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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.

“WITHOUT EDIFICES OR RULES OR ANY ARGUMENT
THE INSTITUTION OF THE DEAR LOVE OF COMRADES.”

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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 ?

THAT 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 dawnward ? 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,
 Hysteric 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,
 Spirts 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.

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 leeches 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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