

Butcher's Apron

The Wolfe Tones

WHERE IS THE FLAG OF ENGLAND?

Henry Dupre LaBouchere

I

Let the winds of the world make answer!
North, South, East, West,
Wherever there is wealth to covet
Or land to be possessed:
Wherever the savage nations
To coddle, coerce or scare,
You may look for the vaunted emblem
For the Flag of England is there!

II

Aye, it waves over the blazing hovels
Whence its African victims fly
To be shot by explosive bullets
Or wretchedly starve and die:
Or where the beachcomber hammers
The isles of the southern sea -
From the peak of his hellish vessel
The English flag flies free!

III

The Maori, full of hate, curses
With his fleeting, dying breath.
And the Arab hath hissed his curses
As he spat at its folds in death.
The hapless fellah hath feared it
On Tel el Kebir's parched plain.
And the blood of the Zulu hath stained it,
With a deep indelible stain.

IV

It has floated over scenes of pillage
And flaunted over deeds of shame.
It has waved o'er the fell marauder
As he ravished with Sword and flame:
It has looked on ruthless slaughter
And assassination dire and grim.
And has heard the shrieks of its victims
Drown even the jingo hymn.

V

Where is the flag of England?
Seek the land where the natives rot
And decay, and assured extinction
Must soon be the people's lot.
Go to the once fair island
Where disease and death are rife
And the greed of colossal commerce
Now fattens on human life.

VI

Where is the flag of England?
Go sail where the rich galleons come
With their shoddy and wasted cotton,
And beer and Bibles and rum.
Seek the land where brute force hath triumphed
And hypocrisy hath its lair.
And your question will thus be answered
For the flag of England is there!

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