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POEMS

WRITTEN DURING THE PROGRESS

OF THE

ABOLITION QUESTION

IN THE

UNITED STATES,

BETWEEN THE YEARS

1830 AND 1838.

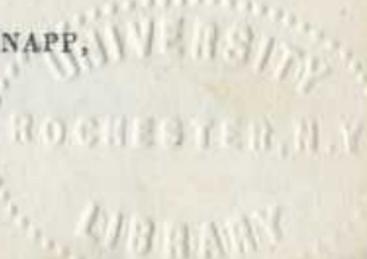
BY

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## STANZAS.

On the appearance of these Stanzas in the *Liberator*, it was predicted by Garrison, that 'they would ring from Maine to the Rocky Mountains,' and the prophecy has been fulfilled. They have been circulated in periodicals, quoted in addresses and orations, and scattered broad-cast, over the land, beneath the kneeling slave and motto, 'Am I not a man and a brother?'—the device of Cowper and the English Abolitionists.

In this last form, they have roused the consciences of slaveholders in New-Orleans—have been held up to a Boston audience by the sophist Gurley, after a fruitless endeavor to create a tumult by one of his strong appeals to prejudice and selfishness—and have been displayed by the noble-souled May before a Massachusetts Legislature, as a refutation of the charge of incendiarism cast on the Abolitionists by the Legislatures of the South. In witnessing the effect of poetic talent thus applied, we cease to wonder that the words of Fletcher of Saltoun—'Give me to make the ballads of a nation, and let who will make the laws,' have passed into a proverb.

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'The despotism which our fathers could not bear in their native country is expiring, and the sword of justice in her reformed hands has applied its exterminating edge to slavery. Shall the United States—the free United States, which could not bear the bonds of a king, cradle the bondage which a king is abolishing? Shall a Republic be less free than a Monarchy? Shall we, in the vigor and buoyancy of our manhood, be less energetic in righteousness, than a kingdom in its age?'—*Dr. Follen's Address.*

'Genius of America! Spirit of our free institutions—where art thou? How art thou fallen, oh Lucifer! son of the morning—how art thou fallen from Heaven! Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming! The kings of the earth cry out to thee, Aha! Aha!—ART THOU BECOME LIKE UNTO US?'—*Speech of Rev. S. J. May.*

OUR fellow-countrymen in chains!  
 Slaves—in a land of light and law?  
 Slaves—crouching on the very plains  
 Where rolled the storm of Freedom's war!  
 A groan from Eutaw's haunted wood—  
 A wail where Camden's martyrs fell—  
 By every shrine of patriot blood,  
 From Moultrie's wall and Jasper's well!

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

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

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

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

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

Oh say, shall Prussia's banner be  
 A refuge for the stricken slave ;  
 And shall the Russian serf go free  
 By Baikal's lake and Neva's wave ;

And shall the wintry-bosomed Dane  
 Relax the iron hand of pride,  
 And bid his bondmen cast the chain,  
 From fettered soul and limb, aside ?

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

Go—let us ask of Constantine  
 To loose his grasp on Poland's throat—  
 And beg the lord of Mahmoud's line  
 To spare the struggling Suliote.  
 Will not the scorching answer come  
 From turban'd Turk, and fiery Russ—  
 ' Go, loose your fettered slaves at home,  
 Then turn, and ask the like of us ! '

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

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

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

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

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

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

