

THE ANCIENT QUEST

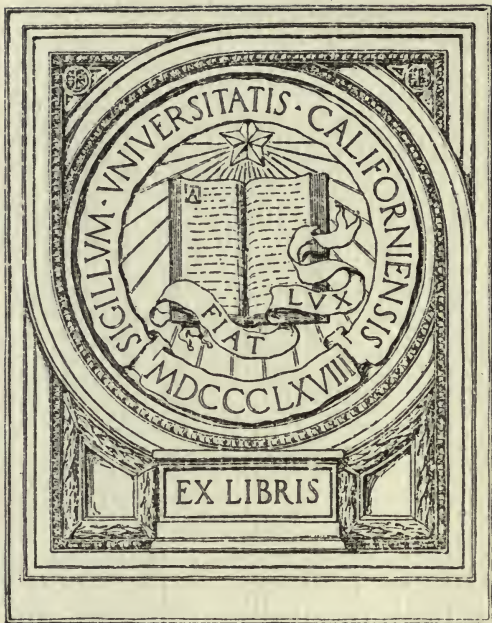
By

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

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The Ancient Quest And Other Poems In Brown

BY

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

Author of "The House of Bondage," "My Heart and
Stephanie," "The Mark of the Beast," etc.



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TO
GEORGE HORACE LORIMER
WHOSE EDITORIAL DISCRIMINATION ACCEPTED
SOME OF THESE VERSES
AND WHOSE FRIENDSHIP APPROVED STILL MORE

R. W. K.

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R. W. K.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE CALL	9
AT THE GATES	10
OFFERTORY	12
TWO SINGERS	14
MY ROSE	15
MAN AND POET	16
WHEN THE GODS RELENT	18
THE SECRET GARDEN	19
NEPENTHE	20
LILITH	21
UNTO THIS LAST	23
LOVE'S EUCHARIST	25
THE ROISTERER	26
THE SUMMONS	27
HER PHOTOGRAPH	29
THE BOSS	32
IN BLOSSOM TIME	34
THE END OF A CHAPTER	36
YESTERDAYS	38
LIGHT O' LOVE	40
APRIL IN PARIS	42
EXILED	44
MARIA PERIPATETICA	46
THE OLD BOULEVARDIER	49

CONTENTS

	PAGE
OTHER POEMS IN BROWN	53
THE AMERICAN	55
THE WESTERN GOAD	56
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	58
HEROES OF YESTERDAY	60
MEXICO	63
NOCTURNE	67
JUSTICE	69
THE LAW OF THE TALONS	71
THE MARCH OF THE HUNGRY MEN	73
MY BROTHER	76
A CHILD PARALYTIC	78
THE SEEKER	80
ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL	82
THE SUBURBANITE	83
THE GOTHAMITE	85
RETURN	87
WAR	88
LUPERCALIA	95
ROMANCE	96
TIME'S REVENGES	99
TROIA FUIT!	100
THE NINETY MILLIONS	101
"AND THERE WERE SHEPHERDS"	103
EASTER — 1917	105
THE GREAT ADVENTURE	109
THE WASTREL	111
THE SON OF JOEL	114



THE CALL

Love comes laughing up the valleys,
Hand in hand with hoyden Spring;
All the Flower-people nodding,
All the Feathered Folk a-wing.

“Higher! Higher!” call the thrushes;
“Wider! Freer!” breathe the trees;
And the purple mountains beckon
Upward to their mysteries:

Always farther leagues to wander,
Peak to peak and slope to slope;
Lips to sing and feet to follow,
Eyes to dream and heart to hope.

Tarry? Nay, but who can tarry?
All the world is on the wing:
Love comes laughing up the valleys,
Hand in hand with hoyden Spring!

AT THE GATES

Turn back the years, dumbfound the roar
Of city life on crowded street,
And let me dream I see the shore
Where two of old were wont to meet.
Was love, I wonder, quite so sweet
As painted now by memory?
Was joy so keen? Was time so fleet?
Turn back the years that I may see.

Can Sleep, perchance, those days restore,
The Gate of Horn those songs repeat?
What was it in that youth of yore
Changed Pleasure from the arrant cheat
Whom now with ever-wearied feet
We follow vainly? Can it be
'Tis *we* have changed? Oh, I entreat,
Turn back the years that I may see!

May see in truth: for blind, and more,
I live my life in city seat.

AT THE GATES

Bring back but once the golden lore
 We learned amid the fields of wheat,
 And on the hills where white herds bleat,
And underneath the island tree
 Where waves of silver break and beat —
Turn back the years that I may see.

L'ENVOI

Somnus, 'mid Winter rain and sleet,
 I raise this single prayer to thee:
Make place for me in thy retreat,
 Turn back the years that I may see!

OFFERTORY

Give me your eyes so young, so grey;
Give me your hands so firm, so small;
Give me the trembling lips that say:
“ But do you love me, after all? ”
Give me the roses from your cheek,
Where firefly blushes dance and dart;
Give me the word you fear to speak:
Give me your glad girl heart!

Take of my little what you will —
The books I read, the books I write;
The work I do, or good or ill;
My brief provision of delight;
Take all my service, all my thought;
Take honour — *that* I never sold! —
And give what never can be bought:
Your heart of virgin gold.

Nay, I who am so poor in gifts
May only for your mercy cry,

OFFERTORY

As when the priestly suppliant lifts
The humblest offering on high:
A sacrifice of doubt and dole! —
Before the incense-wreaths depart,
My Little Lady Pure of Soul,
Give me your glad girl heart!

TWO SINGERS

The bird that mounts the morning sky
 Beyond the gaze of earth-bound men
Sees planets burning by the sun
 That have no place within our ken;
His lyric has a joy above
 The hope of winning any sphere
Save that he left — is lost to them:
 Only the bird himself can hear. . . .

Your eyes are like the burnished stars
 In that wide Heaven whereto I pray;
And, like the burnished stars of Heaven,
 Are very, very far away!
I may not rise, howe'er I sing,
 On pinions broken since my birth —
Dear, is there nothing that will bring
 Your Heaven nearer to my earth?

MY ROSE

Heavy with pink and mignonette,
The garden's incense at your shrine,
Throughout the quiet of your room
The very twilight is abloom;
The air is effervescent wine,
Drugged with the purple violet.

Beyond your window, where are wont
To feed the birds that love you best,
Afar, amid supernal tides,
The new-launched moon, inviting,
rides —
A silver shallop come to rest
Upon a silent Hellespont.

Below us — oh, so close that he
Is almost here! — a nightingale
Persuades his pensive, vestal rose!
Lean nearer. How the music grows!
Love, can such pleading ever fail?
My rose what will *your* answer be?

MAN AND POET

Break my heart — and make a poet;
Give me love — and end my song;
That's the truth, and well I know it
Who have loved you overlong.

Poet dreams and lover lives it:
He that loses hymns the theme;
He that finds love where he gives it
Lives what poets only dream.

Break my heart, and I will sing you
Crowns of laurel and of bay;
Love me, dear, and I shall bring you
Only what no songs can say.

Though to song I prove a traitor,
There is right beyond the wrong,
For the smallest man is greater
Than the very greatest song.

MAN AND POET

And the poet's way is lonely,
 Flint beneath and thorn above:
O, my love, if you would only —
 Only give me love!

WHEN THE GODS RELENT

Last night I kissed you while you slept,
When night, receding, kissed the day;
Into your little room I crept,
Where, like a weary flower, you lay.

I bent above your glorious head
And whispered words you may not hear;
You did not stir upon your bed,
Nor even dream that I was near.

You did not dream the miracle:
That my dear dreams were coming true;
You never thought that I would kneel
Before you there; you did not feel
My arms as they enfolded you.

And yet I kissed you while the West
Shone star-bright and the East grew grey,
Lips close to lips and breast to breast —
Though I was miles and miles away!

THE SECRET GARDEN

(“ *Il faut cultiver notre jardin.*”)

What is it that my friends declare —
“ There’s winter raging in the air? ”
Perhaps; I have not noticed, for
At dawn I sought the hidden door
And entered, by a dead sun’s beams,
The secret Garden of my Dreams.

What does it matter if the rain
Beats on my narrow window-pane?
If all the throng that come and go
Wear the grey panoply of woe?
If down below me in the street
The pave is black with wind and sleet?

I cultivate the plot where grows,
Untouched, the myrtle and the rose —
The myrtle sweeter than the bay,
The pure white Rose of Yesterday.
What though the world in sackcloth seems?
I keep the Garden of my Dreams!

NEPENTHE

I drink to red-lipped Circe of the vine,
Whose magic mars the memory of care,
And in whose fluent smile benignly shine
(Changed now to pearls) the tear-drops of
despair.

I take her hand — and lo! the hand is Fame's!
She speaks — and wisdom wings her lightest
breath;

She is the Goddess of the Many Names,
And in her arms waits ignorance of death;

But best of all, her lips, cajoling mine,
Become the lips I have desired in vain,
And in the easy kisses of the wine
I catch the kisses I could never gain.

LILITH

Through miles of sea, asunder,
Through leagues of land, apart,
Who loves you now, I wonder,
And bares and breaks his heart?
What timid lad, uncertain,
Says all I used to say?
Whose hand now draws your curtain
Against reviving day?

O, face that is a flower
Turned ever toward the sun!
O, frail hands quick with power,
Winning and never won!
O, white limbs lithe and agile!
Where else may man learn of
A heart so firm and fragile
In bondage to Lord Love?

The little men, contented,
Labor and eat and sleep

LILITH

In houses they have rented,
With wives they buy and keep:
But lovers that have tasted
Your lips, your lips pursue;
Forever wander wasted;
Forever thirst for you.

Like Cyprian summer, hither
You come, when life is sweet:
You flee, and all things wither
Beneath basilean feet —
Fly on beyond returning
Along your primrose way,
And leave a memory burning
No other loves allay.

UNTO THIS LAST

*It must end, then? - Now? Tonight?
Well, I have but this to write:*

High design and dear desire
Went to feed your altar-fire —
Honour and ambition toss'd
In the flame, nor counted lost.
Elfin-gold? Ah, false or true,
What I had I gave to you —
All; and you (how shall I say?)
Took it, smiled and glanced away:
Quick to love me, yes; and yet
Even quicker to forget!
Half a humming-bird and half
Woman. I can hear you laugh;
Careless, if the world be kind,
Of the wounds you leave behind —
Heedless, heartless, beautiful. . . .

That's my kind of love — to do
All these things again for you;

UNTO THIS LAST

I would be a goblet wrought
For your pleasure; life and thought
Crushed for you to drink of; then,
With the cups of other men
Offered, just to hear you say,
“ It was sweet ”— and toss away!

LOVE'S EUCHARIST

As timorous boy who, at calm Eastertide
Taking his First Communion, startled, sips
The holy blood of Christ between his lips,
Fresh-flowing from the newly piercèd side;
And as he bows his head and, undenied,
Takes his God's body in his teeth, now dips
My face to thine, now to my finger-tips
Thrill hope, love, reverence, gladdened, glorified.

This my Communion, Benediction this;
And when without the Gate of Heaven I see
God, who declares, "Thou knewest me not
for sin,"
Then will I plead: "I knew Thee in her kiss;
Better than Thou loved'st her, or I loved
Thee
Did I love her."—And God will say:
"Come in."

THE ROISTERER

Your little hand is like a rose,
 With white rose-petals half-uncurled;
My kiss is like a wind that blows
 From all-across the world.

It dartles down the garden aisle,
 It brushes flower and weed away
Unheedingly — until, awhile,
 It halts, as if to pray,

And bends above the white, white rose,
 And gently, where the leaves are wet,
Touches their tips; then forward goes
Where the gods drive; where, no man
 knows —
 Dear, will the rose
 Forget?

THE SUMMONS

Oh, Summer's in the land again, and Summer's
on the sea;
Across the blue horizon-rim, the old gods beckon
me;
The little ships ride restless at their anchors in
the bay;
The birds are trooping northward, dear, and I
must be away.
I see the Savoy mountains white; I hear the
sheep-bells ring
Below me in the valley where the dancing chil-
dren sing;
And high above the timber-line, along the gla-
cier-track,
The ice-fields and the summit-snows, they whis-
per me: "Come back!"
It's well I know your tender heart and kindli-
ness and grace,
And well I know the gentle light that sanctifies
your face;

THE SUMMONS

But sun and wind are calling me throughout the
livelong day

From distant lands I used to know — from all
the Far-Away.

Oh, Summer's on the hills again, and Summer's
on the sea,

And Summer's in my heart, and you — well,
you must set me free!

HER PHOTOGRAPH

*And this was Jenny! This slim girl
With merry face and truant curl,
With dancing, daring eyes that fence,
And air of roguish innocence,
Whose parted lips turn up and laugh
From out this faded photograph!*

Only five years ago, and she
Was one and part of us, and we
No better than we ought to be —
Tom, Dick and Harry.
Of one of us the less that's said
The better; Harry's safely dead,
And Dick, his wild oats harvested,
Intends to marry.

Far in some convent's cloistered close
There languishes our tall red Rose,
And Belle is gone — where no man knows,
Or cares a penny.
Tomorrow changed to Yesterday;

HER PHOTOGRAPH

We lost each other, I and they —
Tonight a turning of the way,
And there was Jenny!

Yet not the same. . . . The play was flat,
And I could gaze serenely at
The curtained box wherein she sat,
Begemmed, brocaded . . .
(" Oh, that's her husband at her side,"
My neighbor casually replied.) . . .
She yawned. I wonder if she sighed.
I'm sure she's faded.

And so the girl I used to know
About Dick's poor old studio
Now's " the rich Mrs. So-and-So "—
The thing's astounding!
Yet stranger things have fallen out,
And that was Jenny (there's no doubt),
Whatever chance has brought about
This pass confounding.

Well, only Jenny, of the three,
Succeeded! Does her memory
E'er turn to all that used to be?
In faith, I doubt it!

HER PHOTOGRAPH

And who is happiest — poor Belle,
Poor Jenny, or poor Rose? Ah, well,
The answer none of us can tell —
We're best without it.

*So that was Jenny! That tall dame,
Who bore a rich man's sordid name
And purse; that woman weary-eyed,
Satisfied, yet unsatisfied!
How can her young lips seem to laugh
From out this faded photograph?*

THE BOSS

As a boy, I used to know —
Oh, but it was long ago! —
An old-fashioned garden, where,
In the drowsy country air,
 Bloomed, through formal row on row,
Bleeding-heart and modest phlox,
Flanked by crimson hollyhocks;
 Bluebells, morning-glories blue;
Sweet William that each evening heard
The vespers of the mocking-bird;
 Roses and violets — and you!

Now often — when my office door
Shuts out the deep street's distant roar,
The click, the giggle, drawl and purr
Of work and clerk, stenographer
And errand-boy and customer —
I, in the room marked "Private: No
Admittance," let my fancy go,

THE BOSS

Though I've a hundred things to do,
Back to that garden — and to you.

Today, with nerves of tempered steel,
I put across my biggest deal,
 The fruit of dreams and toil and tears;
I closed the book, I set the seal,
 I won what I have hoped for years;
And then, with air that owns no betters,
The haughty girl that "takes my letters"
Left on my desk-tobacco-box
A single simple sprig of phlox. . . .

And I would give the battle won
And all the deeds that I have done
To find the garden that I knew
When I was young and you were — you!

IN BLOSSOM-TIME

Yuri-San — Yuri-San!
Since Aprilean boughs began
Filtering the blue and gold
Through their blossoms manifold,
I have dreamed of old Japan
Once again — and Yuri-San.

I have heard the high-shod feet
Patter down the crooked street;
Looked at lacquered beauties dance,
Weaving webs of old romance
(Gossamer alight with dew,
Binding all my heart to you);
Flitting feet and flirting fan,
Flashing eyes — and Yuri-San.

Dreamed — and wakened far away
In a flaming Western day,
Where the only breath of air
Faints across a city square;
Where the mill of traffic runs,

IN BLOSSOM-TIME

Roaring on between the suns,
Grinding life and love forspent
In a weary Occident:
Happier you in old Japan,
Dead and dreaming, Yuri-San.

THE END OF A CHAPTER

I find it is the little things that last,
And make the picture when the model's fled:
Her throbbing voice; the way she tossed her
 head,
Coquetting. When the memory is past
Of line and feature, then mere trifles get
Their fingers on the brushes.

Henriette

Was of that sort; illusive, here-and-there.
I knew her quite two winters — loved her one:
The moment that the narrative was done,
I hardly could have told you if her hair
Was black or golden. (There, I often think,
Lay half her charm: a man could look and drink
Great draughts of all her prettiness, and then
Go, and forget, and long to drink again!)
Even tonight: five years ago we said
Good-bye without a heart-break; were I sent
Da Vinci's art to fetch that lineament
Most fleeting and intrinsic back to me,

THE END OF A CHAPTER

And paint on my spick canvas her dim head
That all her world might there acclaim it she,
Da Vinci's art would fail me utterly; . . .

Although I know her still — her laugh, her
frown;

And how, at moments, her unwavering eyes
That were all innocence, could be all-wise;
A dimple, darting like a butterfly
About the flowers in the pink and white
Glad garden of her cheek; the leaping light
Lost in the wedding of a smile and sigh;
The perfume of her hair, and how the rose
She wore once at her throat acquired new grace;
And that shy sadness her unconscious face
Wore in its moments of untaught repose.

And that is all? It should be all, and yet
This last remains: *that I recall that I
Have wooed so often her fair memory —
While she was ever ready to forget!*

YESTERDAYS

Douarnenez in Finistère!

I passed a purple autumn there

Where sabots clattered down the street,
And lads were lithe and maids were sweet
(We little recked that Time was fleet!)

And life and love were in the air.

In red and grey and the low-roofed town
Right to the harbor-mouth ran down;

The church, with quaint, decrepit grace,
Fronted the ancient market-place

Where first I saw her flower-face:

Jeanne's face that never learned to frown.

Though life to alien cities brings

My steps, that picture lives and sings:

The girl in medieval dress,

Her head erect, through joy and stress

All dignity and loveliness:

A peasant with the soul of kings.

YESTERDAYS

How I recall that sailor's son,
Pierre, whom all men called "Le Brun,"
 And how I hated him when he
 Came with the fishers from the sea
 (For was not Jeanne the world to me?)
And ended what was scarce begun! . . .

It mattered much; it matters naught:
The story stops where stories ought;
 For always through the world, I trust,
 Youth turns to youth and gold to rust,
 And dust returns again to dust —
Love wins what money never bought.

LIGHT O' LOVE

Your lips met mine so lightly
In that Algerian May,
I said: "What comes thus brightly
Will soonest fade away."

Alas, before the morrow
I learned it was not true:
He said "Come in" to Sorrow
Who said "Good-bye" to you!

No other lips can ever
Mean quite what your lips meant
At that farewell, and never
Another kiss content.

No man but one day learns it
And loves the veiled regret;
The fire that leaps and burns it,
His heart cannot forget.

LIGHT O' LOVE

Whatever else he misses,
Those memories remain;
The lighter fall the kisses,
The longer lasts the pain.

APRIL IN PARIS

The scent of spring is in the air
Tonight — tonight;
The moon, high above Montparnasse
Gleams like a disk of yellow glass;
The roofs are white.
I lean from this high window, where
Two leaned together once, and there
Wait for your tread upon the stair
Tonight.

Nothing is altered: I can see,
Tonight — tonight,
The cobbled rue St. Jacques below,
Down which you used to come and go
With footstep light;
And everything that memory
These ten long years kept fresh for me
Remains just as it used to be,
Tonight.

APRIL IN PARIS

Here to the little room I came

Tonight — tonight,

Where, having lived, we said good-bye;

Whence, having loved, went dry of eye,

Untroubled quite.

How youth can hope! How hope can cheat!

“A year,” we said, “and we shall meet.”—

Ten years! And where are you, *petite*,

Tonight?

EXILED

*Springtime again in Paris! Laughter and song
and May*

*From Neuilly Gate to Père La Chaise, Par-
nasse to Rue Riquet!*

*Springtime again in Paris — and I am seas
away!*

The conquering sun comes marching beneath
the Arc, and there,

Sharp to the left, adown the Bois, go trotting
pair and pair;

The Tuileries Gardens glitter with ribbon-gay
nourrices,

And even sculptured Fénelon smiles up at St.
Sulpice.

The very pave is merry with helterskelter feet;
The Faubourg and the Quartier rub shoulders
on the street,

And down the boulevards again the table-chat-
ter swings,

EXILED

For it is May in Paris, and the pulse of Paris
sings.

I know the lamps will sparkle soon throughout
the capital,

Irradiating all Montmartre, but most the Place
Pigalle;

And, oh, tonight I wonder: is Pépé Fernan
there,

And Cécile and DeBronsky, Xerine and suave
Albert?

Does Concha Mendez sing tonight? Do Dircé
and Clarice

And Eulalie and Mélanie whirl in the mad
mattchiche?

Oh, Léonine and Fanchon, Julie, Céleste, Li-
zette,

My heart is beating with you; my dreams are
with you yet!

*Springtime again in Paris! Laughter and song
and May*

*From Neuilly Gate to Père La Chaise, Parnasse
to Rue Riquet!*

*Springtime again in Paris — and I am years
away!*

MARIA PERIPATETICA

Sad, painted flower, cast unwist
 Into Life's lap; poor face that Fate
Has mocked at, drunk to, smitten, kissed
 Until I read the rune thereof
With more in it to love than hate,
 With more to pity than to love:

What nights were thine! What morns had
 they
Whose sleep was incense, vital, rare,
Burned into ashes by the day
 Before thy desecrated shrine!
Thy barren bosom freed their care,
 Because its milk was bitter wine.

Of all who loved and let thee go,
 Is there not one whose lips impressed
Their stamp upon thy memory so —
 Or dark or fair, or black or white —
His eyes outsparkle all the rest,
 The casual Antonies of night?

MARIA PERIPATETICA

Of all the mouths thy mouth hath drained,
Of all the bodies thine hath sought
And clung to, mad, desired, disdained,
In that long catalogue of dole,
Is there not one that something taught,
His soul embracing thy lost soul?

That fair first lover on whose head
Thy maiden shame and passion place —
Living and loving, or purged and dead —
So rich a crown of memory
That to thine inner heart his face
A sinning saint's seems: is it he?

Or is it some poor drunken fool,
Wiser than thou — God save the mark! —
In that salacious, brutal school
Where beasts, as thou and I are, sweat
Over the Lessons of the Dark,
Whom thou recall'st with dear regret?

Perhaps some country lad, who came
Fresh from his home to town and thee,
Is closest — his the charmed name —
Who with the parting tears fresh shed

MARIA PERIPATETICA

And all his sweet virginity
Thy sacramental table spread?

My canker-eaten rose, what then?
My scape-goat of an out-worn code,
“All things,” said Paul, “unto all men”—
So thou, who with the setting sun
Farest nightly on the endless road,
To all men mistress, wife to none!

But mine tonight, though not to kiss!
I lay my head upon that breast
Whose scar our sisters' safety is,
And, from our darkest misery,
To beg thy mercy is my quest,
Lest that we perish utterly.

Forgive our women's scornful glance,
Our poor, pale, pure maidens decorous,
Virgins by purse and circumstance;
Forgive the tiger tusk and claw;
Forgive the law that made thee thus;—
Forgive the God that made the law!

THE OLD BOULEVARDIER

All the women I've been friends with (for a
night or for a decade —

For a soul or for a body — for a tress of
black or gold!)—

How I managed to forget them in my youth
when they pursued me;

How their memory pursues me now they
shun me once I'm old!

At this boulevard-table seated with my opal
glass before me,

Of the living faces passing none to love or
know me seems;

Yet about them and above them

(How they know me! How I love
them!)

They, the dead girls, jostle, thronging

With an eloquence of longing

Through a mist of tears and laughter down the
the pavement of my dreams.

THE OLD BOULEVARDIER

Claudine, Gabrielle and Clara (for a brown eye,
for a blue eye,

For a hand to clasp) or Françoise (for a
bosom bold and strong) :

They were Second Empire spirits when the
court of Little Louis

Taught the mode of little passions that were
neither light nor long!

Délie, Daughter of the People, Communarde
(old Thiers shot her

With a hundred of her sisters by the wall of
Père La Chaise) . . .

Jeanne is dead and Julie married.

Laure, who fled, and Paule, who tar-
ried:

All that kissed and cursed, forgetting,

I remember unregretting —

To the painted bought-and-paid-for Phrynes
of the later days.

What a brave life, that! I knew them, dark
and fair and all conditions,

For a kiss or for a louis, for a drive along
the Bois,

For their lingerie of laces,

For a blush-box for their faces,

THE OLD BOULEVARDIER

For a supper after Patti — “ Norma ” at the
Opera.

Now? Well, even yet, I wager — *Garçon*,
bring again the bottle,

If it please you — There’s a *chic* one! —
Did she mean that smile for me?

If this absinthe were not by me, I would show
you! — She’s like Fanchon,

That *grisette* I loved and buried in Mont-
martre in ’Eighty-three.

Yet so odd a thing is fancy,

Such a riddled necromancy,

That the clearest face of all to me is one both
pure and cold —

One: an un-kissed child of Heaven,

Whom I loved when scarce eleven. . . .

How I managed to forget them in my youth
when they pursued me;

How their memory pursues me now they shun
me — and I’m old!

OTHER POEMS IN BROWN

THE AMERICAN

He takes the creeds of every land,
 Creeds that both false and futile seemed,
And by the work of his own hand
 He animates the thing they dreamed;

Today he keeps their fast or feast
 As they, the dead men, kept it then;
But in the West, and not the East,
 He looks for Christ to come again.

THE WESTERN GOAD

“ And the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west.”— ZECH. xiv, 4.

“ Westward ! ” the Aryan chieftain cried, when
daylight smouldered from the West,
And thence, across the Ural peaks, began man-
kind’s eternal quest.

Westward the swart Phœnicians toiled through
bays unknown and seas unwon ;
And westward fought from burning Troy, to
build a world, Anchises’ son.

The Goths that cursed in templed Rome ; the
Vandal riders raiding Spain ;
The blond Norse conquerors that slew the
Frankish lord, the Saxon thane ;
Columbus in his cockleshell ; De Soto grim, who
saw and died ;
Magellan ; Drake, the buccaneer — the ancient
spur was in their side ;

THE WESTERN GOAD

It splashed the blood of all that blazed, beyond
the earlier-comers' ken,
The wilderness; it stabbed the flanks of hun-
ger-hardened prairie-men;
It urged the bandaged feet across the Rockies,
won Sierra gold,
Till now it pauses at the shore past which the
New becomes the Old;

For but a breathing-space! In man, who
neither may retreat nor stay,
Though wet with sweat and dripping red, the
primal impulse has its way:
Careless of life and eager-eyed, the race pursues
the recreant sun,
Till Orient is Occident, till all the East and
West are one.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Man's saviours are men's martyrs — even thus
It hath been written, and must ever be;
Souls born for sacrifice vicarious,
They bring us life and we repay with
death,
Whether the vision that their sad eyes see,
Portentous with the ultimate agony,
Appear in Illinois or Nazareth.

So also Lincoln, steadfast, gentle, strong,
Both human and divine, to whom God yet
Gave the glad triumph, and withheld the long
Ordeal of the aftermath.— Because
Of that no man can think with terror or
regret
Upon the end: serene at last, he met
Death in the first swift moment of ap-
plause.

He is not ours to weep, nor ours to praise —
Not the great North that put upon his brow
Its laurels; not the South that, in the days

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Of conflict, faced the grim-determined
odds

Destined to conquer, impotent to cower;

Not all America may claim him now:

Forevermore he is Mankind's and God's!

HEROES OF YESTERDAY

Grant is asleep in his great white tomb, where
the Hudson tides are deep;
And Sheridan and Sherman lie on marble beds
asleep;
And all the men that led our men on the bloody
fields we won
Lie 'neath the marble meet for them that he-
roes' work have done;
But what of the men the heroes led — of Smith
and Robinson?

It was good to die on the firing-line if you died
to set men free;
It was good to die when the cannon screamed
in the days of Sixty-three;
And we, of a younger, softer race — we look
with a brief regret
At the modest mounds where the unknown dead
are modest and silent yet:
Smith and Robinson lie so still — and we for-
get — forget!

HEROES OF YESTERDAY

And other Smiths and Robinsons — you count
them on your hand —

Today go hobbling up the street, behind the
village band,

To where encamped their comrade-dead in
sunken bivouac lie;

Fresh lilies in their withered hands, the old, old
men go by —

The Robinsons and Smiths, you know, that
hadn't the luck to die.

Oh, can't you see, and won't you see, and won't
you hold it true,

That these old men had ties as dear to them as
yours to you?

And won't you quit your secret sneer and open,
empty praise —

The inward smile at the selfsame while you
wreath the formal bays —

To pay the simple debt you owe these men of
other days?

The things they loved they left, and died — or
those who still endure

A moment longer stumble on, decrepit, smiled
at, poor!

HEROES OF YESTERDAY

Is this the lot that you decree
To them who risked, to set men free,
All that was theirs to do or be?

Sheridan, Sherman, Grant — is this the end of
all they won?

Is this their country's payment to Smith and
Robinson?

MEXICO

(*Pershing Punitive Column, 1916.*)

Fifty miles to Carrizal; sage-brush, sand and
flies;

If a fellow falls behind — well, a fellow dies.
Nothing much in front of us but the baking
sun;

Less'n nothing back behind: I mean Washing-
ton —

Out in front Carranza's men, hardly safe by
night,

Back' behind a government still too proud to
fight.

Yesterday our "allies" stood grinning to the
last

While the village cut-ups here stoned us when
we passed;

Day before a scout was "lost"— and found
without his toes;

MEXICO

To-morrow —'bout to-morrow the good Lord
only knows.

Had a dream the other night — and, say, it was
a peach:

All the sand was presidents, and every grain a
speech;

Every grain was graceful words, and every
word hot stuff;

But a wind from 'cross the sage-brush called
the scintillating bluff.

That is all about myself ('cept I'm seeing red,
Watchful-waiting for a shot to get me in the
head:

Guns are not for use, I know — that's the
“ Higher Law ”—

Down here saying “ Thank you ” when they
punch me in the jaw!)

But to-day we got some news — got it by the
grace

Of a “ Mexican ” lieutenant (Jena sword-scars
on his face!)—

Got the news from Carrizal; and we thank God
to-night

MEXICO

For Boyd, Adair and fifty coons not too proud
to fight.

Take their murdered bodies up, calk 'em from
the sun —

We let 'em die, but now, oh, my: a plot in
Arlington!

Dead-march! Cart 'em 'cross the Bridge, a
flag atop of each,

And ship one to the White House, so a man
may make a speech.

Will he see it when it goes past him in its pall?
Will he have the nerve to say anything at all?
Bet your life! The brook of words babbles
day and night —

Here's your dead, Your Excellency Still-Too-
Proud-To-Fight!

Fifty miles from Carrizal: half-past time to
die —

We don't mind the dying, but we'd like to know
the why.

If we weren't sent here to shoot (and we
weren't, it's clear),

Tell us, Mr. President, why in Hell we're here.

MEXICO

What's the use of bluffing when the Greaser's
got us right?

He's no kind of talker, but he's not too proud
to fight!

NOCTURNE

Little crescent moon,
Swaying at tiptoe on the top of yonder
bare hill,
Yellow moon
With ragged inward edge,
Weary moon,
Staggering over the hilltop,
Drunken moon:

I think you have had to regard
The nights of the world too long;
The things you have had to look at
Frightened you and sickened you;

For in the beginning
You saw your Earth beautiful,
And then you had to watch what men did
to it
And to mankind.

NOCTURNE

No wonder,
Through the shadows of your day,
You have plunged
Into some drugged pool
Among the waste
Between the flying stars;
No wonder you have gulped down death,
Little crescent moon,
Swaying at tiptoe
On the top of yonder hill.

JUSTICE

My friend the Judge is pink and fat;
A ruby gleams from his cravat;
And when a street-girl pale and thin
Tells in his court her life of sin,
He vindicates morality —
That phrase is his, and well may be! —
By listening to her sordid tale
And sending her straightway to jail:
He shakes his venerable head,
 Then shakes the prison-keys.
(*She sells her body for her bread:
 He sells his soul for ease.*)

My landlord leads a righteous life,
Providing for his child and wife
By buying cheap from who must sell
 And selling dear to who must buy;
He would not steal; he would not tell,
 Even to save himself, a lie;
But an embezzling clerk, his niece,

JUSTICE

He handed to the town police :

“ A cheat,” he said, with solemn nod.

(Yet he was given the gift of life

And squandered it for child and wife:

Has he not cheated God?)

Because twelve men convicted her,

They hanged a girl in Lancaster

Today at rise of sun,

Who killed her false love's love-child. (I.

Who in my soul have slain at birth

So many selves of promised worth,—

What murders I have done!)

THE LAW OF THE TALONS

That soap-box orator uptown
Kicks 'cause the apples all fall *down*:
I don't care what such people say,
Apples were *made* to fall that way.

Our Boss, he builds his mill foursquare
With money made I can't say where;
He offers me "The Right to Work"—
And wages? Well, he pays me just
Enough, if I don't sicken or shirk,
To keep my body from the dust.
He gives me leave to live, and I
Give him the work he lives on, which
Seems right enough; for I don't die,
And he keeps on a-getting rich.
"Small wage!" say you, and "Why so?"—
Well,
Upon my word I cannot tell.

THE LAW OF THE TALONS

Perhaps the Boss, like any man,
Pays a small wage because he can;
His money is his own, you bet!
And mine? Why, mine's what I can get!

THE MARCH OF THE HUNGRY MEN

In the dreams of your downy couches, through
the shades of your pampered sleep,
Give ear: you can hear it coming, the tide that
is steady and deep —
Give ear, for the sound is growing, from desert
and dungeon and den:
The tramp of the marching millions, the March
of the Hungry Men.

As once the lean-limbed Spartans at Locris' last
ascent,
As William's Norman legions through Sussex
meadows went,
As Wolfe assailed the mountain, as Sherman
led the way
From Fulton to Savannah — as they, and more
than they,

THE MARCH OF HUNGRY MEN

There comes another army your wit cannot
compute:

The men-at-arms self-fashioned, the man you
made the brute,

From farm and sweatshop gathered, from fac-
tory, mine and mill.

With lever and shears and auger, dibble and
drift and drill.

They bear nor sword nor rifle, yet their ladders
are on your walls,

Though the hauberk is turned to a jumper, the
jambeaux to overalls;

They come from the locomotive, the cab and
the cobbler's bench;

They are armed with the pick and the jack-
plane, the sledge and the axe and the
wrench.

And some come empty-handed with fingers
gnarled and strong,

And some come dumb with sorrow, and some
sway drunk with song;

But all that you thought were buried are stir-
ring and lithe and quick —

THE MARCH OF HUNGRY MEN

And they carry a brass-bound scepter : the brass
composing-stick.

Through the depths of the Devil's Darkness,
with the distant stars for light,

They are coming the while you slumber, and
they come with the might of Right;

On a morrow — perhaps tomorrow — you will
waken and see, and then

You will hand the keys of your cities to the
ranks of the Hungry Men.

MY BROTHER

“ And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you? ”— ST. LUKE, xii, 14.

I cannot see what many see :

 A Heaven distant from the clod ;
For I behold, not two or three,
 But all our persons in One God.

For most, the Birth 'mid portents wild,
 The cryptic Youth half-sorcerer ;
For me the unnoted, manged child,
 The manly, sweating carpenter ; —
No great detective in the skies ;
 No crafty hand that builds a snare,
And then, all powerfully wise,
 Kills me because I venture there ;
But Him of Sorrows, who forgave
 The woman taken in her sin,
Who had the human heart to save
 The sorry-painted Magdalen.

MY BROTHER

Jesus, they reverence your name —
 Before your altar bowing low —
But would their tongues have been aflame,
 These nineteen hundred years ago?
Are you their Lord, your servants those
 That for your garments would have diced?
Who wills may dread the Master's blows —
 I am your weaker brother, Christ!

A CHILD PARALYTIC

Daily her wistful face looks out
Above the sordid street,
Through all December's driven snows,
Through all the August heat —
A little captive of the slums,
Unenvious and sweet.

The other children run below,
On play or errand bent;
She looks at them from dawn to dark
With great brown eyes intent,
Breaking all shackles of the flesh
In that high tenement.

Yet he who passes day by day,
And they who minister
Beside her to the few cheap wants,
Like an awed worshipper
Wonder, before that placid brow:
“What use is life to her?”

A CHILD PARALYTIC

What use? The great and only use!
The chance to meet her fate
With folded hands and cheerful heart
And stalwart soul elate,
To crush the world 'neath stricken heel,
To suffer and to wait.

O, brave, sad smile that put to shame
My anguish of a day,
I owe you more than I can tell
And more than I can pay:
A lesson for the hour's need,
And courage for alway!

THE SEEKER

“ I, too, was born in Arcady ”;
Yet all your wise-men’s wit
Can never lead me back, and I —
Try as I do, and try and try —
Must work and wait and live and die,
Remembering and regretting it!

I see the whole world sick to be
One moment like my Arcady —
My native, loved, lost Arcady —
In these last days of Time;
And, oh, before your dull sun drops
Behind your prisoning mountaintops,
I want to shout:

“ *Come out! Come out!*
One step beyond those peaks will be
The flowered fields of Arcady;
Take heart, be brave, and climb!

“ *Just there, across the eternal snows,*
Eternal Summer buds and blows;

THE SEEKER

*Could we a little farther see,
 Could we but hear — but, oh, we can! —
There are the nymphs upon the lea;
 There — hark! — there sound the Pipes
 of Pan!
One brief ascent, and even we,
 The slaves of Time,
Shall hear and see,
Be glad and free —
 Oh, climb!”*

And then — and then I know in vain
 I plead with you, for even I
Can nevermore return again:
 I work and wait and live and die
 An exile out of Arcady,
 With nothing left but memory
Beneath your peaks of snow:
 “ I, too, was born in Arcady ”—
But that was long ago.

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL

(CONCORD, N. H.)

*“ Ea discamus in terris quorum scientia
perseveret in coelis.”*

Mother of men! The grave New Hampshire
hills

That gird thee round are not more staunch than
thou;

The token that is bound upon thy brow
Proclaims the motive that thy life fulfills.

Molder of thousand many-molding wills,
Well keepest thou the purport of thy vow:

On earth to inculcate what shall endow
Our hearts in Heaven past all carnal ills.

Far, far behind me on the glowing track
At manhood's dawn thy battlements I see,

Glowing to gold within the purple rack
Of Life's red morning, beautiful and free:

Through all the empty years my heart goes
back,

My Mother, O my Mother, back to thee!

THE SUBURBANITE

The 5:19 pulls darkly out
The train-shed, and the city-folk
Throng down the avenue above
From daily grind to nightly yoke;
They do not stop to think how I,
After the murk of working-hours,
In this dull train am going home
To rest and flowers.

Dingy and draughty coaches, yours,
Grim 5:19, once young and bold;
We both, who have been friends so long,
At last, I fear, are growing old;
But should they "take you off" ere I
Am taken off and reach my end,
I'd miss you, crusty, tardy, true,
As I should miss a valued friend.

Oh, when that other train shall bear
My outworn vesture from the shed

THE SUBURBANITE

Of work and play, from town and home —
When I, who was alive, am dead —
May I, thus darkly passing forth,
Go unregarded and unseen
To find, as now, my rest and flowers,
Old 5:19!

THE GOTHAMITE

The Spring skips lightly up Broadway
In all its old-time tinsel dight,
With lures of country fields by day
And rural lovers' lanes at night;
It whispers of the evening star
Aglow ere yet the sun goes down,
Of lyric scents and birds that are
Impossible in town.

I like the country well enough,
But not enough to venture there;
New York has lanes to spare for love,
And grass is green in Union Square.
Against the glowing evening star
No criticism have I heard —
But then the lights are brighter far
From Thirty-fifth to Fifty-third.

While human nightingales are free
In spotlight and Parisian gown,

THE GOTHAMITE

Not all the feathered birds that be
Can tempt my taxi out of town.

I love the scented April rains

In field and fen aflush for May;

But Spring, though sweet in wooded lanes,

Is sweeter on Broadway.

RETURN

"The city for the winter!" Back from play,
Fagged by the evanescent gilt-and-white
Of your false summer-town in tinsel dight
That mimics freedom in a landlocked bay:
*"The city for the winter — crowded way
Where Progress builds his walls to Babel-
height."*

Defiant day stares at auriferous night,
And night, the profligate, deflowers day!
No town for me! Give me the untrodden
shore

Of rending seas — give me the winter-wood —
Nature in arctic anger — she whose lust
Of torture thwarts your toil forevermore,
Who set a desert where Tyre's towers stood
And shall endure when all your towns are dust.

WAR

“ Encore une fois, je n'aime point la guerre; mais quand on est obligé de la faire, il ne faut pas se battre mollement. ”— VOLTAIRE: *Correspondance, Générale.*

1916

I'm walking down a street I know,
A pretty nurse to steer me —
At least they say she's pretty — and
Just hear the people cheer me;
I've a medal on my uniform:
It seems so good I'd doubt it,
If I couldn't feel it dangling there
And hear the people shout it:

*“ Why, you're blind — blind — blind!
Won't you come and tell your story?
It's for us you suffered blindness —
Here's the People's grateful kindness:
This beribboned decoration
Shouts the thanks of all the nation.
You gave more than life to save us*

WAR

*From the foes that would enslave us!
Do you think we can forget it?
No, you never will regret it!
This is honor; this is glory!"—*
So they shout it down the wind —
*"Won't you come and tell your story?
Tell us how you won the glory
That so many fail to find:
How Our Hero won the glory
Of The Blind?"*

So I tell them of our icy nights
And days in dead-heaped trenches;
I tell them of our woundeds' shrieks,
Our filthy bodies' stenches;
I tell them of the bursting shells
That deafened half who heard them;
Of men made mad by horrors that —
I haven't words to word them!
I tell them how my only friend
Before our trench was potted,
And how I had to sit for days
And watch him while he rotted;
Of gas that strangled hundreds here,
Flung-flames that there shamed thunder;
Of spikes that dropped from flying-craft

WAR

And tore men's heads asunder;
Of how the worst was sitting still
 With every second's fraction
An hour long, till veterans screamed
 In terror from inaction;
Of death — and how we longed for death
 To ease that bloody slavery;
But how our hearts were brave because
 Our Country needed bravery;
 And how at last — at that long last —
 Before I'd had two tries
 To use my gun, a belch of flame
 Burst — and burnt out my eyes. . . .

They've crowded 'round and crowded close
 And sworn and shoved to hear me,
And, now I've done,
You'd think I'd won
 The war, the way they cheer me:

*“ Hero blind — blind — blind;
 All the land shall learn your story!
 Nor your wife nor child shall per-
 ish —
 Them we'll care for, you we'll cher-
 ish.*

WAR

*Though you see not, yet our praise
You shall hear through all your days!
On our memories we'll burn it;
Every childish lip shall learn it."*—

"Bless my baby for me, Mister?"

*(So I've bent and felt and kissed
her.)—*

"Let me cut that button yellow?"—

*"Let me shake your hand, brave fel-
low!"—*

"Do you think we can forget it?"

No, you never will regret it!

You have earned our best oblation:

*You, who've helped to save the na-
tion!"*

This is honor; this glory
More than I had hoped to find:
This reward for my poor story.
And the price I paid for glory,
For the kindness of my kind,
It is small: this care and glory
Cheaply bought by being blind!

WAR

1936

Yes, here's the accustomed place at last —

My dog's pause tells me that —
This is the trench that I must guard
For coppers in my hat.

(Pity the Blind!

Be kind! Be kind!)

My wife? I'm almost glad she's dead!

(Was that approaching feet?)

And now, instead of me, it is

My child that walks the street:

(Be kind — be kind!

Pity the blind!)

A beggar's daughter hasn't much

To keep her clean and sweet.

I ask them if they please won't stop

(Pity the blind!

Be kind; be kind!)

And hear the things I've seen,

And how I came to this by fire,

A soldier in '16 —

And then I hear them turn and go,

And, from a muttered curse or so,

I know these are their thoughts — I know:

“ Beggar blind — blind — blind!

WAR

*Who has time to hear your story?
It is old, and we have heard it
Till we know it word for word, it
Is but one of legions, massing
With each hurried year that's pass-
ing.*

*Money? Press the softer pedal!
Why not go and pawn your medal?
(Though, of course, there's such a
plenty,*

*'Twouldn't bring much, after twenty
Years of soldiers dead or poorer
Every year — there's nothing surer.)
Wounded, were you, for the Nation?
Well, it gave that decoration.*

*Pensions? What, for deeds long
dead?*

· The Public has to look ahead!"

So they shout it down the wind!

This is honor; this is glory;

This is how I end my story:

On a curb-stone in the muck —

They that died had all the luck.

Scarcely what I hoped to find!

If the chance returned, why, then —

No, I'd do it all again!

WAR

Just repeat the same life-story,
Minus pension, minus glory,
And the kindness of my kind.
Being that sort, who wants a story?
Being a soldier, who wants glory
That so many fail to find?
No, I never *looked for glory!* —
(*Pity the Blind!*).

LUPERCALIA

Roisterers, vagabonds forever free,
Mendicants, blacksheep, hybrids — what you
please —

We makers of the merry melodies,
Great Pan, we make our only prayer to thee.
For thee alone our canticles will be —
To thee, for thine Arcadian heartsease,
We sing thy nymphs beneath Lycæan trees
Till all their pulses thrill in harmony.
Wanderers all, to thee we wander far,
And vow our hymns the Syrinx of thy nod,
Holding thine ill-begotten features fair,
Because thou only, knowing what we are,
Beneath the brute wilt find the hidden god,
Beneath the sneer wilt read the great despair.

ROMANCE

Oh, she's just around the corner, and she's just
beyond this street,
And she's just across that hilltop over there!
Can't you see the last glad glimmer of her ever-
flying feet,
Can't you smell the luring perfume of her
hair?

She is always just beyond you, always singing
down the wind
With a breath that's raped from roses and a
voice that's like a spell:
Singing, singing — can't you hear her? —
Singing: "*Come a little nearer!*
Follow, oh, so little faster; I am losing; come
and find!
I am all the dreams you never dared to tell!

"*I am youth and I am gladness; I'm adventure*
and I'm love;

ROMANCE

*I am flowers in the forest when the planets
are atune;*

*I am all those golden chances daily work was
heedless of;*

I am final; I am fatal; I am June!"

When the grinding tasks are dullest, and the
world is grey routine,

You can see her if you'll only raise your
head;

When the ledgers will not balance, or the firm-
est stocks careen,

She is calling from the latest breeze that
sped:

*"Come and find me, come and bind me, come
and loose and fare with me;*

*All I ask is that you cast all else away with-
out regret;*

Though you sacrifice to capture,

I am roses, I am rapture;

*I will take you dancing — dancing — through
the farthest fairy sea;*

I will teach you all the visions you forget!"

ROMANCE

Follow, follow 'round the corner; hurry on be-
yond the street;

Run to climb that highest hilltop over there:
Though she slays you when you find her, there
is nothing half so sweet

As to strangle in the meshes of her hair!

TIME'S REVENGES

The portraits hung together there
Beside the old door's architrave:
A little girl with yellow hair,
A beldam tottering to her grave.

“Grandmother and grandchild?” I said.
Without a change of glance or tone,
My cicerone shook his head:
“The child was mother to the crone.”

TROIA FUT!

The world was wide when I was young
My schoolday hills and dales among;
But, oh, it needs no Puck to put,
With whipping wing and flying foot,
A girdle round the narrow sphere
In which I labor now and here!

Life's face was fair when careless I
First loved beneath an April sky,
And wept those fine-imagined woes
That Youth at nineteen thinks it knows;
Now love and woe both run so deep
I have not any time to weep.

“ Ah, well! Although at last we see
That what was could not always be,
It binds our loins and steels our hands
In duller days and smaller lands
To recollect the country where
The world was wide and life was fair.



THE NINETY MILLIONS

(A Song of Thanksgiving)

This day for thanks to God on high, borne up-
ward through the chilly air!

Here, underneath the scudding sky, the Ninety
Millions kneel in prayer.

For all we lose, for all we gain, for all we flout
and all we prize,

Accept, O God, our humble, vain, but not un-
worthy, sacrifice!

The olden order still endures: the strong are
strong, the feeble spent,

As if the enabling-act were Yours, Wrong sits
enthroned, omnipotent;

One sins and many must atone; the thief is in
his high estate;

Who begs for bread receives a stone, and love
has learned the words of hate.

And yet we thank You, Lord, because of that
immutable decree

THE NINETY MILLIONS

Which wrote the universal laws and whispered
to man's mind: "Be Free!"
Because You granted him the will to fight until
his final breath,
To suffer and to bear, until Hope's smile en-
wreathes the lips of Death.

For the ideals that wing our feet throughout
the chaos and the night,
For the high heart that in defeat throbs only
to renew the fight,
For the new chance to try again, the onward
flag, the unbroken ranks,
Accept, O God, our humble, vain, but not un-
worthy, meed of thanks.

“ AND THERE WERE
SHEPHERDS ”

The night was calm, the night was clear,
The unexpectant night was cold;
The earth was ruled by hate and fear,
The earth was sad and mad and old;
And Herod in his palace pent,
Augustus at his apogee:
The song? They knew not what it meant!
A promise-star? They could not see!

But far upon Judean farms
The farmfolk watched their herds by night,
Beyond Herodian alarms,
Beyond Augustan thirst for might,
And heard and saw, with quick release
Of angels down the purple way,
The song that sang the Prince of Peace,
The star that pointed where He lay.

Not to an emperor in Rome
Or king in brown Jerusalem,

“ AND THERE WERE SHEPHERDS ”

Did any word of it come home;
Not to the lordlings — not to them:
The night-wind bore no anodyne
For ears too dull, for eyes too dim;
Only the wise-men saw the sign,
Only the farmfolk heard the hymn.

Tonight the air is calm and clear,
The unexpectant earth is sad
With hate and war; with blood and fear
The emperors and kings are mad: —
The farmfolk and the wise-men are
The wise-men; ere the midnight cease
They hail aright, aglow, afar,
The Herald Angels and the star
That point the open path to Peace.

EASTER — 1917

"He Descended Into Hell"

Hope there was none; it had fled at the word
of the witnessing eye;
The man they had thought God was dead: from
afar they had watched him die.
God? They had seen him scourged, with the
eyes of the flesh they had seen;
Even she he forgave and purged knew it, the
Magdalene;
And even his mother, the first to feel faith's
flame astir,
Knew that the lips she had nursed were sealed
in a sepulchre:
The God-that-was-man that night had gone
where a dead man goes —
*And then, with the morning light, the Man
That Was God arose!*

Thus is the story told the weary ages through,
For no man's faith is cold whose need keeps
the legend new,

EASTER — 1917

And the world that is growing old needs it
and makes it true.

Each weaves his plans alone — and they part
like a sand-made rope,
And this is all that we own at the last: this
single hope.

“ Is the fair fruit rotten at core? Does God
but tease us and lie? ”

Is the love that is life no more than death
that is death and must die?

The glacier still deceives to the mouth of the
black crevasse,

But if each in his heart believes, then all at the
end shall pass;

Doubt that forever hates kills and is done
with you:

Faith, which is life, creates and will make
what it knows come true!

But sadder today than sad are the great of
the world and the least:

Just as we thought we had risen above the
beast,

Comes — from where what matter? — and
strikes, like another Thor

EASTER — 1917

With his hammer strong to shatter, the blood-
red devil, War.

The thousands in battles are slain, the millions
suffer and wait,

The world in an iron rain is a ruin of madness
and hate.

A thief unrepentant in pride, for whose gar-
ments his lusts have diced,

Himself has man crucified, and with him re-
crucified Christ.

He shall be sealed in the tomb (room there is
always there!)

Of malice and (still there is room) descend to
the Hell of Despair.

Hope there is none; it has fled from the
sound of the cannons' cry;

What was godlike in man, is dead; it is dead.

We have seen it die;

There is no hope at all, no token of life
astir;

Cover its face with the pall, fasten the
sepulchre. . . .

EASTER — 1917

No! For Faith is alive, even here for a world
made new,

For man's rebirth to strive, to hope till the
hope comes true!

“Is the fair fruit rotten at core — does God
but cheat us and lie?”

Is Faith that is Life no more than Death that is
Death and must die?

Doubt that forever hates has killed, and its
worst is said;

Faith, which is life, creates, and is ready to
raise the dead.

The godlike in man: was it vain — has it gone
where a dead weed goes?

Though that and Christ be slain, Faith knows
that Christ arose!

There is the story told the weary ages through,
And the world that has grown so old, needing
it, makes it true:

*At the depth of the Night a pause, a glory
that blinds our eyes —*

*Christ shall rerise because Man, still divine,
shall arise!*

THE GREAT ADVENTURE

How I have loved all life! The sky where
our first hope lingers,
Woodland and field and river, cañon and
mountain-peak;
The clamoring, crowded city, the tide of the
clutching fingers,
The War of the World, the triumph of vigor,
the cry of the weak!

Life was recurring wonder: the wine-glass full
of adventure,
Love was at every turning, labor a red ro-
mance;
All of it beautiful, potent beyond our poor
praise or blind censure;
And never a half-step backward, but ever a
stride in advance.

What if the faithless taunt me? I shall reply:
No matter;
It is enough to have lived here even a breath-
ing-space!

THE GREAT ADVENTURE

“Death is the last forgetting?”— Bah! I
am sick of your chatter;
Only to love life wholly: that is to see God’s
face!

THE WASTREL

Once, when I was little, as the summer night
was falling,
Along the purple upland fields I lost my bare-
foot way;
The road to home had disappeared, and fright-
ful shadows, crawling
Along the sky-line, swallowed up the linger-
ing light of day;
And then I seemed to hear you
In the twilight, and be near you;
Seemed to hear your dear voice calling —
Through the meadows, calling, calling —
And I followed, and I found you,
Flung my tired arms around you,
And rested on the mother-breast, returned,
tired out from play.

Down the days from that day, though I trod
strange paths unheeding,
Though I chased the jack-o'-lanterns of so
many maddened years,

THE WASTREL

Though I never looked behind me, where the
home-lights were receding,
Though I never looked ahead enough to ken
the Inn of Fears;
Still I knew your heart was near me,
That your ear was strained to hear me,
That your love would ask no pleading
For forgiveness, but was pleading
Of itself that, in disaster,
I should run to you the faster
And be sure that I was dearer for your sacri-
fice of tears.

Now on life's last Summertime the long last
dusk is falling,
And I, who trod one way so long, can tread
no other way
Until at death's dim crossroads I watch, hesi-
tant, the crawling
Night-passages that maze me with the ulti-
mate dismay.
Then, when Death and Doubt shall
bind me —
Even then — I know you'll find me:
I shall hear you, Mother, calling —
Hear you calling — calling — calling:

THE WASTREL

I shall fight and follow — find you,
Though the grave-clothes swathe and
bind you,

And I know your love will answer: “ Here’s
my laddie home from play! ”

THE SON OF JOEL

The poet is a beggar blind,
Who sings beside the city gate,
The while the busy people wind
Their daily way less fortunate.

The many pass with arrant speed;
The few remember this or that;
Some hear and jeer, some stop and heed,
And some drop pennies in his hat. . . .

O, you that pause and understand,
Though I may never know your face,
Across the years I touch your hand;
I kiss you through the leagues of space!

THE END



442256

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