

Poems of Power

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

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POEMS OF POWER

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NOTE

The final word in the title of this volume refers to the DIVINE POWER in every human being, the recognition of which is the secret to all success and happiness. It is this idea which many of the verses endeavour to illustrate.

E. W. W.

THE QUEEN'S LAST RIDE
(Written on the day of Queen Victoria's funeral)

The Queen is taking a drive to-day,
They have hung with purple the carriage-way,
They have dressed with purple the royal track
Where the Queen goes forth and never comes back.

Let no man labour as she goes by
On her last appearance to mortal eye:
With heads uncovered let all men wait
For the Queen to pass, in her regal state.

Army and Navy shall lead the way
For that wonderful coach of the Queen's to-day.
Kings and Princes and Lords of the land
Shall ride behind her, a humble band;
And over the city and over the world
Shall the Flags of all Nations be half-mast-furled,
For the silent lady of royal birth
Who is riding away from the Courts of earth,
Riding away from the world's unrest
To a mystical goal, on a secret quest.

Though in royal splendour she drives through town,
Her robes are simple, she wears no crown:
And yet she wears one, for, widowed no more,
She is crowned with the love that has gone before,
And crowned with the love she has left behind
In the hidden depths of each mourner's mind.

Bow low your heads--lift your hearts on high -
The Queen in silence is driving by!

THE MEETING OF THE CENTURIES

A curious vision on mine eyes unfurled
In the deep night. I saw, or seemed to see,
Two Centuries meet, and sit down vis-a-vis
Across the great round table of the world:
One with suggested sorrows in his mien,
And on his brow the furrowed lines of thought;
And one whose glad expectant presence brought
A glow and radiance from the realms unseen.

Hand clasped with hand, in silence for a space
The Centuries sat; the sad old eyes of one
(As grave paternal eyes regard a son)
Gazing upon that other eager face.
And then a voice, as cadenceless and gray
As the sea's monody in winter time,
Mingled with tones melodious, as the chime
Of bird choirs, singing in the dawns of May.

THE OLD CENTURY SPEAKS

By you, Hope stands. With me, Experience walks.
Like a fair jewel in a faded box,
In my tear-rusted heart, sweet Pity lies.
For all the dreams that look forth from your eyes,
And those bright-hued ambitions, which I know
Must fall like leaves and perish, in Time's snow,
(Even as my soul's garden stands bereft,)
I give you pity! 'tis the one gift left.

THE NEW CENTURY

Nay, nay, good friend! not pity, but Godspeed,
Here in the morning of my life I need.
Counsel, and not condolence; smiles, not tears,
To guide me through the channels of the years.
Oh, I am blinded by the blaze of light
That shines upon me from the Infinite.
Blurred is my vision by the close approach
To unseen shores, whereon the times encroach.

THE OLD CENTURY

Illusion, all illusion. List and hear
The Godless cannons, booming far and near.
Flaunting the flag of Unbelief, with Greed
For pilot, lo! the pirate age in speed
Bears on to ruin. War's most hideous crimes
Besmirch the record of these modern times.
Degenerate is the world I leave to you, -
My happiest speech to earth will be--adieu.

THE NEW CENTURY

You speak as one too weary to be just.
I hear the guns--I see the greed and lust.
The death throes of a giant evil fill
The air with riot and confusion. Ill
Ofttimes makes fallow ground for Good; and Wrong
Builds Right's foundation, when it grows too strong.
Pregnant with promise is the hour, and grand
The trust you leave in my all-willing hand.

THE OLD CENTURY

As one who throws a flickering taper's ray
To light departing feet, my shadowed way
You brighten with your faith. Faith makes the man
Alas, that my poor foolish age outran
Its early trust in God! The death of art
And progress follows, when the world's hard heart
Casts out religion. 'Tis the human brain
Men worship now, and heaven, to them, means--gain.

THE NEW CENTURY

Faith is not dead, tho' priest and creed may pass,
For thought has leavened the whole unthinking mass,
And man looks now to find the God within.
We shall talk more of love, and less of sin,

In this new era. We are drawing near
Unatlassed boundaries of a larger sphere.
With awe, I wait, till Science leads us on,
Into the full effulgence of its dawn.

DEATH HAS CROWNED HIM A MARTYR
(Written on the day of President McKinley's death)

In the midst of sunny waters, lo! the mighty Ship of State
Staggers, bruised and torn and wounded by a derelict of fate,
One that drifted from its moorings in the anchorage of hate.

On the deck our noble Pilot, in the glory of his prime,
Lies in woe-impelling silence, dead before his hour or time,
Victim of a mind self-centred in a Godless fool of crime.

One of earth's dissension-breeders, one of Hate's unreasoning tools,
In the annals of the ages, when the world's hot anger cools,
He who sought for Crime's distinction shall be known as Chief of
Fools.

In the annals of the ages, he who had no thought of fame
(Keeping on the path of duty, caring not for praise or blame),
Close beside the deathless Lincoln, writ in light, will shine his
name.

Youth proclaimed him as a hero; time, a statesman; love, a man;
Death has crowned him as a martyr,--so from goal to goal he ran,
Knowing all the sum of glory that a human life may span.

He was chosen by the people; not an accident of birth
Made him ruler of a nation, but his own intrinsic worth.
Fools may govern over kingdoms--not republics of the earth.

He has raised the lovers' standard by his loyalty and faith,
He has shown how virile manhood may keep free from scandal's breath.
He has gazed, with trust unshaken, in the awful eyes of Death.

In the mighty march of progress he has sought to do his best.
Let his enemies be silent, as we lay him down to rest,
And may God assuage the anguish of one suffering woman's breast.

GRIEF

As the funeral train with its honoured dead
On its mournful way went sweeping,
While a sorrowful nation bowed its head
And the whole world joined in weeping,
I thought, as I looked on the solemn sight,
Of the one fond heart despairing,
And I said to myself, as in truth I might,

"How sad must be this SHARING."

To share the living with even Fame,
For a heart that is only human,
Is hard, when Glory asserts her claim
Like a bold, insistent woman;
Yet a great, grand passion can put aside
Or stay each selfish emotion,
And watch, with a pleasure that springs from pride,
Its rival--the world's devotion.

But Death should render to love its own,
And my heart bowed down and sorrowed
For the stricken woman who wept alone
While even her DEAD was borrowed;
Borrowed from her, the bride--the wife -
For the world's last martial honour,
As she sat in the gloom of her darkened life,
With her widow's grief fresh upon her.

He had shed the glory of Love and Fame
In a golden halo about her;
She had shared his triumphs and worn his name:
But, alas! he had died without her.
He had wandered in many a distant realm,
And never had left her behind him,
But now, with a spectral shape at the helm,
He had sailed where she could not find him.

It was only a thought, that came that day
In the midst of the muffled drumming
And funeral music and sad display,
That I knew was right and becoming
Only a thought as the mourning train
Moved, column after column,
Bearing the dead to the burial plain
With a reverence grand as solemn.

ILLUSION

God and I in space alone
And nobody else in view.
"And where are the people, O Lord," I said,
"The earth below, and the sky o'er head,
And the dead whom once I knew?"

"That was a dream," God smiled and said -
"A dream that seemed to be true.
There were no people, living or dead,
There was no earth, and no sky o'erhead;
There was only Myself--in you."

"Why do I feel no fear," I asked,
"Meeting You here this way?
For I have sinned I know full well?"

And is there heaven, and is there hell,
And is this the judgment day?"

"Say, those were but dreams," the Great God said,
"Dreams, that have ceased to be.
There are no such things as fear or sin,
There is no you--you never have been -
There is nothing at all but ME."

ASSERTION

I am serenity. Though passions beat
Like mighty billows on my helpless heart,
I know beyond them lies the perfect sweet
Serenity, which patience can impart.
And when wild tempests in my bosom rage,
"Peace, peace," I cry, "it is my heritage."

I am good health. Though fevers rack my brain
And rude disorders mutilate my strength,
A perfect restoration after pain,
I know shall be my recompense at length.
And so through grievous day and sleepless night,
"Health, health," I cry, "it is my own by right."

I am success. Though hungry, cold, ill-clad,
I wander for awhile, I smile and say,
"It is but for a time--I shall be glad
To-morrow, for good fortune comes my way.
God is my father, He has wealth untold,
His wealth is mine, health, happiness, and gold."

I AM

I know not whence I came,
I know not whither I go;
But the fact stands clear that I am here
In this world of pleasure and woe.
And out of the mist and murk
Another truth shines plain -
It is my power each day and hour
To add to its joy or its pain.

I know that the earth exists,
It is none of my business why;
I cannot find out what it's all about,
I would but waste time to try.
My life is a brief, brief thing,
I am here for a little space,
And while I stay I would like, if I may,
To brighten and better the place.

The trouble, I think, with us all
Is the lack of a high conceit.
If each man thought he was sent to this spot
To make it a bit more sweet,
How soon we could gladden the world,
How easily right all wrong,
If nobody shirked, and each one worked
To help his fellows along!

Cease wondering why you came -
Stop looking for faults and flaws;
Rise up to-day in your pride and say,
"I am part of the First Great Cause!
However full the world,
There is room for an earnest man.
It had need of me, or I would not be -
I am here to strengthen the plan."

WISHING

Do you wish the world were better?
Let me tell you what to do:
Set a watch upon your actions,
Keep them always straight and true;
Rid your mind of selfish motives;
Let your thoughts be clean and high.
You can make a little Eden
Of the sphere you occupy.

Do you wish the world were wiser?
Well, suppose you make a start,
By accumulating wisdom
In the scrapbook of your heart:
Do not waste one page on folly;
Live to learn, and learn to live.
If you want to give men knowledge
You must get it, ere you give.

Do you wish the world were happy?
Then remember day by day
Just to scatter seeds of kindness
As you pass along the way;
For the pleasures of the many
May be oft-times traced to one,
As the hand that plants an acorn
Shelters armies from the sun.

WE TWO

We two make home of any place we go;

We two find joy in any kind of weather;
Or if the earth is clothed in bloom or snow,
If summer days invite, or bleak winds blow,
What matters it if we two are together?
We two, we two, we make our world, our weather.

We two make banquets of the plainest fare;
In every cup we find the thrill of pleasure;
We hide with wreaths the furrowed brow of care,
And win to smiles the set lips of despair.
For us life always moves with lilting measure;
We two, we two, we make our world, our pleasure.

We two find youth renewed with every dawn;
Each day holds something of an unknown glory.
We waste no thought on grief or pleasure gone;
Tricked out like hope, time leads us on and on,
And thrums upon his harp new song or story.
We two, we two, we find the paths of glory.

We two make heaven here on this little earth;
We do not need to wait for realms eternal.
We know the use of tears, know sorrow's worth,
And pain for us is always love's rebirth.
Our paths lead closely by the paths supernal;
We two, we two, we live in love eternal.

THE POET'S THEME

What is the explanation of the strange silence of American poets concerning American triumphs on sea and land?
Literary Digest.

Why should the poet of these pregnant times
Be asked to sing of war's unholy crimes?

To laud and eulogize the trade which thrives
On horrid holocausts of human lives?

Man was a fighting beast when earth was young,
And war the only theme when Homer sung.

'Twixt might and might the equal contest lay,
Not so the battles of our modern day.

Too often now the conquering hero struts
A Gulliver among the Lilliputs.

Success no longer rests on skill or fate,
But on the movements of a syndicate.

Of old men fought and deemed it right and just.
To-day the warrior fights because he must,

And in his secret soul feels shame because

He desecrates the higher manhood's laws

Oh! there are worthier themes for poet's pen
In this great hour, than bloody deeds of men

Or triumphs of one hero (though he be
Deserving song for his humility):

The rights of many--not the worth of one;
The coming issues--not the battle done;

The awful opulence, and awful need;
The rise of brotherhood--the fall of greed,

The soul of man replete with God's own force,
The call "to heights," and not the cry "to horse," -

Are there not better themes in this great age
For pen of poet, or for voice of sage

Than those old tales of killing? Song is dumb
Only that greater song in time may come.

When comes the bard, he whom the world waits for,
He will not sing of War.

SONG OF THE SPIRIT

All the aim of life is just
Getting back to God.
Spirit casting off its dust,
Getting back to God.
Every grief we have to bear
Disappointment, cross, despair
Each is but another stair
Climbing back to God.

Step by step and mile by mile -
Getting back to God;
Nothing else is worth the while -
Getting back to God.
Light and shadow fill each day
Joys and sorrows pass away,
Smile at all, and smiling, say,
Getting back to God.

Do not wear a mournful face
Getting back to God;
Scatter sunshine on the place
Going back to God;
Take what pleasure you can find,
But where'er your paths may wind.
Keep the purpose well in mind, -
Getting back to God.

WOMANHOOD

She must be honest, both in thought and deed,
Of generous impulse, and above all greed;
Not seeking praise, or place, or power, or pelf,
But life's best blessings for her higher self,
Which means the best for all.

She must have faith,
To make good friends of Trouble, Pain, and Death,
And understand their message.

She should be
As redolent with tender sympathy
As is a rose with fragrance.

Cheerfulness
Should be her mantle, even though her dress
May be of Sorrow's weaving.

On her face
A loyal nature leaves its seal of grace,
And chastity is in her atmosphere.
Not that chill chastity which seems austere
(Like untrod snow-peaks, lovely to behold
Till once attained--then barren, loveless, cold);
But the white flame that feeds upon the soul
And lights the pathway to a peaceful goal.
A sense of humour, and a touch of mirth,
To brighten up the shadowy spots of earth;
And pride that passes evil--choosing good.
All these unite in perfect womanhood.

MORNING PRAYER

Let me to-day do something that shall take
A little sadness from the world's vast store,
And may I be so favoured as to make
Of joy's too scanty sum a little more
Let me not hurt, by any selfish deed
Or thoughtless word, the heart of foe or friend;
Nor would I pass, unseeing, worthy need,
Or sin by silence when I should defend.
However meagre be my worldly wealth,
Let me give something that shall aid my kind -
A word of courage, or a thought of health,
Dropped as I pass for troubled hearts to find.
Let me to-night look back across the span
'Twixt dawn and dark, and to my conscience say -
Because of some good act to beast or man -
"The world is better that I lived to-day."

THE VOICES OF THE PEOPLE

Oh! I hear the people calling through the day time and the night time,
They are calling, they are crying for the coming of the right time.
It behooves you, men and women, it behooves you to be heeding,
For there lurks a note of menace underneath their plaintive pleading.

Let the land usurpers listen, let the greedy-hearted ponder,
On the meaning of the murmur, rising here and swelling yonder,
Swelling louder, waxing stronger, like a storm-fed stream that courses
Through the valleys, down abysses, growing, gaining with new forces.

Day by day the river widens, that great river of opinion,
And its torrent beats and plunges at the base of greed's dominion.
Though you dam it by oppression and fling golden bridges o'er it,
Yet the day and hour advances when in fright you'll flee before it.

Yes, I hear the people calling, through the night time and the day time,
Wretched toilers in life's autumn, weary young ones in life's May time -
They are crying, they are calling for their share of work and pleasure;
You are heaping high your coffers while you give them scanty measure, -
You have stolen God's wide acres, just to glut your swollen purses -
Oh! restore them to His children ere their pleading turns to curses.

THE WORLD GROWS BETTER

Oh! the earth is full of sinning
And of trouble and of woe,
But the devil makes an inning
Every time we say it's so.
And the way to set him scowling,
And to put him back a pace,
Is to stop this stupid growling,
And to look things in the face.

If you glance at history's pages,
In all lands and eras known,
You will find the buried ages
Far more wicked than our own.
As you scan each word and letter.
You will realise it more,
That the world to-day is better
Than it ever was before.

There is much that needs amending
In the present time, no doubt;
There is right that needs amending,

There is wrong needs crushing out.
And we hear the groans and curses
Of the poor who starve and die,
While the men with swollen purses
In the place of hearts go by.

But in spite of all the trouble
That obscures the sun to-day,
Just remember it was double
In the ages passed away.
And those wrongs shall all be righted,
Good shall dominate the land,
For the darkness now is lighted
By the torch in Science's hand.

Forth from little motes in Chaos,
We have come to what we are;
And no evil force can stay us -
We shall mount from star to star,
We shall break each bond and fetter
That has bound us heretofore;
And the earth is surely better
Than it ever was before.

A MAN'S IDEAL

A lovely little keeper of the home,
Absorbed in menu books, yet erudite
When I need counsel; quick at repartee
And slow to anger. Modest as a flower,
Yet scintillant and radiant as a star.
Unmercenary in her mould of mind,
While opulent and dainty in her tastes.
A nature generous and free, albeit
The incarnation of economy.
She must be chaste as proud Diana was,
Yet warm as Venus. To all others cold
As some white glacier glittering in the sun;
To me as ardent as the sensuous rose
That yields its sweetness to the burrowing bee
All ignorant of evil in the world,
And innocent as any cloistered nun,
Yet wise as Phryne in the arts of love
When I come thirsting to her nectared lips.
Good as the best, and tempting as the worst,
A saint, a siren, and a paradox.

THE FIRE BRIGADE

Hark! high o'er the rattle and clamour and clatter
Of traffic-filled streets, do you hear that loud noise?

And pushing and rushing to see what's the matter,
Like herds of wild cattle, go pell-mell the boys.

There's a fire in the city! the engines are coming!
The bold bells are clanging, "Make way in the street!"
The wheels of the hose-cart are spinning and humming
In time to the music of galloping feet.

Make way there! make way there! the horses are flying,
The sparks from their swift hoofs shoot higher and higher,
The crowds are increasing--the gamins are crying:
"Hooray, boys!" "Hooray, boys!" "Come on to the fire!"

With clanging and banging and clatter and rattle
The long ladders follow the engine and hose.
The men are all ready to dash into battle;
But will they come out again? God only knows.

At windows and doorways crowd questioning faces;
There's something about it that quickens one's breath.
How proudly the brave fellows sit in their places -
And speed to the conflict that may be their death!

Still faster and faster and faster and faster
The grand horses thunder and leap on their way
The red foe is yonder, and may prove the master;
Turn out there, bold traffic--turn out there, I say!

For once the loud truckman knows oaths will not matter
And reins in his horses and yields to his fate.
The engines are coming! let pleasure-crowds scatter,
Let street car and truckman and mail waggon wait.

They speed like a comet--they pass in a minute;
The boys follow on like a tail to a kite;
The commonplace street has but traffic now in it -
The great fire engines have swept out of sight.

THE TIDES

Be careful what rubbish you toss in the tide.
On outgoing billows it drifts from your sight,
But back on the incoming waves it may ride
And land at your threshold again before night.
Be careful what rubbish you toss in the tide.

Be careful what follies you toss in life's sea.
On bright dancing billows they drift far away,
But back on the Nemesis tides they may be
Thrown down at your threshold an unwelcome day
Be careful what follies you toss in youth's sea.

WHEN THE REGIMENT CAME BACK

All the uniforms were blue, all the swords were bright and new,
When the regiment went marching down the street,
All the men were hale and strong as they proudly moved along,
Through the cheers that drowned the music of their feet.
Oh the music of the feet keeping time to drums that beat,
Oh the splendour and the glitter of the sight,
As with swords and rifles new and in uniforms of blue
The regiment went marching to the fight!

When the regiment came back all the guns and swords were black
And the uniforms had faded out to gray,
And the faces of the men who marched through that street again
Seemed like faces of the dead who lose their way.
For the dead who lose their way cannot look more wan and gray.
Oh the sorrow and the pity of the sight,
Oh the weary lagging feet out of step with drums that beat,
As the regiment comes marching from the fight.

WOMAN TO MAN

Woman is man's enemy, rival, and competitor.--JOHN. J. INGALLS.

You do but jest, sir, and you jest not well,
How could the hand be enemy of the arm,
Or seed and sod be rivals! How could light
Feel jealousy of heat, plant of the leaf,
Or competition dwell 'twixt lip and smile?
Are we not part and parcel of yourselves?
Like strands in one great braid we entwine
And make the perfect whole. You could not be,
Unless we gave you birth; we are the soil
From which you sprang, yet sterile were that soil
Save as you planted. (Though in the Book we read
One woman bore a child with no man's aid,
We find no record of a man-child born
Without the aid of woman! Fatherhood
Is but a small achievement at the best,
While motherhood comprises heaven and hell.)
This ever-growing argument of sex
Is most unseemly, and devoid of sense.
Why waste more time in controversy, when
There is not time enough for all of love,
Our rightful occupation in this life?
Why prate of our defects, of where we fail,
When just the story of our worth would need
Eternity for telling, and our best
Development comes ever through your praise,
As through our praise you reach your highest self?
Oh! had you not been miser of your praise
And let our virtues be their own reward,
The old-established order of the world
Would never have been changed. Small blame is ours
For this unsexing of ourselves, and worse.

Effeminising of the male. We were
Content, sir, till you starved us, heart and brain.
All we have done, or wise, or otherwise,
Traced to the root, was done for love of you.
Let us taboo all vain comparisons,
And go forth as God meant us, hand in hand,
Companions, mates, and comrades evermore;
Two parts of one divinely ordained whole.

THE TRAVELLER

Reply to Rudyard Kipling's "He travels the fastest who travels
alone."

Who travels alone with his eyes on the heights,
Though he laughs in the day time oft weeps in the nights;

For courage goes down at the set of the sun,
When the toil of the journey is all borne by one.

He speeds but to grief though full gaily he ride
Who travels alone without love at his side.

Who travels alone without lover or friend
But hurries from nothing, to naught at the end.

Though great be his winnings and high be his goal,
He is bankrupt in wisdom and beggared in soul.

Life's one gift of value to him is denied
Who travels alone without love at his side.

It is easy enough in this world to make haste
If one live for that purpose--but think of the waste;

For life is a poem to leisurely read,
And the joy of the journey lies not in its speed.

Oh! vain his achievement and petty his pride
Who travels alone without love at his side.

THE EARTH

The earth is yours and mine,
Our God's bequest.
That testament divine
Who dare contest?

Usurpers of the earth,
We claim our share.
We are of royal birth.

Beware! beware!

Unloose the hand of greed
From God's fair land,
We claim but what we need -
That, we demand.

NOW

I leave with God to-morrow's where and how,
And do concern myself but with the Now,
That little word, though half the future's length,
Well used, holds twice its meaning and its strength.

Like one blindfolded groping out his way,
I will not try to touch beyond to-day.
Since all the future is concealed from sight
I need but strive to make the next step right.

That done, the next, and so on, till I find
Perchance some day I am no longer blind,
And looking up, behold a radiant Friend
Who says, "Rest, now, for you have reached the end."

YOU AND TO-DAY

With every rising of the sun
Think of your life as just begun.

The past has shrived and buried deep
All yesterdays--there let them sleep,

Nor seek to summon back one ghost
Of that innumerable host.

Concern yourself with but to-day;
Woo it and teach it to obey

Your wish and will. Since time began
To-day has been the friend of man.

But in his blindness and his sorrow
He looks to yesterday and to-morrow.

You and to-day! a soul sublime
And the great pregnant hour of time.

With God between to bind the train,
Go forth, I say--attain--attain.

THE REASON

Do you know what moves the tides
As they swing from low to high?
'Tis the love, love, love,
Of the moon within the sky.
Oh! they follow where she guides,
Do the faithful-hearted tides.

Do you know what moves the earth
Out of winter into spring?
'Tis the love, love, love,
Of the sun, the mighty king.
Oh the rapture that finds birth
In the kiss of sun and earth!

Do you know what makes sweet songs
Ring for me above earth's strife?
'Tis the love, love, love,
That you bring into my life,
Oh the glory of the songs
In the heart where love belongs!

MISSION

If you are sighing for a lofty work,
If great ambitions dominate your mind,
Just watch yourself and see you do not shirk
The common little ways of being kind.

If you are dreaming of a future goal,
When, crowned with glory, men shall own your power,
Be careful that you let no struggling soul
Go by unaided in the present hour.

If you are moved to pity for the earth,
And long to aid it, do not look so high,
You pass some poor, dumb creature faint with thirst -
All life is equal in the eternal eye.

If you would help to make the wrong things right,
Begin at home: there lies a lifetime's toil.
Weed your own garden fair for all men's sight,
Before you plan to till another's soil.

God chooses His own leaders in the world,
And from the rest He asks but willing hands.
As mighty mountains into place are hurled,
While patient tides may only shape the sands.

REPETITION

Over and over and over

These truths I will weave in song -
That God's great plan needs you and me,
That will is greater than destiny,
And that love moves the world along.

However mankind may doubt it,

It shall listen and hear my creed -
That God may ever be found within,
That the worship of self is the only sin,
And the only devil is greed.

Over and over and over

These truths I will say and sing,
That love is mightier far than hate,
That a man's own thought is a man's own fate,
And that life is a goodly thing.

BEGIN THE DAY

Begin each morning with a talk to God,
And ask for your divine inheritance
Of usefulness, contentment, and success.
Resign all fear, all doubt, and all despair.
The stars doubt not, and they are undismayed,
Though whirled through space for countless centuries,
And told not why or wherefore: and the sea
With everlasting ebb and flow obeys,
And leaves the purpose with the unseen Cause.
The star sheds radiance on a million worlds,
The sea is prodigal with waves, and yet
No lustre from the star is lost, and not
One drop is missing from the ocean tides.
Oh! brother to the star and sea, know all
God's opulence is held in trust for those
Who wait serenely and who work in faith.

WORDS

Words are great forces in the realm of life:
Be careful of their use. Who talks of hate,
Of poverty, of sickness, but sets rife
These very elements to mar his fate.

When love, health, happiness, and plenty hear
Their names repeated over day by day,
They wing their way like answering fairies near,

Then nestle down within our homes to stay.

Who talks of evil conjures into shape
The formless thing and gives it life and scope.
This is the law: then let no word escape
That does not breathe of everlasting hope.

FATE AND I

Wise men tell me thou, O Fate,
Art invincible and great.

Well, I own thy prowess; still
Dare I flout thee with my will

Thou canst shatter in a span
All the earthly pride of man.

Outward things thou canst control;
But stand back--I rule my soul!

Death? 'Tis such a little thing -
Scarcely worth the mentioning.

What has death to do with me,
Save to set my spirit free?

Something in me dwells, O Fate,
That can rise and dominate

Loss, and sorrow, and disaster, -
How, then, Fate, art thou my master?

In the great primeval morn
My immortal will was born,

Part of that stupendous Cause
Which conceived the Solar Laws,

Lit the suns and filled the seas,
Royalest of pedigrees.

That great Cause was Love, the Source
Who most loves has most of Force.

He who harbours Hate one hour
Saps the soul of Peace and Power.

He who will not hate his foe
Need not dread life's hardest blow.

In the realm of brotherhood
Wishing no man aught but good,

Naught but good can come to me -

This is Love's supreme decree.

Since I bar my door to Hate,
What have I to fear, O Fate?

Since I fear not--Fate I vow,
I the ruler am, not thou!

ATTAINMENT

Use all your hidden forces. Do not miss
The purpose of this life, and do not wait
For circumstance to mould or change your fate;
In your own self lies Destiny. Let this
Vast truth cast out all fear, all prejudice,
All hesitation. Know that you are great,
Great with divinity. So dominate
Environment, and enter into bliss.
Love largely and hate nothing. Hold no aim
That does not chord with universal good.
Hear what the voices of the Silence say -
All joys are yours if you put forth your claim.
Once let the spiritual laws be understood,
Material things must answer and obey.

A PLEA TO PEACE

When mighty issues loom before us, all
The petty great men of the day seem small,
Like pigmies standing in a blaze of light
Before some grim majestic mountain-height.
War, with its bloody and impartial hand,
Reveals the hidden weakness of a land,
Uncrowns the heroes trusting Peace has made
Of men whose honour is a thing of trade,
And turns the searchlight full on many a place
Where proud conventions long have masked disgrace.
O lovely Peace! as thou art fair be wise.
Demand great men, and great men shall arise
To do thy bidding. Even as warriors come,
Swift at the call of bugle and of drum,
So at the voice of Peace, imperative
As bugle's call, shall heroes spring to live
For country and for thee. In every land,
In every age, men are what times demand.
Demand the best, O Peace, and teach thy sons
They need not rush in front of death-charged guns
With murder in their hearts to prove their worth.
The grandest heroes who have graced the earth
Were love-filled souls who did not seek the fray,
But chose the safe, hard, high, and lonely way

Of selfless labour for a suffering world.
Beneath our glorious flag again unfurled
In victory such heroes wait to be
Called into bloodless action, Peace, by thee.
Be thou insistent in thy stern demand,
And wise, great men shall rise up in the land.

PRESUMPTION

Whenever I am prone to doubt or wonder -
I check myself, and say, "That mighty One
Who made the solar system cannot blunder -
And for the best all things are being done."
Who set the stars on their eternal courses
Has fashioned this strange earth by some sure plan.
Bow low, bow low to those majestic forces,
Nor dare to doubt their wisdom, puny man.

You cannot put one little star in motion,
You cannot shape one single forest leaf,
Nor fling a mountain up, nor sink an ocean,
Presumptuous pigmy, large with unbelief.
You cannot bring one dawn of regal splendour,
Nor bid the day to shadowy twilight fall,
Nor send the pale moon forth with radiance tender -
And dare you doubt the One who has done all?

"So much is wrong, there is such pain--such sinning."
Yet look again--behold how much is right!
And He who formed the world from its beginning
Knows how to guide it upward to the light.
Your task, O man, is not to carp and cavil
At God's achievements, but with purpose strong
To cling to good, and turn away from evil.
That is the way to help the world along.

HIGH NOON

Time's finger on the dial of my life
Points to high noon! and yet the half-spent day
Leaves less than half remaining, for the dark,
Bleak shadows of the grave engulf the end.
To those who burn the candle to the stick,
The sputtering socket yields but little light.
Long life is sadder than an early death.
We cannot count on ravelled threads of age
Whereof to weave a fabric. We must use
The warp and woof the ready present yields
And toil while daylight lasts. When I bethink
How brief the past, the future, still more brief
Calls on to action, action! Not for me

Is time for retrospection or for dreams,
Not time for self-laudation or remorse.
Have I done nobly? Then I must not let
Dead yesterday unborn to-morrow shame.
Have I done wrong? Well, let the bitter taste
Of fruit that turned to ashes on my lip
Be my reminder in temptation's hour,
And keep me silent when I would condemn.
Sometimes it takes the acid of a sin
To cleanse the clouded windows of our souls
So pity may shine through them.

Looking back,
My faults and errors seem like stepping-stones
That led the way to knowledge of the truth
And made me value virtue; sorrows shine
In rainbow colours o'er the gulf of years,
Where lie forgotten pleasures.

Looking forth,
Out to the western sky still bright with noon,
I feel well spurred and booted for the strife
That ends not till Nirvana is attained.

Battling with fate, with men, and with myself,
Up the steep summit of my life's forenoon,
Three things I learned, three things of precious worth,
To guide and help me down the western slope.
I have learned how to pray, and toil, and save:
To pray for courage to receive what comes,
Knowing what comes to be divinely sent;
To toil for universal good, since thus
And only thus can good come unto me;
To save, by giving whatsoe'er I have
To those who have not--this alone is gain.

THOUGHT-MAGNETS

With each strong thought, with every earnest longing
For aught thou deemest needful to thy soul,
Invisible vast forces are set thronging
Between thee and that goal

'Tis only when some hidden weakness alters
And changes thy desire, or makes it less,
That this mysterious army ever falters
Or stops short of success.

Thought is a magnet; and the longed-for pleasure,
Or boon, or aim, or object, is the steel;
And its attainment hangs but on the measure
Of what thy soul can feel.

SMILES

Smile a little, smile a little,
As you go along,
Not alone when life is pleasant,
But when things go wrong.
Care delights to see you frowning,
Loves to hear you sigh;
Turn a smiling face upon her -
Quick the dame will fly.

Smile a little, smile a little,
All along the road;
Every life must have its burden,
Every heart its load.
Why sit down in gloom and darkness
With your grief to sup?
As you drink Fate's bitter tonic,
Smile across the cup.

Smile upon the troubled pilgrims
Whom you pass and meet;
Frowns are thorns, and smiles are blossoms
Oft for weary feet.
Do not make the way seem harder
By a sullen face;
Smile a little, smile a little,
Brighten up the place.

Smile upon your undone labour;
Not for one who grieves
O'er his task waits wealth or glory;
He who smiles achieves.
Though you meet with loss and sorrow
In the passing years,
Smile a little, smile a little,
Even through your tears.

THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

Man has explored all countries and all lands,
And made his own the secrets of each clime.
Now, ere the world has fully reached its prime,
The oval earth lies compassed with steel bands,
The seas are slaves to ships that touch all strands,
And even the haughty elements, sublime
And bold, yield him their secrets for all time,
And speed like lackeys forth at his commands.

Still, though he search from shore to distant shore,
And no strange realms, no unlocated plains
Are left for his attainment and control,
Yet is there one more kingdom to explore.

Go, know thyself, O man! there yet remains
The undiscovered country of thy soul!

THE UNIVERSAL ROUTE

As we journey along, with a laugh and a song,
We see, on youth's flower-decked slope,
Like a beacon of light, shining fair on the sight,
The beautiful Station of Hope.

But the wheels of old Time roll along as we climb,
And our youth speeds away on the years;
And with hearts that are numb with life's sorrows we come
To the mist-covered Station of Tears.

Still onward we pass, where the milestones, alas!
Are the tombs of our dead, to the West,
Where glitters and gleams, in the dying sunbeams,
The sweet, silent Station of Rest.

All rest is but change, and no grave can estrange
The soul from its Parent above;
And, scorning the rod, it soars back to its God,
To the limitless City of Love.

UNANSWERED PRAYERS

Like some schoolmaster, kind in being stern,
Who hears the children crying o'er their slates
And calling, "Help me, master!" yet helps not,
Since in his silence and refusal lies
Their self-development, so God abides
Unheeding many prayers. He is not deaf
To any cry sent up from earnest hearts;
He hears and strengthens when He must deny.
He sees us weeping over life's hard sums;
But should He give the key and dry our tears,
What would it profit us when school were done
And not one lesson mastered?

What a world
Were this if all our prayers were answered. Not
In famed Pandora's box were such vast ills
As lie in human hearts. Should our desires,
Voiced one by one in prayer, ascend to God
And come back as events shaped to our wish,
What chaos would result!

In my fierce youth
I sighed out breath enough to move a fleet,

Voicing wild prayers to heaven for fancied boons
Which were denied; and that denial bends
My knee to prayers of gratitude each day
Of my maturer years. Yet from those prayers
I rose always regirded for the strife
And conscious of new strength. Pray on, sad heart,
That which thou pleadest for may not be given,
But in the lofty altitude where souls
Who supplicate God's grace are lifted, there
Thou shalt find help to bear thy daily lot
Which is not elsewhere found.

THANKSGIVING

We walk on starry fields of white
And do not see the daisies,
For blessings common in our sight
We rarely offer praises.
We sigh for some supreme delight
To crown our lives with splendour,
And quite ignore our daily store
Of pleasures sweet and tender.

Our cares are bold and push their way
Upon our thought and feeling;
They hang about us all the day,
Our time from pleasure stealing.
So unobtrusive many a joy
We pass by and forget it,
But worry strives to own our lives,
And conquers if we let it.

There's not a day in all the year
But holds some hidden pleasure,
And, looking back, joys oft appear
To brim the past's wide measure.
But blessings are like friends, I hold,
Who love and labour near us.
We ought to raise our notes of praise
While living hearts can hear us.

Full many a blessing wears the guise
Of worry or of trouble;
Far-seeing is the soul, and wise,
Who knows the mask is double.
But he who has the faith and strength
To thank his God for sorrow
Has found a joy without alloy
To gladden every morrow.

We ought to make the moments notes
Of happy, glad Thanksgiving;
The hours and days a silent phrase
Of music we are living.
And so the theme should swell and grow

As weeks and months pass o'er us,
And rise sublime at this good time,
A grand Thanksgiving chorus.

CONTRASTS

I see the tall church steeples -
They reach so far, so far;
But the eyes of my heart see the world's great mart
Where the starving people are.

I hear the church bells ringing
Their chimes on the morning air;
But my soul's sad ear is hurt to hear
The poor man's cry of despair.

Thicker and thicker the churches,
Nearer and nearer the sky -
But alack for their creeds while the poor man's needs
Grow deeper as years roll by!

THY SHIP

Hadst thou a ship, in whose vast hold lay stored
The priceless riches of all climes and lands,
Say, wouldst thou let it float upon the seas
Unpiloted, of fickle winds the sport,
And of wild waves and hidden rocks the prey?

Thine is that ship; and in its depths concealed
Lies all the wealth of this vast universe -
Yea, lies some part of God's omnipotence,
The legacy divine of every soul.
Thy will, O man, thy will is that great ship,
And yet behold it drifting here and there -
One moment lying motionless in port,
Then on high seas by sudden impulse flung,
Then drying on the sands, and yet again
Sent forth on idle quests to no-man's land
To carry nothing and to nothing bring;
Till, worn and fretted by the aimless strife
And buffeted by vacillating winds,
It founders on a rock, or springs a leak,
With all its unused treasures in the hold.

Go save thy ship, thou sluggard; take the wheel
And steer to knowledge, glory, and success.
Great mariners have made the pathway plain
For thee to follow; hold thou to the course
Of Concentration Channel, and all things

Shall come in answer to thy swerveless wish
As comes the needle to the magnet's call,
Or sunlight to the prisoned blade of grass
That yearns all winter for the kiss of spring.

LIFE

All in the dark we grope along,
And if we go amiss
We learn at least which path is wrong,
And there is gain in this.

We do not always win the race
By only running right;
We have to tread the mountain's base
Before we reach its height.

The Christs alone no errors made;
So often had they trod
The paths that lead through light and shade,
They had become as God.

As Krishna, Buddha, Christ again,
They passed along the way,
And left those mighty truths which men
But dimly grasp to-day.

But he who loves himself the last
And knows the use of pain,
Though strewn with errors all his past,
He surely shall attain.

Some souls there are that needs must taste
Of wrong, ere choosing right;
We should not call those years a waste
Which led us to the light.

A MARINE ETCHING

A yacht from its harbour ropes pulled free,
And leaped like a steed o'er the race-track blue,
Then up behind her the dust of the sea,
A gray fog, drifted, and hid her from view.

"LOVE THYSELF LAST"

Love thyself last. Look near, behold thy duty

To those who walk beside thee down life's road.
Make glad their days by little acts of beauty
And help them bear the burden of earth's load.

Love thyself last. Look far and find the stranger
Who staggers 'neath his sin and his despair;
Go, lend a hand, and lead him out of danger,
To heights where he may see the world is fair.

Love thyself last. The vastnesses above thee
Are filled with Spirit-Forces; strong and pure
And fervently these faithful friends shall love thee
Keep thou thy watch o'er others and endure.

Love thyself last, and oh! such joy shall thrill thee
As never yet to selfish souls was given;
Whate'er thy lot, a perfect peace will fill thee,
And earth shall seem the ante-room of Heaven.

Love thyself last, and thou shalt grow in spirit
To see, to hear, to know, and understand.
The message of the stars, lo, thou shalt hear it,
And all God's joys shall be at thy command.

CHRISTMAS FANCIES

When Christmas bells are swinging above the fields of snow,
We hear sweet voices ringing from lands of long ago,
And etched on vacant places
Are half-forgotten faces
Of friends we used to cherish, and loves we used to know -
When Christmas bells are swinging above the fields of snow.

Uprising from the ocean of the present surging near,
We see, with strange emotion, that is not free from fear,
That continent Elysian
Long vanished from our vision,
Youth's lovely lost Atlantis, so mourned for and so dear,
Uprising from the ocean of the present surging near.

When gloomy, gray Decembers are roused to Christmas mirth,
The dullest life remembers there once was joy on earth,
And draws from youth's recesses
Some memory it possesses,
And, gazing through the lens of time, exaggerates its worth,
When gloomy, gray December is roused to Christmas mirth.

When hanging up the holly or mistletoe, I wis
Each heart recalls some folly that lit the world with bliss.
Not all the seers and sages
With wisdom of the ages
Can give the mind such pleasure as memories of that kiss
When hanging up the holly or mistletoe, I wis.

For life was made for loving, and love alone repays,

As passing years are proving, for all of Time's sad ways.
There lies a sting in pleasure,
And fame gives shallow measure,
And wealth is but a phantom that mocks the restless days,
For life was made for loving, and only loving pays.

When Christmas bells are pelting the air with silver chimes,
And silences are melting to soft, melodious rhymes,
Let Love, the world's beginning,
End fear and hate and sinning;
Let Love, the God Eternal, be worshipped in all climes
When Christmas bells are pelting the air with silver chimes.

THE RIVER

I am a river flowing from God's sea
Through devious ways. He mapped my course for me;
I cannot change it; mine alone the toil
To keep the waters free from grime and soil.
The winding river ends where it began;
And when my life has compassed its brief span
I must return to that mysterious source.
So let me gather daily on my course
The perfume from the blossoms as I pass,
Balm from the pines, and healing from the grass,
And carry down my current as I go
Not common stones but precious gems to show;
And tears (the holy water from sad eyes)
Back to God's sea, from which all rivers rise,
Let me convey, not blood from wounded hearts,
Nor poison which the upas tree imparts.
When over flowery vales I leap with joy,
Let me not devastate them, nor destroy,
But rather leave them fairer to the sight;
Mine be the lot to comfort and delight.
And if down awful chasms I needs must leap,
Let me not murmur at my lot, but sweep
On bravely to the end without one fear,
Knowing that He who planned my ways stands near.
Love sent me forth, to Love I go again,
For Love is all, and over all. Amen.

SORRY

There is much that makes me sorry as I journey down life's way,
And I seem to see more pathos in poor human lives each day.
I'm sorry for the strong, brave men who shield the weak from harm,
But who, in their own troubled hours, find no protecting arm.

I'm sorry for the victors who have reached success, to stand
As targets for the arrows shot by envious failure's hand.

I'm sorry for the generous hearts who freely shared their wine,
But drink alone the gall of tears in fortune's drear decline.

I'm sorry for the souls who build their own fame's funeral pyre,
Derided by the scornful throng like ice deriding fire.
I'm sorry for the conquering ones who know not sin's defeat,
But daily tread down fierce desire 'neath scorched and bleeding feet.

I'm sorry for the anguished hearts that break with passion's strain,
But I'm sorrier for the poor starved souls that never knew love's pain,
Who hunger on through barren years not tasting joys they crave,
For sadder far is such a lot than weeping o'er a grave.

I'm sorry for the souls that come unwelcomed into birth,
I'm sorry for the unloved old who cumber up the earth,
I'm sorry for the suffering poor in life's great maelstrom hurled -
In truth, I'm sorry for them all who make this aching world.

But underneath whate'er seems sad and is not understood,
I know there lies hid from our sight a mighty germ of good.
And this belief stands firm by me, my sermon, motto, text -
The sorriest things in this life will seem grandest in the next.

AMBITION'S TRAIL

If all the end of this continuous striving
Were simply TO ATTAIN,
How poor would seem the planning and contriving,
The endless urging and the hurried driving,
Of body, heart, and brain!

But ever in the wake of true achieving
There shines this glowing trail -
Some other soul will be spurred on, conceiving
New strength and hope, in its own power believing,
Because THOU didst not fail.

Not thine alone the glory, nor the sorrow,
If thou dost miss the goal;
Undreamed of lives in many a far to-morrow
From thee their weakness or their force shall borrow -
On, on, ambitious soul.

UNCONTROLLED

The mighty forces of mysterious space
Are one by one subdued by lordly man.
The awful lightning that for eons ran
Their devastating and untrammelled race,

Now bear his messages from place to place
Like carrier doves. The winds lead on his van;
The lawless elements no longer can
Resist his strength, but yield with sullen grace.

His bold feet scaling heights before untrod,
Light, darkness, air and water, heat and cold,
He bids go forth and bring him power and pelf.
And yet, though ruler, king and demi-god,
He walks with his fierce passions uncontrolled,
The conqueror of all things--save himself.

WILL

You will be what you will to be;
Let failure find its false content
In that poor word "environment,"
But spirit scorns it, and is free.

It masters time, it conquers space,
It cowers that boastful trickster Chance,
And bids the tyrant Circumstance
Uncrown and fill a servant's place.

The human Will, that force unseen,
The offspring of a deathless Soul,
Can hew the way to any goal,
Though walls of granite intervene.

Be not impatient in delay,
But wait as one who understands;
When spirit rises and commands,
The gods are ready to obey.

The river seeking for the sea
Confronts the dam and precipice,
Yet knows it cannot fail or miss;
YOU WILL BE WHAT YOU WILL TO BE!

TO AN ASTROLOGER

Nay, seer, I do not doubt thy mystic lore,
Nor question that the tenor of my life,
Past, present, and the future, is revealed
There in my horoscope. I do believe
That yon dead moon compels the haughty seas
To ebb and flow, and that my natal star
Stands like a stern-browed sentinel in space
And challenges events; nor lets one grief,
Or joy, or failure, or success, pass on
To mar or bless my earthly lot, until

It proves its Karmic right to come to me.

All this I grant, but more than this I KNOW!
Before the solar systems were conceived,
When nothing was but the unnamable,
My spirit lived, an atom of the Cause.
Through countless ages and in many forms
It has existed, ere it entered in
This human frame to serve its little day
Upon the earth. The deathless Me of me.
The spark from that great all-creative fire,
Is part of that eternal source called God,
And mightier than the universe.

Why, he
Who knows, and knowing, never once forgets
The pedigree divine of his own soul,
Can conquer, shape, and govern destiny,
And use vast space as 'twere a board for chess
With stars for pawns; can change his horoscope
To suit his will; turn failure to success,
And from preordained sorrows, harvest joy.

There is no puny planet, sun, or moon,
Or zodiacal sign which can control
The God in us! If we bring THAT to bear
Upon events, we mould them to our wish;
'Tis when the infinite 'neath the finite gropes
That men are governed by their horoscopes.

THE TENDRIL'S FATE

Under the snow, in the dark and the cold,
A pale little sprout was humming;
Sweetly it sang, 'neath the frozen mould,
Of the beautiful days that were coming.

"How foolish your songs!" said a lump of clay;
"What is there, I ask, to prove them?
Just look at the walls between you and the day,
Now, have you the strength to move them?"

But under the ice and under the snow
The pale little sprout kept singing,
"I cannot tell how, but I know, I know,
I know what the days are bringing.

"Birds, and blossoms, and buzzing bees,
Blue, blue skies above me,
Bloom on the meadows and buds on the trees
And the great glad sun to love me."

A pebble spoke next: "You are quite absurd,"
It said, "with your song's insistence;
For _I_ never saw a tree or a bird,

So of course there are none in existence."

"But I know, I know," the tendril cried,
In beautiful sweet unreason;
Till lo! from its prison, glorified,
It burst in the glad spring season.

THE TIMES

The times are not degenerate. Man's faith
Mounts higher than of old. No crumbling creed
Can take from the immortal soul the need
Of that supreme Creator, God. The wraith
Of dead beliefs we cherished in our youth
Fades but to let us welcome new-born Truth.

Man may not worship at the ancient shrine
Prone on his face, in self-accusing scorn.
That night is past. He hails a fairer morn,
And knows himself a something all divine;
Not humble worm whose heritage is sin,
But, born of God, he feels the Christ withal.

Not loud his prayers, as in the olden time,
But deep his reverence for that mighty force,
That occult working of the great All-Source,
Which makes the present era so sublime.
Religion now means something high and broad.
And man stood never half so near to God.

THE QUESTION

Beside us in our seeking after pleasures,
Through all our restless striving after fame,
Through all our search for worldly gains and treasures,
There walketh one whom no man likes to name.
Silent he follows, veiled of form and feature,
Indifferent if we sorrow or rejoice,
Yet that day comes when every living creature
Must look upon his face and hear his voice.

When that day comes to you, and Death, unmasking,
Shall bar your path, and say, "Behold the end,"
What are the questions that he will be asking
About your past? Have you considered, friend?
I think he will not chide you for your sinning,
Nor for your creeds or dogmas will he care;
He will but ask, "From your life's first beginning
How many burdens have you helped to bear?"

SORROW'S USES

The uses of sorrow I comprehend
Better and better at each year's end.

Deeper and deeper I seem to see
Why and wherefore it has to be.

Only after the dark, wet days
Do we fully rejoice in the sun's bright rays.

Sweeter the crust tastes after the fast
Than the sated gourmand's finest repast.

The faintest cheer sounds never amiss
To the actor who once has heard a hiss.

To one who the sadness of freedom knows,
Light seem the fetters love may impose.

And he who has dwelt with his heart alone,
Hears all the music in friendship's tone.

So better and better I comprehend
How sorrow ever would be our friend.

IF

'Twixt what thou art, and what thou wouldst be, let
No "If" arise on which to lay the blame.
Man makes a mountain of that puny word,
But, like a blade of grass before the scythe,
It falls and withers when a human will,
Stirred by creative force, sweeps toward its aim.

Thou wilt be what thou couldst be. Circumstance
Is but the toy of genius. When a soul
Burns with a god-like purpose to achieve,
All obstacles between it and its goal
Must vanish as the dew before the sun.

"If" is the motto of the dilettante
And idle dreamer; 'tis the poor excuse
Of mediocrity. The truly great
Know not the word, or know it but to scorn,
Else had Joan of Arc a peasant died,
Uncrowned by glory and by men unsung.

WHICH ARE YOU?

There are two kinds of people on earth to-day;
Just two kinds of people, no more, I say.

Not the sinner and saint, for it's well understood
The good are half bad, and the bad are half good.

Not the rich and the poor, for to rate a man's wealth
You must first know the state of his conscience and health.

Not the humble and proud, for, in life's little span,
Who puts on vain airs is not counted a man.

Not the happy and sad, for the swift flying years
Bring each man his laughter, and each man his tears.

No; the two kinds of people on earth I mean
Are the people who lift, and the people who lean.

Wherever you go, you will find the earth's masses
Are always divided in just these two classes.

And, oddly enough, you will find too, I ween,
There's only one lifter to twenty who lean.

In which class are you? Are you easing the load
Of overtaxed lifters, who toil down the road?

Or are you a leaner, who lets others share
Your portion of labour and worry and care?

THE CREED TO BE

Our thoughts are moulding unmade spheres,
And, like a blessing or a curse,
They thunder down the formless years,
And ring throughout the universe.

We build our futures by the shape
Of our desires, and not by acts.
There is no pathway of escape;
No priest-made creeds can alter facts.

Salvation is not begged or bought;
Too long this selfish hope sufficed;
Too long man reeked with lawless thought,
And leaned upon a tortured Christ.

Like shrivelled leaves, these worn-out creeds
Are dropping from Religion's tree;
The world begins to know its needs,
And souls are crying to be free.

Free from the load of fear and grief,
Man fashioned in an ignorant age;

Free from the ache of unbelief
He fled to in rebellious rage.

No church can bind him to the things
That fed the first crude souls, evolved;
For, mounting up on daring wings,
He questions mysteries all unsolved.

Above the chant of priests, above
The blatant voice of braying doubt,
He hears the still, small voice of Love,
Which sends its simple message out.

And clearer, sweeter, day by day,
Its mandate echoes from the skies,
"Go roll the stone of self away,
And let the Christ within thee rise."

INSPIRATION

Not like a daring, bold, aggressive boy,
Is inspiration, eager to pursue,
But rather like a maiden, fond, yet coy,
Who gives herself to him who best doth woo.

Once she may smile, or thrice, thy soul to fire,
In passing by, but when she turns her face,
Thou must persist and seek her with desire,
If thou wouldst win the favour of her grace.

And if, like some winged bird, she cleaves the air,
And leaves thee spent and stricken on the earth,
Still must thou strive to follow even there,
That she may know thy valour and thy worth.

Then shall she come unveiling all her charms,
Giving thee joy for pain, and smiles for tears;
Then shalt thou clasp her with possessing arms,
The while she murmurs music in thine ears.

But ere her kiss has faded from thy cheek,
She shall flee from thee over hill and glade,
So must thou seek and ever seek and seek
For each new conquest of this phantom maid

THE WISH

Should some great angel say to me to-morrow,
"Thou must re-tread thy pathway from the start,
But God will grant, in pity, for thy sorrow,
Some one dear wish, the nearest to thy heart."

This were my wish!--from my life's dim beginning
LET BE WHAT HAS BEEN! wisdom planned the whole
My want, my woe, my errors, and my sinning,
All, all were needed lessons for my soul.

THREE FRIENDS

Of all the blessings which my life has known,
I value most, and most praise God for three:
Want, Loneliness, and Pain, those comrades true,

Who masqueraded in the garb of foes
For many a year, and filled my heart with dread.
Yet fickle joys, like false, pretentious friends,
Have proved less worthy than this trio. First,

Want taught me labour, led me up the steep
And toilsome paths to hills of pure delight,
Trode only by the feet that know fatigue,
And yet press on until the heights appear.

Then loneliness and hunger of the heart
Sent me upreaching to the realms of space,
Till all the silences grew eloquent,
And all their loving forces hailed me friend.

Last, pain taught prayer! placed in my hand the staff
Of close communion with the over-soul,
That I might lean upon it to the end,
And find myself made strong for any strife.

And then these three who had pursued my steps
Like stern, relentless foes, year after year,
Unmasked, and turned their faces full on me,
And lo! they were divinely beautiful,
For through them shone the lustrous eyes of Love.

YOU NEVER CAN TELL

You never can tell when you send a word,
Like an arrow shot from a bow
By an archer blind, be it cruel or kind,
Just where it may chance to go!
It may pierce the breast of your dearest friend,
Tipped with its poison or balm;
To a stranger's heart in life's great mart,
It may carry its pain or its calm.

You never can tell when you do an act
Just what the result will be;

But with every deed you are sowing a seed,
Though the harvest you may not see.
Each kindly act is an acorn dropped
In God's productive soil.
You may not know, but the tree shall grow,
With shelter for those who toil.

You never can tell what your thoughts will do,
In bringing you hate or love;
For thoughts are things, and their airy wings
Are swifter than carrier doves.
They follow the law of the universe -
Each thing must create its kind;
And they speed o'er the track to bring you back
WHATEVER WENT OUT FROM YOUR MIND.

HERE AND NOW

Here, in the heart of the world,
Here, in the noise and the din,
Here, where our spirits were hurled
To battle with sorrow and sin,
This is the place and the spot
For knowledge of infinite thing

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