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The
Wings of Oppression

LESLIE PINCKNEY HILL



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The Wings of Oppression



By

LESLIE PINCKNEY HILL



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To Jane Clark Hill

FOREWORD

NOTHING in the life of the nation has seemed to me more significant than that dark civilization which the colored man has built up in the midst of a white society organized against it. The Negro has been driven under all the burdens of oppression, both material and spiritual, to the brink of desperation, but he has always been saved by his philosophy of life. He has advanced against all opposition by a certain elevation of his spirit. He has been made strong in tribulation. He has constrained oppression to give him wings.

In such poems as *Armageddon*, *The Black Man's Bit*, and *Cora*, I have desired to exhibit something of this indestructible spiritual quality of my race. In the others I have wished merely to be brought into harmony with currents of thought and feeling common to all humanity. I trust that there may be in all at least an implied appeal to that spirit of human brotherhood by which alone the world must find the path to peace.

For permission to reprint some of these poems I am indebted to "The Crisis," "The Outlook," "The Independent," "Life," and various other publications.

LESLIE PINCKNEY HILL.

Cheyney, Pennsylvania, March, 1921.

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The Wings of Oppression

I HAVE a song that few will sing
In honor of all suffering,
A song to which my heart can bring
The homage of believing—
A song the heavy-laden hears
Above the clamor of his fears,
While still he walks with blinding tears,
And drains the cup of grieving.

I ask not why, I only see
How poor is all our potency,
How soon the wise, the strong, the free
Some deadly bane discloses ;
While he whose bread is doubly priced,
By whom all gain is sacrificed,
Keeps near to beauty, near to Christ,
And Socrates and Moses.

The captains and the gilded kings,
With all their marshalled underlings,
Are found to be but puny things,
Impermanent and hollow ;

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

While up through terror, blood and dearth,
Poor men accounted little worth,
Still raise the beacon lights of earth
For truth and faith to follow.

So long as life is steeped in wrong,
And nations cry: "How long, how long!"
I look not to the wise and strong
For peace and self-possession;
But right will rise, and mercy shine,
And justice lift her conquering sign
Where lowly people starve and pine
Beneath a world oppression.

O sweet is power, dear is ease,
And beauty cannot fail to please,
But mightier far than all of these
Those chastenings of sorrow
By which alone the heart will dare
To mount beyond a world of care
On visions bright beyond compare
Of better things tomorrow.

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

Armageddon

Written at the outbreak of the world war,—just after President Wilson's appeal to the country for a "poise of undisturbed judgment,"—to express the significance to the trammled millions of colored people the world over, and especially to the American Negro, of that *spirit of the times* which well nigh destroyed civilization. The poem was originally published in "The Crisis" under the title, "*Die Zeitgeist.*"

BEFORE the whirlwind and the thunder-shock,

The agony of nations, and this wild
Eruption of the passionate will of man,
These tottering bastions of mighty states,
This guillotine of culture, and this new
Unspeakable Golgotha of the Christ,
My heart declares her faith, and, undismayed,
I write her prompting—write it in that poise
Of judgment undisturbed to which our Head
Admonishes the nation.

But have I
A certain warrant? Does the cannon roar
Above the mangled myriads washed in blood

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Upon a hundred fields embolden me
To vent the doctrine of a private heart!
Nay, ask it not, for God hath chosen still
The weak thing, and the foolish, and the base,
And that which is despised to work His will;
And humble men are chartered yet to run
Upon His errands round the groaning sphere.
Not many of the mighty shall be called,
Not many that dispute, not many wise,
That so the prophecy may be fulfilled.

Among the least of men of many strains,
Whose origin outdates the pyramids,
Uncherished of my country—though the blood
Of all my fathers ran to make her free—
Known by a name that typifies the slave,
Synonymous with darkness, and by that
Set in the ranks of mortals least esteemed,
I claim no merit save the love of truth,
And care to find for her a lodging-place.

I have been bred and born beneath the stern
Duress and cold inhospitality
Of that environment which prejudice
Fills consciously with bane; and I have sought—
Blessed be the God of mercy—at the shrine
Of thought inviolate the wells of peace.

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

There, fortified and unmolested, long
Have I in contemplation rued the plight
Of all my kind, and reverently aspired
To ponder out our mission, unconvinced
That we are born the dupes of Providence,
To be a nation's burden and her taunt,
Or Ishmaels of an unchosen land.

My quest has been to know the good of life,
And why a race should be, and what endures
Of that which man has called society,
And—last and highest aim of these pursuits—
To learn what perfect service, born of throes
Dreadful but purgative, we yet might dare
To offer thee, O country of our hope.

And from these musings—thanks to Him
Whose citadels are stars, with time and space
Their pylens, but Who builds His favored home
Upon the docile trust of lowly hearts—
Proceeded comfort, patience to endure,
And strength increasing of a faith sublime
Which neither infidelity in arms,
Nor all the bitter usage of the world
Can e'er avail to tarnish or impair.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

For looking *out* upon the world I saw
No hope for future man in those who stand
Upon the heights of power, save in the tales
Transmitted of their slow decline and fall.
Because they spurn the truth of brotherhood,
And trade in life, and mock the living God
By high contempt of all His humbler sons,
The strong battalions of eternal right
And nature's law make their discomfort sure.
They prove the error of that pride of race
And nation which has been the world's despise,
And unloosed Mammon for a thousand years.
Not all their transient lordship of the earth,
Their cunning in the traffic of the world,
The condescension of their patronage,
Or thundering proclamations of their might,
Can check the springs of pity, while our prayers
Besiege the throne of mercy for their weal.

But looking *in* upon my stricken peers,
I saw upon their swarthy brows "the gleam;"
I saw the lineaments of hope new-born
For peoples yet to be. O scorn it not,
Ye mighty of all lands, ye that are raised
To glory on the necks of trampled men!
For now within your midst are multitudes
Puissant though despised, meek men of prayer,

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

Dark, shackled knights of labor, clinging still
Amidst a universal wreck of faith
To cheerfulness, and foreigners to hate.
These know ye not, these have ye not received,
But these shall speak to you Beatitudes.
Around them surge the tides of all your strife,
Above them rise the august monuments
Of all your outward splendor, but they stand
Unenvious in thought, and bide their time.

Because ye schooled them in the arts of life,
And gave to them your God, and poured your
 blood

Into their veins to make them what they are,
They shall not fail you in your hour of need.
They hold in them enough of you to feel
All that has made you masters in your time—
The power of art and wealth, unending toil,
Proud types of beauty, an unbounded will
To triumph, wondrous science, and old law—
These have they learned to value and to share.

But deeper in them still is something steeled
To hot abhorrence and unmeasured dread
Of your undaunted sins against the light —

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Red sins of lust, of envy and of greed,
Of guilty gain extorted from the weak;
Of brotherhood traduced and God denied.
All this have they beheld without revolt,
And borne the brunt in agonizing prayer.
For those deep strains of blood that flow from
times

Older than Egypt, whence the dark man gave
The rudiments of learning to all lands,
Have been a strong constraint. And they have
dreamed

Of a peculiar mission under heaven,
And felt the force of unexampled gifts
That make for them a rare inheritance—
The gift of cheerful confidence in men,
The gift of calm endurance, solacing
An infinite capacity for pain,
The gift of an unfeigned humility
That blinds the eyes of strident arrogance
And bigot pride to that philosophy
And that far-glancing wisdom which it veils,
The gift of feeling for all forms of life,
Of deathless hope in trouble, and of wide
Adaptive power without a parallel
In chronicles of men, and over all,
And more than all besides, the gift of God
Expressed in rhythmic miracles of song.

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

O these are gifts, I said a thousand times
Richer than Ophir, stronger than the might
Of armament to conquer and to cure—
Gifts destined yet to permeate the earth,
To heal it of its mighty heresies,
And all its brutal blasphemy of war.

So viewing all my brothers in distress,
Hindered and cursed and aliens, I have wept
And prayed for them in solitude apart,
That they might know themselves a chosen folk,
Unrecognized but potent, chastened still,
But chartered to be ministers of truth,
To search the depths of spirit, to go forth
To woo and win a perfect self-control,
To breed strong children exercised in prayer,
Shunning as they would death the patterns set
By those who hold the kingdoms and the sway.
So might they with the pregnant years become
New arbiters of social destiny,
New health veins in the body politic,
A high-commissioned people, mingled through
With all the bloods of man, and, counselling
Peace, and the healing grace of brotherhood,
“Have power in this dark world to lighten it,
And power in this dead world to make it live.”

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

When through my being, like a lyre strung,
These winds of temporal occurrence sweep,
I hear a kind of music, high and low,
And ranging from the tortured earth to heaven,
Throbbing with tragic cadence to express
The passing and the coming life of man.

And though the tempests rage and earth be
stirred

To her foundations, though the lucid air
Become a menace, and the beauteous world
Be bathed in fire, I am undismayed.

The cataclysmic travail prophecies
The dawn of one world-conscience for all men,
The breaking up of caste and race and creed,
The warfare of all war against itself.

And hence in my low place this living peace
That grows and deepens, while the staggered
frames

Of ancient kingdoms reel beneath a weight
Of crimes so vast that genius strives in vain
To compass them in thought: for out of this,
The spirit saith, shall issue other breeds
Soul-burdened like my brothers, and like them
Despised and trammelled, but sent forth to teach
That nothing in the changing world endures
But truth and love and brotherhood and God.

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

My Race

MY life were lost, if I should keep
A hope-forlorn and gloomy face,
And brood upon my ills, and weep
And mourn the travail of my race.

Who are my brothers? Only those
Who were my own complexion swart?
Ah no, but all through whom there flows
The blood-stream of a manly heart.

Wherever the light of dreams is shed,
And faith and love to toil are bound,
There will I stay to break my bread,
For there my kinsmen will be found.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Tuskegee

WHEREFORE this busy labor without
rest?

Is it an idle dream to which we cling,
Here where a thousand dusky toilers sing
Unto the world their hope? "Build we our best
By hand and thought," they cry, "although un-
blessed."

So the great engines throb and anvils ring,
And so the thought is wedded to the thing;
But what shall be the end, and what the test?
Dear God, we dare not answer, we can see
Not many steps ahead, but this we know—
If all our toilsome building is in vain,
Availing not to set our manhood free,
If envious hate roots out the seed we sow,
The South will wear eternally a stain.

Freedom

O FREEDOM, let thy perfect work be
wrought
In us, the children of a chastened race.
Long, long ago in thy benignant face
Our fathers saw "the gleam." They meekly
brought
Their shackled limbs in faith to thee, and sought
Thy heart with prayer; and thou didst rend
apace
The bonds of men who leaned upon thy grace,
Their spirits with a tuneful patience fraught.
We call upon thee now no more in chains
Such as our fathers wore—from these we're
freed—
But clanging still the fetters of the soul.
"The gleam" we follow weakly, for we need
The Freedom of a sturdy self-control .

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Jim Crow

BY what dread logic, by what grand neglect,
Wide as our nation, doth this relic last—
This relic of old sterile customs past
Long since into deep shame without respect?
Even I whom this contrivance fain would teach
A low submission, pray within my soul
That these my masters may not reap the dole
Of finding remedy beyond their reach.
In lofty mood I mount the reeking box,
And travel through the land. So Terence once
Moved in old Rome, so—wondrous paradox—
Moved Esop in old Greece, the dwarf and dunce,
Then I reflect how their immortal wit
Makes the world laugh with mockery of it.

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

“So Quietly”

News item from the *New York Times* on the lynching of a Negro at Smithville, Ga., December 21, 1919.

“The train was boarded so quietly . . . that members of the train crew did not know that the mob had seized the Negro until informed by the prisoner’s guard after the train had left the town. . . . A coroner’s inquest held immediately returned the verdict that West came to his death at the hands of unidentified men.”

SO quietly they stole upon their prey
And dragged him out to death, so without
flaw

Their black design, that they to whom the law
Gave him in keeping, in the broad, bright day,
Were not aware when he was snatched away;
And when the people, with a shrinking awe,
The horror of that mangled body saw,
“By unknown hands!” was all that they could
say.

So, too, my country, stealeth on apace
The soul-blight of a nation. Not with drums
Or trumpet blare is that corruption sown,

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

But quietly—now in the open face
Of day, now in the dark—and when it comes,
Stern truth will never write, “By hands un-
known.”

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

Cora

I WOULD that you knew my Cora,
Lithe, high-minded, buoyant maid,
Her face is dusk like the twilight shade,
But her fine teeth gleam, and her eyes are bright
With a heartening mirth and a tender light.
I would that you knew my Cora.

I would you could see my Cora.
Sometimes we walk upon the street
And many a fairer lady meet:
With gay apparel and lofty air
They haven't so much as a glance to spare
For passing dusky Cora.

Then I look over at Cora.
Her step is light, her head is high,
The joy of living is in her eye,
She seems a part of all she sees—
It is one and the same if the ladies please
To look or not to Cora.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Once when I walked with Cora
We hungered in the tedious way
And turned aside for bread, but they
Who kept the place in whispers said
That dusky folk they never fed,
Folk like myself and Cora.

O I would you had then seen Cora.
The surge of pride that filled her heart
Compelled one burning tear to start,
But she brushed it by with a queenly shame,
Nor spoke one word of wrath or blame,
But went forth blithely as she came,
And I went forth with Cora.

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

To a Caged Canary in a Negro Restaurant

THOU little golden bird of happy song!
A cage cannot restrain the rapturous joy
Which thou dost shed abroad. Thou dost employ
Thy bondage for high uses. Grievous wrong
Is thine; yet in thy heart glows full and strong
The tropic sun, though far beyond thy flight,
And though thou flutterest there by day and
night
Above the clamor of a dusky throng.
So let my will, albeit hedged about
By creed and caste, feed on the light within;
So let my song sing through the bars of doubt
With light and healing where despair has been;
So let my people bide their time and place,
A hindered but a sunny-hearted race.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Mater Dolorosa

O MOTHER, there are moments when I
know
God's presence to the full. The city street
May wrap me in the tumult and the heat
Of futile striving; bitter winds may blow
With winter-wilting freeze of hail and snow,
And all my hopes lie shattered in defeat;
But in my heart the springtime blossoms sweet,
And heaven seems very near the way I go.

These moments are the angels of that prayer
Which thou has breathed for many a troubled
year
With bended knee and swarthy-streaming face—
“Uphold him, Father, with a double care:
He is but mortal, yet his days must bear
The world cross, *and* the burden of his race.”

The Black Man's Bit

O THERE'S talk from school to pulpit, and
the barber's place is rife,
And the shoe shop and the supper table hum,
With the tale of Dixie's black men who have
shared the mighty strife
For that freedom of the better time to come.
Every mother's eye is brighter, every father's
back is straighter,
And our girls are tripping lightly in their pride,
And by none except a Teuton, or a slacker, or a
traitor,
Will the right to their elation be denied.

They said they were too slow, too dull, too this
and that to do it,
They couldn't match the method of the Hun,
And then to arm a million—why, the land would
surely rue it
If a million blacks were taught to use a gun.
But right won out, and they went in at all de-
tractors smiling;
They learned as quick as any how to shoot,

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

They took the prize at loading ships, and riveting
and piling,
And trained a thousand officers to boot.

And when they went 'twas with a boon no others
had been bringing,
For whether with a pick or with a gun,
They lightened every labor with a wondrous sort
of singing,
And turned the pail of battle into fun.
O the Frenchman was a marvel, and the Yankee
was a wonder,
And the British line was like a granite wall,
But for singing as they leaped away to draw the
Kaiser's thunder,
The swarthy sons of Dixie beat them all.

And now that they have helped to break the
rattling Hunnish sabre,
They'll trail the Suwanee River back again
To Dixie home, and native song, and school and
honest labor,
To be as men among their fellow-men.
No special thanks or praise they'll ask, no clapping
on the shoulder—
They did their bit, and won, and all men know
it—

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

And Dixie will be proud of them, and grown a
little older,
And wiser, too, will welcome them and show it.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

To the Chinese

REJOICE, O ancient brothers of the East.
I hear your voices thrill across the seas,
And hail you, too, unto the marriage feast
Of waking men. Did not the Japanese
Put on the wedding garments bright and new
Though long denied by silly creeds of skin.
Rise ye, and break the "cake of custom"
through,
And, at the New World bidding, enter in.
Faint not, O brothers, if the forward way
Must lie through fire and famine, death and
blood.
There follow you the kindling sympathies
Of other trammled millions, and some day
These shall pour forth in swarthy hordes and
flood
Some worthy field, and be your staunch allies.

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

Matto Grosso

In the unexplored fastnesses of Brazil, known as Matto Grosso, the great South American scientist and statesman, Rondon, has proved the power of unafraid democracy to elevate a backward race. His great work has brought hope and inspiration to millions of colored people here in the northern continent.

THY fastnesses are like the untried depths
Of the unfathomed soul of man—as dark,
As terrible, as full of healing balm,
With danger lurking where no eye can see,
Trackless and wild, yet docile to the touch
Of sympathy, and pregnant with all good.
The shadows brooding like a guilty thought
About thee bar the long-besieging sun,
And lure the mind to prophecy and fear.

Thou art a mighty mother boasting in
An inexhaustible fecundity.
What breathing, struggling, furtive, feral
thing
Hast thou not brought to life! Thy vastness
teems

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

With such an upward urge of flaming trees,
Of vine and herb and flower and weed and shrub,
Of little swarming insect parasites,
Of fiery creatures bent upon their prey,
Of birds with all the colors God has made,
That nature could herself dream nothing more.
And thou hast bred a race of primal men—
A child-like folk. They stand within the doors
Of the great mansion-house of fateful time,
Gazing within the chambers of the past
Where all their kinsmen died in tragedy,
And with a little fleeting smile of hope
As they look out upon the times to come—
Surviving naked men, the challengers
Of judgment and of all democracy.

And yet thou art a virgin. Thou dost hold
Thy untouched treasures all inviolate,
Till men with wider knowledge, finer skill,
With passionate devotion, and a faith
That makes it joy to bind their lives to thee
With all their fortunes and unstinted toil,
Shall woo thy heart and win thee to themselves.
Then from thy womb shall spring another breed
Of new-world people teeming to possess
Thy future, to unlock thy nameless stores
And use the fullness of thy virile strength

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

To build a fair new nation of free men
In justice, mercy, brotherhood and truth.

O wild demesne, thou art a wilderness,
And yet thou art to me a promised land
More wonderful than that which Israel
Sought by the special leadership of God.
For one there is already called to be
More than thy Moses, one who holds the wand
Of modern science that shall make thy voice
Articulate, and link thy largesse up
With all its multiplying benefits,
By open pathways to the waiting world—
Rondon, thy bounteous father.

Let me tell
How thy warm southern winds have wafted on
His name to stir our harsher northern clime,
How I, myself, son of a race oppressed,
Have seen afar there in thy tropic sun
His banner flying high with God's good will
Emblazoned bold upon it, and how all
My troubled brothers grasp anew at life
With firmer confidence because of him.
'Tis he, and such as he alone, whose hand
Can mend the riven fabric of the world,
Or use the fragile instruments of peace

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

In that dread surgery whose end shall be
To lop from off the body of mankind
The cancerous, fetid, tumor-growth of war.

Land of all marvels, I will end my song,
My prayerful song of honor unto thee,
By deep thanksgiving to thy mother soul
For pouring down from forest, hill and glade
Unnumbered multitudes of little streams
And springs that grow to rivers rushing on
To find the sea. Where is the like of these
For number or for meaning! Where is earth
So laved, so watered without ceasing, or
So nurtured into all productiveness?
For ages have those waters run their course
At length unto the ocean, blending there
With all the tides that beat upon the shores
Of every habitable land. In vain
Have they for ages gathered there to sing
That life is one, and man and God are one,
And love and truth and beauty all are one.

POEMS OF MY PEOPLE

Self-Determination

THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE AMERICAN NEGRO

FOUR things we will not do, in spite of all
That demons plot for our decline and fall;
We bring four benedictions which the meek
Unto the proud are privileged to speak,
Four gifts by which amidst all stern-browed
races
We move with kindly hearts and shining faces.

We will not hate. Law, custom, creed and caste,
All notwithstanding, here we hold us fast.
Down through the years the mighty ships of
state
Have all been broken on the rocks of hate.

We will not cease to laugh and multiply
We slough off trouble, and refuse to die.
The Indian stood unyielding, stark and grim;
We saw him perish, and we learned of him
To mix a grain of philosophic mirth
With all the crass injustices of earth.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

We will not use the ancient carnal tools
These never won, yet centuries of schools,
Of priests, and all the work of brush and pen
Have not availed to win the wisest men
From futile faith in battleship and shell:
We see them fall, and mark that folly well.

We will not waver in our loyalty.
No strange voice reaches us across the sea;
No crime at home shall stir us from this soil.
Ours is the guerdon, ours the blight of toil,
But raised above it by a faith sublime
We choose to suffer *here* and bide our time.

And if we hold to this, we dream some day
Our countrymen will follow in our way .

POEMS OF THE TIMES

A Call to Poets

1

RISE up from dalliance with little things,
O poets of all lands. Your golden age
Is now, and all the world your heritage.
The nations perish till ye sweep the strings
With re-creative music. He that sings
With power now to calm the peoples' rage
Will bind the future to his tutelage,
And give the heavy-laden present wings.
Where is your lest dominion? Once ye framed
A heaven of beauty pillared firm in peace,
And ye were called the shepherds of the soul
By what default was that high priesthood
shamed?
How did the magic of your music cease
To win the human heart, and keep it whole?

2

The world is all a wrack and battle-storm.
Stand not abashed while the red warriors break
The heart of Christ, and blundering statesmen
quake

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

In impotence. Build in great verse that norm
By which to mold this chaos back to form.
Let not one line be lawless, lest ye make
A wider wreckage still. Now must ye wake
The lyre of peace with passion deep and warm.
Tell mortals that the tides of night and day,
The dewdrop, and the planet's mighty swing
Nay, life and death itself, must all obey
The eternal harmonies that poets sing,
And that to raise up beauty over war
Is all ye come to earth from heaven for.

The Ships

WHAT heart of man did never glow
To see the great ships come and go,
Or feel what miracles are these
Upon the highway of the seas.
Whenever I go to the harbor shore
The wonder holds me more and more
Until my spirit yearns to cry
Out to the vessels drifting by:
“Bold breasters of the wind and tide,
On what far errands do you ride?
Your funnels fume and your engines strain
To speed you over the tided main,
And all the harbor is gay and bright
Where your colors fly and the waves curl white
From many a sturdy-cleaving keel,
But do you ride for woe or weal?
And when the weary course is done,
What good for human kind is won?”
And the stately vessels drifting by
Seem thus to deign a prompt reply:
“We herald the fate of human souls
By a thousand ways to a thousand goals,

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

And set at naught wind, tide and weather
To bring the tribes of the earth together.
Whether the skies are gray or blue
We plough the mounting billows through,
Lest we should seem to give suspense
To the mighty plan of Providence.
For God has said His people all
Are one, and they shall hear the call
Each of the other, and each shall speed
In His good time to the other's need.
And they shall come from northern snows,
From the torrid isle where the monsoon blows,
From the farthest plains and mountain tips,
And all go down to the sea in ships.
And none shall have a gift or skill,
Or any power of mind or will,
Or any good the hand hath wrought,
Or any luring dream or thought
Of truth or beauty yet to be
The graces of humanity,
But we must bear it safe and fast,
Or flash it out from the top of the mast
Upon the pulses of the air
To all the people everywhere.
We carry the tares with the wholesome grain,
And the joy we bear is born of pain,
And death is with us and disease,

POEMS OF THE TIMES

And we must fare through crimsoned seas
Till men of every land and race
Shall know each other face to face,
And all shall take and all shall give,
And all shall learn at last to live
And labor for the sovereign good
Of universal brotherhood."

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Ode to Patriotism

FAIR goddess, though thy devotees
Are men of every land and tongue,
Thy heart they never yet could please;
And though thy majesty is sung
By statesman, warrior and bard,
Still on thy brow a stern regard
Proves thy disdain, and quickening their fears,
Brings them before thy fane in bitterness and
tears.

As when a suitor, plighting all
His troth unto some high-souled maid,
Makes protestations prodigal,
But finds her loftily afraid,
And still reluctant to aver
Like passion, till that love of her
Enters the temple of her purer mind
As homage less for one than for all womankind—

So, holier mistress, hast thou shown
Why still we fall on horrid days,
Why our best hopes are overthrown

POEMS OF THE TIMES

In spite of all our prayer and praise ;
For thou wouldst have our love expand
Beyond mere race or bounded land,
And thou wouldst test our proffered troth to thee
By what we deeply crave for all humanity .

Build up again our broken faith,
Fair deity ; unloose the gyves
Of hate ; allay the gruesome wraith
Of murderous war ; and lead our lives
Back to the peace that springs of love
For man as man, and mounts above
Land, caste, or creed ! O teach our wrathful time
That brotherhood is still man's destiny sublime.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

The Launching of the Quistconk

WE launch more than a ship today.
Down her smooth ways unto the tide
She bears in every seam and stay
A mighty nation's marshalled pride.
Before her stern, majestic hulk
Our distant higher vision sees
Crime, frightfulness and treason skulk
To certain doom on humbled knees.
We launch more than a ship today:
We hear more than our chieftain's word.
The earth, the air, the watery way
Are thronged with millions who are stirred
To will that this good ship shall be,
With all her strength and treasure store,
And all her Christian chivalry,
The herald of a thousand more.
And these shall follow in her wake
In ever quickening degrees,
Until the endless line shall make
That bridge of ships across the seas,
At whose far end the hosts of God

POEMS OF THE TIMES

Shall stand with all the power of earth,
To raise up justice from the sod
And give to freedom her new birth.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

The Heart of the World

THE men of war and the men of state
Grope in the sloughs of blood and hate,
The great guns range upon the seas,
But the heart of the world is not in these.
The weary chronicles still tell
How tyranny and tyrant fell,
But the heart of the world, O Lord, how far
From captain, kaiser, king or czar!
The empty pomp of force and pride
Has lived its brutal day and died,
And all the gods of arrogance
Have fled before the winds of chance,
While time and fate conspire to plan
A highway for the rights of man.
And now where toilers feel the sting
Of utter need and suffering,
Where men are tortured from belief,
And women manacled to grief,
Where childhood walks in wild despair,
The heart of all the world is there.

POEMS OF THE TIMES

Clemenceau

ON THE ATTEMPT UPON HIS LIFE

HE rode on tempests through a span of
years
That bridged two generations. Round his name
Blew all the fitful winds of praise and blame:
France heaped on him her plaudits and her
sneers.
And he was not deceived—he had his fears—
But kept his patriot zeal bright as a flame;
And when upon his land the fire storms came,
France gave him all her trust with grateful tears.
So when the crazed assassin failed, we said:
“May the kind will of God preserve him yet.
Far nobler men may rise when he is dead,
But this of him mankind will not forget—
When earth shook with the tramping hordes of
hell,
He stood across their path, and held it well.”

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

The Founder

TO THE STATUE OF WILLIAM PENN, CITY HALL,
PHILADELPHIA, WHEN PEACE WAS PROCLAIMED,
NOVEMBER 11, 1918.

1

SWIFTER than wind the mighty message
came
That tyranny had fallen, that the crime
By which the great high traitor of our time
Had fixed upon his race the foulest fame,
And covered the whole earth with dread and
shame
And all the spawn of hell's own murk and grime,
Was purged away at last by that sublime
Wrath of the world that rose in freedom's name.
Then long-leashed passion broke upon the air
And shook the city—cries of joy and grief,
Wild, clamorous thanksgiving everywhere
That God had brought mankind again relief,
And never was a people known to be
So caught away in utter ecstasy .

POEMS OF THE TIMES

2

Then lifted I mine eyes to where thy face,
Turned from the lurid night where king and
throne

Were sinking with the sun, looked forth alone
Steadfastly to the dawn. Around thy base
The tumult swept, but in that lofty place
Thy form without a motion or a tone,
Stood like a prophet who had long outgrown
The fleeting passions of the human race.

And one calm hand extended seemed to say,
“Through travail of the ages, blood and pain,
Freedom indeed is born anew today ;

O build ye now the bulwarks of her reign,
Nor dare to dream the shouting triumph won
Can yet avail until her work is done.”

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

To All Leaders of Men

THREE things there are that men will do
Leaders of men, beware!
Your calling and election true
Will shine, if they have faith that you
Their stubborn purpose share.

*Men will see men as only men,
O masters, take ye heed!
No one shall hold the rights of ten,
No mortal be divine again
No counsel, pact, or creed.*

*Men will be bold to follow thought.
O captains, ye shall find
The peoples of the earth distraught
By being merely led and taught,
But now they have a mind.*

*And men will share the wealth they make—
To this of all attend.
The worker for the worker's sake
Will prove his power to give and take,
That ancient greed may end.*

POEMS OF THE TIMES

Go not to wordy halls of state,
Ye wise that can discern
This threefold tidal pull of fate
That rocks the world—too late, too late
The statesmen stoop to learn.

But through the ways where labor stalks
Portentous with its load,
The soul of God's great future talks,
The genius of His purpose walks,
And there must be your road.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Brixton Prison

A TRIBUTE TO LORD MAYOR MACSWINEY OF
CORK WHO DIED ON A HUNGER STRIKE FOR THE
CAUSE OF IRISH FREEDOM.

THE guard about thy somber walls
May keep a martyr's limbs confined,
But not the dauntless soul that calls
The challenged conscience of mankind.

MacSwiney, wasting in the dark
Forespent of all his manly use,
Transforms a life into the spark
That set the fires of freedom loose.

He would not bend before the rude
Attempt to make his life a lie;
He scorned to taste oppression's food;
He chose to be a man and die.

O Brixton prison, surely thou
Art raised above thy base design:
Thy terrors all are gone, and now
Thou hast become a nation's shrine.

POEMS OF THE TIMES

And thou, lord mayor! Now thy rule
Far out from mourning Cork expands:
Thy spirit has become a school
For patriot heroes in all lands.

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

Lines Written in the Alps Above
Chamounix

HERE had one voice almost persuaded me
To yield with sweet surrender all my heart
In fee to endless beauty, here to bide
And count as nothing worth the flight of days.
Nor could I break at will the subtle spell
That held me, as it hath held many more,
With power that was more than argument.

Forbear attempt at vain expression here!
Poet and painter both alike despair:
A surfeit of all grandeur overwhelms
The boldest gift, and dwarfs imagining.
Here silence, and unutterable thought,
And the blest gift of feeling must suffice.

No monarch could be raised to higher state
Than you or yonder careless shepherd girl
That minds the grazing of the tinkling kine.
Your meanest seat is heather royal-hued
Girdled with nodding berries black and red,
And flaming poppies sated with the sun,

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Your carpet satin green, your body-guard
Soft winds that blow a cooling for your brow
To mock fan-bearers at the Sultan's throne.
Dear music shall not fail you: evermore
Upon your ear shall sound the clear flute note
Of dripping water, or the happier tone
Of slender streams that leap from bolder walls
Singing of freedom from the tyrant ice.
Or, nobler still, up from the vale shall rise
The river music of assembled streams
In symphonies of service to the world.

Look down upon that valley: there behold
Sweet homes with human kindness heaven-dow-
ered.

Those husbandmen have not yet pawned their
souls

For bagatelles of profit, young men there
Are not yet sickly, and the rosy dames
Bear children that go springing to the fields.
They make their valley plain lie in the sun
Like some rich quilting wonderfully wrought
In squares and angles of productiveness.

Nor is the blessed Christ there travestied
By sterile worship lavish of all forms
And ceremonies, while its devotees

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

Dishonor still a long-offended God
By lofty scorn of all his humbler sons.
Those reverent men give fearless benison
To Mongol, Semite, African or Turk:
They plant their crucifixes by the road,
Or rear their cherished shrines upon the rocks
As precious tokens and remembrancers
To all men of the Universal Cross.

For proof of God's unfettered pleasure here,
Look up about those summits where he pours
The light of morning round the monstrous ice,
Round frosted peaks, and hanging frigid plains,
Until they shower down a shining joy
Upon thy lifted head, fill full thy soul
With gladness that transfigures all the vale,
And make the terrible a thing to love.
The white refulgence of those argent snows
Shall follow thee throughout the happy day
With images of purity and peace,
And nevermore shalt thou be what thou wert.

Or, if at noon thy heart be prone to droop
For sheer satiety of loveliness,
Or beauty fail of strength, up through some
cloud
Soft as ethereal eider-down will rise

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

The nakedness of brazen granite towers
That were the pillars of the primal world;
Eons of fury have they set at naught,
And all the gnawing of the tooth of time:
And these at noon shall be thy ministers
When they hold up to God their gleaming
crowns,
And call thy human weakness back to strength.

And O, when downward rides the lordly sun
Behind those summits, richer guerdons wait
To hearten him who lingers to behold.
Then the flushed earth strains up her jeweled
head

Towards the red passion of the bending skies;
Then the bright trees, the high green fields, the
crags

That pierce the clouds with menace, and the ice
That shines upon them, all are built away
In steep sierras like some glorious stair
For angels mounting towards the face of God.

And when at last the night has brought thee
sleep,

Thy couch shall be companioned by some dream
Of what thine eyes have seen and thy heart felt;
And though the thought of never waking more
Steal o'er thy frame, thou shalt be satisfied.

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

To the Smartweed

1

THOU art far more to me than blight and
bane
Alone, as rustics deem, who thus deny
Thy regal will and martial quality.

Often have I beheld the angered swain
Charge through thy ranks with horse and steel
in vain,
And often have I seen the children try
With gleaming blade to make thy banners fly
Till every scion of thy stock was slain.
But when the havoc tarried I have seen
Thy striplings spring again to take the field,
Choke the strong tuber, rout the bean forlorn,
Shade every valued plant with insolent green,
Constrain the earth to their prolific yield,
And wave their purpling tops above the corn.

2

With plow and chain I saw the husbandman
Tear up thy roots to wither in the heat,

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THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

And drag thy foliage down to make a seat
For the brown odorous furrow-crest that ran
Across the mead where thy career began :
But every blade and stalk that met defeat
Rose up transfigured into sheaves of wheat,
And wrought a conquest by a subtler plan.
Ah, then I knew that he is more than blind
And dim of thought who cannot surely see
In thee the symbol of a world of men
Swept down to darkness by the torrid wind
Blown from the caves of fate eternally,
In whom posterity will rise again.

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

To William James

DEVOTEDLY he watched the silent stream
Of consciousness, and from the shifting
brink,

In lucid phrase, taught thousands how to think.
No straightened logic's thrall, he prized the
gleam

Of truth in all experience: the dream
To him was precious too. He dared to link
Reality with wonder, and to sink
The plumb of thought down where all mysteries
teem.

Where is the light we knew upon his face—
The zest for knowledge, searching and intense?
Gone out for aye in darkness deep and strange?
Or do they now at last find scope and place
Where Thales still propounds the elements,
And Heraclitus broods, "'Tis only Change?"

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

To Mrs. Jane B. Taylor

S HALL I compare thee to the winter snow?
So spotless is thy heart, but never cold:
What though thy locks be changed from sunny
gold

To silver, still that perfect brow doth glow
With human interest, still thou sayest, "Go
Straight forward, trust the dream, be strong,
and hold

The faith that love, with all its griefs untold,
Is better than the fairest thing we know."

So when the winter of my days shall fall,
And snow lies white upon the barren ground
Where I have wandered long, and learned the
truth

Of life, and drunk the wormwood and the gall,
O let my bosom, full of years, be found
Still bearing the immortal heart of youth.

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

Two Women

JUST as my wonted task was done
And day was fast declining,
Two women passed, the low red sun
Upon their faces shining.

Their ample cloaks were gathered warm
Against the winter weather ;
Their heads were bare, and arm in arm
They crossed the lawn together.

They seemed two spirits to inspire
Even a mortal craven,
For one had hair like a flame of fire,
And one like the wing of a raven.

With springy step, they passed along
In joyous, bright communing,
And in my heart there came a song
I found delight in crooning.

*Come forth, O masters, if you may,
And choose, if you are able,
The golden brightness of the day,
Or the deep, deep night in sable.*

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

The Actress

THINK not her days are but an idle show
Of artificial manners, speech and dress,
Or that her meed of honor should be less
Because her heart lives where the footlights
glow

Upon the garish scene, with weal and woe
Of mimic passion. Let the happiness
Of her brief hour be full: that bright success
Is purchased far more dearly than we know.
Pity, the wrapt spectators little sense
Her nobler grace! To "hold the mirror up,"
And thereby win the favor of our eyes
Were well; but what applause can recommense
The tempered soul that drains the bitter cup
Of a continual self-sacrifice!

The Piano-Player

DISTRAUGHT with care, I said, "Here
shall be found
A solace for great losses. Long ago,
One gentle soul could lure away my woe
Upon Beethoven's music; for he crowned
A world of sorrow with a heaven of sound.
Thanks to the genius that has willed it so
Those deathless harmonies again may flow
From out this perforated scroll unwound."
Then wondrous came the swelling chords, and
sweet
The troubled minor strain; but O how changed
From the dear tones that brought my younger
heart
A chastened wealth of happiness complete,
When o'er the board her perfect fingers
ranged
With such expressive grace that tears would
start!

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Prevision

FROM THE PORTUGUESE OF ALBERTO DE OLIVEIRA

I KNEW thy smile was but a passing spell,
And yet I loved it—O I loved it well.
I loved the radiant meaning of thine eyes,
Knowing that they would fail me, and likewise,
Though breathed upon the wind, I had no
choice
But still to love the passion of thy voice.
Now all has vanished—all is ended now—
Enchanted voice, enamored glance. In vain
I knew it would be so, and know not how
It can avail me now if I complain.

To a Nobly-Gifted Singer

ALL the pleasance of her face
Telleth of an inward grace;
In her dark eyes I have seen
Sorrows of the Nazarene;
In the proud and perfect mould
Of her body I behold,
Rounded in a single view
The good, the beautiful, the true;
And when her spirit goes up-winging
On sweet air of artless singing
Surely the heavenly spheres rejoice
In union with a kindred voice.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Katerina Breshkovskaya

“**T**HOU shalt die in the midst of thy battles,”
They said of this mother of thought,

When she bared to her countrymen, bared to
the world,
The evil a tyrant had wrought.

But the tyrant was strong, and his minions,
And they harried her out of the land,
To the blight and the death of the frozen
steppes,
And the word she had uttered was banned.

But that word was a fire, and prospered,
And her thought was a wind and a rain,
And it beat on the palace that stood on the
sand,
And it fell, and the tyrant was slain.

O who would not fall in such battles,
What death could a mortal prefer,
In the world-girding fight for honor and right,
To the glory of dying like her!

Christmas at Melrose

COME home with me a little space
And browse about our ancient place,
Lay by your wonted troubles here
And have a turn of Christmas cheer.
These sober walls of weathered stone
Can tell a romance of their own,
And these wide rooms of devious line
Are kindly meant in their design.
Sometimes the north wind searches through,
But he shall not be rude to you.
We'll light a log of generous girth
For winter comfort, and the mirth
Of healthy children you shall see
About a sparkling Christmas tree.
Eleanor, leader of the fold,
Hermione with heart of gold,
Elaine with comprehending eyes,
And two more yet of coddling size,
Nathalie pondering all that's said,
And Mary of the cherub head—
All these shall give you sweet content
And care-destroying merriment,

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

While one with true madonna grace
Moves round the glowing fire-place
Where father loves to muse aside
And grandma sits in silent pride.
And you may chafe the wasting oak,
Or freely pass the kindly joke
To mix with nuts and home-made cake
And apples set on coals to bake.
Or some fine carol we will sing
In honor of the Manger-King,
Or hear great Milton's organ verse,
Or Plato's dialogue rehearse
What Socrates with his last breath
Sublimely said of life and death.
These dear delights we fain would share
With friend and kinsman everywhere,
And from our door see them depart
Each with a little lighter heart.

The Metropolitan Tower

LOOK down securely from thy dizzy height,
O soaring tower, upon the little street
Where men below like termites seem to crawl
In insignificance. Thou couldst not fear
Comparison with any mighty pile
From Babel or the pyramids till now.
The clamor and confusion round thy base
Shall never vex thy summit: there the sun
Shall sit while twilight gathers at thy feet.
Thy shoulders mock the straining of the storms,
And if the earth be loyal to her trust,
Old time shall waste his tooth in wasting thee.
Thou art as wonderful to me as Blanc
Or Fiji Yama or Niagara—
These are the work of God, but thou of Man.
It is thy privilege to symbolize
In giant form the saving truth of art—
That beauty's handmaid is utility,
And strength their bond of love.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

A City Park

THE travail of the world roars like the sea
Throughout the city-traffic, strife and haste,
And all the petty trade wherein men waste
The noblest graces of humanity.
The sounding streets are thronged incessantly
With feverish hordes driven and overpaced
By the sharp whips of need, with little taste
Or time for that which life was meant to be.

But here is hope—here is a rescued spot,
Where beauty waits in fountain, grass and flower,
Where children play, and men turn from the
hot,
Mad mill of labor for a quiet hour
To feel the cooling wash of the summer breeze,
And glimpse the calm of heaven through the
trees.

The Symphony

I THINK there scarcely can be given
Nobler harmonies in heaven ;
Seraph harps and voices swelling
Could not be more heart-compelling ;
For these instruments have found
All the ministries of sound,
And their shriving tones have won me
Far more good than priests have done me.
What troublous passion-stirring comes
Upon the thunder-rolling drums !
What weakness could withstand the scorns
Blown by the bold courageous horns !
What grace is that the spirit needs
Uncompassed by the lowly reeds,
And who could keep a truce with sins
That heard the pleading violins !
Oh, I was weary when I came
To listen, for the sham and shame
And poverty of mortal fare
Are heavy weights for souls to bear.
But, when I left, a flame of light
Went with me through the solemn night,

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

I walked in splendor in a place
Large as illimitable space,
Peace through the mists of doubting smiled,
And life and death were reconciled.

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

The Borglum Statue of Lincoln in the
Court House Square, Newark, N. J.

I THINK there is no other monument
Raised up to merit out of brass or stone
So beautiful as this: it stands alone,
Outreaching far the artist's first intent,
By grace of one sweet human incident .
Round all the high, horsed heroes I have known
An undisturbed indifference has grown,
Which neither time nor wonder can prevent.
But he is on the ground, and children play
Upon his knees, and stroke the earnest face
That shines with their caresses, and all day
He is their comfort in the public place:
The rigid bronze itself cannot conceal
That sheltering heart which little children feel.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

She Will Come

AFTER a tedious day
Of unavailing toil,
Weary of heart and brain,
Disconsolate and faint,
I seek my friendly couch
For respite and release,
Repeating as I go
"Tomorrow she will come."

The darkness and the deep,
Cool silence of the night
Enwrap me, and I dream.

Then in a happy place
Upon a far green hill
The sunlight shines again.
There the warm winds distil
From hyacinth and rose
Their sweet quintessences
To be the breath of life,
There singing streams flow down
From fountains crystalline,

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

And on their mossy banks
The Nereids and fauns
Dance to the reeds of Pan
In glad abandonment.
There the lithe Oreads
Ply every game and sport
In honor of the trees,
And jocund forests shake
Their ancient sides in mirth.
Color and light and shade,
And all dear harmonies
Of poesy and truth
And fellowship are there.
There the great boon of health
And innocent content
Lead on the grateful hours,
And every heart is free,
And pain and aching thought,
And tedium and care
Are alien enemies.
And when the sun retires
Behind the arras drawn
Across the stage of day,
The night begins a new
Succession of delights
With moon, and golden stars,
And blessed memories

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Of music that has ceased,
And a wide heaven of dreams.

Then I awake and say,
“This is the day she comes.”

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

Spring

SWEET are the maiden promises of spring,
Her voice comes wandering like some muted tone

From far-off symphonies, and everything
She wears is but a veiling lightly thrown
Around the form of beauty. She will seem
Demurely chaste and reticent awhile,
But in her eyes is youth's eternal dream,
And all the light of passion in her smile.
When the bold sun, her lover, argues down
Her shy reserves, then will her lips confess
Her timorous deep desire, and she will crown
Her fealty with wondrous fruitfulness.
And when her time is done, the earth will praise
Her blithe and rosy breed of summer days.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

The Dogwood

IT is a rare delight to see
The snow-bloom of the dogwood tree
All virginal against the sheen
Of April's early budding green.
When violet and buttercup
Their timid heads are lifting up,
When dandelions fringe the pass
And dews have gemmed the tender grass,
He opens to the morning light
His fragrant chalices of white.
He cannot stay: he comes to show
That spring intends the heart shall know
Yet once again the primal worth
Of all the loveliness of earth—
The cordial sky, the thought of flowers,
Of friendly trees and singing bowers,
The angel spirits all the day
Around us where the children play,
Fair fields of grain that promise soon
Their cornucopias of June,
And sweet romance that never fails
Of lovers and of bridal veils.

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

A little term of shade and sun,
And all his ministry is done.
A fitting symbol seemeth he
Of all our fair mortality :
So youth departs ; so not for long
Abides the ecstacy of song ;
So brief are all the splendors laid
About the dawn ; so faces fade ;
So dies the moonlight on a stream ;
And so is life a little dream.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

May Again

A GAIN the southern winds at ease
Caress the blossom-laden trees,
While o'er the heavens gay
Is writ in gold and hues of wine
A brightly blazoned script divine—
May comes again, sweet May.

Again what glories wake the dawn,
And how old warrior trouble, wan
And weak, is driven out;
With what clear throats the sparrows sing,
How musical the drone bee's wing,
And how the children shout!

Four walls are all too narrow now—
I follow where the sturdy plow
Has turned the fragrant mead,
Where growing green things rise in line
Like soldiers, or where soft-eyed kine
On new-spring grasses feed.

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

But sweeter than all-nature rife
With song and bloom that zest of life
Which fills the spirit up
With joy new-born of homely food
And peace that whispers "God is good,"
And overruns my cup.

O what of the dreams that faded fast,
Or the fickle "gleam" that glanced and passed,
Or the wine that turned to rue.
I hold a wand, as May can vow,
With magic healing, and somehow
The heavens and earth are new.

In coat of hope-and-courage clad,
I am a bold Sir Galahad,
On quests that cannot fail,
For with clear vision now I see
That one who daily walks with me
Holds up the holy Grail.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

L'ENVOI

O wonder love, whose tender might
Through checkered years of cloud and light
Has been both balm and goad,
Be thou my May when winters chill,
My Sarras set upon a hill,
The ending of my road.

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

Summer Magic

SO many cares to vex the day,
So many fears to haunt the night,
My heart was all but weaned away
From every lure of old delight.
Then summer came, announced by June,
With beauty, miracle and mirth.
She hung aloft the rounding moon,
She poured her sunshine on the earth,
She drove the sap and broke the bud,
She set the crimson rose afire,
She stirred again my sullen blood,
And waked in me a new desire.
Before my cottage door she spread
The softest carpet nature weaves,
And deftly arched above my head
A canopy of shady leaves.
Her nights were dreams of jeweled skies,
Her days were bowers rife with song,
And many a scheme did she devise
To heal the hurt and soothe the wrong.
For on the hill or in the dell,
Or where the brook went leaping by

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Or where the fields would surge and swell
With golden wheat or bearded rye,
I felt her heart against my own,
I breathed the sweetness of her breath,
Till all the cark of time had flown,
And I was lord of life and death.

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

Sacred Music at Sea

ARISE, dear music! O'er the rolling waves
Let harmony abound in praise of Him
Whose mighty hand upholds us, and who saves
Our course from erring, though the way be dim.

Tell of the warring waters, and the sky
That calms them on the red horizon's rim,
And how the clouds are shepherded on high
By winds that blow a tribute unto Him.

Speak, trombone, of the horrid ocean blast,
Cry, cornet, to the finny hordes that swim
Far down where none can fathom, slow or fast,
On errands of sure service unto Him.

Say, baritones and altoes, how the light
Of stars in heaven guides the seraphim,
Till the unshadowed sun dissolves the night
To blaze a golden pathway unto Him.

Sound, drums and tubas, like a thunder storm,
Scream clarionets, like bold sea gulls that skim
The curling billow, on whose awful form
Their daily food is offered up by Him.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Let rippling notes from the small piccolo
Be for the compass tremulous and slim,
But pointing through all gloom the way we go
By laws immutably ordained of Him.

And let the heart of every instrument
Laud the good ship that heeds not any whim
Of wind or flood, but faithful and unspent
Makes for the harbor built of old by Him.

O rise, ye hymns of all the lands that be,
And if for joy mine eyes shall overbrim,
It is that though we all go down to sea
In ships we cannot drift afar from Him.

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

Vacation End

FROM the charm of radiant faces,
From the days we took to dream,
From the joy of open spaces,
From the mountain and the stream,
Bronzed of sunlight, nerves a-tingle,
Keen of limb and clear of head,
Speed we back again to mingle
In the battle for our bread.
Now again the stern commanding
Of the chosen task is heard,
And the tyrant, care, is standing
Arbiter of deed and word.
But the radiance is not ended,
And the joy, whate'er the cost,
Which those fleeting days attended
Never can be wholly lost.
For we bring to waiting duty,
To the labor and the strife,
Something of the sense of beauty,
And a fairer view of life.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Boys Swimming

THERE scarcely is a finer thing to see
Than lithe lads swimming in a running
stream,
Cleaving the tide with breast-stroke gracefully,
The waters slipping by with wave and gleam.

They make delight of one vast element
Which mankind looked upon so long with fear,
Taught unawares to be self-confident
In venturing a hazardous career.

A Legend of the Easter Children

THE legends say children were first
 To be abroad that Easter day
 When morning out of darkness burst,
 And angels rolled the stone away.
 For children's hearts are quick to feel
 The deadening pall of mortal pain,
 And children's hearts are first to heal
 When light and comfort come again.
 And they had loved the Lord Christ's face,
 And on His knees had laughed and cried,
 And heard Him say the heavenly place
 Is where all child-like souls abide.
 And they had often heard Him tell
 Strong men, by pride and greed defiled,
 That they could never please Him well
 Till they were humble as a child
 And they had heard the tale that grieves
 All little hearts: how one so dear
 Was nailed upon a cross with thieves,
 And tortured with a poisoned spear;
 And how the temple's wondrous veil
 Was riven by the lightning stroke,

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

While, mingled with the women's wail,
The earthquake and the thunder broke;
And how there came from northern seas
A terrified brigade of gulls,
Swept on by some unearthly breeze,
To scream above the place of skulls;
And how black night came down at noon,
And ghosts, from graves that opened wide,
Skulked out beneath a blood-red moon,
When He that loved the children died.

For two long days no girl or boy
In Galilee or Jordan plain
Could laugh or sing, for hope and joy
In every little heart was slain.
But when the earth, that third day morn,
Was flooded with such golden light
As never since the world was born
Had come to dazzle human sight,
Then every child, the legends say,
Knew that the time was at an end,
Knew that the stone was rolled away,
And flew to meet the risen Friend.
And long before the Magdalene
Had reached the empty sepulchre,
Or Peter heard what she had seen,
Or fleet John hastened after her,

POEMS OF APPRECIATION

The children had gone forth and found
The Master in the garden walk,
And scattered lillies on the ground,
And seen His smile, and heard Him talk.
No child was puny, halt or lame,
Or hungry, or in tatters clad,
But clothed as if in light they came,
And all were whole, and strong, and glad.

They throng along the Kedron rill,
They thread the city through the gates
Straight up to Joseph's garden hill,
Where He that loves the children waits.
They sing, they dance, they climb the trees,
They circle round in ring and file;
They know they cannot fail to please,
And win the guerdon of His smile.
He lifts His hand: "I bore the pain
Of death for men by sin defiled,
I rise henceforth to live and reign
Lord of the kingdom of the Child."
They vanish, and He stands alone;
And when the women come to weep,
The garden flames with flowers new-blown--
The children are at home asleep.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

“What makes that garden spot so bright!”
The learned Rabbis stroked their chins;
They knew not yet that love is light,
That knowledge fails where love begins.
But somehow still on Easter morn
The world is beautiful again,
And in each child-like heart is born
Some yearning of good will to men,
Some haunting sense, some happy dream,
Of singing birds, of daffodils,
Of olive branches, or the gleam
Of dew-shine on the Syrian hills.

SONGS

SONGS

Sweetest, let no cloud of sorrow

SWEETEST, let no cloud of sorrow
Cast a shadow o'er us;
Let no dark foreboding borrow
One bright ray from that tomorrow
Beckoning before us.

Weary waiting, toil and trouble—
These shall not confound us.
All the hardship is a bubble:
We can love, and that is double
All the world around us.

Can it matter, sweetest, whether
Days be dull or shining?
If our hearts are knit together,
Summer time or winter weather
Ne'er shall know repining.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Lady, who is richer far

LADY who is richer far
Than titled heirs or princes are?
Who hath quaffed a drink divine
Rarer than the rarest wine?

He to whom your eyes are kind,
He to whom you have a mind,
Who by your proud election sips
The honeyed nectar of your lips.

SONGS

All through the day I bore the pain

ALL through the day I bore the pain
Of following after thee in vain.
All through the night the demons sent me
Dream and fancy to torment me.
Now the hope I built upon
Rises with another sun,
And whatever the toil or pain
I follow after thee again.



THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Mutatis Mutandis

WHEN my lady goeth fairly,
And her countenance is rarely
Lighted by the things that please her,
Mien and happy mood according
Are themselves the sweet rewarding
Of the kindling eye that sees her.

But when her course is out of measure,
Or some stirring of displeasure
Tints her face with hues that never
Fell on canvas, or from darkling
Troubled brow her eyes are sparkling,
She is lovelier than ever.

POEMS OF THE SPIRIT

A Prayer

O MASTER, let me labor through the day
Quietly, yet with clear, unswerving aim.
Teach me indifference to praise or blame,
So long as with good conscience I can say
I sought to find the straight and narrow way.
If suddenly the fires of passion flame
About me, let me calm them with that Name
Which in my heart I never could betray.
And when the light fails, and untroubled sleep
Has clothed my senses with its sweet reward,
O give my spirit then a large increase
Of strength for one more day of striving; keep
The gateway of my dreams; and wake me, Lord,
To walk again the manly paths of peace.

A Far Country

BEYOND the cities I have seen,
Beyond the wrack and din,
There is a wide and fair demesne
Where I have never been.

Away from desert wastes of greed,
Over the peaks of pride,
Across the seas of mortal need
Its citizens abide.

And through the distance though I see
How stern must be the fare,
My feet are ever fain to be
Upon the journey there.

In that far land the only school
The dwellers all attend
Is built upon the Golden Rule,
And man to man is friend.

No war is there nor war's distress,
But truth and love increase—
It is a realm of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.

Nil Desperandum

OFT when the way I go lies hard and steep
 Before me, and I cannot see my goal :
 When those dream-kindled hopes wherewith my
 soul
 Lighted the path have failed ; when I could weep
 To think how slow, unfirm a pace I keep,
 How weak my faith, how slight my self-control,
 Or will to speed me forward, though the whole
 O'er-ripe world-harvest waits ahead to reap ;—
 Oft in these hours I listen to the voice
 Of seers and heroes through the ages past,
 Who knew at length the metes and bounds of
 fate,
 And always, whatsoe'er their lot or choice,
 One clear command they give : *Or slow or fast,*
Despair not, trust thyself, and trusting, wait.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Ideal

O WHEN I am tossed on the waters of
sorrow,
Uncertain and sick, without compass or goal,
With no light for today, and no hope for to-
morrow,
And fear is a torture to body and soul ;

When fruitless endeavor, or thwarted ambition,
The anguish of loving or physical pain
Brings sobering thoughts of the rapid transition
Of year into year without comfort or gain—

It is easy and well from out of that sorrow,
O infinite Goodness, to cry unto Thee
For light for today, and hope for tomorrow,
For guidance and faith on a desolate sea.

But teach me, O Spirit, that harder devotion
When skies are serene and the sailing is fair,
When the haven lies white on the rim of the
ocean,
And love is the captain to pilot me there.

POEMS OF THE SPIRIT

For if then I remember to honor and love Thee,
And own that from Thee every blessing is sent,
When the waters of sorrow would gather above
me
Thy merciful care shall be quick to prevent.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

The Wonder

I MARVEL not to see the works of God.
The mighty river rolling to the sea,
The sunlit mountain crowned eternally
With crystal snow, the earthquake like a rod
Of vengeance, trumpet winds and flowers that
 nod
In beauty, all the heavenly majesty—
These from my childhood up have been to me
Familiar voices saying, "God is God."
But evermore the wonder grows amain
That we, slight creatures, should ourselves com-
 mand
The uses and the beauty of the whole
To build a harp, with strings of joy and pain
In endless range, whereon the Master's hand
May strike the music of a human soul.

POEMS OF THE SPIRIT

Watch Night

'**T**IS mystic midnight, and the bell
Cleaves the cold air and tolls away
The haggard year. Alas! no spell
Can lure him on to meet the day.

The new year at the selfsame hour
On winged sandals never slack
Begins his course. Alas! no power
Can hold his flying footsteps back.

Stay not, O heart, for time nor tide,
Nor count the days that now are done,
But spread the wings of purpose wide,
Coeval with the rising sun.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Values

IN God's high heaven and in His earth
These things I hold of matchless worth:
Health and a task, the dreams of youth,
Beauty and law, and love, and truth.

Tyrant Beauty

MY mind is set on earnest days
And nights of quiet sleeping,
But beauty over all my ways
A tyrant watch is keeping.

She haunts me in a lovely face,
By pool and stream she stays me,
Her form in every cloud I trace,
Her starry sky betrays me.

Hers is the mantling down of snow,
Hers is the solemn warning
Of dirges that the north winds blow,
And hers the burst of morning.

She forges all the human ties
That bind me to my neighbor;
She wreathes the laurel crown that lies
Upon the brow of labor.

A golden bird in a budding tree
Pours out his heart in singing—

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Which tells the more of beauty, he
Or the bud where the sap is springing?

No time or place is left to me
By night or day for resting ;
Her finger points, and I must be
Adventuring and questing.

Let this austere dominion cease,
O beauty, to distress me,
Or grant to me a vast increase
Of power to express thee.

POEMS OF THE SPIRIT

The Three Marys

THAT blessed morn three Marys came
To glorify the Easter scene—
Martha's sister, Mary dame,
And the repentant Magdalene.

One by a perfect love was led,
One brought a mother's sore distress,
One wore upon her lovely head
A chastened crown of thankfulness.

And these by loyal suffering
Were made as one in sweet accord,
Through whom the generations bring
Increasing homage to their Lord.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Companionship

I CLOSED the door and turned the key
And spread my book upon my knee,
But though I pondered well that lore,
I ended wanting something more.

I called a comrade friend to share
My quiet room. His speech was fair,
His spirit high, his discourse wide,
But I was still unsatisfied.

Then in the stillness all alone
My soul rose up to claim her own
Inviolable right to be,
O Father, face to face with Thee.

Home is the Heart

MY dwelling place hath ever been
A spirit-built home within,
And though at whiles I fare apart,
My mistress still is mistress heart.

Sometimes the brazen horn success
Drowns all her tones of tenderness,
And then I goad my will and dream
To win the things that men esteem.

Sometimes the meaning and the end
Of living seems to be a friend,
Whose comprehending kindred mind
Is all the boon I crave to find.

And often, too, where beauty's sign
Appears, I make that standard mine,
While pleasure lifts a luring voice
To rob my will of other choice.

Then honor calls; the give and take
Of combat stirs my soul awake,

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Where men through troubled ages long
Clash in the lists of right and wrong.

But what success can be complete?
What perfect friends did ever meet
In fellowship so well inspired
But something more was still desired?

And beauty wanes, and pleasure palls,
And all the pride of honor falls
When carnal strife has claimed her toll
Of ravished limb and tarnished soul.

With clearer vision then I see
Content in these can never be,
And all the folly is disclosed
Of trust in outward things reposed.

And with that lesson I return
To where the lamps of loving burn—
Turn home again—and now aright
I walk by an unfailing light.

Compensation

IF only in thine heart there be
Some depth of earnest gratitude
For life's great bounties unto thee,
Though pain will come and fears intrude,
Thou canst not wholly miss the crown
Of those by heaven accounted blessed :
Patience will bring a healing down,
And peace will give the spirit rest.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Certainty

WHAT have I fathomed of life,
What of its medley of strife,
Sorrow and solace profound?
What can we creatures of dust
Stand upon, swear by, and trust,
What my unshakable ground?

This: that though evil be strong,
Goodness prevaieth ere long,
However betrayed or beset;
That he his own spirit doth smother
Who willeth the hurt of another,
And this: that God liveth yet.

POEMS OF THE SPIRIT

In the Still Night

IN the still night there comes to me
The blessed boon of liberty.
From all the cares that chafed and choked,
The spirit is at last unyoked
To seek her heaven, as she ought,
On sturdy wings of fearless thought.
Then come the dreams which through the day
The toil of living shuts away.
Then can the soul her fountains fill,
While all the universe is still,
From streams of quietness that rise
Out of the hills of Paradise.
And I can tell the day was meant
For some design beneficent,
For sweet-imagined sounds I hear,
And forms of beauty hover near
To win me to the perfect trust
That life is good, and God is just,
And permeates His world whereof
The essence and the end is love.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Father Love

NOT unto him does heaven grant to bend
By day and night above the creamy cheek
And dimpled smile of baby. 'Tis the meek,
Sweet privilege of mother to attend
The cradle shrine. There patience without end
Wins her a beauty words can never speak.
Her troubled joy has nothing more to seek
Where life and love in one devotion blend.
For him the roughened world, all day for him
The tyrant task, the tension of the mind.
But toil were vain as any froth or foam,
Were not that hour to come when twilight dim
Brings weariness, and father turns to find
Rest with the blessed angels of his home.

POEMS OF THE SPIRIT

Divine Affinity

‘**T**WERE vain, O God, in me to tell
Thy potency divine:
Omniscience surely knoweth well
How much of me is thine.
As is the steel to the magnet bar,
As to the rose the bee,
The earth to its compelling star ,
So am I, God, to Thee.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

Learning to Walk

OUR little cherub learned today
To stand alone and make her way.
With faltering will and timid feet
From mother's knee to father's seat.

With many a failure, many a pause,
Now by rebuke, now by applause,
With tears and oft-recurring doubt,
She toiled her little journey out.

And ever as her faith declined,
She strove anew, for there behind
Was mother's sweetly crooned command,
And on ahead her father's hand.

And O, at last when she survived
Her tiny perils and arrived,
What depths of feeling unexpressed
Were stirred within each guardian breast!

We older children of the earth
Have journeyed farther from our birth,

POEMS OF THE SPIRIT

But doubt and pain and dark delay
Attend the journey all the way.

And all our balm for heart or mind
Is merely this, that we shall find,
Before we come to utter harm,
The refuge of a Father's arm.

THE WINGS OF OPPRESSION

The Teacher

L ORD, who am I to teach the way
To little children day by day,
So prone myself to go astray?

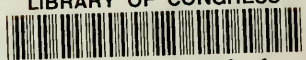
I teach them *knowledge*, but I know
How faint they flicker and how low
The candles of my knowledge glow.

I teach them *power* to will and do,
But only now to learn anew
My own great weakness through and through.

I teach them *love* for all mankind
And all God's ceatures, but I find
My love comes lagging far behind.

Lord, if their guide I still must be,
Oh let the little children see
The teacher leaning hard on Thee.

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