

IF WE COULD UNDERSTAND

If we could know how much of real succeeding
Is buried deep where 'Failure!' marks the place,—
If we but knew how oftentimes receding
Is named 'Advancing', with misleading grace,—
So changed would be our little, shallow, doubting
Conception of this earthly-heavenly race.

If we could see, within the cloud, the bright'ning
Of field and forest 'neath a later ray,
We would not dread so much the short-lived lightning,
Or feel the spirit of the rainy day:
Perhaps we'd grasp a deeper sense of gaining,
Nor mind the windings of the longer way.

If we could, in the beauty all around us,
See the connection between light and shade,
And note, within the scenery that surrounds us,
The lesser beauty, where the shadows fade,
Perhaps we'd see life's artist's truer meaning,
And understand the better what He made.

If we could see, within the seed, the spirit
That throbs within the glowing, spreading bloom,
And in the cold, damp earth would find the merit
That sends life from its cold and hidden gloom,
Perhaps we'd find the substance of real living
Has often come from that cold thing called doom.