

reviewed favorably in the New York monthly *Literary World*, terming it “no unworthy contribution from a poet to that species of literature which only a poet should meddle with.” The New England writings of Hawthorne, Whittier, Catharine Sedgwick, and Stowe would have an important influence on the emergence of local-color regionalism later in the century.

Despite his wide-ranging interests in poetry, prose, and editing, Whittier well into the 1850s was generally regarded (contemptuously by some) as simply an abolitionist poet. His reputation underwent a change in the late 1850s, when abolitionism had become more accepted in the North, and when his poetry and humorous folk legends began to appear in the new (and very popular) *Atlantic Monthly*. With the outbreak of the Civil War, the nonviolent Quaker Whittier, whose progressive antislavery poems had contributed to northern militancy, became increasingly troubled by the carnage on the battlefield and sought refuge in a domestic poetry that recaptured an idealized, harmonic past. Grief-stricken at the death of his younger sister Elizabeth in 1865, he began work on *Snow-Bound*, which James T. Fields published as a book in 1866. In the aftermath of the Civil War, at a time of national mourning, readers responded enthusiastically to Whittier’s nostalgic evocation of a historical moment when houses were not divided and all was mostly well with the world. Suddenly the poet on the margins emerged, along with Longfellow, as one of the nation’s most beloved poets. Whittier earned over \$10,000 from the sales of *Snow-Bound*, an enormous sum for that time, and his subsequent volume, *The Tent on the Beach* (1867), was even more enthusiastically received, selling out its first printing of twenty thousand copies within the first three weeks of publication. During the final decades of his life, Whittier was regaled with honors, and even had a college in Iowa and a town in California named after him. On the occasion of his seventieth birthday, Stowe declared that Whittier’s “life had been a consecration, his songs an inspiration, to all that is highest and best.” In 1888 he helped edit a seven-volume edition of his collected works; his last volume, *At Sundown* (1890), was privately printed for friends. He died from a stroke in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, on September 7, 1892.

The Hunters of Men¹

Have ye heard of our hunting, o’er mountain and glen,
 Through cane-brake² and forest—the hunting of men?
 The lords of our land to this hunting have gone,
 As the fox-hunter follows the sound of the horn:
 Hark?—the cheer and the hallo!—the crack of the whip,
 And the yell of the hound as he fastens his grip!
 All blithe are our hunters, and noble their match—
 Though *hundreds* are caught, there are *millions* to catch:
 So speed to their hunting, o’er mountain and glen,
 Through cane-brake and forest—the hunting of men!

Gay luck to our hunters!—how nobly they ride
 In the glow of their zeal, and the strength of their pride!—

1. “Written on reading the report of the proceedings of the American Colonization Society, at its annual meeting in 1834” [Whittier’s note]. Whittier first published the poem in 1835 and revised it in 1838 (adopting the question mark at the poem’s end). The text is taken from *Poems* (1838). Founded in December 1816, the American Colo-

nization Society sought to transport the free blacks to Africa. The focus of the poem, however, is on the practice of returning runaway slaves to their owners, which was mandated by the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793.

2. Rough or marshy land overgrown with bamboo-like grasses, such as sugarcane.

The Priest with his cassock flung back on the wind,
 Just screening the politic Statesman behind—
 The saint and the sinner, with cursing and prayer— 15
 The drunk and the sober, ride merrily there.
 And woman—kind woman—wife, widow and maid—
 For *the good of the hunted*, is lending her aid:
 Her foot's in the stirrup—her hand on the rein—
 How blithely she rides to the hunting of men! 20

Oh! goodly and grand is our hunting to see,
 In this "land of the brave and this home of the free."
 Priest, warrior, and statesman, from Georgia to Maine,
 All mounting the saddle—all grasping the rein—
 Right merrily hunting the black man, whose sin 25
 Is the curl of his hair and the hue of his skin!
 Wo, now, to the hunted who turns him at bay!
 Will our hunters be turn'd from their purpose and prey?
 Will their hearts fail within them?—their nerves tremble, when
 All roughly they ride to the hunting of men? 30

Ho!—ALMS for our hunters! all weary and faint
 Wax the curse of the sinner and prayer of the saint.
 The horn is wound faintly—the echoes are still
 Over cane-brake and river, and forest and hill.
 Haste—alms for our hunters! the hunted once more 35
 Have turn'd from their flight with their backs to the shore:
 What right have *they* here in the home of the white,
 Shadow'd o'er by *our* banner of Freedom and Right?
 Ho!—alms for the hunters! or never again
 Will they ride in their pomp to the hunting of men! 40

ALMS—ALMS for our hunters! why *will* ye delay,
 When their pride and their glory are melting away?
 The parson has turn'd; for, on charge of his own,
 Who goeth a warfare, or hunting, alone?
 The politic statesman looks back with a sigh— 45
 There is doubt in his heart—there is fear in his eye.
 Oh! haste, lest that doubting and fear shall prevail,
 And the head of his steed take the place of the tail.
 Oh! haste, ere he leave us! for who will ride then,
 For pleasure or gain, to the hunting of men? 50

1835, 1838