

And worshippers be loath to leave and pray
That old-time power return, until there may
Issue a virtue, and the faith revive
And holiness be there, and all the sphere
Be filled with happy altars where shall thrive
The mystic plants of faith and hope to bear
Immortal fruitage of sweet charity ;
For I believe that every piety,
And every thirst for truth is gift divine,
The gifts of God are not to me unclean
Though strangely honoured at an unknown shrine.
In temples of the past my spirit fain
For old-time strength and vigour would explore
As in a ruined abbey, fairer for
"The unimaginable touch of time"
We long for the sincerity of yore.

But this is not man's mood, in his regime
Sweet "calm decay" becomes mischance unmeet,
And dying creeds sink to extinction,
Hooted, and scorned, and sepultured in hate,
Denied their rosary of good deeds and boon
Of reverence and holy unction—
First in the list of crimes man writes defeat.

These purest dreams of this our low estate,
White-robed vestals, fond and vain designs,
I lay a wreath at your forgotten shrines.