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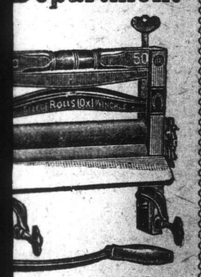

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AN HOUR WITH THE EDITOR

MAKERS OF HISTORY.

II.

Researches among the ruins of the ancient cities of Mesopotamia, and estimates of the length of time necessary for the filling up of the valley lying at the head of the Persian gulf, warrant the conclusion that civilized communities were established on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris fully ten thousand years ago. These rivers carry to the sea a great quantity of silt formed by the erosion of the mountains in which they take their rise, and this is deposited at the seashore, and forms new land. The rate of growth of this is so regular that it furnishes a fairly accurate means of measuring the lapse of time, and when a city is found a long distance inland, which was unquestionably a seaport when it was built, the length of time required for the river to deposit the soil now lying between it and the sea is easily estimated. Another measure of time, which is not quite as reliable, is derived from the depth of the earth coverings of the ruined cities. It is very remarkable that several of these cities should lie one underneath the other. The antiquity of the upper one being known historically, the age of the others can be estimated with an approach to accuracy. A third means of reaching the result is by deciphering the inscriptions found in the ruins. These three methods lead to closely similar conclusions, so that the general conviction of archaeologists is that at least as early as 7500 B.C. civilization had made very considerable progress in the region referred to. Of course, very little can be told with any approach to certainty concerning this very remote period, and we have a hiatus of from three thousand to five thousand years before any actual historical personage can be spoken of with any degree of accuracy. The name of this great maker of history was Shar-gani-shar-ali, commonly called Sargon by archaeologists. The date at which he lived is uncertain. Some calculations assign him to as remote a period as 4500 B.C.; others think that 2800 B.C. is as great an antiquity as the evidence warrants. But whatever may have been the true date of his reign, there is abundant proof that the people of the Euphrates valley had then reached a high stage of culture indicating a very long period of enlightened progress.

Before giving a brief resume of Sargon's career, it may be well to mention that long before his time the use of clothing had become general, so much so, indeed, that a national costume had been adopted, which varied with the wealth of its wearer. This signifies more than appears at first sight. It indicates a stage in progress which our British ancestors had not reached two thousand years ago. Astronomy was an established science, for the heavens were mapped out and the signs of the Zodiac were indicated as we have them today; architecture had made great progress and some advance had been achieved in navigation. Perhaps of greater interest is the fact that many of the stories, which we tell children, such as that of Jack the Giant Killer, Jack and the Bean-stalk, and so on, had their origin in this far-off time. Indeed, they seem to be distorted legends of the heroes of Akkad, in which respect they resemble the legends current among our own Indians. But with this brief suggestion of the progress attained at the period of Sargon's reign, and with a reminder that before his birth fully three times, and perhaps five times, as long a period of civilization had elapsed as separates our day from that of Alfred the Great, it may be mentioned that Babylonian history dates back to Sargon as the founder of an epoch. In a great library found at Nineveh, there were discovered dictionaries, grammars and geographies—not such as we have today, of course, but inscribed on cylinders and tablets, and they go back to Sargon's time as though that were the beginning of settled history. Sargon himself was of obscure birth. He was found in a pitch-smeared basket floating in a canal. All manner of legends surround his origin and early life. All manner of remarkable things were attributed to him. After many adventures he was raised by divine guidance to a position of eminence, and then began a career of conquest and able administration, which has led some writers to call him the Charlemagne of antiquity. He overthrew all his rivals and made himself ruler of Western Asia and Egypt. He plays the same part in the records of that time as we saw last Sunday that Fohi played in the early history of China. All science, art, literature and the whole science of government were attributed to him or to the influence of his patronage. He must not be confused with Arkeanos, who, under the name of Sargon, is mentioned in Isaiah, who lived more than two thousand years after. We find a reference to Akkad in Genesis x. One of Noah's sons was Ham, and Ham's oldest son was Cush, who in his turn had a son, Nimrod. The latter is described as "a mighty hunter before the Lord," and it is told of him that "the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech and Akkad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar." It is just possible that Nimrod and Sargon were one and the same persons. In Genesis xl. we are told of the building of the Tower of Babel, and it is established beyond doubt that the successors of Sargon were chiefly distinguished by the remarkable buildings which they erected. The remains of one of them have been examined, and it is estimated that upwards of 30,000,000 bricks must have been used in its construcion. The years following the death of Sargon, when his son and grandson were upon the throne, were great eras in building. Brick was the chief material used, and for cement bitumen was employed instead of lime. Afterwards this great empire, which Sargon founded, fell to pieces, and it is not improbable that the story of Babel and the confusion of tongues is a legend of this great political event.

The resemblance between the early life of Moses and Sargon is noteworthy, and it may also be mentioned that among the tablets found in the great library at Nineveh was the famous account of the flood that is so often referred to as a confirmation of the story told in Genesis. In view of the fact that the earlier books of the Old Testament were not reduced to their present form until after the Babylonian Captivity, these things are of unusual interest. Although we know so little with any certainty concerning this bygone hero, it is worth mentioning that about fifty centuries ago there lived a man, who made history to such a purpose that the greatest civilization known in all antiquity has been ascribed to his commanding influence.

PULPIT AND PEW

A correspondent sends an extract from an English publication in which the relations of the pulpit and pew are dealt with. In it the oft-stated question: "How shall we get people to go to church?" receives some consideration, and the gist of the views expressed is contained in a question and answer said to have been put to a prominent divine. "How shall we fill the pews?" he was asked; to which he replied: "By filling the pulpit." This seems very well put, and perhaps it is, if we understand the word "filling" in a wide sense. What is the object of church services? Most people would answer that they form a part of man's religious duty, and that they are held in obedience to Divine law. But church-going is purely a human institution, an evolution from the gatherings of people, who used to meet to hear Jesus speak, and later assembled at more or less regular intervals for mutual comfort and instruction. There appears to have been some divergence of practice among those who first professed themselves followers of the new doctrine, so that not only Jude in his general Epistle warned the Christians against abandoning the habit of holding such gatherings, but the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews laid very great stress upon their duty not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. He looked upon these meetings as a means of "provoking one another to love and to good works." Perhaps if we say that public worship was instituted for the strengthening of spiritual life and the promotion of good works, and has been continued with that object, we will not be far astray. This is sought through the instrumentality of three means: prayer, praise, and instruction. When we speak of "filling the pulpit," if what we have in mind is that the preacher shall be a man of eloquence, who is able to interest and attract audiences, we refer only to one of the three means by which the desired effect of public worship can be attained. But if what we mean by the term is that the minister shall be a man filled with the spirit, which the church theoretically at least desires the people to acquire, and able to inspire all three branches of the service with a feeling of certainty that he himself has, as some one has put it, "been touched with a live coal from off the altar," there will not be much reason to complain that the pews are empty. In this sense it is true to say that the way to fill the pews is to fill the pulpit.

But this is rather begging the question discussed in the extract, which is more specific, because it refers more specifically to the act of preaching. While there are some people who go to church simply to take part in the service, and to whom the sermon is the least important part of the ceremony, the great majority, the masses, whose more frequent attendance at services is desired, are very much more interested in the sermon. If this is good, they are satisfied; if it is dull, they are discontented, and not even an attractive musical programme can tempt them to go again. A story is attributed to Archbishop Whateley, whose work on Rhetoric is recommended to every person whose business it is to speak or write, in which it is related that a young curate asked him how long he ought to take in preparing a sermon. The Archbishop replied: "That depends upon how long you are going to preach. If an hour, an hour will do; if half an hour, I should recommend you to take a couple of days; if fifteen minutes, you ought to take the whole week." There is a great deal in this. A trained newspaper writer will often spend more time over a short item than he would over a half column dealing with the same subject. A public speaker who is going to speak as long as his audience will listen to him, does not require much preparation, because, if he can speak at all and once gets started, he is pretty sure to say something worth listening to. Most sermons display a lack of preparation, and no preacher is warranted in expecting his congregation to take more interest in his discourse than he does himself. What is usually spoken of as eloquence is excellent in the pulpit, but earnestness is far better. Eloquence is the glitter which attracts; earnestness the magnetism which holds. If the two are combined so much the better, but the combination is rare.

To be more specific. The pulpit has too much to say about the church as an organization; it assumes too much of what smacks of infallibility; it is given to concealing the truth, for fear that if the whole is told the belief of hearers may be weakened; it does not deal enough with the things which concern men in their daily life. Let a preacher talk straight out to his people upon things with which they are concerned, and they will come a second time to listen to him. Let him deal with things that he understands and that others can understand, and not talk mysteriously about matters which neither he nor anyone else can hope to know anything about, and practical men and women will be eager to hear him. Every one wants the real message of the church, and the chief reason why so few people go to church is that they do not receive the message when they do go. Sometimes one will hear a sermon devoted to the denunciation of evils concerning which every member of the congregation thinks exactly as the preacher does. This sort of thing does very little good. Preachers ought to aim at meeting the actual needs of those to whom they speak.

Some people say that too much is expected of a preacher. Possibly this is true, and possibly it is not true. Their subjects are timeworn, no doubt, and it is next to impossible to say new things about them; but old things can be said in new ways. Sometimes mysteries are made out of things that to the layman are simplicity itself. Here is a true incident: A preacher had delivered a sermon on a text out of one of Paul's epistles. He said that commentators had decided that Paul meant either one of three things, and he elaborated the arguments in favor of each view, closing by expressing his own preference. After the sermon he said to one of the congregation: "What do you think Paul meant?" to which the reply was that he probably meant what he said, to which the preacher answered that it would be impossible to find a commentator who would say so. This little story illustrates the weakness of many sermons. The members of the congregation, if they are at all interested, have decided as soon as the text is read what it means, and the preacher goes on for half an hour or more endeavoring to give it some meaning which is not apparent on its face. It may be taken for granted that the writers of the books of the Bible knew what they wanted to say, and said it. Hence as a rule the best use for a text is to use it as a peg to hang a sermon on. In other words, in each sermon there ought to be a central thought, and the preacher's object ought to be to make that thought plain; and, when he has done this, to stop. And the thought ought always to be one having some direct bearing upon the development of character, the promotion of the happiness of those who are spoken to, or the inculcation of correct principles of conduct, not merely in people as individuals, but in their relation to the community, the state and the world at large. If this rule were adopted, if religion were treated as a practical and understandable thing, if less mystery were made of it, if reasonableness rather than antiquity were relied on to demonstrate its truths, if more were made of personal experience and less of clerical dogma, and if pervading all preaching there were more indications that the preacher himself was in earnest, more people would attend church.

Love Stories of History

II.

(N. de Bertrand Lugrin.)

PENELOPE AND ULYSSES.

As one that for a weary space has lain
Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine,
In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
Where that Aegean isle forgets the main,
And only the low lutes of love complain,
And only shadows of wan lovers pine.
As such an one were glad to know the brine
Salt on his lips, and the large air again,
So gladly from the songs of modern speech
Men turn and see the stars, and feel the free
Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers;
And through the music of the languid hours,
They hear, like ocean on a western beach,
The surge and thunder of Odyssey.

—Andrew Lang.

When Paris had abducted Helen and the wronged Menalaus had called upon his brother Greeks to aid him in the seige of Troy, among the heroes who agreed to assist him was Ulysses, son of Laertes, prince of Ithaca. Ulysses had then been married only a short time to Penelope, and their little son Telemachus was but a few months old. Penelope was second only to Helen in her beauty of face and figure, and the fame of her loveliness had spread from Greece to Troy. When Agammemnon, who was the bearer of Manelaus' message, arrived in Ithaca, he had great difficulty in persuading Ulysses to leave his beautiful wife, for he feared that in his absence she might be abducted as Helen had been. But Ulysses was a hero and a soldier before all else, and after a sad farewell, he set sail with Agammemnon for Troy, where he distinguished himself for his great sagacity and bravery. In the Odyssey, Homer tells of the wonderful adventures that befel him upon his journey back to Penelope.

As soon as he left Troy, fierce storms beset him, scattering his ships. The sails of his own vessel were torn to shreds, and his men, giving themselves up for lost, gathered round their commander, who, even in the face of gravest danger, never lost the great courage that distinguished him among the bravest of his time. A north wind blew his ship across the Aegean Sea to the fair country of the Lotus-eaters, a land in which it "seemed always afternoon," and where the "charmed sunset lingered low adown in the red west."

"The mild-eyed, melancholy Lotus-eaters" brought branches of the enchanted fruit, and bade the tired mariners eat of it and rest forever upon the charmed shores. But Ulysses, whose sagacity was second only to his courage, dissuaded his followers from listening to the soft persuasion of those already under the spell of the enchantment, and they set sail again towards the north, and the Isle of Ithaca, where Ulysses knew his patient wife watched eagerly for his coming. But the gods had doomed the hero to twenty long years of wandering before he should see his home again. Many and varied and always dangerous were the adventures that befel the brave Ulysses. Over and over again in song and legend do we read of the perils that beset him and his men upon the isles of Cyclops and Aeolus and the wonderful island of Aegea. In the latter place lived Circe, the enchantress, and myth-loving painters have pictured this fair lady upon a throne within a glimmering palace, her loveliness intangible and alluring, and at her feet, some crouching to spring, others asleep, and still others gambolling at play, scores of animals, one-time foolish adventurers, who have been changed under her magic into the brutes they most resembled. Wise Ulysses alone was proof against her spell, and so great was his own power, that he compelled her to release his comrades from her enchantment.

He sailed into the country of the Cimmerians, the land of perpetual darkness, and descended into Hades, there to inquire of the blind seer Teiresias if the gods would ever permit him to return to his native land. Heiresias foretold that he would in time reach Ithaca, but not until he had passed through many more perils and adventures.

The west wind blew them towards the islands of the Sirens, and Ulysses filled the ears of his companions with wax that they might not fall under the spell of the luring music. But for himself, he bade the sailors tie him fast to the mast, and on no account to release him until the perilous islands were passed. So was this temptation braved and overcome. Month after month saw the hero in the midst of fresh dangers, through all of which he passed scatheless, though a great storm finally wrecked his ship and drowned all of his companions. For eight years he remained a prisoner of the gods on the isle of Ogygia, the abode of the nymph Calypso. Here he had every comfort, and the lovely nymph ministered to him with ceaseless tenderness. But day after day through the long years "found him sitting on the shore, looking over the unharvested deep, his eyes never dry of tears and his sweet life ebbing away as he mourned for his return to Penelope."

At length the gods permitted "Nausica of the white arms" to come to the aid of Ulysses, and through her instrumentality he was given a ship in which to return home. The winds were propitious, the weather fair, and the hero, his trials over, landed upon his native shore.

Meantime during the weary years of his absence, Penelope was wooed by many suitors. They came from far and near, and were so importunate that Penelope resorted to strategy in order to rid herself of them. She told her lovers that she was at work upon a piece of tapestry, which was to be a shroud for Laertes, and that, when it was finished, she would give them her answer. By day she worked and by night her patient fingers undid the daytime's task. So was the work prolonged and the demanded decision put off, and through the window of her tower-chamber she watched forever across the sapphire sea for the glimpse of a white sail and a golden prow, that would mean the home-coming of Ulysses.

One warm, sweet day in summer a beggar stood at the gates of Penelope's castle, an unshaven, unkempt man, of wonderful length of limb and great breadth of shoulder, but clad in tatters and bent as if from long suffering. From under his shaggy brows he looked upon the camps of Penelope's lovers, and his eyes took fire and his breath came quick and hot. The soldiers at the drawbridge would have driven him away, but an old woman, a long-time servitor and Ulysses' one-time nurse, who stood near, beseeching them to let him pass, they humored her. Once within, and out of sight of prying eyes, the ancient dame fell upon her knees at the feet of the beggar.

"Master, master," she wept, "praise to the gods thou hast returned!"

Telemachus, Ulysses' son, grown to glorious young manhood, passed the beggar and the woman without a glance. Servants who in the past had flown to do the bidding of Ulysses, laughed and mocked at the bent and ragged figure who followed the old dame into the castle hall. But Argos, the hero's old dog, who lay stretched in the sun, stood up as the two approached, and flung himself with cries of wild delight upon the man, licking his face, his hands, his feet, in a transport of joy.

"Of them all," said the beggar, fondling his faithful pet, "only thou and the old nurse remember Ulysses."

But Penelope was in the tower by her loom, and Ulysses sought her there. She rose, half in anger, half in fear, as he entered, and there was no word of greeting upon her lips, until Ulysses, straightening his great form, and holding out his arms, pronounced her name.

"These two meet at last together, he after his long wanderings, and she having suffered the insistence of the suitors in her palace. The woman in spite of her withered youth and tearful years of widowhood is still expectant of her lord. He, unconquered by the pleasures cast across his path; unterrified by all the dangers he endured, clings in thought to the bride he led forth, a blushing maiden, from her father's halls. O just, subtle and mighty Homer! there is nothing of Greek here, more than of Hebrew, or of Latin, or of German. It is pure humanity."

Thus ends one of the most beautiful of the old love-stories. Call it history, myth, legend—what we will—the fact remains that the Christ-like qualities of steadfastness, faith and purity were those most esteemed in ancient civilizations; and, through the thousands of years since the Greek poet's death, Ulysses has been held up as a model of courage and patience, and Penelope as an example to all women in the faithfulness of her love.

THE STORY TELLER

The late King of Portugal was a sportsman and a good shot as well, and once at a dinner the rather inferior shooting of an English visitor was praised, and some one said: "And Lord Gadabout, you know, sends everything he shoots to the hospitals.

"The king laughed, and taking the long black cigar from his lips, he said: "Naturally, since he never shoots anything but gamekeepers."

Martin W. Littleton, the noted New York lawyer, recently said of an opponent: "Gentlemen, if you knew Blank as well as I do, you'd understand that when his mouth opens his brain ceases to work. He reminds me of a little steamer that used to run on the Missouri. The steamer had a seven-inch boiler and a twelve-inch whistle. The effect of this was that when the whistle blew the steamer stopped."

Blumenthal, the great theatre manager of Berlin, was once talking with Tolstoi about Ibsen, and said: "I have a good many of his plays on the stage, but I can't say that I quite understand them. Do you understand them?"

"Ibsen doesn't understand them himself," Tolstoi replied. "He just writes them, and then sits down and waits. After awhile his expounders and explainers come and tell him what he meant."

There has recently been an outcry against the deterioration in modern letter writing, but the following epistolary triumph from a London tailor has leveled things up.

"I have today issued a writ against you," wrote a tailor whose letter was produced in Westminster county court yesterday, "for the amount of your bill. Trusting for a continuance of your esteemed favor, I remain," etc.

An amusing story is told about a prisoner who was charged with felony at Bow street police court. On his way to the police station he became quite confidential with his captor, and remarked:

"There is one thing I am sorry for."

"What is that?" said his captor, expecting to hear a confession.

"I had my hair cut last night," said the prisoner, in a dejected tone "I might have saved that shilling. It's just my luck."

An artist went beyond the city one day recently to get impressions. When he had finished a scenic sketch of the stretch of woods skirting a suburban road, he looked up and beheld a serious-faced Irishman, whom he had previously noticed digging a trench by the roadside, gazing queerly at his canvas.

"'Well," said the artist familiarly, "do you suppose you could make a picture like that?"

The Irishman considered a moment, and with a deep sigh, answered: "Sure; a mon c'n do anything if he's driv to ut!"

One day this summer some poor children were permitted to go over a fine stock farm, near a city, conducted as a hobby by a wealthy professional man, and when their inspection was done each of them was given a glass of milk.

The milk came from a $2,500 cow.

"How do you like it, boys?" asked an attendant, when the little fellows had drained their glasses.

"Fine! Fine!" said one youngster, with a grin of approval. Then, after a pause, he added:

"I wisht our milkman kept a cow."

A merchant of a certain small town one day entered the office of the editor of the only newspaper in the place. He was in a state of mingled excitement and indignation. "I'll not pay a cent for advertising this week!" he exclaimed. "You told me you would put the notice of my spring sale in with the reading matter."

"And didn't I do it?" asked the editor, with reassuring suavity.

"No, you didn't!" came from the irate merchant. "You put it in the column with a lot of poetry, that's where you put it!"

The battle was going against him. The commander-in-chief, himself ruler of the South American republic, sent an aide to the rear, ordered General Blanco to bring up his regiment at once. Ten minutes passed; but he didn't come. Twenty, thirty, an hour—still no regiment. The aide came tearing back hatless, breathless.

"My regiment! My regiment! Where is it?" shrieked the commander.

"General," answered the excited aide, "Blanco started it all right, but there are a couple of drunken Englishmen down the road and they won't let it go by!"

In the English club at Hongkong a white-haired old gentleman who had come down from some northern port was seated at dinner, when he suddenly became very excited. He had been brought a letter by a solemn-faced Chinese butler and he saw something on the outside of this letter which sent him downstairs two steps at a time to interview the hall porter. When he came back he told us what was the matter. The hall porter had inscribed on the envelope in Chinese for the information of the butler: "This is for the old baboon with white fur."

Unfortunately for the hall porter, the little gentleman was a first-class scholar in the Chinese language.

A grizzled old American colonel, who is a veteran of the Civil War, and who had since seen hard active service in several Indian campaigns, the Arctic regions, the Spanish war and the Philippine insurrection, did not view with pleasure the recent promotion of younger and almost unknown officers who were jumped over his head. Strolling about his camp in the Philippines one day, he came upon one of his officers fondling a monkey.

"Colonel," said the officer, "this is the most remarkable monkey I ever saw. Why, he can take a stick and go through the manual of arms almost as well as one of the soldiers."

"Sh!" cautioned the colonel, glancing about in great alarm. "Don't tell anybody. Suppose the War Department heard of it? They'd make him a brigadier-general!"

Some years ago an expedition from the University of Pennsylvania was sent down to one of the Southern States for the purpose of observing a solar eclipse.

The day before the event one of the professors said to an old darkey belonging to the household wherein the scientist was quartered:

"Tom, if you will watch your chickens tomorrow morning, you'll find that they'll all go to roost at eleven o'clock."

"Tom was, of course, sceptical; but at the appointed hour the heavens were darkened, and the chickens retired to roost. At this the negro's amazement showed no bounds, and he sought out the scientist.

"Professor," said he, "how long ago did you know dem chickens would go to roost?"

"About a year ago," said the professor, smilingly.

"Well, ef dat don't beat all!" was the darkey's comment. "Perfesser, a year ago dem chickens wasn't even hatched!"

The London newspapers used to make a distinction between a simple notice of death, for which they charged five shillings, and a brief obituary, for which they demanded seven and sixpence. One day Dr. Thomas Hume called at the office of a morning journal and silently placed upon the counter the announcement of the death of a friend, together with five shillings. The clerk glanced at the paper, tossed it to one side, and said, gruffly: "Seven and six!"

"I have frequently," answered Hume, "had occasion to publish these simple notices, and I have never before been charged more than five shillings." "Simple!" repeated the clerk without looking up, "there's an added line, 'universally beloved, and deeply regretted,' isn't there? Seven and six." Hume produced the additional half-crown and laid it deliberately by the others, observing in his most solemn tone, "Congratulate yourself, sir, that this is an expense which your executors will never be put to."

WITH THE POETS

Always

When the ring dove is calling,
Down the woodland, little darling,
When the fields have grown green and all nature is new,
When the gentle rain, falling
O'er the good land, little darling,
Makes the old world grow glad, then my heart for you.

When the brown birds are winging
O'er the moorlands, little darling,
And the gray gull's adrift on the breast of the blue;
Then I long for the warm clasp
Of your hand, little darling,
When the old world seems sad then my heart yearns for you.

—Cy Warman.

The Dreamer

The dreamer dreamed; and the busy world
Passed by with a mocking smile,
As it went in search of the world's rewards,
But the dreamer dreamed the while.

He saw the world as the world should be,
When longer years had run,
And the world but paused in its work to ask:
"Pray, what has the dreamer done?"

Yet ever the dreamer dreamed his dream,
Until in some wondrous way—
As the water springing in deeps of earth,
Finds passage to upper day—

The dreamer's dream found the man of power—
'Tis strange how men's lives are knit—
Who knew not the dreamer, but took his dream
And transformed the world with it.

The world bows down to the man of power—
Forgotten the dreamer lies—
Yet the dream he dreamed is the secret force
That has forged man's destinies.

—Charles Carter Rollit, in The Bellman.

Brotherhood

Not to be different, Lord,
I ask, from those that fare
Beside me on life's way,
But that my spirit shall accord
With their great purpose; that my share
Wholly I may fulfil,
In thought and will;
And that the simple creed
Of all men's right
Within Thy sight,
I may affirm
By word and deed.

O save me from the blame
Of those who have forgot
Their brotherhood, and boast
Of worth ancestral, and feel shame
For such as bear the common lot.
Make me, dear God, to see,
If aught through me
Find favor in Thy ken,
'Tis but in part
The grace Thy Heart
Pours richly on
My fellow men.

—John D. Barry in Harper's Bazar.

Life and Nature

I passed through the gates of the city,
The streets were strange and still,
Through the doors of the open churches
The organs were moaning shrill,

Through the doors and the great high windows
I heard the murmur of prayer,
And the sound of their solemn singing
Streamed out on the summit air.

A sound of some great burden
That lay on the world's dark breast,
Of the old, and the sick, and the lonely,
And the weary that cried for rest.

I strayed through the midst of the city
Like one distracted or mad.
"Oh, Life! Oh, Life!" I kept saying,
And the very word seemed sad.

I passed through the gates of the city,
And I heard the small birds sing,
I laid me adown in the meadows
Afar from the bell-ringing.

In the depth and the bloom of the meadows
I lay on the earth's quiet breast,
The flex fanned me with shadows,
And the cuckoo sang me to rest.

Blue, blue was the heaven above me,
And the earth green at my feet;
"Oh, Life! Oh, Life! I kept saying,
And the very word seemed sweet.

—Archibald Lampman.

Spring Magic

This morning soft and brooding
In the warm April rain,
The doors of sense are opened
To set me free again.

I pass into the color
And fragrance of the flowers,
And melt with every bird-cry
To haunt the mist-blue flowers.

I thrill in crimson quince-buds,
To raptures without name,
And in the yellow tulips
Burn with a pure, still flame.

I blend with the soft shadows
Of the young maple leaves,
And mingle in the raindrops
That shine along the eaves.

I lapse among the grasses
That green the river's brink,
And with the shy wood creatures
Go down at need to drink.

I fade in silver music,
Whose fine, unnumbered notes
The frogs and rainy fifers
Blow from their reedy throats.

No glory is too splendid
To house this soul of mine,
No tenement too lowly
To serve it for a shrine.

How is it we inherit
This marvel of new birth
Sharing the ancient wonde
And miracle of earth?

What wisdom, what enchantment,
What magic of green fire,
Could make the dust and water
Obedient to desire?

Keep thou, by some large instant,
Unwasted, fair and whole
The innocence of nature,
The ardor of the soul.

And through the house of being,
Thou art at liberty
To pass, enjoy and linger,
Inviolate and free.

—Bliss Carman.