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# LYRICS OF LIFE

ADELE CHESTER DEMING





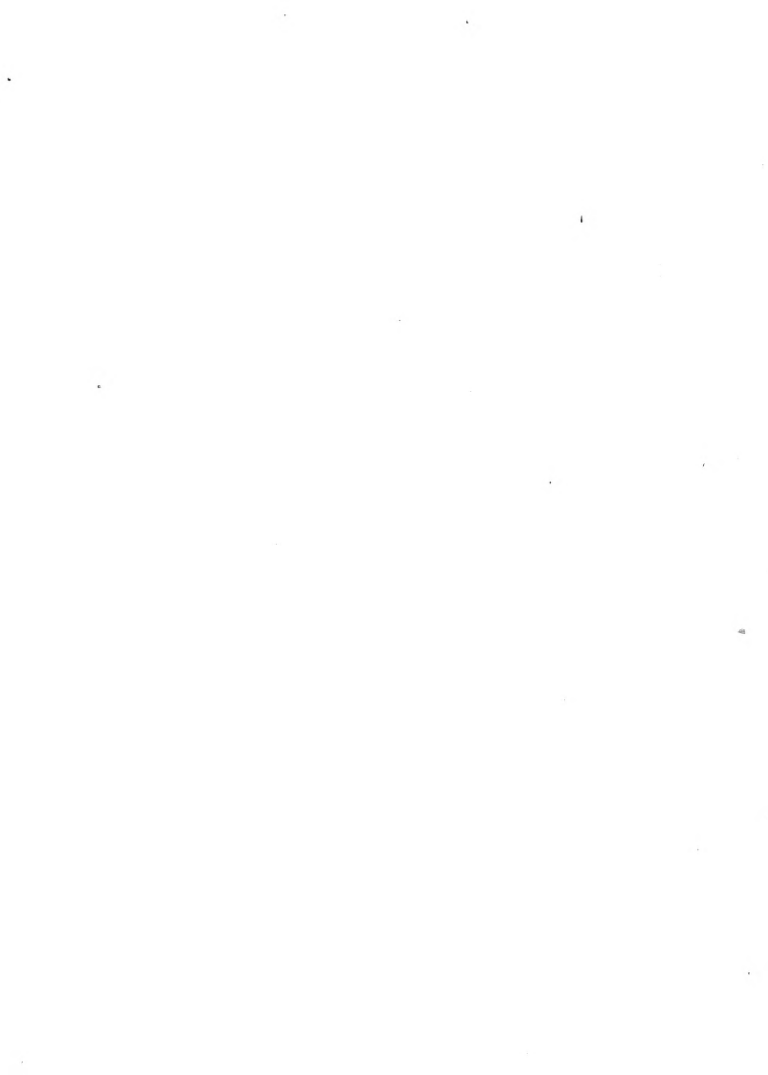
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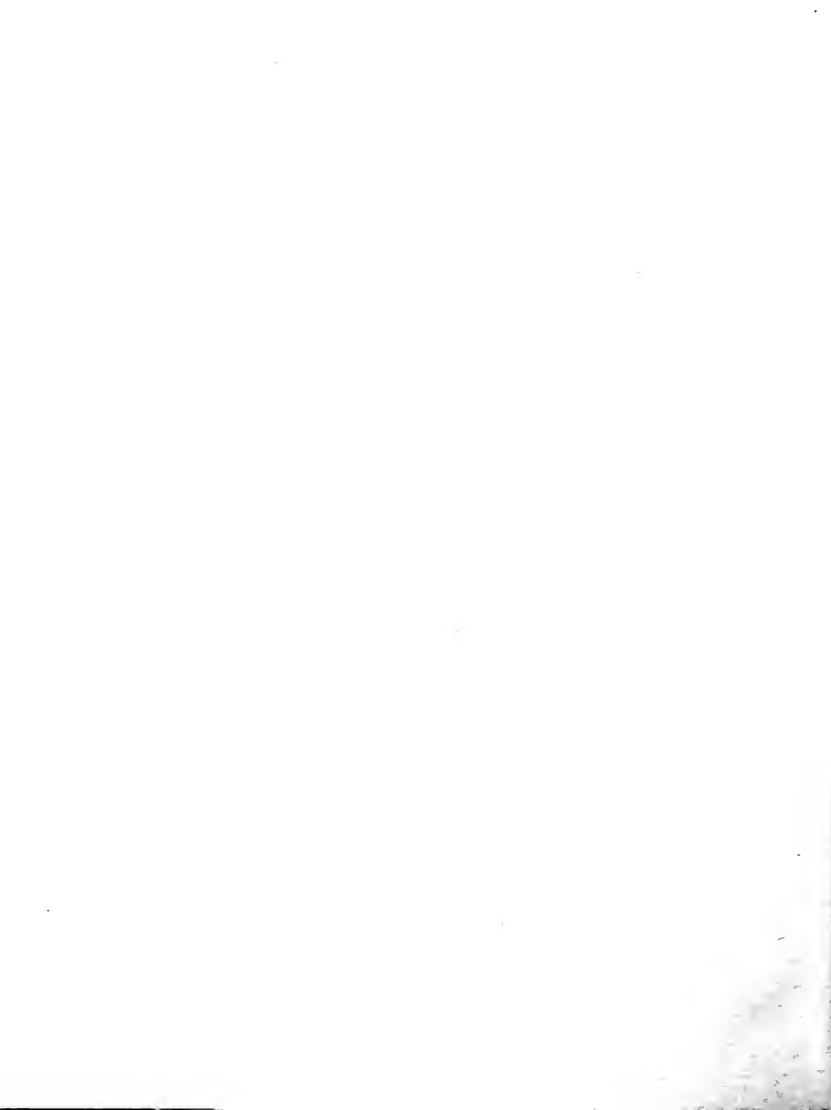
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# LYRICS OF LIFE













*Adelle Chester Deming.*

# LYRICS OF LIFE

BY

ADÈLE CHESTER DEMING

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BOSTON

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## FOREWORD.

The purpose of these Lyrics is to present, in concrete form, fragments of life-thought, which, it is hoped, will appeal to the reader as encouraging, uplifting, and true.

The few notes of unrelieved sadness occurring now and then, are included only as an accompaniment against which the *motif* may sound with more distinct and sympathetic interest.

THE AUTHOR.



## PRELUDE.

I had to walk the valley's dark recess,  
Ere I could lift my dim, aspiring eyes  
To where the sunlit mountains reach to press  
Their kisses on the skies.

I had to find the drooping lily pale,  
Amid the shadows of that valley deep,  
That I might pluck upon the upward trail,  
A rose for those that weep.

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## IDEALS.

Ideals are precious gems which God hath set  
Within the ring of life. Ah, do not let  
The rough world steal them, leaving in their place  
Only the empty setting! Not a trace  
Of earth's dull breath should dim their lustre clear;  
We should protect them, guard them, hold them  
dear;

Not only in our youth, but more as go  
The blighting years, to let endurance show  
That they are real beyond the things of time,  
And therefore priceless. With their light sublime  
They guide the soul to realms of deathless day—  
The very paving stones of Heaven are they;  
But only he the gem-set pathway knows  
Who takes his jewels with him when he goes.

## INSPIRATION.

They only truly live who oft have known  
The joy of sweet return to regions where  
The soul unfettered, earth-freed and alone,  
May breathe again its own pure native air.

From God we came; to God we must ascend.  
Why wait till "Dust to dust" the flesh recalls,  
When far, sweet flights to distant homelands lend  
Recurrent joy ere yet Death's curtain falls?

Who seeks for uplift from the cares and ills  
Of earth, like Moses, shall descend again  
Illumined from God's high and holy hills,  
To bring a message to the sons of men.

## THE LILY OF THE VALLEY.

Flower of the shadow! born where never shine  
The full, bright glances of the laughing sun,  
Toward thee I feel a sympathy divine,  
A tender kindredship which makes us one.

Blossom so fragile—thou canst bravely face  
A keener blast than many a sturdier flower:  
Teach me the courage that is born of grace,  
Inspire in me thy gentleness of power.

Softly I press thee to my lonely heart,  
With trembling lips I kiss thy petals pale:  
Lend thy sweet fragrance to my life apart,  
For we are comrades—Lily of the Vale.

## THE LORD'S DAY.

One day alone of seven days we call  
The Lord's Day, and the one on which we best  
Can worship Him—the King of Days,—and lest  
We should forget His day, we build a wall  
Of sanctimony 'round it; thus we fall  
Below our privileges, for God's bequest  
Includes all days for service, praise, and rest,  
And all are His, since He hath made them all.

O, Thou Creator of my life! On Thee  
The mortal burdens of my days I cast,  
That each may be a day of rest, and free  
From strain of time; my future and my past  
Be blent in one sublime infinity  
Of Alpha and Omega—First and Last.

## THE CHARM OF THE ROSE.

'Tis not thy glowing hue,  
    Enchanting though it be,  
Which holds with charm most true  
    A magic spell o'er me;

Nor yet the rare perfume  
    Of thy alluring breath—  
I know both scent and bloom  
    Will perish at thy death.

'Tis that sweet touch which shows  
    The Master Hand divine—  
'Tis in thy depths, O Rose!  
    The Soul which speaks to mine.

## THE WATERS OF LIFE.

Swing far, O flood-gates of my Soul,  
And let God's mighty waters flow,  
In never-ceasing outward roll,  
With healing as they go.

The channel shall be wide and free,  
That thus the cleansing tide may course,  
Untainted in its purity,  
From Life's unfailing source.

I need not think of loss or gain,  
The tide of Love can bear no lack—  
'Twill bring me balm for mine own pain,  
As it comes ebbing back.



## MY DREAMS.

When thou O Age, shalt rise  
To snatch from out mine eyes  
    Their youthful gleams;  
Let not thy contact blight  
My soul's supreme delight—  
    Leave me my dreams!

And when, O Death, thy hand  
Shall lead me from the land  
    Where truth but seems;  
Retouch my faith-lit sight,  
And, in omniscient light,  
    Prove thou my dreams!

## THE MAGIC TOUCH.

A silent harp in an empty hall  
Is but a useless thing;  
But space is filled, and souls are thrilled,  
When master fingers, fleet and skilled,  
Awaken each responsive string,  
Sweet melody to call.

An empty heart in an idle life  
Is aimless, dull, and cold,  
But purpose new, and power to do,  
Arise when Love strikes clear and true,  
The vibrant chords that slept of old,—  
And Earth with song is rife.

## FROM MY WINDOW.

Down in the valley a cluster of white,  
A cluster of white on the hillside there,—  
How fair are both when the day is bright!  
They glitter and gleam in the sunlight's glare  
Like scattered pearls. From the one, at night,  
The lamps of many a household gleam—  
Twinkle and dance with a merry light;  
Like fallen stars they seem.

But ah, from the other no light shines out—  
Only the pall of the dark instead;  
And the solemn stillness that lurks about  
The settlement of the dead!

## AN OCTOBER REVERIE.

High on the mountain wall, where rocky slide  
And jagged cliff defy the hunter's tread,  
Autumn, with gentle touch, in smiling pride,  
Her rich ancestral tapestry hath spread.

Rare are those tints, in whose soft beauty lie  
The artist's inspiration and despair:  
Silent that loom, whereon no toiler's sigh  
Blent with those hues to make them seem less fair.

Nature expression seeks for God: His mind  
Creates the plan, she only serves His will:  
Behold, O busy man, thy lesson find!—  
Where God presides, there all is calm and still.

## WOMAN'S POWER.

O Woman, wouldst thou shape the world anew,  
Bring justice where injustice now is rife  
And peace where discord reigns? Then keep  
thy life

From jar of outward conflict. Hearken to  
The wisdom born of silence, and subdue  
Thy restless soul unto Creation's plan,  
Which destined thee the counterpart of man,  
And bids thee be to thine own nature true.

To thee man turns for counsel, rest, and cheer,  
Unconsciously, as leaves turn to the light.  
Be still, and keep thy inner vision clear;  
Preserve the magic of thy noiseless might;  
And through thy calm and heaven-illuminated mind,  
Be God's Regenerator of Mankind.

## THE MEETING.

We met in Heaven,—all around seemed white  
And glorified with pure, celestial light.  
We saw the world as from God's holy peak;  
We spoke the language that the angels speak.

We met in Heaven,—yes, for Heaven lies  
Within no boundary lines of earth or skies,  
But is that sacred place where heart and heart  
Make harmony through loving counterpart.

O, Spirit Land! Thy secrets are untold,  
But with my friend this sweet belief I hold,  
That best of all the future has in store  
Is finding we have met in Heaven before.

## THE BASIC LAW.

Do well the thing which lies within thy door,  
And Nature shall adjust the rest for thee.  
Each future task waits on the one before;  
Forever outward to Eternity.

Those who o'er present needs reach out beyond,  
And strive with zeal some distant call to meet,  
Which, more congenial, tempts them to respond,  
Shall find the hell of chaos holds their feet.

But such as will obey, with patient heart,  
Great Nature's law of sequence, she shall bless,  
Causing the sea of circumstance to part  
And clear a perfect pathway to success.

## LOVE'S MAINTENANCE.

Not you and I—just you and I, Sweetheart,  
Can dwell alone in selfish joy apart:  
The love that feeds upon itself must die—  
Not you and I, Sweetheart, just you and I.

But you and I with all the world beside,  
Must live together in a sphere so wide  
That we can feel the universal surge  
Of human need to noble action urge.

Then shall our love in larger love endure,  
Within a kingdom boundless and secure,  
And endless charm through sweet renewal find,  
Where you and I are one with all mankind.



## GOD'S WILL.

Once, crushed by grief, and seeking in despair  
For resignation God's decree to bear,  
I closed my eyes, with hopeless tears o'errun,  
And cried, "O Lord, Thy will, not mine, be done!"

Then to my soul the Soul of Life replied:  
"My will is only man's will sanctified;  
Lift up thine eyes above the dust and sod,  
Thy heart's desire is but the call of God."

Now, with undoubting mind and purpose true,  
I claim my right, approaching God anew,  
And cry to Him whose wish and mine are one,  
"Thy will, O Lord, Thy will and mine be done!"

## TRUTH.

Truth is not seen through Logic's mortal eyes;  
She shines for those whose pinions mount the skies.  
That which the Mind receives, by proof, is small;  
That which the Soul perceives is proof of all.

## GIVE AND RECEIVE.

Wouldst thou the blessing of love's truth receive?  
Then prove thyself to him who would believe.  
To one who asks for bread, give not a stone:  
God's law is just,—truth answers truth alone.

## EMBERS.

Blithe was the song that the robin sung—  
O, but the woods were gay!  
And the world and I were young, so young,  
Only the other day.

Ah! but a blast blew out of the night,  
I know not whence nor how;  
Only, where once Life's fires were bright,  
There are but embers now.

Sighs, and the wonder at what befell,  
Embers and ashes gray;  
And the dream of the things I knew so well,  
Only the other day.

## THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH.

The magic fountain which de Leon sought,  
No famed explorer of the earth shall find;  
Its sacred stream flows in Immortal Mind,  
And answers to the mystic power of thought.  
Eternal youth is theirs who think on naught  
Save that which their Creator first designed;  
And claim the birthright He bequeathed man-  
kind,  
Whom He in His own perfect image wrought.  
And though to-day we dimly glimpse this truth,  
The science of a future age shall show  
That by the path our feet would fain have  
trod,  
A coming race shall find the Source of Youth,  
And daily drink therefrom, till earth shall know  
The ageless children of an ageless God.

## FOREBODINGS.

A mist above the ocean  
Half hides a passing sail:  
Within the air are warnings  
Which hint a coming gale.

Within my heart are yearnings;  
An image haunts my mind;  
My thoughts go speeding onward,  
Like ships before the wind.

“Why comes, O Sea, no message  
From him who sailed from me?  
Vague fears brood o'er my spirit  
As broods the mist o'er thee.”

The surf sends back its moaning,  
Like cries of human pain;  
My heart grows cold with doubting,—  
The mist has turned to rain.

## MOTHER AND BABE.

*Mother:*

I can but dream ere this we two have met;  
Else in the gaze of those deep, questioning eyes,  
What means that shadow of a dim surprise,  
If not to ask, "What, Dear, canst thou forget?"

*Babe:*

Doubt not that we have met before; yes, I,  
Like thee, by means of many a former strife,  
Have worked my patient way from life to life;  
It is the Law: I serve and ask not why.

But now thy face is new—thy bending brow,  
Thy smile, the tender prattle of thy tongue—  
I know them not,—though old, I still am young;  
Instruct me in the earthly things of NOW.

*Mother:*

Seek not to know earth's fallacies—thy power  
Lies in the wisdom born of innocence,  
Which would with worldly knowledge vanish  
hence:  
Such lore has ever been man's worthless dower.

The finished task of time, alone is his  
Who learns the childlike truth, and dwells  
therein:  
Who knows not *how* to know, is free from sin:—  
Of such as thou God's heavenly kingdom is.

## CONTINUITY.

Why say the past is dead? That cannot be.  
Throughout the subtle chain of Destiny  
There are no broken links—each holds the store  
And is the sum of all that went before.

Like children weaving garlands at their play,  
We form our lives—we shape them day by day;  
And Fate is but the scattered seed we sow,  
Which waits the harvest for its kind to show.

The slaves of Circumstance we cannot be  
If we through circumstance will but be free.  
The sleeping soul to resurrection wakes  
By rising victor o'er its past mistakes.

Life does not cease—it only changes form:  
The flower of peace unfolds from out the storm:  
And Destiny means only Good at last:—  
Rejoice, O Soul, in thy immortal past!



## TELEPATHY.

Upon the mystic wires I sent  
A message true, which straightway went  
    To its intended goal—  
A troubled friend in a far-off clime,  
To him it went with help sublime—  
    That message from my soul.

The subtle thoughts that fill the air,  
With silent power are everywhere,  
    And as the ages roll,  
Each one is helping, soon or late,  
To shape the world's predestined fate—  
    These flashes from the soul.

## SOUL-BREATHING.

The sailor knows from the scent of the air  
That blows from land, with its woods and fields,  
That yonder sheltering harbor fair,  
Its happy welcome yields.

So I, afloat on the world's rough sea,  
Breathe deep the air of my Homeland shore,  
And live on the breath of the life to be,—  
When I shall sail no more.

## HER CASEMENT.

I send my gaze through the starless night,  
As straight as a dart might go,  
To where in the distance a pale, pale light  
Streams out on the trackless snow.

It shines from the curtained casement neat  
Of my Lady's dainty bower—  
Her white, white room, as pure and sweet  
As the lily's spotless flower.

And lily lithe is my Love so true;  
Her brow—it is lily fair;  
Her deep, deep eyes are like sapphires blue,  
Like an amber crown, her hair.

My Angel Love! My Star of Night!  
My Love by her white, white bed!—  
My eyes grow dim with a tender light,  
And I slowly bow my head

At the holy thought, till the warm tears start,  
For I know, though I cannot see,  
She is kneeling there, and her pure, pure heart  
Is breathing a prayer—for *me*.

## INDIAN SUMMER.

Voices of Summer and love gone by  
Seem to be haunting the Autumn's track—  
Seem to be calling in woods and sky,  
Pleading, "Come back! Come back!"

Would I recall them—the fair, sweet days?  
Would I recall it—the love that's fled?  
They served their purpose and went their ways:—  
"Let the dead bury their dead."

It is their souls I hear in the air,  
Which are immortal and know no lack,  
Breathing a prophecy, not a prayer,  
Saying, "Come back, Come back."

## AN OLD CATHEDRAL.

(Written to a Friend)

Unique amid our changeful modern life,  
Unmindful of its busy, passing throng,  
Rising from out the tumult and the strife,  
An old cathedral stands, serene and strong.

A mystic halo crowns its sacred tower,  
Which, wrapped within an ancient, mellow haze,  
Lends to the beauty of the twilight hour  
The subtle charm of unremembered days.

Through centuries of triumph and defeat,  
Withstanding time and storm and fire and sword,  
Its Gothic walls have kept their grace complete,  
Guarded by unseen sentries of the Lord.

All heedless of the notes that Progress rings,  
And of the insolence of power less fine;  
Untroubled by the claim of trivial things,  
It proudly glories in its right divine.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thus, midst the fleeting passions of the heart—  
The lesser loves that perish in their youth,  
Our noble friendship stands, pure, strong, apart—  
A living monument to deathless Truth.

## THE HOLY TRYST.

My soul goes out to meet thy soul, dear Love,  
When all the world is still, and out above  
The quiet of the night no sound is heard,  
Save the faint note of some lone, wakeful bird  
Calling his mate, or yonder brook's unrest  
Seeking the comfort of the ocean's breast.  
For when the wheel of Day has made its round,  
And every rasping and discordant sound,  
Which kills the music of the upper spheres,  
Is awed to silence, then sweet Truth appears,  
A sacred courier from out the skies,  
Bearing the incense lit in Paradise—  
Bringing the message meant for me alone,  
And I go forth to greet thee, O, my Own!

What matter that our lips have never met  
In kisses such as mortals know, nor yet,  
Thine eyes looked into mine with warm desire  
Kindled from flames of less transcendent fire?

Our holy tryst we keep full satisfied,  
And through illumined vision, clear and wide,  
Perceive all earthly love is but the dream  
Of this—the spirit love—pure and supreme.



## RESPONSE.

Because one star that held thy gaze on high  
Has fallen from the spangled crown of Night,  
Not all the firmament has lost its light;  
Still other stars are shining in the sky.

Because one heart in Friendship's crown divine  
Has proved unworthy of thy love and trust,  
Still, Faith lies not neglected in the dust,  
And other hearts have sweet response for thine.

Behold the light where once thy star has shone:  
Forever keep through life thy trust sublime;  
And on thy crumbled idols thou shalt climb  
To friendship that is worthy of thine own.

## RECOGNITION.

(On Hearing A. T. G. play the 'Cello)

I heard him play. Swept on the music's flow  
Beyond his art—I marvelled at such rare  
Conception of the soul. "How came it there  
In one so young?" I thought. Then whispered low,  
The mystic answer rose: "Ah, yes, I know!  
It is my own heart's cry, which, in despair,  
Flung on the quiet of the night's still air,  
Finds re-expression through the artist's bow."

I thought it dead; but since its anguished ring  
Sounded my soul's new birth, its own has flown  
Back to the world on consecrated wing,  
To wake Emotion's purer, higher tone,  
And unto all a holy uplift bring,—  
But recognition unto me alone.

“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT  
HAND.”

Sounds of the millions—their cries and groans,  
Their laughter that hides a tear!  
And back of the tumult, the still, sweet tones  
That nobody seems to hear!

Gropings of captives with faces white—  
Slaves that would fain be free!  
And back of the darkness, the pure, soft light  
That nobody seems to see!

Ears that are deafened and sightless eyes;  
Lives that are dreamed away,  
Thinking the real in the seeming lies,  
Taking the night for day!

O, for more wisdom to understand  
That freedom from earthly pain  
Comes just in the knowing that close at hand  
Is the Kingdom we seek in vain!

## EVERYWHERE.

I looked for God in the evening sky—  
I thought His presence near,—  
Till the stars grew dim  
On the mist-bound rim,  
Then I sighed, "He is not here!"

I looked for God in a wayside flower:  
"Behold His face!" I said;  
But, pricked and torn  
By a hidden thorn,  
I fancied He had fled.

I looked for God as I sailed afar  
On the ocean deep and wide;  
Then I thought with dread  
Of its unclaimed dead:  
"He is not here!" I cried.

I looked for God in my unknown self,  
And when I had found Him there,  
I saw by the light  
Of a new-born sight,  
That God is everywhere.

## MY DEAD.

Two friends I had—both went away,  
And one is dead—the world would say;  
But still I seem to see his face  
As oft we meet in spirit space,  
And well I know he is the same.  
So when to-day I saw his name,  
Where Death has carved it deep in stone,  
I could not feel I was alone.

And as I turned to hasten down  
The dusty pathway toward the town,  
I left no tear upon the sod  
O'er him who dwells with me in God.  
But as with flush of vexed surprise,  
One passed me with averted eyes,  
I wept—for once we met in soul  
And now are far as pole from pole.  
"To me, O Life, 'tis he," I said,  
"And not the other—that is dead."

## TO AN ARTIST.

Who would at its perfection see  
That gift which Nature did impart,  
Must be in his simplicity  
Forever greater than his art.

## THE BATTLE HYMN OF NATIONS.

(Written in August, 1904)

I hear the distant music of a grand triumphant song  
Come floating down the future from an unborn  
mighty throng—

A battle hymn of nations, with a ring that's clear  
and true.

Come listen, O my brothers! Hark! Can you not  
hear it too?

The faint, prophetic echoes of that great symphonic  
blast

Sustain a note that sounded not 'round camp-fires of  
the past,

That rose not from the clatter of dread Cæsar's  
marching host,

Nor from the martial splendor that Napoleon's  
power could boast.

It is a tone so perfect that the Angels stoop to hear,  
While all the earth rejoices with a joy that knows  
no tear;  
For in it rings the message, "We are free, the fight  
is done;  
At last our foes are vanquished and the victory is  
won!"

Who are these foes, my brothers, that must perish  
'neath the feet  
Of nations? Are they human forms with human  
hearts that beat?  
Flesh and blood like you—like me—with souls  
that pray and hope?  
Are these the enemies 'gainst which the future's  
arms must cope?



Nay, nay, think not that God approves that battle  
    song whose tones  
Of conquering heroes blend themselves with con-  
    quered heroes groans.  
No, no, the only foes there are—the foes that must  
    be slain—  
Are such as war against the life—are grief and  
    sin and pain.

You ask when will the vict'ry come, and will it  
    tarry long?  
When party strife has been forgot in fighting com-  
    mon wrong;  
'Twill come when men make bold to say that sin  
    is lack of light—  
That justice is by mercy led—that love alone is  
    **might.**

The world its own salvation must work out through  
toil and time,  
As every soul must labor till it gains its goal sub-  
lime.  
Governments shall fall and rise—they are of human  
build—  
But Earth shall struggle onward till the end has been  
fulfilled.

The Eden which mankind once lost, mankind again  
must win,  
Ere conquest be completed over grief and pain and  
sin:  
'Then "PEACE ON EARTH!" shall be the cry,  
"By Him we have been freed,  
Who said if He should make us free we should be  
free indeed!"

But even now the music of a grand, triumphant  
song  
Comes floating down the future from an unborn  
mighty throng—  
A battle hymn of nations, with a ring that's clear  
and true.  
Come listen, O my brothers! Hark! Can you not  
hear it too?

















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