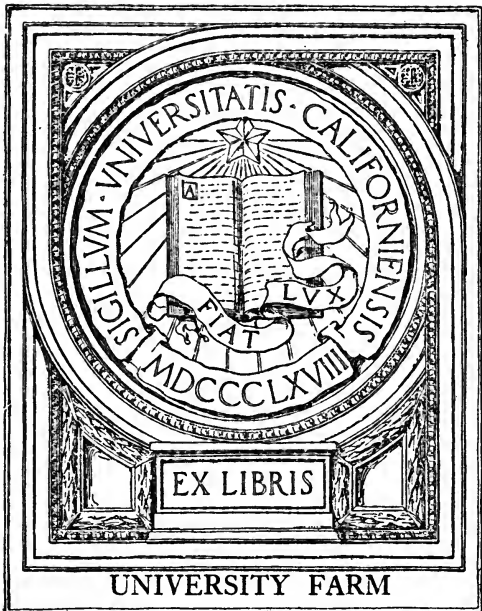
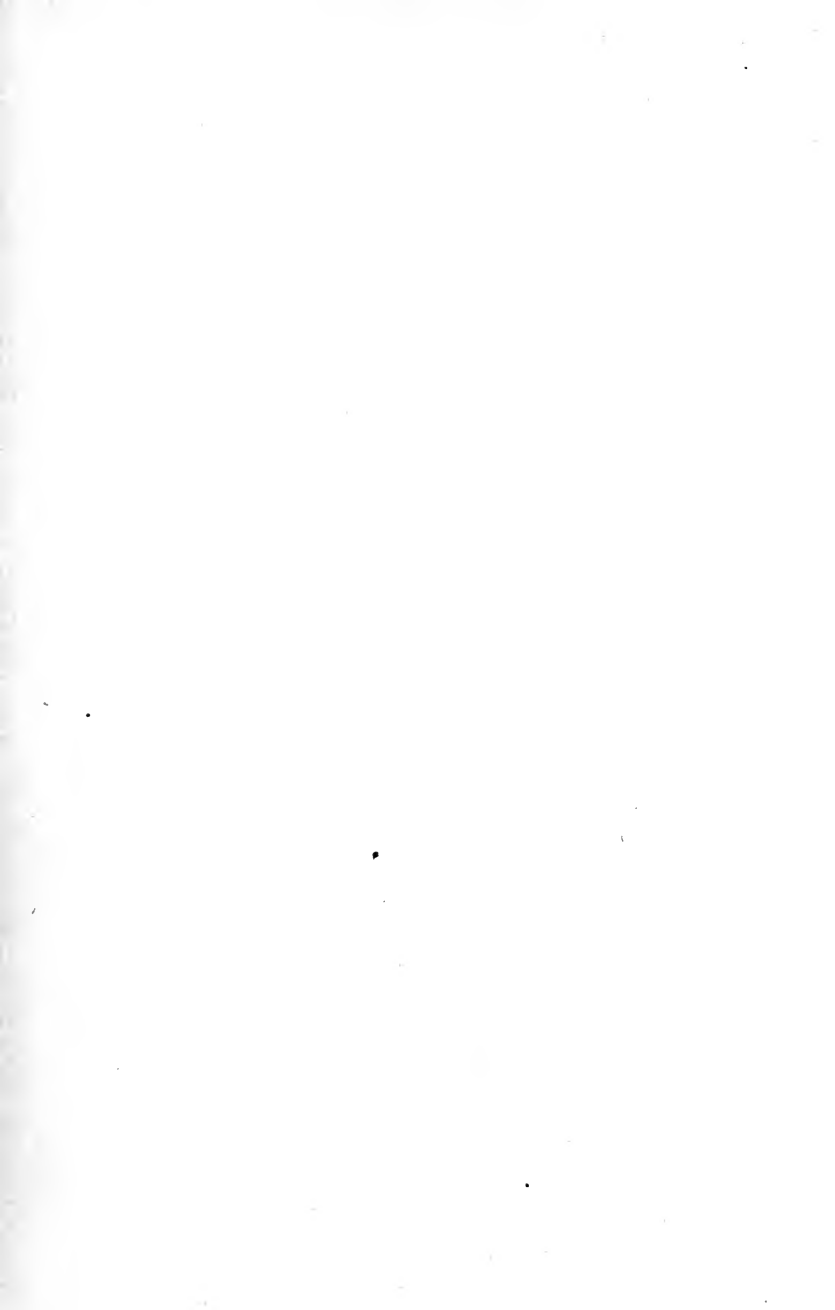


POEMS
MACKAYE



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POEMS AND PLAYS

BY

PERCY MACKAYE

POEMS

WORKS BY PERCY MACKAYE

DRAMAS

- THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS. A COMEDY.
JEANNE D'ARC. A TRAGEDY.
SAPPHO AND PHAON. A TRAGEDY.
FENRIS THE WOLF. A TRAGEDY.
A GARLAND TO SYLVIA. A DRAMATIC
REVERIE.
THE SCARECROW. A TRAGEDY OF THE
LUDICROUS.
YANKEE FANTASIES. FIVE ONE-ACT PLAYS.
MATER. AN AMERICAN STUDY IN COMEDY.
ANTI-MATRIMONY. A SATIRICAL COMEDY.
TO-MORROW. A PLAY IN THREE ACTS.
A THOUSAND YEARS AGO. A ROMANCE OF
THE ORIENT.
THE IMMIGRANTS. A LYRIC DRAMA.

MASQUES

- SAINT LOUIS. A CIVIC MASQUE.
SANCTUARY. A BIRD MASQUE.
THE NEW CITIZENSHIP. A CIVIC RITUAL.
CALIBAN. A SHAKESPEARE MASQUE.

POEMS

- THE SISTINE EVE, AND OTHER POEMS.
URIEL, AND OTHER POEMS.
LINCOLN. A CENTENARY ODE.
THE PRESENT HOUR.

ESSAYS

- THE PLAYHOUSE AND THE PLAY.
THE CIVIC THEATRE.
A SUBSTITUTE FOR WAR.
-

AT ALL BOOKSELLERS

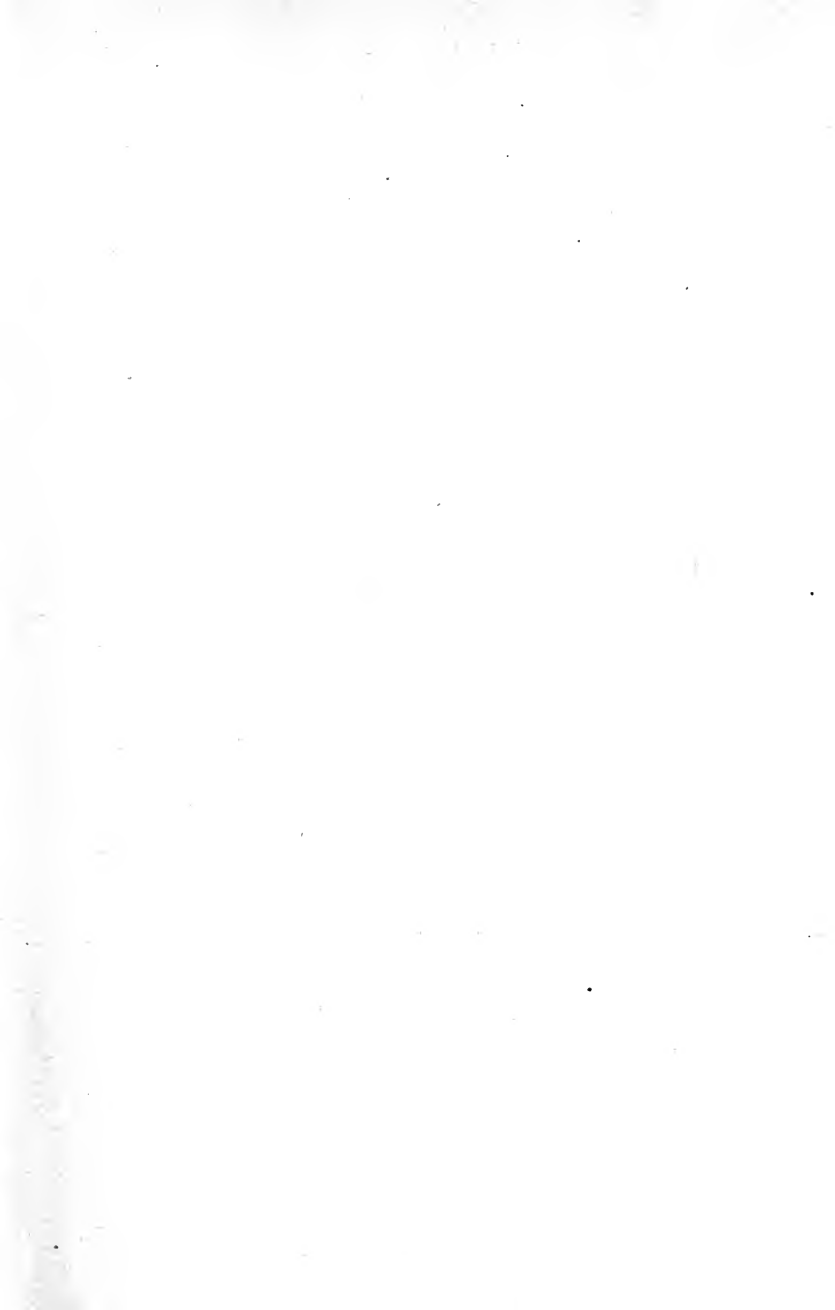




Photo by Arnold Genthe, N.Y.

PERCY MACKAYE

POEMS AND PLAYS

BY

PERCY MACKAYE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

POEMS



New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1916

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URIEL, AND OTHER POEMS
THE SISTINE EVE, AND OTHER POEMS

PREFACE TO COLLECTED POEMS AND PLAYS

IN accepting the invitation of the publishers to collect a portion of my published work within the compass of two volumes, poems and plays, the occasion seems fitting for me to comment on some phases of it as related to the reading public.

While the writer was still in his teens, he said to himself: "There is my life-work; it rises over there beyond: I can see its large outlines. I will give myself till I am forty to do its 'prentice work: then perhaps I may be ready to tackle the real job — that vision which lies there alluring, waiting to be realized."

Now, then, here is forty; and here is some of the 'prentice work gathered together; yet as far as concerns myself, apprenticeship has hardly begun: the real life-work still beckons, unrealized, away there

beyond. For this reason, in submitting to the reader's interest the works here collected, I should like to introduce them anew rather as the by-gleanings of a journey but just set forth upon, than in any sense the product of a goal attained. As such, I have gathered together the contents of these two volumes.

The volume *Poems* contains all of my published poems to date. It is a complete edition, not a selected edition. That is, it does not represent any selective choice on my part, but simply a reprinting in one volume of my four volumes, "The Present Hour," "Uriel" (by courtesy of Houghton Mifflin Co.), "Lincoln Centenary Ode" and "The Sistine Eve," to which are added ten new poems ("Dance Motives" to "Christmas 1915") — in part an aftermath of "The Present Hour" — not till now collected since their appearance in magazines. Thus the volume begins with my most recent work in verse, and proceeds, in backward time sequence, to my earliest published poems.

Of my Plays, since not more than five could bulk conveniently in one volume, I have selected — to represent both verse and prose — “The Canterbury Pilgrims,” “Jeanne d’Arc,” “Sappho and Phaon,” “The Scarecrow,” and “Mater,” in the order of their first publication. The selection, therefore, does not include seven other of my published play-volumes, nor my four published Masques.

Here, then, are two volumes, chiefly of verse, submitted to the reading public. Very little of their contents, however, was first written for the reading public. Of the poems, though many have appeared in magazines, almost none has been written for them. Indeed three-fourths of all my published work, poems and plays, has been designed primarily for the *listening* public — that is, for the ears of convened audiences. In so far as it involves language, the art involved is one wholly of the *Spoken Word* — (not of the written), designed in each case to meet some special problem implied in conveying its idea or image, on tones of the

human voice, to the imaginations of gathered listeners, less or more in numbers. The voice may be that of the actor, or of the poet speaking. The principle applies as much to poems of occasions (designed to express their distinctive spirits to their special audiences) as to plays.

Recently a most wholesome movement has developed among American poets, both of *vers libre* and of rhymed verse forms, emphasizing the immense importance of the spoken word in poetry, as distinct from its pale shadow on the printed page. This movement will, I think (increasingly as conditions of our theatre improve), tend more and more toward definite dramatic expression on the part of our poets, whether to audiences through actors on the stage, or to audiences gathered to hear the direct utterances of the poets themselves.

From its beginning my own work has concerned, almost wholly, one or the other of these two technical expressions of the spoken word. Thereby the spoken

substance of these words, which lie here in these volumes silent (one might almost say, embalmed) in type, has been intimately a part of the vital, throbbing, varied reactions of many thousands of people, to whom the writer as an individual meant and means almost nothing.

For a passing instance, the opening poem "Fight," which the reader here peruses as a narrative in print, was written to be spoken aloud within sight of those very waters, at Plattsburg, where the last naval battle between English-speaking nations occurred just a century before. I read it from a platform in a field — among speeches from representatives of Canada, England and the United States — to the thousands that thronged the grandstands, whom it was necessary to hold as attentive to the folk-theme of a poem as to the political theme of an orator — in both cases, only to be accomplished by spell of the *spoken* word. After it was over, among the crowding groups that gathered round, many of them to deplore the death

of my poem's hero, an old farmer called out to me: "Say, Mister, my grandfather fought in that fight — a real fighting cock too he was! Do you guess that fellow Jock knowed him? Tell me: got any more of Jock's letters, like he wrote to his sweetheart? Maybe they'd tell of my grandfather. How about it?"

Of course I guessed that Jock and his grandfather were chums. That was not the moment (of this printed preface) to explain that Jock's letter to his sweetheart is an imagined one, composed in a stanzaic form of my own invention.

So, if space afforded, I might suggest further some of the living human relationships of verse-forms in plays to actors and managers at rehearsals, and to "gods of the gallery" at performances; relationships of which the printed word gives no hint. In the Notes of this volume are listed some of the occasions of the spoken poems — exclusive of the acted plays. Possibly these bare notes may suggest to the reader that modern poetry, applied to specific uses in its universal

aims, is a thing in demand as alive and many-sided as ever it was in the world's history. I believe it is even more so.

Three-fourths also of all my work — like that of a sculptor, architect, mural or portrait painter — has been imagined and executed for definite commissions.

Seldom, after his art-school days, does the artist in paint or marble have opportunity or inclination to design "*Salon-pieces*," wholly unrelated to any definite placement or function. Quite as seldom may the dramatist, or the poet of the convened audience, design his work without thought of a special functioning.

Such definite "placement" of statue, painting, play, or poem implies, I think, no lessening — but rather a heightening — of the creative image to be expressed. The Sistine Chapel paintings were no less grandly conceived because they were executed, on special commissions, for definite wall-spaces. The technique of the Greek dramatists was as definitely conditioned by the particular demands of Athenian festivals; that of

the Irish bards by the special needs and folk-customs of their listeners.

A commission from without, of course, would be futile if it did not correspond to an inward creative desire, which is itself a commission from what used to be personified as "the Muse." Personally I have never accepted a commission, for play or poem, subject to any conditions that might retard its natural creative impulse or its execution. Thus accepted, a commission is simply the practical opportunity for a work, already conceived, to be born — and to be born with the hopeful assurance of survival.

Here, chiefly, then, in these two volumes are collected in print executed commissions of work involving the spoken word: work conceived and executed not for readers as such.

That this aspect of work by many authors is securing ever wider circles of readers is a remarkable sign of the times in our country. Especially the reading of plays has enormously increased in America

since The Macmillan Company published, in 1903, the author's first play, "The Canterbury Pilgrims." Its publication was the first, or among the very first, to make available for readers, through the regular book trade, American dramatic work of the contemporaneous theatre. That work, a commission from E. H. Sothern, has been followed by the publication of further of the author's commissions from Sothern and Marlowe, Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Henry Miller, Margaret Anglin, etc., and since 1903 such publication of plays has become a regular part of the business of all important American publishers. These activities have received increasing support from dramatic Leagues and Societies, and especially from the real revival of interest in contemporary drama at the Universities. There the change of attitude has been phenomenal.

When I graduated from Harvard in 1897, there were no courses there, technical or otherwise, in the modern drama. The official acceptance of my own com-

mencement part "On The Need of Imagination in The Drama of To-day" was the first official sanction of the subject, which was commented upon by the *Boston Transcript* as being unprecedented in the annals of University discussion, especially at Harvard.

Not till some seven or eight years later did Professor George P. Baker begin his excellent work there in his courses on dramatic technique — itself a pioneering work which has spread to many other universities.

Contrary, then, to many public statements regarding my early dramatic training, it was not at Harvard that I received any technical stimulus or education in writing plays. (There, and at Leipsic, the emphasis of my study was upon languages and history.)

One of my earliest memories is that of a rehearsal of my father's play "Hazel Kirke" in the old Madison Square theatre, New York, of which he was builder, chief actor and director. So much were such rehearsals, and the life on and behind the scenes, a portion of my childhood (as of my life since) that I well recall

the astonishment I felt when one of my schoolmates confided to me that *his* father was not a dramatist, and never read aloud his plays to the family at home, and never "made-up" in a stage dressing-room to act the chief parts in his own plays. That was my first dawning realization that our native drama is not intimately a part of our people's life.

So it was chiefly through familiar association with Steele MacKaye, my father, through the instigations of his wonderfully versatile dramatic genius, as dramatist, actor, stage designer and director, inventor and teacher of his art, as well as with my brother, William Payson MacKaye, an actor and poet rich in promise, who died at the outset of his career, it was with these and their co-workers in the theatre — and not in the university — that I first became aware of the magnificent potency of the theatre's art and dedicated my own thought and work to the hope of sharing in its service.

There remains, in this preface, only to comment

briefly on those poems, here published for the first time in book form, as additions to "The Present Hour." Those of the "Present Hour," occasioned by the course of the Great War, were written during the first two months of the war under the compulsion of an irresistible reaction, which prevented my thinking or expressing anything else than its own impulse to expression. Then came the numbing sense of the ineffectualness of all expression in the face of such stupendous forces. Hence the meagre aftermath of these new poems written during the year that has followed.

The chief value of the war poems remains, I think, that they record the sincere reactions of an American poet toward events of the most ominous "hour" in the world's history, and that those reactions are in large measure representatively American. As such they may make their slight contribution to the historical psychology of that hour. At the date of this Preface, there are some judgments and expressions (though few) in the war poems which I would modify or clarify

if I were now to revise them. But as this portentous time brings daily its revisions to judgment and feeling, how could I revise them permanently? I could not, so I have let them stand, unrevised, as at least a true record of true feeling. The few new poems record that increasing sense of the vast complexity of the war which is borne in upon all who seek its just solution. If there be any left in the world to-day to whom this solution seems simple, their belief will hardly, I think, be supported by the disputing historians of to-morrow. But it is not the poet's function to weigh the *minutiæ* of evidence; it is his privilege momentarily to become the kindled focus-point of fiery forces, and to give forth their light and flame according to the tinder of his spirit.

PERCY MACKAYE.

NEW YORK,
February 14, 1916.

THE PRESENT HOUR

To

THE VALIANT DEFENDERS
OF CIVILIZATION
THE BELGIANS

PREFACE

POSTERITY alone can correctly estimate and apportion the right and wrong of the great war in Europe.

At the present hour, we who look on from neutral America can but judge the war's issues by the facts and arguments laid before us by the press and spokesmen of all parties in the conflict.

By such evidence, the sympathies of our citizens, by overwhelming majority, are with the cause of the Allies.

In thus sympathizing with the Allies, we do so, I believe, whole-heartedly in the faith (based on the declared policy of English leaders) that they are waging against militarism a fight to lessen world armament and the political oppression of small nations. If they win and the stipulations of peace should prove otherwise, our revulsion of feeling would surely be commensurate.

It is conceivable, though hardly probable, that future evidence may alter our judgment of the belligerents. Our reasons remain open to conviction. But no future contingencies can, or should, stay us now from taking thought and expressing it.

In view of the world-misery involved by the war, our reaction, while dispassionate, cannot possibly be unimpassioned. Not to feel its awful issues passionately would be uncivilized.

Confronted by moral and social issues of a conflict the most poignant in history, it becomes for us — as neutrals, who alone may help to form untainted world-opinion — a pressing duty and privilege to express ourselves.

PERCY MACKAYE.

CORNISH, NEW HAMPSHIRE,
October, 1914.

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THE PRESENT HOUR

I

WAR

FIGHT

THE TALE OF A GUNNER¹

I

JOCK bit his mittens off and blew his thumbs ;
He scraped the fresh sleet from the frozen sign :
MEN WANTED — VOLUNTEERS. Like gusts of brine
 He whiffed deliriums
Of sound — the droning roar of rolling rolling drums
And shrilling fifes, like needles in his spine,
And drank, blood-bright from sunrise and wild shore,
 The wine of war.

¹In commemoration of the last naval battle between English-speaking peoples. See note at end of volume.

With ears and eyes he drank and dizzy brain
Till all the snow danced red. The little shacks
That lined the road of muffled hackmatacks
 Were roofed with the red stain,
Which spread in reeling rings on icy-blue Champlain
And splotted the sky like daubs of sealing-wax,
That darkened when he winked, and when he stared
 Caught fire and flared.

MEN WANTED — VOLUNTEERS! The village street,
Topped by the slouching store and slim flagpole,
Loomed grand as Rome to his expanding soul;
 Grandly the rhythmic beat
Of feet in file and flags and fifes and filing feet,
The roar of brass and unremitting roll
Of drums and drums bewitched his boyish mood —
 Till he hallooed.

His strident echo stung the lake's wild dawn
And startled him from dreams. Jock rammed his cap

And rubbed a numb ear with the furry flap,
Then bolted like a faun,
Bounding through shin-deep sleigh-ruts in his shaggy
brawn,
Blowing white frost-wreaths from red mouth agap
Till, in a gabled porch beyond the store,
He burst the door :

“Mother!” he panted. “Hush! Your Pa ain’t up;
He’s worser since this storm. What’s struck ye so?”
“It’s volunteers!” The old dame stammered “Oh!”
And stopped, and stirred her sup
Of morning tea, and stared down in the trembling cup.
“They’re musterin’ on the common now.” “I know”
She nodded feebly; then with sharp surmise
She raised her eyes :

She raised her eyes, and poured their light on him
Who towered glowing there — bright lips apart,

Cap off, and brown hair trowsled. With quick smart

She felt the room turn dim

And seemed she heard, far off, a sound of cherubim—

Soothing the sudden pain about her heart. —

How many a lonely hour of after-woe

She saw him so!

“Jock!” And once more the white lips murmured

“Jock!”

Her fingers slipped; the spilling teacup fell

And shattered, tinkling — but broke not the spell.

His heart began to knock,

Jangling the hollow rhythm of the ticking clock.

“Mother, it’s fight, and men are wanted!” “Well,

Ah well, it’s men may kill us women’s joys,

It’s men — not boys!”

“I’m seventeen! I guess that seventeen —”

“My little Jock!” “Little! I’m six-foot-one.

(Scorn twitched his lip) You saw me, how I skun
The town last Halloween
At wrastlin'." (Now the mother shifted tack.) "But
Jean?

You won't be leavin' *Jean?*" "I guess a gun
Won't rattle *her.*" He laughed, and turned his
head.

His face grew red.

"But if it doos — a gal don't understand:
It's fight!" "Jock boy, your Pa can't last much
more,

And who's to mind the stock — to milk and chore?"

Jock frowned and gnawed his hand.

"Mother, it's *men* must mind the stock — our own
born land,

And lick the invaders." Slowly in the door

Stubbed the old worn-out man. "Woman, let be!

It's liberty:

“It’s struck him like fork-lightnin’ in a pine.
I felt it, too, like that in Seventy-six;
And now, if ’twa’n’t for creepin’ pains and cricks
 And this one leg o’ mine,
I’d holler young Jerusalem like him, and jine
The fight; but fight don’t come from burnt-out
 wicks;
It comes from fire.” “Mebbe,” she said, “it comes
 From fifes and drums.”

“Dad, all the boys are down from the back hills.
The common’s cacklin’ like hell’s cocks and hens;
There’s swords and muskets stacked in the cow pens
 And knapsacks in the mills;
They say at Isle aux Noix redcoats are holding
 drills,
And we’re to build a big fleet at Vergennes.
Dad, can’t I go?” “I reckon you ’re a man:
 Of course you can.

"I'll do the chores to home, you do 'em *thar!*"

"Dad!" — "Lad!" The men gripped hands and
gazed upon

The mother, when the door flew wide: There shone

A young face like a star,

A gleam of bitter-sweet 'gainst snowy islands far,

A freshness, like the scent of cinnamon,

Tingeing the air with ardor and bright sheen.

Jock faltered: "Jean!"

"Jock, don't you hear the drums? I dreamed all night

I heard 'em, and they woke me in black dark.

Quick, ain't you comin'? Can't you hear 'em?

Hark!

The men-folks are to fight.

I wish I was a man!" Jock felt his throat clutch
tight.

"Men-folks!" It lit his spirit like a spark

Flashing the pent gunpowder of his pride.

"Come on!" he cried.

“Here — wait!” The old man stumped to the back
wall

And handed down his musket. “You’ll want this;
And mind what game you’re after, and don’t miss.

Goodbye: I guess that’s all
For now. Come back and get your duds.” Jock,
looming tall

Beside his glowing sweetheart, stooped to kiss
The little shrunken mother. Tiptoe she rose
And clutched him — close.

In both her twisted hands she held his head
Clutched in the wild remembrance of dim years —
A baby head, suckling, half dewed with tears;
A tired boy abed
By candlelight; a laughing face beside the red
Log-fire; a shock of curls beneath her shears —
The bright hair falling. Ah, she tried to smother
Her wild thoughts. — “Mother

“Mother!” he stuttered. “Baby Jock!” she
moaned

And looked far in his eyes. — And he was gone.

The porch door banged. Out in the blood-bright
dawn

All that she once had owned —

Her heart’s proud empire — passed, her life’s dream
sank unthroned.

With hands still reached, she stood there staring, wan.

“Hark, woman!” said the bowed old man, “What’s
tolling?”

Drums — drums were rolling.

II

Shy wings flashed in the orchard, *glitter, glitter*;

Blue wings bloomed soft through blossom-colored
leaves,

And *Phæbe! Phæbe!* whistled from gray eaves

Through water-shine and twitter
And spurt of flamey green. All bane of earth and
bitter
Took life and tasted sweet at the glad reprieves
Of Spring, save only in an old dame's heart
That grieved apart.

Crook-back and small, she poled the big wellsweep:
Creak went the pole; the bucket came up brim-
ming.

On the bright water lay a cricket swimming
Whose brown legs tried to leap
But, draggling, twitched and foundered in the circling
deep.

The old dame gasped; her thin hand snatched him,
skimming.

"Dear Lord, he's drowned!" she mumbled with dry
lips:

"The ships! the ships!"

Gently she laid him in the sun and dried
The little dripping body. Suddenly
Rose-red gleamed through the budding apple-tree

And "Look! a letter!" cried

A laughing voice, "and lots of news for us inside!"

"How's that, Jean? News from Jock! Where —
where is he?"

"Down in Vergennes — the shipyards." "Ships!

Ah, no!

It can't be so."

"He's goin' to fight with guns and be a tar.

See here: he's wrote himself. The post was late.

He couldn't write before. The ship is great!

She's built, from keel to spar,

And called *the Saratoga*; and Jock's got a scar

Already —" "Scar?" the mother quavered.

"Wait,"

Jean rippled, "let me read." "Quick, then, my dear,

He'll want to hear —

“Jock’s Pa: I guess we’ll find him in the yard.
He ain’t scarce creepin’ round these days, poor Dan!”
She gripped Jean’s arm and stumbled as they ran,
 And stopped once, breathing hard.

Around them chimney-swallows skimmed the sheep-
 cropped sward

And yellow hornets hummed. — The sick old man
Stirred at their steps, and muttered from deep muse:

 “Well, Ma: what news?”

“From Jockie — there’s a letter!” In his chair
The bowed form sat bolt upright. “What’s he say?”

“He’s wrote to Jean. I guess it’s boys their way
 To think old folks don’t care

For letters.” “Girl, read out.” Jean smoothed her
 wilding hair

And sat beside them. Out of the blue day
A golden robin called; across the road

 A heifer lowed;

And old ears listened while youth read: “Friend

Jean,

Vergennes: here’s where we’ve played a Yankee trick.

I’m layin’ in my bunk by Otter Crick

And scribblin’ you this mean

Scrawl for to tell the news — what-all I’ve heerd and

seen :

Jennie, we’ve built a ship, and built her slick —

A swan! — a seven hundred forty tonner,

And I’m first gunner.

“You ought to seen us launch her t’other day!

Tell Dad we’ve christened her for a fight of hisn

He fought at Saratoga. Now just listen!

She’s twice as big, folks say,

As Perry’s ship that took the prize at Put-in Bay;

Yet forty days ago, hull, masts and mizzen,

The whole of her was growin’, live and limber,

In God’s green timber.

“ I helped to fell her main-mast back in March.
The woods was snowed knee-deep. She was a wonder:
der:

A straight white pine. She fell like roarin' thunder
And left a blue-sky arch
Above her, bustin' all to kindlin's a tall larch. —
Mebbe the scart jack-rabbits skun from under!
Us boys hoorayed, and me and every noodle
Yelled Yankee-Doodle!

“ My, how we haw'd and gee'd the big ox-sledges
Haulin' her long trunk through the hemlock dells,
A-bellerin' to the tinkle-tankle bells,
And blunted our ax edges
Hackin' new roads of ice 'longside the rocky ledges.
We stalled her twice, but gave the oxen spells
And yanked her through at last on the home-clearin'. —
Lord, wa'n't we cheerin'!

“‘Since then I’ve seen her born, as you might say:
Born out of fire and water and men’s sweatin’,
Blast-furnace rairin’ and red anvils frettin’

And sawmills, night and day,
Screech-owlin’ like ’twas Satan’s rumhouse run away
Smellin’ of tar and pitch. But I’m forgettin’
The man that’s primed her guns and paid her score:
The Commodore.

“‘Macdonough — he’s her master, and she knows
His voice, like he was talkin’ to his hound.
There ain’t a man of her but ruther’d drownd
Than tread upon his toes;
And yet with his red cheeks and twinklin’ eyes, a rose
Ain’t friendlier than his looks be. When he’s round,
He makes you feel like you’re a gentleman
American.

“‘But I must tell you how we’re hidin’ here.
This Otter Crick is like a crook-neck jug

And we're inside. The redcoats want to plug
The mouth, and cork our beer;
So last week Downie sailed his British lake-fleet near
To fill our channel, but us boys had dug
Big shore intrenchments, and our batteries
Stung 'em like bees

“‘Till they skedaddled whimperin’ up the lake;
But while the shots was flyin’, in the scrimmage,
I caught a ball that scotched my livin’ image. —

Now Jean, for Sam Hill’s sake,
Don’t let-on this to Mother, for you know she’d make
A deary-me-in’ that would last a grim age.

’Tain’t much, but when a feller goes to war

What’s he go for

“‘ If ’tain’t to fight, and take his chances?’ ” Jean
Stopped and looked down. The mother did not speak.

“Go on,” said the old man. Flush tinged her cheek.

“Truly I didn’t mean —

There ain't much more. He says: 'Goodbye now,
 little queen;
We're due to sail for Plattsburgh this day week.
Meantime I'm hopin' hard and takin' stock.
 Your obedient — Jock.' "

The girl's voice ceased in silence. *Glitter, glitter,*
The shy wings flashed through blossom-colored
 leaves,
And *Phæbe! Phæbe!* whistled from gray eaves
 Through water-shine and twitter
And spurt of flamey green. But bane of thought is
 bitter.
The mother's heart spurned May's sweet make-
 believes,
For there, through falling masts and gaunt ships
 looming,
Guns — guns were booming.

III

Plattsburgh — and windless beauty on the bay ;

Autumnal morning and the sun at seven :

Southward a wedge of wild ducks in the heaven

Dwindles, and far away

Dim mountains watch the lake, where lurking for their

prey

Lie, with their muzzled thunders and pent levin,

The warships — Eagle, Preble, Saratoga,

Ticonderoga.

And now a little wind from the northwest

Flutters the trembling blue with snowy flecks.

A gunner, on Macdonough's silent decks,

Peers from his cannon's rest,

Staring beyond the low north headland. Crest on crest

Behind green spruce-tops, soft as wildfowls' necks,

Glide the bright spars and masts and whitened wales

Of bellying sails.

Rounding, the British lake-birds loom in view

Ruffling their wings in silvery arrogance :

Chubb, Linnet, Finch, and lordly Confiance

Leading with Downie's crew

The line. — With long booms swung to starboard they

heave to,

Whistling their flock of galleys who advance

Behind, then toward the Yankees, four abreast,

Tack landward, west.

Landward the watching townfolk strew the shore ;

Mist-banks of human beings blur the bluffs

And blacken the roofs, like swarms of roosting

choughs.

Waiting the cannon's roar

A nation holds its breath for knell of Nevermore

Or peal of life : this hour shall cast the sloughs

Of generations — and one old dame's joy :

Her gunner boy.

One moment on the quarter deck Jock kneels
Beside his Commodore and fighting squad.
Their heads are bowed, their prayers go up toward
God —

Toward God, to whom appeals
Still rise in pain and mangling wrath from blind
ordeals
Of man, still boastful of his brother's blood. —
They stand from prayer. Swift comes and silently
The enemy.

Macdonough holds his men, alert, devout :
“He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea
Driven with the wind. Behold the ships, that be
So great, are turned about
Even with a little helm.” Jock tightens the blue
clout
Around his waist, and watches casually
Close-by a game-cock, in a coop, who stirs
And spreads his spurs.

Now, bristling near, the British war-birds swoop

Wings, and the Yankee Eagle screams in fire;

The English Linnet answers, aiming higher,

And *crash* along Jock's poop

Her hurtling shot of iron crackles the game-cock's coop,

Where lo! the ribald cock, like a town crier,

Strutting a gunslide, flaps to the cheering crew —

Yankee-doodle-doo!

Boys yell, and yapping laughter fills the roar:

"You bet we'll do 'em!" "You're a prophet, cocky!"

"Hooray, old rooster!" "Hip, hip, hip!" cries

Jockie.

Calmly the Commodore

Touches his cannon's fuse and fires a twenty-four.

Smoke belches black. "Huzza! That's blowed 'em

pocky!"

And Downie's men, like pins before the bowling,

Fall scatter-rolling.

Boom! flash the long guns, echoed by the galleys.

The Confiance, wind-baffled in the bay,

With both her port bow-anchors torn away,

Flutters, but proudly rallies

To broadside, while her gunboats range the water-alleys.

Then Downie grips Macdonough in the fray,

And double-shotted from his roaring flail

Hurls the black hail.

The hail turns red, and drips in the hot gloom.

Jock snuffs the reek and spits it from his mouth

And grapples with great winds. The winds blow south,

And scent of lilac bloom

Steals from his mother's porch in his still sleeping room.

Lilacs! — But now it stinks of blood and drouth!

He staggers up, and stares at blinding light:

“God! This is fight!”

Fight! — The sharp loathing retches in his loins;

He gulps the black air, like a drowner swimming,

Where little round suns in a dance go rimming

The dark with golden coins :

Round him and round the splintering masts and jangled
quoins

Reel, rattling, and overhead he hears the hymning —
Lonely and loud — of ululating choirs

Strangling with wires.

Fight! — But no more the roll of chanting drums,

The fiffing flare, the flags, the magic spume .

Filling his spirit with a wild perfume ;

Now noisome anguish numbs

His sense, that mocks and leers at monstrous vacuums.

Whang! splits the spanker near him, and the boom

Crushes Macdonough, in a jumbled wreck,

Stunned on the deck.

No time to glance where wounded leaders lie,

Or think on fallen sparrows in the storm —

Only to fight! The prone commander's form

Stirs, rises stumblingly

And gropes where, under shrieking grape and musketry,
Men's bodies wamble like a mangled swarm
Of bees. He bends to sight his gun again,
 Bleeding, and then —

Oh, out of void and old oblivion
And reptile slime first rose Apollo's head:
And God in likeness of Himself, 'tis said,
 Created such an one,
Now shaping Shakspeare's forehead, now Napoleon,
Various, by infinite invention bred,
In His own image moulding beautiful
 The human skull.

Jock lifts his head; Macdonough sights his gun
To fire — but in his face a ball of flesh,
A whizzing clod, has hurled him in a mesh
 Of tangled rope and tun,
While still about the deck the lubber clod is spun

And, bouncing from the rail, lies in a plesh
Of oozing blood, upstaring eyeless, red —

A gunner's head.

* * * * *

Above the ships, enormous from the lake,
Rises a wraith — a phantom dim and gory,
Lifting her wondrous limbs of smoke and glory;

And little children quake

And lordly nations bow their foreheads for her sake,
And bards proclaim her in their fiery story;
And in her phantom breast, heartless, unheeding,
Hearts — hearts are bleeding.

IV

Macdonough lies with Downie in one land.
Victor and vanquished long ago were peers.
Held in the grip of peace an hundred years

England has laid her hand

In ours, and we have held (and still shall hold) the band
That makes us brothers of the hemispheres;

Yea, still shall keep the lasting brotherhood
Of law and blood.

Yet one whose terror racked us long of yore
Still wreaks upon the world her lawless might:
Out of the deeps again the phantom Fight
Looms on her wings of war,
Sowing in armèd camps and fields her venomèd spore,
Embattling monarch's whim against man's right,
Trampling with iron hoofs the blooms of time
Back in the slime.

We, who from dreams of justice, dearly wrought,
First rose in the eyes of patient Washington,
And through the molten heart of Lincoln won
To liberty forgot,
Now, standing lone in peace 'mid titans strange dis-
traught,
Pray much for patience, more — God's will be done! —
For vision and for power nobly to see
The world made free.

THE CONFLICT: SIX SONNETS

[August, 1914]

I

TO WILLIAM WATSON IN ENGLAND

SINGER of England's ire across the sea,
Your austere voice, electric from the deep,
Speaks our own yearning, and our spirits sweep
To Europe's allied honor. — Painfully,
Bowed with a planet's lonely burden, we
Held our hot hearts in leash, but now they leap
Their ban, like young hounds belling from their keep,
To bait the Teuton wolf of tyranny.

What! Would he throw us sops of sugared art
And poisoned commerce, snarling: "So! lie still
Till I have shown my fangs, and torn the heart
Of half the world, and gorged my sanguine fill!" —
Now, England, let him see: Rage as he will,
He cannot tear our plighted souls apart.

II

AMERICAN NEUTRALITY

How shall we keep an armed neutrality
With our own souls? Our souls belie our lips,
That seek to hold our passion in eclipse
And hide the wound of our sharp sympathy,
Saying: "One's neighbor differs; he might be
Kindled to wrath, were one to wield the whips
Of truth." — Great God! A red Apocalypse
Flames on the blinded world: and what do we?

Peace! do we cry? Peace is the godlike plan
We love and dedicate our children to;
Yet England's cause is ours: The rights of man,
Which little Belgium battles for anew,
Shall *we* recant? No! — Being American,
Our souls cannot keep neutral and keep true.

III

PEACE

PEACE! — But there is no peace. To hug the thought
Is but to clasp a lover who thinks lies.

Go: look your earnest neighbor in the eyes
And read the answer there. Peace is not bought
By distance from the fight. Peace must be fought
And bled for: 'tis a dream whose horrid price
Is haggled for by dread realities;
Peace is not paid till dreamers are distraught.

Would we not close our ears against these ills,
Urging our hearts: "Be calm! America
Is called upon to rebuild a world." — But ah!
How shall we nobly build with neutral wills?
Can we be calm while Belgian anguish shrills?
Or would we crown with peace — Caligula?

IV

WILSON

PATIENCE — but peace of heart we cannot choose ;
Nor would he wish us cravenly to keep
Aloof in soul, who — large in statesmanship
And justice — sent our ships to Vera Cruz.
Patience must wring our hearts, while we refuse
To launch our country on that crimson deep
Which breaks the dikes of Europe, but we sleep
Watchful, still waiting by the awful fuse.

Wisdom he counsels, and he counsels well
Whose patient fortitude against the fret
And sneer of time has stood inviolable.
We love his goodness and will not forget.
With him we pause beside the mouth of hell : —
The wolf of Europe has not triumphed yet.

V

KRUPPISM

CROWNED on the twilight battlefield, there bends
A crooked iron dwarf, and delves for gold,
Chuckling: "One hundred thousand gatlings — sold!"
And the moon rises, and a moaning rends
The mangled living, and the dead distends,
And a child cowers on the chartless wold,
Where, searching in his safety-vault of mold,
The kobold kaiser cuts his dividends.

We, who still wage his battles, are his thralls
And dying do him homage; yea, and give
Daily our living souls to be enticed
Into his power. So long as on war's walls
We build engines of death that he may live,
So long shall we serve Krupp instead of Christ.

VI

THE REAL GERMANY

BISMARCK — or rapt Beethoven with his dreams :
Ah, which was blind? Or which bespoke his race? —
That breed which nurtured Heine's haunting grace,
And Goethe, mastering Olympic themes
Of meditation, Mozart's golden gleams,
And Leibnitz charting realms of time and space,
Great-hearted Schiller, and that fairy brace
Of brothers who first trailed the goblin streams.

Bismarck for these builded an iron tomb,
And clanged the door, and turned a kaiser's key;
And simple folk, that once danced merrily
Their May-ring rites, march now in roaring gloom
Toward that renascent dawn when the black womb
Of buried guns gives birth to Germany.

THE LADS OF LIEGE

[“*Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgæ.*” — CAESAR’S
“Commentaries”]

THE lads of Liege, beyond our eyes
They lie where beauty’s laurels be —
With lads of old Thermopylæ,
Who stayed the storming Persians.

The lads of Liege, on glory’s field
They clasp the hands of Roland’s men,
Who lonely faced the Saracen
Meeting the dark invasion.

The lads — the deathless lads of Liege,
They blazon through our living world
Their land — the little land that hurled
Olympian defiance.

“Now make us room, now let us pass;
Our monarch suffers no delay.
To stand in mighty Cæsar’s way
Beseems not Lilliputians.”

“We make no room; you shall not pass,
For freedom says your monarch nay!
And we have stood in Cæsar’s way
Through freedom’s generations.

“And here we stand till freedom fall
And Cæsar cry, ere we succumb,
Once more his *horum omnium*
Fortissimi sunt Belgæ.”

The monarch roars an iron laugh
And cries on God to man his guns;
But Belgian mothers bore them sons
Who man the souls within them:

They bar his path, they hold their pass,

They blaze in glory of the Gaul

Till Cæsar cries again "Of all

The bravest are the Belgians!"

O lads of Liege, brave lads of Liege,

Your souls through glad Elysium

Go chanting: *horum omnium*

Fortissimi sunt Belgæ!

CARNAGE: SIX SONNETS

[September, 1914]

I

DOUBT

So thin, so frail the opalescent ice
Where yesterday, in lordly pageant, rose
The monumental nations — the repose
Of continents at peace! Realities
Solid as earth they seemed; yet in a trice
Their bastions crumbled in the surging flocs
Of unconceivable, inhuman woes,
Gulfed in a mad, unmeaning sacrifice.

We, who survive that world-quake, cower and start,
Searching our hidden souls with dark surmise:
So thin, so frail — is reason? Patient art —
Is it all a mockery, and love all lies?
Who sees the lurking Hun in childhood's eyes?
Is hell so near to every human heart?

II

THE GREAT NEGATION

WHEN that great-minded man, Sir Edward Grey,
Said to the hypocritic 'prince of peace':

"Let us confer, who hold the destinies
Of Europe, ere the tempest breaks, and stay
Its carnage!" the proud despot answered *nay*,
And by that great negation loosed the seas
And winds of multitudinous miseries
To rage around his empire for their prey.

He might have uttered "Peace": Peace would have
been.

He might have abdicated ere he fought
For such Satanic empire; but to win
Power he refused. Therefore a rankling thought
Festers henceforth with that refusal's sin:—
He might have saved the world, and he would not.

III

LOUVAIN

SERENE in beauty's olden lineage,
Calm as the star that hears the Angelus toll,
Louvain — the scholar's crypt, the artist's goal,
The cloistral shrine of hallowed pilgrimage
Rapt in the dreams of many an ardent age,
Louvain, the guileless city of man's soul,
Is blotted from the world — a bloodied scroll,
Ravaged to sate a drunken Teuton's rage.

His lust shall have its laurel. That red sword
He ravished with, Time's angel shall again
Grasp to sere *him*, and deify him Lord
Of Infamy; yea, brand him with its stain
Naked in night, abhorrent and abhorr'd,
Where the dead hail him *William of Louvain!*

IV

RHEIMS

APOLLO mourns another Parthenon
In ruins! — Is the God of Love awake?
And we — must we behold the world's heart break
For peace and beauty ravished, and look on
Dispassionate? — Rheims' gloried fane is gone:
Not by a planet's rupture, nor the quake
Of subterranean titans, but to slake
The vengeance of a Goth Napoleon.

O Time, let not the anguish numb or pall
Of that remembrance! Let no callous heal
Our world-wound, till our kindled pities call
The parliament of nations, and repeal
The vows of war. Till then, pain keep us thrall!
More bitter than to battle — is to feel.

V

KULTUR

If men must murder, pillage, sack, despoil,
Let it not be (lest angels laugh) in the name
Of sacred Culture. Vulcan still goes lame
Though servile Muses poultice him with oil
Of sleek Hypocrisy. They waste their toil
Whose boast of light and sweetness takes its claim
From deeds of night and wormwood, which defame
Fair Culture's shrine and make her gods recoil.

No; let the imperial Visigoth put off
His borrowed toga, boast aloud his slain
In naked savagery, and make his scoff
Of Attic graces. So when once again
He asks for Culture's crown, 'twill be enough
To answer him: *Once Rheims was — and Louvain!*

VI

DESTINY

WE are what we imagine, and our deeds
Are born of dreaming. Europe acts to-day
Epics that little children in their play
Conjured, and statesmen murmured in their creeds;
In barrack, court and school were sown those seeds,
Like Dragon's teeth, which ripen to affray
Their sowers. Dreams of slaughter rise to slay,
And fate itself is stuff that fancy breeds.

Mock, then, no more at dreaming, lest our own
Create for us a like reality !
Let not imagination's soil be sown
With armèd men but justice, so that we
May for a world of tyranny atone
And dream from that despair — democracy.

THE MUFFLED DRUMS

FOR brothers laid in blood,
For lovers sundered,
Defeated motherhood
And manhood plundered —
We moan, moan the faith of man forgotten.

For human vision bleared
And childhood bleeding,
For ripening harvests sere
Before the seeding —
We mourn, mourn the beauty unbegotten.

We were the wanton ones
In old wines sunken,
Who sent the nations' sons
Forth, reeling drunken
With blare and rhythm of war's ruthless glory.

Now in our pulse no more
The old wines quicken,
For the bannered glory of war
Trails dragged and stricken,
And the blood-red beast crawls home, blinded and
hoary :

But we are the beating hearts
Of women, whose yearning
Shall harass the beast with darts
Of their myriad burning
Till the Angel of God remould him — an image human.

Yea, we are the chanting wills
Of women, whose sorrow
Rebels at the age-borne ills
Of a man-built morrow,
And we chant, chant the world redeemed by Woman.

ANTWERP ¹

TOWERS — eternal towers against the sky :

Dawn-touched, noon-flamed, night-mantled and moon-
flecked !

The tenuous dreams of man, the architect,
Imagining in stone what may not die
Though man, the anarchist, dream enginery
For its destruction : towers of intellect,
Towers of aspiration — torn and wrecked,
Profaned by robber sacrilege : ah, why ?

Reason shall ask, and answer shall be given ;
Justice shall ask, and deal to those insane
Their dark asylums, but to those — the vain
Of lustful power, how shall their souls be shriven ? —
They shall be raised on infamy's renown
And from their towers of tyranny hurled down.

¹ See note at end of volume.

MAGNA CARTA

MAGNA CARTA ! Magna Carta !

English brothers, we have borne it

On our banners down the ages. —

Who shall scorn it ?

Bitter fought-for, blood-emblazoned

With the fadeless gules of freedom,

Interbound with precious pages —

English brothers, we who shrine it

In our common heart of hearts,

Think you we can see a monarch,

Tyrant-sceptred, sanguine-shod,

Seek to rend it and malign it :

We whose sires made him sign it —

Him who deemed him next to God !

We who dreamed our world forever

Purged and rid

Of his spectre — think you, brothers,

We can watch this ghost, resurgent,
Sweep his servile hordes toward England,
And stand silent? — God forbid!

Magna Carta! Magna Carta!
Brother freemen, we who bear it
Starward — shall we see *him* tear it?
Fool or frantic,
Let him dare it!
If he reach across the Channel
He shall touch across the Atlantic: —
Scrolled with new and olden annal,
Bitter fought-for, blood-emblazoned
With the fadeless gules of freedom,
We will hand him — Magna Carta!
Yea, once more shall make him sign it
Where the centuries refine it,
Till his serfs, who now malign it,
Are made sick of him, and free
Even as we.

So, if ghostly through the sea-mist,
You behold his Mediæval
Falcon face peer violating —
Lo, with quills and Magna Carta
(Sharpened quills and Magna Carta)
In a little mead near London,
English brothers, we are waiting !

MEN OF CANADA

MEN of Canada,
Fellow Americans,

Proud our hearts beat for you over the border :

Proud of the fight you wage,

Proud of your valiant youth

Sailing to battle for freedom and order.

On our own battlefields

Many's the bout we had —

Yankee, Canadian, redcoat and ranger ;

But our old brotherhood,

Staunch through the centuries,

Shouts in our blood now to share in your danger.

Ah, it's a weary thing

Waiting and watching here,

Numbing ourselves to a frozen neutrality :

Yet, in a world at war,

'Tis our good part to keep

Patient to forge the strong peace of finality.

Though, then, our part be Peace,
Yet our free fighting souls
League with your own 'gainst the world-lust of Vandals ;
Yea, in the dreadful night,
We, with your women, weep
And for your shroudless dead burn our shrine candles.

So, by the gunless law
Of our sane borderline,
By our souls' faith, that no border can sever,
Freedom ! — now may your fight,
Waging the death of war,
Silence the demons of cannon forever !

Kin-folk of Canada,
So may your allied arms
Smite with his legions the Lord of Disorder !
God speed your noble cause !
God save your gallant sons !
Would we might sail with them — over the border !

FRANCE

HALF artist and half anchorite,
Part siren and part Socrates,
Her face — alluring fair, yet recondite —
Smiled through her salons and academies.

Lightly she wore her double mask,
Till sudden, at war's kindling spark,
Her inmost self, in shining mail and casque,
Blazed to the world her single soul — Jeanne d'Arc !

HAUPTMANN

JEAN CHRISTOPHE called to him out of the night —
Out of the storm and dark of Europe's hate,
Crying: "Where art thou, Hauptmann, who so late
Loomed as a rugged tower of human right?
Flame to the world thy lonely beacon-light
Of love for alien hearths laid desolate!" —
In answer rolled a voice infuriate
Hoarse with the fog of racial scorn and spite:

"Here am I! — Let them perish!" And hell laughed
To hear that voice — which once was wont to soar
With Hannele to heaven, and starward waft
The souls of simple weavers — rasp with war;
Yea, laughed to watch that tower's heroic shaft
Fall crumbling on the beaconless world shore.

NIETZSCHE

SOME worshipped and some bantered, when
The prophets of the drawing room
Gossiped of Jesus Christ his doom
Under the reign of Supermen,
And how the Christian world would quake
To hear what Zarathustra spake.

Lo, Zarathustra's voice has spoken :

And they, who use a mad bard's song
To vindicate a tyrant's wrong,
Point to the staring dead for token
Of their triumphant creed, enshrined
In temples of the Teuton mind.

The raving dog-star hath his season :

But when the light beyond our death
Leads back again from Nazareth
The holy star of human reason —
Then will philosophy no more
Be servile to the Muse of War.

THE CHILD-DANCERS¹

A bomb has fallen over Notre Dame:

Germans have burned another Belgian town:

Russians quelled in the east: England in qualm:

I closed my eyes, and laid the paper down.

Gray ledge and moor-grass and pale bloom of light

By pale blue seas!

What laughter of a child world-sprite,

Sweet as the horns of lone October bees,

Shrills the faint shore with mellow, old delight?

What elves are these

In smocks gray-blue as sea and ledge,

Dancing upon the silvered edge

Of darkness — each ecstatic one

Making a happy orison,

With shining limbs, to the low-sunken sun? —

¹ At end of volume see note.

See: now they cease

Like nesting birds from flight:

Demure and debonair

They troop beside their hostess' chair

To make their bedtime courtesies:

"Spokoinoi notchi! — Gute Nacht!

Bon soir! Bon soir! — Good night!"

What far-gleaned lives are these

Linked in one holy family of art? —

Dreams: dreams once Christ and Plato dreamed:

How fair their happy shades depart!

Dear God! how simple it all seemed,

Till once again

Before my eyes the red type quivered: *Slain:*

Ten thousand of the enemy. —

Then laughter! laughter from the ancient sea

Sang in the gloaming: *Athens! Galilee!*

And elfin voices called from the extinguished light: —

"Spokoinoi notchi! — Gute Nacht!

Bon soir! Bon soir! — Good night!"

BATTLEFIELDS

ON the battlefields of birth,
Lulled from pain in twilight sleep,
Languorous in calm reliance
On the Christ-like soul of science,
They whose patient soldiership
Bore the age-old pangs of earth
Till the patient seers of reason set them free —
Volunteers, whose valiant warring
Is the passion of restoring —
Mothers, gentle mothers, bless you, Germany !

By the battlefields of death,
Racked by prayers that never sleep,
Anguished with a wild defiance
Of the Satan powers of science,
They whose loving guardianship
Knit the subtle bonds of breath
Till their sons of iron tore them ruthlessly —
Victims, whose heart-blinding portion
Is their victory's abortion —
Mothers, maddened mothers, curse you, Germany !

IN MEMORIAM

MRS. WOODROW WILSON

HER gentle spirit passed with Peace —

With Peace out of a world at war

Racked by the old earth-agonies

Of kaiser, king and czar,

Where Bear and Lion crouch in lair

To rend the iron Eagle's flesh

And viewless engines of the air

Spin wide their lightning mesh,

And darkly kaiser, czar and king

With awful thunders stalk their prey. —

Yet Peace, that moves with silent wing,

Is mightier than they.

And she — our lady who has passed —

And Peace were sisters: They are gone

Together through time's holocaust

To blaze a bloodless dawn.

How otherwise the royal die

Whose power is throned on rolling drums!

Her monument of royalty

Is builded in the slums:

Her latest prayer, transformed to law,

Shall more than monarch's vow endure,

Assuaging there, with loving awe,

The anguish of the poor.

A PRAYER OF THE PEOPLES

GOD of us who kill our kind !
Master of this blood-tracked Mind
Which from wolf and Caliban
Staggers toward the star of Man —
Now, on Thy cathedral stair,
God, we cry to Thee in prayer !

Where our stifled anguish bleeds
Strangling through Thine organ reeds,
Where our voiceless songs suspire
From the corpses in Thy choir —
Through Thy charred and shattered nave,
God, we cry on Thee to save !

Save us from our tribal gods !
From the racial powers, whose rods —

Wreathed with stinging serpents — stir
Odin and old Jupiter
From their ancient hells of hate
To invade Thy dawning state.

Save us from their curse of kings!
Free our souls' imaginings
From the feudal dreams of war;
Yea, God, let us nevermore
Make, with slaves' idolatry,
Kaiser, king or czar of *Thee*!

We who, craven in our prayer,
Would lay off on Thee our care —
Lay instead on *us* Thy load;
On our minds Thy spirit's goad,
On our laggard wills Thy whips
And Thy passion on our lips!

Fill us with the reasoned faith
That the prophet lies, who saith

All this web of destiny,
Torn and tangled, cannot be
Newly wove and redesigned
By the Godward human mind.

Teach us, so, no more to call
Guidance supernatural
To our help, but — heart and will —
Know ourselves responsible
For our world of wasted good
And our blinded brotherhood.

Lord, our God! to whom, from clay,
Blood and mire, Thy peoples pray —
Not from Thy cathedral's stair
Thou hearest: — Thou criest *through* our prayer
For our prayer is but the gate:
We, who pray, ourselves are fate.

THE PRESENT HOUR

II

PEACE

PANAMA HYMN

LORD of the sundering land and deep,

For whom of old, to suage thy wrath,
The floods stood upright as a heap
To shape thy host a dry-shod path,

Lo, now, from tide to sundered tide

Thy hand, outstretched in glad release,
Hath torn the eternal hills aside
To blaze a liquid path for Peace.

Thy hand, englaived in flaming steel,

Hath clutched the demons of the soil
And made their forge-fires roar and reel
To serve thy seraphim in toil;

While round their pits the nations, bowed,

Have watched thine awful enginery
Compel, through thunderbolt and cloud,
The demigods to slave for thee.

For thee hath glaring Cyclops sweat,
 And Atlas groaned, and Hercules
For thee his iron sinews set,
 And thou wast lord of Rameses ;

Till now they pause, to watch thy hand
 Lead forth the first leviathan
Through mazes of the jungled land,
 Submissive to the will of man :

Submissive through the will of us
 To thine, the universal will,
That leads, divine and devious,
 To world-communions vaster still. —

The titans rest ; intense, aware,
 The host of nations dumbly waits ;
The mountains lift their brows and stare ;
 The tides are knocking at the gates.

Almighty of the human mind,
Unlock the portals of our sleep
That lead to visions of our kind,
And marry sundered deep to deep!

GOETHALS

A MAN went down to Panama
Where many a man had died
To slit the sliding mountains
And lift the eternal tide:
A man stood up in Panama,
And the mountains stood aside.

The Power that wrought the tide and peak
Wrought mightier the seer;
And the One who made the isthmus
He made the engineer,
And the good God he made Goethals
To cleave the hemisphere.

The reek of fevered ages rose
From poisoned jungle and strand,
Where the crumbling wrecks of failure
Lay sunk in the torrid sand —
Derelicts of old desperate hopes
And venal contraband:

Till a mind glowed white through the yellow mist
And purged the poison-mold,
And the wrecks rose up in labor,
And the fevers' knell was tolled,
And the keen mind cut the world-divide,
Untarnished by world gold :

For a poet wrought in Panama
With a continent for his theme,
And he wrote with flood and fire
To forge a planet's dream,
And the derricks rang his dithyrambs
And his stanzas roared in steam.

But the poet's mind it is not his
Alone, but a million men's :
Far visions of lonely dreamers
Meet there as in a lens,
And lightnings, pent by stormy time,
Leap through, with flame intense :

So from our age three giants loom
 To vouch man's venturous soul :
Amundsen on his ice-peak,
 And Peary from his pole,
And midway, where the oceans meet,
 Goethals — beside *his* goal :

Where old Balboa bent his gaze
 He leads the liners through,
And the Horn that tossed Magellan
 Bellows a far halloo,
For where the navies never sailed
 Steamed Goethals and his crew ;

So nevermore the tropic routes
 Need poleward warp and veer,
But on through the Gates of Goethals
 The steady keels shall steer,
Where the tribes of man are led toward peace
 By the prophet-engineer.

A CHILD AT THE WICKET

A LITTLE isle: it is for some
Hell's gate, for some Elysium! —
Round Ellis Isle the salt waves flow
With old-world tears, wept long ago;

Round Ellis Isle the warm waves leap
With new-world laughter from the deep,
And centuries of sadness smile
To clasp their arms round Ellis Isle.

I watched her pass the crowded piers,
A peasant child of maiden years;
Her face was toward the evening sky
Where fair Manhattan towered high;

Her yellow kerchief caught the breeze,
Her crimson kirtle flapped her knees,
As lithe she swayed to tug the band
Of swaddled bundle in her hand.

From her right hand the big load swung,
But with her left strangely she clung
To something light, which seemed a part
Of her, and held it 'gainst her heart :

A something frail, which tender hands
Had touched to song in far-off lands
On twilights, when the looms are mute :
A thing of love — a slender lute.

Hardly she seemed to know she held
That frail thing fast, but went compelled
By wonder of the dream that lay
In those bright towers across the bay.

A staggering load, a treasure light —
She bore them both, and passed from sight.
From Ellis Isle I watched her pass :
Pinned on her breast was *Lawrence, Mass.*

O little isle, you are for some
Hell's gate, for some Elysium!
Your wicket swings, and some to song
Pass on, and some to silent wrong;

But who, where hearts of toilers bleed
In songless toil, ah, who will heed —
On twilights, when the looms are mute —
A thing of love, a slender lute?

HYMN FOR EQUAL SUFFRAGE

THEY have strewn the burning hearths of Man with
darkness and with mire,

They have heaped the burning hearts of Man with
ashes of desire,

Yet from out those hearts and hearths still leaps the
quick eternal fire

Whose flame is liberty.

But the flame which once led deathward all the dazzled
fighting hordes

Lights them now to living freedom from the bondage
of their lords,

And our mothers are uprisen 'mid their sons to wrest
the swords

From hands of tyranny.

For the freedom of the laborer is freedom from his toil,
And freedom of the citizen is right to share the soil,
And the freedom of our country is our loosing of the coil

That chokes posterity.

So we who wage our devious wars, in fastness and in fen,
Let us claim our common birthright in the living sun
again,

Till the battle of the beasts becomes the reasoning of
men,

And joy our destiny.

Let us march then, all together, not because our leaders
call,

But at summons of the mighty soul of man within us all,
Men and women, equal comrades, let us storm the
nation's wall

And cry "Equality!"

For the vote that brings to woman and to man life's
common bread,

Is mightier than the mindless gun that leaves a million
dead;

And the rights of Man shall triumph where once men
and women bled

When mothers of men are free.

LEXINGTON

“WHERE is the little town of Lexington?

Oh, I have lost my way!” —

But all the brawling people hurried on:

Why should they stay

To watch a tattered boy, with wistful face,

Dazed by the roaring strangeness of the place? —

In wondering scorn

Turning, he tapped the powder from his powder-horn.

“Where is my blood-bright hearth of Lexington?” —

Strangely the kindling cry

Startled the crowded street; yet everyone

Still scrambled by

Into the shops and markets; till at last

Went by a pensive scholar. As he passed,

Sudden, to whet

Of steel, he heard a flint-lock flash: their faces met.

“What like, then, is your little Lexington?”

“Oh, sir, it is my home,
Which I have lost.”—The scholar’s sharp eyes shone.

“Come with me! Come,
And I will show you, old and hallowed, all
Its maps and marks and shafts memorial.”—

Out of the roar
They went, into green silence where old elm trees soar.

“Here is your little town of Lexington:

Let fall your eyes
And read the old inscription on this stone:
‘Beneath this lies
The first who fell in our dear country’s fight
For revolution and the freeman’s right.’”

The boy’s eyes fell,
But shining swiftly rose: “Yes, I remember well!

“Yet there lies not my lost home Lexington:

For none who fall

At Lexington is buried under stone;

And eyes of all

Who fight at Lexington look up at God

Not down upon His servants under sod

Whose souls are sped;

They lie who say in Lexington free men are dead."

"My son, I said not so of Lexington.

'There lie the bones,'

I said, 'of great men, and their souls are gone.'

God sends but once

His lightning-flash to strike the sacred spot.

Our great sires are departed." — "They are not!

I am alive.

I fought at Lexington; you see, I still survive!

"And still I live to fight at Lexington.

I am come far

From Russian steppes and Balkan valleys, wan

With ghostly war,

Where still the holy watchword in the fight
Was *Revolution and the freeman's right!* —

Now I am come

Back with that battle-cry to help my own dear home.

“Here, here it lies — my lost home Lexington!

Not there in dust,

But here in the great highway of the sun,

Where still the lust

Of arrogant power flaunts its regiments,

And lurking hosts of tyranny pitch their tents,

And still the yoke

Of heavy-laden labor weighs on simple folk.

“Our country cries for *living* Lexington!

From mine and slum

And hearths where man's rebellion still burns on,

Rolls the deep drum:

Ah, not to elegize but emulate
Is homage worthy of the heroic great,
Whose memoried spot
Serves but to quicken fire from ashes long forgot.

“Here, then, O little town of Lexington,
Burnish anew
Our muskets for the battle long begun
For freedom! — You,
O you, my comrades, called from all world-clans,
Here, by the deeds of dear Americans
That cannot die,
Let *Lexington* be still our revolution-cry!”

SCHOOL

I

OLD Hezekiah leaned hard on his hoe
And squinted long at Eben, his lank son. —
The silence shrilled with crickets. Day was done,
 And, row on dusky row,
Tall bean poles ribbed with dark the gold-bright after-
 glow.

Eben stood staring: ever, one by one,
The tendril tops turned ashen as they flared.

 Still Eben stared.

Oh, there is wonder on New Hampshire hills,
Hoeing the warm bright furrows of brown earth,
And there is grandeur in the stone wall's birth,
 And in the sweat that spills
From rugged toil is sweetness; yet for wild young wills
There is no dew of wonder, but stark dearth,
In one old man who hoes his long bean rows,
 And only hoes.

Old Hezekiah turned slow on his heel.

He touched his son. — Through all the carking day

There are so many littlish cares to weigh

Large natures down, and steel

The heart of understanding. — “Son, how is’t ye
feel?

What are ye starin’ on — a gal?” A ray

Flushed Eben from the fading afterglow:

He dropped his hoe.

He dropped his hoe, but sudden stooped again

And raised it where it fell. Nothing he spoke,

But bent his knee and *crack!* the handle broke

Splintering. With glare of pain,

He flung the pieces down, and stamped upon them;

then —

Like one who leaps out naked from his cloak —

Ran. — “Here, come back! Where are ye bound —
you fool?”

He cried — “To school!”

II

Now on the mountain Morning laughed with light —
With light and all the future in her face,
For there she looked on many a far-off place
 And wild adventurous sight,
For which the mad young autumn wind hallooed with
 might
And dared the roaring mill-brook to the race,
Where blue-jay's screamed beyond the pine-dark pool —
 “To school! — To school!”

Blackcoated, Eben took the barefoot trail,
Holding with wary hand his Sunday boots;
Harsh catbirds mocked his whistling with their hoots;
 Under his swallowtail
Against his hip-strap bumping, clinked his dinner pail;
Frost maples flamed, lone thrushes touched their lutes;
Gray squirrels bobbed, with tails stiff curved to backs,
 To eye his tracks.

Soon at the lonely crossroads he passed by
The little one-room schoolhouse. He peered in.
There stood the bench where he had often been
 Admonished flagrantly
To drone his numbers: Now to this he said good-
 bye
For mightier lure of more romantic scene:
Goodbye to childish rule and homely chore
 Forevermore!

All day he hastened like the flying cloud
Breathless above him, big with dreams, yet dumb.
With tightened jaw he chewed the tart spruce
 gum,
 And muttered half aloud
Huge oracles. At last, where through the pine-tops
 bowed
The sun, it rose! — His heart beat like a drum.
There, there it rose — his tower of prophecy:
 The Academy!

III

They learn to live who learn to contemplate,
For contemplation is the unconfined
God who creates us. To the growing mind
Freedom to think is fate,
And all that age and after-knowledge augurate
Lies in a little dream of youth enshrined:
That dream to nourish with the skilful rule
Of love — is school.

Eben, in mystic tumult of his teens,
Stood bursting — like a ripe seed — into soul.
All his life long he had watched the great hills roll
Their shadows, tints and sheens
By sun- and moon-rise; yet the bane of hoeing
beans
And round of joyless chores, his father's toll,
Blotted their beauty; nature was as not:
He had never *thought*.

But now he climbed his boyhood's castle tower
And knocked: Ah, well then for his after-fate
That one of nature's masters opened the gate,
 Where like an April shower
Live influence quickened all his earth-blind seed to
 power.

Strangely his sense of truth grew passionate,
And like a young bull, led in yoke to drink,
 He bowed to think.

There also bowed their heads with him to quaff —
The snorting herd! And many a wholesome grip
He had of rivalry and fellowship.

 Often the game was rough,
But Eben tossed his horns and never called it off;
For still through play and task his Dream would
 slip —

A radiant Herdsman, guiding destiny
 To his degree.

IV

Once more old Hezekiah stayed his hoe
To squint at Eben. Silent, Eben scanned
A little roll of sheepskin in his hand,
 While, row on dusky row,
Tall bean poles ribbed with dark the gold-bright after-
 glow.

The boy looked up: Here was another land!
Mountain and farm with mystic beauty flared
 Where Eben stared.

Stooping, he lifted with a furtive smile
Two splintered sticks, and spliced them. Nevermore
His spirit would go beastwise to his chore
 Blinded, for even while
He stooped to the old task, sudden in the sunset's pile
His radiant Herdsman swung a fiery door,
Through which came forth with far-borne trumpeting
 Poets and kings,

His fellow conquerors : There Virgil dreamed,
There Cæsar fought and won the barbarous tribes,
There Darwin, pensive, bore the ignorant gibes,
 And One with thorns redeemed
From malice the wild hearts of men : there flared and
 gleamed
With chemic fire the forges of old scribes,
Testing anew the crucibles of toil
 To save God's soil.

So Eben turned again to hoe his beans ;
But now, to ballads which his Herdsman sung,
Henceforth he hoed the dream in with the dung,
 And for his ancient spleens
Planting new joys, imagination found him means. —
At last old Hezekiah loosed his tongue :
“Well, boy, this school — what has it learned ye to
 know ?”
He said : “To hoe.”

THE PLAYER

[Shakspeare]

His wardrobe is the world, and day and night
His many-mirror'd dressing room : At dawn
He apes the elvish faun,
Or, garbed in saffron hose and scarlet shoon,
Mimics the madcap sprite
Of ever-altering youth ; at chime of noon
He wears the azure mail and blazoned casque
Of warring knighthood ; till, at starry stroke
Of dark, all pale he dons his "inky cloak"
And meditates — the waning moon his tragic mask.

His theatre is the soul, and man and woman
His infinite repertory : Age on age,
Treading his fancy's stage,
Ephemeral shadows of his master mind,
We act our parts — the human
Players of scenes long since by him designed ;

And stars, that blaze in tinsel on our boards,
Shine with a moment's immortality
Because they are his understudies, free
For one aspiring hour to sound his magic chords.

For not with scholars and their brain-worn scripts,
Nor there behind the footlights' fading glow
Shakspeare survives: ah, no!
Deep in the passionate reality
Of raging life above the darkling crypts
Of death, he meditates the awed "To be
Or not to be" of millions, yet to whom
His name is nothing; there, on countless quests,
Unlettered Touchstones quibble with his jests,
Unlaureled Hamlets yearn, and anguished Lears up-
loom.

Leave, then, to Avon's spire and silver stream
Their memory of ashes sung and sighed:
Our Shakspeare never died,

Nor ever was born, save as the god is born
From every soul that dares to doubt and dream.
He dreams — but is not mortal: eve and morn,
Dirge and delight, float from his brow like prayer.
Beside him, charmed Apollo lifts his lyre;
Below, the heart of man smoulders in fire;
Between the two he stands, timeless — the poet-player.

TO JOSEPHINE PRESTON PEABODY

(On first reading her play "The Wolf of Gubbio")

CONJURESS, here

You've poured, all clear,

In a cup, a carven crystal cup —

Pied with lights that flush and falter

And flower again —

All in a three-rimmed loving-cup

Fit for the dear Madonna's altar,

Where thieves and shrews and wolvish men

And wondering children may come to sup —

All in a cup, a shining cup,

Held by the trembling paws and fingers

Of your divine dog Fra Lupone

And him, his crony,

Whose loving laughter lingers

In the echo of song that bubbles so easy

In syllabing: *d'Assissi! d'Assissi!*

Him, large white soul in the simple wee body —
Pulsing, you've poured in a glowing cup
For joy of our generations —
Wine: wine distilled from the art
And the sheen
Of the mind and the heart
Of Josephine
Preston Peabody. —
Fair befall her! — Felicitations!

PROLOGUE AND EPILOGUE TO A BIRD
MASQUE

PROLOGUE

Enter FANTASY, who speaks:

GENTLES, just now I met an elf
Who crooked mid-air his finger joint
To beckon me, poising himself
Sheer on a shining question-point;
And there he cried: "Who may *you* be?
Where are you bound, if one may ask?
What are these birds that hold a masque?
What *is* a masque? What witchery
Can cause my woodland boughs to grace
This walled and crowded shut-in place?
How may divine Aurora rise
Under a roof? That parchment scroll —
What's written there?" — I said: "Replies
To elves like you, who claim their toll
Of answers." So I cast my eyes
Downward, and read this from my roll:

I

Follow me, Gentles! Follow me
By hidden paths, for I am Fantasy:—
Between the ear and what is heard,
Betwixt the eye and what is seen,
Midway the poet and his word
I hold my shadowy demesne.
And there to-night I act a thing—
Nor drama nor lyric but mid-way—
Wrought for my fairy folk to sing
And real folk to play.
Your nature critic does not ask
Robin to nest with wren,
Yet both are birds: Why argue, then,
What drama is, or masque?
My theatre's art is nature's, when
It serves the creator's task.

II

Then, follow me, Gentles, if you will!
To follow means but tarry still
Here in your seats, for I will bring
Horizons for your journeying,
Till soon this many-murmured hall
Shall be for you a silent wood,
Where we may watch, through leafy solitude,
Quercus the faun, and hear his echo call
In sighing surds
The vowel-bubbling birds,
And spy where Dawn steals past with pale footfall.

III

Come, then, for this can only be
If you will follow Fantasy.
No magic is, except through me;
Yet I myself can nothing do
Alone; my radiance 'tis from you.

For if in woods I walk alone
No light will be around me thrown;
And if alone you walk the woods,
Your eyes will blink through darkening hoods.

IV

Come, then, together let us go,
As birds and men together meet
Where boughs are dim and woodlands sweet
With meditation. Meeting so,
My simplest arts
Will serve to please you, and unblind
Your own rapt vision; for kind hearts
Need no compulsion to be kind
To their own natures. So the mind
Amongst you which shall act most feelingly
My simple masque, and find the fewest flaws,
Shall win my best award, and he (or she)
Be showered by my players' glad applause.

EPILOGUE

Gentles, if you have followed me,
Now is no need to say goodbye;
For we shall meet in revery
Wherever glad birds sing and fly —
Wherever sad birds bleed and dumbly die.

Oh, where they mount on wings and song
'Tis we who mount there — you and I;
And where they fall and suffer wrong
'Tis we who perish — you and I:
Our own is Ornis' pain or ecstasy.

So, at fresh rise and set of sun,
May Ornis bring her joy to you, each one,
And Tacita her dreams! — Our masque is done.

THE SONG SPARROW

WHEN June was cool and clover long
And birds were glad in soul and body,
I sat me down to make a song,
And sweltered in my study:
I swinked and sweat with weary art
To tell how merry was my heart.

With weary art and wordy choice
I toiled, when sudden — low and breezy —
I heard a little friendly voice
Call: *Simple, simple, so easy!*
I heard, yet sat apart in dole
To sing how social was my soul.

In vain! — That artless voice went round
In tiny echoes faint and teasy.
I rose: “What toil then, have you found
Simple, simple, so easy?”

Dauntless, the bird, with dewy beak,
Carolled again his cool critique.

Nay, song it is a simple thing

For hearts that seek no reason:

Relentless bird, why should you sing

Who *are* the happy season? —

Still *why!* The root of joy I seek,

While laughter ripples from your beak.

No wonder, then, the bard's pen creaks,

The critic's drone grows wheezy,

When joy the June bird never seeks

Is *simple, simple, so easy!*

While we, who find our art so long,

Still make a subterfuge of song!

TO AN UPLAND PLOVER

CRESCENT-WING'D, sky-clean

Hermit of pastures wild,

Upland plover, shy-soul'd lover

Of field ways undefiled!

I watch your curve-tipt pinion glean —

Slim as a scythe — the rusty green

Reaches of sweet-fern cover

That slant to your secret glade,

But what you cull with your rhythmic blade

What mortal can discover?

Azure-born, gale-blown

Gull of the billowy hills,

My heart goes forth to see you hover

So far from human sills,

To hear your tweeting, shrill and lone,

Make from the moorgrass such sharp moan
As some unshriven lover,
For you are sorrow-wise
With memory, whose passions rise
Whence no man may discover.

Reticent, rare of song,
Rears the shy soul its pain :
You sought no cottage eave as cover
To dole a dulcet plain ;
But swift, on pinions lithe and strong,
You sought a place for your wild wrong
God only might discover,
And there God, calling, came,
And flies with you in His white flame —
Your wilding mate, O plover !

RAIN REVERY

IN the lone of night by the pattering tree
I sat alone with Poetry —
With Poetry, my old shy friend,
And his tenuous shadow seemed to blend —
Beyond the lampshine on the sill —
With the mammoth shadow of the hill,
And his breath fell soft on the pool-dark pane
With the murmurous, murmuring muffled hoof
Of the rain, the rain
The rain on the roof.

In the vast of night and its vacancy
I prayed aloud to Poetry,
And his luminous eyes grew large and dim
As my heart-pulse quickened to question him;
For out of that rumbling rhymeless rune
He only might know, by a sense atune,

To unravel the anguish, and render vain
The remorseless will that wove the woof
Of the rain, the rain
The rain on the roof.

So I cried: "What mute conspiracy
Have you made with the night, O Poetry?
Lover and friend of my warm doorway,
Do you crouch there too on the storm-soaked clay?
Did you creep indoors when that gust of damp
Raised the dead moon-moths round my lamp
And the wan flame guttered? — Hark, again!
Do *you* ride there — so close, so aloof —
With the rain, the rain
The rain on the roof?

"Ah, what of the rapture and melody
We might have wrought, dear Poetry!
Imagined tower and dream-built shrine,
Must they crumble in dark like this pale lampshine?"

Our dawn-flecked meadows lyric-shrill,
Shall they lie as dumb as the gloom-drenched hill?
Our song-voiced lovers! — Shall none remain?" —
Under the galloping, gusty hoof
Answered the rain, rain
Rain on the roof.

THE HEART IN THE JAR

A Meditation on the Nobel Prize Award for Medical
Research, 1912

I

ALIVE it beats in a bosom of glass —
A glowing heart!
It has come to pass!
Ventricle, auricle,
Artery quivering:
No metaphorical
Symbol of art,
No cold, mechanical trick of a cog,
But ardent — an organ mysterious,
Alive, delivering
Serene, continuous
Pulses, poised in its chamber of glass,
Beating — the heart of a dog!

II

And it came to pass
While the hearts of men
Were selling and buying
The blood of their brothers,
Then, even then —
While grocer and draper
And soldier were eying
Their market-news in the morning paper,
And, musing there among the others,
Their poet of words
Stood staring — his back to the laboratory
(Where the poet of life
Plied ether and knife) —
Stood musing his rhymes for a miracle-story
Of Babylon queens or Attic birds.

III

Yet others were there more strange
(More strange, as they spoke in the holy name
Of the human heart, while still their eyes
Were blind to the light love's visions range) —
For they cried: "Lo, the dog — he dies!
Spare him the knife! What have ye done,
Awarders of fame! Will you grant to one
Who slaughters — the great world-prize?"
Yet these are the same
Who cherish the deed and worship the pain
Of saints that offered their blood in fire
For the meed of men,
And these are the same who bend the knee
To One who hung on the bleeding tree
Under the seraphim:
In the name — in the hallowed name of Him
Who raised us from Caliban,
Would they grudge to a dog — what a god might aspire:
To render his heart for the Heart of Man?

IV

How calm in its crystal tomb
It beats to the mandate of life!
How hush it waits in the sexless womb
For the hour of its strange midwife —
The seer, whose talismanic touch
Shall give it birth in another — what?
The heart of a dog once, was it not?
So then, if it still be such,
Why, then, the dog — (cur, thoroughbred,
Mastiff, was it, or hound?) —
What of the dog? — is he quick or dead?
His soul (as they used to say)
In what Elysian field should he stray,
Or where lie down in his grave?
For hark! —
Through the clear concave
Of the glass, that delicate pulsing sound!
Ah, once, how it whirred in the flooded dark
Of his deep-lunged chest, with rhythmic beat

To the wild curvet of his wonderful feet
And the rapturous passion of his bark,
As he welcomed his homing master's hand,
To crouch at the quick command!
Yet it never has ceased to beat: —
Charmed by the poet of life,
Freed by his art and the cunning knife
That counterfoils the shears of fate,
See it quiver now in that golden bar
Of noon — unlaboring, isolate,
Alive, in a crystal jar!

V

The heart of a dog — why pause?
Why pause on your brink, bright jar? Or why
This reticent allocution?
A dog! — Shall I stop at to-day, because
To-morrow it might be I? —
Yea, and if it be!
Even this heart of me

The subtle bard of life with his blade
To sever from out the mystic whole
I have deemed my Soul
And shatter me — like no cloven shade
Divined by a Dante's ecstasy —
In morsels to immortality,
Piecemeal to dissolution!

This, then, that knocks at my breast —
Starting at the image of its own inquest
Hung in a gleaming jar — this sentient thing
Responsive in the night
To messages of grandeur and delight,
Pensive to Winter, passionate to Spring,
Mounting on strokes of music's rhythmic wing,
Beating more swift when my beloved's cheek
Ruddies with rapture the tongue fails to speak,
And pausing quite
When her rose turns to white —
This servant, delicate to suffering,

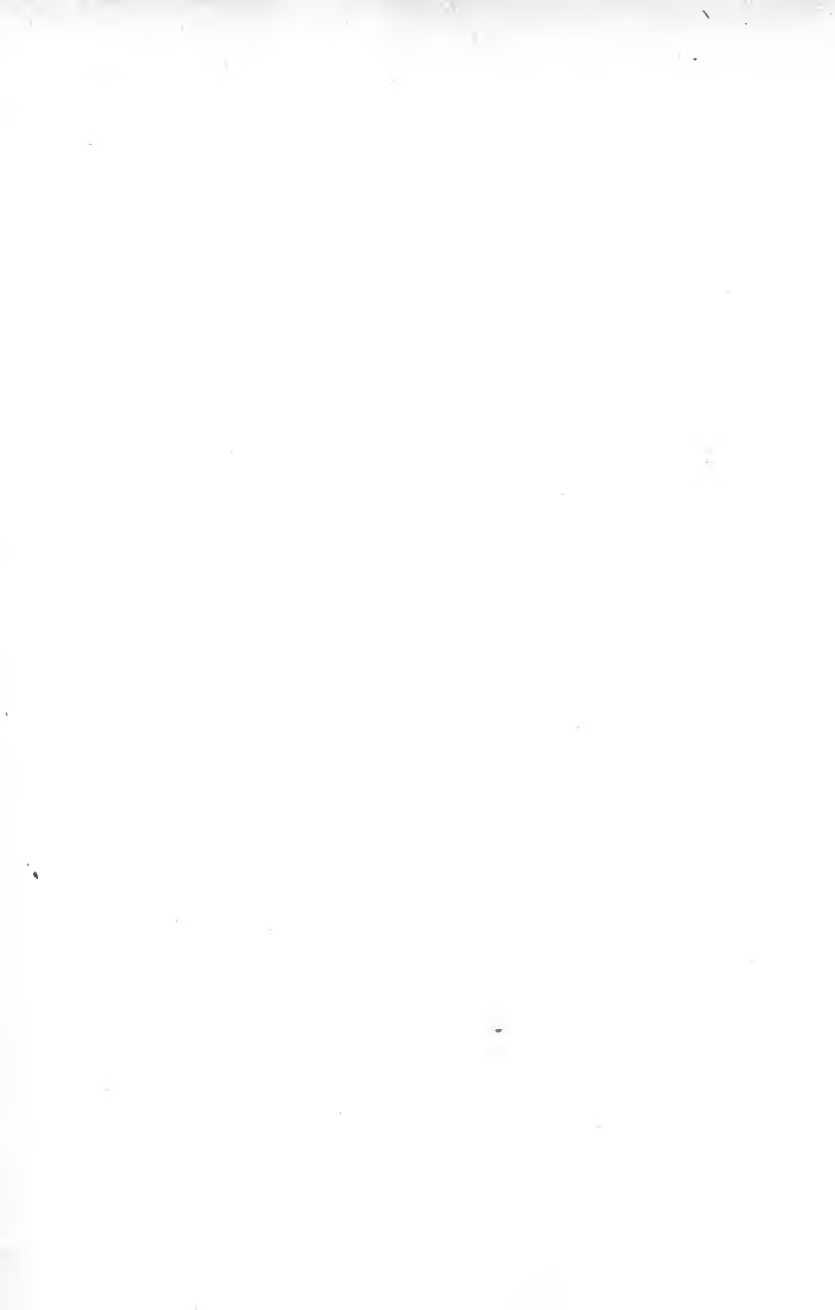
Insurgent to restraint, soothed by redress,
This shall the life-bard place upon his 'shelf
Beside the dog — and both shall acquiesce.

VI

For he — artist of baffling life — himself
Sculptor and plastic instrument —
He holds within his hand the vast intent,
And carves from out the crimson clay of death
Incredible images
Of quickening fauns, and headless victories
More terrible than her of Samothrace, —
Yea, toys with such as these,
As, silent, he lifts a severed Gorgon's face
Toward his own;
(The watchers hold their breath,
Hiding their dread.)
Calmly he looks — nor turns to stone,
But with a touch freezes the sphinx instead.
Till last, all pale, beside him — like a dream

That rises into daylight out of sleep —
Death rises from the mystic, crimson stream
And murmurs at his ear: “What, then, am I?
And what art thou whose scalpel strikes so deep
To slay me? Yea, I felt it glance me by
And I am wounded! Give it me!” — They clutch:
Death snatches, and his frozen fingers touch
The scalpel’s edge — when lo, a lightning gleam
Ruddies their wrestling shadows on the night;
Immense they lengthen down the vasty gloom
And darken in their height
The rafters of a silent room:
Around its walls, ranged in the crystal jars
Of infinite stars,
Beat, as they burn, the myriad hearts of life;
In lordship, where their lonely shadows loom,
Death and the Artist grapple for the knife.

NEW POEMS



THREE DANCE MOTIVES

Imagined for dances of Isadora Duncan

I. LETHE

ALONE by a starless sea

I lay with Sorrow ;

And mists of slumber breathed

From the mouth of my lover ;

And I rose from his numbing arms

And moaned : "O, release me !

Let me flame, let me leap once more

On the hills of vision !"

Then one by one stood round us

Stars of the morning :

Their lyric bodies sang,

Their torch-limbs beckoned ;

But the fog of my blind lover's breath
 Congealed their burning
Till they drooped on the banks of dawn
 Like lilies frost-slain,

And I drooped to his lethal lips
 Of anguish, and lay there
Till the shy Stars bloomed again
 By shores of the evening,

Beckoning anew, with their palms
 Of flame, to rejoin them
On the Mountains of Joy, and once more
 I rose in my yearning

And gazed: *I am coming!* But ah!
 The arrows of my gazing
Pierced them there, side by side,
 And they waned by the waters,

Lying like mermaids, dead

In the shoals of twilight. —

Then my soul waned with them, and kissed

The cold mouth of my lover.

But still, through the pulsing mists

Of our pitiful dreaming,

I feel their immortal eyes

Burning with wonder.

II. DIONYSUS

Dionysus! — io! Io! — Dionysus!

Who hath rolled back the rock from the cave Cim-
merian

And blinded the world with morning?

Dionysus! — thou! — It is thou, Dionysus!

Out of the niggard, numbing dark of the ages

Thou, from the dead, art restored!

Stark from the Tree of Pain,
Crucified, bleeding, disowned,
They bore the beautiful God of our Joy to his charnel :
But there in the flaming dark, thou — thou, his seraph,
Rolled back the awful stone
For the Lord of Life — new risen.

Dionysus ! — io ! Io ! — Dionysus !
Lo ! thy grapes are the clustering hearts of children
And the wine of these is thy worship.
Dionysus ! — once more ! — Once more, Dionysus,
Thou revealest our God, who is One through all ages : —
The Lord of Life is regained !

III. THE CHASE

Through what vast wood,
By what wild paths of beautiful surprise,
Hast thou returned to us,
Diana, Diana of Desire ?

Coming to thy call

What huntresses are these?

What hallowed chase? What long, long cherished
goal?

Through man's wan mind

By radiant paths of rhythmic liberty

I am returned to you,

Diviner, diviner of dreams!

Those huntresses, they are my hallowed desires —

My unquenched selves with overflowing quivers.

Joy is our chase and goal:

Our bodies the tense crossbows, and our wild souls the
shafts!

THE BANDBOX THEATRE ¹

LADIES and Gentlemen, to-night we christen
Our little new-born venture. — If you'll listen
Let us, therefore, bethink ourselves a minute :
“What's in a name?” Methinks to us what's in it
Implies — what's in a bandbox? But what's that?

A bandbox, you will say, implies a hat ;
Nay, more, a hat that's shapely to a head ;
But shapeliness implies the power to shed
Charm to the eyes — in short, to an audience,
And meaning *you*, that means — intelligence.
So from our bandbox (when the lid is off)
We hope to furnish headgear fair enough
To fit your high-bred choice in varied modes
Adapted to your pleasures and the codes

¹ An Epilogue for the opening night, New York, December 16, 1914, spoken by one of the actors.

Of modern workmanship in world-old art,
Building for these a little place apart
With roof and walls, to shelter from bad weather
King Richard's crown or Lady Teazel's feather.

Such is our Bandbox. To deserve the name
Implies, you see, your sanction to the same.
Your good-will is our garland. Help us win it!
Our Bandbox holds the palm — while *you* are in it!

TO "E. A."

[Edwin Arlington Robinson]

WITH CAKE AND CANDLES¹

E. A. — Of all the alphabet
That combination is the key
To unlock a door of memory
Into a quiet hall-room, set
With pen and pipe, where smoke of fancy
Swathes with a gentle necromancy
(Remote from Gotham's glare and racket)
One who reclines in crimson jacket
And smiles, in cryptic meditation,
To hold a friendly hand to me. —
E. A.! — Yes, there's the combination :
The door turns inward to the light
Of kind eyes through the dark. — To-night
Candles illumine there, like day,
The sign above the knocker : See !
Entra, Amice, Remane! — Thanks ; your key
I turn, *E. A.* —
To friendship the true way.

¹ On his birthday : 23 December, 1914.

CHARLES KLEIN : DRAMATIST

Died 7 May, 1915 on the *Lusitania*

THE arc-lights gleamed on glare Broadway
Where the people passed to see his play —
To mingle their own mirth and fears
With players' laughter, players' tears ;

Yet while they watched, they little wist
The presence of the dramatist :
The practiced hand, the artful means
Of the mind that moved behind the scenes.

Only the glamour which he wrought
Instilled its purpose — stirred their thought,
And made its glow and color blaze
Unconscious on their after-ways.

But once, against an awful hour,
They saw him loom — they felt a power
Whose blinding and immortal ray
Put out the arc-lights of Broadway

To show a planet all on fire ;
And there — one instant on that pyre —
He stood with those who held strange tryst
With Death — the master dramatist.

There shines his great memorial,
And we who shudder at his pall
Cannot in fitting phrase relate
An elegy more grand than fate ;

For make-believe of mirth and fears,
And players' laughter, players' tears,
Take on more vast and solemn range
That he has suffered that sea-change. —

Broadway goes by : new players tread

Old boards, but still their memoried dead

Act on in lordlier demesnes —

Moved by the Soul behind the scenes.

EDISON

A THOUSAND leagues on the Arctic sea
A ship went down through the frozen floe.
Captain and crew they watched her go :
 They ran her colors free ;
 They cheered her lustily ;
And far peoples shouted her praise with them
Where a phonograph from her plunging stem
Pealed to the stars her requiem.

A thousand leagues through the Afric wood
A man went looting the jungle's wealth.
Leopard nor lion could stay his stealth,
 Nor sleeping-death, nor flood :
 He drew not the monsters' blood,
But he led them alive through the scorching day
By a tape of moving film, to play
With the wondering children of Broadway.

A thousand leagues or a thousand years
Are motes in the gaze of the seeking mind :
By its own radiance thought can find
 Its way to ultimate spheres,
 Dark, till its beam appears
To blazon them. So on that beam hath run
Round Arctic moon and Afric sun
The electric mind of Edison.

Through delicate engine and disk and reel
He quickens the elemental Cause,
Kindling the lightnings of its laws
 Till atoms of jelly and steel
 Are made to stir and feel,
And mortals that long have ceased to be
Live on, for the world to hear and see,
In a semblance of immortality.

The throbbing ticker resounds his fame
With its ominous pulse, and the mart responds,

Selling his magic in stocks and bonds ;
 But they, who toss his name
 With gold in their mighty game,
Behold not the soul of the mightier One
Who sits in the brain of an Edison
And weighs the dreams, when all is done.

For all that the millions sell and buy
And wrangle for, is a dreamful thing
Wrought of a lone imagining :
 Tower'd cities, that top our sky,
 Loomed first on the pensive eye
Of brooding architects ; the glories
Of art and science, their sounding stories,
Have birth from silent laboratories.

So out of his visioning silences
The great inventor reveals to us
New pathways of nature, perilous
 With unknown skies and seas,
 For new astronomies

To chart, and each dim discovered trail
Is lit by the gleam of a lurid grail
With the legend : What shall the search avail ?

What at last shall avail our invention ? Yea,
What avails our soul its cunning brain
If our paths be hatred, our goal be pain ?
 Brain searches in cloud and clay,
 But our soul must point us the way
Through cloud to a star, through clay to God's breath,
Or else it were wiser to welcome death
On the star-lit road to Nazareth.

But they *shall* avail — both — brain and soul ;
They avail us now in him who has won
Earth's wondering homage — Edison :
 For his mind has held as its goal
 The good of a world made whole,
And his spirit girds it with lightning span —
The planetary American
Whose master-thought is the joy of man.

THE RETURN OF AUGUST

DARKLY a mortal age has come and gone
And man grown ancient in a single year.
August! The summer month is blasted sere
With memories earth bleeds to dream upon.

To dream upon! Ah, were we dreaming then
Ere Europe, blindfold, lulled in holiday,
Harkened the sudden thunder through her play
And, fumbling, held her breath to hark again,

Or is this blighted year our dream? — How swift
The blackening tempest fell! How vast, through fire
And cloud of Belgium's rape, a planet's ire
Flared on that pall of shame, while through the rift

The livid sorrows racked our sympathies!
For still thought burned unclouded: Right and wrong
Strove for the palm as in an epic song;
And so we poured our succor overseas,

Neutral in act but never in our souls,
Yet guarding the brave goal of peace. Till soon —
Slow-warping to the waning year's blind moon —
The tide ebbed back, and in the freezing shoals

We stared upon the dead — the dead, whose mothers
Suckled them still in dreams. Stark, mid the stench
And yellow choke that reeked from shell and trench,
They lay together there — mere boys, and brothers.

Were *these* the epic hosts of Wrong and Right
Whose clash had whirled us in their spirits' war?
These silent boys: what had they battled for
To lie such still bedfellows in the night?

Must breath of dying brothers wake the brass
That thrills the call to arms? Shall ghostly lips
Summon the living to the dark eclipse
And all their dearest shout to see them pass

Merely for this : That these who might have shared
A simple handclasp share a bloodied sod? —
So for a while we gazed and questioned God :
A haunted while : for dimly, as we stared,

Far off, we heard the multitudinous cry
Of mangled Poland, like a cry in sleep,
And Servia fever-panting, and the deep
Half-breathed self-doubt of prisoned Germany ;

And still far tidings blew, but that first spark
Of August splendor burned in them no more ;
Pity and sorrow palled, and custom wore
A deeper callus and a blur more dark,

Till sudden — the *Lusitania!* Lightnings shot
The unhallowed message, and a shuddering fire
Leapt from our long-charred hearts — a glowing spire,
And Europe's sword swung nearer to the knot

That ties our bonds of peace. And now — and now
The summer steals again toward winter's sleep ;
The reaping time draws near — ah, *what* to reap ?
And spring, that lurks beyond, comes hither — how ?

Still, O my Country, while we may, look back !
The blighted year cries from the charnel grass :
Must breath of dying brothers wake the brass
That thrills the call to arms ? — A blood-sered track

Leads backward to that other August day,
Prowled by the still unglutted Minotaur ;
But we, who watch to slay that beast of War,
Shall we hunt *him* or those he mangles ? — Say :

For reason has its ire more just than hate ;
Imagination has its master hour,
And pity its foil, and mother-love its power
Mightier than blood-lust and more obdurate.

My Country ! poised in forward visioning,
With pity, love and reason let us pray
Our lives shall serve to cleanse this August day ! —

The summer wanes : the ploughman comes with spring.

FEDERATION

OVER there — they know the singeing and blinding of
sorrow.

Over there they know the young dead: they know
the dear
Touch of the living that shall be the dead to-morrow:
Here — what know we here?

Over there, they feel the heart-rage, the sick hating
Of bitter blood-lust, the imminent storm of steel,
Burden and pang of a terror never-abating:
Here — what do we feel?

There, where they snuff the reek of a burning censer
Borne by the stark-mad emperors — their pain,
Tinged with a hallowed pride, takes on the intenser
Soul of a world insane.

We, who still spared to reason, here where the thunder
And surge of the madness dwindle to murmurs and
cease,

We who, apart, stand dazed by the demons of plunder —

How shall we conjure Peace?

Peace — did we call her, the gluttonous mother who
suckled

The monster child her lust of dominion bore?

Peace — did we crown her, the secret harlot who
truckled

To breed from the loins of War?

One word — one only will — be ours in awaking :

Nevermore! Nevermore let us build for merely our
own.

Peace is not ours alone for the making or breaking :

Peace is the world's alone.

For the battle-gauge is feud-lust or federation.

The ultimate beast is enthroned and man is its thrall ;
And beast or man shall survive, as nation with nation
Fights — not for one, but all.

A dream? — Yes, the dream that once was a planet's
derision

Now blazons a planet's prayer: the cry to be free
Of a world unconceived in woe of a Dante's vision,
Or Christ's on the blasted tree.

For our deeds are the henchmen of dreams. Since
only by another

Dream can the dreamer be vanquished, let ours
create

The beautiful order of brother united with brother :
Victorious dreaming is fate. —

America — dreamer of dreams ! Be destiny's leader,
Militant first for mankind, for so your own soul,
Blended of all, for all shall be interceder
And guide to the world's goal.

CHRISTMAS 1915

Now is the midnight of the nations: dark
Even as death, beside her blood-dark seas,
Earth, like a mother in birth agonies,
Screams in her travail, and the planets hark
Her million-throated terror. Naked, stark,
Her torso writhes enormous, and her knees
Shudder against the shadowed Pleiades,
Wrenching the night's imponderable arc.

Christ! What shall be delivered to the morn
Out of these pangs, if ever indeed another
Morn shall succeed this night, or this vast mother
Survive to know the blood-sprent offspring, torn
From her racked flesh? — What splendor from the
smother?
What new-wing'd world, or mangled god still-born?

NOTES

OF the poems collected in this volume, those in Part I (War) have been written during the last ten weeks; those in Part II (Peace) have been selected from poems written during the last two years — chiefly during 1914. Most of them have been published, separately, in the following journals and newspapers, to the editors of which the author makes his acknowledgments: *The North American Review*, *Collier's Weekly*, *The Outlook*, *The Forum*, *The Independent*, *The Boston Evening Transcript*, *The New York Times and Times Literary Supplement*, *The New York Evening Post*.

NEW YORK CITY,
October 26, 1914.

NOTES

Most of the poems in this volume were written for special occasions. These notes record the dates and events which called forth their expression, as follows:—

I: War

Fight: written for the centenary celebration of the naval battle of Plattsburgh, and read by the author at Plattsburgh, N.Y., September 11, 1914.

In the naval battle of Plattsburgh, the American commander "Macdonough himself worked like a common sailor, in pointing and handling a favorite gun. While bending over to sight it, a round shot cut in two the spanker boom, which fell on his head and struck him senseless for two or three minutes; he then leaped to his feet and continued as before, *when a shot took off the head of the captain of the gun crew and drove it in his face with such force as to knock him to the other side of the deck.*"

The above quotation is from "The Naval War of 1812," by Theodore Roosevelt.

The Conflict: These six sonnets here printed were originally published, together, in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, August 29, 1914. The first, "To William Watson," is a response to a sonnet by Mr. Watson entitled "To the United States," first published in *The London Post*, and cabled to the *New York Times*.

The Lads of Liege: First printed in the *New York Times*, September 2, 1914.

Carnage: These six sonnets were first published, together, in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, September 26, 1914.

The Muffled Drums: These stanzas (published in the *New York Evening Post*, September 3, 1914) were written

with reference to the Peace Procession of Women in New York City, August 29, 1914.

Antwerp: The early press accounts of the storming of Antwerp by the Germans told of great damage to the city's architecture. Later accounts have described a less amount of physical injury inflicted. This sonnet, however, has reference less to the physical violence, than to the spiritual violation wrought by unwarranted invaders.

Men of Canada: First printed in the *Boston Evening Transcript*, October 17, 1914, shortly after the sailing of Canadian troops to England.

The Child-Dancers: The little children of the Isadora Duncan School of Dancing, to whom these verses refer, came to America in September, owing to conditions of war in France. Russian, German, French, and English, they form a happy and harmonious family of the belligerent races.

A Prayer of the Peoples: This poem was written on the day of President Wilson's Call to Prayer, Sunday, October 4, 1914. It was published in the *New York Times*, on October fifth.

In Memoriam: Mrs. Woodrow Wilson: These stanzas were first printed in the *New York Evening Post*, August 13, 1914. Shortly before her death, the earnest, expressed wish of Mrs. Wilson for the passing of the law for the betterment of conditions in the slum district of Washington was fulfilled by vote of the Senate.

II: Peace

Panama Hymn: Sung by a chorus at the Panama Festival for the benefit of the New York Association for the Blind, New York City, March 25, 1913, for which occasion the hymn was written. It was published in the *North American Review*, April, 1913.

Goethals: written for the National Testimonial to Colonel George W. Goethals, and read by the author at Carnegie Hall, New York City, March 4, 1914.

A Child at the Wicket: This poem, which narrates a true experience of the author at Ellis Island, refers by implication to the now historic labor troubles at Lawrence, Mass., in 1912.

Hymn for Equal Suffrage: Written for the Equal Suffrage Meeting (Authors' Night) held at Cooper Union, New York City, in January 1914, and read by the author on that occasion. The poem is based on one of a like nature in the writer's play "Mater."

Lexington: Written for the two hundredth anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Lexington, and read at Lexington, Mass., June 8, 1913.

School: Written for the centenary celebration of the founding of Meriden Academy, and read by the author at Meriden, N.H., June 25, 1913.

The Player: written for the celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of Shakspeare, and read by Mr. Douglas Wood at the ceremonies beside Shakspeare's statue in Central Park, New York City, April 23, 1914.

Prologue and Epilogue to a Bird Masque: These were written for the indoor performance of the author's Bird Masque "Sanctuary" in New York City, at the Hotel Astor Ballroom Theatre, February 24, 1914. On that occasion they were recited by Mrs. Charles Douville Coburn (in the rôle of *Fantasy*), who has since made use of them in the performances of the Masque by the Coburn Players at various American universities.

The Heart in the Jar: written at the time of the announcement of the award, to Dr. Alexis Carrel, of the Nobel Prize for Medical Research, and published in the *New York Times Literary Supplement*, December 8, 1912.

New Poems

Three Dance Motives: Composed for dances of Isadora Duncan, and recited by Augustin Duncan at the Metropolitan Opera House and the Century Theatre, New York, March, 1915.

Edison: Written for the National Testimonial to Thomas A. Edison, on his receiving the Civic Forum Medal for Distinguished Public Service, and read by the author at Carnegie Hall, New York, May 6, 1915.

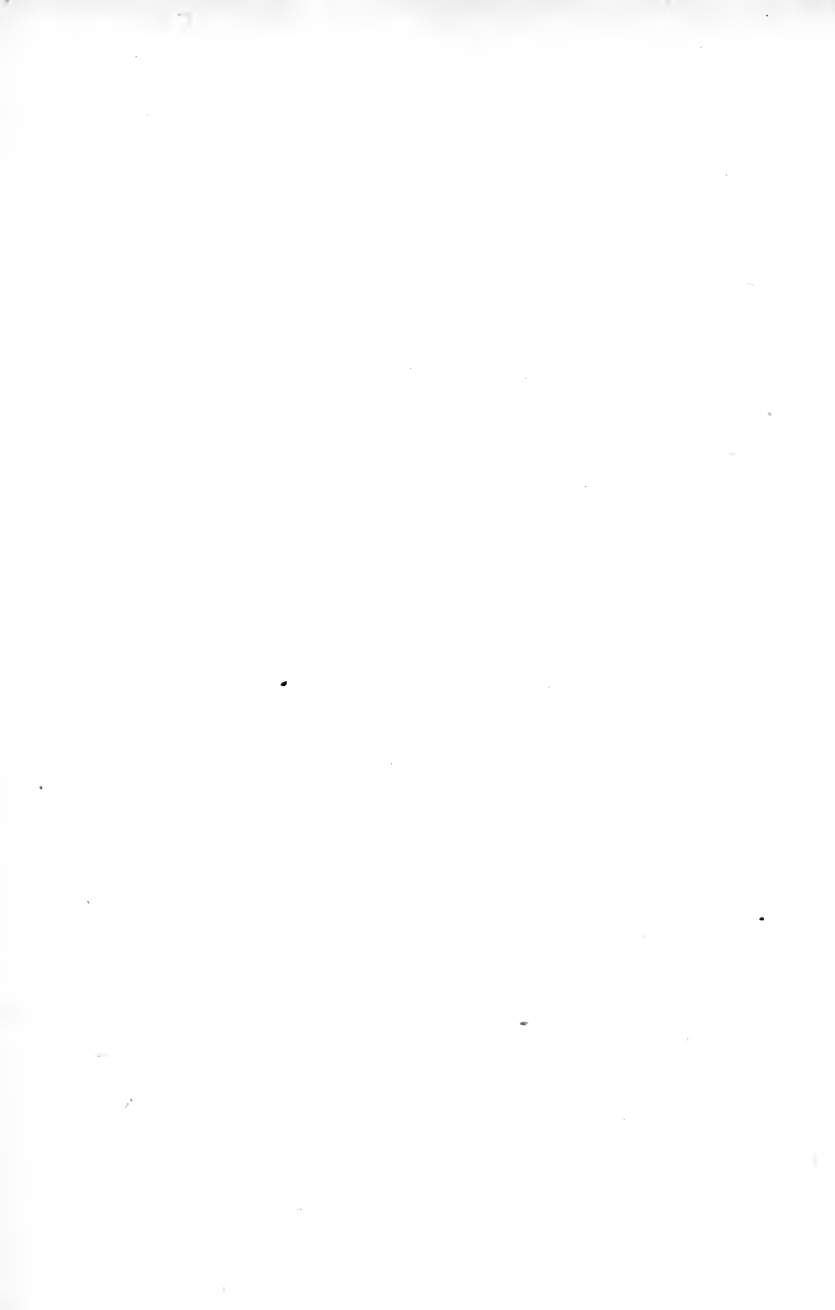
Federation: Read by the author before the National Institute and Academy of Arts and Letters, Boston, Jordan Hall, November 19, 1915.

Charles Klein: Dramatist: Read by the author at the memorial meeting to Charles Klein, Hudson Theatre, December 19, 1915.

LINCOLN CENTENARY ODE



Delivered before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences
at the Academy of Music, Brooklyn, New York
February, 1909



ODE ON THE CENTENARY OF
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ODE ON THE CENTENARY OF ABRAHAM
LINCOLN

I

THEN fell the season bleak
Of silence and long night,
And solemn starshine and large solitude ;
Hardly more hushed the world when first the word
Of God creation stirred,
Far steeped in wilderness. By the frore creek,
Mute in the moon, the hunted stag in flight
Paused, panting silver ; in her cedarn lair,
Crouched with her starveling litter, the numb lynx
Winked the keen hoar-frost, quiet as a sphinx ;
On the lone forest trail
Only the coyote's wail
Quivered, and ceased.

It was the chrisom rude
Of winter and wild beast
That consecrated, by harsh nature's rite,
A meagre cabin crude,
Builded of logs and bark,
To be a pilgrim nation's hallow'd ark
And shrine the goal aspiring ages seek.

No ceremonial
Of pealèd chime was there, or blarèd horn,
Such as hath blazoned births of lesser kings,
When he — the elder brother of us all,
Lincoln — was born.

At his nativity
Want stood as sponsor, stark Obscurity
Was midwife, and all lonely things
Of nature were unconscious ministers
To endow his spirit meek
With their own melancholy. So when he —
An infant king of commoners —

Lay in his mother's arms, of all the earth,
 Which now his fame wears for a diadem,
 None heeded of his birth ;
 Only a star burned over Bethlehem
 More bright, and, big with prophecy,
 A gust blew forth from that far February
 To fill the organ-reeds that peal his centenary.

II

Who shall distil in song those epic years ?
 Only the Sibyl of Simplicity,
 Touched by the light and dew of common tears,
 Might chant that homely native *Odyssea*.

For there are lives too large in simple truth
 For art to limn or elegy to gauge ;
 And there are men so near to God's own ruth
 They are the better angels of their age ;
 And such was he : beyond the pale of song
 His grandeur looms in truth, with awful grace ;

He lives where beauty's origins belong
Deep in the primal raptures of his race.

Yet may we strive to trace
His shadow — where it pulses vast
Upon imagination, cast
By the oft-handtrimm'd lamp of history —
In carvèd breath, or bronze, that we may scan
The imagined child and man
Whose life and death are looms of our own destiny.

III

The loveliness which is reality
Surrounds us, but its glamorous romance
We glean afar from heroes of old France,
Or Hellas' arms, or Gothic heraldry,
While Roland and his conquerors
With Sigmund sleep beside our doors,
And Homer's age awaits us at our hearth.

How like a saga of the northern sea

Our own Kentucky hero-tale begins!

Once on a time, far in a wintry wood,

A lone hut stood;

There lived a poor man's son, that was to be

A master man of earth.

And so for us,

Like children in the great hall of his spirit,

The homebred fairy-story spins

Annals whose grace the after-times inherit.

The uncouth homestead by the trail of Boone,

The untitled grant, the needy exodus,

The ox-cart on the Indiana heath,

The log shack by the Sangamon, and soon

The fever'd mother and the forest death —

From these the lonely epic wanders on.

The longshank boy, with visage creased by toil

And laughter of the soil,

Cribbing his book of statutes 'mid his chore,
Erelong his nooning fellows of the field
Hail their scrub-orator, or at sundown —
Slouching his gaunt and sallow six-foot-four —
Their native Touchstone of the village store.
Or from the turf, where he has matched his build
To throw the county champion in the loam,
Idly he saunters home
To rock some mother's cradle in the town ;
Or, stretched on counter calico, with Clay
And organ-sounding Webster, dream the night away.

But time begins
Slowly to sift the substance from the slag.
And now along the county pike's last lap,
With giant shins
Shut knifewise in his wabbling rattletrap,
The circuit lawyer trots his tired nag
Toward the noon tavern, reins up, and unrolls

His awkward length of wrinkled bombazine,
Clutching his tattered green
Umbrella and thin carpetsack,
And flings a joke that makes the rafters roar :
As if, uplooming from of yore,
Some quaint-accountred king of trolls,
Out-elbowing a sexton's suit of black
In Christmas glee,
Should sudden crack
His shrilly jest of shrewd hilarity,
And shake the clambering urchins from his back.

IV

How vast the war invisible
When public weal battles with public will !
Proudly the stars of Union hung their wreath
On the young nation's lordly architrave ;
Yet underneath
Its girding vaults and groins,
Half the fair fabric rested on the loins

And stooping sinews of a slave,
That — raised to the just stature of a man —
Should rend the whole asunder.

And now the million-headed serf began
To stir in wonder,
And from the land, appalled by that low thunder,
“Kansas-Nebraska!” rang
The cry, and with exceeding pang
Out of the earth blood sprang
And out of men’s hearts, fire. And that hot flame,
Fed by the book that burned in all men’s homes,
Kindled from horizon to horizon
Anguish and shame
And aspiration, by its glow
Ruddying the state-house domes
With monstrous shadows of Dred Scott
And gaunt-limbed effigies of Garrison.

Then in the destined man matured the slow
Strong grandeur of that lot

Which singled him ; till soon,
Ushered with lordly train,
The champion Douglas met him on the plain,
And the broad prairie moon
Peered through white schooners at the mad bonfires
And multitudes astir,
Where — roped like wrestlers in a ring —
The *Little Giant* faced the *Railsplitter* ;
And serious crowds harked silently,
With smothered taunts and ires,
While Commonsense grappled with 'Sovereignty,'
Till the lank, long-armed wrestler made his fling.
And still sublime
With common sympathy, that cool
Sane manfulness survives : *You cannot fool*
All of the people all the time.

No ; by that power we misname fate,
'Tis character which moulds the state.
Statutes are dead when men's ideals dissent,

And public will is more than precedent,
And manhood more than constitutions can create.
Higher than bar and documental ban,
Men's highest court is still the heart of Man.

V

Bold to his country, sick with compromise,
Spoke the plain advocate;
Half slave, half free, our Union dies,
But it shall live! And done with sophistries,
The people answered with tempestuous call
That shook the revolutionary dead,
And high on rude rails garlanded
Bore their backwoodsman to the Capitol.
"Who is this common huckster?" sneered the great,
"This upstart Solon of the Sangamon?"
And chastened Douglas answered: "He is one
Who wrestles well for Truth." But some
Scowled unbelief, and some smiled bitterly;
And so, beneath the derrick'd half-built dome,

While dumb artillery
 And guards battalioned the black lonely form,
 He took his oath.

We are not enemies, but friends!

Yet scarce the sad rogation ends
 Ere the warped planks of Union split in storm
 Of dark secession.

Then, as on a raft

Flood-rended, where by night the Ohio sweeps
 Into the Mississippi, 'mid the roil
 Of roaring waters with eroded soil
 From hills primeval, the strong poleman keeps
 Silence, midway the shallows and the rocks,
 To steer his shipment safe, while fore and aft
 The scrambling logmen scream at him, or scold
 With prayers and malisons, or burst the locks
 And loot the precious bales, so — deaf and mute
 To sneers and imprecations both —
 The lone Flatboatman of the Union poled

His country's wreck midstream, and resolute
Held still his goal :
To lash his ballast to the Sundered half,
And save the whole.

*" They seek a sign,
But no sign shall be given them,"* he said ;
And reaching Godward, with his pilot's gaff
Probed in the dark, among the drowning and the
 dead,
And sunk his plummet line
Deep in the people's heart, where still his own heart
 bled,
And fathomed there the inundated shore
Swept by the flood and storm of elemental war.

VI

The War ! — Far on the dim verge of To-day
Its rack of livid splendor fades away.

The bane is past ;
The awful lightnings, spent,
Have wrought a chastening not a chastisement ;
The beauty and the benediction last.
And mustering, in season due,
From farthest hill
And hamlet — still
Keeping the morning last but one in May
Proud with great memories — one by one,
Whose young life sank not with the sun
Of Gettysburg or Missionary Ridge,
Buttons his coat of blue,
And from his whitened hair
Removes the hat with golden-corded brim
And plants again old colors in old graves ;
And groups of simple children fair
And folk of middle age are there
To kneel by him,
And honor, though they cannot share,
His pensive privilege.

Still in the living past we may recall
The war's live tribute. Go to Washington
On New Year's morning of Emancipation,
When even from Arlington
Beyond the Capitol
The streets and alleys all
Surge black with singing tides. There creep a few
Sweet-visaged, swart and hoary men
To bask them in the sun
That beats on Pennsylvania Avenue,
Or lounge in smiling knots
At drowsier spots,
To listen where one boasts again
Of ancient bondage, now his pedigree.
Those are the nation's honored slaves
Knighthood of old by the great Proclamation.
For them the empower'd saviour dipt his pen
In blood of equity,
And signed away the curse as old as Ptolemy.

The War! It was a forging blast
From God's own furnace, welding North
And South henceforth
To be one weapon for His hand,
Till even that word which once inflamed the land
Falls idle at the last :
What need to boast of *union*, being one?
The War is done.

Yet who that, in complacent day
Of peace, invokes the right divine
Of labor to reward itself,
Or vested power to hoard its pelf,
Reaping the enviable embrace
Of joy denied to others,
Remembering that dark assay
Our country and our chief withstood,
When fathers sought their sons in blood
And brothers fought with brothers, —
Who then, before the memoried face

Of Lincoln, but must pause, and pray
For love like his, whose larger grace
Outclimbs the individual —
Dreadful, and yet more dear than all —
The love that serves our race.

VII¹

“To sleep, perchance to dream!” — No player, rapt
In conscious art’s soliloquy, might know
To subtilize the poignant sense so apt
As he, almost in shadow of the end,
Murmured its latent sadness to a friend;
And then he said to him: “Ten nights ago
I watched alone; the hour was very late;
I fell asleep and dreamed;
And in my dreaming, all
The White House lay in deathlike stillness round;
But soon a sobbing sound,
Subdued, I heard, as of innumerable

¹ See Note at end of poem.

Mourners. I rose and went from room to room ;
No living being there was visible ;
Yet as I passed, unspeakably it seemed
They sobbed again, subdued. In every room
Light was, and all things were familiar :
But who were those once more
Whose hearts were breaking there? What heavy gloom
Wrapt their dumb grieving? Last, the Eastroom door
I opened, and it lay before me: High
And cold on solemn catafalque it lay,
Draped in funereal vestments, and near by
Mute soldiers guarded it. In black array,
A throng of varied race
Stood weeping,
Or gazing on the covered face.
Then to a soldier: 'Who is dead
In the White House?' I asked. He said:
'The President.'
And a great moan that through the people went
Waked me from sleeping."

God! that a nation too should have bad dreams!
The cities all are still, and voiceless all
The valleys and the woods:
But what are these husht sounds insufferable
Of moaning multitudes?

Through the Republic's silent house
From room to room the awful Spirit walks,
Yet all things are familiar; it seems
No change has been:
From Maine to Florida
Still flash the blue seas; California
Is quick with April green;
The middle ways are pied
With crocus blooms and river fleur-de-lis;
And the great western rooms are open wide
To greet the northing sun;
In every one
Are strewn the Saviour's lilies of white peace
In festival of Him who quenched the fiery feuds.

What, then, is that which mocks
The victory and grace that were before?
Once more, and now insufferably once more —
The moan of multitudes!

The lofty Spirit knocks
And, opening last the door
Into the Capitol, with pensive head,
Stooping his deathless stature o'er the dead,
Looks there on his own image — tenderness,
Pity, on which sad truth has set its seal,
Heroic patience, strong humility,
Power, whose human courage shines not less
That humor leavens the shrewd honesty:
Democracy's own brow — the American ideal.

While triumph pealed his consummated task,
And that great theatre
Where late he watched the war's solemnity
Was narrowed to a moment's comedy,

The sudden angel of the tragic mask
Flashed on his gaze the blinding sepulchre.

VIII

It was a dream ! for that which fell in death,
Seared by the assassin's lightning, and there lay
A spectacle for anguish, was a wraith ;
The real immortal Lincoln went his way
Back to his only home and native heath —
The common people's common heart. And they
Who speak of Lincoln to his countrymen —
Now while one vast communion makes To-day
His temple — speak *to* Lincoln, born again
From that perennial earth
Whereof he had his birth,
And estimating him, they estimate
The source of all that made, and yet shall make us great.

IX

The loving and the wise
May seek — but seek in vain — to analyze

This man, for having caught
The mystic clue of thought,
Sudden they meet the controverting whim,
And fumbling with the enchanted key,
Lose it then utterly.

Aesop and old Isaiah held in him
Strange sessions, winked at by Artemus Ward,
Till sudden in their midst bright Seraphim
Stood, summoned by a sad, primeval Bard
Who, bearing still no name, has ever borne
Within his heart the music of mankind :
Sometime a lonely singer blind
Beside the Ionian sea ;
Sometime, between two thieves in scorn,
A face in Calvary.

That was his master soul —
The mystic demi-god of common man —
Who, templed in the steadfast mind,

Hid his shy gold of genius in the bran
Of Hoosier speech and garb, softening the wan
Strong face of shrewdness with strange aureole.

He was the madstone to his country's ire,
Drawing the rancorous blood of envious quarrel
Alike from foe and friend ; his pity, stirr'd,
Restored to its bough the storm-unnested bird,
Or raised the wallow'd pig from out the mire.
And he who sowed in sweat his boyhood's crop,
And tackled Euclid with a wooden spade,
And excavated Blackstone from a barrel
To hold moot trials in the gloaming, made
By lighted shavings in a cooper's shop,
He is the people's still — their Railsplitter,
Himself a rail, clean-grained, of character
Self-hewn in the dark glades of Circumstance
From that deep-hearted tree
Democracy,
Which, by our race's heritage,

Reforests age on age,
Perpetual in strong fecundity.

X

Those are the rails to build republics with,
Their homesteads and their towns. God give us more
And ever more of such to build our own,
Enlarging still in manhood, not in stone
And iron merely and in metal ore :
Not men, like rails of polish'd steel,
Invoice-begotten breeds, that pour
Stillborn from laboring wombs of stark machines
And all alike,
With flange and spike
To couple and dovetail, and serve as means
To cart more gold-dust on the commonweal ;
Not those : but such as breathe
Still of the trail, the redwood and the ranch,
The gale-swept mountain and the prairie's sheen,
And cities where the stars can still look in

And leave their benediction : common men,
Kindled by nature's awe to contemplation,
And by her goads to courage ; not too vain
Of self, to show the clean knots in their grain,
Blazed from the same great bole that grew Abe Lin-
coln's branch :

Such be the men of whom we build our nation !

XI

But he is more than ours, as we are more
Than yet the world dares dream. His stature grows
With that illimitable state
Whose sovereignty ordains no tribute shore
And borderland of hate,
But grounds its justice in the joy it sows.
His spirit is still a power to emancipate
Bondage — more base, being more insidious,
Than serfdom — that cries out in the midst of us
For virtue, born of opportunity,
And manhood, weighed in honest human worth,

And freedom, based in labor. He stands forth
'Mongst nations old — a new-world Abraham,
The patriarch of peoples still to be,
Blending all visions of the promised land
In one Apocalypse.

His voice is heard —
Thrilling the moulder'd lintels of the past —
In Asia; old Thibet is stirred
With warm imaginings;
Ancestral China, 'mid her mysteries,
Unmasks, and flings
Her veils wide to the occident; the wand
Of hope awakes prone Hierapolis;
Even by the straits of old that Io swam,
The immemorial Sultan, sceptreless,
Stands awed; and, heartened by that bold success,
Pale Russia rises from her holocaust.

And still the emancipating influence,
The secret power, the increasing truth, are his,

For they are ours : ours by the potencies
Poured in our nation from the founts of time,
Blending in us the mystic seeds of men,
To sow them forth again
For harvests more sublime
Throughout the world.

XII

Leave, then, that custom'd grief
Which honorably mourns its martyred dead,
And newly hail instead
The birth of him, our hardy shepherd chief,
Who by green paths of old democracy
Leads still his tribes to uplands of glad peace.

As long as — out of blood and passion blind —
Springs the pure justice of the reasoning mind,
And justice, bending, scorns not to obey
Pity, that once in a poor manger lay,
As long as, thrall'd by time's imperious will,

Brother hath bitter need of brother, still
His presence shall not cease
To lift the ages toward his human excellence,
And races yet to be
Shall in a rude hut do him reverence
And solemnize a simple man's nativity.



NOTE

The dream of Lincoln, recounted in this poem, takes significance from its authenticity. Shortly before his death, Lincoln actually had this dream, and described it to a friend in words which the writer has closely followed in Part VII of this poem. The passage, *To sleep, perchance to dream*, Lincoln himself quoted in this connection. Cf. Norman Hapgood's "Abraham Lincoln, the Man of the People," pages 405-406. It is perhaps worthy of mention that the words of Lincoln, italicized in the Ode, are also authentic, being for the most part *verbatim* his own. The book, referred to in the second stanza of Part IV, is of course "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

URIEL AND OTHER POEMS



TO
THE GRACIOUS LIFE
AND QUICKENING MEMORY
OF MY BROTHER
WILLIAM PAYSON MACKAYE
POET ACTOR ARTIST
1868—1889

“He was a verray parfit gentil knight.”

PREFATORY NOTE

FOR this volume the author has selected, from poems written chiefly during the last two years, such only as are commemorative in their nature. Since most of these are concerned with persons or events of public interest, the following brief references to some of their special occasions are placed here in lieu of footnotes.

Uriel: William Vaughn Moody, poet and dramatist, died October 17, 1910. This poem was written about a year later. Shortly before his death, he told a friend about a new drama, on the theme of Saint Paul, the outlines of which had come to him splendidly as a vision. To this the sixth stanza of *Uriel* refers symbolically.

The Sibyl: In 1912 was published *The Art of the Theatre*, by Edward Gordon Craig. The volume is significant of a new era in the art involved.

The Return of Ellen Terry: Read by the author in the Hudson Theatre, New York, November 3, 1910, upon the return of Miss Terry to America, for her series of Interpretive Readings "The Heroines of Shakespeare."

Peary at the Pole: Read by the author in the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, February 8, 1910, at the National Testimonial to Robert E. Peary, on his return from the North Pole.

To the Fire-Bringer: On the death of the author of *The Fire-Bringer*, the body of the poet was cremated, October, 1910. These verses were written at the time.

The Trees of Harvard: Stanzas read at the Dedication (on Commencement Day, 1912) of a red-oak sapling, chosen by the Harvard Class of Eighteen Ninety-Seven from among those then planted to supersede the dead elms in the College Yard, at Cambridge.

Invocation: Written for a Symposium of tributes by American poets to the memory of Robert Browning, gathered by Mr. William Stanley Braithwaite, and published in the *Boston Transcript*, May 4, 1912.

The Bard of Bouillabaisse: Stanzas written for the Centenary of the birth of Thackeray. Read in the Sixty-Ninth Regiment Armory, New York, January 30, 1912, by Mr. Ben Greet, at the Centenary Festival held by the Southern Industrial Educational Society, at which bouillabaisse — the dish celebrated by Thackeray in his ballad — was served to the public.

The Candle in the Choir: Read by the author in the Congregational meeting-house at Old Rockingham, Vermont, August 4, 1912, on the occasion of the Annual Pilgrimage. The incident narrated is historic.

In the Bohemian Redwoods: Written at San Rio, California, in the Redwood Grove of the Bohemian Club of San Francisco, on the festival of the Thirty-Third Mid-

summer High Jinks and the performance of the Grove Play, August 6, 1910.

Browning to Ben Ezra: Read by the author before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, at the Robert Browning Centennial Meeting, May 7, 1912.

Ninety-Seven: Read by the author at the Decennial Celebration of the Harvard Class of Eighteen Ninety-Seven, at the Hotel Vendome, Boston, June 24, 1907.

To the Editors of the *North American Review*, *The Mask* (Florence, Italy), the *Century Magazine*, the *Boston Transcript*, *The Outlook*, *Scribner's Magazine*, *The Churchman*, the *Poetry Review* (London), the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, the writer makes his acknowledgments in reprinting poems which have appeared in those journals.

CORNISH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
October, 1912.

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URIEL

STANZAS TO THE MEMORY OF
WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY

I

Uriel, you that in the ageless sun
Sit in the awful silences of light,
Singing of vision hid from human sight, —
Prometheus, beautiful rebellious one!
And you, Deucalion,
For whose blind seed was brought the illuming spark,
Are you not gathered, now his day is done,
Beside the brink of that relentless dark —
The dark where your dear singer's ghost is gone?

II

Imagined beings, who majestic blend
Your forms with beauty! — questing, unconfined,
The mind conceived you, though the quenched mind
Goes down in dark where you in dawn ascend.
Our songs can but suspend
The ultimate silence: yet could song aspire
The realms of mortal music to extend
And wake a Sibyl's voice or Seraph's lyre —
How should it tell the dearness of a friend?

III

The simplest is the inexpressible ;
The heart of music still evades the Muse,
And arts of men the heart of man suffuse,
And saddest things are made of silence still.
In vain the senses thrill
To give our sorrows glorious relief
In pyre of verse and pageants volatile,
And I, in vain, to speak for him my grief
Whose spirit of fire invokes my waiting will.

IV

To him the best of friendship needs must be
Uttered no more ; yet was he so endowed
That Poetry because of him is proud
And he more noble for his poetry,
Wherefore infallibly
I obey the strong compulsion which this verse
Lays on my lips with strange austerity —
Now that his voice is silent — to rehearse
For my own heart how he was dear to me.

V

Not by your gradual sands, elusive Time,
We measure your gray sea, that never rests :
The bleeding hour-glasses in our breasts

Mete with quick pangs the ebbing of our prime,
And drip — like sudden rime
In March, that melts to runnels from a pane
The south breathes on — oblivion of sublime
Crystallizations, and the ruthless wane
Of glittering stars, that scarce had range to climb.

VI

Darkling those constellations of his soul
Glimmered, while racks of stellar lightnings shot
The white, creative meteors of thought
Through that last night, where — clad in cloudy stole —
Beside his ebbing shoal
Of lifeblood, stood Saint Paul, blazing a theme
Of living drama from a fiery scroll
Across his stretchèd vision as in dream —
When Death, with blind dark, blotted out the whole.

VII

And yet not all: though darkly alien
Those uncompleted worlds of work to be
Are waned; still, touched by them, the memory
Gives afterglow; and now that comes again
The mellow season when
Our eyes last met, his kindling currents run
Quickening within me gladness and new ken

Of life, that I have shared his prime with one
Who wrought large-minded for the love of men.

VIII

But not alone to share that large estate
Of work and interchange of communings —
The little human paths to heavenly things
Were also ours: the casual, intimate
Vistas, which consecrate —
With laughter and quick tears — the dusty noon
Of days, and by moist beams irradiate
Our plodding minds with courage, and attune
The fellowship that bites its thumb at fate.

IX

Where art thou now, mine host Guffanti? — where
The iridescence of thy motley troop!
Ah, where the merry, animated group
That snuggled elbows for an extra chair,
When space was none to spare,
To pour the votive Chianti, for a toast
To dramas dark and lyrics debonair,
The while, to *Bella Napoli*, mine host
Exhaled his Parmazan, Parnassan air!

X

Thy Parmazan, immortal laird of ease,
Can never mold, thy caviare is blest,

While still our glowing Uriel greets the rest
Around thy royal board of memories,
Where sit, the salt of these,
He of the laughter of a Hundred Lights,
Blithe Eldorado of high poesies,
And he — of enigmatic, gentle knights
The kindly keen — who sings of *Calverly's*.

XI

Because he never wore his sentient heart
For crows and jays to peck, ofttimes to such
He seemed a silent fellow, who o'ermuch
Held from the general gossip-ground apart,
Or tersely spoke, and tart :
How should they guess what eagle tore, within,
His quick of sympathy for humblest smart
Of human wretchedness, or probed his spleen
Of scorn against the hypocritic mart !

XII

Sometimes insufferable seemed to come
That wrath of sympathy : One windy night,
We watched through squalid panes, forlornly white, —
Amid immense machines' incessant hum —
Frail figures, gaunt and dumb,
Of overlabored girls and children, bowed

Above their slavish toil: "O God! — A bomb,
A bomb!" he cried, "and with one fiery cloud
Expunge the horrible Cæsars of this slum!"

XIII

Another night dreams on the Cornish hills:
Trembling within the low moon's pallid fires,
The tall corn-tassels lift their fragrant spires;
From filmy spheres, a liquid starlight fills —
Like dew of daffodils —
The fragile dark, where multitudinous
The rhythmic, intermittent silence thrills,
Like song, the valleys. — "Hark!" he murmurs, "Thus
May bards from crickets learn their canticles!"

XIV

Now Morning, not less lavish of her sweets,
Leads us along the woodpaths — in whose hush
The quivering alchemy of the pure thrush
Cools from above the balsam-dripping heats —
To find, in green retreats,
'Mid men of clay, the great, quick-hearted man
Whose subtle art our human age secretes,
Or him whose brush, tinct with cerulean,
Blooms with soft castle-towers and cloud-capped fleets.

xv

Still to the sorcery of August skies
In frillèd crimson flaunt the hollyhocks,
Where, lithely poised along the garden walks,
His little maid enamoured blithe outvies
The dipping butterflies
In motion — ah, in grace how grown the while,
Since he was wont to render to her eyes
His knightly court, or touch with flitting smile
Her father's heart by his true flatteries!

xvi

But summer's golden pastures boast no trail
So splendid as our fretted snowshoes blaze
Where, sharp across the amethystine ways,
Iron Ascutney looms in azure mail,
And, like a frozen grail,
The frore sun sets, intolerably fair;
Mute, in our homebound snow-tracks, we exhale
The silvery cold, and soon — where bright logs flare —
Talk the long indoor hours, till embers fail.

xvii

Ah, with the smoke what smouldering desires
Waft to the starlight up the swirling flue! —
Thoughts that may never, as the swallows do,

Nest circling homeward to their native fires!
Ardors the soul suspires
The extinct stars drink with the dreamer's breath;
The morning-song of Eden's early choirs
Grows dim with Adam; close at the ear of death
Relentless angels tune our earthly lyres!

XVIII

Let it be so: More sweet it is to be
A listener of love's ephemeral song,
And live with beauty though it be not long,
And die enamoured of eternity,
Though in the apogee
Of time there sit no individual
Godhead of life, than to reject the plea
Of passionate beauty: loveliness is all,
And love is more divine than memory;

XIX

And love of beauty is the abiding part
Of friendship: by its hallowed beams we char
Away all dead and gross familiar
Disguise, and lay revealed truth's living heart—
The spirit's counterpart,
Which was in him a flaming Uriel
Obscured by chaining flesh, but freed by art

And by the handclasp that his friends knew well,
To make from time the imprisoned splendors start.

XX

The splendors start again from common things
At thought of quiet hours of fellowship,
When his shy fancy, like an elfin ship,
On foam of pipe-smoke spread elusive wings,
While subdued carollings
Of viewless fervors followed in her wake,
Till, with swift tack and rhythmic sweep of strings,
She flew before his darkening thought, and strake
On reefs that rolled with solemn thunderings.

XXI

The simple and the mighty themes, that keep
Friendship robust and taut the mental tether,
Of these we talked in casual ways together,
Delighting in the shallow and the deep:
Nature, quick or asleep,
And poetry, the fool's anathema,
Plays, and the magic house where passions weep
Or laugh at their own image, America
Our gallant country, and her captainship.

XXII

But special-privileged investitures
Of beauty liked him not. To him the fact

Was by its passion only made compact
Of beauty ; as, amid the Gloucester moors,
The loveliness, which lures
The artist's eye, for him was nature's prism
To illumine his love of country : art which endures
At once is poetry and patriotism,
In spite of jingoists and epicures.

XXIII

So, since his soul contemned thoughts which suborn
Glory from theft, where he stood, unafraid,
" Before the solemn bronze Saint-Gaudens made,"
It was his consecration to be torn
Between swift grief and scorn
For the island pillage of our Myrmidons,
And there alone, alone of the high born,
He spoke, as the great sculptor spoke in bronze,
From love, whose worth can never be outworn.

XXIV

Long may we heed his voice, though he be mute
As the wan stars to instigate us more!
Long shall we need his voice, in the gross war
Of civic pillagers whose hands pollute
Our country, and confute
The oaths of freedom! Long his passionate art

Let serve the people's temple, to transmute
The impotence of artists, and impart
Strength to the fair, joy to the resolute !

XXV

The joy of that large faith American
In the high will which turns the human tide
He blazed across the sun-crowned Great Divide
To make in art a new meridian,
Stretching the puny span
Of our pent theatre's roof, to arch a flood
Of mightier passion cosmopolitan
And build, in nobler urgings of our blood,
The excellent democracy of man.

XXVI

Nor less he probed the covert cosmical
Yearnings which glorify the spirit's sleep,
Where dumb Michaelis, 'mid his grazing sheep,
Stared on the awful Presence Spiritual,
And heard the mystic call
Of the clear Christ across the desert waste
Lifting from life and death the numbing pall,
Subtly for all the anguished and disgraced
Cleansing the mind with breath medicinal.

XXVII

These were the virile omens of his prime
(Unmellowed still, he deemed them, but enough
To give his ardor tang for lordlier stuff),
But these, when from the clear noon of his clime
He sank — to solemn chime
Of stars — in twilight down, the petty grigs
That pipe around the marshes of the mime,
Parched niggards of negation, rasped with jigs
Of glee — to perish in the frost of time.

XXVIII

To her who, 'mid his starry litany,
Muffled their niggling jargon from his ears
For quiet music of familiar spheres,
Soothing the dark inevitability
With springs of courage, be
Her own strong soul her sentinel: the flame
That leaps in praise dies in my monody.
Beauty with service hallows her own fame:
A living greatness asks no elegy.—

XXIX

Uriel, you of light and vision guard!
Uriel, *you* who with his fiery being
Are blended in my vision's far foreseeing,

That by one name I hail you — friend and bard!
Our battling age is starred
With portents of your presence, till the years,
Urged by your voice, besiege time's evil-scarred
Ruin with sounds of singing pioneers,
Whose onward wills, like wings that slip the shard,

xxx

Sweep to the future! What the mind adores
The will of man shall conquer: what his fate
Denies, his courage still shall consummate!
And as Imagination, rising, soars —
Scattering her viewless spores
Of beauty on the tempest — Uriel,
You gaze with her where the blind gloaming roars,
Or murmur, where she sits, with fervent shell,
Rapt in the solitudes of fiery shores.

THE SIBYL

TO EDWARD GORDON CRAIG
UPON THE PUBLICATION OF HIS VOLUME
"ON THE ART OF THE THEATRE"

Cloudy, vast, the caverned stage
Glow with twilight— Where are they:
Ribald love, and conscious rage,
Joyless banter, captious quibble,
Brass and bauble of Broadway?
What are such to her—the Sibyl,
Where she dreams beside her solemn
Single column
In the quiet?—
Bats in swoon,
Gnats in riot,
Midgets swarming 'gainst the moon:
Such are they
Beneath the grace
And the rapture of her face.

She will waken. Long she's slumbered
Through the noisy years unnumbered,
Since her radiant limbs withdrew—

Swift, adept,
Divinely calm —
From the leering satyrs' view
To the visioned silences
Where she slept,
Pillowed in her bended arm
On the starred Acropolis.

She has wakened! She has smiled
With a tender, large delight
At the spell-charms of her child,
Her own spirit's acolyte.
At his wand-touch she has risen
In the mind of man — her prison
And her temple. *Lo, she moves!*
Sensuous, with form of fable,
Most divinely reasonable,
Not the comets through the ether,
Not the planets in their grooves
Tread a more harmonious measure
Than she paces, in her pleasure,
On the silences beneath her.

For the silences are thrumming
As with heart beats at her coming,
And the Passions pause aghast

At the glorious decision
Of her movements, as they mark
Wild *vivaces* of her vision,
Deep *andantes* of her dark;
And her gestures — as she lifts
Pillared vistas of the past,
Spacious visions of the marches
Of To-morrow, gracious arches
Through whose rifts
Beauty beckons — hold no mirror
To the error
And the grossness of the age,
Mimic not
Whims and gropings of emotion,
Atrophies and tricks of thought,
But her rapture is the rage
Of man's spirit in its fullness
Purged of accident and dullness;
And her music, born of motion,
Recreates the spirit's trance,
Weaving symphonies of sunlight,
Waking chorals from the wan light
Of the Pleiads in their dance.

Through her cloudy, caverned stage
Bursts the morning: And she stands

In the quiet, by her solemn
Shining column,
Gazing forth, serenely glad,
On the roaring dazzled lands,
Where the little children, clad
In the garments of her spirit,
On enchanted feet come streaming,
For she knows they shall inherit
All the ages of her dreaming.

Then the sated ones and blinded,
And the timid, callous minded,
Clutch the children's sleeves, and stare,
Crying: "What behold you there?
There is nothing!" But the lover,
And the young of soul, his friend,
And the artist, follow after
The children in their laughter,
And the daring half discover,
And the happy comprehend.

THE RETURN OF ELLEN TERRY

How shall we welcome back her image bright
Who from our hearts has never been away?
They never lived who never loved to play,
Nor ever loved who loved not in delight.
Therefore to her who, in Dull Care's despite,
Long since has taught the world's sad soul to pray
To saints of joy, we bring an homage gay
Of hearts made lighter by her own pure light.

Juliet of love, Miranda of the mind,
Katherine of quips, and beauty's Rosalind,
Truth's Portia, Beatrice the madcap-merry,
All heroines wrought of the master's heart —
To these we bow, and these bow down to Art,
And Art to Time, and Time — to Ellen Terry.

PEARY AT THE POLE

I

Divinely curious

Child of the stars is man ;
And the wonder that beckons us
Is a child's, since the world began :
For the fire that keeps us purged and free
From the sloth of the beast and his sluggardy
Is kindled of curiosity.

II

Beckoned the polar star —

And the world child wandered forth :
The aurora blazed afar
Onward in to the north ;
And the awful lure, enticing us
Long ere the tales of Tacitus,
Wrought with a splendor ruinous.

III

The Arctic ages dashed

Spindrift on wreck and spar,
Till a Yankee viking lashed
His prow to the ominous star ;

And, blent with breed of the States, he manned
His ship with the sinew and the sand
And the sea-glad soul of Newfoundland.

IV

Freighted were cabin and hold
With pemmican, sea-gear and pelt :
Skyward the loud cheers rolled,
Seaward — the *Roosevelt*,
And northward beyond Manhattan Bay
They sank to the silences far away
In the sunlit night and the star-strewn day.

V

O silence is a thing
More beautiful than song
When the paths of the silent ring
With the valor of the strong :
O silent the cliffs of blood-bright snow,
The boreal flush, the emerald floe,
Where they sailed — the earls of the Esquimaux !

VI

Forth from the glacial coasts -
They strode with their dogs and furs,
And their shadows were the ghosts
Of old adventurers ;

For the barrowed dead rose numb from the night
And followed their path by the igloo's light
Through storm and the smothering infinite.

VII

Silent, and one by one,
Southward the forms turned back,
But one, who walked alone,
Held still his starry track,
Till the vast sun circled the ocean's sill,
And the luring star in the void stood still,
And the mind of man had wrought his will.

VIII

From the Arctic's blindfold eye,
From the iris of the world,
He tore the mystery
Where a planet's dream lay furled;
And the planet's vision and his were one,
For the doer had dreamed and the dreamer had done
What the wondering world-child had begun.

IX

How may the singer reveal
Truth from the toiler wrung?
Or how shall the sinew of steel
And the heart of gold be sung?

Who saith unto Cæsar : *He conquered: He saw?*
Weak, weak is word-tribute ; yet mighty is awe
That renders its homage, where truth is law.

x

To Peary of the Pole

To the vigilant and wary
Undeviating soul,

Viking and visionary —

Hail, in honor's meridian :

Hail, and honor American

To the triumph of manhood and a man !

TO THE FIRE-BRINGER

(WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY)

Bringer of fire
Down from the star
Quivering far
In quiet eternal:
Bringer of fire! —
Ashes we are
If to thy pyre
Out of our hearts
Ashes we bring.

Vernal, vernal,
Divine and burning —
A wreath of worlds
And wings — was thy vision:
Fadeless now,
That fiery wreath
Wrought of thy yearning
We lay in death
Bright on thy brow.

Singer and lover,
Brother and friend,
Ashes can end
Only the dross of thee:
Quick, Promethéan,
Out of the dirge
And the dark loss of thee,
Leaps thy star-wrestling
Spirit in pæan!

Fire, fire,
Fire was thy bringing,
An urn elemental
Of burning song
So on thy pyre
We leave it flaming—
Where Death cannot follow—
Toward thee, who camest singing:
“Apollo, Apollo!”

THE TREES OF HARVARD

I

Religion is the shadow of a tree
Cast by a star upon the soul of man
Tingeing its substance with solemnity,
For under mystic boughs the soul began
Its progress from the primal Caliban
Toward reason, and the beauty yet to be.
Therefore perchance it is
That in trees we treasure
Our own tranquillities,
Making them the measure
Of our own growth — our griefs and ecstasies.

II

Dear stricken elms of Harvard, while even thus
Now with your wounds we bleed, still, still it seems
Your vanished verdure — multitudinous
With twinkling dryads of our boyish dreams,
With orioles of song, and golden gleams
Of youth — abides, a quickening part of us:

Abides, as though it would
By some spell enchanted
Disperse this tragic mood,
By your fate implanted,
To share with you a secret brotherhood.

III

Your branches die, but not the dreams they bred :
They, like immortal choirs of dawn, displace
Your silent ruin with the singing dead.
Still in your shadowed walks, with shadowy pace,
The Concord poet lifts his star-pale face,
The Elmwood statesman holds his lyric tread.
Still through your silences
Float the far Hosannas
Of that undaunted press,
Brave with tattered banners,
Filing from Lexington to the Wilderness.

IV

Yes, dreams abide ; yet fungus will infect
The living tissue and the limb will fall :
Alike in soaring elm and intellect
The cankering worm will bore, and spin the pall
Of aspiration ; yet if this were all
Our world of dreams had long ago been wrecked.

It is not all : for growth,
Plying deep substitution,
Outwears decay and sloth,
While, with sure revolution,
Youth conquers age, and life o'erlords them both.

v

Then life, give way for life! Old elms forlorn,
The scion oaks supplant you, and you die ;
Shorn are your locks of golden days — all shorn
(Save in our dreams) of glory — so, good-bye!
But hail, strong-limbed in young integrity,
Hail, glory of our Harvard boys unborn!
Death is a churlish thing ;
Life, life alone is royal!
Red oak, red oak, we bring
Hearts alive, hearts loyal :
The king is dead : Long live our crimson king!

INVOCATION

ROBERT BROWNING: 7 MAY 1912

I

Poet of the vast potential,
Curious-minded, quintessential
Prober of passion, ample-hearted
Lover of lovers, virile-arted
Robert Browning, plotter of plays,
Leaven us in these latter days!

*Now in rebirth,
Renewing time's festa,
Spring — the wild quester —
Quickens the earth.*

II

Not mere being, but becoming
Makes us vital. Stript from numbing
Vestiture of self-complacence
Naked for our soul's renaissance,
Robert Browning, riddler of hearts,
Pierce us with your singing darts!

*Sharp through the sod,
Flower-tipped for His aiming,
Shoot now the flaming
Spear-heads of God.*

III

Not our prayer-stool, but our passion
Makes us holy. Thus to fashion
Psalm and *Credo* to a human
Ritual of Man and Woman,
Robert Browning, purger of souls,
Heap on us your passion-coals!

*So let aspire —
As now this young season—
Spirit and reason
In flower and fire!*

THE BARD OF BOUILLABAISSÉ

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY 18 JULY 1911

I

Old guests are gone ; old friends have faltered —
 Passed to forgetfulness or fame ;
Time's little inn remains unaltered,
 The bill of fare is still the same ;
And still within his cherished corner
 He keeps his " old, accustomed place " —
Our brother, cynic, lover, scorner,
 Beloved bard of *Bouillabaisse*.

II

The grizzled face has grown no older ;
 A hundred years, they bring no scars,
Pensive, he turns his shadowy shoulder
 To snuff the candles — of the stars,
Where generations, eager hearted,
 Throng newly round his storied chair,
And Monsieur Terré, long departed,
 Leaves in his stead — Madame la Terre.

III

Madame la Terré plays now the hostess
 And decks his place for holiday,
 Where his imperishable ghost is
 The guest to whom she bears her tray.
 That he may friendly smile upon her,
 She curtsies to the shadowed face :
 What may she serve to do him honor ?
 Behold — a bowl of *Bouillabaisse* !

IV

“ A hotchpotch of all sorts of fishes,”
 (Such is his ballad recipe :)
 “ This *Bouillabaisse* a noble dish is : ”
 Hotchpotch of *all* sorts — such as we !
 Souls with the garlic and the pepper,
 A sort of savory broth or paste
 Of lover, liar, hero, leper :
 He taught us — for *ourselves* the taste !

v

For lo, now, to his festa who comes ! —
 Where Beatrix shines down the stair
 Through crowded Crawleys, Esmonds, Newcomes,
 While Becky, purring in her lair,

Sits tangling the besotted Sedley
To bumptious Gumbo's black grimace —
A mordant, brilliant, bubbling medley
To mix his bowl of *Bouillabaisse!*

VI

His recipe remains the human :
Hotchpotch of passions, pruderies,
Lusts, raptures, loves of man and woman,
Old vanity of vanities
Redeemed in visions of the poet
Who learns from anguish all his arts :
His bowl, Madame la Terre, bestow it !
The bowl is brimming — with our hearts.

THE AUTOMOBILE

A FIRST RIDE — 1904

Fluid the world flowed under us : the hills
 Billow on billow of umbrageous green
 Heaved us, aghast, to fresh horizons, seen
One rapturous instant, blind with flash of rills
And silver-rising storms and dewy stills
 Of dripping boulders, till the dim ravine
 Drowned us again in leafage, whose serene
Coverts grew loud with our tumultuous wills.

Then all of Nature's old amazement seemed
 Sudden to ask us: "Is this also Man?
 This plunging, volant land-amphibian
What Plato mused and Paracelsus dreamed?
 Reply!" And piercing us with ancient scan,
The shrill, primeval hawk gazed down — and screamed.

THE CANDLE IN THE CHOIR

I

In Rockingham upon the hill
The meeting-house shines lone and still:
A bare, star-cleaving gable-peak,
Broad roofbeamed, snow-ribbed, stark and bleak,
As long ago their needs sufficed
Who came from cottage fires to Christ,
Sharing with frosty breath
Their foot-stoves and their faith.

II

In Rockingham above the hill
The stars are few, the winds are shrill;
And pale as little clouds, the prayers
Pulse upward round the pulpit stairs,
Where silent deacons upright sit
Among the gusty shadows, that flit
From hands upholding higher
Faint candles in the choir.

III

Seven candles make a shining dim
To mark the psalm and find the hymn;

Seven candles from the choir-rail throw
Their blessing on the pews below ;
Seven candles make a glimmering heaven
Of righteousness, but one of seven
Shines in the hand of her :
Elvira Pulsifer.

IV

High on its place of holy fire
The towered pulpit fronts the choir,
From whence the pastor's hand may strow
The penfolds of his flock below,
Or sign, from under level brows,
Toward them — the seven of his house
Who sing with one accord
The service of the Lord.

V

Gaunt looms the shepherd in his gown :
“ O Lord, Lord God, who lookest down
Serene from Sinai's dazzling height
On deeps of everlasting night —
Deeps where Thy scorching ire hath streamed
Like lava on the unredeemed —
Be merciful to her,
Elvira Pulsifer !

VI

“Thou art our Father, Lord, Lord God!
And they who kiss Thy shining rod
And break Thy bread and keep Thy tryst—
They walk this bitter world with Christ;
All else with dire Apollyon dwell.—
O save her tender soul from Hell,
 And with Thy Pity stir
 Elvira Pulsifer!

VII

“Brethren, the thirty-second psalm!
And let your solemn voices calm
The secret fiend from his intent,
And make a virgin heart repent!”—
Thin from the dark the pitch-pipe sounds
Its note, faint stir the crisping gowns,
 While the dim shepherd there
 Creaks down the frosty stair.

VIII

A shrilling sweet of childish throats,
With sombre bass of elders, floats
Around him through the raftered room,
And elvish from the outer gloom

Seven candles on the little panes
Sway to the choir's subdued refrains,
As down the aisleway floor
He seeks the entry door.

IX

More faintly now, as if more far,
He hears them through the door ajar,
While from the entry, climbing soft,
He flurries to the choir loft:
Here to a darkling privacy
He beckons — so her glance may see —
God's errant worshipper:
Elvira Pulsifer.

X

Candle and hymnal in her hands,
She comes to where the shepherd stands —
Her shepherd who hath labored sore,
With venerable neighbors more,
To lead her spirit to the fold
Where all her kinsfolk came of old:
All them she loved full well,
But not — their fear of hell.

XI

Anxious they whisper in the aisle
(The shrilling voices swoon the while

And boom like cymbals in her ears) :
“ Our Lord and Father, child, He hears
The cry of sin’s repentant heart ;
O obdurate, walk not apart
 With one who darkens all,
 But come to Christ His call.”

XII

“ Our Lord He is our Father, yes,
And He hath come in tenderness
To me, in hours both bright and dim.
There is no one at all but Him ;
And so I cannot walk apart
Nor cry with a repentant heart,
 Nor heed another’s call,
 For God is good to all.

XIII

“ His wrath it is eternal, child.
Who fear it not they are defiled.
They may not sit in choir or pew,
Defiant, with His chosen few.
The hymn is ended, now return :
But nevermore His light to spurn !”
 Dark, dark, she turns about :
 Her candle — he hath blown out.

XIV

O elvish from the outer gloom
Six little flames they leer and loom,
And elvish on the frosty panes
Six candles mock the choir's refrains.
But one all dark, by inward grace
Shines on unseen, and lights the face
Of Christ His worshipper :
Elvira Pulsifer.

IN THE BOHEMIAN REDWOODS

Silent above, with seraph eyes
That peer amid the fronded spars,
More intimate, more friendly wise,
More tender glow the eternal stars.

Lyric beneath, with echoing blast
Of fellowship Arcadian,
More cosmic-strange, more pagan-vast,
More stellar glow the hearts of Man.

Oracular, aboriginal
Beyond our dreams, the psychic trees
Conspire their awful ritual
Of sempiternal silences ;

Till solemn now, with lunar state,
The Druid drama slowly dawns,
Where cowlèd satyrs consecrate
A monastery — of the fauns.

Lit by dance and starry scroll,
Aloof, familiar, lone, divine
With Delphic laughter of the soul,
The temples of To-morrow shine !

BROWNING TO BEN EZRA

A CENTENARY SOLILOQUY

I

A hundred years! — Hardly I understand:
Unriddle it, Rabbi. Through the Abbey stones
Hearken — the hushed and reverent monotones,
The shuffled feet, that pause! ‘Here lie his bones,
Who passed away
From earth, perhaps to heaven,
Aged seventy-seven;
Born on this self-same day,
The seventh May,
A century gone.’ — Look, Rabbi: In my hand
I hold this little watch they call their world,
Open it with my thumb, where lo! each cog,
Each golden wheel, on star-gemmed axis whirled,
Pulses with delicate action. — Pray you, jog
My laggard mind once more! — They state, you say,
This was my time-piece: on this crystal face
I’d pore, and through dim introspections trace
The portent of the tickings underneath,
The mainspring of the action. May be so,
For you should know, Ben Ezra. All I know

Is, that the ticks grew fainter, as it slipped
 Under my pillow. Then I fell asleep,
 And have been busy dreaming. That was *death*,
 They say, — death. Sudden the quick hair-spring skipped
 A turn, trembled, and stopped short. — Much too deep
 For me! — Somehow I don't conceive the soul
 Like to a watch unwound. Yet now, they say,
 I am a poet who has passed away,
 With many common millions, to a goal
 Unkenned. — Here 's Limbo, then : and I, a shade,
 Soliloquize now, in this cloistral corner,
 Among pale forms of other ghosts forlorn,
 With you, Ben Ezra, whom alive I made
 The Rabbi of my rhyme. — A quaint conceit!
 Suppose we grant it. So, then! Let us sit
 On dust of kings and make a rhyme of it
 Together — one dead poet and one rabbi
 Conceived and born of him. While you keep tab, I
 Will muse the elegy, and score our text :
R. Browning to Ben Ezra, adding next :
Suggested by the former's centenary,
 And after that — lest precious ears be vexed —
Apologies for defunct vocabulary.

II

The question I would stress, then, — pray allow —
 Is this : To pass away, is it to cease ?

But if so, *how* to cease? I said just now
That, since my pillow muffled this time-piece,
I have been busy dreaming. Ha, those dreams!
In what frail shallops, what austere triremes,
Unchartered cruisers, barks adventuresome,
I have put forth on unimagined seas
And sailed — with what courageous companies!
Nay, on no phantom ships! no guest needs fear
A skinny-handed, ancient mariner
In me. I entertain with dice of doom
No spectral crews. My fellow-voyagers were —
And are, and shall be still — rich-blooded men,
Rare-hearted women, lovers of this life
And wrestlers with it, reckless of the strain.
My visionary barks, those be my books,
And I, whose bones consort here with the spooks,
Am admiral there of dreamy argosies,
That ply 'twixt earth and heaven their perilous mer-
chandise.

Perilous, yes; for dreams are perilous craft,
When they be manned by fierce doubts, fore and aft,
Whose mutinous foreheads scan the heaven for signs,
And menace their commander: 'You, who planned
Our questing voyage, show us the land — your land
Of God, His promise! All the lone sea-lines

Are dim with setting stars, and stark with death ;
Yet you, who hold the rudder, answer *Faith!*
And, once more, only *Faith!* ' Thus curse my crews !
I share their hearts but overmaster them,
And hold the rudder straight ;
Till now — a star above each plumèd stem —
Lo, where my galleons, guided by their Muse,
The surging planet circumnavigate, —
Doubt kindling nobler doubt, faith quelling fate,
Forms flung to revolution, creeds to rack,
Old cities of dead empires put to sack,
Love founding lordlier kingdoms in the future's track !

So, Rabbi, to our question, if you please :
Is sailing thus — to cease ?
The ghosts demur ;
For, in the nudging vault, I hear one say :
' Browning, the poet, who has passed away,
This is his sepulchre.'

III

Once a dawn-shaft from God's quiver
Struck my soul, and from its embers
Flashed a star of song forever.
Then the dawn passed. — Who remembers ?

Not remember Pippa? — Pippa who, at sun-up,
Rose in her bare attic, while the east boiled gold!
With her rising, see, the morning roses run up
Clambering live and warm, concealing the night-mold. —

Pippa, she who sang till little Asolo
Widened out its walls — like arms, that reach in pity
To nestle lonely things, that yearn for love — till, lo,
Vines of Asolo enwall the heavenly city!

Pippa she was Luigi, Ottima was Pippa,
Mighty Monsignor, chafer, bee and weevil:
Life redeemed from listlessness, innocence from evil,
Like the cinder-girl that wore the crystal slipper.

Well, well, Rabbi, so
Now, as long ago,
Even thoughts of Pippa
Lilt another music, breathe an afterglow.
What, then! Will they say
She, that passed in song, she too has passed away?

Trust me: as I used to sit and ponder,
Songs, songs, songs she sang me, winged of wonder,
Flitting sunward, till they quite forsook —
Like happy birds from open pages —
My black-barred pages.

But shyly three and four, with slantwise wing,
Dartled from heaven back, and hovering
Around my head,
Sung my dear earth instead,
Then nested down, beaks spilling, in my book,
Splashing its margin with God's meadow-dew. —
How cage and heart clapped to!
When lo, all lamely, came a scant-winged few
That fluttered, just outside the closing covers,
Too late to slip between, and lingered nigh,
Teasing with matin-tunes the twilit memory.
Listen! — There pipes one, now! Hark, while it hovers!

On passion's flower
I poised for an hour,
A little hour long,
Ere I passed in song.

Stay! cried my lover
Forsaken: *Faded*
Are love's endeavor
And all that made it!
Dead — dead!

But far overhead
Where faint stars hung,
And low o'er the grass

By the eddying river,
Where poisoning moon-moths flickered and
 swung,
I called to my lover
Over and over :

*I poise, I poise, I poise forever,
Because I pass.*

IV

To poise — to pass away !
Rabbi, beyond the high groins, rose and gray,
Dimmed by the Minster's adumbrated day,
How, browed in silence, broods my Centenary,
In silence, bred of dust
And the dank charnel's must,
That wraps these bones ! — Yes, *he* is passed away
Forever more ; nor London's warping mist,
Nor Italy's keen amethyst
Shall cast his shadow among men ; and soon
No lingering friend to care, nor old contemporary. —

He, I mean, whom once they pointed at
In Rome and Florence : poet-putterer
Among old pictures,
Uncouth utterer
Of obscure strictures,

Styleless stutrer

(Quoth his critics,

Itching with their own enclitics), —

Paracelsus! — how he sat

In chilblain halls, Del Sarto-dippy,

Robbia-mad, or Lippo Lippi-,

Like some mage of alchemy,

Grinding, in his cracked brain-crucible,

Tortuous rhymes from radiant Titians,

Delving for the thence-deducible

Dialogue-soliloquy :

Not to mention those musicians !

Through the dilettantes' drawl

At the countess' musicale,

What surmise you, English ogler,

Of visions dreamed by old Abt Vogler,

When you stare (nor note his frowning,

Conscious of your own silk gowning)

And pour at tea for Mr. Browning?

Dust to dust: the large, the little,

Ashes both! Who cares a tittle,

At the teas of Goethe, Horace,

Who wore satin, or who wore lace?

Ashes all! even such as — Wait!

What of *him* — even him, the speaker,

Whose spirit, invoked, comes muffled through this weaker

Organ of an alien poet,
Pale, yet not all impassionate,
Sounding subconscious chords that flood and overflow
it, —

Of him, *my* spirit, Rabbi, — what of him,
My poisoning soul? Ah, since I died
How has this soul of mine been multiplied
By minds made pregnant with that seraph's fire,
Whose touch conceptual made aspire
Mine own from all the ages!
Wherefore I deem —
No individual ghost,
Moored on some drifting coast,
Yearning from out the dark for daylight lost,
For youth's wild torch
Wind-blown with joyous rages,
Hope's lifted latch and laughter in the porch, —
Not even now
For dear exchange of love's undying vow
With her that was the Aurora of my life,
My freed soul longs. For I, that lived, grew old
And died, am born again in beings manifold,
By grace of that which, once expressed,
Bequeathes to them the beautiful, the best,
That bloomed of me;
Whereby immortally

Their passions now partake
Of mine, of mine their raptures, their far wonder-quest.

So, in the spirits I pass through,
Still I create my own anew,
Broadened in scope ; still I awake
Refreshed, in world-awakened eyes
Of all whom mine with thought imbue ;
Still in my critics criticize ;
Till, stretching the thrall'd spirit's cramp,
My art becomes an Arabian lamp
That, touched, — behold the genie rise !
Who bows his blazing form, and cries :
'Of all my Master's wealth — the true,
The beautiful, the strong, the wise, —
Mortal, what may his servant bring?'

Hist, Rabbi ! — What bird's that ? — I smell the spring.
Soft ! — Could it be my silk-girl carolling ?

Never alone,
Lover of joy,
Delicate scorner
Of death and his dances,
Whether you be
Girl or boy,

Rapturous mourner
Of life and her fancies,
Never may you, never alone,
Utter your ecstasy,
Make your moan.

Garland your hair :
Wind, come unwind it !
Hide away care :
Kind heart, come find it !

Winter, you gnome,
Shrunken and shrilly,
Shut Love in her tomb :
Tut ! — willy, nilly,
Love through the loam
Unlocks with a lily !

Starlight or stone,
Nothing 's its own !

v

Fluent through all flows all, as the Greek saith :
The drowned stone ripples the starlight, even as death
The living waters
With widening discs of light. No sparrow falls
But gray-stoled choirs revive his matinals

With incense fresh of dawn. — You, Rabbi, friend,
Soul-fellow, busy with me to the end,
Crunching with poet-pestles and rhyme-mortars
Conundrums for the mind to apprehend,
Bear witness with me to this paradox:
What 's permanent must pass. All spirit-shocks,
Numbness and pain arise
Conceiving otherwise.
For Beauty is the flowing of the soul
Without impediment, the effect being joy;
So with a ripple may reveal her whole
Eternal ocean. But the child says: 'See!
My earth is stable; sun and stars spin wild.'
Not so the man: 'Our earth spins dizzily
Round the fixed sun.' The poet (man and child)
Peers in the sun, imagining he sees—
Beyond his face — the shadowy vortices,
Vast suction and compulsions of the soul.
'Beyond the sun,' he sings, 'beyond — our goal
Is God!' Last pries the seer: 'Him whom so far
Ye seek, yourselves consider what you are
And find Him: stars aspiring *to be*,
Life from itself evolving soul — such He!
Time's runner, not Time's stake; Spring's sap, not sod;
Man's orbit, not his planet — such is God.

Vouch then, Ben Ezra, through the texts we glozed
Of earth's philosophies, I still opposed
The fixed, immutable. *To slake His thirst,*
You said, there lives our soul's utility —
His thirst unquenchable, for whom also she,
My silk-girl, sang: *There is no last nor first!*
Therefore through all
The chambers of His spirit, as I passed
In changing roles — to lift the dim tent-flap
(As David) and behold where hung huge Saul,
Supine,
Gigantic, serpentine,
From the cross-beam; or, through the black storm-gap,
Panting beneath a woman's hair
(As Sebald), to watch — now here, now there —
Blind lightnings stab the dark; thence to unfold
Before the quiet eyes of Cleon
His epos on its burning plates of gold;
Else watch, in Spring of another eon,
(Curled like the finger of an infant faun)
The prying crocus crimson through the lawn,
Idling, without other care,
In England, when my April's there; —
Still it was mine, and *is*, in dreams
To search beyond the world that seems,

And flash before my fellow men,
Kindling His image to their ken,
Glimpses of that God-Man, who wills yet to *become*,
Ever for Whom,
In future as in past,
There is nor first nor last.

VI

But hark! Above our vault,
Rabbi, the footsteps halt;
The organ rolls the chant processionary.
Relinquish here this dust;
Accomplish there Time's trust;
Ascend with me beyond this centenary.

Go forth, for we are young!
Time's song is yet unsung;
Let our glad voices mingle with God's mass.
You, Rabbi, on my right,
Before us both — His light:
Through men's dear world, with Pippa, still I pass!

NINETY-SEVEN

A DECENNIAL GREETING

I

After the years, this hour : and after this — the years !
Fellows of Ninety-Seven,
Here 's to the hour that 's given
Out of the gladness of Time's gold arrears
For us, once more linking our several spheres,
To revel and remember. So let be
Our toast *Reunion* in our lifted glasses !
Yet of the wine each fellow passes
A glory shall escape his lip
To wake its magic counterpart
In the ten-years' vintage of his heart ;
For Thought is the master of revelry
Whose common ale of fellowship
Turns to Moselle in memory.

And now one thought which makes us what we are
Masters our hearts anew, where we are met
On the outer moats of youth,
And with strange ruth

Compels our vision, with a half-regret,
Toward those dear days and far
Of earliest manhood, ere, with souls elate,
We passed the ivied gate
To serve our elder liege, the State,
And paused, with tremulous faces turned, together,
Back to the Yard, as to our native heather :
Then plunged in the blind roar and tide of fate.

II

Put by the years — put by !
Let as it will the lamp
Of old Time lour :
After the years, this hour !
And after this, the years !
For hark ! — above our gay night-camp,
Out of our common sky,
Blown from far bleachers by the winds of memory,
Hark now — the wild, boy cheers
That set us, lang syne, tingling by the ears :

*Ninety-Seven, Ninety-Seven, from near and far,
Ninety-Seven, Ninety-Seven, to hail our star —*

Harvard, Harvard !

Ninety-Seven, Ninety-Seven, here we are !

And once more the incense rises by the rush-lined banks
of Charles

On the frosty breath of thirty-thousand soul,
And the side-line watchers scramble as the skein of torses
snarls

And a shoulder glides from under — past the goal!
And a cataract of crimson pours its wave upon the turf
And heaves the sweating victors on its throng,
Where the bleachers rise like headlands from the roar of
living surf,

And the breakers of wild boys burst forth in song :

For it's *Glory, Glory to the Crimson!*

And hoarse echoes from Harvard's halls;
And the ivy overhead is glowing deeper red
In the twilight of her walls.

But four years are not Destiny,
And the ultimate June days pass
To hail the flower-ensanguined Tree
Where the hosts of Harvard mass,
And — banked like iris, sheath on sheath,
A-quiver with all their curls,
One mighty, rustling, maiden wreath —
Our coronal of girls!

Then it 's on with the fight of flowers,
And the battle of bouquets !
Till the mangled crush of the roses blush
In the smile of a maiden's praise.

Soft, then, that glance of smile and tress
Through murmurous evening glows :
The lace, the laugh, the loveliness,
The paper-lamps of rose,
Are portions of a pageantry
Made of the music's bars ;
And now they are a memory,
A Class-day in the stars !

III

Watched from some clear and starry eminence,
How calm in plastic beauty dreams the world !
Mile after mile through moon-lit silences,
In fronded slumber furled,
Murmur the herded forests ; and there is
No other sound or passion, but a sense
As if some stellar truce perpetual
Had healed all life with dews of harmony
And quietness ; for all
The nestling foothills and the valleys lie —
Lapt in the summer moon's unconscious keep —
Like children, or like lovers, fast asleep.

Fond reverie and illusion ! for beneath
That gloom-suspended canopy, the moan
Of the struck stag is stifled ; blind, alone,
The wood-cat tears his flank ; innumerable
Throughout the dark, seekers of life and death
Pursue their aimless ends of suffering
And brief satiety ; claw, tusk and wing
Torture, waylay, destroy each other : even
The beak, whose morning-song ineffable
Shall ravish heaven,
Strikes at the adder with his own despite,
And all the pensive wonder of the night
Is stung with venom of a monstrous hive
Of hearts insatiable — to survive.

So 'neath the gaze of early manhood's eye
Repose the civilizations : derrick and spire,
Lighthouse and looming shaft and armoury —
Islanded grandly in the evening air —
Far-coiling trains spetting the gloom with fire,
And moving barges in the mist, and fair
Suspended bridges, lifting unaware
Beyond the fog-banks — build for one who dreams
Beautiful self-delusion : Fabulous
Must be the master-race of such a world !
Titan and angel in their stature, thus
To guide the lightnings that the gods have hurled.

— God! That this only seems
And *is* not! No, for us
Who fume and strive beneath the glamour, — we,
The cannibals of competition, see
What things we are: what beasts that hunt and flee
And kill, yet love the life we kill, and breed
The very progeny whose hearts we bleed.

What for? What need?
Are we, then, so in awe
Of our own pain, that we may not create
Out of our need the thing we thirst for — Joy?
Joy is not nature's law
But man's; and in the mind of man resides
For Joy's subservience —
The angel and the titan, Commonsense;
So if there still abides
In us the primal spark American
That kindled us in Liberty, a nation,
Let it leap up and burn a clearer flame,
As ever and the same
It still has leaped, since first that fire began,
At the cry: Emancipation!

IV

Fair is the field where Reason and High Will
Captain us, and their quickening battle-cry

Is *Justice, and the New Democracy!*

Justice, whose heart-red shield

Blazons this ultimatum on her field :

More Happiness

For all that live, and shall live, and not less.

The noble fustian of a former age,

Surviving still,

Has served its nobler ends ; turn now the page !

All men are *not* born equal : *let* them be,

And let them be born better :

Equal in hope and opportunity,

Better in altruism and in will

To execute their clearer wisdom. Let

The loins of the begetter

Be passionate for his posterity

To breed a race more excellent, until

Our human species shall be perfected

Beyond the sway of passion, and forget

That ever time was when it might be said

(As men have said by San Francisco Bay) :

Nature is not more cruel than mankind.

But this is still To-day,

Our day — not of rebellion or defined

Outburst, as when our law-schooled fathers broke

The transatlantic yoke,
Or Lincoln the slave's goad
Lifted, and struck the intolerable load
From Freedom's gallèd shoulders. Not to us
That outward menace : subtler slavery —
The inward canker of corruption, cant
Of predatorial wealth, insidious
Muffling of the bugle-voicèd press,
Hazard us none the less.
No more the trumpet's call and stallion's neigh
Incite us to the action : but instead
The ticker's steel tattoo, the teller's drone,
The trip-hammer's iron intermittent clang, the shrill
Steam-whistle, the huge-heaved and sullen moan
Of vast machines in vassalage — resound
Our call to carnage, where no blood is shed,
But where, from skyward cliffs and underground,
The living dead —
Whirled on the spokes of the enormous wheel
Of Commerce — chant their strident monotone.

v

Classmen of Ninety-Seven — Classmates still
In common conscience for the public weal !
Come forth, and let the quenching of world-sorrow
Kindle our joy ! — Come forth, and make To-morrow

A new Commencement at the gates of Time
Whence all our deeds shall climb!
America, the matrix of the nations, lies
Fallow before us, and her destinies,
In nascent grandeur furled,
Are ours to shape in beauty for our kind.
Our manhood shines before, but when that shuts behind,
Still beckons — the young manhood of the world.

FINIS



THE SISTINE EVE AND OTHER
POEMS

To

W. V. M. E. A. R.

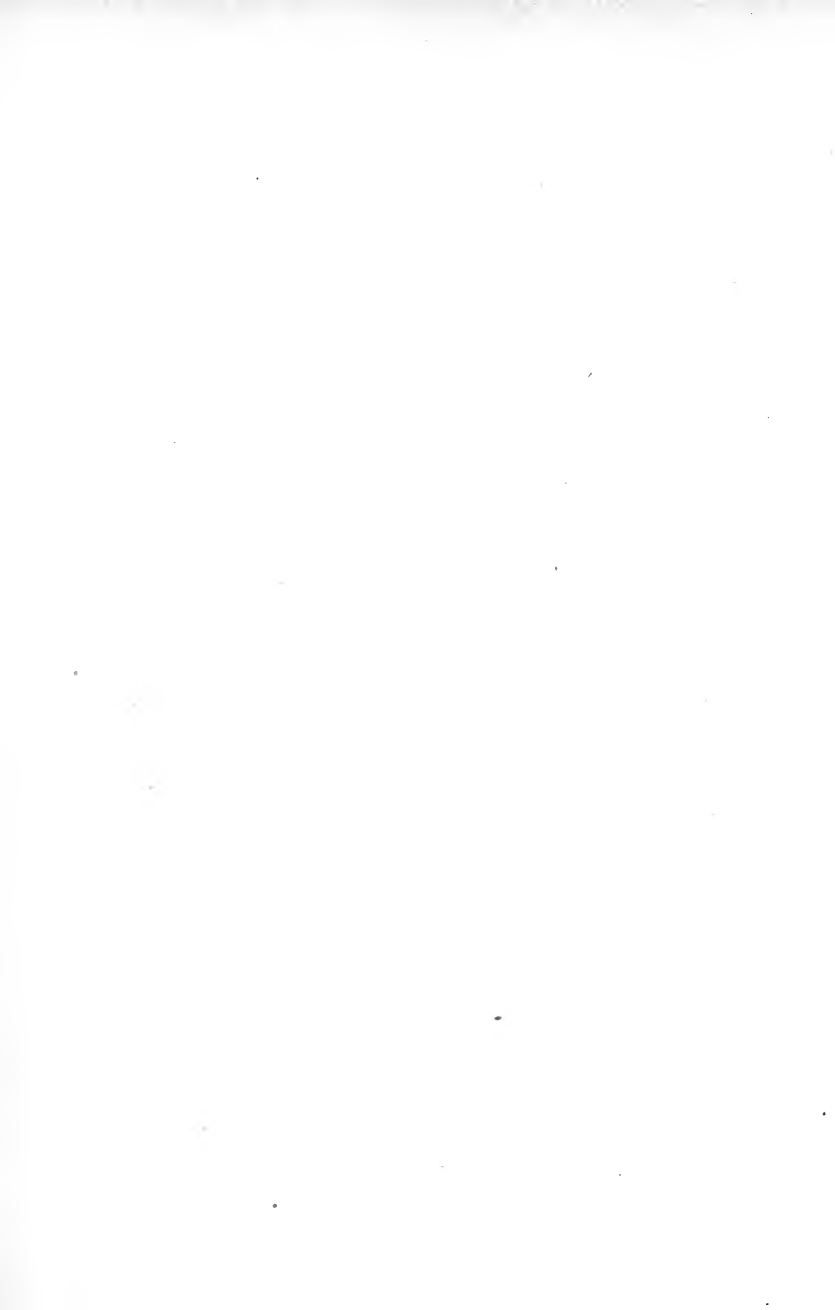
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R. T.

IN FELLOWSHIP



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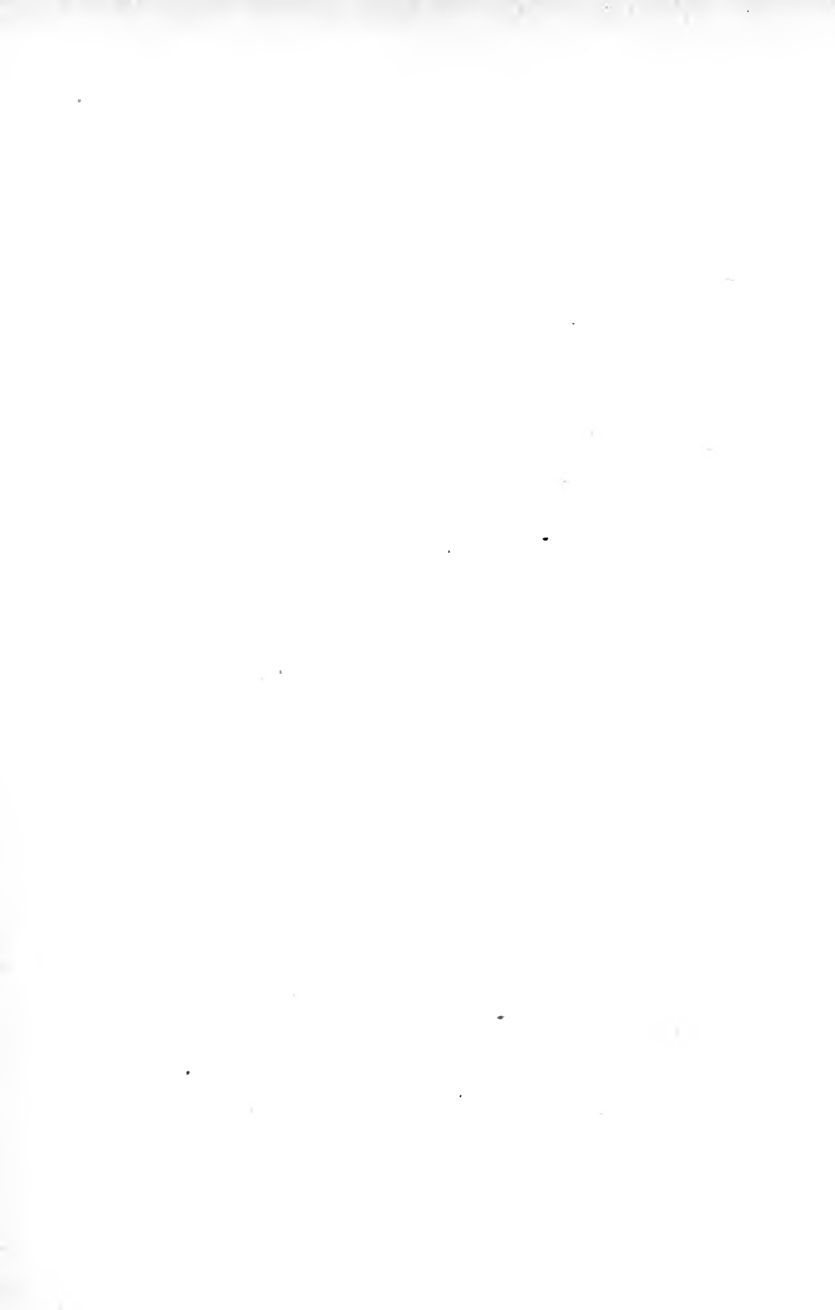
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PART ONE

POEMS CHIEFLY OCCASIONAL

TICONDEROGA ¹

A BALLAD

I

*What spirits conjure thee from time,
Ticonderoga?
On thy headland rock
Of history,
Who are these that knock
And summon thee
To move thine ancient lips in rhyme,
Ticonderoga?*

Where the wind-blown swallows
Veer and vary,
Where the shore and shallows
Lie visionary,
Titans three
Stand at my knee:
Each one is a century.
In their shadow, silently,
Sits the sibyl Memory.
And her silence questions me:

¹ Read at the celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the discovery of Lake Champlain, at Fort Ticonderoga, July 6, 1909.

II

*Who glide so dim upon the lake
Ticonderoga?
Over their dreaming prow
The morning star
Blazes their goal; but now —
More dusk and far —
What old world dwindles in their wake,
Ticonderoga?*

The fleur-de-lis, the fleur-de-lis !
The White Chevalier — lo, 'tis he !
His pale canoe along the tide
The painted Huron paddles guide
With dumb, subdued elation ;
The wild dawn stains their bodies bare,
The wild dawn gleams about his hair ;
Steeped in his soul's adventure, lie
The valleys of discovery —
The peaks of expectation.
Midway the lake they pause: on high
His arm he raises solemnly.
Above the lilies, that emboss
His azure banner, and the pied
Algonquin plumes that float beside,
He holds the shining cross.

“Champlain!” — The placid word
The mute air hath not stirred.
Touched by the morning’s wing,
The ruddied waters, quickening,
Alone are kindled by that christening
Quaint splendors mass
Within the lake’s clear glass,
And liquid lilies golden run
In rose gules of the rising sun.
Naught else there of acclaim
Greets the great Chevalier’s name,
Save where the water-fowl’s primeval broods
Awake Bulwagga’s lone and echoing solitudes.

III

*What strident horror breaks thy spell,
Ticonderoga?
What long and ululating yell?*

The Iroquois: in covert glade
They build their pine-bough palisade,
And weave in trance
Their sachem dance
With hawk-screams of their heathen wars,
Till naked on my shrilling shores
Mohawk and wild Algonquin meet
And taunt, with fleer and blown conceit,

Each other's painted ranks:
 But, lo where now their flanks
 Give way and reel!
 And 'mid the silent sagamores,
 In shining cuish and casque of steel,
 Before them all
 Stands bright and tall,
 With gauntlet clenched and helmet vised,
 The calm knight-errant of the Christ;
 Then, in sign miraculous,
 Levels his arquebus
 And, charged with bullets from his bandoleer,
 Looses the bolt of preternatural thunder.
 A sachem falls: the wild men stare in wonder
 And mazèd fear;
 Once more his engine peals, and hurls the fire
 Whose flash shall kindle continents to ire.

IV

*Like sanguine clouds at sunset spread
 The ages slumber round thy head,
 Ticonderoga!*
*Tremendous forms
 Loom in their dreams:
 Through levin-light of starless storms,
 By giant fords of chartless streams,
 Saxon and Gaul*

*Wrestle and rise and fall,
Conquering the region aboriginal.
Hark! From the long tides of Lake George,
What rolling drum-beat rumbles through thy
gorge,
Ticonderoga?*

O why should woman weep for war?
Or man — why should it vex him more?
Or why beside so sweet a shore
Dreadful should the drum be?
O clear the snorting trumpets neigh,
And blithe the squealing bagpipes play!
O red the redcoats on the bay,
Sailing with Abercromby!

A thousand bateaux floating glide
And flaunt their banners sheen;
Calm isles swim by on the summer tide
Clad in their birchen green.

Lord Howe he lies on a rude bearskin
Beneath the pleasant sky;
Says: Never day hath fairer been
For one's dear land to die.

Says: Tell me true now, gallant Stark,
What trail may foil the Frenchmen?

Where should our redcoats disembark
 To rout Montcalm his henchmen?

A trout-brook once I fished, Lord Howe,
 To fry my catch in bacon:
 Along that trail, Sir, I'll allow
 Ticonderoga's taken.

O what so wildly fair as war!
 From dancing skiff and dripping oar
 Land down on yonder dreamy shore
 And drowsy let the drum be.
 O proud as life the far crag's flush!
 And sweet as youth — the hermit-thrush!
 O deep as death the dark wood's hush,
 Marching with Abercromby!

Our trail grows blind, good Putnam: draw
 More close your forest rangers.
 By yonder balsam [hark!] I saw —
 Who calls there — friends or strangers?

A mile hence runs a mill, Lord Howe:
 Might be the Frenchers sawing;
 Or likely, Sir, ye heard yon crow
 Round Roger's Rock a-cawing.

Qui vive? Their muskets flare the wood;
Français! Their wild cheers start:
Lord Howe is dropt down where he stood,
A hot ball through his heart.

They drive them back, they drown their boast
In blood and the rushing river,
But the heart of Abercromby's host —
The Lord of Hosts deliver!

Said is prayer and sung is psalm;
In the moonlight waits Montcalm.
Felled is tree and sunk is trench;
On their ramparts rest the French.
Moon is waned and night is gone,
And the plateau, in the dawn,
Strown with strange gigantic wrack,
Bristles like a wild boar's back,
Horrid shagg'd with monstrous spines
Of splintered oaks and tangled pines.
Where last night the setting sun
Placid forest looked upon,
In its place the sunrise sees
Rubble heaps of withen trees,
Boughs — that hid the shy bird's nest —
Sharpened for a soldier's breast.

Hot soars the sun: in dove-white swarms
 Cluster the dazzling uniforms
 Along the earthworks; distant shines
 The vanguard of the English lines.
 Scarlet from the sombre firs
 They start like sudden tanagers,
 And smoothly sweep the open glade
 Toward the abatis. There, waylaid,
 They flounder midst the galling heap
 Of tumbled branches, where they leap
 And crawl, as 'mid some huge morass,
 Like locusts in storm-beaten grass.
 The looming breastworks now they see
 But still no foemen. Suddenly,
 Blinding the noon, a dusk of smoke
 Blooms, and the roaring air hath broke
 In hurricanes of scorching hail,
 Through which, to dying eyes that quail,
 Falls the round sun — a fiery grail.

Vive le Roi! rings from the wall
 Of flame: *Vive notre Général!*

Choked by the fury and the fire,
 The rended English ranks suspire
 A moment's pause, then maddened rush
 Stifling through the giant brush
 Where, trapped in pits of jagged spars,

Rangers and yelling regulars
Struggle to shoot and strain to see
The blithe and viewless enemy.

Vive le Roi! shrilly the call
Rings clear: *Vive notre Général!*

Whirled from the zigzag bastion's scarp,
The hellish crossfire weaves its warp.
Thrice they return, and thrice again:
Image of God! and are these men
With eyes upturned in sightless stare,
Glazed with the dead hate that they glare:
And one, with dumb mouth, shouts in death
To one the red blood strangleth,
And one, outstretched with woful brow,
Hangs spiked upon a greenwood bough,
Wrought in a sculptured agony
Like Him that died upon a tree.

The soul of Abercromby's host
Follows Lord Howe — his shining ghost:
On stormy ridge and parapet
It rides in flame, it leads them yet;
Smiling, with wistful image wan,
A dead man leads the dying on.
And Campbell, Laird of Inverawe,
Hath met the doom his dream foresaw;

Pierced by his murdered kinsman's eyes,
His clansmen bear him where he dies.

Lord Howe, Lord Howe, why shouldst thou
fall!

Thy life it was the life of all;
Thy death ten thousand hath undone.
England hath sunken with the sun.
Ticonderoga's lost and won!

O women, weep ye yet for war?
Bugles and banners, flaunt no more!
For some be sleeping by the shore
 In slumber dark, and some be
Awake in fever's roaring gorge,
And some, in crowded keels that forge
Southward, curse heaven and Lake George,
 Flying with Abercromby!

V

*Still round thy brow the riven war-clouds range,
Ticonderoga:
The conquest marches though the colors change.
And now, where revolution's lightnings run,
Beyond the battle-smoke, sublime and wan,
Quivers the patient star of Washington.
Ranger 'gainst regular,*

*Sundered in enmity,
Opens thine ancient scar
Newly — for liberty.
Now with a rushing noise
Burst freedom's fountains
Where the green-forest boys
March from their mountains.
Listen! What wheedling fife
Quickens thy smouldering memories to life,
Ticonderoga?*

We're marching for to take the fort
With Ethan — Ethan Allen,
That when with fight he fills a quart
He ups and gulps a gallon.
Double-quick it! faster! — hep!
Lord! his blood is brandy.
Mind the music and the step,
And hold your muskets handy.

Friends and fellow soldiers — halt!
Mind your P's, you noodle!
What mother's son will earn his salt
And dance to Yankee Doodle?
There stands Ticonderoga: state
What now ye mean to do there.
Yon's the fortress' wicket-gate:
How many will march through there?

As many now as volunteer
 Poise your firelocks! — Right, Sir!
 Each man has swung his musket clear,
 Each man files off to fight, Sir.
 The British sentry points his gun,
 And Ethan hears him click it;
 He fires: the Yankees yell ‘Come on!’
 And thunder through the wicket.

They thunder through the barracks court
 And ram the British mortars. —
 What rag-tail rebels make such sport
 In great King George’s quarters? —
 King George’s style is over, Sir!
 You redcoats wear the wrong dress:
 Ground arms to the great Jehovah, Sir,
 And the Continental Congress!

VI

*Thine eyes grow dreamy in the evening haze,
 Ticonderoga.
 Where, in mimic art
 Ephemeral,
 Thy pilgrims hold their part
 In festival,
 On what eternal pageants dost thou gaze,
 Ticonderoga?*

Soldier and saint and sagamore
Are vanished from my tranquil shore.
The ripples that the summer breeze
Awakes — they are my reveries;
The day-fly darts where below
The *Royal Savage* hides her woe,
And where the silver lake-trout ply
Arnold still grapples with Sir Guy.
On Mount Defiance, looming proud,
Glowers Burgoyne — a twilight cloud,
In whose spent shower's radiance
Macdonough fights the *Confiance*.

Battles whose blood is liberty,
Heroes whose dreams are history,
Imagination hath them wrought,
Tempering all things to a thought,
Painting the land, the lake, the sky,
With pageants of the dreamer's eye.

So by my visionary shore,
Soldier and saint and sagamore
Live in my shadow evermore:
Where, rapt in beauty, sleeps Champlain,
Lulled are the passion and the pain;
The legend and the race remain.

TENNYSON ¹

I

SONG keeps no dim centennial
Where one who sang lies hushed in earth,
And Beauty wears not death nor birth
Though lovers bring her flower and pall;

While Life itself, in endless youth,
Is sown along sidereal deeps,
From darkness, where the dreamer sleeps,
Trembles the morning-star of Truth.

Not to the singer, but to Song
That lights with viewless finger-tips
Her flaming music at his lips,
Those immortalities belong.

Yet to the singer, for the sake
Of austere service lowly lent
To make his mind her instrument,
The flower and pall of sōng we take.

¹ Written to be read before the Brooklyn Institute, 1909, in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Alfred, Lord Tennyson.

II

Among the mighty island-choir
His 'earliest pipe' was faintly heard
When still the hearts of time were stirred
With revolutionary fire,

While lights and echoes still were blown
Across the darkening lyric sky
Of Shelley's shrilling ecstasy
And Byron's orphic organ-tone.

He watched the shuddering Age, aghast,
Behold the sphinx of Science grow
A lion vigilant, and throw
Its shadow o'er the golden past,

Assuming slow an awful Shape
That stood impassive at the feast,
Revealing man a mystic beast —
The evolution of an ape.

Still shy he sought his shunning Muse
Remote from sceptic clash and curse,
And mixed the palette of his verse
With nature's mellow gleams and hues,

And crowned his rhyme with bloom of fern
 In fiery orchid palaces,
 And caught in crystal chalices
Bright spillings from a Grecian urn;

Till, touched by human lover's hand,
 The singer rose to larger thought
 And took the spurs of Lancelot
And galloped into Fairyland.

But most of olden fair romance
 Is rust on Reason's shining shield,
 And Merlin's hand is weak to wield
The wand of Science' necromance.

And soon the mage of modern rhyme
 Poured all his alchemy of art
 In newer purpose — to impart
The noble doubtings of his time;

And sped the Mediæval ghost
 Of faith, and hailed the love of all,
 The lessening individual,
The kingly 'common sense of most';

And watched, with keen prophetic scan,
Wild lightnings from the embattled crew
Of 'navies grappling in the blue'
Quenched by 'the Parliament of Man.'

Thus on his centenary page
The Muse has scrolled his name with hers :
A Prince of old Artificers,
Knight-errant of the Newest Age.

The poet pales in memory —
Aloof and proud and book-bemused,
His Saxon plainness subtly fused
With pomp of Norman chivalry ;

His ashes in the Abbey lie
Aristocratic in their place,
But all that lives of him has grace
Of beautiful democracy ;

Near mouldering glaive and oriflamme
His cerements rest, but he, unwound
From death, by human love is crowned
With friendship *in memoriam* ;

By many a far and alien beach
He seeks the holy grail of song,
Hailed by the Saxon-thinking throng
The laureate of English speech.

III

O Song — O Grail of man's desire !
O living Splendor, never sped !
Out of the ashes of the dead
Rise, rise once more in mystic fire !

Reveal for us, for us, reveal
The Singer in his harness clad,
And gird him forth like Galahad
To smite, to chasten and to heal ;

To hallow spear and spade and hod,
To wrestle manhood from defeats,
To face the mighty in their seats
And humble greatness before God ;

To be the bugle of his race
And blazon through the age again
Thy music in the hearts of men,
Thy beauty in the market-place.

THE AIR VOYAGE UP THE HUDSON ¹

LIKE nothing earthly, on awful wings,
 It burst on the staring million,
Like a dream of ancient dreadful things
 In the dusk of the time reptilian.

Our hearts beat quick; we spoke not aloud;
 Our minds our senses dissuaded;
As we saw the bastions of bird and cloud
 By the vision of man invaded.

We caught our breath, as we watched him bound
 Where the air-billow swirls and serries,
And the shout of our straining hearts is drowned
 In the din of the roaring ferries.

With sliding pinion and whizzing prow —
 His sky-ship the sea birds scaring —
Like a thought from Liberty's looming brow,
 He flashes and soars in his daring.

¹ Stanzas written on witnessing, from Battery Park, the first flight made by Wilbur Wright in his aeroplane from Governor's Island to Grant's Tomb and back, on the morning of October 4, 1909, during the Hudson-Fulton celebrations.

He has flashed; he is gone: only fancy aids
 Our eyes where the haze grows hoarer:
 The Ages look up from the Palisades,
 That looked down on the Dutch explorer.

But what of their dreams — those gray steel hulks
 Deep-moored in the river below him,
 With the loins of a nation girt in their bulks?
 In their iron hearts, do they know him?

Do their deadly engines twinge with a doubt,
 A dread of this thing ethereal,
 That hides in its plumes the earliest scout
 Of the armies and navies aerial?

And what of their hearts — that human throng?
 Do they hail in this creature regal
 The harbinger of dirge, or of song?
 A vulture, or an eagle?

He tacks; he returns: the news is blown
 On the winds of a city's wonder:
 He comes, in the braying megaphone,
 He comes, on Manhattan's thunder;

He looms once more by the swarming bluffs —
 A bird of marshes gigantic —
 And slants on the slumbering mist, and luffs
 To his nest by the booming Atlantic.

CHORAL SONG FOR THE NEW THEATRE ¹

(Written to be sung to music from Gounod's *Redemption*.)

AWAKE! awake! awake!
Spirits of Aspiration!
And hasten to renew
Your ministering vows:
For lo! the Prince of Faery
Returns within your walls,
Back from his ancient bright dominions:
Awake! awake! awake!
For he is crowned again.

But who is he, the Prince of Faery?
Of Hellas he was god, a swan he was in Avon.
But who is he, the Prince of Faery?
Of little children lord, of men and angels
master:
Within the human mind he rules the world.

¹ Sung by members of the Metropolitan Opera Company, at the ceremony of the laying of the corner-stone of the New Theatre, New York, December 15, 1908, and also at the opening ceremonies, November 6, 1909.

ODE TO THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES ¹

HARVARD PHI BETA KAPPA POEM, 1908

I

ONCE more amid her mountains and her seas
American, dream-startled Liberty
Stares round her, listening. From her mystic
limbs
Sleep like a garment slips;
Between her lips
Bright wonder trembles momentarily;
About her knees
Her ancient streams and shores, innumerable
With navies and strange peoples, raise new
hymns
In her immortal name. Once more she lifts
Her head in proud resistance, beautiful
Rebellion: yet not now with martial frown
To glare through scorching rifts
Of cannon smoke, smiting her foemen down,

¹ Read in Sanders Theatre, Cambridge, June 25, 1908.

But now, with gaze upturned in the deep sky
 Whose timeless arc reveals each mortal blur
 Of her bright image overhanging her,
 To purify herself, for her least worshipper.

II

Ours is an age of mutability,
 A threshold radiant yet sinister
 Toward strange horizons, where the eternal hills
 Of ancient law heave, and sink shuddering under,
 Bursting in giant surf against the base
 Of vastier summits, newly starred with wonder;
 And though that portent thrills
 Our thoughts with dread, or joy, here is our place;
 Here we must look our common future in the face.

Necessity sounds no alarms, and time
 No tocsin for his patient siege. To-day
 No detonation of deep Sumter's gun,
 Nor lightning musket-flash of Lexington,
 Nor jangled steeple-chime,
 Ushers our holy war; but silent-shod,
 And in the secret way
 Of human hearts, where in the sordid street
 The modern slave and master dumbly meet
 And in the other's eyes

Each, unaware, beholds the eyes of God,
 That ever after burn and scrutinize
 The vitals of his soul; or where, defiled,
 The starless miner barter his own child
 For mordant drink to quench his questioning
 mind;
 Or where, behind
 The squandered toil of millions, the impeach'd
 man
 Puts out his life, to shut away the shame;
 Still silent as the flame
 Of serpent fire through autumn grass,
 The radiant revolution creeps,
 Impregnating the nation's prone morass
 With seed Promethean
 That, kindling, leaps
 Forth on the peaks of life, aspiring whence it
 came.

What is that seed? — that living fire?
 What mystic name,
 What secret shrine,
 Revealed, sets free
 That sweet and awful Potency,
 Which wears, 'neath blasphemy and ire,
 'Neath pain and sin and hate and blood,
 The hallowed smile of brotherhood?

A myriad names, a myriad
 Shrines its worshippers have had,
 Yet whatsoever god men call it by,
 Still the divine
 Democracy of man, while man is, cannot die.

Hearken how far
 The high persuasion
 Of our renascence thunders! Groping, dumb,
 Bowed with old burdens of a continent,
 Branded with immemorial scar
 Of sheik and king and khan and czar,
 They come — they come,
 Filing, in vast and orderly invasion,
 The planks of Ellis Island. Who shall tell
 What numbers thronged the fields where great
 Martel
 Marshalled his hordes, or old Arminius
 O'erwhelmed the Roman legions? — Gaul and
 Hun,
 Vandal and Visigoth, behold, for us
 To-day the humdrum agent, one by one,
 By sex and ages,
 Chalk-marks and checks, and down the bright
 steel cages
 Passes the hybrid clans,
 Whose migratory hosts pour forth — Americans.

III

Præsides et socii collegiorum!

Masters and scholars of the chosen places!

I ask of you — to whom

Shall those inchoate freemen, dazzled races,

Turn in their promised land for leadership?

Who shall equip

Their hope with discipline, their nescience

With light, their sudden zeal with reverence?

I ask of you — to whom

The amazed Republic, gazing on this skein

And stuff of destiny,

Pied-shot with human passion, joy and pain,

Shall look to engineer the awful loom,

So that within the fabric of the state

The large ideal of the intricate

Design shall blazon, bold and beautiful,

The gracious lineaments of Liberty?

Flower-sprung from mesas of the prairied land,

Star-strewn along the hills and by the seas —

The quiet-bastioned citadels of peace

And gunless fortresses of freedom — stand

The universities. No breastwork heaves

Its brow in menace near; the ivied gates

Rise moatless; from the campus and the caves

Perennial youthhood chimes; and all awaits

The coming conqueror. Yet inward shrined,
 And panoplied
 With arms more glorious than glaive of Cid
 Or Charlemagne, the quenchless human mind
 Sits inexpugnable;
 While far around, from swarming cities and wide
 swards,
 Murmur the vague, aspiring, passion-driven
 hordes.

Let us not vest with visionary seal
 Of sanctity the individual.
 Wherever among men
 The brave and reasonable citizen
 Thinks for the common weal
 And speaks his thought, there the Republic speaks,
 Yet, if unanswered, speaks in vain.

For ours is a day of coalition: this
 Our people, viewed with the perspective eye
 Of revery, appears a titan group
 Of powers compositive, vast Dramatis
 Personæ, plying their immortal tasks,
 'Neath which their Atlantean sinews stoop,
 In that high Comedy Serene
 Wherein the Evolutionary will immasks;
 And there, amid those titan forms of Man —

Their torses poisèd proud
 In athlete ease, their foreheads pensive-bow'd —
 The Spirits of the Universities
 Enact their corporate rôles American.

Therefore to you, lords of the large demesne
 Of learning, scholars of well-earned degrees,
 To you, in your confederated power,
 Preëminently, the Republic turns
 And charges you, by your just love of her,
 To lead, to pilot and uplift
 Her generations, and administer,
 With the most holy shrift
 Of reason and Time's slow amassèd dower,
 Her bright communion to the multitude.

Toward you, in whose calm hands her chalice
 burns
 With beauty strange, how many thirst-imbued
 Gaze, yearning! Not alone on your own walls,
 Wherein your chosen meet — your shadow falls
 Also on alien thresholds, thrown across
 The nation's childhood, by the increasing glow
 Of truth that flares beyond you. As you sow,
 So shall the lesser seekers harvest — dross
 Or substance. In responsibility,
 You are the true inheritors of kings

Whose sceptres now lie impotent, your halls —
 The sovran courts of the democracy;
 And by the royalty
 Conferred of patient high imaginings,
 Your first prerogative —
 And prime efficiency — is leadership.

IV

Who is the scholar-leader? What is he
 Whose learning shows the unlearned best to live?

 There be, who — finger hard on lip —
 Pore lifelong, with laborious glass,
 On nature's enigmatic heart,
 Dissecting shrewdly, part by part,
 To store her secrets in their scrip,
 Heedless of human love and art,
 Or how the passionate generations pass.

Others there are who, moved no less
 To explore that mute obscure abysm,
 Make of their probing minds a prism
 Whose many-sided radiance
 Illumes with their own hearts the heart of Nature,
 Touching her darkest feature
 With revelation for man's happiness,
 And with love's couchèd lance
 Wrestling from Science a new Humanism.

Such is the scholar liberal: for him,
 Not knowledge which ignores the Whole,
 But knowledge grafted in the soul
 Is scholarship; to esteem
 His calling justly is to see
 That culture is proficient sympathy.

For all that issues beautiful
 From dim retort and crucible,
 And makes our modern day to seem
 Arabian night or opiate dream: —
 Genii, that on the wireless air
 Transport within imagined waves
 The cosmic Echo from her caves
 To work their will, or from the stars
 Expound the mysteries of Mars,
 Or in earth's rotting shale prepare
 The alchemy of radium, —
 All powers, articulate or dumb,
 Which scholars probe and sages scan,
 Are meaningless except to Man —
 To urge his peace, to ease his pain,
 And from his mind's domain
 To exorcise the lurking Caliban.

To exorcise! — Not in the Middle Age,
 With Faust's redemption, did the devils cease
 To lure great doctors to their tutelage,

Whereby to lengthen their protracted lease
 Of the lewd rabble's gaping ignorance :
 Still, with incessant metamorphosis,

The monsters hatch and hiss

And, breeding, grow

To honor'd stature in the imperil'd state,

Where the true scholar still is Prospero,

Making their misshaped natures dance

Attendance on his master vision : So

To humble monsters to the use of men,

The foremost scholar is first citizen.

He, when the rank broods teem and generate

Their giant seed,

That prowl the rich land with impunity,

Where corporate greatness stoops to cormorant
 greed,

And that one bulk, much-mouth'd and subtle-
 gin'd,

The unsated Minotaur, Monopoly,

Extorts his toll in the meek nation's blood

Of boys and maidenhood, —

He then, the scholar-leader, pores not stale

Upon his book, nor peers where sits the wind

In the golden weathercock on Minos' gate,

But prescient, girds his clear mind all in mail,

And gathering round the time's unperished youth,

Apportions his bright armory of truth
 And points what right-aimed blow shall make the
 beast disgorge.

So did that steadfast captain of our race —
 A storm-trained scholar — stand at Valley Forge
 With all the gales of England in his face,
 And sharing forth his visionary arms
 Of faith with his shorn comrades, smiled, and
 hurled
 Victory through disaster's blind alarms,
 And wrought with fearless mind the future of a
 world.

V

O beautiful and spacious one,
 My Country! Spirit free,
 Who floatest wild on that lone eagle's wings
 Fledged in the fiery heart of Washington,
 And fed on heart's blood of each dauntless son
 Of that strong father, how exceedingly
 Fair is thine image, when
 First the least-born of men
 Burns with thy story! Then
 Thou art a presence never darkling: night
 Shrouding thy solemn flight,
 Sprinkles, with hoary rite,

Stars on thy plumage; morn,
 Ere on the cottage thorn
 Scarce the shy warbler sings,
 Fills all familiar things
 With thy far glory; dreams
 Of thee at evening haunt the hermit thrush,
 And in his ecstasy's pure after-hush,
 High and austere sweet, thine immanent eagle
 screams.

So by the large compulsion of that Presence
 I make this invocation;
 And by the might of that dear name, whose es-
 sence
 The staling tongue of usage cannot taint —
 America — I speak, that I may stir
 You, her far-ranging universities,
 Through glad constraint
 Of love you owe to her,
 Henceforward to conjoin your destinies
 In grander federation.

VI

Not adversaries in the scrambling street
 Of commerce, need your nobler wills compete
 For numbers and for names. A saner law
 Moves your coöperation, and the awe

Of that shall fix a sound stability
 At the base of civic freedom. Strong must be
 The scholar in himself. Far better were it
 Your halls stood empty and their corridors
 Silent, than that the youth who from your doors
 Go forth to breed the nation, should inherit
 The sowings of that spirit
 Which bows the mind to serve the vulgar mood,
 Or truckles to the man that owns the multitude.

It cannot be. Never, till now, before —
 In age of Plato or of Abelard,
 In empire or republic, linking shore
 With shore by aspiration's viewless chain —
 Has your high calling held the fair regard
 And faith of one vast people. Not in vain
 Their faith abides in you. The taint which blinds
 The weak shall not be yours. Your yards and
 halls

Still with expanding splendor shall be filled
 By the strong magnet of the sane ideal,
 And to the common weal
 Shall speed their generations of glad youth
 Forth in the land — alumni of the guild
 Of leadership, the minute-men of truth,
 Whose muskets are their uncorrupted minds,
 Clean for their country where her service calls.

VII

Nobly our world renews, even as in ages gone.
Man's eras have their vernal equinox
No less than nature's: Still, on that wild dawn
When the high winds, unleashed, no longer fawn
At Winter's knees, but lift his sparse-blown locks
In haggard wrack — there, on the looming hills,
Sharp with unearthly light, the sudden flocks
Show radiant, and on the vista'd sills
Of Spring, earth's visionary beauty starts
Revealed: Not otherwise in human hearts
Recurrent, after seasons numb and blind,
Freshly the ancient Loveliness reveals
 The love of our own kind,
Rekindling in our race the raptures of the mind.

PROLOGUE TO THE SAINT-GAUDENS MASQUE ¹

PERFORMED AT ASPET IN CORNISH

Enter IRIS

IRIS

FRESH from the courts of dewy-colored eve
Jove summons me before you. Who I am
And why he bids me here I, must declare.

¹ In June, 1905, to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Cornish Colony by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, an outdoor masque was devised and performed by his neighbors in a pine grove at Aspet, his New Hampshire home. In the Masque, written by Mr. Louis Evan Shipman, more than seventy persons took part, among whom were some forty artists and writers of craftsmanly repute, who enacted rôles of Greek deities and demigods.

About twilight, the sculptor with his family and some hundreds of guests were seated in front of a green-gray curtain, suspended between two pines, on which hung great gilded masks, executed by Mr. Maxfield Parrish. Close by, secreted artfully behind evergreens, members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra awaited the baton signal of Mr. Arthur Whiting, conductor and composer of the music.

Then, in the softened light, emerged from between the folds of the curtain the tall maidenly figure of Iris, in many-hued diaphanous veils, holding in one hand a staff of living fleur-de-lis. Iris, enacted by Miss Frances Grimes, the sculptress, spoke the accompanying Prologue.

The three allusions to works by Saint-Gaudens refer, of course, to the Shaw Memorial Bas-relief, in Boston, the Sherman Equestrian Statue, in New York, and the Adams Memorial, in Washington.

My home is half-light; you have watched me
oft

Through closing lids at noontide, or at dusk,
Moving between the daylight and your dreams,
A shape illusory. Whether I pause
Midway my quivering arc, that spans the roar
And tumbling prisms of sheer Niagara,
Or by the ferny banks of Blowmedown
Trellis my hair with braided fleur-de-lis,
Still I am Iris, and my mission is
To shatter the white beam of garish day
Into a thousand mellower tints of twilight,
Spinning across the sceptic eyes of reason
Fine rainbow-films of fancy. Such, then, I.
But whence, emerging from the curtained wood
Of Aspet, on this longest summer eve,
While yet the veerie rings his vesper chimes,
I have made journey hither, hearken !

Late,

Below the gilded state-house by the bay,
Sitting his horse in proud simplicity,
I left a young commander; thronged beneath
His lifted brow, clouded with battle dreams,
The eager Ethiop faces onward surged;
No sound arose from all their trampling feet,
But the imagined drum-beats rolled in bronze.

From these I passed to where the human hives
Shadow the stars from the Metropolis,
Whence, turning homeward from the hell of war,
Another hero, scarr'd and old, there rode;
And at his bridle-rein, in maiden awe,
Went Victory — with pity in her eyes.

A third and Sibyl form, remote and mute,
Brooding alone beside a secret grave,
Asked with unopening eyes, “What means it all?”

From these imagined and immortal forms
To him, O mortals, who imagined them,
And fixed his revery in stone and bronze,
I come to render tribute, not of praise
Superfluous, but playful badinage
And mock-Olympic mummery, whereby
If these shall cause the elvish Gallic smile
To twitch his lip, or stir his blarney laugh,
The mock-Olympians will die content.

Behold, then, by the enchantment of this staff
A magic transformation: not such change
As once my goddess sister Circe wrought —
Circe, whose spell debased the forms divine
Of men to bristled shapes of snout and horn:
Mine is a charm reverse, that lifts, not lowers,
By power whereof all neighbor Jacks and Jills

That tug their art-pails up these pasture slopes
Of Cornish are converted here to strut
In guise of antic gods and demigods.

[IRIS waves her staff, music sounds from the grove.]

Hark now! 'Tis they, who clamor to begin
Their frolic masque of satyr, muse, and faun,
And on the shrine of mirth make sacrifice
In honor of their only pagan saint.

[IRIS withdraws between the curtains: the music
grows louder, then dies away. The curtains,
dividing, open upon the Masque.]

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

KEEP closer to the wall; stop crawling; wait.
We have our orders. Hold the dynamite.
I hear their sentry cough. The moon burns white
Behind the battlements, and cuts each one —
Turret and tower — an inky silhouette,
Like paper castle-tops I used to trace
With scissors as a boy. Step softly! Place
The bomb here, underneath the garrison.
Now if their souls are dreaming of hell-fire,
This will not wake them. Midnight! That's
the choir
Of children hailing the Nativity.

*What are ye that walk the night
Heaven's will divining?*

*Shining are your mantles white
And your staffs are shining.*

*Shepherds, we have come from far
Dark and danger scorning:*

*We have seen our King His star
By the gates of morning.*

Come now, this is no time for hands to quake;
On this one breach depends the victory,
A nation's honor, and her destiny.
And these, who lie so unsuspectingly
In sleep, not one of them must ever wake
This side of —

*What is He whose star ye seek,
Toilsomely and slowly?
He is monarch of the meek,
Regent of the lowly.*

*Wise men, seek another land,
Shun our lord his greeting:
For we perish at his hand,
And our lambs are bleating.*

What a devilish close call!
There creeps the sentry on the shadow-wall
Like a black ant. Quick, now — the fuse!

*What are ye who knock by night
On my palace portals?
Triple wreaths of silver light
Crown you like immortals.*

*Herod, from the east we bring
Fine and lordly treasure.
Where is He that born is King?
We would do him pleasure.*

*These your gifts uncover them,
Myrrh and spice, before me.
Lo, I am Jerusalem!
Bow ye down, adore me!*

*King, your shepherds wretchedly
Starve without your city.
You Jerusalem may be,
But our Lord is Pity.*

Quick, fool!

This is our country's job, and you her tool.
What are you waiting for? You want to think
Before you kill? You dream that love may link
All born of woman? Fool, are we the first
To live in mothers' memories accurst,
Or in the little children's helplessness?
These men, like us, know gentle eyes that bless
Their goings and homecomings, baby hands
That reach, fine feet that dart, at their commands.
What, then? This is not murder; this is war.
We are not men, but patriots. Think no more:
The fuse is lighted; run! Run for the shore!

*What are ye that screen your eyes
From the awful burning?
Look where 'neath His star He lies,
Nestled by her yearning.*

*Ye that saw His glory shine,
What were dark and danger?
Blessed ye that make your shrine
Mother, Child, and manger.*

Now the Lord of Love —

Look back! Look back! How the torn earth-
clouds blot

The stars, and the far hilltop heaves the roar!

Ah, *Merry Christmas!* Almost I'd forgot.

THE DEATH OF VERESTCHAGIN¹

WITH gaze serene and brow of silver rime,
He watched the up-staring sea and reeling
land
Converge, as limned beneath the veteran hand
That last, fell sketch of war was traced sublime;

But even in the act his pencil ruthlessly
Was snatched away, where — blasting all his
view —
The inexorable Artist stood, and drew
The awful masterpiece — reality.

And now the silver rime is on the wave,
And Verestchagin sleeps with Makarof,
And calm, above the red brine's eddying
trough,
The eyes of Christ and Buddha guard his grave.

¹ Vassili Verestchagin, the Russian painter of war themes, while sketching a naval battle off Port Arthur, sank in the warship *Petropavlovsk*, with Admiral Makarof, April 4, 1904.

SHIRLEY COMMON ¹

NOT ours, upon the house-tops, here to claim
Battles and heroes of historic scene,
A century and fifty years of fame: —
Our boast is silence and this day's serene.

The loud circumference of jangling lands,
Conflict and craft and wrong surround us; still
Shy in her orchard-wildness Shirley stands:
A hushed spectator on her mapled hill.

Here to her simple festival she calls
Her folk home — yet not all: Where are they now,
The Pilgrim race that piled her corn-field walls,
And served the Lord with patience and a plough?

The hardy citizens that now are sod
They may not hear her summons home; and yet
The elm-hid belfry nestles toward their God,
And we, who gather here, do not forget.

¹ Read at the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Town of Shirley, Massachusetts, July 30, 1903, in the First Parish Meeting-House.

For still the sights familiar to their eyes
Are dear to ours: the spires of Groton blaze
Their weathercocks from Gallows-Hill's sunrise,
And the long slopes of Harvard slant in haze;

And still, at night, the bittern booms to rest,
The secret whip-poor-will complains afar;
And still Wachusett marshals in the west
The sunset and his solitary star.

Here, then, let thoughts be memories; let our
 pride
Be the untainted loveliness, which is
Our Shirley's dower on woods and pastures pied;
Let our ambition, even as hers, be this: —

Unenvious, to win the envied bays
Of nature's health and honest common sense;
And, by the peace of sane, inglorious days,
To earn the unrepute of innocence.

ISAAC WALTON IN MAIDEN LANE

IN that Manhattan alley long yclept,
With gentle olden music, *Maiden Lane*,
Where sick and sad-eyed Traffic scarce has slept
Even at midnight, in her lust for gain
Rolling in restive pain
Through the stern vigil of a century,
There, mid the din of harsh reality —
The newsboy's shriek, car's clang and huckster's
 chaff,
The cobble's roar, and the loud drayman's laugh,
And the dull stare,
The inhuman, hunted glare
Of the faces — the gray faces
Of Mammon's stark-mad races,
Sordid and slattern,
Modish and tattern,
Loveless in their misery —
There, in the midst of all,
Seated upon a stall,
Musing on meadows, Isaak, I met thee! —

How my heart stopped for too much happiness,
To meet thee there in that maelstrom of men,
Benignant, wise and calm! Ah, gently then
Came back, in fancy's dress,
All that of old was sweet,
Serene and fair, to grace the garish street.
Musing on meadows now in Maiden Lane,
The turbid current surging at my side
Became the flow of Thames' sequestered tide,
The newsboy's cry waned to a curlew's call,
The jangling pedlar tended tinkling sheep
Along green hedgerows; even the drayman's
brawl
Sweetened to an old soliloquy, till all
That strident world has chastened to a sleep
Where, in a twilit eddy of my dream,
Thine image, Isaak, pored upon a bream.

THE SISTINE EVE

**FRAGMENTS OF AN ORATORIO
WRITTEN FOR THE BEGINNING
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

PLAN

OVERTURE

PRELUDE

FIRST CANTO: *The Birth of Eve*

FIRST INTERLUDE

SECOND CANTO: *The Temptation of Eve*

SECOND INTERLUDE

THIRD CANTO: *The Birth of Man*

PRESENCES ¹

SPEAKING PRESENCES: *The Sistine Spirit*
The Spirit of the Vatican

SOLO PRESENCES: *Adam*
The Persian Sibyl
The Cumæan Sibyl
The Delphic Sibyl
Judith
Goliath
Jonas
Jeremiah
Isaiah
The Expelling Angel
Eve

CHORAL PRESENCES: *The Cornice Cherubim*
Symbolic Figures
Botticelli's Women
Shapes in "The Last Judgment"

SCENE

The Sistine Chapel, Rome

TIME

Midnight, before the Dawn of 1901

High pontifical mass is being celebrated. Cardinals and prelates in splendid vestments, assembled.

¹ *These Dramatis Personæ are figures in the paintings by Michelangelo and Botticelli on the ceiling and walls of the Sistine Chapel.*

*“La forza d’ un bel volto al ciel mi sprona
[Ch’ altro in terra non è che mi diletta]
E vivo ascendo tra gli spirti eletti,
Grazia ch’ ad uom mortal raro si dona.*

*Sì ben col suo fattor l’ opra consuona,
Ch’ a lui mi levo per divin concetti,
E quivi informo i pensier tutti e i detti,
Ardendo, amando per gentil persona.*

*Onde, se mai da due begli occhi il guardo
Torcer non so, conosco in lor la luce
Che mi mostra la via ch’ a Dio mi guide.
E se nel lume loro acceso io ardo,
Nel nobil foco mio dolce riluce
La gioia che nel cielo eterna ride.”*

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI; Sonetto III

OVERTURE

A VOICE FROM THE CHAPEL CEILING

SIBYLS and prophets of undying art,
Awake! for Buonarrotti's golden dome
Is as an angel's passing-bell, to toll —
On midnight's starry, tingling silentness —
The interring of an Age. Wake and behold!
They bear her toward the never-shutting doors
Which fearful mortals screen with draperies
To bar the eternal night. — Lo, she has passed!
With bead and psalm and solemn catafalque,
With mitred state, and pomp episcopal,
The latest of the sovereigns of time —
Nineteenth among the entombèd centuries —
Has sealed forever her pregnant lips, and lies
Sculptured in the cold clay of history.

But thou, O live new-crowned Herculean Age,
Who clingest to the rugged breast of Labor,
Gazing with wonder in calm Science' eyes,
While Poesie, with warm tears on her cheek,
Searches thy look, in passion lost of pathos, —
Thou titan child of promise, hail to thee!

And while these spirits, with their serene eyes
 Of strifeless beauty and strong consummation
 [Spirits that pass not with the passing age]
 Chant o'er thine earliest breathing, may the hymn
 Which they shall lift in prayer to the first Mother,
 Be as an exhortation, to incite
 Thy dreams to deeds in thy maturer days.

And now, while all the kneeling prelates pray,
 Spirits, which are my voices, even as the stops
 Are to the lute, awake your harmonies!
 And celebrate the pain and the desire,
 The daring and the victory, of her
 Who set love's seal upon the centuries.

A VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

Of *her*? Of whom?

THE VOICE FROM THE CEILING

Awake, Divinities!

CHORUS OF PRESENCES

Thou whose form crepuscular
 Dawns through the Sistine heaven, as a star
 Through autumn twilight, beautiful
 Our mother Eve —

THE VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

Peace, painted Forms ! Or if ye, who have sat
The mute spectators of my solemn Mass
For vague centennials of memory,
Now ope your lips inspired, let it not be
To chant amid these rites pontifical
A song of sacrilege. — Peace, painted Forms !

THE VOICE FROM THE CEILING

What art thou there below, with taper eyes
Upraised from many a prostrate cardinal,
Who puffest, from thy vast, seclusive cowl,
Columnar storms of incense ? Whose are thine
Imponderous and gilded limbs, which show —
Between the silky folds of surplices —
Like pillars, sculptured in a pagan shrine
Or pillaged Coliseum ?

THE VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

Answer thou !

What voice is thine, visible Aspiration,
Whose torse, half chiselled from cerulean cloud,
Outlifts the youthful arm indomitable
Of David, who at Florence guards the Palace,
While thy rapt brow hurls the time-piercing gaze

Of Moses, in St. Peter's-of-the-Chains?
 What is thy name, majestic Grace of Power?

THE VOICE FROM THE CEILING

I am the Sistine Spirit. What art thou?

THE VOICE FROM THE ALTAR

The Spirit of the Vatican. My voice
 Is the peal'd organ of perennial Rome,
 And even as those sibyls are thy stops
 So all these red and golden reeds are mine:
 But now, until this sacred mass be said,
 Be silent, thou! or let our requiem
 Be sung in harmony.

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

What discord can
 Arise, when Power prays to Innocence
 And Beauty?

THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

None; but these, thy sensuous choir,
 Dare to uplift their ritual to her—
 To her, whose fluent and unstable mind,
 Impregn'd with lust of new and gloss of beauty,
 Became a fair conception-place for Satan;

To Eve, whose folly wrought the fall of Man,
Yea, all the dire resultance of his fall.

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Man never fell. The inexorable blow
Of the Expelling Angel was the stroke
Which first conferred God's knighthood on his
nature,
Kindling that anguish, whereby first he rose
To the protective stature of his soul.
This Eve first knew was so, when she loved Adam.
For it was she who first, feeling herself
A child of God, yearned in her little Eden,
Yearned for herself and Adam, as true lovers,
For aims beyond their summer-day self-seeking;
And even while she grasped the fateful fruit,
Smiled in the dream of nobler mortal sons
Instead of an idle immortality, —
Smiled, and then reached the fruit to Adam, so
To share with him the awful insurrection.

THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

Preposterous Spirit! does the fallen race
Of man fulfil her dream? Reveal to me
A nobler mortal son whose angel stature
Exceeds his father Adam's ere his fall.

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Spirit of earthward vision, — even I!
 Yea, these and I and more than us are Man.
 Our exaltation doth confute his fall,
 And build again, in beauty, art and love,
 Another and inviolable Eden.

Speak! ye serene and lofty Presences,
 Delineations of inspired Power!
 Awake! ye children of a child of God,
 And hymn, with your chromatic harmonies,
 The prelude and the Trilogy austere,
 Wherein the intuitive grace of Woman's love
 Enacts the eternal Genesis of Man.

THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

Strange spirit, they are silent.

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Dost thou hear

No sound?

THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

No sound; save only the faint breath
 Of cardinals, that tell their rosaries.

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Hark! — Hearest thou no mural melody?
The playing organ of an ocular sense,
The hidden choristers of lovely hues,
The chant of heavenly forms? — Once more, with
 all
Thy breathless spirit listening in thine eyes —
No music?

THE SPIRIT OF THE VATICAN

None.

PRELUDE

CHORUS OF PRESENCES

O ye wise, love Beauty! All
Ye strong, revere her!
Through passion's starry arches thrill
The echoes of her light footfall;
The worlds, to do her deathless will,
Draw near her.

By ways divinely sensuous,
Her viewless form entices us
'Mid visions pale and passionate
To kneel beside her awful gate;
Where, girt with song and silences,
The lonely mind her mansion is.

The innocent obey her call,
The happy know her dreamy face
And hear her;
Despair is softened by her grace,
And sorrow is her worshipper.
All things that love grow like to her.
O ye wise, love Beauty! All
Ye strong, revere her.

FIRST SYMBOLIC FIGURE

Who draws his face beneath a cowl of cloud
And kneels beside the altar, dumb and bow'd?

SECOND FIGURE

That is the Spirit of the Vatican:
He meditates upon the Fall of Man.

THIRD FIGURE

But what is he, with countenance beguil'd,
That smiles upon the sleeping titan-child?

FOURTH FIGURE

The Sistine Spirit. — See! he draws away
The incense-curtain from our holy play.

THE FIGURES

That all the enactments of our mural stage
May pass as dreams before the new-born Age.

FIRST CANTO: THE BIRTH OF EVE

SEMICHORUS OF SYMBOLIC FIGURES

How like a garden lies the world
The day when love is born;
Strange beauty glows upon old boughs,
Strange flowers conceal the thorn;
And noon and night are tinged with light
Of unfamiliar morn.

CHORUS

While with a sense — as though a god were near
it —
Of noble languor, droops the lover's spirit.

SEMICHORUS

So float the trembling hues around
This maid in Paradise.
A joy, a reticence, a prayer,
Clothe with bright poesies
Her meek limbs, where she worships there
In God the Father's eyes.

CHORUS

While, drawing deep from beauty's opiate springs
A sigh of power, recumbent Adam sings:

ADAM

As I lay in Eden,
Alone with Love and Lethargy,
An immortal maiden
Was conceived in heaven
And born to me.

All that I had dreamed
And sculptured from the cloud-lit skies, —
All that loved and gleamed
And sang, in my encircling Paradise, —

The summit's calm,
The flower's voluptuousness,
The forest's majesty,
Night's balm,
The morning's victory
And twilight's veiled melodiousness —
Became a glowing fire
In me and my desire.

As I lay in Eden,
My bosom was unfolded;

And an elemental Hand,
 Swift, mysterious and grand,
 Culled that perfect maiden —
 With all that my wild soul contained
 Of passion peerless and unstained —
 As erst by heaven she was moulded.

And the maiden, in that place,
 Grew before her Maker's face
 To a form [methought I dreamed]
 Which *was* what beauty only seemed.
 And my lax arm limply pressed
 To my warm and unnerved breast,
 And my brow sank in a swoon,
 And I smelt the scents of noon,
 And I felt the faint winds straying,
 And my heart could scarce conceive
 What the Father's Voice was saying:
 "Adam, behold thine Eve!"

A FIGURE

Hush! — He is silent. Spirits, he has swooned;
 And from his breast bright Eve has flowered forth;
 As when the passion of the nightingale
 Thrills and expands through his eternal arches,
 Recumbent Rome feels the faun-blood of Nature
 Leap in his limbs, while an imponderous rib

Of marble sloth from his immortal heart
Vast and invisibly is plucked away,
And from that rent — profuse of ecstasy,
Exhilarant of life and innocence,
Trailing bright incense for her naked glory —
 Outpours the Spring.

FIRST INTERLUDE

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

How fair he sleeps — this lordly child of Time!
In sleep, the soul is in its infancy
And Power a babe again. But soon the dawn
Will break, and he will rise to titan-stature.

Meanwhile, within the crystal of his slumber,
O'erhanging visions pass, as o'er a lake
The hues of sunset, sweeping across heaven,
Lay down their splendors in its placid heart,
And passing, leave no tremor on its face.

SECOND CANTO: THE TEMPTATION
OF EVE

CHORUS OF THE CORNICE CHERUBIM

The Tree! — Behold the curtain-cloud is cleft!
The Tree, in all its pride and mystery!
 And smiling on its left
Content and Innocence, Self-love and Leth-
 argy;
 And on its right,
 Departing into night —
Anguish, Sin, Death, Love and Eternity!

A SYMBOLIC FIGURE

Sister of an Orient eld,
What read'st thou from that parchment, held
Close to thine eyes, as if thou spelled
Secrets from all else withheld,
Or as, at twilight, thou should squint to see
A form, that moves or stands beyond thy scrutiny?

THE PERSIAN SIBYL

I trace and read, in Time's obscure abysm, —
Where cold Imagination, like a prism,

Darts many-colored beams on the carved
walls, —

The subtle sorceries of scepticism.

I seek — and vainly through the centuries
I sought — a fire, which kindled never dies,
Like that which yonder, 'neath the darkling
Tree
Of Knowledge, burns in Eve's uplifted eyes.

THE FIGURE

Thou, loosened from whose sea-green veil
The auburn tresses lightly trail,
While soft thy mantle's azure pale
Floats round thee, like a filling sail,
Where rests *thy* dreamy gaze, as though, unfurl'd
On some Olympie height, it brooded o'er the world?

THE DELPHIC SIBYL

I dream (and in my dream, I smile)
Of a maid in Melos' isle —

How beautiful she was!

She kept no slave, she wore no crown,
But all the gods from heaven looked down
To see her pass.

Her brow was calm, her limbs were free;
The might of her simplicity

To men seemed more than human :
A Deity ! they cried ; a new
Venus ! — But one, who loved her, knew
That she was Woman.

He wrought her all of marble pure.
He cried : Thy beauty shall endure
When Hellas sleeps in clay.
Behold, O World, thy Womanhood ! —
They smote the statue where she stood,
And hewed the arms away.

They buried her both dark and deep ;
They bade their wives and sisters heap
Mould on her, with their hands : —
She rose like light ! The centuries
Slipped like a garment to her knees,
And still she stands !

THE FIGURE

Sibyl hoar, Enchantress holy,
Giantess of Melancholy,
Tell us —

CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

Hush !

THE SISTINE EVE

THE FIGURE

What awful book
 (As when some rugged hill
 Cleaves with a titan's look)
 Opens beneath thy gaze,
 Where thy vast, pagan face
 Is darkened under
 Night-hues of unreverberating thunder?

CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

Still! O still!
 She is not such
 As tone of mortal song can touch.

THE FIGURE

Speak, Prophetess!
 We fear — we guess —
 What our hearts wait in breathlessness.

THE CUMÆAN SIBYL

“Tarquin! Tarquin!” — Thousand score
 They hailed him god and emperor.
 I entered at his palace door:
 I looked at him —

CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

No more! No more!

THE CUMÆAN SIBYL

I said: I bring thee volumes nine.
 Men name thee lordly and divine:
 Thou *shalt* be — but the price is mine!
 He said: I take no price of thine.

I hurled six volumes in the flame.
 He cried: What price now dost thou name.
 O Prophetess? — I said: The same!
 He frowned; I went the way I came.

He sent for me at set of sun:
 And hast thou burned them all but one?
 And hast no other price? — Nay, none.
 He answered: Then thy will be done!

THE FIGURE

Speak, Sibyl, speak! What was the price
 Which asked so proud a sacrifice?

JUDITH

[*Aside to her maid, who bears the head of Holo-
 fernes on a golden salver*]

Hark what she saith!

THE CUMÆAN SIBYL

The same which yonder, of Eve's eyes,
 The Serpent asks, in Paradise.

JUDITH

I guessed it: — death.

GOLIATH [*to David*]

Death!

* * * * *

FIRST CHERUB

Hark yonder, where from wall to wall, two
Prophets

Converse like oaks in storm across a grove,
One husht in the roar, one vocal in the lull.

SECOND CHERUB

Which one is silent?

FIRST CHERUB

He who, browed benign,
Sits like the Prince of Death, soliloquizing
With the commanding genius of his soul.

SECOND CHERUB

But the other one: What beetling thoughts are
his
Where, like a crag o'erclung by cataracts,
He murmurs deep in the tortuous folds of his
beard?

FIRST CHERUB

Listen !

JEREMIAH

I have likened the Daughter of Zion to a comely
and delicate woman :

The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto
her round about.

They shall pitch their tents against her ; they shall
feed every one in his place.—

*Yea, Eve, men are thy shepherds, and thou like
the Daughter of Zion.*

Prepare ye war against her ! Arise ! let us go up
at noon.

Woe unto us ! for the day goeth away, and the
shadows of evening

Are stretchèd out and afar. Arise ! let us go up
by night,

And let us destroy her palaces. Let us smite the
city that fed us !—

*Yea, Eve, men are thy shepherds, and thou like
the Daughter of Zion.*

ISAIAH

Yet shall they not destroy her ! But their land
shall be named Ignorance.

It shall be no more inhabited, but wild beasts of
the desert shall lie there.

Yea, satyrs shall dance on their hearths, and
dragons crouch in their palaces.

*For the city is stablished, O Eve, where thy
dreaming shall have its fruition.*

Where shall the Ignorant dwell? Yea, where is
the land of their Eden?

The grass thereof shall wither; their heavens be
closed as a scroll;

And all their host shall fall down, as the leaf fall-
eth off from the vine.

*But the city is stablished in Man, where thy
dreaming, O Eve, hath fruition.*

CHORUS OF CHERUBIM

The Tree! The smiling, bitter Tree!
The Tree, in all its pride and mystery!

ADAM [*beneath the Tree*]

Where dost thou look, beloved, O my Bride?

Where dost thou gaze beyond and far away?

Dost thou not feel thy lover at thy side,

And the soft winds of this cerulean day?

Why look'st thou so, beloved, O my Bride?

THE SNAKE

Lift up thine eyes to mine, daughter of God!

Like birds into heaven let them enter in:—

Behold an angel battling with a cloud ;
The angel is Man ; the splendid cloud is Sin ;
The battle is Man's Soul, daughter of God.

ADAM

Let us go forth into our garden, love :
The birds are singing and the beasts awaken.
Dew-laden dreams fall round us from above,
Like almond-bloom, when breezy boughs are
shaken.
Let us go forth into our garden, love !

THE SNAKE

Eat of the fruit of Knowledge, Child of Eden !
Of bitter Knowledge, which hath roots in
death.
Dare with thy dreams — yea, that which is for-
bidden !
For life is but a dream which conquereth
Its coil of slumber. Live, then, Child of Eden !

ADAM

Love, there shall be no thought but Thee and Me
Forevermore. When our two spirits mate,
Time and the world shall do us ministry
And all the stars contribute to our state.
Love, there shall be no joy but Thee and Me.

THE SNAKE

Behold the stars — and Thee and Me forgotten !
 Time and the world and other lovers, trem-
 bling
 At all the beauty still to be begotten ;
 Yea, hark to thine and Adam's sons assem-
 bling
 To hymn thy deed, when Eden lies forgotten.

* * * * *

CHORUS OF MALE PRESENCES

We thirst for life, and the more we thirst
 The swifter the rivers of love outpour
 To quench us ;
 Like the living, leaping waters that burst
 From the Prophet's stroke on the desert's shore,
 They uprise and drench us,
 Yet we thirst the more
 And we joy to thirst,
 For we count the pain a joy to repay us,
 When the power of love, which pants to allay us,
 Quickens again
 And again, as at first,
 The infinite rapture the weak call pain.

And we know — for we have sharpened the dull edge
 Of sense on the sword of the Tree of Knowledge,

And we feel — as Spring feels the sky in the
sod —

That we are the sons of a son of God.
And we kindle from that a divine volition —
The fire of more than a mortal ambition,
The love of a conflict deep and grand
Which only Manhood can understand, —
And we bless the Apple, that erst was accurst,
And our Mother Eve, who bestowed the thirst,
Which vaults, like flame, through spirit and brain,
And courses like vigor through every vein,
In seeking the joys that the weak call pain.

CHORUS OF BOTTICELLI'S WOMEN

We thirst for love, and the more we thirst
The deeper our spirits and limbs are immerst
 In the beauty, that is love's radiance:
Out at our eyes, o'er the tremulous brim
Of our hearts, it beams, as at heaven's rim
 The moon brightens over a lake in a trance;
Till a peace, more lovely than morning light,
Makes us grow like lilies, tall and bright,
 From the banks of Sin, which is Ignorance.

And we take an innocent, shy delight
In the flow of our maiden forms, and the sight
Of our faces, half glimpsed, half recondite,

And the luminous coils of our looping dresses,
Which emulate the beauty of tresses,
And the flower-like grace of our hands; but
these
Are the symbols of inner serenities.

For we know [from that piercing intuition
Which takes from Eve its superb ignition]
And we feel — by the light in each other's eyes —
That we are the daughters of Paradise.
And this sense brings with it a certitude
Of the immortal aim of this mortal feud,
And makes us simply reconciled
With weakness of woman and birth of child,
And makes our souls, in largess, be
Self-renderers to futurity,
With a faith, miscalled fatuity
By those who love beauty less than we,
And a passive joy in the present's good,
And a self-forgetting, understood
By the heart alone of womanhood.
And therefore we bless the divinely human
Heart of Eve, that created us Woman,
And gave us that insight, which can prove
Its faith, that ours — while the planets move —
Are the worship and strength of the men we
love.

CHORUS OF SHAPES IN "THE LAST JUDGMENT"

We are the Phantoms, which the exceeding mad-
ness

Of mortal Ignorance creates in sadness

Out of the clouds of conflict and of pain.

Horror and Hopelessness, amid the gnarring
And knotted tumult of our rabid warring,

Spawn us, and their own Dark devours us
again.

Hateful to others, to ourselves abhorrent,

We fume and wrestle, like a falling torrent

That, fearing, hastens its own overthrow;

Or bleakly blown upon by winds eternal,

Like shadowy spirits strewn on shores infernal,

Downcast, we file in diuturnity of woe.

Far from the lamps of Dawn and pure Orion,

We endure the anarch tortures of Ixion —

Immortal anguish: misery! O pain!

Love, send thy light amid our dim abortions,

To show that we are evanescent portions

Of the Mind's mortal battling for the eternal
gain.

JONAS

Awful and dazzling Loveliness!
 Immortal Render of our mystery!

O World! O orbèd Time!

O Heaven! And does my spirit climb
 Beyond them all, beyond them all — to thee,
 Lady ineffable of Love? — This, this
 It is to love, to dare and to achieve!

Behold, O Eve,

The consummation of thy bitter Tree.
 Look, mighty Mother! Even thou didst con-
 ceive

This son! — Thine insurrection leaps in me,
 An effervescing fire, a piercing foison
 Of keen effulgence! Vision in mine eyes
 Like clouded wine it pours, and in my limbs
 Impenetrating joy, subtler than poison,
 And in mine ears — incomparable hymns!

Yea, like a Charioteer, on whirling Time,

I sit sublime,

And guide, with my majestic left hand,
 The invisible reins of nameless black Despairs
 And haughty Miseries — a chafing band
 That plunge and tremble, like enraged Night-
 mares,
 In the dusk of the Last Judgment; these, like
 steeds,

Propel the triumph of my viewless car,
 And while the purple incense streams from under
 The trampling fleetness of their muffled thunder,
 And while their flanks froth terrors, in bright
 beads,

 To dare the goal
 Of my imperious soul, —
 Still guiding them, as with a god's control,
 Over my splendid shoulder turning
 Mine eyes, in giant yearning,
 Upward, my Mother, upward still to thee
 I gaze for power and love and immortality.

* * * * * * *

THE SNAKE [*to Eve*]

Now canst thou doubt the beauty of thy dream-
 ing?

 Now canst thou doubt the duty of thy deed?
 Eat of the fruit, O Eve! Thou art redeeming
 The race of Adam to their latest seed,
 For Time shall prove the beauty of thy dream-
 ing.

EVE [*taking the Apple from the Snake*]

O ye Wise, love Beauty! All
 Ye Strong, revere Her!

SECOND INTERLUDE

THE SISTINE SPIRIT

Ha! dost thou shake thy slumber off, young
titan?

(Unconscious child no more, for now the dawn
Proclaims the awaking world.) Ah! dost thou
seize

The shadow of my mantle, and in mine eyes
Gaze with an ecstasy of pain and power?
Say, dost thou feel the immitigable blade,
Which sings in the light above the Tree of Knowl-
edge,

Upscorch the loveless impotence within thee,
Ignite thy mind, and scorify thy heart?
What! dost thou reach thy hand thyself to swing
it?

Arise! Go forth! Youth of the centuries,
And wield thy sword in prayer to thy great
Mother!

THIRD CANTO: THE BIRTH OF MAN

CHORUS OF PRESENCES

Eden is fallen !

Man is arisen !

Like a knighted warrior, behold him arise.

Like a waker from slumber,

Like a captive from prison,

He bursts from the bondage of Paradise !

For the Almighty's stroke

Has severed the yoke

Of the beast's contentment and earthward eyes.

SONG OF THE EXPELLING ANGEL

Mine is the stroke Promethean !

The infinite love that burns like ire,

The impregnating might, the conceiving fire,

And the pang that delivers the Birth of Man.

I am the life, whose garment is Death,

And Truth like a lining within is laid,

And him who seeks me I singe with my
blade,

But he weareth the garment and triumpheth.

Adam, depart! My sword's flame, like a torch's,
Reveals thy kingdom consumed and
wrecked,
But the pain that revolts in thine intellect
Is the love that heals in the lightning that
scorches.

CHORUS OF PRESENCES

Eden is fallen!
Man is arisen!
He is burst from the prison
Of Paradise!

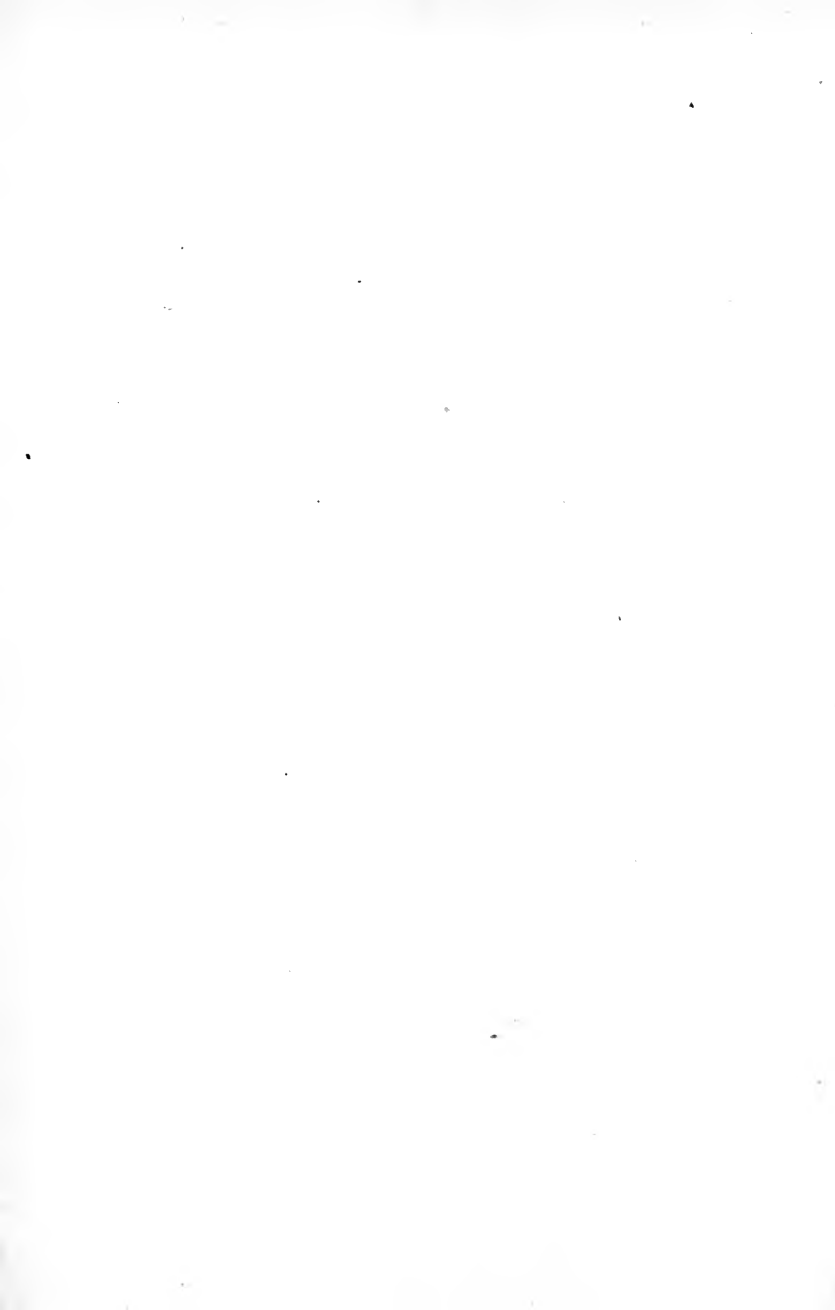
ADAM

Eve, crouch more close to me. I will protect thee.
The hailing fire my sense like anguish sears.
The goal is far — but O! how glorious,
For through the night thine eyes are still the stars.

PART TWO

POEMS LYRICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE

GROUP I



Two song-birds build their nests within my
brain,
And hatch strange broods, each to his own re-
frain;
Ever one sings: "To-morrow,
Sweet Joy!" The other: "Yesterday, sweet sor-
row!"

FRAIL Sleep, that blowest by fresh banks
Of quiet, crystal pools, beside whose brink
The varicolored dreams, like cattle, come to
drink,

Cool Sleep, thy reeds, in solemn ranks,
That murmur peace to me by midnight's
streams,
At dawn I pluck, and dayward pipe my flock
of dreams.

THE ARC LIGHT

I WATCHED an arc light under wind-stirr'd trees
Sleep on the pale green grass, in tender
swoon,
And held my breath thinking the pensive
moon
Was telling there her lucent rosaries.
Light of the Arts! no more by lonely seas
Wandering in naked glory art thou met;
From out our heaven Homer's moon has set,
That lit the love-bowers of the Dryades.

Yet 'neath the conscious vestments Time has
wrought,
The simple Graces love and act the same;
And through the subtle wires of labored thought
The world is lit by heaven's divinest flame,
Till, in the sordid midnight of the poor,
The lamp of Zeus illumines a workman's door.

SHE stood before a florist's window-pane.

Roses peered forth and they were envious
pale,

And lilies, white as cloistered virgin's veil,
Vied with the deep carnations but in vain.

If at her beauty's heart a lethal stain

Were hid, to beauty's face it told no tale.

"Cut flowers [so she read the sign] for
sale;"

Half to herself she murmured it again.

One stopped within the sharp, electric light,

And threw his shadow on her and his eyes,

Nor read those sad concealed analogies

Of which her gorgeous, answering look
was full.

"Cut flowers," and to-morrow they shall blight,

But till to-morrow, God! how beautiful.

I DREAMED a thousand ages, armed with flint
And bone and bronze, were toiling in a mint,
 And sculptured rude to see
On each rough coin they struck was "Poesie."

And now, in that same hall, a mighty wheel,
Revolved incessant by a mob in steel,
 Showers the round gold thence
Stamped with the goddess's head "Conven-
 ience."

LEISURE, kind Leisure, I require !

Leisure, whose snood
Of quiethood

Conceals shy dreams of sage desire :

For Leisure, only Leisure,
Ripens young thought and brings work pleasure.

Dull toil is but a drudge at best ;

Sloth has no profit,

Sleep — still less of it ;

But idle brains are busiest

While Leisure, shyest Leisure,
Ripens young thought and brings work pleasure.

HER eyes are casements clear as dew
For her kindness to look through;
There, behind their crystal, stray
Fairy fancies dressed in gray;
Through the trellis'd lashes, till
Slumber draws the silken blind,
Her quick spirit peeps behind
The pane, or signals from the sill.

IN VENICE

THE Lady of the Sunset,
The Bride of the New Moon,
She lifts her liquid garments
About her silvery shoon,
And as she sways their draperies
The dim stars interwoven
In their dark fabric swing and ripple
Like winds by music cloven.

The Princess of the Olden Isles,
The Enamored of the Sea,
She has glided from her throne of stars
And courtesied, Love, to thee :
Along her smooth and turquoise halls
She glides, and kneels with me
Before thy shrine, with clasped hands,
And bows and prays to thee !

A MATINADE

RISE, sweet signora of the sigh !
The gondola is gliding by.
The queenly Adriatic Sea
Shall hold her mirror, dear, for thee,
Apollo be thy slave, to twine
A fillet for those locks of thine,
And lure the moonlight from thine eyes
To cool the day-star of his skies.
So lady dear, be fleet !

And from your dreamy sighs,
Signora mine, signora sweet,
Arise !

TO A GONDOLA

SWAN of the silver beak and sable breast,
 Stemming the night,
Art thou a bird of song, or bark of quest,
 Or heaven-wandered sprite,
 That in the still moonlight
Makest in palace courts thy liquid nest?

If bird thou be, what swaying skies are these,
 Between two heavens,
That lap thee in their starry lucencies,
 Whilst thou toward unseen havens,
 With plumage like the raven's
Glidest with pinions closed against the breeze?

If bark thou be, what fairy argosies
 Leadest thou on?
What amber port of all the sunset's seas
 Lures thee with music yon?
 What fêtes of Oberon,
Tinkling husht joys, twinkling tranquillities?

A sprite thou art — a spirit without peer !
 A lover's thought
Thou art, and Fancy is thy gondolier,
 Whose gliding vision, fraught
 With song and love, gleams but
An instant in life's dark, only to disappear.

“IN THE STILL CAMPAGNA.”

IN the still campagna,
When no birds were singing,
'Mid the undulating
Little hills and hollows
Pied with starred mosaic,
There I stopped and pondered.

Right against the azure
Of the Alban mountains,
Rose an overwhelming
Gaunt and eyeless ruin:
Eyeless, but the sockets
Stared on me in sadness.

Loneliness then clutched me
Like a chill at noonday;
Terrors of old Cæsars
Taught me a new heartache
Where those walls still on me
Stared with a stark blindness.

“How! old earthy phantom,
Hast thou, then, no solace

When the burning sunbeam
Chars thy skull like Cyclops' ?
None? No inner vision,
Thoughts that hymn like Homer's?"

Hardly had I ceased when
Sudden from the knollside,
Or perhaps from heaven,
Through that hollow, lidless
Ruin flying, rose a
Flock of songbirds, singing.

Love, you are my nature !
When by lonely broodings
Long on mortal anguish
I stand blinded, swift and
Sweet from lyric fountains,
Dart then through my sadness
Songbirds of your soul !

EARLY MAY IN NEW ENGLAND

STRAWBERRY-FLOWER and violet
Are come, but the wind blows coldly yet;
And robin's-egg skies brood sunny chill
Where hyacinth summer sleeps under the hill
 And the frog is still.

Applebloom floats on the warm blue river,
But white shad-blossoms ripple and shiver,
And purple-grackle pipes till his blithe heart
 grieves,
For his gladdest songs, through the little elm-
 leaves,
 Are but make-believes.

EARLY APRIL IN ENGLAND

ACROSS the moist beam of the cloud-rimmed sun,
The larks run up in ecstasies of Spring,
And little feathered flutes of melody,
The yellow-ammers, pipe along the hedges.

The sheep, half basking in the golden blaze,
Half shivering in the gray, engulfing shadows,
Browse on the faint-green hills; the chilly wind
Ruffles the white geese on the rippled pond.

SONG

SPRING is Shakspeare's garden! —
 In May, to the lover's mind,
 Every rose is a Rosalind
And every wood an Arden.
Hark! "Phœbe! Phœbe! Phœbe!"
 Sylvius! Can it he be?

HOLIDAY

WHAT is so free
As a child in its glee,
Or a bird on the tree!
A jumping boy
Is a wave of joy;
Little girls,
That gayly pass
With flying curls
Across the grass,
The soul unclog:
And oh a sight
Of rare delight
Is a running shepherd dog!

THE KATYDID

THOU husky raven of the insect race,
 Who hintest — hid by darkness from espial —
Of some poor maid's disgrace,
 Cease this asseveration and denial!
Whatever the black blame, will it abate it
Thus to incessant rasp and iterate it?
If Katy *did* the dark deed, let *her* state it.

THE CRICKET

HARK to the fairy linnet —
 How reticent he sings !
Sings, stops; then, in a minute,
He'll re-begin it,
 Then stop again.

The sunset is his dawn :
 When day is over,
 He pipes a delicate strain
Beneath the tiger-lilies, by the lawn,
 Or, from the top boughs of the tallest clover,
Outpours his Lilliputian carollings.

At night, I prayed for sleep; instead
The Muse came, rummaging my head
For rhymes. Again I craved the dews
Of sleep; they fell — upon the Muse.

WITH A ROSE

TO S. A. D.

A ROSE —

From lovely Rhodope's remotest time —
The poets chose
To instil a lovelier meaning in their rhyme.

A friend
Is subtler than a poet. Friendship knows
A way to lend
A finer fragrance even to the rose.

STANZAS

TO THE BURNISHED GRAIN OF AN OLD-FASHIONED
MAHOGANY TABLE

AURORAL tempest on an auburn sea,
 Scourged by the spectres of unmoving wind,
Still storm, dumb gale, immured immensity,
 Dark thunderer upon the shores of mind,
 Spirit of oceans! — here thou art confined
In beauty and in silence. Rive thy locks
 Tumultuous, till thy bronze waves foam in
 glory,
 Writhe on till thou art hoary,
The hush-air'd chamber shall not feel thy shocks,
Nor thy smooth polished shore thereby be under-
 mined.

Wild harrier of the mad atmospheres,
 Whose looks are lightnings, who hath cap-
 tured thee
And poured in wood this sunny wrath of tears?
 Who else but mirror-cinctured Nature, she
 That lurks by rivers and the placid sea

To prison-in the silent-roaring thunders
 With pomp pictorial. In such still state
 Art thou incarcerate,
And Time, whose sitting worketh mellow won-
 ders,
Thy jailer sits, in cell of dark mahogany.

The terrors of the guessed invisible
 Are worse than seen calamities; the eye
Beholds not here the famine-screeching gull,
 The ear knows not the night-wreck'd sea-
 man's cry,
 Yet may the fancy hear his monody
Sung by the mermaids of those amber deeps,
 Beneath whose burnished and congealèd
 waves
 A lurid dragon raves,
Whose dropping eye with ruddy tinctures steeps
That marvel-teeming world in strange mortality.

Tempestuous sea, dash on! Roar on, dim tides,
 That come, or go, or stay, — we are not
 stirred;
The dark-descending simoon o'er thee glides,
 But to the wooden'd sense it moans are surd.
Even while we gaze, our inward eyes — grown
 blurr'd, —

Behold thee for illusion, that reproves

Our reason's folly, till we ask: why should

We sympathize with wood?

Yea, thou art like a passionate heart that loves:

Wildly it beats upon the world, but is not heard.

SUNSET

BEHOLD where Night clutches the cup of heaven
And quaffs the beauty of the world away!
Lo, his first draught is all of dazzling day;
The next he fills with the red wine of even
And drinks; then of the twilight's amber, seven
Deep liquid hues, seven times, superb in ray,
He fills—and drinks; the last, a mead pale-
gray
Leaves the black beaker gemmed with starry
levin.

Even so does Time quaff our mortality!
First, of the effervescing blood and blush
Of virgin years, then of maturity
The deeper glow, then of the pallid hush
Where only the eyes still glitter, till even they —
After a pause — melt in immenser day.

FOR F. J. L.

THE flower shall fade, not the spirit
Which gave to it being;
That has finer forms to inherit
Beyond our mere seeing.

Oh, why does the lily seem fair?
For seeing? for smelling?
Or is it that Ariel there
Has found him a dwelling?

Stale flowers for me shall not sere,
If you do but give them;
Slight thoughts for me shall be dear,
If you but conceive them.

TO M. AND M. L.

I CANNOT think good-by;
How can I say it?
My heart's debt lies too nigh
For words to pay it.

Bright cloud, that flingest wide
The heaven's wonder,
Dark cloud, and dim hillside,
And far-voiced thunder,

Soft breeze, that ringest clear
The sweet day's knell,
Sad bird, that singest near, —
Speak my farewell!

BALLAD

I

YOUNG rider and steed they dash on through the
dusk,
And the fog gathers gray as the mould on the
husk,
And the froth on the flank is like foam on the flood
Where the brown stream pours panting through
dark underwood.

“But what of the night, love, and what of the
miles,
When the morning shall break in my true love’s
own smiles?
Oh, I’d ride the white charger that neighs from the
sea
To the edge of the world, if she waited for me!”

Dim head in the doorway it hears him dash by,
And the cold smile curls keen, and the laugh
lights the eye:

“Ye’ll hae off wi’ your league-boots and love by
the sea
When your bonny hair’s white and ye’re wiser
like me.”

II

The flare’s in the chimney, the song’s on the
crane,
And the maiden sits watching the fog on the
pane,
And the hot glowing hearthlight is cosey and dry,
But the warm light that’s tender’s the light in her
eye.

“Nay, granny, I’ll just take a step from the sill,
For the twilight is cold, and the mist hides the
hill,
And fain would I warm the whole world with my
heart
To comfort thee — O my dear love — where thou
art!”

“Ye’ve let the winds in, lass; the candle is out!
Now God send ye wisdom, whate’er ye’re about!
The parritch is cold, lass, that erst was sae hot:
When ye’re older ye’ll be a deal wiser, I wot!”

III

There's a leap in the mist; there's a voice in the
night;

There's a step that is heavy with one that is light:

“Ah, *love*, dear, is wisdom, and wisdom is this:

The seals of your sages — they melt with a kiss!”

EVEN as an infant fingers the crisp sheet
And crumples it, the more his milk is sweet,
So we, with restive hands, in happy sleep
Enact vague deeds on Nature's cover-slip.

A CHILD

BRIEF Revelation of enduring Truth,

 Frail snowflake in the silent storm of God,
Scarce lighting on the swallow-wing of youth
 Ere wafting down to dew the pregnant sod,

Infant! or Angel else — thine innocence

 Is as a crystal, wherethrough men may see
The seedling's might, the star's magnificence,
 And of our common day the mystery.

More, it enkindles might; and like the pure
 Polished convex of a bright burning-glass,
Binds the wild hues and lightnings, which perdure
 In love as heaven, and in concentric mass

Ignites by them the unfeeling dross of nature
To conflagrations heavenly in stature.

BABY PANTOMIME

SERENE, he sits on other shores

 Than ours: with wide, unconscious lands
He holds strange speech, or, silent, pores

 On denizens of viewless strands;
On tablets of the air weird scores

 He writes, and makes, with eager hands,
As strange erasements; then, two-fisted, stores
 An elfin hour-glass with heavenly sands.

THE FIRST TOOTH

DEAR babe, that this should be! Whence should
this come? —

This horny 'scutcheon of an eld orang,
Where through the tender coral of thy gum
The wee, sly beast has peeped his prying
fang:

Colossal meditation! Can this be
The cropping of that seed which Cadmus
sowed?

Or that gaunt emblem of mortality
Under the sickle, on our earth-abode?

Forbid it, heaven! 'Tis but the nursling thorn
That nestles near the bloom of every rose,
The curling holly-leaf's keen-sharded horn,
The stubborn shield of beauty's frail repose,

The official mace of angels: even as the Lord
Guarded the grace of Eden with a sword!

THE DESERTED STEEDS

MIDWAY the silent parlor plain
The iron horses stand, nor turn,
But like the yoke that Putnam left,
Await, mid-field, their lord's return.

There they have stood since yestereve —
Nor champed, nor broke their traces — till
The moon looked in the western blind,
Till morn peeped o'er the eastern sill.

Then strides their lord to field again
To crack his whip and drive his teams,
Back from the far campaigns of sleep,
The baby Bunker Hill of dreams.

THE CHILD AND SLEEP

THIS baby brow, like a smooth handkerchief,
Has in the night been ironed white and even,
And all these little limbs, beyond belief,
Are like sweet garments, fresh prepared in
heaven

To clothe the littlest angel loved by Mary.
Who was it smoothed these rose-habiliments
Of childhood? — Sleep, a gentle nurse, and fairy,
Who folds the crumplings of our discontents,

And lines Day's chest with viewless lavender
To sweeten all the vestments of our care.
All Nature's tired children turn to her
For renovation; for she can repair
The outworn body, from her secret scrip,
And minds outworn seek her physicianship.

SUMMER SONG

THE cricket is chirring,
The tree-toad is purring,
 The busy frog pipes,
The beetle is whirring,
 And curled in his nest,
 'Mid the night dew of rest,
My wee one is stirring.

*Then quick, Fairy Hummer,
Lull my newcomer
 Rosy and deep
 In sleep, soft sleep,
'Mid the sweets of the summer.*

The stars at bo-peeping
Like white lambs are leaping
 On the hills of the dark
In the Good Shepherd's keeping:
 Their wool is like silk,
 And they pour their bright milk
For my little one's sleeping.

Then hush, Fairy Hummer!
Kiss my newcomer,
And cradle him deep
In sleep, soft sleep,
'Mid the sweets of the summer.

FIRE WORSHIP

A POPPY, all on fire with beauty's beams,
 Outburned the glamour of the liquid bar
 Of sunlight where it swam, diffusing far
The brilliance of its spiritual streams:
A chalice, spilled on some blood-stained trireme's
 Prow, in libation to the sanguine star,
 The ritual cup of dread Dyauspitar,
Brimmed with the wine of its own opiate dreams.

Before that shrine, in mute idolatry, —
 A little Gangean god, an orient
 Cupid, rose-flushed with infant wonder-
 ment —
The baby gazed, and reached in rhapsody
His small, translucent hands, while silently
 From flower to face a rubiate nimbus went.

PLASTIC Fancies, form a mould:
Fill it, Heart, with burning gold:
Break it, Love, when life is cold.

When the shard is struck away,
There shall stand — where once was clay —
Beauty, till the Judgment-day!

THE UNSAID

THE forms sublime, the moods elate,
That rise within the poet's reach,
May never transubstantiate
Their glowing ardors into speech.

Yet sweet — although we fail in words —
To feel the changed, creative light
That gleams on nature's fields and herds,
Cast by a sun of inner sight,

While burst upon the exultant brain
Visions of grandeur and of grace.
He gazes more serene on men
Who looks the Muses in the face.

I WATCHED a drama, sitting in the wings,
And heard the plaudits of eternal things:
 But when the Prompter bawled
My name, I failed my cue — nor was recalled.

ALL joys, familiar and divine,
All satisfactions fail, save thine,
 Contemplation !
Ambitions climb and fall ;
Love, and Hope, his thrall,
Pity, and our noblest passions pall ;
 Yea, one and all,
 Each one.

Not Venus, wreathed with bloom and vine,
Glows with rapture like to thine —
 Meditation !
The rose can never be
Sweet as our revery
About her. Lord, each deity
 Bows down to thee,
 Each one.

WHEN subtle passion makes me slave
 And leads me, in her golden chain,
Where dazzling legions of the grave
 Troop in her spurious beauty's train,
 Poetry, make then thy sign —
 Lord and Sovereign divine !

The beast wears still his tusk and snout ;
 Man merely has dispensed with these.
The satyr leeringly looks out
 Behind the mask of Socrates ;
 Thou only art of heavenly line,
 Lord and Sovereign divine !

When, therefore, orient-vestured Sin
 Holds her usurping court in me,
Set thy white torch aflame within
 Her palace walls, O Poetry,
 And on their ashes build thy shrine,
 Lord and Sovereign divine !

THE SLINGER

I

A BOY, who stoops upon a green hillside,
Where he has climbed, exhilarant and flushed,
And picks up a flat stone, shell-shaped and
smooth —

A piece of splitty slate, or curved feldspar —
Scanned with the relish of an expert eye,
And fits it in the hollow of his hand,
And sways his body for the joyous fling —
How wondrously he shoots it through the air!
How pent with song it soars into the blue
Stored with the frenzy of his boyish whim,
Skims the sunk summit of the tallest pine,
Rounds, dips, tacks, turns, then, twirling, soars
again,

Catching the sunlight like a swallow's wing;
Then, like the last dip of a 'cellist's bow,
Or a ground-sparrow, slacking to its nest,
Slants the long slope, and dives in to the vale.

Not more inspired the pebble David slung!
 A stone, a lump, a clot of hardened loam,
 Yet, in an instant's metamorphosis,
 It leaps to beauty like a work of God —
 A lyric thing, a fellow of the lark,
 Breathing a moment's immortality —
 Then sinks to silence and the loam it left.

II

Whose was the hand which flung me into breath?
 Whose was the whim or purpose of that deed? —
 Flung in the dizzy zenith of clear mind,
 Whirled in the cloudy vortex of dark will,
 On, on — projectile of a deathless youth,
 Poised with his sling upon the brow of heaven —
 Skimming, and skimmed by other whizzing clay,
 Skipped in the sun to caper caracoles,
 What is of man the ultimate Goliath,
 Giant of Ill, whom he must batter down
 That Saul the Right may reign? What is man's
 goal?
 Or — mindful of the grim analogy —
 What stricken pine, forgotten in the forest
 That skirts the valley underneath Time's hill,
 Shall mark his accidental tumbling-tomb?

LIFE SAID TO DEATH

LIFE said to Death: 'Brother,
Who was our mother?
Did not One who bore us
Make the world for us:
Were we not twin-born?
What hast thou, then, inborn
Lordlier, vaster,
That thou playest master?
By what right or merit
Dost thou inherit
Earth's beautiful riches?

Answer me: Which is
The world's more deserving —
The served, or the serving?
Thou art a depender
On me, yet a spender
Of all my dear earnings,
Rhapsodies, yearnings.

I build, thou breakest;
I bring, and thou takest;
I save, thou lavishest;
I love, and thou ravishest.

Deaf and disdainful,
Thou leavest me baneful —
Curst all I care for.
Answer me: Wherefore?

O, say that thy spendings
Are used in befriendings;
That 'neath barbarity
Thou workest in charity,
To joy givest feeling,
And a quick healing
To pain's slow cancer.
O, loosen the tied knot
Of silence, and answer! —'

But Death replied not.

OLD Age, the irrigator,
Digs our bosoms straighter,
More workable and deeper still
To turn the ever-running mill
Of nights and days. He makes a trough
To drain our passions off,
That used so beautiful to lie
Variegated to the sky,
On waste moorlands of the heart —
Haunts of idleness, and art
Still half-dreaming. All their piedness,
Rank and wild and shallow wideness,
Desultory splendors, he
Straightens conscientiously
To a practicable sluice
Meant for workaday, plain use.
All the mists of early dawn,
Twilit marshes, being gone
With their glamour, and their stench,
There is left — a narrow trench.

As children fling bright silver in the sea
To watch it shine and sink there, so do we
 Our treasures of wrought rhyme
And marble toss amid the surge of time.

GROUP II

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

OUT of the 'obscure wood' and ominous way
Which are our life, to that obscurer sea
Whose margin glooms and gleams alter-
nately
With storm and splendor of the shrouded spray —
He has departed. Our familiar day,
His elm-hushed, ivied walks, no more shall
see
That radiant smile of austere courtesy:
On Shady Hill the mist hangs cold and gray.

He has departed hence, but not alone:
Still in his steps, where golden discourse
burns,
To Virgil now he speaks, and now he turns
Toward Allighieri in calm undertone,
Holding with modest tact his path between
The Mantuan and the mighty Florentine.

FRANCIS JAMES CHILD

How fain we conjure back his face ! How fain
As, bowed with musings long on elvish lore,
He clutched his satchel at the class-room
door

And shot the quick "Good-morning, gentlemen,"
From under the bronze curls, and entered. Then
For us that hour of quaint illusion wore
Such spell as when, beside the Breton shore,
The wizard clerk astounded Dorigen.

For we beheld the nine-and-twenty ride
Through those dim aisles their deathless pil-
grimage,
Lady and monk and rascal laugh and chide,
Living and loving on the enchanted page,
Whilst, half apart, there murmured side by side
The master-poet and the scholar-mage.

TO GEORGE PIERCE BAKER

THE ghosts of Praise-God Barebones and his
clan

Still walk, and with their old acerbity
Infect us; even the University
Is haunted still, and the sparse Puritan,
Turned Prospero, has made a Caliban
Of human passion, and wild Poesie
Pinched in an oak to starve, and Mimicry
And all her kindred Muses put to ban.

Yet not so now at Harvard; there betakes
Him now the scholar-player, with his Muse
(That deathless wench, the Mermaid) and
renews

His vows, and breaks his fast, and is
restored

By our own Baker. — May the loaves he bakes
Soon pile a feast at Master Shakspeare's
board!

TO WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY

MOODY, our time is glad of you; 'tis given

(After exotic, ineffectual blows)

For you, a poet, with sure blade of prose
Keen from the artist's scabbard, to have riven
Our specious theatre from its roof-beam even
Unto the pit of smugness, to disclose
The emancipated desert's wild repose —
The new-world gladness of our native heaven.

Henceforth we cannot be the same; for us
Americans, because of you, the tide
Dramatic turns to seek its heritage
Splendidly homeward to ourselves; our
stage
Is cleft: between its pusillanimous
And daring goals stands now the Great Divide.

TO THE SAME, AFTER SEVERE ILL-
NESS

Now that you are come up from the hush vale
Whose crumbling verge hugs close the dread-
named stream,
And we, for whom your sojourn there did
seem
A time intolerable, may inhale
Glad breath to greet you on the old firm trail
Of health again, still that suspense extreme
Pervades our deep thanksgiving, like a dream
Of Him whose thin hand felt the sanguine nail.

For not alone the sentient personal
Pang that was spared compels our gratitude,
But that contagious loss which would
have spread,
Unknown, to those who knew you not, through
all
The after-time; but now, that dread sub-
dued,
With victory life girds you, garlanded.

TO GEORGE GREY BARNARD

HEWER of visions from our human clay,
Hewer of man's strong soul in sentient stone,
Of maiden limbs, like breath of flowers new-
blown,
Of mighty loins, girded in giant fray,
Of hearts that wrestle, vanquish, fall and pray —
Hail to you, dauntless Hewer! Not alone
Your arm is raised to shape the vast un-
known:
A nation's sinews hold that arm in sway.

Though from Carraran hills, by alien hands,
Those forms of plastic vision are unfurled,
Yet in their glowing, marble chastities
America in naked splendor stands
Inviolatè, and looms across the world —
Labor's impassioned apotheosis.

TO AUGUSTUS FRANZÉN¹

HAD poet Geoffrey been a painter then
In Richard's days, he would have painted
true,

Healthful and bold and beautiful, like you
Franzén, large-souled, sure-handed. Had Fran-
zén,

Painter in oils, wielded an English pen
To-day as artist, he would limn anew
Even such a clear-eyed Canterbury view
As Chaucer limned of nature and of men.

So, when I watch, anew, my little son
Take breath beneath your brush, and pout
again
His arch and fresh-eyed innocence, I
stand

Silent, and take your hand in mine, as one
Who, in Old London, or Velasquez' Spain,
Held in his own a living master's hand.

¹ With a copy of "The Canterbury Pilgrims."

TO J. E. F.

Is this our common world of weariness —
 The narrow stream we fume and struggle in?
 Soft as a sleeping ocean and serene
The quivering city slumbers, measureless
Under the moon: the roaring paths men press
 By day, are sweet with silences, akin
 To dying murmurs of a violin:
Such magic has the moon to calm and bless.

The mind, too, has its moonlight, which can
 steep
 Time's sordid commonplace in harmony
 That heals pain with oblivion, and the
 scar
Of garish strife with beauty, and the deep
 Rebellions of the soul with sympathy:
 Such might has quiet friendship's mystic
 star.

THE HILL-SPIRIT

TO R. B.

RIBBED like a conch and ruddy through the dark
The frail wedge of his horn-clear tepee glows
Above the pasture-cliff, warm with the rose
Light of its own live heart: outside the stark
Grove clicks the wampum of its frozen bark
Against the starry cold; a shadow shows
Tall in the tepee's slit; then in the snows
Valeward husht moccasins imprint their mark.

Blithe with the wonder of their home wood-fire
The hillside children, rapt in fairy lore,
Hark suddenly his footstep: giant-
geared,
He stands before them; then upon the floor
Seated beside them, like an immortal sire,
Laughs — with one great hand tangled
in his beard.

TO R. E. F.

ARCH twinklings of the quaint wood-smile of Pan,
Far-trembling, golden lights from Jason's
fleece,
And lyric breathings from the lutes of Greece,
And gentle ardencies from old Japan,
With whatsoever blithe, Arcadian,
And simply wise accord with such as these,
Are blent in you to one true Yankee piece,
Keen, classic, laughter-brewing, Keatsian.

By forum, Alp and oriental fane
(As varied climes color the song-bird's
wings)
On you far paths and fair imaginings
Have traced their retrospects; yet, if
there be
One word by which to conjure you up plain,
That fine home-word is Hospitality.

TO E. H. S.

BRIGHT in the dark of sleep all night till morn
The henchmen dreams about my bed did sit
And looked on me, with their strange torches
lit;

And one was passionate, and one was lorn,
And one, that fingered his bronze beard in scorn,
Scowled at another's smile of tranquil wit;
And all were dreams of heroes yet unwrit
In dramas high, and pageants yet unborn.

O happy knight! immortal retinue!

What may we not, when morning breaks,
achieve!

The morning breaks — ah, pale and strengthless
crew!

Who now shall in your mighty forms believe?

Dear friend and host, even you! My dreams

I leave,

(Those happy dreams) to serve and honor you.

GROUP III

FAIR is the foreground of her soul
 With mirth and domesticity,
And vistas far, through cottage vines,
 Of a storm-lit, pagan sea.

A bluebird nests beneath the porch,
 A hidden song-sparrow, hard-by,
Sings near the ground; but overhead
 A gull's wing glitters high.

Rose-fragrance dreams along the hedge,
 Wild sea-tangs drift from off the wave,
And girlish trebles sweetly pierce
 The eternal ocean-stave.

My love was freshly come from sea
The morning she first greeted me :
The salt mist's tang, the sunny blow
Had tinged her cheeks a ripening glow.

She bowed to me with all the ease
Of meadow-grasses in the breeze,
And yet her look seemed far away
Amid the splendors of the spray.

Her step was vigorous and free
As maiden's in the Odyssey ;
And when she laughed, I heard the tunes
Of rushes in the windy dunes.

An air so limitless, an eye
So virgin in its royalty —
Hers was a spirit and a form
That took my inland heart by storm.

I felt an impulse, an unrest,
And secret tides within my breast
Flowed up, with silent, glad control,
And drew the rivers of my soul.

THE soft rains are falling
 On wild rose and vine;
The far winds are calling
 To foreland and pine;

The big wave is rocking
 The gull on its breast;
The surges are knocking
 With joyous unrest;

There's a spirit in the sky, love,
 That pants for the sea,
But the heart that beats nigh, love,
 Beats higher for thee!

SHE was a child of February,
Of tree-top gray and smother'd stream,
Of cedar and the marsh rosemary,
Of snowbird and the sunset's dream.

A frozen brook that, April-eyed,
Sings soft beneath its silver fretting,
Her lyric spirit soon belied
The ice of her New England setting;

Till on a day when sudden thaw
Rent all her snowy chains asunder,
The impassioned sun beheld with awe
Her heart of deep Italian wonder.

Still Nature has described her best,
Veiled in those February skies,
With summer singing in her breast,
And April laughing in her eyes.

I HEARD the waves exulting in their power,
 Their unpaced leagues of dim immensity,
Their splendors and their thunders and their
 dower
 Of heaven's far glory, and I thought: — the
 sea,
 The sea is mighty! Yet, O Love, to me
Who sought a symbol, meagre was that might
 Which was encliffed and shored, for vaster be
The tides of love; not beach nor beacon-light
Marks where their surges clasp the misty infinite.

MAID-MARINER

THE ragged clouds are all a-rout,
 And the white gulls reel like swallows,
And the billowy herds, at Triton's shout,
 Plunge snorting down the hollows,
And my heart is with the storms a-stir
 For Marian, my maid-mariner.

The spray is whiffed by the sneezing wind
 Where the dory's prow is ducking,
And souging where the cliff is brined
 The seaweed-cows are sucking,
And the wild-duck flocks begin to whirl,
 Marian, maid-mariner !

Then come with me to the green salt tides
 When the storms have slipt their traces,
And the live blood vaults in our glowing sides,
 And the winds flap in our faces,
And hearken to my heart's harbinger,
 Marian, maid-mariner !

O, if the world were all a bark,
 And wishes all were true, love,
With one blithe maiden I'd embark —
 Her captain and her crew, love —
And sail the world away with her:
 My Marian, maid-mariner !

OUT of the drenched and leafless night, my dear,
 Entering to you — like hot-haste March I feel,
Who bows before the beauty of the year,
 And spurns presumptuous Winter with his
 heel.

My thoughts are like pied cattle on the hills,
 Browsing the pale green slants, through silt-
 ing mist
That laps the verdant uplands, and far fills
 The valleys where the parted woods have
 kisst.

Scarce can I see them for the purpling rain
 That drives across the pastures, where they
 loom
Beyond the hedges of my shrouded brain,
 Herding the solemn sunset of my gloom.

O Fancy, be my eager-lung'd Boy-Blue,
 And blow upon your dewy echo-horn
A blast to call them home to me and you
 Out of the eerie meads and magic corn;

For they shall yield us white abundance of
Their milk, for me to bring unto my love.

WHEN beauty ripens newly in old sheaves,
Wears purple 'mid the vine's cold penury,
And hides young blushes in age-altered leaves,
I take one more excuse to think of thee,

Conceiving this: the harvest's mellow gold
Shall gleam, though faded harvests feed the
swine;

The sheaf's bright glance shall shine in brandies
old,

The dark grape's splendor glisten in the wine.

So, too, when thou art withered from the earth,
And loveliness no habitation finds
In thy beloved form, yet shall thy worth
Still glow with living lustre in men's minds.

O then to be thy vintager I ask,
And every verse of mine thy beauty's flask!

WHEN first the pussy-willow shows
 Her fairy muffs of gray,
While still amid the poplar tree
The blithe, familiar chickadee
His morning suet gratis gets, —
When first the consternating crows
Break on the winter-keen repose
 Of February day
 Their strident cawings,
Startling with Stygian silhouettes
 The virgin snows
 To wake, and with faint thawings,
 Like speech half-audible,
Murmur of spring, until we houslings feel —
 Or dream we feel — the breath
 Of blowing violets,
That start where the old oak-leaf floats to death,
 At such a time —
On this your birthday morning, winter-weary,
 Once more the stealing rhyme
Runs up within my heart, to greet you, dearie.

For now through all of nature that we love
A vernal change, like love's, has late begun;

The northing sun
That nightly from Ascutney shall remove
Farther its setting, fills
The valley-chalice of the Cornish hills
With wine of warmer splendors; by woodways
Those spurting flames of blue, the jays,
Less oft the eye and ear amaze,
Mock musical, with gong-like throat,
Ringing the red-wing'd blackbird's note;
More seldom sounds the frosty axe,
And by the rabbit-run
Our quaint embroideries of snowshoe tracks
Grow softly blurred and charr'd
On their south edgings, while the logging-bells
Tinkle less coldly through the hemlock dells,
Or cease, amid snow-muffled lumber-stacks,
Where sledges come to "Whoa!" in the mill-yard.

Therefore, because this lovely season leaves,
Like all else, only memory to take
Joy of its vestiges, now for the sake
Of fleet delights that never may return,
Watch, dear, with me, where, 'neath the dropping
eaves

The iris-dewed icicles burn and burn,
Till beauty on our minds indelibly
Shall brand her image, bright with mutability.

STEEP ran the hill-road out of the wood:

Lambent, below us
Flushed in the valley
Snow-colored twilight —
Black isles of pine.

Hushed the cold tinklings, shuddered the sleigh:

Round the horizon,
Keen and auroral,
Burned on the hill-lines
Inexpressible rose.

Snorted the silvery breath of the horse:

Into the silken
Quivering silence,
Slid like a snowflake
Saint Agnes' moon.

A BIRTHDAY

(FOR S. S. P.)

SEVENTY years !

What memories are the peers
Of such a service ! Who shall send
Awed messengers into the vast of mind
To summon them ? Or who shall find
And herald their grand reticence ? — If hours
Are sometimes epochs, if there are
Minutes, which rise like Babylonian towers
Above time's sordid plain, who shall declare
The grandeur of this life ? What angel compass
it ?

Not words, but smiles and tears
Can hail, with homage fit,
Those seventy years.

ONCE more Chopin and Mendelssohn
Have conjured you, sweet Mother!
How playfully you charmed the one,
How pensively the other,
As, standing tiptoe on the stair,
I watched your waving golden hair!

Again I watch the flashing keys —
A dreamy boy, dear Mother,
Climbing to bed by slow degrees;
Again my sobs I smother
Where, hid beneath the muffling spread,
The heavenly music fills my head.

The heavenly music fills again
My heart with childhood, Mother,
And stirs with blended bliss and pain
Yearning I cannot smother:
A husht, tear-blinded ecstasy
Of mingled love and memory.

Only Chopin, or Mendelssohn,
None holier, and none other,
Can paint for me, with magic tone,
Your portrait, lovely Mother:
That face, amid the golden hair,
Forever young and debonair!

FOR A CHILD CONVALESCENT

BITTER death,
Blind heart-ache,
 Now that you are gone,
How distracting-dear you make
This soft breath, this ease-drawn breath
 Of my beloved one.
 Sing, Spring!
 Be gracious, weather!
 My love and I and you are together.

Budding boughs,
Pale blue skies,
 What if you had come
Senseless to her sealèd eyes,
Impotent her sleep to rouse,
 All your songbirds dumb!
 Sing, Spring!
 Be grateful, weather!
 My love and I and you are together.

Mighty God,
Thou in grace
 That didst Death deter:
Lovely is Thy tranquil face
In the sunlight or the sod,
 Loveliest in her.

Sing, Spring!
 Bring, wind,
 Soft weather —
 Long and kind.
Sing, Spring!
 Wing, Song,
 On lark's feather —
 Silver-lined.

Bring along,
 Wind,
 Kind song and weather,
Singing high —
High on lark's wing —
My love and I
 In love and Spring
 My love and I are together!

HALFWAY the climbing rose of Infancy —
 With tears for dew-drops shining on its thorns,
 Lit by the Mother-smile of peaceful morns,
All pink in bloom, with now a golden bee,
Burrowed in kisses, to hum lullaby,
 And now a shower, that intermits and warns
 The birds to carol 'twixt the thunder's horns,
Robin of babyhood, thy nest I see.

Babe of the birds, when from thy rosy source
 Thou shalt upclimb to boyhood's ruddier
 charm,
The brooks shall mock thy boisterous discourse,
 The skies uplift thy shout, where, held from
 harm,
Thou shalt disport on the big world's battered
 torse
 Like Bacchus on the Elgin Hermes' arm.

CATHLEEN

My Cathleen of the wilding curl
And roguish yellow ringlet,
Oh, are you but a budding girl,
Or cherub clipt of winglet?

I kissed you, clambering at my knee,
All dimpled, shy and darling,
When every glance you shot at me
Flew like a starling.

You sang to me from printless books
Of tree-top-boughs a secret
So hushed, that in my heart those looks
Of baby wonder speak yet.

Of pussy-cat — the chucklehead!
An epic you told after,
Till porch and lawn and garden-bed
Caught that clear laughter.

You kissed me then — Ah, twinging joy!
Cathleen, that I might hover
About your steps, a golden boy,
To grow your golden lover.

Your lover! Nay, I scorn his name,
Far rather, oh, far rather
I'll live, to thwart him, what I am:
His someday sweetheart's — father.

A BABY it was, or a bird :

'Twas hard to tell at a guessing ;

For the only tidings I heard —

Save a lullaby low and caressing —

Was a bunting out on a bough

Calling: *Quick, quick, quick, have you seen
her ?*

And a chickadee, perched on the mow,

Singing: *Christy, Christy, Christina !*

Not a bird, but a baby she is !

So cuddly and quaint and surprising :

As fresh as sweet clover to kiss,

More rosy and blithe than sunrising.

And her brother *he* was the bird

Calling: *Quick, quick, quick, have you seen
her ?*

And her sister the songster I heard

Singing: *Christy, Christy, Christina !*

BE merry, dear, for merry is the while,
And let Mirth make a ladder of thy woes
Whereon thy thoughts may mount unto thy
smile —
As fairies climb by briars to the rose.

THOU art the still-renewing spring
For poesie's replenishing.
By thy brink, like Rachel, stands
Beauty pensive: in her hands
Poised, she holds her artless pitcher;
Her own reveries bewitch her
Where she bends, with maiden start,
To fill it faultless at thy heart.

But I — poor stumbler with verse-vessels,
Worn rhyme-thin by fancy's pestles,
Stub my toe with too much longing
And break — what I should catch the song in.

I SAW white fields and shadows gray
 And clouds the low sun lurked behind;
A quiet seemed to tint the day
 With fainter colors of the mind,
 For all of nature to my sight
 Was tempered by an inner light.

The winter sun set clear as wine,
 A silent star stole to its place,
And still, beneath a glooming pine,
 She stood, with visionary grace
 Watching the sky: I could not speak;
 The words that faltered were too weak.

My voice was smothered in my eyes;
 I gazed — and what so changeless sweet
(Since Love has twined our destinies)
 As when, in retrospection fleet,
 All after-visions I forget,
 And dream that I am gazing yet.

THE perfect rose has but a paltry fruit;
 The gracious summer but a garish end;
And May's sweet choirs in August all are mute,
 And youth's strong loins his largess soon
 dispend.

The water-lily, at her ripening,
 Hides in the muddied lake her beauty's
 spores;
Even in the tender calyx of the Spring
 The icy-sharded worm of Winter bores.

But you, dear, are a flower of God's own isle,
 Whose glammers ripen in the spirit's seed;
The Galilean lilies are your smile,
 And in your aching heart the roses bleed;

And wreathed of fire cold Time can never smother
The maiden yields her garland to the mother.

ONLY the strong have right to reign in song —
The strong of soul, that are the warriors
Of God. — The weak-at-heart, he that out-
pours

His coward pain, perpetuates a wrong.
Therefore I promised you I would be strong,
Or silent: But now — hark! Again the doors
Of heaven are wide, and on the palace floors
I greet the Nine, who wept for me full long.

Look up once more, my love! The lark is risen;
Not as of old, above the immaculate fields,
Remote, of May he chants, but now he builds
His nest of dew beneath the common prison
Of Workaday: — O hark to him, dear one,
Rounding, of song and toil, a Pantheon!

REALIZING that the lives of men are rills
 Coursing in lines consecutive and bright
Down the pied slopes of Time's 'eternal hills,'
 Or flocks of mingling sea-birds, that alight

An hour upon the icebergs, there to strew
 Wide Babel o'er the pristine silences,
Then, soaring, blend in the universal blue:
 Brooding an hundred analogues like these

That show how we, bright atom-points of thought
 In this congested brain of being, reign
An instant and no longer in the plot
 Of God; realizing this, and then

Remembering I run my race with thee,
I grow in love with my mortality.

As ripples widen where the stone is cast,
 So we do wane toward the banks of death;
 As dips the summer grass before the breath
Of the west wind, so lightly we are passed:
Our lives are liquid; even when Grief has massed
 Their evanescent flowers to a mort-wreath,
 They are such icy blooms as a frosty heath
Paints on the glass-pane, and as long they last.

Therefore, since joy is the acquiescent will
 That blends our spirits' limbs with all which
 flows,
Since pain is the stagnant eddy and the chill
 That lies congealed within the withered rose,
Let us, sweet friend, of beauty drink our fill,
 And fix in natural change our soul's repose.

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