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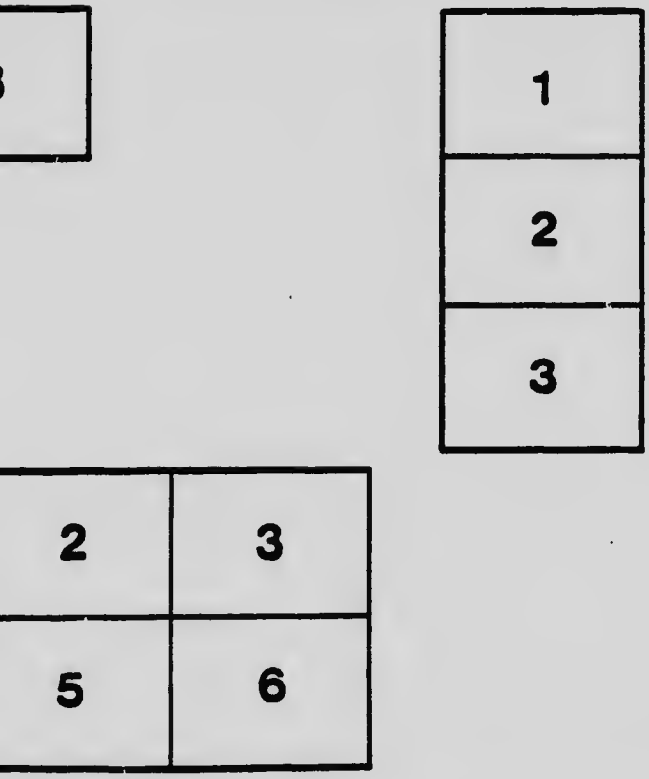

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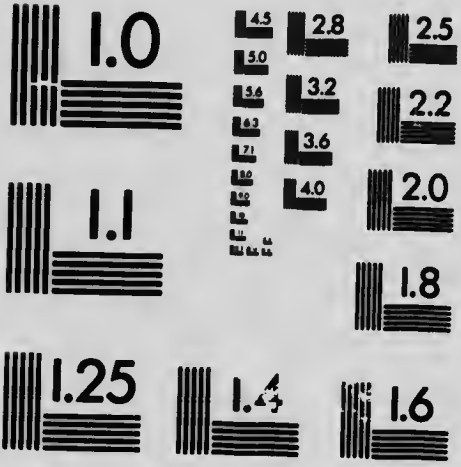

THE LIGHT OF GENIUS

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

LESLIE GRANT SCOTT

THE LIGHT OF GENIUS

THE MYSTIC AND OTHER POEMS

LESLIE GRANT SCOTT

Toronto
WILLIAM BRIGGS
MDCCCCXII

TO

R. T. M. S.

Who has ever helped me with
patient advice and
criticism.

CONTENTS

I

THE LIGHT OF GENIUS

THE soul fain would, but cannot, speak to us,
For we are held in thrall by flesh and sense,
And by their spell do dwell in darkness dense,
Save when, by chance, a beam of genius,
Agleam athwart the dusk, forms a nimbus
Of pale, white light amidst the gloom intense
Cast by our ignorance, and seems from thence
To draw us on to the soul's radius.
For true genius ever is inspired
By swift flashes of soul-light, and doth see
Those things invisible to eyes world tired,
And things to which we long have lost the key
Reveals, bringing our soul to us so near
That its low whisperings we faintly hear.

II

FLEETING TRUTH

WHEN speaks the soul our doubts are ended,
Time suspended,
And the mind expands and grows,
Till it tells us what it knows.

The moment over, life reclaims us,
Binds and chains us,
And now all that truth did seem
Is a vision in a dream.

III

TAJ MAHAL BY MOONLIGHT

O Taj Mahal, thy soul doth live!
I saw it in the moonlight rise,
All pale and ghostlike to the skies;
I heard it in the fragrant breeze
That gently quivered in thy trees,
And from thy roses wondrous white
I breathed its essence in the night.
O Taj Mahal, thy soul doth live!

IV

THE IDEAL

WRAPT in a cloud, flame tinted, edged with fire,
Thou art ever more and more elusive,
Always strangely more and more delusive.
Though to thee, with wistful soul, we aspire,
And ever more to reach thee do desire,
Still vainly of our heart and strength we give,
Striving to grasp thee, always fugitive,
For thou hast wings which never seem to tire.
Oh, vision in a mist of changing hue,
With flashing flames of blue and orange-red,
Bringing with thee vain hopes and tears, we rue
The day we saw thee floating far ahead;
And yet we do thee endlessly pursue,
For with thee gone our life is grey and dead.

V

LIFE'S TEARS

THE tears of life are fresh and sweet
When they in joy do fall,
And bitter deep when, burning hot,
They start at sorrow's call.

O you who weep with happiness,
And you whom grieving sears,
Can pity those from whom life holds
The mercy of her tears.

VI

LOVERS' DAYS

ALL witchery of mystery,
All scents of roses rare,
All moonlight romance silvery
Are thine, Winona fair.
Or so, at least, it seems to me,
When in my dreams I look at thee
And at my heart,
Old mem'ries start,
And through a rainbow mist I see.
All mystic things that poets dream,
All tales of lovers told,
All murmurs of a golden stream,
Thou, in thy heart, dost hold.

VII

LOVE'S HOUR

TIME, in his web of hours, has spun many
A golden day, many a silv'ry night,
And in his threads has tangled the fair light
Of Myriad stars. When deftly any
Hour he spins, singing the sad litany
Of bygone things, it vanishes from sight,
Never to return, taking oft in flight
All sweet of life. Such is Time's villainy.
So, O Love, clasp we close our golden hour,
Nor let it slip away. Ever kiss we
Closer, closer, in our rosy bower;
For do we but love enough, it may be
That, of Love, some great and unseen power
May change our hour into eternity.

VIII

PSYCHE

O Psyche, symbol of the soul,
Who search'd for Love from goal to goal
Through pain and tears
For weary years.
When Cupid caught thee in his arms at last,
And through the starlit firmament so vast,
With snowy wings outspread did swiftly soar with thee,
Thou didst find Love and so gain immortality.

IX

WATER LILIES

O LILIES pure and white, afloat upon the river,
On broad green leaves, hast heard the call
of Pan which goes,
When on his pipe he blows, all up and down the
river?
O lilies pale, thy petals frail are kissed with rose,
And in thy fragrant, yellow heart a soul doth
quiver!
Is this the work of great god Pan? Who knows?
Who knows?
His music ever grows along the sleepy river.

X

TO LA GIOCONDA

MONA LISA, whence thy smile, sweet and strange?
Noble and beautiful thou art and wise,
But in thy subtle smile a mystery lies,
And as I look it seems to ever change
And take my soul with it from range to range
Of life and thought till I see with thine eyes
For a brief space; then the illusion dies,
And thee again from me thou dost estrange.
Da Vinci to thy lips did bring that smile,
Mystical of full knowledge, good and ill.
Can it be his soul blent with thine awhile
When to such purpose he did bend his will?
For lo, thy look is his and his thy smile,
And in thine eyes his soul doth whisper still.

XI

TWIN SOULS

As strong their long look grew
And ever deeper drew,
Slowly to the surface stole
Their soul,
Transfiguring the whole.

And as its spreading glow
Did seem to brighter grow,
Their faces both became
The same,
Lit by a sudden flame.

XII

TO A GENIUS

ALONE thou passest through the throng
That praiseth thee with wonder.
They see thy face and hear thy song;
Thy soul is far asunder.

XIII

THOU WHO ART MYSELF

O THOU who art myself apart from me,
Whose mind communes with mine in wordless speech,
And seems my inmost thoughts to subtly reach,
Whose soul is bound so inextricably
With mine that oft there seems no me and thee,
But only thee which is myself grown whole
In perfect fulness of a complete soul,
No matter where or what our destiny
Or through what pain and longing we may pass,
We shall not ever be alone in mind
Or soul, nor feel aloof from humankind,
As one who watches life as through a glass
And with vain questions does his brain harass,
For we, in our one soul, all answers find.

XIV

A DREAM

WAFTED far by gentle breezes,
I seemed to hear the sirens sing;
Drifting swiftly ever onward,
I seemed about to near the thing
I had longed for through the years;
But as I strove to grasp its gleam,
Clearly came a voice that warned me,—
"Thou art asleep and thou dost dream!"

XV

PAIN AND ENVY

Now Pain and Envy met one day
And started boasting, on their way.
Said Pain, "I do cripple bodies whole."
Sneered Envy, "I shrivel up man's soul!"

XVI

TO ——

THERE are no words with which to say what I
Would say to thee. Words are too small, my thought
Too big, for speech or rhyme. Though it be wrought
Of soul-like stuff which cannot ever die,
Still, through its beauty, emptiness would cry,
And sense of its futility be brought
Unto my soul, wherein was born what sought
To speak, and does for true expression sigh.
So unto thee, to whom I all would say,
I can but silently outstretch my hand
In thankfulness, while trusting that one day
Thy soul, so great and strong, may have command
Of all my thoughts in some strange, mystic way,
And that which I would say will understand.

XVII

WE MEET

WITH radiance all is fair;
Thoughts and words unspoken
Quiver in the still, sweet air;
Soul to soul doth beckon.

XVIII

WE KISS

THE skies burst into glowing glory;
The world with rosy love's aflame;
O heav'n, O earth, witness love's victory;
O wind, O sea, cry out love's name.

XIX

WE PART

THE slow, sad shadows fall;
The dull, grey gloom of twilight dim
Creeps slowly over all;
For love and life are but Fate's whim.

XX

SIR WILFRID LAURIER

O HEARKEN to Sir Wilfrid Laurier,
Who towers high, so great, erect and strong,
Above the crowd and ordinary throng,
And who doth stand for Canada to-day.
Long may she be beneath his mighty sway!
Simple and honest with no thought of wrong,
Just "Canada for Canada" his song,
Trust ye, Canadians, your Premier!
If Canada be now an entity,
Most independent and despised by none,
To whom does she owe her prosperity
If it be not to that clear-seeing one,
Whom all Canadians full proudly can,
With one accord, proclaim their "Grand Old Man"?

Ottawa, September 19, 1911.

XXI

THE MUSICIAN

He played, and a flood of sound did us immerse,
And bore us on while he, with face transformed,
Did draw inspiration from the Universe;
A genius of power and fire he seemed.

He ceased, and the spell was now at once dispersed,
As from the crowd the shower of applause
Did swift, through the hall, full loud and ringing burst,
While bowed and smiled a gnomelike, little man.

XXII

A PRAYER

MERCIFUL Lady of Dreams,
From thy poppy-laden shore,
From oblivion-giving streams,
Send me, Lady, one dream more.

Let the dream be one of love,
Full of joy and vital breath,
Lifting me on wings above;
And O grant its end be death!

XXIII

TO J. G. J.

O DEAR, my lady of the old régime,
So dainty in thy gracious stateliness,
So full of coquetry and wittiness,
Canst thou, I wonder, even faintly dream
How dark and sear a place the world did seem
When thou didst leave it? Or what loneliness
Enveloped me in its blank dreariness . . .
I who did pray thy life mine might redeem?
Thy brain was like a man's, thy heart and soul
All woman, and thou hadst the tender grace
And fragrance of a child which swiftly stole
All hearts. No one can ever fill thy place,
No matter what may be their name or goal,
Nor dim the mem'ry of thy treasured face.

XXIV

THE GONDOLIER'S SONG

OUT into the night it rang,
Like a chant it rose and swelled,
Then as if a lover sang,
When his mistress he beheld.
Next a weirdly wailing sigh
As though some strange, lost spirit
Breathed a long-drawn, moaning cry
From the sobbing heart of it.
Through the sleeping city spread,
In the silence deep and long,
O'er the moonlit city dead,
Rose and fell that living song.

XXV

GOLDEN THREADS

As when enveloped close within the soft perfumèd shower
Of sweet Melisanda's yellow hair,
Pelleas to breathe of love did dare,
And up each single golden hair did send a quivering kiss;
So do my thoughts go flying swift along the golden threads
Which true love hath spun twixt me and thee,
And on nearing thee do breathe of me
And of my love, and on thine eyes do leave a lingering kiss.

XXVI

REMORSE

WITH hidden face and slinking footsteps slow
Thou dog'st the paths of those thy chosen prey.
Through all the years and months and day by day
Thou ever with them shadowing dost go,
Bringing with thee deep rancour and vain woe
Which to their hearts do eat their stealthy way,
Corroding all that had been light and gay
With subtle poison which doth ever grow.
O thou great, cruel and relentless force
Who dost crush down the souls of men and grind
Into the dust their very life and mind,
Unswervingly thou dost pursue thy course
Till one by one thy victims fall, gone blind
With thy despair, bound with thy chains Remorse!

XXVII

SILENCE

In the deep forest's heart,
Where filters the sun's rays,
In a still, golden haze,
The breathless silence speaks,
Bringing Nature's soft balm
And her great soothing calm
To all those who will hear.

XXVIII

A VANISHED HOPE

THOU pale, lurking shadow
Of a long lost dream,
Why dost thou haunt me so,
Until thou dost seem
To fill the world with the wile
Of thy dreary, ghostlike smile?

XXIX

LIFE

O LIFE, through whose dark labyrinths we wend
With groping hands and eyes that strain to see
The light, hast thou a hidden meaning we
May hope to find at our strange journey's end?
Or are we chance creatures of growth who rend
Our hearts in vain attempts a mystery
To solve to which there never was a key,
Since we but grow and then to earth descend?
Still while we tread thy maze of days and years
And on thy stage play out thy given role,
We cry to thee as if to one who hears
And will give answer from some distant shoal.
But who doth know if at the end of tears
And smiles we shall face death or our own soul?

XXX

DESTINY

WHO art thou whom I ever meet
At every turn on every street?
What is thy name,
O thing of flame?
By paths that twist and wind I flee
From thee, but thou in front of me
Dost ever stand
With beck'ning hand.
What canst thou want of one like me,
O thou strange thing of mystery?

I am thy destiny, O man!
Come now and meet me if you can
With a brave heart
Of life, thy part
Am I. Bitter or sweet, thy lot
Am I. Advance and shirk me not;
Rather gird thee
And strive with me.
Thy strength in flying do not spend,
For I shall grasp thee in the end.

XXXI

THE FUTURE

ALL strange and veiled and silent,
In front of us she stands;
Her face is hidden from us,
But hope is in her hands.

XXXII

TWILIGHT

O GREY, illusive sister of dark night,
When thy soft wings descend, dimming the day
Before darkness begins her mighty sway,
There falls a hush upon the world whose light
Is fading fast; and mid the strife and flight
Of life we pause to breathe for a short space
Before continuing our hurried race,
And in thy gloaming rest our straining sight.
As on us gently falls thy low, slow psalm
We feel vague yearnings grow within our heart
And sweet, strange words our lips do sometimes part,
For 'tis at this, thine hour of brooding balm,
When to us comes thy deeply mystic calm,
That oft faint stirrings of our soul do start.

XXXIII

ILLUSION

I LOST thee one day, Illusion,
And without thy rainbow light
I stumbled in sad confusion
Through bitter Sorrow's night,
But on thy path, Disillusion,
I found a shining truth.
Now I smile at thee, Delusion,
And love thee for thy youth.

XXXIV

INSPIRATION

WHEN thou art far from me
All inspirations fail;
Discordant seems to be
My lute, its music mute.

My soul cries out to thee
And at thy answ'ring touch
There breathes strong harmony
From but now tuneless strings.

XXXV

REINCARNATION

IN ages past you, dear, were I, I you.
Lo, now we meet once more and it is done;
We, soul and body, once again are one.
Must we still more be parted, going through
New lives, seeking past Karma to undo,
Until our courses separate be run
And final victory completely won
Which shall forever surely blend us two?
It may be so, for we have much work still
To do; but O beloved, we have this boon
Of meeting close on our steep progress hill,
Thus faintly glimpsing mighty love's high noon,
To give us strength and patience, for God's will
To part us is lest we reach heav'n too soon.

XXXVI

THE SNAKE CHARMER

WITH music insinuating,
Now ever attenuating,
So the Snake Charmer plays
Till at length, from all ways,
The snakes slowly slide,
With sinuous glide,
To his feet and, at his first beck,
Up him writhe and twine round his neck.

XXXVII

THE MYSTIC

His eyes are all heavy with dreams,
And into the distance he seems
To ever be looking, as though
He saw far beyond the vain show
We think to be life, and had found
A world of his own which had bound
His mind in a spell of its thought
In which he now sees all he sought.