

A CRY FROM ANDERSONVILLE PRISON

by William Comfort

When our country called for men we came from forge and hill,
From workshop, farm and factory the broken ranks to fill,
We left our quiet happy home and those we loved so well,
To vanquish all our Union foes or fall where others fell.
But now in prison drear we languish and 'tis our constant cry,
Oh ye who yet can save us . . . will you leave us here to die?

Did the voice of slander tell ye that our hearts were weak with fear?
That all, or nearly all, of us were captured in the rear?
But the scars upon our bodies from the musket ball and shell,
The missing legs and shattered arms a truer tale will tell;
We have tried to do our duty in the sight of God on high,
And ye who can yet save us now leave us here to die.

There are hearts with hope still beating in our "Northern Homes"
Watching, waiting for the footsteps that will never come.
In "Southern prisons" pining, meager, tattered, pale and gaunt,
Growing weaker, weaker daily from pinching cold and want --
Are husbands, sons and brothers who hopeless captives lie,
And ye who yet can save us -- Will you leave us here to die?

From out our prison gate there's a graveyard close at hand,
Where lay fourteen thousand Union men beneath a Southern sand,
And scores are laid beside them as day succeeds each day,
And thus it shall be until we all shall pass away;
And the last can say while dying with upturned glazing eye,
Both faith and love are dead at home and they've left us here to die.



The Cannon is Named "The Dictator"
Petersburg, Virginia
From the National Archives