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Smiles of God

BY

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SMILES OF GOD

God smiled in the woodland bowers,—
And violets answered, blue;
God smiled on the fields,—and flowers
Of white and gold shimmered through.

Wherever His smile was given,
A blossom was brought to birth;
And the flowers that point toward Heaven,
Are the Smiles of God on earth.



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MATINS

At dawn the wild-flower breathes: "Oh, may
I so uplift my face to-day,
That all who pass along this way
 Will smile, and find the world more fair—
Because I blossomed;—this my prayer."

And deep within the wood is heard
The morning-pæan of the bird:
"May I so sing, hearts will be stirred
 To soar with me, forgetting care—
Because I sang;—this is my prayer."

And, Father, I would add my plea:
"May I so walk, where'er I be,—
In Love Divine reflecting Thee,—
 That men will breathe a purer air—
Because I lived;—this, Lord, my prayer."

BENEATH THE LEAVES

I wandered through a lonely wood
 Long years ago,
No flowers bloomed beside my path,
 The clouds hung low.

And heartsick, faint, I struggled on
 For weary miles,
While last year's leaves around me lay
 In dreary piles.

At last, as worn and almost spent
 With pain and care,
I pushed away the mouldering leaves
 That gathered there;

And, searching 'neath them as they lay,
 Just at my feet,
I found a perfect woodland flower,—
 Divinely sweet.

And so beneath my broken hopes,
 In life's dark hour,
I seek the blessing, as I sought
 The woodland flower;

For,—having learned though rough the way
 And deep the gloom,
Still underneath the withered leaves
 The flowers bloom,—

I now have faith to ever know,—
 Though naught I see,—
That God hath placed in every path—
 A flower for me.

THE LILY

Down in the mud and mire it came to birth
 In darkness deep,
And there it stayed content—of little worth—
 Close-wrapped in sleep.
But though its roots were twined in beds of clay,
 There gently stirred
Within its heart a thrill of life one day,
 And lo, it heard
A call to struggle upward from the strife
 Of mud and gloom,
And reach toward Heaven to find its real life
 In perfect bloom.
So up it grew straight toward the wondrous light,
 With purpose sure,
And brought from out the mire,—a lily white,
 Unsullied, pure.

Down in the gloom and mire of earth he dwelt
 As one asleep,
And seemed content,—nor in his heart e'er felt
 The yearning creep
To wake and rise; but lo, one day he heard
 The call of Love,
And felt the thrill of Spirit's power that stirred
 Him; while above
Toward Heaven he raised his longing, earth-
 dimmed eyes,
 And through the night
There came the call:—"O child of God, arise!—
 Thy Life is Light!"
And so he mounted upward toward new-birth,—
 The Spirit's goal,—
And brought from out the mud and mire of earth,—
 A spotless soul!

SUMMER SNOW

The fields are white;—and yet 'tis June!
What trick is this?
Did Nature miss?
The flakes so pure are lightly strewn:—
Doth Winter kiss
Fair Spring? What bliss!

Yet stay! whence come these flecks of gold?
Is that the sun
On every one?
But still they tarry:—Winter's bold!
His web is spun,
His weaving done.

Ah, look! they're daisies,—Summer-snow;
Come up—not down
From clouds afrown;
Born of the sun on earth below,—
A perfect crown
For Spring's green gown.

NATURE'S MAGIC

Only a leaden rain-drop;
 But soon we see it pass,—
An amethyst on the violet,
 An emerald on the grass,
A ruby red on the columbine,
 Or a disk of gleaming gold.
Transformed by Nature's magic;—
 The rain-drop's tale is told.

Only a bitter tear-drop;
 Yet out of the poignant pain,
Love's wand will bring forth jewels,—
 As the flowers are born of rain.

AFTERMATH

Only a withered blossom;—brief its hour!
 Yet, wouldst thou say
'Twere best the poor dead bloom had lived away—
 One little flower?
Behold! Unnumbered seeds have come to birth,
 To bless the earth.

Only a burned-out torch;—a hope that died
 Ere scarce 'twas born!
Yet, wouldst thou find the bright, Eternal Morn,—
 One ray to guide?
Lo, Love brings forth new Light,—oh, soul
 that gropes,—
 From shattered hopes.

JUNE

May brings us a promise subtly sweet,
 A tender whisper of things to be;
But June comes dancing, and spreads at our feet
 Her wealth of treasures for all to see.
With open arms and lavish hand,
She scatters largess o'er the land.

Her feet rose-tangled, primrose-twined,
 Spring loiters, lingers,—loath to go;
While Summer weaves a wreath to bind,
 Ensnaring her with daisy-snow.
They meet and wed, then kiss and part;
Yet ever one in Nature's heart.

June: blest between, where God's best gifts cling;
Half waking Summer, half waning Spring!

OCTOBER

O Crown of the Year,
I bow to thy sway!
Fulfillment is here
Of the promise of May.
Each seed, each flower,
Spake—sesame,
To this glad hour
That welcomes thee.

All Nature's athrill,
And breathless with bliss
Of color, until
We know Life meant—this!
The charm of Spring,
The Summer's bloom,
Live—but to bring
Thee from Love's loom.

They weave through the days
That herald thy birth,
Till,—veiled in blue haze,—
Thou comest to earth,
Then, full content,
They fade and die:
Earth—as God meant—
Is flaming nigh.

With beauty that thrills
Till Spring splendors pale,
Ablaze on the hills,
Aflame in the vale;
Thou!—God's blest plan!
Through thee is given
To mortal man—
A glimpse of Heaven.

ANSWERED

Where is God?—I asked my soul.
Then I listened—listened;
Not a whisper came my way;
Just a purple violet lay
At my feet,
Dewy-sweet,
Where the sunlight glistened.

What is Life?—I questioned then.
Not a breath came hither;
Just a mother-bird flew by
To her nest with eager cry:—
Service, love,
Flights above,
On its journey—whither?

What is Love?—my query came.
Long I waited, lonely;
Just a gentle zephyr stirred,
Came another homing bird,
Violets twain
Smiled through rain:—
These gave answer only.

What is God?—Oh, list, my soul!
Silence still unbroken;
Just the songsters downward flew
Where the violets nestled blue:—
Beauty, Life, and Love,
All about—above.
Like a flame
Answer came,—
Yet no word was spoken.

ROSES

One held a rose in his eager hand,—
 But his soul was empty quite;
For he never knew,—so earth-blind was he,—
There is more to a flower than the eye can see;
 So he smiled and kissed its petals white.

But ah, soon he wept o'er a barren stalk;
For his rose lay strewn on the garden-walk.

One held in his heart Supernal Bloom,—
 But his hands were empty quite;
Yet he joyed in the Real, for his soul saw true,—
An Immortal Flower—forever new—
 Though his lips were unpressed by petals white.

But no tears, no loss shall his spirit see;
For his Rose will bloom through Eternity.

A SPRING PRAYER

May kisses barren boughs to blushing bloom,
And waves a wand that wakens all the wood.
She breathes—and blossoms answer with perfume;
Here life is fair and good—and understood.

Make barren lives, O God, to swell
From bud to blossom sweet;
Wake sleeping souls that list hope's knell—
New Life to greet.

Make every heart blest answer give
To Spirit's Spring at hand,
Until, new-born, they rise, and live—
And understand.

VESPERS

As day fades in the crimson west
The blossom breathes: "To-night I rest
In knowledge that I've done my best;
Yet with the morn I long to be
A fairer flower,—worthy Thee."

As darkness steals, from out the wood
A bird-voice floats: "O God most good,
I've sung my song as best I could;
Yet would I sing to-morrow's lay
More nearly perfect than to-day."

And, Father, as descends the dew,
I come to Thee, and whisper too:
"I've lived to-day the best I knew;
Yet may I rise with morning's light
Far nobler, purer, than to-night."



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