

The Rockwood Review.

A MEMORIAL TO CERTAIN DUMB FRIENDS.

My heart is heavy and sad for the helpless and the weak,
Feudal retainers of man, of whom he is master and lord,
Whose piteous eyes speak for them, whose dumb lips cannot speak :
For whom to die is the only goal, and refuge and reward.

The only refuge, the last,—for merciful death is kind
To the poor worn bodies and limbs, stiffened with toil and sore,
Bringing the soft anaesthetic of sleep, for the weary to find
Rest and peace in the grave, where the wicked trouble no more.

Do they not think and feel?—do they not certainly know?
These thralls of the field, these swift-limbed steeds of the stall,
Who start and cower and shrink from the cruel word like a blow,
Whom a child may lead with a tether, who come at a gentle call.

Fear, and desire and shame, and the keen sense of disgrace,
And love, and a wistful constancy, words could not make more plain:
Speak in the eloquent limbs, and the sensitive mobile face,—
Like, and so unlike our own in heart and nerve and brain.

So unlike in devotion, which triumphs and survives
Evil and wrong and cruelty—unquestioning and mute :
Ah, were the balance straitly laid between these alien lives,
Before high heaven, which were the nobler, arrogant Man or the Brute?

Swift and sure are the steady feet when our's in the darkness grope,
Quick are the listening ears that flinch from the lash's stinging hiss :
Spirit of slumbering justice, speak!—is there no "larger hope,"
No hint of the life immortal to right the wrongs of this.

For I would that far off somewhere, beyond the bounds of time,
There were balm for the speechless anguish that has never yet been told,
Some sweet and blessed country—some unimagined clime,
And room for all God's creatures within its sheltering fold.

K. S. McL.