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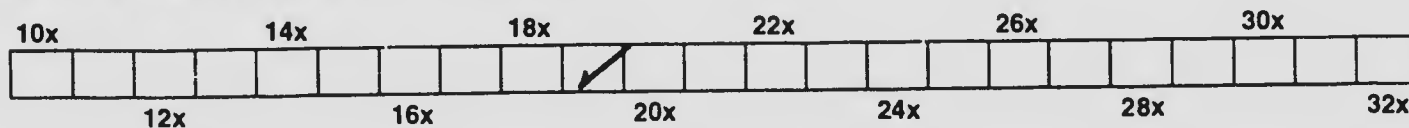
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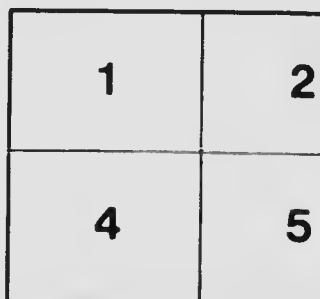
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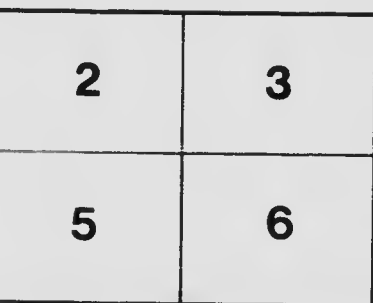
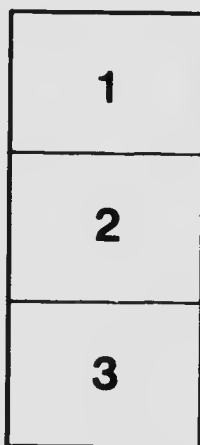
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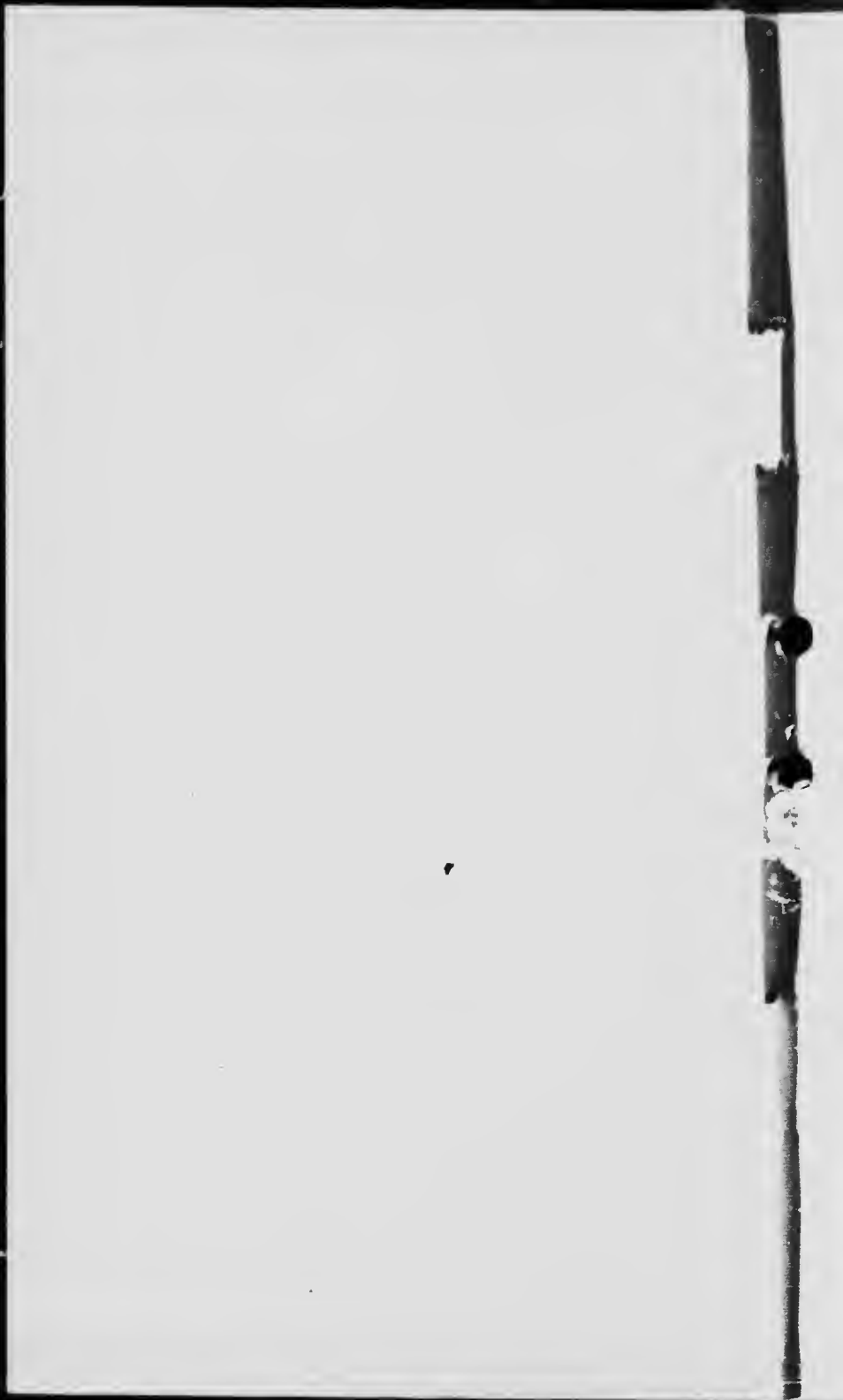
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The Coming of Joy

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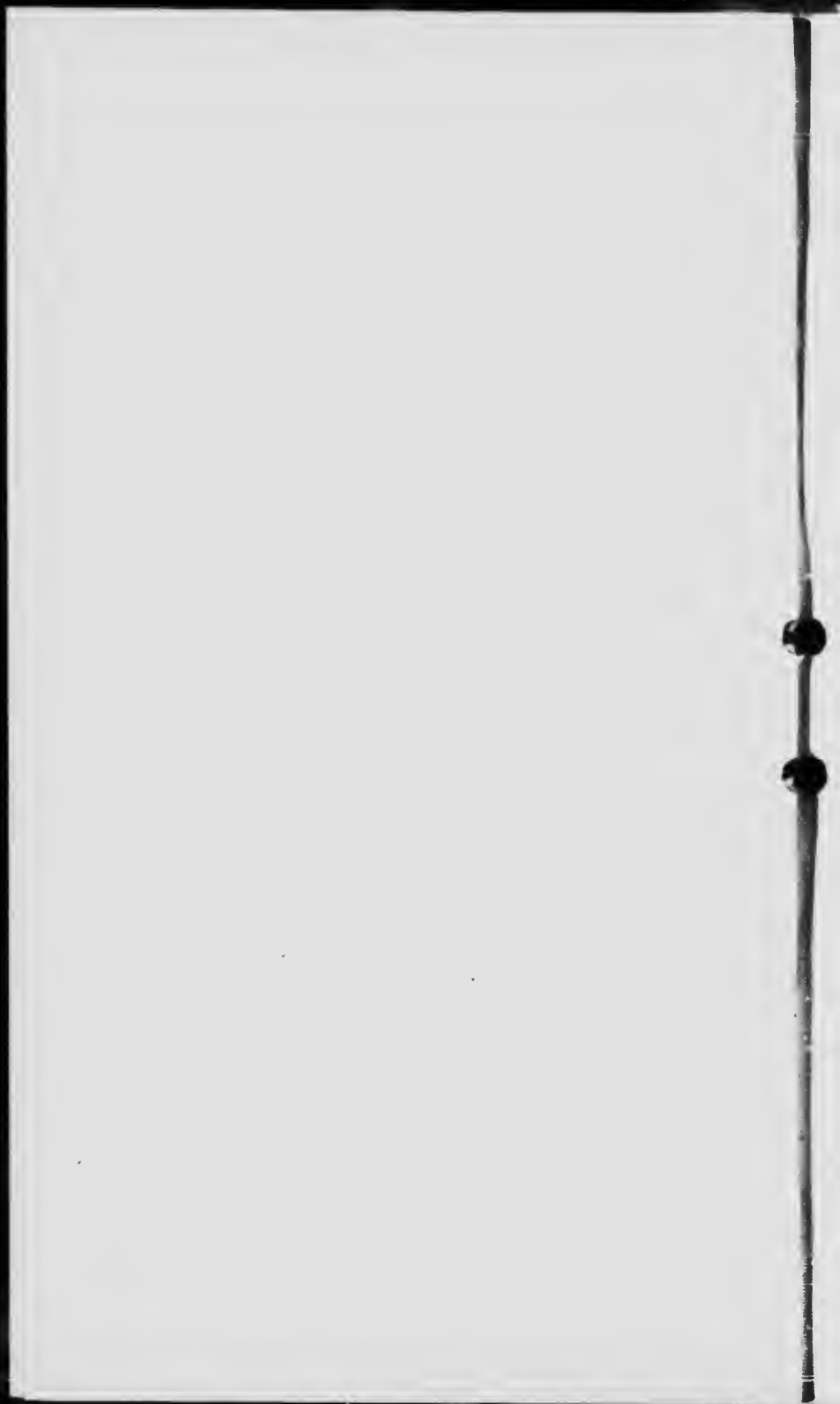
The Coming
of Joy

and other Poems

by

A. L. READ

[unclear]



THE COMING OF JOY

J OY came into my heart one day—
I kept him there, an honored guest,
For in his cheerful company
I found both peace and rest.
His radiant spirit knew no bound,
It swept across the land and sea,
And looking through Joy's eyes, it seemed
A better world to me :

A world where love and sympathy
Bound up the wounds of sin and strife,
And justice triumphed over ill,
And mercy tempered life ;
A world of beauty—God's own world,
Extending far beyond our view.
The more its treasures we explored,
The more of God we knew.

And thus in perfect harmony
We dwelt together day by day ;
Thro' pastures fair I went with Joy,
Joy kept with me the even way.
And when I lay aside my tools,
Earth's labor done, I'll take Joy's hand ;
Together we will journey on
And reach the Far-Off-Land.

A SPRING DAY

GOD opened the door of Heaven
And sent forth a fair spring day—
It took the wings of the morning
And sped on its downward way.

It breathed on the white-capped moun-
tain,

And over the snowy plain,
Releasing the silent brooklet
That bubbled with joy again.

Far down in the sheltered valley
Its radiant beams were shed,
Compelling each little flower
To raise a curious head.

Then notes of magical sweetness
Went echoing far and wide,
Till myriad song-birds caught them
And joined in the swelling tide.

God opened the door of Heaven
When evening shadows fell ;—
With fragrance of dewy blossoms
And songs of the woodland dell,

With majesty of the mountain,
And laughter of brooklet gay,
There soared to the door of Heaven
The soul of a fair spring day.

AN EASTER MESSAGE

I LOOKED into the lily's face—
No shadow of the cross was there,
The wondrous light of victory
Shone from its petals white and fair;
I saw no lonely sepulchre,
Nor any trace of darkened tomb,
The glory of the risen Lord
I saw within the lily bloom.

I looked into the lily's heart
For grief that had been stored away.
The hope of immortality
Deep in its pure sweet chalice lay ;
I saw no mark of sacrifice,
No sign of shame or guilt with
For lo, the great atonement seal
Had blotted out the stain of sin.

O lilies, that adorn God's house
And breathe of love, pure, undefiled,
This is your silent ministry
Your message of the Eastertide !

IF

If I suffer Faith to go,
What can take its place ?
If I lose my Charity,
What have I of grace ?
If the lamp of Hope burn dim,
Truth, how may I see ?
If Love vanish, who will share
My cold hearth with me ?

Fearfully I bind my faith
Closer to my heart ;
Pray that ne'er sweet Charity
From my home depart ;
Trim my poor, uncertain lamp
Till it glows with light ;
And to Love repeat my vows
By the hearthstone bright.

THE ETERNAL DAWN

YOU are a part of this great universe
Linked up with empires and with
grains of sand,
Claiming a kinship with the distant stars.
Fashioned and moulded by the self-
same Hand.

The mighty mountains call across vast
space

And find an echo in your inmost soul,
You seek the ocean in your troubled
moods.

Responsive to its calm, unceasing roll.

The trees your comrades are, the birds
your friends,

The brooklet greets you as it goes its
way,

And cool and quiet hills invite your steps
When slowly sinks the sun at close of
day.

You move as moves the whole created
world,

Impelled by some deep force, divinely
drawn

Unto that far-off goal where shines the
light—

The light of Heaven—and eternal dawn.

NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING

O UR lives are passed 'mid change of
scene and season,

We gaze on nature in her wonder-
ful array,

Now pale and glistening in her spotless
garments,

Now revelling in robes of colour gay.

Delighting in these glorious transforma-
tions,

Yet doubtful in the face of Nature's
plan,

"Surely," we reason, "He who wrought
such changes

Must change in His relationship to
man."

Can we believe that God is still the
Father

Whose promises fail not, unto the end?

In spite of all life's seeming contradic-
tions,

Does God still hear and consolation
send?

Thus reads the Word: He faints not, nor
grows weary.

(Though all about us changes may
abound)

There falls on earth no shadow of His
turning.

No variableness in Him is found.

THE SHEPHERD'S PSALM

THE Lord's my Shepherd, I shall never
want

Or homeless be ;
In pastures green He maketh me to lie ;
He leadeth me
In paths of righteousness for His name's
sake,
By waters still, where'er my steps I take.

Yea, though I walk amid surrounding
gloom,

Why should I fear ?
Through death's dark vale no evil shall
befall,

For Thou are near ;
Thy rod and staff shall be my comfort
still,
And Thou wilt keep me safe from every ill.

There, in the presence of mine enemies,
Thy table stands,
And my unworthy head thou dost anoint
With Thy dear hands ;
Goodness and mercy follow on my way,
Till, safe with Thee, I dwell through end-
less day.

THE GARDEN OF HOPE

I HAVE my hopes—a goodly row,
Some die, but others live and grow.
Concealing the unsightly place
Of plants that withered in the space.

A hope for wealth—'tis shrivelled quite,
But growing here to mark the site
A modest flower I behold,
A daisy with a heart of gold.

My hope of fame—unhappy lot—
It lies in this neglected spot
But brave endurance, fair and green,
Has chosen here to grow unseen.

A hope for wisdom—and a plea
For deeper knowledge; here I see
A plant that needs the proper soil,
A vast amount of honest toil.

Experience has taken root
And sent forth quite a healthy shoot.
Contentment has a leaf that's new,
And happiness is showing through.

And as I travel down the row
Among the hopes that thrive and grow,
I plant new hopes, praying that they
May blossom in some future day.

GAIN

COUNT not as **loss**, the hours of endeavour,

The prize thou didst not win hath borne thee far

Upon thy course, leading thee thro' the darkness ever

Into bright vistas, like a guiding star :
Thy feet are set upon a higher plane

What matters the award !—Count this thy gain !

Count not as **loss**, the heights thou hast ascended,

Thine eyes have caught the glory of the hills,

And ever on thy way by hope attended

Thou hearest the soft music of the rills :

What tho' thou hast not reached the longed-for goal,

Count this thy gain—the finding of thy Soul !

Count not as **loss**—the fondest hopes
that perish.

Heaven hath still richer gifts for thee
in store.

All the best things of Life for thee to
cherish.

Such is the promise. Canst thou wish
for more?—

Oft times thy gain is loss--thy loss is
gain

So strangely interwoven are the twain.

THE ENTRANCE OF LOVE

I FOUND a poor neglected heart
And longed to make it trim and fair,
But though I stood before the door
I could not gain an entrance there.

I tried the keys that I had brought,
The keys of Hope and Charity,
But neither fit the rusty lock.
Ah, which among them could it be !

I paused dismayed before the door,
Then breathed a prayer to Heav'n
above ;
The answer clearly came to me,
"You have not tried the key of Love."

And lo, before the magic key
I felt the stubborn hinges start,
Love entered in to occupy,
That lonely and neglected heart.

BLINDNESS

EYES have they but they cannot see,
They know not that the world is
fair,

That every blade of grass reveals
The secret of divinest care ;
Know not that stretching far and wide
Are fields of green o'erflecked with gold,
That there is more of loveliness
Than earth can ever rightly hold.

They know not that each timid wave
Trembling before the ocean's roar,
Is guided by a Hand unseen
Until it gains the quiet shore :
Knew not that mountains grave and stern
Are set in firm resistless row,
Protecting by their giant forms
The gentle, smiling plains below.

They know not, see not; suns go down,
Stars blossom out and pale moons
rise—

The glories of the universe
Unheeded pass before their eyes,
O eyes that see not, soon will fall
The shadow of approaching night,
Go forth and view God's handiwork
Ere darkness hide it from your sight.

TWO PRAYERS

The Pharisee's Prayer

I THANK Thee, Lord, that Thou hast
made
And fashioned me in perfect way.
Unlike the vast humanity
Formed out of common clay.

A man unjust, extortioner,
A publican, I could not be ;
How fortunate was my escape !
Lord, I give thanks to Thee.

Twice in the week I keep the fast
On solemn and appointed day ;
Of my possessions, great and small,
A tithe to Thee I pay.

And when I change my earthly place
For blest abode on distant shore,
I know a **special** Paradise
Awaits me evermore.

The Prayer of the Publican

Lord, be merciful—merciful to me,
A sinful man, condemned by Pharisee ;
I dare not raise my eyes to heaven, I smite
My breast, and fall before the dazzling
light.

Were I as righteous as this Pharisee,
O Lord, Thy favor might descend to me ;
But how unworthy of reward am I !
My life is base—I am but fit to die.

Have mercy, if Thou canst then stoop so
low,
For heaven is very far from me, I know.
O Friend of sinners ! 'tis Thy face I see—
Thou art merciful—merciful to me !

MYSTERY

WHEN I have looked across vast
spaces
And seen the distant mountains
high,
Raising their grave and reverent faces
With heads uncovered 'neath the sky—
I too have prayed. . . . I know not why.

When I have listened through the sadness
And heard a feathered songstress nigh,
Singing in ecstasy of gladness,
As of needs must sing or die—
I too have sung. . . . I know not why.

THE DOOR OF HOPE

WITHIN the spacious Temple of Life
Youth stood with careless and easy
grace,

Then lightly knocked on the Door of
Wealth
And waited there with expectant face.

The clink of gold could be plainly heard,
But no response to his summons came.
He sadly turned from the massive door
And saw before him the Door of Fame.

Again he knocked in his eager way,
A light illumined his features fair,
He heard the chanting of praise within.
The odor of incense filled the air.

On down the corridor lined with doors :
He tried Ambition and Worldly Gain,
But patient knocking no answer brought.
His face grew weary and wan with pain.

He reached the last, the end of the row,
And saw that one an inscription bore :
Above the archway he read these words,
"The Door of Hope is an Open Door."

Oh, weary feet, the portals are wide !
'Tis God's own hand keeps the door ajar,
Across the threshold the light falls clear,
For high in Heaven, God sets a Star.

THE OUTCAST

I CARE not how deep you have fallen,
There's the face of a Christ above ;
And no one can blot out the pity
And no one can alter the love—
A face of unquenchable brightness
That shines thro' the pitiless gloom,
And comes between man and destruction
And rescues the soul from its doom.

I care not how far you have wandered,
That dead to the world you may be :
One bond can never be broken,
For it linketh a Christ to thee,
There is never a path too lonely,
There is never a trail too steep,
For the feet of a Christ to find you,
For the heart of a Christ to weep.

SONGS OF HOME

O SING to me of home !
That home whose kindly walls I
may not see,
In distant lands I roam
But memory keeps the vision clear to me.
And dear old songs so vividly sustain
The scenes of former years that rise
again.

O sing to me of Home !
That fair celestial Home beyond the skies
Beneath whose radiant dome
The songs of angels and archangels rise :
O blest abode, where many loved-ones
dwell !
I see the faces that I love so well !

O paradise of mind !
Where I may wander amid pleasures fair.
About me faces kind,
And loving hearts to banish ev'ry care ;
O songs of home, like far-off melody
I hear you call across the years to me !

VOICES OF LONG AGO

THEY come to us in the silent night,
Voices of long ago.
We see them in the shadowy light,
Faces we used to know ;
They speak to us of the bygone day.
They smile on us in the old-time way.
Whence do they come ? Where do they
go ?
Voices and faces of long ago.

From peaceful shores of the world above,
Voices of long ago,
They come to us in the forms we love,
Faces we used to know ;
The cords that bound on earth before,
Are bound again in Heaven once more ;
Softly they come—whispering low—
Voices and faces of long ago.

WHAT THANK HAVE YE ?

IF in your heart
 Ye love where love is given, 'tis but
 part.
 In robbing love of all its charity
 What thank have ye ?
 Sinners who claim
 No place among the righteous, do the
 same.

And if ye do
 Good unto those who do good unto you,
 Showing no mercy to your enemy
 What thank have ye ?
 Sinners have learned
 To do good also, where it is returned.

If ye deny
 Request of one in need, and pass him by,
 Lending alone for good security
 What thank have ye ?
 A sinner lends
 With hope of increase, to his sinner-
 friends.

Look not for gain ;
 Do good. Let not the needy cry in vain ;
 Be merciful and love your enemy
 Even as He.
 Be kind. Forgive—
 As children of the Highest ye shall live.

SOMETHING NEW

THERE is something new beneath the
sun.

There is something different ev'ry
day,

For the work of God is never done,

He plans it so, in His perfect way.

'Tis ever a shifting changing scene,

From snow-clad hills to the fields of
green.

Have you ever rightly understood,

Has it ever crossed your active brain,
You are in a world that God called good.

Not a sordid world of greed and gain :
Not a world of joys that quickly pall,
A world where nothing is new at all.

God is Alpha and Omega, too,

He leaves us not to a poor, blind fate,
What he hath fashioned He will bring
through,

Bring to a final exalted state
The hidden future we may not know,
But ours the present—to live and grow.

THE ANGELUS

I WENT along a lonely way,
And lonely was my heart that day,
To me the dreary solitude
Accorded with my pensive mood.

Ominous clouds hung in the sky,
A threat'ning wind went sweeping by,
The little waves moved restlessly
Fearing the anger of the sea.

Then faintly from a distant tower
Sweet bells chimed out the evening
hour—

The gloom was lifted everywhere,
I bowed my head in silent prayer.

Once more I pressed along the road,
Within my heart strange peace abode ;
And Heaven closer came to me
For angels bore me company.

THE MEANING OF THE STAR

“**W**HAT meanest the star—the star
in the East,
Aflame with celestial glory ?
Is the season one of a noted feast ?
I pray you tell me the story.”

“It heralds the birth—the birth of a King,
He cometh to earth a stranger,
But in Heaven above, the angels sing
And watch o’er the lowly manger.

“And wise men have come—wise men
from afar,
Rejoicing beyond all measure,
They were seeking a king and saw the
star—
They bear the costliest treasure.

“While shepherds were watching—
watching at night,
An angel appeared in warning,
And they left their flocks when they saw
the light
And came in the early morning.”

“O, come let us worship—worship the
King
Who robbed the earth of sadness !
I have naught to offer—humbly I bring
A heart o’erflowing with gladness.”

THE HIGHER LIFE

HE gave to the world his noblest thoughts
And these will live for many a day.
But what of the uncompleted work,
He left behind when he went away ?

The unfinished fragments lying there,
The thought half-formed when the
summons came,
The question unasked that trembling lay
On silent lips when God called his
name ?

Can this be the end of all his toil ?
The work he loved, must it rest un-
done ?
His life pass out in this sudden way
The goal far-off and the race half won ?

His work in more perfect form goes on,
He bears his part in the Higher plan,
There Justice and Truth are meted out,
The glorious heritage of man !

MOTHER'S DAY

LAST Mother's Day I wore a rosebud
red,
I knew the wealth of mother-love, the
light
Of Mother's smile ;
Now 'gainst my heart I place a rose of
white,
And yet, I cannot say that she is dead—
Just gone awhile.

A vision fair of immortality
Within my spotless rose ; it doth re-
veal
A shining way,
That I may follow, till at last I feel
Her arms enfold—and once again for me
'Tis Mother's Day !

A TALE THAT IS TOLD

DAWN, with the flush of the radiant
morn—

A rosebud unfolding its petals bright,
The tremulous breath of a babe new-
born,

The wonderful advent of life and light.

Noontide, the glory, and myst'ry of life—

The rose in full bloom, and man in his
prime,

Voices of pleasure, ambition, and strife,

And thro' all the footsteps of passing
time.

Night, with its forces of grandeur and
gloom—

The soul going peacefully back to God,
Rose-petals falling—the darkened room,
The weary at rest 'neath the quiet sod.

