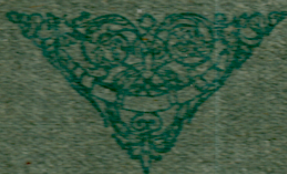


POEMS FROM THE PORT HILLS



Poems from the
Port Hills /

by B. E. BAUGHAN

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B. E. BAUGHAN

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"Shingle-Short, and other Verses," "Reuben, and other Poems,"

"The Finest Walk in the World," etc.



WHITCOMBE & TOMBS LIMITED

Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington, N.Z.
Melbourne and London

PREFACE

Of these "Poems from the Port Hills," "Sumner Estuary" has been published in the London *Quest*; "Beauty for Ashes" in the Sydney *Bookfellow*; "Escape" in the Indian *Pradbuddha Bharata*; and "Through the Pine-bough" was given to the Christchurch School of Art, N.Z. The right to re-publish in every case is now used with grateful acknowledgment. "Hope" has been privately printed, but the edition has long been exhausted.

B.E.B.

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HOPE

Spring sat bright on the hill-top. The pines were
lit with her candles,
Glittering-tipt were the gum-trees, the gorse, thick-
golden with blossom,
Laugh'd to the laughing Blue. Below, the paddocks
were grassy,
Wide was the plain and green, the ribboning river
was azure,
White lambs raced in the paddocks, little white
clouds in the sky,
And, deep in the plain, up-tossing like tresses her
radiant smoke-curly,
From a luminous veil of vapour, the enchantress City
bloom'd out—
Her walls as of glass and gold, her windows flashing
like eyes.
To the right, like a broad blue sun, sparkled and
flash'd the Ocean,
To the left, by winter refresh'd, ran a long white
splendour of snow-peaks.
—Ay, once more it was Spring! once more, in spite
of the struggle,
Traffic, tempests, and toil, decay and destruction, of
ages,
New again, fresh as a child! lovely with light and
delighting,
Old Earth uplifted a joyful face to the glad warm
kisses of Heaven.

Up the rocky track from the plain, close under
the tawny hill-top
(Where, 'mid the pines and blue-gums, and pink-
white foam of an orchard,
A low, red roof peep'd out), came two—a man and
a woman.
Slender and straight as a blue-gum, graceful and
meant to glitter
But all unglittering, came he! his young head
sunken with sorrow,
Guilt weighting his eyes, and his step heavy with
shame.
A lark sprang carolling up in the sunny resonant
blue space;
He neither saw it, nor heard; but the woman with
him, his mother,
Middle-aged, massively-built, but moving with
buoyance and spirit,
She was glad with the lark and the light, she tasted
the freshness and freedom!
The gorse laughed into her heart, and her soul sang
up through the Blue—
Till she turn'd and glanced at her son; then, as after
the shine the shadow,
After the shadow the shine, sweeps over the face of
the plain,
Over her open face rapidly swept and follow'd
Love, pity and grief—dark dread, bright resolution!
Dumbly they walk'd together, until, at the edge of the
pine-grove,
By a great grey rock he paus'd, but she went onward,
and in.

Down on the rock he sank, his hand in a cushion of
 shamrock :
 Its bright little gold-cups gleam'd, the tussock
 glisten'd with newness,
 Ruddily spir'd the sorrel, and rosily spread the
 crane's-bill—
 Just as in all past springs! when, from the self-
 same vantage
 Over the plain and the mountains, the sea and the
 city, daily,
 A daring aeronaut, he had launch'd forth flying
 ambitions,
 That over the snows had soar'd, and roam'd more
 wide than the ocean,
 For gallant the dreamer had been, and the dream-
 ships gallant and good.
 Lost, lost were they all now! sunken in glamorous
 evil
 Under the veil of yon City, and he, crouch'd here
 in his old haunt,
 Wingless and worse! companion'd by memories
 now, not dreams.
 O, unescapable gall! how he remember'd....
 remember'd....
 That one bright actual journey, down to the waiting
 City,
 Out to the welcoming world! Gaiety, glitter,
 adventure,
 Merry young mates at last, and the birthright
 of pleasure and power
 Ready at hand, to be tasted.... The money, bor-
 row'd....*not stolen*,
Ah, not stolen!.... Then... then... the incredible,
 frightful

Falling....the crash! the struggle with horrors,
impossible, real!
The bright flight brought to its end by the gloom
of a prison-cell.

Free now, back on his rock, at home, yet in prison
for ever,
Listless he lay, and gazed on the once-belov'd fair
prospect
Languidly, savouring nothing, Disgrace, like a
dingy fog-shroud,
Blotting all beauty out. Dully he look'd at the
bright Blue,
At the gorse's gaiety scowl'd; and his eye slunk
from the snow-peaks
And the frank face of the sea, but amid the plain
like a culprit
Furtively spied, till it found the prison, and there
like a chain'd thing
Hung, all helpless awhile—then, fled to a near-by
hill-crest,
Seen as a vision, how bright! in those nights of
desperate darkness,
Truly in sight now at last, and to-morrow,
to-morrow, thank Heaven!
Last of all sights to be! for it fronted fathomless
water,
The hiding sea would be all, and life and self-
loathing done!....
....A honey-bee boom'd o'er the tussock, and sipp'd
at the blossoming shamrock;
He look'd and beheld the blossoms bruise'd by his
twisting fingers,

Ruin'd at start of the spring; and his eyes grew
cloudy with pity
(He was easily touch'd, fine-fibred); then, dark
with a bitter pity
For himself and his own spring, spoil'd!

But now again came his mother,
With food, and they ate together; listlessly he, to
content her
(No need of eating to-morrow!), and she in her
ministry silent
With a tender, responsive silence, for inly she knew
his nature.
Not till the meal was done, his dazed, unwilling
attention
Sudden she startled and fix'd, with quiet, terrible
words.

“Son! Here are two of us, sinners! You know,
for I have not conceal'd it—
Name, or ring, I never have had. But now, I must
tell, and you listen!
My friend I robb'd of her mate; to his lust I
deliver'd my love;
And you I brought into the world, unfather'd, and
by me mother'd—
Crippled before the race. O, boy, I have been
through it all—all:
I know all the bewilderment—blackness—blasphemy
—blankness—
Shame—the cringing abasement—and then the bitter
rebellion,
Isn't it so? the revolt! the fierce self-justification

Against the disguised fell Fate, the thing not us!
that so lured us
First, and then drove and dragg'd, and degraded us,
and defiled us!
The self-disgust (for however one came in the ditch
one is loathsome),
The self-hate, self-despair, the fierce abhorrence of
life.
O worse! for turn as I would from the wickedness
I had committed,
Committed it was! It was done! Not Heaven's
own self could undo it,
No repentance erase it, no forgiveness annul—
There in the history of things it was a vileness
eternal—
It never could be Not Done.

“You too,—your sin, you abhor it,
Loathe it, spurn it,—I know! but alas, my son!
you have done it,
And you cannot make it undone—Nay, my dear!
I hurt but to help you.
Trust the touch of your mother—the touch of your
fellow-sinner!
Together let's face it! It's there, it has to be faced.
Look, my dearest—
You've done it, you cannot undo it.

But—*what will you do with it next?*

“Ay, son, take courage with me, for there is a way
from transgression,
Right straight up into triumph. *What will you make
of your sin?*

Sin that it was, ay, and shame that it is, and blemish
eternal.

What else too shall it be? What else eternal
become?

God be thank'd! There's a Law that can turn all
blemish to Beauty,
And the worst crime into a tool for the Hand of
Eternal Good.

I know, for I've seen it done! I see it everywhere,
doing!

Look you, and see—yon paddock, green with the
ribbonwood grove once,

Until that fire went through; don't you remember,
next morning,

The pitiful, poor black ruin, and how I sat down
and cried? But

You—you sow'd it with grass-seed, you turn'd the
ruin to riches!

For the blessed Earth-law work'd on, and now, see
Jetty and Jewel!

They know where the best grass grows!

“Even so, dear heart, with this ruin
Handle and do! Plough it deep, and harrow it—
yes, let Contrition

Bite!—but never stop there! Instantly sow it, with
courage

To be and to bear, for yourself, and O, with help and
compassion

For the rest who suffer from sin! (Ay, the need
and sorrow of sinners

Who knows better than we? So who should better
bring help?)

Briskly about it, my son! and the greening grass,
and the spring stir,
And the stars in their shining shall hail you, the
globe in its rolling shall help you.
For, *After Ruin, Renewing!* so runs the merciful
Life-Law:
Out of Destruction, Growth! and a human life that
is broken
Can break on, like a fertilised field, into help for a
hungry world!

“The bright sea says it again—Look! Under that
brightness, blackness,
Slime and wreckage and ooze: yet, deep in the dregs
too, service!
Doesn't the world need divers? There's sunken
treasure to rescue,
Where but in drowning deeps are laid sure harbour
foundations?
And pearls, the gentlest of gems, maybe because
made with sorrow,
Only the sea has pearls.... You and I have been
under and down, son!
In the dregs of the world we've been—Woe's me!
some stay there and sleep there....
Not out of Touch, even so.... but we've quick air in
our lungs yet
To bring us back to the air and the beautiful shining
surface;
We're for the sun again—and we'll not have been
down for nothing?
Outcast of men, ay, and justly! still the Omnipotent
Mercy

Can meet us down in the depths, and turn us too
to Its Use.

“O, think no more what you’ve lost, boy, but what
you have learn’d, through transgression!
Count not the cost—that is fixt—but reckon the
possible profit.

You can build you a beautiful *But*, you can start a
shining *It Shall Be*

Now, this minute, my son! You can bury the Past
—in the Future!

What matters the boy you have been if, so, now you
are more of a man?

“Nay, and let’s look away, look out, look up, from
our puny failures
To what is beyond, whole, safe! Over yon smoking
City

See the great sky, how clear! Look at the sea, how
clean

For all Man’s drainage and wreckage! And the
plain that never grows weary,

And the snows, that never sin—How much of the
world’s all right yet,

Pure for all our pollution, undamaged by all we
have done!

Thanks, O thanks, for the Great Things!....

“More thanks for the so much Greater,
That nought can ever drag down! Past all things
and all people,....

Beyond all seas and snows, all lovely shadows and
symbols....

Sovereign, strong and sure, the real Realities shine!
Ay, Purity still is pure, Beauty is beautiful always,
Perfection is utterly perfect, and Love is loving
for ever,
Never mind you and me! O, isn't that something
rooted,
Something that saves the world?
And praise to the way of Its working!
For that does mind you and me! Look at you
glory going
Out all over the landscape, in the sooty smoke of
the City—
Curling up, silver and gold....how it lightens the
very light!
And that is the way, I know it! with a soul that
seeks for retrieval;
And sends its sacrifice-smoke up, abroad and away.
It catches the Light, that smoke! Humanity's
misty sunshine
It brightens with beautiful banners—Ay, Courage,
and Aspiration,
Understanding, Compassion, these from the souls of
sinners
Ascending, glorify Life, O merciful, sweet
Perfecting,
Dear Magic, beyond our knowing, that works
through large and through little,
Everywhere, everywhere! backward, as well as
inward, and onward;
Making, of creatures, creators!—Look, son! As you
tiny prison
To that great white wall of the Alps, is the darkest
sin of our sinning

To the Unstain'd Life of us all: yet strong with the
self-same Power
That calls green grass out of ashes, beauty from
refuse vapour,
And cleanness out of corruption, is a soul that turns
from its sin.
O son, my son, have you sinn'd? are you down?
are you wreck'd and ruin'd?
Up, then! Higher than ever! Out of the broken
boyhood,
Through the horror and struggle and darkness and
devastation,
Into the masterful manhood of a spirit risen through
falling!
Wide, wide the way opens, for one who has learn'd
that freedom—
O, better the world by your wreck, boy! Because
you're a sinner, save!"

With that, she arose and left him. Thick, at last,
on her lashes
Hung the bitter hot tears, and she stumbled over
the tussock;
But, ere she reach'd the house and went upon daily
duties,
Back was the light in her eyes, back her soul in the
Height.

....But he stay'd still on the rock; and the plain
was drown'd and the mountains,
In the amethyst afternoon-haze, as the long bright
hours pass'd o'er him

Brooding still and absorb'd, but now in a nobler
sorrow.

His Mother! His passionate, patient, seeing, large-
hearted Mother!

Mother to all sad hearts, to all lives crippled or
lonely,

Mother-confessor to many—lads and girls in their
hot shame,

Husbands and wives in their cares....Recluse, yet
comrade....Self-outcast,

Yet welcome sharer of sorrows, understander of
souls....

The sick demanded her touch, the eyes of the dying
her deep eyes;

Like Fog in face of a breeze, misery melted before
her,

Courage came with her coming, cheer remain'd
when she went.—

But, for her, what comrade, what comfort, what
understander?

Irony! only himself.

Now, as with vision new open'd,
All her way he discern'd—how, to pay, she had
pluck'd out

The hot, wild heart that offended, had died to
herself, had chosen

For the new, difficult life, the difficult, lone, new
country,

Renouncing all ease, all help, all love, save that of
her son—O

*God, of her traitor son, that sword through her
bleeding bosom!*

....He recall'd her smiling privations for him, her
joyful contriving,
Her strong plans, always for him, her happy pride
in his promise....
Then, the magnanimous trust....later, the deep
forbearance,
Of that sensitive heart, presaging fresh anguish, a
second ruin,
New wounds gashing the old....yet he never had
seen but his own tears,
Ever a bright face to his, ever quick eager kisses
For her son, her second betrayer, her worst of
failures! *O Death, Death,*
Death! Make a merciful end. Finish the failure for
ever.
....Would it finish it, though, or only carry it
further?
She hadn't slunk to Death....

“*Boy, I have been through it all!*” O,
Awful, heroic cry of that comrade true to the
utmost,
Stripping her soul for his sake, of that splendid,
intrepid sufferer,
Ruler of ruin and wreck, of that sinner sainted and
shining,
All for hard honour still, and never-be-done
requital!
“*Your fellow-sinner!*” Not his, the cur and the
coward! “*Your Mother!*”
Ah, thank God, yes, yes! his Mother, always his
Mother,

Loving, comforting, tender....Ah, now, his
anguishing Mother,
In travail still of his spirit, groaning to bring forth
his soul....
“*O soul of a man, come forth!*”....

As one out of deep sleep rising,
Up he leapt to his feet, and look'd about him, and
listen'd.
The air was lustrous—it bloom'd, for the sun was
near to its setting,
And the gorse, the bush all bloom above thorns, was
a Burning Bush.
Bailward the cow-bells rang; he turn'd, and went
through the blue-gums'
Cloister of silver columns, down to the bail, where
his Mother,
Her milk-pails flashing about her, stood by a ruddy
heifer
In the low, rich, broadside light. Gently, but still
in silence,
He took from her bucket and stool, then, seated, his
head in the bright flank,
But his voice ringing and clear through the music
of milking, “Mother!
Your way is mine. Please God, I'll be better for
sinning!” he said.
Then, as she sprang to him swiftly, “But, O Mother!
O Mother!
If you'd not been down in the depths, I could have
never come up!”

Now the snows were a march of kings, and the
sea was a glass of glory;
Halo'd with rose was the plain, and robed in
royalest purple;
The hill-top glow'd, and rays from the deep-down
city windows
Flash'd through the shining mist like triumph from
tear-fill'd eyes.

BEAUTY FOR ASHES

My love had in a madhouse been, full seven years
and more,
Till last night at twilight, there she stood within
my door!
But she that had been lowly, how grand was now
her grace:
The dark room was bright with the glory from her
face.

She said, "I stay'd in prison, to pay my full debt;
I stay'd in school to learn so deep as never to forget.
Touch me not! but tell me, the long way back I've
come,
O, is it to a stranger, or my heart's old home?"

"Never an hour of all the days of the seven years,"
I said,
"That the door has not been wide for you, and a
full meal spread.
Horror, Rebellion, and Despair have beggar'd me,
'tis true,
But my heart's hearth has kept, see, ever ablaze
for you!"

"Why, is it seven years," she said, "or seconds,
that you mean?
Long, long, long, and yet how little it has been!

Seventy years would be little, to have learn'd what
now I know,
And I'll teach you, Beloved, when I've gone where
now I go!

“But give me a coal of love,” she said, “to warm
me on my way,
And a little bite and sup of love, to stay me on till
Day.
Fire and food I'll send you down, when I am safe
above,
And you'll find then, Beloved, that I've sent you
Love for love!”

She put her lips to my heart, and kiss'd away the
seven years' pain;
Cold little hands she put to it, and lo! 'twas warm
again.
Like a star, a star, she shone....across the sill, the
sod....
Till the stars above told me the way she'd gone to
God.

SUMNER ESTUARY

My dog beside me in his dog-like way
Tastes the divineness of this place and day,
Breathes-in the freshness of the large hill-air,
Basks in the blessed light spread everywhere;
 Seems, even, down to gaze,
 Far, far down, on the shining waterways,
Wandering 'mid shoals of sand and salty weed,
Of yon wide Estuary....
 But eyes can gaze, it takes a mind to see!
How much does my poor Collie sense indeed
 Of this vast, exquisite view,
 All breadth, all detail too?—
Bright twisting emerald, brilliant blues,
 Purple and violet, bronze and fawn,
Blending, make bloom with loveliest hues
 All the broad water-lawn:
Clouds bosom it with white:
A myriad curling courses, golden-bright
 Or like sharp silver, thread and flourish it
With inlaid light:
And, down its long length sinuously shining,
 From right and left, rich roads of sapphire,
 glide
The sister rivers.... then, together twining,
 Gleam past the yellow dunes into yon wide
Glitter of bare blue sea,
Eastward expanding, look! how far and free.

Northward, outside the pattern'd Estuary,
Smooth goes the gold shore curving far away
Round the smooth crescent of the great blue
Bay;

And, inland turning, toward the west, behold
The cluster'd city, breathing breaths of gold...
The purple width of plain...the lifted line
Of snows processional, that stride and shine
Continuous on, behind City and Estuary,
And Bay...till lastly, standing as on sea,
Station'd in sky, what massive Splendour
glows

Alone 'twixt blue and blue?—
Pure silver are her bulwarks, and aspire
To domes and pinnacles of silver fire,
So holy in their lifted, bright repose,
That, watching them, one's hopes grow holy
too....

O City Celestial, what indeed are you
Beyond mere snows?

My great home-picture, how you satisfy
Far more than brain and eye!
Burden of Beauty! how is the heart to bear thee,
Unless the soul too share thee?
Satisfy? nay, it overwhelms! and yet
Ever more hunger still doth wake and whet.
Ah, here's more eye-delight than mine can see,
And yet here's not enough, not Beauty
enough for me—

No, clambering up its noble and high peaks,
My spirit o'erpeers them mistily, and speaks,
Stammering of Beauty, Beauty! hid behind it...
O, if I could but find it!

Yes, only in my poor blind human way
Sense I the splendour of this place and day;
And my sight passes Collie's, it may be,
But by this mean degree—
That passionately I know I do not see!
An eye to gaze, a mind I have, to read,
A heart, a soul, to exult in this great scene,
But Ah, what faculty to fill my need
Of knowing what its dazzling scriptures *mean*?

O Thou, Whom here on the hill dog-like I
dwell beside,
My unseen Artist-Master, Teacher, Guide!
Yon sweet meanderings of blue and green,
Enamell'd purple and bronze,
Curv'd sea-neck like a swan's,
Curl'd veinings that illumine and damascene;
Mist and bright sea, low plain and lofty
snows,
City of man that gleams, City of God that
glows—
How, to Thine absolute view
That eye the depth can see, the surface through,
Appears the lovely symbol shining there?
What dost Thou see, whereat I do but stare?
The lettering so lovely, what must be
The meaning's majesty?
What says this curv'd and colour'd
character?
How reads this rich page of Eternity?
What is our Estuary's immortal lore?
O, far, far, far from me!
Collie can sense the surface, I may pore

Rapturously the curves and colour o'er,
Spell out the jewel hieroglyphs...., but
read?

Ah, there's my impotence, yet there's my
need!

O, it swims in my eyes, forth from my breast it
breaks,

My straining, stretch'd soul aches,

And but one thought redeems me from
despair,

Nay, ravishes me!—I know the meaning's
there!

O Master-Artist! when

Wilt Thou enlarge Thy poor man-creature's
ken?

When wilt Thou judge him worthy, ripe to
teach,

And useful to be taught,

The truth of Thine emblazon'd Nature-speech,

And through Thy Painting to perceive Thy
Thought?

Ah, not more light—abundant here Thy light!—

But, I beseech Thee, Lord, more sight, more
sight!

THE BLIND LAMA

At earliest sunlight,
Ocean and City glitter'd broadly bright!
 With ringing song the lark,
 The sky with radiant blue,
 The air with shining, and
 The grass with dancing dew,
Rejoiced at the defeating of the dark,—
Till, listening, looking, with rejoicing too,
 “Light! Light!” I cried, “What dearer gift
 than you?”

—Straightway, on the spread page
Of Hedin's brave and morning-hearted book
The finger of a sunbeam bade me look,
 And read how strange a story!
 Of a Thibetan sage,
Who steadfastly the light of day abjured,
 And dwelt from youth to age
In dark immured,
 Striving to see the super-sensual Glory.
Through sixty-and-nine years he so endured,
 Then, life's last measure being all but run,
 Ask'd to be once more brought into the sun,
 And to it show'd his eyes grown wholly
 blind—
So well the dreadful discipline was done!

*Sixty-nine years of voluntary night?
O dire delusion! senseless sacrifice!
Back to the lovely, reassuring light
For refuge rush'd my eyes....*

But, thro' all differences of race and creed,
My spirit with that kinsman spirit, lo,
 Strongly agreed!
Applauded the design, if not the deed;
The purpose understood, echo'd the need
 All lanthorns of the flesh down, out, to turn,
 If so the Inner Light may brightlier burn.
Nay, as I mused, those sixty years and nine,
 Dark for Light's sake, began to glitter and
 sparkle,
Into my heart that dismal state to shine!
 That strong renouncing did my will great good,
 And lit my mind to such a morning-mood,
That now its whole interior landscape glow'd,
 And, as in Nature's glory erst I gloried,
So could I joy now in that fortitude
 How dazzlingly that show'd
The truth of humanhood!—
 For if, when soul demands,
 The body must so utterly obey
 As to put off, and steadfastly abide,
 Sixty-nine years denied, till self-denied,
 Even the light of day —
 Why, then, how much of man the soul
 must be,
 How little, clay!

O Brother in the Dark! 'twas forth, not out,
 The light of thine intrepid young eyes went!
Forth, as a starry ray
Upon our darkling way,
 A shining, burning testimony, still sent
 Our groping life about,

Its Inner Light to reinforce, and slay
 Its Dark, of sloth and doubt.
The glitter of this outer morning-glee
How hast thou inly re-illumed for me!—
 Thou, who for love of Light,
 Could'st even light abhor,
And whose firm soul, for us who press
 through night,
 Has lit one lanthorn more!

PAST THE PINE BOUGH

At night the sea-wind sings
Thro' the pine-bough.
Up, Spirit! wave thy wings!
To the stars, thou!
Clay by the fire-side
Let the clog, Body, bide—
But thou, beyond all walls,
Past the pine-bough,
Past night, and stars, and sea,
Breath of Infinity!
Sing thou, and wander thou,
Free!

THE SUMMIT TRACK*

Come, climb with me, my soul, and let us change
This City of the plain for yon hill-range
 Builded along the Blue.

 In the bright shops the sunlight pales,
 In the full street the wing'd air fails,
And we are limited too,
 We are prevented by houses, and men and women,
A clearer vision we want, a wider view—
 Up let us climb!

 Ah, blessed Green-and-Blue
Already see, invading! where
These happier hill-side dwellings share
With rock and turf this livelier air
 Blushing with peach-blossom, and blent
 With skylark-song, and wattle-scent.
Here is brave sun to spare!
 And yonder full-flower'd gorse-lines up the height
 Point long gold fingers to yet more air and light...

*Traces of the teaching of Plotinus, of Fechner, and of the Vedanta are certain to be found in this poem, for all have helped to make explicit to the writer its main idea. This idea, however, has been with me implicitly as far back as I can remember; and was deeply intensified by a sudden experience some years since, impossible to put into words, but conveying most clearly to the mind the absolute conviction that Reality is Perfection, and One-ness.

While the long pine-plantations point us down,
And frame, between their dusky branches, bright
Vignettes and panel-pictures of the town....

The town! so seen, beneath ascending skies
And deep in bloomy mist, how beautiful it lies!

O'er rock and tussock, up the steep and on!....

The gardens go, the last red roof has gone;

Only the vault of Heaven, the hills' bare brow,
And space, and silence now!

Far, far below, the whole spread city lies,

Breathing, enhalo'd; the vast plain spreads round

Its amplitude of vaguely-pattern'd ground,

And far across, into a world of skies,

Leaps the great, silver-white,

Angelic Presence bright

Of the long Alps....till city alike and plain,

And marching mountain-chain

Sweep to yon wide way-out, of sapphire sea....

Ah! here is liberty;

Here can the gaze go free!

And, gazing with it, here

May heart and mind see clear.

Far now below lie all Humanity's

Close claims; and that which more than human is

In us, awakes! and deeply grows aware

Of that dear Other-One, with whom we share

This Earth-life—'neath her robes of green and blue

Our fellow-dust, our fellow-spirit too!....

Nature, Man's Sister! whose activities,

Though guided not, like his,

Down nerve and muscle from desire and thought,

Have yet this bright and living splendour wrought ;
Whose body is but this grass,
Yonder cold snows, waters that witless roll,
Clouds that uncaring pass:—
But yet whose life, like his, is very Life ;
Whose soul is very Soul !

Yes, yes! For though, as Man we may not guess
How flow those currents of her consciousness,
As Spirit, we sense them! What, must flesh and
blood

Be Soul's one vesture? who would have it so
Not yet hath understood!

But I, have I not felt, do not I know?
Nature! my life-long comrade close and true,
My Angel with the great wings green-and-blue,
O, since the darken'd childhood long ago,
When to the little lonely spirit near

Thine answering spirit drew,
Laid mother-arms about the shivering heart,
Smiled in the sad eyes, in the hungering ear
Murmur'd the home-word, *Beauty*—thou and I,
Thank God, dwell never apart!

What human touch more intimate, more dear?

Who brings me else thine exquisite release:

From passion and pettiness to faith and peace?

Who can so flood self out with Loveliness,
And to all sorrows point the great Redress,

Perfection perfect still? I lay

My hand here in the grass, I press

My cheek against this cold, hard rock—

And lo, thy being's answering stress

Thrills through me with the old sweet shock,

And to my happy, happy eyes
The tears of love and rapture rise,
And longing! O my Glory, O my Guide!
Could I but serve thee as thou savest me!
Could I but prove, could I but make men see
The earthly and the heavenly company,
The comforter, the comrade, given in thee,
The shining Sister ever at their side!

What need? This outlook shows it! Look,
complete
In little, here's all the Earth-life at my feet....
Nature in her unveiled majesty,
Simple, superb and sure;
Glad colours, mighty forms, of land, sky, sea:
Man in her arm—the city! sunk in mist,
Blinded with breaths impure
Incident to his subsoil—wrong and pain,
Hate, ignorance, greed of gain....
And yet, as yonder vapours show,
Sun-shot at noon, an opal glow,
And paint the plain into a lawn
Of roses and violets at dawn:—
As yonder chimney-smoke uproll'd
Crowns it with curls of silver and gold,
And leaguéd lamps at black of night
Strew it with galaxies of light:—
So with his varying fun and feud,
His gloom and gleam of circumstance,
Fortunes and fancies many-hued,
Building, and battle and romance,
Man, the inventive and the various,
The complicated and contrarious,

Quickens the Earth-life! kindles it
With restless will and zesty wit;
And, with the ardours of his soul,
The holy passions of his heart,
Stars the Earth-star anew, with Love,
Heroism, Worship, Wisdom, Art!

While Nature, shining, blooming, stands
Beside him, look!—a life akin,
Yet other. Can the Ocean sin?
Has the clean snow a heart, or the sweet sky warm
hands?

Nature works, true; but does she toil, or tire?
Remorse, disgust, depression does she know?
Must she renounce, and does she need aspire?
Man on to God through grief, through want must go,
And up sore steps of difficult desire;
While she, methinks, through Beauty's open
gate
Runs, and is with Him straight!

But both about their Earthly business go
Rhythmic—he quick and short, she gradual and
slow;
Through both, great secret currents circulate,
Great world-tides flow, great world-waves undulate.
Movement and change, birth and decay and growth
Modulate both,
And some more subtle Mandate both obey
Whereby, akin yet contrast, they
Each other mould through interplay,
Ever they clasp, or clash, in love or strife,
And evermore the issue's larger life—

As yonder City vivifies
Her setting rare of plain and skies
And glorious past both, the whole scene lies—
So, world-wide, Man and Nature win fresh worth
Through one another, and new power confer,
The while, in union, both create and share,
Past either mighty, and past either fair,
The life of the whole Earth!

Ay, Nature's cool, serene
Yellow and blue and green,
Cunningly wove and wed
With Man's hot orange and red,
Cloud-purple, indigo—
And lo! the ladder of the Earth's rainbow:
Her treble and his bass in true accord,
The Earth-Song joins the music of the
spheres:

Her consciousness and his conjoined to
one,
The Cosmic Poem hears
The syllables twain of Earth's required Word:
Her life and his life in one living whole,
And Earth through Spirit as through space shines
on
A Star, a Soul!

Yet O! what join'd them? Could the mere Star-
dust

Compose itself to unity so just,
And such begetting Harmony beget?
Then in its deadness must
Some deeper being be, that one can trust!

Whence came It? Whither tends It? soil of Earth,
And soul of Earth, are these the limits still?
Hast thou no further Vision glimmering yet
Through thy far view, my Hill?

Once, in the days of old,
Where yonder landscape lies,
A fiery Chaos roll'd....
And changed....at last, to skies,
Rocks,....and these fields and Sea....
And warm Humanity.

Now, daily does Man die, and is re-made;
Daily the mountains melt, the sea exhales,
The fields revive and fade.

—What if, some day, they not revive? if Man
No more at last his race replenish can?
If, o'er the perish'd City, gradually
This hill sink down to the exhausted Sea?
If Man and Nature both, both born of Change,
Through Change to Change should pass and cease
to be—

Till the whole Earth-life vanish utterly,
A broken wave, a life-cell fail'd and cast,
A climax past?....

What matter, O what matter? Past the range
Of Rise-and-Fall, past the creating strife:
Beyond all Change, though with all changes rife:
Safe still, for ever safe, is That Which saves!
The Ocean is not counted by its waves;
Containing all, by aught containéd never,
Fadeless and formless, past all forms, for ever
Shines the Essential Life!

Ay, God! Perfection! Spirit! name as we will
Thee Whom our highest name
Can but defame—

Soul of all souls, All-Source, All-Satisfaction,
To Thee, to Thee, ever we break through still!

In Whom both Man and Nature live and move
And have their being; in Whom men think and love,
Struggle and choose and aim; in Whom
Stars come and go, winds drive, and violets bloom.

Purport of all! 'tis Thou the Power still art
Of each Thy separate part;
For Thee, in Thee, they run together, subsume
More of Thy Life, and with Thy Light illumine

The shining body and soul of this Earth-Star,
One of Thy Thoughts express'd,
One Word made manifest.

—O, how much more! in Thee continuing far,
Her double note with what all-resonant Chord,
Hark! goes on choring—O, behold how bright

Her colours, in Thee mounting, smitten are
To what white Light!

In Thy proceeding Poem stands this Word,

Thou, Thinker, through this Thought, art thinking
on—

O, Man, and Nature and Earth, I see all gone

On! past themselves—all fused

With all, and yet all free!

Their utmost powers used,

Their lives not lost, but loos'd,

In union, Universal Life, with Thee!

Come down with me, my soul! let us go down
Freely to bondage, and contented stay

At large within the flat and crowded town—

Having brought Sight away!

It was but to climb up a little space,

View the same prospect from a loftier place,

And large is the little! Stainless and high

Over the street presides the Sky,

Over the chaffering stand the Snows,

Thro' the traffic the Ocean flows!

Larger, larger, the Glory grows!

With Nature and Man in her radiant span,

The Earth-Star travels, the Earth-Soul glows

Thro' space, thro' Spirit . . . Here on the hill,

Spirit and space, I see them still

Widening on, and out, until

Through!—to what sparkling Sum

Of all ends ended!—

Lo, all the limits come

Magnificently Home,

Triumphant travellers,

Shining and splendid!

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