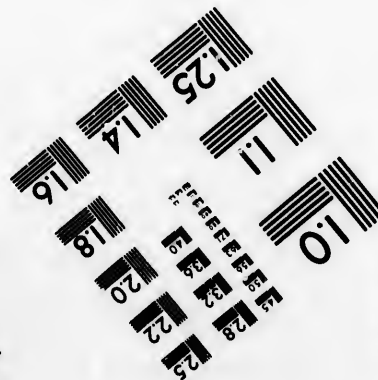
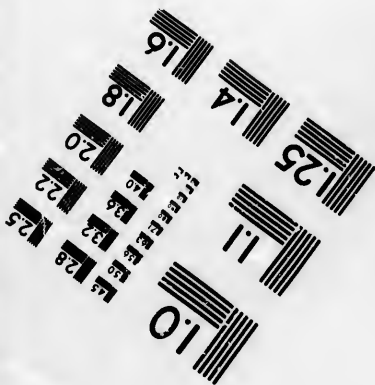
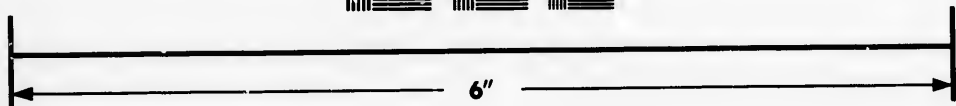
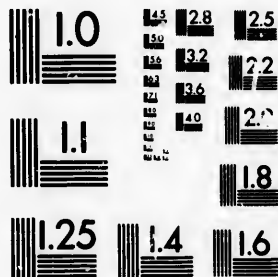


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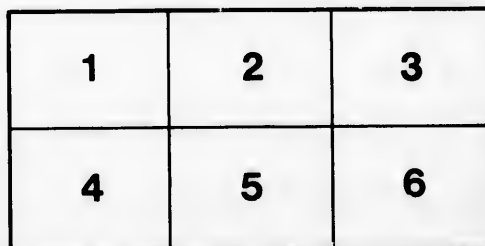
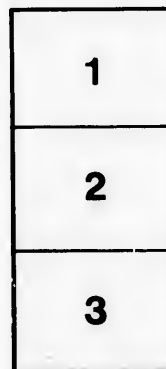
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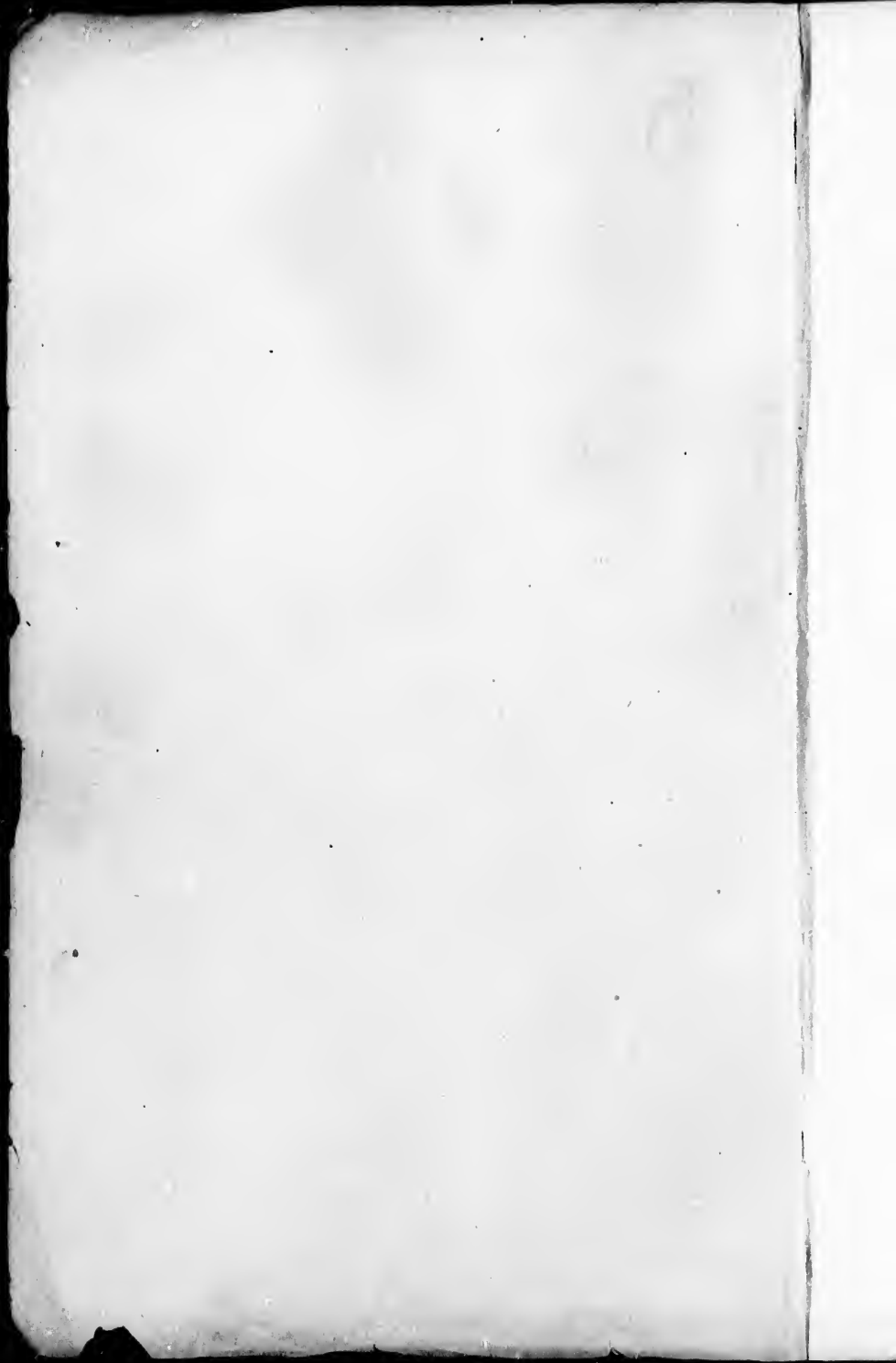
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— * P O E M S * —

ANKREM COUCH.

BROOKLYN:
WEBB & PHELPS, PUBLISHERS,
1884.



—*POEMS.*—

ANKREM COUCH.

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87

Dear friend Bob.

I have had some fifty copies of these poems printed for circulation among my friends and the friends of the two young men whose names appear upon the cover, as "publishers" — a weak joke, but they would have it so, and as they printed the book for me, I could not well refuse. It is not, of course, for sale. The poems, with the exception of the first, do not amount to much even in my estimation. I have got over the glowing

stage, and took a very
common sense view of
such things now. There
may be some poetry yet in
my head, but there's ~~plenty~~
little in my surroundings.

My brother has been here
for a month now and is
qualifying for a situation
as a shorthand^{er} writer. He
wishes to be remembered to you.

I send you a copy of Zelgard
will send you a couple
more if you wish them.

Remember me to all
the folks and write
soon.

Yours as ever

Arthur C. C.

II.

Thus in our home, but oh, in other lands
 Are there no wrongs our feelings to enlist?
 See where Siberia lifts her trembling hands,
 Imploring heaven,—winding the chilly mist
 Around her snow-girt brow; her pale lips kissed
 By the north winds; her tears are ice e're yet
 They leave her cheeks. Behold that Nihilist—
 That Priestess of Despair! Here is a debt
 Man owes to man, as deep as man hath ever met:

III.

To free the imprisoned who have done no crime
 But love their country and oppression hate—
 Men such as have come forth in every time
 To die for Freedom, leaving a memory great
 To the advancement of the struggling State,
 And overthrow of Wrong; men who have stood
 To challenge Tyranny and question Fate,
 Sealing their principles with their life blood.
 Who shall deny them, who accuse them to his God?

IV.

Lo! what a slavish death awaits them here
 Who have but thought nor yet aspired to do,
 Being withheld less by a natural fear
 Than hatred of the knife that others drew
 Whose hearts were only sterner, not more true.
 In vain to the red axe their necks are bared,
 Yet are they doomed and executed, too;
 Murdered by piecemeal, yet by murder spared;—
 Their prayers return to them, their curses pass un-
 heard!

V.

O'er the bleak plain, beneath a northern sky
Whose very smile is bitter, wanders slow
The train of exiles, driven out to die
A lingering death, whose bosom-rending thro'—
The sons of Liberty may never know!
Torn from their homes and kindred, snatched away
In youth and manhood—crushed by the fell blow
Of Tyranny in the full blaze of day—
Where are Thy thunders Jove, cans't Thou not bid
them stay?

VI.

One man the curse of millions!—let him be;
Why should we meddle in his dark designing?
It harms us not. Enough that we are free,
Rejoicing in the sun above us shining—
While millions for that very light are pining:
Starving in dungeons, wasting their lives away
In the deep mines, on the cold earth reclining,
Debarred from hope, from liberty, from day—
Come hither, ye who laugh, and weep your mirth
away!

VII.

One man the curse of millions!—can it be
That we are men of soul, and yet are mute?
We, who have found it glorious to be free,
And stepped to freedom with light heart and foot.
There is a sympathy 'twixt brute and brute:
And hath man none for man—for his own kind?
Are we not all sprung of a common root?
Is blood not blood? Is there no tie will bind?
Doth Pity only cry to the unheeding wind?

VIII.

Behold him as he is, the mighty Czar:
 Enslaving millions and himself a slave!
 Dimmed now the glory of that northern star!
 Help, Tyranny, if thou hast power to save,
 Thy lordliest empire totters o'er the grave—
 She falls—Oh, Freedom!—shrieking to the skies;
 (Weep not, oh, Man—thy tears are for the brave!)
 Hark! how she groans!—nay, 'tis Siberia cries—
 Vengeance, where is thy sword? Freeman, thy brother
 dies!

IX.

Where is the justice, the eternal rights
 That men, since they were men, have claimed as
 theirs,
 Dreaming themselves upon the sublime heights
 Of Freedom, to which they are natural heirs;
 And must they succumb when a tyrant dares
 To rob them of this better part of life?
 Freedom, must they ascend the scaffold stairs
 For thee? Will Justice come not but through
 strife?
 Is there no cure for wrong but the assassin's knife?

X.

Call it not murder! Gaze upon the wrongs
 Of noble hearts,—the sufferings of those
 Who dared be free; their hands were laced with
 thongs,
 Because they raised their voices to oppose
 Injustice; pleading, they were met with blows;

They cursed the insolence Oppression wears,
 And dungeons shut them in; and when they chose
 To grasp through blood the freedom that was
 theirs,
 The scaffold claimed them—God; ye call them mur-
 derers!

XI.

For thee they suffered, yet thy cheeks are dry;
 For thee they died—Oh, where hath Pity flown!
 Suffuse with tears of gratitude the eye
 That but for them had wept o'er ills thine own!
 Thy liberty, like a bright flower, hath grown
 Watered by their heart's blood; thy brow had
 sweat
 In slavery such as thou hast never known,
 But that they freed thee; and thou would'st forget
 Thou owest aught, as though thou could'st not suf-
 fer yet!

XII.

They are not murderers who driven to bay
 Turn on their human hounds with club or knife?
 Beast preys on beast, but man is not the prey
 Of man! There is no need of endless strife—
 Earth yields enough for all. And if Wrong, rife,
 Hurries the millions into early graves;
 Shall they submit without a blow for life?
 They are not thieves who steal when hunger
 craves;
 And they who tamely die, for conscience sake, are
 slaves.

XIII.

Oppression long continued doth make slaves
 Of men who otherwise had made their hour
 Glorious with noble deeds! They are not knaves
 Who take by lawless force their natural dower!
 The sense of wrong is an almighty power,
 Making of men, who but a day ago
 Slavery, with stripes, had taught to cringe and
 cower

Before a master, monsters, whose mad blow
 Falls swift alike upon the guiltless and the foe.

XIV.

Are they responsible? Long suffering
 Dulls the capacity in men to feel,
 Rending their bands, ferociously they spring,
 Drunk with new freedom and misguided zeal,
 Grinding the oppressor with a heavier heel
 Than that they groaned 'neath. They have borne
 too much

To weigh out justice when they draw the steel!
 Power is a fatal weapon in the clutch
 Of the unskilled; but it is Wrong hath made it
 such.

XV.

Are they responsible? The right to live
 Is the common property of all the race.
 And must men die when they have naught to give
 For that they have been robbed of? Must they
 face

Starvation, while a few usurp the place,

Hoarding the wealth of millions? Shall they
flee
Who have the power, knowing that not a trace
Of want were left if all would only see,
And claim their long earned wealth and natural lib-
erty?

XVI.

All forms of life are subject unto fear,
And sink to a common level under it.
Men are not selfish; but to see want near,
And know themselves, if not forearmed, unfit
To grapple with it, puzzles the weak wit,
Making of hearts that otherwise had bled
For every human ill, rocks whereon split
The waves of sympathy! Remove the dread,
And each will serve and haste to see his brother
fed!

XVII.

Justice is law! Injustice, though she wear
The dignities that olden customs lend,
Breathing divinity in her cold stare,
Is an assassin! Laws are not an end
In themselves, but through constant change,
mend
An unjust edict, is no more a law
Than murder, when committed to befriend
A noble cause, is virtue! Though in awe
Men for the time bend low beneath the ills that
gnaw.

XVIII.

And goad their spirits, they will not forever
Be silent. Time is the great friend of Right,
Developing the bold hearts that deliver
The enslaved people, slowly through the night
Of Fear and Ignorance; flooding them with the light
Of human love, on which they feed and grow
Strong, till the hour has arrived to fight,
When they come forth, and all men seem to know
Their leader, and surround him, armed for the
great blow.

XIX.

Away, red courser War! Awake the plain
With thy shrill neighing; toss thy dauntless head,
Expand thy iron ribs and breathe again
The breath of Freedom, till thy awful tread
Shall quell cold tyrants with a colder dread.
Scatter their votaries. Let Oppression bleed
Till the surfeited earth hath vomited—
Oh, when 'tis for the millions to be freed,
Man lays his bosom bare, he glories in the deed.

XX.

Within his palace, girt by armed men,
The tyrant crouches, trembling for the fate
That must inevitably follow, when
The slave awakens, and the wounded State
Groans with oppression, turning on the great
The vengeful fires of her kindling eye,—
Her bosom swelling with a deathless hate,
That will, in its blind haste, all law defy,
Making a howling waste under a midnight sky.

XXI.

Life howsoe'er thou would'st, Tyrant, if thy death
Will make a people happier, thou shalt die!
Thy doom hath gone forth on the whirlwind breath
Of a world-freedom! Hope'st thou to defy
Light, who wast born in darkness? Wilt thou fly
The wrath of suffering ages? Can'st thou wage
Successful war with Truth? Think not they lie,
These warnin' voices of a brightening age.
Trust not to silence, it but cloaks a deeper rage.

XXII.

Time steals away the power of the hero,
Shall it spare tyrants? Change, like a vast river,
Bears all before it. Death shall find his Nero!
Rome is no more—shall Russia stand forever?
Empire of martyrs unavenged, the quiver
Reserves an arrow for thy hated heart.
Tyrants have fallen, greater tyrants—never!
The tragedy must end, each in his part,—
Thou who wert skilled in death, beware of thine own
art.

XXIII,

In Wrong's back history thou shal't have a place,
A chapter to thyself, writ with the blood
Of murdered millions; o'er its leaves the face
Of the worn exile ever shall intrude,
Breathing thy name to earth's great multitude
In burning syllables. Time will not heed
Thy virtues, for thou surely did'st some good,
But curse thee for thy cruelty and greed—
Even Pity will forsake in that last hour of need.

XXIV.

There is an era of which prophets speak
And poets sing—the evening quietude
Of that sweet peace the weary millions seek,
Waiting in hope, the hour when the hood
That wraps in night the mingling multitude;
Hiding the aims of life, shall vanish quite;
And universal love and every good
That man may claim as his eternal right.
Warm this cold world of ours, and make creation
bright!

XXV.

Oh, glorious morning, thou wilt surely come!
The night of kingship hastens to a close.
Freedom awakes, and Tyranny is dumb—
Pale in her rage, and feeble to oppose
The exile's hatred and the subject's blows.
Oppression falls!—Hark! the triumphal cries:
Russia rejoices; Earth with rapture glows;
Even for a time, Siberia's wintry skies
Breathe a warm spring; and Hope looks on with
beaming eyes!

ODE TO THE WAR OF 1878-9.

“ A love of liberty with life is given,
And life itself th' lesser gift of heaven.”

—*Dryden.*

I.

When the Bulgarian,
Smarting from unavenged affronts and blows,
Stood madly brooding o'er his country's woes,
There kindled then
Within the hearts of men,
A hatred of the Oppressor and a thirst
For freedom from the ills by which they were ac-
cursed.

II.

With the alarm
The Tyrant rouses from his dreams,
And stretches forth his arm.
The war-horse paws the earth and neighs;
Upon the wind the crescent streams;

The turbans of countless warriors blaze,
In the sun's hot beams;
And flash and glance
The naked lance,
As forward move
To his defence
The columns dense,
Of those who faithful prove.
Thou viewest them depart,
Under the soft blue sky,
With a quicker pulse in thy heart
And a fiercer gleam in thine eye.
Trust not in thine armies, Tyrant; they
May fade from thy side in a single day!
Trust not in thy arms—in the cause of wrong,
Though they number millions, thou are not strong!
Trust not in thy skill—The Right's success,
Though won by fools, is none the less!
Thou art insolent to-day
With an army still in sight,
But I ween thou wilt not come forth to pray
When they return at night,
Wounded, famished and worn;
With lances broken and banners torn;
Defeated,—ungeneralled,—forlorn.

III.

Carnage, on the throne of War,
Sits and plumes her purple wings;
Rolls her bloodshot eyes
To the Future's lowering skies,

And shrilly sings
Of conquest yet afar,
And bloody banquetings!
But, lo! the hour is near.
The tread of serried men breaks on mine ear.
Armed with bayonet, lance and gun,
The rival hosts appear.
Now is the hour of glorious hope, the hour of dastard fear.
Cowards trembling; heroes, tried
In battles lost or won,
Marching to the grave
With the steady step of one.
Behold them, slave!
Hither turn thine eyes and see
How men, who were enslaved like thee,
Fight for life and liberty!
They come, determined one to take;
And, strong and jealous one to hold:
Which, their purpose shall forsake
And a trampled banner fold?
Answer, Freedom, thine the cause!
Answer, answer with a blow;
Strike for everlasting gains;
Strike, and lay the tyrant low,
And break thy chains
On the rattling cannon's jaws!
Lo! they near, they meet, they dash—
Their rifles smoke, their bayonets flash—
Hark, to the blazing cannon's roar, the fiery charger's crash!

IV.

As when at some cold, cheerless dawn,
The swimmer battles with the swelling flood,
The warriors of Freedom struggle on,
 Their hard hands red with blood.
Under their feet, not a slain brother
But his fall brings the triumph nearer.
Life is dear to them—Liberty, dearer.
 Earth is only their mother,
 Freedom, their God.
Onward, with fiercer stroke, for well ye know,
The blow for Freedom is a desperate blow;
And they who strike must fall, or they must fell the
 foe!
Better death in such a cause—
Fallen amid true men's applause:
Than life in which the better part
 Is ruthlessly suppressed;
Where high desires swell the heart
 Throbbing in a slave's breast;
And noble thoughts fade unexpressed
 In the aspiring mind;
Or, bursting like the gusty wind,
Pass purposeless, nor leave a trace behind—
Lest be the gibbet where the bones
Of he who asked so mad a boon
As justice, daring to be free,
Swing slowly to the melancholy tones
Of night winds, pleading to the moon
 That cannot help but see.

V.

Pity, are thy tears in vain?
Mercy, look not at the slain—
 Scorched and shattered;
 Riddled and battered;
 Torn and entangled,
 Disfigured and mangled;
 The young and the old,
 The faint and the bold,
Dead in thousands on the plain;—
 And yet again
 With dreadful stroke
 The lines are broke;
 The rifles smoke;
 The bullets fly;
 The bayonets goad;
 The cannon roars;
 The shells explode;
 The grapeshot pours,
And Death throws wide a thousand doors.
Wilder, faster, further in,
Louder, deeper, grows the din,
 Until with awful voice
 The cannon and the drum
Loudly summon thee, their choice—
 Liberty!

VI.

Upon the plain,
With turban cleft in twain,
And eyes to heaven turned,
Glassy in prayer that heaven spurned,
Lies the vanquished infidel—
Cursing by his presence still.
Bury him; cover him up from sight,
For the darkness is his goal,
And his progress-hating soul
Hath winged its flight
With his latest breath,
Through the doors of death,
And into the land of night.
The Prophet weeps to find his children slain,
Bends low to catch the murmur of despair,
The curse of hatred and the anguished prayer,
And weeps again.
Starts, and calls his children brave
On to conquer and to crush—
Do they come? Do they come?
Do they gather round to save?
Silence, why so deep thy hush?
Let him hear the muffled drum;
Tell him they are in the grave!
Infidel, thy cries are vain—
Spare thy curses, stay thy tears;
There is nought for thee to gain
In the oncoming years!

Ruin gathers o'er thee fast—
Sword and fire will not save!
Thy decay was long forecast—
Time shall tread upon thy grave!
Tyranny must fall at last,
Though the measure of her reign
Be the cycles of the past, —
Fall, never to rise again!



A PHILOSOPHER'S HYMN.

1.

Summer was with me; warm and bright
All nature lay beneath my eye;
The stars shone down serene at night,
On the green earth from the blue sky.
The north winds, coldly they have blown
Darkening the sky o'erhead
With wintry clouds, whose snows enfold
Hill, wood and field, till all have grown
White, and silent, and cold.
My love was as that summer, e'er it fled!
A cold wind blew upon her cheeks and she is dead.

2.

There's a dull mockery in grief.
Away, my mourning will be brief.
Brief and yet deep;
That will not wake forever, nor yet forever sleep;

But tinge life with a deeper hue
 Of thought all the way through.
 Oh, wherefore do we weep,
 Knowing our tears are vain?
 We cannot mend the broken glass
 Of life, or to the dull earth, chain
 The spirit once freed! Our prayers pass
 On wings of holy fire to heaven—
 Yet do the spirits from us riven,
 O'er the mysterious main
 On which their barques at death were driven,
 Return to us again?

We can but murmur, hope and wait apart,
 Peering into the mystery with beating heart.

3.

All men have dreamed—such dreams, alas!
 As time will never bring to pass!
 All men have hoped—I with the rest—
 And lived to see their hopes depart,
 Like the last sunlight in the West,
 Vanishing imperceptibly;
 Or dying suddenly, with the sweep
 Of some dark cloud into the sky.
 All men have loved, and fondly pressed
 Some cherished idol to a heart
 Throbbing in a proud breast!
 All men have wept—shall I not weep?—
 And felt a pang at the heart's core,
 And through the frame a shudder creep,

Bending in silence o'er
 The form of one they loved, still in the sleep
 That comes at last on all, fromout the voiceless
 deep.

4.

Mark how the dial shadows move!
 Bid Time not stay his flight.
 He cannot give me back the love
 That I have lost to-night.
 He cannot take the joys he gave
 Long since, though that which was their life
 Hath part no longer in the strife—
 He cannot bid them cease—
 Their memory lingers in a grave
 And changeless peace.
 O, wherefore am I sad?
 The past have I not had,
 And have I not to-day?—
 To-day that will be gone
 So soon—lo! I am glad!
 Therefore, let time wing on,
 And write upon my brow,
 The story of all life, as he is writing now!

5.

Let Time wing on—the past with all
 Its golden store is mine.
 Scenes vanished reappear at call;

The leaves of long-gone autumns fall
Again; the suns of summers shine
In which I roamed a happy boy,
 Bearing to the wind my brow—
My heart is filled with a strange joy -
 When I behold them now.

He cannot take these from me, he can add
A richer color only, making my heart glad.

6.

Let time wing on—the future's heart
 Thrills like a child's at play—
To-morrow is the better part
 Of that we call to-day.
The Future beckons from her bowers
Smiling; the scent of new blown flowers
Mingles in her sweet breath.
What though behind her Sorrow cowers
 In the dark robes of death?

 What, though
The shadow of Invisible Powers
Falls chilly on the passing hours,
 Tincturing the world with woe—
I will take her fair hand, it thrills my soul
With a new life that throbs towards the uncertain
goal.

THE BROKEN HEART.

"Yet if you die, can I not follow you,
Forcing the straits of change?"

—*Rossette.*

A few remember Edward yet;
And Mary, none who knew forget;
But often tell at the fireside
How Edward wooed and won his bride,
And sunk heart-broken when she died.

Fair Mary's heart was cold. She said:
"Press not—I cannot love you, friend."
"My love will conquer in the end,"
He answered and was comforted.

A bracelet of pure gold, in which
Were precious stones, before her eyes
He held (believing women prize
The giver, if the gift be rich,)

And parting in the evening, kissed
Her hand, and slipped it on her wrist.
But she undid the clasp, and pressed
The gift into his hand again,
And said: "I do not love you—best
You keep it, Edward, until then."

There is a love that strong men know—
A fire of the heart—a glow;
Warm, inextinguishable, slow.
And such was Edward's love. Each day
She saw him enter at the gate,
And wished him, though she could not hate
His presence, fifty leagues away.
In his calm eyes and voice she read
The love he bore for her; and said:
" 'Twere best you come not, when you know
I cannot love you."

"Even so,"

He answered, "I would dwell away,
But cannot live unless I may
Behold your face from day to day."

But when again he came, within
Her room she hid, and locked the door;
And said, "I will not see him more,
Lest by persistency he win."
Then threw herself upon her bed
And wept and wished that she were dead;
And smiled that he should make her weep;
And hated him, and fell asleep.

And after that her heart was changed;
And daily did she watch and wait
His coming at the garden gate,
And felt no more her love estranged,
But chid him if he tarried late.

And Mary loved him more and more
As weeks went by, and wondered much
That she had failed to see before
What others saw, the worth of such
A love as his; and sometimes thought
That Edward must remember how
Her heart had turned from him; but nought
He spake, or said "What matter now?
My kisses are upon thy cheek,
Thy lips are mine; so let us speak
Of love, and be the past forgot."

Twice did the summer come and go;
Twice were the bare fields clad in snow;
And all that time upon a bed
Of sickness lay the patient wife
Of he who loved her more than life.
And when the leaves again were shed,
And snow the cold hills mantled o'er,
Fair Mary's spirit passed away;
And Edward sorrowed day by day,
For her whose face he saw no more.

There is a grief that strong men feel,
Keener than the thrust of steel—
A wound that balsams cannot heal.

And such was Edward's grief. The day
Was mournful with the memory
Of her who had gone hence to be
At rest; and when at night he lay
Upon his couch, his soul looked through
The brooding darkness, out into
The unknown, and the lonely hours
Were fraught with tears and prayers addressed
To God; but the Invisible Powers
Made answer none—there was no rest.

Oh! the insatiable yearning
Of a heart that hath lost its mate!
And, oh, the agony of learning
To love in hopelessness, and wait!

All Edward's thoughts were with the dead,
And daily in the morning hours
He went to strew her grave with flowers.
Men looked on him and said:
"His heart is broke." And when they passed
And saw him there from day to day,
They came in course of time to say:
"Upon the grave we'll find him dead
Sometime;" and so it was at last,
For when the leaves again were shed—
The third time since their wedding day—
He turned not from her grave away
At noon; and when the sun had set,
They looked, and lo! he tarried yet.

Then they approached him, saying, " Sir,
The night is cold—'tis time you seek
Your home." But Edward did not speak.
And one put out his hand to stir
Him, lest he slept, and starting, said:
" Even as we feared—the man is dead."

One narrow grave contains their dust
That long ago hath mingled there.
Their faithful souls are with the just
In heaven, where neither grief or care
Can reach them more. Or, if they must
Forever sleep, still are they blest
Within thy walls, Dark House of Rest—
Where few whose love was true and deep
As Edward's, of thy millions, sleep.



LABOR.

Hark! Labor begging on the street
Or fettered to a tyrant's feet,
Compelled in bitterness to eat
The proffered crust of Capital.

Shrieks o'er the native eagle's scream,
Where is our justice? Must we deem
Our liberty a hollow dream—
The phantom of a carnival?

Too long hath Capital oppressed!
Too long hath Labor groaned for rest,
Cursing within her bleeding breast
The dagger of Monopoly!

Must tears forever wet her bread?
A stone the pillow 'neath her head,
By cowards bound, by tyrants bled,
And scourged with woes of penury?

Hark, how she cries! Her struggling breath
Pathetic with the ring of death,
Expiring piteously beneath
The iron heel of Capital!

Awake, proud people! who were born
As free, untrammelled as the morn—
And blow for blow, and scorn for scorn,
Shall ring immortal to her call.

United in the hour of need.
Strike now and let oppression bleed!
Wrench now the sword from social greed
And individual tyranny!

Throw party politics aside,
No more let enmities divide;
By common wants and sufferings tried,
Move out and on to victory.

Wrong must succumb! The right, alone,
Is heir to an eternal throne!
And every tear and every groan
Wrung from oppressed humanity.

Is but another polished gem
For her immortal diadem;
When time at last has gathered them
Into that crown of brilliancy.

THE BALLAD OF RED BOB.

A youth, quite a youth, who was known as Red Bob,
On account of his hair (which was rather a pity),
To fortune aspired, but, alas, for said Bob—
He found there were scores like himself in the
city.

So he thought, as he pictured the things that might
be,

“ My purse and my patience are not everlasting;
There's nothing but want on the far side of me,
And the truth is, I never took up well with fasting.

“ A bench in the park is an unpleasant bed,
And that more especially in the wet weather;
And to live, like a poet, on water and bread—
Well, it's tough, kind of tough, take it all
together.

“ I’m willing to handle a pen or a spade;
 There’s no use relying on luck—it’s a bubble;
 I’m not of the stuff of which beggars are made;
 I’m honest—perhaps that’s the ‘cause of my
 trouble.”

(Which belief, if applied to the men of to-day,
 Would suppose them to be very cheerful.) It
 never
 Occurred to our hero to take it that way
 Till he fell to indulging in “yet ”—and “how-
 ever ”—

Since nothing appeared, he resolved on a plan,
 Excused by the state of his purse and the season.
 (A man will be honest as long as he can,
 And failing, is sure to alight on a reason.)

Accordingly, buying a fair weather friend,
 And the use of his office, in case he should need it,
 He borrowed a name, an advertisement penned,
 And put into print, that the blindest might read it.

Now this was the notice: “ Here’s something for all
 Who are sick of the wearisome toil of inditing:
 Send a dollar to me at my office, or call,
 And I’ll teach you the latest improvement in
 writing.

“I’ll teach you to write *without ink, without pen;*
 Send a dollar along—the sooner the better.

My office is open for business at ten;
 But it's just as convenient to teach you by letter."

A youth was installed in the office to say
 ("A youth, quite a youth,") to the numerous
 callers,

That the gentleman's business had called him away,
 But they might as well leave their addresses and
 dollars.

And the postman deposited during the day
 A hundred and fifty or sixty odd letters;
 And Bob, the said youth, put the money away,
 And coolly sat down to unfasten his fetters.

Now, what do you think was the answer he wrote,
 The principle taught them, or what the utensil?
 He simply to each of them posted this note:
 "You blockhead, you see you're to write with a
 pencil."

MORAL.

Ah! what was the end, after such a beginning?
 What could it be, if not arrayed in a wrong dress?
 The rascal grew impudent, sinning and sinning,
 And was sent—"to Sing Sing"—no! to Congress.

THAT SERMON.

Five minutes past eight, and the preacher not here;
The papers said sharp—disappointed, I fear!
“ A heaven-born orator,” the announcement said;
“ A prophet, a great theologian,” it read;
The house was crowded, not a vacant seat,
And still a hundred or two on the street.

A warm summer evening; a quarter past eight!
I wonder how long he expects us to wait?
It's really annoying; my patience won't last
Very long, I'm convinced, for it's running out fast;
But then such a treat; it is worth the delay—
One don't hear an eloquent man every day.

Twenty minutes past eight. Ah! here he is now—
A murmur of pleasure, applause and a bow—
A plain-looking man; but the audience said,
“ What a very odd face, what a wonderful head.”

They sang. He arose; and throughout the great
hall
The silence was such you might hear a pin fall.

His text I forget. But that makes little odds,
 all texts and all sermons pertain to the gods.
 into his subject, anon did he pause
To picture the beauties of spiritual laws.
He spoke of the messengers sent us in love,
And lifted his hands to the ceiling above.
(Sage gesture.) The audience rolled up their eyes,
And saw apparitions superb in the skies.
He smiled, and their faces were lit with a smile;
Looked sad, wiped his eyes, and they wept for
 awhile;
Then he stormed, and his eloquence took them so
 well, -
They bent in their seats to the mastering spell;
On his words hung enraptured, and murmured when
 o'er,
"We never heard anything like it before."
Looked sage and looked sideways, as much as to
 say,
"That's what we call preaching; that, *that* is the
 way."

The plate was passed round—the collection was
 just
To defray cash expenses, and not run on trust;
And the services were about to be brought to an end

With the thanks of the house to their eloquent
friend,
When he came to the front.

“ I had almost forgot
(Excuse me, my friends) the announcement I ought
To have made at the first, but it slipped from my
mind—

It is this: You will be disappointed to find
The preacher who was to be with you to-night
Has not yet arrived; and the board thought it right
That some one should speak, to get out of the
plight;

So, happening to know of my presence, they prayed
That I would address you instead. I obeyed,
Although I am only a peddler by trade.
And now, my dear friends, without any extension,
I thank you—”

He intended to say, “ Kind attention,”
But the shuffle of feet and the “ ahems ” that arose
Brought his good-natured thanks to an ill-natured
close.

Those nearest the door were soon clean out of
sight,

And swear they were not in the city that night;
And the lady who whispered, “ Inspired of God,”
Now grumbled “ Indeed, to be taught by a clod!”
And the gentleman said, with an ill-disguised frown,
“ I knew from the first he was only a clown;
But I would not disturb any one by expressing
My opinion.” In short, they had all turned to
blessing.

They sang not a hymn, for the choir were gone;
The gallery was empty, the organ alone.
They prayed not a prayer, but with common consent,
The preacher said "Ah!" and the audience went.



DEAD MEN.

Dig up the bones of dead men! They have no right
to sleep
With monuments to lions, whom Time hath proven
sheep.
Dig up the bones of dead men! Life is too sore a
fight,
To yield the victor's laurel to any stolen might.
Dig up the bones of dead men! Tear off the wreaths,
and then
When man beholds them naked, let him adjudge them
men!
Heed not the shallow sentiment that holds the
weak in awe—
Truth is above all sentiment! Right above all law!

FENCE PHILOSOPHY.

[FOUND AMONG THE PAPERS OF A DECEASED
POLITICIAN.]

When I was young my parents said
I was a little loon,
Because I sat upon the fence
A-gazing at the moon.

It was a high and ragged fence
That shut the orchard round;
The grape-vines grew along the rails,
And trailed upon the ground.

The apple trees behind it rose;
And where I used to sit
Their laden branches spread above
And kindly shaded it.

I knew naught of the world then:
I had but little sense;
And yet my heart was always glad
A-sitting on the fence.

Ah, me! how I have changed since
I was a boy at play!
The innocence that cheered me then
The years have borne away.

They gave me other, riper joys,
And feelings more intense;
But still, somehow, they left me
A-sitting on the fence.

And yet I always think, when men
In fierce combat divide,
A man is safer on the fence
Than down on either side.

To smile on both, to assist appear,
But never quite commence;
And, till they settle it, remain
A-straddle of the fence.

So few of us, I grieve to think,
Are brave enough to own
The right, and stand uncowering,
Unaided and alone.

With power armed beside her,
And Moloch at her heels,
A man may be a Knight of Truth
And boast the pride he feels;

But when in rags, and help will come
We cannot tell from whence,
I think, like most, considering all,
I'll just get on the fence.

So little can we trust our friends;
To change we are so prone—
An honest man can scarcely call
The smallest good his own.

And when a grave conundrum
Defies his feeble sense,
What better can a fellow do
Than get astride the fence?

It is a great convenience,
And yet how mean the joy—
It is not now the same as when
I sat on it, a boy.

For though I turn my eyes above,
As in the years gone by,
The spectacles I wear obscure
The beauties of the sky.

Time was when every twinkling star
Could wake within my breast
A pure emotion; but their beams
Now leave my soul unblessed.

Yet oft when I look backwards
Through memory's radiant lense,
I think myself a boy again,
A-sitting on the fence.

The moon is shining in the sky;
The fields are sleeping round;
The river murmurs far away—
I love its plaintive sound!

And sitting there I revel
In joys that only seem,
Until a sigh that comes unsought
Awakes me from my dream.

And still I sit where I have sat,
And still they pass away—
The years that stole my raven locks
And turned my whiskers gray.

So be it. When at last arrives
The hour for passing hence,
In sooth, I may be just as safe,
A-sitting on the fence.

My sole request: that when my friends
Are clamoring for my pelf,
They let my jaded memory sit
Where I have sat, myself.

Meantime in every cause my prayer
Is for the side of right,
For, though my carcass keeps the fence,
My soul is in the fight.

And I'd remark, by way, to those
Who flounder in the strife,
That it is comfortable here—
And that's the point in life.

THE WORLD.

AS VIEWED BY A STINGY MAN.

(Every man sees the world through his own soul.)

A stingy world is this world of ours,
No matter how we take it;
A stingy world, for, by all the powers,
They're stingy men that make it.

The stingy merchant sells us
Liquors unadulterated;
While his stingy notice tells us
To believe the lie just stated.

The stingy druggist bills us
For his stingy patent swill;
And the stingy doctor kills us
With his stingy little pill.

The stingy oyster sees us,
And leaves the stingy plate;
While the stingy lawyer fees us
At an anti-stingy rate.

The stingy parson preaches,
Whining to the stingy pew;
And the stingy deacon reaches
For a stingy dime or two.

The stingy landlord (render,
In common justice, to him—
The devil—what is due him,)
Is sometimes feebly tender,
If the times are not too hard.
But the stingy money-lender,
Never for a moment tender,
Charges interest by the yard.

Stingy wives (uphold us justice,
There are stingy husbands, too)
If we were not stingy, trust us,
Would proceed at once to "bust" us,
To adorn their forms and faces
With innumerable graces,
Leathers, feathers, silks and laces;
The bills for which would break a
Mechanic hourly, shake a
Retired judge, and make a
Millionaire look blue.

The stingy politician,
On the eve of an election,
With political affection,
Round your habitation lingers,
Offers you his stingy fingers,
Tells you that his aims are glorious,
That his purposes are square;
When you bring him off victorious,
And he has secured the mission,
He would see you to perdition—
Yes, and kindly help you there.

A stingy world is this world of ours,
No matter how we take it,
A stingy world, for by all the powers,
They're stingy men that make it.

Robbed by the milkman, robbed by the baker,
The butcher, the grocer,
The cabinet-maker,
The grave undertaker,
The tramp and housebreaker,
The weak and the healthy,
The poor and the wealthy;—
Great heavens! all grades,
Professions and trades
Are robbing us! Oh, sir,
Wherever we go, sir,
To hovel or hall—
'Tis vain to say no, sir—
We're robbed by them all.

Upward from the famished pauper
To the bloated millionaire,
White or yellow, black or copper,
Man is stingy everywhere.

Stingy in his youth, at bottom;
Stingy as his summer flies;
Stingy in his white-haired autumn,
Stingy, stingy till he dies —
When his stingy friends expressing
That his life was one long blessing;
In their bitterness, confessing
That their sorrow, so distressing,
Had of reason nigh bereft them;
Set themselves at once to guessing
What the stingy dog has left them.

A stingy world is this world of ours,
No matter how we take it;
A stingy world, for by all the powers,
They're stingy men that make it.



THE OLD HANDSLEIGH.

I was up in the garret the other day,
And rambling there at will,
I found in a corner the old handsleigh
That was bully of the hill.
The shoeing and irons were eaten with rust,
The color had faded away,
And a dull, dry rot, and a coat of dust
Had seized on the old handsleigh.

It was just like meeting a dear old friend
And finding him battered up,
So much like myself that the two griefs blend
And smile in the one full cup.
It was summertime, but I thought of snow,
And the nights upon the hill
Some fifty, full fifty, years ago,
When we were small boys, Bill.

When we tried it first, you remember the night;
The moon was in the sky;
We shouted loud, while with delight
Our hearts beat quick and high.
We flew along, while around our ears
The wind blew cold and shrill;
And passing the rest we gave three cheers
For the bully of the hill.

But those good old days have passed away;
They have gone forever, Bill;
And there's no more talk of the old handsleigh
That was bully of the hill.
But it's only the way of the world, and now
We are nigh the close of our day,
And care hath furrowed the once smooth brow
And time hath turned us gray.

But I sometimes smile—it is all so strange—
When I come to think of it, Bill,
How little our spirits know of change
On either side of the hill.
The laughter of youth and the tears of age
Are one and a simple part
Of life's short story, writ on the page
Of the changing, yet changeless heart.

We are still the same whatever we do;
Our mirth and our sorrows blend;
We are only repeating ourselves anew
From the first of life to the end.

Though my hairs are white I could ride to-day
With a heart as lithsome, Bill,
As it was in the days when the old handsleigh
Was the bully of the hill.



EMERSON.

Life's day of labor hath its night, when Death
Bids weary nature sleep and be at rest,
At rest forever, yea, at rest forever!
For though that sleep be but a change of waking,
Yet is that waking rest—eternal rest.

Into the Unknown he hath passed from us;
Yielding to earth all that was born of earth.
Concord will miss him from her quiet walks.
Man speak of him in fables of the past,
Blending his name with dreams of purity.

With us he is no longer. He has gone
To join his brother, who a day ago
Bowed his white head and kissed the hand of
Death,
Fearlessly lying down. And now the earth
Hath wrapped another favorite in her folds,
And taken him to her breast, making him part
Of her great pulses throbbing evermore.

Oh, reverend soul!
What secrets, what eternal mysteries
Are thine to-day for which we hunger still!
Or in thy cell unconscious, if that sleep
No waking knows, then art thou still as wise,
Since there is naught to know—nothing beyond.

Oh, but to know what after life is known,
And, yet to live and feast the hungry mind
Upon that knowledge! Oh, to look away
Into the endless future of the soul,
And lay a finger on the beating heart
Of every motion, every thought to be—
Or chain the wandering fancy to the grave,
And bid the reason question not of death—
Oh, but to know the truth and be at rest!



A POEM OF LIFE.

I wrote a poem when the flush of youth
Was pink upon my cheek. In it I strove
A new-armed knight of innocence and love,
And bound its rhymes with many a pleasing truth.

I wrote a poem when the dawn of sense
Was breaking o'er the passions of my soul;
I hungered to be wise and reach the goal,
And filled its measures with a fire intense.

I wrote a poem when the cares of life
Had gathered round my path. It was a groan—
A murmur that my lips had given tone—
Quelled by a hope that still endeared the strife.

I wrote a poem when the weight of thought
Had bowed my whitened head. It seemed to
weep;
Its only burden was a dream of sleep—
A sleep where every sorrow is forgot.

Dreams Of Glory Haunt Me Nightly!

Dreams of glory haunt me nightly!
In the silence calm and deep;
Touch my heavy eyelids lightly
With thy soothing fingers, sleep!
Let me lie a while, forgetting
All my failures, all my schemes;
Cease aspiring, cease regretting;
Sleep—and live anew in dreams.

Dreams of glory haunt me nightly!
When my weary senses rest;
Lo! the wizard Fancy brightly
Robes the idols of my breast
In the purple cloth of dreams! Still
In my waking hours stay;
With my cares returning, beam still
In the ashen eye of day!

Dreams of glory haunt me nightly!
Dreams of glory such, alas,
As, if time hath taught me rightly,
Day will never bring to pass!
Not so soon, bright dreams, forsake me,
Happy if I only seem!
Morning, not so soon awake me;
Let me slumber still—and dream!

A COMMON LAMENT.

O, for the innocent pleasures of youth,
Cold life hath but few of their gleams;
O, for the days that were laden with truth,
And cradled my soul with their dreams!

O, to be young and happy again,
As light as a cloud on the wings of the blast!
O, for the joys—but I weep in vain—
Youth thou art golden, golden and past!

I weep, sweet hours come back to me,
But they'll come to me no more;
They have passed away, like a wave of the sea,
And left me a wreck on the shore.



WHAT MILLIONS MIGHT SING.

We are free—while the chains of our systems are
galling,
And Justice is under the thumb of the knave!
We are free—while a million of free men are call-
ing
For comforts that were not denied to the slave!
We are free—we may call ourselves free in a man-
ner,

And boast of a pride that our fathers could feel;
We may take off our hats to the Star Spangled Banner,
But that does not make our chains any less real.

We are rich—but the strong arms of labor that gave
us

That wealth, are in fetters. The sinews of Toil
Are strained with the burdens of those who enslave
us

By the wealth we have wrung with our sweat from
the soil!

Shall we glory to know we are rich as a nation,

And boast of the wealth we have built up, so long
As that wealth is a curse in its misapplication—

The fount-head of Suffering, the right arm of
Wrong ?

We toil, and the fruit of our labor belongs to

Another, whose title is false to the soil ;

And it is the one wrong of all earthly wrongs to

Deny to the toiler the fruit of his toil !

The children of freemen—yet vain to deny it,

Oppressed by a tyranny freedom hath bred !

The children of brave men—awake and defy it,

And rescue the living and honor the dead.

THE JUSTICE OF IT.

Injustice drove our fathers here from homes across
the sea ;
Injustice spurred their children on to fight for
liberty ;
Yet, in the midst of glorious dreams and after years
of toil,
Injustice has become at last a native of the soil,
Rearing for Anarchy a throne and paving day by day,
Under the flag of liberty, the path to sure decay.
When poor men have been injured and at law de-
mand relief,
They are mocked, through corrupt judges, by the
brazen moneyed thief,
Who claps his breeches pocket, saying with insulting
sneer,
“ Justice, don't deceive yourself, sir—I have judge
and jury here.”



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