought agony  
Seizes on me suddenly,  
For of old my shining bands  
He laid upon the lands.  
The net with skillful hands he wove,  
Beneath the sun its meshes shone,  
And in the pale-rayed moon;  
And every knot was set to prove  
Some mystery of love.

Ah! me. Ah! me.

What hand hath rent, hath torn in twain,  
Our cunning net, our shining chain?  
Is the love of heaven in vain?  
That hath written its intent  
Over this fair continent;  
Written plain in lines of light,  
To be read by day or night?

Shall my waves then backward flow?  
Seek the sources whence they came,  
In the mountains capped with snow,  
Or forgotten of their fame  
Slip into the gulf below?

VOICE OF THE MOUNTAINS.

Of an ancient race are we,  
Barriers older than the soil,  
Older than the sea.  
Who shall break the strong decree,

By which He, the mighty One,  
Lifted us to taste the sun?  
Shall His word of power once more  
Put an end to light and bliss,  
Open up the drear abyss,  
Where we dwelt with night before?  
Shall we sleep with death again?  
Since His signals speak in vain,  
And the mortal nations know  
Wall nor limit to their power,  
Nor whither in their hour  
Their rash usurping waves may flow?

## VOICE OF THE SEAS.

I, Ocean, from the North, the East, the West,  
With forced retreat that day  
Fled, at His stern behest,  
Who shaped her shores,  
And broadly laid her bounds, with port and bay,

And harbors good, like mighty entrance doors  
Set wide for commerce. One the line

That from the northward swept  
Down to the stormy gulf,

Whose warmer waters leapt  
With impulse strange, henceforth to meet,  
With new embrace, by contrast sweet,  
And by the voice divine,  
My chilling tides, that roll  
Ice laden from the pole ;  
And on her western shore,  
With mighty surge and roar,  
My billows broke in vain.

For He that said, "O land! be one."

Made firmer his decree,  
Than that strength-shattering waves of mine  
Could foil the great design.

One, therefore, let it be,  
From North to South,  
From rising unto setting sun.

## VOICE OF THE LAKES.

Midway the continent, behold!

Our emerald waters dance,

And, tipped with sunny gold,

Out of their lucid fountains glance

To kiss the gladsome light.

So clear are we and bright,

E'er since His mighty hand

Pressed deep the fertile land,

And touched the living springs below.

In one unbroken chain

Half way from main to main,

Through basins wide, He bade them flow,

And said, "Bear up upon your breast,

O waves! the commerce of the West,

And lead it to the sea.

Ye, on the North, for such a land

As now my wisest grace hath planned,

And closed about from strand to strand,

A boundary shall be."

## AMERICA.

Ah! me. Ah! me.

Still with his God at war, with nature still,  
Is man, and ever thwarts with random spite  
The will of sovereign love. Should I be vile  
Even as he, and dare reproach that grace  
Which, able to control, leaves free to choose  
This creature frail, who still so awful power  
Turns to his own destruction? I have heard  
This always to be true, that God hath planned,  
And man with scorn rejected, every good  
That to his lot is suited. Eden first—  
That lost, still some new garden, planted fair  
With pleasant shoots thence rescued, all alike  
His foot hath trampled, and the curse of thorns  
Hath come upon it, through his wanton pride.  
So, shall this last and fairest run to waste?  
O destiny! O power of endless grace!  
Forbid! forbid, the sacrilege, the shame,  
The loss unsummed, that time shall not repair.

Give mercy, — now is time for grace, and proof  
 Of all-sufficient might — some way devise,  
 O wisdom! — sure a way is hid with thee,  
 A cure for all this madness of the heart,  
 And thou wilt heal. — But woe is me, I fear,  
 My spirit trembles in me, lest this time  
 God interpose not, since I know his plan  
 Gives little room for wonders; unto man,  
 Man's way he leaves, if he himself will slay,  
 No hand omnipotent shall strike aside  
 The dagger from its aim.

*[Shades of Revolutionary heroes pass in solemn procession.]*

Ha! what new sight  
 Affrights the stars, and startles from their sleep  
 The shadow-cradling hills? — Sure to my thoughts  
 An answer, to mine unbelief a sign!  
 Or rather from my wild and teeming brain  
 A monstrous product, that to fancy's eyes  
 Appears than sense more real. . . .

O Shapes obscure!

That round the moonlit margin of the vale  
Wind slow your ominous way, declare, speak out,  
And with intelligible words make known  
If such ye be, as unto me ye seem.

All's silence,—yet if ever from their graves  
The dead upstarting, walk this world once more,  
'Tis in such guise they come, and lo! the forms  
And lineaments of heroes long asleep,  
Known unto me each one—each one beloved.  
With heads bowed low as if through weight of  
grief

'Twixt where I stand and yonder massive gloom  
At solemn pace they glide, as if their ears  
Heeded some spectral music, and anon  
Each bends on me his melancholy gaze,  
Then with a slow obeisance passes on.  
O souls of patriots! could not death make strong  
His fetters, but that ye must also come  
To break my heart with memories?—Nay! put on



The very robe of flesh ye wore of old,  
Stand once more in your places, let men hear  
Each voice severed, to those grand accents tuned,  
That once compelled assent, though long withheld,  
Even from the unwilling. It may be that then  
The traitors will grow true, the faithless sons  
Unto the fathers' creed return, the spoiled  
And wasted heritage be fair once more  
With pains of prosperous toil. Yet nay! yet nay!  
Even so their blind eyes would refuse to see,  
Their ears be deaf as ever. Since your graves,  
Once hallowing all the soil, can not rebuke,  
Nor former words remembered, all in vain  
Your living lips would speak.

Nay! who art thou?

O chief of heroes, and of patriots first!  
Great father of thy country! proved thy tomb  
Too narrow also, when its walls received  
This tumult of our strife? Can trumpets break,  
And shouts of war, and cannons with their roar,

So sacred peace?—Nay! turn not thou on me  
 The mild reproach that sits within thine eyes.  
 That can I not endure, for what in me  
 Of blame discernest? Clean I know my skirts,  
 But thy great work of life, undone! undone!  
 Except with mightier hand than ever yet,  
 God smite the evil, turn the torrent back  
 Of whelming wrath, as my avenger stand,  
 And take the victory.

See! they pass, they pass,  
 The blackness of the night in yonder glen  
 Receives them—so they leave me to my woe.

CHORUS OF APOSTATE SPIRITS.

See! as if with sudden pain,  
 Vanquished, to the earth she falls,  
 Who the doubtful life recalls?  
 Let her lie there, ours the gain!

Who to me, of ancient time,  
 Whispered warnings of a date,

By the ordinance of fate  
Set to misery and crime?

Not to-night, and not to-morrow,  
Comes an end of human sorrow;  
Mischief without us is brewing,  
Man is still his own undoing.

Every gift that Heaven sends him  
Loses virtue as he takes it,  
With his sin a curse he makes it;  
Nothing helps him, nothing mends him.

Therefore, I rejoice securely,  
Holding now my throne more surely,  
Knowing that no coming day  
Holds for him a treasure, greater  
Than his hand now flings away.

## ANGEL OF COMFORT.

Hist! hist! she sleeps,— or is it rather death,

Or but a swoon of grief? Her languid lids  
Betray no motion, on my hand no breath  
Makes known she lives. O fair and noble head!  
Art thou laid low forever? — is this end  
Put to thy thoughts sublime, and the rude earth  
So soon thy pillow? — yet it shall not be.  
Rest, sleeper, on my heart, and if one spark  
Of vital power yet linger, let this touch  
Disturb its slumber,—let this kiss of mine,  
Pressing thy two pale lips, send through thy veins  
A kindling tide of warm and ruddy life,  
And reënforce at once with full supplies  
Its failing fount, to former health restored.

## AMERICA.

Methought an evil presence hovered near  
And bound my brows with iron.

## ANGEL OF COMFORT.

None is here,  
I only.

A M E R I C A .

What hast thou to do with me?

A N G E L O F C O M F O R T .

To bring thee comfort.

A M E R I C A .

Comfort?—even so

They mock the desperate!—yet I think thy look  
Hath something in it that might cheer, though  
death

Leered close behind thee. Prithee tell thy name.

A N G E L .

Even as mine office, is, for thee, my name.

A M E R I C A .

How wilt thou comfort such an one as I?

ANGEL.

Making thee turn thine eyes away from ill.

AMERICA.

Shall they then rest on naught?

ANGEL.

On good alone,  
Until a little strengthened.

AMERICA.

Dost thou see  
Good then?—that can not I.

ANGEL.

I bid thee look.

AMERICA.

I look on thee, and through so beauteous sight  
My soul is fed with strength.

ANGEL.

I bid thee see  
Cause of more hopeful courage.

AMERICA.

Wilt thou name  
Such cause more clearly?

ANGEL.

Yet thou mayst prevail.

AMERICA.

Knowest thou that?—O sweet and tranquil voice!  
Speak on.

ANGEL.

What nation yet hath touched  
Its pinnacle of greatness, but an hour  
Hath intervened, of strange and fearful test?  
Shouldst thou expect exemption? Then thy part

Were but a mean one; none should ever know  
If gold thou wert, or only sparkling clay.  
But trodden and defiled by feet of men,  
Soon wouldst thou be forgotten. Yet thy place  
Is on the very forehead of the world.

## AMERICA.

This also would I know, for scorn hath met  
Such weakness in me, that I live in doubt  
Of any virtue — since my children hate  
In part — I see not cause for any love.  
And guilt in some discovered makes me fear  
Lest such corruption, springing from the heart,  
Have tainted all the members.

## ANGEL.

Yet not so,  
For truth lifts high her sceptre in the land,  
And loyalty is waxed to such a pitch  
As earth hath never witnessed. Also prayers



Ascend for thee, from lips that God regards,  
Making the morning vocal, and the night,  
And through the noisy noon they find a way  
To heaven's gates; nor shall they plead in vain.

## AMERICA.

Into a prayer, my heart that promise turns.

## ANGEL.

Millions of hearts still brood and think on thee,  
Of thee is all their counsel. Fear not thou,  
Though some do temper still their faithful love  
With meek submission, waiting for His will,  
Who rules the nations, since therefrom no loss  
Unto thy cause shall come. Hear even now  
How one discourses with her secret soul.

## VOICE OF A WOMAN VERY FAR AWAY.

Out of the South the battle-fiend up-soars;  
He shakes a banner, red with brother's blood,

And from the utmost borders comes a cry  
Answering the baleful signal. Wildly leaps  
The nation's heart of fire. To arms they throng,  
And o'er the advancing myriads, lightning-robed,  
Hovers the avenger. O my land, my land!  
Thine hour is on thee. God has lifted high  
His sword, long sheathed—now shall be known  
through thee

Justice exalted over all vain schemes  
Of little souls, mad with self-worshipping;  
Now truth shall speak in accents to be heard  
By those who can not hear the inward voice  
Or words prophetic, out of lips of love.  
Be not thou deaf upon this chosen day,  
So shall its hours be shortened, and no stroke  
Too deeply smite;—thy vigor shall return,  
Thy course proceed with joy, thou yet shalt taste  
Jehovah's bounties without measure poured  
O'er the obedient land that seeks his name.  
Yet know I not what destinies o'erhang

The coming years,—with mournful heart I wait  
And watch the gathering omens. These no joy,  
No promise bring; no hour is this for pride,  
Light boasts, and careless triumph. Now behoves  
On sin to think, and with abased mien  
Implore compassion, lest our load of guilt  
Amid these waves should sink us utterly.  
Yet unto one who still with earnest eyes  
Follows and marks the goings forth of Him  
Who rules amid the thunders, Hope is born  
Daughter of Faith, with meek Experience joined.  
Nor will he fear, knowing that thus of old  
Evil is made the minister of good,  
And that the headlong will of selfish man  
Still works the purpose of a calmer choice,  
Serene in wisdom. So I look on thee,  
My country, and the love I bear thy soil  
Grows the fair sequel of a higher far,  
Wherewith in patriot links my heart is joined  
Unto my truer birthland; her in thee

I ever see, and for her sake thy peace  
Is dear, and though when gayly on the breeze  
Thy colors float, the blood within my veins  
Dances for exultation and for joy,  
Yet with a deeper thrill I see in thought  
Above the heights of that celestial home,  
A blood red banner float in air serene,  
Our tumults reach not, nor shall any hand  
Of foe or rebel shake it where it stands,  
Guarded with power eternal. Round it throng  
The hosts of God's redeemed, name after name  
Answering the roll-call. Gladly go they forth  
To spread the peaceful triumphs of their King.  
This is my land beloved, whose fairer shore  
I see afar in visions of the night;  
And when I wake, her thought is with me still.

## AMERICA.

This is a sacred mood, and yet methinks  
It waked a chord within me. We are dull,

We spirits of the nations—slow to read  
The great decrees of God.

## ANGEL.

Yet if thou hear,  
There comes a strain on ruder voices borne,  
Of more terrestrial import. Hear what songs  
O' nights thy warriors sing, who lift their hearts,  
Counting thy praises o'er in measures wild,  
That yet through harmony of loving truth  
Claim in thine ear a welcome. List! they come.

## VOICES OF SOLDIERS SINGING.

*First Chorus.*

Who will thy glory sing,  
Land fair and wide?  
Who make thy name to ring  
Loud, in his pride?

Sure never land like thee  
    Meriteth song,  
Sweet soil of liberty,  
    God bless thee long.

How the sad age of men  
    Painfully crept!  
Thee, in his mighty arms,  
    Ocean still kept.

Still, save of soulless things,  
    Cattle, or bird  
Through the wild wood that sings,  
    Voice was not heard.

Save the wild hunter tribe,  
    Feeble and few,  
Thee, and thy gifts in store,  
    No man yet knew.

Then, in his faithfulness,  
God, o'er the sea,  
Guided the stately ships  
Even to thee.

*Second Chorus.*

Wide was the portal thrown,  
Swiftly they came,  
Left the close prison-house,  
Bondage and shame.

Sick of old tyrannies,  
Forms that were dead,  
Life that in fetters lay,  
Hither they fled.

Then, from the people's heart  
Went a new cry,  
"Liberty! Liberty!"  
Win her, or die.

Out of thy coast, my land,  
Went forth the voice,  
How did the fettered ones  
Shout and rejoice!

Here on thy soil, my land,  
Stood, face to face,  
Slavery, Liberty,  
Each for the race.

Here on thy soil, so dear,  
Once and for all  
Was the great battle set:  
How shall it fall?

*First Chorus.*

Made ye not answer loud,  
Fathers renowned?  
Answer — that tyrant-hearts  
Quailed at the sound?



Answer—when lifting  
In liberty's name,  
Our star-lighted banner  
Ye fought for the same?

Always in glory bright  
Nobly maintained?  
Unto your true-born sons  
Handed unstained!

*All.*

Lo! for the battle-rage  
Still waxes high,  
Liberty! Slavery!  
One is the cry.

Still the one battle-field  
Where it began,  
Still the same banner bright  
Floats in the van.

Still the wide world looks on,  
Knowing before,  
Freedom, here falling,  
Falls evermore.

Shout, O America!  
Shout, unto these.  
Shout, O great mountains!  
Lakes that are seas.

Shout, O ye mighty shores  
By either flood!  
Shout! ye brave hearts of men  
Rich with true blood.

Shout! that not utterly  
Freedom shall fail,  
God hath uplifted her,  
Bids her prevail.

Who stands to live for her,  
Who stands to die,  
Hark! from thy valleys deep  
Millions reply.

There bleed the noble sons  
Where the sires bled.  
Land, thy true-hearted ones  
All are not dead.

Still art thou glorious,  
Land fair and wide,  
Worthy our joyous hope,  
Worthy our pride.

Still we shall shout from thee,  
Loud o'er the sea,  
Hither, ye captive ones,  
Haste, and be free.

AMERICA : (*after a pause.*)

They pass and leave night silent, but their song  
 A happier thought hath wakened. That new mood,  
 Born of my trouble, seems awhile to yield.

ANGEL.

Forget thy sorrow. Think as thou wast wont,  
 Take up thy courage. Think with these brave  
 souls

On what thou wast, and art, and yet mayst be.

AMERICA.

In no mean place the Lord of heaven and earth  
 Hath set me, and I know that deed of his  
 Assures me safety, if I hold his word.

ANGEL.

Not for thyself thou art, but he through thee  
 Poured favors out on man. So if thou fall,  
 On man, and not on thee, shall rest the loss.

## AMERICA.

Angel, I know that man is dear to God,  
 And that since earth began, his love outruns  
 The nimble-footed sin with swifter stride.

## ANGEL.

Though evil seem to conquer, yet that show  
 Shall vanish, and the conquered rise to snatch  
 A laurel from the bosom of defeat.  
 Stay up, stay up thy heart!

*The SPIRIT OF REBELLION appears.*

## AMERICA.

Ha! ha! what shape  
 Lowers at me from yon glen—my blood grows  
 thick  
 With curdling horror.—Back!—avaunt, thou foe!  
 Still it advances,—and with threatening glare  
 Its looks assails me—all my spirit fails,

The storms that shook return with wilder rage;  
I faint, — I perish.

ANGEL.

Still I hold thy hand.

SPIRIT OF REBELLION.

Now is my work accomplished, I can choose  
Some summit of these hills, and without need  
Of further motion, watch the play proceed  
To consummation; as in prosperous years  
When rain, dews, winds, sun, and heat-shrouding  
clouds

Are in the farmer's counsel. He but waits,  
His seed once planted, till the germs mature,  
And the rich autumn bring, without his toil,  
The spoil forecounted. — Nay, I even take  
First fruits of triumph, as in many ways,  
So also now, proud tyrant, seeing thee  
Stand there with threatening looks, so impotent.

Haughty thou wast, and boastful from the first,  
And as I note thee, still. I like it well.  
No less contempt shall wait upon thy fall,  
Or scorn surround the mention of thy name  
Forever after; when I've proved to men  
Of what vain wind, and worse than empty breath  
Thy promises were made. I like to think  
How soon my foot, that once could not be bold  
To cross thy threshold, scarce the pains will take  
To push thee from the path by which I walk  
To perfect empire.—Is the lightning left  
That scorched me once or twice some time ago,  
Leaping from eyes so vengeful? I am healed  
And stronger for the seasoning, and have proved  
The quality of those fires. Lo! here I stand  
Prevalent, of their fury unafraid,  
Already master of a subtler force,  
Deadlier to those I hate, as well thou knowest,  
Writhing even now beneath it, though so still  
In awe-affecting calmness thou canst stand

As words disdain. Yet I know thy tongue  
Hath not lost power of speech, that hath betrayed  
Thy weakness to these winds, now muttering out  
Through every cave and hollow of the hills  
Defeat and fear and grinding agony,  
Proving thy soul more abject than the slave,  
Blindfold beneath the thick descending lash.  
Still proud, still silent? But a step or two  
I take, and smite that circlet from thy brow  
That marks thee still as sovereign.

SPIRIT OF UNION *appears, and speaks.*

Back, accursed!

Stand back, till first thy fell and impious hand  
Accomplish my destruction: then, with mine  
That sacred life shall own a tie so close  
There needs no blow director. Both thine aims  
End thus in one.

REBELLION.

Whence then hast thou appeared?



I struck thee, left thee prostrate, thought thee  
dead :

For not my steel I trusted, nor my strength,  
Knowing thee vigorous,—but with careful skill  
And slow invention, such a poison mixed  
As, entering thy fair body with the wound,  
Fouled all the taintless blood. I smile to see  
The marks of such disturbance, in black lines  
Written so thick all over that soft skin,  
Once spotless in its brightness,—in quick breaths,  
Twitchings of restless features, as if pain  
Pulled at the strings of life, and in thy limbs  
Some strange distortions, such as were not wont  
To mar their godlike grace. I gather hope,  
Seeing at least, if not the very self,  
The ante-signs of death.

## UNION.

True is thy word,  
Yet not all true, O boaster! Even thou—

Nay ! none so well — hast known that art nor  
spell,

Could mix a drug so potent, but this frame,  
If strong in native health, should cast it out  
As fountains what defiles them, or else change  
And make subservient. So thy purposed work  
Was longer and more secret. Ere I knew,  
Strange languor unexplained, importing ill,  
Had taken half the vigor from these limbs,  
And dull and creeping symptoms of disease,  
More fatal, as less noticed, paved the way  
For death to enter, when thy bolder hand  
Should thrust him on me, at some chosen hour.  
Such was thy plan ; but if the end shall prove  
The crafty venom, and the open sword,  
Both impotent alike, and greater strength  
Born of the greater contest, and the proof  
Of native force unguessed, until the act  
Of agony that tested, then to me  
Pure gain accrues, and this not last nor least,

I know my foe, I know him and his might,  
And all his ways of cunning, and shall meet  
Henceforth as one so armed.—Nay, I believe  
Already thou hast felt thy blows recoil,  
Which, if it should imply, though felt at first  
But slightly, some such vast and hideous ill  
As that fell stroke intended, aimed at me,  
If failure meant defeat, and not to slay,  
Thyself to lie at last among the slain,  
Perchance thou now canst guess. What! dost  
    thou start?

Some eloquence within, that met my words,  
Filled out my meaning there, and caused thee  
    make  
That gesture of despair.

## REBELLION.

Such speech is cheap;  
I skirmish not with breath. A twinge that came  
And passed before 'twas felt, means something else

I fancy, than thy sounding threats portend.  
 Failure? — Ha! Ha! — Defeat? — I take thy sense  
 To be some other than old custom sets  
 To such articulations. But, for thee,  
 What madness holds thee? What hast thou to do  
 To save this crazy state? I with main strength  
 Have snapped thy weakened cords, felt long ago  
 As fetters, lately proved more dissoluble  
 Than once thy boastings gave us leave to see.  
 What's left to thee, self-stripped—by flattering talk  
 Of freedom, loyalty enforced by love,  
 Willing submission to an equal yoke,  
 Felt so as none—of power that might have dwelt  
 In bonds coercive? That vile cant o'erthrown,  
 I scarce have need to measure words with thee.

## UNION.

Fiend! whose foul plots, and now more open war,  
 Have marred so far the fair tranquillity  
 That like an atmosphere had wrapped about

This country of my choice, — know that not vain  
The slow advance of ages, not in vain  
That noble state now stands, whose living sap  
Is union. This, both power and law, shall prove;  
Obeyed in joyous freedom, while men know  
Their highest glory, but, this wisdom lost,  
Still are they used, not using. Still goes on  
The mighty deed of life. They cannot choke  
The ample channels, but the genial tide  
Finds soon a way, sweeps them along its course,  
Flows on triumphant. Still my glorious tree  
Uprears its giant branches to the sun,  
Brother of clouds and dew, and gathering strength  
From storms alike and sunshine, — from soft airs  
Sighing among its summer-painted boughs,  
And frosts, whose slender needles prick among  
Its tender roots in winter. Still returns  
The season of its fruitage, food and joy  
Remain, and shelter good for all who come.

## REBELLION.

Deal thou in breath. For me, I'll cut thy tree,  
Ay! hew it at the roots, and turn it up  
To whiten in the sun. What! canst not see  
(I know not why I wait and talk with thee)  
In what a hell of ruin thou art plunged,  
Thou, and thy favorites with thee? Look about,  
Come up to yonder height. We can from thence  
Behold our arguments, all spread about  
In forms of ready logic. Lo! what sight  
Confutes thee ere thou speak. The world can see  
What love thy nurslings, dandled on thy knees,  
Bear thee — grown old enough to understand  
What fools thy flatteries made them. And for  
those  
Who stand as in thy name, to trample down  
The natural rights and lawful liberties  
Of their so cherished brethren, why, 'tis plain  
Against thy will they do't, and o'er thy neck  
Rush on that foul injustice. I am glad

They did not tamely yield. Their act refutes  
Their reason for it, and thee and them involves  
In such a paradox as endless time  
Shall never reconcile. I'll leave thee then  
To deal with that. My part to glory now  
In full success, that long ago o'erpassed  
The boundaries of my hope, and swells each day  
Into a very ocean, flooding wide  
Thy old dominion, soon by strictest search  
To be discerned no more.

SPIRIT OF SLAVERY *appears.*

What ho! good friend.  
Welcome, old comrade, yet what storms of wrath  
Brew in thine eyes, and seem on me to fall?

SPIRIT OF SLAVERY.

O boaster! without me, what hope hadst thou  
To stir this mighty fabric, now o'erthrown,  
Because I, I was in it from the first

Laid in among the mortar and the stones  
That seemed its firm foundation,—deeper yet  
A fatal quicksand, underneath it hid,  
And as its solid walls securely rose,  
Pinned in, among the rest, a timber fair  
To outward sight, but inwardly corrupt  
And crumbling to the hammer. This being so,  
How could it else but fall? I grudge thee much  
Thy self-exalting—but am thus content,  
When the last crash shall come, that scarce had  
come

So soon, but for thy meddling, as I own,  
But little shall be left for thee, or me,  
Or any, nay, I know not who shall gain.  
I lose my great security, but thou  
Mayst go to sleep forever, since thy deed  
Shall safely thrive, nor any end be found  
Of that rank harvest; as an evil seed  
Will spread, and spread, till none can root it out,  
But all the land is poisoned.



## REBELLION.

What care I?

My end is gained.—And boast not thou so loud,  
As sole efficient of my finished deed,  
Though thou alone wert ruin. Other beams  
Wormed through, I know, and rotten to the heart,  
Built into this fair house, though painted o'er  
So well that none save I, whose eyes have searched  
Each undiscovered flaw, had found it out.  
Nay, I could make confession larger still,  
Sweep all in one, and say, that sin itself,  
All weakening, all corrupting, both in thee  
Working, and elsewhere,—under social forms,  
Uses of commerce, policies of states,  
Castes, customs, private lusts, and public wrong,  
Sin is my guaranty, excites my hope,  
Finds me a foothold, puts his hand with mine  
And crowns me when I triumph! O'er this land  
I look, and see it drowned and choked with sin;  
Toward God I look, remembering that his throne

Endured not sin of old, and this old scar  
 Of his once headlong vengeance stirs me up.  
 I call on him to help me,—rather use  
 My arm, to bring his ready thunders down  
 On these offenders. Such a prayer I think,  
 E'en from my lips well suits him, whom I know  
 A God of justice.

## A M E R I C A .

Is there none to help,  
 Am I then given up an ungrudged prey  
 For hell to feed on, while the heavens look down  
 From their high place approving? Was it this,  
 This so near bourne, and limit set to all,  
 That from fate's niggard hand, without my prayer,  
 Tempted so lavish bounties? Summers short  
 Are plenteous, but my fruits are yet to taste,  
 My vines ungathered, nay! the cruel snows  
 Cut off the very flowers that from their stalks  
 Nodded in sweet assurance of the time,  
 So far from winter's threshold. Ah! too soon

Mine hour has found me, and the hounds of death  
 Smell out my hidden crimes, to tear them down,  
 Me with them also, me and all whose life  
 Had centred at my heart. Shall it be thus?  
 O God! shall sin prevail?—shall former grace  
 Count nothing? Is there nothing in me left  
 To claim thy pity even?—no faith, no truth?  
 No loyalty, no wide beneficence,  
 Without the hope of guerdon exercised?  
 No spark of any virtue, that should shield  
 A little from these storms?—yet should I plead  
 The things my soul remembers? doubtless all  
 Stand uneffaced forever in his book.  
 He knows, and yet his judgments fall like hail,  
 And I lie bruised beneath, and can not rise.

VOICE OF EARTH *is heard from below.*

EARTH.

Cease now, my daughter, cease this vain lament,  
 For what to thee hath happened, save the lot

Common to nations? From mine ancient seat,  
Since God appointed man to tread my face,  
Mine eye hath marked his goings, and discerned  
Of all his plans and hopes, his marvelous schemes  
And high achievement, one sole end assured,  
When for himself and them he seeks at last  
Some chamber of my always open grave.

All over my broad surface, East and West,  
Lie strewed the wrecks of empires, that his hand  
Once raised to glory,—but no base so strong  
His hand contrived for any, that some wind  
Of adverse fortune brought not down at last  
Its towering pride, and made it lie as low  
As each that went before it. All alike  
Proclaim in long succession how his work  
Is error, all, and failure. If he hits  
Some hidden wisdom in his random path,  
Still he o'erlooks, or, seeing, underrates,  
Or, rightly understanding, yet prefers  
The present pleasure to the greater good,

Or choosing well, yet through unsteadfast will  
Lets slip erelong the treasure half secured,  
And with the crowd goes headlong. This last  
proof

Should not for aye be lacking, and thy name  
Must to thy mighty list of perished states  
Add yet its fading lustre. Why shouldst mourn  
If as thy fame was greater, so thy fall  
Comes sooner? Not to heaven impute the cause,  
Nor on thyself too heavy burden lay  
Of rash remorseful censure. Since with man's  
Thy destiny is one, thy wisdom still  
Swayed by the rule of his, and as he is  
Thou art in all things, while of him I know  
No virtue constant, but his every deed,  
Like that same dust of which his God him made,  
Owns fealty to winds, and changing tides,  
Rather than any law by truth prescribed,  
Or reason in him planted. So my soul  
Yearns o'er him still, seeing him always own

His ancient kinship, and so well betray  
What unto me belongs of all he is,  
Though lifted high among the meaner tribes  
Of my less gifted offspring. Well I know  
The source of his decay, nor greatly chide  
That frailty, by whose sure effect at last  
He lays his head down, whence he reared it first,  
And mingles with my clods his glorious frame.

Thou also be content, I counsel thee,  
Take now thy portion as it falls, and share  
The fortunes of thy lord. For thou shalt lose  
With life, no good that should not cost thee dear  
Beyond its proper worth, through cares and toils,  
Anxieties and fears. But shorter fate  
Implies thy sorrows shorter, and thy doom  
Less terrible, than if through longer course  
Of years, prepared, and fruit of many crimes.

## AMERICA.

Are these the voices that pronounce my doom?

Earth! thou hast spoken. Now let Heaven unfold  
Her portents, then will I believe.

## REBELLION.

Look up,  
Behold the sign! — O thou accursed light!  
Mine eyes are blinded.

ANGEL OF VENGEANCE *descends with a flaming scroll, open in his hand. Speaks.*

Over this foul land  
I hang the doom that God's just wrath awards  
Unto its many crimes. A little while  
The cloud of indignation shall uphold  
Its black tempestuous burden — e'er it rend  
The covering of the heavens, and be poured out  
In one wide wasting ruin. Let men read  
The condemnation, manifest to all.  
The doom of such a land as lifting high  
The cry of justice, liberty for all,

Hath still approved, and cradled at her side  
The worst of wrong, the tyranny whose shame  
Gives every other leave to lift again  
Its head, once bowed before her arrant boasts,  
And at her text's brave comment sneer and laugh,  
A land that makes of freedom and of right  
Excuse for every sin, whereby man mocks  
His God, and harms his brother, and pollutes  
The very founts of blessing, turning all  
To poison and a curse. For such a land  
Behold God's sentence. From the sin shall come  
The ruin more direct than arrow flies  
From bended bow, or from the widening breach  
The wall's destruction. So that all shall know  
What caused this utter fall, and see therein  
And praise the perfect justice of our God.

## AMERICA.

Pity! O Lord! Thus groveling on my face,  
Thus without plea, excuse, or any hope,



Save in the one Name though hast taught to man,  
I still remember, though the pains of death  
Take hold upon my soul, that thou art Love.

*The ANGEL OF MERCY descends.*

SLAVERY.

I fall! I fall! blasted with utter light.

ANGEL OF MERCY.

Swift messenger of vengeance, I at last  
O'ertake the meteor course that fell so swift,  
Since first the word went forth, down the steep  
chasms

Of yawning night, to bear the signs of wrath;  
But in my mouth another speech was put,  
Another scroll than thine my hand enfolds,  
Thine open is, mine sealed.—Thy message, clear,  
Thy proclamation in all ears resounds,  
But mine is secret still. Yet be it known,

Seeing that God hath sent me, there is hope—  
 Mercy still lives, and heaven forgets not man.

## ANGEL OF COMFORT.

Lift up thy head, O stricken one! and drink  
 The balm that Heaven vouchsafes thee.

## AMERICA.

I thank God!

And yet my heart is dull, my brain confused,  
 I understand not any thing. I seem  
 A field once fair and fruitful, which the storms  
 Have beaten, and the water-floods made waste,  
 Which, though the rain hath ceased, lies prostrate  
     still,  
 Mingling its riches with the muddy soil.

## ANGEL.

Take comfort.

## AMERICA.

Is there pardon then, in truth?

Shall I yet flourish as in days of old?  
Oh! that I heard the voice of destiny,  
My soul should listen, while the great decree  
Fell from his lips that can not speak but right.

*The ANGEL OF DESTINY descends.*

ANGEL OF DESTINY.

O Spirit of a nation! whose high state  
And happy lot hangs now to view of men  
Balanced upon the edge and turning-point  
Of some most fearful change, which, once com-  
plete,  
Implies to man great loss, but to his foes  
New and most signal triumph. I am come  
At hearing of thy voice, and to thy prayer  
Such answer bring as leaves inviolate still  
The things ordained as secret, till their time  
Brings their unfolding. Unto Him that rules  
Leave also perfect knowledge. But take thou,

Freely vouchsafed, such light whose honest use  
Shall make thee wise enough for all thy need.  
No new disclosure from the pitying skies  
I bring, but things thine ears have often heard  
Unheeding, things once known, but, in this strait,  
Not present as they should be to thy thought,  
Though nearest to thy need. For much men err,  
Straining their eyes towards heaven, as hoping  
thence

Some special gift to tumble from the blue,  
While all they lack lies waiting at their feet,  
And trips them ere they heed it. Ready lies,  
Provided long ago, the utmost good  
Unto man's want proportioned: but his looks  
Turn not that way, and thou, allied to him,  
By equal error blinded, now must learn  
Thy youth's first lessons o'er, which, though they  
sound

Simple, are worthy yet an angel's tongue.

Know first, or first remember, to what end

Nations arise or perish. Hast thou heard  
Of these each several record, what began  
Their upward courses, what to each belonged  
Of greatness, how they served, and how betrayed  
Each cause sublime committed to their trust?  
How of their worth, continuance, of their crime  
Decay ensued and fall? One work for all,  
Varied in each by nature's several bent,  
Eternal love intended — but alike  
All turned aside, and to some private lust  
Debauched their glory. Love, not turned so soon  
From that fair plan, made even wills averse  
Serve unaware and minister some good  
To bless the ages, though themselves were left  
To take their own poor choice, and lose at last  
Even that part of good, whose scanty charms  
Enticed them from the whole, and so their fall  
Came close upon their grandeur's utmost height.  
Their service done, some new estate of power  
Swallowing the past, — itself foredoomed to know

Like limits in the future—these in most  
 Adjusted by some happy natural gift,  
 Tact, genius, power to rule, or warlike might,  
 Or skill in commerce, yet in all alike  
 Proportioned to one plan—whose exigence  
 Shortened their time of empire, or drew out  
 To length, by no internal worth explained.

## AMERICA.

Too well I knew, too well, the common doom,  
 And how comes back the thriftless prodigal  
 A beggar to the gates. I counted not,  
 But lavished out my portion. It is just.

## ANGEL OF DESTINY.

Yet think more deeply if thou wouldst be wise,  
 And know that fruitful root whence trouble  
 springs.

## AMERICA.

Speak—that I may be wise, in hearing thee.

## ANGEL OF DESTINY.

States are ordained for man,—he in himself  
Being that proper state, whose government  
Employs the eternal counsels. There behold  
The first disorder, anarchy and schism,  
Which from the one the many doth infect,  
And breeds the public ills. He, since he fell,  
No longer stands in archetypal grace  
The perfect pattern after which should rise,  
Fair in proportion, strong in unity,  
The social fabric. Rather in him reigns  
Confusion, all his faculties at war,  
The noblest put the last, the mean ones first,  
These trampling those, and those through slavish  
fear,  
Or cramped and dulled with suffering, yielding  
still  
Compliance undue, implying all alike  
Debased and miserable. Seest thou well  
What evils vex the nations? Should the sea

Be sweeter than its waves, or wilt thou make  
Out of much dust, one pearl?

AMERICA.

Though I aspired,  
I aimed beneath perfection.

ANGEL OF DESTINY.

Yet below  
That mark, what safety?

AMERICA.

Angel! I am bold  
As one who pleads for life. States are as man,  
So hast thou taught me,—vexed and overthrown,  
Because, through disobedience, he hath lost  
The harmony within. Yet unto man  
Hath God vouchsafed no hope? Why then  
goes on  
This agony? Why rather doth not heaven



Shut down at once the awful night of doom  
And make an end forever?

ANGEL OF DESTINY.

Yet if God  
More gloriously had wrought, — some brighter  
thing  
Had caused to spring amid this wreck of time?

AMERICA.

I praise him! — for he dealeth wondrously.

ANGEL OF DESTINY.

For he hath bought redemption, at what price  
Archangels dared not utter, till his deed  
Taught their rapt ears another name for love,  
By whose effect the man, a higher strength  
Receiving, set in tune with perfect law  
In all the powers he owns, need never fear  
A second time to lose his happy lot,

Assured by mighty tokens, both from God  
And manifest within. Seest thou that state,  
Through all whose members perfectly had wrought  
Such marvelous healing? Seest thou what life  
Were hers, what fearlessness, what sure defense  
Against all foes without? Of foes within  
What confidence, and how her wealth's increase,  
Her wisdom, power, and gladness had no bound?  
Though such an one on earth hath never been,  
Nor yet one perfect man (save HE that joined  
To man's the strength divine) hath walked un-  
stained

Her paths polluted, yet the grace of heaven  
Makes earth a place to work in, here prepares  
Parts of a pure and precious harmony,  
Whose full accord shall all at once swell out  
Upon His chosen day—and thrill afar  
The angels in their music-bearing spheres.  
Out of these ruins, scattered far and wide,  
Betokening only loss, shall God upbuild

A city of his own, a state composed,  
Not after dead and outward rules of law,  
But by the vital energy of love :  
A growth, complete as any fairest flower  
That brightens in the sun, or vine that tempts  
With plenty sweet the thirsty passers by.  
But thou, O scarce believing ! scarce aware  
What words like these portend, lift up thine eyes,  
And tell me what report they bring thee home.

## AMERICA.

Angel! the vision is of other days,  
New things I see and men, a realm of peace  
Transfigured with pure light, whose sacred touch  
Makes beauty where it rests. How my dull  
thoughts  
Slink back ashamed, while I behold indeed  
My fairest dream's fulfillment, but set high  
Above its utmost daring. See what grace,  
What dignity, what glory decks the form

I know as man's! Angel! deceive me not,  
 Are these my children, mine that walk the streets,  
 The golden pavement of that city fair?  
 Familiar are their faces as the sun,  
 And now as glorious. Whither are they come?  
 And by what path? and how shall men aspire,  
 As rightly hoping such estate of bliss  
 May at the end receive them? And to me  
 What signifies this sight, which thou hast shown,  
 Intending me some comfort, and to lift  
 My soul above the loss this hour portends?

## ANGEL OF DESTINY.

This is the kingdom, and the reign of God,  
 Whose deep foundations, long in secret laid,  
 Shall stand unshaken, when the shows of things  
 Called real have vanished. Then shall come to  
 view  
 What underneath this gross external shell  
 Matured unseen its strength, and drunk in life

Where all in death seemed silent. Then shall  
shout

All creatures that are ministers to man,  
Seeing at last their homage and their faith  
Approved, and sealed as just, while he appears  
All glorious, of the many works of God  
Fairest and most divine. So also thou  
Canst not be else than glad, knowing before,  
That surely as the truth of heaven prevails,  
Out of thy thorniest cares, thy woes and pains,  
This flower shall blossom, and its odorous heart  
Be opened to the skies. Hence, first of all  
Take comfort, and as this can give support,  
Measure the hope that yet some wished for task  
Awaits thy willing hand,—not yet expired—  
For One whose love can estimate aright  
Her office and its end—the proper term  
Of happy service. By this law is sealed  
The destinies of nations, first, as each  
Bears on its earthly face some likeness fair

Of that celestial pattern, shows to men  
Some shadow of that grace, and by such laws  
Is governed, as in that pure liberty  
Work out the life of love,—to gifts so fair  
Continuance shall not fail, He that bestows  
Such wisdom, shall not lightly make it vain.  
Yet on a safer hope thy heart may rest,  
Since 'tis the perfect state that God regards,  
Making all histories and acts of time  
That way to work, that meaning to write out  
Letter by letter, till he finish all.  
Thou, working with him too, with willing heart  
Lending thine aid, not blindly, but that light  
Well used—so freely poured, that many err  
Slighting the common gift,—so shalt insure  
Triumph in every conflict—unashamed  
Meet all the fierce assaults of earth and time.  
Nay! could this be, could any state on earth,  
So armed with constant wisdom, turn her eyes  
From shows of power, to truth's enduring crown,

Then might she hope one day, without much loss  
 Even of that she seemed, to drop aside  
 With her loved pupil, man, this dress of clay,  
 And mount, complete in robes of victory,  
 The welcome-giving skies.

## AMERICA.

Well do I know  
 This can not be for me, yet through thy word  
 My heart revives. I see a hope, at last  
 Strong confidence upholds me, that my cause  
 Wars not with truth, and that her foes are mine.  
 Therefore, O angel! while my many sins  
 Oppress me, and the follies of my sons,  
 So that, with these weighed down, I scarce can  
 lift  
 My forehead from the dust, I yet recall  
 Teachings not wholly slighted, light vouchsafed  
 In some peculiar measure, not unused,  
 And mercies shown in timely chastisements,

Whereof I think my thoughts, in after days  
Taking account, shall reckon as not least  
Measured by previous sin, or present pain,  
Or after fruit of good, this that now turns  
My sweets to bitter.—Of these things I take  
Some balm of glad assurance, well can trust  
That pitying guidance still, that led my feet  
Into this wilderness, apart from men,  
And showed me things that others had not known,  
And new and separate mercies,—knowing well  
How I should use them, knowing too, I trust,  
How by his faithful providence, my ways  
Should ever be amended, till their course  
Went clear and straight to right and happy ends.  
Not in this flush and promise of my morn  
Doth he intend such ruin, not so soon  
That I, with all the fresh and untried gifts  
He, for the sake of man, bestowed on me,  
Should o'er the brink of such destruction fall.  
So never more, I fear, to human wish



Such promise would return, but all in vain  
His heart go mourning through the coming days  
The irretrievable and perfect loss.

## ANGEL OF DESTINY.

Well dost thou argue—from man's threatening loss  
Some token that the love which follows man  
Will for his sake deliver,—well dost trace  
The future's promise, written in the past,  
Since of one piece is all that work divine  
Done on the face of earth, and if thy heart  
Tell thee, and conscience whisper in her seat  
That, howsoever thou hast gone astray,  
Yet, thou hast prized God's favors, canst recall  
Some use he must approve, some acts of love,  
And liberal deeds of world-wide charity,  
Some help accorded from thy happy seat  
To those who strove with famine, or the hand  
Of ready welcome reaching out to meet  
The fugitive and wanderer in their need;

If with such memories thou canst prop thy heart,  
 Glad be thy courage then, though not to rest  
 Even here too surely—since thy best of deeds  
 Paid not thy debt, and if that heavenly love  
 Has some great good thy blind eyes could not  
 see

Wrapped in this present ruin, not for thee  
 The plea of well desert, and blessings used  
 In full and glad obedience. Rather this  
 Should be thy stay, whatever thee befall,  
 The vision shall not fail,—thy youth's pure dream  
 Shall yet prove real—thou hast not been in vain.

## AMERICA.

Strange comforts, angel, dost to me propose ;  
 But thou, I think, to some sublimer sphere  
 Dost lift my thoughts, companioned with thine  
 own.

Well!—if the mood might last. Yet who that  
 once

Unto the power of truth hath yielded up  
His soul within him, ever quite shall lose  
The memory of that sweetness? So to mine  
This moment's revelation shall be gain  
Whatever come behind, and for all war  
My spirit with new strength be fortified.

## ANGEL OF DESTINY. .

Yet farther counsel. If the will of Heaven  
Intend thee now deliverance, and once more  
Thou at the head of nations stand, in hope  
And joyful promise; thus henceforth be wise  
By aims that follow God's,—by justice shown  
In public deeds, by liberal works of love,  
By virtue cherished, and the fear of God  
In hearts of all thy children,—by good laws  
Matured in thoughtful wisdom, thrusting out  
With sharp or gentle force the evil code,  
Oppression's hateful remnant,—by all acts  
That lift the state, and give it surer hold

On God's great mercy manifest to man,  
Unto thyself secure a longer course  
Of prosperous wealth, and to thy happy sons  
A heritage secure, which, used aright,  
Shall be the pledge of nobler good to come,  
Beyond the region and the reach of storms  
That rage amid the shows and forms of time.

## AMERICA.

Angel! I listen, and thy words are good.

## ANGEL OF DESTINY.

See! earliest rays of morn begin to light  
Faint signals in the East. For thee begins  
A day of doubtful conflict. Yet be strong,  
Be valiant, lend thy soul no more to fears,  
But use thy hopeful courage, all shall be  
As God disposes, and shall so be well.

FINIS.

























