

IN TIME OF WAR

i

WAR is of God no less than thrifty peace,
God, that Unknowable which raiseth Man
From dust, and sets him free to will, and plan,
And mould his fate by slackness or increase
In making noble usage of the lease
Of soul each hath in trust some little span.
To will sublimely common mortals can
When War's great clarion biddeth dallying cease.

Peace is probation, too. If Man shall strive
Therein for vanities, and glut, and pelf,
Whose votaries scoff at serving fellows' need,
He wrongs his trust; he works his doom himself;
Yet War may trumpet him to knightly deed
Who would not save, in peace, his soul alive.

ii

Better were death in battle than the fear
Which, did it master man, were suicide
To all that lilt of spiritual pride
That doth alone make life worth living here.
Better than slavish stoop to gather gear
It were to cast the coil of flesh aside.
The worst were lingering, after honour died,
To eat, and drink, and lust from year to year.

Wherefore doth will to nobly live ordain
Contempt of death on hosts of common men
Who reck not why their rulers call the fight.
"On them let rest the wrong and murder when
The Cause is bad; yet must we arm to smite,
Or die, lest in us more than life be slain."

E. W. THOMSON