

Source: Alfred Gibbs Campbell, *Poems* (Newark, NJ: Advertiser Printing House, 1883)

OLD JOHN BROWN

“Swing up the traitor!” Let him die!
Truth, honor and sincerity
Are treason to Virginia’s laws,
Are fatal to Virginia’s cause,
And he who doth true courage show [5]
Strikes an unpardonable blow.

“Swing up the traitor!” for the deed’s
Demanded by Virginia’s needs,
And all her broad dominion lies
In deepest peril, till he dies! [10]
The truest man ye ever saw
Hang by Virginia’s glorious law!

“Swing up the traitor!” Who shall dare
Henceforth to taint Virginia’s air
With freedom’s word or honor’s breath? [15]
Behold for such a traitor’s death.
As symbol of her sovereignty
Virginia hoists the gallows-tree.

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“Swing up the traitor!” Though he be
Captive, yet Conqueror is he! [20]
The blow he struck destroyed your power,
And prophesied the coming hour
When heaven’s avenging wrath shall fall,
And wrap your land in ruin’s pall.

That prophecy ye heard aright! [25]
Your lips with terror pale to white,
For every north wind’s breath ye feel
Now seems your certain doom to seal,
And every midnight sound ye hear
Palsies your coward souls with fear! [30]

Oh! Glorious “Traitor!” out to thee
Gushes my full heart’s sympathy!
Heroic Martyr, from thy tomb
Shall speak the awful voice of doom,
And ages hence they name shall be [35]
The hallowed watchword of the Free.

1859.