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**DAWNWARD?**

**BERNARD O'DOWD**



MELBOURNE

THOMAS C. LOTHIAN

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DAWNWARD ?

Of the verses herein contained, those grouped under the title "Dawnward?" were printed originally in *The Bulletin*: with the exception of "Prosperity," which appeared in *The Tocsin*; "Hate," in *The Champion*; and "A Poet of the Moment" and "Keynote," now first published. Excepting "The Seed Time," part of which was printed in *The Tocsin*, the remaining pieces were printed in *The Bulletin*.

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# DAWNWARD?

BERNARD O'DOWD

MELBOURNE  
THOMAS C. LOTHIAN  
226, LITTLE COLLINS STREET.

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To  
Young Democracy



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## AUSTRALIA

*L*AST sea-thing dredged by sailor Time from Space,  
Are you a drift Sargasso, where the West  
In halcyon calm rebuilds her fatal nest?  
Or Delos of a coming Sun-God's race?  
Are you for Light, and trimmed, with oil in place,  
Or but a Will o' Wisp on marshy quest?  
A new demesne for Mammon to infest?  
Or lurks millennial Eden 'neath your face?

*The cenotaphs of species dead elsewhere  
That in your limits leap and swim and fly,  
Or trail uncanny harp-strings from your trees,  
Mix omens with the auguries that dare  
To plant the Cross upon your forehead sky,  
A virgin helpmate Ocean at your knees.*



## DAWNWARD ?

**T**HAT reddish veil which o'er the face  
Of night-hag East is drawn . .  
Flames new disaster for the race ?  
Or can it be the Dawn ?

Those mutterings horizonward . .  
What destinies are there ?  
Do organed Hopes triumphant chord,  
Or thunders roar " Despair " ?

What gifts are those the clouds release  
As far ahead they scud ?  
Are they the genial rains of Peace,  
Or deluges of blood ?

\* \* \*

Our motley masses struggle slow  
'Mid wilderness, through sands ;  
Our flags with fetish watchwords glow  
Above the gloomy bands.

Three watchwords ! Will they glorify,  
Or weave us fates more stark ?  
Lead downward from this lowering sky,  
Or downward to the dark ?

## DAWNWARD ?

Will "Freedom!" over Athens' scrolls  
 Our greater glory carve?  
 Or prove mere choice to sell our souls  
 To Mammon or—to starve?

Content with Freedom's forms, shall we  
 Real tyranny caress,  
 Through sybaritic apathy  
 Or mad forgetfulness?

"Equality!" Will each a king  
 Become, a seer, a sage?  
 Or will it ruthless all men fling  
 In cosmic helotage?

Will crucibles, wherein, tho' great  
 With primal vice, we pour  
 Equalities, precipitate  
 Napoleons—as before?

"Fraternity!" Will black and white  
 As brothers mingle, or,  
 Surcharged with lust of carnage, plight  
 The bloody troths of war?

While prudent churches neutral watch  
 The conflict of the twain,  
 Will Wealth his brother Want despatch,  
 An everlasting Cain?

\* \* \*

While heedless on our masses move,  
 Their sad-eyed mystics see  
 On rushing Cloudland's stage above  
 Dark hints of what may be.

Palladium and Shibboleth  
 Pose on each misty dome:



Red Crisis' tableaux blotch with death  
Smug Order's monochrome.

Race-ogres here on vulture-cloud,  
And there race-fathers hie ;  
And Then and Now and Will-Be crowd  
The pantomimic sky.

Prophetic 'mid the whirlwind flow  
These cryptic figures steal :  
Are they to be for further woe,  
Or may they be for weal ?

Will turbaned Shem, revived, through sweet  
White women filtered long,  
With sober scowl triumphant meet  
The drunken Western throng ?

Will Ham, acquit of servile strain,  
Of art and craft compact,  
A loathing Europe's pallor stain—  
Democracy in *fact* ?

Will Japhet still his brothers lead  
Unto the shambled tryst,  
With tentacles of trading greed  
And drivel of his Christ ?

Will Gog, awaked, his Huns outpour  
At empire-breaking time,  
To sluice away our fame and lore,  
Our features and—our crime ?

\* \* \*

Scrolls, written "Debt," and "Wanton War,"  
And "Sterile Love," flare high :  
Are these our *Mene ! Mene !* or  
Illusions of the sky ?

## DAWNWARD ?

“Majority !” Divorced from wise,  
 Sad Conscience, will he prowl  
 Through tender, human heresies  
 With Torquemadan scowl ?

And “Comfort !” Will her siren song  
 To narcotising shades  
 Seduce our veterans, while Wrong  
 Our weaker frontiers raids ?

Will “Sport” educe a virile pith,  
 Our pulses teach to throb ?  
 Or weary earth re-saddle with  
 A Nika-riot mob ?

Will centre-seeking “Culture” hold  
 Tangential Passion’s bolt ?  
 Yield orbits of an Age of Gold,  
 Or comets of Revolt ?

\* \* \*

Yet, foodless oft and homeless, we  
 Not hopeless, loveless, plod—  
 Whither ? To Failure’s midnight sea  
 Or downward ? Ay, to God ?

## THE CAMP-FIRES OF THE LOST

Who will may see, on plains around,  
By scanty rivers crossed,  
Where only weedy growths abound,  
The camp-fires of the Lost.

To feed the flame, the twigs and cones  
From dying Hopes we tear ;  
And wolfish Angers gnaw the bones  
Of dead Ideals there. . . .

To drown your glory in the dark,  
O children of the Light !  
The frail, the crushed, the fell, the stark  
Deploy their hosts to-night.

Anon a stern-lipped watcher flings  
Remorseless to the flame  
The effigies of sacred things  
Or bric-a-brac of Fame. . . .

Grim scouts o'erleap your city's walls,  
Cast potions in your wells,  
With leprous patches taint your halls,  
And mine your citadels.

Your timid treasurers await  
The onset of our need :  
The myriad tramp his lonely hate  
Is whetting on his greed,

Your serfs grimacing flout your cries  
 Of "honour," "law" and "trust,"  
 Your lily women recognise  
 The prowling lips of lust.

Your veil of Art, by free winds tossed,  
 Is rending as you look—  
 Your Art—which claimed to love the Lost,  
 And jeered them, and forsook.

Your brutal Science sends a corps  
 Of derelicts to train  
 With formulas of lethal lore  
 Our nascent rebel brain :

And scavengers of learning there,  
 And outcast lords of rhyme,  
 Compose as anthems of despair  
 And polyglots of crime :

And godless phalanxes assist  
 Our priesthood celebrate  
 A diabolic eucharist  
 With chalices of hate.

Your system's ripened fruits appear  
 In psychopath and sot :  
 The tiger women wait you here  
 You soiled and left to rot.

See there ! a squeezed-out sponge of trade,  
 Or drunkard's, gambler's wife :  
 And there ! a haggard sempstress spayed  
 By Competition's knife.

Within your walls anon there shines  
 A wrecker's signal light,  
 And falcon-featured Catilines  
 Sneak to and fro to-night.

Ah, city dwellers ! fearful wrong  
Entails a fearful cost,  
And ye that dare may see who throng  
Those bale-fires of the Lost.

## PROSPERITY

Enlaced with gardened jewelry  
My basking villas nest  
Where sifted sunshine soothes the eye  
And cosy hillocks rest.

Convention's fronds here screen from view  
Immodest Nature's haunt,  
And wizard Distance veils in blue  
The haggard peaks of Want.

The millions fast that I may feast,  
And drudge that I may play ;  
But Average, complacent priest,  
Condones the wrong away :

Finesse, my statesman, calculates  
Subjection's breaking strain,  
And Comfort crooning mitigates  
The drifting moan of pain.

My sages God's commandments frame  
From maxims of the desk :  
My Art, from poverty and shame,  
Evolves the Picturesque :

By glamour haloed, leering Lust  
So angel-like appears  
That Scruple loses her distrust,  
And Innocence her fears.

Secure I lounge upon the shore  
Where Anger's breakers throb,  
Or, high above the marsh, ignore  
Its ague-smitten mob.

The highways to Desire I hold,  
And fatten on the fees ;  
My hungry Science gathers gold  
From limbecks of disease.

Success, my sorcerer, refines  
My murder-tainted hoard,  
And hides the felon weals and lines  
With which my back is scored :

He perfumes from my women's gowns  
Their tainted makers' shame ;  
In Glory cyclic Wrong he drowns,  
And Treachery in Fame.

Who reaches me a stream must ford  
Whose popped waters dim  
Old dreams of wielding Freedom's sword  
And chanting Freedom's hymn :

Must hold the claims of Discontent  
Mere envies of the mass ;  
That Life's repose was only meant  
To dower the ruling class :

Must learn that Nature weakness scorns,  
That God the serfs ignores,  
That Toil deserves its crown of thorns,  
And Poverty its sores ;

That tho' 't is wise with Charity  
Torrential Need to dam,  
The Hope of Progress is a lie  
And Brotherhood a sham.

## HATE

I scour the present and the past  
In tyrant-hunting raids ;  
No weakling in the flocks of caste  
My vulture-sight evades.

I scatter panic where the hoards  
Of oily Dives breed ;  
With treason notch Oppression's swords  
And clutch the throat of Greed.

I show the slave dishonour's scab  
On daughter or on wife,  
And aim the lightning of the stab  
That spills the satrap's life.

When tilted Fraud with cant deludes  
The mob, his neck I strip,  
And point where treason's asp protrudes  
From print of Eblis' lip.

When Liberty salaams to Fate,  
I fling her gorging foes  
Gold apples labelled " For the Great ! "  
Till Envy murder grows.

From malted wrongs I brew revolt ;  
I numb the nerves of Doubt ;  
Astride Revenge's thunderbolt  
I charge Corruption's rout.



When Freedom's legions, wearied, nod,  
Relentless on I push.  
Although my sister, Love, is God,  
I am the burning bush.

And I, who choke with seeding bane  
The pasturage of Wrong,  
Demand a niche in Freedom's fane,  
A verse in Freedom's song.

## CUPID

To get recruits for Pain, I use  
The bait of Pleasure's lips ;  
I crimp from soft oblivion crews  
For planet coffin-ships.

Lest Father Chaos' rule should cease  
I mingle Near with Far ;  
Afflict alternate years of peace  
With progeny of war :

In years of fat increase select  
The victims for the lean,  
And into choicer veins inject  
Infusions of the mean.

In democratic tyranny  
I cleanse the human face  
Of tattoo-marks of low and high,  
The black and white of race :

So mate. I handmaid of the vale  
With baron of the height,  
The sable ogre or the pale  
With angel brown or white ;

Yet unity they scarce attain  
When, as your Science knows,  
I rend them into castes again  
And fertile racial woes.

At times I urge to noble ways,  
At times for evil strive :  
But reckless aye for good or base  
If but the race survive.

My only care is that blind Life  
Shall man the world-ship's deck  
In spite of peace, in spite of strife,  
Until its day of wreck.

So that it may I weave as charm  
Protean loveliness,  
The little prides of face and form,  
The alchemies of dress,

Repute's hypnotic pageantry,  
The hope of ended strife,  
The vision, that is vanity,  
Of nobler types of life.

The fruitful kisses of the trees  
Wind-wafted to their mates,  
The maiden-mother aphides,  
The alternating fates

Of jelly-fish, or fluke, or moss,  
In higher skies I set  
Than wifeless Christ upon His cross,  
Or childless Juliet.

So that it live—The Germ ! The Germ !  
It matters not to me  
If sheep or tiger, man or worm  
Earth's victor-captain be.

## PROLETARIA

The sunny rounds of Earth contain  
 An obverse to its Day,  
 Our fertile Vagrancy's domain,  
 Wan Proletaria.

From pole to pole of Poverty  
 We stumble through the years,  
 With hazy-lanterned Memory  
 And Hope that never nears.

Wherever Plenty's crop invites  
 Our pitiful brigades,  
 Lurk cannoneers of Vested Rights,  
 Juristic ambushades ;

And here hangs Rent, that squalid cage  
 Within which Mammon thrusts,  
 Bound with the fetter of a wage,  
 The helots of his lusts.

With palsied Doubt as guide, we wind  
 Among the lanes of Need,  
 Where meagre Hungers scouting find  
 But slavered baits of Greed.

The wet-lipped Lamias of Caste,  
 Awaiting our advance,  
 Our choicest squadrons' fealty blast  
 With magic smile and glance :

Delilah-limbed temptations flit  
Among our drowsy rows,  
And on our willing captains fit  
The badges of our foes.

What wonder sometimes if in stealth  
Our starker outposts wait,  
And, in the prowling eyes of Wealth,  
Dash vitriol of Hate ;

Or if our Samsons, ere too late,  
Their treasons should make good  
By whelming in the temple's fate  
Their viper owners' brood !

Our polyandrous dam has borne  
To Satan and to God  
The hordes of Night, the clans of Morn,  
That through our valleys plod.

Ah, motherhood of misery  
For Christ-child as for pest !  
The greater her fertility  
The drier grows her breast !

Too many linger on the track ;  
A few outstrip the time :  
Some, God has tattooed yellow, black,  
And some disguised with crime.

Art's living archives here abound,  
Carraras of Despair,  
And those weird masks of Sight and Sound  
The Tragic Muses wear.

Tho' blind and dull, 'tis we supply  
The Painter's dazzling dreams ;  
The rolling flood of Poetry  
From our dumb chaos streams.

Nay, when your world is over-tired,  
 And Genius comatose,  
 Our race, by Nemesis inspired,  
 Old Order overthrows :

With earthquake-life we thrill your land,  
 Refill the cruse of Art,  
 Revitalise spent Wisdom, and—  
 Resume our weary part.

The palace of successful Guilt  
 Is mortared with our shame ;  
 On hecatombs of Us are built  
 The soaring towers of Fame.

We are the gnomes of Titan works  
 Whose throbbings never cease ;  
 Our unregarded signet lurks  
 On every masterpiece.

The floating isles, that shuttling tie  
 All peoples into one  
 By adept steersmen's sorcery  
 Of magnet, steam and sun ;

Religion's dolmens, Sphinxes, spires,  
 Her Biblic armouries ;  
 The helot lightning of the wires  
 That mesh your lands and seas ;

The viaducts 'tween Near and Far,  
 Whereon, o'er range and mead,  
 Bacchantic Trade's triumphant car  
 And iron tigers speed ;

The modern steely crops that rise  
 Where technic Jasons sow :  
 —All these but feebly symbolise  
 The largesse we bestow.

And our reward ? In this wan land,  
In clientage of Greed,  
Despised, polluted, maimed and banned,  
To wander and—to breed.

## A POET OF THE MOMENT

Criterion of better, worse,  
 Gives me no troubled days :  
 I sing as bids the moment's purse  
 In epics or in lays.

A love will warm a couplet, and  
 A lust another spice ;  
 If virtue be not in demand  
 I feel no qualms at vice.

I laugh at fogies who maintain  
 My conscience I degrade :  
 His conscience only writhes in pain  
 Whose Muse is underpaid.

They say that Art by God was sent  
 To man His thoughts to limn,  
 To be perennial testament  
 Of Progress and of Him :

That Beauty is but perfect Truth,  
 On Space's canvas traced :  
 That Truth is Beauty's self, forsooth,  
 In soul's perspective placed.

But I have won a poet's name,  
 And barter willingly,  
 For victuals now, and now for fame,  
 This turgid mystery.



And for an equitable fee  
My docile Muse will try  
To prove a tyranny is free,  
Immortalise a lie.

What prudish mobs consider wrong,  
However right it be,  
I will denounce in lofty song  
As infamous to me.

Thus, while abuses laugh at Fate  
In amber of my verse,  
The voiceless woe must bleeding wait  
Till it can chink a purse.

It may in theory be wrong  
One's duty thus to fly,  
To prostitute the gift of song  
For popularity.

But duty will not villas buy,  
Or conscience cosy robes,  
Nor is there any reason why  
All poets should be Jobs.

All Art is Art, since it delights,  
And so, with careless lilt,  
To sooth Remorse's moody nights  
I sing the joys of Guilt.

How could my women welcome find  
In Fashion's scented nooks,  
If, for a craze, I spilt my mind  
In perfect, unread books ?

When War's sensations charm the brain  
Of those who gild my worth,  
Shall I impertinent explain  
That War is hell on earth ?

## DAWNWARD ?

Those waifs, leg-ironed to despair !  
 The ragged corps of Need !  
 Suppose I drew God's vengeance there,  
 Would they my poems read ?

If chance has thrown me genius  
 (Which, well-applied, means cash),  
 Why should I waste the gift in fuss  
 O'er democratic trash ?

I much prefer, and so do you,  
 To scorn and rags and chains,  
 The pretty moths that flutter to  
 The tailored man of brains.

Shall I denounce as traitor to  
 The people he would sell,  
 The morning rumour-vendor who  
 Pays Judases so well ?

The soul may have its higher needs  
 (As if you pay, I'll show),  
 But he who with the crowd succeeds  
 Must with its current go.

Successful Vice and Force and Fraud  
 Can only reach their goals  
 When such are what the crowds applaud,  
 And covet in their souls.

So I provide the lust that leads  
 My maidens hand in hand,  
 The rich rogue's praise, and war's red deeds—  
 Because they're in demand.

Tho' dreamers warn of moral death  
 And ragged Envy brays,  
 The Moment is my Muse's breath,  
 The Moment 'tis that pays.

I'd rather lure one pouting maid  
To dalliance with a trill  
Than with an epic for my blade  
All Future's tyrants kill.

Why should your starveling's whine dismay,  
Your sweater's wreck annoy,  
When all one's well-tilled moments may  
Be dedicate to joy ?

You say my race I'm dragging down !  
Ha ! With such nymphs a-knee,  
With gold and wine and glory's gown,  
What is my race to me ?

'Tis but a glamoured dawn you seek :  
The daylight's here, and now  
Its flush is on my lady's cheek,  
Its whiteness on her brow.

And as for query notes of doom—  
If doom is near : why, drink  
With me unto its Sibyl, Gloom,  
And to its Sirens wink.

## THE CITY

The City crowds our motley broods,  
 And plants its citadel  
 Upon the delta where the floods  
 Of evil plunge to Hell.

Through fogs retributive, that steam  
 From ooze of stagnant wrongs,  
 The towers satanically gleam  
 Defiance at our throngs.

It nucleates the land's Deceit ;  
 Its slums our Lost decoy ;  
 It is the bawdy-house where meet  
 Lewd Wealth and venal Joy.

Grim wards are here, where Timour Trade  
 His human cairns uprears ;  
 There, Silent Towers, where girls betrayed  
 Unseen rot through their years.

The City curbs the wrath that bays  
 Rebellious in our souls,  
 By soothing fumes, and pageant days,  
 And sweet Circean bowls.

With Saturnalia of the Serf  
 Our discontent it cures ;  
 Its Fraud, to dalliance of the Turf,  
 Hysterical Folly lures.

The Babylonian Venus sways  
 In every city park ;  
 Her idiot niece, Abortion, plays  
 Beside her in the dark.

Here, Office fawns fidelity  
 When stroked by gilded hands ;  
 In bramble of chicanery  
 Belated Justice stands.

Glib Sophistry our mobs deludes,  
 As showman does his beast,  
 By serving up their whims as foods  
 From wholesome Wisdom's feast :

From craze to crime they bleating rage,  
 Pursue what least is wise,  
 And, stoning the unselfish sage,  
 Impostors canonise.

At times in free-lance echelons,  
 Or called, at times, "The State,"  
 Ubiquitous its myrmidons  
 Our foison desolate.

Exactions on its counters perch ;  
 Our marts Commission raids ;  
 Sleek Simony, behind the Church,  
 Prepares his ambushades.

Dame Rumour, organised, the Press,  
 Spirits slander—for a fee ;  
 Or, masked in Public Welfare's dress,  
 She gags or dirks the Free.

Great spider intellects here lurk  
 In bank and in exchange ;  
 And through the feebler folds of Work  
 Hyæna sweaters range.

Debt's gargoyles 'neath each eave grimace ;  
 Debt's mildews sour the soil ;  
 At all there grins a Shylock face :  
 Round all, Debt's suckers coil.

Here Thrift, with Art obscene endowed,  
 A sterile haven finds  
 Where Malthus-Onan's whey-faced crowd  
 Slink from the genial winds.

The Dead's miasma o'er us creeps ;  
 Their mandates dull our brains ;  
 Inheritance, their steward, keeps  
 The tithes of our demesnes.

Phylacteried ascetics brood  
 On their precedence here ;  
 There, Science tampers with our food,  
 Or taints our atmosphere ;

And Art spurns Poverty, her spouse,  
 To be the courtesan  
 Of ogre of the counting-house  
 Or ribboned Caliban ;

And o'er that hovel-burdened waste  
 Where Indigence is pent,  
 The Huns of Property have raced  
 On withering hoofs of Rent.

\* \* \*

Yet not all black our horoscope,  
 For, urged by Guardian Fates,  
 On hoyden Disobedience, Hope  
 Rebellions procreates ;

And awful Exorcists contrive  
 The potion and the thong  
 That from the City's breast will drive  
 Its incubus of Wrong.

Ripe knowledge of our ill and good,  
In fellowship of woe,  
Makes fertile streams of Brotherhood  
From Ego's glacier flow.

The outcast sons of Art and Want  
Tyrtaean songs prepare,  
To nerve us 'gainst the guns that daunt  
From bastioned Mammon's lair.

Self-sacrifice averts His frown,  
When, angry, God at last  
Our Gadarenian droves adown  
Disaster's cliff would cast ;

And those Bohemians of the mist,  
Arrayed 'gainst Law, 't would seem,  
Are cleansing for the Harmonist  
The City of His Dream.

## THE PRESS

I syllable the thoughts of those  
Who bow the knee to me,  
In every wilderness where grows  
Far-sown democracy.

My crucible with shrewd assay  
To statesmanship refines  
What docile lightnings haul each day  
From crude opinion's mines.

I teach the people what is good  
For them and for—my purse :  
If vice will aid my livelihood,  
Then virtue has my curse.

Impostures simulate the real  
When to my loom I hie ;  
With threads of truth it can conceal  
The shoddy of a lie.

I am the arbiter of style,  
And, Caliph-like, decree  
That books which question me are vile,  
And useless which agree.

Omission is the master-word,  
When critics balk my will,  
With which I blunt Exposure's sword  
Or Competition kill.



To what they loathe I can compel  
My devotees subscribe ;  
Can Right distort to spawn of hell  
With venom of a jibe.

With silver pieces I can lead,  
From Honour's narrow way,  
Each Judas with a pliant creed,  
A Saviour to betray.

When Privilege would Progress blast,  
Or Nemesis bid wait,  
O'er goodliest fields of Peace I cast  
The tares of racial hate.

The truth, now lopped to fit my bed,  
Now lengthened to a lie,  
I vend ; and for my clients' bread  
The slop of Passion's sty.

My fluent myrmidons efface  
A scruple with a jest,  
If broken confidence can grace  
An item with a zest.

Their art astute to sleep beguiles  
The crowd, or to excess,  
With Roman rhetoricians' wiles  
In piquant modern dress.

They haunt the stews where Wealth and Power  
The people's substance waste,  
So that my clients may devour  
The offal of their taste.

As I enjoin, they portion blame,  
At good or evil laugh,  
Profane the blush of wilted shame  
To tint a paragraph.

Last week I advertised for sale  
The cheapest way to sin,  
To-day at victims scourged in gaol  
My leader-writers grin.

To Panic, loose-brained mobs I drive  
With iterated screams,  
Or lull them, when for Right they'd strive,  
With lotus-eaters' dreams.

I put the brake on each great Cause  
That rolls on selfishness ;  
Nay, edit God, whene'er His laws  
My favourites oppress.

For scores that Cleons could befog  
I can a million sway :  
I am the modern Demagogue  
In modern Mammon's pay.

## YOUNG DEMOCRACY

Hark ! Young Democracy from sleep  
Our careless sentries raps :  
A backwash from the Future's deep  
Our Evil's foreland laps.

Unknown, these Titans of our Night  
Their New Creation make :  
Unseen, they toil and love and fight  
That glamoured Man may wake.

Knights-errant of the human race,  
The Quixotes of to-day,  
For man as man they claim a place,  
Prepare the tedious way.

They seek no dim-eyed mob's applause,  
Deem base the titled name,  
And spurn, for glory of their Cause,  
The tawdry nymphs of Fame.

No masks of ignorance or sin  
Hide from them you or me :  
We're Man—no colour shames our skin,  
No race or caste have we.

The prognathous Neanderthal,  
To them, conceals the Bruce ;  
They see Dan Æsop in the thrall ;  
From swagmen Christ deduce.

## DAWNWARD ?

Tho' butt for lecher's ribaldry  
 And scarred by woman's scorn,  
 In baby-burdened girl they see  
 God-motherhood, forlorn.

With them, to racial siredom glides  
 The savage we deprave ;  
 That eunuch brilliant Narses hides :  
 A Spartacus, that slave.

They Jesus find in manger waif ;  
 In horse-boys Shakespearehood :  
 And earthquake-Luthers nestling safe  
 In German miner's brood.

The God that pulses everywhere  
 They know fills Satan's veins ;  
 No felon but they see Him there  
 Behind His mirror's stains.

'Tis theirs Earth's charnel rooms to clear,  
 And ruthless sweep away  
 The Lares and Penates dear  
 To man in his decay.

Their restless energy supplies  
 Munitions that will wreck  
 The keeps whence feudal enemies  
 Our free banditti check.

Their unrelenting wars they wage,  
 These Furies of the Right,  
 Where myriad Falsehood's legions rage,  
 Artilleried by Might ;

Where Fashion's stupid iron clamps  
 Young Innovation's head,  
 And Law the stalwart Present cramps  
 In Past's Procrustes-bed ;

Where Pride of learning, substance, blood,  
Or prowess in the strife,  
Exacts from teeming lowlihood  
The lion's share of life ;

Where Gluttony would to the brutes  
Degrade his loose-lipped gangs ;  
Where Tyranny his venom shoots  
From one or million fangs ;

Where Cruelty, in Wisdom's mask,  
Piths fame from writhing beasts ;  
Where blest is racial Murder's task  
By Christ's apostate priests.

In Punic or in Persian fray  
With Love's and Conscience' foes,  
Unadvertising Romans they,  
And Spartans free from pose.

Abused as mad or traitors by  
The trolls they would eject ;  
Cold-shouldered by wan Apathy ;  
Of motives mean suspect ;

Outcast from social gaities ;  
Denied life's lilled grace ;  
They mount their hidden Calvaries  
To save the human race.

The bowers of Art a few may know ;  
A few wait highly placed :  
Most bear the hods of common woe,  
And some you call disgraced.

But whether in the mob or school,  
In church or poverty,  
They teach and live the Golden Rule  
Of Young Democracy :—

*" That culture, joy and goodliness  
Be th' equal right of all :  
That Greed no more shall those oppress  
Who by the wayside fall :*

*" That each shall share what all men sow :  
That colour, caste's a lie :  
That man is God, however low—  
Is man, however high."*

## A KEYNOTE

Evading Loves that beckon me  
To gardened Muses' bourn,  
I take allotted tasks I see,  
To help, to scourge, to warn.

My ears, attuned (God grant deceived !)  
To secret keys of Fate,  
From Future's silences upheaved  
Hear flotsam Woes that wait.

And he who though God's warnings waft  
Yet knows He loves us still,  
Resigns desire for mastercraft  
To tell the Penman's will ;

To shame from Art, while men lack food,  
His brothers of the brain ;  
The serf, his brother of the blood,  
To manhood lead again ;

To urge on priest his people's need,  
To fight the orphan's foe,  
The widow save from sweater's greed,  
And bring God here below.

For temples of his God (and mine)  
Will crumble if he rest  
While Avarices crush their wine  
From out the Dispossessed.

When millions trampled in the ruck  
 Succumb to want and crime,  
 Are ye who read content to suck  
 Sweet juices from your time ?

Altho' your elders quench remorse  
 As cynic and as sot,  
 Are you, the young, upon their course  
 Contented too to rot ?

There may be here and there a youth,  
 A clear-souled girl or two,  
 Who will respond to what of truth  
 My verses globe in view.

Such are my hope, for sanctions old  
 Now dimly sink at last,  
 And Mammon's comets waxing bold  
 Are gathering too fast.

The weak and poor are bought and sold ;  
 The meek are out of place ;  
 The limpid pools of Love, we hold  
 Mere breeding ponds of race.

Howe'er triumphal Progress blare  
 And Freedom wave flambeaux,  
 Reaction's smoke is everywhere  
 And undertones of woe.

Where Self-conceit sees culminant  
 Poor Culture's half-success,  
 Untutored mobs the prophet daunt  
 With portents of their stress.

Society, where teeth and claws  
 Bite Indigence and tear,  
 Will prove to be ere menopause  
 A womb white Huns to bear.



Who wrongs the poor for revels, pays  
His dues to Nemesis :  
Who with Oppression's Gorgon plays  
Shall hear her serpents hiss.

The bard for lowly service meant  
Fawns on the great to-day :  
From Art, the cancer of content  
Eats nerve and blood away.

Great brains with power divine endowed  
To teach, exalt, persuade,  
Dole Wisdom tinted, as allowed  
By those by whom they're paid.

While starvelings stumble to despair  
For lack of but a guide,  
The miser hermits everywhere  
Their hoards of learning hide.

The vices of decadence here  
Already levy toll,  
For Sybaris and Lydian leer  
Pollute the modern soul.

In Romes we build of rapine, crime,  
And grim monopolies,  
Incipient Caesars bide their time,  
And deadlier Crassus his.

For tho' the Sun, Democracy,  
Arises slow and large,  
With glory that should never die  
Upon our era's marge ;

Yet while all men to manhood fare  
By its illuming breath,  
A baser orb is lurking there,  
Emitting rays of death.

Yea, Wealth, one time a useful thrall  
 In needful menial toil,  
 Usurps the pen, the senate hall,  
 Is satrap of the soil.

He dares to stamp his sordid tests  
 On learning, art and love,  
 Soils, blasphemous, the very nests  
 Of white Religion's dove.

His whims release the hells of war,  
 He gags the consul, judge,  
 And helpless peoples hopeless for  
 His pander, Commerce, drudge.

The love of fame, or for a Cause,  
 The True, the Good, obeys  
 The subtle mandates of the laws  
 Wherewith the soul he sways.

And, queen of his infectious train,  
 Corruption spreads her fees  
 Till e'en the democratic brain  
 Shows symptoms of disease.

\* \* \*

Heard, from the speaking stones that strew  
 The hillside of Success ;  
 From spheres whose harmonies anew  
 Can those who listen bless ;

From breaths of every sacred isle  
 By which my Muses move,  
 Released from battle's claim a while,  
 In Brendan voyage of Love ;

From shambles of the Dispossessed ;  
 From Croesus in his sty ;  
 From old Democracy obsessed  
 By fiends about to die :

Read, in the scars of veterans  
In Want's resultless fray ;  
In noon-day Science' futile plans  
To yoke the soul to clay ;

In watchings of the social sky  
And soundings of its deep ;  
And where Oppression's vultures fly,  
And sad Redeemers weep ;

'Neath living palimpsests of Pain ;  
On shards of deathless song ;  
In God's magnificent disdain  
Of Might enthroned on Wrong ;

Read where, unheeded, outcastes groan,  
And waits Rebellion's form :  
These verses voice an undertone—  
The prelude to a storm ?

## SONG OF THE OLD SUN-DIAL

*"Horas non numero nisi serenas."*

**I** SING no nitric lays of truth,  
But filigree the mildewed past  
With eerie fay-lore, verve of youth,  
Romance and burgeonry of caste :  
I strive that Glory's charnel-room  
No gentle nostril overpowers :  
Tho' grief a million days may gloom,  
"I only count the sunny hours."

The sky may warn, in cirrus scroll,  
Of cataclysmic change ahead :  
Insistent stratus layer with dole  
Horizons spacious Hope had spread ;  
Weird wrongs may mass their cumuli,  
Or, lurid, belch from nimbus' towers :  
These weary Joy. I pass them by,  
And "only count the sunny hours."

The dark is for "the common herd"  
By whom the dirty work is done ;  
By whom life's sweetmeats are prepared  
For those who can enjoy the sun.  
You'd have me pen their shoddy strife,  
And deem their fungus virtues flowers ?  
Deny that glad repose is life,  
And cease to "count the sunny hours" ?

Tho' women soiled blaspheme the nights  
And veins of men are leech'd for gold,  
Tho' truculent Ambition blights,  
And vulture Hunger hovers bold ;  
There are a few who know not this,  
A lily few in rosy bowers,  
To spare their dainty hearts it is,  
"I only count the sunny hours."

## COMPROMISE

**I** PENCIL glaring wings of Right  
With Wrong's sedater black ;  
And rushing Freedom's crotchets with  
Resurgent minims slack.

I paralyse the hand of God  
When He would loose at last  
The gales of vengeance on the ripe  
Enormities of caste.

For froward Duty hesitates  
When wrongs grow vested rights,  
And squealing Pity wards the blow  
Relentless Justice smites.

The limpid clarity of Truth  
I phosphoresce with lies,  
And put sophistic hectics on  
The pallor of the Wise.

My brews that change to mead of Lust  
Love's vapid hydromel,  
Should tempt the very seraphim  
To nuptials of hell.

## GOD IN HISTORY

WHEN Egypt's secret science solved  
The mysteries of God,  
When wonders of the world evolved  
To every Pharaoh's nod,

Sad Israel, with tasks o'erweighed,  
A wormwood chalice drank,  
Or, toys of luxury and trade,  
To slow perdition sank.

The Pharaohs now are fellaheen—  
Bond-bled 'neath Hebrew sway,  
Where cycles saw their glory green,  
Simoom and desert play.

\* \* \*

Tho' Athens lured from Silence Song,  
And Form from Chaos graded ;  
Through centuries of Turkish wrong,  
Unpitied, robbed, enslaved,

She penance did for cities sacked,  
For slavery allowed,  
For sea-kissed Syracuse, attacked  
On clamour of the crowd.

Tho' Greece in light the old world laved  
(By tidal Homer's song  
Love-linked), and Europe's pastures saved  
From Xerxes' locust throng ;

Tho' Greater Greece in majesty  
 From Gaul to Ganges swayed :  
 Their age-long vice and tyranny  
 With age-long bonds were paid.

Rome gave us Lore and Law, and sowed  
 Great norms of Liberty ;  
 But dawning peoples overrode  
 With callous usury.

She held them sponges but to squeeze,  
 And not her trust from God—  
 The maid for foul adulteries  
 The man for tax and rod.

Too wide she would at height of pride  
 Her loose-held confines spread,  
 So Goth and Parthian myriads died  
 That Roman greed be fed.

She sickened so, she could not breed  
 Upholders of her might ;  
 She armed the stranger in her need,  
 She hired her foes to fight.

Then, to such tint as Verres bled  
 The flesh of Sicily  
 Paled fatted Rome, when Etzel fed  
 His Hunnish chivalry.

Lethargic grew her vitals, sucked  
 By parasites she bare,  
 The vulture Goths this eagle plucked,  
 And cawed the Vandals " There ! "

\* \* \*

And those great Empires of the Seas—  
 Tyre, Carthage, Holland, Spain—  
 Developed golden gluttonies,  
 Grew bandits of the main.



The trade they found so deft a tool  
At last they made their goal,  
And for the maxims of its school  
Each lost its very soul.

While smugly on their gods they fawned,  
Whole realms their wars would blight  
To sell a drug, exact a bond,  
Acquire an Ophir site.

A vassal or a daughter State  
They sowed 'neath every sky,  
But goaded them into the hate  
That mothers Liberty.

To-day Oblivion's mask, Decay,  
Bemoans their old renown ;  
The mermaids of the Silent Bay  
Have dragged those sailors down.

## THE SEED TIME

*"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."*

ALTHOUGH our satraps can o'erflow  
Their storied miles with wool and grain,  
And galleons to Britain go  
With tribute rich of mine and plain :

The foodless child, the sterile dame  
In every city's streets appear,  
And workhouse roofs already shame  
The palaces of pride we rear.

The native flocks that Hope had bred,  
Imported errors, thriving, blast ;  
O'er our young nations' faces spread  
The roué pallors of the Past.

In ghastly barrack-rooms of Trade,  
Mephitic lane and sweater's den,  
Its ogres rob the ripening maid  
Of power to gift the world with men.

With Helot joys and scanty crust,  
Its Youth drifts on to middle life,  
Supplied with outlets for his lust,  
But daring not to love a wife.

And 'mid its wildernesses, lo !  
Its bands of wifeless men migrate  
With sagging loads of care and woe  
And meagre wallets soured with hate :

Down parched gullies of Defeat,  
By salt-pan stretches of Despair,  
To goads of endless thirst and heat,  
On aimless tramps to God-Knows-Where.

Yet we who hope and therefore love  
Will from its stains the picture clean,  
Will blue the sky of brass above  
And plough the desert grey to green.

Our Herculean Demos who  
With wild "Eurekas!" in his youth  
Emerging despotisms slew,  
Shall rid our land of all this ruth.

With club of Justice he shall fright  
The gold-beast from his human prey;  
Shall drive with arrowed Love and Light  
Despair's Stymphalian birds away:

Shall so renew, upbuild, conserve  
Our natal rights to shelter, food,  
That none need lack who will deserve  
The joys of parenthood.

From trees that Eld had never known  
He'll bring us seeded Virtue, Health;  
Yea, snatch from Europe's Art her zone  
To glorify our Commonwealth.



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