



THOUGHTS
TWICE DYED

By
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JAMES MENDONCA

Bishop of Tiruchirappalli

THE CARPENTER

Angelic hosts had sung His birth in
joyful "glorias."

His ears were tuned to Seraphim's
"Hosannahs".

But here the livelong day He heard
split chips fall to the ground,
and the grating thud of hammer on
the chisel.

It is He who set the universe on its
majestic course,
and traced the perfect path for planet and
star and nebula.

Here beads of sweat stood on His
forehead as He laboured,
to set the clumsy ploughshare to the
villager's likes.

He fashioned all earth's charms, fair
flowers, snowclad mountains and
children's eyes;
that grandeur of being, of life, of intellect
is but His handiwork.

What mystery is hid in this soul-stirring
contrast?

That doing God's will is the highest glory,
that there is nothing low or mean
that God decreed.

CO-REDEEMERS

Has not the passion of Christ, and His
Blood profusely shed,
filled to overflowing the cup of justice,
sufficed even more than needed to
repair man's sin?

Blood-beads have girt the wide world
in a jewelled chain;
from the pain-racked Body flows the balm
for every sin-seared soul;
a piercing beam of light darts from
Calvary to search each darkened
conscience.

Yet, alas! behind steel walls of ignorance
and apathy,
men in millions, sundered from the
source of grace,
wallow in sin, and rush headlong
to certain doom.

O Christ, has infinite wisdom been deceived,
or has the outstretched arm been taken back,

or have undying mercy's fountains
shrivelled and dried.

that this be the fruit of all Thy life
and work?

Hast Thou so utterly failed?

No, it is not Thou, but I that failed,
and every one that drank from mercy's
fountains,

mean, cowardly, and selfish, oyster-souls,
that received the message and the grace,
but did not pass it on.

Thy toils are over; ours the further task.

O grant us to be true to Thee.

I think of Thy soothing, restful presence,
which sends out the cool draughts of
peace from the western sea.

It is Thy hand that rocks the ocean's
cradle in waves and storms.

It is Thy life that bursts forth in the
riotous splendour of flower and leaf.

It is Thy might that rolls the giant
orbs across the limitless spaces of the
universe.

But most of all, it is in the depths of
my own self

that I know Thee and feel Thy presence.

Each beating of my heart, each rising
desire, each passing thought,

is Thy work in me, a proof of Thy
watchful care.

It tells me of Thee towards whom
my life's journey is bound.

The universe is a work of power;

I am a work of love.

TO SAINT JOSEPH

Dear Saint Joseph, see this sorry ship
of mine.

It is wrecked beyond repair,
smashed against the rocky beach by the
slashing wave.

The masts are broken;
the planks are warped;
wide gashes have rent the hull.

My poor little ship,
it is I myself that made it,
frail little toy of a fishpond,
unfit for the strong winds and rising
waves and rocky shores of the open sea.

Dear Saint Joseph, now I need a carpenter.
Would you be the one,
to teach me how to choose my planks,
lay them side by side and fix the beams,
caulk the seams and plant the masts—

to teach me how to build a ship,
so strong and secure,
that not all the unchained fury of hell
will change it from the right course,
nor break again its well-set planks?

Dear Saint Joseph,

and while I put out to sea,
would you stand by me at the helm,
warn me of the hidden rocks and fitful
tides,
help me steer aright,
until the day I reach the haven
in the distant shore beyond time's reach—
Where Jesus and Mary await my
homecoming?

GIVE ME TO DRINK

"Give me to drink"—

You said once to the woman of a Samaria
who came to draw water from the well.

With meaning far deeper, down the ages,
You repeat
the same words to all who come close
to You.

"Give me to drink,"
today in my ear the same voice pleads
clear.

I to give You to drink?

It is I rather who should ask of You.

Though You look weary having
waited so long for me,
though Your feet are dust-covered
by the long journeying,

though the mid-day sun scorches
Your face and limbs,

it is not You, but I, who should say :

"Give me to drink."

If You thirst, it is for my giving, not
my gift,

and my giving must be proof of
self-surrendering love.

But is there love in me?

Have I wherewith to give?

"I thirst, give me to drink" I pray You.

My fountains have gone dry;

I cannot slake Your thirst even if I
wanted to.

Meanwhile I pine in an unquenchable
thirst myself.

The fountains of living water are with You,

drinking which I shall never thirst again.

Of this water, from this fountain,

give me to drink.

SIMON OF CYRENE

Thus spoke the aged man to children
gathered round his knees ;

“Nay, children, I asked not to help Him
with the cross,
nor cared I aught for Him.

He was but another criminal, thought I,
whom the Romans killed to show
their power.

Though my heart smote with pity,
so weak He looked, so roughly used.

‘Sirrah’, they said, ‘take the end that
trails behind’.

I refused, but the Roman’s word was law.

I was but a subject Jew.

I moaned my bitter fate,
to be yoked to a task so low, so mean.

(I feared the scorn of friends, the jeer of the
rabble, the loss of a half-day’s work.)

But there was no escaping.

So I helped Him with the cross.

But soon my heart's rebellion ceased.

I was happy and proud, I knew not why.

I felt He was no criminal,

but somebody, greater than Rome's
great emperor.

He said no word, but turned and looked
on me,

such a look, deep and meaningful,

as I shall not forget all my life.

He fell often, and I helped Him to His feet.

His touch thrilled my veins.

It was the happiest day of all my life.

On Calvary's top they nailed Him to
the cross,

I was loath to leave Him and go my way,

for so great a favour He had done to me".

and once more He would send a
dazzling light to open their eyes.
Yet what strange means He chose!
A barren, wind-swept, lonesome
mountain-side;
the vision of a Lady in white and
blue, beautiful, mysterious;
a frail, unlettered peasant-girl to carry
a message to all the wide world.
That mountain-side is Lourdes,
where all nature's laws seem swept aside;
where miracles pour down as
snowflakes from the sky.
The Lady of the vision is God's own Mother,
the channel of all graces, by God
appointed
as mother to all mankind.
And her messenger is you,
Saint Bernadette.
The weak things of the world has
God chosen
to prove the weakness of the strong.

But great they were in God's sight, and
on this night,
the most joyous in all the world's history,
they were the chosen ones to hear first
the good tidings, the momentous fact, of
God's supremest gift to human kind.

"To God in the highest, glory; peace to
men on earth",
thus in their ears sang the angel choirs.
Heaven had opened; the sky poured
down its floods of light;
chill night to warm day had changed,
death to life.

A new age for the world had dawned.
The shepherds in wondering awe heard
the news.

With thankful hearts, with eager steps,
they hastened to their king, their God.
All Bethlehem slept, but for the shepherds,
for all mankind had dawned the
first Christmas.

THE BROKEN LAMP

Thérèse, Saint of the Little Way,
rememberest Thou that one hour with
a broken lamp?

A Sister, absent-minded, had taken
yours away,
and placed this instead, a lamp that
gives no light.

You mourned not that precious hour
gone to waste,
but saw in it a higher rung
of the swift ladder that makes your
little way.

That the hour of complaining, will subdued,
of love ablaze, dispelling night,
of work awaiting completion, joyfully
sacrificed,
was of a piece with all your life,
a soaring heroism achieved through
name-less deeds.

That night of yours, in darkness,
with that broken lamp,

I love to think on; from it I fain
would learn.
Your ecstasy that seraphim would emulate,
the years of Carmel's cold austerity,
your miracles scattered in endless
rose-shower,
make dizzy my admiring look.

But not so this brief hour of darkness,
and the use you made of the broken
lamp.

A broken lamp I too have often found,
I find it still.

when clear unclouded sight eagerly
I long for
no light to show the stony, uphill track,
but only a voice from the summit far awy,
to bid me climb with blind faith
and unflinching hope.

But lend me, dear Thérèse, I pray you,
for those dark hours, a ray reflected
from that strong inward light which
ever burnt in you—
that matchless love of a soul at rest
in God.

TO SAINT FRANCIS

Dear Poverello, you that fled from
the world's wealth,
what mystery it was that unmeasured
wealth came to your feet.

Barefoot friar, poorest of the poor,
kin to gentle laughter;
kings in their palaces might have
envied your vast treasures.

You who roamed as God's troubadour,
through nature's halls of gorgeous
splendour,
did a thing ever meet your eye which
you could not call your own?

All things were God's; all things were yours.

To you the meadows smiled, to you
the streams sang their soothing hymn
over the rocks and sands;

the daisies waved their myriad heads
in gentle laughter;

the landscape spread its vast green
carpet in giant folds.

All things were your own, for nothing
you owned;
even the sea and the air were your realm,
and bowed to your behest.

The birds flocked and chirped about you,
and the fishes gathered in silence to
listen to you.

Silver and gold you carried not in your
purse;

but summer spilled about you her largesse.
The gold of sunshine, the silver sky,
the emerald and jasper of field and flower.

Roof and shelter you possessed not,
but what lacked you with night's
canopy of velvet arras, overhead,
and the star-lamps each glittering in
its socket?

You forsook all;

but to you was given the love that links
earth to heaven.

Forsaking all, you found God and all.

COME, FOLLOW ME

"Come, follow me," said Jesus
To Levi the publican who sat behind
his counting desk,
to John the fisherman who plied
his father's boat,
to Philip and Nathanael, to Andrew,
Thomas and the rest.

They counted not the cost; they cast
no sorrowing glance behind.

They heard the call, mysterious,
gentle, pleading, sweet;
and instant was their answer.

They followed him and His bidding,
out into a Christless, sin-steeped world,
preaching His truth, founding His
Kingdom, leading men to Him.

They followed Him in the service of
His people,
spending and being spent.

They followed Him in utter self-devotion,
through gathering storms of hatred,
to the martyr's crown.

"Come follow me," Jesus calls again,
as down the ages, in every clime,
He sets His eyes on youths of promise
and energy.

CAPTIVE BIRDS

These thoughts that flap their feeble wings
uncomfortably in a foreign tongue,
in strange phrases and stranger rhythm
are, if you know the truth,
a plaintive cry yearning towards you.

A flock of singing birds they are
from your own forests and fields.
Around your childhood they have grown ;
from your own hands they oft have fed.
And now, forgetful friend of changeful heart,
you mark them not ; their pleading
goes unheard.

But why should they, these captive birds,
thus languish in a narrow cage ?
Take up the cage and open wide its doors ;
you know how—let them but freely fly.

See if they cannot sing a sweet melody
to chase from you the darkening hour,
to thrill the taut heart-strings.

They sing of justice, beauty, truth and love;
unwelcome do these accents seem to you,
a painful reprimand, the echo of a sound
you once had silenced, a stern reproach?

Experience, wisdom, power and wealth
are yours now, comfort's soft caress;
but peace have you, true inward joy?

These captive birds bring you no reprimand,
only the memory of distant days
when you were their friend, when
roaming the fields,
you stroked the yielding down of
their necks;

when you were one with all the land,
and each aching heart caused yours
to throb.

R. I. P.

REST IN PEACE, dear life-weary soul,
rest from the clamour and the strifes,
the labour and the heats;
rest in the peace of the haven after the
stormy waves.

The battered bark has reached the
journey's end ;
the shattered oars have been laid aside ;
the torn sails are furled ; the masts are
lowered.

No more shall the howling winds and
the fears of the deep
touch your struggling soul.

No more for you the sad loneliness of
melancholy days,
or the dull autumn of yellow falling
leaves.

It is now winter, all life entombed
in the silent brooding earth.

Farewell forever to the hopes deferred,
the vanished dreams,
the ceaseless battling of an unequal strife.
Farewell to the warm felt love of human
hearts,
the soothing sympathy, the soft caress;
you need not these; for these greater
comforts have followed.
Time with its anxious tomorrows and
painful yesterdays
has slipped from your side,
giving peace to a perpetual now.
Yours is the great peace in the heart of
the Infinite,
a peace which no storm shall shake,
the peace of task done, of achievement
crowned.

THE YEARS THAT WERE

I come to thank You, Lord, for all the
years that were.

When life first pulsed in me, and an
immortal soul,

by Thy creative power from nought
evoked,

upon my body set Thy seal,

when baptism with new life-stream washed
my soul,

and heaven was given me as heritage,

when truths beyond man's reach, by Thee
revealed,

in me the seed of Thy celestial vision
showed,

when wandering feet You led aright,

when straggling course You made
straight again,

when with unnumbered graces,

untiring watchfulness, power infinite,

the hound of heaven, You, almighty God,

THE ETERNAL PRIEST

By that gracious moment when
Mary's Fiat echoing in heaven's vaults,
the Word eternal leaped the chasm of
the infinite;
when to mankind was given the perfect
Priest,
when adoration meet and fitting praise
for the first time were offered from
a sin-steeped world,
by that hallowed silence of God's
almighty deed,
which on creation bowed in worshipful
awe
a crown of glory set,
which made this earth, midst the
myriads of the starry sky
the most resplendent, with brilliance
other than of created light,
by that supremest mercy of Thine

which gave Thy Son to us,
to be our Brother, one of us,
a Mediator most holy, offering in our
name
the one acceptable sacrifice,
by that august decree of Incarnation,
than creation more stupendous,
incline Thy pity and hearken to our prayers,
as when daily for our morning offering
gathered
we raise to Thee the Victim immaculate.
Our sins are many; our frailty great;
look not on us; we come not
ourselves alone.
Thy Son us represents; He stands between
to speak on our behalf, our eternal Priest.

A MIGHTY LOVE

What is Christ in a Christian's life?

The teacher whose undying lessons echo
down the centuries;

the shining exemplar, the perfection
of all human virtues;

the ransom for sin; the living sacrifice;

the unique way, truth and life; the
source of all grace.

Christ is all that, but more, immeasurably
more.

Christ is a mighty love.

A love preferred before all else; an
over-powering love;

a love that is life's guiding star,
its inspiration, its joy and crown,

a love that taxes strength, courage,
energy, all that is best in man,

to the height that makes God's heroes,
the saints.

Christ's name heroic missionaries, leaving
home and country, bore to wild tribes;
for His love saints in every age lived a
deathless sacrifice;

they proved to a sin-steeped world the
grandeur of a soaring ideal.

In His cause countless martyrs poured
out their life's blood,

they braved the rack, the hangman's
rope, the tomahawk, the wild beasts'
den, the burning pyre,

nor once winced in their staunch
confession, in their faith and love.

Christ is not dead, but lives,—compelling,
graceful, dynamic, focus of human hearts;

Christ is not a figure of history; He is a
throbbing fact in each Christian life;

a power stronger than all that the world
has known

is the love that binds human hearts
to Christ.

UNMEASURED LOVE

I asked him for the brief company of
a kindly friend

to ease my loneliness in a stranger's land.

He brought me into a home of the
world's kindest and best,

made me a member and rightful
heir of that home,

surrounded me with the fondest and
most ardent of human loves.

I asked Him for a flower whose soft
touch I might feel,

whose colours richly blending might
give joy to my sight,

whose soothing fragrance would fill the
air I breathed.

He set me in a garden, bidding me
call it mine,

where flower-beds, to match the fairy
land, stretched far and away,

with loveliest colours and sweetest
perfumes, in patterns of splendour.

And all that riot of beauty and form
was mine own.

I asked Him for a candle-flame to guide
my steps,

across the dark and unknown paths,
safe from the fearful chasms that
yawned on either side.

He changed the night into a day,
each shadow and lurking fear He
chased away;

for a feeble candle-flame, He gave
me light in overflowing fulness.

I begged Him that I, unworthy though I be,
be permitted to sit a moment at His feet,
to catch the light of His eyes, to hear
His gentle voice.

Stupefied, with tear-filled eyes, I saw
Him rise,

gather me in His arms and press me
in fond embrace.

My heart aches for joy and happiness;
eternally I shall be His.

Unmeasured love He has shown me.

What return shall I make? Quid retribuam?

MORNING PRAYER

When morning gilds each tree-top with
the crimson light,
and fleeting sunbeams deck in diamonds
the lowly blades of grass,
when gentle zephyrs bid each flower-bud
to open,
and birds with full-throated ease sing in
a thousand nests their joy,
thou, all-beautiful, art there,
invisible, but not unrecognized.

Thy robe is the crimson and gold of the
eastern sky ;
the dewdrops and the diamonds are lamps
trimmed to await Thee ;
the myriad flowers of forest and meadow
waft their perfumes to Thee ;
and the birds from their pendent nests
are welcoming Thee by their songs.
Midst all this riot of splendour and joy

shall I alone remain apart, sullen and
unmoved?

Let me throw off my ugly mask of
self-centred thoughts,
and join creation's joyful throng.

My face, as a mirror catching Thy
reflection

shall be transformed like nature's
radiance;

the dark haze of sin's bitter memories
shall melt away as mists before the
morning sun.

All things in nature bow to Thee.

Unconscious though they be.

But to me Thou hast given the power
of feeling and sight:

From me there must rise a prayerful
hymn,

to give expression to the melody of the
universe.

CANDLE FLAME

This trembling candle-flame will be my
last gift to Thee,

O Lord of life, eternal unwavering
source of light !

When with straggling feet I started my
long journeying,

You lent it to me, and lighted it from
Your living torch.

Its flame grew steadily, fed by desires
that melted into the warm air ;

the wax dripped by its side like the
tears of a weeping child.

There were other lights beside mine,
stronger, steadier ;

they went their different ways ;
I heeded them not, nor envied them.

But mine alone was a guide to my feet,
in days of weary loneliness, in hours of
doubt and fear.

It's gentle touch pierced the blankets of
darkness

that phantom-like fluttered around me,
obstructing each forward step;
It's feeble glow showed me the narrow,
upward, stony, zig-zag path
that skirted the chasms and led up to the
mountain top beyond the night.
When the angry storm howled through
the trees,
when the heavy cloud swept away all
heaven's lights,
my little lamp rose and fell heavily,
like the breath of a dying man;
though frightened it still kept on,
shielded by the palm of my hand;
and at that hour when all storms will
have passed away,
when nature shall be hushed in prayer,
and day shall absorb the night
then will I place this candle at Thy feet.
Its mission will then be over;
all its wax will be melted in tear-drops;
and its flame will grow to a brilliance,
the brilliance of Thy eternal day.

IT'S GOD'S WORK

Weak little man, it is not yours
to raise the soul to saintly eminence,
or to open a bud to blossoming fragrance.
A flower bud is a mystery of workmanship,
folded tight like the joined hands of a
child at prayer,
breath of many lives, promise of colour
and perfume.

It is beyond your power to open its petals;
your hollow voice will not call forth
its softness of hues and richness of
scent ;

your fleshly fingers will but crush its life.

But let Him that throbs in all life speak
the word ;

then will enchantment burst forth into
splendour of beauty.

So is it with each human soul.

The goal whither it tends is not men's
striving but God's calling.

He made it a pulsing flame of upward
longings ;

A closed mystery that thinks, chooses,
wills ;

a spirit clothing matter, transcending
matter's law and being.

He who painted the lowly violet and the
flaming cherry,

who charged with fragrance the lily and
the rose,

the same with power infinite, fashioned
man's immortal soul,

a thing of power and beauty, heaven's
counterpart in earth's sordid life,

planted in nature to reach towards
super-nature.

Clip not its wings, crush not its life,
ignorant, thoughtless man ;

tamper not with its law of being ;

but be docile, expectant, humble,
prayerful ;

and respond promptly to God's bidding
voice, His quickening touch,

FOR JUSTICE

The slant roofs of the factories rose one
behind another across the land.

A silence as of death reigned within;
no wheels turned; no machine moved;
no smoke issued from the proud chimneys.

In dark lanes of the slums walked sullen
workmen,

with hollowed cheeks and sunken eyes;
for work they could not have, nor food.

In lowly huts their children moaned
in famine's grip;
the strike was on

I closed my eyes and saw in vision a
hammer and a sickle;

colossal, placed crosswise, arching the
slums.

On them was fixed the gaunt, lean form
of a workman,

stretched as on a rack, with hands and
feet tightly bound,

straining at the bonds that held him,
writhing in agony.

I stepped forward to loose the bonds and
to set him free.

"Stay" cried the voice of another in
agony.

Christ's figure rose in the background,
fixed too, but by nails to a wooden cross.

"Stay and answer: whither wouldst
thou lead him when freed?"

Whither? Back to work, back to the
harsher rack of the factory?

Back to grind and sweat, and pitiful
doles?

Back to inhuman squalor, heartless
injustice?

No, that shall not be.

The workman's bonds shall be loosened,
not to bind him anew to machines and
tools,

but to set him truly free in a land
where justice reigns;
to show him a life that is worthy of
man.

ALL THINGS BEAUTIFUL

All about me lie scattered Thy messages
of love;

this golden light of dawn that fills my
eyes,

the soft cool breeze imprinting its kiss
upon my cheeks,

the freshness of the air, crisp,
fragrance-laden,
crystal-clear,

all speak to me of the supreme,
invisible One,

Who travels upon the beams of light
and stirs in every breath of wind,

Whose life is in the timeless age beyond,

Whose ever active presence spans the
unmeasured space.

Thou art the Infinite,

and I the tiny atom lost mid aeons of
dreams.

Lost? No, not lost to Thee.

Thy searching love-lit eyes have
picked me out.

Thou gavest to the finite a touch of
the Infinite

Thy sun-beam turned the floating
speck of dust to a star;

from broken harp-strings Thy touch of
breeze called forth a celestial harmony.

Through nature's sand and rubble the
foundations have been sunk;

the edifice divinely built soars to God's
high throne.

It is love that planned this work of grace;

and love's tokens are all things
beautiful on earth and sky.

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

Light, golden Light,

of joy,

light that bathes human hearts in a sea

that kisses childhood's eyelids, opening
them to a new-born day,

lurks behind death's sunset, to be reborn
in a blaze of never-ending day,

spreads in countless ripples across
life's sea,

softly draws my boat, and sweetly fills
my sails,

guiding me ever forward to the haven
of rest.

Eternal, uncreated Light,

far nobler than the light of day,

which gives life and warmth, the fresh-
ness of nature, the fragrance of flowers,

far richer than the myriad lights of night,

which shoot from star to star in
unmeasured space.

SWORD, NOT PEACE

"Peace", sang the angels at Thy birth.
But You said: "Sword, not peace, I bring."
I had seen that sword, quivering like
the lightning flash;
the very sight of it had frightened me.
I had prayed never to feel its sharp edge.
But one day in the quiet of morning prayer,
You placed it in my hands, and bade
me wield it against Your enemies
lurking in my soul's fortress.
I shivered: yet I refused it not.
I have it now, Your sword,
decked with jewels, but terrible to behold.
It hurts me when I press it to my
bosom.
it cuts all flesh from my heart,
to change it into a throbbing flame of
love;

It drains all blood from my veins
so that proud, sinful self be utterly
killed in me.

How long, Lord, shall this warfare last?

When will this bitter struggle be crowned
in victory?

When shall I sheathe this terrible sword,
and place it at Your feet?

I hear a voice:

“Not till death’s summons ring.”

TRUE VISION

Three wise men gazed at heaven's gold
dust,
and saw midst myriads one star that
led to Thee.

So—may it be with me.

There are many things that dupe me
with fair-seeming lure;
but Thou alone, their maker, art
truly fair.

Let me pass these by, and tend straight
to Thee,
like an arrow shot at the mark,
like a ship on high seas, bound for port,
like a bird at nightfall winging to its
nest.

Nature's grandeur is poured out on
earth and sea and sky;
their myriad beauties entrance my
unthinking mind,

hold it in bonds and check its upward
soaring.

But when wide vision breaks the mind's
captive bonds,

and scales of blindness drop at Thy
healing touch,

I see not these, but in them Thy
Hand divine:

They are the mirrors dimly reflecting
eternal radiance,

unmeasured beauty.

HEART OF JESUS

Heart, symbol of an infinite love,
heart, source of the burning flame,
 that consumes all dross, purifies all gold ;
 bearing aloft the cross,
 sign of suffering and victory,
 proof of the redeeming love ;
girt around by the crown of thorns,
 the crown of the mock-King,
 pleading for reparation for the world's
 unnumbered sins ;
pierced Heart,
 that drained blood to the last drop in
 ransom for men,
 ever open to receive the sorrowing
 sinner, the stricken sufferer ;
Heart of Jesus whence flows courage and
 love and saintliness ;

men know Thee not, alas,

though ever bathing in Thy warm rays,
they respond not to Thy pleading.

Oh, would that I could make this Heart
known everywhere,

win for love the return of love ;

oh, would that my own heart were a flame
of love,

set ablaze by the love of Jesus' Heart.

THE DESERTER

Alas I did not know that it was the hour
of the rally.

The air was fresh; the shade was cool;
the grass was soft.

The birds sang sweetly on the trees;
the stream flowed gently at my feet;

I cared not to shake off the velvet touch
of sleep;

nor heeded the King's bugle-call.

"Youth, rise, the King's calls you,"
whispered some one in my ear.

"No," I answered, "It is the tree-trunks
rubbing against one another,
swaying in the wind."

And I slept on.

The rhythmic thud of a million feet fell
on my ears.

The men were on the march.

"Young man," said some one,

"Rise, the hour is come for fight.

The victory and the glory shall be yours."

"No," lazily I shook my head,

"it is the water splashing on the rocks,
and breaking into flowery spray."

The soldiers marched away.

All day the battle was fought in the
distant plains.

But I was not with them.

I had deserted my comrades in the hour
of need ;

I had turned a traitor to my King.

How dare I meet them when night falls,
when battle-scarred and glory-crowned,
the soldiers gather in the King's
banquet-hall ?

GOD'S QUEST

I was the beggar of the street,
awaiting You at life's daybreak,
with cupped hands, ready to receive, but
not to give.

You came but not in kingly glory,
splendidly arrayed ;

You were the village carpenter,
a wooden cross slung at your side ;
You reached to me Your nail-pierced,
labour-hardened hands,
and asked for something I alone could give
—my love.

Foolishly, I refused to know You and
Your quest.

I gave You a tiny trinket from my bag,
—the least of the things I had—
and then turned my back to You.

Sadly You walked away, to go to some
other with Your quest.

At life's sunset, I opened my bag
to reckon what the day had gained.
I found things valueless, mere dust and
straw,
—except for the toy I had given You.
It was back there—turned into a toy of
gold.
Fool that I was not to have given You
my all;
not to have followed You when first You
came to me.

THE PRODIGAL

A sinner,

oh, the depth of misery in that name.

The sinner pleads pardon in broken sobs ;

the prodigal has returned in tattering
garb ;

his purse is gone,

his eyes are sunken,

his frame is withered,

his legs are bruised.

In a stranger's land, in famine's grip,

he had wailed his wail of woe,

he had moaned the blackness of his crime.

My God, I am he ; I am the prodigal ;

I am the guilty one.

I have come back to You, repentant,
imploring ;

I own my guilt, I plead for pardon.

I have broken Thy laws ;

I have slighted Thy favours ;

I have wounded Thy love ;

I have squandered Thy graces.

If justice were to be shown to me, the
cruellest hell would not be cruel enough ;

I plead not for justice, but for mercy ;
not for judgement, but for pardon.

For my ignorant waywardness, for my
feeble fickleness,

for my mean selfishness, for my heinous
ingratitude,

for all my sad melancholy past, my God,
be merciful to me,
a sinner.

THE NEW YEAR

Four simple digits, strange, silent,
unshakeable :

They stand in bold clear print on my
new desk calendar ;

below them are a pile of fresh pages.

Another calendar with a different figure
stood here yesterday ;

all its pages had been turned aside one
by one ;

pages that spoke of days, joyful, sad or
colourless ;

reminders of all that I might and should
have been ;

recalling unfulfilled purposes, wasted
chances, leisure misspent ;

pages too richly blessed by God, instinct
with service and sacrifice ;

none of those can be turned back again ;

relentless time has put its seal on all.

Fresh pages, other days, another year are
now given me,

tremendous in import, dark with mystery.

What shall they bring to me? Sunshine
or cloud,

sparkling success, or dull, tragic failure?

I know not; but with God at my side,
this I know,

I shall face all squarely; I shall not
weakly shun life's strife.

Days are given me to make of my life
something noble, uplifting,

ever reaching towards the goal which is
beyond grasp.

Helped by God's grace, I shall do it.

And on that day when time will have torn
away all the pages of all my calendars,

may I have cause to think with joy of
these now before me,

may I then say to my God: "Thank You
for having given me these."

THE TRIPLE VOW

Three roses borne aloft on a single stock,
fairer by far than all that earth can yield,
petal within petal, delicately unfolding,
softly hued, with soothing fragrance,
they are the symbol of my holocaust.

The first is a golden rose,
the gold, not of the rich man's hoarding,
but of heaven's surpassing gift,
beside which all the earth's wealth is vile
and cheap,
possessing all, still having nought,
gold that adorned Bethlehem's crib,

Nazareth's shop and Calvary's cross.

The second is of spotless white,
with no taint of the sodden earth in its
purity untarnished,
white that matches the fleecy cloud,

the fresh-fallen snow, the angel's wings,
reflection in frail flesh of heaven's radiance,
the best adornment of God's own pure
mother's soul.

The third is hued deep red :
red like the blood of the Lamb of God,
proof of unceasing death and living
sacrifice,
the crushing out of self, daily, hourly,
the putting on of God,
the moulding of the will to God's perfect
pattern,
even as that of Jesus was.

Poverty, Chastity, Obedience,—with these
I make my holocaust.

Brute force is enthroned in place of reason ;
and souls imprisoned in darkened consci-
ences have shut off God's light.

"On earth peace to men of good will."

O Thou who sent this message from the
skies,

O Prince of peace, O God of love,
Emmanuel,

have pity on Thy straying, rebellious
children,

who have no peace,

who neither will let others taste of peace.

Drive far from the world oppression and
violence ;

open blinded eyes ; crush proud selfishness.

Let charity and justice reign supreme ;

and let once more Thy message of peace
ring out across the skies.

THE GRANDEUR OF GOD

In everything man's thinking mind
can draw away a veil of outward seeming,
and see beneath the grandeur of Him that
 makes and shapes and preserves all.

The softly sailing winds,
the buried treasures in earth's bosom,
the tiny germs of life that elude all
 human search—
enveloped in blindness though they be,
across the haze of mystery they proclaim
 the Infinite, the Invisible.

The giant spheres in the limitless sky,
the snowclad mountains glistening in the
 morning sun,
the pure light in a child's smiling eyes—
though to human ears they utter no sound,
the pondering mind hears from them a
 perpetual hymn to God.

BLESSED

Thus spoke she in solemn prophecy,
whom the angel hailed 'full of grace,'
whom Elizabeth greeted 'blessed among
women,'
Mary, humble maiden of lowly Nazareth.

Hillsides of Judea heard the words and
hid them,
Not forgetting but pondering.

Men's ears were not tuned to such a
message.

It was night ;

And men sunk in mortal slumber.

But a time would come
when Life breaks from the grave,
when Light shines upon the world,
and the voice of Mary's Son reaches
the nations,

then would Mary's prophecy break from
the hillsides,
start a deadless echo down the arches
of the years.

Millions in every land shall call:

· "Ave Ave, Blessed art thou,"
for thrice blessed is she
through whom came the world's
salvation.

SHADOW AND LIGHT

How bleak and desolate my past appears
as in a moment of gathered thought
under the sanctuary's mellow light,
I range the halls of memory.

Seared, burnt, like a bomb-smashed city,
mean deeds as monuments to failing
faith,
the ugly shroud of self covering the
best of days.

Yet not all is desolation ;
bright lights gleam where the shadows
break,

God's love like a silver shaft shoots
across the years.

It is that love that brought me back to
tears of repentance after each sin,
a love that made me promise again
each unkept vow,

and dispelled the gathering mists of
despair from evil days.

Self is gluttoned with the havoc it worked ;
but yet it could not crush the conquer-
ing love of God.

MARY'S COMMUNION

Fear, joy and love,

three streams of thought struggle for
mastery in the soul

when the moment comes for Holy
Communion.

So was it with Mary,

when the angel had told his message
and departed

and the months of waiting sped quickly
by ;

in waking hours, fear softly urged

what homage would be meet for Him
who hears songs of Seraphim,

what palace would welcome Him whom
the vast universe holds not in.

In slumber, dreams of the Mother-to-be
danced in thrills of joy,

for God's supremest gift to mankind,

for the soul-filling happiness of the
Mother of God.

At all hours, in work and rest, love's
flame blazed ever brighter,
as her life blood flowed to form and
foster the growing Infant,
union of bodies melting into oneness
of being.

The moment comes to me too, Mother,
when I will be God's and He in me.

Yet how far are my thoughts from what
thine were;

Oh, teach me to make of each Communion
another Christmas.

CHARITY

Charity is the virtue of infinite power,
 unfathomed reach,
the fountainhead of God's manifold work,
the meaning of the Word that became
 Flesh,
the soul of the Christian Gospel,
blazing flame that makes God's heroes.

Charity is a plant of heavenly clime,
 the fragrance of its blossom rises first to
 God's high throne; gathers all
 in a vast embrace.

It is the link of man to God and of all
 men in one pervading life.

It is the fire that burns all cancer of sin, and
 gives the freshness of youth's purity,
sweet scent that dispels the foul air of
 hatred and enmity,
gentle rain for the parched soul whence
 sprout virtue in beauteous forms,

CEASELESS EFFORT

I slept and I dreamed
of a boat upon a placid stream,
under the moon's silver light,
between green banks and waving palms,
sweetly gliding in fragrance-laden breeze,
with the rhythmic splash of a single oar,
accompanied by the hum of a soft melody.

I dreamed such to be my soul's journey
to the haven of perfection.

I awoke and I perceived that such is not
my soul's journey.

It is a journey up, not down, stream.

Strong downward flow ever pulls the boat.

Cross currents send it digging into the
banks.

In the shallows its keel dives into the sand.

Hidden rocks shatter its prow.

In engulfing whirlpools it spins and sinks.

It is a dreary rocky desert all around:
no refreshing view of green,
no pleasing voice of music,
no strengthening touch of breeze.

Skillfully to avoid the shallows and the
rocks, and the deadly whirlpools,
ever to row upwards, and forwards,
ever to fight against cross and down
currents,
what effort, and exertion,
and often what exhaustion!

THE LOVE OF CHRIST

I measured, weighed, compared, estimated,
things created of every kind,
to know the uncreated love of the
Heart of Christ—

I descended into the great shaft of the
mine,
saw wide caverns in the dim light,
weighed the heaps of gold delving skill
had peeled from the rocks.

Thought of the richer treasures man's
industry will never reach.

All that is dross, vile refuse-heap beside
the love of Christ.

I stood upon the lips of the yawning
volcano's mouth,
looked into the deep, dark, silent abyss,
a year back a burning river of sulphur
had flowed out of that stillness
even now, though unseen, great masses
boil and heave and seeth at its depth.

All that power of burning and consuming
is icy cold beside the fire of the love
of Christ.

I sailed upon the wide seas in a mighty ship.

In audacious thought I measured the
stretch and depth of the waters,
sounded the unfathomed caves,
coursed the uncharted routes,

I saw it giving itself up for the life-
restoring rain of the parched earth
and sustaining all manner of life in
its bosom.

All its immense expanse is tiny beside the
generosity and mercy and pity of
the love of Christ.

I jumped into space, and wandered with
speed of thought among the stars.

I saw the myriad stars moving in
perfect harmony.

I saw the burning globes whose names
human speech has yet to learn.

I thought of stars whose light is yet
on the way to our earth.

Farther I ventured and saw the island
universes,
thousands evolving according to the
same perfect law.

All that power and beauty and immensity
is slight beside the enrapturing,
unmeasured love of the Heart of
Christ.

ONE TALENT

Lord, I ask for one talent;
more I dare not ask;
with more I may lose all and myself.
More I care not to have;
all else is so vile beside this.
I shall labour with this, and give you a
hundredfold.
Presents I shall bring in rich fruitfulness
to place at Thy feet,
the frankincense of fragrant prayer
rising,
the myrrh of painful, bitter sacrifices,
the precious gold of zealous, ceaseless
labour.
That one talent shall be to me a
sacrament,
a source of unfailing grace and
that talent shall be to me a certain pledge,
courage and hope for evil days.

That one talent is LOVE

burning, consuming, sacrificing,
immolating love,

love to make up for the thousands
who do not love,

love that will wash away with tears my
sins, and bind me to You inseparably.

Love that will widen my heart, and
outstep its narrow bounds, fill it,

crush and bruise it with love's force

pierce it with love's shaft,

so that I languish and die love's victim,

and see Your Heart replacing mine,

for the union of eternity's bliss.

MORNING SACRIFICE

Mother, why that bright flush of scarlet and
vermilion over yonder greying hill?

Child, it is the angel gilding your sombre
slumber with another bright day,
and parting closed eyelids.

And why that last faint taper of night's
altar snuffed so gently on the
northern sky?

Because candles are lighted on God's
altar,

because the vested priest and kneeling
people are ready for their sacrifice.

And why the dawn hangs her crimson
curtains on the north and south skies,
and why the horizon decked in jewelled
beauty?

Because the earth like a vast cathedral,
awaits its solemn hour of service,
and angels are bidden to festoon it.

TRUE GIVING

It is a more blessed thing to give than
to receive.

Generous givers spread over the earth
the blessedness of Paradise.

They walk through life as mirrors of
God's bounty.

They give without counting the cost.

And when you receive from them,
they feel that they and not you are
the privileged—

they thank you inwardly for the benefit
you have conferred.

They and you are the happier of the
exchange.

To give is their joy,

and they expect no return.

When they are injured or wronged,

when justice is denied them,

they utter no complaint.

In sunshine and in rain, they are
equally happy.

Grumblers are those who ever feel that
their rights have been violated,
that justice is denied them.

They want the world to dance to
their tune,
and all men to obey their whims.

They torture themselves with imagined
griefs and feigned illnesses.

And they torture their fellowmen with
their wrongs and ills.

They are tightfisted and self-centred;
their hearts are too narrow to expand
to the joy of giving.

Engrossed in themselves they grow blind
to the needs of others.

They give rarely;
and if they give,
the reluctance of the giving makes the
receiving a humiliating insult.

THE ALTAR OF SORROW

There is a public altar in the church's
sanctuary, whereon is immolated the
Son of Man.

There is also a private altar in the
sanctuary
of each sorrow-laden soul,
of each crushed and bruised heart.

Thereon is immolated the victim
of world's tyrannies,
of man's harshness,
of fortune's vagaries,
of mental sorrow and bodily ailment.

Two faint tapers burn in the dark interior,—
Faith and Love.

A thin incense wreath curls upwards—the
plaint of sorrow's lowly cup of
burnt ashes.

Tones of a solemn ritual break upon the
brooding silence—

the prayer for strength,

the prayer of resigned acceptance.

A sombre shadow covers the altar and
the victim—

—it is the shadow of a tall rugged cross,

—the sanctuary's sole adornment,

—whereon hangs another victim—

But it is a shadow cast by God's pleased
countenance in the distant background.

Thou, blest child of sorrow,

look up through thy tear-stained eyes,

clasp the feet of Christ who bends

over thee,

rejoice in God's light which shines of

Him and thee.

THE LITURGICAL SEASONS

With joined hands, with gathered thoughts,
the priest and the people, united in
Christ,
celebrate the phases of the Lord's year.

Fleeting time with its noisy todays and
anxious tomorrows
stops in its course,
fades from the view.

Eternity unfolds its glorious pageant,
like a rosebud to pour out its fragrance,
like cupped hands to be filled with gifts,
like a baby's eyelids to smile on a
new day.

Man, sinful man, weak, fallen man,
man, crushed under the sway of nature
and of matter,
awakes to the revelation of eternity
in time,
beholds his elevation to the supernatural
—the redeeming grace,

UNITY

Upon Babylon's waters let Thy Spirit
move, O Lord, my God,
pour Thy concord into Babel's confusion ;
falsehood and hatred reigning supreme
have obscured the light of reason,
have dried up the springs of affection.
Isms that promised to cure all ills have
covered the land with a deadly
pestilence,
science feigning to search all truth has
darkened the abiding Truth of
eternal life,
false religions and false philosophies set
men on the futile race after
will-of-the-wisps.
Oh, if the light of the Gospel could
shine on all men,
undimmed in full radiance,
oh, if truth could make enslaved minds
free,

oh, if unity of thought could lead to
unity of action,

selfishness has captured men's narrow
hearts,

suspicion and jealousy have together
begotten the accursed brood of
hatreds,

deep chams separate man from man,
race from race, nation from nation.

Oh, if the charity of God could bridge
all gulfs,

oh, if true love could cement all God's
children into one family bond,

oh, if unity of thought and unity of love
could heal this sickened world.

WHAT IS MAN ?

What is man ?

A shooting star of vanishing glory,
a brief life spanned by three-score and
ten years,

but the universe will crumble to dust
and emptiness,

and man will outlive the stars.

A mite of terrifying smallness,

a speck lost in the vast ethereal space
and among giant spheres,

but with an intellect that annihilates space
and grasps the whole universe,

with a soul that is the apple of the
Creator's eye.

Just one among the billions of other men
traversing life's corridor,

a bubble blown by a child to float in space
awhile and then to burst,

but one for whom God became man,

one who passes life's corridor to enter
eternity's hall.

AT HIS FEET

She was the sinner in the city.

Her slender form darkened the festive
entrance of the hall,

and many eyes were lifted in heavy
frown.

She stood hesitant a moment,

then rushed forward,

and fell at the feet she adored.

Repentant love flowed out in a flood of
tears.

O Jesus, Master, love's source and
completion, mercy infinite,

I too would share the bliss of that
meeting, after the long estrangement.

There are no assembled guests, and no
festive drapery.

But You are here as in Simon's gay hall,

and the lone red lamp stands sentinel.

You are here as of old, awaiting the
prodigal's return.

I would kneel before you, in spite of all
my fears,

press upon your pierced feet the kiss
of pain-purified lips,

wash the blood-stains in the warm stream
of shame-and-sorrow-laden tears.

But where is my perfume to anoint feet
so pure?

I will bring to You all that is left to me
from the wreck of ill-spent years—

a broken heart for alabaster box,

its deathless love for ointment.

INTO THY HANDS

This was Thy prayer, O Jesus,

in the last moment of Thy earthly life,
when the cruel passion and the three
mortal hours of agony drew to
their close ;

when the spirit of life was leaving the
body, with its task consummated.

This was the prayer of all Thy saints,

O Jesus,

when death's summons bade them depart
from this life.

The body, like the shell that had yielded
its priceless pearl,

was cast aside for the grave ;

the soul, the spirit of life, was
commended to God,

from Whom it came,

to Whose image it was made,

to Whom it returned.

May this be my last prayer, O Jesus,
when death's rattle shakes my frame,
when all power of resistance has
vanished,
when phantoms of sin and devil's might
wrestle with my languishing strength.
Then, in confidence, in love, may my soul
be commended to Thee,
to be pardoned and to be absolved,
to be strengthened with Thy strength in
the last agony,
to be drawn with irresistible force
into Thy arms.

But now,
the vision has faded behind clouds,
the path is hard and steep and devious,
the stars are veiled,
the storm is gathering.

Weird sounds of the night break upon the
stillness,

I hear prowling feet upon the dead leaves.

My feet ache with pain's fatigue,
my frame shivers with cold and fright.

Shall I give up the struggle?

Shall I return to the garish light of the
haunts of pleasure in the valley?

"Coward," I hear a whisper.

"Trust you not in my love and my
power?"

Startled, I open my eyes;

a love-lamp lights my steps,
its warmth drives far fear and fatigue,
my resolve grows;

I can do all things in him that
strengtheneth me,

**"TEACH ME, O LORD, TO DO THY
WILL, FOR THOU ART MY GOD"**

Child, why dost thou stand thus,
with face darkened, furrowed,
with eyes weeping, bloodshot,
with limbs trembling, rigid?

Great sorrow floods thy heart,
part the locked gates of thy hanging,
trembling lips and speak.

Lord, Thy sanctuary lamp faintly gleams,
it thrusts a beam of hope into the
blackness of my soul.

Perchance, I too may rebuild life from
shattered foundations.

Too long have I followed my will
unheeding of Thine;
the clay lump writhed out of the
potter's hand,
the canvas smudged the painter's brush,
the marble broke the sculptor's chisel,

thy plan to make a superb masterpiece ;
my work has made a hideous spectre.
Thou art my God ; Thy will my unerring
guide ;
fool that I was
to reject that guide,
to pick and choose my path,
to be bruised and broken in life's
unnumbered pitfalls.

I come back to Thee, humbled, crushed,
let my future make amends for my past.

In sunshine and in rain,
in things great and small,
today and ever after,

teach me to do Thy will.

MY GOD AND MY ALL

My God is my all; and there is nought
beside Him

which I dare or care to call my own.

Memory, intellect and will, so feeble,
so wayward,

honours and riches, friends and kinsfolk,
so transient,

so fickle,

proud self, its hopes, its plans, its
ambitions, so earthly,

so vile—these I once called my own
and regarded as

my all; for these I wasted my days,
and alas! smeared

my conscience.

But those days are past and their drunken
follies.

I was disillusioned,

Another and a greater love entered
my life,

I left all and followed my God.

I cut asunder the heart-strings that
bound me to all
beside Him.

I gathered all for a holocaust to be
consumed upon the fuel of sacrifice,
by the sacrificial flames of love.

All that is now left to me in the wide
world,

my life's all for time and eternity,

is my God:

His mighty love fills every void,
satiates every want.

My God and my All.

EMMANUEL-GOD WITH US

The Mass is over; the priest has left.

The music is hushed; the candles are out.

Silent I kneel with the few

communicants;

with joined hands, bent head, burning

heart,

I thank the Sacramental Lord, and

repeat:

"Stay with me, Lord; be my true joy."

The weary, dreary day drags slowly on,

never nearing its end;

the monotonous tasks of office and home

crush me with their leaden weight;

petty annoyances fall thick like hail.

Life seems an unrelieved song of

melancholy.

And still I repeat:

"Stay with me, Lord; be my true joy."

And when my life nears the journey's end,
when rigidly I lie, awaiting the hour,
when I hear the suppressed sobs around
me,
and feel the pain of the parting,
when I recall the wasted graces of my
past,
and feel the fear of the judgment,
in loneliness of soul, repentant, hopeful,
may I turn to Thee and repeat my
eternal prayer,
"Stay with me, Lord; be my true joy."

THE FRAIL BARK

Every morning I set the prow of my frail
bark towards an unknown future.

I weigh anchor, unfurl the sail and
handle the oar,
to breast the mounting waves,

to traverse the uncharted seas,

to conquer the unconquered land.

Every day of my life is a voyage of
adventure, discovery,
conquest.

Every day I steel myself for the siege
perilous.

But unnumbered enemies lurk on the
way to compass my ruin.

Alone I am impotent against them;

my soul trembles to think of the
pirates of the high seas,

enemies of the Christian name,

hidden rocks that would shatter my
bark into a thousand planks,
shallow quicksands in which I shall
flounder and be smothered,
the sudden heavy storm that would draw
my bark and me to a watery grave.

Thou, O Lord, Captain of my bark,
invisible guardian over life's voyages,
to whom are known every concealed
danger, every future change,
from whom come counsel and strength
and protection,
watch over the day's voyage, and guard
me from the shipwreck of sin.

CALL FOR AID

Abyss calls to abyss.

From the depths have I cried.

My weak impotence seeks Thy mighty
power.

My soul's enemies are stronger than me;
the world, flesh and devil have
encircled me.

their wily means have laid a trap to
every step I take.

I must struggle with clenched fists and
set teeth, and break through;

or manacled I shall be led to my doom.

Like a hare wounded on the track.

I struggle for breath, and flee for life.

The jeering crowd mocks my trembling
and my flight.

Unless Omnipotence lifts me out of
this frenzied fray,

swift and sure will be my ruin.

Like an unwise scouter plane,

I have ventured far into enemy land.

My fuel is failing;

my escorts are missing;

my bearings are lost.

Death missiles fly about me.

My nerves are shattered.

My resistance seems vanishing.

My soul trembles for its life;

the heinous fall of sin seems imminent.

Trembling, anxious, desperate, hopeful

I pray,

O God, come to my aid; O Lord,

make haste to help me.

PITCHED IN BATTLE

Lord, I am pitched in battle against a
relentless foe;

there can be no truce or armistice but
a ceaseless struggle to death's finish.

The war is on many and wide fronts;

my forces are feeble and vanishing

my courage fails;

my strength weakens.

Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies.

Bad habits sown through years of neglect,
have left an undestructible seed;

like weeds they sprout; and choke the
life of the soul.

Oh, that I could crush them out wholly
and save the taxing labour of
endless plucking.

The world is an intricate maze of traps
to my wandering feet.

The fair semblance of society and fellow-
ship allure me into shameful vices;

oh, that I could spurn the world under
my feet and pass through it unscathed.

Flesh lusteth against the spirit;

the longing for haunts of pleasure is
not dead in me.

Strong temptations knock at the door of
my heart, urging admittance.

Oh, that I could turn a deaf ear to these
ceaseless knocks and keep my heart
for Thee, my God.

FREEDOM

In other days,

what garish visions have I dreamed.

My vaulting hopes like fire ever flamed,
and spread,

and waxed, and never sated;

my childish wishes grasped the entire
world;

the lust of eye was for glittering toys
of gold;

ambition's flame, ever quested, pulsing,
throbbing;

unleashed vanity, craved for more and
ever more praise.

Yet not for a moment was the gnawing
agony within repressed.

Restless I floated on the baubles of time,
and—

Restless I turned to my God.

I left all, and followed the call.

I have nought, yet I have all.

Unshackled in mind, and heart,
freely I wander the wide world,

whilst my soul lays up treasures in heaven.

ANNUNCIATION

No special feature marked the landscape
on that spring day.

The sky was fair; the trees were green;
the hare flitted through the lusty grass.

The village lay silent under the sun,
oblivious of its coming greatness.

A young maiden, fairest of the fair,
worked in her garden, praying the while;
Her hands buried in the wet soil,
her soul wrapt in God's immensity.

Suddenly a crystal voice broke upon
the brooding silence,

like lightning splitting the stormy sky :

“ MARY ”

God's angel stood before,

with folded wings, joined hands,
bowed head.

He told his message,

God's redeeming wish,

the sorrow and the glory and the love
that were hers

She said her Fiat ;

she stood, Immaculate Queen, on the
pinnacle of virginal Motherhood.

The vision faded.

Mary, God-bearer, on God's earth,
contemplated God's universe.

The western sun shed a new brilliance.
on this privileged dark planet.

Invisible choirs sang an unheard "Gloria"
of unending echoes.

Incarnation—

The central fact of history,
the pivot that turns the human race,
the supremest condescension of divinity,
Sole comfort to a sin-ridden world, was
accomplished that spring-evening,
in that rendez-vous of heaven and earth,
of the angel and the maid.

BENEDICTION

Golden flames of light on white tapers
send forth a mellow glow like stars
in the firmament.

Flowers in profusion, petal within petal
of tenderness,
give life and beauty and fragrant
freshness.

Incense wreaths like winged angels curl
and rise,
to overspread the bowed heads.

Notes of angelic melody, sweetly hymned,
float in the air with soul-stirring force.

It is Benediction
of gifts and blessings
of the Lord and King,
in solemn audience,
of loving, loved subjects.

They know it; they believe, and they kneel
together in homage.

Their deep, depthless thoughts of love—
touched hearts yearn for means of
utterance;

and they have chosen these.

The broken flowers and the vanishing
incense are soft as their daring humility ;

the gold, silver and jewels, the silk and
lace are tokens of a deeper
self-oblation ;

the columns and arches, and sculptured
marble are hymns in stone of
rising prayer.

The Presence that breaths vaguely and
with awe from the mountain-tops,

the Power that broods limitless and mys-
terious upon the ocean waves,

the Immensity that rules the harmony of
unnumbered celestial globes,

God omnipotent, Christ Emmanuel,

here bends to the prayer of love,

in gentle graciousness accepts the
homage,

soothes every sorrow, heals every wound,

fills every heart with a blessing.

not for these did God fashion us
so nobly, with such loving care.

For greater things are we born.

No father gives a serpent

to the child that asks for bread to sate
its hunger,

no, nor yet to the foolish child that
asks for serpent.

For things worthy, then let our prayer be.

For all the wide world let us pray,

embracing all in generous desire.

A stone thrown upon the placid lake
opens out its crest, a circle of waves,

which floats forward, ever widening,

until it laps the distant shores of sand.

A prayer said for others, for the Church,
for all mankind,

sends out its circles of endless blessing,
will not cease or be spent,

until it breaks on eternity's shore.

Universal, then, let our prayer be.

IN GOD'S IMAGE

In His image God created man—

the image of the invisible, the infinite,
the one transcendent.

What boastful fancy this! Yet divinely
true.

God mirroring forth is man.

Matter blindly rolls through space;
its pendent spheres are in their orbits
fixed.

But man's seeing eye leaps beyond space;
no orbits bind his fleeting thoughts.

Life in its varied forms, in plant and
animal,
through birth, growth and decay, remains
ever earth-bound.

But man is born with cravings infinite;
his growth is heavenwards; dying
he lives.

He is sprung from the common earth;
but harbours an imperishable life.

NAZARETH

Nazareth was Jesus' chosen home.

Unthinking people said that no good
ever came from Nazareth ;

but thither the centuries turn for the
world's loveliest home—

a home that was built on soul-knitting
love,

where peace and joy reigned, and
heaven's sunshine.

Not in wealth and splendour, not in the
poms of power,

not with pleasure's sickening touch, nor
with luxury's lurid glow,

not with the itching to grasp more and
yet more,

not after worldly men's misguided ways,
was the home built.

Here a village carpenter plied his humble
trade,

fitting wheels to rough-hewn carts,

or mending broken furniture.

A lovely maiden, fair lily of the vale,
kept the home,
while with tender care and love she
worked,
at the hearth, or with the distaff, or
in the garden.

Betwixt them grew to sprightly boyhood,
a fair child with features kingly,
with golden hair, with eyes that
matched His mother's—
Omnipotence concealed in human form,
Infinity shrunk to small compass,
unknown to all save God's chosen
guardians of the Word.

Against poverty and want, with thankless
toil and meagre return,
battled this home—but not with
dismayed hearts.

No shadow of gloom, no trace of bitterness,
ever crossed the threshold of Nazareth's
home.

It was heaven's antechamber, earth's
godliest spot,
reflection of happiness—eternal, foretaste
of unending joy.

RETROSPECT

'Neath the sanctuary lamp I make my
retrospect,

Its glow resolves the riddle of the
chequered past,

reveals the mystery of God's dear
designs.

What strange changes have I seen of
joy and pain,

cruel, harsh, thrilling, unforeseen!

There were days, dark, dreary, oppressive,

when sorrows past endurance weighed
heavy on the heart,

when life was bleak and benightmared,

when the present seemed a torment,

and the future a futile venture.

There were also days, bright, joyful,
uplifting,

when life wore youth's rich adornments,

when joy's pulse beat swiftly,

and all the world was decked in beauty,
when the fleeting present was gloriously
happy,

and the future soared on many—
coloured wings.

In retrospect I grieve for my sorrows
and my joys,

for sorrows borne so grudgingly,

for joys received so thanklessly,

in ignorance of the source of all,

in defiance of infinite Wisdom's designs.

But now the vision is clear;

all are gifts of a loving Father,

to enrich, fashion and perfect, a

beloved child.

Now the mind is firm;

in all I bend my will to His;

in sunshine and in rain,

I will give thanks to the Lord,

I will seek the glory of the Lord.

TRUTHS UNVEILED

Great truths He has unveiled to me.

Step by step He led me by the hand
into the halls of vision ;

my widening eyes beheld the grandeur
of His palace beautiful.

This wondrous world His hand fashioned
for me,

it's mysteries from the tiny atom to
the mighty stars,

life's power, throbbing, decaying,
perfecting,

plants and animals each true to its
type, swelling the river of time.

Man, the link between spirit and matter,
chained to the earth, yet soaring to
heaven,

tiny in compass, yet infinite in desires,

I saw all these, in the passing years,

with the broadening mind.

I saw above all the majesty of God's
own being.

dimly through the darkened glass,
yet with certainty,

assured of the truth of what was shown.

My gladdened heart heard the God-given
truth

of the Triune Being above all being,

of the Son Incarnate.

Of the redeeming grace.

Of the uplifting call graciously given me.

With joy and hope I cast the yearning
look into the future

when dreams shall be reality,

when knowledge shall yield to vision.

VANISHED GARLAND

I had gathered my flowers from many
gardens.

Long had I laboured in their search,
My feet had been bruised,
my eyes were sunken,
my hands were benumbed with pain,
but all weariness I counted as nought.

My flowers were to my thought the
loveliest of all gardens :

They were precious as gold and jewels;
they were sweet as cups of honey;
they charmed with their fragrance the
passerby.

My heart swelled to behold what my
hands had gathered.

I wove my flowers into a garland for
the feet of my beloved,
and circled the petals round with threads
of gold.

I thought my gift the brightest men
could offer;
in pride and pleasure I took the garland
in my hands;
fixed my proud look on it,
and pressed it to my lips.

Alas, in the twinkling of an eye, the
flowers melted,
and nothing remained save the gold
threads in my trembling fingers,
and my poisoned breath, a spreading
pollution.

IN GOD'S COMPANY

In the twilight of life's dawn, you were
beside me,
King of my being.

When existence pulsed within me with
longings infinite but unconscious,
when the tiny frame, the feeble muscles
strained for the wide unknowns of
growth;

You were beside me, though I knew
You not, nor thanked You,
moulder and guardian of my future,
light of my waking vision,
song of my rocking cradle,
sweetness of my secure sleep.

And when, like the sun parting the scarlet
curtains of the eastern skies,
reason's glowing orb rose within me,
when darkness was chased away by the
spreading light of knowledge,
when feeling and love and joy warmed
my throbbing heart,
again Your presence was near me;
and my childhood's lisping prayer was
raised to You,

Guide of my winding path,
moulder of my conscience,
teacher of my searching thoughts.

Through life's waxing and waning,
in the morning of youth, when I am
 led forward on the wings of hope ;
at mid-day, when wide horizons open,
when the labour and the heats fall to
 my lot ;
in life's decline, when the shadows
 lengthen,
when wearily I lean against my staff ;
You still continue by my side,
never parting company, ever ready to aid,
comfort in all sorrow,
strength in all trials,
goal of all my endeavour.

And at last in the dusk and sunset of life,
when all light shall fade,
when my eyes shall close in the sleep
 eternal.

May You still be beside me,
and may my sleep be the waking to
 Your unending day.

THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

I sought for a sure way that leads
me home.

Many devious paths opened to my
straying feet,

paths that promised easy crossing,
quick achievement,

paths winding, level, straggling, pleasant.

They held their charms to my
unthinking mind ;

and for a time I followed them with
eager steps,

soon to be disillusioned, straying ever
farther from my goal.

But now leaving those paths and their
futile wanderings,

I have come back to Thee who said :

“I am the Way.”

I sought for knowledge to sate my
questing mind.

The treasured wisdom of the ages
I conned ;

Nature's secrets lay before me as an
open book ;

history led me through gorgeous halls
of vision.

For a while proudly I fancied that the
torch of reason,

held deftly and straight could be my
sole guide, sure and safe,

until from oft mistaking and many
doubts,

I learnt to pray for a surer, safer guide.

And longing for the sublimer truth which
reason cannot teach,

I have come back to Thee who said :

“ I am the Truth.”

I sought for a life to answer the cravings
infinite

of a spiritual soul ever reaching upwards,
but imprisoned in corrupting flesh,

and discontented with its earth-bound life.

Comfort and pleasure I spurned,

power and knowledge and fame led me
not to happiness ;

and seeing that nought in this world
can fill the void in my soul,

I have come back to Thee who said :

“ I am the Life.”

TO MARY

O Mary, Mother of Christ, Mother of God,
Mother of the Way that leads to man's
true goal,

Mother of the Life that quickens to life
death's victims,

Mother of the Truth shining bright
midst darkness.

O Mary, harbinger of hope, surety for
mercy,

mystical rose born of the self-same clay
as sinful man,

full of beauty and fragrance and promise
supernal

lily of the valley, raised aloft on slender
stalk, immaculate,

wafting heaven's fragrance.

O Mary, light in darkness, star of the sea,
hope of the lone, lost mariner,

safe guide to port mid destruction's
gloom,

TO DECEASED FRIEND

The days that were and the joys we knew,
friend, answer me, can you recall those
days?

Can you live again the sweetness of our
youthful love?

Alas! your voice, that golden voice
which so thrilled my heart is silenced.

Your pursed lips will whisper no more
in my listening ear.

The light of your eyes—
that sparkling light of twin gems, I
loved so to look on—
is faded to dark mystery.

And no more shall I grasp the warm
touch of your hands—
death's cold grip is on them.

Days were, dear friend—do you not
remember them?—
when we vowed deathless love and
no parting.

But no power on earth can prevent this
last parting.

No love can bridge the yawning
chasm of the grave

to make present an absent friend.

My heart bleeds for your loss;

you are gone, gone for ever, never
to return.

But still my sorrow brings with it no
bitterness.

Do you not remember what oft we spoke
of the one Love which is above all
human loves?

Its links were forged in the Heart
of Christ;

blood sealed its bonds;

it knows no parting—even of the grave.

In it all human loves have their crowning.

To that love I commend you; there rest
till the day when for me too time's
veils shall drop.

Friend, you are not dead, but gone before.

ON LIFE'S SEA

The sea is a parable of life :

And I am the boatman who crosses it
towards the distant shore—

not alone, nor unaided ; Christ is my
helmsman.

when the shore grows invisible in the
haze, and seems nowhere,

and dark doubts arise in my heart
whither my journey tends,

gently He assures me : The course is
straight, towards My Father's home.

Drooping hope rises again, and patiently
I ply the oar.

The waters yield softly at every stroke ;

but they are treacherous, uncertain,

changeful, dark with mystery ;

all calm and peaceful at times, dancing
in gentle ripples in the breeze.

Then on a sudden comes a terrible storm ;

the giant waves mount; the sails flutter
and tear;

my oars, fiercely beaten, split in my hands.

My courage wanes; strength fails in me.

But Christ is not far; He says but one
word;

and instantly the winds grow still; the
waves sink;

and the sea is calm again.

Life has no storms but must yield to the
gentle Christ's command.

In storms and calms I move onward,
till the day when with my bark
shattered perhaps,

with spent strength and tired limbs,

I hope to reach the shore where angel
voices sing—

The Father's home.

THE OFFERTORY

“Accept, holy Father, this spotless host.”

It is mankind's supremest gift-giving,
the token of a total self-surrender,
creation's offering of praise to its Maker.

The priest in vestments at the altar,
speaks not for himself alone, but for
the Church,
he is the mouthpiece of his race,
the mediator between heaven and earth.

In his hands is raised a gift, frail and
slight,
but it rises not alone.

By unseen hands are raised gifts precious
in God's sight,
the love of immolated hearts, a thousand
daily tasks of hidden lives.

The wafer is made of countless grains,
cleansed, ground by stone, baked in fire.

So too is each God-centred life;

A perfect round of countless moments,
each moment dedicated in suffering
and love.

Am I too of this group of unseen offerers,
who silently join their gifts with the
priest's?

Is mine a life fit to be offered in the
paten with the host?

Not spotless, nor yet tried in fire,
accept, O holy Father, my lowly life,
still longing to be made wholly Thine;
crush its rebellious uprisings;
sanctify its every deed.

Let mine be henceforth a dedicated life.

TO ST. PAUL

Dear Saint Paul,

you who soared on wings of haste
beyond life's common strife.

What shall we most praise in you?

What most admire?

What shall we call the greatest jewel in
your crown of glory?

Amethysts and emeralds are prodigally
strewn across your blazing trail,
these gathered by angels' hands and set
in beauty make your unparalleled
crown.

Their brilliance has not dimmed
through the ages;
nor their memory ever faded from
Christian hearts and minds.

Through wide lands of unknown terrors
you carried the word of truth.

Your conquering quest shunned not the
stormy seas, nor the hostile crowds:

Barriers of race and culture and country
you trampled down;

Jewish pride you humbled ; Grecian wisdom
you spurned ; Roman power
you defied.

Scourged, buffeted, stoned, abandoned
as one dead,

shipwrecked thrice, grappling with
the waves,

loaded with chains, dragged before judges,
yet ever with burning ardour, spread
the message of Christ,

what purest gem you gathered in each
new trial and effort!

Of brilliance more dazzling was the vision
which wrapt you into heaven above,
and in Seraphim's company showed you
secrets which no earthly seer
has seen.

And yet not for these we admire you most ;
not in these we deem your greatest
glory ;

but in that one phrase you said,
the core of your life :

" For me to live is Christ."

GOD'S PRESENCE

Thou art near, and yet Thou art far away,
when the hour of silent prayer draws
me apart,

and all thoughts are collected as are
the petals of a fragrant bud ;
when sorrow comes like the thick, black
clouds of July rains,
and fills the air with the tears of my
loneliness ;

when love and joy thrill my being, as
golden sunshine a summer sky,
and Thy touch on my heart-strings
draws forth a divine melody ;
then Thou art near, though I see You
not.

Nearer than all I hold dear ;
near as the fragrance in the flower,
the water in the rain,
the music in the lyre.

In humble homage I kiss my fingers
which touch Thy feet.

And yet Thou art far away,
as far away as heaven is from earth.
To sight and feeling Thou art nowhere,

And not the faintest whisper of Thy
voice falls on my fleshly ears.
Nature that displays its beauty and
grandeur,
life that floats on its many-coloured
wings,
mind that flits through weird realms
of thought,
—all these are Thy works,
their growth and movement are from
Thy ever present care;
Thou art in them, but deeply veiled.
And yet how little our senses can
perceive Thee
In Thee we live and move and are;
and yet how easily we forget Thee!
O grant to us, grant to all mankind,
a piercing sense of Thy Being, Thy law
and Thy love!
So may we never be led astray by
nature's glamour,
ever be led forward to Thy love and
bliss,
and show to Thee the service of
grateful, willing hearts.

ONE BODY IN CHRIST

One mighty life pervades us all,
a life transcending far all that in nature
moves and acts,
a life unseen, beyond nature's reach,
divinely bestowed,
the life of grace, of God dwelling in man,
in being intimate as the soul, in action
a second nature.

Stupendous is the fact of grace,
taught us by faith, received in humble
adoration,—

God in us, as co-worker with us,
making our human acts divine.

Though feeble, frail, earthly, our being
reaches heavenward.

Such is the higher life we live by,
a divine life.

From Christ flows this life; He is its
source.

Even thought that flits across the aeons,
and scales the dizzy heights of the
universe,
envelopes Him not. It creeps towards
Him,
Sees Him as in a mist, dimly
and stoops low in adoring awe.
What power has He given to crumbling,
sinful, mortal flesh,
that at its hollow voice,
He should descend from beyond space
and time and thought,
and be cabined in frail, white wafer?
Omnipotence has bridged the chasm;
a blazing love has leaped infinity.

JESUS IN NAZARETH

Against the green hillside of Nazareth's
vale
stood the white, lowly house of the
village carpenter.

The caravans laden with wealth,
clamorous, tinkling many bells, strode by.
The mail-clad legions of Rome's farflung
sway
marched with rhythmic thud on the
stone-paved road.

They heeded not the youthful
carpenter, nor He them ;

His was the hidden, silent life, the
hard, unchanging work ;

theirs wealth and power and the wide
spaces of the world.

Swiftly, stopping not to pause for breath,
He worked
with the rough tools that Joseph had
used,

fitting a wooden wheel to an old broken,
peasant's cart,
fashioning a plough, mending a chair.
Beads of sweat stood on His forehead;
He wiped them with a careless hand.
His hands ached; but on He worked.
Many a complaint had He to hear from
the angry customers,
that Joseph's had been better work,
that He lacked skill; that His mended
things did not last.
And yet it was He, though they knew
it not,
who with perfect art, had fashioned
the tree, the cataract, the wide oceans,
the gold dust of the star-lit sky,
and the wondrous mind of man.
Foolish men still will say that He lacks
skill,
that His is not a perfect work.

LIFE'S HARMONY

A symphony concert :

now the music gently glides like
morning breeze fragrance laden ;

now it rushes with maddening haste
like cascades of mountain torrent ;

now ruthless, now majestic, ever a
thrilling melody.

Each little chord torn apart is but a
harsh jumble of sounds,

set in order by the deft artist's hands,

they make the perfect, pulsing harmony.

Such is the chequered course of human
lives.

Our heart-strings make the trembling
harp

on which plays the divine Artist,

supremest author of harmonies,

in accents sweet or harsh, slow or quick,

ever fashioning an immortal symphony.

Often life's events are to us meaningless:
its pains and griefs, its sharp failures,
its cruel buffetings,
leave us embittered, puzzled, sad.

Our vision is dark; we see not the
hand that plays the very chords;
our ears are gross; we grasp not the
celestial meaning of God's
perfect melody;
we live in time; the present alone we see;
the future is hidden; the past is dim.

But this we know, when viewed as a whole,
in the light of God's changeless ages,
this fleeting life, its meaningless trifles,
the tears and laughter, the shared joys,
the lonely griefs,
echoing in heaven's vaults
make the divine Artist's immortal
symphony.

TRUE APOSTOLATE

Behold, O Christ, Thine apostle, lowly, a
thing of little worth,

which in Thy hands might yet serve
a purpose divine,

if Thou but change and quicken it,
mould it after Thy designs.

A bunch of grapes, the frosty season's
late yield,

from the knotted unpruned vine, not
luscious nor fair to behold.

But take it Thou, O divine vine-dresser ;
crush from it its last blood-red bead
of wine,

which by Thy power transformed,
might become the world's source of
life and grace.

A clumsy bundle of faggots, which in
Thy hands
might serve as the world's beacon light.

Take it, shape it into a wayfarer's torch,
burn it till it hurt and scorch,
light it from Thy flame of love and truth;
that so in the dark night of ignorance
and hate
this torch be Thy unfailing radiance.

Take Thou, O Christ, all that is in
Thy apostle.

Take though self resists; take to the last
ounce of energy, effort, strength;
and then break the emptied vessel
but broken in Thy hands, these
fragments shall be
not clayey potsherds, but stars shining
in the firmament.

And Thine apostle, emptied of all himself,
losing himself, shall find in Thee life's
eternal embrace.

TO SAINT PETER

In fear, beneath the felt burden of sin,
you once cried: "Depart from me,
O Lord";
from the greatness and power of the
Godhead
you fain would hide yourself.

But to you was granted the vision,
dazzling beyond words, blinding to
mortal eyes,
of the glory of God unveiled, the
radiance of the sun,
in the transfigured Christ on Thabor's
height.

Treading on the waters, though in the
Master's steps,
you weakly doubted once, trust failed
in you;
the waves yielded, and you sure would
have sunk
but for Christ's strong, supporting arms.
But you were made Cephas the Rock,

unshakeable, invincible, of strength to
weather all storm;
on you was built the Church of the ages,
ever unchanging midst earth's many
changes.

Thrice, coward-wise, you denied Christ;
but thrice too you professed your love,
and thrice received the supreme
Pastor's office.

You dared not let Christ wash your feet;
but of the triple denial Christ did wash
your soul;

and to you was given the power to
bind and loose.

Dear Saint Peter, you are the trophy of
divine grace.

Man's weakness counts not; God's power
counts.

In weakness power is made perfect.

Grant to us humble trust, burning love;
be our greatest glory to be made

God's lowly instruments.

THE CANDLES OF CHRISTMAS

Two candles with golden flames, gently
poised
over twin green holly leaves and a
bloodred berry
these are the symbols of Christmas,
remembrance of joy and hymns and
gifts,
of the Christmas crib and the midnight
Mass.

Two golden flames of light did once shine
beside a new-born Babe, in a lowly
manger,
and sent their rays through all the
night-steeped world
two undying flames of Peace and Love.

Peace,—not as the world gives,
between brandished swords, on the
blood-soaked battle field,
but the true peace of heaven, joy's
fountain-head,
peace that midst all earth's changes,

UNCEASING PRAYER

I ask a favour, knowing that I shall
receive;

I seek a treasure, certain that I shall find;

I knock at a door, confident that it will
be opened.

The joined hands betoken still
recollection and earnest pleading;

the bended knee is proof of a heart
and mind bent low in humility;

the downcast eyes, the pursed lips are
fortress of a soul,

which cut off from the world and its
many cares,

pleads with God in fervent supplication.

It is not food or raiment or glittering
earthly treasures that I seek;

these I shall find according to need,

through God-given strength and skill,
by the sweat of the brow.

TO THE ENGLISH MARTYRS

What tragic scenes these ancient walls
have seen! Enclosed here, time seems
to sink
beneath my feet; this prison carries
my sad, proud memory,
to days of heroism of martyrs, my
brothers in the faith.

Mine is the faith—how can I forget,
standing here,
in this dark dungeon, beside these
rough, heavy walls?—

Mine is the faith of Campion, Fisher,
More,
of scores of others, who here faced
the rack,
confessed the faith, who hence,
"Te Deum" on their lips,
went forth to scaffold or block, to
heaven's joy.

These writings on the walls, oh!
thank you,
dear martyrs, Saints, thank you for
having left us these;
I can read them with tearful eyes,

these precious souvenirs of your lives
farewell.

On stone you wrote, on stone of your
confining wall,
your only book to write on; your pen
some sharp point by a kindly gaoler lent.
Through tedious, prayerful hours you
wrought at these,
your testament to future ages, burning
words of love.

In your hearts, deeper than on stone,
your message burnt; the flames of love
rose
to God's throne, carrying the dear
holocaust of nearing death
I think I see you kneeling here, with
fingers by long labour aching
with tired eyes, but will ever firm
of which these stones, these words
bear lasting proof.

From heaven you watch us; give us of
your strength;
teach us with like courage to live
our common faith.

FOR THE LAST VOYAGE

Steersman, at my helm sit Thou,
on that last day, when I put out to sea,
for the perilous voyage to the shore
unseen.

Let there be no mourning beside my
moored boat,
to make bitter the last adieu ;
no cruel snapping of fitful heartstrings
that foolishly may cling to broken toys ;
no rude stormburst of tears
to hide from me nature's smiling face.

Not in a wail of sorrow shall I depart,
nor grieving for the things I leave
behind ;
but in a song of triumph and victory,
in the uplifting sense of task accomplished.

A lone star shall shine from the
evening sky,
the star of hope, of vision under
failing light,

the star that heralds the setting of a
long feverish day.

After day comes night; but not the
night

of darkness, of black tears and weird
phantoms;

after work comes rest; but not the rest

of aching limbs and uneasy sleep;

the fragrance of memories long forgotten

shall be wafted to me from many gardens;

the earth shall sing to me its last song,

the song of autumn's yellow, falling
leaves.

And angel choirs shall re-echo its refrain

in a melody of unending life.

Steersman, bid me when the hour strikes,

and gladly shall I weigh the anchor
and unfurl the sails;

but steer me Thou alone, with
kindly care,

for the voyage is perilous and the
shore unseen.

A BEACON LIGHT

O Jesus, make of us, Your followers,
Your loving friends,

a shining forth of Your infinite radiance.

You want us to be for the world a lamp
raised on high,

a beacon light to show the way midst
the encircling gloom.

But light there is none in our sparkless,
lack-lustre lives;

of clayey mould we are; in darkness we
ourselves grope;

the world can see in us nought but the
inert human dross.

But your power reaches from end to end
mightily;

no barrier can withstand omnipotence.

Into the slime of the earth You once
breathed a human spirit and made man;

water You changed into wine at a
marriage feast;

Your power, daily, on our altars turns
a wafer into Your divine Self.

Is Your arm shortened now?

Can You not work in us a like miracle?

Take up this human lump Your hands
have made;

strip off from it the rebellious self;

break, burn, cut, chisel; do whatever
You will;

melt it like gold in the crucible;

beat it like iron on the anvil;

that so You change it into a masterpiece
of Your skill;

a crystal clear, a spotless mirror, a
glittering star,—a saint,

that pours forth in cascades Your rich
light upon the world.

TOWARDS THE DAWN

Like lampless pilgrims of the night,
we journey towards the distant dawn,
the dawn of unity, of progress, of
peaceful, steady upward march.

The way is long and the night is dark;
those that have power strive to be stronger
still;

those that have voice drown every
other voice.

No star breaks through the thick-veiled
blackness of the sky;

men struggle for each other's gains, for
harvest without sowing;

they trample under ruthless heel the
weak and poor.

The dawn recedes ever farther into the
distance,

and the night air is choked with the
tears of the sorrowing.

The dumb millions creep wearily to their
untimely graves

suspicion, hatred, jealousy rankle in
men's hearts;

in death-grip they sieze each other's throat.

Whither is vanished the unity for which
men sought?

Why is mankind's march not upward,
but down and ever down?

For unity Thou alone can give to
distraught minds,

let Thy hands guide us, dispelling
black fears;

Thy countenance be our light, not the
hatreds we foment.

Ours is a task that needs united striving
from all of us;

o conquer dire want and abject misery,

to uplift the weak and ailing,

to hasten the longed for dawn of peace.

Too long through the night of war and
bloodshed

we have wandered our devious, conflicting
ways.

Grant us at last to march together,

all hands aiding in the common task,

all burdens mutually shouldered,

deep peace and steady progress greeting
us with a smile of joy.

MEMORIES

On Olivet to her Jesus she bade adieu,
and back to Nazareth's home she came—
a little cottage, nestling midst the hills of
Galilee,
alas, a home, no more; bleak, lonely, silent;
still of all places in the wide world the
dearest;
filled with memories; eloquent of Him
on Whom her thoughts were centred.

Here, from this porch, three years ago
He had gone,
out to the world of toil and preaching
and suffering and death,
to redeem mankind; to found His Church.
His work was now accomplished; to His
Father He was gone.

Alone she remained to mother the infant
Church,
to dwell on memories that were.

This was the workshop,—Joseph's first,
then His;

there lay a few rough planks and
instruments;

but no more a Divine Artisan shall bend
over them

with labour-hardened hands, with
sweat-beaded brow.

Here by this table, He had often sat
to eat the simple meal her loving hands
had set,

and while He ate, she watched Him
with a mother's pride;

and heard Him as He spoke of the
day's work,

of the plans for the morrow,—also of
the plans for the ages;

God's loving plans for wayward, sinful
world.

The walls still echoed His dear accents;

Nazareth's home was not silent;

no, nor lonely either.

The very air still breathed His presence.

HIDDEN TRIUMPHS

All Mary's triumphs were hidden,
not for men's curious eyes to see,
but for her Son's recording in life's book.
She was not there, when in the temple
court,
the ancients of the law, Israel's wisest men
stood dazed to hear the boy Jesus speak.
But back in Nazareth, to all the village
folk,
she was the humble mother of the
carpenter ;
her hidden triumph to serve His needs.
Not in the desert place where with
five loaves
He fed five thousand, and the crowds
would make Him king ;
nor on Mount Thobor's height, where
dropped
the veils of human nature, Godhead
shining forth in splendour
was Mary seen ; not hers to share in
glory thus.

AS GOD WILLS

All things bend to the divine Architect's
supreme will,
which brought them forth from the void
of emptiness,
which sustains them in being;
which governs their every chance and
change.

The majestic snow-clad peaks needs must
bend
as glaciers break and tear, and strip them
bare.

The gorgeous sun never can say 'nay'
to any ugly rack of cloud hiding its
fair face.

An angry, howling storm may lash and
beat and rive and fell
the giant oak standing proudly in its
strength and age.

A sudden earthquake rising mysterious
from hidden springs
will make the peaceful, firm-set hills and
valleys heave and quiver

HOME-WARD, HEAVEN-WARD

The harvester walks beside the creaking
cart,
sheafs of golden wheat are piled high and
fastened fast.

He sings in his heart as home-ward he
treads,
want shall not darken his cottage door
for many a coming month.

The vintage is over, and baskets in rows
are filled with the luscious grapes.

The gleaner places them on the wagon,
and daily drives home-ward,
with a hymn of joy to the purple cups
of health-giving drink.

The people with their priest assemble at
God's altar.

They too are home-ward bound-heaven-ward.

Bread from the wheat and wine from the
grapes are their offering to God.

They present their work and with it
themselves in sacrificial gift.

God accepts the gifts and changes them
to His own being.

He gives it back to them,
to sate their hunger and thirst,
to strengthen them on their home-ward
heaven-ward road.

THE ANNUNCIATION

The air was hushed in mute adoration,
where God's angel had bowed before
the Virgin
and delivered his message—

The sublimest message ever uttered in
human ear,
heaven's power for uplifting earth's
fallen state,
omnipresence encompassed in a
woman's womb,
omnipotence enchained in fleshly form.

Shadows turn to light; night to day.

Man's race turns a new page in history,
of hopes fulfilled, of life received,
of joy and warmth and ceaseless
striving and Godward ascent,
a brief whispered message, an unseen
deed of divine might;

PALM SUNDAY

Behold He comes,—

Jerusalem's gay streets are carpeted
with cloaks drawn off men's shoulders.

Children have gathered from far and near;
a forest of palms is waving and swelling,
in welcome to the promised One, the king;
songs of hosannah rend the air.

From David's royal lineage is new-risen
a King and Leader,

the longing of the ages,

the joy and crown of Israel,

Redeemer, Liberator, Ransom.

Behold He comes,—

yet what strange contrast.

A donkey for a royal mount,
children for noble guards of escort.

The priest of the temple,

and harsh guardians of the law,
they stand afar,
sullen witnesses of scenes they cannot
prevent.

Behold He comes,—

but five days hence He will come
again,

derided and spat upon.

Covered with stripes, laden with a cross,
with a jeering crowd thirsting for His blood.

The welcome in triumph is sad prelude
to a rejection in shame.

RISEN CHRIST

Risen Christ, hail to Thee, triumphant.

Thou has broken death's chains,
vanquishing sin ;

mortal flesh Thou has crowned with
immortal glory.

The Roman soldiers fled in terror ;
the Jews wailed their schemes
defeated ;

Jerusalem woke to God's mighty
work of power.

The scattered disciples, depressed, sad-
dened, were gathered together again,

to have their faith re-kindled, their
vision cleared,

to receive their mission, to be made
herlads of Thy undying reign.

Risen Christ, Thee we proclaim.

To Thy side we rally from the ends of
the earth ;

Thy victory is ours.

The Head is risen and lives eternally ;
the members shall not perish.

Death's hand shall not pluck us off
from Thee.

Dying we shall find Thee, made more
closely like Thee, vanquishers
of death.

In mortal flesh we carry an undying
hope.

Risen Christ, Thine we are.

Thy tomb, with its seals broken, is to
us a remembrance

of our past which we have left behind.

With Thee we are risen to a new life,
triumphant over sin, radiant with Thy
glory.

Grant us thus ever to live,

till life be swallowed in eternity,

and we are gathered to Thee in
heaven, sharers of Thy crown

Men grope in darkness ; God's proffered
hand is refused.

Death reigns ; will you be the giver
of life ? "

Lord, the task affrights me, it is divine ;
too mighty for weak hands such as mine.

" Too mighty for you, if you be alone.
but it is My work done through you
by Me.

Will you be My instrument, pliable,
easy to wield,

quick in response, self-abasing, ready
to suffer ?

Will you be the one to continue My
Person in the world ?

Will you be another Christ ? "

pointing to Christ, drawing all hearts
to Him,—
the tabernacle, the living tent God has
pitched among men,
house of gold, without stain created,
adorned with every grace,
God's fittest dwelling place on earth's
sordid clime,—
the monstrance raising aloft the God
of glory,
in splendour decked, yet appealing
tenderly
to our bowed heads bringing the healing
benediction,—
all this thou art,
and we thank thee for what thou art,
Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament.

THE SOWER

The sower goes out to his field :
so barren the soil seems, but God to
him has given its care ;—
his is the noble work of spreading
God's words
of making it bear fruit in a field
that seems to sleep in perpetual winter.

He ploughs the furrows deep across the
field ;
his prayers and tears are a pitiful
tickle of rain
for the parched, stony, thirsty clod.

He plants the dormant seeds in the
thankless soil—
a futile work—so dead his words seem
as they fall from his mouth on
listless ears.

When shall the harvest be ?

He peers into the distant future.
But lest discouragement grip his soul,
and sap the energy of his tired limbs,

he takes in both his hands his faith
in a power
so far above his impotence.

He is but a weak instrument, a toiler
in a divine work ;

it is not his, but God's, to work the
miracle of growth.

The seeds he sows, cold, lustreless words,

Possess a might not of his making
but of God's giving ;

the soil he sows in, hearts hard as rock
though they be.

Can melt as wax in fire, as rich mould
in the summer rain ;

a thousand hands in many lands are
uplifted in prayer

to draw down heaven's dews on his
barren field.

With firm, courageous faith he toils,
day in day out,

assured that he shall see the harvest
in heaven, though not on earth, plenti-
ful beyond all hope.

TO THE FATHER OF THE POOR

Heal Thou, O Lord of all this dear land
of our birth,

wherein seem gathered in pestilential heap
all evils that fallen flesh is heir to.

Dire famine proudly stalks the land,
mowing down with battle-axe the
hungry poor,

like ears of corn at harvest time, beneath
the scythe.

They groan in pain, and falling down,
die in their thousands, cursing perhaps
a fate unseen.

And those that die not, living on a
pitiful dole,

drag on a harrowing struggle, riddled
with disease;

with death's seal in their foreheads,
they creep with slow haste to the
yawning grave.

Their thankless labour yields them not
its fair returns;

the fruits they gather are snatched
from their mouth

by stony-hearted vultures ere they taste
of them.

THY NAME

Thy Name, O Christ, upon this vellum
trace,

with paint of fire, with brush of steel.

It is a soul that before You pleads,
with one adornment, the eager thirst
for Thy imprint.

Thy Name, O Christ, here trace.

Other names, weird figures, were writ here
in years past, black in memory—
disordered loves and deeds of shame.

Tears of a broken heart have washed
them clean;
sharp edge of pain erased the lingering
marks.

All fibres broken, knotted ties cut asunder.

Borne on the wings of haste,
upswept beyond earth's phantom lure,
a pining love heaves its sigh—

Thy Name, O Love, here trace.

In lines of beauty, and strength,
in design perfect, in fire and flame and
steel,
in lasting figures, cutting, burning,
chiselling,
in proof of total consecration.

In power that shapes and moulds to
Thy hallowed will,
immutably, sealed for heaven's timeless
years,

Thy Name, O Christ, upon this soul
imprint.

Eternally Thy possession it shall be,
with self-will crushed, in suffering
purified,
to stintless service dedicated,
with Thee, O Christ, fasten to the cross,
Thy Name, O Crucified Love, shall
mark it Thine for aye.

PENTECOST

Apostles of all climes, Church Militant of
today,
you who at that first moment gaze,
and wondering adore the parted tongues
of fire,
on bowed heads descending,
and love's flame setting hearts ablaze to
conquer a world,
if conquest be your dream,
and you mourn your hearts dull cold,
if whole wide worlds you would set on fire,
and you lack the spark divine to start
the flame,
eyes and hearts up-reaching, if you
would yearn,
a Lady you would find, the Queen of
Apostles,
who holds the secret of the Pentecostal
fire,

which she, the Maid of Nazareth, long
years ago had welcomed,
immaculate, a mother to be,
to give to fallen race the Saviour, the
fount of life;
if for love you would yearn,
turn to her who by Love was shadowed;
if on wide conquests your hearts are set,
fight by her side, to make of yourselves
a fortress impregnable, a temple
inviolable
meet dwelling for the God of love.
With that first bastion conquered,
consecrated,
as from the cenacle on Pentecost,
with courage, sense of strength, God's
power in your arms,
by the Queen of the Apostles guided,
onward you shall march,
for Christ new Kingdoms to conquer.

FOR SINNERS

For all the sinners of the world we pray,

How gaily they troop down life's
primrose path

to the land where the dead dreams go,
where pleasures pall, the senses are
benumbed,

and all that remains is the bitter burden
of unforgotten years.

They do not drink their poisoned
cups alone;

what they have tasted they press
to others' lips.

Injustice breeds more injustice;

dishonest deals are paid back in kind
by other dishonest deals;

those that corrupt their bodies taint
with disease the world.

Fearfully, from moment to moment,

the avalanche of evil grows,

as it hurtles down the precipice.

It shall not cease, nor lose its
gathering force,

until millions be engulfed in ruins,

or a powerful Hand stays its
downward rush.

O Thou, whose fingers fashioned our clay,
behold Thy blind, wayward children,—
alas, rebels now.

afloat on a sea without a shore, of
misery,

They cannot heal their sickened souls,
or rise to a sense of the good and true.

The lure of wealth and power, of fame's
sweet incense,

of pleasure's velvet touch, the cravings
of the flesh,

dragged them down to their melancholy
depths.

Sorrow that blights and sears is theirs;
wild and empty grief; the certainty of
impending doom.

Stretch out Thy hand, O God of mercy;
lift from destruction's path the victims
of delusion;

shed Thy light on darkened consciences,
and show to all wanderers the way that
leads to Thee.

SEAT OF WISDOM

God's Wisdom uncreated, eternal word,
by whom are all things made, all
knowledge bestowed,
high seat in heaven leaving, seeking
on earth a throne,
found you alone, O Mary, befitting
infinite Majesty.

In your womb you bore Him for nine
dear months,
with a Mother's pride and joy, with
adoring awe.

Uplifted in your arms you showed Him
to wondering shepherds and wise men
from the orient.

Seated in your lap He lisped His first
faltering speech ;
eternal Word learnt from you the
sound of human words.

To the all-seeing eye you opened nature's
book ;
you taught Omniscience after man's
fashion to read and write.

Seat of Wisdom too on Calvary's top,
when sorrowing Mother, heart riven
by seven swords,
you saw the divine, life-less, mangled
form laid in your lap.

Seat of Wisdom, in a sense more true,
more deep,

who with piercing vision read God's
eternal counsels,

saw earth and heaven, in the vast
ocean of redeeming love,

who reckoned all else as dross beside
God's knowledge and love.

O Mother divine who serenely possessed
those precious truths of life which we
in passion's coils lost are striving ever
to grasp,

grant us, we pray, to share in your
wisdom,

to prize above all earthly science,
the priceless treasure of faith and love.

EARLY DEATH

How swiftly was that passing hence !
dear builder of dreams and hopes,
life's luscious cup had scarce touched
his lips ;
he rather knew not than spurned
the world.

What painful, puzzling mystery this is,
that all the youthful promise, all the
dear might-have beens,
were seared, blighted, crushed to
mocking nothingness.

Why was this blushing bud,
the fairest flower that was to be,
this treasure-chest of fragrance for
the wide world,
plucked off while still a bud by the
divine Gardener's hand ?

Not to demand a reason we ask,
but to soothe the aching hearts, to
chase the bitter thoughts.

"His soul pleased God," the answer
slowly comes:

"and hence his release God would
hasten in love."

love's glance had swept across the
vast flower-beds;

the eye was gladdened by waving
banks of white and red;

but only a moment; and then deep
sadness

rested on the brow, reflection from
impending doom

The blight was coming, the canker to
sear each fair petal;

the pestilential breath, the poisoned touch.

Would He, love's Gardener, to this
dire fate

expose the tender bud with promise
infinite?

He culled it, gathering it to His bosom,
in mercy cruel-kind, in love chastising
through embrace.

YOU LOVED ME

Your handiwork is night's bejewelled sky
of myriad stars, through changing
years themselves unchanged,
through countless aeons tracing back
their life.

But long before Your wisdom fashioned
these,

You loved me; gifts to them unknown

Your goodness set in store for me;—

will, intellect. a heart to love,

a soul immortal of high destiny, Your
mirroring.

As yet no flickering light from Aldebaran
gleamed;

Orion flashed not his sword of fire,

nor Pole Star by its axle whirled the
universe.

Ere Saturn knew its girding rings,

when danced no satellites round Jupiter,

before this earth its ellipse round the
sun commenced,
when time's smooth-running chariot was
yet to be,
when nights and days, years and
centuries
marked not the rhythmic pulse of
change,
before that first dawn when light
at Your high bidding, chasing
darkness, shone,
before all that was to be, at one word,
out of the void was clothed with being,

You loved me ;

Your love for me in all creation its
eloquent ;

all things are sign-posts guiding me
to You.

You loved me ;

and love me still You will
when the last flickering star burns out,
and I abide in You, supremest bliss.

" I THIRST "

Across the centuries the voice speaks,
the voice of the Victim of Calvary :—

the gaping wounds run dry beneath the
clotted blood ;

the moments creep to the agonizing end ;

the rabble's jestings ring out in the
murky air ;

the livid frame sags lower from the
nail-fastened palms.

The voice speaks, feeble, but piercing :

" I thirst."

It sends its echoes down time's long
corridors.

He whom no need can touch,

whose behests a million liveried angels
instantly heed

whose handiwork are the rains and
streams and oceans,

He thirsts, the thirst of a parched
throat and dried lips.

The thirst that is death's sentinel.

For what thirsts He? For water
as the hart after the fountains panting?
Yes, and for something more, for love
that abides.

His open Heart, a while hence, shall
make this peading plain.

He thirsts for love, seeking which He
had spanned
the gulf that separates man from God,
paid in His self-oblation the ransome for
fallen man,

offers the life to make sin's slaves
God's children, heirs to heaven.

He thirsts for love; His side spear-lanced
speaks that message down the centuries.
Nor shall this thirst be quenched
till each single soul repay in self-gift
the mighty love of Calvary's first
self-gift.

The earth is but the ante-chamber to
our true home ;
death opens wide the gates and lights
the path.

Life is the pilgrim's wandering in a night
night passes, and the day will come,
in brilliance of scarlet and vermilion
on the eastern sky.

This body is the prison-cell for the spirit,
as the ugly sheath of chrysalis
for the azure and silver wings of a
butterfly.

we mourn not for the broken chrysalis,
nor for the body whence the spirit has
winged its flight to God.

Time is the waiting of all seeds beneath
the damp soil ;

death is the sprouting into life of plant,
flower and fruit.

we fear not death ; it shall not
vanquish us.

Through death we look to life, to
lasting victory.

MARY'S CONTEMPLATION

'She pondered in her heart''
of Mary so the scripture says.
High praise this, oft ignored, but for
those
whose vision is on things unseen,
who are not of, though in, the world,
rich, meaningful, thrilling to emulation.
Words she heard, accents floating,
vanishing ;
but inwardly her soul stirred ;
the truth, profound, abiding heavenly,
in her, on vibrant chords, played
a harmony.
Words died away in time's silent night ;
truths lived eternal in a heart's
pondering love.
In Bethlehem's manger, lighted by a
single star,

in Nazareth's humble cottage, beside
the growing boy,
in Jerusalem's temple-court, among the
sages of Israel,
on Calvary's bleak top, beneath a
bleeding cross,
she heard the words not of earthly
wisdom taught,
she saw the doings not of man's design;
she pondered in her heart,
and in her eyes blazed a soul with
God aflame.

And through her, down the centuries,
we too have heard the self-same words.
Her secret wisdom love-annealed,
her pondering heart rich in thought,
to mankind has taught the sterling worth
of inner, God-focussed life.

In dark night, from an ark on stormy
billows tossed,
we strain our gaze for the dove hovering,
approaching, olive bearing, herald of
peace restored.

In vain we strain our gaze.

That dove shall not rest save in hearts
where truth and love have built a nest.

By lust for power seized, blind leaders
of hapless land
have filled men's minds with base
untruth,

have twisted human hearts to hatred
and violence.

Dark tides of evil round us press ;
the dawn of peace seems far away.

Hail ! Queen of peace, our suppliant
prayer hear ;

crush within us our pride and folly ;

let night's long waiting cease ;

and hasten for our anguished land
the dawn of peace.

A CHANGED VISION

It's night—
 across the garden walk
 in starlight's taint allowance gleams
 against the shadows of the trees a
 Crucified Christ.

His arms outstretched are ever
 welcoming
 the searching feet, the throbbing heart.
But it's a cold dark night.

No rustling leaf on tree or fence,
the fearful silence breaks; no fireflies flit;
the early dews descend like death's
 pall, cold, wet, thick.

The air has chilled my very heart
 O Christ;
I cannot come to Thee; my feet
 seem heavy as lead;
on the grief-laden soul there rests a
 sickly gloom.

THY MUSIC

I shall not speak, my Lord, no, no more
in borrowed words, in noisy dissonance.
These many prayers from books make
me feel ill at ease.

Permit me at Thy Feet to sit awhile
to listen, this clamorous mouth silenced,
adoring, speechless, to the music of
Thy lute.

It fills me with amazement, Lord,
its rhythm pulsing in plant and flower
and leaf,
its richness filling all heaven's vaults,
its cadence leaping from star to star.
It soothes all rebellion in the heart :
no obstacle can stop its onward stream.

All discord it wipes clean like rain's
gentle flow ;
all surging passions it quiets down
like oil on water spread.

I To listen is to learn; to listen is to hope.
The heedful silence is true life.
Thy music thrilling in my veins,
stirs in the blood the dancing ripples
of joy;
speaks to the heart, with no enmeshing
coils of thought,
C the message of my home beyond all
space.
O when shall my voice be clear, my
melody true,
t when shall this fleshly prison house
be broken and my spirit free,
that listening, bathed in Thy music,
wholly changed,
F I shall be but an echo, an unceasing thrill
Of jubilant harmony?

LIFE OF MY LIFE

Of this misguiding blindness cure me Lord,
I scan the distant scene where light
in shadow fade ;

and the nearest, brightest I see not.

I search inscrutables on truth's confines ;
and the truest, clearest I ignore.

Away these anxious wanderings
for things unprofitable, for knowledge
vain.

O! let me to myself return,
see Thee in me, adore the power and
love,
that makes of fragile, fickle, fleeting
frailty

Thy dwelling place, Thy temple
consecrate.

Thy living touch is on all my limbs
on every fibre of this little pulsing heart,
on every picture that my senses
conjure up.

on each swift thought that crowds in
mind or memory.

Grant me, O Lord, to be ever pure,
Pure as is Thy ennobling touch,
pure in body, senses, mind.
Thy strength it is that my each muscle
moves;

Thine arm upholds mine raised to strike
or save.

O never to strike, but always to save,
to be in good unwearying, to serve,
to give unstintingly, strengthen me.

Thou art the ever present truth
that kindles my mind's torch.

No guide but Thou in all my quest.

Let no untruth, false hopes,

through passion blinding, in me
welcome find.

All good my will might choose

in Thy reflection, faint copying;

Thy urging impulse is the power of choice

my selfishness, greed, cruelty, lust, pride

never sway my choice,

but only Thou, Life of my life.

MOTHER OF SORROWS

All great joy is born of pain bitter-sweet ;
so was it with you, Mother of Sorrows.

The fragrant rose blossoms not but on a
stalk of prickly thorns.

A black night of gloom heralds each
day's golden morn.

No life springs from the moist soil but
through a seed hidden, crushed,
and changed to nought.

The tears of rain in the sky give to the
bright-eyed landscape its cheery smile.

Our greatest triumphs rise from our
crueliest trials,

and our sweetest songs are those that
sing of grief.

But Mother, what grief was ever as
great as thine?

As you stood by the rough-hewn cross
in the midday darkness,

and watched the livid pendent Christ
creep towards a slow death,
as the Blood drained from a hundred
open wounds,
as the Body sagged from the nails,
as the parched mouth cries out its
fever of thirst.

Did not you, Mother, watching thus,
feel your stricken soul broken crushed?

Did not sorrow's bitter tears of blood ooze
out from your pierced heart?

Yet from this sorrow rose your life's
sublimest triumph.

We hail thee co-redemptrix, channel of
graces, second Eve, Queen of Heaven,

We hail thee, Mother of Sorrows.

LIFE'S AUTUMN

"Oh, for the vanished years of youth,"
we sigh,

"Oh, for the dreams that now gleam
no more."

Life grows to autumn, to mature years,
and a foolish thought to call it sad.

Is autumn sad?

when golden ears mellow to the reaper's
scythe,

when trees in groves bend low with
luscious fruits,

when birds chirp in every branch,

when dry leaves rustle on the walks,

and winds sing sweetly in the grass,

is autumn sad?

No different is life's maturity;

not harsh and gloomy, but happy,
reposeful, uplifting.

Youth's restless search is over, and its
eager questionings ;
nor success nor failure thrill one so
deep any more ;
no more the struggle for the unknown
goals.

But for these other gifts have followed,
less valued perhaps, but more soothing,
more precious :
calm certainties, the backward look,
joys of achievement, steady tending
towards the distant port,
friendships tested and sealed, glimpses
of the golden glory ;
peace as of heaven's vault in a
star-lit night.

Nor have youth's ideals, the goals for
striving, vanished ;
they still remain, not within easy grasp,
but high above, as stars in the
firmament.

Mariners, secure midst changing tides,
by the stars we chart our course to
journey's end.

where love has lost its charm
in dreary wastes of selfishness;
in places such as these, in mansions of
the rich,
I sought for Thee, and found not.
Thy dwelling is where struggle the
lowly poor;
where simple wants in homely ways
are met;
where faith and love and prayer are
beacon lights,
and a perpetual blessing Thy
protecting arm.
O tender Father of the poor,
make me share with Thy children
my joys;
with Thy great pity fill my heart,
that with Thee, serving them, my
days be spent.

TO LABOUR EVER

To be Thy servant Thou hast chosen me.

Blessed be this hour and Thy
gracious call.

New courage rises in my breast ;
and the one wish that forms in my heart
is that never may my efforts cease ;

to labour and not to seek for rest
be my law of life.

When springtime comes and the tender
plants

put forth their first leaves, let me
not stop

to handle and caress them ; to other
fields I must go.

When flowers brighten all the land,

the air with perfume is filled,

and for the honeyed treasure hunt the
swarms of bees,

let me not lie beside the hedge

to drink in the scent or idly to dream ;

the petals must fade and fall ; like mists
the perfume will vanish in the thin air.
Give other tasks to fill my days ;
to newer strife may my thoughts
extend.

If fruits succeed where flowers die,
not even then shall be my work achieved.
Each fruit conceals a seed within,
a seed which falling to the earth
must die,
to be the bearer of a younger life.
For ever to live, to strive, to grow,
to cast behind all boastful thoughts
of gathered fruits and flowers culled,
to spurn the leisured ease of idle hours,
the drowsy measuring of tasks achieved,
to reach ever forward with unceasing thirst
to newer tasks and thus to triumph's
crown,
this be the haunting vision of my life.

THE PRISONER

My prison-cell, some say, is vast and
beautiful—

Still a prison, it is ; for wings of the
spirit,

for flights unfettered, too closely limited.

A flat green space, tree tops and winding
roads,

red-tiled roofs, swarms of toiling men,

my fellow prisoners, a sad huge
company.

Unhappy hearts there are that feign
to love it ;

their lovely earth, they sing ; but to me,

bleak desolation, tristful loneliness.

A circle of airy nothingness frames us
round

impregnable as a fortress wall ;

we prisoners have named it our horizon.

It marks the farthest boundary

for our narrowed vision ; mystery lies
beyond.

None of us ever walked it across,
none ever reached it any near.

A round large bowl covers us in,
stretched like a tent, without fissure
or fold,
with not a window for yearning eyes
to peep.

Strange patterns are sometimes traced
within our tent ; the twinkling lamps
hang low at night ; clouds come and go ;
a red globe rises in the east
to course along an unchanging arc.

Monotony weighs heavy on my soul
as I watch this fitful change of
seasons, days and hours.

A term is set for me ; is to last this
life in prison
as long as life shall last ; then only
may I seek

to break these barriers, to open wide
these doors,
here I shall leave my prison robes,
this fleshly body and go forth
with joy-thrilled soul, a prisoner no
more.

You angels, and you saints who have
gone before,
tell me of the happy land beyond
these prison walls ;
to think of the home that you dwell in
for the prisoner herebelow the
greatest joy.

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