



### The Average Man

When it comes to a question of trusting  
 Yourself to the risk of the road,  
 When the thing is the sharing of burdens,  
 The lifting the belt of a load,  
 In the hour of peril or trial,  
 In the hour you meet as you can,  
 You may safely depend on the wisdom  
 And skill of the average man.

'Tis the average man and no other  
 Who does his plain duty each day,  
 The small thing his wage is for doing,  
 On the commonplace bit of the way.

'Tis the average man, may God bless him,  
 Who pilots us, still in the van,  
 Over land, over sea, as we travel,  
 Just the plain, hardy average man.

So on through the days of existence,  
 All mingling in shadow and shine,  
 We may count on the every-day hero,  
 When haply the gods may divine.  
 But who wears the swarth grime of his calling

And labors and earns as he can,  
 And stands at last with the nobles,  
 The commonplace average man.

—MARGARET E. SANSTER.

### A Striving After Wind

"Curse him and his woods," old Burke muttered. "Not a wind from week's end to week's end—and the creek going dry and the alfalfa burning up."

He leaned against the rail fence and glowered into the jungle of pine woods that bordered his land. In the Valley half a mile above, he could hear the wind blowing steadily, as it had blown for three weeks and would blow to the end of the windy season; on the ridges that cut the sky-line high up on each side, the same wind was rushing through the scattered pines and firs; but where he stood hardly a breath was stirring.

"And I'm rich," he continued. "Shouldn't a rich man have what he wants—a man who's got money where all the banks can fail and leave him untouched? I'd have bought him out and put these infernal trees where they stop no more wind for me, but the fool won't sell. He loves the woods, he says; so do I love them—chopped down and burned to ashes?"

Still leaning against the fence, he turned so that the woods were behind him and his own clearing and buildings were in front. By his cabin of hewn logs a great, earth-banked reservoir stood; above it towered an impotent wind-mill, its fans idle. The sight drove the old man into a fresh burst of fury.

"Why should my land cry for water," he raged, "when there's a river below my feet—curse him and his woods—"

Tearing a rail from the fence he sent it whirling at a tree-trunk, while the veins stood out on his sweaty forehead.

"I wish I could treat him the same way," he yelled. His rage had worked itself up to the point of frenzy for which he seemed to have been waiting—clambering clumsily across the fence he stepped into the edge of the woods.

"I'll do it," he said. "No one can prove anything, and if they do I can stand the fine—I'm rich."

He stooped down and gathered a bunch of pine needles, then without giving himself time to think, drew a match across the sole of his shoe and dropped it into the tinder. The act seemed to have loosed all the furies in his soul—he turned and ran toward the fence, across which he fell rather than climbed. His breath came harshly through set teeth as he continued his mad race to the threshold of his barn.

Within, a harnessed team was munching hay. Like one in a nightmare Burke hurried them out and onto his big wagon. Three minutes later he was driving furiously down the lane, forcing his horses to gallop until he reached the main road, half a mile from his barn. Here he pulled them down to a trot.

"I've done it," he said in a tone between rejoicing and despair. "With this wind I'll sweep through the woods and clear him and his buildings off the earth. The fool—he ought to have sold and not tried to baffle me. He was insolent too—told me if I hadn't cleared the old swamp on the government land above his house, the stream wouldn't have gone dry, and I'd have water for irrigating without building a reservoir and mill."

This seemed so unjust to Burke that it gave him a moment's respite from his conscience. When this wore off, he sought another insult to act as an anodyne.

"Told me to build a tank at the lower end of the ranch, where I'd get the sweep of wind from my own cleared land—and run the water up hill, I suppose."

This helped; he almost grinned at the witticism. While the contortion was still on his face, however, his hat blew down into the wagon-box. He looked up with a start, then turned and faced the wind. There could be no mistake—it had changed and was blowing down the valley instead of up.

Before Burke's mind caught the significance this incident held before him, his body acted and the big team was galloping up the road at a rate which brought the country people to their doors. The roar of his heavy wagon, bounding from stumps and rocks, drowned his voice, when he recovered sufficiently to use it, or these neighbors might have heard his blasphemous ravings, consigning them and every living creature to present and future misery.

"If it gets into my slashing, it'll take house and barn and cattle—" at every recurrence of the thought he lashed his team, which was already going at an uncontrollable pace.

By one of those miracles that attend such desperate chances, he made the slight turn into his own lane

without upsetting—the angle was so obtuse that the two roads ran nearly parallel for several rods. The smoke which attended him for some distance now came in clouds. He came within sight of his barn—it was apparently untouched, but his house—

His team slowed down on approaching the barn, and finally stopped with lather dripping from flanks and from heaving sides. The old man dismounted; all his fury had deserted him he walked as a dead man might walk, toward a figure standing a few rods away.

Cooly, the neighbor who had refused to sell his wood-land, confronted him. Cooly's face was sweaty and smoke-grimed, and he held a long pine bough with scorched needles.

"It's too bad, Burke," he said. "Your cabin's gone, but I backed-fired in time to save the barn."

"Old Burke looked at him dully. "I thank you, Mr. Cooly," he said. "I thank you, but I'm a poor man now—I can't do more. I had twenty thousand dollars in bills and mortgages in the cabin—they're gone—and I set this fire to burn you out."

Cooly held out his hand. "It's too bad, just the same," he said kindly. "We'll all help you start again—I'll slash that timber, if you still want it down."

The old man didn't hear him; he was looking stupidly at the pile of ashes which represented his home and his fortune.

### A Cradle Song

Sleep, O by, my little baby,  
 In your cradle, mother's near;  
 Angels watch all through the night,  
 With your mother, baby dear.

Sleep, O by, my little baby—  
 Tiny bud from heaven's throne;  
 Mother guards you through the shadows  
 Of the night. You're not alone.

Sleep, O by, my little baby;  
 Slumber softly, baby mine;  
 Gentle breezes now are blowing,  
 And the stars above you shine.

Sleep, O by, my little baby,  
 Till the sun-peep comes anew.  
 Angels guard my little darling—  
 Mother watches over you.

### Contentment

There are two ways of securing contentment:

(1) By obtaining everything we desire.

(2) By proportioning our desires to what we can reasonably expect and attain.

The first is by trying to control the whole of what is outside of ourselves; the second by governing ourselves. Dr. John Hall used to say he found it a means of grace to stand before the great store windows in New York, and thank the Lord for the large number of things he saw that he could do without.