

## WHAT MEAN THIS BLEATING OF THE SHEEP?

By Clara Ann Thompson

*And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? 1 Samuel 15:14.*

America, proud freedom's land  
Thy flag is trailing in the dust!  
Where are thy boasted precepts grand,  
Thy pledge of faith: "In God We Trust?"

Alas! they did not loose his bands  
Because they hated slavery,  
But that their fair united land,  
Might ever undivided be.

Thou criest to the world's oppressed,  
Who stretch to thee appealing hands,  
"Come hither, come! here end thy quest,  
Thou'lt find a refuge in this land."

And so they broke the galling chains,  
And bade the African go free;  
But cast a stigma on his name,  
That blighted all his liberty.

"This land of love and liberty,  
Far-famed in history and song;  
Where Justice holds supremacy  
Where God is feared and faith is strong."

In this great Freedom's land he saw  
That other nation's refuge found,  
While prejudice's cruel law  
In chains of thralldom held him bound.

Oh, cease thy boasting freedom's land!  
'Twere sweeter far to hear thee weep;  
If thou hast heeded God's command,  
What mean this bleating of the sheep?

He saw the laws that make men free,  
For him grow feeble from disuse;  
And boasted Christian charity  
Sink to oppression and abuse.

Thy founders fled, with hearts aflame  
With freedom's fire, across the waves;  
Ere long, to them the Tempter came,  
And offered them a band of slaves.

Again we hear the solemn words,  
Forerunner of King Saul's defeat—  
"What mean this lowing of the herds,  
What mean this bleating of the sheep?"

Alas! they failed, those founders proud,  
And as they gained in freedom's power,  
There followed ever, like a cloud,  
The shadow of that testing hour.

For more than fifty years have passed,  
Since you declared the black man free,  
And still your fetters hold him fast,  
Bound in that other slavery.

And when they stood, from England free,  
A voice came from that shadow deep,  
E'en while they shouted, "Victory",  
"What mean this bleating of the sheep?"

You care not that he's proved his worth,  
You care not for his loyalty;  
The land that gave the black man birth  
Has proved his deadly enemy.

For lo! they rose at Freedom's call,  
And rent their galling chains away,  
But left the black man still a thrall,  
Without a hope of Freedom's day.

You block his pathway to success,  
By force, deceit, and strategy;  
And oft your brutal prejudice,  
Finds outlet in the mob's wild sway.

And so that warning shadow spread,  
Until it covered all the land;  
And civil war, the nation's dread,  
Clutched at its throat with bloody hands.

You cause for mobs you'd glorify:  
The black man's crime 'gainst womanhood.  
And while you flaunt the baleful lie,  
You hound the women of his blood.

And brother strove with brother then,  
Upon that awful field of blood,  
Until the fettered African,  
Before the world, a free man stood.

Yes, hound them till you bring them low,  
Protected by your laws unjust;  
Then call them vile names, when you know  
They're but the victims of your lust.

How dare you boast of chivalry,  
And haste to shed the black man's blood,  
While you, like wolves, feast greedily  
On unprotected womanhood?

You, lifting guilty hands to God,  
Vow universal liberty;  
While 'neath your feet, the trampled sod  
Reeks with the blood of tyranny.

Your brother's blood, though dark his face,  
Shed by the fiendish mob's decree;  
His crime? A member of that race  
You've held long years in slavery.

You dragged him, bleeding, through the streets,  
To where you'd built a ghastly pyre;  
You tortured him like savage beasts,  
Then cast him, living, in the fire.

Your mothers with their babes were there,  
To view that feast of fire and blood;  
Your sisters, wives and sweethearts fair,  
God pity such base womanhood!

Oh proud, vain women of the South,  
You also have a work to do!  
For jealous pride has sealed your mouths  
Till you've become the victims too.

Too proud to own your sister's wrongs,  
Or say your men do aught amiss,  
You languish in your broken homes,  
Or join in revels such as this.

Yes, revels that should make you blush;  
Instead, you lend a helping hand  
To make your lauded Sunny South  
The fest'ring plague spot of the land.

Arise! Arise! count not the cost!  
Where is your boasted Southern fire?  
That nation is forever lost  
Whose women sink into the mire.

America proud freedom's land,  
Your flag is trailing in the dust!  
Where are your boasted precepts grand,  
Your pledge of faith: "In God We Trust?"

Did you thus trust Almighty God,  
The blacks would have their liberty;  
Nor would you wait until His rod  
Drives you again to set them free.

How dare you say you trust your God,  
And keep your mob and Ku Klux Klan?  
Did you thus trust Almighty God,  
You'd scourge the monsters from the land!

Had you such faith, your Freedom's vow,  
You made to God, you'd dare to keep;  
And He would not be asking now:  
"What mean this bleating of the sheep?"

He asked that question years ago,  
And well you know the price you paid;  
Your streaming blood, your cries of woe,  
A bitter lamentation made.

He speaks again; you'll not obey;  
You raise weak arms against his might,  
But soon there'll come a bitter day  
When he will scourge you to the right.

E'en now your wards from foreign lands,  
Are forging chains of Anarchy;  
And while you chain the African,  
They'll bind you in their slavery.

You welcome knaves to liberty,  
But scorn the loyal African;  
You'll learn the worth of loyalty  
When Anarchy invades the land.

Beware, America, the proud!  
Thou'lt surely bitter harvest reap;  
Once more there comes in accents loud:  
"What means this bleating of the sheep?"

Seek not like King Saul by device  
An answer to that question deep;  
Who said it was for sacrifice,  
He spared the cattle and the sheep.

For God beheld his sinful heart,  
And spoke the words of doom to Saul;  
Unless thou from this sin depart,  
America, thou too, shalt fall!