

THE HOUSE OF BREAD  
AND OTHER POEMS



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# THE HOUSE OF BREAD

EDGAR H. BROOKES



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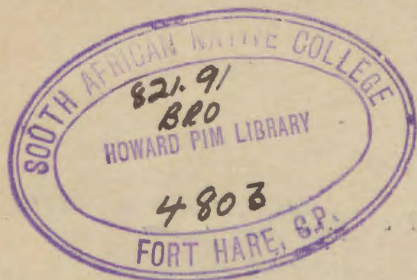
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# THE HOUSE OF BREAD

I



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"The secret of its Bethlehem is holden  
Within the bosom of its mother earth."

# BOOK I.



WE TAKE this bread, O Christ, as Thou didst  
take it—  
This homely food, this endless mystery;  
Beneath the shadow of Thy Cross we break it:  
This is Thy Body that we take from Thee.

Whence comes this loaf? A thousand valleys golden,  
A thousand waving hillsides gave it birth:  
The secret of its Bethlehem is holden  
Within the bosom of its mother earth.

All work, all hope, through every clime and nation,  
We bring this day and offer it afresh:  
The House of Bread in every generation  
Renews the marvel of the Word made flesh.

Co-worker with God's sun and rain, the peasant  
Labours, a priest unconscious, far or near:  
Still Nature's holy sacrament is present—  
The blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear.

And when, amid the night's great silence hidden,  
His cottage glimmers on the lonely hill  
And blessing on his humble bread is bidden,  
The sudden peace of Christ is present still.

As when the ship ploughs on, faint lights dim-gleaming  
In vastness of the great, grey, sombre main,  
On weary men that sup and sit a-dreaming  
Falls Christ's swift hallowing giving peace for pain.

Oh! that our eyes beheld Him ever present,  
Our hearts thrilled lover-like to hear His voice,  
Our hands stretched forth in gladness acquiescent  
As night and day He calls us to rejoice.

Oh! that we saw, for that His beauty bound us,  
The wine of heaven in earthly vessels poured,  
The sacerdotal common man around us,  
And every meal a Supper of the Lord.

Then should we take with joy all earth outreaches,  
All Nature's sacramental wealth outspread:—  
Our hearts may burn within us as He teaches:  
We know Him in the breaking of the bread.

So round the simple tables of the lowly,  
Where children's happy laughter comes and goes,  
Gather the shining legions of the holy,  
The living petals of the Great White Rose.

Heaven beats about our little daily duties;  
No child so small but is the heir of time,  
No flower so swiftly fading but its beauties  
Transcend the wistful tenderness of rhyme.

Therefore we take this bread as our oblation,  
This homely food, this endless mystery,  
Christ, by the wonder of Thy consecration,  
This is Thy Body that we take from Thee.

Six years old, and beside the sea—  
The blue-green waters shine for me:  
Life is delight  
From morn to night,  
And the bright sands glisten beneath the sun.

Six years old, and beside the sea—  
And Jesus was six in Galilee,  
Where vine-leaves fill  
Each terraced hill,  
And the ripe corn waves in the golden sun.

Six years old, and beside the sea—  
A drifting blossom blows from the tree,  
Fragile and light  
As the foam so white,  
Lost in the sky and the far-off sun.

Six years old, and beside the sea—  
The shadows fall of the years to be:  
The breezes stir  
With the scent of myrrh,  
And the wine is poured at set of sun.

## BOOK II.

Here hidden lies the toil of all our race,  
One bread, one body, in our will's despite;  
We put asunder: Thou dost still unite.  
We judge and censure: still endures Thy grace.

On good and evil shines one quickening sun:  
On rich and poor comes down one fruitful rain;  
One is the world-wide fellowship of pain:  
The sacraments of fire and food are one.

We learn to sever life from life in hate,  
We strive alone to live our little hour.—  
In vain we pit our utmost puny power  
Against God's reign of love inviolate.

Here in this bread we offer lie concealed  
The thousand whirring wheels of industry,  
The toil of commerce spread o'er land and sea,  
The patient labour of the furrowed field.

Thou takest all we give—the wistful dream,  
The poor accomplishment, the broken plan,  
The child's ambition that dies hard in man,  
Tears that on life's swift-fading petals gleam.

Across the centuries Thy voice rings true—  
True from the heart of love that understands,  
Taking our pitiful offering in Thy hands:  
“This is my body, which is given for you.”

Glad may our labours be in Love to bide,  
Our bread of toil the body of the Lord;  
But lo! that bread is broken at the board,  
That holy body maimed and crucified.

Each generation spills His blood afresh,  
Each people drives the sharp nails through His hands,  
Where'er the workman writhes within his bands  
And men make money out of human flesh.

They send the harlot to love's ruin dread,  
They filch her blood-price from her, shame on shame,  
Make profits out of her dishonoured name,  
And dare therewith to buy their children—bread!

Bread, laden with the sins of all the years,  
Of tainted bodies, souls athirst for death,  
Blind, stricken children fighting hard for breath,  
And in the darkness women's scalding tears.

Injustice reigns: man raises hateful bars,  
Shuts lives by thousands in the dreary slum  
Or flogs and lynches men Christ died for—dumb  
Dark brothers underneath the silent stars.

Oh! arrogance that rends Christ's heart in twain,  
I hate with fierce and bitter hate your pride  
Of race, your lust of power, that crucified  
My Lord and Love, and crucifies again!

Hē hates not, though I hate. His patience through  
The very pangs of torture speaks. He cries  
Turning on you (ah! yes, and me) His eyes:  
“ Father, forgive! They know not what they do.”

Thy mercy, Lord! We live one sinful race,  
One bread, one body, in our will's despite;  
We put asunder: Thou dost still unite.  
We judge and censure: still endures Thy Grace.



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Mountain wild-flowers  
In scarlet pride,  
The sower sowing  
By the lake-side,  
The trodden wine-press,  
The blood-red wine,  
The children playing  
With eyes ashine—  
All this the rapt days hold  
At twelve years old.

Strong, tall pillars  
Around the pool,  
Gleaming corners  
Of marble cool,  
Whirring on white wings  
Beneath blue skies—  
Fresh renewing  
Of life's surprise,  
Bright as the temple gold  
At twelve years old.

Ceaseless musings  
Alone with God  
Along the roadway  
By pilgrims trod,  
And in the temple  
Where, deeply wise,  
Grey-haired learning  
Meets serene eyes  
And lips with freshness bold  
Of twelve years old

### BOOK III.

“ Except a corn of wheat fall in the ground  
And die, its life is lost: it dwells alone;  
Its death with sheaves of fruitful life is crowned.”  
So spake Our Lord and Love in measured tone.  
What though by Pilate’s cords He must be bound,  
Beneath his oft-descending scourge must groan?  
In darkness deep of God’s and man’s rejection  
He kept this victor-word of resurrection.

We know the lore of death, whose paths are set  
Alike in earth and heaven, whose bodies turn  
Dust into dust, whose names all men forget.  
Though dead, strange fires within our flesh still  
burn:

Life springs from our corruption through the wet  
Bright summer. Upwards towards the air we yearn;  
And, where above us wave the feathered grasses,  
The scarlet pageant of the veld-flowers passes.

Even so our spirits know that hidden way  
From death to life. From journey dark and long  
Glad is our entry with the dawning day  
Beneath the wooded headland sweet with song.  
And calm the happy haven, whence to stray  
Were all His love compassionate to wrong.  
On eyes by all night’s sorrow held is flaming  
Dawn’s sharp and joyful light, our terrors shaming.

Far other was it in the days gone by  
When the soul's vessel drove beneath the rain,  
A straining hulk beneath a leaden sky,  
Cut off from God in labour and in pain,  
Where the great cold green billows gathered high,  
Crashed on the streaming decks, and crashed again,  
In lonely stretches grey and seas forsaken,  
Where no ship passes and no dawns awaken,

And where the only land is some dead shore  
Forgot of God and man in those far seas,  
Barren and bleak, with craggy headlands froze,  
No grass beneath its blinding rain nor trees,  
No sound but screaming sea-birds and the roar  
Of waves that dash in fierce cacophonies,  
Worse than the wild abandoned seas, wind-chidden,  
Since death beneath false hope of life is hidden.

Yet life returns, as when of old was burned  
God's temple, all its splendour lost in fire  
Its beauty into smouldering ashes turned,  
And into dust of death its sweet desire.  
Hope still! Did not from that poor ruin spurned,  
That very grave of desolation dire,  
The second temple built in hope and sorrow  
Rise in the blood-red dawning of the morrow?

How could that house regain its life, how could  
The lost gold shine again and pillars tall?  
Ah, God! but in that house of brass and wood  
Shone forth the Light of Lights magnificent;  
Here where the builders' feet discouraged stood  
The King of Glory came, and made this hall  
Desired of nations; and for shame and scorning  
Poured out the fount of light, the spring of morning.

With more than peace, with joy shall we be crowned:

Bliss, not mere rest, shall be for sigh and moan:

Except a corn of wheat fall in the ground

And die, its life is lost: it dwells alone."

The harvest comes, the golden sheaves are bound:

Life triumphs where the seed in tears was sown,

And out of death is born, to slay our sadness,

Love's eucharistic bread of power and gladness.



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Bride of seventeen,  
Dark-haired, with pure bright eyes,  
Whose thoughts ineffable  
Are shining as the skies,  
And clear as springs that well  
From hills in Galilee—  
Bride to whose wedding Jesus came,  
Giving simplicity  
An everlasting name.

Bride of seventeen,  
White-wreathed, with far-off eyes,  
Who dared to bid as guest  
The Blessed One all-wise,  
Your dearest friend and best,  
And brought to Cana a town,  
Hid beneath spreading fig and vine,  
Its simple life to crown,  
The miracle of wine.

Bride of seventeen,  
Like stars shine forth your eyes.  
The cup He lifts is dear  
Beyond all loves men prize:  
Youth's rippling water clear  
By Him as red wine lives,  
Us, too, He bids with Him to sup:  
The broken bread He gives,  
The sacrificial cup.

## BOOK IV.

O mother Earth, whose life-bestowing breasts  
Have suckled beast and man, we give thee praise:  
Thy arms enfold us when all hopes and zests  
Fade from us, soothe us through the nights and days,  
Until in strange new life our bodies blaze,  
Flowers from decay. We love thee, quick or dead.  
Our longings, treading dim primæval ways,  
Through the fresh-swelling rain to thee are led  
Or scent of smoking wood in shadowy forest dread.

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We hail thee near or far, where hour by hour  
The fever-green mimosa all men shun  
Hears the shrill savage cries of fear and power  
In swamps where wildebeest and zebra run,  
Rhythmic like wind-swept grass beneath the sun;  
Or where the stars o'er huge baobabs wink  
Above the darkened pool, and, one by one,  
The wild bush-creatures steal like shades to drink,  
And, dumb with terror, see the lion on the brink;  
  
Or, where the red road parts the furrowed land,  
And, slippery with the shining rain, winds slow,  
Where springing blades in peaceful order stand  
And watch the idle glistening weeds that grow  
In their sustaining strength. With health we glow

And they in sun and rain. O Mother Earth,  
Mother of beast and man, thy gifts bestow.  
Quicken our corn: the bread still bring to birth  
Which, nurtured in thy bosom, saves thy sons from  
dearth.

O Mother Eve, whose voice like music speaks  
Gentle and clear across the misty years,  
Whose smile like sunlight waits for him who seeks,  
Flashing athwart long centuries of tears;  
O, frail yet strong, alive with hopes and fears,  
Desired through all our wilfulness, and thine,  
Pierced by creation's rending travail-spears,  
Wife, mother, daughter, in a glory trine,  
Inheritrix of God, the Sufferer Divine!

Before the golden moon thy dark hair streams;  
Flowers spring to beauty at thy tender feet;  
Thy hands weave the rich pattern of men's dreams  
Where starlight and the fires of home still meet.  
Wings of infinity about thee beat;  
Yet daily bread and oft-repeated care  
And endless tender toil for children sweet,  
And sorrow dost thou know, that will not spare  
The white and gleaming blossoms of thy youth most fair.

Old, old and dim, with weary eyes that seek  
From earth's renewed and ruthless beauty rest,  
Hair silvered in the firelight's glow, hands weak  
To labour as the sun sinks in the west,  
We greet thee tenderly. That love is best  
Which dies not with the long day's dying red  
But whispers on while night falls. Mother blest,  
We hail thee, Mother of our daily bread,  
Mother without whose care earth's children were not fed.

O Mother Mary, lead our spirits on,  
Pure as the glistening wing of Gabriel,  
Bedewed with starlight, when o'er thee he shone  
The heavenly salutation forth to tell,  
Awful as love, as love inscrutable,  
Charged with white mysteries of life and death,  
And leaving deep-enchanted by its spell  
The shining blue of quiet Nazareth,  
That with the tranquil noontide softly drew its breath.

Blue, blue, celestial blue—the purest light  
Of heaven above, below the calm blue sea:  
More holy than the Angel's gleaming white  
The peasant robe of blue enfolding thee.  
Ah, Mother Mary! Those blest eyes that see  
The golden flight of Gabriel must be dim  
Beneath the brutal Cross on Calvary,  
Where skies are black and men are foul and grim,  
And all thy mother heart is one great sob for Him!

O Mother Mary, name too sweet for song,  
Beyond all women honoured in thy name.  
From brute to man in pangs of travail long  
Life moved: from man to Christ through thee life  
came.  
Thou hast known joy supreme, in utter shame  
Hast bowed a desolate, forsaken head.  
Now starry Angels glow to speak thy fame,  
Who out of Bethlehem, our House of Bread,  
Didst bring the Bread of Life to succour quick and dead.

To die at thirty-three—  
The blood of youth still pulsing, and the eyes  
Bright with the vision of divine desire,  
The great plan unfulfilled, unclasped the prize  
That gleamed like fire . . . .

O, blithe and strong and free—  
You that gave life to God gave life indeed,  
Colour and sound, bright skies, great winds that blow  
Along the shore and bend each tossing reed;  
And youth aglow

With deeds that were to be,  
High comradeship in service strong and true,  
The bread of toil, love's rich and glowing wine . . . .  
All this inexorably asks of You  
The Will Divine.

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So now at thirty-three  
For the world's fellowship you pass alone;  
For the world's peace You give Your shame and pain:  
High on that outcast hill where felons groan  
Begins Your reign.

## BOOK V.

Fire, bright and holy, terrible and fleet,  
By which alone to man the golden wheat  
Becomes the Bread of Life, thy glory glows  
Down the blind centuries that no man knows,  
And through the shadows cast by thee we trace  
The mighty nameless fathers of our race.

Home grew around the red warmth of thy flame:  
City and State were founded in thy name.  
The beasts slunk baffled from thy magic light  
And man was left the lord of day and night,  
Able alone the altar-stone to raise  
With smoke barbaric of primæval praise.

Salted with fire, the Church down changing years  
Gathered her band of knights to fight men's fears:  
The bush that flamed remote in desert lands  
Called Moses on to break his people's bands;  
The burning coal upon Esaias' lip  
Cleansed him for God's heroic fellowship.

In fiery furnace-depths the faith began  
Which saw beside brave men the Son of Man;  
With sacramental tongues of living flame  
The mighty Pentecostal Spirit came,  
That comradeship of victors to inspire  
Which Nero and Domitian sealed with fire.

A flaming brotherhood of living truth  
That Church, a chivalry of deathless youth,  
An army clad with strength invincible  
Prevailing o'er the brazen gates of hell,  
And ever speeding where the fight attends,  
A valiant company of faithful friends.

For friendship must be tried by fire to be  
Tempered and true in all adversity,  
No trinket to be bought at little cost,  
Found without effort, without effort lost,  
But from life's quartz of commonplaces cold  
Mined, molten and refined, and kept, like gold.

There is no greater joy than this in life—  
Shoulder to shoulder in a common strife  
With disciplined and tested strength to weather  
The storm of combat, loyal-souled, together—  
Together to endure until the night,  
And give God thanks together for the fight.

O'er such high triumph how can death prevail?  
Life flames upon us though the flesh may fail:  
Love kindles in our hearts through death and after  
The inextinguishable flame of laughter;  
And high above us floats through gain or loss  
The kingly blood-red banner of the Cross.

Vain is the pageantry of outward sign  
Without the shining heart of love divine:  
Where souls are bright in ardour of love's search,  
There flame the golden candles of the Church:  
So is the bread we break at friendship's board  
Communion of the Body of the Lord.

Beyond all time and space  
There is a song of never-failing grace,  
Shining in wordless music through the spheres,  
Eternally in bliss prevailing over  
Earth's undertone of tears.

That song all life must fill  
With joy, pure joy, with joy that blossoms still,  
Because in spite of sorrow and of pain  
Joy is our heritage; and when sorrow passes  
Home we return again.

When time and space began,  
Beyond them, through them, in them music ran:  
The morning stars together raised their song;  
The sons of God shouted for joy of living,  
Beauteous and bright and strong.

When into time and space  
Flashed the Eternal Word of truth and grace,  
The Angel-song all-joyful heralded  
God's coming in good-will to Bethlehem's stable,  
Our House of Bread.

When time and space were borne  
Redeemed beyond the farthest founts of morn,  
Men whose enraptured hearts within them burned  
Homeward with shining eyes and souls rejoicing  
To save the world returned.

Beyond all time and space  
Ever are sung the boundless gifts of grace,  
The dayspring of creation's conquering Lord,  
Peace for our pain, bliss for our peace, unending  
Joy upon joy outpoured.

## BOOK VI.

Through all the world this saving bread is broken,  
In every land this saving cup is poured;  
It matters not what tongue of man is spoken:  
Here is the silent language of the Lord.

Heart cries to heart though speech divide asunder:  
Forgotten stand the frontier-forts of hate;  
Silent we hear, in heaven-enraptured wonder,  
Love's blissful music inarticulate.

So rings the song of wordless adoration  
Across dim continents and lonely seas:  
So the torch passes, lighting many a nation,  
Down the long pageant of the centuries.

Though time in turn all things extinguish, leaving  
Forgotten dynasties and empires dead,  
Vain dreams, lost hopes, designs marred in the weaving,  
Still stands the simple sacrament of bread.

Of earth, space, time, of rain and sunshine living,  
God fashions gifts His children's hearts to bless,  
Condemning not the world of sense but giving  
Love's coronation to its lowliness.

Blessed be God, Who saved us, not by willing  
Remote redemption in some heaven above,  
But gave to earth for sacrificial spilling  
Life of the human Saviour that we love.

Blessed be God that writ across Heaven's glory  
Names of our little earth of time and death,  
Mingling for ever with His cosmic story  
Our homely Bethlehem and Nazareth.

Praise to His Name Whose wisdom turns, forgiving,  
From the bleak laws of justice pitiless,  
And sends His rainbow smile upon all living,  
Suffused with tears to pardon and to bless.

In His great wisdom, where beyond all spaces  
The thunder of Angelic music rolls,  
Is heard the simple earth praise of His graces,  
The glad thanksgiving of forgiven souls.

Wherefore we take this Bread in adoration;  
All life is here, of Angel or of clod:  
Heaven meets with earth to offer this oblation,  
Silent before the mystery of God—

Whose blinding beauty veils itself for knowing,  
Whose righteousness His mercy makes less dread,  
Who, Spirit in Whose thought all life is glowing,  
Yet tabernacles in the House of Bread.

# IN THE SHADOWS

II



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“Dead in the pulsing pageant of the days,  
Mocked with vain hope and desolate desire.”

# A CRY



DARK beneath the summer's golden blaze,  
O, chill beneath his genial heavenly fire,  
Dead in the pulsing pageant of the days,  
Mocked with vain hope and desolate

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## ALIQUID AMARI

The first faint mist of morning clears;  
All roseate gleams the fen:  
So from the everlasting years  
Waken the tears of men.

Dawn's glories that preceded day  
Pass, and the white moon wanes;  
So pass men's hopes and dreams away:  
Only the day remains.

Ere triumph we must taste defeat,  
Ere gladness learn dismay,  
Ere evening bear the dust and heat  
And burden of the day.

## DE PROFUNDIS

Out of the depths I cry to Thee:  
My God, my God, remember me!  
Out of the depths of hell I cry,  
Where no sweet voice of hope is nigh,  
In deep unlighted gloom of hell,  
Where clangs the deafening passing-bell  
Of hope and life and high desire  
And love's perfume and poetry's fire,  
The hell of lost, lost hope and love,  
Chaos below me and above  
In one mad hope that strangles fear  
I grasp Thee, God; leave me not here!

## THE ANGEL OF PAIN

Others have sung thee; but I know thee best  
Not from their words, but from thy tenderest  
Keen touch on this poor body and this soul,

That pierced but to make whole;  
That burned with fire, the spirit to make pure,  
This outer temple, teaching to endure;  
Most Merciful; that gave me agony  
That I our Christ might see.

Without thee, Angel of the Presence, none,  
The wearisome ascent and journey done,  
Can see, thrown back the heavy dark-hued veil,

The glory of the Grail;  
Nor comes, unless his barque may feel thy hand,  
The storm-tossed, wave-beat voyager to land,  
Seeing alone in thy enlightening fire  
His City of Desire.

## TWO SONNETS IN THE SHADOWS

### I.

Through weary days of weary argument,  
Of fightings and of fears within, I go,  
While soul and body travail in their woe  
To bring forth what? **He knows** who thus hath blent  
My joys with sorrow, and **in wisdom** sent,  
Disguised—so using ways **I cannot** know  
To perfect me—His Angel, who shall strow  
Fair Easter-blossoms when at last this Lent  
Hath brought its tale of storm-sweet, gloomy days  
To mystic Easter-Even of the soul,  
Whereunto I shall come, praise God! my Life,  
Whose might shall quicken me from death, shall raise  
My soul to peace from unsung months of strife,  
Shall bring the broken, fainting athlete to his goal.

### II.

O, what a shadow fighting fool am I!  
Are all things of less import than to vex  
My soul with thoughts that harass and perplex,  
And dim the perfect azure of life's sky?  
O, that my soul, perchance to Peace so nigh,  
Could tear away the gossamer that decks—  
But keeps me from—her altar. Yea, what wrecks  
Must men become if such a course they try

As I have tried, wherein myself I find,  
Sans compass, rudderless, even the stars  
By darkness veiled; and yet I might now be  
Within a mile of peace and liberty . . . .  
O, for a hand to touch the prison-bars!  
O, for a Guide to steer, since I am blind!



## IN DEJECTION

I have no word to sing—Love's soul is mute  
Of beauty's rainbow lustres destitute;  
Dim, dim is all without; within is night:  
Dull and forlorn the gardens of delight.  
What shall with poetry or music bless  
This stony, barren, fruitless wilderness?  
Forth, sword! Wake, trumpet! Speak thy message rude:  
Beneath a clouded sky speak fortitude!  
Where Love's last melodies grow faint and dry  
Let hand with voice conjoin in courage high.  
Fulfilled then shall the ringing message be  
That death is swallowed up in Victory!

## VIA DOLOROSA

As some dark cloud with chilly breath  
Eclipsing song and mirth and light,  
Around me draws the spirit's night:  
This is the second death.

I stand alone: no pilgrims meet  
Upon the pathways I have trod,  
Ensanguined with the tears of God,  
Desolate with defeat.

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# DEATH

## I.

.... Not that we fear you; for we would have died  
(Love's immortalities born in our stead)  
These many years—soul's beauty glorified  
And truth and wisdom in a triune dread—  
These cannot die; only this fragile breath,  
Body and blood are yours to claim, O Death!—  
Those things alone that bound the spirit's love,  
Alone that hold as from the light-born quest  
Of mystic absolute beauty, those whereof  
Our souls are weary and athirst for rest.  
These are that little all that you can alter  
In ordered change from life through death to life,  
Leaving the real no more with love to palter  
Freeing the Christ within our souls from strife.

## II.

Yet we seek respite ere you claim our duty,  
Leading us from flaming truths to Truth,  
From roseal beauties to eternal Beauty,  
From earth's young laughter to ideal Youth,  
On to these high realities above,  
From hearts so tenderly beloved to Love.

Some souls there are athirst for your relief,  
 To whom you come an Angel of Repose,  
 The ultimate dark-gleaming slayer of grief,  
 Crowned with forgetful poppy, not with rose;  
 And some there are, not overwhelmed with sorrow,  
 But weary, in earth's warfare long grown grey,  
 Their loved ones gone, unhopeful for the morrow,  
 Who but await your call to pass away.

### III.

But we, yet young in years and heart's high dreaming,  
 Ardent in battle, girt with friends around,  
 We look not for your wan starred banner's gleaming  
 Nor listen for your low-voiced call profound,  
 That summons us to come and come alone—  
 To that bright, infinite, terrible Unknown.  
 Yet are you herald of eternity,  
 Your dark robes veil the blaze of Beauty's light:  
 You summon us to that high state which we  
 Have sought—Love's commonwealth—through this  
 our night:  
 What though the sacraments of God be ended?  
 To God our striving fainting souls attain,  
 Heedless that, now by human unbefriended,  
 We find the Ideal fraught at last with pain.

### IV.

Still we obey. The City of our Hope  
 Still calls us on. We journey steadily,  
 Forsaking all, if but our souls that grope  
 In darkness may find light, O God, in Thee,  
 Beseeching only that we be endued  
 From life to life with living fortitude.

We work in tranquil coldness till Thy call  
Shall summon us to Wisdom's royal seat;  
Though bleak and snow-girt her imperial hall  
Our journey shall be dutifully fleet.  
We serve not Thee nor her for hireling's wages;  
We ask no boon of warmth or of repose,  
Only beseeching that, while man engages  
In conflict, we be strong against Thy foes.

V.

Ah! Love, this is not all. This saddened singing  
Command to cease! Awaken in our heart  
The echoes of that heavenly music ringing  
Wherein each tender earth-note bears its part  
(For still earth's piercing tenderness of song  
Lives where heaven's choristers of rapture throng).  
Inflame our coldness with a hope that burns;  
Our austere teaching colour with Thy love,  
That, as the spring-time's heavenly green returns  
And crimson pomp, and skies of blue above,  
Sweeping away the pure estranging snows,  
So Thy bright-gleaming blazonry of joy,  
And splendour of Thy Paradisal rose,  
O'er soul and song may sweep without alloy.

VI.

Incarnate Love! Thou, too, earth's loves hast known.  
The weary people drew God's rest from Thee.  
Sick hearts found comfort where Thy white robe  
shone  
By lake or mountain side of Galilee;  
And silently beside our beds of pain  
Those seamless folds of healing stand again.

Thy pity woke the little maid from sleep  
 Of death once more to home's dear daily food:  
 Thy human hands the doors of death still keep,  
 And all our griefs by Thee are understood.  
 No joy of friendship, pulsing of life's summer,  
 Sunshine or rain, but hath in Thee a part:  
 Thine arms stand outstretched for each weary comer:  
 All loves, O Christ, are hallowed in Thy heart.

## VII.

Immortal Love! With Thee our heart's high dream-  
 ing  
 Is safe beyond the reach of death and time:  
 With Thee heart-loyalty abide in gleaming  
 Freshness perpetual, holiness sublime.  
 Earth's rainbow-lustres, though they seem to fade,  
 Pass not to death's annihilating shade.  
 Earth's many coloured loves in one white light  
 Of love still live, and when that glory grows  
 More clear to our earth-dimmed and mortal sight,  
 We see them, petals of the mystic Rose,  
 Not one destroyed, but in that splendour blest  
 Finding its own long-destined fragrant home,  
 Ordained from everlasting there to rest,  
 No longer blown where wandering breezes roam.

## VIII.

Eternal Love! Thy harmonies divine  
 Close in the music of immortal faith!  
 Hearing the choral wonders that are thine  
 Our living spirits have no fear of death.  
 The chords and melodies of radiant day  
 Have driven night's starry silence far away.

We have found a song that is not hushed by night;  
We have built a mystic palace, not to fall;  
We have heard the very symphonies of light;  
We have drunk in Beauty's inner festival,  
Let that free grandeur of rejoicing linger,  
Its evidences of concord hushing strife—  
Music ineffable, Eternal Singer,  
That breathes the wonder of Eternal Life.



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# IN THE SUNLIGHT

## III



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“In hope and tenderness and pride and truth  
Earth finds again the miracle of youth.”

# TRANQUILLITY



RAISE be to God! the task is learnt  
Of labour crowned with peace:  
Awhile from conflict and from pain  
Let soul and body cease.

And as some far secluded bay,  
Translucent, hope's own green,  
Set like a gem in glistening sands,  
Shining, remote, serene,

So let the heart that beat in storm,  
To-day be still with Love,  
Unending seas of peace around,  
Unclouded skies above;

And thus from passion-stricken strife  
With sudden calm set free,  
Awhile forget the fight for truth  
In simple charity.

God hath His times and seasons set  
For peace or fervent war:  
On this, His sabbath, O my soul,  
Be silent and adore.

## OF A CERTAIN BELOVED LADY

She is the very sacramental light

Whose silver beauty guards the throne divine;  
Through her the sacred splendours calm and white  
Of Beauty's mystic inmost temple shine:  
O'er her in still, enchanted hours of sleep  
Their watch the star-crowned Seraphim do keep.

Happy are they to whom she ever brings

The hidden glories of a world unseen;  
Still from her eyes life's gleaming morning springs,  
The hopes and purities of best eighteen:  
Human and tender is our love for her,  
Yet is she still a heavenly harbinger.

O, battle-scarred, O all but recreant knight,

O, stained with blood and dust, defiled with sin,  
When thou hast longed and yearned for gift of light,  
For sweet refreshment, far from battle's din,  
Has not her image come before thy face,  
Ineffably the day-spring of God's grace?

For she is young, and very pure and true:

Not yet the world's harsh ways have saddened her.  
Her soul is fragrant-sweet as morning dew:  
Her calm, deep thoughts as spring's fresh breezes stir:  
Not yet the heat and burden of the day  
Has swept her pearl-set dawn of life away.

Therefore, O Knight unworthy, o'er her keep  
Thy faithful ward; and ever at her side  
In time of peril let thy sword forth leap:  
Thus serving her thou shalt be purified—  
So, in far splendour of some realm divine,  
Haply her hand, half-faltering, may seek thine.



## AFRICAN SPRING, 1942

Sombre yet gay the flowering wattles stand  
Above a clean and joyful rain-washed land.  
Gone is the dusty chill of winter days.  
Not yet is summer's bright and languorous haze.  
In hope and tenderness and pride and truth  
Earth finds again the miracle of youth.

High on the mountain-buttress colours bold  
Are spilt profusely crimson, black and gold.  
Below those crags of pagan splendour gleam  
The pink peach-blossoms like an Angel's dream:  
Near them, in youth so sweet that it brings pain,  
The tender green of willows shines again.

Far north machines are roaring, men are dumb  
In death or fear of death-in-life to come.  
Hope lifts a glance that almost seems despair.  
Thank God that still our southern spring is fair,  
And that in hidden valleys men may see  
The sacrament of peace that is to be.

## A SOUTH AFRICAN HOMESTEAD

(Afternoon in December)

Deep calm of summer's on the long low hills;  
The sleepy sunshine all the valley fills.  
From wilting grass bare quartz and granite gleam.  
The ferns grow weary near the tepid stream.  
The white, quaint-gabled homestead's drenched in sleep,  
The tired dogs a fitful vigil keep.  
The blue-gum trees beside the wind-mill rest,  
Of perfect white-barked quietude possessed.  
The herd and herd-boy in the silent grass  
With listless languor watch the slow hours pass.  
It is a charmed sleep without, within:  
No breath of life nor busy, cheering din  
Can enter: surely here contentment lies  
The heart of all things so to harmonise.

## THE WEALTH OF SOUTH AFRICA

Not gold or flashing gem that earth  
Yields richly are your greatest worth;  
Nor springing corn nor fruitful vine  
Nor countless fields of sheep or kine;  
Nor rugged mountains grand and free,  
Wide sun-kissed plains or sparkling sea.

More dear than these beyond compare,  
Mother, your daughters sweet and fair,  
In whose serene and happy eyes  
The secret of your sunshine lies,  
And in whose hearts perennial spring  
The lilies of the Christ our King.

Lo! writ in laughter and in tears  
Upon the pageant of the years,  
Emblazoned on Time's scroll unfurled,  
" 'Tis woman makes or mars the world ";  
So flames the glory of the State,  
Great if its womanhood be great.

## GIRLHOOD

Her dawn's first flush is mellowing into gold;  
With smiling eyes she waits the years untold:  
Only faint murmurs of the coming strife  
Swell like white waves upon the sea of life.



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## YOUTH

The tender-tinted dawn of childhood's years  
To fuller light of day is brightening —  
The blue and gold of youth's sweet-scented spring,  
Flushed with glad sunshine, misty too with tears:  
Our Knight life's high imperious calling hears,  
And, swift his sacrificial sword to bring,  
Rides to obey the summons of the King  
And plunge into the battle with his peers.

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Love guard his purity through the perilous way  
And keep his eyes on beauty's holy light!  
Courage be in his heart and strengthen him;  
And when the clouds come and the sun grows dim,  
The faith that meets dark moments aid his sight  
And bring him through victorious to the day.

## A SONG OF LIGHT

Out in the darkness strange and dread  
I walk with slow, uncertain tread.  
The hillside path I know the most  
Is unfamiliar as a ghost:  
My dog's coat through the silent night  
Glimmers a shadowy, spectral white.

The dawn shows yet no faintest sign:  
Far-off dim windows faintly shine;  
But when my task is nearly done  
I'll see the banners of the sun,  
And hands of beauty touch my sight  
As clear and joyful comes the light.

The aloes stand upon the hill:  
The grass is parched and wintry still.  
Haze-hidden are the distant seas;  
There's chilly freshness in the breeze;  
And, where the blue-gums stand up strong,  
Our southern winter lingers long.

But listen! for a ringing tune  
Floats up the hill this afternoon;  
Flutters a blue, a yellow wing;  
Red blossoms splash the news of spring;  
Fresh voices rise, serene and strong,  
And clear and joyful comes their song.

## DAWN ON THE NATAL COAST

Ah! the cool morning air that softly wakes  
Life from its sleep in dewy hope of day:  
Like God's own breath a viewless path it takes,  
Stealing o'er misty headlands far away,  
And, where in sandy bay and rocky cove  
Incessantly the ocean ebbs and flows,  
From seething crest of wave on endless wave  
The fragile, gleamy, snow-white foam it blows;  
Then, turning to my window low and quaint,  
It wafts the goodly smell of brine-washed sands  
And wakes from high bamboos the twitterings faint  
That spell our 'dawn' to him who understands:  
Then as it dies away, its labours done,  
Red-gold from ocean's bosom leaps the sun.

## “ SWEET MINISTRANT OF PEACE ”

Sweet ministrant of peace, whose shining eyes  
Bright symbols of the dewy dawn of spring,  
See, innocent of fear or swift surprise,  
Each day the mystic palace of the king;  
Blest ministrant of love, untaught, unschooled,  
With unspoilt soul and gracious spirit free,  
Bestowing, by no code of duty ruled,  
An overflowing, tender charity;  
High ministrant of faith, no winds of doubt,  
No fiery heat of conflict, sweep away  
Thy spirit's ordered grace, to us without  
The tranquil beauty of a cloudless day;  
Brave ministrant of Life, heaven makes us dare,  
Valiant through thee, the challenge of despair,

## HYMN TO BEAUTY

Beyond the solemn whiteness of the night  
In angel-wingèd cloudy splendour still,  
Across the Ocean's billowy movement bright,  
The star-reflecting pool, the misty hill,  
We seek the infinite spirit that sustains  
These inmost sanctities of sound and sight—  
The soul of Beauty, wheresoe'er she reigns  
In holy solitude of sacred light.

How can we find her, we who search and pray?—  
That hidden, subtle spirit, near yet far,  
That disembodied glory of pure day  
That shines alike in butterfly and star.  
That mystic effluence of the Word Divine,  
That haunting spheric music far away,  
That light which smites the ramparts crystalline  
From Heaven's seraphic, starry-crowned array;

In all things imminent wherein our eyes  
Emblazoned colour find and vivid life—  
Each scarlet splash of recondite surprise,  
Each tropic brilliance born of nature's strife;  
The blue lagoon, intense, profound, serene,  
Shimmering with heat-haze under bluer skies;  
The tangled, palm-starred, murmurous ravine  
Where green and gold the screeching parrot flies;—

And yet in all earth's silvers, browns and greys,  
In all her chastened half-tones, breathing peace;  
In gloom of dripping pines and rain-swept bays  
Of archipelagoes in Chilean seas;  
In solitary, wind-swept, pathless miles  
Where in the wilderness the heath displays  
Its sea of silence; or in lonely isles  
Where sky and ocean brood through endless days.

She still eludes her lovers, flies us yet,  
Her streaming hair just passing from our sight  
Our quest the whole day baffling; then comes night.  
Darkling we follow who can ne'er forget  
How once we saw her shining foot in flight  
Once almost caught, far off, her low clear call,  
Half-saw, half-dreamed her form magnificent.

O, ever moving from our swift pursuit,  
Our hope and faith of thee are eloquent.  
Whither thou ledest, up that steep ascent,  
Down to what gloom we know not, chill and mute;  
Yet, on our breathless ardent quest intent,  
And following where Thy gleaming feet have trod,  
Haply our eager flight shall end in God,

The lustre of whose love through force and fate  
It is that gleams, and makes of all earth's tears  
A rainbow through the everlasting years—  
Rich through His deathless light immaculate;  
Beauty and truth and pity crown the Throne:  
Dimly we see these sacred Three are One.

## MAXIMA CARITAS

We are aweary of the high, cold steep,  
The grey philosophies, the clear  
Bleak systems, and the white  
And everlasting snows.

Only the bright sad stars our comrades are  
And holy Wisdom chill, serene,  
Labour and fortitude  
Invincible and grave.

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Surely we are but men, howe'er we strive,  
Not made alone for silent night,  
Vigil and prayer and fast,  
And high austere restraint.

Not only on the barren peaks is God,  
But where the sleepy sunbeams throng  
Over the low green hills  
On sunny fields to fall,

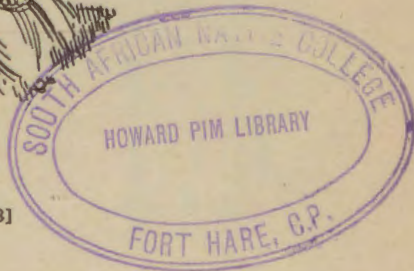
And where the valleys stir with cheerful life—  
The orioles' burst of joyous tune,  
The noise of falling streams,  
The sleepy hum of bees;

Or where on winter evenings firelight red  
And lamplight fall on sights of home,  
And happy faces glow  
Around the crackling hearth;

Laughter of boy and maiden dies away,  
Hand softly touches tender hand,  
Tremulous hopes are born  
Of loyalty and love;

Grave-faced and sweet some elder sister pours  
The steaming coffee, and the cups  
And saucers, rattling, make  
A sound of cheeriness;

And, dreaming in their cosy big arm-chairs  
The old folk sit. The light that falls  
Upon their silver hair  
Is very near to heaven.



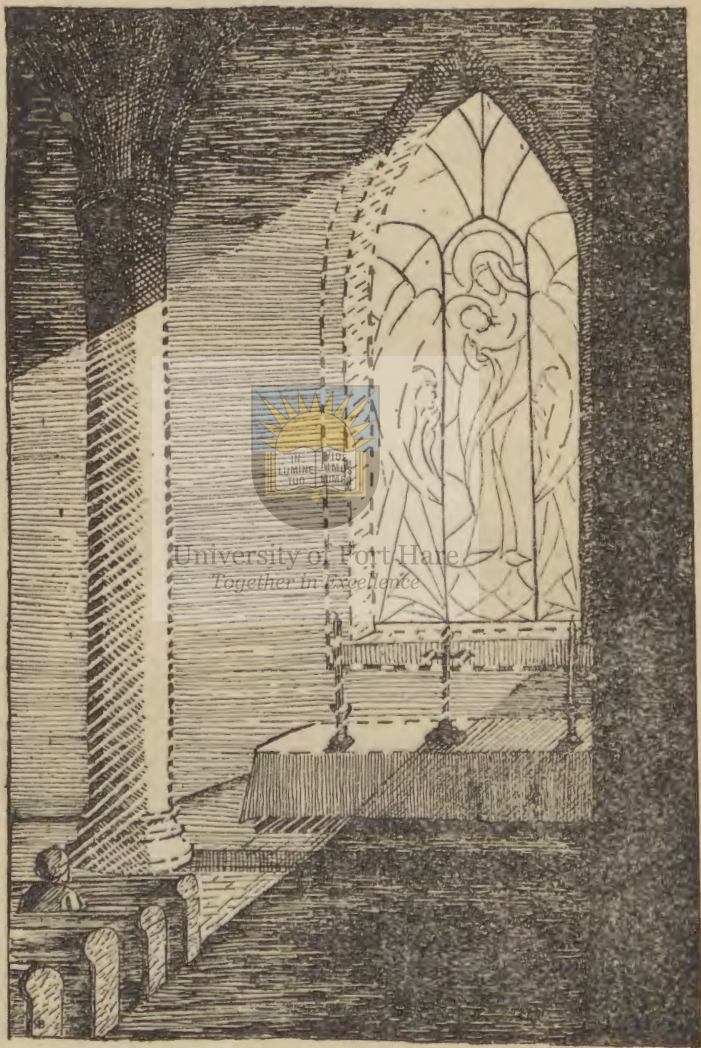
# IN THE CATHEDRAL

IV



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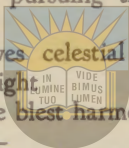
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"Late have I loved thee, O immortal beauty,  
Have loved thee as thou meritest man's love."

# NATURA RERUM



WHAT THOUGH our hearts be weary, the un-  
numbered stars are strong,  
In ordered toil pursuing their orbits traced in  
song,  
In shining waves celestial where through the  
solemn night,  
They join in one blest harmony, the joyous hymn  
of light—



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Light radiant and eternal, the energy that burns  
In the great heart of nature as through its worlds it  
yearns  
Towards universes hidden and unbegotten years,  
Dew-drenched with roseate laughter, ablaze with splen-  
did tears.

Its great creative glory, infinity of pain,  
Infinity of gladness, flames into life again;  
Blinding in deep compassion, in pity strong and sweet,  
Its mystic music trembles to harmony complete.

Deep down eternal ages its voice triumphant rings—  
Love that transmutes to glory the hidden tears of things:  
Through sphere and space it flashes: sound is made one  
with sight;  
Love's holy fire sweeps over the symphonies of light.

## CHRIST AND THE SCAPEGOAT

Blind with the desert dust, defiled with blood,  
Weary, and dying for the far-off springs  
He drank before the ruthless Law of Death  
Seized on him, griefs to suffer not his own,  
Sick and with stifled, piteous, thirsty cry  
Stumbled the scape-goat through the wilderness.

Then also, sad and weary through the sands  
Fell the dread footsteps of the Suffering God,  
Immortal sorrow shining from His face  
Immortal sorrow but immortal love,  
And the white robe, by desert winds defiled,  
Fluttering its hem of healing round His feet.

Then, He, our Lord, compassionate, merciful,  
Seeing the weary scape-goat parched with thirst,  
Forbore not ev'n this least one to relieve;  
But lifted up his head, and with the robe  
Wiped from his filming eyes the dust and blood  
And with a human pity wept o'er him;

Then, rising, with divine and deathless word  
Smote the hot rock, commanding, and there flowed  
Ceaseless the healing waters cool and clear,  
And there the scape-goat drank with greedy tongue,  
Not knowing (for the Lord's least child was he)  
That God stood by him and refreshed his need.

But the All-merciful, beholding him,  
Blessed and so strengthened him that he arose,  
A long day's journey through the wilderness  
To the green plains of Sharon where he browsed  
Unknown among his comrades of the field,  
Himself forgetful of his agonies.

And there Immortal Love, a little space,  
Self-emptied of His power to aid Himself,  
Stood musing where the crystal water flowed.  
Then through the desert on His thirsty way  
Tempted and sad in burning heat He went:  
Others He saved, Himself He would not save.



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## THE QUEST ETERNAL

“ The poet says ‘dear City of Cecrops’ and wilt not thou  
say ‘dear City of Zeus?’ ”

Dear City, longed for by man's heart and soul,  
Where stands the whiteness of thy pillars high?  
What bright blue seas beneath thy ramparts roll?  
Above thy marbled glory spreads what sky?  
We press our barque to reach thee ere we die —  
For we were once not strangers, but at home;  
Stood once upon thy walls of porphyry,  
Knew once each tower and gold-encrusted dome  
Ere yet we left thy portals far o'er earth to roam.

We dream of thee where'er our vessel takes  
Its steadfast never-ceasing watery way:  
The ardour of thy search our vision makes,  
(We yet pass breathlessly each new-found bay)  
And in the crimson of the dying day  
Thy rosy-flushing palaces arise;  
Mirages lead our curving prows astray,  
Until beneath the ever-darkening skies  
Grow dim the empty phantoms of our glad surprise.

Comrades, still on! The quest shall yet be crowned.  
O Zeus! Thy children seek thee not in vain!  
Through boundless deeps and silences profound  
Not unrewarded does our trireme strain:

The high endeavour's joy transcends its pain.  
We cease not, Father, in our onward quest:  
No isles Circean hold us from the main.  
We cease not, Father, but in Thee we rest,  
Cleaving the Ocean purpled with the flaming west.

Pursuing still the daemon of our hope,  
Still following hard the phantom of our dream,  
Through wind-swept rains and mists our way we grope,  
Or dash, full-oared, beneath the glad sun's gleam.  
Not void of hope, O Zeus, our pennants stream:  
The immortals leave us not without their light.  
Oft the bright-haired Apollo sheds his beam  
In deathless radiance on our flaming sight,  
And great Athene comes, all-armed, to guard our night.



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## SERENITY

Life that is spent in vain,  
Swift, fleeting joys with interludes of pain —  
Such are the ways of man;  
And such his aimless, passion-stricken living,  
Meet but for God's forgiving.

Rather behold the cold  
Stars in undeviating course controlled,  
The sun's diurnal law;  
The grand submission of the rolling ocean  
In patient, endless motion;

As day by day their way  
Predestined they pursue, its laws obey,  
With peace, serene and high,  
Finding in everlasting paths of duty  
Perfection of sweet beauty.

We that are spirit-ruled,  
Would we in spiritual calm were schooled  
And tranquil unforced toil,  
For right's sake good, fruits of our labour bringing,  
Not without softened singing.

## HYMN FOR FOUNDERS AND BUILDERS

Unseen to-day but close at hand  
With us the Elder Brethren stand,  
Upon whose faith and toil and tears  
This place was built across the years.

With chisel, hammer, axe and spade  
The prayer of honest work they made,  
And preached God's message faithfully,  
That we and all men might be free.

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They wrote in words of speech unknown  
New songs to reach the Heavenly Throne;  
They healed the sick with tender care,  
And taught the little children prayer.

They ploughed and planted where we reap:  
They built the fortress that we keep:  
They kindled at the Altar's flame  
The lights we bear in Christ's high Name.

With them we lift our song above  
To praise the deathless Lord of Love,  
Who binds in one across long days  
The past and present to His praise.

## HYMN FOR ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

Ye Princes of the hosts of light,  
Immortal Paladins of Right,  
Be with us who are called to be  
On earth God's younger chivalry.

Our Captain calls to arms for truth  
Our mortal, your undying youth  
And bids us with unflinching eyes  
Smite down the dragon and his lies.

His glory dwells beyond our gaze:  
You, as we cannot, sing His praise;  
But we in silence understand  
The nail-prints of each wounded hand.

Our swords, like yours, be bright and keen  
To smite all evil things unclean,  
That we may serve, till battles cease,  
That heavenly will which is our peace.

## SERO TE AMAVI

*"Sero te amavi, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova."*

Late have I loved thee, O immortal beauty,  
Have loved thee as thou meritest man's love,  
Not with the cold white flame of steadfast duty,  
But like the sun's great urgent fire above:  
Late do I learn to give myself to thee  
At all times utterly, rejoicingly.

Yet through the days of toil, when, slowly fading,  
Dim grew the vision of thy loveliness  
When earth's false gods drove on, despite upbraiding,  
My traitor-heart to their dread wilderness,  
I never ceased to see, through fear and pain,  
Thy loveliness renew the stars again.

And now to thee whose love was boyhood's rapture,  
Whose glorious beauty shone upon my prime,  
I come in hope of spirit to recapture  
The deathless passion that reconquers time.  
O everlasting, ancient loveliness,  
Be present in new youth new days to bless!