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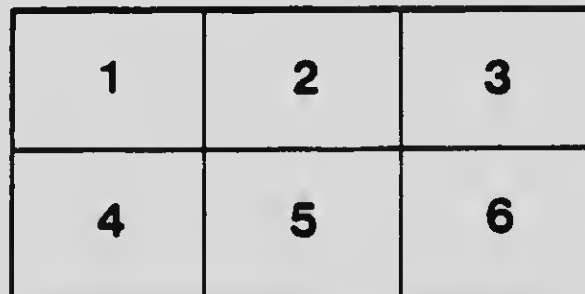
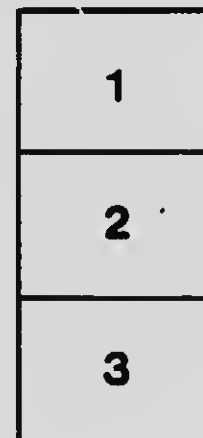
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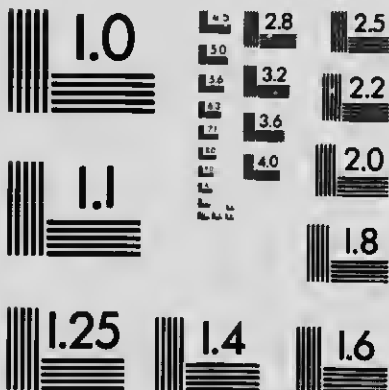
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Containing revisions found in  
Mrs. King's copy by B.C.

Dear Mrs King:

Pray accept a copy of this poem  
which your reading has made ac-  
ceptable to many people - including  
your friend who wrote it.

---



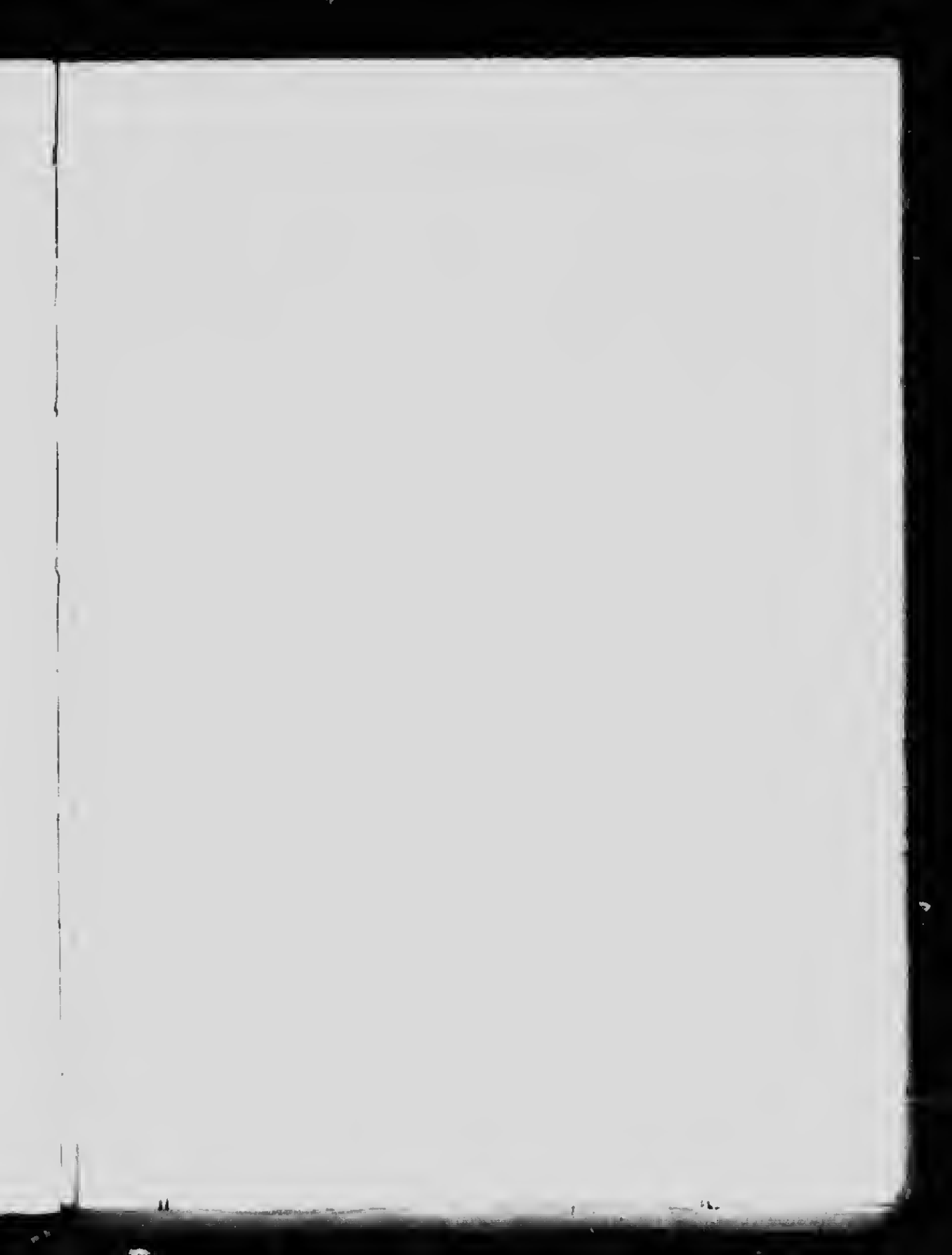


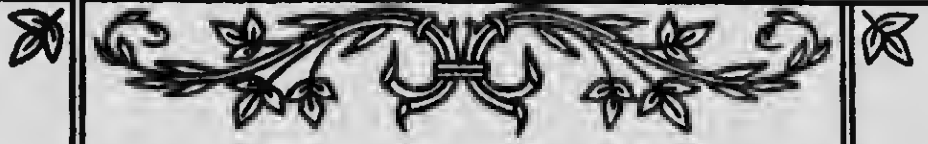
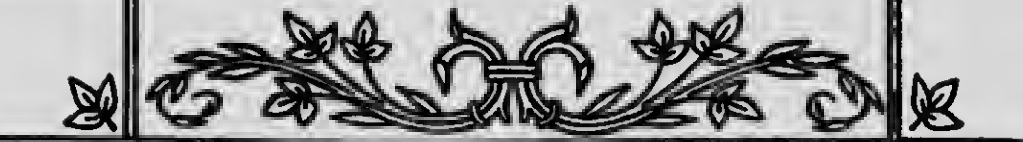




THE WORD AT ST. KAVIN'S










THE  
WORD AT ST. KAVIN'S

BY  
BLISS CARMAN

THE MONADNOCK PRESS  
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1903

THE WORD AT ST. KAVIN'S

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THE WORD AT ST. KAVIN'S



NCE at St. Kavin's door

I rested. No sigh more

Of discontent escaped me from that day.

For there I overheard

A Brother of the Word

Expound the grace of poverty, and say:

**T**HANK God for poverty  
That makes and keeps us free,  
And lets us go our unobtrusive way,  
Glad of the sun and rain,  
Upright, serene, humane,  
Contented with the fortune of a day.



**L**IGHT-HEARTED as a bird,  
I will obey the word  
That bade the earth take form, the sea subside,—  
That bids the wild wings go  
Each year from line to snow,  
When Spring unfurls her old green flag for guide,—

**T**HAT bids the fleeting hosts  
Along the shelving coasts  
Once more adventure far by sound and stream,—  
Bids everything alive  
Awaken and revive,—  
Resume the unperished glory and the dream.

**I** TOO, with fear put by,  
Confront my destiny,  
With not a wish but to arise and go,  
Where beauty still may lead  
From creed to larger creed,  
Thanking my Maker that he made me so.

**F**OR I would shun no task  
That kindness may ask,  
Nor flinch at any duty to my kind ;  
Praying but to be freed  
From ignorance and greed,  
Gray fear and dull despondency of mind.

**S**O I would readjust  
The logic of the dust,  
The servile hope that puts its trust in things;  
Ephemera of earth,  
Of more than fleeting worth,  
Are we, endowed with rapture as with wings.

**T**YPE of the soul of man,  
The slight yet stable plan!  
Those creatures perishable as the dew,  
How buoyantly they ride  
The vast and perilous tide,  
Frail shreds of earth the skyey tints enhue!

AND I would keep my soul  
Joyous and sane and whole,  
Unshamed by falsehood and unvexed by strife,  
Unalien in that clear  
And radiant atmosphere  
That still surrounds us with a larger life,

WHEN we have laid aside [Whenever we are free]  
Our truculence and pride, [From insincerity]  
Craven self-seeking, turbulent self-will, [truculent]  
Resolved this very day  
No longer to obey  
The tyrant Mammon who begods us still.

**A**LL selfish gain at best  
Brings but profound unrest  
And inward loss, despite our fine professions.  
Think therefore what it is,  
What surety of bliss,  
To be absolved from burdensome possessions!

**S**HALL God, who doth provide  
The majesty and pride  
And beauty of this earth so lavishly,  
Deny them to the poor  
And lowly and obscure?  
Nay, they are given to all justly and free.

**A**ND if I share my crust,  
As common manhood must,  
With one whose need is greater than my own,  
Shall I not also give  
His soul, that it may live,  
Of the abundant pleasures I have known?

**A**ND so, if I have wrought,  
Amassed or conceived aught  
Of beauty or intelligence or power,  
It is not mine to hoard;  
It stands there to afford  
Its generous service simply as a flower.

**H**OW soon, my friends, how soon,  
We should obtain the boon  
Of shining peace for which the toiler delves,  
If only we would give  
Our spirit room to live,—  
Be, here and now, our brave untarnished selves.

**I**F only we would dare  
E. use the good and fair  
Our soul, unbound by custom, still perceives,  
And without compromise  
Or favour in men's eyes  
Live by the truth each one of us believes.

**B**OW not to vested wrong  
That we have served too long,  
Pawning our birthright for a tinsel star!  
Shall the soul take upon her  
Time-service and mouth-honour?  
Behold the fir-trees, how unswerved they are!

**N**ATIVE to sun and storm,  
They cringe not nor conform,  
Save to the gentle law their sound heart knows;  
Each day enough for them  
To rise, cone, branch, and stem,  
A leaf-breadth higher in their tall repose.



**A**H, what a travesty  
Of man's ascent, were I  
To bear myself less royally than they,  
After the ages spent  
In spirit's betterment,  
Through rounds of aspiration and decay!

**F**OR surely I have grown [may not]  
Within a cleft of stone,  
With spray of mountain torrents in my face;  
Slow soaring ring by ring  
On moveless tilted wing,  
I have seen earth below me sink through space.  
[I have seen the earth]

[14 11] I TOO in polar night  
Have hungered, gaunt and white,  
Alone amid the awful silences;  
[10 1] And fled on gaudy fin,  
When the blue tides came in,  
Through coral gardens under tropic seas.

[12 1] A<sup>ND</sup> wheresoe'er I strove,  
The greater law was love,  
A faith too fine to falter or mistrust;  
There was no wanton greed,  
Depravity of breed,  
Malice nor cant nor enmity unjust.

**N**AY, not till I was man,  
Learned I to scheme and plan  
The blackest depredation on my kind,  
Converting to my gain  
My fellow's need and pain,  
In chartered pillage ruthless and refined.

**T**HEREFORE, my friends, I say,  
Back to the fair sweet way  
Our mother Nature taught us long ago,—  
The large primeval mood,  
Leisure and amplitude,  
The dignity of patience strong and slow. Wisdom of the seasons as they go!

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=  
Glad industry and zest,  
A passion for the best,  
Unsoiled, unperverted, unimpaired,  
The pride of life again  
The comeliness of men,  
With happiness and power unimpair'd:

LET us go in once more  
L By some blue mountain door,  
And hold communion with the forest leaves ;  
Where long ago we trod  
The Ghost House of the God,  
Through orange dawns and amethystine eves !

THERE bright-robed choristers  
T Make music in the firs,  
Rejoicing in their service all day long ;  
And there the whole night through,  
Along the dark still blue,  
What glorious hosts with starry tapers throng !

**T**HERE in some deep ravine  
Whose walls are living green,  
A sanctuary spacious, cool and dim,  
At earth-refreshing morn  
The pure white clouds are born,—  
The incense of the ground sent up to Him.

**N**O slighted task is there,  
But equal craft and care  
And love in irresistible accord,  
The test and sign of art,  
Bestowed through every part ;  
float  
No thought of recognition or reward.

**I**N that diviner air  
We shall grow wise and fair,  
Not frayed by hurry nor distraught by noise,—  
Learn once again to be  
Noble, courageous, free,—  
Regain our primal ecstasy and poise.

**C**ALM in the deep control  
Of firmamental soul,  
Let us abide unfretful and secure,  
Knowledge and reason bent  
To further soul's intent,—  
Her veiled dim purposes remote yet sure.

**F**OR she has led us now,  
Science unravels how,  
Through cell and tissue up from dust to man ;  
And will lead bye and bye,  
No logic tells us why,  
To fill her purport in the ampler plan.

**A**H, trust the soul, my friends,  
To seek her own great ends  
Revealed not in the fashion of the hour !  
For she outlives intact  
The insufficient act,  
Herself the source and channel of all power.

**T**HE soul survives, unmarred,  
The mind care-worn and scarred  
That still is anxious over little things,  
To come unto her own,  
Through benefits unknown,  
And the green beauty of a thousand springs.

**F**ROM infinite resource  
She holds her gleaming course  
Through toil, distraction, hindrance, and dismay,  
Till some high destiny,  
Accomplished bye and bye,  
Reveals the splendid hope that was her stay.



**T**HEREFORE should every hour  
Replenish her with power  
Of joy and love and freedom and fresh truth,  
That we even in age  
May share her heritage  
Of ancient wisdom with the heart of youth.

**L**ORE of the worldly wise  
Is folly in her eyes. [faul+ty]  
All-energy, all-knowledge and all-love,  
Aware of deeps below  
This pageant that we know,  
Hers is the very faith accounted of

**B**Y Him who rose and bade  
His friends be not afraid,  
When peril rocked their fishing-boat at sea,—  
Who bade the sick not fear,  
The sad be of good cheer,  
And in the hour they were made whole and free.

**T**HE sceptic sees but part  
Of Nature's mighty heart.  
A wide berth would I give that dangerous shoal,—  
Steer for the open sea,  
No sight of land, but free.  
Trusting my senses, shall I doubt my soul?

LET me each day anew  
L My outward voyage pursue  
For the Far Islands and the Apple Lands ;  
Till through the breaking gloom  
Some evening they shall loom,  
With one pale star above the lilac sands.

AH, that day I shall know  
A How the shy wood-flowers grow,  
In the deep forest, turning to the light ;  
Untrammelled impulse still  
With glad obedient will  
The only guide out of ancestral night.

**O**H, I shall comprehend  
Truth at my journey's end,—  
What being is and what I strive to be,—  
What soul in beauty's guise  
Eludes our wistful eyes,  
Yet surely is akin to you and me.

**T**HEREFORE, towards that supreme  
Knowledge, that unveiled dream,  
That promise of our life from day to day,  
The grace of joyousness  
Abide with us to bless  
And help us forth along the Perfect Way!

**T**HE voice of the good priest  
In benediction ceased ;  
The congregation like a murmur rose ;  
And when I set my pack  
Once more upon my back,  
'Twas light as any thistle-down that blows.

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