

THE MOUNTAINS
AND OTHER POEMS

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GEORGE BENSON
HEWETSON

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THE
MOUNTAINS
AND OTHER POEMS

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BY
GEORGE BENSON
HEWETSON

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THE
MOUNTAINS
AND OTHER POEMS

THE GREAT QUEEN

22ND JANUARY 1901

I

A WORLD-WIDE Empire bows its head and weeps,

The Mother of her People is no more :

In Life's last majesty the Great Queen sleeps,

And spacious glory of her deathless days ;

Whilst this our Britain to her farthest shore—

Her scattered lands, and alien in their ways,

One in that greatness which from Justice flows—

The marching nations upward in their gaze,

Girded as friends, or, panoplied as foes,

The towering might of her good life disclose

In teeming tribute of their golden praise.

THE MOUNTAINS

And from afar,
Where all the perished pomps and glories are
Of dusty thrones long pillared by the sword,
The stormy majesties of old
With wondering eyes this sleeping Queen behold,
Revered by all, and by her own adored.

II

From those high calms where goodness is renown,
In maiden fear she came
To the grave splendour of Earth's kingliest crown,
When lowering tempests big with loveless night,
And desolating flame,
Menaced its lustre of benignant light
With cloud of civil shame ;
And lo, the passion-threatened throne became
The lofty source of that enlarged release
Which clasps her Empire in the bond of Peace,
And lifts to Life's sublimities her name.

THE MOUNTAINS

III

And now the skies,
Where all is good and great and just and wise,
Have claimed again from this dear land of ours,
In these bleak sullen days when snow-born flowers
Tell of the life that sleeps but never dies,
This sceptred joy of all our hearts and eyes :
Earth's mightiest task she greatly hath outgrown ;
And from the winter of her hallowed years
Springs that white bloom of life which never sere,
And more exalted is henceforth the throne.

IV

She is not dead ;
Though through the world her loyal myriads weep,
Immortal glories gather round her bed,
And sanctify her sleep
To the vast uses of those realms sublime

THE MOUNTAINS

Where dwell the forces which have vanquished Time ;
And whence into our hearts enlarged shall flow
The grace of cherished greatness, till men see
Freedom increased, and balanced Justice grow,
And life in all its puissance come to be.
O burdened rulers of the lessening sea,
Intrepid Sons of Empire, whose far cry
Startles the desert, and the Arctic sky,
That which we reverence is not of the dust !
No part hath she in that which Death devours ;
This life so pure, so gentle, so august,
Is greatly merged in ours.

V

And what is Empire but extended good ?
And what its might,
But majesty of deed that loves the light,
And rich profusion of vicarious blood ?
Still sounds admonitory day and night

THE MOUNTAINS

The wail of buried peoples, they who died
Dropsied of power, and of insensate pride,
Dethroned by that vast Arm which wields the Right ;
For in the cycle of the watching skies
Sleep the dread trumpets at whose golden call
The starry armies of that Might arise,
And proud dominions fall—
And this she knew,
The kindly radiance of whose island crown
Allured her diverse peoples, till it grew
Earth's constellated joy of high renown,
And symbol of the true.

VI

And now in sceptred slumber like the Kings
From whose red blood the might of England springs,
Whose passing was through splendours of the West
O'er their loved deeps to Islands of the Blest,
Let this their Daughter of the Ages be

THE MOUNTAINS

Given in last triumph to her subject sea
To bear her where her gathered people waits
Sombre with grief, and silent in her gates,
That she may sleep for ever by his side
Who, in the happiness of sainted rest,
Again enfolds her to his blameless breast,
Eternal bridegroom of a deathless bride.

VII

And thou, the free, the bold,
Land whence Earth's loftiest sovereignty hath sprung,
That thine be not the fate
To die of Empire like those thrones of old
By wide dominion great,
Shun thou the coarse idolatry of gold,
And be for ever young.
Not thine the perished soul, the shrivelled heart
Closed to the current of exalted life,
The callous product of the worshipped mart,

THE MOUNTAINS

And grasping strife ;
Nor thine to lie
Mocked of the Earth, abandoned of the Sky,
Slain by the languors of inglorious ease
Through lavish tribute of thy vassal seas.
But thine, O swift familiar of the Day,
Freedom's white light o'er groping lands to fling ;
That of thy lasting greatness men may say,
As of this cherished goodness whom I sing—
“ One with the lowly, though enthroned so high,
“ The golden ways of simple life she trod,
“ Heart ever open to the sufferer's cry :
“ She ruled her Empire as a fief from God.”

TO HIS MAJESTY
KING EDWARD VII
ON HIS CORONATION

I

SIRE, in this hour of prayer and gold,
In all the lands, from every sea,
Thy people, mighty from of old,
Great with the greatness of the free,
To that dread Presence all adore,
Their myriad supplication pour,

II

That in the high and devious ways
Which wait the feet that mount a throne
Thine may be that large wealth of days
When the great nations greater grown

THE MOUNTAINS

Shall lead to loveliness of light
The peoples climbing through the night.

III

For in this age of mellowing power,
 These liberal days of large release
From brutal hungers that deflower
 The cloistered sanctities of peace,
Where calm the folded future lies
Wrapped in its high benignant skies,

IV

Earth's last and lordliest greatness waits
 No pomp of battle-flags unfurled,
No triumphs through the shouting gates,
 But some proud lands to lead the world
Where the white wonder of the True
Transmutes the Vision to the View.

THE MOUNTAINS

I

O KINGS of the unwritten ages, akin to the stars and
the sea,

Throned high in majestic stillness, aboriginal, natural,
free,

Broad-belted with forests primeval, and crowned with
white silence of snow,

And pillared on flame of the primal fire of the planets'
throb and glow,

Profound with Life's lingering secret as ye shoulder
the limitless sky,

And lift the low thoughts of the earth-born to the sweep
of its splendours on high—

From the clutch of the covetous cities long haunted
by Hunger and Crime,

THE MOUNTAINS

Through the haze of Man's hesitant wisdom which blurs
the large landscape of Time,

When the greatening impulses languish, and life takes
the hues of defeat,

O sages primeval in knowledge, a suppliant comes to
your feet,

And hears from your deeps and your summits no
shoutings defiantly hurled,

But the whisper of Infinite Wisdom as ye speak in the
speech of the world :

II

“To give the great deep to the deep, and to bastion
the beauties of Earth,

“To the calm we so mightily keep we attained through
that conflict of birth

“In the anguish of Nature's wide advent, when trembled
with tumult of fire

“The Void with its virginal darkness shot through with
hot love and desire,

THE MOUNTAINS

- “ When leapt from the lair of the lightnings with
trumpets of shattering glee
- “ The cohorts of riotous tempests to their pact with
the mutinous sea,
- “ And rose to their challenge tremendous, their rage
of maleficent might,
- “ Invincibly mailed in glad splendour, the swiftfooted
legions of Light,
- “ Who sabred the Day from the Darkness, and chastened
the thunders to calm,
- “ Then sang from the fields of gold glory the Morning’s
first jubilant psalm,
- “ As the Deep that had challenged the Zenith divided
and vanquished was hurled
- “ From the shores of the fields of the sunlight to surge
in the clefts of the world,
- “ And into the gold of Time’s sunrise, and the dusk of
his ominous wing,

THE MOUNTAINS

“Leapt the Earth from the Winter of Waters to the
clasp and the dance of the Spring.

III

“Then the palpitant red wine of Being, from crypts
of the Chaos and Cold,

“Was poured in the Shape of the Clay, over Dawn’s
burning summits of gold,

“And it glowed as the Chalice of Soul, where mingles
the Earth and the Sky,

“The arrogant child of the Potter, that would compass
the Whither and Why

“Of the Sea with its sapphire secret, the emerald Earth
at his feet,

“Through splendours of sunlight and starlight, where
finite and Infinite meet,

“Exulting as lightly he triumphed, till he closed in
presumptuous strife

THE MOUNTAINS

“ Where the searchers lie humbled and vanquished by
the Source and the Secret of Life,

“ And cried his vast cry in the midnight when clasped
with that Spectre August

“ Who touched his life-thews to that lesion which keeps
him akin to the dust.

IV

“ Estranged from the Song of the Morning, and the
shout of its raptures sublime,

“ Man shrank to the dwarf of his being, and the deeps of
the discords of Time,

“ As the wail of the Mother of Peoples first wounded
his sensitive ears

“ When he woke in that cold dawn of Sorrow to the
blight of the pitiless years :

“ The cloud that benighted his vision ; and the tumult
of lawless desire—

THE MOUNTAINS

- “ His bequest to each child of the ages, seared into his
loins as by fire—
- “ The doubt, and the storm, and the desert, the reproach,
and the grief, and the thorn,
- “ The pangs of the mothers of nations as the feuds of
the ages are born ;
- “ The cries of precipitate armies, and Plague with his
vanquishing breath,
- “ And Famine that laughs with strong War as he reaps
his loud harvest of death ;
- “ The night with its watch of the sleepless, and the
noon with its deeds of the night,
- “ The cowering dread of the darkness, and the fear of
the witnessing light ;
- “ The perishing pomp of his marbles, and greatness that
dies with a day,
- “ And ever the clutch at a sceptre, and the fugitive
dream of his sway ;

THE MOUNTAINS

“ And piercing the night and the tumult the plea of his
passionate cry

“ For a grasp of the Hand that had touched him through
the limitless silence of sky.

V

“ And so the tempestuous ages in chastening darkness
unroll,

“ The conflict of Man with the forces that thwart the
vain dreams of his soul,

“ Since he challenged the Infinite Secret in the jubilant
dawn of Time's day,

“ When the Sky and the Clay strove within him, and he
yielded himself to the Clay ;

“ Defying the Hand that had made him, and snatching
Its sceptre in strife,

“ To give to Earth's pleasures seductive the rapture of
infinite life ;

THE MOUNTAINS

“And that Hand in omnipotent pity—great Love in
its zenith of Might—

“Dwarfed Man to the deeps and the darkness to redeem
him to breadths of the light

“By that Voice which allures to the pathways the
triumphing greatnesses trod,

“Through anguish, endurance, and conflict to the
calm and the sunlight of God.”

VI

O Kings of the unwritten ages, akin to the stars and
the sea,

Throned high in majestical stillness, aboriginal, natural,
free,

When the greatening impulses languish, and life takes
the hues of defeat,

O Sages primeval in knowledge, a suppliant comes to
your feet,

THE MOUNTAINS

And hears from your deeps and your summits no
challenge defiantly hurled,

But your witness to Love the Eternal as ye voice the
vast truth of the world.

LADYSMITH

“ I thank God we have kept the flag flying.”

GENERAL SIR GEORGE WHITE.

I

YEA, unto Heaven be the thanks that thy flag never
had to come down

Realm that art highly favoured, holding in jubilant fee,
In the bonds of a love that is born of pride in a just
and high renown,

Lands that are golden in yield of the earth, and isles
that are gems of the sea ;

Giving their sons to increase of thy might from near
and from far,

That Earth's divergent peoples the one vast joy may
behold

Of thy gathered guiding glory as the nations' northern
star,

Steadfast with solemn Justice, and lustrous with Liberty's
gold,—

THE MOUNTAINS

Yea, thanks be to Heaven that we found them, thy dead
and thy living, still free,
Crowning thy claim to an Empire's name from Lady-
smith down to the sea.

II

“ Never a place that the brave can defend, ” the witlings
gravely said,

“ Flanked by unfavouring hills, with a river besiegers can
ford ; ”

But these vowed hearts had no choice, and determined
to hold it till dead,

Sons of the race as strong in Will as it is strong with the
sword.

What recked they of fever and famine and the crash of
the life-shattering shell ?

Could Britain forsake her own ? Nay, would not all
still be well ?

THE MOUNTAINS

Britain that shields her kindred wherever their hap may be,
In the lightless lands of the severed earth, or the outmost
 isles of the sea ;

The Mother of many navies, that can bring her sons
 from far

Who go to death with exultant breath 'mid the flame and
 steel of war.

III

So opened their four months' vigil by noon-day, early,
 and late,

As closer around the little town drew the steel-fringed
 ring of Hate,

The scowl and the gleam of that tempest, first spawned
 in the red glare of Hell,

Which rains its angry darkness down in fury of shot and
 shell.

And straightway from Pepworth Summit the smokeless
 lightning spoke,

THE MOUNTAINS

At whose grim command of thundered ire the pitiless
 tempest woke,
A storm which with squalid equipment they sturdily
 struggled to meet
As it surged to that last shock of battle which shadowed
 their lines with defeat,
When out of the night from the coast to that fight came
 rushing the rescuing guns,
And what should they be but her might of the sea, and
 manned by the Sea-Mother's sons.

IV

Engirt by the Hate that would crush them, and their
 vigilant valour deflower
When the flame of the fever had shrivelled their ranks,
 and Famine, that lives to devour,
Left bare to the smiting of heat and of cold, and riot of
 wind and of rain,

THE MOUNTAINS

Looking long for the host that was hasting to save,
yet sifting each sunrise in vain,

Still the fires of their sires glowed within them, for twice
through his sentinelled night

They scaled the foe's summits of thunder, and shattered
his weapons of might—

When sudden as dawn o'er the mountains the syllabled
sunlight averred

That Britain forsook not her kindred, that by tempest
and wave undeterred

Their brothers were there, she had borne them over
two thousand leagues of the sea,

Each vowing his life to the love that decreed that these
thralled ones again should be free ;

But the foe was there too in his pits big with death,
ever vigilant, brave, yet unseen,

Secure in his hills, whilst ours was the plain, and a torrent
was raging between ;

THE MOUNTAINS

Yet what recks the Briton of barriers, or the ban of an
enemy's host ?

Is it not the long voice of his story that he's grandest
where dangers are most ?

So we challenged that hell of defences, and faced it
the whole of a day,

Still dauntless before its flaming hate when the sunlight
in gold fell away,

And loth to obey the command to retire when twilight
merged into the night,

Baffled, unbroken, our last word unspoken, and thirsting
still more for the fight.

V

Then days when we burned for the battle, from comfort-
less sun to sun,

Drear days that decayed into deedless weeks with never
the task begun—

THE MOUNTAINS

The victims of Britain's blind greatness that trusts to
the fearless might

Of the loyal hosts of her oft-proved sons to conquer in
every fight—

When startled her sloth the thunders which told that the
fury had burst

Once more on the near and famishing town fast failing
of fever and thirst,

And along with the thunders came lightnings, we spelled
them all out from the sky,

And knew that our comrades were into the fight to repel
an assault or to die.

For flashed on the wings of the sunrise in words of
precipitate flame,

“Attacked by the foe on every side,” the stinging tidings
came,

Then clung we to all of that climbing sun, for we dreaded
their last it might be,

THE MOUNTAINS

As that crested battle we heard afar like the rush and
 roar of the sea,

Till in blazing noon-tide's fierce white light, Day's splen-
 dour of burning gold,

Of the foe repulsed on every hand the winking mirrors
 told ;

Then rolled through our camp long waves of cheers ; but
 the fight was not yet done,

“ Foe reinforced, attack renewed,” those mirrors flashed
 in the sun.

God, we had become as phantoms, so shortened our
 might of hand,

Yet leapt not our longing souls to Thee for these sons of
 our Motherland ?

And Thy stars in their courses were with them, yea, some
 could descry Thy Form

And Thy Right Hand in that terrible hour when broke
 o'er the battle Thy storm,

THE MOUNTAINS

Thy darkness and hail which palsied the might of the foe
they fought to repel,

For the morrow's sun told that the fight they had won—
“ With Ladysmith all is well.”

VI

They had breasted and broken his fury, and seen his
foiled cohorts reel,

And turn and flee at their bugle-call, as it sounded,
“ Charge with steel ! ”

For the favouring darkness swoln with that storm the
great occasion gave

To sweep from their front the clinging foe by a bayonet
rush of the brave ;

So from Cæsar's Camp and Wagon Hill in rabble-
rout he fled,

His only spoil his shattered pride, his wounded, dying,
and dead ;

And to those that had triumphed, the world's acclaim,
and—fell decree of Fate—

THE MOUNTAINS

The fever, the thirst, the famine, the deaths, the sleepless
watch and the wait.

VII

Yes, for fifty days more we must ravish the sky with
shocks of the battle born,

Yea, seven long weeks of that night must be before we
should see the morn ;

But sixteen miles from the goal that we sought, which
was more than once in sight,

Still looking for opulent promise of day, but ever the same
grim night ;

Mountains and gorges, rivers and hills, with never a
fight on the plain ;

O sleepless nights, O fighting days with your harvest of
wounded and slain,

And thoughts of the fallen, and of those yet to fall—
Death ever before our eyes !

O coffinless corpses, wet shallow graves ! O measureless,
merciless skies !

THE MOUNTAINS

The valour and slaughter of Spion Kop—we can see that
shambles still,

And hear that one lone heartening cheer that rang out
from Bastion Hill ;

Whilst our comrades at Ladysmith, weakened and worn
with watching, fight, and disease,

Still flashed their faith's white dauntless light through
such fierce days as these ;

Then rearward to find another way to the goal where we
would be,

For had we not sworn by night and by morn that Lady-
smith yet should be free ?

VIII

None dreamed of retreat or surrender ; nay, the cold of
the gloomiest night

Was warmed by the gold of that splendour which is
Britain's proud record of fight ;

THE MOUNTAINS

We remembered the glory of Lucknow, when our sires
under favouring Heaven

Were to hold their frail fort for fifteen days, and held it
for eighty-seven.

Then we wrestled through blood to Vaal Krantz, but
'twas ever the same sad climb ;

Yet from soil so barren there blossomed a deed that will
live with the laurels of Time :

For, thrice baffled, but still undefeated, once more we
advanced to attack

Defences the hate of the world had devised to drive our
valour back ;

And what can withstand such valour ? Not mountains
and floods in its path,

Nor the treacherous use of the flag of truce, nor the wide
world's envious wrath.

The mountains go down before it, the torrents their rage
abate,

THE MOUNTAINS

And the whole round world once more is shown that
 Britain still is great,
As the signals flash far through the sunlight the tidings
 immortal and brief
That triumph at last is crowning the toil of the fighting
 force of relief,
Whilst Ladysmith hears the welcome guns roar loudly
 and yet more loud,
And her drooping watchers descry afar an advancing
 pillar of cloud,
A vapour of gold in that sunset, more glorious than gold
 in that night,
When out of it rang the words of cheer, "The Vanguard
 of Britain's Might!"
For so we replied to her challenge, "Halt!"—and
 feeble "Who goes there?"
Which hoarsely fell from the fevered lips of a sallow,
 shrunken stare ;

THE MOUNTAINS

And the women and children greet us ; yea, be it to
all men told,

A truth that shall live in ageless youth when the Earth
herself grows old—

That wherever the Briton's in danger from sword, storm,
hunger, or thirst,

Whatever may be the means of life, 'tis for women and
children first ;

And so it was here, for these could cheer, and cheered us
alone in that night,

But the flag still flew, and the truth we knew when we
saw in Morn's cold dim light,

Haggard, and famished, and weary, too feeble to raise a
cheer,

Phantoms of men, yet heroes, whose valour had
vanquished fear,

These formed as a guard of honour—and never was
guard more grand—

THE MOUNTAINS

Some crouching low in the deathless lines, too feeble
even to stand ;

Whilst parched with the veldt's fierce fever, sick, wounded
and dying were there

In the crowded hospital's shattered walls, deliriously
mocking despair ;

And sleeping beyond our awaking, in the equal embrace
of the grave,

Lay those who had given to disease or in fight the last
great gift of the brave ;

Yea, such were thy sons as we found them, the dead and
the living still free,

Crowning thy claim to an Empire's name from Lady-
smith down to the sea,

O Britain, great Mother of nations, the rapture and
pride of them all,

Thy lands indeed, for in time of need how richly they
answered thy call !

BRAKENLAAGTE

30TH OCTOBER 1901

WEIRD in that barren grandeur
The worlds in their making know,
When scarred and seamed by the shaping fires,
And the heave of each moulding throe,
Solemn with Night's vast secret,
Dim with the folded deeps
Of fallen cloud that blind the sky,
The veldt in the darkness sleeps.

Urging the laggard conflict,
Restless for laurelled Peace,
Braving the wildest hate of War
That that hate might sooner cease,

THE MOUNTAINS

Sons of the white-browed England,
Resolute, swift, ungent,
To harry and leash her subtle foe,
Grove through the dreams of the veldt.

Thwarted by mist and tempest
Day is delayed in the skies,
Only the sodden darkness greets
The quest of those straining eyes,
Till, cleaving the dawn and the silence,
Startling the first faint light,
The sudden rifle flashes to birth
The long fierce roar of the fight.

Never a word is spoken,
Held is the wounded breath ;
The mist and veldt in cold cabal
Conceal the swelling death,

THE MOUNTAINS

For, called by that sharp, swift summons,
 Alien to trump and drum,
From the four peopled points of earth
 The circling squadrons come.

And as the leaping lightnings,
 Loosed from their livid lair,
Love best to smite the loftiest peaks
 That cleave the deep of air,
So, where rent mists, amongst the brave,
 Revealed his towering form
Whose path the foe had marked with wrath,
 Leapt all the leaden storm.

O Morn of wounds and slaughter,
 O Noon of crimson pride,
When nothing left but their land's fair fame,
 For this, these Britons died !

THE MOUNTAINS

When day in mist and tempest
Was night above the field,
Where overwhelmed these heroes fell
Who knew not how to yield.

Merged in one death by valour,
In one white glory dressed,
In the lone veldt's long tawny clasp
They sleep, and take their rest ;
On the dread dust that wraps them
No alien stars look down,
The triumph that they died to gain
Has made that land their own.

THE SPRITE

I

THE Gleam—has it thrilled you?—of what was, and
what is, and what is to be,

Transcending the clay of the seen—the swift, revealing
light

That sometimes smites to the soul on the land, and
sometimes on the sea;

Yet ever the same, on sea, or on land, by day, or by
night—

The Gleam?—nay, the angel,—of old men could see his
form,

For then was the open vision, the *touch* that is gone
from our eyes

Long blinded with Life's salt spray, whose sea is now
ever in storm,

And gloomed by that vanished glory, the *silence* of
speaking skies.

THE MOUNTAINS

II

I have known it in wild night-watches, but little I
 heeded then
As our bows split the blotted sky, my thoughts were
 all of my breath,
And the fate of the fellows around me—the fellows ?—
 my fellow-men !
For should we go down we'd be brothers in the same
 cold, emerald death ;
But that is the perished past, long buried those hopes and
 fears ;
Yet out of the crypt where they sleep there rises sheer
 from my soul
In substance what once seemed a vision, which has
 taken form in the years,
And lives as a truth to steer by, as fixed as the star at
 the Pole.

THE MOUNTAINS

III

Here is my revelation :—The storm his trumpets blew,
And the sea arose in her wrath like a fury drunk with
power,

And Fear came near to the hearts of our trawler's storm-
scarred crew

As deep we were tossed in her teeth-edged jaws opened
wide as if to devour,

Then were vomited up to the pitchy night, in the pon-
derous might of that swing

Which deepens the kinks in men's minds, the kinks
men ever have known

Whose life has been on the deep, with its lift, and its
swish, and its moan,

For the sea hath power on men's lives, the sea is a
living thing,

THE MOUNTAINS

IV

The unresting mother of all, that felt in the primal night
The swift, wide brooding of God, His arms and His kiss
in her sleep,

And the arrowy pangs of travail as He trumpeted, " Let
there be light ! "

And the blinding wonder leapt into life from the side of
His riven deep ;

The splendour born of the dark of the wave to people
His desert of sky,

Which hath still that love for the mother nor storm nor
Time can eclipse,

And sheds through the gloom of our life the gleam of the
life far and high

In the signs and wonders vouchsafed to them that go
down to the sea in ships.

THE MOUNTAINS

V

“Credulous,” say you ? What then, if the close-wrapped
things from the first,
Far folded from earth’s vain wisdom, are to simple
souls revealed—
If the mother her secrets shows to the babes she has
cradled and nursed,
In whose minds throbs the pulse of the space-swung
world, undulled by the clods of the field ?
Shall it all be accounted naught—by contemptuous
minds dismissed
As fancy that has its birth in the dwarfed and idle
brain ?
Shall day and night to the climbing soul come ever
enveloped in mist ?
And life be one sleepless search for Truth finding nothing
to count as gain ?

THE MOUNTAINS

VI

There were two brothers amongst us ; clearly I see them
now,

Linked in the love that is more than words which passion
wings with breath ;

Where truth sits enthroned in the eye ; the love whose
calm, white brow

Mocks at the many waters ; the love that smiles death
unto death.

But the sword of the fever clave them ; and the sick we
must send ashore,

For we were outward bound ; so we hailed “ The
Sprite ” as she passed ;

Little dreaming that when she left us we should see
her again no more,

And as we put him aboard, he was bound to the storm-
less vast.

THE MOUNTAINS

VII

We parted ; she to the sunset, and we to the morning star,
For hers was the voyage home—O realm of limitless
gold,

Where the harp, and the viol, and trumpet, the lute, and
the cymbals are

In hands that cease not from music, that faint not,
neither grow cold,

In thee man builds his home ; ignoring the foolish wise ;
For what to the fool in his wisdom is the palace with
moat and keep

Deep-founded to flourish for ever in the calms of the
tearless eyes ?

Yet is not this your comfort, eyes straining in vain
that weep ?

THE MOUNTAINS

VIII

She was gulfed in the pitch of that night ; we knew she
was no more

By the gleam that smote to our souls when dawn hushed
the wind and the sleet,

As we gazed on his water-soaked bunk, and could see on
our fo'cas'le floor,

Leading straight from our battered bulwarks, the
prints of his wet, bare feet.

We had shipped no sea where he slept ; 'twas the waves
gave up their dead.

They that mock at the Truth in the manger may
mock at the water-soaked berth,

But if Truth be ever-living, hath the ultimate word
been said ?

Hath Heaven no signs to make itself known to the sons
of the groping Earth ?

JAPAN

RICH in the might of long-hoarded sleep,
From the brain of the golden East,
Enthroned on the land, and enthroned on the deep,
At the wide world's teeming feast
She sits with the lands of far renown,
The youngest, but not the least.

In anguish of blood she has leapt into birth,
And shrieks of the shattered sky ;
She has laughed the red laugh of War's loud mirth
As her sons went forth to die ;
And to lands that would question her place by their side
She queenly makes reply :

THE MOUNTAINS

“ For no lust of the Earth was my war-flag unfurled,
My thunders let loose on the sea ;
I come not to trample by conquest the world,
Nor to feast on War’s maddening glee ;
But I rose in my might that the babes of my breast
Should still have their homes and be free.

“ For my heart is the heart of the rest of mankind ;
And though alien the light of my brain,
To all that is noble I am not blind,
Nor blind to all that is vain ;
My heart is the heart of the rest of the race,
And I grieve for my children slain.

THE MOUNTAINS

“ Yet my dead I behold with tearless eye ;

And if callous I seem to you,

Know this, that the noble can never die,

There is no grave for the true ;

And this is my creed from the ancient years,

Still fresh with the morning dew.

“ And I speak to my dead in the life that they live

In calms of the nightless day ;

And into my life of their life they give

The light of the heroes' way,

With its golden call to the merging world,

To serve and not to slay.”

THE PRICE

[The late Grand Duchess of , who has just died at the age of twenty, was very unhappy in her married life. As a child of eighteen she was persuaded to marry the Grand Duke, who is extremely wealthy, but the Princess did all she could to escape from the fate she dreaded. On the evening before the marriage she declared she would not marry him.—*Vanity Fair*.]

DEAD is the sapphire of the sea ;
The sky's vast rapture overhead
Is cold and darkness unto me,
Still living, though amongst the dead ;
And meaningless the words he said
Whose voice proclaimed us man and wife,
For with those words went out my life,
The lustre of my soul was shed.

They wedded me to gauds of earth,
To fields and woods, a hall, a town,
To scrolled emblazonry of birth,
And splendours of a ducal crown.

THE MOUNTAINS

Lifeless to me thy smile, thy frown :
Joyless thy wealth of wedded lands ;
For every wedded heart demands
A heart that it may call its own.

But in the clutch of loveless fate
I shall go lone amongst my kind,
Too cold to love, too dead to hate,
To Life's majestic meanings blind ;
To wedded thralldom unresigned,
And severed by its chill decree
From him whose love is all to me,
Whose image haunts my perished mind.

O, for the rapture of that kiss
Which fuses two lives into one !
Life's morning-ecstasy of bliss,
Which sets not with its setting sun,

THE MOUNTAINS

But, in Love's ampler day begun,
Grows with the life that never dies ;
O, for the love-look of those eyes
Which now these lifeless eyes must shun !

Then take my corpse, for such it is
Thy eager arms shall now enfold ;
Dead are the lips which thou shalt kiss,
For all Life's fires in me are cold ;
And let the gruesome truth be told—
This sin of murder is not thine,
But theirs whose blood is kin to mine,
Who sold my life for minted gold.

DE PROFUNDIS

YES, you're right, me Lidy—this 'ere is me bloomin' kid ;
But I'm not married, say you—Good 'eavens, w'y w'at
of that !

W'at are gels in this country taught of the things w'at
should not be 'id

By them as are their teachers ?—that's w'at I wants to
be at.

Our mothers tells us some things—not much—and our
teachers, well,

They never speaks of such, and so we grows up in the
dark,

Till all at onc't we're dazzled by some dashin', bloomin'
swell,

And w'at you call love begins with us in w'at most of us
thinks is a lark.

THE MOUNTAINS

And they tells us, them clever swells, that there's no
such thing as sin,

That Last Judgment is all a fancy, that sin is jest monkey-
tricks

In'erited from our forefathers, jest tricks which with
life we begin ;

And so they tells us of pleasure, and leaves us then in a fix.

But I went to Sunday School, say you—oh yes, but I
never could see,

With the bloomin' show of fine clo'es our lidy teachers
wore,

W'at there ever could be in such plices for such pore gels
as we ;

And w'at did I get by going there ? Jest this, and
nothing more—

THE MOUNTAINS

Some trac's, and a bit of the Bible w'at is taught by
Lidy Vine ;

But she never mentioned kids—no, that'd be vulgar—
rude,

So such as me 'ungers for truth, the truth w'at makes
all things pline,

Taught by a Church w'at's a Mother, not one as is jest
a prude.

The truth w'at lifts Mother and Child to a throne in
the palace of sky ;

W'at says mother and child is 'oly, not meant for the
dark of the street ;

The truth w'at speaks joy of the pure, and w'at sets up
the Virgin on 'igh,

W'at says Father and Mother and Child is the kingdom
of glory complete.

THE MOUNTAINS

There's no Mother in your religion, 'tis all Brother—

Father—God ;

W'at sinning gels need is a Mother w'at's been tempted

the same as they ;

'Twould be so with the Virgin Mary, for w'erever man's

foot 'as trod

'E 'as spread the snare of the fowler, and gels 'as been

'is prey.

RAIN

THERE is a cloud in the sky,
And as they see it expand,
The weary nations sigh,
But do not understand.

Slaves to the mill and the mart,
To the forges, trains and ships,
They sere to the very heart,
And love dies from their lips.

To Life's great issues blind,
And worn with their long unrest,
They shrink in body and mind,
These peoples of the West.

THE MOUNTAINS

But now there is sound of rain,
Its slow first drops released,
Fall on their life's parched plain,
In the calm and dreams of the East.

For those nations in might arise
Which witness to every clime,
The calm of the restful wise,
The dreams of the elder time.

BEETHOVEN

I

THOU, too, didst know the night,
The conflict with the mysteries, and the scars,
The heaven devoid of stars,
And all Life's sweetness emptied of delight ;
Men's bleak indifference, and the witling's sneer,
The bitter cold,
Which hath not yet been sung, nor even told,
Of the long winter of a world austere.

II

And thou didst see
The loud enthronement of the little worth,
The puny sovereignty
Acclaimed by sudden plaudits of the earth,

THE MOUNTAINS

The trivial object compassed by all eyes,
Whose shouted name,
Too brazen for the golden trump of Fame,
Is sounded not from constellated skies.

III

For so it is
That they who would Man's yearning soul unbind
From this drear world and blind
Must brace their thews in Life's great agonies,
And front the flame that purges gold of dross,
The sword endure
Which cleaves the clay from that which is more pure,
And gives exalted gain for bitter loss.

IV

'Twas thus with thee
When cancelled to thine ears were all earth's cries,

THE MOUNTAINS

The shouting of the sea,
The loosened thunders of the livid skies,
And thine was that great calm whence Time was born,
And thou didst hear
The mighty music of each singing sphere,
And all the sudden trumpets of the Morn ;

V

And day was thine
In that melodious flowing of the light
Which flashes on men's sight
The flawless beauty of the life divine ;
The crowned emancipation of the just,
Their welcome high
By chanting seraphs to the blameless Sky,
From taint and degradation of the dust.

VI

So didst thou find
Rich solace in the high domain of soul—
The breadths serene of mind—
And proud assurance of the shining goal :
The conquest of men's hearts by might of song,
The lofty joy
Of towering above thrones in great employ,
And scorning weakness to make weakness strong.

THE SOWERS

WHERE ringed with burning seraphim

The final lightnings sleep,

On the farthest verge of the outer vast

That skirts the nightless deep,

Colossal in His righteous calm

By Whom the worlds are swayed,

God's angel holds aloft the scales

In which the lands are weighed.

From the vials high

Of his angered sky

Hath God's lava-wrath been poured

On the wanton lands

Of mighty hands

That gloried in the sword,

THE MOUNTAINS

Since that cold red dawn which shrank back into night

When first a man lay slain,

And broke in the withering thunder-peal

Of the doom of the homeless Cain.

For in marshalled pomp of legioned power,

From wintry south to north,

To the swaggering dream of a ruling hour

Have the shouting lands gone forth ;

Since the perished days when the earth was young

Hath Man rebelled and warred,

And those mighty lands are now no more

That triumphed by the sword.

They reaped of the seed which the lands still sow

In grasping deeds, and hate,

Whose harvest is dusty overthrow

In War's keen, dread debate ;

THE MOUNTAINS

For the wakened might
Of the lands in the night
Is trained in this way abhorred,
And these in their turn
Shall for conquest yearn,
And seek it with the sword.

FAMINE

By one keen soul alone discerned,
Gleamed in the certitudes afar,
A joy for which the ages yearned,
Remote and radiant as a star.

This giant lover of his kind,
Who fronted with calm brow the night,
In lone and bitter life designed
To clothe the ages with its might.

Cold in his meagre tenement,
Invincible to doubts and fears,
A captive to his great intent,
He struggled up the steep of years

THE MOUNTAINS

To chilling heights of bleak renown,
Beyond the challenge of defeat,
And tossed the healing rapture down
To passers in the heedless street.

APATHY

*(On the indifference of the Nations to the sufferings
of Armenia, 1896)*

VALOUR is dead. Blind Greed heeds no man's cry.
The named of Christ the monstrous crime contemn,
And, like the priest, lift up their garments' hem,
Nor, like the Levite, *look*, ere they pass by.
Since no Samaritan, O God, draws nigh,
Gird on Thy sword and doff Thy diadem,
Behold with pity these, with anger them,
While Thy vexed legions fill the vast of sky.
Bow Thy wide heavens and in Thy might come down ;
Let the forked lightnings of Thy wrath strike dead
The ruthless butchers at their bloody meal ;
Avenge the wronged in vilayet and town,
O Just and Good, that still it may be said,
If men are callous, God at least can *feel*.

ON EARTH PEACE

(THE HAGUE TRIBUNAL)

ON Time's vast palimpsest of sky,
Blurred with concealing mists of night,
The watchers on Life's peaks descry
The Everlasting Fingers write,
In changeless words of quenchless fire,
The fiat of the world's desire.

As splendid with benignant fate
The solemn wonder greatly grows,
The lurid shibboleths of Hate
Die to the darkness whence they rose,
Lost in that joy whose lustres drown
All bitter words of red renown.

THE MOUNTAINS

Large with rich life, the healing power
Streams where Love lies in long defeat,
As sunlight strikes on roof and tower
And spills along the waking street,
And nations in the night behold
The advent of the Age of Gold.

A PHOTOGRAPH

A FADED sun-print—'tis of one
Untrumpeted by lordly fame,
To all the teeming world unknown,
Save those to whom he gave his name.

No brow deep-furrowed with great thought,
No eye that flashes light is here ;
No face with mystic radiance fraught
By gazing at a loftier sphere,

But just the features of a man
All undistinguished to the eye,
Framed on that simple, lowly plan,
So common that men pass it by.

THE MOUNTAINS

Yet that to which the world is blind

In these loved lineaments I see,

A man most noble of his kind,

A hero, if on earth such be.

Not one whose fires to flame were stirred

By lifting blast of bugle-call,

Who at the trifle of a word

Plucked glory from the blazing wall ;

Nor one whose spirit soared afar,

With Nature's chafing bounds at strife,

To wrest from some reluctant star

The lofty secret of our life,

And, like Prometheus, to bring down

The fire that knows not Death's eclipse ;

And perished clutching at renown,

The mystery frozen on his lips.

THE MOUNTAINS

But one who died to things that please

The little minds that love the earth,

And toiled through Life's austerities

To beacon-heights of human worth ;

Where throned above the merely great,

The greatly good salute our eyes ;

Divested of their world-estate,

And robed in purple of the skies.

Calm victors o'er the equal grave,

Their crowns with Love's high deeds impearled ;

The grandly good, the greatly brave

Who *live* their lives to lift the world.

THE RULERS

WHERE man affronts the roomy sky

With dens the very brutes would spurn,

Which callous Pharisees pass by,

Where looking Levites ne'er return,

On the cold level of the earth,

Or crowning some strait creaking stair,

The souls of Genius leap to birth,

Where common natures would despair.

Alien to ways of little men,

These souls speak thunder to the night,

And darkness brings to birth again

The cosmic wonder of the light

THE MOUNTAINS

In trumpet words, and thoughts sublime
That tower to majesty of deed,
And hold in fee exacting Time,
Beyond the clutches of his greed,

Who crushes all the might of gold—
What life of empires is so long
As that blind beggar's who, of old,
Chained all the ages with a song ?

ONE ITALY

20TH SEPTEMBER 1870

(Written at the request of a friend, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Italian Independence)

THROUGH long millenniums of renown,
From timeless reaches vast with power,
Where Fame's loud splendours blaze and crown
Large deeds of thy prodigious hour,
To trumpet blare and roll of drum,
In magic of great life there come

Red visions of thy might of old,
Chained nations at the victor's car ;
The prowess of thine arms extolled
By the loud brazen pomp of War
Above the earth, beneath the sky,
The dauntless legions sweeping by

THE MOUNTAINS

Where Scipio's crushing soul of fire

Resolved to ashes Punic pride ;

Where Cæsar, in his large desire,

Fed thee with life of lands that died ;

Where Regulus, confronting death,

Ransomed thy valour with rich breath,

When from cold heights of life sublime,

Unsullied by the shade of shame,

Flashed in the skyey vast of Time

The starry greatness of his name ;

A constellation fixed and clear,

In white reproof of cringing fear.

VALUES

IN these vague days when men are loudly wise,
And, shouting far the knowledge of an hour,
Blind to the ruins of Man's shattered power,
Flout with wild jests the silent, mocking skies,
From nameless graves the wraiths of empires rise,
The vanquished majesty of wall and tower,
Crushed by His might Who marshals sun and shower,
With sand of perished glories fills our eyes.
The mimic wisdom men so greatly trust
Is kindred with the desert and the dust,
And all their boasted monuments shall lean
Decrepit on the ages yet to be,
Till they shall vanish to vacuity
Touched by the finger of the Nazarene.

THE OBEDIENCE OF THE PEOPLES

“The greatest of British interests—universal peace.”

THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE in the House of Lords.

(THE SECOND PEACE CONFERENCE)

LORD of Hosts, the Undivided,

Of all men the Living Lord,

In the thrall of hate and mammon

Live the peoples by the sword.

On Man's cleavage into nations

Let Thy healing be outpoured.

Sick of Moloch's hoary altar,

And the blood to Moloch shed,

Turn they from his monstrous orgies,

Meek of heart, and bowed of head,

Pleading, “Lord of All, have mercy

On the living and the dead.

THE MOUNTAINS

“ From the path of Thy uprightness

Our rebellious feet have strayed ;

And we suffer from the idols

Our unruly wills have made ;

Grant to us, Thy contrite peoples,

Thy great peace, so long delayed.”

Vast with calming benediction,

Through their hearts there runs a thrill,

Not of earthquake, fire, or whirlwind,

But of Voice, which, small and still,

Whispers, “ Man’s abiding conquest

Is to do God’s saving will.”

“ Peace on earth,” so sang Thy angels,

Yet on earth the peoples bleed ;

THE MOUNTAINS

“ Not the least of these should perish,”

From of old Thou hast decreed,
Not of Thee the murderous conflict,
But of Man's gainsaying deed.

And as War's high-sounding trumpet
Brings the valiant to the field,
So to Thy constraining summons,
Long chastised, the peoples yield,
That the enmity of nations
May for evermore be healed.

For this hour they long have waited,
Struggled on through smile and frown,
Faced the fierce award of battle,
Laid their lives in conflict down,
Hoping that some future blessing
Would their sacrifices crown.

THE MOUNTAINS

As before Thee they assemble,
Grant the coming of the time,
When the mingling of the peoples,
Gathered in from every clime,
Shall result in one vast nation
To subserve Thy deeds sublime.

Let no word of doubt or anger
Fall from lips supremely blest
With the message of a people,
North, or South, or East, or West,
That would wound the most defenceless,
And estrange from all the rest.

Give to each the prophet vision,
That large heart which can divine,

THE MOUNTAINS

In the chaos of the ages,
Thy omnipotent design
To produce from earth's confusion
That vast age which shall be Thine.

God of Mercy, on the nations
Let Thy pity be outpoured,
In the hearts of all the peoples
Be that love of Thee restored
Which shall fuse them into oneness,
A great people for the Lord.

ANTAEUS

No feudal lord am I of earth,

No palace proud have I, nor lands ;

Mine is that fancied bane of birth

Which eats its bread with workers' hands ;

And mine that glad reward of toil

Which blessed the fabled god of old,

Whose constant contact with the soil

Gave him that strength more rich than gold.

THE MOUNTAINS

So, where those spectres I may throw
Which daunt the heart that would aspire ;
Where thews of soul the statelier grow
By ever wrestling base desire ;
Be mine in touch with earth to plod,
In glowing zest of greatening strife,
Till merged in that vast might called God
I share the calm of deathless life.

LIFE AND IMMORTALITY

LIFE in Whose life all life began,

Thou great All-wise, Who hast decreed
Within the babe shall be the man,
The larger life within the seed ;

Who sowed the yearning void of space

With dust of systems yet to be,
The swiftness of whose thunderous race
Centres, Undying One, in Thee ;

Since life is thus from less to more,

Why should we speak with sobbing breath
Of those whose little life is o'er,
Born to that larger life called Death.

THE CONQUERORS

WHEN that last fiery bolt is hurled,
Which waits but Heaven's august decree,
To shiver into dust the world,
And shrivel up in flame the sea ;
When strikes the last sad human eye
The tumult of the reeling sky,

Unawed shall stand in that wild hour,
When the red suns as ashes fall,
Poised in the calm of God-like power,
One with the Great Supreme of all,
Those souls who, guileless of retreat,
Snatched the lit laurels from defeat.

PAARDEBERG

(TO CANADA)

NOT where the lifting bugles call,
The death-winged bullets speed,
Nor burning swords from scabbards leap,
Be thine the splendid deed ;
But on the sunlit peaks of soul,
In high and lustrous strife,
Be thine to show the laggard lands
The ultimate of life.

To march, to trench, to sap and mine,
Mankind for long have known,
But out of Earth's slow years of youth
'Tis time that we were grown ;

THE MOUNTAINS

Since " old " means " high " then let us climb

Where Life her mission fills,

And leave the darkness of the vale

For light upon the hills.

None doubt the might of thy young arm,

Thy valour none gainsay,

Who know of storied Chrysler's Farm,

And laurelled Chateauguay ;

And should the tempest e'er return,

Whose lightning is the sword,

Thy valiant deed shall flash to speak

The thunder of thy word.

But in thy wide and waiting land

Sow thou the ampler seed

Prolific of divinelier life,

Man's first and greatest need ;

THE MOUNTAINS

That thou, not least of Earth's new lands;
May'st vindicate thy birth,
In that vast commonwealth of soul
Which shall renew the Earth.

THE END

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