

64 ONE YEAR AGO

One year ago our glorious flag
Lay trailing in the dust,
Bent were the grand old stars and stripes,
By Treason's deadly thrust.
One year ago, and every cheek
Was tinged with manly shame,
As eyes flashed fire of storm and ire,
At the sound of Sumter's name.

One year ago, and Treason stood
With scornful mien and high,
And blotted out, one after one,
The stars that lit our sky.
Oh, fearful shame, and foul disgrace,
That Freedom's holy lamp
Should turn into a baleful torch
To light a rebel camp!

Then -- then it was our hearts were stirred
By one electric thrill, --
A remnant of the ancient fire
That blazed on Bunker Hill, --
And every hilltop caught the flame
That heralds war's alarms,
When on the startled ear were rang
The clarion cry "To arms!"

State after State with loyal zeal
Marched manful to the front,
Contending which should strike the first,
And which should bear the brunt.
The grand uprising of that time
Shall live in deathless song,
The protest of the loyal free
Against disloyal wrong.

And now, beneath the Southern sky,
A hundred camp-fires gleam,
On Carolina's land-locked coast,
Beside Potomac's stream;
And, scattered through the mighty West,
By river-course and plain,
The white tents of our soldier's mark
Law's re-established reign.

We send them forth with prayers and tears,
Our dearest and our best;
That they are true, and brave as true,
Our battle-fields attest.
Full many a hard-won victory
Has crowned their valor tried,
Yet not alone by mortal strength,
For God was on their side.

A year ago, and blank distrust
Held all our hearts in thrall,
The fabric of our nation's life
Seemed swaying to its fall.
Now our advancing columns march
Behind God's pillared flame --
He turns the scales of victory,
And blessed be his name!

Sources:

Boston Transcript, April 28, 1862.
Christian Register, May 17, 1862.
Littell's Living Age, June 21, 1862.
Rebellion Record, 1863.
Alger Street, 1964.