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1854

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KNOW NOTHING.

KNOW NOTHING:

A POEM,

FOR

NATIVES AND ALIENS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEBRASKA."

Samuel R. Phillips



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KNOW NOTHING.

PART I.

KNOW NOTHING.

THE mother nations, wrinkled, old, and gray,
Dying with the "king's evil" in their blood,
Send swarming armies of their children here
To feed upon the fat of lands we till,
Or seek for shelter underneath the wing
Of our young country's noble charity.
Taught by the tyrants of despotic lands
To love and serve crowned kings and mitred priests,
And worship relics of the dusty past,
How can they sympathize with freedom here?
Their customs, laws, and language are not ours;
Their bigotry sticks by them like their brogue.
As full-blown sunflowers turn toward the sun,
Their hearts turn to the cross upon the church.
Our young Republic will be ruled by Rome,
While nunneries will be strung upon our streets

As thick as beads upon a rosary,
 Unless we watch our native country's weal
 With vigilance — a plant which blooms in votes.
 For shameless demagogues, on supple knees,
 Bow to the dust before the foreign power.

KNOW SOMETHING.

Why aim such blows at the mercurial Celt?
 Is he not useful in the shops of trade?
 Does he not pave the roads with iron bars,
 And link the lakes and rivers with the sea,
 Bringing the wealth of nations to our doors?
 As from its back the snail casts off its shell,
 So from his shoulders the bronzed laborer casts
 The brick and mortar domes in which we live.
 His blood has baptized every battle field;
 His valor helped to crown each victory;
 He pays his taxes and performs his tasks;
 Erects his temple with its cross and spire,
 And worships as his creed and church direct.
 He came from the Green Isle across the sea, —
 The emerald brooch upon the ocean's breast, —
 Where grand O'Connell, the great patriot,
 Shook Britain as Olympian Jove the hills;
 Where Emmett, the lamented martyr, poured
 His warm heart's blood, his country to redeem.
 Shall we receive his tax and spurn his vote,
 Ay, stand beside him on the battle field,
 And step before him at the ballot box?
 No; "honor bright" 's the watchword of the brave,
 Who honor toil by whomsoe'er performed.

Toil swings the axe, and forests bow ;
The seed breaks out in radiant bloom ;
Rich harvests smile behind the plough,
And cities cluster round the loom.
Where towering domes and tapering spires
Adorn the vale and crown the hill,
Stout Labor lights its beacon fires,
And plumes with smoke the forge and mill.

The monarch oak, the woodland's pride,
Whose trunk is seamed with lightning scars,
Toil launches on the restless tide,
And there unrolls the flag of stars.
The engine, with its lungs of flame,
And ribs of brass, and joints of steel,
From Labor's plastic fingers came,
With sobbing valve and whirring wheel.

'Tis Labor works the magic press,
And turns the crank in hives of toil,
And beckons angels down to bless
Industrious hands on sea and soil.
Here sunbrowned Toil, with shining spade,
Links lake to lake with silver ties,
Here builds huge palaces of trade,
And heaps the granite to the skies.

KNOW NOTHING.

The crowded nations of this teeming earth
Are separated by the stormy seas,
Whose foaming waves rise and forbid the banns

Of union 'twixt the old world and the new.
God's mighty mason work, the mountains, stand
On either hemisphere, dividing walls.
The rivers are stretched out like silver lines
To mark the boundaries of the several states.
Climate has spread its varied tent of clouds,
Of sombre or of silver lining, o'er
The different lands where different races live.
Soil, with the various roots, and herbs, and flowers,
Sustains the wants of various tribes of men.
The desert suits the Arab, as the sea
The sailor, or the mountain suits the Swiss.
Nature has bleached all the Caucasian race,
And touched the Indian with a tinge of gold,
And steeped the African in inky night.
Then languages are all dissimilar.
These marks and landmarks prove my theory right.
Now, shall we make a Babel of our land,
Our continent a convict's colony,
America the almshouse of the world?
The noble patriot from other climes,
Whose heart, true as an astronomic clock,
Keeps time with this reformatory age,
We cherish in the greenest memory.
We pity Mitchel, who is forging chains
For slaves while claiming freedom for himself;
We scorn Bedini, whose red, reeking hand
Our servile senate grasped so cordially:
Had Bishop Hughes been holy as St. Paul,
He would have shook that viper from his arm.

KNOW SOMETHING.

Go to the wandering Tartar's tent,
On the broad desert, wild and free ;
Go to the Bushman's tenement,
And live with him in his hollow tree ;—

Go to the Indian's wigwam, where
Fat venison and corn are spread ;
Meet with a red man's welcome there ;
He'd add his blanket to thy bed.

The tawny Arab lends a steed
To speed the stranger o'er the wild ;
The African will bid him speed,
And bless his absent wife and child.

In frozen lands of ice and snow,
The hardy, fur-clad mountaineer
Will wrap in sealskin friend or foe,
And give him team of dogs or deer.

Let all Anglo Know Nothings, then,
Go to the pagan climes to school,
And in the haunts of savage men
Learn to observe the golden rule !

“ My country is the world ; its people are
My countrymen,” whate'er their clime or creed.
Of one blood all the nations God has made.
State lines are not the limits of my love ;
Cold cannot chill it into disregard,

Nor heat absorb its buoyant life away ;
 It overtops the mountains, whose snow-crowned
 Heads nod among the glorious stars of heaven ;
 It reaches farther than the broadest sea ;
 It understands the wide world's polyglot,
 And recognizes every human form,
 Whate'er may be the color of its skin.

Commerce has bridged the billowy ocean o'er
 With mast, and sail, and steam, and smoke, and fire :
 The compass is the round world's "wedding ring,"
 Which marries all the nations of the earth.
 The rocky shores which frame the rolling sea
 Form the vast loom where Emigration weaves
 The mingled fabric of society,
 Green here with hope, stained there with tragic red,
 Gay as a marriage dress bestarred with gold,
 Then white as any air-bleached winding sheet.
 Now, if red-handed War should cut the threads,
 Society would seem unravelled here.
 Pray who would build our roads, our conduits dig ?
 Who blast the stubborn rock and bear the load ?
 Who'd scrape and sweep the crowded thoroughfares ?
 Who cook the viands and prepare the couch ?
 Patricians would not soil their snowy hands
 Nor spot their garments at such plebeian toil.
 How would a Broadway dandy hold the spade
 Or climb the ladder with a loaded hod ?
 How could he sacrifice his kids and straps,
 And daub his darling boots with vulgar lime ?
 A daffodil in mortar cannot grow.
 He never carried bricks save in his hat,
 Which sits so lightly on his scented hair,

No creeping thing without, no thought within,
 His perfumed head could ever be disturbed.
 Too proud to beg, too indolent to dig,
 He'd sooner starve than earn his daily bread.
 His creed is simple and soon understood :
 " To be well dressed is the chief end of life ;
 To strut and eat, life's chief accomplishments.
 Heaven is a fashionable place above,
 Where lavender perfumes the atmosphere,
 And hell the vile abode of vulgar folks,
 Who never visit Newport's yellow beach."
 The simpering belle, fresh from her boarding school,
 With little heart packed full of vanity,
 And smaller head filled up with useless lore,
 Speaks execrable French, plays with her dog,
 Makes tender lambs and savage lions meet
 In the millennium of her worsted work,
 Lisps love to foplings hideous in their hair,
 Hobnobs with libertines at fairs and balls,
 Or in licentious polkas clasps the rake
 Who wounds her honor with adulterous eyes,
 Would scorn to ply the needle or the broom.
 How could a handsome damsel so divine
 Darn socks, and stockings, or perform (!) a patch,
 Sweep floors, or play a tune upon the tub ?
 We need the service of the emigrant.
 This is my song of welcome to the world : —

With the voice of many waters
 Let us shout, till Echo starts,
 Welcome, welcome, sons and daughters,
 To our hearthstones and our hearts !

Gather where our sun-crowned fountains
Fall in showers of golden spray ;
Come down from the snow-robed mountains,
Like an avalanche, to-day.

Where the tropic sun is glowing,
Where dun lions make their lair,
Where the ancient streams are flowing,
Come and welcome every where ;
Come with banners and devices,
Borne aloft with sturdy arm,
From the south land, where the spices
Kiss the winds with lips of balm.

Onward, upward, bear the banner,
With rejoicing heart arise,
While our loud and glad hosanna
Shakes with thunder shouts the skies.
Bright as stars, fair as Night's planet,
Let th' oppressed of nations come
To green vales and hills of granite
With mellow flute and marching drum.

PART II.

KNOW NOTHING.

THE sacred Sabbath is the whitest day
Of all the week; its rosy hours of light
Are filled with shining moments, as the sky
Is spangled o'er with golden stars at eve.
I love its air, unstained with labor's smoke,
Filled with the pleasant sound of chiming bells,
That speak from lofty tower and trembling dome,
As if the angels, on their way to earth,
Stopped there to call the nation to its knees.
I love its unyoked waters, pure and free
As are the thoughts which flow through holy hearts.
Down past the mill yon silent streamlet runs,
With sweeter voice than sound of echoing choirs,
Into the blue arms of the bounding sea,
Where it is crowned with wreaths of ocean flowers,
Where radiant shells with ruby lips invite
The waves to worship on the sandy shore.
So may my thoughts and aspirations flow,
'Twixt the embankments where life's lot is cast,
Until the all-embracing God of truth
Absorbs me in the ocean of his love.
Sweet day of rest, designed for man and beast!
The laboring ox shall in the meadow graze;
The steed, unharnessed, gallop from the stall;

While the unkennelled dog speaks out his joy!
Let no young Walton whip the waters now;
No sportsman kill the sinless birds to-day.
Now Nature speaks from brook, and bird, and bee;
And let her teach again the human heart.
Behold, the burning bush is unconsumed,
And every Moses hears the voice of God!
This flower stem is a tiny tower, which lifts
Its bells above the congregated grass —
Bells where the yellow bee tolls out its tune
To this fraternity of dying flowers!
Let me tread softly, with unsandalled feet,
Amid these flowers; for this is sacred ground.
As the dark seeds on downy pinions soar
From the rough-bearded thistle in the vale,
My purest thoughts on wings of hope shall rise
Up from the green sod to the great white throne.
My heart wells up with joy and gratitude
For blessings showered like raindrops from above.
Peace smiles at every rose-wreathed cottage door;
And Plenty shakes her round, red cheek with bliss.
There is no land beneath the watchful sky
So near the crystal gates of heaven as ours.

There are no traces on the sky,
Where rolled in clouds the thunder car;
The arrows of the storm sped by,
Quenched in bright rainbows arched afar.
Lo, earth and heaven are now serene;
For, when away the tempest flew,
The earth assumed a gayer green,
And heaven shone out in brighter blue.

Now clouds of crimson, edged with gold,
 Adorn the crystal walls on high;
 And balmy winds in peace unfold
 The rich upholstery of the sky.
 Eternal arch of boundless blue!
 Ethereal floor of azure light!
 With angel faces shining through
 As shine the radiant stars at night.

Above its quenchless beacon fires
 The city of our God behold;
 The shadow of its silver spires;
 Its crystal gates and streets of gold.
 The overarching skies unite
 Both worlds, and make a radiant road,
 All paved with suns and stars, to light
 The pilgrim on his path to God.

Such were my thoughts and fancies while I sat
 Beneath the shadow of a friendly tree,
 Whose long root, stretched out like a finger point,
 Called my attention from the skies to earth,
 On which the Sabbath seemed a space for thought.
 A bell was throbbing in a neighboring tower,
 Surmounted by a spire, with globe and cross.
 Upon that lofty cross methought I saw
 The image of my country crucified.
 Party betrayed it with a sinister kiss;
 Fat bigotry put on the crown of thorns;
 While politicians nailed it to the spire.
 Then fled the Sabbath like a flash of light;
 Then from her pedestal fair Freedom fell;

Then patriots and martyrs went to heaven
 In seas of blood and chariots of flame.
 Our institutions, like uprooted reeds,
 Were swept away before the blasting storm ;
 Orphan asylums, sad, forlorn, and poor,
 No nursing mother in the nation found ;
 Guideless the blind groped through a life of gloom ;
 College, and church, and common school were filled
 With cowl, and crucifix, and mumbling men.
 The busy hum of trade was hushed and still ;
 Ships rotted at the wharves, and grass grew in the
 streets ;

Art, with her statues and her pictures, fled.
 'Twas but a dream ; yet in my heart of hearts
 I firmly then resolved to " nothing know " —
 But the prospective and the present good
 Of this my dear, my loved, my native land.
 And thus I poured out my indignant song
 To demagogues, who dig our nation's grave : —

Fear not the frown of Virtue while ye win
 The harlot smile of every horrid vice ;
 So make it lawful in the land to sin —
 Ye must have votes, whatever be the price.
 Heed not the Church ; like Rachel in her tears
 She weeps, and will not be consoled, because
 Her children, lo, these many mourning years,
 Have been oppressed by our blue license laws.
 Let loose the serpent and the savage beast
 To terrify, and bite, and sting, and kill ;
 Import the plague, and let the grave worm feast,
 And curse us next with the Nebraska bill.

Great God! and has it come to this at last,—

Here in this land of hope, and truth, and light,—
The sun of Liberty is setting fast,

In blood, and bitter tears, and blackest night?

Fill up the hospitals with halt and lame,

And crowd the workhouse with the wretched
poor;

But honest patriots will proclaim your shame

When ye are known as senators no more.

'Twas at the ballot box ye prayed to us;

'Twas to the house we sent our prayers to you;

We sought a blessing, and ye gave a curse;

When we implored for bread, a stone ye threw.

When next ye bow to lick the hands which hold

The votes of men ye basely have betrayed,

Few will be caught, although the bait be gold,

In the man traps ye have in secret laid.

KNOW SOMETHING.

The sun rolled down the steep blue bank of sky,
And dropped into the sea, which quenched its light.

It seemed as though a king had fallen from

His throne into the bosom of the grave,

And left the realm of space to his fair spouse

The moon, and her bright parliament of stars.

There were no ruts upon the royal road

Where rolled the monarch's chariot of fire;

Like a discrowned and banished king he fell.

But he will rise in regal splendor when

Infant To-Morrow, nursing now upon

The veiled bosom of its mother Night,

Springs from its ebon arms to laugh in light.
Each blessed day lends every mortal wings,
With which he flies towards the eternal land.
But few more nights, each studded thick with stars
And lined with rosy day, are folded now
Between us and the radiant realms of bliss.
We look up at the overarching heavens,
And know God watches with unslumbering eyes
The welfare of the sleeping world below.
He sends his angels down the starry stairs;
They light the wild flower in the silent wood;
They visit children with sweet dreams of heaven;
They dry the tears which bleach the face of youth;
They kindle hope in the despairing breast;
They drive temptation with a sword of flame;
They ward off danger with their snow-white shield;
They drop rich blessings on the road of life,
And open all the crystal gates of heaven.
God's corps of armed angels can protect
Our nation if we put our trust in him.
He speaks to us through nature; let us hear
His voice from buds, and bees, and waves, and
winds.

How radiant the evening skies,
Broad wing of blue in heaven unfurled!
God watching with a thousand eyes
The welfare of a sleeping world.
He paints the wild flower in the wood,
And rocks the sparrow in her nest;
He guides the angels on their road
That come to guard us while we rest.

When the bee blows his tiny horn
To wake the sisterhood of flowers,
And God shall kindle up the morn,
Praise shall expand these hearts of ours.
He rolls the sun to its decline,
And speeds it on to realms afar,
To let the modest glowworm shine,
And man behold the evening star.

With wings of flame he sweeps away
The stars above so thickly spread,
To light the ant with golden ray,
And show man where to find his bread.
The skylark meets the distant blue
Which stoops to clasp a waking world ;
While flowers shake off their crowns of dew,
And hues of heaven are here unfurled.

Pure as the dew dissolved in air,
Like incense rising from the sod
Shall be my morning's praise and prayer,
While faith shall wing my words to God.
Like silver rain the light-beams fall
From rosy Morning's torch of flame,
Where the mailed beetle rolls his ball
And the brown beaver builds his dam.

The sun looked from the sky and smiled,
And earth awoke with songs of bliss,
As wakes the sweet and smiling child
Roused by a mother's morning kiss.

From the green wood the wild bird hymns
Ring out upon the summer air ;
The trees lift up their leafy limbs
Like happy nations shouting there.
As hope lights up the heart that grieves
When desolation no more reigns,
This cloud of bud, and bloom, and leaves
Revives the soul with woodland strains.

The trees are teachers that I love ;
Their leafy book I oft have read ;
Their branches point to worlds above ;
Their roots point to the world that's dead.
O, solemn thought ! the wood, so lorn
In winter, and in summer fair,
Holds in its trunks, for the unborn,
Cities, and ships, and coffins there !

Let root clasp root throughout the wood,
And branch intwine with branch above,
As hand joins hand in brotherhood,
And heart joins kindred heart in love.
When like these trees we lose our charms,
And fate shall smite us with its breath,
Like them may we find friendly arms
To hold us till we drop in death !

The robin on yon blossomed tree,
From his note book of fragrant flowers
Sings hymns of praise, O God, to thee,
For summer, sunlight, seed, and showers !

The bright wild flowers which deck the sod
Look skyward with their grateful eyes,
And breathe their sweetest praise to God
For blessings from the earth and skies.

The silver stream which gently flows
Like liquid light through meadows green
Makes richest music as it goes,
And beautifies the sylvan scene.
The stars which crown the brow of night
Look down on us with eyes of love,
And give to all the golden light
They borrow from the orbs above.

O that I were a bird of song,
Or radiant flower of rainbow hue,
Or like the stream which glides along,
Or like the stars which gem the blue!
God grant that hollow, hollow words
Stain not these living lips of ours!
But let our songs be like the birds,
Our thanks like balm of sweetest flowers.

And let us, like the crystal rill
Which runs toward the waiting sea,
Shine through this vale of tears until
We lose ourselves, O God, in thee.
We know immortal man is worth
More than sparrow, flower, or star,
Whate'er may be his place of birth;
So let us be as angels are!

Such are the lessons Nature teaches me.
On the same soil she sprinkles various flowers,
Of different dyes as "night is sown with stars."
The violet looks not with jealous eyes
Upon the modest primrose at its side ;
The daisy brings no charge against the pink
Because it sucks up moisture from the breast
Where it is nursed and fed with rain and dew ;
The queenly rose flames out in fragrant bloom,
Burning incense sweet in bushes unconsumed ;
And sister lilies fold it in white arms ;
And marigolds, like suns in miniature,
Smile joyously through leafy clouds of green.
In the same wood the family of trees
Spring up, and, like a band of brothers, grow
On the same soil ; while from their leafy lips
Come not the lowest whisper of complaint.
The oak flings not his acorns at the elm,
Because the ivy leans upon his trunk
As a fond maiden on her lover's arm.
We see that birds of every note and plume
On the same bough sing cheerfully their songs.
O, let us learn from Nature's open book
The lessons of fraternity and love.
Why, foreign blood flows through each artery
And vein in the vast body politic ;
And he who plucks at this network of life
Will find the nation's heart is at its root.
Let the poor laborer, with his hod and harp,
Rest in the city which his hands have built ;
Set not the dogs upon him in the field

His labor filled, fence-full, with golden grain!
This is an inauspicious time to war
Upon our neighbors at the ballot box.
Ireland, like ragged Lazarus at the gate,
With outstretched hand asks for the crumbs which
fall

From proud Old England's most luxurious board;
France, like the maniac among the tombs,
Maims herself with the fetters that she breaks;
Hungary bleeds in chains at Austria's throne;
While Russia puts the yoke on Poland's neck
And plunders Turkey of her "royal" rights.
Is this the time to scan each foreign face
With jealous eye and most insulting speech?
To look for foes behind a foreign name,
And scent disaster in "imported" blood?
To measure loyalty by lineage?
Do you not disfranchise the native black,
And drive the Indian from his hunting ground?
Give to the slave his sacred liberty,
And give the Indian his plundered lands,
And then produce a signed and witnessed deed
Of undisputed title to this soil;
Or hold your peace, and hide your head for shame.

KNOW NOTHING.

As seeds grow up to blade, and bloom, and fruit,
So our ideas to institutions grow;
As tiny plants become a grove at last,
So families expand to kingdoms huge.
Then we should guard with sleepless vigilance

Our infant country from incipient ills.
We know that bigotry is Freedom's bane ;
That we have men in search of place and power
Who'd sacrifice their souls, if souls they had,
To win a vote, though stained and steeped in rum.
And we have multitudes of mouthing fools
Who'd vote for devils were they candidates
And polls were opened at the gates of hell.
Cass, in the council chamber of the state,
Could compliment the legate of the pope
And press that butcher's spotted hand in his.
Then, like a minnow in the whale's white wake,
Our Arnold followed with his fulsome praise!
And, next, bloody Bedini found himself
Imparadised within a Badger's arms.
Since then, this Badger gave the Russian bear
Such a fraternal hug he pleased "old Nick."
Butler, whose silvery locks are not a crown
Or even shield of glory to his head,
Whose face is rubicund as reddest wine,
Thought the Italian priest a saint indeed.

Our Congress is corrupt, and needs reform ;
Our Capitol the haunt of greedy men,
Who fill their pockets at the public purse ;
Who cram their stomachs at the country's crib ;
Who dodge their duty in the hour of need ;
Who misappropriate the nation's land ;
And, like most gallant lovers, bow before
The wanton woman in her scarlet robes.
These filibusters stretch their itching palms
To snatch fair Cuba from the crown of Spain,

And put that jewel on the sable brow
Of hateful, black, and ugly Slavery.
They steal whole territories at a grasp!
Such regal rascals, sinners so sublime,
Our bleeding country never saw before.
Petit, a pseudo Samson of the west,
Whose curls ambrosial strew the amorous lap
Of his Dalilah, — fleeting, fickle fame, —
Came forth, with brow of brass and heart of flint,
To slay three thousand honest, earnest men
With the dull jawbone of an arrant ass.
At such men we may throw words hard as stones,
Or place them in the pillory of scorn.
Such fireflies none but fools mistake for stars.
Behold, from postmaster to president,
How uniformly all of them pronounce
The “shibboleth” of party politics!
When Pierce becomes afflicted with a cold,
There is a cough in every custom house;
And when he takes a tickling pinch of snuff,
Postmasters and commissioners must sneeze.

Thank Heaven, the medal has a brighter side:
More than ten honest men can yet be found
To save our capital from Sodom's fate.
Men of the loftiest minds have loyal hearts;
Their words, and votes, and deeds, and earnest
prayers
Are always on the side of right and truth.
Such men, at every hazard, we'll sustain;
They will not trample on downfallen slaves,
Nor slaves become to tyrants north or south.

No man can own another man ;
 For he who buys or sells another,
 Of any color, class, or clan,
 Insults his race and steals his brother.

And he who runs may plainly read,
 No mortal man in man shall barter :
 God gave to each a title deed,
 Then signed and sealed the holy charter.

And he will break the galling link
 Which binds the slave before him kneeling.
 He gave the negro mind to think,
 And filled his heart with human feeling ;—

He gave him hands to earn his bread,
 And feet to fly from the oppressor ;
 He lit the north star overhead,
 And he will be the slave's redresser.

KNOW SOMETHING.

A rosy boy, with flaxen hair, and eyes
 Blue as the sky which stoops to clasp the earth,
 And a fair maiden full of beauty, met
 In a thronged city, far from brooks and bowers.
 If the sweet rose had lips, and eyes, and speech,
 I would compare her with the queen of flowers,
 If heavenly angels had no shining wings,
 I should have thought she dropped from the mild
 sky.
 Her hair was darker than the midnight sea,

From which her forehead rose fair as the moon,
Accompanied by the twin stars of her eyes.
The silken lashes of those lustrous orbs
Were arrows pointed with a lovelit glance.
Her words were richer than the soft-tuned lute ;
And in those words her young love thoughts were
 seen,
Like unhatched birdlings in transparent shells.
When the youth pressed her soft, white hand in his,
Her throbbing heart crept through her silken veins
As sea tides up the narrow rivers creep
When banks are green with grass and gay with
 flowers,
And the old Ocean's breast seems filled with joy,
And told in throbs the story of her love.
There stood the bashful youth ; a maiden's heart
Worth more than worlds was beating in his hand ;
And when connubial bliss had crowned her queen
Of the whole empire of her husband's heart,
'Twas found both hearts were beating in each breast.
But he was born across the deep, dark sea ;
And when 'twas said her liege lord could not vote
If Young America should rule the realm,
Her heart beat quicker for her country's weal.
She scorned the natives who would disfranchise
A noble man whose loyal heart was true
To freedom as the shadow to the sun.
And she is not alone throughout the land :
The marriage ring links indissolubly
The native with the foreign heart and hand ;
And woman's influence, like the gentle ray

Which comes down from the overarching sky,
Will fill our happy land with better light;
Then such societies will pass away
Like darkness with its ghosts before the morn.

Drop follows drop, and swells
With rain the sweeping river ;
Word follows word, and tells
A truth which lives forever.

Flake follows flake, like sprites
Whose wings the winds dissever ;
Thought follows thought, and lights
The realm of mind forever.

Beam follows beam to cheer
The cloud a bolt would shiver ;
Throb follows throb, and fear
Gives place to joy forever.

The drop, the flake, the beam
Teach us a lesson ever ;
The word, the thought, the dream
Impress the soul forever.

PART III.

KNOW NOTHING.

THE skylark with its bill broke through the shell
Which did surround it like a spotted sky,
And then soared sunward with its umber wings
Over green fields on waves of golden air,
Leaving the opaque and empty nest behind
Just as a disimbodied spirit leaves
Its envelope of clay to moulder here.
So would I soar beyond the shell of sky
Nature has bent around my earthly sphere ;
Then, like the lark, rain down a shower of song
And inundate the air with melody.

Why am I placed within this world so fair ?
'To have an animal's or angel's aim —
To eat, and drink, and sleep my life away,
Or fill each day as full of noble deeds
As earth is filled with flowers or heaven with stars ?

Benevolence, be thou my blessed guide,
And lead me with the lamp of charity
To kindle fires upon the frozen hearth.
Such cheerful fires an angel's torch might light ;
They 're seen in heaven as stars on earth are seen.
Go with me to the gasping sick man's couch,
Where ministering spirits wait with wings
To plume the soul perched on his parchéd lips
And escort it to realms of endless bliss.

O, let us wisely measure mortal life
 By heart throbs, not by hours that pass away ;
 By noble deeds, and not by noisy words ;
 By thoughts which sparkle in the sky of mind,
 And not by years which glide past unobserved.
 Then age may plough its furrows on the face,
 Misfortune drag its harrow o'er the brow ;
 But Time will reap no crop of sorrow there,
 Since black Remorse has sown no bitter seeds.
 If many tongues and languages we learn,
 Like Burritt, let us plead for world-wide peace ;
 But if the bully smites our brother down,
 Like Ingraham, let us strip for his defence ;
 If tyrants put the yoke upon his neck,
 Like Beecher, let us break the clanking chains ;
 If landlords proffer him the Circean cup,
 Like Dow, the man of Maine, let's dash it down ;
 If wealth has poured its treasures in our lap,
 Like Lawrence,* let us give it to the poor.
 Here I would pay a tribute to the dead.

An arrow left an archer's bow,
 And lo, a prince has fallen here ;
 In winding sheet as white as snow
 Wrap him who died when died the year.
 Life ended when his work was done ;
 We miss him where his good deeds are
 As noon would miss a cloudless sun,
 Or night would miss the evening star.

* Amos Lawrence died on the last day of the year.

He was the poor man's faithful friend.

While our sad hearts with grief are riven,
 We know 'twas God who bade him spend
 A happy New Year up in heaven.
 Whose shoulders now are fit to wear
 The mantle worn so well by him?
 Whose heart is large enough to share
 The task at which his eyes grew dim?

He's numbered with the illustrious dead —
 The great, the good, the true, the brave;
 He sought no laurel for his head;
 He needs no granite o'er his grave.
 More durable than works of art
 Or words in verse his deathless name;
 'Tis writ on many a grateful heart,
 And hallowed with immortal fame.

Such men will ever be our country's pride;
 They never cringe before the golden calf;
 They value man, not by the envelope
 Of flesh and blood in which the soul is sealed,
 Not by the heaps of white and yellow dust
 That fortune may have tossed into his lap,
 Not by the collar creed locks on his neck,
 Not by the party "shibboleth" he speaks;
 But by his moral and his mental worth.
 They have no compliments for gilded vice;
 They weave no laurels for the tyrant's brow.
 While many stand out far before their age,
 Vast is the grovelling multitude behind.

While little men are numerous as the sand.
There are more mountains than great men on earth.

KNOW SOMETHING.

Black thunder clouds came roaring from the south
Like lions through the desert of the night,
Scaring the stars and blinding all the sky
With darkness dense, which filled the space between
The moonless heaven and melancholy earth
As crime fills the dark bosom of despair ;
When lo, a sudden flash revealed the scene,
With wood, and stream, and hill, and bridge, and
 spire,

As momentary gleams of conscience show
The unrepentant wretch his guilty life.
Peal followed peal, and flash succeeded flash,
As though the angry spirit of the storm
Shook all the stars out of the trembling sky.
One moment the immeasurable dome
Was black as Erebus ; the next 'twas lined
With world-wide flashing sheets of lurid flame.
From the torn clouds down came the arrowy rain ;
While winds arose to soothe the sobbing storm,
Which, like a sad heart, found relief in tears.
The Morn, with singing lark and shining sun,
Could not be seen through rents the lightning made ;
But when Boreas tipped the sable cloud
We heard the lovely minstrel of the sky
Sing hymns learned at the golden gates of heaven,
And saw the Morn come like a rosy maid
Fresh from the shower bath of the last night's rain.

The monarch Sun rode through his realm of sky
Upon a chariot of crimson clouds,
Diffusing heat and light to all the world.
His beams flamed on the lofty mountain's brow,
And flowed like fluid gold into the vale ;
Then, mingling with the streams and ocean vast,
Made every wave reflect his glorious light.
So, when the love of the " All-Father " shines
Unclouded in the firmament of hope,
Our faces, like the face of Moses, glow
With love divine, until like him we break
Commandments written by the hand of God.
The humble grass, arrayed in modest green,
Flung up its verdant arms with grateful joy ;
Embryo plants broke through the shells of seeds
To let in rain and light and kiss the day ;
The maiden violets, with meek blue eyes,
Which won their azure from the dome above,
Sweetened the atmosphere with fragrant praise ;
And dandelions, like bright drops of gold
Rained from the sun, glowed in their sky of green ;
Gay flowers, which had absorbed the rainbow's
dyes,
Were vocal with the voice of golden bees ;
There piping yellow birds upon the bough
Seemed blossoms yielding song instead of balm ;
The robin redbreast with his open bill
Proclaimed the advent of the joyful day ; -
Clad in his coat of mail, the turtle climbed
The grassy bank and crossed the flinty road ;
Like a wise traveller, whose impervious tent
Shields him from burning sun and blasting storm.

As we on birthdays to our homesteads go,
The wood bird visited the crumbling shell
Of straw and clay once lined with moss and wool,
Deserted now and filled with last year's leaves,
To celebrate his birth with roundelays.
Green trees looked skyward through their blossomed
eyes ;

And yet their roots like human fingers grasped
The earth — emblem of him who would ascend
To heaven if he could take the world along.
O glorious land, the Canaan of our time,
Whose mighty lakes “expand to inland seas,”
Which gleam like molten mirrors in the sun,
Repeating all the beauty of the heavens,
With cloud, and sky, and moon, and glittering stars,
A shining thought from the almighty Mind.

Like silver veins the rivers interlace
Our blooming prairies and our blushing plains ;
Vast forests, vocal with the song of birds,
Contain our future towers, and towns, and fleets.
Here Plenty smiles in every verdant vale,
A laughing damsel on a couch of flowers ;
Here proudly rise the everlasting hills,
Whose foreheads lean against the argent stars —
Impregnable bulwarks wisely built
By the almighty Architect above.

Let dark clouds winged with fire pass o'er our land.
The murky Night is mother of the Morn ;
It is the birthplace of the great reforms ;
The battle field where Right, not Might, shall win.
Such were the lessons taught me by the rain.
When spring and summer smiled their months away

I wandered in the autumn woods and sang
This little lay to tune of falling leaves :—

The thistle with its head upreared,
Like genius with its noble deeds,
Though coarsely clad and rough its beard,
Sends on white wings afar its seeds.

The modest daisy in its bloom
Here meekly wore its satin frill ;
Like mourners at its early tomb,
Wet grass blades bow upon the hill.

The wild bird's nest upon the bough
Is like my saddened heart which grieves ;
'Twas full of music once, but now
Deserted hangs and filled with leaves.

As hope illumes the pilgrim's eyes
Along the shadowy vale of night,
Yon streamlet like an arrow flies
Between the hills be-crowned with light.

Cloud heaped on cloud goes drifting by
Like billows on the broad, deep bay ;
And then the white waves of the sky
Dash o'er the hills and break in spray.

Here, like the patriarch in his dreams,
I see the ladder Jacob trod :
This mountain to us mortals seems
A footstool near the throne of God.

KNOW SOMETHING.

The moving tide of human life which flowed
 Between the city's glass and granite banks
 Had nearly ebbed away and left the streets
 With a low current sweeping on its course.
 As hollow ditches, wells, and pools are filled
 When the broad sea calls back obedient waves,
 So temple, tavern, brothel, house, and hall
 O'erflow with streams poured from our thorough-
 fares.

The pilgrim city, like the patriarch, drunk,
 Staggered and sprawls in filth upon the ground ;
 And modest Night comes with averted face,
 And with its mantle hides its nakedness.

Fair lady Moon, who com'st to promenade
 'The streets of heaven lit up with silver lamps,
 Conceal thy face behind a veil of clouds.
 Look not upon our shame, ye lidless eyes
 That watch the world with such unsleeping care.
 Cast not thy first glance here, pure maiden
 Morn ;

For during all the night Vice stalks the street.

From that dark lane and darker den of sin
 Comes the night walker in her rustling robes,
 Without a woman's blush behind the paint
 That coats her wanton and her wrinkled face.
 She's like a flower that's thrown upon the
 brink

Of petrifying waters, turned to stone.
 Red-wingéd health flew from her blooming cheeks,
 Scared by the kisses from licentious lips.

A guardian angel from the heaven of home
Has fallen, tormented in hot Passion's flame.
She was the May Queen of her native town,
The pride of parents whom she fondly loved.
She sinned; her guilt whitens to innocence
Contrasted with the hell-black crime of him
Who, with soft words and lying promises,
Beguiled her to the fearful brink of ruin,
Then thrust her down the gaping gulf and fled.
The mighty city, like a heartless prude,
With gas lamps like a thread of golden beads
About her neck, heeds not the pitying plea,
Holds out no helping hand, drops not a tear,
Opens no safe asylum of retreat,
But turns her back upon the Magdalen,
And leaves her on the sidewalk in her sins.
Poor creature! go thy way and sin no more;
Go to the country, where the flowers shall teach
Lessons of innocence as pure as they;
Behold the sweet brier, with its bayonets
Of polished thorns and shields of radiant leaves
To guard the virgin rose from violence.

The brier, without a bud to light its branch
Or leaf to ornament its withered stem,
Struggling for life upon a barren rock,
Beneath a sky of stone, where rain falls not
And the warm sun ne'er drops a ray of light,
But where the robber winds have free access
And the cold frost king finds an icy throne,
Is just like thee, thou frail unfortunate!
Transplant the brier beneath a generous sky,
Where shining sun and sheltering cloud with rain

Shall send the sap through its dry arteries,
 Then leaf, and bud, and bloom will follow fast,
 And load the ambient air with fragrant sweet.
 Fly from the city to the country fair ;
 Nature will nurse thee into health again,
 And stars of hope light up thy firmament.
 This simple case points to an ample field,
 From which we hear the Macedonian cry,
 Behold the men who light the fires which burn
 Upon the altar of base appetite !

O God of mercy, what a sacrifice
 Is offered on that reeking shrine of shame !
 As Abraham offered up his only son,
 Men put the knife into the throat of health,
 And never heed the voice which calls from heaven.
 There mutilated reputation bleeds ;
 Lo, there, in undistinguishable ruins,
 The heart, and mind, and soul are sacrificed.
 There is a red sea in the drunkard's bowl
 Where more than Egyptian hosts are swallowed
 up ;
 And there no Israelite can walk dryshod ;
 For o'er it burns no hallowed fires from heaven
 To guide the erring wanderer by night,
 No sheltering cloud to shield his path by day.

KNOW NOTHING.

Is hope a straw upon the stream ?
 Is faith a shadow on the wave ?
 Is truth the phantom of a dream ?
 Is right a mockword for the slave ?

No ; hope, and faith, and truth, and right
 Shall triumph in a better day,
 When tyrants shall be shorn of might
 And driven from their thrones away.
 Then hope on radiant wings shall rise,
 Then faith look up with smiling face,
 Then truth speak from the upper skies,
 Then right shall rule the human race,
 Then navies shall not stain the sea,
 Then armies shall not wade in blood,
 Then peace, and love, and liberty
 Shall bind us in one brotherhood.

Is light an ignis fatuus star ?
 Is peace a white flag in the wind ?
 Is grace a trumpet sound afar ?
 Is love a little god that's blind ?
 No ; light, and peace, and grace, and **love**
 Are angel guides to mortals given ;
 They come from realms of bliss above
 To lead us to their native heaven.
 Is man a tool, a thing, a slave
 For priest, or pope, or king, or queen ?
 No ; he is wise, and true, and brave,
 And will not be what he has been —
 A slave chained at a tyrant's car,
 A menial at the palace door,
 A soldier harnessed for the war,
 A beggar lame, and sick, and sore.

Some giant genius at the loom
 Shall weave his thoughts in lofty verse,

And help to seal the final doom
Of ills which are the common curse.
Then little children will be seen,
Not shut up from the light and air,
But romping on the village green
With rosy garlands on their hair.
Some one, now delving in the pit,
Shall wash the coal dust from his brow,
And in the senate chamber sit
In good times which are coming now.
Where smoke clouds sail o'er vale and hill,
Where hammers ring and spindles hum,
Browned at the plough, bleached in the mill,
Are men who pray "God's kingdom come."

Men Mammon cannot bribe nor buy
Are arming for the glorious fight;
And, sink or swim, survive or die,
They know that "God defends the right."
Go execute each holy law,
Ye patriot sons of Pilgrim sires;
And He who locked the lion's jaw
And led the Hebrews through the fires
Will send a legion from the sky
To guard his faithful servants here;
While foes defeated wildly fly
Before the bannered hosts they fear.
In the free steeple clang the bell,
Light bonfires on the hills and plains;
And let the notes of Freedom swell
Till lungless Echo learns the strains.



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