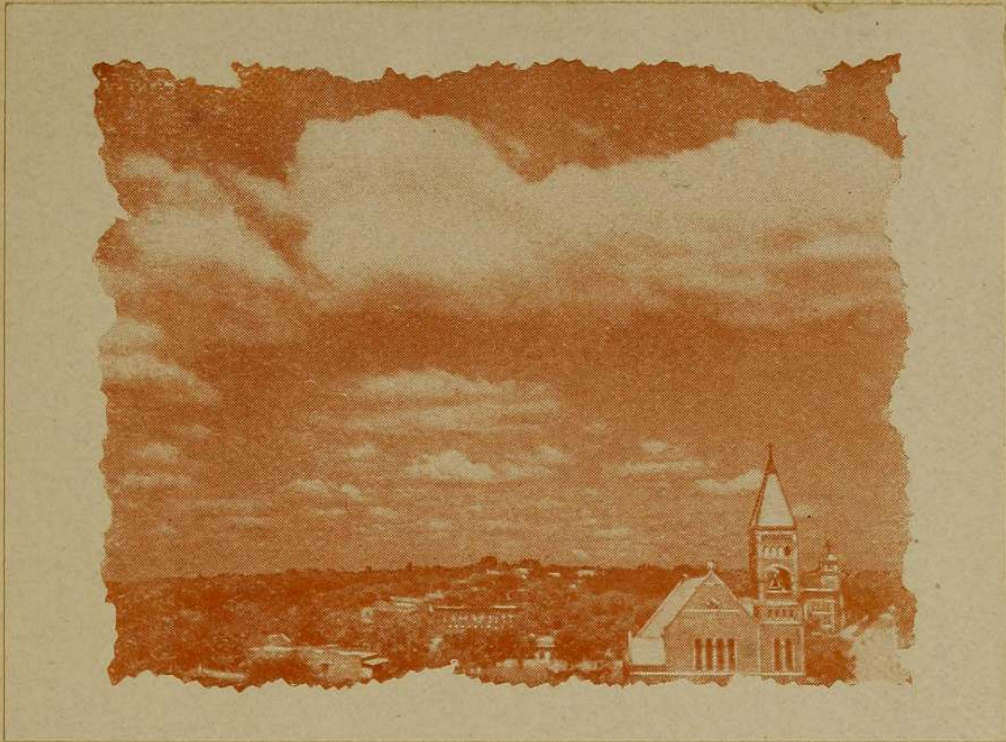




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SOUL SHADOWS

BY

CHARLES GOULD BEEDE

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1908

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Foreword



HIS little volume of poems goes forth as a tribute to the memory of Charles Gould Beede, whose soul passed through the deep shadows October 7, 1906, and whose literary utterances record the light that lessened the gloom that long hung over his house of clay.

The devotional spirit that pervades these selections is breathed to us not alone by the unselfish activity that characterized the author, but by the mantle of loving and poetical affinity that rested once upon the husband and wife, and now rests in double measure upon the bereaved companion, whose efforts are bending themselves to the production of his more valuable literary works.

Coming, as it does, to a restless if not a turbulent age, it must first find its friends among those who knew something of the author and his work, either by person or the occasional publication. Later it will find its way into the lives of those who of necessity live out their days in the minor rather than the major key; and to all who face the gathering shadows of bodily or mental affliction there will be a word, if they can but see it, that will make the world brighter by these songs.

The literary value of these and other of his poems has been attested by the fact that many of them have been published in such high class papers as the Boston Transcript,

The Chicago Inter-Ocean, the Register and Leader of Des Moines, and many religious and other weeklies.

As the pastor and friend of Mr. Beede during the later period of his life, and the pastor and friend of Mrs. Beede still, I commend to their friends and the public generally, this little volume, which is in reality, but the first fruits of his labors, and the first stones of a memorial she longs to erect in his name; for she possesses the manuscript of a more pretentious work, an epic, which is a Romance of the Soul, a strong biblical poem, based upon the idea of reincarnation of the soul. Having read the manuscript, and knowing the difficulty that attends the publication of so expensive a work, I bespeak for this the success that will warrant the early preparation of the other for the press.

WILLIAM J. MINCHIN

Congregational Parsonage,

Ames, Iowa,

Nov. 29, 1907.

The Spirit-Call



A wide expanse of billowy prairie grasses;
A wind-blown sky with cloud-veils o'er the blue;
The straggling, vagrant rain-drops earthward falling;
A mud-hen mourning in a distant slough.
A little child the tall, coarse grasses parting,
With fearless feet plods through the pathless way;
She cannot see the father she would follow—
The sighing reeds around her bid her stay.
She pauses where the yellow cowslips glimmer
In golden blotches from their watery bed;
The bridgeless pond across her pathway stretches;
Relentless clouds are frowning overhead;
Her tear-tuned voice rings out across the water,
The friendly zephyrs wing it to the ears
Of one who hearing turns, the trail retraces,
And bears her safely over—stills her fears.

A lonely woman on a lonely pathway;
Life's fallen leaves her sable mantle sweeps;
The moaning pines her vanished hopes bewailing,
Blot out the sky above her as she weeps;
Unmindful of the din of busy voices,
Whose strident tones from dusty highways roll,
She stumbles on, her deaf ears hearing only
The spirit-call that echoes in her soul.
She stands at last beside a mist-bound river,
With well-known foot-prints on the nearer shore,
And just beyond, within the purpling shadows,
Her widowed heart beholds its mate once more.
A grief-impassioned cry, then dumb outstretching
Of arms across the bridgeless, boatless wave—
A spirit answer—then life's grand awakening,
Within the arms of love, beyond the grave.

—LILLIAN BARKER BEEDE.

There may my Ship Come in



One day by the waters cool and gray,
One day on the shore where the sunshine lay,
I wandered alone on the sands of the bay,
Watching the waves come in.

Backward and forward in idle roaming,
While watching the crested billows combing,
Rolling, and breaking with ceaseless foaming,
There where the waves come in.

Far in the distance a single sail
Just lifted above the horizon pale,
Where it shone like a spectre all sheathed in mail
Over the ocean dim.

And the ship I watched kept sailing, sailing,
Away, away to the sunset paling,
Fading below the shadowy railing,
That shut the ocean in.

Till the dying day grew cold and dark,
There, I sought in vain for a sign to mark,
Through the gathering gloom, the returning bark,
But she never came again.

And the cruel sea kept moaning, moaning,
While daylight faded into the gloaming,
With a rythmetic moan, a dirge intoning—
The moan of a soul in pain.

The sobbing waves broke sad on the shore,
And my longing spirit mourned, sick and sore,
As I thought of the sail I should see no more,
 There, over the ocean's rim;
For so had friendship and trust gone sailing,
With a life's sweet dreams, all paling, failing,
Hope disappearing with cries and wailing,
 Over life's ocean grim.

Oh, I pray that when my ship shall sail,
As it nears death's horizon cold and pale,
Kind Heaven will grant one last favoring gale
 To waft it over the rim—
Into that sea where there's no more storming,
Through the open gateways of the morning,
Into a haven of God's adorning,
 There may my ship come in.



Eternity



'Tis time unbound, a thought of God
 Embodied from His brain,
Whose limitless expanse untrod
 E'en He shall not attain;
All heights, all depths, all distance rolled
 Around one endless wheel,
Within whose vastitudes, untold,
 Lie all our woe and weal.

An Invocation



O Soul, climb up thy starry ways,
Reach out thy hands and touch the lyre,
Gather about thy head the rays
Of song's primeval living fire.

The harmony that keyed thy strings
When Milton, Byron, Shakespeare sang,
Now sits and dreams with folded wings,
Where once immortal music rang!

Search high and low through all the earth,
Only a strain or two is tossed—
The shuttlecocks for children's mirth—
To mock the final holocaust.

Our hands are weak, our ears are dull,
The motive power of song is dead;
Now pride and greed, they only, cull
The flowers that deck the Poet's head.

Awake! awake! Thy lyre is where
Thy altars lift before the Lord,
Where self is immolated—there—
There thou shalt find the hidden chord.

O Soul, climb up beyond the stars;
Up to the glory 'round the throne,
Where love and truth shall wake the bars
Of music and of song, alone.

What Becomes of the Soul



In the scales of God are there joys for woes?

Who knows?

When the wild wind blows,

'Mid the storm's downpour,

'Mid the thunder's crash

And the billows' roar;

When fell disaster the ship enfolds,

And over the dead an ocean rolls,

Who knows

What becomes of the souls?

Is the deeps of pain where a mercy glows?

Who knows?

When 'mid life and jest,

'Mid a life of sin,

When the reaper, Death,

Gets his harvest in;

When slow and solemn the funeral bell

Sounds over the wold with mournful toll,

Who knows

What becomes of the soul?

Then, does one man reap what another sows?

Who knows?

In the desert drear,

'Mid the sand-storm's might,

In the battle torn,

In the front of fight;

When red destruction in robes of fire

Leaves only the moulds of burnt-out coals,

Who knows

What becomes of the souls?

Doth an angel stand where death's river flows?

Who knows?

When the righteous die,

'Mid the sunshine fair,

In the arms of love,

'Midst the voice of prayer;

Then faith looks trembling up to the skies,

Seeks there for the goal with tears and dole,

Nor knows

What becomes of the soul.

Is it vain, O man, that the Christ arose?

He knows!

And our God can tell;

In His name I trust,

In His mercy sure,

When the world is dust;

For He, the Shepherd, hath many folds,

And God ere a bell has ceased to toll

He knows

What becomes of the soul.



Through Broken Harp-Strings



What wonderful thoughts from the spirit spring

To the lips of the singer, who cannot sing;

What wonderful visions and fancies bless

But the innermost heart of life's consciousness.

In the soul is the thought and the dream and the song,

But the words and the music both utter them wrong.

Dropped Stitches



An old woman sits in an old dingy room, knitting;
It is cold, it is cheerless and bare as a tomb;
Just a table, two chairs, and a bedstead so small
That it looks like the ghost of one, there by the wall.
The woman is haggard and gray, and so pale, and the way
That she works with her poor, trembling hands
Tells its own patient story. Ah me, and alas!
Youth holds up the cup, but age turns down the glass.

Now she smiles, then she sighs, while she works,
At some joy, at some pain
In her life's tangled skein;
And the tears drop, drop from her dim, weary eyes,
And she takes a wrong stitch and stops knitting.

This woman, who sits there so friendless and lone, crying,
Is another that time and the world have outgrown.
Would you think, do you think she was ever as young
As you are? But she was; and she danced and she sung
And played. I have heard people say she played well in her day,
That her voice had a promise her life could not keep.
Poor young girl, poor old woman! Ah me, and alas!
That ever a mortal should come to this pass.

It is hard to be lonely and old.
'Tis the fate of the poor
To live on and endure
To the end. Poor, poor, is there anything worse,
If you take no wrong stitch in your living!

Her fire and her food, her scant rags she must earn, working.
As she sits there she talks. Let us listen and learn
What she thinks of, if memory now is her all,
Or her present where death is, the grave and the pall.
Her voice, as herself, is as gray and as full of decay;
Yet within it there lingers the hint of a song
That still clings to a birthright. Alas, and ah me,
Some fates have an Esau for life—poverty.

Jacob drinks up his pottage with tears.

Is our Father, too, blind,

And the blessings designed

Gone astray? Strange, strange, is it not, very strange?
There's a stitch dropped somewhere past our finding.

She speaks. Hush, keep still! "As I sets 'ere ter night thinkin'
How the past it jist rises agin ter my sight.

Thar stands me thar; an' pritty! an' jist couldn't I play!

I kin 'ere my Ma now, 'She'll git famous some day'.

Lan' sakes, an' besides so Bill said. We wus goin' ter be wed,

But he died 'fore I got 'im; Lord, Lord, but 'twas hard.

I remembers ther hour that they telled me that he,

My Billy, wus gone. Then suthin' broke in me.

Then Ma died. Then I must 'er died too;

Or else how cud I see

Them thar lookin' at me

As they does? Dear, dear, whar's that needle o' mine?

Sakes, I've clean dropped er stitch an' can't find it."

A sob. "Whar's my eyes! I can't see enymore! workin's
E'en-er-most spiled 'em; guess tears makes 'em sore;
But ther Lord He knows best. 'Taint fer long, praise His name!
It's jist we folks what change, but He's allers ther same.
Yes, Ma, I kin 'ere, yes, I'll sing ther old song, it will bring
Back ter me all ther joys that be faded an' gone.
Yes, Ma, yes, I'm awake! I've bin dreamin', dear Ma.
Well I swan, you look nice! An' if ther aint you, Pa!
 Sakes er live, what er dream 'twas be shore.
 Well I never! dear, dear!
 An' me feelin' so queer.
God o' Heaven! Bill, Bill!" her voice fades in a groan
And a broken life drops its last stitches.

A shiver; her spectacles fall to the floor, breaking.
'Tis as well; they are useless, she needs them no more.
Is she dead? No, not yet, for her voice once more rings
With the power of her youth—'tis a hymn that she sings—
A hymn that can never grow old, that has strengthened, consoled
Many hearts—"There's a land that is fairer than day
And by faith we shall see it"; one faint, long last breath,
"Afar", is the near, she beholds it in death;
 And her soul is re-kissing the lips
 Of a past that has fled
 From the quick and the dead.
No more sorrow, loss; where she is, there love is,
Who has picked up for her the dropped stitches.

The Lone Grave on the Mountain



On the crest of the hills I found it,
For the graves of a host there was room,
For the pyramids of Aegyptus
Are as naught to this lofty tomb.
There he lies till the trump shall call him,
In his grave on the hills, all alone;
Just a soldier's grave, so they told me,
But yet one that a king might own.

There he fell, there he died, there they laid him;
Though unmarked and forgotten—a throne.
What's his name? He died for his country,
Then what matter his name unknown?
'Tis the act, not the actor, liveth;
'Tis the deeds which we do crown the grave;
What life wins is transient glory;
It is death makes a king or slave.

Here the sun's last blush lingers longest,
Here the feet of the morning first come,
And the thunder's voice singeth his requiem,
Like the roll of a funeral drum.
See, the clouds above him are stooping,
And they gather around him and weep;
So I leave him, enwrapped in his glory,
With his God, on the hills, asleep.

Over the Hills of God*



Over the hills and far away,
Over the hills at break of day
Riseth sweet the morning gray—
 Over the hills of God,
Bright is the dawning light of the morning
 Over the hills of God.

Over the hills when day is done,
Over the hills, its goal is won,
Sinketh down the summer sun—
 Over the hills of God;
Night of our sorrow, wait for the morrow
 Over the hills of God.

Over the hills a shadow creeps,
Over the hills a splendor sleeps,
Dreaming where the Savior weeps
 Over the hills of God.
Beautiful story, pictured in glory,
 Over the hills of God.

Over the hills a chorus rings,
Over the hills an angel sings—
“Come, O soul, and be with kings,
 Over the hills of God!”
Angels in glory echo the story
 Over the hills of God.

*By permission of the owner, P. P. Bilhorn.

Over the hills when time is o'er,
The soul of life returns no more,
Standeth in the open door
 Over the hills of God—
Clad with the dawning light of the morning
 Over the hills of God.



The Face



Oh, the beautiful face of the Christ!
 Is it dreams that makes it so fair—
Only human dreams of a God who seems
 To stamp His divinity there?

Is it art in the peace of the eyes,
 In the calm of that tender face?
Only pictured there, but a human prayer,
 A hope, and a dream of grace?

Could the mortal, untaught of the Lord,
 Paint the lines that so touch the heart—
Paint the mighty dower in that face of power,
 With fancy alone, by art?

Oh, no, no! 'Tis the spirit within
 That has drawn each beautiful line;
'Tis the human soul, through the years that roll,
 That keeps it untouched for time.

The Passing of a Soul



The sexton's hand is on the bell
Tolling the spirit's passing knell,
The preacher whispers—"All is well,
Farewell! Amen!"

A tearing pain, a cry, a groan,
A sound of tears, a far-off moan,
One final wrench to bear alone,
Alone! and then—

Then, silence, nothingness and gloom;
A stir, a radiance, beauty, bloom
That bursts the fetters of its tomb
And shroud and pall;
Expansion, glory, not a care,
Unbounded power, freedom, air,
With Heaven's fulfillment, like a prayer,
O'er all; o'er all.

Where life is living, nothing dies,
But on the wings of love arise
Where God's eternal wisdom lies—
A scroll unrolled;

Where is no need of sin and wrong,
Where all things unto soul belong,
Where there is music, poetry, song,
Untold—untold!

There—where is no more misery,
There, freedom is made wholly free
To reach its true divinity
With God above;

Where, uncrowned hope sleeps on the breast
Of Heaven's blessings, doubly blest!
Where is no better but—the best,
The soul and Love!

Through Toil



Within the crevasses of time,
Grow wisdom's buds of thought;
These to obtain, each soul must pay;
It wears them not unbought!

Success is weight of excellence,
On labor's balance hung;
'Tis by deserving lips of worth
Life's noblest songs are sung.

Within the grasp of pain alone,
We pluck thought's folded flower,
That all our years of toil enwrought
May weave one laureat hour!

But ah, that hour is worth the years;
The soul, then, at its best,
For that one bud from out the deeps
Shall blossom on its breast.



Life



A mesh within the web of time,
A space for loss and gain;
A wail of woe, a song sublime
Entangled in one strain.

Among the Tombs



Here sleep the dead. I stand where ye are lying,
Upon the sod that covers all your state;
Past—all your glory, laughing, singing, crying;
Whate'er ye were, here—neither small nor great!
Self, here, is smothered up in cold, dull ashes,
Pride, here, is humbled in the loathsome grave;
Here is no personality or form to dazzle;
Here hath returned to dust that dust first gave.

Here chains are rusted off and crowns are nothing,
Here, side by side, they mingle in decay,
Rise into life and beauty in the lily,
Blush in the rose, or build again in clay.
Does title, name, on lofty stone emblazoned,
Stamp in the man upon earth's living heart?
Do pompous phrases make us less forgetful?
What's in a name when we ourselves depart?

Man lives in that alone he leaves behind him,
In deeds of fire, in noble thoughts that burn—
These are the things which score and live forever,
Heaven's chain of gold; 'tis dross that fills the urn.
Here sleep the dead. No, no! here sleepeth nothing!
These stones but say that such a one hath been;
The man himself is living in the ages;
One page is written, cast away the pen!

Thou simple, loving soul, how sweetly falleth
The welling tears thy tenderness doth shed;
But they are wasted; this is but the casket;
Then mourn no longer o'er this empty bed.
But come, he loved a baby, go and kiss it—
Soul hovers round that most for which it cared.
Hast thou a letter? There the spirit speaketh.
Wouldst thou be nearer? Do what it hath dared.

If it hath cheered one heart, there that soul dwelleth:
If it hath trained one flower upon life's wall,
Go, water that, twine there another flower—
There, thy dead liveth, not beneath a pall!
I sometimes think that what we call the spirit
Is nothing but results which crown the years;
Each, lays some stone— though it but fill a crevasse,
It lessens somewhat future griefs and fears.

So that all soul shall build up towards perfection
Life's monumental temple from the sod—
To find, at last, when death and time are over,
Its base is wisdom and its cap-stone—God.
Well, fare—ye—well, I leave this place of shadows.
Ye reconstructing elements—farewell!
Perchance within me glows what here hath mouldered—
Alive in me, suggesteth what I tell.

On the Course



Our lives are courses, round and round
Creation goes to meet and bound,
Or fast or slow.

For one a dry and even road
Where time speeds on without the goad
And winneth so.

For others only mud and mire,
That clings around the struggling tire
To overthrow;
And they are distanced in the race,
Outweighted, cannot keep the pace
And loseth so.

Here, man is judge; but after time
What know we of that course sublime,
Or where its goal;
Where is the judge's stand of God;
When falls the gavel at His nod
Upon the soul?

O human failure, ne'er despair,
The wires of God are everywhere
Where man's are not.
Though thou art still among the field
When life's triumphant bells are pealed,
Scorn not thy lot.

Along the roadway of the soul
Thy chariot wheels may swifter roll.

Be strong, be brave!
Beyond the race-course of to-day
Stretches another, on for aye,
Beyond the grave.



Te Deum Laudamus



For calm and tempest, day and night,
For joy and sorrow, weakness, might,
For all that passeth in Thy sight—
That were not if it were not right—

We thank Thee, Lord.

Whate'er is lost, whate'er is won,
As led by Thee Thy years roll on;
Though dark our way, nor moon, nor sun,
May each soul say, when all is done,
"I've kept Thy word".

To Thee we come with willing feet;
Give us the bitter or the sweet,
For love sits on Thy mercy-seat,
And what Thou wilt is best and meet
For sire and son.

Life's ordered waves resistless sweep,
And we are in Thy loving keep—
Though some must smile and some must weep,
And so—whatever life may reap—
Thy will be done.

“Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men”



Sing, O my soul, a glad anthem—
There's a star on the night impearled;
'Tis a heavenly new-born glory
Greeting a new-born world.
“The Child of Love”, it is saying,
“Is born, He is born”, and then
Comes the voice of God declaring,
“It is well, it is well, A-men;”
And the angels repeat, “A-men!”
Till over the earth it echoes,
Like a song with a grand refrain
That has caught on its mighty pinions
The lost chord of glory again.
Ye hills that once saw the wonder
Of love into life new born,
Ye vales that once heard that anthem
Look up and greet the dawn
That breaks on the hills of Judea
Into a perfect psalm,
That fills all humanity's ages
With joy and supernal calm,
That still lies with its hands of blessing
Upon the head of time,
And crowns it with joy, the eternal,
And destiny sublime.
Arise, Oh thou star of splendor,
On us and the night again.
We stand at the gates of the morning,
And we wait for the A-men.

God's Hour



How sweet when the sunset is painting its splendor
On the breasts of the hills in irradiant dyes,
When the moon and the bevy of stars that attend her
Through the azure above me immaculate rise.

How fair is the silence that drops like a blessing
Through the floors of the twilight, the eyes of the stars,
That enwraps all the earth like a mother's caressing—
Aye, that draws forth the soul through its prisoning bars.

Te-deums are hymning on moorland and mountain,
A low psalm of contentment is rising above,
A soft call from the ocean, the worshipping fountain—
Come, O soul, unto nature's baptism of love.

Come, come and draw closer and closer to Heaven,
Burst the fetters of time and the chains of the clod;
For to you in this glory and peace it is given
To approach somewhat nearer the kingdom of God.

Hush! earth is a church and the mountains are steeples,
And the valleys are pews where the soul kneels in prayer;
All life's murmurous sounds are bells calling the peoples,
Saying, "Come, come, my children, and worship me there".

Then be not unheeding the voice of that calling—
Though it speaketh so gently its speech is sublime;
Harken, soul, and obey, when the twilight is falling,
'Tis God's hour, 'tis love's hour, for the children of time.

What Difference



There's a moan and a cry from two souls that part—
One, alone, must live on with a broken heart;
One to moulder. O life, what a farce thou art,
 Quick today, and tomorrow dead!
Hark! the requiem toll of the funeral bell—
There's a groan and a prayer in each bleeding knell,
How those slow, solemn strokes on the heart do tell,
 Of some beautiful hope that's fled.

But what careth the world for a soul in gloom,
Flowers spring from the earth that new covers a tomb,
And the better they grow and the sweeter bloom,
 Oh, this death is a mystery!
Yet, perchance, from the grave a new hope may spring,
And thy tear-drops may jewel a diamond ring;
And thy groans may unfetter some pinioned wing;
 Ah, this life is a mystery!

There's a moan and a cry on the harbor bar;
There's a sigh and a wail from the sea afar;
And the merciless winds laugh—"Ha-ha! Ha-ha!"
 Like a ghoul in his fiendish glee!
There's a hope-freighted ship on the rolling wave,
The storm demons are loose, and the billows rave,
And the vessel goes down to its ocean grave!
 "Ho-ho, Ha-ho-ho!" laughs the sea.

There's a smile on the waters, the storm is o'er;
But the sad undertone in the billows' roar
Seems to say, "Thou shalt know of these nevermore,
 They are mine, aye, all mine, to keep!"
And the scavenger fish wander in and out,
Through the bones of the dead where they lie about;
For all life feeds on life; it is right, no doubt,
 So smile on! It is ours to weep!

Now 'tis given unto man that but once he die;
Then what matter the where, that the body lie?
All in vain do we ask for the reason why;
 Ask the dead, perchance, they can tell—
Whether under the sod or under the sea—
What's the difference, pray? Is it aught to thee,
If the soul shall but live in eternity?
 Then, wherever thy grave—'tis well!



Truth



Truth is a flower from the gardens above,
Conceived of God's mercy to bloom in His love;
One gem from His diadem unto thee given;
Thy passport to enter the portals of Heaven.

The Better Way



The higher soul, the greater life
Is that which dwells alone;
Thy holiest aspirations feel
And take their purer tone
Away from all earth's sordid strife,
Its low and little things.
Within the hermit cell of mind,
There all thy thoughts are kings;
Greatness can never pander here
Except to its own soul.
No lofty flight was ever made,
And never won a goal,
Save by that egotistic pride
Which knows its own true worth,
That wisdom is the child of God
And foolishness of earth.
Be in the world, not of it, then;
Dream, study, think and plan.
Lit by thy hand a light may glow
Above the doom of man.
Kneel only to thy mental shrine;
Disdain earth's smiles and pelf;
And thou assuredly shalt be
Sufficient to thyself.

Only God



Ye spaceless voids, when first your silence woke,
And echo told to echo life was born,
When on your pulseless hearts a glory broke,
And light sprang forth to crown your vasts forlorn;
What said ye, on that ever blessed morn,
When 'gan your dead, cold breasts to throb and move,
And from your limbs enchaining gloom had gone—
What uttered speech clomb first to waiting love?
“God, God!” they whisper only—“Only God, above.”

Ye wondrous deeps, when first the power sublime
Moved on your waters and with might untold
Pinned your great azure curtain round all time,
And looped it up with moons and stars of gold—
What saw ye there, as soft and sweet unrolled
Heaven's shining veil about a world untrod?
Who loosed its robes of glory, fold on fold,
As it came trailing downward to the sod?
“God, God!” the deeps repeating thunder, “Only God!”

Oh soul of man, when first thy consciousness
Awoke to feel what strength within thee lies,
What power to curse thyself, what power to bless,
To claim thy kinship with the kindred skies—
Did'st think, O soul, how hard 'twould be to rise
Above environment, above the clod
That struggles on in anguish and then dies?
What hope hath time to lift thee from the sod?
“God, God!” the soul repeating answers—“Only God!”

Peace, Be Still



Oh, thou pilot on the ocean
Of a life's despair,
See, thy vessel tossing, veering,
Out of stays and ever nearing
Where the cruel rocks appearing
Show me death is there—
What is thy command, pray tell me,
What, O soul, thy will?
But the pilot answers only—
“Peace, I say, be still!”

Hark! before me sound the breakers
On an unknown shore.
Pilot, why am I forsaken,
All my trust in thee is shaken;
Art asleep? Oh waken, waken,
Hear the billows roar!
Think thee God did launch this vessel
Just to wreck and kill?
But the pilot answers only—
“Peace, I say, be still!”

Fool, I cry, I will not, will not!
Where is He, thou clod?
Pilot soul, the one who lent thee,
In this ship who bound thee, pent thee;
He shall answer—He who sent thee—
He, thy master, God.
He will not forsake me, ever,
He hath might and skill.
Then the pilot louder answers—
“Peace, peace, peace, be still!”

God of Heaven! behold, I perish!
Hear, oh hear, my cry!
Not one reason time can give me;
Lord, I love thee, oh, believe me
Thou art God and canst relieve me,
Help me or I die!
“Hush,” I hear a low voice saying,
“Hush, it is My will;
Question not, but wait, be patient,
Peace, my child, be still”.



The Master and the Reaper



Said Death—“O my Master”,
He tenderly spoke,
“See, the grain of Thy harvest
Bleeds under my stroke;
So long I have labored;
There’s plenty to spare—
I am tired of this reaping;
Oh, hear Thou my prayer!”

“’Tis mine”, said the Master,
“It cumpers the plain;
And no work which I give thee
Is ever in vain!
The grain of my harvest,
Though garnered by thee,
In its fullness of beauty
Shall blossom with me.

The strains of mutation,
With musical tone,
Sing the songs of creation
For my ear alone—
Thou Reaper, remember
That justice and love
Bind the sheaves of thy reaping
With mercy above.”

Oh, know ye the Reaper—
God’s angel of pain?
He still gathers and garners,
And ye are the grain.
By sin ye are blinded,
By sorrow and tears;
For the work of the Reaper
Is crowning the years.



Sunset Thoughts



Once when I was sitting gazing
At the sunset’s cloudy bars,
Softly, sweetly fading, fading
Into pearl and purple shading,
Tangled with the light of stars—

Peeping, peering through the rifted,
Painted glories of the sky;
Why, I said and fell a dreaming,
Bathed within that splendor streaming,
Why, with this, must man then die?

Is there not enough of beauty
 In this world in which we live—
Sunlight, moonlight, starlight beaming?
Surely, surely 'tis not seeming
 Which this world of ours doth give.

Is there something then above us
 So much higher than is this,
So much better for each spirit,
Which is only won by merit,
 Some far happier state of bliss?

If there is, then, wherefore linger
 On the border land of time?
Surely we should smile at dying
Knowing of the glory lying
 In that other land sublime.

Do we know it? Aye, we know it!
 It is blazoned on the scroll
That the heavens declare in beauty,
That our lives confess in duty—
 Aye, within each human soul!

Only they, whose feeble fingers
 Falter on the chords of earth,
Look not for a harp diviner,
Sing not of a sunset finer,
 Know not of a nobler birth.

They alone, whose spirit reachings,
 Ceaseless, lift above the sod,
Seeking ever something higher—
They alone, shall touch the lyre
 Echoing round the throne of God.

Music



Music, thou mystery of sound,
Thou child of wonder-birth,
Where words leave off, there first unwound
Thy melodies to earth!
Thy ministry doth preach for thee
From Love's immortal scroll;
Doth through the clay let in the day
Upon man's heart and soul!

No one thy message understands;
We feel, but can't express;
Thy diamond links escape our hands,
But not our consciousness!
One fragment sought, by genius caught,
May glorify the years;
Perchance, one note may heavenward float—
To sing among the spheres.

Uplifted on the wings of song
The soul of man may rise,
Pierce through the night of sin and wrong,
Claim kindred with the skies.
Earth's sweetest lays climb on the ways
That reach up from the sod,
With footsteps fleet to kiss the feet
Of music's master—God.

Music is nature's undertone,
The underlying chord
That vibrates downward from the throne,
And upward to the Lord.
Though human will and human skill
May only catch one strain,
From out the deeps where music sleeps,
Man hath not lived in vain.



“In the Morning There Shall be Light”



What do you do when the sunshine fades,
And the cold, gray night draws on?
Do you sit and moan in the twilight shades,
And lament that the day is done?

What do you do all the spectral night,
All the weary night alone,
Do you cry and sigh for the vanished light,
For the beautiful day that's flown?

No use to moan that the shadows creep,
That the day grows dark with gloom;
Go to bed and sleep, ther's no time to weep,
In thy dreams a new hope shall bloom.

The dawn shall bring thee a sweeter boon
Than thy yesterday hath known,
And thy day shall ring with a gladder tune,
For the dread that the night hath sown!

A Bloodless Battle



There's a wonderful scene in the land of the sunset,
Where the clouds are all massing in heaps—
Hear the sibilant winds shrieking hail to the onset,
And that thunderous roll from the deeps.

'Tis a terrible scene, like the crash of the battle,
With its banners of carnage unfurled,
With its sleuth-hounds of war, with its din and its rattle—
Lo, the storm is let loose on the world.

There's the flashing of sabres, the cannon's mouthed thunder,
Midst that tumbling tempest on high;
And the soul just looks on, in a sort of dumb wonder,
With a questioning reason—a why.

See, like squadrons, the clouds charging down from the Heavens
Hurl tempestuous tumult around;
Then the rain, like a monstrous ocean, wind-riven
Into streams, pours in cataracts down.

There's a change in the scene; for the storm now is over,
All its tumultuous armies are fled;
Then I trembling look, but I fail to discover,
Anywhere, there's one wounded or dead.

There's no hospital-vans and no graves, bare and lonely;
There's no stain on the leaves or the flowers,
There's a crowned crimson glow in the West; but there only!
Oh, how different earth's battles from ours!

Then I thought what a lesson kind nature was teaching
In that contest, all bloodless, above—
'Tis the justice of God, that is ever outreaching,
With the balancing scales of His love.

As I gazed, all the landscape a glory did borrow,
All refreshed, grew in perfume and bloom;
For perfection is born from the womb of a sorrow,
Struggle wins, there is light after gloom.

Tell me then, wears not nature God's signet of duty,
Of the duty clod owes unto clod?
Do the battles we wage fill the earth with more beauty?
Is God's alphabet plain but to God?



In Hora Mortis Nostræ



How will it be when that hour shall toll,
Solemnly toll, and death's billows roll
Over thee, under thee, how, O soul?

How will it be? Thou wilt go thy way,
Mystical way, to the Judgment Day
Over there. Over where, canst thou say?

How will it be? It is not all trust,
Ignorant trust. Did thy talents rust
Over here? Over there—worse than dust.

How will it be? If thy best was given,
Prayerfully given, for a world unshriven
Over here: over there—Love and Heaven.

Why Weep?



Why weep for those who pass through death's sad portal,
Who change time's blindness for eternal sight?
Whose souls have cast their grave-clothes and immortal
Are bosomed in the lifting of the light.

Who climb the crystal stairs of the eternal,
Close clasping progress with angelic power,
Reaching from heights to higher heights supernal,
Where bursts the bud into the perfect flower.

Is life so full of wisdom's perfect teaching,
That none can fall o'er living's God-made stones?
Was Adam's sin so vile and so far reaching,
That any tomb can hold but crumbling bones?

From dust and ashes nature still is raising
The rose's perfume and the lily's cup;
And through the dregs of time God's eyes are gazing
Upon those dregs transformed and lifted up.

The earth is beautiful, and all around us,
Life blossoms on the bosom of decay;
So in the grave where death's chill chains have bound us,
The night of life shall burgeon into day.

Shall waken like a child that wakes from sleeping,
Rosy with rest, and lets its drapery fall,
Laughs up at love, where love his watch is keeping,
Supreme, triumphant, conqueror over all.

Why weep for those who pass through death's glad portal,
Who change time's blindness for eternal sight?
Whose souls have cast their grave-clothes and immortal,
Are bosomed in the lifting of the light.

The Birthright of Song



From the dark tomb of pain,
Born of sorrow and wrong,
Through a loss to a gain,
Is the birthright of song!

Not from foam on the wave,
Not of life's amber sea,
But from death, from the grave,
Is its spirit set free.

Is it better to sleep
Like a baby at rest;
Or incarnate the deep
With a God for thy guest?

For the lullaby chime
Of earth's slumbering souls,
Leaves but echoes to time,
Where oblivion rolls.

As the soul spreads its wings
From the depths of despair,
Borne aloft as it clings
To the heart of a prayer—

So, the birth of a strain
Which from anguish is riven,
Strikes a balance with pain,
With the echoes of Heaven!

The Divinity of Genius



Where are the thoughts that shall lift the soul,
'Till its gaze shall pierce to the hidden scroll—
Where wisdom and beauty and fancy entwined
Lie awaiting its search—by Divinity signed?

Where are the words that like vesper bells
With their low, sweet calls o'er the sunset fells,
Ring out to the soul all the peace that is where
They are lifting their summoning voices to prayer?

Not in the bells nor the evening glow,
Is the hope they give to the soul of woe,
The thought that they send with each silvery tone
To the heart of life from the foot of the Throne.

Where are the words that can clothe a thought,
As 'twere robed of God? Are they found unsought?
Or seeking for them, do they flash on the brain
Through the struggling mind, after labor and pain?

Are great ideas tossed up on the wave
Of a sea unknown, from some ocean grave,
Where chance and not will is the gauge of all power?
Must then I seek for years what you find in an hour?

Pray, doth Divinity stretch the lines
So that one shall lose where another finds—
Predestined to glory and fame from his birth;
While the other is nothing, is useless on earth?

Where are the thoughts and the words that roll
All their sounding chords on the human soul?
Oh, where do they wander; that genius is given
All the gems from the crown of its glory in Heaven?

Come thou in joy, or come thou in woe,
Only come to me in thy primal glow,
O genius, art deaf to my heart's longing cry?
Place thy seal on my forehead, and then let me die!



The Soul's Intaglio



Upon the jewel of the soul
The power of God hath given,
There thou wilt find deep cut, engraved
These words—Trust thou in Heaven.

But on the plastic wax of earth,
(How few of us e'er know!)
This stamp divine is found reversed,
In perfect cameo.

So, leaving monuments to time,
Soul-printed on the sod
In noble deed, from this sublime
Intaglio of God.

When pain and sorrow weigh thee down,
'Tis but its pressure there,
The sealing of no cross no crown,
Upon the lips of prayer.

The Music of the Spheres



If thou hast tuned the harp-strings,
God-strung, within thy soul,
To vibrate to the echoes
That throb and pulse and roll
Above thee and around thee,
The music of the spheres—
Then, in thy heart shall glow the might
And glory of divine delight
From God's eternal years.
The spirit listening hears,
Though not with mortal ears,
The music of the spheres.



The Storm Has Passed



The storm has passed away.
In grand, tumultuous splendors up on high
The tumbled clouds like routed armies fly;
It is the sunset hour;
Recumbent in the west, the god of day
Lies flushed with victory on his golden throne;
The distant mountain peaks
Rise dim and misty, with their brows unveiled,
Encrowned and beautiful, athwart the sky;
From out the dripping earth,
The songs of birds, the hum of waking life,
Of free, glad nature rebaptised and strong.

The storm has passed away.
Art thou then blind? Lift up thine eyes and see—
Pictorial nature is a book divine;
On every fresh turned leaf
A lesson lies. Stoop down and mix the clay;
The Hand is there. Thine eyes, as his of old,
Shall see, retouched of God.

The storm has passed away—
The thankful flowers lift up their drooping heads
And kiss the perfumed air with odorous lips—
An offertory sweet—
Their laughing limbs are garnatured in gems.
The dust of life is cleansed from off earth's robes.
Contrast is life. Behold—
Each tiny raindrop is a living pearl
Laid on earth's altar by the hand of change;
Each murmuring brook is love;
Each shining hill and mountain-top is peace;
Each voiceful valley, praise; each bird-song, prayer.
Contrast is life's best gift;
No storm, no calm; no rain, no rainbow; No!
Souls are like flowers, both sweeter after storm.

Hast Heard



Hast heard the songs of morning,
The singing, laughing rills,
The silent songs adorning
The hazy eastern hills,
Where light her white wine spills?

Hast heard the songs a-dreaming
About the heart of noon?
Hast seen the beauty gleaming
Around the silver moon,
That always sings in tune?

If thou canst read this story
That Heaven pens for thee
Upon its scroll of glory,
In might and majesty—
Thy life is melody.

Hast heard that voice of beauty
That love adorns with bliss,
That crowns the head of duty—
A mother's that you miss,
Hast known that mother's kiss?

Hast heard the voice of sadness
That echoes through a room,
Where once was joy and gladness
And now is death and doom,
The gateway of a tomb?

It's here that soul is stringing
Another chord of love
To that, the earth is singing;
And this thou'lt find wilt prove
Thy sweetest song above.



Life



A space between two sleeps,
Upon the wheel of time—
Up, up, and over, into nothing tossed;
From deeps of silence in a silence lost.

Upon the stage of life, life creeps;
Laughs for one little while beside the wings;
An embryo actor yet in chrysalis;
Then, makes its bow before its little world;
Stands up and plays its meagre, tiny part
Midst changing scenes and fast dissolving views,
That break or mould or purify its heart—
Mouths, moans or smiles—a crowned king or slave.
And all the while beneath its feet a grave!
So; struts across the boards in robes of pride,
Or with bowed head and timid, lagging stride;
Hissed or applauded;
Then the curtain falls,
And it is known no more, for it hath passed
And left a few dry bones, a heap of dust,
That's all, beneath a pall,
A shade less 'mong earth's shadows, soon forgotten.

The Life of Man



A little drop of water in a sea;
A little speck of dust in dusty space—
That fills for time a momentary place,
And then is swallowed up, O Lord, in Thee.

A little cry, a laugh, a groaning breath,
A little wandering on a pleasant shore,
A dawn, a noon, a sunset, and 'tis o'er,
And life is swallowed up in thee, O death.

A little while investing king and clod;
For what great issue is as yet unknown;
It wakes and rises up, is overthrown,
And waits the answer at the feet of God.



The Song of the Lark



Listen, oh, listen to the lark's clear notes,
His matin song that lifts and floats
Above my head, adown the sleeping vale,
Greeting the morning pale.

Hark! to the cherry call of coming day
Fresh from the heart of May,
Dewy with echoes from a thousand notes
From newly opened throats.

Earth's rising bell soft sounding from afar,
Where blushing sweet the morning star
Gleams through her misty robes, and beauty spills
Her glory on the hills.

Each daybreak lifts an infant hope on high,
And holds it up to destiny,
And, at each christening, I can hear thy voice,
O lark, it says—rejoice!

 Ringing down the distance,
 Pealing through the air,
 Comes thy clean cut carol—
 'Tis thy morning prayer.

Lark, O lark, I pray thee
 Lift my thoughts above—
On thy sinless pinions,
 With thy songs of love;

Till on wings, in Heaven,
 As thy notes to me,
Mine shall fall in blessing
 On humanity.

The Burial in the Rain



'Tis a sick, sore heart, 'tis a cold, gray sky,
And the wind wails, wails like a mourner's cry,
And the rain drips, drips like the tears I shed
O'er the still, white face of the loved and dead.

But the weeping sky hath a mission plain;
Through the thirsty lips of the earth, again
Shall arise the flower, with a sweeter bloom
For the tears that fall shall unbar its tomb.

Mourner, dip thy fingers in nature's urn
And be re-baptised and her lessons learn;
For if simple dust for the flowers of earth
Hath the need of tears for a beauty's birth—

Far more need the garments we hide beneath
The cold clods of time, where they lie with death,
To be re-baptised to reburst the sod;
For the tears of earth are the smiles of God!

'Tis a sick, sore heart, 'tis a cold, gray sky,
And the wind wails, wails like a mourner's cry,
And the rain drips, drips, and the flowers are dead,
But their perfume lives in the tears I shed.

Under the Sod



Under the sod an angel sings,
Under the sod where wisdom clings
To Hope's immortal, death-bought wings;
Under the sod.

Under the sod is life new wed;
Under the sod is glory's bed,
Where love awaketh all His dead,
Under the sod.

And yet, Oh yet, what surety
That life shall find eternity?
For we are blind and cannot see
Under the sod.

Peace! but the shell is lying there,
The moulding casket, worn and bare,
There life hath left its heart of care—
Under the sod.

Under the sod but heaps of dust;
Under the sod but moth and rust;
But there faith saith, "In God we trust"—
Under the sod.

Under the sod, Oh under the sod,
There thou wilt find life's chast'ning rod
But whips the soul up to its God,
From—
Under the sod.

Faith



Oh, Faith is a bird with its pinion untiring,
She mounts like the eagle and bathes in the sun;
Her soul is the soul of a Christian aspiring
To God on His throne, there her laurels are won.

And knowledge flies closer and closer behind her,
Or builds, where she resteth, the eyries of time;
Till o'er are the duties which God hath assigned her—
To show from these eyries man's pathway sublime.

From eyrie to eyrie the ages are creeping,
Unfledged though the wings of humanity be,
And onward and upward, in ecstasy sweeping,
Faith calls—"come up higher," to thee and to me.

Yes, wisdom is surely approaching its Giver,
With Faith for its pioneer angel of light;
Whose horizon is rising forever and ever—
Till Faith overtoppeth the world and the night.

Then Faith shall be merged into Truth, the supernal,
Aye, lost in the glory of love and the blest;
For Faith linketh time to the endless, eternal,
And pinneth God's hope to humanity's breast.

Why Art Thou Sad, O My Soul?



Why art thou sad, O my soul?
Beauty around thee is clinging;
Life holds a musical scroll,
Holds sweetest songs for thy singing.
Why dost thou gaze far away?
Round thee the wonderful hours
Lay on the breast of the day,
Madrigals written in flowers.

Who does not know it? But then
Harken those discords of sorrow;
Singeth to-day, but again
Waileth the fear of tomorrow.
Answer, O soul, through the dark,
Heed thou the voice of my praying;
Why art thou silent? But hark,
List what my spirit is saying:

“Earth is a harp heaven-strung;
Still in its bosom there lingers
Songs which the angels have sung,
Waiting the touch of thy fingers.
Seek for its chords, be not sad;
Glory is thine, and thanksgiving;
Sing and rejoice and be glad
Only to know thou art living.”

Unbound



On either hand my view is wound
Round the horizon's rim;
Shall all the world move in its bound,
Because my eyes are dim?

Beyond the archways of my sight
That close my vision in—
The glad earth stretches warm and bright,
I end and you begin.

Around me smiling nature sings;
No storm her beauty mars;
Her lessons give to me the wings
To pierce earth's cloudy bars.

Truth stoops and mixes from the clay,
And lo, where man is blind—
One touch lets in the light of day
Upon the darkest mind.

Ah, past this housing place of mine,
Though wisdom hides the spot,
My sight shall climb the heights divine,
Where mete and bound are not.

Drink



Time fills his wine cup full, unto the brim;
The bubbling nectar waits thy lips and mine;
Drink, drink, O man, before thy eyes grow dim,
Thy palate tasteless for this gift divine.

Wait not, but drink, for, lo, a bitter glass
Time holds for thee, wherein the wine is sour—
Wait not, for soon thy only chance shall pass
And thy dead lips forever lose their power.

Red wine, sweet wine, of human life and love;
Just see it sparkle in its crystal cup!
Drink, drink! nor wait for better wine above:
If time permits thee, drink the nectar up.

What is Thy God?



Tell me what thy God is, then
I will tell thee what thou art;
Attributes thou givest him
Show to me thy inner heart.

Buildest thou a God of clay?
Then thy heart is hard and cold,
In thee is no charity,
Only selfishness untold.

Makest thou a God of love?
Thou art loving too, as well;
Hast thou laurel crowns for hate?
Then thy God is king of hell.

Tell me what thy God is, then
I will tell the what thou art;
Attributes thou givest him
Show to me thy inner heart.



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