

Around me throbbed the busy street,
And want and hate at morn arose,
And these I sought 'midst stress and heat
To vanquish ere the long day's close,
And yet my deeds were incomplete
As the Great Lord above me knows.

Still paid I tribute oft and kept
With fervour an exalted creed,
And on the flagstones as I stept
Sowed in the silence golden seed
That grew to fruit, though passions swept
Within and swayed me as a reed.

I toiled, too, in neglected lands
Whereto some early toilers sped
To sow and reap in scattered bands
Where e'er their priestly impulse led,
Yet left, to mock their holy hands,
The harvest still unharvested.

Alas ! long silent voices rose
Within a crypt of memory's hall
That called me from the task I chose,
And fain was I to hear their call,
For I was swayed by all of those
Malign delights which compass all.

Sad days and nights of thralldom came
While drifting from her wise control,
But when she whispered naught of blame
And found some virtue to extol,
I hung my head in very shame
Lest she should truly see my soul.

Then 'neath these austere Northern skies,
I felt a solemn purpose grow
To drive the mists before mine eyes,
And ease and recompense forego,
And, where the fruitless fallow lies
In wrinkled ridge and furrow, sow.

Still torn with ancient chains and weak,
Like one of a half-vanquished race,
Without the virtues of the meek,
And with the palsy of the base,
I yet lift up mine eyes and seek
The light of that high angel's face.

