

[blank page left]

[title page]

NEBRASKA:

A POEM
PERSONAL AND POLITICAL.¹

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN P. JEWETT AND COMPANY.
CLEVELAND, OHIO:
JEWETT, PROCTOR, AND WORTHINGTON.
1854.

This electronic edition has been prepared for the Antislavery Literature Project, Arizona State University, a public education project working in cooperation with the English Server, Iowa State University. Acknowledgements to the Library Company of Philadelphia for the original text. Digitization and annotation by Joe Lockard. All rights reserved by the Antislavery Literature Project. Permission for non-commercial educational use is granted.

¹ This poem was published anonymously during national controversy over the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Based on his acknowledgement of authorship, its author was George Washington Bungay (July 22, 1818 – July 10, 1892). Born in Walsingham, England, he immigrated with his family to the United States in 1827 at age nine. Bungay was a poet, journalist, biographer, and antislavery and temperance reformer. After publishing several books of poetry and prose, in 1855 he established a brief-lived newspaper in Ilion, New York. His reform politics were reflected in *The Independent's* motto, "Independent in All Things, Neutral in Nothing." Following the newspaper's financial failure within a year, Bungay joined the editorial staff of Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*, the best-known newspaper in the United States of that day. Bungay continued to publish prolifically in temperance journals for many years.

Like the vast majority of antislavery poets, Bungay had minimal literary visibility. Beyond an 1852 letter of reference from John Greenleaf Whittier for two temperance advocates, sent to Bungay and three others, and one complimentary reference in 1876 by William Cullen Bryant to Bungay's poetic opinion, there are no other immediately identifiable references to his work among better-known American writers of the mid-19th century. See John B. Pickard [ed.], *The Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier* (Cambridge: Belknap, 1975) vol. 2, p. 200; William Cullen Bryant II and Thomas G. Voss, *The Letters of William Cullen Bryant* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1992) vol. 6, p. 336. Although Bungay was associated with the *New York Tribune* and acquired a reputation as one of its reform writers, Greeley does not mention him in his memoirs, *Reflections of a Busy Life* (New York: J.B. Ford, 1868). At the *Tribune*, Bungay joined famed writers such as George Ripley, Charles Dana, Fanny Fern, Bayard Taylor, Whitelaw Reid and many others. See Francis Nicoll Zabriskie, *Horace Greeley, the Editor* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1890), pp. 329ff. Unlike other journalists of the period, who established literary reputations, Bungay's reputation remained that of a newspaper writer.

Appendix 1 provides an extended list of Bungay's publications. For brief biography, see W.J. Burke and Will D. Howe, *American Authors and Books: 1640 to the Present Day*, 3rd ed. (Irving Weiss and Anne Weiss), New York: Crown Publishers, 1972, pp. 89.

[unnumbered page 2]

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by
JOHN P. JEWETT AND COMPANY,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

NEBRASKA.

PART I.

THE granite giant, whose imperial brow
Shone like the moon amid his night of hair,
And whose magnetic eyes pierced through the veil
Which hides the future from the vulgar gaze,
Sleeps on the borders of the broad, deep sea, 5
Where winds and waves his requiem sing for aye!
O that the deep unto the cheep could call
In tones of startling thunder, and awake
The mighty man who slumbers softly there,
That he might rise, and in the nation's ear 10
Unsav the words in which his heart beat not, --
Words stereotyped to yokes upon the necks
Of slaves beneath the flag of stripes and stars, --
And then, with his surpassing power of speech,
Rebuke ambitious traitors, who would sell 15
Their country as they sell their countrymen!
If that herculean arm could rend the shroud,
And shake the temple of our Capitol,
Where base conspirators betray our rights,

Then Freedom would not there be stultified. 20
We need a Daniel to translate the fire²
Which burns upon the walls at Washington,
Where proud Belshazzar, steeped in wine, reads not
The fearful fate which threatens to destroy
The mad assassins of our liberty. 25
Could we but roll the stone from Calhoun's grave,³
And find a shade or spirit sitting there,
No one would dare to drive the rusty nails
Through Freedom's shrinking sinews on the cross.
Nor put upon her head the crown of thorns, 30
Nor shroud her in the mocking robe of scorn,
Nor pierce her broken heart with cruel speech.
He would have cursed the leprous lips that dared
Betray fair Freedom with a Judas' kiss;
His fiery glance would shrivel up the hand 35
Reached forth to break the seal of compromise;
He would have scorned to own a slave so mean
As sneaking senators who strive to sell,
For silver pieces, pottage, place, or power,
The birthright of a nation like our own; 40
His burning logic, winged with words of fire,
Would scathe the demagogues like light from heaven.
We weep between the altar and the porch
To think a man who led so pure a life,
A life so constant and so free from cant, 45
Made merchandise of men, and owned a troop
Of slaves; but why shed tears upon his grave?
O, let us rather weep because no man
In Carolina South has yet been found
With ample shoulders broad enough to wear 50
The mighty mantle he has left behind.
The gallant sage of Ashland⁴ died too soon

² Dan 5.

³ JOHN CALDWELL CALHOUN (1782 – 1852). US senator from South Carolina, Secretary of State, and Vice President. Throughout his political career, Calhoun sought to protect the institution of slavery.

⁴ HENRY CLAY (1777 – 1852). Attorney, Kentucky legislator, US congressman, Speaker of the House, Whig Party presidential candidate, Secretary of State, and US senator. He supported the Compromise of 1850. Clay was a lifelong slave-owner who opposed the presence of African Americans in the United States. He advocated returning freed slaves to Africa and was longtime president of the American Colonization Society, established for that purpose. 'Ashland' was Clay's family home in Lexington, Kentucky.

To save the senate from disgrace and shame.
We miss his manly form and magic voice,
And sorely need his thrilling eloquence. 55
Although the parent of a "Compromise"
Which might have made a northern doughface⁵ blush,
He would not sacrifice his plighted faith;
Although he oft defended slavery,
He'd tie no curse to territories free. 60
Unlike the chivalrous Kentuckian,
The "little giants"⁶ who come after him
Would smooth the way and open wide the gate
For servitude to curse the soil that's free.
Behold them braiding scourges for the backs 65
Of unborn millions of the human race;
Their bunkum speeches are drowned in the din
Of galling fetters, which they forge for men.
There is Nebraska, fair as Eden was
Before the Arnold of the fiends below 70
Made Eve and Adam break their compromise.
Now let us climb Nebraska's loftiest mount,
And from its summit view the scenes below.
The morn comes like an angel down from heaven;
Its radiant face is the unclouded sun; 75
Its outspread wings the overarching sky;
Its voice the charming minstrels of the air;
Its breath the fragrance of the bright, wild flowers.
O blessed day! rich gift of God to man;
Brimful of beauty to delight the eye, 80
And thrilling music to enchant the ear;
It lights me to the unreturning past --
A dreary waste, where other days have fled
With the dear souls they pioneered to heaven.
The past is night, in which these souls are stars! 85

⁵ Slang for Northerners who supported slavery or Northern politicians who had changeable opinions on the issue. Coined in 1820 by US congressional representative John Randolph. William B. Craigie and James R. Hulbert [eds.], *A Dictionary of American English, on Historical Principles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), p. 803.

⁶ STEPHEN ARNOLD DOUGLAS (1813 – 1861). US senator from Illinois and Democratic Party presidential candidate in 1860. Douglas opposed the abolitionist movement, but also opposed the proslavery position that the US Constitution endorsed slavery. He supported the doctrine of popular sovereignty, which proposed to leave the question of slavery to the white voters of territories such as Nebraska and Kansas. He assisted passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, and its accompanying repeal of the 1820 Missouri Compromise that banned slavery from new western states. Referred to as the "Little Giant" due to his short stature.

Like flocks of migratory birds awing,
The by-gone days sweep o'er the sea of time.
On, on to the eternal shore they speed:
One is baptized with sad and bitter tears,
And bears an arrow 'neath its bleeding wing; 90
One, crimsoned o'er with battle's bloody stain,
Utters a nation's agonizing shriek;
One, scarred and battered by the winds and waves.
Sobs out the grief of shipwrecked mariners.
Ay, life would fail to name disastrous days, 95
Days red and reeking with the foulest deeds,
Days the bright stars mistook for blackest night.
But lo, amid the flying flock I see,
Like doves with rooks, fair golden days like this,
Filled to the sunset with the song of larks, 100
And wreathed with roses to the morning's rim,
Blue with bland sky and crowned with glorious light
And starred all over with the noblest deeds.
'Tis God who lifts the window and sends forth
The raven, night, on its eternal course, 105
And the fair dove of day with leaves of peace
From his celestial Ararat⁷ on high.
'Tis but a step on such a morn as this
From hill sod to the condescending sky.
O glorious world, afloat in golden air! 110
Behold the prairie, broad, and wild, and free;
Ocean of emerald grass and golden flowers;
'Tis God's own garden, unprofaned by man;
There the meek grass with its green finger points
To Him who feeds it, with his hand in clouds; 115
'Tis there the rainbow-tinted flowers send up
Their offerings rich of purest, sweetest balm;
The yellow bee hums out his drowsy song

⁷ Sacred land or high land. Gen 8:4; 2 Kings 19:37; Is 37:38; Jer 51:27.

Upon the bosom of the wild white rose;
There, striped with green and gold, the serpent glides, 120
With deadly venom 'neath his tongue of fire,
Dangerous as malice hid in compliments;
And showers of insects, fluttering in the air
On gauzy wings, so various dyed they seem
The happy offspring of the gorgeous flowers. 125
Gay birds, like winged blossoms filled with song,
Pour forth their roundelays from morn till eve.
The robin, bard of birds, whose ardent hymn
Swells out upon his radiant breast of flame,
Builds here his neat round nest and rears his brood. 130
That jewel of the air, the oriole,
Bright drops of sky and sunshine turned to song,
Hangs his moss cradle on the lonely tree;
And there God rocks it with his mighty hand,
And watches it with all the stars of heaven. 135
The prairie lark, perched on some towering stem
That lifts its crimson bells above the grass
As a tall steeple rises in the town,
Is prairie sexton, ringing up the sun.
Swift o'er this sea of fragrant beauty skims 140
The twittering swallow in pursuit of food,
Plunging no deeper than the critics dip
In th' unappreciated page they cut.
There chants the blackbird in his sable plumes,
A bit of last night tangled in the bush. 145
The thrush, the jay, the linnnet, and the wren
Are prima donnas holding concerts there;
While, like a speck between the earth and sky,
The soaring eagle, royal king of birds,
Poised on his wings, calmly surveys the scene. 150
Yonder behold the monarchs of the wood;

For ages have they battled with the storm
The envious clouds have pelted them with hail,
The lightning pierced them with its quivering lance,
And the fierce whirlwind wrenched them in its wrath. 155
As mortals, chastened by affliction's rod,
Grow firmer and grow faster in the faith,
So these tall Titans of the forest glade
Are stronger for their struggle with the storm.
When at their feet their predecessors fell 160
Spring covered their remains with mourning moss,
And wrote their epitaph in pale wood flowers,
And gave sweet berries to the gentle birds
To stay and sing their sad, sweet requiem.
These trees are throned upon their fathers' graves, 165
And the same sun that cheered th' ancestral stems
Bathes all the sylvan wood in golden light.
I love to gaze up at the grand old trees,
And hear the rustling talk of whispering leaves,
As mortals softly speak the tenderest vows 170
With lip to lip and arm encircling arm.
I've seen them clad in Autumn's golden pomp,
When blushing leaves were red as flakes of fire,
And the deserted nest in silence swayed
Like a sad heart beneath a royal scarf. 175
And when their crowns of emerald and gold
Shivered, and, scattered by assaulting winds
Had left them in their leafless poverty,
I've seen their trembling branches, bare and brown,
Lifted like stricken arms in humble prayer. 180
The trees have taught me unforgotten lore
In winter, when the hills were wrapped in snow
And looked like giants slumbering in their shrouds,
Each tree a crystal chandelier ablaze;

The towering pine, with its tall plume of green, 185
Without a sear leaf, smiled upon the wood
As Hope smiles in the winter of despair.
So have I seen a lofty nature rise,
His feet on earth, his head beyond the clouds,
When a dumb nation, to the vitals froze, 190
Shining and shivering, stood in clanking chains
He was the mainmast of our country's ship.
To me the branches of the wildwood trees
Are ladder rounds, such as the patriarch saw
In holy dreams, reaching from earth to heaven, 195
And filled with angel messengers of light.
From the green woods uprising spontaneous songs,
Which fill the gaping space with grateful joy;
Blossoms like blazing censers fill the air
With sweetest fragrance, and the balmy sky 200
Seems an inverted flower of blue and gold.
Meanwhile, yon river, like a constant heart,
Pours forth a hymn as copious as its flood,
Unchecked by flowers coquetting on its banks.
That stream reflects the glory of the day, 205
A silver thread, strung with sun, moon, and stars,
And wound about the landscape's verdant waist.
Glide on, sweet river, with enchanting song,
And teach thy lesson to the earth and sea,
Progressive, yet confined within the path 210
Traced by the hand that poured it from the hills,
Save when a shower gift fills its breast with joy,
As blessings falling like the rain from heaven
O'erflow the purest hearts with gratitude,
Harmless when unobstructed in its course, 215
But terrible when hindered on its way,
Foaming and roaring with a host of waves!

Winter may bind him fast with crystal chains;
In spring he'll strew the banks with icy gyves,⁸
Then rush forth, shouting, to the ocean's arms, 220
Exchanging snow wreaths for a crown of shells.
I love to stand upon the grassy brink
Of the meandering stream, and in its depths
Behold the fishes flash in green and gold,
As though they were the flood's embodied thought. 225
Fair land of silver streams and mountains green,
Of boundless prairies and pellucid lakes,
Of rocks, and hills, and plains, and woodlands wild,
Shall Slavery clank her galling fetters here?
Or Freedom wave her starry flag for aye, 230
And make these forests blossom like the rose,
And build great cities on these fertile plains,
And launch her floating fabrics on these waves,
While streams are serfs to turn the busy mills
Which soon must wall the waters of the west? 235
Yes; here let towering domes and tapering spires
Ascend above the tree tops' dizzy height;
Here let the hum of honest industry
Be heard in busy hives where freemen toil;
While schools are filled with troops of rosy youth, 240
And peace and plenty smile at every door.
May Temperance, like the watchful angel armed
With sword of flame at Eden's guarded gate,
Protect this pleasant garden of the West;
May meek Religion, pure and undefiled, 245
Lead the young nations born and cradled here
In Wisdom's straight and narrow path of peace.
The day is near when towers and towns will rise
Like magic in this new and vast domain,
And iron threads, thick strung with villages, 250

⁸ Chains or shackles. See Longfellow's 'The Witnesses': "Within Earth's wide domains / Are markets for men's lives; / Their necks are galled with chains, / Their wrists are cramped with gyves." *The Complete Poetical Works of Henry Wordsworth Longfellow* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1893), p. 22.

Will stretch from boundary to border line;
While ships, like shuttles, fly from shore to shore,
Weaving the eastern warp with western woof.
Methinks I see the forest bow before
The sharp axe swinging in the settler's hand; 255
The Indian corn springs up with silken plume,
And fills his ample barn with golden ears;
White wagons trundle through the winding lanes.
Soon horn responds to horn, and farm joins farm;
Rude huts, like birdless nests, are tenantless; 260
While mansions fair are zoned with fruit and bloom,
And filled with good Nebraskians, who are free!
The horse with lungs of fire and ribs of steel,
Ad mane of smoke and nerves of shining wire,
Goes thundering past in haste on burning wheels, 265
Like an express from Erebus⁹ to earth.

With heart of fire and joints of steel,
With sighing valve and groaning wheel,
With startling scream and sweeping stroke,
The iron steed the train is bringing; 270
So look out while the bell is ringing!

A sheet of fire illumines the track
When Night reigns in her tent of black;
And so the progress of reform
Sweeps on through cloud, and sun, and storm. 275
'Tis Freedom's song the masses are singing;
So look out while the bell is ringing!

The slave will doff his yoke and chain;
The drunkard will not drink again;

⁹ In Greek mythology, the darkness below the earth ruled by Erebus, god of darkness.

The gods have set no seal upon his brow;
His speeches have no spirit in their words
Mere mobs of syllables devoid of souls!
Thoughts are to words what souls to bodies are;
But Douglas is ambitious, and aspires 310
To highest honors, though deserving none.
He sacrificed the freedom of his state,
Made it the byword of a mocking world,
The most inhospitable spot on earth,
The black sheep in the bleating flock of states, 315
That he might gain the presidential chair!
He purchased a plantation tilled by slaves,¹²
And fattened on the negro's blood and sweat.
Gold was his gospel, and the lash his law,
Office his heaven, and power and pelf his wish, 320
His farm the only empire that he ruled,
And ragged slaves the subjects he oppressed.
He was the emperor of a gang of blacks;
His driver his prime minister of state,
Who left his mark upon the rising race. 325
This great king of a Mississippi swamp
Divorced sad husbands from their weeping wives;
Snatched screaming infants from their mothers' arms;
Scourged white-haired dames and venerable men;
Erased God's image from the face divine; 330
Extinguished hope within the human breast;
Trod on the necks of most obsequious slaves,
And crushed their hearts beneath a tyrant's heel!
He counterfeited the autograph of God
Upon the charter of our sacred rights. 335
And signs deeds for the priceless soul of man.
Now he, who forges the Almighty's name,
Would make Nebraska like his own domain –

¹² Passage refers to the fact that Stephen Douglas was a slave-owner. He was a slave-owner by inheritance from his first wife and subsequently a partner in a Mississippi plantation. Although opponents raised the issue, as above, it had little discernable effect on his political career. In general, Douglas believed in an inherent right of whites to decide on government of blacks, though this need not be slavery, and in white racial superiority. For discussion, see Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 299-300 and 337 re plantation; pp. 570-571 re racial beliefs.

A vast plantation filled with suffering slaves!
Shall the free winds that sweep her grassy vales 340
Be burdened with the groan of sad despair?
Shall the free waves that wash her fertile shores
Blush with the blood that runs from furrowed backs?
Shall her tall mountains crowned with sparkling snow
Become red altars for the slaughtered slave? 345
Shall her green valleys be the early grave
Of Freedom, or the cradle of the free?
Shall her broad rivers, rolling to the deep,
Shout Liberty's inspiring song for aye,
Or slink to the old Ocean's arms to hide 350
Their stains behind his ample cloak of waves?
Shall her vast plains and prairies, filled with flowers
As glorious night is filled with gleaming stars,
Be cleared, and ploughed, and hoed, and reaped by
slaves? 355
Let pulpit, press, platform, and people speak!
Thank Heaven, New England's pulpit speaks at last!
Her trumpet tones are heard throughout the land,
And sordid tyrants tremble when they hear
The echo of the revolution's voice! 360
From the Green Mountains and the Granite Hills,¹³
From velvet valleys and from seagirt isles,
Where steeples point like fingers out to the sky,
The heralds of the cross speak out men.

For others' weal these good men labor, 365
And not for fame or paltry pelf;¹⁴
They mind the maxim, "Love thy neighbor
As much as thou dost love thyself."
Yes, they would make this dark world better
Than 'twas the day it gave them birth, 370

¹³ I.e., from Vermont and New Hampshire.

¹⁴ Illicit wealth; lucre.

By breaking every yoke and fetter,
And spreading light and truth on earth.

And should their feeble brothers stumble,
And often fall upon the road,
Though poor, despised, and black, and humble, 375
They'll raise them up and point to God.
They heal the heart that's almost broken;
They light up hope and banish fear;
With gentle accents, kindly spoken,
They heal the wound and dry the tear. 380

Such are our best and bravest, wisest men,
Who in the name of the great God they serve
Sent their remonstrance to our senate room –
Men of vast learning, talent, taste, and skill,
Whose thrilling eloquence has charmed the church; 385
Whose classic works have won immortal fame;
Whose noble deeds are known in earth and heaven;
Whose influence, like the light, inwraps the world.
They stand where Emmons¹⁵ and where Channing¹⁶ stood,
In Boston, Charlestown, Concord, Lexington, 390
Where our brave fathers' loftiest landmarks stand
But their petition was received with scorn!
Douglas, with bar-room slang and Billingsgate,¹⁷
Bespattered them in most insulting speech,
Until the atmosphere of Washington 395
Was fetid as the air when nameless beasts
Befoul it with inodorous defence:
When lo, a polished, ministerial man,¹⁸

¹⁵ NATHANIEL EMMONS (1745 – 1840). Congregationalist minister and theologian. Born in East Haddam, Connecticut; graduated Yale in 1763; called to the ministry in Wrentham, Massachusetts in 1772. Emmons was a leading voice in the New Divinity movement, a radical form of evangelical Calvinism, and an early abolitionist.

¹⁶ WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING (1780 – 1842). Unitarian minister and author. Born in Newport, Rhode Island, son of a prominent family; graduated Harvard in 1798; lived in Richmond, Virginia, and became an opponent of slavery; accepted a pulpit at Federal Street Church (current-day Arlington Street Church) in Boston and become the central figure in 19th-century liberal American Unitarianism; helped establish the Harvard Divinity School in 1816; and developed a substantial intellectual reputation in Europe on the basis of his writings. After a visit to the West Indies, Channing published a major American antislavery text, *Slavery* (1835). His antislavery writing included *Remarks on the Slavery Question* (1839); *Emancipation in the British West Indies* (1840); and *The Duty of the Free States* (1842). Channing's antislavery views emphasized slavery's religious and ethical unacceptability; however, he never joined an abolitionist organization. Channing was held in high esteem by the Transcendentalist movement for his social integrity in religious practice, rather than for his philosophical contributions. For a celebratory poem of his work, see Whittier's 'Channing,' in *The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier* (Boston: James B. Osgood and Co., 1873) 132-133.

¹⁷ Foul language (from name of London's fish-market).

¹⁸ DANIEL WEBSTER (1782 – 1852). Attorney, New Hampshire legislator, US congressional representative, US senator, Secretary of State. Born in Salisbury, New Hampshire; graduated from Dartmouth in 1801; entered national politics in 1812, where he became a major figure for four decades. Webster opposed slavery when supporting the 1820 Missouri Compromise, but embraced popular sovereignty in order to

Once the Apollo of the sacred desk,
With pleasant face and most polite address,
Arose, and then with gracious smiles and speech

400

help pass the 1850 Compromise. He was heavily derided in antislavery newspapers and John Greenleaf Whittier wrote 'Ichabod,' a poem of anti-Webster obloquy. *The Complete Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier* (Boston: James B. Osgood and Co., 1873), pp. 146-147.

Showered honeyed compliments on all around.
His mouth was sweet as Hybla's ancient hive;¹⁹
His words as musical as golden bees.
He hoped the "giant" would not strike him back -- 405
He humbly begged his pardon in advance,
And then apologized with crimson cheeks
For the remonstrants and their reckless course!
Hoped Douglas would forgive both them and him.
But Houston²⁰ bared his bosom to the storm; 410
The gallant Texan stood before the world
The champion of New England clergymen!
And Douglas staggered 'neath his ponderous blows,
While Everett,²¹ shivering, showed his lack of "GRIT."

Who ever saw such times as these? 415
Stripes on our slaves, stripes on our flags;
Our blacks wear gyves, our whites wear gags;
And half the nation on its knees
Implores the other half, that scorns
Freedom betrayed and crowned with thorns. 420

Dust of our fathers, rise in deeds!
For these are times that try the soul,
While parties plan and cliques control,
And men bow down like broken reeds,
And demagogues reforge the chains 425
Our fathers broke on Concord plains!

Is Massachusetts so bereft?
The spirit of our sires has tied,
And nothing of the noble dead
Save their "dumb ashes" here is left: 430

¹⁹ Mount Hybla in Sicily, renowned for its honey. "But for your words, they rob the Hybla bees, / And leave them honeyless." *Julius Caesar* v:1.

²⁰ SAM HOUSTON (1793 – 1863). Attorney, US congressional representative, Tennessee governor, President of Republic of Texas, US senator, Texas governor. A slave-owner but a strong Unionist, Houston suffered great political harm by voting against the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The Texas state legislature officially condemned his vote. Opposing secession in 1860, he refused loyalty to the Confederacy and was removed as governor of Texas.

²¹ EDWARD EVERETT (1794 – 1865). Minister, classics professor, editor of *North American Review*, US congressional representative, Massachusetts governor, minister to Great Britain, Secretary of State, US senator, and vice presidential candidate for the Constitutional Union Party in 1860. A renowned orator of his day, Everett's political career collapsed in 1854 when he spoke against the Kansas-Nebraska Act, but was absent when the vote was taken. Facing public outrage in Massachusetts, Everett resigned in the second year of his term. Everett represented moderate compromise and national conciliation over the issue of slavery.

And when we see the Charlestown stone 435
Must we reflect that freedom's gone?

No, we have brave and honest men
On whom the Pilgrims' mantles fell;
True heirs of freedom, fit to dwell
Where never clanks the hateful chain; 440
Unlike the men, with hearts of rock,
Whose platform is an auction block!

There is a voice from Bunker's Hill,
A thunder shout from Faneuil Hall,²²
Where patriots' portraits light the wall, 445
And the church steeples are not still;
And words of warning cross the sea,
While Europe struggles to be free!

The Press -- the Press -- the free, untrammelled Press
Spoke out the bold reformers' earnest prayer; 450
Thus anti-slavery sentiment was born!
The mob, a monster without head or heart,
Assailed our Wilberforce²³ with sticks and stones
Instead of arguments and stubborn facts;
With Cromwell's courage and with Luther's zeal 455
He wrote, and heart pulsations moved his pen
And starred his paragraphs with gems of thought
His style and sentiment were pure and strong
In prose and verse, at home, abroad, he wrote;
His words fell like a rain of quenchless fire 460
Upon our nation, slumbering in its sins;
And when it woke it pelted him with scorn!
Around him stood a fearless, faithful band,
Who coveted the rude and ruffian blows

²² Boston marketplace building and meeting-hall, originally constructed in 1742 and re-built in 1806, that served as a center of political debate.

²³ In October 1835, a mob attacked a meeting of the Boston Anti-Slavery Society, where abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison was present. Garrison was seized and bound, but escaped unharmed. "Our Wilberforce" compares Garrison to WILLIAM WILBERFORCE (1759 – 1833), British merchant and leading early abolitionist.

Aimed at their gallant leader's heart and head. 465
One, with soft, golden hair, and brow of Jove,²⁴
And eyes magnetic as the evening star,
With silver voice poured forth the sweetest strains.
One, cradled on the lap of luxury,
Whose honored name shines through our history's 470
page,
Heedless of *caste*, or fame, or Fortune's smile,
Stood by our hero's side and shared his fate.
"Fair women and brave men" of every rank
Flocked round the waving standard of the free. 475
Then came a tall, pale man, with eyes of flame
A broad brim flung its shadow o'er his face;
A suit of sober hue inwrapped his form
A quiet Quaker he, the prince of song,
Whose harp notes cheered and charmed the bold and 480
brave
Reformers harnessed for the moral war.
Thus, step by step, the holy cause moved on,
Pavilioned with God's sheltering clouds by day
And led by fiery pillars in the night. 485
The red sea has been crossed, and we have reached
The shore where only little Anaks²⁵ stand
Between true heroes and the promised land.
In this broad land the giant mountains rise
With base on earth and summit in the skies; 490
And here the rivers roll their waves along,
And here Niagara shouts her ceaseless song.
Here woodland, prairie, lake, and rock, and isle,
With birds, and brooks, and flowers responsive smile;
And Nature speaks from sky, and earth, and sea, 495
God made these hills, and vales, and waters free!
O glorious land! beneath a golden sky
Where banners wave and Freedom's eagles fly,

²⁴ English version of Jupiter, supreme god of the Roman pantheon.

²⁵ From Hebrew for 'giants.' Together with Amalekites, Anaks were inhabitants of biblical Israel. Joshua 11:21; Num 13:33; Deut 9:2.

[page 19]

Gay be thy flowers and green thy vales and hills,
And fruitful be the soil free labor tills! 500
But, hark! a voice falls on the aching ear --
Cain beats and binds his brother even here!
The blood of bondmen stains both soil and sea,
And men are fettered where the beasts are free.

PART III.

WHENCE this insatiable thirst for fame? 505
Fame is a sea which will not seek the spray
Lost on the shore that flings its billows back;
Fame is a sun which will not leave its sphere
To seek the gnat that sported in its beam;
Fame will not seek us in our sodded home 510
When the red sea of life has ceased to dash
Against its trembling shore of flesh and bones,
And when the sun of life, unclouded now,
Sinks out of sight behind the churchyard mound.
But vile ambition, that would sacrifice 515
The rights of unborn nations for a toy,
Deserves from all unmitigated scorn.
I knew a man whose merits did not raise²⁶
Him to the lofty seat he could not fill
He was a buzzard in an eagle's nest; 520
He wavered like a feather in the wind,
Yet soared so high he showed his nakedness.
Ambitious man! if fickle Fame should press
A golden trumpet to her lips of air,

²⁶ Bungay here denounces Daniel Webster for his support of the Compromise of 1850, which enraged the abolitionist movement.

And sound his name throughout the wondering world 525
Until it filled the earth, as yonder moon
Fills all the space 'twixt clod and cloud with light,
And mothers called their children by his name,
And sculptors in Carrara²⁷ carved his bust,
While poets praised him in immortal verse, 530
And nations named their capitols from him,
Until his broad-mouthed appetite was gorged,
Would fell Disease respect his laurelled brow?
Could scowling Death be bribed to spare his life?
Would bannered angels with their golden harps 535
Echo the brazen-throated fame of earth?
The ocean swallows streams, then puts its lips
Of sand against the river's mouth for more,
Clasping the green banks in its ardent arms,
Until at last the jealous moon comes forth 540
From her white chamber in the lofty sky,
And with her wand drives back the wanton waves.
Fame is the restless ocean in his breast,
To which all other passions flow like streams,
Which no pale planet in the sky can guide. 545
He was a dizzy, mediocre man,
Whose friends wore custom collars on their necks:
This man betrayed Nebraska with a kiss!
I knew one old, and oleaginous,
A fat wick in a lamp, large and opaque, 550
Whose flame was like the ignis fatuus' light,²⁸ --
A flash, a lantern, or a mimic star, --
Which lures the patriot in the path of doom.
Nature had dowered him with her choicest gifts;
The nation crowned him with her fairest wreaths. 555
He was the Democratic oracle,
And canonized in all our calendars,
And when he s poke the country bowed its ear;

²⁷ Carrara, Italy, famed for stone quarries and the quality of its marble.

²⁸ Lit., 'foolish fire.' Spectral light that deceives.

But when this mastodon of modern men 560
Stood on the line between the north and south,
Just like a starving ass between the stacks,
The million monster, with its Argus eyes,
Saw through the motives of the famous chief.
It was not that he loved Nebraska less, 565
But that he loved the presidency more:
He gave his voice and vote for tyranny.
Our sister state, the maiden Michigan,
Blushed like a crimson sunset for his shame.²⁹
Now, when he dies, his monument must be 570
A bale of cotton and a broken sword;
A letter which he wrote, his epitaph.
But there are men, without the mark of Cain,
Who'd rather suffer wrong than "wrong pursue" --
The well-born heroes of the human race. 575
Behold that tall and senatorial form,
A noble soldier harnessed for the war!
Old age has crowned his venerable head
With snow, but left his manly heart unchilled.
As sun and moon stood still while Joshua fought, 580
So will our northern lights illumine the path
Of this brave chieftain of the broad, free west.
Among the "foremost men" in all this land
The great MISSOURIAN stands preëminent³⁰
A man whom gold can neither buy nor bribe, 585
Nor smoothfaced flattery with soft tongue seduce,
Nor threats from bullies can intimidate,
Nor domineering clans and cliques control.
He stamps upon the platforms of the age,
And shivers into splinters every plank; 590
He snaps asunder party rules and ties
As Samson did the cords which bound his limbs;
He scorns the caucus gatherings, and derides

²⁹ Public opinion in Michigan was especially upset by the Kansas-Nebraska Act. In July 1854 in Jackson, Michigan, the first state Republican Party convention occurred with some 10,000 in attendance, in reaction to the crisis.

³⁰ THOMAS HART BENTON (1782 – 1858). US congressional representative and senator from Missouri. Born in Hillsboro, North Carolina; became schoolteacher, attorney, Tennessee state legislator, and well-known duelist; moved to Missouri and was elected to US Senate in 1820. Benton owned slaves, but despised and opposed expansion of the institution, limitation on antislavery petitions to Congress, and censorship of the US mails against abolitionist literature. Defeated in 1850 due to his antislavery and Unionist sentiments, Benton returned to the US House of Representatives in 1852 and opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, leading to his election defeat. In 1857, Benton published a book-length attack against the Dred Scott decision.

The noisy demagogues who nominate
The few who fatten at the public crib. 595
And he would run the river of reform
Through all the Augean stables of the state.
Where is the man, with brass and brains, to face
This scarred and battered statesman in debate?
Who has the skill to tilt a lance with him? 600
A statesman, scholar, hero, gentleman;
In council wise, in battle always brave;
Chivalrous, courteous, generous, and frank
No little giant on a negro's back;
No pigmy up for sale upon the block; 605
No swaggering braggart schooled in Billingsgate;
No northern doughface with a cotton heart.
He is the southern Nestor of the race;³¹
The king of statesmen, since the *trio* died.³²
"Old Bullion" is no disrespectful name; 610
His words are gold, coined in the mint of mind,
Like a stout oak, amid the blasting storm,
Which looks through buds into the time to come,
When forests folded in its acorn cups
Shall be the glory of the hills and plains. 615
He stands, while prostrate monarchs strew the vale
And trembling Titans lean upon his boughs;
And with the prophet's vision he foresees
His hopes upgrown to stern realities.
As a bold promontory on the coast 620
Of a tumultuous sea looms up and flings
Its shadow like a wing upon the waves
And bares its bosom to assaulting storms,
Unshaken by the elemental strife,
So stands the "Greatheart"* of our "holy war" 625

* Gerrit Smith³³.

³¹ Nestor, king of Pylos, representative figure of warrior virtues and wisdom in Greek mythology. Appears in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

³² The triumvirate of Daniel Webster, Henry Clay and John Calhoun, who were highly influential in the Senate and national during the mid-to-late 1830s and in the 1840s. They were nicknamed "The Trio."

³³ Bungay's reference. GERRIT SMITH (1797 – 1874). Businessman, social reformer, US congressional representative. From a wealthy western New York family and one of the wealthiest men in the United States during the 1840s and 1850s, Smith provided substantial funds to antislavery, women's suffrage, temperance, and international peace causes. He provided land grants in western New York to over 2,000 freed slaves and financially supported Frederick Douglass' newspapers. Active in the antislavery Liberty Party, he was elected to the US House of Representatives in 1852 and opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. He resigned from his congressional seat shortly after its passage. Smith had gradually become identified with violent antislavery activities. He was a leader in the Jerry Rescue, an 1851 jailbreak in Syracuse (NY) to free William Henry, arrested under the Fugitive Slave Law, and provided financial assistance to John Brown's attack on Harper's Ferry in 1859.

Calm and serene amid the raging fight.
His soul shines in his firmament of eye,
As the bright sun shines in yon azure arch --
A model man, with frame of perfect mould,
And heart so large, that, if his form were less, 630
'Twould batter down its walls of flesh and blood,
And let an angel pass its crimson gates.
Contrast him with dissembling demagogues
Who bend their supple knees to lick the hand
Which holds the "starvelling office or the vote;" 635
Who weep and laugh, and swear and pray, by turns,
To suit the changing temper of the times --
Amphibious animals, who chiefly live
On office, rum, and vile tobacco juice!
Compare him with the patronizing snob 640
Who bows before the golden calf of wealth;
Who recognizes gilded vice with smiles;
Walks through the crowded streets with splendid sin,
But turns his head when met by honest worth.

PART IV.

THE blushing sun hid its indignant face 645
Behind the free hills of the blooming west.
It seemed red with the human blood absorbed
From lands soaked with the sweat and tears of slaves,
Where canes grow for the toiler's aching back
And sugar sweetens the proud tyrant's cup; 650
Where the white cotton blooms like mimic snow,

Not for the naked negro's bleeding loins,
But for the lily lords who will not toil
Nor spin, though Solomon was not arrayed
Like them in all his glory and his pomp. 655
And when the waves of light had ebbed away
The tide of night flowed in and filled the land,
And covered up the fresh and bleeding wounds
That plead like piteous lips for liberty.
God heard the blood that shrieked to Heaven for help, 660
And held the flaming north star in his hand,
And sent an angel down to tell the slave
To follow where the torch of Freedom led.
The negro from his humble cabin crept
While echo slumbered and the dogs were dumb; 665
The north star crowned the lofty hills he climbed
And watched his weary footsteps o'er the plain.
Day broke and found him in the forest shade,
Where the low bushes fed him with their fruit
And the soft moss invited him to rest, 670
While cheerful birds sang songs to Liberty.
Pale pirates scoured the land for miles about.
The panting fugitive had reached the shores
Of a free state and dreamed that he was free.
But he, alas, was seized by human hounds, 675
And, like a felon, dragged before the judge,
Charged with the crime of seeking liberty,
(Unpardonable sin in this free land!)
He and the judge were brothers in the church,
Sang the same songs, indorsed the same belief, 680
At the same altar bowed, and hoped to end
Life's dreary march in the same heaven at last.
Power to heal his Wounds and wipe

The tears which ploughed deep channels in his cheeks;
But he betrayed his brother for a vote, 685
And scorned the holy charter God had signed,
Sealed, and delivered to the race of man.
He might have made the young West blush with pride,
And twined a laurel round her lovely brow;
He might have thrilled a nation's heart with joy, 690
And with brave Ingraham³⁴ shared the honest fame
Bestowed by an appreciating world.
But he, a timid and timeserving man,
Feared the proud south more than he loved his God.
He rent the stripes from Freedom's starry flag, 695
And scourged his brother in the courts of law.
With his white hands that morning clasped in prayer
He locked the clanking chains upon the slave;
With knees that bowed before the throne of Heaven
He knelt upon a Christian's heaving breast 700
Until his broken heart oozed out in tears;
With lips that asked a blessing on his meal
He doomed the black to hopeless servitude.
Yes; he would send all Afric's sable sons
Back into bondage were they brought to him; 705
And all her dusky daughters, were they pure
As his own children fair, he would return
To the slave driver's harem at the south.
Out of such facts Nebraska's chains were forged:
May God ordain that they shall not be worn! 710
Old Massachusetts proudly said, the slave
Will find asylums in the Old Bay State.
This was her loudest boast; just hear her song: --

Shall the poor bondman, from oppression flying,
Be hunted here with bloodhounds on his track, 715

³⁴ In July 1853 in the harbor of Smyrna, Captain Duncan Ingraham of the USS Saint Louis confronted the Austrian brig SMS Hussar and demanded the release of Martin Kostza, a Hungarian revolutionary and US resident visiting Turkey. After bringing ship cannons to bear, Ingraham obtained Kostza's eventual release. The act created a crisis between the United States and Austria, and Franklin Pierce's first Annual Message to Congress (December 5, 1853) supported Ingraham's actions. Ingraham became a popular hero in the United States. The US Congress passed a resolution that commissioned him Commander and authorized minting of a commemorative bronze medal. See "Thanks to Captain Ingraham – Mr. Dean," *Congressional Globe*, House of Representatives, 33rd Congress, 1st Session, pp. 81-84. The comparison here is between Ingraham's actions in the rescue of Kostza, and those of judges and politicians in the United States who enforced the Fugitive Slave Act.

[page 26]

O'er valleys where our fathers bones are lying,
Because he's black?

Shall priest and statesman climb the tapering steeple
At Concord to behold the wondrous chase,
To see black Kossuth³⁵ and our own white people 720
Running a race?

And when the slave is bleeding in their clutches,
Shall we light bonfires for the men so brave,
And crown with laurel they who did as much as 725
Catch a poor slave?

God bless old Massachusetts! She will never
Hunt panting Negroes o'er her classic plains;
She's true to Freedom, and she will forever
Spurn bribes and chains.

Her free-born sires, brave sons, and angel daughters 730
Speak from the rocky hill and rolling wave,
In tones loud as Niag'ra's stormy waters,
God speed the slave!

Here man's more sacred than the constitution;
Tyrants and traitors now are blanched with fear 735
Because the spirit of the revolution
Still lingers here.

An armless hand is waiting on the plaster;
Belshazzar, drunken, cannot read the sign.
Meanwhile the sable slave outwits his master, 740
Who's steeped in wine.

³⁵ LAJOS KOSSUTH (1802 – 1894). Leader of Hungarian nationalist movement. In 1851-52, Kossuth toured over 60 US cities and gave some 300 speeches in support of Hungarian independence. Antislavery poetry frequently employed Kossuth as a heroic figure of freedom. Kossuth, however, diplomatically preferred to avoid the topic of slavery during his American tour. See 'Kossuth's Speech at Faneuil Hall,' in *Kossuth in New England: A Full Account of the Hungarian Governor's Visit to Massachusetts; with His Speeches and the Addresses that Were Made to Him* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Co., 1852) pp. 86-97, esp. pp. 92-93.

[page 27]

We have a Daniel to translate the letters
Which burn like lightning on the southern wall
While their false prophets now are forging fetters
For those who fall. 745

The footsore slave, sad, battered and heartbroken,
Finds freedom and a safe asylum here,
And gentle words from pleasant faces spoken,
And friends sincere.

Such was her song; but when the Negro came³⁶ 750

They hunted him through Boston's classic streets
Until the stones beneath his feet cried "Shame!"
Descendants of white slaves* like dogs pursued
The fugitive and harnessed him with steel;
He asked for freedom, and they gave him chains. 755

That was a dark day in our history;
The sun of Freedom was in black eclipse;
But then, thank God, the brightest stars shone out,
And scared Conservatism's bats and owls!
O that the constant ticking clock of Time 760
Could be turned back, or that sad day be struck
Forever from the records of the past!

Why, drizzling Friday at a hanging time,
Or even starless Night, alive with ghosts,
Would be fair weather and fine scenery 765
Contrasted with that ill-born imp of Time!
Two dozen guilty hours skulked slowly by;
Each one was sixty wicked minutes long;
Each moment was a traitor and a thief.

* In the early settlement of Boston numbers of white persons were sold for debt, and some of their descendants were the most efficient enemies of the slave.

³⁶ Bungay refers here and in the following verse to the February 1851 seizure of Shadrach Minkins, the first fugitive arrested in Boston under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. See Gary Collison, *Shadrach Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

That day fair Liberty was cloven down 770
Beneath the shadow of old Fanueil Hall!
The Court House, even, wore a zone of chains,
While jailer, jurymen, and learned judge
Bowed down and crawled like cravens under it.
That was the chain which held the Union fast – 775
Let Curtis³⁷ wear it as his coat of arms.
Its links are brightened for Nebraska's use
Methinks the bust of Adams³⁸ in the hall
Cried "Shame!" until the very plaster cracked,
Thus opening mouths for other tongues to shout. 780
Methinks the portraits shook their gilded frames,
And pointed at the hateful scene with scorn.
Who did not hear their withering rebuke?
I will repeat it in unpolished rhyme: --

Have ye been rocked in Fanueil Hall, 785
The famous "cradle" of the free?
And will ye hear your brother call
For help, and never heed his plea?
Ye heap the granite to the skies
O'er heroes' graves on Bunker's Hill; 790
But if the sleepers there could rise,
While men are slaves, would *they* be still?

They would again renew their vows
To wipe away a nation's stain;
And Warren's³⁹ thrilling voice would rouse 795
The iron will of mighty men;
They would relight their beacon fires
On old Wachusett's⁴⁰ naked brow,
And clang the bells in all their spires,
While trumpets bray and torches glow! 800

³⁷ BENJAMIN ROBBINS CURTIS (1809 – 1874). Attorney, Massachusetts legislator, US Supreme Court justice. Born in Watertown, Massachusetts; graduated Harvard Law School in 1832. A conservative Northern proslavery advocate, Curtis aided Secretary of State Daniel Webster in arguing for passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. He subsequently prosecuted the arrest of fugitive slaves and was involved in the Shadrach, Anthony Burns and Thomas Sims cases. President Millard Fillmore appointed Curtis to the Supreme Court in 1851, where he became best-known for this dissent in the 1857 *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision. Brother of constitutional historian George Ticknor Curtis.

³⁸ JOHN QUINCY ADAMS (1767 – 1848). Attorney, minister to the Hague, Massachusetts state senator, US senator, Secretary of State, sixth US President, US congressional representative. As a congressman, following his Presidency (1824 – 1828), Adams led congressional opposition to slavery, opposed the 'gag rule' forbidding antislavery petitions, defended the slaves captured after the *Amistad* mutiny (1839), and opposed the admission of Texas to the Union and the Mexican War on grounds of antislavery.

³⁹ JOSEPH WARREN (1741 – 1775). Physician, organizer and orator in the American Revolution, major general. Born in Roxbury, Massachusetts; came to prominence as leader of the Liberty faction in Massachusetts during the Stamp Act controversy in 1765. Warren served as a leader of the Boston Committee of Correspondence and later as president pro tem of the Provisional Congress. He died at the Battle of Breed's Hill in June 1775.

⁴⁰ Mount Wachusett, near Worcester, Massachusetts.

Where are the sons of sires who cast
The taxéd tea chests in the sea?
Where is the spirit of the past
Which moved the deep of sympathy?
Would not oppression have been driven 805
Away, as sunshine drives the dew,
If, when your fathers went to heaven,
Their falling mantles fell on you?

Descendants of the Pilgrim stock,
By all the free blood in your veins, 810
By all the prayers at Plymouth Rock,
Strike off the bondman's galling chains!
By all the blood your fathers shed,
By all the laurels they have won,
Stand up for freedom as they did 815
At Concord and at Lexington!

Freedom invites her armies forth,
And waves a flag of spotless white
Up, freemen! from your couch of sloth,
And forthwith harness for the fight! 820
By every stripe and every star
Our banner shows on land or sea,
Let every man list in the war,
And fight till all mankind are free!

What cared officials for the warning voice? 825
Their creed was this: First worship gold, then God;
Make sure of wealth, then turn your thoughts to
heaven;
Heed not the "higher law," but men in power;
Rise, though you stand upon your brother's neck -- 830

The constitution now, and conscience nest;
Souls cannot shine through skins of ebon hue,
So slavery is only abstract sin.
Such is the cruel creed of selfish men.
The errors and the vices of mankind 835
Are thieves which steal away their happiness.
Behold the miser worshipping his gold!
His stingy skin can scarcely hide his bones;
His little eyes begrudge the light he needs;
His toothless gums his hungry stomach starve; 840
He knows, he fears, he loves no god but gold --
The mighty dollar is his deity!
His sacred Bible is the bank-note list!
The banker and the broker are his priests;
The mint a model of his paradise; 845
If air cost cash he would refuse to breathe;
He values heaven because the streets are gold;
And, like a grovelling grub, he dies at last
Smothered and starved beneath his yellow dust!
Behold the idiotic, slaving sots! 850
His parched mouth like a fiery oven burns;
His veins are vipers plunging fevered fangs
Into his blood, which flows like liquid fire;
Day is a demon scourging him with light,
Night a black ghost which scares him with her stars, 855
Life a dark ocean lashed with angry storms,
Death a deep gulf which terminates in hell!
But the base miser's and the drunkard's sins
Whiten to innocence compared with those
The God-forsaken demagogues commit 860
They'd drench a state in rum to gain their end,
Kidnap a negro or betray a friend,
Profess religion or profane the church,

And veto God's commandments for a vote.
I've seen them flock around our Capitol 865
As thick as Egypt's lice, and frogs, and flies,
Crawling in crowds along the public street,
Buzzing in house and hall, hotel and mart,
Croaking in secret conclave with their clan,
Flying from post to post in search of game; 870
Heads of departments itched, and scratched them off,
But those which were not crushed crawled on again.
They lit on every officer of state,
And buzzed petitions at their aching ears.
These frogs from bread troughs and from ovens 875
croaked;
Pierce⁴¹ found them in his chamber night and day;
Not even Caleb⁴² could have "crushed" them out.
God speed the time when plagues like these shall pass
Away, and ne'er return to plague us more! 880
These men for place or pay would now enslave
Nebraska, Kansas, and New England, too!

PART V.

THE sun, wrapped in a shroud of golden mist,
Dropped out of sight, and left the widowed sky
In sable robes, without a single star 885
To light the dark and lonely solitude,
When from within a cave of murky clouds
The ruffian wind stole out, on mischief bent.
At midnight, while reposing on my couch,

⁴¹ FRANKLIN PIERCE (1804 – 1869). Attorney, New Hampshire state assemblyman, US senator, brigadier general, fourteenth US President (1852 – 1856). Pierce was a Northern 'doughface' with proslavery Southern sympathies. He supported the 1850 Compromise and the Fugitive Slave Act. As president during the Kansas-Nebraska crisis, Pierce backed proslavery forces in Kansas and opposed the antislavery Free Soilers. During the Lincoln administration, Pierce was a vocal critic of the Emancipation Proclamation.

⁴² Biblical figure of Caleb, who silenced opponents of Moses. Num 13 and 14:5-11.

The robber wind came banging at my door, 890
And shook my lattice till the ringing glass
Pealed out like bells held in the fairy hand
Which wrote the flourishes in frostwork there.
Boreas,⁴³ like a blustering burglar, came,
Thrusting his arm through every open pane, 895
Rattling the blinds and scaring sleep away,
Unhinging swinging gates and creaking signs,
Lifting the chimney to his lips of air,
And blowing trumpet blasts in every tube.
He woke a rose-lipped maiden from her dreams; 900
Then from the mast he shook her sailor boy
Into the watery grave he scooped for him;
Returning then on wings invisible,
Shrieked in her ears the story of his death.
This wanton wind snatched from our flag the stars, 905
Leaving the stripes upon the trembling staff.
He bowled the billows o'er the sandy beach,
And made the mountain shake beneath the shock.
Winter had made a pauper of the earth,
And the wind tore its brown and tattered dress; 910
So that the patches white of driven snow
Looked like a wretched beggar's under robe
Seen through the ragged mantle which he wears.
Blow till ye "split yer lungs" and "crack yer
cheeks;" 915
Pluck down the wood kings by their long, green hair;
Strew all the coast with mast, and spar, and sail;
Unroof the humble dwellings of the poor;
Disrobe the fugitive on th' unsheltered plain,
And blow his torch and soul out with thy breath. 920
For all these sins thy punishment is sure;
Nor day, nor night, nor on the land nor sea

⁴³ In Greek mythology, god of winter.

Shall thy tired wings find peaceful rest for aye.
And thou shalt be a slave for all that live,
Grinding the corn and carrying the pack; 925
While flower, and herb, and tree will toss their heads
In scorn and hiss thee on thy restless way.
Thy moan shall move no heart to pity thee;
Thy shriek awake no sign of sympathy.
Art thou the conscience of this wicked world, 930
Or evil spirit from some star above,
Or unimprisoned fiend from flames below?
Whate'er then art, we fear thee not, ill wind;
God holds thee in the hollow of his hand,
And he can chain thee in thy cave of clouds, 935
Or make thee harp upon the towering pines,
Or from thy pinions scatter sweetest balm.

Amid the pipings of the storm
I heard a woman's fearful cry;
A lightning flash revealed her form 940
"O God!" she cried, "where shall I fly?"
She passed my window when the light
Streamed o'er the sky from east to west;
Her face was wet with tears of fright;
She held an infant at her breast. 945

Then shouting thunder shook the arch
Where often glowed the evening lamp,
As though the battle gods did march
Above that floor with Titan tramp;
And spouting fire broke from the clouds 950
That sailed before the wailing air,
Like helmless ships with sable shrouds,
On cloudy billows heaving there.

The moaning wind and rain that came
Came knocking at my cottage door; 955
The thunder spoke with tongue of flame,
"In Christ's name help the hunted poor!"

I gave that mother and her child
A welcome to my home and hearth;
The dusky babe looked up and smiled 960
On me, the happiest man on earth!

I dressed the raw and reeking wounds,
That seemed their own sad tale to state,
Torn by the teeth of broad-mouthed hounds,
Then baying at my garden gate. 965
I would not let the hunter come,
With whip, and gun, and gag, and chain,
To desecrate my humble home,
But left him to the winds and rain.

The tempest fled on fiery wing; 970
The dark night slowly passed away;
The song birds made the woodlands ring
With anthems to the new-born day.

The thunder shaft had left no scars
Upon the blue and boundless sky; 975
And I unfurled the flag of stars,
And gave the praise to God on high.

There is a railroad running under ground,
A subterranean route to royal lands,
Which God lights up with rows of shining stars. 980
Its cars are filled with freedom-seeking slaves,
Who run the gantlet of rapacious mouths,
Amid the booming storm of leaden rain,

To reach a monarchy in search of rights
Denied them by pseudo republicans. 985
The negro loves the lion and unicorn⁴⁴
Because they guard his promised paradise,
And hails with shouts of joy the Union Jack,
Which waves like a delivering angel's wing,
And welcomes him to the fair Queen's domain, 990
Where color is no crime, crisped hair no sin;
Where impious men won't dare to criticize
The wisdom and the taste which God displayed
In making of one blood the blacks and whites.
For him our flag has stripes without the stars; 995
Our eagle is a vulture at his breast;
Our pole a cross where he is crucified;
And our free soil a northern hunting ground,
Where vile officials scent the Afric smell,
And, with suspicious noses on the ground, 1000
Pursue the game with barking of delight!
I've seen pack after pack of hungry dogs,
With collars on their necks, and names thereon!
When Fillmore⁴⁵ puckered up his mouth, they pricked
Their ears before he got the whistle out; 1005
And when at length the shrill, sharp sound was heard,
Their savage yelpings made the welkin⁴⁶ ring.
Why, I could fill this waiting page with names
Of mastiffs, curs, and most illustrious clogs
COTTON, a fat, sleek spaniel, that could bark 1010
With voice so musical it charmed the ear;
He was too fat or too polite to run,
Therefore he gently jogged along behind.
UNION, a mastiff with ferocious mouth,
Whose angry bark awoke the slumbering hills, 1015
Was always first and foremost in the chase;

⁴⁴ A lion and unicorn rampant appear on Canada's Coat of Arms.

⁴⁵ MILLARD FILLMORE (1800 – 1874). Textile worker, attorney, New York state assembly member, US congressional representative, US Vice President, thirteenth US President (1850 – 1852). Fillmore supported the 1850 Compromise as a settlement of the slavery issue. His political career ended with his unsuccessful presidential candidacy for the anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic American Party (Know Nothings) in 1856.

⁴⁶ Celestial sphere or vault of heaven.

His flabby jaws were red with human blood.
COMMERCE, a most sagacious dog, who barked
With so much dignity one would have thought
He knew enough to speak, perhaps to vote! 1020
STATESMAN, a cunning dog, most like a fox;
He never led, but followed in the pack,
And barked just like the echo of the rest,
And bit the victim with the whitest teeth.
LAW, an unfeeling and relentless cur, 1025
Whose fevered fangs were cooled in human blood.
TASTE, a white lapdog from a lady's knee,
Whose piping voice amused both mice and men.
SMELL, with a small pug nose and great long ears,
Sneezed often when he should have barked aloud. 1030
SIGHT, a seared puppy, howling in the dark;
And minor dogs too numerous to name.
But all these watchful dogs could not prevent
Th' escape of hunted freemen to the north.

A poor down-trodden slave one night 1035
Resolved that, ere the morrow's light
Should beam on him, he'd take his flight,
Whatever might betide him
He bade his weeping wife good by,
Then dashed a soft tear from his eye, 1040
Looked at the star up in the sky,
And said that star should guide him!

And then beneath the silver gleam
He climbed the hill and swam the stream
To realize a golden dream 1045
Of happiness and freedom
When negro night brought forth pale day

The fugitive stopped on his way,
And where the footsore traveller lay
 There were no friends to heed him. 1050

He slept beneath the broad, blue sky
The sun blazed in the heavens on high;
The wood bird sang his lullaby
 He dreamed of chains he'd riven;
But when he woke in that lonesome place 1055
Gaunt hunger stared him in the face;
And yet he still pursued the race,
 Led by that light in heaven!

He scared the wild beast from his lair;
And daylight found him resting where 1060
No knotted scourge his flesh could tear,
 Nor bugle blast could rout him
Bark, buds, and berries were his food,
Sharp briars and brambles paved his road,
While slimy snake and rusty toad 1065
 Hissed and crawled about him!

Bloodhounds are baying on his track;
Red grow the scars which seam his back:
God speed the poor hound-hunted black,
 That he may fly the faster! 1070
He springs into the leaky skiff;
And though his limbs are sore and stiff
He hoists the sail; winds fill the reef
 And bear him from his master!

No sight on all this earth is more sublime 1075
Than deep Niagara shouting to the slave,

Baptizing him in Freedom's silver spray
And folding him in robes of golden mist,
Arching his passage to the promised land
With rainbows such as emperor's never saw 1080
In their triumphal marches through the world.
Who can translate the thunder of the wave
Unwinding like a river from the rock?
Who read the radiant autograph of God
Written in beauty on its wrinkled brow? 1085
"The sound of many waters" who can still
As Jesus stilled the billows of the sea?
I stand and tremble on its awful brink,
Shuddering at shadows of my nothingness.
My thoughts are flighty as the birds which sweep 1090
And scream in circles round my dizzy head.
These rocky walls are God's own mason work,
Where he has chronicled the epochs past;
That cloud which hovers like an angel's wing
Is the great, spotless flag of Peace unfurled 1095
Betwixt the mightiest nations of the earth.
Just like a burnished sickle in the sun,
The river reaps the fetters from the slave --
His fiery pillar is the bright north star;
His guide by day Niagara's sheltering cloud. 1100
From lake to lake these wondrous waters flow,
As human love from heart to heart should run,
Uniting them with ties as bright and true
As those which bind in peace the pure in heart.
O that I were a flower, to bloom and breathe 1105
My little life away upon its banks!
Would that I were a bird, to soar and sing
In this sunlighted shower of gleaming pearls!
Here beauty and sublimity are wed.

As Moses dropped his sandals from his feet,⁴⁷ 1110
So here must yokes and gyves be cast aside --
For God is here, and this is holy ground!

PART VI.

Is it fit labor for the life of man
To eat, and drink, and sleep, and nothing more?
Were head, and hands, and brains, and bones designed 1115
Merely to pack our mouths and pockets full?
Who has not seen a man, of six-feet height,⁴⁸
Whose father's purse was fat with current coin,
Move like a scourging pestilence about?
Barbers, instead of books, adorned his head; 1120
Cooks and confectioners supplied his taste;
And good things went whence good things never came.
He was the haberdasher's dry goods sign;
St. Crispin⁴⁹ put the polish on his boots;
His feet reflected, though his head did not; 1125
The tailor winked, and praised his "perfect form";
No other man his habits could improve.
He drank as though the passage through his throat
Was hollow as his little, hollow heart.
Sometimes such men are sent to Washington. 1130
Now, paradoxical as it may seem,
They often speak aloud, yet nothing say.
Good game are they for bullying duellists;
For when they fall and die nobody's killed.
Thank God, we have another class of men! 1135
They rise like lofty mountains from the plains,

⁴⁷ Ex 3:5.

⁴⁸ Personal reference unidentified.

⁴⁹ Patron saint of shoemakers.

Crowned with a diadem of glowing stars;
Plain is their dress and simple is their meal;
Their libraries, not larders, fill their thoughts;
Their words go forth like winged oracles; 1140
Their counsels guide and govern all the state.
Yes; I could gem this little telltale book,
Which fools will spit upon and spurn with hate,
With most illustrious names of noble men.
Chase⁵⁰ truly is the giant of the west; 1145
His broad, white forehead is the bank of thought
Which discounts only purest gold of mind;
And his large eyes light up his pleasant face
As stars illuminate the cloudless sky.
Sumner,⁵¹ upon whose ample shoulders fell 1150
The mantle of a sainted patriot,
Has won green laurels and a golden name.
Seward,⁵² wise in council and discreet in war,
Though minimum in person, yet we know
His influence proves him maximum in power. 1155
And Smith⁵³ has proved himself True-man indeed
In fair Nebraska's sorest time of need.
God bless our Wades,⁵⁴ and all the earnest host
Who live in deeds, and not in windy words
But southern men see not with northern eyes: 1160
Chains on a "servant's" fettered hands appear
Handsome as bracelets on a lady's arm;

⁵⁰ SALMON PORTLAND CHASE (1808 – 1873). Attorney, antislavery activist, US senator from Ohio, Ohio governor, Secretary of the Treasury, Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court. Born in Cornish, New Hampshire; graduated Dartmouth College in 1826. Became a committed evangelical during the Second Great Awakening and a leader of the American Sunday School Union. In the late 1830s, Chase committed himself to the antislavery cause defended captured fugitive slaves, becoming known as “the attorney general for fugitive slaves.” He was a leader of the abolitionist Liberty Party, fighting both the 1850 Compromise and the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and then a founder of the Republican Party in 1856,

⁵¹ CHARLES SUMNER (1811 – 1874). Attorney, social reformer, US senator. Born in Boston; graduated Harvard Law School. Sumner emerged as an attorney devoted to antislavery and reform causes, and became the leading political abolitionist within the US government prior to the Civil War. Following the war, he lent support to Reconstruction work and civil rights legislation.

⁵² WILLIAM HENRY SEWARD (1801 – 1872). Attorney, New York state senator, New York governor, US senator, Secretary of State. Seward became a leader of antislavery forces when he joined the US Senate in 1849 and denounced the institution as contrary to “higher law.” He aggressively opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act and expansion of slavery while his own Whig Party fractured over the issue. Seward joined in founding the Republican Party in 1856, but advocated a policy of peaceful compromise in the belief that slavery would disappear of itself.

⁵³ CALEB BLOOD SMITH (1808 – 1864). Attorney, newspaper publisher, Indiana state representative, US congressional representative, Secretary of Interior. Smith was an opponent of the Mexican War in 1846 and an antislavery politician, but one who advocated emigration and colonization for freed slaves. He opposed the Emancipation Proclamation and, as Secretary of Interior, promoted a short-lived plan to re-settle former slaves in Panama.

⁵⁴ BENJAMIN FRANKLIN WADE (1800 – 1878). Farmer, attorney, US district judge, US senator from Ohio. Entering the US Senate in 1851, Wade attacked slavery and the Fugitive Slave Act continually. In response to the Whig Party’s divisions over the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Wade became a founder of the Republican Party.

Yokes, locked upon the negro's "stubborn" neck,
As beautiful as Fashion's silk cravat;
An ebon back, seamed o'er with frightful scars,
A sight as pleasant as a parchment map;
Tears streaming down an Afric's dusky face
Are far too vulgar to excite their grief.
And southern men hear not with northern ears:

1165

The shriek of sad despair from breaking hearts 1170
Would startle them no more than whistling winds.
There are exceptions to this sweeping rule.
The native southron⁵⁵ is a nobleman
Contrasted with the turncoat of the north,
Who starves, and whips, and works his slaves to 1175
death.
He has not southern hospitality,
Which covers up a multitude of sins;
He has not southern magnanimity,
Which, like the angel in the sepulchre, 1180
Shines forth whene'er the stone is rolled away
And he has not the southern chivalry,
Which cowards dread and gallant men admire.
I speak not of the bullies who provoke
A challenge with the murderous intent; 1185
But basswood men,⁵⁶ such as Connecticut
Brands with rebuke and burns in effigy –
Such as New Hampshire punished at the polls.⁵⁷
They've granite hearts, and souls devoid of grit,
And on the gibbet of remark should swing 1190
As warnings at the cross roads of the world.
O, what a strange and busy age is this!
I take my standpoint where I read its fate,
And see its panorama moving past;
There where the bloated custom house looms up 1195
Like an obese and lazy officer,
Our "gallant" Guthrie cut off Bronson's head.⁵⁸
Since then his pale and bleeding ghost was seen,
Like a stained shadow from its winding sheet.
Though doomed by "hands" and damned by all the 1200
"softs,"
He could not rest within his narrow grave

⁵⁵ Southerner.

⁵⁶ Imitation men. Dismissive term applied to the names of articles of trade allegedly made of basswood and dispensed by Yankee peddlers. Mitford Matthews, *Dictionary of Americanisms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 85.

⁵⁷ Both Connecticut and New Hampshire elected Republicans to the US Congress in 1854 in consequence of the Kansas-Nebraska crisis. Isaac Toucey, a Democratic Party senator from Connecticut, was burned in effigy for supporting the Act. These are the latest events that the poem references, indicating a probable publication date in November or December 1854.

⁵⁸ Obscure reference. Probably refers to a political dispute between JAMES GUTHRIE (1792 – 1869), US senator from Kentucky and Secretary of the Treasury under the Pierce administration, and GREENE C. BRONSON (d. 1863), judge and defeated proslavery New York gubernatorial candidate in 1853.

Until he cursed Nebraska and the "prince."
O favored prince, take warning and be wise!
Lust not for office or emolument; 2005
Speak up for Freedom and strike off the gyves,
Or else the jolly Duke of York will be
A weasel nailed upon the barn-yard gate.
There stands the trumpeter on Brooklyn's heights,
A sleepless watchman on the Church's high walls, 2010
Whose thunder blasts have shaken all the state,
Until reverberating echoes sound
As though the deep responded to the deep.
Here stands a herald on the Trimount hills,⁵⁹
Whose words are echoed round the list'ning world. 2015
Upon a firm and lofty tribune stands
One of the noblest champions of reform,
Whose winged words like grateful manna fall
To feed with mental food the multitude.
There, too, is God's black servant, Uncle Tom, 2020
Who preaches from the press to all the earth.
Never was preacher honored so before
His temple, built by God, holds all the race.
See lords and ladies, dukes and knights, and squires,
Proud emperors, and gilded kings and queens, 2025
With crowns of glittering gold and tossing plumes
Which look like royal heads run up to seed,
Armies and navies in gay uniform,
War buds, which blossom out in smoke and fire,
With parliaments and people, throng to hear 2030
The thrilling story of a simple slave!
These instruments, and such as these, have changed
The current of our nation's sentiment.
God grant the Pulpit and the Press may guard
Nebraska from the onslaught of her foes! 2035

⁵⁹ Original three hills of early Boston, where Beacon Hill developed in the late 18th century; presently commemorated in the name of Tremont Street.

APPENDIX 1: Major Works by George Washington Bungay

- 1837 *Acrostics and Miscellaneous Poems*. New York: John W. Oliver. [poetry]
- 1848 *A Christmas Hymn*. Boston: Excelsior Printing. [broadside written for the Boston Juvenile Temperance Army]
- 1852 *Crayon Sketches and Off-hand Takings of Distinguished American Statesmen, Orators, Divines, Essayists, Editors, Poets, and Philanthropists*. Boston: Stacy and Richardson.
- 1852 *The Maine Law Museum; and Temperance Anecdotes*. Boston: Stacy and Richardson.
- 1854 *Off-hand Takings; or, Crayon Sketches of the Noticeable Men of Our Age*. New York: De Witt and Davenport.
- 1854 *Know Nothing: A Poem for Natives and Aliens*. Boston: J.P. Jewett. [poetry]
- 1856 *A Story of Everyday Life: Old Moses*. Utica, NY: James E.N. Backus. [poetry]
- 1857 *Pen and Ink Portraits of the Senators, Assemblymen, and State Officers, of the State of New York*. Albany, NY: J. Munsell.
- 1860 *The Bobolink Minstrel, or, Republican Songster for 1860*. New York: John W. Hutchinson.
- 1860 *De Witt's Common School Vocalist; A Choice Collection of Original and Selected Songs and Tunes*. New York: Robert M. DeWitt.
- 1860s *Total Abstinence Not a Failure*. New York: National Temperance Society and Publishing House.
- 1860s? *Freemen, or Slaves?* New York: National Temperance Society and Publishing House.
- 1865 *Mustered Out -- Now Look Out*. New York: American Temperance Union. [poetry]
- 1874 *Temperance Anecdotes: Original and Selected*. New York: National Temperance Society and Publication House.
- 1881 *Pen Portraits of Illustrious Abstainers*. New York: National Temperance Society and Publishing House.
- 1882 *Traits of Representative Men*. New York: Fowler and Wells.

Also see:

- 1840s? *Home, Sweet Home*. John Howard Payne; George W. Bungay. New York: Hard and Parsons. [gift book]
- 1862/4 *Better Times Are Coming*. Stephen Collins Foster and George W. Bungay. New York and Boston: Horace Waters, and O. Ditson & Co. [musical score, written and composed by Stephen Foster, with words by George Bungay]
- 1864 *God Save Our Noble Union: Patriotic Song & Chorus*. Charles D. H. Martin; George W. Bungay; Patrick M. Stakpole. New York: Horace Waters. [musical score]
- 1874 *The Court of Death by Rembrandt Peale, with Three Descriptive Poems*. New York: American Church Press Co. Prose and poetry about Peale's painting, 'Court of Death'. The first two poems are unsigned; the third is by George W. Bungay. In: *American Poetry, 1871-1900*, in the Harris Collection,

Brown University Library. Reel no. 170, item no. 13. Cooperative Preservation Microfilming Project, Research Libraries Group.

1870s *Jem and Velvet*, Julia P. Ballard. New York: National Temperance Society and Publishing House. Contains Bungay's short story, "The Drunkard's Daughter."