

PS 3545

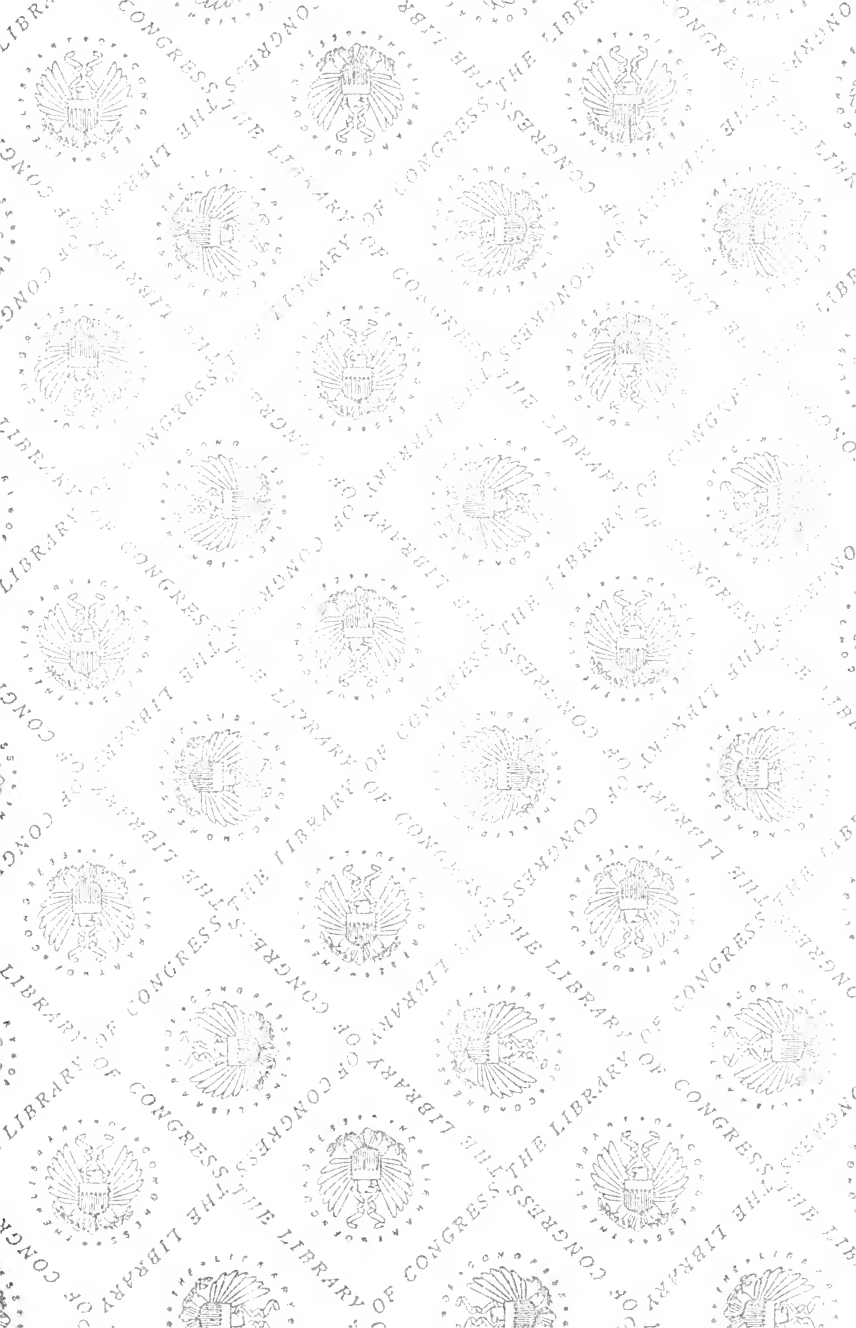
.A895 L3

1918

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00003263733



LANTERNS IN GETHSEMANE

Lanterns in Gethsemane

A Series of Biblical and Mystical Poems
in regard to the Christ in the
Present Crisis

BY

WILLARD WATTLES

*Neglect no small beginnings,
Despise no village dearth:
The influence of Nazareth
Went out to all the earth.*

NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

681 FIFTH AVENUE

COPYRIGHT, 1918,
By E. P. DUTTON & COMPANY

All Rights Reserved

NOV 26 1918

Printed in the United States of America

©CL 50839

819
New York
1918

TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER:

If there be aught of good within this book
it is they who have dreamed the dream
of passion and of faith

Acknowledgment is made to the following publications in which poems from this book have been printed: the *Independent*, the *Outlook*, *Contemporary Verse*, the *Christian Register*, *Harper's Weekly*, the *Bookman*, the *Smart Set*, the *Lyric*, the *Midland*, the *University Kansan*, the *Graduate Magazine*, the *Springfield Republican*, the *Kansas City Star*, the *Emporia Gazette*, *Seven Arts*, the *Masses*, and *Poetry, A Magazine of Verse*.

PREFACE

One hesitates to preface such a book as this with explanation. In many ways it were better to let the work, such as it is, meet its public without introduction. But the peculiar personal nature of the verse must, even unwillingly on the author's part, be made clear for the sake of those to whom some such explanation is due.

The poems of this book are the result of an experiment in living which grew out of two memorable experiences: one, the reading at about ten years of age of Rev. Charles M. Sheldon's "In His Steps"; the other the reading seven years later of "Each in His Own Tongue" by William Herbert Carruth.

The first of "Lanterns" to be written was "Gethsemane" in 1909, followed two years later by "The Wilderness." Such a poem as "Upon the Vatican" was planned for five years before being set on paper in the summer of 1918, and many others were in process of preparation for as long a time.

The material of the book has been drawn from the New Testament and from the lives of the author's friends and parents. Hence, in a certain sense he has been a reporter. Though conscious for long of certain tendencies toward a religious and spiritual awakening in Europe and America now patent to all observers, the author's method of composition has been to search constantly backward along the trail of memories for the living and breathing Christ as revealed most authentically in the heart. Later, he often has discovered that

his findings were not original, but were substantiated by history and theology. Perhaps his own conceptions may have deepened during these years of seeking; witness the two poems, "Ere Joseph Came to Build" and "He Speaks in Threes," the first composed in 1911, the second two years later. On the other hand, "The Builder" was written before George Moore had printed "The Brook Kerith" or Frank Harris had called the author's attention to Harris's "Miracle of the Stigmata," neither of which, in spite of its superior artistry, seems quite satisfactory in its interpretations. The writing of "Upon the Vatican" preceded the reading of any delineation of St. Peter by Edgar Lee Masters.

"An Ode for a New Christmas" was published in the *Christian Register*, December 18, 1913. In view of the nature of the stanzas on the War this fact may be of some interest. All the poems are personal, many of them being no more than transcriptions of letters from the author. "The Bells of Death" was written for his father; "He Speaks in Threes" for his sister; and "Against My Second Coming" for a member of the MacDowell Colony whose son had enlisted at the beginning of America's participation in the Great War. It was in the quiet haven of that colony in memorial to Edward MacDowell, Peterborough, N. H., that eight years of these writings were gathered together during the summer of 1917, and the ninth year planned.

It is not desirable here to reveal all the sources of this verse. Yet those who may recognize within it something of their own most gracious memories may welcome the assurance that this book is merely the record of a life blunderingly spent in the attempt to follow "in His steps," and cheered and strengthened by the brave hearts of the

"Millions who humble and nameless
The straight hard pathway plod."

Perhaps if that assurance could be set in words, it might be found in this extract from a letter to a friend* now a member of the American Expeditionary Force in France, and written some two years ago:

Searching for truth fearless of consequences and open to every influence that could lead me to the truth, I have at last emerged from much darkness into a belief in these things and a knowledge that to me they are true:

That there is a conscious immortality before and after this present existence, and that there are means of communication open with those who now or at some other time have or will have the power to live,

That those who wish immortality may have it,

That Jesus has taken a human part more than once in the ordering of history and in the forming of men's minds,

That this immortally projected personality of Jesus is, so far as I am concerned, different from the personality of any other man in history, and as such is known to me as the Christ,

That the Christ is the Christ because he has so longed for immortality that the power has been given him of assuming a personal relationship with all who call upon him for his love,

That he teaches men and women to-day, as yesterday, to do his work,

That he uses all sorts of people to his purpose, and that he is using me and those I love,

That he has revealed himself to me in unquestionable ways, both in my heart and in the faces of those whom I have loved,

That they in their turn have looked behind my face and seen the Christ,

That God is love, and that any man may have the

*Lieut. Robert C. Westman, killed in action in France, Aug. 10, 1918.

attributes of God who learns to serve intelligently his fellow-men,

That those attributes are wisdom, tolerance, courage, loyalty, service—and immortality,

That other people are trying as sincerely and as prayerfully as I to do what is right,

That there is no mistake I make which Jesus does not understand,

That as I wish others to love me, so do they ask for my faith and affection, and will know it when I love them,

That he is most truly the son of God who most faithfully performs this the will of God, to serve and to keep faith cheerfully.

WILLARD WATTLES.

CAMP FUNSTON, KANSAS,
Sept. 18, 1918.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
LANTERNS	1
OF A SABBATH	2
BUT A GREAT LAUGHTER	3
COME WITH ME	4
I AM THAT I AM	6
TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO	8
YOUTH APOLOGIZES	9
RETURN	12
“AGAINST MY SECOND COMING”	15
AN ODE FOR A NEW CHRISTMAS	17
GABRIEL	22
ERE JOSEPH CAME TO BUILD	23
MARY, MARY	27
HE SPEAKS IN THREES	28
THE WISE MEN'S STAR	32
THE BELLS OF DEATH	33
THERE WAS A MAN	39
A PAGE FROM AMERICA'S PSALTER	40
WHICH?	42
ABEL AND CAIN	44
THE STRANGER	46

	PAGE
FRAGMENTS	47
THE WILDERNESS	48
A SECRET	60
JERICO	61
THERE WOULD BE NO WONDER	63
WINE OF CANA	64
MARY	67
MARTHA	68
THE LADY MAGDALEN	70
ABSOLUTION	71
PISGAH	72
PRAYER	73
IN HIS OWN COUNTRY	74
LET NOT THEIR DOUBTS	78
OUT OF THE DESERT	80
I NOW, WALT WHITMAN	81
THE LOOM	83
THE MYSTIC	84
PETER, THE ROCK	85
ASSURANCE	86
ACCEPTANCE	88
THE WAY	89
FOR ONE WHO GOES	90
MIZPAH	91
SOLOMON	93
UNPARADISED	94
FOR A MOUNTAIN HOSTELRY	95

CONTENTS

xiii
PAGE

THE GARDENER	97
CREEDS	98
AN EPITAPH FOR THE DEVIL	99
PRAYER TO THE DEVIL	100
NONCHALANCE	101
THE MONEY-CHANGERS	102
OLIVE-WOOD	103
JOHN	104
GETHSEMANE	106
FAITH	109
GOLGOTHA	110
THE ONE	113
THEY HAVE NOT LOWERED HIM	114
THE BUILDER: I	115
THE BUILDER: II	116
UPON THE VATICAN	124
DAWN	130
THE SEVENTH VIAL	131
ARMAGEDDON	138
PATINS	139
AN INCANTATION	143
NOT BY SLEEP MAY WAKING DEEM	146
SOMETIMES	147
AFFIRMATION	148
THE CYCLE	149
WITNESS	150
HAVE I BEEN SO LONG TIME WITH YOU?	151

LANTERNS

If you should one day find those eyes upon you
Whose dear wan lids once closed in Galilee
The night you lowered that still too lovely Burden
From one high cross on shadowed Calvary;

If you should know Whose lips are sweet with languor,
Whose hands still hold release from old distress,
And sudden rise and follow when He calls you
To your own cross and agony no less;

If you should hear the voice that whispered to you
Tender and strong, with not a single change
From that good-by when lanterns woke the Garden,
Shatter your soul—would it seem very strange?

OF A SABBATH

THE little lonely souls go by
Seeking their God who lives on high
With conscious step and hat and all
As if on Him they meant to call
In some sad ceremonial.

But I who am a pagan child,
Who know how dying Plato smiled,
And how Confucius lessoned kings,
And of the Buddha's wanderings
Find God in very usual things.

Mohammed and the Brahma led
Me past the gateway of the dead,
And even Astarte's temple dim
No less than Raphael's cherubim
Have somehow led me back to Him.

I would not take from them their faith
That somehow Jesus rose from death,
Yet strange for me the Crucified
Stands almost breathing by my side
Who do not think he ever died.

BUT A GREAT LAUGHER

THEY do me wrong who show me sad of face,
Slender and stooped, gentle, and meek, and mild,
As if I were forever reconciled
To sting of hate and bitter of disgrace.
I was youth's lover, swiftest in the race,
Gay friend of beggars, brother to the wild,
No lily-featured, woman-hearted child,
But a great laugher, confident of place.

Shepherd and fisher, sailor, carpenter,
I strode the hills and fellowed with the sun,
Knew arms and bosoms and slow steady eyes,
Felt each new April through my body stir,—
Then, when 'twas over, and the loving done,
Even with a smile I slew my enemies.

COME WITH ME

THERE is a road that ventures down
Through many an olive-shaded town,
By many a nook where I have seen
The Jordan willows turning green,
By many a well where women wait,
By many a barred, unopened gate,
All the way to a hill-side house
And a night beneath the olive-boughs.

And I have strangely come upon
A walker in the windy dawn
Who has not found, where'er he went,
The hand or face that brings content
Within a shy and shady space,
But turned away—I knew his face
For one I summoned long ago;
I wonder I remember so!

I have called him. He will come
With youth within him like a drum,
And strength within him, warm, unspent,
To fold peace in his arms, content,
And faith within him like a star,
And feet to wander with me far—
I would not show to every one
That long gray pathway in the sun.

I would not show to every one
The road that I have come upon,
The road that I at last must ride
With a ragged ass-colt by my side;

COME WITH ME

For he shall know, and he shall see
The hill-side house of Bethany,
And I will teach him many things
Of purple old rememberings:

Death and love beside me sit,
But few there are who know of it.

I AM THAT I AM

I do not murmur I am thrown
Upon life's empty years,
For I who walk with death for friend
Trade not with fears.

I smile to look at other folk
Who smile to look at me:
They little know what eyes I have
Nor what they see.

For I have smiled in Nineveh,
And I have loved in Tyre,
And I have seen fair Helen's face
Fade in the fire.

When Cleopatra watched the work
Of poison, I was there;
Her fingers felt my breast grow cold,
Her harp player.

I sought three arrows that were sent
The friend of Jonathan,
And I have seen the moon stand still
In Ajalon.

From everlasting I am come,
To everlasting go,—
The pageant of the centuries
Can work no woe.

I AM THAT I AM

The galley-master beat with whips
And fed me broken bread;
I faced him fairly eye to eye
Till I was dead.

I drank the hemlock cup of sleep
And bade my friends be still;
I hung between two lonely men
Upon a hill.

On other worlds I set my feet
And visit other stars,
And other spears have pierced my side
And left strange scars.

I do not bend to men of scorn
Nor measure what they say,
For all their generations are
But as a day.

I look behind the hearts of men,
I see their secret thought,
I speak in ways they later learn
Were meaning-fraught.

And yet I am. Could you but wish,
Believe, and touch my hand,
You need not wait till after years
To understand.

TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO

(To a member of the Young Men's Christian Association.)

COULD you have welcomed me
In flat-roofed Bethany,
Or climbed the way to death
Out of gray Nazareth,
Or later stood beside
Me when my body died,
Watching in a tomb
The spiritual bloom
When souls come back to see
Their own Gethsemane
With wounded hands and side
That will not be denied,—
Would you have risen then
Witnessing to men
That I had died in vain
Who now have come again?

Still with eager face
You track my deathless grace,
Yet with what little faith
Thinking I died in death,
As if so old a book
Could tell you how I look
Even when I bend
Like an accustomed friend
Bearing on my lips
Love's mute apocalypse,—
Two thousand years ago,
And still you do not know!

YOUTH APOLOGIZES

SOMETHING ON THE SUBJECT OF PROPHETS

OUT of the cloud of baffled questionings
The Truth some unexpected moment springs,
So near at hand that her familiar face
Is hidden by the wonder of her wings.

And some there are who laugh the prophet down,
Contending him no prophet, but a clown:
Ah, long ago it was in Nazareth
The people stoned a prophet from the town.

For he, they said, was much an egotist
Claiming Jehovah kept an earthly tryst,
As if God cared for carpenters, so they
Tongued their pale cheeks and politely hissed.

"How should it be," I hear it said among,
"He should know anything who is so young?"
Ah, God, could I prevail to move thy will,
I pray Thee, be no evil on my tongue.

How should it be that anything is known
Except that those who long to see are shown;
How long is life for those who fear no death,
And oft caressing, have familiar grown?

I swear that I could break between my hands
The bubble Time like sea-kelp on the sands
And laugh, and fling the fragments to the sea
Where some gray crag for centuries upstands.

YOUTH APOLOGIZES

Youth is a fiction from the sophist sprung,
Age but a cry from the muezzin flung,
Calling the Faithful a moment unto prayer—
There is no death for those whose hearts are young.

And if Age be so fleeting, then in sooth,
Who shall define the limits unto Youth?
Be man immortal to remember things,
Perhaps some pre-existence taught him truth.

“Ah,” but you say, “the young make much ado
Declaring they divide the false from true;
Yet when their dreams are dead like withered flowers
They shall indeed be wise as I or you.

“And all the sum that we have lived to learn
Is that hearts ache and eyes burn,
And there’s an end for every lovely thing,
The day that’s gone will nevermore return.

“The bird has flown and left the song unsung;
We touched a flower, the petals dropped in dung”
—I may be mad, my masters, and you wise:
Haply you may forgive me, I am young.

Leave youth to bluster, knowing he will creep
Sobered at last to his eventual sleep,
And he shall lie lower than root of tree
And snows above him shall drift deep.

YOUTH APOLOGIZES

Leave youth his dream, and let him think it true;
Have you forgotten how you dreamed it, too?
Smile, if you will, but smile indulgently,
As gently as your elders smiled at you.

And if youth set his lance at some mad wheel
Or charge at meal-bags in excess of zeal,
Remember, Don Quixote seemed a fool—
But unto Sancho Panza he was real.

RETURN

WISE man, wise man,
Fingers and thumbs,
Which is the way
That Jesus comes?

Wise man, wise man,
Rabbi, priest,
Did you ever see a man
On such a poor beast?

Wise man, wise man,
I saw a lame child,
And when he came by
Jesus smiled.

Jesus, Jesus,
How do you come?
"To those who are halt
And blind and dumb."

My knee was sprung
And I couldn't see,
So I climbed up high
In a jujube tree.

Jesus, Jesus,
What are you worth?
"The sun and the moon
And the little round earth."

RETURN

Jesus, Jesus,
Sing me a song.
"I can't stop now
For the road's too long."

Jesus, Jesus,
Go along, Lord;
My knee is straight
As the governor's sword.

Jesus, Jesus,
Go along before
To a high house
With a silver door.

But I'll stop first
To clean my feet,
And then sit down
In the chimney-seat.

And Jesus will laugh
And say it's good
That I've moved into
His neighborhood.

When he lights his pipe
I think he'll scratch
The Morning-Star
For his safety match.

RETURN

We'll drink all night
From a good brown cup
And not go to bed
Till the sun comes up.

Wise man, wise man,
Fingers and thumbs,
This is the way
That Jesus comes.

“AGAINST MY SECOND COMING . . .”

“AGAINST my second coming,”
Christ, the Lord, hath said,
“Provide with driven thunder
The nations for my bed,
Make plain the path before me
With lightning from the skies
When unbelief shall open
And all the dead arise.

“With patience beyond wisdom
And knowledge beyond grace
I have prepared my peoples
At last to bear my face;
By many intimations
The final truth is known,
And all the lone discover
They never were alone.

“Against my second coming,”
The good Lord Jesus saith,
“Ten million young men lightly
Shall charge the gates of death,
Until, grown still with wonder,
They know how far they came
Through many habitations
Eternally the same.

“Behold, I knit the nations
With instant words of light,
And on the clouds of heaven
My wingéd feet are bright;

AGAINST MY SECOND COMING

Beneath the seas I smite them,
And through the mountain's core
The splendor of my coursers
Escapes the granite door.

"The shining page my hill-side,
I need no special sea,
For fishing-boats are paper
And oceans, Galilee.
I walk no more among you
On brown and lovely feet,
But yet my hand is on you,
And still my lips are sweet.

"My perfect consummation
Ye cannot put aside.
I am the living Jesus
Who will not be denied;
The moment of your anguish
When all seemed dead but death,
I drew you to my bosom," . . .
The good Lord Jesus saith.

AN ODE FOR A NEW CHRISTMAS

WHILE others write that thou art born, O Christ,
Let me, with large security of faith,
Write, Thou art dead!

Dead and forgotten, and in a cold tomb lying
By some lone hill outside Jerusalem
While the dear mold of thy forsaken body
Long, long ago has fed the twisted stem
Of some wild olive's wind-whipped diadem
Tossed by the tempest,—hear the great winds crying,
Christ, the Christ is dead!

Dead and forgotten, though the world's cathedrals
Trembling with music, blossom into stone.
Up the mighty transept of the lonely ages,
Censers swinging, see the nations pass
Sceptered and mitred, with the keys of heaven,
Shifting shadows in a darkened glass.
Gleaming croziers, children crimson-stoled,
Glory of garments, emerald and gold,
What a wondrous show they make,
Singing, Jesus, for thy sake,
And thou upon the hill-side lying stark and lone.

But hark, a terrible thunder is borne on the wings of
time,
The earth is shaken with battle and black with the can-
non's breath,
A hundred gory legions leap at the throat of death,
And a million million corpses rise
With flaming eyes

AN ODE FOR A NEW CHRISTMAS

As the walls of beleaguered cities are swarmed in the
name of Christ
And dead men drop from the battlements as fast as the
living climb.

The seas are swollen with ship-wreck and mighty arma-
das sweep
For one little golden moment the heaving floor of the
sea,
Then sudden the heavens are loosened and down to the
fathomless deep
The shattered bones of nations are drifting aimlessly.
The Cross and the Crescent in conflict, emperor, pope,
and king,
Broadsword hacking at broadsword, arrow and lance
and sling,
Bayonet and javelin, sword and scimitar,
And the scythe of Death the reaper, who laughs when
the nations war,
The trumpets and drums of onslaught, the standards
streaming red,—
Christ is dead!

No more the fillets white
Press the pale brow of Phrygian prophetess,
Nor from Apollo's shrine breathes forth the oracle di-
vine.
The gods of Greece and Rome are one with Nineveh and
Tyre;
And the red fire,

AN ODE FOR A NEW CHRISTMAS

The clang of cymbal and of brass,
Affright no more the silences of night.

Behold them pass,
Isis and Demeter, jovial Iacchus,
Buddha, Mohammed, Odin, Priapus,
And dumb Astarte with the haunting eyes;
The woods are silent to their mysteries,
The shadows echoless.

And must Thou, too, follow their little fame,
Christ of Golgotha and Gethsemane,
Is all the beauty of thy spirit shame,
When men can murder in thy gentle name
And raise thy cross to shelter blasphemy?
Blasphemy of God and thou His messenger,
To drone in churches to their perfumed pews
Empty hosannas on the Christmas morn
When in vile brothels and in shameless stews
Some unacknowledged, birth-cursed Christ is born
Of some sad madonna whom the good folk scorn.

Not in far-off and lonely Bethlehems
Is that low manger in the naked shed;
Not by the walls of dead Jerusalems
Lies the scarred body and the weary head;
But here, each day, with hands that clasp and cling,
With faces stained by foul disease and shame,
With bodies bowed beneath the cross they bring,
Walk the sad Christs, hungry and lame.

AN ODE FOR A NEW CHRISTMAS

Here on the western horizon a waiting people lies,
Born of the centuries' travail, swaddled in prophecies,
Sprung from the loins of Europe, flushed with the
strength of youth;

Lead us, O Christ, to know thee in spirit and in truth.

Not through the empty mazes of old theology,
Hiding thy simple message in intricate words,
Throning thee in the heavens, turning your life to a
creed,

You who knew as a brother the call of a brother's need,
Who knew the glory of serving, of facing with fearless
eyes

The shame of a dead religion's charneled hypocrisies,
And drove in thy flaming anger with a whip of knotted
cord

The shrinking slaves from the Temple, who buy and sell
their Lord.

Come to us, O Jesus, come as you came of yore
When you walked with Andrew and Peter by the Gal-
ilean shore,

And called to the young men fishing, as I to the hearts
of men,

Is it strange that the loving Jesus should wander his
world again?

Out of the daily sacrifice of the mother for her children,
Out of the tender love of the father who faces a certain
death that his little ones may live,

Out of the wisdom of old people who see more than
their grandchildren see,

AN ODE FOR A NEW CHRISTMAS

Out of the innocent questions of babies, and the beautiful strength of young men,
Out of the purity of young girls and the wide-eyed wonder of their dreams,
Out of the deep love of comrades who never tell their love,
Out of all that is true and strong and divine in the weakest and most sinful,
I will lead the hearts of men to know the real Jesus,
The lover of men and of women and of little children,
The interpreter of all the loveliness of earth and of a life not lived alone;
And in America I shall found for him a new and everlasting kingdom,
The kingdom of human love in the democracy of kindness;
And then with the voice of thanksgiving and with the sound of world-rejoicing
We shall cry aloud—all of us—new-found comrades and lovers,

“Christ is not dead!

He liveth and worketh in common with God the Father,
And his dwelling-place is in the homely heaven of the human heart!”

GABRIEL

MARY walked in the daisies
Along a winding way;
The wind came by and touched her,
Her face was glad and gay;
Something nested in her heart, . . .
The sad Christ smiled that day.

For God had grown so lonely
On his throne,
He put his staff on his shoulder
And set off alone;
Among the scornful brambles
He laid his head on a stone.

Mary bore the daisies
Home in her two hands,
Daisies of white petals
For all the lonely lands,
That will not fade or vanish
While the arch of Heaven stands.

ERE JOSEPH CAME TO BUILD

CHILD of my love, oh little tousled head
And warm cheek nestling near thy mother's heart,
Around us now the black Egyptian night
Fringed with the breathless, shining host of stars
Folds us in silence as I strain thee here
Against my happy side,—I am content.

Only the sighing of the deathless winds
From out the desert spaces, and the sands
That lash round Joseph's ankles, plodding slow
With gray, bent head and patient, sandaled feet
So still I scarce can hear him through the dark
Searching the road, the donkey's taken breath
That shakes me with its steady rise and fall,
And thou, dear restless sleeper, at my breast
With thy half-smothered wail so sudden stopped,
These only break the brooding quietness
That lurks in shade along our stealthy path.

Before us stretch the dim and dusky realms
Whence Moses led the Chosen long ago
Into the land which now his children flee—
On this same road, perhaps, where Benjamin
Wept that the cup was found within his sack
Unknowing whose the love that placed it there,
And turned him back from home to Joseph's arms.
To Joseph's arms,—aye!—not such as lead
Before me, even now, my halter-rope;
For he was young and strong, with smooth round arms

ERE JOSEPH CAME TO BUILD

That must have clasped with rough sweet tenderness
So close it hurt, his brother's slender form,—
Such arms as cling about my body still
Until I swoon remembering,—hush my babe.

And so we pass across the desert sands,
The child and I, our beast, and Joseph there
With patient steps, my husband whom they gave.
My husband,—yes, for women must obey;
They are not wise to choose what suits them best,
And he had birth,—besides, a steady trade,
Was sage and sober, just and kind to rule
Within his house,—what more could woman wish?

Ah yes, what more? Oh, timid new-made wives
With frightened eyes that plead for gentleness,
And lips that, half-reluctant, yield their store
Of rifled sweetness to a ruthless strength
That crushes them with kissing, fearfully
When ye set out upon that nameless road
All women travel with the man they love,
Whence there is no returning, can there be
One thing ye pray to find along the way,
Which, if ye find not, turns to mockery
All that ye hoped for in your setting-out,
Until your heart dies in you . . . ?

And yet he loves me,—as a father would
A fragile child that plays about his house
And must be humored for her cheeriness
Lighting the dark old rooms that else were sad.

ERE JOSEPH CAME TO BUILD

So, even I into his lonely heart
Stole like a sunbeam when he came to build
My father's flat-roofed house of mighty beam
Upon the olive-slope; and when 'twas done,
In payment, asked to take me as his wife.
And since he came of David and the kings,
And builded well, and owned himself a house
A maid would joy to govern,—I was wed.

He has been kind,—too kind sometimes, I think—
Until I pity his dumb loneliness
That married spring to winter, selfishly,
As did his withered grand-sire long ago
Warming his clammy palms in younger hands,
When he had done with singing and with love.
And I have tried,—oh God, how have I tried!—
Still to be faithful, for he could not know
Of all I left behind to follow him.

But now as through the soft and noiseless sand
We flee along the path that camels tread,
Past the dim huddled camps of caravans
Into the desert spaces where the stars
Seem far away like ghosts of burnt-out lamps
That haunt the dusky chambers of the night,
There breathes upon the shadow-freighted wind
The clear insistent summons of a voice
That calls me back along the way we come.

ERE JOSEPH CAME TO BUILD

Nay, God, I will not hear it,—close my ears,
Pity Thy handmaid,—see, I draw my veil
Tighter about me, shutting out the wind
And the voice with it.

(No, I am not cold,
Joseph, my husband, not so very tired,
And yet I shivered; let us hasten on.)
Again his voice! It creeps through every stop
Calling my soul; and yet I will not heed.

(Faster, still faster, Joseph; dawn will come
When we can flee no longer; faster still!)

I cannot shut it out; nay, let it call
And I will hear it though it slay my soul.
Will feel his arms about me, and his breath
Sweeter than cassia buds upon my cheek,
With lips that pluck my very life away
Leaving me more than life, his deathless love
That nestles in my bosom, even now,
With baby fingers minding me of him.

So, let me dream my happy little dream
As in the days ere Joseph came to build.
Sure, God will not begrudge it,—only that;
And Joseph? Well I know not; God is just.

MARY, MARY . . .

THERE was a son whom Mary had,
A little thoughtful lad,
Whose heart held many a whispered word
That might have made him mad.

Mary, Mary, where is he
Who walked so slow and soberly?
I saw a shining face like yours
Once in Galilee.

HE SPEAKS IN THREES

JOSEPH, my husband, I pray you, come,
Throw down the adz and leave the little shop.
I have great news, something, my love, I dreamed
Or else I saw it. Here where the step is smooth
Worn with the faithful passing of your feet,
Let us sit down, for I have news to tell.

Such news, my lover, oh, such good, good news.
Look at me, Joseph, read it in my eyes.
Surely you see it; nay, but you're a man,
And men are slower—See, you know, you know.

Is it not strange that love can be so still?
One moment earth is humdrum—nothing more;
Linen to whiten, floors to sweep and sand,
Butter to mold and olives to be culled,
And oh, the weary ache of back and knee—
Then a great rush of flaming splendid wings,
A face that blinds one with strange loveliness,
A voice that conquers all abyss of space,
And earth has leaped to heaven at a bound.

And so, my Joseph, I had set the curd
To harden in the window-ledge and turned
Back to the table where I pressed it out;
I heard a swallow underneath the eaves,
I felt the vineyard musk blow in the door,
My heart stopped beating,—and I knew.

HE SPEAKS IN THREES

Oh, I have longed, my Joseph, for this hour,
And wondered, sometimes, if my flesh could bear
The great sudden leaping of my soul, feared almost.
—That was before I knew you, years ago,
When I was yet a slender, wide-eyed girl
Cuddling wee, strange-made babies at my breast,
With knobs for noses and round funny ears,
Little gourd-babies, but I loved them so.

Then I grew older, and went to the well,
And brought the heavy, earthen pitchers home,
But scarcely heard my mother's gentle voice
Bidding me hasten, for I dreamed I felt
My arms grow burdened with a load that clung
And pressed my bosom with a tiny hand.

And then you came . . . I stood beside the door
And saw you turn the little narrow street,
Dusty with travel, but your eyes were true.
I loved you, Joseph, as I love you now.
For you have been so patient and so kind,
So strong to lean on and so gentle when
You could have been so cruel. Surely, God
Has walked beside me like a tender friend,
And I have known His mercy, dear, in you.

I do not think that God is far away.
They say that Abram knew him as a friend,
And Moses saw him on Mount Sinai,
And Samuel heard him calling in the night:

HE SPEAKS IN THREES

Surely, he does not leave us all alone;
I think I could not live if God were not.
Even with you, my Joseph, there are times
I do not miss you as I ought to do,
Yet if God left me, Joseph, I should die.

See, here I lean upon you and my lips
Meet yours; your hand is welded with my own,
Yet are we separated though I yearn
To press you closer. Love, we cannot meet.
There are strange bars that God has set between
All lovers since he made the first to love.
Only through Him who moves within us both
Are we made one who else were sundered flesh;
And God is nearer to the two of us
Than I to you or you to me. 'Tis best,
For were we mingled, water into wine,
We should forget, in loving, God who loves.

He speaks forever in the threes of life,
Husband and wife and little clinging child,
And in our baby, Joseph, God comes down.
Something, my husband, is there yet to do,
Together we shall labor, you and I,
And he shall know, our little laughing son,
How near to heaven is a perfect home.

We cannot shield him from the storming years,
We cannot feed him but with homely fare,
And he must stagger through life's sweat and pain;
Yet have we something Cæsar could not buy,

HE SPEAKS IN THREES

Nor haughty Herod in his purple ease,
And he shall have it richly without stint,
The perfect tribute of unselfishness,
Our love, my husband, and his heritage.

And he shall know it when he is a man
How God can stoop and walk with men in love,
And lean upon them with a friendly arm,
And mingle with earth's lovers when they cling,
Till every baby is a child of God.
And he shall call all men to walk with God,
Women and children shall he lead and love,
Strong with great hands that clasp men to his heart,
Pure with white faith that makes the blind to see,
Melting the deaf ear with his tenderness,
Till men shall hear the very speech of God,
Knowing our son's hand on them, and his eyes
Deep with all knowledge, remembering our love.

So shall we do our little in God's world,
Not by mad deeds that set the hills ablaze
And thunder down the avenues of time;
But just by loving with a love so great,
So pure and strong and sweet and wonderful
That God himself will stoop and call it good;
I think there is much blessing in a home.
—Now I am weary, Joseph; help me in.

THE WISE MEN'S STAR

I FELT the arms of little children clinging
About my throat a short, sweet while ago;
Within my heart I heard a father singing
The white, shy song that I may never know.

Dear chubby hands that dimple like pink roses
When dew-drops kiss them, as I bent to kiss,
What haughty-sceptered emperor imposes
Allegiance half so free and sure as this?

Blue baby eyes that open wide with wonder
And pure as just unfolded pansies are,
What spell is this ye put a strong man under,—
Is this the secret of the Wise Men's star?

THE BELLS OF DEATH

HOW THE THREE WISE MEN FOLLOWED THE STAR

SON, I will heed you, hearken while ye may,
My strength is ebbing, shadows close me in,
And I can hear the women wailing low
Beside the entrance; hear the camels breathe
Heavily, and feel your arm beneath my head.

You shall be sheik of many-herded hills,
Lord of the desert, brother of the wind,
Master of swarming, dusky-throated tribes
Almost as numberless as are the sands
And twice as restless—but thy arm is strong
And God hath blessed thee when he made thee wise.

Yea, I will tell thee how I saw the child
On that strange journey to Jerusalem,
In those glad days when I was young and dreamed,
And saw great visions flash among the stars,
And felt the throbbing of the desert's breast,
And thrilled in touching all the friendly hands
That leapt to meet my clasping, swift and sure—
Such friends as thy Balthasar is to thee.
Such dreams as flushed the beauty of thy face
One night gone by, when I hung o'er your bed
In the dim watches when you fell asleep,
Wearied with tending him who gave thee life.
So even I, your father, crept away

THE BELLS OF DEATH

From this dull couch that holds me prisoned now,
And crouched beside you for one thankful hour,
Blessing that God who gave to me in age
To see my body's image live again.

Damp was your forehead, and your breath was
warm,
Smiling your lips, and peaceful still your face
Where the dark lashes of your eyelids drooped
Over your cheek, and ruddy health sat crowned
Upon his dusky throne of sandalwood.
Then was my soul uplifted and I cried:
"I fear not now the parting of the ways,
I go to meet the shadows; but I live
Body and soul, in him I leave behind.
No death can shroud the eyes that children close."

Yea, I must hasten, hold me to your breast
Until your manhood feeds my dying flame,
Only so long as needs to end the tale.
Even now I hear the jingling bells of Death
Riding his camel through the silent sand
Nearer and ever nearer—hold me close.

'Twas in those days of wonder long ago
There gleamed one night within the desert sky
In white magnificence, a stranger star
Than ever yet had herded on the hills
Of heaven; white its fleece and knit of thread
Spun of the moonbeams, shining through the night,

THE BELLS OF DEATH

Ever and ever eastward beckoning
Until I rose and followed, drunk with awe,
Shimbar, the camel, racing with the wind,
And I upon him fronting toward the star.

Afar behind me stretched the ghostly sands,
Billow on heaving billow like the sea
Stilled in its restless motion changelessly.
Bathed in the mystic glamor of the star,
Ever before me stretching seemed the way,
Leaving the gray horizon streaked with dawn,
Climbing the long, white pathway of the star,
Until I scarce had noticed at my side
The swift, light running of two camels more,
And knew Balthasar followed after me,
Selekmar with him, in their eyes the star.

So through the night; but when the great red day
Climbed in his splendor over the eastern sands,
Paling the whiter beauty of the night,
We slept beneath the slender-shading palms
Where in a tiny hollow bubbled up
The spring that vanished in the amorous air
As that white star within the arms of day.
Then on again as soon as set the sun
Behind us, weltering all the world in flame,
Onward and ever eastward toward the star
That nightly seemed to stoop more near to earth
And those three faces flushed and eager-eyed.
Until one morning when the dawn was gray

THE BELLS OF DEATH

We saw the mighty-walled Jerusalem
With her great temple like a priceless pearl
Hid in the swarthy bosom of a queen,
Gleam marble-white from out the dusky town.

And yet the star still beckoned past the gates
Ever to eastward, drooping lower now
Until it blazed so strangely terrible
It seemed well-nigh to hem us round about
In radiance of thousand flashing wings,
And witness of unseen, observing eyes.
But when we stopped a passing morning flock
Of goats the herdsman drove to sacrifice,
He could not see the glory of the star
Although it shone more brightly than the sun.
Fang-toothed he was, with knotted, close-clutched
 hands,
And busy eyes that traveled with his flock
So ceaselessly he never saw the sky.
Onward he plodded up the dusty road,
And left behind the clamorous, bleating wind;
He thought us mad to go in search of stars.

The east was paling, but the star stood clear
And drove the sun back with a flaming sword.
Then to the southward fled we with the wind,
Until at last we came to Bethlehem,
Shut in the jealous hills that shoulder close,
And in a stable found the new-born babe.

THE BELLS OF DEATH

Closer, my son, strength of my body's strength,
Warm with the youth that once my pulses throbbed—
The jingling bells ring clearer through the night,
And Death rides swift across the shifting sand.

But what saw we, sons of the desert wind,
In that white, pain-transfigured mother face
That brought us kneeling? Only her great dark eyes
And feeding breast, and weary smile of pride.
And yet together, shoulder to shoulder there,
We knelt in silence, worshiping the child.

Then through me surging swept a wave of awe,
Cresting my reason with wild harmony
And wordless music of low plaintiveness,
Sweet as the lullabies that mothers croon—
Only, the stars were singing, and the sun
Struck out ten thousand molten notes at once
From the vast circle of his wheeling moons.
And through the corridors where planets flame
Rolled the long reverberations, echoing.

I was at one with chaos when God's word
Formed from the void Creation's crystal shell.
Within me leapt my immortality;
Back to His love I stretched me through my sires,
And knew that forward through the centuries
My children's sons would round the circle home.
God stirred within me and I knew His face

THE BELLS OF DEATH

Shining upon me with the self-same peace
That smiled in slumber from your perfect lips
One night gone by when I, your father, knelt
Beside your body all one thankful hour
And saw at once beginning and the end,
The past and future hand in hand with God.

And now thou knowest—hark! Again the bells—
The lights grow dim—the women, too, are still—
The dawn-wind rises. So, with Death I mount
And make my last, long journey toward the Star!

THERE WAS A MAN . . .

THERE was a Man in Galilee
Who talked as simple as could be,
Saying men should brothers be—
This lonely Man of Galilee.

There was a Man of Olivet
Whose strong voice reaches to us yet
Across the centuries' clamor—yet
There was a Man of Olivet.

There was a Man on Golgotha
Whose eyes grew dim at what they saw—
Yet clear to me is what they saw,
The dying Man on Golgotha.

Come, walk by Lake Gennesaret:
I saw a Fisher with his net,
Draw silver planets in his net—
How quiet is Gennesaret!

A PAGE FROM AMERICA'S PSALTER

ACROSS the bitter centuries I hear the wail of men:

“Oh, would that Jesus Lord, the Christ, would come
to us again.

We decorate His altars with a ceremonious pride,
With all the outward shows of pomp His worship is
supplied:

Great churches raise their mighty spires to pierce the
sunlit skies

While in the shadow of the cross we mutter blas-
phemies.

“We know we do not do His will who lessoned us to
pray,

‘Our Father, grant within our lives Thy kingdom rule
to-day.’

The prayer he taught us, once a week we mouth with
half-shut eye

While in the charnel-house of words immortal meanings
die.

Above our brothers' frailties we cry, ‘Unclean, Unclean.’

And with the hands that served her shame, still stone
the Magdalene.

“We know within our factories that wan-cheeked women
reel

Among the deft and droning belts that spin from wheel
to wheel.

A PAGE FROM AMERICA'S PSALTER

We know that unsexed childhood droops in dull-eyed
drudgery.

The little children that He blessed in far off Galilee,—
Yet surely, Lord, our hearts would grow more merciful
to them,

If Thou couldst come again to us as once in Bethlehem.”

WHICH?

RICH and fat was the altar feast
For the holy flame that day:
But there in the pool from the slain lamb's
throat
A slender body lay,
While the Horror stiffened each lovely limb
And kissed the red lips gray.

Far over the desert a shadow flees
In the glare of the angry sun:
Is it man or ghost or hunted beast,
Or sand by the whirlwind spun,
And why does it run and look behind,
And look behind and run?

The yellow hair of the white boy-priest
Is damp with a ghastly dye:
Can he not raise those perfect hands
From his bosom where they lie,
And why does he stare at the noonday sun
With such a fearless eye?

He does not smile, he does not stir,
But still the shadow flees:
It cannot be that sound is born
On such wan lips as these,
Yet surely shadows never sobbed
In such strange agonies.

WHICH?

Across the desert of the world
Still stumbles in his pain
The Man who killed; and yet, which is
The slayer, which the slain,
The delicate-fingered Abel, or
The shamed and branded Cain?

ABEL AND CAIN

Two brothers in a far and lonely land
Built up two uncouth altars out of stone,
And on them laid their labor's offering
To that High Power who bids men sweat and toil.

One brother lifted high his slender hands
And bent his dainty knee upon the earth;
For he had bleating flocks that multiplied
Even as he watched them, lying in the shade,
Fingering his whittled reeds that thrilled in song
And dreaming all the summer-tide away.
What need had he to soil those tender palms
With touch of earth? His flocks were fat and sleek,
And ever upward, ever thicker, rolled
The smoke from off the altar he had made.
"One frightened lambling from its mother torn
Would not be missed among so many sheep,
And yet its flesh would feed an altar-flame
As well as any"—so he knelt and prayed.

The older brother likewise lifted up
His hands beside the altar he had built.
Gnarled were his fingers as the roots of trees
On some high cliff that clutch the desperate slope,
Fearing to slip within the gulf below.
Bare was his body, and the knotted cords
Stood out upon his clumsy-muscled knees,
That were too stiff for bending; so he stooped
Half crouching in the weary droop of toil,
With dumb defiance glooming in his eyes,

ABEL AND CAIN

And lips that scarce could lisp his Maker's name.
The smoke that smoldered round his offering
Sagged earthward, stifling, when he tried to pray.
No fleecy lamb lay on his altar-fire,
Blazing in crackling savor up to Heaven;
A few scant roots, a withered bunch of leaves,
Wet still where he had grasped them sweaty-palmed.
And one green melon that his vines had borne
To all his painful tending, choked the flame
That whitening crept among them—so he prayed.

And, since in that lone country far away
One brother rose and, swift in anger, slew,
Upon his brow his Maker set a sign
That men should know the deed that he had done.
But what the sign He set, no man has known
From that blood-sprinkled day of shame to this;
Though still two altars rise in every State
And still two brothers bring their offering.

*Arise, O Abel, kiss that Brother's brow
Before, too late, it bear the brand of Cain.*

THE STRANGER

A STRANGER walked the crowded streets upon the Christ-
mas day
In tattered coat and ragged shoes, with lips so drawn
and gray,
That Christian folk who passed him by and saw his
patient eyes
Half paused in wonder at the prayer of his dumb mis-
eries.
The stinging wind was bitter keen, and icy sharp the
snow,
“But beggar-folk are often shams, and fakirs, don’t you
know,”—
With half-averted, doubting glance they hurried on their
way
While o’er the Stranger’s gentle face the veil of sorrow
lay:
Not one of all the goodly throng who called upon His
name,
That day or ever knew Who passed in lowly weeds of
shame.

FRAGMENTS

I AM a searcher of faces,
I am a seeker of hearts
In lonely and desolate places,
In immaterial marts.

* * * * *

It is enough to wander
Through all the busy day;
It is enough to squander
The things we throw away.

* * * * *

It little matters that the things we set
Do not return in ways we recognize:
Each of us mounts in turn his Olivet
And finds, alone, Tophet or Paradise.

* * * * *

Only those who are lonely,
Broken and worn and sad,
These are my people only,
These will I render glad.
Go let the stricken deer go weep,
The hart unwounded play;
For some must find and some must seek,
And some must roll the stone away.

* * * * *

THE WILDERNESS

WHY do I falter, now my hour has come:
Can one man's choice mean either this or that?
I grow presumptuous. 'Twas not God who called!
The Prophets now are confined with the Past;
They walk no more among us as of yore
In those great days when God abode with men;
His voice is silent, lo these centuries.

He calls no more across the empty years,
The wrangling years so filled with clamoring,
The clink of barter, and men's littleness
Pushing and pulling at the Infinite
As if 'twere linen in a mercer's shop
And they could measure with a three-foot rod
Of disputation, what is measureless.
No wonder He is silent, while men shout.

And yet there was a time when men believed
That they could find Him in the burning bush,
Or hear Him in the watches of the night
Waking the sleeper, or mingle in the cloud
With His great presence on Mount Sinai.
He walked within the Garden of the World
Startling the guilty silence with His voice;
He couched within the ark of shittim wood;
The stone was graven at His finger-tip
And men could read in Nature His decrees.
He strode before them in a cloud by day,

THE WILDERNESS

He fed them on the manna of His love,
The desert gushed in fountains at His touch,
And in the mystery and wonder of the night
He wrestled limb to limb with human kind.

Oh, to have felt the swelling thews of God,
The crushing anguish of His vast embrace,
To strain against His mighty-heaving chest,
And feel strength draining from one drop by drop,
One's shoulders nearing inch by inch his doom,
And still to struggle, knowing that He asks
No tame and feeble-kneed antagonist
Who cringes fawning, but He rather loves
That soul who questions, doubts, and scorns to yield
Without one desperate trial of his strength
Before he smiles and whispers, "I am thrown."

Those were the days when Prophets walked with
God,
And found Him near them in the wilderness
When they went out to meet Him face to face,—
God sends no ravens to Elijahs now.

And though perhaps it was not God who called
When John had hailed me with his prophecy,—
And those mad eyes that shine upon me still,
And his great body white and beautiful,—
Yet was it something; for I felt a stir
That ripened all my being suddenly,
As if a sunbeam pierced a lily's heart

THE WILDERNESS

And loosed the molten fragrances that bound
Her aching bosom, till it burst in bloom
And glowed beneath the quivering lips of day.
It seemed my soul was somehow strangely new,
As if, across the bending heads of wheat
Trembling between their milky-kerneled youth
And mellow richness of maturity,
In that expectant moment, came a breath
Warm from the very sun-kissed cheeks of June,
And when the wind had passed the grain was set.

So, when John touched me, all at once my soul
Trembled to feel it, and the voice of God
Burst with the glory of magnificence,
Drowning my senses, till I rather felt
The thunder of His presence than I heard.

But now within the wilderness I wait,
Alone, and far from Jordan's crowded bank.
The flame that warmed me, now has sunk to ash,
And I am hungry, strengthless, and forgot.
The moon has grown, and waned, and grown again,
And still I wrestle with God's purposes,
Weaker and ever weaker; and I fear
The scuttling shadows lurking by the rocks,
Where fiery eyes creep nearer every night,
Until I almost hear their eagerness
Sniffing, and wrinkling up their silken lips
Over the gleaming of their cruel teeth.
The desert creatures throng me hungrily,
Perhaps to-night they banquet,—let them come.

THE WILDERNESS

Better the quick leap and the rending fangs,
The momentary anguish warm with blood,
The merciful swift death that wild things deal,
Than to be torn upon the breakers of the world,
Impaled with scornful shafts of mocking men,
Each truth we die for jeered and spit upon,
Naked and beaten, stoned from house to house,
Scourged by those hands that we have tried to clasp,
Cursed by those lips that we once hoped to kiss.

One way is open,—join the common crowd,
Perhaps more merciful in deed than they
And thinking one's own thoughts, but quietly;
Run with the herd in body, but reserve
The right to enter in one's privacy
A secret chamber where the spirit dwells
Apart from all appearance, unrebuked:
No need is there to throw oneself on death
When life is all before one, rich in love.

And who can live life more intense than I?
The Galilean hills are full of friends,
Timid and slender wild things cross my path
And stop to eye me, fearlessly and tame,
Soft, furry things that slumber in my breast.
I know where every sparrow lays her young
Along the plastered walls of Nazareth;
The earliest lily lifts for me her cup
And fills it with a draught of morning-dew.
Above me when I drift on Galilee

THE WILDERNESS

The quiet stars shine out like brother souls,
And through the tattered sail the wind sifts down,
Brushing my cheeks with fragrance of the night
And whispering me to silence and to sleep.

But not alone with this great comradeship
Is my whole being filled as if with wine.
The children run to meet me in the street,
And cling about me till I lift them up
Where they can stretch their tiny chubby hands
Along my cheeks, and laugh to see the eyes
That mirror back a little laughing face.
And I have known old men the fever racked
Grow calm and quiet when I hold their hands
Or brush away the anguish from their brows,
Until I tremble with a tenderness
That seems to soothe them till they fall asleep
Clasping my strong cool hands upon their breasts;
I cannot help but love them slumbering,
Such strangely sweet and pitiful old men!

I know not why it is; 'twas ever thus;
All faces turn to follow when I move.
It may be that I am so young and strong,
So fresh with all the tang of wind and sea,
So glowing with the sweetness of the sun
That seems like a great brother on the hills
When I have climbed the sandy, shrub-clad slopes,
Above the drowsy streets of Nazareth,
That tired women, flushed with household tasks

THE WILDERNESS

And bent with aching shoulders grinding corn,
Feel, when I enter at their low-beamed door,
As I do when the cooling twilight breeze
Warns me to lay my adz and maul aside,
And roam beyond the little narrow town
Far out upon the hills alone with God.
For I have seen such women lift their eyes
When I looked in upon them at their work,
And all the toil-worn faces softened, till
They seemed transfigured with a sudden peace
As if they caught a vision of God's love:
'Tis wonderful, and leaves me half afraid,
So glad I am that I can make them smile.

As sweet to me as children's clinging hands,
Old men that slumber, or tired women's eyes,
And strong as the deep swell and surge of sea
That lifts a weary swimmer to the shore,
The love of young men, reverence of friends,
And eloquence of eyes that answer mine
When all the rest is silence,—those who work
Beside me day by day at bench or wall,
Strong backs and sturdy limbs that lift and strain
Until the beam is swung into its place
And swift, sure blows have driven it safely home;
My brother Joses with his merry face,
And all the workers at my father's trade.

Strength answers strength, at work or on the shore
Leaping to breast the waters of the lake,
When toil is ended and my comrades run

THE WILDERNESS

Along the level sand-beach boyishly,
And jump and wrestle, tumbling over nets,
Until the evening star o'er Galilee
Warns us to don our tunics and retrace
The hill-path back to sleepy Nazareth.
Then through the moonlight side by side we walk,
Scarce speaking, till the long, brown path leads down
Between the shadowy houses, and we part
To sleep a sleep untroubled until dawn.

So speed the careless days, one after one,
Friendship, and evening calm, and working-hours,
Each sure and certain to be brimming o'er
With health and comradeship and happiness,
All these are mine,—why should I lose them now
By blindly following a sudden whim?
Perhaps God called me, but I need not heed.
Life is too full of love and hope and youth
To turn the foaming cup upon the sand.
If only I keep silent, I am safe;
There is no need of making stones of bread.

And yet as in the wilderness I lie,
With those strange shadows skulking in the shade,
I seem to hear the rabbi's droning voice,
Perched high above me in the synagogue,
Rustling the parchment: "It is written here,
Man shall not live by bread and flesh alone,
But by each word from out the mouth of God."

THE WILDERNESS

“By bread alone?” Can it be there is
In this wild turmoil of uncertainty
Some boon unguessed of, that outweighs secure
And selfish comfort? Can man throw away
His life and find it? Must he tell the truth
Regardless of all doubters, face the mob
That lusts to tear him limb from limb, and still
March out to meet them, bravely confident?
It may be so; the truth is still the truth,
Although a village rise to cry it down.
And if God lead me through the cloud awhile,
I shall be safe if I cling to His hand:
He keeps my feet; His love supports me still;
In His good time, I shall emerge some day.

And yet why wait upon Him: is there not
Some quicker way to reach the goal desired?
The harvest of the centuries is late,
And slowly move the axles of the years;
It cannot be that man must wait so long.
Suppose some masterly heroic soul,
Bold with victorious triumph, flushed with power,
Bending the nations to his purposes,
Should seize the reins of empire, and erect
Upon the prostrate world his mighty throne.
Oh, how easy 'twere to rouse the restless tide
That surges underneath the Roman's feet,
Chafing and eddying like the undertow
That sweeps a sturdy swimmer out to sea
When he is most secure, arm Palestine,

THE WILDERNESS

Call in all Asia, join hands with the Greeks,
And push the purple tyrant from his throne;
The time is ripe; the nations murmuring,
The leader only missing,—why not I?

Even at the thought I feel my strength renewed
As when a runner nears the welcome goal
After a weary journey; for I see it all,
The dark and seething turmoil of the tide
That sets toward conquest, and the Jewish faith
That looks to see Messiah raise them up,
Throw off their yoke of bondage, heal their stripes,
And found the endless bastions of his realm
Upon the ruins of empires and of Time.

Strange tales were spread about me at my birth:
There needs but little fanning to the flame,—
When once the tinder of revolt is set,
It grows with quenching, and it leaps so swift
No eye of man can follow its mad course.
I need but stand upon the Temple steps,
Proclaim myself Messiah, sent of God,
And all Jerusalem will surge at once
In such a wild, fanatic tidal wave
Of frenzied fury, that its foaming crest,
Gathering the deeps of Asia to its arms,
Will whelm the mighty sovereignty of Rome
Upon its seven hills, until the world
Reverberates beneath the shuddering blow
And topples in engulfing surge of war.

THE WILDERNESS

Then shall Messiah knit the nations' hands
In that new empire of man's brotherhood,
The long anticipated Golden Age
That prophets told of in their mighty moods
And dreamers fashioned in their heart of hearts,
The new Jerusalem of comradeship
That God ordained some day would come to pass
When men were weary of their wars and hates,
When lamb and lion should lie down together,
And children should climb round them, unafraid.
Is not such Empire worth a little fraud,
Such glorious perfection worth the trial,
When one bold, masterly heroic brain
Can hasten with his help God's mighty plan?
All things are possible to him who dares
The bold audacity of one great lie,—
The kingdoms of the world are mine to keep!

Once more upon the desert wind there breathe
Strange memories of rustling parchment rolls:
"Serve only God,—no other; Truth is Truth."

I cannot hide me, Father, from Thy face;
Within the deeps I hid me—Thou wert there;
And when I climbed the steep ascent of heaven,
Beyond the farthest star-beam Thou wert there!
One and Eternal, everlasting Thou!
The Truth is Truth,—behold I serve but Thee!

And so, my Father, do I yield Thee up
My life to fashion to Thy purposes,
Forsaking comfort, empire,—following Thee

THE WILDERNESS

In confidence where'er Thy guidance lead.
One thing I pray Thee, leave me only this,
One broken morsel from Life's laden board,
One rose-bud smiling from the bitter thorns,
One star to guide me in the darkest night;
For Thou hast said that Thou wouldst guard and keep
That man who, fearless, trusted all to Thee
And dared to follow Truth and boldly die,
Casting himself from off the pinnacle
Of all his soul's ambitions, all his hopes,
Yielding his highest and his best to Fate,—
Yet still would give him knowledge of himself,
The faith to stake all on a single throw
And meet reverses smiling, confident
That God will not forsake him in his need.

Give me Thy angels to uphold my feet,
Lest in my fall I dash against a stone;
Give me to know that Right is ever Right,
And I shall fear no evil though I die.

My God, my God, I cannot let Thee go,
I crouch beneath the shadow of Thy wing,
Without Thee, I am nothing. Cover me!

Again the rustling of the parchment rolls;
My soul is slain within me: "Tempt not God.
That soul deserves Him not who cannot walk
Alone into the outer darknesses
Beyond God's love, and find Him in the void.
He knows not God who has not stood alone."

THE WILDERNESS

Father, I yield me; shape me to Thy hand,
Bend me, or mar me, cast me from Thy face;
Thou canst not take away my love for Thee;
Only by loving may one learn to love.

And so I meet the morrow quietly.
Let come what will, night follows after day,
And after night the dawn; each day will pass
One like the other, one day at a time.
For though I know the Prophets are no more,
And God's great loving voice, men say, is hushed,
He walks no more among us,—still I trust
That He is nearer than we sometimes think;
Perhaps men cannot see Who walks beside,
Nor hear His voice when He speaks tenderly:
Our ears are filled with idle clamoring,
Our eyes are dazzled with too near a view,
We walk with God each day and know it not.

The fortieth night is passing; I must rise
And with the morning seek my mother's house;
Then forth to wander where He leads the way.
'Tis such a simple message that I bear
A child can grasp it; surely so will men:
"God is our Father,—let His sons be kind."

A SECRET

COME, I will show you a thing beyond knowing,
This is the land where the Israelites fled;
No one has seen them to know of their going
Save an old man with a scar on his head.

Come, I will whisper a secret I'm keeping,
This is the land where Goliath was slain;
Down in the meadow a farmer boy sleeping
Found David's sling, and lost it again.

Come, I will sing you a song when I'm older
About a young man who was dead on a hill;
They shut up his body behind a big boulder
. . . I have a sign that he never lay still.

JERICHO

JERICHO, Jericho,
Round and round the walls I go
Where they watch with scornful eyes,
Where the captained bastions rise;
Heel and toe, heel and toe,
Blithely round the walls I go.

Jericho, Jericho,
Round and round the walls I go. . . .
All the golden ones of earth
Regal in their lordly mirth. . . .
Heel and toe, heel and toe,
Round and round the walls I go.

Jericho, Jericho,
Blithely round the walls I go,
With a broken sword in hand
Where the mighty bastions stand;
Heel and toe, heel and toe,
Hear my silly bugle blow.

Heel and toe, heel and toe,
Round the walls of Jericho. . . .
Past the haughty golden gate
Where the emperor in state
Smiles to see the ragged show
Round and round the towers go.

JERICO

Jericho, Jericho,
Round and round and round I go. . . .
All their sworded bodies must
Lie low in their towers' dust. . . .
Heel and toe, heel and toe,
Blithely round the walls I go.

Heel and toe, heel and toe,—
I will blow a thunder note
From my brazen bugle's throat
Till the sand and thistle know
The leveled walls of Jericho,
Jericho, Jericho, Jericho.

THERE WOULD BE NO WONDER

THEY are very stately
Who found the way for walking
Upstairs and downstairs,
And such important talking!

They are very happy
Who counted wine so sweet
They did not care for leavened bread
When they came to eat.

They are very careful
Who can read the rune
I have hidden lightly
In this quiet tune.

If every one could understand
All that letters spell,
There would be no wonder
In a miracle.

WINE OF CANA

THE wine has failed? Nay, Mother, cease thy plaint,
Why seek ye me, a stranger at the feast?
It was not I who bade so many guests;
And if they swarm as locusts round the bins,
What wonder if they scour the threshing-floor:
Can men expect to drain an emptied cup?

Already has the feast dragged out too long;
I weary of the wailing zither strings,
The empty clashing of cracked tambourines,
The mirthless jests a third time cackled o'er
By nodding graybeards with the eyes of goats
That set the bride's pale, frightened face aflame.

Do ye not see her lips too tired to smile,
The lashes' curtain lifted wearily,
And the big, brooding wonder of her eyes
That see as Moses from Mount Pisgah's height
The strange, glad nearness of the Promised Land,
See and half fear and know they see in vain?

Can wine run warmer through the bridegroom's limbs
Than that strong flood that sets its tide toward her
And in the very mid-leap of its confidence
Is stilled as quiet as the ocean pool
Flung by the mad sea on the gentle sand
Above the breaker's surge; and all because
She smiled too bravely and her hand sought his
Like a poor, timid birdling frightened home?

WINE OF CANA

And yet there is a glory none can name,
A fragrance in the purple-blooded grape,
A lure of sunshine and the kiss of health
Where wide-cheeked pitchers burst with ruddy foam
And cob-webbed jars are damp with mustiness.
And those that tread the press with crimson feet
Where whitened ankles flash with beaten gold,
Laugh in the sun with cries of sheer content
While songs of vintage echo from the hills
And round the dripping vats the children throng.

Such joys are not for nothing; surely He
Who bent men's backs will lift sometimes the yoke;
He does not frown forever on His world,
And when men laugh they do not laugh alone.

*Then why not drink, since wine is never sweeter
Than when the bubbles flush the rosy brim;
The pale bride droops, but fast the hour is nearing
When the last faltering torchlight flickers dim,
And in the bosom of the far horizon
The waning crescent melts her silver rim.*

*Then why not laugh, since mirth is never fairer
Than when we feel presentiment of pain;
The rocky pathway climbs the beetling crag-top
From whence one sweeps with eagle-eye the plain:
Dull not that triumph with some dread foreboding,
A lurking rainbow shimmers through the rain.*

WINE OF CANA

*Then why not love, since lips are soft for pressing,
Then why not live when life is new and sweet;
The hour is not yet come when I must clamber
With burdened shoulders up the hooting street:
Go, wash the wine jars with untainted water
And lay the vintage at the Master's feet.*

MARY

THE Master stood in the narrow street
Where Lazarus lived of yore,
And his eyes were turned to a woman's face
That smiled from the low-beamed door;
Oh, the face was tender and dear to see,
But the Master's was troubled sore.

The long road climbed to the hills beyond,
Dusty and white with heat;
Weary to death was the Master then,
Bleeding and worn his feet;
But there at the threshold his heart stood still,
And he paused in the narrow street.

And often I wonder what dreams he saw
In that face at the doorway dim;
At her parted lips, and her great dark eyes,
Did his vision sudden swim,
While tinier faces leaned from hers
To smile and beckon him?

MARTHA

MARTHA, the sister of Mary, one day in Bethany,
Pressing the curded cheese flakes, paused quite thought-
fully,
Flushed was her brow at the fireplace, red were her
hands,
Dark o'er her shoulders her hair fell, loosely in strands.
White was the floor underneath, but her garments were
soiled;
Noon-tide was coming and Martha since morning had
toiled;
Cool were the grape-arbor shadows that seemed to
entreat
Her to come to the green of the vineyard away from the
heat.

There, 'neath the shade of a fig-tree, Mary, her sister,
sat.

Listening so breathlessly silent she wondered thereat,
Turning her delicate face, half a flush on her cheek,
Up to the eyes that spoke as no others could speak.
Gentle the face that, above her, shone as he smiled,
Resting his hand on her head as if on a child;
Whether he trembled in touching the listening maid,
Martha herself could not tell us,—they sat in the shade.

Then was she troubled, for Martha was weary, and she
Knew all at once that her garments were sweaty to see,
Yet was the dinner not ready, and much was to do,—
Martha, the sister of Mary, who loved Jesus, too.

MARTHA

So, as she stood at the threshold, loudly she cried,
"Jesus, O Master, send Mary to work at my side."

*When he rebuked her for asking, and smiled upon Mary
anew,
Haply, he knew not he did it; but Martha, her sister,
knew.*

THE LADY MAGDALEN

THE Lady Magdalen

Came to the good Lord Jesus,
Her hair was dropping down
Sweet was she with sin;
There was no one else like her,
The Lady Magdalen.

Lord Jesus paused to look,
The solemn good Lord Jesus,
Her hair was dropping down;
White as his parchment book
Was the hand she laid thereon—
Lord Jesus paused to look.

The Lady Magdalen

Bent low before Lord Jesus,
Her hair was dropping down,
Her heart was light within—
There was none more wise than she,
The Lady Magdalen.

ABSOLUTION

ONCE I was bound in slavery
But now my sins have set me free.

No matter what the songs have sung
It is my sins have kept me young;

When cruelly my heart inclined
My own dead sins have made me kind;

It's some are blind, and some are wise,
But only sins have gentle eyes;

'Twas little recked the brittle thong
When my sins woke to shake me strong;

And when I face the certain grave
It is my sins have made me brave. . . .

In Heaven beside the jasper sea
The sins of Christ will pardon me.

PISGAH

By every ebb of the river-side
My heart to God hath daily cried;
By every shining shingle-bar
I found the pathway of a star;
By every dizzy mountain-height
He touches me for cleaner sight,
As Moses' face hath shined to see
His intimate divinity;
Through desert sands I stumbling pass
To death's cool plot of friendly grass,
Knowing each painful step I trod
Hath brought me daily home to God.

PRAYER

THOSE who in their hearts have known
The living God's eternal throne,

Who have beheld the flaming sword
Leap in the flash of human word,

Who carry in their deep-set eyes
Quiet immortalities,

Whose feet have walked with scarce a sound
Wonder-haunted homely ground,

For whom each feathered throat that stirs
Is one of heaven's choristers,

Who look and look and always see
Men's hearts beneath their mummery,

Whose thoughts are instant everywhere. . . .
What need have such as these for prayer?

IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

CURSES upon him, men of Nazareth,
For this high sacrilege of holy church
And desecration of our synagogue.
What, shall a wandering gipsy blasphemer,
Dream-visionsed and a friend to rogues and tramps
Idling away the busy crowding days
When men are working, set the town on ears
And turn the village upside down with talk
Of God's glad kingdom come again to men?

Have I not known him, son of a carpenter,
Setting a shoulder to his father's trade,
Grimy with sweat and straining with an adz
To smooth the toughened trunk of olive-wood,
Weary with dragging up the rocky street
The beams of half the houses of the town,
And shall this slender stagerer beneath
Such clumsy burdens lift the whole round world
Up to the dizzy pinnacles of God?

Have I not seen him, racing o'er the hills—
Hair in the wind, with sun-browned boyish face,
Chasing the clouds and shepherding the sky,
And shall this thoughtless friend of mountain birds,
This idle playmate of the bees and gray
Sleek-coated foxes, rule Jehovah's throne
In everlasting glory down the years,
And from the buttressed Zion of our faith
Appal the courts of Cæsar and of Baal
With the dark shadow of a bloody sword?

IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

Messias when he comes is king of kings,
But Jesus would be emperor of the poor;
Messias flames a whirlwind of God's wrath,
But Joseph's son proclaims that God is love.

"Love," does he say? Could I but reach his cheek
He soon would know the wage of blasphemy
To brave within God's holy synagogue
The village elders with his heresies
And artful mouthings of the prophet's word
That he it is Isaiah has foretold
Shall loose the captives, give the blind to see,
And lead the broken-hearted into peace.

What, can he heal us, he who thirsty, drinks,
And hungry, threshes Sabbath corn in ear,
Or faints when weary of the summer sun?
His father needs him; can he find no task
To clothe his brothers, stay his mother's hands,
Or set his sisters singing at their looms,
But he must wander careless, up and down,
Sleep under hedges with his John and James,
Upsetting half the country with his talk
Of love and brotherhood and Father God?

Can he teach me, a rabbi of God's church,
New ways to read the ancient prophecies
Whose eyes grow dim above the yellow rolls,
Whose hands are palsied grasping at the Word;

IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

And he with his young beauty, breathing health,
Lover of men and children's comforter,
Whom women follow as the stars the moon
Across the windy heavens, shall he crowd
Me out the hearts of all our villagers
And pilfer with the turning of a hand
What I have struggled all these years to keep?

Nay, that he shall not. By my fathers' graves
And all the lineage of my tribe I swear
He shall not do it. Old as I am, I vow,
Jehovah helping, that these withered hands
Shall pluck his beard out, crown him with wild thorn,
Throw sand upon his scourged and bleeding back,
And tear his body limb from shining limb.
He will not be so swift for running then,
Nor flash great visions from his sunken eyes.
Those hands that draw men simply at a touch
Shall clasp in darkness crumbling palms of death,
And night forever brood within his brain.

Millions of dreamers stormed as brave as he
The everlasting bulwark of all time,
Setting their aery standards in the breach
And climbing with their silly swords in teeth
Up the great slippery granite sides to die.
Millions of dreamers, and where are they now?
Jehovah liveth, still his ministers
Lift in the Temple pleading hands of prayer,

IN HIS OWN COUNTRY

Emperor and Galilean come and go
And leave their shifting shadows in the glass,
While Aaron's priesthood rule behind the Veil
And holy Tabernacle of the Most High God.

The Temple stands, Jehovah lives, and I
Need no instruction from a carpenter.
My curse upon him for his blasphemy.
Seize him and stone him, men of Nazareth.

LET NOT THEIR DOUBTS

LET not their doubts prevail at last against me,
I who have set to build a hall of state;
They cannot know, with getting and with spending,
The things to come for which I work and wait.
I hasten slowly with divinest leisure,
Lie in the sun a long day at a time;
With unconcern I watch the wave dissolving
The frail sand-castles of my lonely rhyme.
There are great ships that shoulder down the channel,
There are white gulls that float and dip and sail;
And I with sand that slips between my fingers
Smile as they follow the broad-flung, far sea-trail.

What can they find who scale the gates of ocean
Beyond the sea in those enchanted lands,
So warm and strange, dappled, brown, and lovely
As this elusive swiftness in my hands?

I will arise when I am drunk of sunlight,
Fostered of wind and intimate with earth,
Back to the lengthening shadows of the mountains,
The inviolate snow-fields of the river's birth.
There in the mists that veil the shimmering aspen,
There on the granite pinnacles of time
I shall uprear of stones that make my pillow
The homely hospice of all souls that climb.
To sound of music made of many voices
Uprose the snowy walls of Camelot
By Merlin's magic . . . my hearth-fires shall kindle
From flaming hearts that burned and knew it not.

LET NOT THEIR DOUBTS

Let not the fears of all the valley-dwellers
Fetter my feet fain of the flint and fern:
I will have done with measuring and weighing,
Shielding no more the candle—let it burn!
It little matters if the wick be wasting,
Sooner or late the thing to do is done;
Let not their doubts prevail at last against me,
Stretched on the sand and brothering the sun.

OUT OF THE DESERT

Out of this little and this nothingness
I will build slowly what cannot be effaced,
There shall come sound of iron hammers ringing
And groining arches like fingers interlaced;
Each youth a king who walks the common kingdom,
Clad in the seamless robe, with lifted head;
Each girl a queen, love's roses in her bosom,
Walking beside him with an equal tread.
I will set song upon the lips of singers
Who slumber still uncalled from out the dust,
I will light fires upon unnumbered altars,
Love shall be honest, justice shall be just.
I have not cried alone within the desert,
Ye go not out to find a broken reed;
I have clasped Him who walks the pillared darkness,
I have not wrestled with Him feeble-kneed.
About my loins I gird a sword that flashes
With lightnings hidden in the marching cloud;
I break above your heads the awful tablets,
And fling the fragments to the wheeling crowd.
Out of such sowing shall come mighty reaping,
Hearts are the fields, and songs the seed I sow:
Ye shall not know until the time of reaping
What hand upheld me, but I know, I know!

I NOW, WALT WHITMAN

I NOW, Walt Whitman,
In the twenty-fifth year of my wandering with invisible
 footstep
Raising no dust in the green paths of heaven,
More alive now than I was in Camden, more so even
 than in Manhattan,
Come from knitting with gossamer windings the hearts
 of many who love me,
Finding me uninvited an intruder into their chambers
Never again to be banished—
I alive now, happy, rejoicing in manhood and in the
 increasing manliness and tenderness of lovers,
Salute you, who thought I could lie still and not re-
 member
The flesh and the body, the roughs as well as the gentle,
(As if when a man has written a book, he will never
 start in on another,
And as if I had not spoken the truth when I told them
 I should not lie still in my coffin,
But should be continually out on the open road).
I have published myself many times since I left the old
 rocker,
And many have thought that what they had written had
 something within it,
But few have acknowledged whose hand has been laid on
 their shoulder.
Here in the West, born of the sun and the prairie,
Like myself in many things, tenderness, courage, devo-
 tion, knowing some things that I knew not,

I NOW, WALT WHITMAN

Yet lacking in wisdom—humble, though, and yielding
with perfect faith to my guidance,
(He himself could not say these things, but I can say
them),
He I have chosen is setting in words not so resistless as
mine were,
Still with a witness of earnest about them

Come, now, ye who have sworn by my pages, making
out of my frankness a cult that I never intended,
Fearing the open, lurking in pestilent cities, and hectic
with milling together,
In what was purest and manliest in me finding excuse
for your ordure,
With delicate fingers picking my body to pieces,
Have done, I disown you!
My most undeniable message.

The perfect body singing its ample justification,
The open-handed candor of the dawn seen through the
interlacing pine-trees:
I take the road, but leave my staff behind.

THE LOOM

TWENTY-THREE and twenty-seven,
Lots of time to get to Heaven,
Though we camp and watch for dawn
Beside the road we travel on;
Time to live and time for love,
Time enough for time to prove
All the healing in the hem
Woven for Jerusalem.

THE MYSTIC

THERE is a power you know not of,
EXCCEPT you know as I have known
HOW one can give his all to love
AND find his all in love alone.

PETER, THE ROCK

THE centuries passed. . . . I said, "I shall not find him:
He has been dead for twenty hundred years.
'Peter,' I called him by the lonely waters,
'Peter, the Rock,' whose sword struck off men's ears."

. . . And then I saw you, steady-eyed forever,
With strong arms still, firm lips, and ready smile;
I called you to me. You flamed in broken wonder,
Finding I had been with you all the while.

ASSURANCE

I WILL go with you step by step
With even stride,
Up a never-ending way
With One beside.

What I have seen, you shall see,—
It is not much,—
And yet one does not always sense
God's touch.

You are a prayer your parents prayed,
And I prayed too;
God has been good, and given us
You.

You shall become a fisher, and seine men,
Making God complete,
And One we love will stand upon the shore
With bare feet.

Jesus, I have lived into a life
Your love,—
Though darkness smite me, have I something left
To think of.

He shall remember and shall not forget,
God keep him now,
My living prayer is strong, for Christ has touched
His brow.

ASSURANCE

We walk together when we are apart;
Our eyes have met,
And what we saw, there is no man shall know,
Nor we forget.

ACCEPTANCE

I CANNOT think nor reason,
I only know he came
With hands and feet of healing
And wild heart all aflame,

With eyes that dimmed and softened
At all the things he saw;
And in his pillared singing
I read the marching Law.

I only know he loves me,
Enfolds and understands,—
And oh, his heart that holds me,
And oh, his certain hands!

THE WAY

Is life less worth the living
Now you have found the way
Of laughing and forgiving
And living out the day?

Suppose Night come the faster
And lamps grow sudden dim;
Love, and face disaster
With laughter, God, and Him.

Matthew, Mark, and Peter,
Lazarus and John,
Knew a thing completer
Than we have looked upon.

Yet, we could mold and fashion,
Could we love as they,
And sense God's perfect passion
With fire inform our clay.

Knock and ye shall enter,
Seek and ye shall find;
Let Earth forsake her center,
But my sure words shall bind.

FOR ONE WHO GOES

I do not wish that you should think,
Touched with this new surprise,
I am not made as others are,
Or see with fresher eyes.

The dark things that to you are dark
To me are just as dim;
The Galilean only knows
My ageless trust in him.

And if some strange things come to pass
Before you knew not of,
It is because my heart is steeled
In his remembered love.

If this be good that we have found,
It cannot pass away;
And partings cannot come between,
Though you go and I stay.

For you may take the mountain trail
And I may take the plain;
But our two roads, where'er they go,
Will cross some day again.

Time cannot wither, custom stale,
Nor even death make end,
To this good thing that we have found
Who call each other friend.

MIZPAH

"The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another."—Gen. 31: 49.

If I should leave you, friend, and go beyond
The touch of hands, the strength of steady eyes,
The perfect understanding of your face,
I go in body but go not myself.

For in the hour of parting we shall turn
Back to the gentle Christ who went away
From all he loved, women and men and babes,
And firm caressing hands and tender lips.

He knew by living what we, too, must learn
Close in his arms who never yet has died,
Whose love outlives his beautiful cold limbs,
And the dim closing of his weary eyes.

I have not always known that Christ still walks
Beside us daily though we do not see,
I did not know that when men dare to love
The living Jesus has an arm round each.

I do not understand, and yet I know
The arms of Jesus have encircled me,
And I have felt his lips upon my own
And seen his eyes' immortal tenderness.

Not to each other but to him keep close,
Each to his labor where his task is set,
And He who brought the two of us together
Will watch between us though our roads diverge.

MIZPAH

A little while,—what reckon we the years
Who have set out upon an endless way?
We shall yet walk together, you and I,
Shoulder to shoulder underneath the stars.

SOLOMON

I SAY that those who have forgot the feel
Of the good God's dirt beneath a grimy heel,
Whose hands are heavy with a signet ring,
Cannot teach me the worth of anything.

I say that those who read within a book
May look quite wise, but that is all they look;
Perhaps some clown may find a better school
Than those who sit the day through on a stool.

And if this be the way that wise men go,
Why, then, the fool knows all the wise men know;
Nay, something more the wise men never guessed—
Why, then, the wise man is a fool at best.

I say the clown in being a good fool
Is wise as he who keeps the village school,
And a child who knows one-half the throstle sings
Is sager than Solomon, king of kings.

UNPARADISED

MOSES, Moses, where thou art
On a lonely hill,
Hast thou heard the shawms of God
Have their holy will?

David, David, leaping down
Low before the Ark,
Hast thou heard young Solomon
Where thou liest stark?

Adam, Adam, driven out
To a desert place,
Go in peace and dig thy grave:
Thou hast seen God's face.

FOR A MOUNTAIN HOSTELRY

IN this lifted quiet place
I have learned anew God's grace,
Grace of mountain-peak and snow,
And the lonely lake below,
Spruce and aspen's gentleness,
And the ruddy sun's caress,
Here where stars are never far
But intimate as lovers are—
Happy he whose trail ends
By the hearth-fires of such friends.

There is more than meets the eye
In this gracious hostelry:
There is something man can find
Only in the quiet mind,
Only in the faith that tells
More than lettered rubric spells,
Only in the heart that knows
More than blazing altar shows,—
In the wilderness have trod
Feet that find their way to God.

Prairie, mountain-peak, and sea
Pentecostal are to me;
And in faces have I seen
Eyes that knew the Nazarene
When He passed them footing slowly
The hushed way to the mountain holy:

FOR A MOUNTAIN HOSTELRY

John from Patmos in the sun
Saw God's love-anointed one,—
Blest be he whose ears have heard
Daily that unuttered Word.

THE GARDENER

Out of an old-world passion
I shape you a new-world song,
And deft are the hands that fashion
Though dark with an ancient wrong:
Yet God is abroad in his garden
And he knows where the stains belong.

He walks in his garden slowly
Like a great man at his ease;
Hushed is the air and holy
In awe of his reveries,
For he is the ancient warden
Who guardeth memories.

I saw Him in his garden,
I stared at him over the wall,
The keeper of Death and Pardon
To bind and loose us all,—
He was only an old man walking,
Gentle and gray and tall.

CREEDS

How pitiful are little folk—
They are so very small
They look at stars, and think they are
Denominational.

AN EPITAPH FOR THE DEVIL

THE Devil is dead and laid in his shroud:
Sprinkle him with holy water,—
Now he knoweth reconciliation.
Before he died he was the cause of not a little
trouble:
Now he is quieter than December snow-flakes.
Think kindly of him, for he did no evil
He was ashamed of;
And he was at least always honest with God.

PRAYER TO THE DEVIL

DEAR Devil, I would pray to thee from out an earnest
heart,
The lone thing in the universe who dare be what thou
art,
Look up from out the torment of thy burning lakes of
pain,
And pity in thy steadfastness us men who fawn and
feign;
For in our cowardice we dare seem neither good nor ill,
And, lagging in the vale, pretend to climb toward the
hill,
Half-men who hug within our breasts each nasty little
sin,
Like rotten fruit still fair without, but nameless foul
within.

NONCHALANCE

WHY is it that I cannot fear
When others are afraid,
But in the lightning's center I
Walk barefoot, undismayed?

Though frail the walls of flesh that hold
They are as granite too,
Thin-carven as a pane of stone
For light to filter through.

When other careful-minded men
Seek prudent shelter, I
With nonchalance of thunder-doom
Assail the splendid sky,

As if I knew how far could reach
The dreadful hand of God,
And just escaped his fingers with
A not unhostile nod.

THE MONEY-CHANGERS

COULD I but see you, Comrade, as that day
You snatched the whip-cord in a wrathful hand
And drove with swift flail of your stern command
The money-changers from their shame away,
Beyond the Temple steps to cheat and pray,
Man-furious in splendid anger stand
Like pillared flame by surge of tempest fanned,
I would not ask you one hot blow to stay.
Long have they bartered in your tenderness,
The smirking Temple-rogues who cheat us now;
Smite with your lash that beats like jagged hail;
Pity them not, for they were pitiless;
Strike in white anger, glad avenger, now,
And in your hand I shall become the flail.

OLIVE-WOOD

THE sky at night is not too large—
In Olivet I found it—
I never knew how small the world was
Till I put my arms around it.

.

Happiness like sand
Through my fingers slips:
I have caught a grain or two
On my finger-tips.

.

When I am here I am not there—
How very queer it seems
That Here, and There, and Everywhere
Are different kinds of dreams.

JOHN

JOHN, my beloved, come with me apart
In this dim garden for a little space.
I cannot rest me though the others sleep;
There is a time to wake them, but not now.

Is it not good to climb this hill to-night
After the glad hosannas in the streets,
The crowding faces, life and men and love,
Here on the slope of the eternal stars
To watch the lights that shine through Kedron's Vale
And 'neath the olives walk alone with God?

'Tis not the first time that we two have walked
Shoulder to shoulder underneath the stars;
Nor yet the last, John, though to-morrow's sun
Should dawn upon you, and on you alone.

Nay, my good brother, loose your fingers' grip.
You could not keep me if I willed to go:
Your heart enfolds me, not your fearful arm—
The lights shine clearer through the dusky vale,
And with their coming, John, we say good-by.

We say good-by, for every road must end,
All pleasant journeys underneath the sun;
Claspt hands are severed, hungry lips must part,
The long night comes at close of every day,
And men must slumber when their work is done.

Nay, it is better,—light is not light alone;
 Were there no shadows, even suns were blind;
 Only by parting do men meet again.

And we have met, John, met in a holy land
 Alone with God in his great silences
 Where never men have ventured—you and I.
 And we have looked beyond the gates of heaven,
 Beyond the stars, beyond the flaming sun,
 Beyond all time, and known that God is love.

Was it not worth it, just to dare to be
 One's simple self, to think, to love, to do,
 And not to be ashamed? To live one life
 Fearless and pure and strong, true to one's self,
 Though the false world were full of lies and hate,
 Where blind men lead each other through the dark,
 Too weak to sin, ashamed of what is good,
 Unable to do evil, thinking it.

But we have dared. David and Jonathan
 Drank no divinelier in courts of Saul
 Than we together in Gethsemane.
 And though to-night I drain the cup of death
 Down to the stinging dregs of Judas' kiss,
 The wine of love lies sweeter on my lips—
 I see the lanterns gleaming. Kiss me, John.

GETHSEMANE

COMRADE, my friend, when tramp of Romans made,
Through the hushed silence of Gethsemane,
Thy soul to waver if 'twere best for thee,
Strongly to meet with Judas, undismayed,
And drain the poisoned chalice of his lips,
That killed thee, or more prudent, flee
Far to some desert cave of Galilee,
Where the hill-fed brook that scarcely slips
From rock to little pool is kinder far
To the parched water-grass that shyly dips
Within the tide its dainty froned tips
Than, in the world of men, the gentlest are—
If thou hadst known, within the olive shade,
How men have scorned thee, since, wouldst thou have
 stayed?

Jesus, dear friend, who loved so gentle-wise
That children lifted up to thy thin cheek
Their ineffectual fingers—as we seek
Through the long years the glory of thy eyes,
And find it not,—Jesus, who loved so well
That strong men followed when they heard thee speak,
Leaving their sagging nets beside the bleak
Wild sea; for whom, unmarked, no fledgling fell
From out the nest, or lily bloomed in vain;
Who heard thrush music like a silver bell
Rise from the road-side hedge, antiphonal,
And stayed the thoughtless hand that would have slain—
If thou hadst known how blind men are and dumb
To all thy pity, wouldst thou, then, have come?

GETHSEMANE

If thou hadst known, dear Jesus, that for thee
Men should lift hands against their brothers, yea,
Should stain those hands with scarlet, ere they pray
At perfumed altars, chanting blasphemy;
Couldst thou have seen men build a temple high
O'er mouldering corpses that with foul decay
Pollute the present with dead Yesterday,
Where money-changers cheat and rascals buy
Their tickets into Heaven, bargaining;
Couldst thou have heard lip-mumblers craftily
Lure through that vast and unsubstantial lie
Men's souls to self-extinction, hungering—
Wouldst thou not, rather, from Gethsemane
Have passed into the darkness quietly?

Hark! Already up the breathless side
Of that lone summit sound the stealthy feet;
The torches flicker; shielding shadows meet
Above thee still,—oh, do not now abide!
Why shouldst thou fling thy glorious purpose there
For knaves to mangle? Moments now will cheat
Them forever; the fields of life are sweet
With unaccomplished fragrance, oh, so fair!
—Forgive me, Jesus, if too yearningly
I seek to touch thy garment's hem in prayer
Across the ages.—Hadst thou been aware
How, in the world-wide Garden of Gethsemane,
Men still with kissing sell thee, crucified
In their own bosoms, wouldst thou, then, have died?

GETHSEMANE

—I will not question. Jesus, thou didst drink
Deep of the cypress cup, and thou didst know
How strangely sweet the dregs are, sinking low;
When that Which Is has melted link by link,
And the pale petals of What Is To Be
Tremble in blooming, through the darkness, so
One wonders if the whiteness stirs, or no;
Then morning dawns, and, unexpectedly,
The Gardener finds that night has blown a rose!
Night holds us now bewildered, and we see
Dim shadow-shapes that shroud mysteriously
The commonest shrub that in the Garden grows;
Morning will come; nor shall I, craven, shrink
Before the cup that thou, dear Lord, didst drink.

FAITH

THE few who love are stronger far
Than all the rest who hate:
So, robed in flame, I do my work,
Accept my cross, and wait.

GOLGOTHA

AND has it come to this? How strange it seems
That after all the shouting so it ends.
A skull-strewn hill, the great sky overhead,
All round about the throngs of little men,
And over there Jerusalem—Jerusalem—
Set like a queen upon a burnished throne,
With one white jewel in her perfumed breast,
The Temple, where men's prayers go up to God
Even now as on the Hill of Death I wait
To stretch my weary arms upon their cross.

(One moment now to take my leave of life?
I thank thee, comrade, for thy gentleness.
The Roman soldiers have been kind to-day,
Their eyes are milder than their wont to be;
And as I stumbled up the rocky path
I felt one lift me as I fell to earth.
His hand was warm and lingered over mine
An instant as he raised me,—was it thou?
I knew it from the gruffness of thy voice:
Man's love for man is something, after all.)

“To take my leave of life.” Dimly I see
The hill-side black with peoples, hear a sound,
Hoarse as the cry of breakers in a storm
When winds are angry with the fisher-craft,
Thunder upon me. Can they hate me so?

GOLGOTHA

But now they fade from vision, and I seem
To ride once more along the palm-strewn street
Where little children press to touch my knee
And men and women arch my way with song,
Strong men with muscled bodies warm with life,
And women tender-eyed and rich in love;
That was my day of triumph, life and love.

And now I leave them, all the golden days
Of hands that touch and eyes that answer mine,
The quiet evenings, and the hush of dawn,
The fields that faint with lilies, street and hedge,
Grim Galilean caverns, and the water cress
Fringing the hill-stream, dusty winding roads,
The waving wheat-fields, and the arbor shade,
Thrill of warm bodies sleeping by my side,
And arms of comrades thrown across my breast
In the dim mornings when the dew is chill
And the first sparrow twitters to his mate
Beneath the vineyard trellis where they nest.

(John, my beloved, thou at least art true,
More than a brother, even though we part;
Stand thou before me, when they raise me up,
And I shall dream that thy dear head still lies
Upon my bosom, and forget the pain.)

Strange that I fear no evil, now that Death
Draws nigh to fold me in his long embrace,

GOLGOTHA

But rather do I feel a wondrous calm
As if the cooling sheets already wrapped
In all the perfumed languor of the grave
This fevered body,—fold me surely, Death.

I would not come again though life be sweet
And fragrant with the lure of Sharon's rose.
'Tis something to have left upon their stems
Some buds unopened, to have lived one life
Rich with the unperfected beauty of great love,
And passed yet potent to what after comes,
Leaving still undeciphered half the truth,
Till on Golgotha's of their homely tasks,
Beset with trivial thorns from day to day,
And sneered by scoffers or unnoticed quite,
Men learn to shoulder bravely each his load
And come to know, as I do, what is love.

(Yes, I am ready. Nay, I know, my friend,
Thou must obey when Pilate gives command;
God's will be done: for thou hast wife and child,
And men just live for others,—as I die.)

THE ONE

WHEN He went out from Jordan
To walk in Galilee,
He went with those who loved him,
The Twelve, and then the Three.

When He was in the Garden
Before the cup was done,
He found the Three were sleeping
And called aside the One.

And when 'twas almost finished,
Down from the bloody Tree
He found the One beside him
And His heart leapt to see

The One, the more than brother,
Who on His heart had lain,—
Knew only that he loved Him,
And felt no more His pain.

THEY HAVE NOT LOWERED HIM

STRONG in defeat, because you dared to say
What others dream of only to forget,
Glorious failure,—upon Golgotha yet
You hang, with wan-blanchèd cheek and gray
Drawn lips that moan, “Forgive them; they
Know not the thing they do.” The centuries fleet,
But still the blunderers transfix thy feet,
And press the thorn yet deeper as they pray.

Stranger than Lazarus who thrilled to hear
Through the deep, death-like trance thy tenderness,
Or blind men clearer-eyed than Pharisees,
Or melodies that haunt a deafened ear. . . .
That worshipers in smug forgetfulness
Leave thee to hang and mock thee from their knees!

THE BUILDER: I

SMOOTHING a cypress beam
With a scarred hand
I saw a carpenter
In a far land.

Down past the flat roofs
Poured the white sun;
But still he bent his back,
The patient one.

And I paused surprised
In that queer place
To find an old man
With a haunting face.

“Who art thou, carpenter,
Of the bowed head;
And what buildest thou?”
“Heaven,” he said.

THE BUILDER: II

You think it strange that I, an aging man,
Here in this lonely village hew my beams
And set the flat-roofed houses straight and true,
Yet ever with a something in my face
That makes you love me, even though I'm old;
How should an old man teach a boy to love?

Aye, lad, we'll rest, and clear a little space
Here in the shavings underneath the tree—
How softly that green vine has faced the sun,
The clusters ripen, there's a sparrow's nest,
I think the lilies never were so fair.
The goats are driven through the narrow streets,
The weary oxen leave the threshing-floor,
And there's the new moon like a silver sail.

Oh, I have sailed upon a magic sea,
And heard the winds that blow from the new moon
Across the waters move with wondering—

Boy, you have served me; if you were my son
I do not think you could be tenderer.
And I have marked the question in your face
Many long days you never spoke at all
But set a stouter shoulder to the beam
Because I stumbled lifting it in place,
Feeling the old wound in my side afresh.
I was as strong within my father's house—
He was a carpenter—I had my trade of him.
Remembrance of him and of my mother's face
Crowds round my heart: to-night you shall be told.

THE BUILDER: II

There was a young man, such as you are now,
Filled with great wonder at the winds and hills,
Sturdy of back, laughing, and fleet of foot,
Yet hiding a great yearning in his heart
For the good touch of women and of friends.
Lettered he was only in humble ways,
Yet knew the ancient language of his race
And pored above the parchments lovingly
Upon the house-top near the twilight time,
Reading of Abram in the land of Ur,
Of Moses in the courts of Pharaoh,
Of Samuel and the voice that called
And how he late anointed Jesse's son,
Of how Saul loved the young lad in his heart,
And of the arrows shot by Jonathan.

One day into the village came a Greek,
Hungry and fleeing, whom the carpenter
Took to his house because he once had fled
Into another country years before;
And when the fugitive prepared to go
He took from his own breast a parchment roll
And gave it to the young lad of the home,
Saying, "My friend, I leave thee living bread
For those that hunger dumbly after Truth.
There was a good man whom they judged to death
Because men loved him for the word he spoke,
Saying he had no fear but to do wrong,
No aim in living but to speak true.
He drank the hemlock, but his words are here

THE BUILDER: II

Written in love by one who loved him much;
Behold, I plant truth like a mustard seed
Within thy heart, to cover all the earth.
Take it and use it as the word of God."

So saying went the wanderer from the town,
But the young man remembered all he spoke,
And knew the parchment was from Sinai.

Then came upon him the awful immanence
Of understanding out of visionings,
And he was caught up in a fiery cloud
Of all the dead undying prophecies
That stirred the hearts of those whom men have slain
And after worshiped, knowing them from God.
And as he went about the village street
He saw new meanings in the children's play,
The shepherd's labors, and the house-wife's toil,
And love of men for those who yield them peace.
He laughed among them, wrestled ruddily
With his hale comrades, helped the vintner tread,
Rejoicing with his father in snug beams
And well hewn rafters; but his mother knew
Upon the Sabbath how he sought the hills
And made the barren slopes his synagogue.

Then was his vision shattered by a voice
That cried upon him in the wilderness,
Saying, "God's Kingdom is near at hand";
And he went out among the country folk

THE BUILDER: II

Speaking the truth of God's love unto man,
And how His Kingdom was within the heart,
And man should love his brother, knowing him
His kingly comrade and good comforter.

Then did the elders murmur at his speech,
Saying such words were highly dangerous,
And he should die—so he was judged to death.

But I have had a vision in my time
As here in this lone village I have bent
Through forty years, and now you at my side—
I think it set God's peace upon my face—
And this I tell you, now that night draws near,
And you shall be a witness of the dream.

I thought one hung upon a cross all day
Upon a hill and faced the blazing sun
And heard the thunder of the waves of hate,
Yet only saw his mother's stricken face,
Three mourning women, and one fearless friend.
Then all was darkness, and he cried aloud,
"My God, why hast thou left me, even Thou!"
Then came forgetfulness and gracious peace.

I thought in time the darkness lifted up
And pain came back into his battered hands
And a great fire burned deep within his side;
Then a low voice that whispered in a tomb:

THE BUILDER: II

“Father, my God, thou knowest of our love
And now I heard him in the utter dark
Calling me forth into the green of day.
Thou knowest all the splendor of that cry
That shattered to me through the walls of sleep
And dragged me upward even to his arms.
In our white town where my dear sisters sit
There is no comfort like they laid away,
And the faint myrrh is sweet about him still.

“Oh, God my Father, grant that my strong lips
Shall blossom on him red as our deep love,
My arms cleave to him and my heart awake
Remembrance of old stirrings of the blood,
My hands bring healing, and my feet yield life.
He is so strong, so young, so brave, so true,
He has within him all the goodly springs
Unsquandered and unwasted, deep and clear:
He cannot die because of one red day.
Even the Roman turned aside the blow,
Sparing the shining beauty of his limbs;
The spear has pierced him, but the tip was love.
He cannot die, he is not dead, not dead.

“See, I have come, my Father, past the guard,
I waited for the lightning and the storm,
The shuddering earth that shook aside the stone
And let me in to call upon his name.
And I have warmed him, lips and breast and all,
Given my youth and all the strength of love,
He cannot die, he is not dead, not dead.”

THE BUILDER: II

I thought there came a light within the dark,
A little radiance and a growing flame,
A flutter of the eyelid and a slow deep breath,
The dead lips stirred and met the lips that clung,
And life came back within the arms of God.
Then he that was sore wounded unto death
Knew his good friend and said, "I have but slept."

With morning stooped a woman to the tomb
Where two men sat, and she became afraid
And ran to tell the others, weeping sore
That he was gone whom she had come to bathe.

I thought within a garden once she knelt
And tried to touch him whom great love had healed
But he cried out and gave her not her will,
Whereat his heart went dead for a great space
Because he loved her with exceeding love
And would have wed her for the love he bore.

I thought he showed himself among his friends
Within a room where one felt of his hands
And knelt before him, crying, "Thou art he";
Or on the shore he showed them where to cast
As in the days before the great red day,
And one upon the sand cried, "Thou art he."

And then because he knew his work was done
On that high hill where he had hung till dark,
Proving that he was steadfast unto death,
Giving his life as witness to the truth

THE BUILDER: II

That men so loved that they could die for love
And set a witness on the hills of time;
Because it seemed that he had suffered much,
And he was young, and life held something still,
And God had tried and found him to be true;
Because he knew that he had done enough
And God was strong to finish what he left,
Leading men's hearts to that high sacrifice
As to an altar,—so he met his friends
And one day left them, passing from the hill
Where he had told them much of goodly cheer.
Then to a far country made his unknown way
And builded flat-roofed houses straight and true,
Yet never spoke of what he left behind.

For then it seemed he found another Truth
Beside the one he learned on the high hill,
That to build houses is a work of God,
To set them level, raise them square and strong,
Where children may find shelter, and love nest,
And women spin, and men smile in their sleep;
That Labor is a worship fair as Love,
And God is but a Master Artisan
Who builds a Temple in His Universe
Alike within men's hearts as in the sun.

So as his shavings scattered from his plane,
"They are my prayers," he said half-smilingly;
And as he set a house-beam in its place,
"I am like God," he said, "Who high in heaven

THE BUILDER: II

Hangs the great ridge-pole of the Milky Way”;
And when there came a boy to learn his trade,
He loved him with exceedingly great love
Because he seemed unto him as a son;
And as he taught the lad to fashion straight,
“He is the priest who knows the false from true,
And he shall shape anew a living God
And never know the thing that he hath done.”

Behold, my lad, the evening star has come,
And these old wounds within my hands grow fresh—
I hurt them once when my great hammer swerved,—
I cannot talk the night away as once
When I was younger, yet these arms of mine
Have some good labor left within them still.

So now, good-night, I leave you to your dreams.
God keep you, boy; to-morrow brings us work,
And work is blessing and a house of peace.

UPON THE VATICAN

I AM a Jew, amenable to your law
That here upon the Vatican I die
To make a Roman festival. 'Twere well
If ye should bind me firmly when ye bind,
Head down, arms and legs thrown wide. Drive deep—
Perhaps such searching nails may find the truth.

Ye need not shrink; no longer is my hand
Instant to anger; my sword has dulled its edge.
You will permit, my masters, out of grace,
A fisherman whose hands have mended nets
A little while to bring his fish to land,
Brown memories and little silvery thoughts:
I was not much for talking in those days.

Not much for talking, but I loved him deep;
Not even John, lad of the shining hair,
Dared leap to meet him walking by the sea,
Or knew that little trick of hand and arm
That tossed the shimmering beauty on the shore.
On me he said his secret house should stand,
The Church Invisible that holds men's hearts
Like nesting birds within the clefted rock.
Simon I was, but now I am the Rock.

Aye, even though I hear the drunken populace
Of an ensanguined Rome loll to applaud
Yon purple emperor whose most holy zeal
Is ridding his world of Christian infidels,

UPON THE VATICAN

Through drooping vine leaves, insolent with song,
Pampered by slave-girls, this, this is not Rome!
There is another Citadel of God,
And it is builded on no shaken sands
But on immense and granite permanence.
Simon I was, I am, I am the Rock.

Out of much testing is the center proved,
The corn threshed in the ear, and quietly
Man grows to understanding like a child
Grateful at last for that swift chastening
Which healed him worthy of his Father's house;
For though he enter on belated feet
Creeping at midnight through the silent halls
To that one room prepared, the grace of God
Like to a mother waking, calls his name,
"I knew your footfall; welcome home, my son."

O Grace of Christ, white nester of the heart,
And brooding Dove whose silence is its song,
Not flesh and bone have whispered of the truth
But faith alone reveals the living God.
But faith, what faith? Not only that which bows
In acquiescent silence at the shrine
Ablaze with constellations, but the wrestling soul
That meets each day its wan Gethsemane
And just wins through to anguish, brokenly.
He knows not peace who may not stride the storm.
And I who failed him, left him hedged with thorns,
Beaten and mocked and brave and shadow-eyed,

UPON THE VATICAN

Him the dear lover, comrade, teacher, friend,
The man who burst the ancient dread of death
And by great loving beat the darkness down,
I who had heard three times the cock that crew
And knew he loved me not alone for this
Great, golden body and impetuous faith,
But loved me best when I denied him most
And called me to him with still patient eyes
Jesting at sorrow—I know, I know at last.

He is the Christ, I say not *was* but *is*,
The quiet walker of the windy stars,
Familiar with his immortality
And unabashed by cocks that crow him nay,
Young as creation, ancient as the hills,
Walker of deserts, coucher with the slain,
Lips of the lover, mother's feeding breast,
Doubter and doubt, and everlasting aye,
The hound of heaven, wanderer of God.

For if a man have power to save his world
By loving much, how shall we think it strange
If he return to walk again with men
In every land, in every century?
This do I know, who have seen many lands,
That down the gray traditions of the years
Walks many a wanderer with a face like his,
And I have knowledge of the road he came.
The grace of God will walk his world again;
Men shall not lack the comfort of God's kiss.

UPON THE VATICAN

“Remember this,” he spake and broke the Bread,
“Ye whom I loved that ye might know the way
To scatter friendship through the hearts of men:
Whene’er ye break the bread of comradeship
Whether in homes where children laugh and cling,
Or with the aged sitting with their dreams,
Or with the young, the strong who take the shade
Where the mown grass dries in the ruddy sun,
That I am Love, and ye shall find my face
Reflected in the eyes of those you love
And in great longing know that I am there.
I am the bread that fills you day and night,
I am the wine of perfect friendliness;
And whosoever shall remember this
Memorial of parting in a quiet room
Where twelve dear friends gave each the kiss of peace,
Shall hold his own Last Supper in my name.
As I have loved you, friends, feed thou my sheep.”

And yet not this could compass me with wings
Upon this hill where I shall meet my death
Head downward swooning on a bloody cross:
What should I fear who have beheld my God?
I am an old man, yet youth is in my heart
Who have discerned with younger eyes the truth.
There are strange things that falter at the sense
Of sight and hearing, things we cannot touch,
And scarcely even know, till in a flame
Sudden there bursts a sense within the sense

UPON THE VATICAN

Of hearing, seeing,—and men name it death.
How shall one chart that chronicle of faith
Whose hands are touching parchment and pen alone?
A traveler sets out upon a distant road,
Finds an inn, pays his host, and sleeps,
And all night long the road runs by his door.

To-day Paul dies, wrapped in a sheet of flame
In this same festival of Lupercal;
His body will shed ash upon the wind.
Paul says that in the judgment of the dead
The dust shall quiver, bodies rise again
In old habitual flesh and blood and bone
Familiar . . . I do not hold with Paul.
For in a life-time I have outgrown my shell
Over and over, cast aside the clay,
And am not now the same in any part;
If bodies rise, which body will return?

Nay, Paul is wrong; he never talked with Him
Who swore the soul may pass but never die,
Entering again such house as time shall raise
Fit for his dwelling, but never the old walls;
For when the beams decay, we build anew,
Remembering the old home and its graciousness
Of thronging threshold and of sheitering roof,—
Who would put new wine into musty jars
Except the fragrance of the musk be there?

UPON THE VATICAN

Nay, Paul is wrong; he hath not seen his God
As I have seen Him walking in the dim
Young twilight near the open tomb. . . .
Ashes to ashes, but spirit walks in flame.

There shall come men who will obscure the truth,
Saying the body, as Egyptians do,
Must be preserved against the day of doom,
Or the soul perish. . . . The soul can never die.
For though the body molder stone by stone
And in three days dissolve to whence it came,
Insensate earth and groping root of tree,
The spirit walks with peace upon its lips,
Returning to those who, waiting in the flesh,
Have yet clear eyes to see beyond the grave,
And know no partings and no distances
But only that their love is deeper now,
More tender-true, more near, more intimate.

This is the victory of Christ in death
That many dreamed like Socrates the truth,
But only He first shook aside the tomb
With the glad triumph of a known return.
Take care ye know Him when he pass you by.

. . . And with this cast I draw my net to land.

DAWN

THERE is a Watcher on the walls of Time
Who waits the coming day;
From headland to blown headland spreads the flame,
And Troy is far away;
Helen has led her maidens to the tower,
Leda's sons are clay;
Hector's body lies a broken flower,—
The Watcher waits away!

When shall it dawn, the day of perfect peace,
The King come home to rest?
The Watcher waits, the dawn is far away,
Hector is slain, and Helen's lovely breast
Flowers with the May;
Paris lies low, Achilles cannot stay:
From headland to blown headland leaps the flame,—
The Watcher waits away!

There is a Watcher, and he will not fail;
He sees, beyond the dark,
A little light that climbs like a dim star:
His great, glad voice, oh, hark!—
“Waken, ye sleepers, Ilium is dust,
Lift up your voices, strike the hillsides dumb;
Even while ye were dreaming of the war,
The King of Peace has come!

THE SEVENTH VIAL

THESE are the days when men draw pens for swords
Hurling hysteric bombs of epithets.
And girding on the glory of great words,
Storm the embarrassed parapets.
Words, words,—“Democracy!” they cry,
Who pass their neighbors with averted eye.

America, my country, not with the lesser love
Do I, thy son and lover, set the flame
Cleansing thy shame,
But only that I know what love is molded of,
That here for us in these United States
Where still the dullard prates
Of the propitious fates,
Democracy as yet is but a name!

A name for demagogues to juggle facilely,
A tinsel ball to catch the crowd and mock it
While deft confederates with razor-edge set free
The staring burgher's plump distended pocket.

The trumpet blows to war and youth upstarts
With shaken hearts,
Stirring to all old splendors of the past,
Knowing that we are heritors of glory
Whose names shall stand in story:
The die for us irrevocably is cast.

THE SEVENTH VIAL

For youth has never shrunk to pay the price
Of the recurrent sacrifice.

It is youth's prerogative to do
What gray age tells them to,
With song upon our lips
Facing the last eclipse;
Death never waits to summon young men twice.

Youth is ready to lay down
Strength of foot and body brown,
Glow of life and red of lip,
Supple knee and clinging hip,
Sting of health and gracious breath,
All to weave a crown for Death.
Youth is ready, stripped to run
That immortal Marathon.

And so the khaki clothes glad limbs once more,
The rifle's shouldered, and the quick-step starts,
The old flag billows, deep male cannons roar,
And honor draws our hearts.
To die for one's country, that is bliss—
But what of this:

*Old men have a bitter tongue,
"So were we when we were young;
Now that we have wavering knees,
Blessing fall on subtleties!*

THE SEVENTH VIAL

Just as the sense of all it meant struck home,
The broken bodies spumed with bloody foam,
The tousle-headed boys who scarcely knew
One of life's joys before death thrust them through,
Staggering women learning how to plow
And children starving for milk of one lean cow,
 There in the crowd upon the unshamed Square
I saw two men and a woman with red hair.
Her white arms gleaming, with dimples in the bends
Familiar with the shoulders of her friends;
Two men, one woman, but they scuffled there,—
Let Europe tumble, ten million young men die,
“Aw, quit your kidding, you're the lucky guy,
This is the life”—it's midnight in Times Square!

 Not in Manhattan only
 But in lonely
Forgotten villages upon the plains
Men still are forging their invisible chains
 Out of misplaced endeavor
That bind them to hoar Caucasus forever.
America is still the awkward boy,
 Hobbledehoy,
Knowing no joy except in birds' nests or the mood's
 employ,
Stranger to heart-sweetening laughter,
Tooting horns and running after
Each his own peculiar grafter,
 Reckless in all things, trying all by turns,
 Here hits the saw-dust trail, there a negro burns,

THE SEVENTH VIAL

Mortgages his home to buy a motor-car
Still hitching wagons to a darkened star,
With something still of the strange whim of boys,
Thinking that man most great who makes the loudest
noise.

And yet we need not be the thing we are.
There is a greater war,
The War at home!
And though we go abroad
With the avenging rod
Calling ourselves from God,
Upholding now the desperate hands of France
In crater-scarred advance.
And though to Mother England now we swarm
Under her wearying arm,
And though to Russia we in faith extend
The warm hand of a friend,
Restore to Belgium all of what she lost
Haloed in holocaust,
And though we win and break the brutal Hun—
Our task will not be done,
But just begun.

There is a War, a greater War, at home,
Not whistled by shrill fife,
But still a war to knife,
For more than life.

THE SEVENTH VIAL

America has need, oh, pitiful, utmost need
Of the old breed here in our weakened seed
The spawn of mighty fathers, Jeffersons and Lincolns,
Washingtons,
And shrewd-eyed "Richard" with his almanac.
We have lacked something, we oblivious sons,
Something we must win back.

A few there are by some direction sent
As if our fathers still were provident,
And gave us in this hour, a president.
Thank God, thank God for Wilson!
He has set
His hand against all bluster and it dies,—
The ancient verities are with us yet.

This is the hour I saw the angel stand
The seventh vial in his hand.

This is the Armageddon prophet-told
When seven hills give up the dead they hold.

When shines the angel in the bloody sun
And in the darkness Cæsar is undone.

This is the day the flaming planet swings
Back to the sun from lonely wanderings.

THE SEVENTH VIAL

And this the revelation shall not cease
Till ye have seen the perfect Prince of Peace.

So, oh, my country, follow, follow far;
Though this is war, there is another War!

ARMAGEDDON

THE gods of war have tossed the apple of death
Into the peaceful laps of reluctant nations,
The clock of Europe is set back six thousand years
And the Servian peasants leave ungathered harvests
To be mown down in an unnameable garnering.

I see a sorrowing face lifted in a far garden,
I hear a voice upon a lonely hill,
Nay, I see uncountable millions of faces
Of women and huddled children and helpless old people,
And the pale unafraid faces of strong men going to be
cut down.

It is the desperate rally of expiring feudalism,
It is the last crucifixion of the rights of man,
It is the resurrection and the day of judgment
Pronounced upon the war-gods by unescapable wisdom
That men may learn the imperative necessity of avoid-
ing war.

PATINS

(I cannot imagine what I do not remember.)

THERE is a crag in Thessaly
Where the grass is green
Like the greenness in my heart.

. . I am very far from you,
And I cannot find my sheep.

This I know, that when the door of the temple opened
And the high priest came down to the edge of the water,
I could almost have touched him.

If it were not for the sound of the camels breathing,
I should think there were not even nearness.

Hand round the great cup with the horn handle,
Lady of the broad girdle;
I have brought home buck-antlers.

If it should be as you say
Then the pigeon shall fly home by evening,
But do not tarry longer than the hour of the moon's
rising.

Stand where the street branches on the way to the
Circus;
But do not look at me in the procession;
I shall be leading the chanting.

PATINS

I think, when he snores like that,
That his horse is impatient.
It would not do, though, to drop the hanging.

You say you have slaughtered the chief of the neigh-
boring nation:
I will believe you when you bring me his tooth of black
agate.

It is enough, Madame, I begin to understand you.
I regret the position in which I think you will find him;
He had a sweet treble.

When the lash eats, I think it will not be forever.
Last night I thrust the lentils out at the oar-lock while
the sentry was drowsing.

When the ripe dates fall to the ground for lack of
plucking
I will set my hand to the window,
And there will be no more sleeping.

The black cow to-day would not cross with the others,
And all underneath her the turf was quaking:
It will be a sign of the faring.

The wall, my lord, is very high,
But will it keep out folly?

If her breasts were fuller she would make no better
model,
But I cannot use such lashes for my Madonna.

When the great conch blows I must leave you,
For the gods when they are carven of green jade
Are inscrutable.

I do not know why that star should have a way of
looking
As if he could hear us even among the green rushes.
To-morrow night I will bind him with the thong from
my loin-cloth,
But to-night there is time for only loving.

You think they are dancing around the May-pole:
I tell you I have seen that dance before,
And it is not for nothing it is pointed with an acorn.

Through subterranean corridors beneath the wooded
mountain I thread the rosy labyrinth of warm and
yielding walls,
Seeking, seeking. . . .

There were but six steps that led down to the judg-
ment-chamber,
Yet it was the fourth step was his undoing.
To-night the door of your pavilion may be left un-
guarded.

PATINS

I met my love in the morning. . . .
She was coming home at day-break,
And her eyes were starry.

All I know is, the touch of an ax on the nape of the
neck
Is soft as the falling of snow-flakes between two silent
houses.

Love, if they should tell you I am fallen, do not believe
them,
For even were I to meet the black bane it would be but
my way of returning,
Never to leave you again though an hundred battles
were calling.

Even though your body blazes in this red morning,
Forget the sea of faces where clenched hands are tossing,
And in a little while we shall be together
Beyond crucifixion.

You came to meet me, yet I tell you,
It is not the first time you have seen me.
If it were, why did you come so quickly?

AN INCANTATION

BUILD the wigwam close and secret,
Bend the willow boughs,
Wind the sacred forest creeper
Through the house.

Heat the glowing granite boulder
Till it scorches brown
The green birch bark we shove under.
Set it down.

Strip him naked, loose his war-lock,
Bind his arms behind;
He shall see the sacred spirits
Of his kind.

Cast upon the fiery granite
In the center ring
Cool clear water brought by maidens
From the spring.

Knit the door with wild-grape tendrils,
Leave him there alone,
Start the mournful tom-tom's wailing
Monotone.

Round the wigwam dusky bodies
Glisten all the night
And the Spirit-maker wears an
Elk-tooth white.

AN INCANTATION

Little fiery lights are glancing
Through the stifling gloom,
And his nostrils sense a subtle
Strange perfume.

Little fiery faces glimmer,
Little hands are laid
Cool against his sweating body
Unafraid.

And the voices of his fathers
Through the shadows dim
All the secrets of the spirits
Tell to him.

Tell him where the tribe shall winter,
What new enemies
Have come creeping through the marshes
On their knees.

Tell him that the Spirit-maker
Walks with Manitou,
That his voice should warn the peoples
What to do.

Louder beat the muffled tom-toms
Through the stifling steam
And the throbbing in his temples
Is like flame.

AN INCANTATION

See, the eastern sky is whiter
And the stars have gone;
Open wide the sacred wigwam
 With the dawn.

Lift him out, the fainting prophet,—
Holy is he now,
For thin spirit hands have rested
 On his brow.

Nevermore the warriors know him
In his empty place,
He has seen the Long Departed
 Face to face.

He has paid the price of vision,
Looked past life and death;
Sacred in the tribal councils
 What he saith.

Manitou has breathed upon him
And his eyes are deep;
And the lips that spirits greeted,
 Secrets keep.

NOT BY SLEEP MAY WAKING DEEM

So real in sleep the shadows seem,
So near and intimate the theme,
In sooth, I know not how it seem
Which is the dream within the dream.

So dim in day do red suns gleam,
So mistily does sunlight stream,
So like a dream that dreamers dream,
In sooth, I know not which it seem.

Whether a dreamer dream or no,
To dreams both dream and dreamer go—
And not by sleep may waking deem
Which is the dream within the dream.

SOMETIMES

SOMETIMES when I go
At night into my room
And press the tiny bulb
That sets it all abloom,

I think that when I pass
Within death's friendly door
There shall be more of Light
Than I have known before.

AFFIRMATION

I CANNOT see the wind, and yet it draws
By secret laws;
The moon I see, yet never that which brings
The waters welling from their coraled springs;
And when the rainbow stands
Over the shimmering lands,
I think some ancient promise lifts up her regal
hands.

I have known many a friend—
Come from the world's end
Down circling stairways of recurring years—
Stand with the startled grace
Of knowledge in his face
And sudden wonder smiting nigh to tears:

So now I dare not say
In any careless way
That death could be so dark as not to bring the day.

THE CYCLE

THERE in the crowd I knew him
And his eyes sought my face
With all the old assurance
Of that other place

Where I once saw receding
His eyes of steady flame,
And heard before we parted
His accents form my name.

Each in his path appointed
Hath breasted bitter years
And still the perfect knowledge
In this one face appears.

Ah me, I dared not tell him
Or lift my hand to save
The thing the grave had yielded
A moment from the grave.

The only thing I carry
Is his comprehending face
Who, well as I, remembers
Our parting in that place.

WITNESS

As once with my divinity
I won the hearts of men,
So now in this humanity
My deathless soul again—
That you might understand me
And know the road I came—
Ascends the Hour appointed
Enrobed in living flame.

HAVE I BEEN SO LONG TIME WITH
YOU?

*Have I been so long time with you, and yet you do not
know me
Whose feet you washed, whose bread you broke upon
the eager hill,
Was I so unlike the Bridegroom who you said would
come in glory
That you wait, and never wonder how my hand is on
you still?*

*You bow the knee, you sip the wine, you breathe my
name before me,
You say I called the dead to life, but slept upon a
stone—
Have I been so long time with you, and yet you do not
know me
Because I laughed and loved you and bade you walk
alone?*

*If I had faith to meet with death and wrest all terror
from him
To prove how far a man may walk who knows from
whence he came,
Do you think the spear could slay my soul or that the
tomb could hold me
Or that I would not come to those who call upon my
name?*

HAVE I BEEN SO LONG TIME WITH YOU?

*I bide my time, I keep my peace, I bind, I loose, I win-
now,
I bear no wounds as witnesses in hands and feet and
side;
I wear instead upon my brow the thorns of your com-
placence,
And through earth's generations my heart is crucified.*

*If you were brave, if you were kind, if you had faith
sufficient,
If you believed the things you say, and died to make
them true,
I should not need to come again returning and returning
Through all the lonely centuries and Golgothas for you.*

*Yet I am He whom seas obey, who take the wings of
morning,
Whose feet are on the mountain peaks, whose messenger
a star—
Have I been so long time with you and yet you do not
know me,
The living God who walks beside and loves you as you
are?*

