

"THE THINGS THAT ARE MORE  
EXCELLENT."

WILLIAM WATSON.

As we wax older on this earth,  
Till many a toy that charmed us seems  
Emptied of beauty, stripped of worth,  
And mean as dust and vain as dreams—  
For gauds that perished, shows that passed,  
Some recompense the Fates have sent :  
Thrice lovelier shine the things that last,  
The things that are more excellent.

Tired of the Senate's barren brawl,  
An hour with silence we prefer,  
While statelier rise the woods than all  
Yon towers of talk at Westminster.  
Let this man prate and that man plot,  
On fame or place or title bent :  
The votes of veering crowds are not  
The things that are more excellent.

Shall we perturb and vex our soul  
For "wrongs" which no true freedom mar,  
Which no man's upright walk control,  
And from no guiltless deed debar ?  
What odds, though tonguesters heal, or leave  
Unhealed, the grievance they invent ?  
To things, not phantoms, let us cleave—  
The things that are more excellent.

Nought nobler is than to be free :  
The stars of heaven are free because  
In amplitude of liberty

Their joy is to obey the laws.  
From servitude to freedom's name  
Free thou thy mind in bondage pent ;  
Depose the fetish, and proclaim  
The things that are more excellent.

And in appropriate dust be hurled  
That dull, punctilious god whom they  
That call their tiny clan the World  
Serve and obsequiously obey :

Who con their ritual of Routine,  
With minds to one dead likeness blent,  
And never ev'n in dreams have seen  
The things that are more excellent.

To dress, to call, to dine, to break  
No canon of the social code,  
The little laws that lacqueys make,  
The futile decalogue of Mode—  
How many a soul for these things lives,  
With pious passion, grave intent !  
While Nature careless-handed gives  
The things that are more excellent.

To hug the wealth ye cannot use,  
And lack the riches all may gain ;  
O blind, and wanting wit to choose,  
Who house the chaff and burn the grain !  
And still doth life with starry towers  
Lure to the bright, divine ascent !—  
Be yours the things ye would . be ours  
The things that are more excellent.

The grace of friendship—mind and heart  
Linked with their fellow heart and mind ;  
The gains of science, gifts of art ;  
The sense of oneness with our kind ;  
The thirst to know and understand—  
A large and liberal discontent :  
These are the goods in life's rich hand,  
The things that are more excellent.

In faultless rhythm the ocean rolls,  
A rapturous silence thrills the skies ;  
And on this earth are lovely souls,  
That softly look with aidful eyes.  
Though dark, O God, thy course and track,  
I think thou must at least have meant  
That naught which lives should wholly lack  
The things that are more excellent.

—*Spectator.*

Woe to the people, whose attachment to  
their land is based upon its material advan-  
tages, who have lost their sense for those  
spiritual presences, from an appreciation of  
which springs all true love of country, with  
warrior's courage in her defence, and states-  
man's faith in her destiny ! The greatest

calamity which can befall any people is to  
forfeit the enthusiasm for the soil on which  
their history has been achieved and their  
hearths and altars lie, by suffering their faith  
in the presence of God, of which these are  
but the tokens, to pass away.