

THE ARSENAL
AT SPRINGFIELD

This is the Arsenal.
From floor to ceiling,

Like a huge organ,
rise the burnished arms;

But front their silent
pipes no anthem pealing

Startles the villages
with strange alarms.

Ah! what a sound will rise,
how wild and dreary,

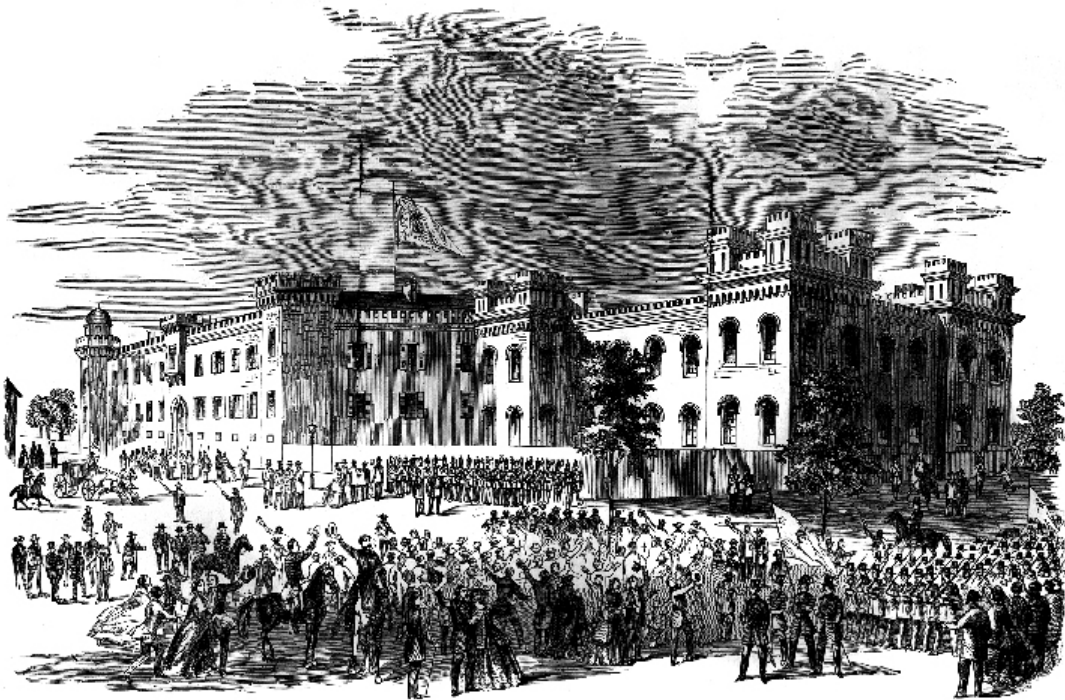
When the death-angel
touches those swift keys

What loud lament
and dismal Miserere

Will mingle with their
awful symphonies

I hear even now the
infinite fierce chorus,

The cries of agony,
the endless groan,



Which, through the ages that have gone before us, In long reverberations reach our own. On helm and harness rings the Saxon hammer, Through Cimbric forest roars the Norseman's song, And loud, amid the universal clamor, O'er distant deserts sounds the Tartar gong. I hear the Florentine, who from his palace Wheels out his battle-bell with dreadful din, And Aztec priests upon their teocallis Beat the wild war-drums made of serpent's skin; The tumult of each sacked and burning village; The shout that every prayer for mercy drowns;	The soldiers' revels in the midst of pillage; The wail of famine in beleaguered towns; The bursting shell, the gateway wrenched asunder, The rattling musketry, the clashing blade; And ever and anon, in tones of thunder, The diapason of the cannonade. Is it, O man, with such discordant noises, With such accursed instruments as these, Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly voices, And jarrest the celestial harmonies? Were half the power, that fills the world with terror, Were half the wealth, bestowed on camps and courts,
---	---

Given to redeem the
human mind from error,

There were no need
of arsenals or forts:

The warrior's name
would be a name abhorred!

And every nation,
that should lift again

Its hand against a brother,
on its forehead

Would wear forevermore
the curse of Cain!

Down the dark future,
through long generations,

The echoing sounds grow
fainter and then cease;

And like a bell, with solemn,
sweet vibrations,

I hear once more the voice
of Christ say, "Peace!"

Peace! and no longer
from its brazen portals

The blast of War's great
organ shakes the skies!

But beautiful as songs
of the immortals,

The holy melodies
of love arise.