

**1831**

**SONG OF MARION'S MEN**

**William Cullen Bryant**

**Bryant, William Cullen (1794-1878) - American poet and editor of the New York Evening Post who practiced law before devoting his life to writing. A master of blank verse, Bryant's earliest works are considered his best. Song of Marion's Men (1831) - Tells of the exploits of Francis Marion during the Revolution. Opening lines: Our band is few but true and tried, / Our leader frank and bold;...**

## SONG OF MARIONS MEN

Our band is few but true and tried,  
 Our leader frank and bold;  
 The British soldier trembles  
 When Marion's name is told.  
 Our fortress is the good greenwood,  
 Our tent the cypress-tree;  
 We know the forest round us,  
 As seamen know the sea.  
 We know its walls of thorny vines,  
 Its glades of reedy grass,  
 Its safe and silent islands  
 Within the dark morass.

Woe to the English soldiery  
 That little dread us near!  
 On them shall light at midnight  
 A strange and sudden fear:  
 When, waking to their tents on fire,  
 They grasp their arms in vain,  
 And they who stand to face us  
 Are beat to earth again;  
 And they who fly in terror deem  
 A mighty host behind,  
 And hear the tramp of thousands  
 Upon the hollow wind.

Then sweet the hour that brings release  
 From danger and from toil:  
 We talk the battle over,  
 And share the battle's spoil.  
 The woodland rings with laugh and shout,  
 As if a hunt were up,  
 And woodland flowers are gathered  
 To crown the soldier's cup.  
 With merry songs we mock the wind  
 That in the pine-top grieves,  
 And slumber long and sweetly  
 On beds of oaken leaves.

Well knows the fair and friendly moon

The band that Marion leads-  
The glitter of their rifles,  
The scampering of their steeds.  
'Tis life to guide the fiery barb  
Across the moonlight plain;  
'Tis life to feel the night-wind  
That lifts the tossing mane.  
A moment in the British camp  
A moment- and away Back to the pathless forest,  
Before the peep of day.

Grave men there are by broad Santee,  
Grave men with hoary hairs;  
Their hearts are all with Marion,  
For Marion are their prayers.  
And lovely ladies greet our band  
With kindest welcoming,  
With smiles like those of summer,  
And tears like those of spring.  
For them we wear these trusty arms,  
And lay them down no more  
Till we have driven the Briton,  
Forever, from our shore.

**THE END**