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OTHER POEMS.

THREESCORE,

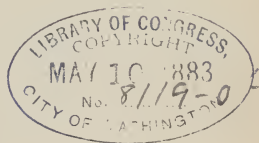
AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

GEORGE H. CALVERT.

11



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CONTENTS.

THREESCORE	7
A DEEPER DEEP	11
MAY-SPIRIT	14
LIFE'S JUBILEES	17
UPWARD	21
DAYS IN DARKNESS SET	23
FREE	25
SHELLEY	31
LOVE	33
NEW YEAR	34
FUNERAL SONG	36
THE MAIDEN	38
TO ÆSCHYLUS	40
QUATRAINS	41
TO MRS. POWEL	42
LISETTE	43
THE SMILE	49
HER LITTLE BOY	53
GREECE	55
WARD'S SHAKESPEARE	60
BUNKER HILL	63
A NATION'S BIRTH	65

THREESCORE.

I AM not old, and will not be ;
I daily grow, and joys are piled
About my life, as when a child
I bloomed into Eternity.

And still for me the sunny day,
Outleaping from mysterious night,
With dew of God's fresh-breathing bright,
Glistens in all its primal ray.

Each morning is a buoyant birth :
Daily I rise up from the deep
Of bounteous, broad, prolific sleep, —
The only death man knows on earth.

I grasp the wonders to my soul,
That flash their freshness far and near,
And tell how great is that career
That bares to me so vast a whole.

And at the multitudinous joy
Of being, without, within, I drink
As thirsty as when on the brink
I played and pried, a wondering boy.

And am I not an infant still ?
Or should I pace a sixscore span,
What were it to th' eternal plan
Ordained me by Almighty will ?

All earthly time is fagot smoke ;
The soul is an upspringing flame,
That, kindled, mounts to whence it came,
And frees itself from yearly yoke.

If I were old, the life within
 Would cease to blossom thought and want,
 And, like an hoar oak, branchless, gaunt,
Would dribble through a hollow skin.

But new thoughts gush, and wants, as bold
 (And wider) as when twenty years
 Through dauntless hopes and flying fears
Had shot me into manhood's mould.

High beauty's glory ne'er was higher,
 Nor so ethereal yet its power,
 Nor yet of reaching thought the dower
So glittering with celestial fire.

And never in those earlier days,
 When joy was bold and hopes were new,
 Were rainbows of such heavenly hue,
The future so with life ablaze.

The quick perennial *now* is mine
As much as in my wakeful youth,—
Nay, more ; for gleams of gathered truth
Their safety on its tempests shine.

This mighty *now*, this lord of life,—
And yet of life itself the thrall,—
Doth sparkle 'mid the sparkling all,
With transcendental vision rife ;

With vision peering in the deeps
That deepen with the spiritual ken,
Aglow with blest revealings, when
The spirit towards its freedom leaps.

Life is no mouldering sapless swathe,
Our clay-clad bones erect to hold :
'T is flame that kindles worlds untold,
A fire whose warmest pulse is faith.

A DEEPER DEEP.

THERE is a deep deeper than thought,
Dim sanctuary, myriad-doored,
Where Feeling's miracles are wrought,
Whence Life's immensities are poured.

There whisper voices none can hear,
Shoot quickening glimpses no eyes see ;
There Sorrow's lonely filtered tear
Falls drowned in th' infinite inward sea.

Thence, through the glow their birth creates,
Great deeds flash on the world's eclipse,
And words, that spirit consecrates,
Sparkle long ere they kindle lips.

And there, with veil of sunless smoke
Shrouding in shade unholy thirst,
Deformed desires their thought evoke,
In self-destruction pre-immersed.

There holy purpose secret throbs
Blessings to buoy the coming time,
And hoarsely heave the certain sobs
Boding the bitterness of crime.

Beneath an earthy sordid gloom
Upspring elating jets of fire, —
Fresh buds of Beauty's primal bloom, —
The lustral flames aye glancing higher.

There redden sparks so hot with life
They melt the frosts that palsy sight,
And for a moment fevered strife
Is quenched in happiness of light.

And deeper still, below the deeps
Where human life broods on its nest,
A breath the subtile fibres sweeps, —
Deific breath that keeps them blest.

MAY-SPIRIT.

EARTH her breast again is warming,
And in mystery deep are spun
Lives uncounted, joyful swarming
Out to meet th' ascending sun :
Kisses flames he in a flood,
Sparkling through their mounted blood.

What a resurrection's glory !
Souls upwaking toward the Soul,
One and many, young and hoary,
That so raptureth the whole,
Not the least, but it must be
Each an immortality.

See the foremost lilies, lancing
 With quick green their winter roof,
Round about them timid glancing
 If the snow be all aloof ;
While above, fresh-orbed with flowers,
Glow a maple through the showers.

Everywhere the mould is bursting
 With imprisoned souls enfreed,
Each for blossoms hotly thirsting
 To revive the earth with seed ;
And at night around their sleep
Stars a watchful heaven sweep.

Still diviner than what poureth
 Ecstasy through earth and space
Is the might that calmly soareth,
 Keeping all in peaceful place ;

Motion, fervor, safely folding,
Law unbroken aye upholding.

Thunder liveth that ne'er sounded,
Closely held in lightning's lap,
Closely by the Might unbounded :

Lo ! if they should flash and clap,
Heaven itself would cease to be,
And be shrunk Infinity.

LIFE'S JUBILEES.

WHEN the earth, to light new-born,
 With requickened voices sings,
At the flush of wakened morn,
 In its gold I steep my wings ;
Then, wherever pulses beat
 To the burst of being's glee,
Revelling in glad nature's heat,
 There I hold a jubilee :
Where first violets, sprung from graves,
 Sip a sparkling draught of dew,
Or replenished cedar waves
 'Gainst the tempest leaflets new ;
Where the sea a murmur makes,
 That the moon, with streak to shore

Through its crystal, glittering breaks
 What the sun had smoothed before ;
Round cold capes, where storm and sea
Lash the land incessantly ;
In hot lair whence leopard leaps ;
Down the dell where glow-worm peeps ;
Where tall cataract's midnight roar
 Silences hoarse lions near ;
Where beneath hushed shadows hoar
 Nightingale elates his ear. —
Now a sweeter thirst I slake,
 Hugging children to their toys ;
Or a deeper joy I wake,
 Bounding with the hopes of boys ;
And still deeper when I swim
 In the looks aflame with fire,
That, to courage kindling him,
 Raps the youth to man's desire,

As his glances softly thrud
Fresh-oped path through maiden's lid,
And two beings' ecstasy
Holds all life in prophecy ;
Or with th' unmatched smile I play
 Wreathed in love's warm heaven within,
Hallowing with his finest ray
 All the mother's features thin,
When her firstling she espies,
And new vision win her eyes ;
Or I dance along the blood
 Calmly reddening in the hearts
Just about to pour in flood,
 Fearless fronting deadly smarts,
That men's lives may higher be
After some Thermopylæ.
Where live knowledge, with a spring,
 Victor-flusht a mystery bares,

And, her thought-light brandishing,
Far ahead a guidance flares,
Aye renewing manhood's youth
By revealing truth on truth,
There I hold high revelry,
Blossoming on discovery.
When the Poet's free far-seeing
Greets new thought with feeling's kiss,
Warming his illumined being
With a more than earthly bliss,
From his soul a lightning gleaming
That nor fades nor smites with death,
But with freshness ever streaming
Sweetens ever manhood's breath, —
Then, O then I joy to be ;
There my highest jubilee.

UPWARD.

WE cannot rise by sense alone,
By what we touch and see and feel,
By levers of the daily meal :
Senses are footstools round a throne ;

And be these held by blinded slaves,
Who see above no higher seats,
Contented with their lowly heats,
Circling like bats in starless caves,

The service of the throne doth fail,
Shaken the king by earthly fears,
His eyes ne'er moist with ruthful tears,
His upper lights distract and pale.

The blinded slaves are guilty greeds,
Dumb lusts of flesh and pelf and power,
Gross appetites unblest, that lour
To seize and chain the higher needs.

Unblinded they must run ; and then
Slaves they will cease to be, and rise
To bless and to be blest, with eyes
Bright visionary with higher ken.

DAYS IN DARKNESS SET.

WHY are our days in darkness set,
Sundered by intersperséd glooms,
Like diamonds on a field of jet,
And life a retinue of dooms?

Self-sentenced are we by our greeds,
That outface virtue on the seats
Whence law should flow from generous creeds
To drench with life these selfish heats.

Rude tyrants are we to our being,
Cooping us in the gilded pens
Of worldliness, with its mis-seeing,
By glimmers duped from shallow fens;

Or simmering on the flameless fire,
Of daily vice, that heartstrings chars,
We make the soul an earthly pyre,
Blackening its healthiness with scars ;

The soul, which is a light flashed thence
Where life, beyond the sphere of earths,
Glowes with a being so intense,
Each throbbing is a thousand births ;

Flashed thence to be itself creative,
Thought, feeling, bounteous deed aye raying
Upon all neighbor life, and, native
Of Heaven, with broad divineness swaying.

FREE.

THAT stout maple cannot walk,
Or the wild deer mount on wings,
Unchecked eagle glibly talk,
Blazing rainbow shift its rings, —
Think you therefore they are thralls,
Convict culprits tied to stalls,
Hindered, hampered, shrunken slaves,
Longing to be free in graves ?
Each is whole with nature's gifts,
Runs its cordial range of life,
Void of impulse that uplifts
Motion to a counterstrife.
Freedom is not lawlessness ;
She of law is all compact ;

For 't is that doth loving press
 Quickening shoots to fruitful act.
Nothing bodied but must be
 Circumclosed in rightful bounds :
Suns and planets, like the tree,
 Wheel by law their mighty rounds ;
Law it was that shaped their being,
 Drew them from chaotic naught,
And their lives from riot freeing
 Keeps them now with splendor fraught.
Can you see without your eye,
 Whose far virtues, every one,
Through encagéd matter ply,
 Matter moulded like the Sun ?

Through the hot-breathed engine fleet,
 Telegraph that light outspeeds,
Our slow bulks have swifter feet,
 And are freer thought and deeds.

Thus the lower lifts the higher,
Kindling soul to subtler fire,
When for truth we wisely watch,
From glad Nature secrets snatch.

Life were freedom, if the soul

Were not oft its own fee'd foe,
Madly seeking sunken goal,
'Gainst its current's healthy flow.

Health is then when no desire

Is by noisome hindrance pained,
And no hallowed soaring fire
With a fulsome heat profaned.

Life's unsounded current's head

Sparkles trickling from the vast,
By almighty wisdom sped,
Into life divinely cast ;
Sparkles with a Soul, new-launched,
Or elate or terror-blanced,

Ever struggling to be free, —
 Spirit, quintessential spright,
Deathless possibility,
 Motor mute, invisible might,
Forger fine of every form,
Driving on through calm or storm ;
Onward, upward, through the joys
Childhood tires of as of toys,
Through the fragrance, fresh ascending,
 From young passion's censer swung
Round the blushing self, sweet blending
 Incense to another flung ;
Onward to the looming heights
 Where great manhood reigns in power,
Looming through the artful lights
 Hope throws on the coming hour.

Soul, O Soul, how swarm thy trials,
 As huge tempests 'bout the earth,

When they pour from burning phials

Wreck that proves her steadfast worth.

Thou shalt seem to be uplifted

But to be cast lower down :

Keen delights, desires unsifted,

Freedom in their joyance drown.

Freedom springs not from the dross

Of warm wants self-gratified ;

Her plumed pinions are not gross

With hot fuel, passion-plied.

Passions, pleasures, have their places,

And so has clean appetite ;

But 't is not as Freedom's braces,

Or inflators of her flight.

Of the self unbind the self ;

Hush the lusts, loud greeds of pelf :

Thus acquitted being bless

Through full self-forgetfulness.

Diamond's worth is what it throws
From its core to others' eyes :
Man is precious as he glows
With the large humanities ;
And 't is they whose wingéd might
Lifts him into freedom's light.
From cold mineral up to man
Aspiration is the law
Whereby each accomplish can,
Each his life unstained by flaw.
When all wishes upward strive,
Then will life be full alive :
Only is the soul then free,
When it freer aims to be.
Onward, upward ; higher, higher ;
See ! there beckons angel-fire.

TO SHELLEY.

DEAR outcast, whose melodious moan
 Startled erewhile our English air,
Æolian heart tuning the groan
 Of sick humanity, wan care
Flusht into life by spirit's breath
 That won from sufferance and death
A tearful ravishment — love's wings
 Bore thee, a weeping Ariel,
About the earth, to cool the stings
 Of anguish with thy rhythmic spell.
Thou stoodst apart, the solitude
 Of thy quick-panting breast o'erpeopled
With being's prime, the fire-eyed brood
 Of Poesy, wherewith high-steeped,

Sun-pinnacled piles thou didst upthrow,
Flamed with imagination's glow ;
Fabrics supreme to crumble never,
The soul's warm homes of light forever.

LOVE.

I HAVE no fear of thee,
That thou wilt swerve from me ;
My feeling is so closely wound
About thy being, through, around,
I cannot fancy how
We two could part : canst thou ?

THE NEW YEAR.

WHAT a tumult ! how they pour,
Like a crowd through narrow door ! —
Passions, plans, desires, and schemes,
Dogged purpose, wingéd dreams,
Hurrying into the New Year,
Flusht with hope or pale with fear.
And athwart the murmur's flow,
One above and one below,
Voices two are clearly heard :
Like the warbling of a bird,
One is full with joy and life,
Broken one with ghastly strife ;
From the heaven within us one,
Hell is in the other's tone.

Heed the higher, hush the other,
Lest ye would the New Year smother ;
For the new is fresh from God,
Pure as dew on morning sod.

Bless the year with *more* and *less* :
Less of hate, more helpfulness ;
Less of fraud and faithless fashion,
More of truth and noble passion ;
More of love's sure thoughtfulness,
And of cross-eyed discord less ;
More of aspiration's joy,
Less of groveling greed's alloy ;
More of love and less of lust,
So to lift us o'er our dust.
Let the man control the beast,
That the year be one long feast :
Thus we win the great New Year,
And the right to crown his bier.

HER FUNERAL SONG.

SADDER than wont the neighbors came ;
For she had sunk in giving life,
A youthful mother, loving wife.
The quenching of so fresh a flame,
The mystery of untimely death,
Wrought in us and more stilled our breath.

The mill near by had stopped its wheel,
A May sun warmed the open door,
And trees and flowers, the porch before,
Glowed with new life as they did feel
Athwart the air, beneath the sod,
The blessing of the eternal God.

And when the prayer within was heard,
A mocking-bird his voice upsent,
A lively, pure accompaniment.

Was it but music of a bird ?

Was it herself who near them hovered,
From seeming death so quick recovered ?

Her soul was free, and joyed to well
Through the sweet bird's delighted throat,
With heavenly, clear, immortal note,
To break the gloom's too earthly spell,
On the hushed, shadowed, mournful throng,
Pouring her own blithe funeral song.

THE MAIDEN.

SHY, graceful-timorous, like large-eyed fawn
 Just waked from dreamless sleep ;
And yet, unconscious bold as urgent dawn
Self-heralded by dewy lights that peep
 Into the day they bring,
From far, mysterious, supersolar spring,
 She comes, fresh wonder, freshened daily
By great auroras ever breaking
 Prophetic clear, flushed gayly
 From deepened soul, and making
Her face an aye-renewed illumination ;
 Her step elastic as the light
 That leaps upon relucent lake,
 And firm as virtue's easy might
When great obediences its brilliance make ;

So fragrant she with sweet humanity,
The gazer's sense is purged incessantly ;
Her inward being so superbly full,
Shining all through her blood's carnation,
That Beauty can unstinted cull
 The thousand hues
 From roses, whites and blues,
 Wherewith he would delight
 The glad beholder's sight,
And cast reviving spell upon each eye
That strains to seize this morning mystery,
Ensteeped in life and grace and loveliness,
The elated features so divinely married
Best bloom from each to all so deftly carried,
They glow a wreath of linked tenderness,
 Life's dearest gifts, warm lavish loves,
 Raying about her as she moves,
 So circling her with love-illumined cope,
That she, where'er she cometh, fills the air with hope.

TO ÆSCHYLUS.

(After reading "The Maxims witty and wise of the Athenian tragic Drama
by D'Arcy W. Thompson.")

How wise thou art! — so prematurely wise
We wonder at the words that fall from thee,
Words of such wide-embracing sympathy
They clasp our feelings' brood and thoughts that rise
From the best brains, as they were modern-new.
But still thou dost not, couldst not, shouldst not, reach
That beaming height of wisdom whence to teach,
What to humanity is foremost true,
Of Love the power and good and peerless beauty,
Th' immortal life and wealth and depth of Duty, —
Deeps which were later probed by a great Soul,
A soul so tender strong, so simply fine,
Men face not yet his facts in their bright whole,
But veil them with beliefs as crude as thine.

QUATRAINS.

DEAR life is weariness to those
Who dig forever in the mire
Of self, or prank them in the shows
Of sense, or overfeed desire.

Your soul may be a quickening sun,
Which only thrives when it doth give ;
Learn this, and you have partly won
Your life, and know what 't is to live.

Man's life is mostly but a branch
Torn dripping from a happy whole ;
And sensuous balsam cannot stanch
Wounds that bleed inly from the soul.

TO MRS. POWEL.

(On receiving from her a covered basket of roses.)

LIKE the dawn, quick heralding
The sunniest day of spring,
A fragrance brims the sense
From hidden treasure, whence
Blow tidings that express
A punctual friendship's truth and living inwardness.

O the beauty of the roses,
In whose sweet breath reposes,
Mid tender sleeping buds
And color's perfumed floods,
The wealth, and nothing less,
Of dear old friendship's ever-freshened loveliness.

LISETTE.

A MUSICAL BALLAD.

A MIDNIGHT strain — so warm and bold
The rooms dilated with its might —
Loosed on the sleepers sleep's soft hold
To pale them first with wonder's fright.

Athrough the open door they crept ;
And there Lisette, with nimblest ease, —
While still her outward senses slept, —
Struck with a master-hand the keys :

Their little handmaid, meek Lisette,
She who three years their babe had nursed,
Herself a child, not thirteen yet,
In rhythmic fingering all unversed.

Swift the fresh harmonies of sound
 Leap from the keys into the ear,
Piling up concord, mound on mound,
 And clasping th' air so cordial near,

The listener breathes but ravishment ;
 Then tenderly afar they sink
(As sense, dissolved, with thought were blent)
 Almost to very stillness' brink ;

Thence to rebound with fugue of thunder,
 Rolling athwart the raptured strings,
To flush the soul with tuneful wonder,
 Lifted on unapparent wings. —

Uprose she sudden with the grace
 Of ripened womanhood, her hair
About her childish, dreamy face
 Dressed with a former fashion's care ;

“ I am the mother of Lisette :

Start not, dear friends ; to me how dear !
Loved guardians of my orphaned pet.
By law of life and love I ’m here ;

“ For soul with soul is so compact,
It leaps of fleshly form the fence
To interfuse, in thought and act,
Being with being, sense with sense.

“ On earth sweet music was the food
Of all my life. My head and heart
It filled, resounding through my blood
To heal in me my daily smart.

“ ’Tis three years since the earth I left,
And pain and hunger’s agony,
And worse, thinking she was bereft
Of mother’s help, of all in me.

“But O! the blessed privilege
Of death, which is not death, but life
Released, — life sharpened with the edge
Of higher thought, with freedom rife.

“Soon as earth’s film passed from my soul
I saw my child, afar, afar,
Dim as a hope flashed through the dole
Of black despair, or mist-held star.

“Still higher joy, delightful wonder!
Scarce had I thought me of the wide,
Gross distance that us two did sunder,
Scarce had I willed me by her side,

“When I was there; and there have been
Each minute since; my life, my joy,
My heaven, to be with her, and wean
From earth her gentle thoughts, and buoy

“ Her heavenward. Could she live here,
I'd help her live ; but she is doomed ;
And even now the day is near
When she her last will here have bloomed.”

She ceased ; then like a woman went
Forth from the room up to her bed,
Lisette's small cot, the two still blent
In one, daughter by mother led. —

Lisette woke late, without or ken
Or conscience of that tuneful hour ;
Weaker than wont, and daily then
She paled and drooped, like smitten flower.

One morning lonely in the bed
They found her body ; gone the gem.
Herself, her spirit, away had sped
To help her mother watch o'er them.

While they were weeping for Lisette
They heard a song, as though the spheres,
Choiring in joy above, had let
Their rapture reach to human ears.

THE SMILE.

A SCENE IN THE AFTER LIFE.

'T WAS she ! She sat upon a bank,
A babe within her arms !
But she is dead. And was 't the clank
Of conscience, guilt's alarms,
That made her seem to breathe new breath ?
He too ! — had he not writhed in death ?

But now he was alive, and stalked
Before the grave-like mound :
A six feet span was all he walked,
Aye quickly wheeling round,
As though just there some demon raged,
And he invisibly were caged.

On her his gazes aye he bent ;
 He could not else than so :
All hers upon the child were spent,
 As she no change could know.
And now and then she gently pressed
The babe more closely to her breast.

The child stared with a thirsty look,
 Its eyes would drink his being ;
Then with a sudden dread it shook,
 As blasted by their seeing.
Mother and child together clung,
The two by one pale terror wrung.

His eyes were balls of rayless fire,
 They seethed his ghastly brain ;
And through his pulse unquenched desire
 Poured its dim hell of pain ;

As there he paced, without a pause,
Moved by the mystic might of cause.

He could nor rest nor look away,
He had no power of will ;
All *that* he squandered on the day
He drank of murder's fill ;
And near the two with light imbued,
He strode in a dark solitude.

He could not sigh, he could not weep,
His life so subject drear ;
Forth from his tainted blood could leap
No easeful moan or tear.
Rang in his ears the awful cry —
There is no death ! he could not die.

And still the child it stared, with bland,
Inquiring look and wild ;

Then suddenly put out its hand,
Then on him deeply smiled :
A groan did the long silence greet,
And he fell weeping at her feet.

HER LITTLE BOY.

Joy slid into her grief,
A light shone from each tear,
When she could give her to the great belief
Her little boy was near.

She felt his presence mute,
And soon, his prattle still,
Aerial breathing through unearthly flute
Sent to her heart a thrill.

And then, O ecstasy!
All o'er the mother's face
His tiny tender hands, with childish glee,
Ran a caressing race.

HER LITTLE BOY.

For a sweet, rose-fleshed boy,
Forth from th' eternal day,
She 'd snatched an angel pet, — diviner joy,
Free from the earth's decay.

Regiven was her child,
Through that beneficence
Which, in celestial wisdom undefiled,
Marries all soul to sense.

ODE TO GREECE.

THOU beautiful great Greece !

What is our debt to thee !

Upon thy sowing followed such increase

That still to-day, and in all time to be,

Where'er new men aspire,

And have the spring to rise

On thought's unflinching flight, the higher, higher

They mount, the more the lightnings from thine eyes

Shoot life into their souls,

Luring them toward their goals,

Aye beckoning to wider day,

To freer, stronger sight and sway.

This gorgeous western land —

Save in broad Plato's dreams

Unknown to thy bright band —
Basks in the kindling beams
Of thy illumination's might,
As surely as the streets
Of Athens in the fresh transcendent light
Of Socrates, when greets
His talk wise Jove, as he discoursed of duty,
Jove listening from the Acropolis, aglow with beauty.

Moments make histories.
What a midnight was that
When true Aristides,
Close to where Xerxes sat,
Met bold Themistocles,
And, rivalry subdued,
One policy pursued !
To Asia back were hurled barbaric hosts,
With one swift blow freed all the Grecian coasts

From the dire darkness that there threatened them,
And us, far offshoots of that thoughtful stem.

Dear Salamis, thou art

A beacon to the earth :

Thy light thou didst create, and still dost dart
Its rays where minds are polished to reflect mind's
worth.

Greece ! all thy sunny face

Glistens with beacons high,

Tomb, trophy, or renowned birth-place
Of those that signals are to watchful eye ;

Some by creative pen

Snatched from the cloudy brink

Of legend, visionary men,

Whom Homer's vast projecting power

Launched on the ages. Link

'Twixt Gods and men, they cower

Scarce to their clay compeers,
But help us feel, act, think,
As do thy statesmen, artists, soldiers, seers :
Pindar and Phidias, Pericles,
Solon, Leonidas, Timoleon,
And the great kin of these ;
Epaminondas, like to Washington
In fortitude and calm far-seeing,
In truthfulness and forceful being ;
Miltiades, Phocion, Demosthenes,
And loose colossal Alcibiades ;
Sophocles, Æschylus, Euripides,
With brave, derisive Aristophanes,
First forgers of unrusting scenic keys,
And by their side faithful Thucydides ;
Nor should be honored any one by us
More than Tyrannicide Thrasybulus ;
And still fame scores her wide decrees :

Lesbian Sappho, Simonides,
World-grasping Aristoteles,
And many-minded Empedocles ;
Th' heroic Theban, stout Pelopidas,
Thinker and liver pure, Pythagoras,
And Plato the divine, and still diviner
Deep Socrates, in ripened reach of mind
Unparagoned, subtlest refiner
Of the most free and choice and good of human kind.

But him th' Athenians slew :
In cruel blindness bleak
They slew their best, nor knew
In that gross deed how weak
Their will ; and how their self-accomplished doom
Was deeply graven on the mighty martyr's tomb.

WARD'S SHAKESPEARE.

(On first seeing, in Central Park, the statue of Shakespeare, by Ward.)

ON an early autumn day,
With sunny shadows bright,
Warmed was I in a new ray,
Awed by the sudden might
Of a great presence, as I stood,
Flushed into fullest mood,
Before the mightiness
Of Shakespeare, springing
From beamy shaft, and bringing
Deep admiration's joy, to bless
The thankful gazer's eye
With his dear majesty.

In a hushed gladness,
In love and tender sadness,
 We looked, almost with reverence bent,
As there his image sprang,
 In beautiful embodiment,
From a fit pedestal,
As though the Muses nine, all musical,
At its creation's feat together sang
 When it uprose into the air,
A living form of strength and grace,
Crowned with that thoughtful face,
 And holy head so fair,
Vaulted and swol'n by tides of urgent deeps
 From earth and heaven and man,
Itself a central depth, wherein there leaps
 A life that can
 Feed hungering humanity ;
 Men, women, children, grouped to see

Each other kindled (part unconsciously)
By this refulgent effigy
Of a perennial splendor ;
Nature a brimful lender
Of glory and of light,
To consecrate a power, a delight,
A triumph aye to feeling, thought, and sense,
A boon given by heavenly art,
Through sympathy of heart,
And made to bloom in ever-fresh magnificence.

October, 1875.

BUNKER HILL.

“NOT yet, not yet; steady, steady!”

On came the foe, in even line :

Nearer and nearer, to thrice paces nine.

We looked into their eyes. “Ready!”

A sheet of flame! A roll of death!

They fell by scores; we held our breath!

Then nearer still they came;

Another sheet of flame!

And brave men fled who never fled before.

Immortal fight!

Foreshadowing flight

Back to the astounded shore.

BUNKER HILL.

Quickly they rallied, reinforced.
Mid louder roar of ship's artillery,
And bursting bombs and whistling musketry,
And shouts and groans, anear, afar,
All the new din of dreadful war,
Through their broad bosoms calmly coursed
The blood of those stout farmers, aiming
For freedom, manhood's birthrights claiming.

Onward once more they came :
Another sheet of deathful flame !
Another and another still.

They broke, they fled :
Again they sped
Down the green, bloody hill.

Howe, Burgoyne, Clinton, Gage,
Stormed with commanders' rage !

Into each emptied barge
They crowd fresh men for a new charge
 Up that great hill.
Again their gallant blood we spill :
 That volley was the last :
 Our powder failed.
 On three sides fast
 The foe pressed in ; nor quailed
A man. Their barrels empty, with musket-stocks
 They fought, and gave death-dealing knocks,
 Till Prescott ordered the retreat.
Then Warren fell ; and, through a leaden sleet,
 From Bunker Hill and Breed,
Stark, Putnam, Pomeroy, Knowlton, Read,
Led off the remnant of those heroes true,
The foe too shattered to pursue.
 The ground they gained ; but we
 The victory.

The tidings of that chosen band
 Flowed in a wave of power
Over the shaken, anxious land,
To men, to man, a sudden dower.
From that staunch, beaming hour
History took a fresh, higher start ;
And when the speeding messenger, that bare
 The news that strengthened every heart,
 Met near the Delaware,
 Riding to take command,
The leader, who had just been named,
 Who was to be so famed,
The steadfast, earnest Washington
 With hand uplifted cries,
 His great soul flashing to his eyes,
“ Our liberties are safe ; the cause is won ! ”
 A thankful look he cast to heaven, and then
His steed he spurred, in haste to lead such noble men.

June 8, 1875.

A NATION'S BIRTH.

JULY THE FOURTH, 1776.

WITH untried deeper rhythm,
As for a holier chrism,
Sea-choruses along
The Atlantic coast sang their resounding song,
The unwonted fugue by tides
Borne inland to the hills,
Whose hearkening savage sides
Quiver to feel the strain that thrills
Broad air with new prophetic flood.
Lone Niagára, in his agéd solitude,
Catching the robust sound,
Shouted such thunderous shout
His neighbor seas and wakened wilderness
Shook to the core, the shout's rebound

Making the wisest stars look out
By day, with their best light to bless
The splendid prophecy.
Onward with the happy Sun
Swept the warm fluent symphony,
Mingling at noon
Its martial tune
With Mississippi's giant run
(Who paused in joy to listen);
Then westward sped to where
Nevada's virgin summits glisten
In vast Pacific's glare.
The placid Ocean, her great sister's roar
Quick answering, with calm upheaval smote
The sleeping golden shore,
Echoing Atlantic's jubilant note;
For she well knew that tone the birth-throes meant
Of a new Empire on their sunny Continent.

Deep nature feels with deeper man,
Attuned to helpfullest accord
When first creative breathings here began
Their endless work and sacred word.
The invisible circumambient air
Feeds with its finest food the soul,
And from sidereal reaches brings
More heavenly visitings
When nobler aspirations bear
Upward men's thought and a stout will control.

And now the manful race,
Who close behind tempestuous capes
Had built self-governed tenures, brace
Brave hearts 'gainst usurpation, that aye gapes
For more. From Hampshire's mountain fields
To Georgia's hot alluvial plains,
Where'er soil, tree, or river yields

Fruit to industrious foresight's pains,
Farms, hamlets, cities, towns upgrew,
Mastered by men who from dear England drew
Their wishes, principles ; who brought
Much freedom with them, seeking more ;
So that, when England's arrogant King distraught,
With his dull oligarchic tools would gore
This loyal people with sharp tyrannies,
Uneasy motions mounted by degrees
From silent deeps to uttered wrath,
Until to some the bloody path
Of war yawned on the vision. South and North, —
In those first days there was no West, —
Empowered men, their wisest, best,
In solemn Congress to deliberate ;
From whom such words and acts went forth,
That Chatham to them tribute paid,
And from his peerless station said,

In History they have no mate.
To that august Assembly give
Thanks upon thanks from age to age,
Yet, long as on this Continent shall live
Men of our race, they will not disengage
Their being from its living debt to them.
In the conned annals of the breeds
Who wrought for right by word and deeds,
Each one will shine a beckoning gem.
The spirit that will not brook the wrong,
That was the pith that made them strong.
And one there was, the very symbol clear
Of this hale spirit, wise
Even above each great compeer,
A man from whose blue deepening eyes
Looked soul so human, so benign,
Men felt his presence as a breath divine,
A light whereby their souls could see,

Inspiriting warmth to chilled humanity.
Not yet full known, more felt
Than valued, in him dwelt,
Yet latent to himself, the powers
That were to blaze o'er darkest hours
A flame of might, a star
Potent to rule the waywardness of war.

And now came couriers breathless, pale,
Sped from the North by battle's wail ;
And in and out of Boston stood
Defiant armies, their hot blood
By mutual slaughter chafed to infuriate mood.
The Congress oped its arms and made its own
The host that had so boldly thrown
Its bloody gauntlet in the teeth
Of Britain's power. The sheath
Of peace was flung away. And then,
In that great clan of men,

All looks were turned to him,
By no self-seeking stained,
Sole leader, preordained
To vast achievement, dim
As yet even to the scope
Of largest earthliest hope.
With earnest unanimity
The high Assembly named
Him who for young supremacy
In arms was early in Virginia famed.
Then he, as fast as horse could speed,
Rode eager to the post decreed.
And when the ranks in Cambridge their new chief
Beheld, upwent a myriad-throated shout
That shattered sheer the veil of doubt:
His mien majestic gendered quick belief,
As 'neath the Elm he calmly took command
O'er all the forces of th' embattled land.

And when that sacred sword flashed in the Sun
For us, a liberating power was won,
For History, the name of Washington.

Now Order by the throat rude Chaos caught,
And stern Obedience to loose License taught
The fruitful laws of discipline.
Then mattock, shovel, pick, and spade
So wrought at fort and palisade,
The foe was daily more pent in.
Through all one night of early spring
With thundering echo fell,
From the wide hurried ring
Of forts, ball, bomb, and shell
Upon the leaguered foe,
Puzzled not long to know
What meant this deafening night's
Unresting cannonade ;
For on the impending heights

Of Dorchester shovel and spade
Had in those few noise-shielded hours
Built battlement that lowers
So deadly on army, fleet, that in dismay
The foe his legions pressed aboard and sailed away.

From rescued Boston toward the South,
To Hudson's affluent mouth
The Chieftain sped,
In time to meet
The foeman, thither fled,
Borne by his puissant fleet.
And now began those great retreats, —
Tokens of his high mastership, —
Which the outnumbering war-trained enemy
Outwore, and, spite of manifold defeats
And gashing strokes on thigh and hip,
Upstored for us the final victory.

Whilst in New York the Chief was compassed round

With risks, from Philadelphia came a sound
Ne'er heard before
All the world o'er,
Shout for a Nation's birth !
Then through the Peoples of the earth
Shot a new thrill,
And a new will
Waked, with an earthquake heave,
In the drugged consciousness of man.
Then all who sorely grieve
Beneath compulsive sway
Smiled fiercely, as from mount to valley ran
The auroral tidings of that holy day.
Vast spectacle sublime !
Unseen on all the rearward heights of time !
A State deliberately self-created,
A Nation born of highest principles, born
Of inward, manful, moral need,

Upreared from feeling into deed,
On that blest July morn,
For aye to freedom consecrated.
Out of itself a people drew
Its government anew.
Of History's highest they the peers
Those fifty-six who signed as one,
Tutelary pioneers
Those few who seized a safety for the whole, —
By magnitude of soul
Creators, Poets, gifted Seers,
Through the rhythm of lofty deeds,
In holy unison
With the singing of the Spheres, —
Prophets who sowed so wisely deep, their seeds
Keep coming up for aye
In luminous display,
In broadening benefaction ;

So freshly sound their action,
Their doings live in all the best we do :
From them our privileged possessings, —
A glorious past and freedom to be true.
May we still have their blessings !

While this strong band, in that ascendant hour,
On its vast orbit hurled
Portentous Empire, a new Power
Among the Nations of the world,
And to the glad caressing blast
A maiden banner cast
With sane audacity,
Their chosen martial Leader, where was he ?
Driven from stand to stand
By foes swarming on shore and sea
Outnumbering far
In men and the armory of war
His raw command ;

Almost surrounded,
His flanks and rear
By boats of foemen bounded,
And, fearful thought! himself to death so near;
For, galloping, at cannon's call,
He met a squadron flying:
Enraged at such a fall
From duty, fear's disgrace,
He snapt his pistols in their face,
Struck at them with his sword, and crying
"Am I to save America with these?"
In his wild anger sprang to throw
Himself single upon the advancing foe,—
His bright soul for a moment dimmed by honor's
wrath,—
Had not been by an Aide to sieze
His horse and wheel him from the deathful path.
His wonted calm he soon regained,

To guard, like growling lion foiled,
The panic-stricken fugitives, he pained
To the soul that they had so ingloriously recoiled.

Still reënforced, the foe
Drove him across the Hudson, slow,
With his lion's heart, to turn his back,
Except to save the cause. Ever on the rack
Himself, as man, as General, he still kept
The courage up of all; and now he wept
As tenderest child, to see
The heroic garrison
Of fortress Washington
Butchered before his eyes incapably.
Nothing was left but flight
Through Jersey's plains: he had no means to fight.
Mistrust, desertion, treason, blind despair
Within, poisoning the general air,
Exultant enemies without,

Sure clutching at his total rout,
His country's and his doom
Seemed swift impending. 'Mid the gloom
The shaken land that palled
He stood staunch, hopeful, unappalled,
His steadfast soul a light
To warn his country to its right.
While proud oppressors everywhere
Joyed like lean tiger leaping from his lair,
And the oppressed still deeper groaned,
Feeling their chains already bind
More tightly, he sat throned
On faith in good and his unconquerable mind.
Pursued to Delaware's low banks,
He passed with thinned and sickly ranks,
His army to a handful dwindled,
Almost extinct the fire so late enkindled.
When winter's gloom had deepened night,

And the half-conquered land had chilled
With thoughts the colder for its plight,
And pulse of hope was nearly stilled,
And every patriotic eye
Drooped with despondency,
Washington the rough river crossed
At midnight, his full boats betossed
In ice ; and through a storm of snow
Struck unexpected blow
That made their legions reel ;
Répassed the flood, with keel
Deeper for a thousand prisoners,
Startling the lifted land, that stirs
Once more with hope ; and then,
Hardly time given to rest his men,
The freezing Delaware recrossed
To front at Trenton confident Cornwallis,
Who exclaimed at evening, “ Now he ’s lost,

He 's mine to-morrow." Of that solace
The British Chief was cheated.
For, roused by distant cannon's boom,
That told his rear would be defeated,
He looked, to see the room,
Filled in the evening by our camp,
Deserted, bare, our squadrons gone,
Unheard their stealthy tramp.
'T was a great day for us and Washington,
That morning fight at Princeton.
The first line checked and driven back,
His drawn sword gleaming,
His eyes war-lightnings beaming,
He led them to a fresh attack,
Waving and calling to the charge :
Himself on battle's hottest marge
A moment veiled by smoke,
He emerged victor by personal daring,

By his inspiring mien and bearing,
By bold strategic stroke,
Courage with wisdom blent.
Well might great Frederick send a sword,
Magnanimously enfurled
In this significant word,
“From Europe’s oldest General sent
To the greatest in the world.”
England, America, at length
Began to feel the single strength
Of this upmounting man.
The worst birth-throes were past.
The foe — he stood aghast
To see shattered his fostered plan.
But still must we smart at defeats,
Still mourn rude sufferings, checks, retreats;
At Brandywine, at Germantown,
Again confront war’s bloody frown;

And shiver then at Valley Forge,
Where, as in Alpine gorge,
Winter's impetuous blasts
Their anger at our warriors dart,
Half clad, half fed at their repasts ;
Only their souls warmed by their Chief's great heart.

From Philadelphia's nest Clinton flew North.
Tracking him on his way, sped forth
The eye watchful Washington, who struck
At Monmouth staggering blow ;
Then, careworn, soon could comfort pluck
From the advent of Count Rochambeau
From France, bringing most timely generous aid,
The which with thanks can never be o'erpaid.
To the far South, now sorely prest,
The Chief despatched his trustiest, best
Lieutenant, Greene ; worthy to be
Second to such a first was he.

Then after him the gallant Lafayette,
Our noble friend, and who not yet
Hath had his meed of statue, but whose name
Will ever sparkle with this unique fame,
That he was as a son
Beloved of Washington.

And now the Chief, with practiced martial ken,
Planned from afar
The climax of the war,
Shaping each angle of the pen
Whereinto was Cornwallis driven ;
And the last link of chains,
That bound us to the pains
Of weak dependence, riven.
Once more he crossed the Delaware.
Britain, beware !
'T is the last time
The man sublime

Will pass in panoply of war.
His soul is now in arms
Burning fierce War to push
From his black throne, and hush
His dread alarms.
Europe, America, hung on that march :
All knew him then the keystone of the arch.
His soldiers were bronzed veterans now ;
The officers tried heroes, who
To patriotism had made a vow ;
Martyrs if need be, prompt to woo
Danger where dangers most abound ;
Men who went earnest forth to found
A great Republic for the Ages,
Fame, consciousness of duty their high wages.
This dear exalted band,
To whom we owe our land,
Our privilege to do the right,

Our deepest fountains of delight,
Looked to their Chief with reverence
And love, with confidence
Illimitable. In the camp,
The field, he was their lamp
Of safety. From within, this modest man
Earned his high place of foremost in the van.
A primal goodness in his nature turned
His wheels of action, either when he burned
With wrath or calmly for the better yearned.
'T was a large heart's soft throb that warmly swelled
His being to its clean, symmetric, great
Proportions. Men loved him because there welled
Within himself such love it made his state
An hourly benediction. 'T was the weight
Of character that gave his look its power.
Those who came near him put religious trust
In his plain speech, that braced them strong and quelled

All discontent and fear. He was so just
His will became the measure of the true ;
And angels seemed to second it and strew
Quick lights along his darkneses, a shower
Of guidance, as they held him for a mate :
With high superiorities so rife,
He came to be the soul of a new Nation's life,
The ideal man for a whole People's lead,
Beacon whereby the true and pure to read ;
A man whose life had this transcendent beauty,
'T was all and ever subject unto duty.

On the great march he to Mount Vernon came.
Six stormful years had died since, without name,
A simple country gentleman, in story
Unknown, he left it. He returned, a glory
To the land, his country's father, and a light
Forever in his country's sight.
Short time he tarried, but with guests

Illustrious rode onward to where
The foe still gleams in arms, and rests
Hopeful of help, which 't is the care
Of Washington shall not be given.
At last the British chieftain, who had striven
Bravely 'gainst skill and fate, reluctant yields.
Then on war-wounded fields
The Angel Peace poured his strong balm,
And sudden rapturous calm
Smoothed, like a smiling slumber,
The ruffled feverish land, and number
Of fleetest couriers bore from side to side
The mighty news. Late in the night
They stirred the city watch, who all alight
Strode quick, and cried
From block to block,
Glad citizens to waken,
“ Past two o'clock !
Cornwallis is taken.”

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