

THE CRIME OF FATE:



OH, here's a health to the square of jaw and to him with receding chin,
 The petty thief and the murderer who follow the paths of sin ;
 The lying knave and the swindling cheat, the fool and the beery clod,
 Burned with the brand of predestined Crime by the will of the one Great God ;
 And hang the murderer heaven-high, and bury him deep as hell,
 In the name of God, who created him and saw that it was well.
 Bury him deep as a loathsome thing, cover him up with lime ;
 But, was it the crime that stamped the face, or the features that stamped the crime ?

To the lunatic who is not insane, for the eyes of the law are keen,
 Whose destiny worked to a six-foot drop—shall we say what he might have been ?
 He might have been this or he might have been that, but God was his Maker still,
 Who placed desire in his poor weak brain, and muttered, "Thou shalt not kill !"
 As a babe may hold to a plunging horse, he holds to his fierce desire ;
 Will he find a curb in a hope above or a fear of eternal fire ?
 "Resist ! Resist !" is the preacher's cry, "let victory's paths be trod."
 Resist by the power of his poor weak brain the will of a tyrant God !

To the slum-born babe who is birth-accursed with hunger and want and shame,
 Who may not covet his neighbor's goods, though he covet in hunger's name ;
 Drag him not to the Sunday school from the filth of the family barn,
 Lest he find a startling parable in the good old Bible yarn,
 And the Lord who fed the ravens on the agony and the blood
 Of his smaller, weaker creatures, might be misunderstood ;
 And the ravens turn to fat men in his little brain agog,
 While he illustrates God's mercy on a sacrificial frog.

To the little hands that are taught to steal—little lips that are taught to lie ;
 To all the weak and the damned of Earth, to Fate and the Reason Why ;
 To the generation yet to come, and e'en to the third and fourth,
 Who foot the bill of their father's sins to appease a just God's wrath ;
 To the unblown bugles and silent harps of the souls who fell from grace ;
 To an empty Heaven and crowded Hell, and the joy in Satan's face.
 For the weak of will and the strong of will must battle the deadly game ;
 And the strong shall stand and the weak shall fall—and whose is the praise or blame ?

To a true God and a good God—fighting for each man's soul,
 Who takes not the righteous as his tithe when Peter calls the roll,
 But holds as each man's heritage till the breaking of the dawn,
 A seat by Jordan's river for the curse of Being Born ;
 For the curse of Life Unasked-for, whose reins are held by fate—
 Demand no hell's repentance to pass the Pearly Gate.
 To the music of his lifetime each man must foot his dance,
 With God or the Devil to pipe for him—according to circumstance !

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