

The Chemistry of Character

JOHN, and Peter and Robert and Paul,
God in his wisdom created them all.

John was a statesman, and Peter a slave,
Robert a preacher, and Paul—was a knave.
Evil or good—as the case might be,
Black or colored, or bond, or free—
John and Peter and Robert and Paul,
God in his wisdom created them all.

Out of earth's elements, mingled with flame,
Out of life's compounds of glory and shame,
Fashioned and shaped by no will of their own,
And helplessly into life's history thrown;
Born by the law that compels men to be,
Born to conditions they could not foresee,
John, and Peter and Robert and Paul,
God in his wisdom created them all.

John was the head and the heart of his state,
Was trusted and honored, was noble and great,
Peter was made 'neath life's burden to groan,
And never once dreamed that his soul was his own.
Robert great glory and honor received,
For zealously preaching what no one believed;
While Paul, of the pleasures of life took his fill,
And gave up his life to the service of ill.

It chanced that these men in their passing away
From life and its conflict, all died the same day!
John was mourned through the length and the breadth of the land—
Peter fell 'neath the lash in a merciless hand—
Robert died with the praise of the Lord on his tongue—
While Paul was convicted of murder, and hung.
John and Peter, and Robert and Paul
The purpose of life was fulfilled in them all.

Men said of the statesman—"How noble and brave"
But of Peter "Alas—he was only a slave."
Of Robert—"Tis well with his soul—it is well,"
While Paul they consigned to the torments of Hell.