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*The Torch-Bearers*

*Arlo Bates*

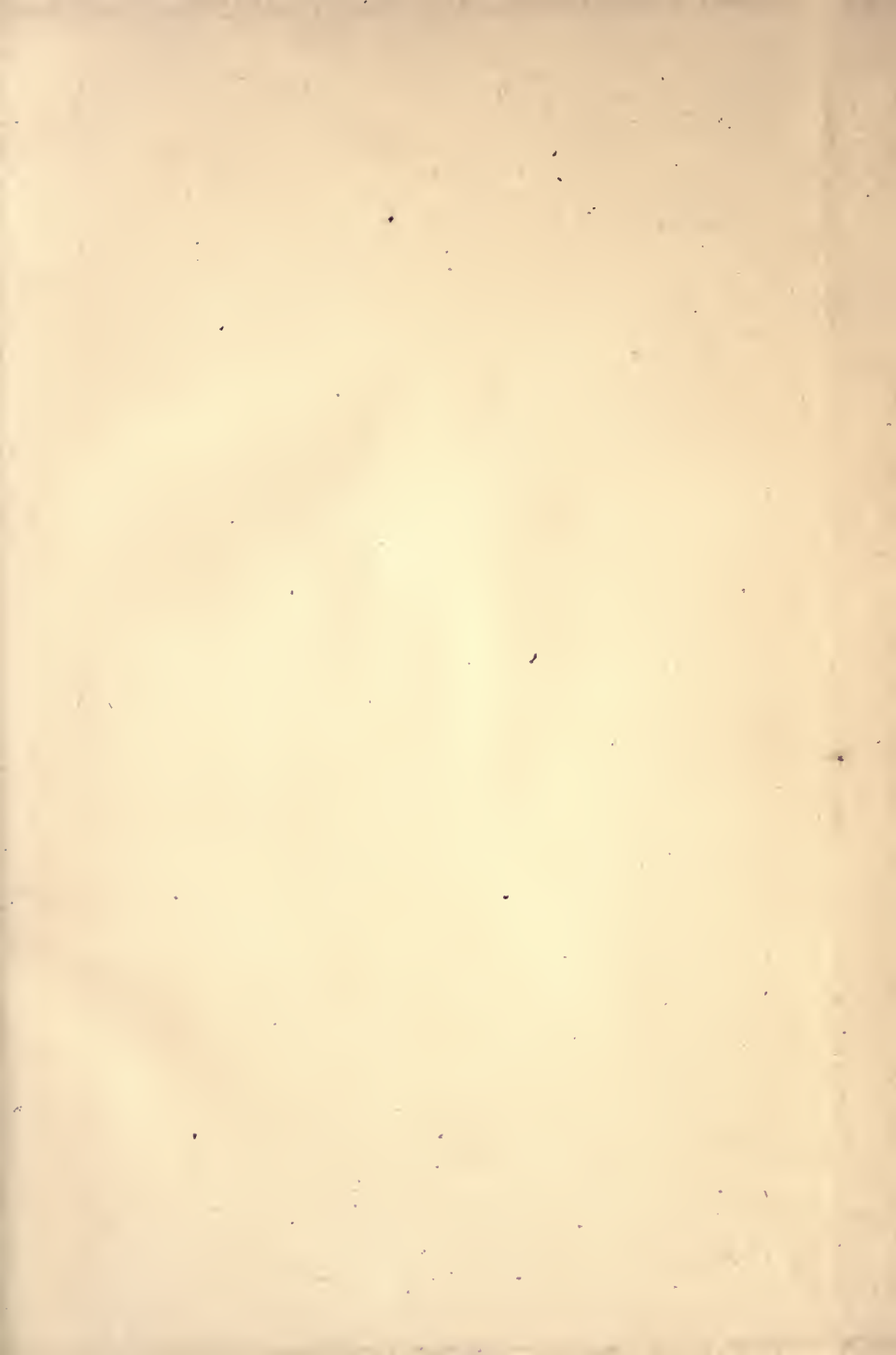
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ROBERTS BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS.

THE  
TORCH-BEARERS

ARLO BATES

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**O**NCE in this place I saw a poet stand,  
In all the dignity of age, with hair  
White as the foam on Androscoggin's falls ;  
And heard his silver voice over the hush  
More eloquent than noisy plaudits say :  
" O Cæsar, we who are about to die  
Salute you !" While all those who listened knew  
Fame had so crowned him that he still would live  
When death had done its worst. To-day the grace  
Lies in the high occasion, not the lay.  
To-day we mark the rounded century,  
And pause to say : " Our fathers have done well ;  
Let us take counsel what their sons may do."

At such a time, in such a place as this ;  
Here, where a melancholy whisper comes  
From the thin breezes yearning toward sea ;  
Where wistful sighs of long remembrance stir  
The bosom of the ever-murmuring pines ;

*Here, where a thousand varied memories  
Rise up to waken pride or touch regret ;  
Where our lost youth lies wait and peers at us  
As if some dryad shy peeped from her tree ;  
What word is fitting here and fitting now ?*

*We find our hearts too full for lightsome speech.  
The burden of the century which ends,  
The burden of the ending century,  
Together weigh upon us, and incite  
To thoughts of grave and deep solemnity.  
The empty babble of things idly said  
By lip alone were insult to the time.  
Not for a day like this are gleeful song  
And amorous lay, — melodious nightingales  
Fluting enchantment to the southern moon ;  
Gay mockery of life, like dancing foam  
Flashing and crackling at the wine-cup's brim.  
Not for a day like this regretful plaint  
For all that has been, but, alas ! is not.  
Jocund bravado of high-thoughted youth*



*And bitterness of grief-acquainted age  
Alike would jar. For, lo, here Duty waits  
With finger on her lip, unsmiling, stern, —  
And yet with eyes of passionate desire  
Which yearn for that which is beyond all speech ;  
Her mien austere, and yet her lofty look  
An inspiration and a benison.*

*It is in Duty's name that one must speak,  
Or let the silence prove more eloquent.*



## THE TORCH-BEARERS

---

### I

ONCE on a night so dark it might have been  
Ere God had yet commanded: "Be there  
light!"

When all the spirits of the dread unseen

Had burst their bonds, and joined rebellious fight,  
I stood among the fisher-folk, and heard

The innumerable tumult of the storm sweep down,  
Till the earth quivered, and the sea seemed stirred  
To its remotest deeps, where they who drown  
Sleep calm in water still as lucent stone.

The wind and wave were all commingled. Sea  
And air were one. The beaten surf was blown  
Like sand against our faces; mockingly  
A million voices clamored in the dark,  
Deriding human might. They who upheld

The flaring torches stood there gaunt and stark,  
And fought for breath; while yet they stood un-  
quelled, —  
For there were boats at sea.

A woman lay  
Face down along the sand, her brown hands clenched,  
Her hair mixed with the drifted weed, while spray  
And rain and icy sleet her garments drenched  
And froze her as she lay and writhed. Her love  
Was in the boats. His mother at her head  
Crouched with white locks storm-torn; while bright  
above  
The red glare by the flaring torches shed  
Fell on white faces, wild with fear and pain,  
Peering with eyes hand-shaded at the night  
In vain endeavor some faint hope to gain.  
But the black wall of darkness beat the light  
Backward as from a block of ebony.

The spume and spray like snow-flakes whirling flew  
Where the torch-bearers stood, half in the sea;  
From every torch the flakes of red flame blew  
Backward, as float the blood-stained tufts of down  
Torn by an arrow from a fleeing bird.

The wind beat down the flame, the rain would drown ;  
Almost it seemed shrill voices might be heard  
Crying against the beacon set to guide  
The tempest's prey to safety. "Quench it!  
Quench !"

The voices clamored ; while the angry tide  
Leaped on the bearers to drag down and drench  
The saving flame. Yet none the less they held  
Their bright, wind-beaten torches high  
Amid the storm, and as it fiercer swelled  
Flung out defiant hope to sea and sky.

## II

Like those brave torch-bearers around whom foam  
And wind-blown spray flew blindingly, to-day  
Stands man upon these shores, refuge and home  
Of Liberty, who fled in sore dismay  
Across the seas, escaping lash and chain, —  
The nameless tortures of the sullen East,  
Where souls are thrown like dice and manhood  
slain ; —  
The tyrannies of Europe, rack of priest  
And knout of Tzar, the dungeon and the spy ; —  
The cunning craft of Bismarks, gluing up



With blood an empire ; — the infuriate cry  
Of France, drunk both with blood and pleasure's  
cup ; —  
England's supreme brutality, which leaps  
To strike each weak, defenceless land, and leaves  
Her bravest sons to die unsuccored ; keeps  
Ireland in chains beneath her feet, and weaves  
A net of tyrannies around the earth  
Until the sun can never on them set.

Such things have been. Alas for man when birth  
Means slavery !

Her snowy shoulders wet  
With unstaunched blood, torn by the biting lash ;  
Her wrists scarred with the gyves ; her pleading eyes  
Piteous in wild entreaty ; bruise and gash  
On her fair brow, — fled Liberty, with cries  
Which startled to the stars with piercing dread.  
Daring to draw our daily breath like men,  
To walk beneath the sky with lifted head,  
How should we know man's degradation when  
His every heartbeat slackens with the fear  
Of lash and chain, — life's meaning to the slave ?  
It was from this fled Liberty, and here  
She finds a refuge or she finds a grave.

For, O America, our country! Land  
Hid in the west through centuries, till men  
Through countless tyrannies could understand  
The priceless worth of freedom, — once again  
The world was new-created when thy shore  
First knew the Pilgrim keels; that one last test  
The race might make of manhood, nor give o'er  
The strife with evil till it proved its best.  
Thy true sons stand as torch-bearers, to hold  
A guiding light. Here the last stand is made.  
If we fail here, what new Columbus bold,  
Steering brave prow through black seas unafraid,  
Finds out a fresh land where man may abide  
And freedom yet be saved? The whole round earth  
Has seen the battle fought. Where shall men hide  
From tyranny and wrong, where life have worth,  
If here the cause succumb? If greed of gold  
Or lust of power or falsehood triumph here,  
The race is lost! A globe dispeopled, cold,  
Rolled down the void a voiceless, lifeless sphere,  
Were not so stamped by all which hope debars  
As were this earth, plunging along through space  
Conquered by evil, shamed among the stars,  
Bearing a base, enslaved, dishonored race!

Here has the battle its last vantage ground ;  
Here all is won or here must all be lost ;  
Here freedom's trumpets one last rally sound ;  
Here to the breeze its blood-stained flag is tossed.  
America, last hope of man and truth,  
Thy name must through all coming ages be  
The badge unspeakable of shame and ruth,  
Or glorious pledge that man through truth is free.  
This is thy destiny ; the choice is thine  
To lead all nations and outshine them all ; —  
But if thou failest, deeper shame is thine,  
And none shall spare to mock thee in thy fall.

## III

As when an avalanche among the hills  
Shakes to their very base the mountains hoar  
And with a din of vibrant voices fills  
All air and sky, there answer to its roar  
A hundred empty echoes, poor and thin,  
So words come after deeds ; so must words stand  
For all that men hold holiest, all they win  
By might of soul no less than strength of hand.

What generations desperately brave  
Have fought through war and woe, through doubt  
and pain,  
To break the bonds which make of man a slave ;  
How poor are words to gather up their gain !

We hear with even, hardly quickened breath  
Or one poor thrill, freedom's supernal name ;  
The word our fathers cried in blood and death  
Leaves but a dying echo, weak and tame.  
We read the patriots' roll with hearts unmoved,  
And count their deeds as old wives' tales grown  
stale ;  
The glorious fields in which their worth was proved  
Grow thick with grass ; heroic memories fail.

O men, sons of the world's one land left free,  
What shall bring home to you the mighty truth, —  
The burden of your sacred destiny,  
The office which is yours in very sooth ?  
What word will make you feel that you must stand  
Like those torch-bearers in the night and storm ?  
That mankind struggles desperate toward land, —  
Lost, if your beacon-light do not inform

Their tempest-blinded eyes? Not yours to sit,  
Sheltered and warm, and hear the gale sweep by  
Unheeded. Let the blazing torch be lit,  
And stand like heroes where the surf is high!  
The night roars round us as if tempests cleft  
The solid earth and made the heavens bow;  
If now the torches fail, what hope is left, —  
For never was more need of aid than now?

## IV

Yet not alone from base indifference  
Do her sons fail the land in her sore need.  
Easy it were to arm in her defence,  
And on the splendid fields of glory bleed.  
The land lacks not sons at her call would die, —  
It is a harder task for her to live!  
And who may say which way duty doth lie?  
Who tell what aid we to our land may give?  
Lo! like the thunders by a prophet heard  
Telling the things which future days shall see,  
Far down the ages rolls the mighty word,  
The voice of God: "The Truth shall make you  
free!"



The Truth! Not now we fight with sword and lance,  
Nor yet with eager bullet swift for prey;  
Strife is not fiercest now where foes advance  
In ranks embattled, in mad zeal to slay.  
Thus have men fought of old, and thus while life  
Is made a pawn in the great game of fate  
Men may fight on; but keener is the strife  
Where bloodless triumphs upon victory wait.

When first rude savage brutes — but half aware  
That they were men; feeling their doubtful way  
To reason and to manhood, — chose some lair  
Where crouched and huddled like wild wolves they  
lay,  
They made him chief who beat them down and broke  
Their pride with fear; — but if he did them wrong,  
If he betrayed, their sullen rage awoke;  
And stealing on him stretched in sleep along,  
They slew him, — doing sacrifice to truth  
By very treachery, in guiltless crime.

Oblivion-lost, dull generations, youth  
And age melted together in the lapse of time,

Sped from the womb swift-footed to the tomb ;  
And learned of life and love a little, learned  
Of death and hate how much ! From out the gloom  
Of those dim centuries, long since returned  
To chaos whence they came, whatever gleam  
Of light glances to sight is but the flare  
Of sword or lance ; or, if a brighter beam  
Leap up a moment, 't is the dancing glare  
Of blazing town, or pyre where in flame  
Some warrior goes in fire to claim reward  
For hardihood in battle. What was fame  
But echo from the din of fight ? Abhorred  
Was he who dared name peace. All history  
Is writ in blood and stained with battle-smoke ;  
While still that word : " THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE  
YOU FREE ! "  
Uncomprehended, down the ages spoke.

## V

But what is truth ? Wise sages long inured  
And countless generations craved it still  
With unavailing passion, faith which yearned  
In ecstasies of hope, and ardent will

Which stormed high heaven and groped in utmost  
deep.

Since time's first day the history of man  
Has been this quest; and yet of all who sleep  
In graves unnumbered how few won to scan  
The open secret blazoned all around!

What far lands have been searched, what battles  
fought,  
What stress of soul endured; yet men have found  
It not! And found it not because they sought  
For that which is not; thinking truth a thing,  
Cold concrete fact, their very hands might touch,  
To which their weakness, their despair might cling.

How could they know the truth, deeming it such?  
How many ages needed man to learn  
That that which changeless is may changeful show!  
Alters the spherèd moon, although it turn  
With varying phases to our eyes below?  
Truth is not brought from far; it comes not fair  
Like delvèd gold drudged darkling from the mine;  
It breathes about us like the morning air;  
For every eye its quenchless glories shine.

Wide as the light, truth is not formal creed,  
Or fact or law or theory ; it takes  
A thousand shapes protean, now in deed  
And now in doctrine, like a wave which breaks  
Forever on the jagged rocks, and yet  
Is never twice the same. A passing word  
Holds it a moment, as a jewel set  
In a king's signet if his hand be stirred  
Kindles with sudden light then darkens straight ; —  
So with the word upon the very tongue  
Sudden 't is false. Truth's trumpet tones elate  
Awake to deeds such as the bards have sung, —  
Then ere their echoes die the clear notes jar,  
And harshest discords crash upon the ear ;  
Till that which has been truth from truth is far,  
And they who fought in faith shrink back in fear.

How many noble souls in ages old  
Have given life itself to testify  
That that was true which now as false we hold ;  
Faiths which to-day discarded, trampled lie  
Have been the war-cry thrilling hearts austere ;  
Legions have rushed their triumph to achieve,  
And with their blood have written crimson-clear  
Upon a hundred fields : " This we believe ! "

From fallen truth to truth shall fall the race  
Goes ever forward. What to-day is true  
To-morrow will be false, and in its place  
New creeds as frail will live their short day through.  
Like bubbles on a flood, brief as a breath,  
Yet telling how the stream flows ceaselessly,  
Truth's brave illusions have their birth and death,  
Immutable in mutability.  
For truth is as a ray of light let fall  
Upon the sea, — for every wavelet bright  
A different beam; the same for all  
And yet diverse in every mortal's sight.  
It were as easy for a babe to reach  
And gather up the sunshine on the floor  
As to enchain elusive truth in speech, —  
Though changeless yet evasive evermore.

## VI

Who then shall know truth? Who the glory claims  
To feel his being kindle with its fire?  
How amid falsehood's thousand dancing flames  
Know the pure spark of man's supreme desire?



Stand with thyself alone. Let mankind be  
As if it were not. Question then thy soul:  
“Say now what thou believest?” That for thee  
Is truth the ultimate. The hoar stars roll  
No surer in their orbits, firmly stayed  
By unseen bonds of elemental force,  
Than man’s inmost integrity is swayed  
By that which is of verity the source.

Eons through space and through eternity  
The universe sweeps forward on its way ; —  
Whence, who shall say? While whither utterly  
Is hid from knowledge as night hides the day.  
Yet all men feel the current of its tide ;  
We know the push of unseen hands behind.  
Man’s earliest conscious thought barbaric tried  
With groping speech a name for this to find,  
And called it God or destiny or fate ;  
Weighing assurance by the weight of doubt ;  
Greater in faith because of fear more great ;  
Believing most what least man might search out.  
To-day Doubt, with her sneering, chilling smile, —  
She who destroys all faiths which time hath spared

As the weird sphinx with her entangling guile  
Devoured them whom her riddle had ensnared ;  
Doubt, who with her destructive finger breaks  
Each gleaming bubble of fair fancy frail,  
And of its iridescent beauty makes  
A drop discolored, — laughs to scorn the tale  
Of other days as fable void and vain.  
Only one thing remains she may not reach ;  
One thing which man can never doubt, though slain  
All other verities the ages teach.  
Conviction moves us still. What man believes  
We reverence, whether we his faith may share  
Or wonder how some wile his faith deceives.  
We feel the truth, beyond all aware  
That truth lies in sincerity, though shame  
And ignorance have bred and folly mean, —  
As fire is pure although its lambent flame  
Feed on heaped foulness, festering and obscene.

On this rests all the faith of man in man ;  
All brotherhood, all knowledge and all hope.  
On this rests love. All human dealing scan,  
Nor find the limits of its gracious scope !

Why is the martyr's name the highest crown  
Which man may win, save that it proves him true  
To that which speaks within? Lo, up and down  
The wide, cold earth their influences renew  
Courage and faith, till all true men thereat  
Are steadfast in their turn, aroused thereby; —  
Not for the thing which they believed, but that  
They did believe, and dared for this to die!

See where a broken host, desperate and torn,  
Reddened with blood as with the sunset's glow,  
Sweeps down the field in one last charge forlorn,  
Knowing their cause is lost, yet choosing so  
To fling their lives up in the face of fate, —  
Too resolute to fear, too great to grieve, —  
Exultant thus their death to dedicate  
To that which they through life might not achieve.  
And all mankind shall honor them, — yea, all!  
Though they fight in an evil cause, they fight  
For truth who hold conviction firm; and fall  
Martyrs for truth, and children of the light.

There was a morn when all Rome stood aghast.  
Riven with a thunder-bolt from Jove on high

Yawned in the forum a chasm deep and vast  
As hell itself might at the bottom lie.

Tumultuous terror through the city sped.

Mothers their babies clasped, and maids as pale  
As lilies lightning-seared, fear-smitten fled

Up to the pillared temples, with wild wail  
Crying to the immortal gods for aid.

Men whose undaunted might Rome boasted, now  
Were weak as cowards, trembling and afraid.

The priests with smoking sacrifice and vow  
Of hecatombs to the vexed deities

Strove to assuage heaven's wrath; until at last  
The sullen oracle what would appease

Indignant Jove proclaimed: "Let there be cast  
Into the gaping depth Rome's choicest thing."

Then rode young Mettus Curtius to the brink,  
And reined his curd-white horse in act to spring.

"Lo, here," he cried; "can hoary wisdom think  
Of aught in Rome more choice, to Rome more dear,

More precious in the sight of gods and men  
Than Rome's young manhood?"

Down the chasm sheer

He leaped to death and glory; and again  
The rifted forum trembled, while as wave

Whelms into wave, the abyss shuddering closed,  
Gulfing with greedy maw the dauntless brave,  
Forever deathless there in death reposed.  
We count his faith but folly ; yet every heart  
Still at his deed must thrill, because he died  
For that which he believed, and stands apart  
By that supreme devotion sanctified.

Woe were it mole-blind man if truth for him  
Meant vision piercing down eternity,  
Solving creation's riddles far and dim,  
The secret of infinity to see.  
We scan the countless errors of the past  
And know them false, yet these were very proof  
Of mankind's truth. Brave hearts have held them fast,  
And given life itself in their behoof.  
Even at the very mouth of error's den  
Will singleness of soul build truth a shrine ;  
Truth's lily flowers, star-white, in falsehood's fen ;  
Sincerity makes even doubt divine.

See where Niagara majestic pours  
Its flood stupendous down the precipice,

And from its thousand throats Titanic roars  
Shoutings which quiver through the wide abyss. —  
Seek not truth's image there ; but look below  
Where wild the whirling, seething Rapids rush,  
Striving in wrath and tumult to and fro,  
Wave smiting wave as rocks together crush,  
Force battling force in Nature's feud supreme,  
Confusion infinite, uncurbable ; —  
While underneath the turmoil still the stream  
Makes ever seaward ; undisturbable  
The law which urges on. Each jarring wave,  
Each boiling whirlpool, while it seems to stay,  
Yet helps the river onward ; floods that rave,  
Current and eddy, all one law obey.  
Thus truth goes forward. Every thought sincere,  
Conviction's every word and every deed, —  
Although they seem to hinder, and appear  
As counter-currents, — every passing creed,  
Each noble error where the soul is true  
Though human weakness blind poor human sight, —  
Helps the truth onward. Be our glimpses few  
Of that great tide which to some ocean bright  
Flows on forever ; be its surface vexed  
With turmoils infinite ; hidden by spray

And foam and spume ; its channels all perplexed, —  
Yet be thou sure nothing its course can stay.

What man believes is truth. To this alone  
The ages cling. The greedy hand of time  
Steals all but this. From origin unknown  
To destiny unknown moves man, sublime  
In this alone, that he forever dwells,  
If so he will, with inmost being lit  
By truth's clear light divine, which ever wells  
From the deep glories of the infinite.

## VII

Such then is truth, and truth shall make man free.

Strong is that land whose every son is true  
To the clear flame of his integrity.  
Strong any land, though armèd guards be few,  
Poor her defences, weak her armament,  
Whose sons no higher good than truth conceive ;  
But, each in his own sphere, remain unbent,  
Unswerved from that which they at heart believe.



Mighty that nation, bless'd among the lands,  
Whose sons think first of country, last of self; —  
Woe were a state where men stretch greedy hands  
Grasping for place, and palms that itch for pelf;  
Whose senates have become a market-place  
Where laws are to the highest bidder sold;  
Where only honesty secures disgrace,  
And honor has no measure save hard gold;  
Where parties claim the people's sufferance  
Not for their virtue but for foe's misdeed;  
Where public trusts from shame to shame advance,  
And faction vies with faction in its greed;  
Where pledges are like balls which jugglers toss;  
Where no abuse of place can pass belief;  
Where patriotism means — profit and loss;  
And one scarce knows a statesman from a thief!

Shall our land come to this? Is such the end  
Of all our fathers' loss and toil divine?  
Their burning hope, their faith which could transcend  
All doubt and present agony; resign  
All that the flesh holds dear, counting it naught  
If thus they might to their own souls be true;

If thus new freedom for the race be bought ;  
 And truth its mighty kingdom here renew ?  
 Shall our land ever come to this, — our state,  
 The last hope of mankind ? Shall it betray  
 The high trust of its destiny, — ingrate,  
 The mock of all the earth, shame of the day,  
 Stained with disgrace too deep for night to hide ?  
 Shall our loud-sounding boasts of freedom, made  
 To all the globe ; the vows of swelling pride  
 Flung in the face of man and heaven, fade  
 Like wreaths of smoke ?

Forbid it all the roll  
 Of patriots who have died to make us free ;  
 Forbid it, martyrs, great and stern of soul,  
 White as Sir Galahad in integrity ;  
 Forbid it, noble forefathers, who gave  
 Life and all life's best boons of love and peace  
 In high-souled manhood, this one land to save  
 For its great destiny, lest freedom cease,  
 And mankind's hope be lost !

Forbid it, ye  
 On whom the burden lies ; ye, by whose voice  
 Is made the choice of leaders, — yours to see  
 That these be men to make the truth rejoice.

Not statesmen, dazzling with shrewd eloquence,  
Not politicians, weaving cunning snares,  
Not even knaves who claim omnipotence  
For bank-accounts, — self-damning unawares! —  
Can shape the destiny of this free land.

They are the hands, but back of them there lies  
The great will of the people. All shall stand,  
All fall by this, whatever chance arise.

However cunning tricksters may befool,  
Or crafty schemers turn the law aside;

However leaders eloquent may rule,  
Or generous statesmen strive for good to guide;  
It is the people's will which must be done.

The schemer fears it as a slave the lash;  
Power circles round it as earth round the sun;  
It is the last appeal when factions clash.

It is your will, men of America,  
Which yonder in the senate-house is wrought;

It is your will, and if anathema  
Be its desert, upon yourselves 't is brought.

Your will is law; and if you stand aloof,  
Idle in indolent indifference

When shame and evil put the land to proof,  
Where shall our country look for her defence?

It is from your conviction must be born  
The truth which makes the nation nobly free.  
Though night should mock the very hope of morn,  
Hold high the torch of your integrity !  
Speak from your very souls, and be not stilled  
By plea of party or by greed of gain ; —  
Freedom was ne'er by honest error killed ;  
By falsity alone can it be slain.  
The chain has strength of its least link alone ;  
One loosened sod the avalanche lets slip ;  
The arch falls crashing through one crumbling stone ;  
One traitor mars the goodliest fellowship.  
That land alone is safe whose every son  
Is true to his own faith and cannot fail ;  
Where men cannot be trusted one by one  
Little appeals to all shall have avail !  
Be not beguiled by busy theorists  
Who would upon the state all burdens lay.  
The state but subject to men's will exists,  
Is wise or weak, is true or false, as they.  
It is in self-hood which makes man divine  
The strength of nations lies. No liberty  
Can be where men are but a mass supine ;  
Each must be true or all cannot be free.

Far off in the old misty Norseland sang  
A bard heroic ere the Viking prow  
Had found out Vinland; and his song, which rang  
Above the clang of swords, avails us now.  
“Thyself thyself direct!” the old bard cried.  
The inspiration of that high word still  
Thrills through us. Thrust all meaner guides aside  
And follow thy best self. Thy good and ill  
Lie in thine own sure keeping. For the land  
And for thyself thou art thyself as fate.  
No other man can do thy part; none stand  
An instant in thy place or soon or late.  
Thine own soul be thy judge to prove thy worth,  
To try thy deeds by thy conviction’s law; —  
And what were all the glories of the earth  
If this tribunal dread find blame or flaw!  
Though plaudits of the nations to the skies  
Proclaim thee great, if thou art small and mean  
How canst thou deck thy shame in such disguise  
That by thyself thy baseness be not seen?  
What though thy virtues choke the trump of fame  
If thou shouldst know them false? Better despise  
And burning infamy and bitter blame  
Than praise unmerited. Better the blight

Of all men's censure undeserved than one

Quick taunt of self, — for what man is is all.

Only the truth can matter ; and undone

Is he who for the shadow shall let fall

The substance.

Yet, though self-hood be supreme,

The lowest deep to which man's soul is led

Is selfishness. Thyself from self redeem.

The man who lives for self alone is dead.

Better St. Simeon Stylites, caged

Upon his narrow pillar, than the man

With his own petty cares alone engaged.

Not such shall save the land ; but they who scan

The broad horizon of humanity,

Asking their very souls what they may do

To help men on and up. They are most free

Who most for others dare to self be true.

Speak out by action thy soul's deep belief ;

Be true to all by faith to thine own sooth ;

Amid whatever night of doubt and grief

Hold high the ever-blazing torch of truth !

*Men of our college, gathered here to-day,  
If this be an hard saying ; if I seem  
Too much to play the preacher, let the word  
Or stand or fall as it to you is true.  
To-day the land has bitter need of us.  
Across the sea what myriads swarming come  
From the dark pestilential dens which reek  
With all the Old World's foulness. Those to whom  
Knowledge is given stand in double trust,  
Guardians of liberty and of the right.  
No man can flee responsibility,  
Which surely as his shadow to him clings.  
Ye are the torch-bearers ; stand firm, stand staunch.  
Light all the coming new-born century  
With splendid blazon in the name of truth !*







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