

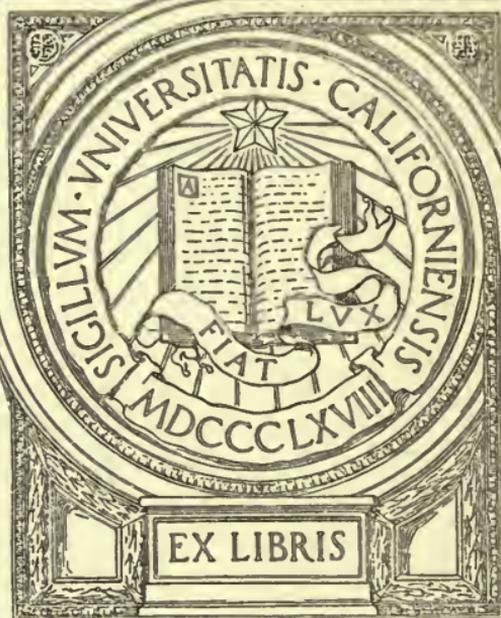
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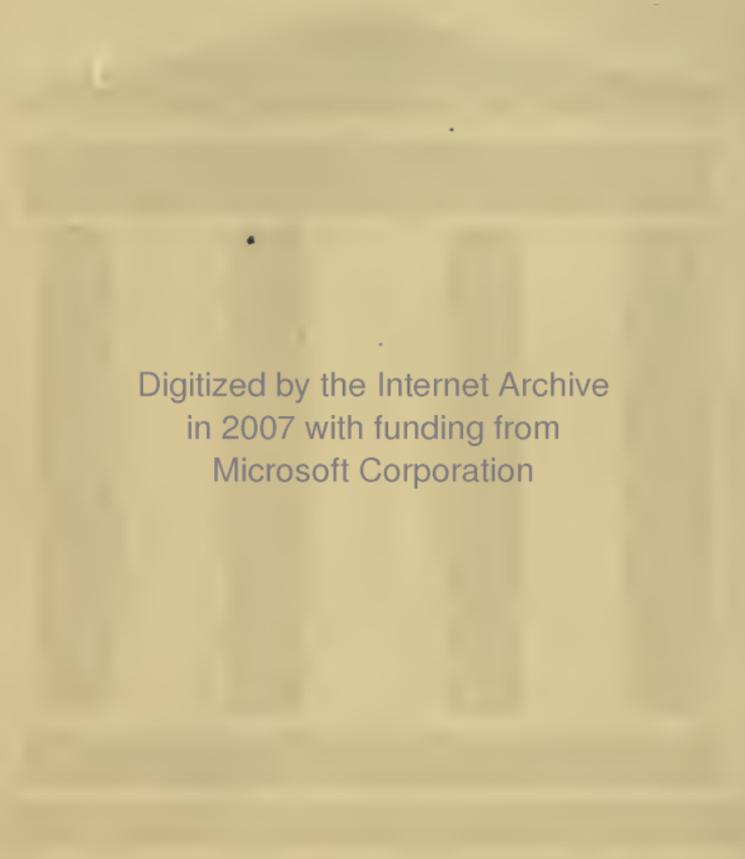
November:  
Poems in War Time  
*by* Henry Bryan Binns

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT LOS ANGELES



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November



# NOVEMBER:

*Poems in War Time*

BY

HENRY BRYAN BINNS

NEW YORK

DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

1918

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*DRAW into thine own being the circumambient Power,  
Till wholly invigorated by its divinity,  
Thou art become enthusiast in every cell,  
Poet throughout thy soul; breathing the fine  
The starry breath of that spirit transcendent  
Whose body thou may'st be, hast thou faith for it—  
To vibrate, radio-active, with the intense  
Joy of its immanent music, pain of the wild  
Strange passionate intervals of its music,  
That is no mere singing of words—pulsation  
This, of celestial singing such as, it may be,  
Thrills all the ether between the living stars.*

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NOTE.—The Fourth and Fifth Preludes and “A Non-Combatant” first appeared in the *Ploughshare*, and “The Hill-top Wood” in the *Poetry Review*. “A Schoolmaster in Picardy” was suggested by Albert Thierry’s *Des Conditions de la Paix* (Paris, *L’Union pour la Verité*, 1916), partly written in the trenches. Its author was killed at Aix Noulette, 26 May, 1915.

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November



# November

## FIVE PRELUDES

### I

**U**P dripping from the sea  
Her weeds all watery,  
She dashed against the windows as she came  
The fringy hem of her wet  
Cloak, and set  
Me shivering closer to the genial flame.  
Bleak was her face, turned westward from the  
grey  
Uncompromising dawn of a grim day,  
As though she would not countenance  
Even his ungracious greeting!  
O, when she turned her back on all romance  
And left, so long ago, the East behind her,  
Her heart of hope already had stopped beating.  
Grey woman, going by my door,  
There's nothing can remind her  
Of colour any more!

### II

**O** BUT a wood on a November day!—  
Do you know the thing I say?  
Do you see the russet bracken  
That the sunlight lies among?—

## NOVEMBER

See the shafts of brass among the dreamy grey  
Pillars, where the low sun strikes, flashing?

Above the cold still under-air  
In the morning, pale above you,  
Can you hear the north-wind passing  
Over with his wingy flight?  
Can you feel the quiet glee  
Of the world's untroubled heart?—

Summer's dead, the bracken's dead:  
In the earth the trees have buried  
Safely with their sap their treasure:  
All for wrestling, all for mirth,  
They stand ready.

Do you see how glad and gay  
Is the Earth with all her trees?  
How they welcome in the season  
Rude and gruff? How they give  
Themselves to the November  
Day, and to the rough  
Hands of winter?—

They have humour to enjoy  
The changing moods of time:  
To smile with the cold light and say  
"I take you, too, November!"

## NOVEMBER

### III

**H**OW lovelily the larches bear their dead  
And the young oaks carry their widow-  
weeds!

Gladder than Spring it is to see their glory  
When the air is cold above the snow.

I say it's a glad thing to see that tall young larch  
Standing all maiden-stately in gold apparel  
To welcome him who now shall strip her bare.  
Or yon, her sister, lovelier in thinner gossamer,  
As it were sunny gleaming dew-drops veiling  
her:

And to know Winter laments naught but hath  
his own pure splendour.

Winter!—when you stand here amid the wood,  
There's some sublime gladness that summer  
could not tell

Comes forth to praise you! Among these com-  
rades

I hear another mightier word of freedom  
spoken.

They weep, but not corrosive tears.  
They let grief go, it also frees them.

## NOVEMBER

Stedfast, evading naught, from life they withhold nothing.

Even their grief is presently a toy  
For the spirit of young laughter.

### IV

**W**HEN joy escapes me, it is not this sin or that I have committed, but, longing after some unattained delight, I have forgotten my Divine Companion.

Numb to His touch, what can I know of joy? It is only in His presence that my spirit ventures forth from its shadowy lair:—only responding to His touch my spirit ventures.

But I forget, and unaccountably my busy day is empty: meaningless seem the dear greetings of my friends.

In His love is my meaning: vainly I seek myself elsewhere!—I have outgrown my mind and body. My spirit is no more at home except in His companionship.

There only, is health for me, purpose and happiness. But I forget: I recognise Him not: I am no longer part of His delight, but my own burden: my body and soul heavy with a forgetfulness that cuts me off from knowing Him at hand: that, looking in His face, is still alone, and lying in His bosom, desolate.

## NOVEMBER

v

**I**F we withheld thee not, O thou divine delight,  
Thou radiance, whom we hide in our un-  
happiness,  
Our days would shine like gold thread in the  
woof of night,  
And God would take their labour for his  
comely dress.

O thou divine delight, did we withhold thee  
never  
But dared with every breath to give thee  
utterance,  
Fear would have lost his foothold on the earth  
for ever,  
All of it caught again into the starry dance.

Aloof from thee, the oppressor holds himself, a  
stranger;  
The unjust shelters him from thee with  
shields of scorn:  
Mightest thou but rejoice in these, thou wouldst  
endanger  
The last withholding thrones that keep thee  
yet unborn.

## NOVEMBER

Thou art not childish glee, nor gladness only  
art thou:

Thou art Creative Power whom we have dis-  
obeyed:

Thou art the pulse of God within us here and  
now:

'Tis not of Death—of thee O life, we are  
afraid.

# Freedom's Fellowship

## I

SEATED in the World's Playhouse, I beheld  
The Great Piece playing. Often I rebelled  
At watching, and was fain to disobey  
The Voice that held me at that Passion Play  
Of Man's Redemption, a spectator, far  
Removed from the actual agonists of a war  
Wherein myself was mixed. Till onlooking,  
There woke within me the æonian Thing  
Displayed in all that action. I was 'ware  
Of Him whom I beheld: the Actor there  
Across the footlights, the Protagonist.  
As one who had looked upon a glass and wist  
Not that it was a mirror, nor whom he saw—  
So gazing, suddenly, I knew with awe  
It was no stranger, nor that Piece of Strife  
Another than the substance of my life. . . .

Often on that Playhouse I'd turn my back  
To wander in the woods of Goodly Stack  
And squirrel-haunted Squerryes. There, the  
trees  
Showed me the sense of the ancient prophecies  
That foretell a strange breaking-forth of power  
Beautiful as the unfolding of that flower

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

Whose bud is this mysterious Earth, that keeps  
The glory so enfolded in her deeps  
No man, however nimble be his wit,  
Guessing at its delight can image it.

### II

**A**S a tall pine, grappling the rock below  
To climb the unsubstantial air, will grow  
On a hand's breadth of the hill-shoulder, so  
On a mere span of space, therein set firm,  
Shall rise that royal spirit that hath its term  
In Godhood, will a man but give his whole  
Passion and patience to become one sole  
Substance for it, that he may stand sublime  
Upon a shoulder of the Hill of Time  
Witnessing to the Timeless;—may rise up  
Erect, to dare the lightning with his top:  
Wrestle with wanton tempests, and not break  
In any of their capricious clutches: take  
The sun's pitiless drouth, out of that fire  
Fashioning fibres still to lift up higher  
The challenging dark shadow of his crown.  
Dizzily up he climbs, but he thrusts down  
More than a pine into the secret place  
Forbidden to the light, beneath the face  
Of Earth that looks on Heaven. There is the  
fount

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

Of the ever-urgent impulse that doth mount  
Up in the sap and out into the light,  
Carrying the secret of that recondite  
That enigmatic power, which is the mirth  
Vibrant in all the Body of the Earth,  
The gladness of Her being, whereof all  
Things that are Hers partake. . . .

High in the tall  
Pine's upper fork, the kestrel hath his seat;  
While up and down its shaft with clattering feet  
The nut-brown squirrel scrambles: screams the  
jay:

The mild wood-pigeon all the livelong day  
Flutes to his lady. But the unexpressed  
Residue of delight within the breast  
Of Mother Earth aches so for utterance  
In man as to becloud the pure expanse  
Above him, burdening the atmosphere  
Wherever he is gathered, with the sheer  
Anguish of her unbearable delay  
Till he respond to her, and She can say  
That without which her joy is yet unspoken,  
That which without him must remain but  
broken

Fragments and enigmatic words. O when  
That which already is half awake in men  
Bewildering their days with impulses  
Mysterious that they know not to appraise

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

And so seek to evade—when it shall gain  
Them wholly, and they serve with might and  
main

Its divine purpose to bestow on Man  
God's meaning, they shall utter, for they can,  
That Life on whose appearing Earth attends,  
That word of words that changes into friends  
The foes that hear it, for before their birth  
It cradled them within the heart of the Earth.  
Then life's assembled hosts shall hear again  
The fiat of creation, spoken plain  
Among them all, and they shall understand.  
Can you not feel the wonder close at hand!  
The Earth is quick with it beneath my feet,  
So nearly is the whole of life complete.

### III

**A** ROOT was I, and burrowed down my  
way  
Year after year through sorry coloured clay;  
And it was liker death than life to me  
Through all that miry age of misery.  
My spirit with enduring patience bore  
By some mere pebble to be thwarted, or  
To be encouraged by the slimy ooze  
To new blind patient toil: my spirit whose  
Manhood was made expressly for the wide  
Regions of the light, where it would open-eyed

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

Enter some little into God's design,  
Echo his windy words, and even divine  
The informing joy, clear, lucid, beautiful,  
That lurks within all substance as a soul.

I strove, I sulked, I struggled for my breath  
In that dark under-life that was like death,  
So strange to any enfranchisement it seemed.  
And I grew strong in the dark and stubborn-  
limbed

In that unkindness: yet withal I knew  
My stubborn strength was of itself untrue  
To something in me, though it was full-  
vigoured:

For, nourished on resistance and the niggard  
Diet of strife, I could not tell the whole  
Truth that was kept a secret in my soul.

Somewhere—but far beyond hearing or see-  
ing—

Somewhere upon the utter brink of being,  
There dwelt another me, in other fashion  
Occupied, fed upon a generous ration  
Of open light and free air. I had seen  
The immortals, in a world of gold and green  
And azure, that is only just beyond  
The surface of the earth, free of its bond,  
And floating all, as though upon a sea,

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

Buoyed up on their aerial liberty.  
But stranger than to know them anchored there  
Almost within my reach—should I but dare  
Reach up a moment from my groping toil,  
Lift myself but a little from the soil  
Into the sun—a voice familiar bade  
My heart leave off its striving and be glad  
In the translucent blessedness above me:  
For these bright presences were they that love  
me,

And I their kin, companion and compeer.  
Inhabitant already of their sphere  
Of iridescent light, was I, unknowing:  
Groping below, my spirit had been growing  
Upward into a leafy-headed tree  
That floated even now upon that sea  
Of windy light, and was companion with  
Those earth-born joys that breathe immortal  
breath.

I lifted up my heart: I was lift up  
So upon gladness that I could not stop  
Uttering twiggy praises full of leaf  
Into that wondrous light as though all grief  
Of my long labour in the dark were over  
And I had now no more to do but hover  
Upon the air, crooning my happiness  
Fond as a pigeon. Now the pitiless

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

Lonely urge of my blind will down and down  
Pulsed up out of my trunk into a crown  
Of heavenly leaves: my stubbornness became  
Gentle with gladness: I shook off the shame  
Of my frustrated will, frustrated now  
No longer, but achieved in every bough.

Now I have franchise both of sun and earth,  
Till my last root is merry with the mirth  
Of March, and I outstretch my branches bold  
To joy, in the stubborn strength of that root-  
hold.

I live in the earth: I am no flickering wraith  
Of fancy but the embodiment of faith.

### IV

**T**HERE are great spirits that stand up  
alone

As here and there an oak stands in a zone  
Of corn and ample meadows: hero trees  
Staunch in themselves against all enemies  
And royal to small creatures in bad weather:  
And there are spirits as great that stand to-  
gether

In an inseparable fellowship,  
Like the high pines on a hill-slope that's deep  
In their long-fallen needles: spirits that are  
As the high pines erect and columnar,

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

Because for many a lustre they have stood  
Rank upon rank together in the wood,  
Until each one is not so much a tree  
As member of that great society  
Of friends in whose association dwells  
A presence I discover nowhere else.

And I have known a Quaker meeting when  
The strangely still, intensely real men  
And women ranked about me in the deep  
Silence, were like a group of trees that keep  
In their mysterious circle the untold  
First and last secret of the manifold  
Wonder of the world: a group of druid trees  
Still haunted by the primal mysteries,  
The elemental presences that are  
Ever about us unfamiliar.

I was in a great grove of mighty thewed  
Storm-challengers, that make a solitude  
By their august companionship. Apart  
Spaciously set with magisterial art  
To entertain in mutuality  
Those vast emotions that could never be  
The guests, even of comrades, if they stood  
Crowded together in a thicket wood.

I found a freedom in that company  
Elsewhere I had not found. For to be free

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

You must be rooted in the rock, and keep  
Your proper distance for the swing and sweep  
Of the impassioned rhythm to vibrate through  
Your being and make music out of you,—  
One clear note of that full spontaneous speech  
That no man sings alone, but many, each  
Exulting in a wonder whereinto  
Life pours the impetuous current of its blood  
Pulsing from its one heart. Upwells the flood  
Of joy in them out of its reservoir  
Through every root that has gone groping far  
Down through the soil to catch in the still deep  
Bosom of the under-earth, that seems to sleep  
Always, the secret thrilling of a life  
Beyond the utmost reach of stormy strife,  
Beyond exhaustion and beyond dispute.  
Well may they stand splendid and resolute!  
Out of the marrow of the world they draw  
Their sustenance. The everlasting Law  
Vibrating like a voice through all earth's frame  
Vibrates in each, and every one of them  
Shares its authority. Strangers to fear,  
Most royally they give what is most dear  
To them. Rooted in God and independent,  
The ardour of their passion shines resplendent  
As the moon's raiment when her beamy light  
Clings round her dewily in the winter night.

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

v

WHO strays among them, let him have a  
care

With what companionship he enters there:  
For there are hours in which you cannot hide  
Aught from the Trees: when you must open-  
eyed

Behold the shapes of dream you carry about  
The world with you—your dark or shining rout  
Of dreaded or desired imagining.

To life about you leaps the Magic Ring  
Your feet can never step out of, because  
It is your self that the dark circle draws  
Enclosing you in the curve of its occult  
Desire, against whose logic you revolt  
With half your will in vain. Darkling, it  
sweeps

Its compass, and within securely keeps  
You prisoner of the line invisible  
Traced by the rebel half of your own will:  
Invisible, till in this solitude  
Of Great Trees it become strangely indued  
With substance, and confront you with your  
fate.

Ay, but the Wood is not confederate  
Against you!—These are comrades among  
whom

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

The secret that is in your heart may come  
Venturing forth out of its secrecy  
Into the worship that they make with me—  
A spacious living silence underneath  
A spread of branches interwoven with  
Slant sunbeams, in whose wide beneficence  
Our spirits have no more need of defence:  
A space of sunshine that dictates to none  
The joy wherewith he shall be clothed upon,  
But only bids him free his spirit wholly  
Of chattering care and murderous melancholy,  
And give it to delight: sunshine that quickens  
That singing of the heart that flags and sickens  
Where love's a prisoner and hath not yet  
Climbed up on to the windy parapet  
Of boundary cliff that gives upon the vast  
Expanse of life, nor yet had heart to cast  
Forth trusting to the waters of the sea  
Of faith's incredible immensity.

### VI

**I** AM myself at last, with now no more  
Fluttering against the pane, at the locked  
door  
No more entreaty. Now with bitterness  
I claim no more forgiveness or redress:  
The battle-cries that echo about me cease  
To nerve me or unnerve me: I have peace.

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

My spirit from his age-long strife arose:  
He stood no more contending with his foes:  
Flung down his sword and shield: put off his  
mask  
Of warrior, and to his proper task  
Turning with a quick gesture seemed no longer  
The self I knew: wiser he was and younger.

I felt my body quicken with that might  
Of mastery that is the soul's delight  
When, from its secret chamber issuing,  
Clad in the candour of a May-morning,  
Comes the Almighty Fiat forth that changes  
The aspect of the world in all its ranges  
With a new rhythm, whereto all circumstance  
Responds, and the eternal atoms dance.  
Comes a new pattern, comes another norm  
Into creation, and the subtle form  
Of every creature answering to it, wins  
Fresh meaning, and another age begins.

The peace I enter into is alive  
With living life, that needs no longer strive  
Because it is triumphant as a flower  
Whereof the air admits the sovereign power,  
The substance of whose delicacy carries  
Magic that with the power creative marries  
So that its ecstasy, and it alone,

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

Brings to the earth a hitherto unknown  
Henceforth eternally recurrent joy.  
When I assign my heart to this employ  
It lifts me up that suddenly I dare  
Find foothold on the skyey thoroughfare  
To journey on my errands. Joy afresh  
Sets her republic up within my flesh  
With all its liberties of continence,  
Where sullen moody disobedience  
Answered the tyrant: for republican  
Is the full-statured body of a man,  
His freedom and delight are the good-health  
Of that irradiated commonwealth  
That is so capable of joy its cells  
Conspire together against whatever else  
Usurps its government, but all their will  
Is Gladness, his commandments to fulfil.

### VII

**O** LARGE is life!—The life I come into  
Stretches so large about me as I go  
Upon my errands, that I seem to be  
Already a dweller in that Liberty  
That is itself the immortal blessedness  
I sought, but dared not deem I could possess.  
I move about in it as in the temple  
Built by my spirit for its worship: ample

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

For it as the whole starry-raftered Night,  
But not too lonely-wide for my delight  
To fill it, as the worshipping fulfils  
All some vast minster, when, crossing its sills,  
You enter from the noisy stranger street  
And on the instant are a part of it:  
So, when out of the traffic I come in  
To mine own freedom, once again I win  
The great horizon of Reality—  
To know in everything I hear and see  
My fellowship, as it were all one life with me.

More than myself it is I: In it alone  
I am the master of the fully-grown  
Faculties of my spirit, incorporate  
Only in its high purpose to create  
A body for my joy, a consciousness  
That my delight shall hold against distress  
If but for an hour: only in it I know  
The imperative command, that bade me go  
Forth into birth and being, justified:  
Only in it, immortal, I abide  
Set in my place, as in the firmament  
Of godhood, till Its purpose be forspent.

For this my larger life is that wherein  
I enter into Freedom, and begin  
Participating in the power that flows

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

Through all the living fellowship of those  
That are its members and embody it.  
Though we be only simple folk that sit  
Wrapped in its life together, one we are  
With all the heavenly host that, star by star,  
Declares God's Glory, filling up the span  
Of worship, since the dark of death began,  
With the inseparable company  
Of them that enter into Liberty.

### VIII

**I** AM among my comrades: my delight  
Is all about me like a starry bright  
Company. . All the wonder in the air  
Is actual communion that I share  
With that great fellowship in whom I am  
Enkindled from a coal into a flame.

Often when I am most alone that joy  
Encircles me with friends: and they convoy  
The ship of my desire safe through the shoal-  
Waters into the open sea: my whole  
Being is theirs because they set me free  
Who catch me up into their company  
And carry me out to the Open Sea.

When I am left with my defeated gladness,  
And am beset about by sullen madness  
That battens upon misery, and my numb

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

Spirit cries out for succour—then they come  
Thronging about me, and I feel the anguish  
That ate into my soul begin to languish  
Because of them: I know again the strong  
Arms of that joy whereunto I belong.  
Anew each day with all my will I break  
Out of the circle of these cares that make  
A loneliness round the imprisoned heart.  
For having once discovered myself part  
Of the Great Life that only comrades know,  
Something divine in me will not forgo  
His birthright, but still challenges whatso  
Arrogance of things seen would paralyse  
The visionary power that makes me wise  
To know my comrades of eternity  
Sharing the moment of delight with me,  
Respiring with me that immortal breath  
That is one life beyond despair and death.

### IX

**F**ELLOWSHIP is a grove of trees that  
stand  
Taller than the thick wood on either hand  
As heroes stand than men. The heart lifts  
higher  
Entering here. It ventures to aspire  
To its full manhood: rises up above



## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

I feel the grave humorous light caressing  
The creatures of the wood: no dread oppressing  
The stillness with solemnity to crush  
Their mirthful life: but the half-audible hush  
Is of some gracious God whose presence gives  
A deeper meaning to each life that lives  
In his presiding splendour, until each  
Becomes a particle of the God's speech  
To tell a truth it cannot comprehend,  
Save that to that delight it loves to lend  
Its heart. Now he begins to utter me  
Among them. Now mine eyes begin to see  
The meaning of the grove, begin to feel  
The presence that these living forms reveal  
In every gesture, every living line:  
For now their comradeship is become mine,  
And this that, all together, they concealed  
From me, eagerly now to me they yield.

There is no onlooker may understand  
The mystery embodied in that band  
Of comrades. Final truth it is, and they  
Only can know it. He that would betray  
The secret that is freedom must declare  
The divine wonder in his being—bare,  
Body and soul, in that translucent air:  
Must become parcel of that infinite,  
There is no other way to utter it.

## FREEDOM'S FELLOWSHIP

O the world's meaning is a bud, a splendour  
Sealed-up, saving as, to some spirit tender  
To his caress, Love may vouchsafe a proof  
Of what is yet hid. She thenceforth aloof  
A little from the press of men's affairs  
Must stand. Strangely, and all at unawares  
The vision was vouchsafed: the unconcealed  
Delight of earth. Hers now the perfect  
    wheeled  
Glory of a hundred petals, still tight-packed  
In its November sheath. O hers the Fact  
That shall fulfil the world we sense and see  
With its more intimate reality.

## To Love

**L**OVE, to the little-loving nebulous Thou  
    appearest:  
Their eyes worship not Thee. Now that I get  
    Thy range  
How beyond belief exquisite is Thy form!  
Thou starry Light-bearer, young-eyed Child of  
    the Morning,  
Impartest the purposeful meaning of the Crea-  
    tion  
To the learners of Thee.—O Joy everlasting,  
We that learn Thee are one joy, one composite  
    glory—  
As a golden Dandelion, all our florets together  
One flower in a field! As the sun, heavenly  
    Dandelion,  
Rays light forever out recklessly, keeps no ac-  
    count of it,  
What he *means* is to shine, God help him!—so  
    is the lover,  
So is the man raised up in Thee to the power  
    of his manhood,  
Stedfastly golden, resplendent, joy-outpouring.

## TO LOVE

Yea, as the god-like Sun, that Unit of Lov-  
ers  
Stablished in heaven to radiate earth-impreg-  
nating joy,  
Are we Thy learners, together his fellow, the  
Company  
Of Them that Beget Delight . . .

To beget a love-child who would not give the  
price Earth asks?  
But O, blessèd are they that, loving, beget the  
invisible  
Form of Thy pure power, mighty deliverer,  
Spirit of Sunshine!—  
Apart from Thee, Love, Power is a monster.  
Empty of value,  
Vain all the wealth of nations, if it be not for  
Thy spending:  
Wasted the resolute toil of a people not learnèd  
in Thee.—  
Thine is fruition. There is no joy but rejoiceth  
in Thee.—  
Love, lacking Thee, the ages miscarry. Their  
gathered-up knowledge  
Is naught, for without Thee Truth is not.—  
Thou alone knowest the whole use of the  
world.—

## TO LOVE

The use of the world is at last Thy joy that  
abides:

Substance eternal, ether irradiant with the com-  
plete

Purpose of an inexhaustible life outpoured.—  
He who carries the wonder within him knows  
it divine.—

Thou, Love, alone settest free.—I feel Thy  
passion

Patiently gather within me: Thy procreant  
power grow

Sure in me of its sanctity: not-to-be-thwarted:  
god-like:

All of me handling with calm clear eyes of de-  
cision:

Pouring my life forth with a Hand that is yet  
my hand.—

Thou duly directest the crawling caterpillar,  
Else a vain destroyer of delicate promises,  
Eater of buds:—Thou transformest him into  
an airy carrier

To and fro in the fields of the flowers' mes-  
sages.

It is only toward Thee at last that Desire  
emerges

Out of its chrysalis into the light on wings.—

## TO LOVE

Thou createst a whole out of this confusion of  
parts,  
In Thee the excesses of passion that are not  
wholesome for life  
Are justified: they come at last to their meas-  
ure in Thee.

Infinite Thy demand, O Love, as the infinite  
blind

Urge of unuttered longing: wild, pent-up to  
madness:

Fiery mouth not to be quenched at dear lips:  
whose kisses

Poison its love, till Thou, God, overpowering  
That stormy power with Thy purpose, yoke it,  
exuberant

To Thy task of creating Joy not less but more  
passionate.—

Thou givest eyes to Desire.—All my meaning-  
less parts

Love, when thou touchest me, Thou sanctifiest  
with sight.—

Thou makest whole that takest not less than all  
that I can be.

That only Thou ownest for Thine wherein a  
man pledges

Body and soul and spirit in one passion, holding  
Earth for his witness and the eternal stars.—

## TO LOVE

When I began to love, and felt my soul going  
forth  
Away from me to the Unknown, I was afraid  
to be squandered,—  
So many a greedy mouth: many a snatching  
hunger!—  
After, I feared lest this that was precious only  
for spending,  
Life's own seed, in me hoarded remain, and  
perish.  
Of Thee less ignorant now, I fear either death  
no longer.

Immanent in our loving, Thou transcendest, O  
Love, our passion:  
All of our love together is but a little of  
Thee.—  
Within Thine orb, as within the all-circling  
horizon,  
Each of my passionate loves shines in his place,  
secure:  
Ever-sustainer of loveliness, world-enamouring  
presence,  
Loving them, I give worship, O not to them,  
but to Thee.  
Thou fulfillest, O Love, my entire manhood  
with praise.

## TO LOVE

Thou art as the Sun. Thou beholdest the ugly  
secrets of shame  
Averting not thence Thy clear eyes: changing  
not into hatred  
Their undismayed regard.—Derelict, desert-de-  
feated,  
The poor pilgrim of life in his last extremity  
Catches that wonderful gaze and on the instant  
forgets  
His dismay at the cries of the flocking heavy-  
winged birds.  
As with the triumphing choral of the great  
Ninth Symphony  
Joy breaks out of his torn body to Thy em-  
brace.—

Who now shall sustain the lad, the soldier de-  
scending,  
Snatched like Koré the Maid from an April  
world, down  
Into the bowels of death, into the underworld  
air,  
There to do battle, to make corpses with his  
young hands—?  
Only Thou art sufficient, down in that place, to  
keep  
His spirit alive, Day-spring of beauty inex-  
haustible,

## TO LOVE

Love Divine, in whose Almighty power I uphold him.—

When I forget Thee, how helpless my love is of succour!

Love is a pitiful thing once it is parted from Thee.

## Delay Not, Love

**D**ELAY not, Love, lest what I have of  
power  
To hold against Thou come, my marriage-  
dower,  
Be conjured, through some unbelief of mine  
That doubts Thee or Thy coming, to assign  
Itself to another lord, and so betray  
My will to accomplish his desire:—delay  
Thy coming to my government no longer,  
So many a foe have I—but Thou art stronger.

When I behold the promise of the world  
Blighted, and all a kindly people hurled  
In God's face with a lie by one mad will—  
Love, I know hardly how to endure until  
My little kingdom be possessed by Thee,  
There comes so many a royal treachery  
To impose upon my will—so many a claimant  
To power, kingly and clad in shining raiment.

I am not unacquainted with Thee, Love,  
But to know Thee a little is not enough.  
Loving a little, must I not admit  
These that look like Thee?—Whole and infinite

## DELAY NOT, LOVE

Is my necessity for all Thou art.  
Henceforth I will do naught from Thee apart  
That, love being all my business and profession,  
All of my being may be in Thy possession.

## The Greeting

**H**ER pinched uncompromising face was  
pitiful  
Seeming to plead for love, and yet with what a  
proud  
Accent she said, setting my proffered love  
aside:—  
“My friend, if you had only looked with faith-  
ful eyes  
Into the truth I showed you, if you had not  
faltered  
Upon the sills of sight and, guessing prema-  
turely,  
So misconceived the look in which I told you all  
As to make foolishness of it with your wild  
answer,  
You would have understood what I can never  
tell:  
You would have seen me, for I ventured forth  
to you:  
To you, unseeing, I came forth out of my  
secret,  
If haply, mirrored in your comprehending gaze,  
I might at last behold my spirit unknown to me,  
Know myself in your eyes, and solve at last my  
riddle.”

## THE GREETING

I heard her speak, I made a silence of myself  
That I might all be, as it were, one word of  
welcome,

As it were hands held out all ready to receive  
her—

Wherefore my lips were silent, hands folded  
before me—

For her, all that I am was waiting in my eyes.

Then she came forth to me, radiant, a spirit  
of light,

Before whose sovereign pure splendour the con-  
descension

My fond heart had prepared was utterly  
ashamed:

I saw her: I forgot my folly, worshipping in  
her

That wonder of else incredible divinity

That searches the world through if there be  
any place

Unoccupied by the busy turmoil of our cares

Wherein Its quiet hands may find employment.

# The Exile

Heribert Freimuth, hyphenated American, writes:

## I. OF GERMANY

**S**HE had a place midmost among the nations—

Woman, large-built, for the elemental throes;  
Her frame a harp superb for the exultations  
Of Life, what time his hands were magical  
With starry rhythms to draw from her the  
chant

Inimitable of her being, all  
Mysteriously resonant—  
And for his solemn, heavy-fingered woes.

Great-hearted she, and like a mother's  
Her voice was then!  
There was not one among men  
Fibred for Freedom's song  
—Her music—but was hers: and she was ours:  
More than another's  
Her mighty voice doth yet of right belong  
To the great-chorded harmony  
Of Man that wants it now.

Ours still the song that still  
Vibrates with her own voice: but she—

## THE EXILE

Bewitched by warlock Powers  
That steal away the will—  
Is stol'n from us.  
Our joy that was in her they have made dumb.  
Now in her place a stranger stands :  
For face, a mask : her brow  
Blind with a wild possession and piteous  
In its blank arrogancy : numb  
Is she to all old kinship, strange  
To the sisterhood of the Lands.

As if caught in a curse,  
She suffers all some werwolf change :  
Horror is in her hands :  
Her womanhood perverse  
Preys upon that it once caressed :  
The mother-fountains of her breast  
Turn to a treacherous, devouring drouth  
And suckle madness. Ay, she is  
Changed all ; but most her mouth,  
That wonder-teller, fairy-eloquent  
As April's when the influence of the South  
Opens her lips with summer promises.  
Her spirit on what wildwood breath  
Would issue, leading forth for our embrace  
From out the ever unspent  
Treasure of joys she had in hiding,  
Some unimagined grace

## THE EXILE

Whereof, save from her mouth we had no  
tiding—

Her mouth that now, wolfishly, barks out death.

O now with what vile rout  
Of shameful things that wait upon her  
She mocks at those her younger years!  
Bewitched, she hath gone out  
From the company of her peers  
Boasting of her dishonour.

And who, of those that honoured once her  
name,  
Seeing in her still the light she used to be,  
Howso obscured, shall lead her back? Her  
own

Bleed inly with her shame:  
Their every nerve aches to her infamy.  
Who love her most, they are least prone  
To absolve her unrepentant: to the last,  
Implacable in their loving, they would strive,  
Withstanding her false will, by any means to  
cast

Out of her body the deceitful Thing  
Whereto she hath given her womanhood  
To be its substance, glorying  
Because it pulses in her blood.  
Vibrates and is alive  
Throughout her many-chorded frame.

## THE EXILE

He that most loves her, let him now be hard  
Against her pitiful distress,  
Lest it disarm his love of power to save her!  
I dare not pity her howso by battle marred,  
Howso sharp anguish cruelly engrave her  
Dear old-time loveliness.  
For I was bred of her and know  
Her too self-pitying weakness:  
How loving Liberty a little, to his foe  
She yielded up herself with wicked meekness;  
For when her love of him brought her to peril,  
she  
Failed in her little love and grew ashamed she  
had loved liberty.

### 2. OF HIS YOUTH

**A**LWAYS I see you, Mother, as a fair  
Woman, pleasant in any place to greet,  
And smiling with a smile  
Childishly innocent.  
O it is worse in you than any guile  
That, evilly-mated,  
You are so debonair,  
So well-content.  
Spirit so incomplete—  
Soul so unconsecrated  
By memory or passion, to rebel!

## THE EXILE

I wonder if Demeter's sunny-eyed  
Daughter submitted so  
Obsequiously, once she was Pluto's bride—  
Smiled so, being Queen in Hell  
And mistress of her foe!

Did she—doth she so smile,  
Hers is a better right than yours,  
Dreadfully mild mother of my exile!  
For though, in chambers dark  
Beyond imagining, his love she endures,  
Its nakedness is not so stark  
As your Ægisthean lord's,  
To whose tyrannous pleasure, rather  
Than bid him do his worst,  
Your too complaisant beauty accords  
What erst  
Was sacred to my father.

Freedom!—'Twas he begat me! He whose  
high begetting  
Sings through my being that I am his son  
Sprung of his blood and nation:  
Sings with your young voice, Mother,  
In the utterly sweet singing  
Of that forgotten March when Germany  
Was at her love's beginning:  
Music that still, in each and every one

## THE EXILE

Of all my nerves is mine beyond forgetting,  
My spirit's exultation  
That he,  
He was my sire, none other!

I was young when he perished. I remember  
'Those far days, and how then you delighted  
In his babe. It is my November  
Now, and your joy in me long ago blighted.  
But in me it is ever quick-water,  
The bubbling-up, throbbing  
Of that long-ago joy,  
That cradle-singing that before I was a boy  
Was mine!  
O, still a spring divine  
Amid this world of slaughter,  
It is the heedless gay  
Trill of some bold November robin  
Whose small roundelay  
Breaks down my grief and sets him sobbing.

Though I shall always carry about the mark  
Of that grim boyhood in a world all dark  
To me—Orestes-like, sun-worshipper am I.  
But chiefly Thee I praise, O pitiless Apollo,  
That, unlike young Orestes, me thou maddest  
not  
With the Avenger's Cry

## THE EXILE

Against a queen so miserably royal:  
That me, O pitiless One, thou badest not  
Wipe out in blood my mother's shame  
Striking at her with dreadful hands.  
But, westering, bad'st me follow  
Thee hither oversea,  
To this, that of all lands  
Was worthy of my father's name:  
America, ample, republican and loyal  
To Freedom her first love, and arbiter to be  
Of Justice: pitiless, clear-eyed  
As Thou, shadow-denier:  
Thou, chain-of-slumber breaker:  
Thou, mocker at the tyrant and his bride:  
Resolute world-awaker,  
Multiplier  
Of rebels against vain authority!  
This is thy land, Apollo, and at last like thee  
The world's peace-maker.

Wonderful as to a fugitive slave  
When he creeps trembling out of the hunted  
wood  
Into the welcoming security  
Of a friendly hearth, her welcome was to me.  
Slowly to it my numb being unfroze;  
Till when I understood  
That she too, this America, had foes,

## THE EXILE

How eagerly all that I was  
All the Apollo-worship of my spirit, gave  
To her good cause!

Cut sharply from its trunk, my twig  
Flourished upon the free  
Flowing, exuberant sap of that young tree  
Of Liberty, whereon I was engrafted:  
I made bold to declare  
The secret manhood in me to that sun,  
Responded to the greetings wafted  
Me on that virginal air:  
Freedom pulsed through me, faith in me grew  
big,  
Ousted my fear and took me all for its do-  
minion.

With me there was transplanted  
Into this generous soil, this orchard of my  
choice,  
So much of the old Germany  
As it was granted  
To a young lad to bear away with him.  
Answering to the deeds of Liberty  
There would thrill in the fibres of my being  
Many an old clear voice  
Of sunny Rhineland or of grim

## THE EXILE

Forest: my new world was forever freeing  
Of its dumb shame some unremembered part  
of me.

And when in battle for her, I became  
One body with America, and shed  
Wholly mine orphanage of shame,  
No more was I an exile hope-defeated,  
Mine was this country of the exile's hope:  
Even my father was no longer dead,  
No longer was he of achievement cheated:  
His spirit with mine exulted and found scope  
For all its courage in the storm  
That burst upon America: I knew him  
Then ever beside me, and before  
Ever that Siegfried-murdering Attila,  
Ever that sinister Ægisthean form  
That pursues Freedom if he may  
Seduce his bride from him once more:  
And here in this New World, wrestling with  
him, we threw him.

### 3. TO THE ALLIES

**O** NOT because ye are guiltless, but be-  
cause  
In your own selves ye chiefly hate  
The lingering old fierce lust to dominate:

## THE EXILE

With Mammonry and Might  
To override the faithful laws  
Of Freedom, that uphold  
With a divine equality, each people in his  
right:—

Because the Day is not yet old  
That broke for you upon the haunted Night  
When lying Ashteroth  
Had you seduced, in the occult half eclipse  
Of her slim moon, to forego the bread of truth  
And suck the baleful honey of her lips  
That promise treacherously:—

The day is not yet old and still your flesh  
Is tainted in you with the envenomed sweet  
Of the seductress, as itself had been a meat  
Offered to the Idol:—

O because a fresh  
Ye nations are returned to freedom only now,  
She doth your hands endow  
With virtue against this passion suicidal  
Wherein my poor illustrious Germany  
Gives herself still to Manhood's Counterfeit.

(Not as Psyche, deceived  
Far otherwise, to her undoing,  
Suspected of infamy her glorious Lover  
And put the god to flight,  
This hath fondly believed  
The subtle serpent's wooing,

## THE EXILE

She hath not lifted up the glittering cover  
Nor guessed her shameful plight.)

Tyrannous lies on her still  
The haunted night  
Wound all about a will  
That cannot but obey:  
Till ye shall shock her wide-eyed to the day  
Of True Power, and the glory that it is  
Already in the awakened air:  
Cheat Hell,  
Shatter the dream she dreams and shiver  
The abominable spell  
As kindness could never!

Then shall she see how graciously beyond  
The hard horizon edge  
Apollo lifteth up his shining wand:  
Then shall she hear the stellar mysteries,  
Mute to her all night long,  
Make answer in your voices and respond  
At the sign of a new day:  
Then shall she know the august  
High privilege  
Of Very Power  
That is divinely strong,  
For like the sun in his uprising,  
He cannot help but must

## THE EXILE

Evoked with magic ray  
The myriadicity of joy, surprising  
Out of each indistinguishable clod of clay  
A different flower:  
She too, awake, shall say  
"I can no more contend against this power."

Ye shall shock her wide-eyed,  
Because, awakened from your own so-heavy  
dreams of pride,  
Already in yourselves  
Ye begin to know the quick thrill  
That is like the little feet of elves  
Merry in a hill:  
Already the numb, the cold  
Separate molecules of your earth  
Have begun stirring toward the summer, and  
grown bold  
With February mirth  
To conspire together and loose the hold  
Of separation: ye commence  
Telling, among the astonished rocks and roots  
With eager, brave inconsequence,  
Of the April shoots  
That are to issue thence.

Among you is beginning  
Another year, another age!  
And she,—

## THE EXILE

Her false fond dream irrevocably fled,  
The Furies she invited having spent their rage  
And sunk exhausted on their leagues of dead—  
She shall awake, but first to see  
In the blank dawning of disaster,  
Her cannon grinning  
Upon her, with delight insane  
Of that first crime, prelude vaster,  
Wherein, betraying a little people's trust  
By the mere sacrilege of Power,  
She trod its valour for an hour  
Into the nameless dust,  
And branded in her brain  
For all eternity  
BELGIUM—challenge forever  
To whoso would endeavour  
Henceforward to seduce  
Her spirit: there, blazing behind her eyes,  
With inarticulate agonies  
Fiery to wither and annihilate  
Any least creeping shadow of thought  
Ere it can whisper an excuse  
That might abate  
The horror of her soul  
For this, unspeakable, that she hath wrought.

O, presently across this trampled slough  
Of bloody hours,

## THE EXILE

Will lie the reconciling light,  
And grass and gracious meadow flowers  
Will cover it from sight:  
To her too, will return the blessed days  
Of vision: Life's amaze  
Will kindle in that brow,  
And deep within that tortured brain  
There will well-up anew the healing spring  
Of music, for whose mighty murmuring  
The heart o' the earth is fain.

Presently!—O but first,  
(There is no cure else for this obscene possession)  
Down must she go under defeat  
And fling her boasting down.  
Either herself must perish  
With her deceit,  
Or she shall cease to cherish  
This shadowy Thing accurst  
This Hell-begotten Hope,  
That she crowned with the high crown  
Of her pride.  
On no side  
Evasion: no new scope  
Left it: but blank surrender and abject confession. . . .

## THE EXILE

Then with the end of strife  
Comes knowledge of her need—  
To repent: to take the oath  
To Liberty: to plead  
—If such a thing might be—  
That, after final rout,  
With all the battle won,  
Truth should lay by now sword for surgeon's  
knife:  
Discover in his hiding, and pluck out  
Of his hold in the quick of the brain  
That greedy, that malignant growth  
Which like a heaven-obscuring tree  
Shadowed her days, and shut her from the  
Sun  
That shining upon all the lands shone upon  
hers in vain.

## Siegesallee Fantasia

*The Avenue of Hohenzollerns near Berlin.*

*Enter, in full fig, his scabbard dragging at his heels, the KAISER, talking to himself:*

I 'LD like to pack these ancestors of mine  
To Königsberg or somewhere over-Rhine  
Where they could not keep watch upon me!

How,

With them about me, can I face the now  
Obvious fact I need not specify?

Old William with his grandpaternal look  
Seems always to be calling me to book:—  
Bismarck made fun of him: why cannot I?

And these huge Fredericks in a double row,  
Electors, kings and what-nots: I could go  
Crazy, seeing them stand, week after week  
Glaring at me! I've got a mind to tweak  
That Frederick-William's beard, and make him  
speak,

Pompous old marble idiot! If they'd only  
Say what they mean, I shouldn't feel so lonely  
Among them.—But nobody ever said

*That* to me.—Well, he would have lost his  
head

For his fool's trouble!—But suppose, suppose

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

Someone had spoken truth to me! Who  
knows—?

I *might* have listened. One in whose aspect  
My Prussian-eagle eye could not detect  
Any self-interest or any fear.  
For once I should have relished not to hear  
My All-highness spoken of. If, let us say  
Some Roosévelt, fresh from America  
Had flouted all my favourites, confronted  
Flattery with stark fact: relentless, hunted  
Down the deception that we practise, under  
My very eyes; with lightning to my thunder  
Had answered like a good Republican:  
Had made me wrestle with him, man to man,  
Bound only by the hard rules of the Ring—  
And he the better man because no king.  
Would I have taken a drubbing from him?

Well

That is a thing I'll argue out in Hell  
When we make nights of it around the blaze  
To keep away the memory of these days.

I've had twenty-eight years of Kaisering  
And, good God, it's enough! But how to fling  
The bauble from me with these looking on!  
My spirit might be an automaton  
For all they care, and not like Alexander's  
Hungry for worlds to conquer, that I can't,  
Since first I made a mess of it in Flanders.

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

The thing is plain. Since other worlds I want  
I'll have to look for them where I can find  
them.

The screens of death are solid. But behind  
them

There must be what I am in search of—  
Change,

And room for my ambition's farthest  
range! . . .

*(He glances impatiently at his wrist watch)*

Now where's Our Old Ally? The fellow's  
late,

Confound him! But here comes old honest  
pate.

*Enter old MICHAEL, a gardener with barrow  
and besom. He is dressed in a tasseled cap,  
leather jacket, and knee-breeches. Seeing  
the KAISER, he salutes with military gesture.*

KAISER *(benevolent to an ancient retainer)*.

Good morning to you, Michael.

MICHAEL *(shaking his head)*. It's a sad  
Dark morning, Master, as we ever had.  
Beg pardon, it is better where you be  
Up yonder, but it's bad for such as we.

KAI. I am surprised, old friend, to hear you  
grumble.

Whatever grief may fall upon the humble

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

Remember heavier falls on Us: We bear  
The burden of the Empire. None may share  
What We must carry.

MICH. Hearken now, All-Highest!  
When you go reckoning up the chaps you've  
got  
I'm "old man Michael," ain't I? Toughest,  
dryest,  
Stubbornest, old curmudgeon of the lot?

KAI. What's in your head this morning,  
out with it.

MICH. I've been a soldier and I've done my  
bit:  
Sergeant I was under the old king here;  
And "our Fritz," him, your father. It's a  
queer  
Thing that I'm telling you, but it's a true:  
Soldiering's done with.

KAI. Long ago, for you! . . .

MICH. It isn't that way you can save the  
folk:  
And it needs saving, for our hearts are broke,  
So that we can't so much as go to church.  
So, Master, if you leave us in the lurch,  
As you might say, we're perished.

KAI. When did we  
Hohenzollerns, desert our peasantry  
Of the Mark? Since five full centuries ago

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

Led by the voice that we have come to know  
For God's own Word within us, Frederick first  
Left his rich lands to redeem one accurst,  
Converting its mere sand into a rock  
Of bronze against which all the nations shock  
Their enviousness in vain. This miracle  
To God's praise we have wrought: unto His  
Will

We've shaped the stubborn metal of this folk,  
Till in our hands it is a living sword:  
And now the Mark toils in the easy yoke  
Of a divinely led and loving Lord.

MICH. That's just where you mistake,  
Master: This people  
Is a lost people. Each young man's a cripple  
That's not a corpse. But there's worse still  
than that,

For each new child they get's a devil's brat  
Marked for damnation. People of the Mark,  
Ay, of the Devil's Mark—that's us!—And  
hark,

Master, there's nary good that we can do  
Ourselves, there's only one can save us . . .  
you.

Not by the sword, but yet the sword's a sign  
Grasped by the blade, as often I've held mine  
And seen it was a Cross, and wondered when  
There would be found some Holy One again

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

To hang there and redeem us with his passion.

KAI. (*severely*). Old man, you should not  
rant in heathen fashion

Of what you do not understand. The price  
Of our salvation is not asked for twice.

God paid it once for all. Each German man,  
Woman and child He bought out of the ban  
That lies upon the world because of sin.

Are you a Brandenburger and begin  
Speaking to us of a lost people? We  
Hold the salvation of our Germany  
Secure within our care: to doubt of it  
Is the sure symptom of a crazy wit.

MICH. Ay, Master, you're our pledge, and  
God be praised

For that! But my old wife at home she's  
crazed;

Sits in the chimney-corner all a-dodder  
Muttering "Give me again my cannon-fodder"  
(Her twenty grandsons that she doted on)  
And sits and curses God. To look upon  
You'd say she was a saint. I gets me gone  
Out of my little mad-house, every day  
Comes here and works among my kings. It's  
they

As comfort me. Wonderful thoughts do keep  
A-running through my noddle while I sweep  
The leaves up that are always falling down:

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

Strange high thoughts that belong under a  
crown

And not a *zipfelhaube!* Mark my word,  
Master. The whisperings I have overheard  
Were meant for you, but as you were not  
near

They said "This is a good old harmless fool  
As never saw the insides of a school,  
If we can only make old Michael hear  
He'll take our message to the Emperor."

KAI. We cannot listen to you any more.  
Go now, get to your sweeping——

MICH. (*sweeping*). What they said  
Day in, day out, rings in old Michael's head:  
*"Tell him: the soldier's day is done,  
Another better day's begun  
With a new glory in it!"*

KAI. Go further from us there!—But, stay  
a minute,  
What's this about new glory?

MICH. (*as before*). And they said—  
Day in, day out, it runs in Michael's head—  
*"Tell him: there shines a glory on  
The cross that is not on the crown,  
Would he reach up and win it,  
Tell him: the world would now repent  
And live again the life it's meant  
To live, would he begin it."*

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

[OUR OLD ALLY, *who has been sitting perdu behind the statue of the Emperor William, here makes himself seen and catches the KAISER'S eye, who promptly dismisses MICHAEL.*]

OUR OLD ALLY (*looking curiously like Dr. Dryander, advances from amid the dead Hohenzollerns*). Our scourge! Our Attila!—

KAI. (*saluting*). Our Old Ally!

O.O.A. Whenever you're in trouble We are by.

KAI. We sought You on this Path of Victory

In the august company that is fitting . . .

O.O.A. (*with an inclusive gesture*). For Us.

KAI. Amid our sovereign Family  
We sought you.

O.O.A. We were waiting for you, sitting  
Beside your grandfather the Emperor  
And our first William, our good simple friend.  
We both have many things to thank him for.

KAI. (*impatiently*). Yes, yes! but We have  
little time to spend  
And weightiest matters . . .

O.O.A. Upon us depend  
Whenever care weighs heavy on your shoulders.

KAI. Spare us your rhetoric!—

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

O.O.A. (*admiringly*). You're more imperious  
Each time we meet. What an impatience  
smoulders  
Within those royal orbits: something serious  
Must have befallen. Have We somewhere  
hurt  
Your delicate majesty with zeal mistaken?  
To each his manners! We too, can be curt.—  
The pledge we made each other stands un-  
shaken:  
Still We supply the Power that still you want.  
KAI. This power of yours that was so loud  
a vaunt  
We have tried and found it insufficient for  
The task we have begun.  
O.O.A. You can have more,  
There still is plenty: it calls out for using.  
KAI. You are pleased to jest!  
O.O.A. You too, become amusing!  
KAI. What good to Us is power of the  
wrong kind?  
O.O.A. Ah, yes, we know the tool's always  
the wrong one  
Of a Monday morning!—Presently you'll find  
It's still the German Sword, the trusty, strong  
one,  
That rattles so divinely!



## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

Farewell! I go to greet the new! . . .

O.O.A. (*aside*). Faust! Faust!

KAI. (*returning*). But I forgot: there are things to be arranged!

In this to-morrow's world Our part is changed.  
We shall put by the sword and give release  
To our armed host, and become Prince of  
Peace.

We feel the War-lord grows anachronistic.  
At bottom We have always been a mystic.  
We foreknew when We stood on Olivet  
And wept over Jerusalem, that yet  
We too, should suffer: We too, should redeem  
The erring nations from the fond false dream  
Wherein they dwell: in Us, also, the power  
Of Gospel-love should find its passion-flower:  
We should be lifted up and all would see  
Our body broken for Humanity.  
For this We claim your help. To you, We  
feel

How mightily our purpose must appeal.

O.O.A. (*hesitating*). A new part for a Hohenzollern, eh!

I wonder what the Family will say.  
And what henceforth you'll do with your right  
hand

When no hilt's handy to it?—But command!  
We will fulfil your orders as of old.

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

KAI. The change is good to us because it's bold.

Half-measures do not catch the public eye.  
Once it is understood that We shall die  
A willing sacrifice for all men's good . . .  
Do you not see, *when it is understood!*  
We shall have superadded to the story  
Of our tremendous House another glory  
Such as will swallow up the rest and hold  
The imagination of the world for ever.

O.O.A. We will so match your deed with  
our endeavour  
No one shall tell the gilding from the gold.

KAI. No word of yours to-day but is dis-  
cordant  
With our high mood! Your wit that once was  
mordant

Is now a clown's. Can no occasion oust  
This ribald habit?

O.O.A. My good worthy Faust!  
To-day you really seem to have grown blind,  
Hypnotised not to see what lies behind  
This cardboard Siegesallee puppet-show  
Wherein you play the Kaiser!—But you know  
Me very well—the spirit that affirms  
The proper half of truth, which is far better  
Than like a pedant, to spell every letter  
Where some of them, being unfamiliar terms,

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

Inevitably raise misunderstanding!  
The whole of truth is like a flight of stairs  
That's far too slow to climb: at unawares  
I leap the people up, landing by landing!  
My better part of truth is like a lift,  
It gets them to the top without the trouble:  
Half though it be, it is worth more than double  
To any ruler, taken as a gift.

KAI. (*doubtfully*). A gift?

O.O.A. Oh, as for that, I have my wages,  
Though on my tongue the old-fashioned word  
sound odd.

A Hohenzollern now for several ages  
I've valeted as his familiar god.

(What other house can boast a deity  
As practical as yours, Vulcan or Venus  
Or Mars?) It's simply understood between  
us,

The royal Us signifies you and me.

Between us only, but for all the rest

My part, as you may say, is a dead letter,  
Acknowledged, but as good as unexpressed,  
For here, as always, the half-truth's the bet-  
ter.

KAI. Come now, to work! Your words  
are all too plenty.

O.O.A. With pleasure: shall I call up four  
and twenty

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

Brand-new, fully munitioned, army corps,  
And let old Hindenburg wind up the war?

KAI. No, that is not the way the war shall  
cease.

We've had enough of playing Goth and Van-  
dal:

Now We'll be recognised as Prince of Peace.

O.O.A. You really think the game is worth  
the candle?

Your mind is set on it?

KAI. Our mind is set  
On this new title that We have not yet.

O.O.A. We've but to whistle Peace and  
she'll arrive

In her tremendous car. A Juggernaut  
Over obsequious nations you shall drive,  
Vishnu's avatar!

KAI. You mistake our thought.  
We will be lifted up that We may draw  
The eyes of all men to Ourselves with awe  
Of this that never Hohenzollern did  
Before Us.

O.O.A. Your great deed shall not be hid!  
We'll have it filmed for the ages yet to be  
When all the universe is Germany.  
But now before we call her—in my ear,  
Whisper—what is it you have grown to fear  
More than the last of terrors, for I think

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

You know the kind of cup you'll have to  
drink—

Unless of course the whole thing is a bluff.

KAI. We Germans fear God only . . .

O.O.A. O enough  
Of that! We Germans understand each other!  
We're not a Bonn *festkommers*, but a brother  
Orator. Come now. What is this you dread  
So much you'd rather be a ghost instead  
And lodge with me for ever?

KAI. As for you  
We have no terror of what you can do.

O.O.A. Not if I turned old Michael's heart  
away.

KAI. (*startled, but recovering himself*). You  
daren't do that, for then he'd cease to pay  
Honour as well to you. You can afford  
As ill as I not to be Michael's lord.

O.O.A. There's no denying what you hint  
is true,  
Though I have other subjects—more than you.  
However, I'll concede it. It was partly  
Because it's mine I guessed your dread so  
smartly.

What you dread is to lose the simple thing  
Without which nobody could be a king.  
And what I dread—a little less, maybe—  
Is to cease being feared in Germany.

## SIEGESALLEE FANTASIA

An uncrowned king and an ungodded devil  
Sink at a single stroke below the level  
Of consciousness: and that we cannot. No,  
We must hold on together even though  
The price be the uncomfortable Cross  
(For you!)—It *will* secure us both from loss,  
You're positive of that? (KAI. *nods.*) Well,  
let us trust

The actuaries are right.

KAI. It will. It must.

There is no other way for Us at all.

O.O.A. (*considering*). A Hohenzollern  
couldn't learn to crawl

As a poor devil might?

KAI. Certainly not.

We'll set it here upon this very spot.

O.O.A. Then, hang it all!—the crosses must  
be got.

KAI. Crosses? There is but one: and that  
shall stand

Heaven high.

O.O.A. But you will have on either hand . . .

KAI. Nor Pope nor Sultan shall with Us  
divide

This signal glory.

O.O.A. No, but malefactors. . . .

KAI. Sirrah! upon this stage there are no  
actors



## The Blacksmith

WHAT have you in your stithy, Thor,  
That now you make your bellows roar  
So terribly within?

What is there hidden in the heat  
That now you snatch it forth and beat  
With such huge din?

He shouted—for he would not cease  
Hammering—"What I make is peace!

Amid this clang of war  
I shape to't—I who have the skill—  
The stubborn steel of all men's will."  
—So I heard Thor.

The metal rhymed the word he spoke  
As though each awful hammer-stroke  
Gave freedom and release:  
Under the blacksmithing of Thor  
Anvil and steel together swore  
World oath of peace.

He took me also, and his blast  
Roared, as through all my being passed  
The permeating heat:  
Within the fury of the flame  
I, that had stood apart, became  
For forging meet.

## THE BLACKSMITH

Snatched forth and on the anvil laid,  
With sudden heavy strokes he played  
On me his music well:  
"Death! Death! Death!" was the hammer  
clang  
And "Faith! Faith! Faith!" the answer rang  
Clear as a bell.

## Decision

**T**O-DAY'S the end.  
There is no more to-morrow.  
Now I pay: I cannot borrow  
Of a friend.  
I must shoulder all my sorrow  
To-day, and to the utmost end  
What I love defend.

At last, to-day,  
It is not any longer  
"You must go, for you are younger:  
I can stay."  
I have heard the Voice that's stronger  
Than the other voices say  
"It's your turn, to-day."

## The Peacemaker—August, 1914

**T**HE nightmare that was once Napoleon-  
ism  
Stalks now the harvest-ready, unharvested  
Fields at high noon, to blast them with his red  
Laughter, loosing a final cataclysm.

We boasted him a dream, while he was whet-  
ting  
His belly's hunger, for he never ceased  
Behind the years to gloat on the fair feast  
Preparing—all the births of our begetting!

Is there no spear with which to slay this Slayer  
Of nations, this Dragon of massacre, this  
Viceroy on earth of the Monarch of the Abyss?  
Is there no Champion against Life's Betrayer?

There is a hand that yet shall slay the slaughter,  
A brand that yet shall smite to the death Love's  
Cheat!

Ringing across the world the hills repeat  
Liberty's challenge, that the mountains taught  
her.

## THE PEACEMAKER, AUGUST, 1914

And she shall not withhold her hand for sor-  
row,

Or pity, or prudence that counts up the cost :  
Either the day is Freedom's, or we have lost  
Peace, and the Spectre walks again to-morrow.

She shall make peace, but never with oppres-  
sion :

Hallowed her pitiless sword that it may clean  
The whole earth utterly of the obscene  
Presence that holds the folk in his possession.

O, she shall make an end of war for ever :  
Victress, she shall make peace, a radiant-  
browed

Splendour of fear-defiant Faith, endowed  
With all the heart of passionate endeavour.

# A Non-Combatant

## I

I SAW my neighbour going gay  
To France as for a holiday:  
Caught out of the cursing battle  
Many a burst of boyish prattle:  
Heard how many a devilish stroke  
Was taken, laughing, for a joke:  
Knew the horror, and the sin  
In the horror glorying,  
Boasting they could make a clod  
Of any image of our God,  
Boasting they could dim and dull  
Love with hatred, and annul  
Whatso'er is beautiful:  
Boasting all the hideous boasts  
That glut the ugly battle-ghosts . . .  
Clear, among the starry rafters  
Of the world, heard angel laughters  
Answer with melodious shout  
And put the ugly ghosts to rout—  
Even while the dead lads lay  
In their dreadful disarray,  
Even while their women stood  
Frozen in their motherhood.

## A NON-COMBATANT

I heard the voice of Liberty—  
That was and is and is to be  
From first to finish of our span  
Son of God and Son of Man—  
Cry that splendid word of Death  
(That we say beneath our breath)  
In its whole divine intent;  
And I knew the joy it meant,  
Shared the joy that only they  
Partake who give themselves away  
To the freedom of the world.  
I saw the mystic flag unfurled  
Of ever-new defiance, flung  
To the old world by the young:  
Saw that flag—whose sunrise-red  
Dissipates despair and dread—  
Repay all the dead are giving  
With its joy of mightier living:  
For I heard the dying cry,  
“Freedom! You shall never die!”  
Saw their dying as the birth  
Of that overmastering mirth  
At whose face the devils quail  
For their terrors naught avail.

2

I saw soldiers going gay  
Over the hills and far away:

## A NON-COMBATANT

And I followed through the fern  
Sighing, "They will not return!  
To the board and to the bed  
Grief and Hate will come instead.

The November sun was pale,  
But the tall defiant trees  
Shook their tops against the gale,  
Spurning such impieties:  
And within my soul I knew  
My fear and sadness were untrue  
To something in myself that would  
Give my body to make good  
My spirit's boasting: fain would give  
All that makes me glad to live  
For a weapon or a shield  
In Freedom's hand, that He may yield  
No inch to Tyranny, or 'bate  
Any joy of His for Fate.

I believed that I would dare  
Naked to confront Despair,  
Having given all I might:  
Would go dwell in the dark night,  
Of my light bereft: defy  
Loneliness, if only I  
Could feel I had held nothing back  
From Freedom in His hour of lack.

## A NON-COMBATANT

Evermore I would rejoice  
That I had recognised the Voice  
Divine, and against any odds  
Held to Him against the gods  
And princes of this world,  
Who have no stomach for the high  
Mirth of His flag unfurled  
Upon the sky.

### 3

When myself I utterly  
Give to Freedom, I can be  
The hateless weapon in His hand—  
Let Him bid me, let me hear  
The authentic voice within my ear  
That I know for His command.

I have seen the eyes of Him  
Who is Freedom: they are dim  
With no doubting: naught of weakness  
Dulls their gaze of piercing meekness;  
It is brighter than the sun  
That I cannot look upon.  
I have felt His living breath  
Challenge in me doubt and death:  
Who am I that I should bear  
Only to speak gentle and fair?

## A NON-COMBATANT

I must be the battle-cry  
Of Freedom, or become a lie  
On His lips, when they would speak  
Mortal Truth, though they be meek.

There is not, nor ever shall  
Be any peace on Earth till all  
Life's great truth be spoken out:  
Never while we fear to flout  
Half-truth; while we dare not be  
Hated of complacency:  
Never till we give our whole  
Being—body, mind, and soul—  
To Freedom, and stand forth among  
Them who battle against the strong  
Proud powers that put Him in the wrong.

## A Schoolmaster in Picardy

**M**OOONLESS, republican, an April night  
That the south-west wind burnishes  
until

Thick-set, the stars blaze in it with the world's  
Purposeful thought, which Zoroaster learned  
And Abraham was wise in. This, entrenched  
In Picardy, he spells and understands.

Over him circle the Great Seven, sign  
Of Labour and Promise. Through a luminous  
field

Of stars unspelled, dips the Sun's pathway;  
now

It leaves the Lion and the King behind  
To enter on Astraea's realm of promise.  
Justice, the Virgin, rules here: in her lap  
Sits the world's hope: and shine in either hand  
The Scales of Judgment and the Spear that is  
A golden spear of corn, a Spike of Peace.

A peasant and a village schoolmaster,  
Patiently he had tuned his little world  
Scholar by scholar, daily into accord  
With Peace, the music that he knew within him.  
Rumour of foes designing war against France

## A SCHOOLMASTER IN PICARDY

Was bygone folly afar-off that he heard  
Smiling amid the garden of his school.

Far-off, till on that sudden First of August,  
France calling him with her trumpets, his spirit  
rang

Out like a trumpet answering hers. Within  
him

Sang a strange music that he heard amazed  
And knew the old happiness was at an end.  
He hated war, as though somewhere he had  
been

A mother, matched a body with a soul  
And made them one together magically,  
To know the cost and meaning of a man.  
Peace was dearer to him than to another,  
Gave him her heart, and like a bride demanded  
What most he longed to give her, that she  
might

Transform his ardours into life. But War  
Out of that happiness he was at home in,  
Like a pre-destined passion snatched him away.

Transplanted in the miry field of death,  
He and the stars night-long kept company.  
Often of her he loved War minded him:  
Different, yet with the same divine denial  
Of the great dreamy idols men bow down to

## A SCHOOLMASTER IN PICARDY

With less than the whole passion of their being.  
She was a sister to his lady, Peace :  
And when her masterful accompaniment  
Challenged the singer in him with its strange  
Rhythms, his exulting spirit answering cried  
New pæans against it in the praise of Peace.

Through all this visionary April night  
He sees her face in memories. At Leipzig,  
He knows again how verily it was she  
Fanning the passion that swept Bonaparte  
Back over Rhine. At Strasburg, it was she  
Consenting not to a conquest that denied  
The only meaning common to the world.  
For as, when fond peace-makers intervene  
With "Recollect, the man is now your hus-  
band!"

The white-faced woman, answering nothing,  
sets

Her clear stern eyes aloof—again he saw  
Alsace joined to the Stranger. Faithful she,  
Silent, implacable, France in her heart.  
Fed there upon such puissant love as nation  
Knew never, France became Joan's holy  
France,  
Country of Freedom. And the emperor  
For whom she was the pledge of his dominion,

## A SCHOOLMASTER IN PICARDY

Who upon her subjection had built up  
Towery dreams, would he but look, might see  
The real world reflected in her gaze  
Hateless, mockingly patient of his might.

As Alsace, weariless through the long  
hours—

The Plough driving its furrow to the zenith  
Earthward again turning, descending slow—  
He grapples with that false spirit who is  
The discord among men, and cries against  
Truth, in the name of some obedience it  
Would tune the whole world to—and cannot  
while

Justice endure. He strives, and through the  
hours

Peace urges and upholds him, striving: Peace  
That of all spirits is the only one  
That can, to every soul and tribe of Man,  
Give that to which his passionate spirit  
aspires—

For it is in her eyes. Pitilessly  
They demand all the irrevocable whole  
Of worship . . . which long since he gave to  
her.

Fighting, he fashions what the peace-mongers  
Had made impossible. Dismayed they heard  
The name of Justice, for they knew the price

## A SCHOOLMASTER IN PICARDY

Was not in their white hands. The price slips  
not

His bloody hands, nor his embattled brain  
That being sworn-in against injustice, dares  
Take the inane days and the nightmare nights  
When there are no stars in the monstrous dark  
That is too full of strange presences, bred  
Of horror and corruption.

But to-night

Is one great fellowship of stars. Already  
Justice commences. The whole world is flung  
Open as never yet to the indomitable  
Creators! Now they labour all its stuff  
With hands nor false nor blind, with thinking  
hands

Spirit-imbued: they put themselves to it  
And it responds to them, and it becomes  
Human, and brings forth beauty to their touch:  
No here-and-there fantastic joy, but all  
A consummation and accomplishing!

Out of the love-dream of the adolescent  
Youth of Democracy a passion ripens,  
No more the formless shadow of Humanity,  
A fond vague aspiration cosmopolitan,  
But now the emerging purpose, whole and final,  
The Will to Justice, to begin together  
The complete life of Man not yet attempted!

## A SCHOOLMASTER IN PICARDY

Long had we dreamed, too long had dallied  
dreaming,

Almost content with hopes we had not real-  
ised—

Embrace of bodiless joys—our immature  
Manhood spent for the barren behest of vain  
Visions, worshipping them in our folly, till  
Suddenly Death with hoarse voice shouting our  
names

We awoke to the grim guns of the adversary.  
Only then, will against will, sprang into pas-  
sionate

Purpose effectual, Freedom, the lad's fancy,  
Freedom, youth's romance, now manhood's  
sworn

Oath to accomplish or to perish doing it.

German folk, in whom as in one strong man  
The despot's will to power is all embodied,  
Now rebuffed, as you shock yourselves against  
our

Liberty-making will, another purpose  
Shall you espouse! This greater, this in-  
credible

Promise, to which we are now pledged, believ-  
ing it—

Freedom, a commonwealth built up of nations  
Bound together in faithfulness to uphold

## A SCHOOLMASTER IN PICARDY

Justice against dissension and oppressors  
Sovereign over themselves and over the earth.  
Now together, we shall achieve what long syne  
England, France, America, each proposing  
Severally began and accomplished not! . . .

The upholding Presences depart. The stars  
Pale: the rhythm flags: he is wrapped in loneli-  
ness.

Now at its coming the drab daylight proves  
The night's promise inane with what a world—  
What an unroofed charnel-house of a world!  
But up above the horror on little wings,  
The larks, Franciscan-clad, sing canticles  
To the sun and praise him. Leaps this peasant  
heart

With praise for the light of the sun return-  
ing:—

“Praise for the earth-born spirit of Justice!  
Praise

For whoso is at home in poverty:  
Puts wealth away: success for himself abandons  
To be the enabling tool of that Prometheus  
Who, Titan though he be, requires a man  
To effect justice, without which the world  
Fails of its hope and still remains a dream.

“Carol the larks above the cannon!—Praise,  
Praise for the justice that doth undismayed

## A SCHOOLMASTER IN PICARDY

Its dread Augean labour in the stables  
Of massacre. Praise for the comrade-love  
Of men devoted who, having forgot  
To bargain, on the sill of battle are  
Clear prophecies of the peace that shall come  
after

Builded upon their fear-forgetting gladness,  
Their surety of each other and the living  
Presence among them of Our Lady France.  
Praise, praise for these and Thee, O sun up-  
rising,  
And for the day wherein we perish, praise!"

## The Hill-Top Wood

UP in the hill-top wood  
I heard the oak-trees sing  
As only the great oaks can  
When the leaves are down, and they fling  
Their arms to the utmost span,  
And exult in their brotherhood  
Up on the top of the hill.

O but the air was good!  
And to feel them glorying  
As only the great oaks can,  
In their stubbornness and the spring  
That is in it—as in a man—!  
To exult in their brotherhood  
Up on the top of the hill!

I never thought that I could  
Know in my flesh the thing  
That only the great oaks can  
When the leaves are down and they fling  
Their arms out wide—but a man  
Is at home in that great-oak-wood  
Up on the top of the hill.

I climbed up among them, I stood  
In the ranks of the trees that sing

## THE HILL-TOP WOOD

As only the great oaks can,  
All of the Wonderful Thing:  
There, to my uttermost span,  
I exulted in this that I could  
Up on the top of the hill.

This that I one time would  
If, sometime, the hour should bring  
Me mastery!—now I can.  
I hold it from taking wing:  
I hold it, more wonderful than  
Any wonder:—the Making Good  
Of my Dream on the top of this hill.

I tumble out all the brood  
Of Doubt from my boughs that I swing  
As only a great oak can!  
I exult with my branches: I fling  
My arms to their utmost span:  
I have come to my brotherhood  
Up on the top of this hill.

You great hearts!—you that have stood  
On this hill-top uttering,  
As only the great oaks can,  
Your wonder—to-day I bring  
Another fragment of Man  
To be of your brotherhood  
Up on the top of the hill.

## The Quaker Women

**F**RIENDS, whom from our defence a Voice  
divine defends,

Let not the thought of us make your obeying  
hard:

Of your obedience we are the faithful friends:  
Fear not for us: the God of love shall be our  
guard.

He is among us here, though hid from our  
espial:

It is of doubting Him our spirits are afraid.

For you we have no fear, how stark soe'er your  
trial,

Though more than flesh may carry be upon  
you laid.

His call ye answer. His the inexplicable word  
Of your refusal to put forth your manly might  
Against His enemies. We also, friends, have  
heard

The Voice, and share with you all the wise  
world's despite.

Blind as stampeded cattle that fear will not  
release,

The peoples herd together, panic on every-  
one:—

## THE QUAKER WOMEN

O if amid the battle, we might ourselves be  
    peace  
And fear might fail as trampling over us they  
    run! . . .

If it be ours to endure Love's uttermost: to  
    suffer  
The mocking might of Hatred when he breaks  
    his chain,  
'Tis ye shall keep secure our vision of Man's  
     Lover  
Redeeming mortals by the price of mortal pain.

Shall ye not, also, bearing the agony we bear,  
With us triumphing over fear's delirium,  
For us, even then, forswearing your strength  
    to save us, dare  
Still with us to endure, with us to overcome?

Until our wedded faith marry with the creative  
Power that through all the ages yet remains  
    unspent,  
And unconcerned with death, shall know itself  
    a native  
Of the invisible country of Love's government.

## The Stay-at-Home

**A**S a woman that is with child, my soul  
already fosters  
A life conceived within me, secret as yet and  
sacred,  
As though the herald, Gabriel, in a sudden-  
shining shaft  
Had bidden me glory in this I nourish for  
men's joy.

At the clamour of drums without or bidding of  
voices within  
Can I abandon This? Can I resume my soul?  
Am I also free to go, one with the millions  
Descending at Freedom's call to the camp and  
the yonder field,  
Spending themselves for Her, as I fain myself  
would spend?

He is not free to go who hath already gone:  
To give himself afresh who hath already given.  
Assigned already my place, I cannot leave it  
and go:  
Mine to stay, to abide, as a woman that is with  
child.—  
And I continue at home, contented, as one with-  
out

## THE STAY-AT-HOME

Trammel, if he should run in the race, runs not  
but remains.

I see them go: my heart, going not, is one with  
their heart,

Shares in their gladness going, that now to the  
uttermost

Farthing they have responded with all that is  
theirs, as I

Also wholly respond, with all that I am en-  
dowing

The intangible hope within me, that is not other  
than theirs,

The unborn joy I was bidden foster and bring  
to a birth.

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM



# The Price of Freedom

## A FOOTNOTE TO EPIPSCHYDION

*A large room at Pisa, 1820. SHELLEY, pacing to and fro. MARY SHELLEY sewing. He is twenty-eight, she is five years younger. At this time EMILIA VIVIANI was about eighteen.*

SHELLEY. My spirit, my real self, once it was awakened into consciousness by your recognition, began to be aware of its need and of its power. I myself awoke to knowledge. All the argument about Truth ceased because I was face to face with Truth; or rather, the argument was changed into a way of revelation, the two parties completing for one another their partial affirmations.

But the great change was in desire. Desire is a seeking-together of parts into their unity. But when once the nature of that unity has been discovered, desire itself becomes different. For the whole, which is Love Himself, is henceforward awake within desire. It is now no more the blind longing of the creature after he knows not what. For now desire calls upon the God

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

within both me and the object of my longing, so worshipping Him that He manifests Himself, ruling, ordering, illuminating, till the desire is changed into delight of His presence.

Love is no wantonness. It is the life of the awakened spirit.

The rhythm of the divine life within me cannot but vibrate with that responding rhythm, of which now and again it is aware in some kindred being. Thus vibrating together, we are married into one whole, as are the notes of a music to which each note belongs.

This realisation of unity is an extravagant thing. It transcends the ordinary terms of speech. It is beyond the measure of the senses. When it seizes me, it seizes me with actual rapture, so that I neither know myself or what I am saying. It is the passion of a fuller incarnation. Do you not see?—It is the Something in which all that we have won together is enlarged and heightened into a fuller meaning.

MARY (*without looking up*). So now it is this Italian!

SHELLEY. Mary . . .

MARY. Well! . . .

SHELLEY. You have frozen up my words. . . .

MARY. I want the truth. I can bear that so

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

much better than anything else. It's the not-knowing what is true that I cannot bear. With her you are happy. When you speak of her, your whole face changes. But with me, see how constrained you are! Why do you stay? I will not keep you. For now, surely you know it, our life together is a mere lie. I cannot go on in it. One of us must go away.

SHELLEY. Harriet said that.

MARY. Poor Harriet!

SHELLEY. Poor Harriet! Poor Mary!

MARY. You dare to pity me! . . .

SHELLEY. Mary, do you remember when it was that Harriet said what you were saying?

MARY. Said what? . . . Yes, I remember.

SHELLEY. And how you said, "poor Harriet, she's not herself"?

MARY. I did not understand Harriet then. I was happy. Now I understand.

SHELLEY. You mean, Mary, you feel as Harriet did when she was not herself. So now because you are not yourself, you cannot understand anything at all. You have become a misunderstanding of everything in order that you may hold me back from what you do not understand.

MARY. Do I want to hold you back? But you—you do not know what you are doing, or

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

where you are going, upon the current of this river.

SHELLEY. So many times you have told me truth, truth that I did not know till you had told me; but this time it is not truth that you are telling.

MARY. I am simply saying we must separate, since, however it be for you, for me this life together is become a lie.

SHELLEY. No, but your going, my going, that would be the lie.

MARY. Give me freedom, since you claim it for yourself.

SHELLEY. Freedom is neither given nor taken. It is the life of a spirit that is true to itself. Now, if you go, you are not true to your utmost self. If I go, I am but a traitor.

This I know about myself: I have all the weaknesses and follies of which you ever justly accused me:—(for you love and see me as I am. I have no trust in myself at all. I look to you continually for my judgment and my strength.) But yet there is something in me—it is you who have made me know it—there is something that is at last the real Shelley: the essential spirit—that neither passion nor any kind of death can dissolve: something to which I can and must entrust everything that I possess.

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Do not make me doubt that, or you will destroy the integrity of my soul which you discovered to me and have nourished. I shall cease to be a man: I shall go back to the days before ever I loved you: before you gave me the pledge of my immortal spirit.

MARY. When you loved me, then I understood. But now . . .

SHELLEY. What has befallen you, that you say such a thing! As if ever now I could not love you: as if ever now you could be less to me—O God, how infinitely more!

MARY. A woman is either everything or nothing to a man.

SHELLEY. That is the falsehood of love's idolatry, which has nothing in common with our truth and freedom. . . . If that is what you mean by love . . .! But it is you yourself who deny it, Mary: there is nothing of that in you. You freed me from that. That is poor Harriet's talk, that goes into madness.

MARY. I thought myself free and wise. But now I know that every woman who has ever loved is the slave of love. It is her nature. She cannot share that which is the very reason of her being. Men are different.

It is the eternal tragedy of woman that she is mated with her contradiction. The man's

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

need for change is unnatural, it is monstrous to the woman.

SHELLEY. What strange, false doctrine on your lips! You strain and wrest your words out of sheer anguish, as though indeed your time had come. What if this is indeed to be a birth . . . for the new child . . . Freedom!

MARY. Freedom! O that is the word you are all always saying! A woman must not hold a man from his freedom—*with other women*. I know it is what I too, have thought and said. But now I know, I do not understand I only know—it is a lie. Until men get beyond the illusions of their desires, no happiness can be secure for women. There can be no real freedom: no abiding vision of the truth. A woman who loves as I do, cannot feel otherwise than as I.

It is the very deepest of my being that cries out against this wandering, this prostitution of the man, always pursuing some new pleasure, worshipping at some new altar, never finally faithful to any one. Whereas a woman, when she gives herself to love, gives irrevocably. There is no withholding, no duplication possible. It is her life, total and single, that she gives. She can no more share it with another woman than she can share her body and soul.

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

You give yourself, for to-day. I give myself for ever. To-morrow you can give yourself again, as though it were a new self. I can never take myself away from you to give myself again.

You have finished with my gift . . . it ceases to have value. It is no good any more. It cannot be offered to another. I must find a different way of living: and once a woman has been loved, other ways of living are but degrees of death. Harriet's way was the best. But it is not for me.

SHELLEY. False! False!

MARY. No, Shelley, it is true.

SHELLEY. Wickedly false.

MARY. For you!

SHELLEY. For you, Mary: most of all for you.

MARY. I have always wanted you to be free. I am my mother's daughter. . . . Let us be reasonable. It is hard for you too. When we are older and the fires have burnt out . . .

SHELLEY. The fires will never burn out! O, Death may quench this little candle that floats upon its dark pool: but as long as there is being anywhere this fire that is both my spirit and yours—our fire—will burn ever fiercelier, fiercelier! . . .

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

MARY. Aren't we wandering from actuality? I should not have said "fire": when this sex-passion has died down in you . . .

SHELLEY. Why are you poisoning my soul with worldly thoughts? When one body is done our love will take another: the fire must have its flame. While ever life goes on there must be attraction and fertilisation and birth. Ever new attraction and new birth. But never—O never—with denial and treachery to the old. Always and only as a consequence of the old. I love, because I love you, not because once I loved you. You have lighted in me this that cannot be extinguished: a passion you yourself cannot, may not now withhold. It is indeed I that love, but it is not merely I; it is we. You cannot take yourself away.

MARY. I cannot take myself away, and I do not love her. Your Emilia is nothing to me, but I must give you to her. I must share with a mere stranger what is nearer to me than my flesh.

SHELLEY. Yes—you must share.

MARY. But how, Shelley—how can I learn this? It is impossible. I cannot. . . . If only it were some natural necessity! But we are young yet, you and I. Our children are but babes.

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

You are more fortunate than most men who are born to love, because you have your art: you can find vent there too for passion. . . .

O if only she were real to me: this convent girl, this half-woman, who feeds her sick fancies upon your emotion. She is but little better than a ghost; and it is horrible to me that you should squander upon her all the treasure of sunshine that we two have gathered into this focus of our love. I gave myself to you, but not for her, Shelley, not for her.

SHELLEY. You gave yourself to Love, never to me. Who am I that I should accept an idolatrous gift? Who am I that I should take you for my own, or offer myself so, to you or to another? As a companion, as a lover, as a comrade in freedom, as a partner in life's enterprise,—O yes, yes!—but that is not what you are saying.

We dedicated our love to freedom, having first dedicated to freedom our own souls. You are not mine, nor am I yours, save only in that. We have no use for one another, save in that. Any other thought is abominable to me—and to you!

And Emilia, she also belongs to freedom, as do we. It is in that I meet and am joined with her. Where we meet, where we love, where

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

we are one delight together, there is freedom. . . .

Do not misunderstand. You have no right to misunderstand what you yourself have made me realise; freedom is the life of that in us which has the right, the power, the duty to be free. When I say I am joined with her in freedom, I say it out of the world of inspiration. I tell the last truth. Something of me that, without her, was blind and dumb, finds sight and speech because of her. I love her by necessity, as I love you. We share together in a life which becomes conscious and creative in so far as we dare love one another, as we dare to be joined and mingled in its being.

MARY. I feel that you are telling the truth. But is it all the truth? What is this in my soul that resists and denies—that forces me to contest your words?

I had always thought of myself as free, and giving freedom. But now I know that this is what I really am.

O, why can I not love Emilia? My deepest being longs for you to have all that life can give. But not from her, never from her!

SHELLEY. She is unreal to you, and so my love for her is an unreal thing, a fever, an infatuation. As such you hate and struggle

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

against it—but with unreal weapons. Fighting this that is not, you too become false. And because this love of mine is false to you, I too have become to you unreal; to you whose intense reality is in your love, to you who only hate this one thing, unreality.

MARY. Make me see her as you see her! Save me from what I see! With my own eyes I can see nothing in her upon which any reverence can take hold. If only I could realise a spirit burning within her—and not be always thrown back shivering from those chameleon eyes, that bloodless skin, as from an empty mask. If I could feel her alive behind those fanciful words she marries so easily with yours!

SHELLEY. If you could *see* Emilia you would understand, because you too would love her.

MARY. O if I could. But what an "if"!

SHELLEY. You will begin to believe in her. You will challenge every day this mask till it yields its reality to you. Because I love her, because you cannot doubt I love her, you too will inevitably begin to know and love her. You shake your head, Mary—and yet your eyes shine.

MARY. I think I shall never be able to see her as you do. Our relation will never be like yours: and only, perhaps, in such a relation can

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

her spirit reveal itself. I must be content never to understand. And it may be my love for you will be strong enough even for this last giving up to Love.

SHELLEY. To love is always to have faith, always to have more faith and more.

MARY. But this growth in faith demands a struggle in the soul that is little removed from actual madness. At times the creative forces of one's passion make one blind, make one cruel, so tremendous is their struggle with the stubborn substance of one's soul. One suffers till one loses hold of oneself. There are moments when I know I am not myself—moments in which I could hurt you, you who are so much dearer to me even than our children. What is it—tell me what it is, my dear!

SHELLEY. It is the birth-pains of the God. And who shall win to liberty save by this mortal way? Only through a sort of madness can we be sufficiently withdrawn from the grasp of our selves for this new spirit to take possession of us. To be shewn the throes of that new birth taking hold upon and shaping a beloved soul, this utterly humbles as it purely exalts the spirit.

MARY. I have always wanted to pay the price. I think I have never really wanted any

## THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

happiness except upon these terms. Well have I known there was a kind of happiness that might indeed be otherwise won and conferred, but never the reality that alone I sought after,—the final good which a man may obtain in exchange for himself. If he keep back a penny it can never be his. For either the deed is whole, or it is a cheat. The payment is without withholding, or it is without avail. For this is just. O above all else I have loved justice, for the sake of Love.

SHELLEY. Without it there could be no freedom. Freedom is a perfect and final thing even as death and birth are in their order final. And Freedom goes beyond them. It is eternal life. It is immediate participation in the integrity of God himself.

MARY. But never without justice: never without wanting to pay the price.

## Greeting to America Entering the War

**A** BOY, I dreamed that out of Liverpool  
I sailed adventuring to the West. Romance

Presently led me thither, and th' expanse  
Of your wide world of freedom did not fool  
My April dream. Anew, I went to school  
To wonder, for I saw all circumstance  
Growing obedient to man's spirit, and chance  
I saw you take, as it had been a tool.  
But now, America, that we are set  
Together down, commensal with the worm  
At the feast of Slaughter, you have put a term  
To all my faith's shortcoming; you have met  
Our will with yours, implacable to affirm  
The whole of freedom that was never yet.

HENRY BRYAN BINNS.

London

October the 28th 1917

## Envoy

*THY love is all about me like the loveliness  
Of Earth when she puts by the veiling of  
the snow*

*And all her beauty of ploughed and fallow,  
ochre and red,*

*Nourishes me anew. Thy love is all about me,  
More intimately near my spirit than the flesh  
Wherein I live and move and have my daily  
being.*

*For only in the enabling presence of thy love  
I can become myself, that else with alien speech  
Hear myself strangely utter fancies foreign to  
me.*

*Within thy love my spirit is confident, at home  
As I was never yet in mind or body of mine;  
For thou embracest me with that which is not  
strange*

*To my imprisoned spirit, bewildered in the mesh  
Of this incomprehensible, this unfamiliar world,  
That by the magic of thy love is changed for me  
Into a welcoming presence, friendly and won-  
derful.*





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