



Walker's Appeal in Four Articles: An Address to the Slaves of the United States of America (Cosimo Classics History)

David Walker, Henry Highland Garnet

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The whites want slaves, and want us for their slaves, but some of them will curse the day they ever saw us. As true as the sun ever shone in its meridian splendor, my colour will root some of them out of the very face of the earth. They shall have enough of making slaves of, and butchering, and murdering us in the manner which they have. -from Walker's Appeal in Four Articles The rage of blacks in slavery-era America is not something we today must merely imagine: we can read their angry words in documents like these. David Walker, born to a free black woman, was by the 1820s a leading black intellectual and a proponent of black unity as a necessary precursor to throwing off the shackles of slavery. His Appeal, published in 1829, warned of a violent and bloody slave insurgency, and startled even abolitionists with its vehemence. He was rehabilitated by Henry Highland Garnet two decades later, when he—a runaway slave since childhood—republished it, in the single 1848 volume of which this is a replica, along with his own Address to the Slaves of the United States of America. Garnet's call for massive slave uprisings had been similarly rebuffed several years earlier, but worsening tensions between the North and the South, and between slave owners and abolitionists, created an atmosphere in which rising militancy was more welcome. In their passionate writings, the bitter wrath of Walker and Garnet echoes across the decades, reminders of the shameful past that continues to haunt America as a nation to this day. DAVID WALKER (c. 1780s-1830) was a contributor to Freedom's Journal, the first black newspaper in America. HENRY HIGHLAND GARNET (1815-1882) was editor of the black newspaper The Clarion, and, after the Civil War, served as the president of Avery College and as an advisor to President James Garfield.

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