

THE TRAIL OF WAR

O'er blighted lands a scorching wind has passed
And, forest fires' relentless fury spent,
The blackened boles of centuries' growth lament
Like mutes funereal. Grim and gaunt they cast
Their spectral shadows, shame the sunshine, blast
With presages of death returning life (now bent
On reparation). Their first beauty, meant
For benediction, doomed were they to outlast.
So passes war's foul breath and so remain
The ghastly ruins of men's hopes and dreams
Built in stone, wrought into roof and spire.
Tapestried hall or matchless window pane;
Of perfect workmanship, their remnant seems
To urge renewal while it mocks desire.

BROKEN LIVES

Who that has followed up a single strand
In fate's perplexing coil could try to gauge
The cruel windings of war's heritage
Of woe worked out in every land
In wounds, in nervous wreckage, life work planned
Diverged into strange ways and life a pilgrimage
Dreary and sad beyond all hope to assuage
But by the Man of Sorrows' healing hand.
Of broken bodies, broken lives no art
But His can blend the precious fragments till
They hold more sweetness and more beauty than
Th' unbroken forms could ever know—their part
To show true values and true valor—fill
A privileged place in God's unfolding plan.