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A BALLAD OF WISDOM.

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In days when wisdom walked with men,
And oldest saws were new,
When virtue guided tongue and pen,
And everything was true.

Both man and woman equal stood
Before the law and Lord,
And both together wrought for good
With wonderful accord.

Their simple needs the earth supplied,
With fruit in ample store ;
No class oppressed to heaven cried,
And problems vexed no more.

The Poets wrote such fetching lays,
They crowded all the shelves,
And dramatists evolved such plays,
They simply played themselves.

Technique artistic overrode
All critical regard ;
Each house with paintings overflowed,
And sculpture filled the yard.

With orators 'twas just the same,
With perfect skill they roared ;
But woe to be, and fie, for shame !
At last the world was bored !

Men shuffled off their mortal coil
By thousands every day ;
Because they had no need to toil,
They had no strength to play.

Then sages wagged their bearded chins
In calm and high debate,
And vowed, though all were free from sins,
The gods to supplicate.

" We ask a trifling boon," they prayed,
" Our weary hours to while,
O ! give to matron and to maid
Their old alluring guile."

The gods were kind. Then came a change !
Man felt with thrilling joy
Within his breast emotions strange,
For woman kind was coy.

To win a maid took all the art
That mortal could devise ;
With greed they plundered mine and mart
To feast her yearning eyes.

Then war was rife and mortal strife
Among the sons of men ;
His own, man guarded with his life,
And chaos came again.

But tyrants rose from out the din,
Who ruled with power and wit ;
Once more the world was full of sin,
But men could live in it.