





LEXINGTON, — 1775.

1.
No maddening thirst for blood had they,
No battle-joy was theirs who set
Against the alien bayonet
Their homespun breasts in that old day.

2.
Their feet had trodden peaceful ways,
They loved not strife, they dreaded pain ;
They saw not, what to us is plain,
That God wou'd make man's wrath his praise.

3.
No seers were they, but simple men :
Its vast results the future hid ;
The meaning of the work they did
Was strange and dark and doubtful then.

4.
Swift as the summons came they left
The plough, mid-furrow, standing still,
The half-ground corn-grist in the mill,
The spade in earth, the axe in cleft.

5.
They went where duty seemed to call ;
They scarcely asked the reason why :
They only knew they could but die,
And death was not the worst of all.

9.
The bridal time of Law and Love,
The gladness of the world's release,
When, war-sick, at the feet of Peace
The hawk shall nestle with the dove, —

10.
The golden age of brotherhood,
Unknown to other rivalries
Than of the mild humanities,
And gracious interchange of good,

11.
When closer strand shall lean to strand,
Till meet, beneath saluting flags,
The eagle of our mountain crags,
The lion of our Mother-land.

6.
Of man for man the sacrifice,
Unstained by blood, save theirs, they gave.
The flowers that blossomed from their grave
Have sown themselves beneath all skies.

7.
Their death-shot shook the feudal tower,
And shattered slavery's chain as well :
On the sky's dome, as on a bell,
Its echo struck the world's great hour.

8.
That fateful echo is not dumb :
The nations, listening to its sound,
Wait, from a century's vantage-ground,
The holier triumphs yet to come, —

John G. Whittier.



