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Poem - "Howard at Atlanta" by John Greenleaf Whittier

O.O. Howard Collection

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"Howard at Atlanta." John Greenleaf Whittier.

Right in the track where Sherman
Ploughed his red furrow,
Out of the narrow cabin,
Up from the cellar's burrow,
Gathered the little black people,
With freedom newly dowered,
Where, beside their Northern teacher,
Stood the soldier, Howard.

He listened and heard the children
Of the poor and long-enslaved
Reading the words of Jesus,
Singing the songs of David.
Behold! - the dumb lips speaking,
The blind eyes seeing!
Bones of the Prophet's vision
Warmed into being!

Transformed he saw them passing
Their new life's portal!
Almost it seemed the mortal
Put on the immortal.
No more with the beasts of burden,
No more with stone and clod,
But crowned with glory and honor
In the image of God!

There was the human chattel
Its manhood taking;
There in each dark, bronze statue,
A soul was waking!
The man of many battles,
With tears his eyelids pressing,
Stretched over those dusky foreheads
His one-armed blessing.

And he said: 'Who hears can never
Fear for or doubt you;
What shall I tell the children
Up North about you?'
Then ran 'round a whisper, a murmur,
Some answer devising;
And a little boy stood up: 'General,
Tell 'em we're rising!'

O black boy of Atlanta!
But half was spoken:
The slave's chain and the master's
Alike are broken.
The one curse of the races
Held both in tether:
They are rising, - all are rising,
The black and white together!

*top
Thin
paper*

*3 thin
carbons*

*Put in
one side
of the
sheet in
double
columns*

Over

O brave men and fair women!
Ill comes of hate and scorning:
Shall the dark faces only
Be turned to morning?
Make Time your sole avenger,
All-healing, all-redressing;
Meet Fate halfway, and make it
A joy and blessing!