

DEAD HUSBANDMEN.

(In Memoriam - Comrades)

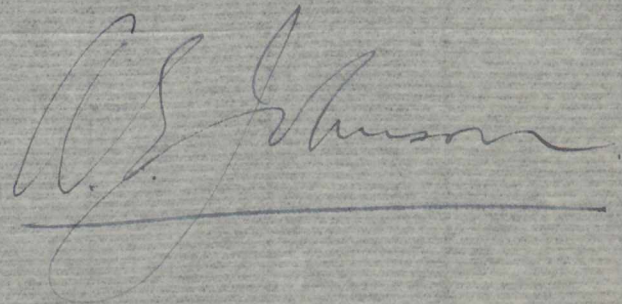
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Strong love fell here, and stalwart kindness;  
Fine boughs of the Maple Tree were torn  
When these dear slain ones kissed their Mother Earth.  
She felt the cooling of their broad young breasts  
And missed the pattern of their hurrying feet  
And all the loved engraving of the shear.

Old Fanny hears an alien footfall to the barn;  
Other grips are staining the handles of the plow;  
The grown baby has been snatched from the Mother's breast;  
Thick sods are packed between them and the stars,  
And dusty-hollow are their once illumined eyes.

Dead are their hands and dead their darling hopes,  
And mockingly the multitudinous weeds  
Blow o'er the virgin furrows they forsook  
When brayed the bugle, and the demanding drum  
Pricked the great silence of the drowsy plains.  
Now reapen is the reaper ere he reaped  
And cannot any more go forth to sow.

Neigh no more, ponies; moo not, ye milchers,  
To him who from the clovery meadowlands  
Unto your frosted mangers brought the sweetsome hay.  
Dead, dead; the strong young husbandmen are dead,  
And, oh, the death of beauty in each one of them.

  
A. J. Johnson