

1934

From out the void: a volume of verse

Wilbur Daniel Spencer

Follow this and additional works at: https://digicom.bpl.lib.me.us/books_pubs

Recommended Citation

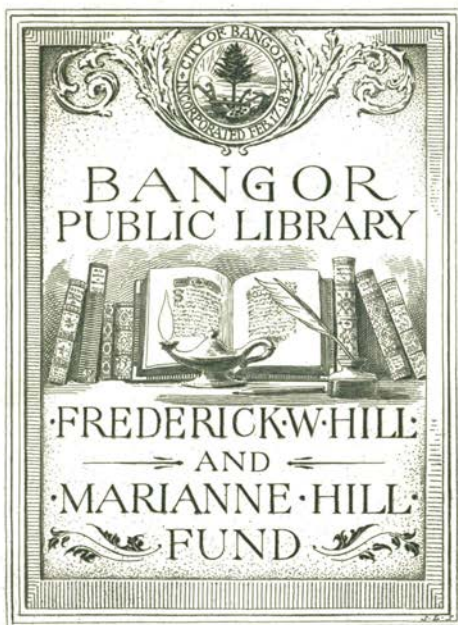
Spencer, Wilbur Daniel, "From out the void: a volume of verse" (1934). *Books and Publications*. 39.
https://digicom.bpl.lib.me.us/books_pubs/39

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections at Bangor Community: Digital Commons@bpl. It has been accepted for inclusion in Books and Publications by an authorized administrator of Bangor Community: Digital Commons@bpl. For more information, please contact ccoombs@bpl.lib.me.us.

FROM OUT THE VOID



SPENCER



Shelf Number,	Vol.,
811.49.S 745f	X
Accession Number,	218212

MAY 14 1935



MOUNT KATAHDIN (See page 21)

FROM OUT THE VOID

A VOLUME OF VERSE

By
WILBUR D. SPENCER
H



AUGUSTA, MAINE

1934

Copyright, 1934

By

WILBUR D. SPENCER

✓

ADONIS
ALAB
YHARAL
IN 1934

PRINTED AND BOUND AT
KENNEBEC JOURNAL PRINT SHOP

PREFACE

This volume contains a more or less nomadic collection of verse, produced throughout a period of forty years in an otherwise active life. It represents selected subjects, several of which have never been offered for publication. Some have elicited favorable comment; others have been reprinted in books and magazines or preserved in the scrap books of friends and acquaintances. A few have been declaimed on various occasions. It is the sincere hope of the subscriber that the book may find a permanent place in the esteem of the reading public.

W. D. S.

Augusta, Maine, December 19, 1934.

CONTENTS



From Out The Void,	1
INDIAN LORE:	
Adown An Indian Path,	5
The Trail of the Mohawk,	7
Passaconway,	9
The Priestess of Lubin,	13
Samoset,	19
Agamenticus,	20
Katahdin,	21
The Lost Province,	22
RHYMED NARRATIVES:	
The Shepherd King of Ur,	25
The White Angel of Bristol,	30
The Dawn of American Freedom,	33
Mon Cher Alcide,	35
Cephas,	37
IN LIGHTER VEIN:	
Fancies,	41
Enough For Two,	42
Retrospection,	43
If Love Should Die,	44
After-Thoughts,	45
In Other Days,	46
Fidelity,	47
Just Memories,	48
The Last Analysis,	49
The Homeward Trail,	50
Just a Little Bit of Love,	52
IN STERNER STRAIN:	
Star of the East,	55
Heaven Is Not Far Away,	56
Forgiveness,	57
The Last Judgment,	58
To-Morrow,	60
Mariners All,	61
As I Would Have It,	62

IN STERNER STRAIN: (Cont.)

Immutability,	64
Bygones,	65
Wild Geese,	67
Climbing to Heaven,	68
The Call From the Sea,	69
The Trysting Tree,	70
Into the Void,	71

MISCELLANEOUS VERSE:

Americanism,	75
The Recall,	76
Dartmouth Class Poem,	77
Maine,	83
The Cabin at Casco,	85
Isle of Monhegan,	88

SONGS:

My Maine,	91
If To-Day Were Yesterday,	92
The Royal Outlaw,	93
Building the Future for You,	94
Sons of Maine,	95
Just Make Me Believe,	96
Your Last Real Kiss Is Mine,	97

FROM OUT THE VOID

Some phantom ship comes in alone
From foreign port—
Its registry to me unknown,
Of privateer or pirate sort.

Some star swings up beyond the sea,
Some vagrant star
At candle light, that beckons me
From ageless spaces and afar.

And thoughts of nameless origin
Bestir my mind,
Not schemes of bitterness and sin
But dreams of purer, sweeter kind.

And whence these come I cannot say
Nor yet may know,
But far or near, day after day
From out the void they ever flow.

INDIAN LORE

ADOWN AN INDIAN PATH

High on these ledges, shorn of shade,
Some arrow maker plied his trade,
Shaping shafts which sped away
On cruel wings, to maim or slay;
And in this nook were cleft apart
Tips of agate, slate and flint,
Of jade, or jasper's lurid tint—
Unerring tips for feathered dart.

Here, on the margin of this lake,
In tangled haunts of fern and brake,
Lichened boulders mark the spot
Where, long ago, some toiler wrought;
Some savage artizan designed
Crescent barks, both light and strong,
Of balsam pitch and rawhide thong
And covering of birchen rind.

And, where the river sedge grows rank,
Where potter's fragments strew the bank,
Wizards of ceramic skill
Pursued the plastic art at will
And fashioned from the native clays
Dainty pipes and cups and charms,
With beaded bands for dusky arms
And novelties in bowls and trays.

Ofttimes, beneath this hoary tree,
Half-hidden from the distant sea,
Clever craftsmen held the stage,
Throughout a long forgotten age,
And wove from ash and osier shoots
Wicker baskets, red and blue,
And mats of rich, fantastic hue
From fragrant grass and fibrous roots.

And where the meadows broaden out,
And pointed fir trees range about,
Men of magic once held sway,
To keep all dread disease away
With healing herb and sorcery,
Brewing potions when the moon
Enflooded far the dim lagoon
Beneath a phosphorescent sky.

On this secluded island shore,
In ancient days of tribal lore,
Subtle seers of sophistry
Distilled each mystic paint and dye
And blended many pigments rare,
Tracing with their symbols queer
The massive pelts of bear or deer,
Or staining war plumes for the hair.

From yon drab pinnacle of stone
Once watched a maiden all alone,
Daring dangers of the night—
The hungry wolf, the fateful kite,
The inky horrors of the glade—
Just to glimpse the signal fire
That meant the safety of her sire,
Returning from some savage raid.

Old days are gone; their actors dead;
New ways still lead where old ones led;
Fertile fields and lordly homes
Are all about; yet, if one roams
The countryside as in a dream,
Heeding the call of ancient days,
He lists the rustle of the maize,
The whirl of paddles in the stream.



LEON
HAROLD
TEBRETTS

"Returning at dusk to lodge with some stranger
And leaving no footprint upon the damp snow."

THE TRAIL OF THE MOHAWK

Red is the sky, O Indian maiden!
Red is the sky, like an omen of dread,
And far in the north the mallard is soaring
While harrying hawks still circle o'erhead.
Blue is the lake, and the bald peak above it,
Crystal the creek where the shadows are gone
And muskellunge, togue and sun-loving salmon,
With rainbows of spray, hail the first gleams of dawn.

Dun are the wilds, O maid of the morning!
Dun are the wilds and, in numbers untold,
The buck and the bear and beaver are stirring
In upland and swale and heart of the wold.
Campfires are cold and asleep are the echoes,
Lone is the vale where the war cry resounds,
Canoeless the water, empty the wigwam,
Forsaken the maize fields and old hunting grounds.

Long is the trail, O maid of the forest!
Long is the trail where the weird wind blows cold;
It may be your hunter stalks in the lowlands,
Among the gaunt hemlocks, hoary and old;
Maybe afar, in the dead of the winter,
On the chill heights he still weaves to and fro,
Returning at dusk to lodge with some stranger
And leaving no footprint upon the damp snow.

Never again, O child of a Sachem!
Never again will your young brave return;
Adown his dank hair the life blood is coursing
And in his dark eyes the dull fevers burn.
Risking his life at the hand of the Mohawk—
Foe of all nations for ages gone by—
He fell, where Orenda marked him and claimed him,
And where, in his prime, he was destined to die.

Ways of the world, O maiden of sorrow!
Ways of the world will yet soften your pain;
Through many black moons the hours will drag slowly,
In all the old haunts your quests will prove vain.
Life is a secret the sagas must fathom
And strong beats the heart that dispels all its fears;
Your hero has gone—no war drum disturbs him,
No vestige of mourning, no tribute of tears.

PASSACONWAY

Where the aged, stately forests,
In the days of long ago,
Peopled all the sloping hillsides
And the quiet vales below,
Was the home of Passaconway,
Chief of warlike Pennacooks,
Who had wisdom that was greater
Than the wisdom found in books.

Never was there such magician
In the country north or south,
And his fame had gone before him
Speeding on from mouth to mouth,
So that chiefs of distant nations
Came to pay the homage due
To a monarch who had secrets
That no other mortals knew.

Etchemins and Abenakis
Kneeled before him in their awe,
Feeling that his wrath was fatal,
Knowing that his word was law;
Power was his to burn the waters
That before his wigwam shone;
To create a living serpent
From a dead one's skin alone.

He could change himself at pleasure
To the nature of a flame,
And could make each tree about him
Dance, whene'er he spoke its name;
He could raise a fair green leaflet
From the ashes of one dead,
And of many other wonders
Not one-half could well be said.

But there is an ancient legend
Ofttimes told among the rest,
Which, though now almost forgotten,
Seems to be by far the best:
Passaconway had a daughter
Whom he loved next to his sons,
And she was in truth the fairest
Of her nation's fairest ones.

Far away in Newichwanic
Dwelt a noble chieftain's son,
Who had often come to woo her
And at last her heart had won;
But her father loved to watch her
Flitting near his wigwam door,
Where, some spirit message warned him,
He might never see her more.

So time passed; the winter coming
Burdened all the trees with snow
And anon the budding springtime
Thrilled with life the earth below;
All the world seemed truly happy
To these people of the wilds,
Save the face of Passaconway,
Troubled at his loving child's.

One bright day when she had wandered
Far beyond the village ground,
Searching for an early floret,
Noting every woodland sound,
From the green leaves just above her
Leaped a panther, hungry-eyed,
Crushing with its powerful body
All her senses, so she died.

As they broke to Passaconway
News they felt their chief must know,

From his eyes, so unaccustomed,
Drops like rain were seen to flow,
But he would not give the mandate
That they should avenge the deed,
Though his son, young Wanolancet,
Would have been the first to heed.

Soon he calmed their wilder passions,
Telling them that there was one
Dwelling with the Abenakis
He had loved to call his son;
And that that one, as avenger
Of the maiden loved by all,
Should pursue the wily panther
And his hand should cause its fall.

Thus the old magician waited
While a half a moon went by,
When one day from Newichwanic
Drew the lover chieftain nigh;
Then the aged Passaconway
Went to greet him, all alone,
Fearing lest the ears of others
Might suspect his lowest tone.

As he spoke, the young chief's fingers
Pressed more tightly to his side,
Where a shining hilted dagger
In its leathern noose was tied;
But his eyes were glowing brighter
Than his hilt of English steel,
And his rage was great within him,
Such as wounded creatures feel.

So, when he had learned the markings
That the wily panther bore,
Into depths of distant woodlands,
All unknown to him before,

Rushed the brave at paces headlong,
Where at last he found the foe
And, while fighting with the monster,
Fell beneath its fatal blow.

Yet the youth had dealt a death stroke
In the creature's tawny side,
Whence her life blood, quick outpouring,
All his face with crimson dyed.
There they lay, locked fast together,
Where no Indian ever came,
To behold the signs of struggle
Or repeat the hero's name.

Then the lonely Passaconway,
Knowing well that both were dead,
Set beside his wigwam doorway
A wild rosebush, erstwhile red.
This he cherished through the springtide
Till the season in its wake
Caused two beautiful white roses
From two tiny buds to break.

And when both at last had faded
And were falling to decay,
He, preserving every petal,
Laid them secretly away;
For, said all, these were the spirits
Of the lovers, man and wife,
Who had blossomed in the rosebush
To a sweeter, purer life.

THE PRIESTESS OF LUBIN

"A vagrant wind is sighing in the palms, Loren,
And needs must wake sad memories again,
Of olden days when you were in your prime
And sailed a Spanish bark to foreign clime."

* * * * *

"Ah, yes!" said old Loren, "the snow-clad peaks afar
Were tipped with growing dawn; a single star
Still hung above the wisps of blue-gray mist
In skies of clear, resplendent amethyst.

On such a morn, from ancient vales of Huican,
The fierce Pizarro led his heartless van
Across the hills, to conquer worlds untold
And lade his decks with precious gems and gold.

Our leader was a pilferer; his sordid men,
Accursed offscourings of the prison pen,
Had oft demanded much but, getting less,
Were mad with discontent and waywardness.

Then Atahualpa ruled the wilds of old Peru
With fifty thousand Incas, tried and true,
And rumors of their hidden wealth were rife
With ugly threats against the monarch's life.

But forceful words could not excite the natives' fears,
Or make them yield the golden hoard of years,
And when no serfs would lead them to the mines
Our vandals sought their loot in costly shrines.

For what could temples mean to hardened brutes like
these
Save plunder! What to outcasts of the seas
Meant human life, or pious creed, or sterling friends,
Where they could gain their base and selfish ends!

And so, with ruthless strains of banditry inbred,
We entered where no savage dared to tread
And stripped the sacristy and sacred graves
And made a hundred priestesses our slaves.

At first our number proved too small to bear away
All of that gorgeous temple's vast display
And later, when we would have garnered more,
The luckless shrine had lost its priceless store.

Its golden cups and plate and sacrificial urns,
Engraved with films of fruits and flowers and ferns,
Had disappeared; within were naked walls;
Without, a market place of empty stalls.

It seems that zealous priests had followed in our wake,
To salvage everything we could not take
And bury deep in shifting desert sands
The richest store of those benighted lands.

Four hundred teeming llama loads of old-world wealth
Had been removed with reckless haste and stealth
And, to this hour, no Spanish seer can say
Just where the pagan hoard was hid away."

* * * * *

"Were you not roundly cursed by all the Inca race
And doomed to suffer torture or disgrace?
Did not some fatal malady ensue
To blight your schemes or wreck your godless crew?"

* * * * *

"Not at that time. Though small, our loyal band was
strong
And held at bay that outraged, motley throng,
Whose slender, wooden spears could ill prevail
Against our deadly arms and coats of mail.

And since no man of ours had fallen in the fray
The enemy retreated in dismay,
Believing that we held some potent charm
Which gave us victory and dealt them harm.

Young Atahualpa, taken prisoner and held
For royal ransom, was ere long impelled
To sue for peace and end unequal strife
Which, he well knew, might cost his crown and life.

The Inca reckoned roughly and sketched upon the wall,
Below the lofty ceiling of his hall,
A line to mark the space which, he agreed,
Must thrice be filled with gold, ere he be freed.

Eight million pesos' worth of loot, we did enjoy,
Delivered speedily in terms of coin,
Eight million pesos, half in gold alone—
The most astounding sum the world had known.

Two thousand trusty couriers were sent abroad,
By mountain pass and gorge then seldom trod,
Where hardy knaves were prone to hold their breath
Because a careless slip meant instant death.

There native teamsters on the overhanging shelves
Relied on beasts, as safer than themselves,
And toted packs of Maya plate and ore
From mines unworked a thousand years or more.

The golden flood came pouring in from cave and glen,
In life-size images of beasts and men,
In plaques of trees and flowers and burnished tile,
In jar and vase of crudest Maya style."

* * * * *

"What of the Inca priestess who became your slave?
Does she still serve you and never crave

The holy rites of church? Do you not claim
Some kith or kin, some child which bears your name?"

* * * * *

"Ah, no!" quoth gray Loren. "That slave became my
wife

And changed the brutish tenor of my life.
With her I left my countrymen and fled,
Preferring jungle solitudes instead.

I left behind the safety of a guarded town,
My early dreams of worldly honor and renown,
My rightful share of undivided Inca pelf,
And hopes to reach the fatherland itself.

And yet, there was no selfish motive in my mind;
I sought to shield the priestess from her kind:
Those mad idolaters whose pious clan
Forbade her ilk to wed a warlike man.

And my companion was a maid of tender age,
Both fair and modest at that early stage,
Who, strictly reared beneath the cloistered arch,
Had fallen prey to our triumphal march.

In days of burning heat we stole through swale and
brake,
Adown a mighty river and o'er a lake,
Until a vacant clearing came to view,
With palm-encircled cottage, far from new.

And there we dwelt in quiet bliss for many moons,
Untroubled by the rampage of typhoons
Which, born at sea and crashing inland, died
In empty canons on the mountain side.

But warring elements could bring us no concern;
The worst of all would be enforced return

To Cajamarca, where sure death awaited me
As base deserter from my companie."

* * * * *

"And what of Atahualpa and his ransom hoard?
Did he disclose where virgin wealth was stored
Or did he fail to meet your vain demand
And drive your eerie minions from the land?"

* * * * *

"The Inca kept his word although his matchless price
For life and liberty did but suffice
To whet Pizarro's rabid appetite
And advertise the country's woeful plight.

Forthwith our leaders strove to lord it over all,
Exacting daily toll from store and stall
And humbling faithful subjects of the king
With cutting lash and cruel buffeting.

The peons sulked to see their hapless offspring whipped,
Their priests were wroth to find their altars stripped,
And both conspired to break Castilian rule
And free their ill-starred chief from ridicule.

So, first of all, the natives laid in wait and slew
Four of our roistering, befuddled crew,
Relying on some ancient shibboleth
To prove that we were not immune from death.

Faint murmurs of revolt scarce reached the sky
Ere Atahualpa was accused of perfidy
And put to death, unshrived by priest or prayer,
At Cajamarca, in the public square.

And with their king's demise the Incas turned on me
To expiate their own impiety:
They stalked my steps without our hidden glade
And slew my priestess, leal and unafraid."

* * * * *

"And what of you, Loren, since that relentless day?
Why dwell you here alone and far away?
Pray tell me, will you never seek again
Your native port in sunny, southern Spain?"

* * * * *

"I cannot say," replied Loren, "but this I know:
My life has been a wretched round of woe!
Without a country, I am never free
To fare from port to port and sea to sea.

For heinous sins like mine remorse is long and deep.
God rest thee, but I seldom sleep!
My mind with fear is constantly oppressed
And harmless sounds disturb my nightly rest.

In years ago I have survived where others died,
On sunken ledge and shoal, in shifting tide;
To-day, I trust, my lagging sails are set
For that last port of all, where men forget!"

SAMOSET

There stands, far-off upon the hill,
Upreared against the evening sky,
Tall and erect, unkempt and still—
Like the lone wolf about to die—
The wraith of Samoset.

Where he was born, or reared, or trained,
Or what his creed, or if he thought
The forest empire where he reigned
Should be supreme, it matters not;
He was indeed a man.

His "Welcome, Englishmen!" survives
As sentiment of after years,
And in its sway the nation thrives
And world-wide malice disappears
With universal peace.

His was no hope, no subtle plan,
To conquer; his, no racial lore,
But just the call of man to man
That seeks afar and evermore
The sympathy of men.

The mist-wraiths wind along the lea
And hide the form of Samoset;
The moon upon a silver sea,
His crescent bark, sails onward yet—
To westward and alone.*

* It was a belief of the American Indian, derived undoubtedly from the apparent movements of the celestial bodies, that at death the soul goes up "westward".

AGAMENTICUS

Trimountain of the purple haze
And filmy cloud-wreaths dun and gray;
Reminder of those youthful days
So dim and far away.

Mysterious mountain of the East,
Bold landmark of the plain and sea,
Enduring symbol of the past
And of eternity.

Beloved mount of Aspenquid—
On which at last he chose to die,
In foliage forever hid
Betwixt the earth and sky.

Memorial to one who sought
A higher level for his race;
Where, though his realm survived him not,
He still retains a place.

Fair mountain of the lights and shades,
With peaceful grandeur in its heights,
As restful as the star which fades
At dusk on summer nights.

KATAHDIN

In ageless dawn the Power that men call God
Cast thee from caverns of the moulten sea,
All adamant, but smote thee with his rod
And left thee, for future time, a mystery—
Not human sphinx in sculptured monolith,
To guard the gilded sepulchres of kings,
But one vast shrine for Christendom, wherewith
The souls of men are pledged to loftier things.

In thee the Indian marked a spirit call
Which lured him upward to untimely death,
Where dwelt Pamola, origin of all
That stirs in quickening things the vibrant breath;
And on the sheerest pinnacle of fate,
Above the world's base bickerings of strife,
He wooed his bride, in white supremacy of state,
As patroness of fair and virtuous life.

Star of the North, still gleaming as of old!
Still speaking in the language of the soul!
Far up the heights, the cloudland wreaths unfold
Eternal hieroglyphics on thy scroll.
And still men climb the pathways to the stars,
And scale the peaks no living foot has trod,
To die, disfigured with their hideous scars,
When death presents their only way to God.

THE LOST PROVINCE

Fabled city of the East
Hidden in a wilderness,
Where the golden hours obsess;
Where the Indian princes feast
And the princesses caress.
Found but once in ancient times
By romantic Spanish dons,
Who exalted it in rhymes
Over flowing demijohns.

Norumbega, still obscure,
Still enchanted in romance
Where all distances enhance,
Where illusions all endure
And all mysteries entrance;
From thy void of olden days
Men are carving greater things;
From thy wilderness they raise
Cities unsubdued by kings.

RHYMED NARRATIVES

THE SHEPHERD KING OF UR

A shepherd sold his slave at dawn,
Young and beautiful as women go,
For forty shekels and a pawn
For other things I do not know;
She wept at parting, for although
He was a shepherd of the tent,
He owned the herds that came and went
In twenty vales below.

He was a nomad king of old,
Wandering with thirsty flock,
Alert and young and fiercely bold,
Familiar with each spring and rock
For miles upon the desert sands;
He long had traveled, South and East,
And fought and supped at kingly feast,
In many foreign lands.

For him one wife was well enough;
Others might give much concern;
To rule them often meant rebuff,
To teach them, that they would not learn;
So, to be rid of all, he chose
To send away his faithful one,
With caravan at rise of sun,
To land of Pharaohs.

Full oft when wearied with the chase,
Lasting till the night had passed,
She welcomed him with smiling face
And viands that would break his fast;
But now he sought to live alone,
With men who understood him well,
With men who dared not truly tell
The lives that they had known.

His clansmen were a tribe that oft
Moved for pasturage afar:
In spring, where winds were warm and soft
Beneath the guiding Northern Star;
In winter, toward the southern moon,
With changing scenes, both far and wide,
On treeless plain and mountain side,
At morn and eve and noon.

* * * * *

Some years had flown. The shepherd king
Grew in wealth as did his tribe,
He wanted not for anything
The faithful elders might prescribe;
Both east and west he wandered far
To cultured halls beyond the sun,
To armored camps where life was one
Grim tragedy of war.

And still he was not satisfied
For, wherever he might roam,
He missed companionship and sighed
For sweeter luxuries of home;
He found no mastery in life
For wanderers of noble birth,
No shrine enchanted on the earth
And no surcease from strife.

And so, whatever course he tried,
Discontentment ever grew
Until one day at eventide
The pyramids far shadows threw
Across his path, and just below
Lay spread the Nile with gardens wide
And palaces with sunset side
Of pinnacles aglow.

And there he paused. His caravan
Seeking trade, at his behest,
Lodged at the inn, where beast and man
Could find their needful food and rest;
And there the evening meal was spread
Beneath an arching sycamore
As it had often been before
In sunset, gold and red.

And while the feast was at its height
And the harvest moon rose full,
Wine-bearers danced with footsteps light
In graceful robes of silken wool;
And there his past came back again:
With memories of early days,
Of wanderlust for foreign ways
And haunts of savage men.

And as his vision sensed the scene,
Dreaming of his native land,
He saw approaching, like a queen,
His former slave girl, far more grand
And beautiful than he had known:
A woman of the highest class,
A princess, once the humble lass
Who cared for him alone.

And so, for sooth, they met once more,
Face to face in alien land,
Yet, not as in the years before,
When he, as master, could command
And she, as maid or concubine,
By ancient custom must obey—
They met as equals, every way,
Beside a pagan shrine.

The king marked well his former slave,
Coveting the artless smile,

The sympathy that once she gave,
Her loyalty, which brooked no guile;
For now, relieved of petty cares,
He saw where once capricious fate
Had entertained within his gate
An angel unawares.

He cast about for some excuse,
Fearing that his old neglect
Ranked little short of sheer abuse,
Assuming that to gain respect
He needs must barter all his land,
His title to a ducal crown
And pay a mint of shekels down
As ransom for her hand.

But time had yielded wealth and caste,
Raising her to high estate,
And no allurement of the past,
No burning plea, no threat of fate,
Could lure her from the lofty sphere,
Where long ascendancy at court
And contacts of the nobler sort
Had changed her whole career.

Then too, the lights she glimpsed askance,
One by one adown the way,
Were lights of home where zestful dance
And tale and mirthful roundelay,
And, sweeter still, an infant's call,
Invoking joy, dispelling pain,
Woke haunting magic in her brain
And brought her peace withal.

She faced the king with due restraint,
Holding back her retinue,
The hoary camels with their quaint,
Rich trappings of fantastic hue;

The massy elephants which spread
Wild trumpetings across the plains
And threshed anon their strident chains
As surgent trunk met head.

She would not tarry if she could,
Owing naught by way of debt,
Nor did she argue why she should
Do something that she might regret;
Besides, it irked her to explain
To one who might not understand
And, tendering her jewelled hand,
She traveled on again.

And so the king was left that night
With the leisure to repent
Where desert wastes gloomed left and right
Beneath a fickle firmament;
And with the dawn an Arab band
Espied afar a ghastly form,
Half-buried by the midnight storm
In trackless rifts of sand.

THE WHITE ANGEL OF BRISTOL

Night by night the stars trailed west
Where the dark horizon lay;
Eastward on its homing quest
Drove the vessel, day by day,
With full sail and straining spar
Toward the Milford lights afar.

All the summer months her crew,
Drifting with the flashing seine,
Had pursued the shadows through
Reaches of the Gulf of Maine,
Luring treasures with their wiles
From the far, mysterious isles.

Happy fishermen were these,
Idlers, as a last resort
Weaving port yarns on the seas,
Spinning sea yarns when in port,
Boasting of their feats galore
As they neared their native shore.

And while some still dreamed of home,
Or on watch at midnight posts
Longed to glimpse the flying foam
That enwreaths the Cornish coasts,
With no warning hint or hail
Three strange ships bore down full sail.

These were pirates of Dunkirk,
Watching on the Northern Main
For some Englishman or Turk,
Or the treasure ships of Spain—
Sea hawks lurking in the way
For rich merchantmen as prey.

When the gray of morning spread
Over trackless wastes of sea
And the dawn, a golden thread,
Ran from starboard to the lee,
Solid shot across the bow
Brought a challenge from the foe.

Bristol fishermen could fight
And, if need be, they could die,
But they would not think of flight
Nor submit to slavery,
When the loss of freedom meant
Slave marts of the Orient.

So their captain held his course,
Cleared the decks and primed his guns,
Mustering his lesser force
To dispel far greater ones;
With the hope that sunrise might
Overtax the foemen's sight.

Storms of shot shrieked up aloft;
Mizzen sails went by the board;
Deck planks ripped abaft, but oft
Answering guns of Bristol scored,
While the ensign, masthead high,
Ever flew defiantly.

Then the foremost privateer,
Hit below the water line,
Sank before her boats could clear—
Ere the nearest brigantine,
Shortening her sails, could take
The survivors in her wake.

Yet, the last great ship-of-war,
Sweeping on at fearful speed,

Confident of conquest, or
Quick surrender, took the lead,
Holding both her broadsides back
For the fateful, last attack.

So the Bristol gunner fell,
Overcome by smoke and heat,
In that fiery, choking hell
Where the havoc was complete;
Every gun was burst save one
And the crew dead or undone.

There his mate, a Cornish lad,
Punctured through the shoulder blades,
Fired the only charge he had
At the murderous renegades,
Leaning on the rack beneath
With a slow match in his teeth.

And that last shot won the day,
Fired at fifty yards point-blank
At the hull of dingy gray
Through the walls of live oak plank
And all barriers between
To the powder magazine.

All was ended when that night,
Far upon the Irish tide,
With no harbor lamps alight
And no living hand to guide,
The *White Angel* once again
With full cargo drifted in.

And in Bristol port they can
Tell the world that awful feat
Of a light-armed merchantman
Which destroyed a full-armed fleet,
But they cannot name again
Any of its gallant men.

THE DAWN OF AMERICAN FREEDOM

Ere farmers fought at Concord,
On a world-wide field of fame,
Ere the call for independence
Made America a name,
There were patriots in New Hampshire
And in Maine who had the will
And the foresight that provided
Powder burned at Bunker Hill.

Men of Berwick, men of Durham,
In those days of long ago,
Drifted down the tide at moonlight
On a river gundalow,
Past the ancient port of Portsmouth
With its harbor lights aglow,
Past the guns of Fort McClary
And its sentinels below;

Stormed the fort across the harbor,
Hauled the flag and spiked the guns—
“Dogs of War might bark for England,
But no more should harm her sons;”
Took all arms and ammunition—
Arms that borne on every field
Of the later Revolution
Made opponents die or yield.

These were men whom some called traitors,
In the days of doubt and fear,
And upon the rolls of honor
Names of few may now appear;
Some were with Paul Jones in action
On the distant Irish sea;
Some were in the ranks at Monmouth
And at Yorktown under Lee.

Men of eloquence and courage,
Guards and friends of Washington,
Who could rally the despondent
Till the weary war was won;
Some were lost in flush of battle,
Others died in prison ships,
But their words and deeds awakened
Valiant hearts and loyal lips.

Men they were whose aims were peaceful,
Men who knew and dreaded war,
But the services they rendered,
In a cause worth fighting for,
Taught the world a thrilling lesson
Which the ancients had not known:
That, in every plea for justice,
One can win *and stand alone*.

Men of Portsmouth, men of Berwick,
Men of Durham and unnamed!
They are gone, and their achievements
Never yet have been acclaimed;
Many of their resting places
Are unmarked, but their ideal
Of a universal freedom
Makes a monument more real.

MON CHER ALCIDE

W'en we marry long tam ago
Alcide he mak' it some beeg show;
He was wan gentilhomme of rank
Who nevair work or own der bank,
An' so, by Gar, he sleep an' read
Jus' lak der king—bonhomme Alcide.

But for der chil'ren, wan, two, t'ree,
He mak' bes' nurse I nevair see;
He tak' it all on side hees lap
An' nevair scol' or mak' wan slap,
But play an' sing "Le Gros Rapide",
All full of pep, mon jeune Alcide.

I nevair learn to read or write,
But jus' to sew all day by night;
An' all der tam hees enfants grow
An' learn somet'ing I nevair know;
It was enough to fin' deir feed
An' leev' der res' to pere Alcide.

He tole dem of der beeg hero
An' prima don's he use' to know,
Der painters an' les maitres de l'Art
Du France an' le grand Bonaparte
An' how he save heer in hees need—
Full of ambish was mon Alcide.

An' den le guerre cam by wan day
W'en all aroun' dey march away
To fight for home an' tak' wan chance
To die for Montreal an' France;
So mon bonhomme jus' volunteed
Wit' all der res'—le gros Alcide.

Dey say he mak' wan brave soldat:
Der gin'ral ax heem dis an' dat
An' w'en hees comrade were on fight
Dey foun' heem ev'rywere in sight;
He was le capitaine who mus' lead
To end der war—le grand Alcide.

An' w'en der war she cam' on end
An' fifty t'ousand men were send
Safe home, flags flyin' at deir head,
Som' mor' were lef' in France, all dead;
An' no wan now will evair heed
Jus' w'ere he fell—mon saint Alcide.

But w'ile ma familie ees gon'
Mon brav' soldat still car'ees on.
Der peep may cheer an' music play
W'ile I mus' wait me long an' pray,
No mat' w'at all der res' may plead,
To fin' som' tam por los' Alcide.

An' mon Joseph, le Presiden'
On der Colleg', much tam has sen'
For me to leev on heem. So, too,
Francois, Marcelle an' Marie Lou,
Want me by dem—I mus' not heed;
I wait long tam for cher Alcide!

CEPHAS

W'at no 'count nigger slam' mah do'
An' tote' de san' across de flo',
An' ho' all am dat on'ry snipe
W'at steal' de melons 'fore deay's ripe?
Ho' hid de mice in massa's hat
An' sicked ol' Tige on de daid pole cat?
Yo' all, Cephas, yo' all!

Ho' snare' de robins wid ah string
An' dump de treetoads in de spring?
W'at scamp shies stones at ol' King Drake
An' scoots de goslin' off de lake;
W'at coon done bust de settin' aigs
An' bin' de ca'f by de hindum laigs?
Yo' all, Cephas, yo' all!

Ho' han' de goat dat ol' tin can,
An' wash' he's feet in mah dish pan?
How come dat soap on mah do' stone,
An' ho' eat up mah bes' co'n pone,
Wid ebry spec' ob gooseb'ry jam.
Uh-huh! An' looked jes as meek's a lam'?
Yo' all, Cephas, yo' all!

We'en pickaninnies cry for bed
An' all deir eb'ning pray'rs am said;
W'en spooks and goblins 'gin ter creep
An' all good chillern go ter sleep;
W'at coal-black bum'kin stay' awake
An' hoot' an' howl' fer de lawdy's sake?
Yo' all, Cephas, yo' all.

But w'en he's peepers close at night
An' mammy's arms jes squeeze 'im tight,
Ho' all lie' thar so sad an' still,
Lak he's daid daddy on de hill?
Ho' mak' he's mammy take one peek
An' smac' he's fingers, toes an' cheek?
Yo' all, Cephas, yo' all.

IN LIGHTER VEIN

FANCIES

Sitting by my window,
In the waning light
When the spectral shadows
Are merging into night,
I seem to be surrounded
By countless, motley bands
Of tiny elves and fairies
From unknown, mystic lands.

Every lisping current
Of the summer breeze,
Every ray of moonlight
That filters through the trees,
Is laden with a freightage
Which, swarming through the pane
And crowding all my study,
Bestirs my wearied brain.

Thus the throng, increasing,
Fills the moonlit room,
As I sit and watch them
From out the inner gloom.
On chair and book and table
They trip with merry feet
And steps so light and airy
One cannot hear them beat.

Swift and swifter turning
In their dizzy whirl,
Almost in an instant,
Their sail-like wings unfurl
And as the moon, in setting,
Sinks down beyond my sight,
They vanish in the darkness
That ushers in the night.

ENOUGH FOR TWO

There is a charming garden plot,
Not very far away,
Where it is nice to pass the time
Before the close of day;
Within that garden is a walk
Almost concealed from view,
Too wide for one, too straight for three,
But just enough for two.

Beside that pleasant garden path
The choicest flowers blow
And, here and there, a spreading tree
Extends its shade below;
Within the shade there is a seat,
Oft measured by a few,
Too long for one, too short for three,
But just enough for two.

Upon that seat a couple sat,
Not very long ago,
And what was said while sitting there
The birds alone can know;
But in that hour a word was dropped,
To which we have a clue,
Too sweet for one, too sad for three,
But just enough for two.

That fateful word may well be guessed,
Without a shade of doubt,
For, like the hardest riddle, solved,
Its secret all is out;
There is a little cottage now,
Beneath the *heavenly* blue,
Too large for one and, as for three,
It might hold more than two.

RETROSPECTION

I heard the rattle of castagnets,
In measured rythm, one night
And partings mingled with regrets
And whispers recondite.
Fair senoritas with glamorous eyes
And young subalterns gay,
Adventuring on far emprise,
Pledged lasting constancy.

One gave a rose from her cortege fair
And one, a chain of gold;
A third, a lock of raven hair;
The fourth, a kiss, I'm told.
And when, with many a youthful pair,
It came our turn to part,
My lady, proud but debonair,
Plighted to me her heart.

Though many seasons have sped away
We never met again
And oft my lips will humbly stray
Upon an old refrain.
Still senoritas would sing and dance
And rattle castagnets,
But one I met that night, perchance,
Never her pledge forgets.

IF LOVE SHOULD DIE

If love should die, I cannot tell
What would become of you,
Or, what become of me, and all
The things we planned to do.

If love should die, I know not how,
But in some strange, sad way,
I hope the end may come at once—
Not slowly, day by day.

If love must die, I know not when,
With splendid hopes still bright,
I pray the hour may fall at noon
And not at dead of night.

If love must die, I know not where,
Save in our paradise,
There then would be less pain for you
If in your heart it dies.

I wonder if, when love has died
And life begins anew,
Your thoughts will sometime stray to me
As mine will turn to you.

So, after all, I cannot say
Just what the years may bring,
But, as for me, when love is dead,
My loss is everything.

AFTER-THOUGHTS

I heard a far-off bell one night—

A sweet, sad bell;

What there was sweet in tones so light,

Or sad, in bells beyond my sight,

I cannot tell.

But when at last that haunting sound

Had died away,

The echo, lost in hills around,

Still in my heart a lodgment found

Day after day.

And that which once had charmed my ears

And stirred my brain,

Turned back my thoughts to former years

And filled my eyes with sad, sweet tears

By its refrain.

Oft, for some friend, some hope, some hour,

The tears may start,

And oft some tone, some star, some flower

May manifest its magic power

To move the heart.

The soul itself wakes at a tone

From slumbering clod,

To give response, not to its own,

But to the finer touch alone

Of nature's God;

And days and years may ever bring

Some theme unsung;

Some sacred influence may spring

From source far grander than the thing

Which from it sprung.

IN OTHER DAYS

The fragrance of the faded flower is ever sweeter
Than one fresh-blown;
The sanctity of earthly days is far completer
When they have flown.

The half-forgotten song of yesterday enchants us
More than the new;
Some face of youth in tender memory still haunts us
And keeps us true.

The lilt of birds in olden times has sounded purer
To childish ears;
The voices of the hallowed past are always surer
To start our tears.

The early loves and friendships, won of yore, are dearer
Than human ties;
Familiar stars in heaven itself are growing nearer
To dimmer eyes.

And so, the change of time, or even death, can never
Obstruct our ways,
For we shall find once more, and live again forever,
Those other days.

FIDELITY

I know that thou art ever near me
And, though a spirit of new birth,
That in thy being thou canst hear me—
Me of the earth.
The sun or star light moves thee never;
All lights and shades are one to thee;
With fears and hopes I, trembling ever,
Would be as free.

I feel that thou dost have compassion
For such as I who linger here,
And that, in more than earthly fashion,
Thy love is near;
As faithful thou wert once, and kindly,
So never canst thou be the less,
Although thyself thou showest blindly,
As nothingness.

As in the royalty of living
My fond subjection serves thy will
So, while thy pledge is past the giving,
Mine binds me still;
The words "Till death us twain shall sever",
Have deeper meaning than they say,
And majesty of death can never
Take it away.

Although I cannot now perceive thee
Yet faithful I shall still remain,
While other friends may often grieve thee
With cold disdain.
Then to the sweet hereafter, blending
Withal the everpresent now,
Thou mayest trust, with faith unending,
My sacred vow.

JUST MEMORIES

As I wait in the dusky arbor,
Looking out on the dunes of Dee,
A sail from some distant harbor
Invades the twilight sea.

And I know not from whence it hailleth
Nor, indeed, what its freight may be
Or whether the master saileth
Abroad or homewardly.

While the hull like a dim, gray trailer
Cleaves the farthest horizon through
My heart, like a wistful sailor,
Would go a-roving too.

Where I might drift about forever
On the wastes of the purple sea,
Or fall from its rim and never
Return to dunes of Dee.

But a dream of the dusky harbor
And the sands of the shifting lea,
The sail and the twilight arbor,
Will always speak of thee.

THE LAST ANALYSIS

This world is unfeeling for mortals to live in,
With misunderstandings, injustice and hate,
But the endless hereafter holds time to forgive in,
Withal it may seem such a long time to wait.

It's a world inconsistent, because there are in it
The sage who, presumed to know everything, don't,
. And the rube who, supposed to know nothing, each
minute
Does something the superman cannot or won't.

It's a mystical world, because reputation
Conceals, like a garment, the type from his kind,
And the Maker alone, with exact calculation,
Marks the breadth of his soul and the depth of his
mind.

And no matter how strong, or how true, or how tender,
How rich is the life that has toiled for the race,
No one misses for long any saint or defender
Save God, who must furnish *two* men in his place.

THE HOMEWARD TRAIL

In dreams that lead me far away,
Full oft at dead of night,
In old familiar haunts I stray
Adown a roadway, gleaming bright;

A trail that fares beyond the realms
Of childhood vagrancy,
Through vistas of low arching elms
And wastes of opal, cloud-wisped sky;

A lonesome way which upward crawls
Along a rambling hill,
Where wind-swept fields and moss-grown walls
And straggling footpaths lure me still.

It is no pathway to the skies
In which my fancies roam,
No rose-strewn lane to paradise,
But just the humble trail toward home.

I scan each ancient shrub and tree,
The rustic bridge and stream;
I glimpse a homestead, dear to me
And prized by all who share my dream.

Once more a portal swings ajar
And those I love to greet,
Though lost erstwhile in ports afar,
Forgather in that quaint old street.

And there we meet as in the past
But fonder than of yore,
For Time upon our hearts has cast
A spell, forevermore.

* * * * *

Such dreams soon fade and all I hear
Is one lone whip-poor-will;
A cricket's chirping, sad and clear,
A tinkling sheep bell, on a hill.

The old-time way, now stark and white,
A smooth, strange thorofare,
Evanishes beyond my sight
For other worlds—I know not where.

JUST A LITTLE BIT OF LOVE

While youth is fresh and thoughts are pure
You hold me in your arms and say:
"I miss you more and more each day,
My love for you is ever sure."
And so you kiss my rounded cheek
And praise the luster of my hair—
I know you really think me fair,
If love-light in your eyes can speak.

And yet, I wonder if the truth
Will sound as sweet as years go by
And we grow old; I wonder why
My heart should dread the loss of youth.
Is there no way that we can check
The current in its ceaseless flight
Which bears us outward in the night,
Like spectres clinging to a wreck?

Is there no virtue I possess
That keeps my image in your heart?
Is there no living, lasting part,
No simple charm, no vague caress,
No fleeting instant of the past
That comes and goes but never dies
And, weaving closer all our ties,
Will blend our destinies at last?

So may it be, day after day,
Although wide oceans roll between,
That you still save my memory green
And, ever longing, truly say:
"There is no sacred place above,
And naught below, or old, or new,
That I could wish, save only you
And just a little bit of love."

IN STERNER STRAIN

STAR OF THE EAST

There is a star that shines through all our tears,
A harbinger of ever brighter days,
A star that rules our passions and our fears
In life's obscure and uninviting ways—
A star that touched our universe with flame
And though unknown to long observant eyes
Became, without a number or a name,
The *Alpha* and *Omega* of the skies.

O Star of Bethlehem that all shall know
And yet that hosts in Christendom forget!
O Star that rose so many years ago
And in the years to come will never set!
O fadeless Star, that lit one wondrous night,
And at its zenith held so much in store,
Although the sky no longer needs your light
It lives, in countless hearts, forevermore!

HEAVEN IS NOT FAR AWAY

The twilight star,
That faintly glows above the dark'ning sky,
Is farther distant than we are
From Heaven's boundary.

The sainted saith
That height, nor depth, nor aught below, above,
Not even all-engulfing death
Can take us from God's love.

For while we live
Is God our guide through all, both light and shade,
And he the mastery doth give
O'er all that he hath made.

And when we die,
If death it be to pass the only gate
That leads to immortality,
He guards our helpless state.

From midnight earth
Is but a step to morning paradise,
For, from the instant of our birth,
It shineth in our eyes.

Our lives are His:
It matters not what means the *far* or *near*
For where God is, there Heaven is,
And God Himself is here.

FORGIVENESS

It is no little thing to ask
That one forgive;
It is, in truth, no simple task
To toil and live;
But life presents no charm for him
Who merely moves to shun the ills
Beneath its crumbling archways dim
Nor looks for dawn along the hills.

As to the crushed and withered rose
Its perfumes cling,
So life lacks love unless it shows
In suffering.
Love has no meed unless it be
The kind that holds whenever tried,
That love that bides unselfishly
Until the future shall decide.

The broken heart is watched of God—
He notes its tears
Who brings the blossom from the sod
And fills the years.
Divinity is in that soul
That careth though it oft reproves,
For the Creator of us all
Loves and forgives, forgives and loves.

THE LAST JUDGMENT

The mind is but a bit of clay, reformed
With a creative but unconscious art;
The heart, a gem refined a thousand-fold
By infinite degrees of temperature;
The soul, a vibrant harp which ever stirs
With voiceless echoes from unmeasured space.
Life is a silken mesh wherein appear
The shadow pictures of the universe:
A realistic tragedy, with all
The world before and one behind the stage;
A sentiment, that all unbidden seeps
Through countless sunsets of a million years;
A blossom, that absorbs the rarest hues
From radiance of suns and stars long dead.

Life is a sphere within a sphere from which
The infinitely small encompasseth
The infinitely beautiful and great.
Life is an algebraic quantity
That deals with numbers ceaselessly, although
Not in itself numerical.
It is the mystery of every age:
The theorem of the present and the past;
The problem of the future, yet unsolved.
There is no limit to the possible,
For man may touch his finger to the dome
Of highest heaven, or carelessly disrupt
The framework of creation, if he sets
His heel against the nether stone of hell.

Is there no goal mark to accomplishment?
No penalty for failure or delay?
No victory or base defeat in death,
Which drops the last portcullis down
Before its victim, imprisoned or released?
Does life afford the privilege alone
To clasp the hands and bow submissively
Before eternal sentences of God?
Not so! The Author of all destinies
In His tribunal of the last resort,
Can entertain a penitent appeal,
So that, some day, may yet be realized
The golden opportunities that hide
Behind to-morrows of eternity.

TO-MORROW

There is a day which never comes
To light the morning sky,
But in our thoughts alone it lives
And there may never die.
It holds our hopes of future bliss,
Our aspirations high,
And life itself is but a point
In that eternity—
To-morrow.

Each sunset brings us nearer that
Which earth shall not behold,
Where, far away beyond the hills
And through the clouds of gold,
We catch a glimpse of brighter hours
Than tongue of bard has told,
When marks of time will be effaced,
When men will not grow old—
To-morrow.

MARINERS ALL

Every ship that rides the sea
Has its rudder and its sail,
However near its port may be,
However mild the gale.
Every vessel has its star
To guide it through the night,
No matter what the dangers are,
To points beyond the sight.

So, each day of life for me
Bears a course beyond my ken,
No matter what the end may be,
No matter where or when;
But days are fair and winds are free—
My ship is your ship too—
So, if my ship arrives with me,
Your ship will dock with you.

AS I WOULD HAVE IT

If I should live again,
Beyond the barrier of years,
Across the borderland of tears,
Those things which whilom gave me pain
And sheer regret,
I would forget.

And when I thread once more
The purple maze of paradise,
Such moments as I most emprise,
Those haunting sentiments of yore—
Some few, not all,
I would recall.

Fair scenes I would enshrine,
Forever, in the heart of me:
Like sunrise in far Sicily,
On flowering heights of Palestine
Or by the sea
In Galilee.

Soft sounds I would retain:
Like tides upon the shingle borne,
Like winds among the rustling corn,
Like robins singing in the rain,
Or doves, that grieve
At falling eve.

And I would cherish still
My mother's ever watchful care:
Her soothing fingers in my hair,
Her faith that warded off all ill,
With prayer divine
For me and mine.

Then, too, I would renew
One golden epoch of my life
When with romance my soul was rife:
That heavenly day when I met you
And thrilled with bliss
At our first kiss.

So, let me treasure long
Part of my past, without alloy:
That bit which brings its surge of joy,
Revives my spirit like a song
And holds me well
Within its spell.

IMMUTABILITY

Once, nurtured by an hundred suns,
A fern leaf grew beside a stream
And from primeval solitude
Evanished like a passing dream.

When countless eons long had passed,
Some avalanche disrupts a stone
And in its heart appears once more
The outlines of a form unknown.

A perfect picture in reverse
Shows each minutest vein and spore,
With feathery films of light and shade
As they existed long before.

And, so it seems, in Christendom
Each humble life is fully cast,
Unnoted by observant throngs,
In niches of the changeless past.

The careful Sculptor, marking all
Restores in full the faintest trace
And in the adamant preserves
A truthful record of the race.

All helpful services performed
For human weal will linger on
Till life itself has been effaced
And the philanthropist is gone.

BYGONES

Let bygones be!
The heritage of ancient sins,
That lies so heavy on us now,
Will leave us when the life begins
Which takes the curse from every brow
And makes us free.

Let bygones be!
With all their bitterness and loss,
With all their lure for gold and fame,
With all their horror of a cross,
And all their fear of guilt and shame
And cruelty.

Let bygones be!
The hours of toil and years of pain
Will never come to mar again
Or make us sad with their refrain,
Or taunt us that we once were men
Of memory.

Let bygones be!
Not so! Association delves
Among the ruins of the past,
Or we should never know ourselves
Or feel awakening at last—
So dumb are we.

Let bygones be!
We could not, would not, let them go,
For all their treachery and strife,
For all their wretchedness and woe,
They are the surety of life—
Its victory.

Let bygones be!
Let hopes of future pass for aye!
And what, indeed, must Heaven mean!
One thrill of joy can far outweigh
All trouble that we may have seen,
Or yet may see.

Let bygones be!
Ah, no! But let us ponder o'er
Our former error or success,
That triumphs may be more and more
And failures may grow less and less,
Eternally.

WILD GEESE

Just a tint in the goldening willows,
Just a hint from the summerish sea,
Just a gleam in the sky is awaking
And an instinct to soar and be free.

Just a concourse of wild birds of passage,
That are winging along in the sun
To those far-away Labrador headlands
Where the first living impulse begun.

All are moving in squadron formation,
With no chart and no compass to guide,
But more sure of their ultimate haven
Than are ships making port with the tide.

So it is with all human relations
Where the lure of each intricate way
Leads one home, through the shadowy distance,
Always homeward, and not far astray.

The dim end of the course may seem nearer
By the air-line that some might pursue,
When if all would but follow the leader
Every one might not fail to come through.

And ever and ever I hear them
As they wheel overhead, out of sight,
Flying high in the splendor of daybreak,
Swinging low on the fog banks at night.

CLIMBING TO HEAVEN

My youth marked the height of ambition
And, since, I have ever toiled upward,
In search of the portals of Heaven—
Ever with humble contrition,
For, with every six steps I ascended,
I seemed to have fallen back seven.

So Babel of old once bore witness
To longings and striving supernal,
When giants who sought something higher,
Failed in the prime of their fitness,
Oft descending to earth in the twilight
With dearth of their hearts' desire.

And I, ever footsore and weary,
Just crave a short surcease from effort;
To-morrow may bring fuller courage,
Daybreak may seem far more cheery,
If I wake at the foot of some rainbow
And pay the full price of demurrage.

Perhaps, I may dream of successes,
Far off in the answerless future,
Inverting each six for each seven
Till certainty springs from my guesses;
And, perhaps, I may wake at the sunrise,
Within the sure portal of Heaven.

THE CALL FROM THE SEA

Comes a voice from the sea of mystery,
Just calling to me, to me—
With no ship in sight from dawn until night,
But the ever sailless sea;
And the north wind is cold like the icebergs old,
From out the ageless floe,
And the south wind is hot like cannon shot
That bore the horizon through.

But it is not the wind that brings the call
Again and again to me;
It is not the waves that murmur their staves
Of chromatic symphony;
And it is not the whirl from the rush and stir
Of sea-birds winging low,
Nor a voice from afar where mermaids are,
That stirs me and startles so.

While the sea is itself a mystery,
That comes and departs at will,
And time will yet be when there is no sea,
When its secret sounds are still,
The far call that I hear, every hour and year,
With message yet unsaid,
In some subsequent time, or distant clime,
May all be interpreted.

THE TRYSTING TREE

I cut your name, long years ago,
Upon our favorite tree,
When we were young and all alone,
I carved your name above my own,
Where all the world might see.

The day was just a bit of May,
A tang was in the air,
The gulls were mating on the sea,
The robins nesting in our tree,
While you and I were there.

As on that day I see you now,
With sun-gold in your hair,
With eyes that shine like sparkling wine,
With lips that fondly turn to mine—
To me divinely fair!

The ancient tree still guards our names
As in the olden time,
And, year by year in sun and rain,
I trace the letters with my cane
Across the moss and rime.

And yet, you never seek the spot
And may not know the truth—
Perhaps you have no cause to care—
But long ago was buried there
The first love of my youth.



LEON HAROLD TEBBETTS

"I carved your name above my own,
Where all the world might see."

INTO THE VOID

Great Lord!

When I shall fall asleep
Outside the portless wall
Of yesterdays, and when
The firmament doth fall
And seas surge from the deep,
Shall I awake again
Or must I sleep.

And if,

Life is not all, but more
May be in store for me,
Can I be safely led
Through stark immensity;
Can I escape before
The stars dethroned and thread
A sealess shore.

For years,

The frailest vine has grown,
In confidence supreme,
About the massive oak
Which raging mountain stream
Nor avalanche of stone,
Nor gale or lightning stroke
Has overthrown.

And so,

The universe may be
Distraught and depths of space
Be folded up at last
Without abiding place
For either mine or me,
But still, as in the past,
Lives destiny.

And still,
Through all the blinding maze
And Fate's impervious wall,
Some welcome path may shine
Or voice of duty call
To one of many ways
That lead, for me and mine,
To halcyon days.

MISCELLANEOUS
VERSE

AMERICANISM *

Behold the flags of the thousands
That led in defense of the right,
But where are the heroes who bore them?
Why come they no more to our sight?

Their arms are stacked at the border,
Old battlefields rustle with grain,
But longing for them is unanswered,
And no one may greet them again.

They listen not to the roll call,
They will not return from the strife—
The cause they pursue in the future
Is higher and dearer than life.

All rolls of honor may perish,
The sun may burn out in the sky,
All traces of culture may vanish,
But patriots never shall die.

Behold the holiest sanctum
Where races of men yet have trod,
Where flags are the pledge of a nation
Whose dead have kept faith with their God!

* Written in the Rotunda, Augusta, Maine.

THE RECALL *

From awful depths to us unknown,
The Voice Supreme has called its own—
Back from the dignities of state,
Back from its cares, both small and great.

For him, there is no fear of change
He merely rises to a range
Of fuller service, greater deeds
And higher wisdom, that he needs.

For us, the earth drives on apace:
There is no pause in time nor space;
The constellation where we cling
Is still a restless, mystic thing.

And so our paths now lead apart,
Yet close together, to the heart
Of that vast universe, divine,
As well as human, in design.

* Written at the death of a Maine governor.

DARTMOUTH CLASS POEM

O Quiet Haven in the Hills!

May sadder moments never be
Than these in which, if God so wills,
We now must turn from thee.
Here, we have found as happy hours
As Earth can hope to give
And, like the breath of fragrant flowers,
Which can no longer live,
They grow the sweeter as they fade
And, though the seasons may pass by,
The impress that they once have made
Will never change or die;
And often we shall sadly say,
When youthful life is o'er,
"The places of our yesterday
Would know us now no more."

Why did we yearn to seek this spot?
Why leave our native fields and skies?
What find we here, that we had not,
To cherish or despise?
The quest is sacred for each one
Knows best what he has sought,
And what at last remains undone
Of all he would have wrought;
Just as the hero of Old Greece
Could carve his history with pride
Upon his shield and never cease
To bear it till he died,
Each one of us must have his acts
Of faithfulness outlined
Where he alone can see the facts,
Emblazoned on the mind.

Since life is more than passing days,
Which swiftly come but swifter go,

And time, so short, in many ways
Can yet affect us so;
Since lack of training for a child
Can make a brief career
One awful discord, far too wild
For even him to hear,
Let us rejoice that we have known
A higher training, well designed,
Where many trust to fate alone
Or other humankind.
We all have tried to find the truth
And each one, more or less,
Has tasted, from his early youth,
The vintage of success.

Believing that man should not be
The soulless slave of bestial toil
But as a creature which is free
Should dwell on sea and soil,
We wished to learn the way to live,
Each choosing as he would,
And, getting, we have meant to give
As loyal brothers should.
We see in man a bud divine,
A heritage of noble birth,
Which shall give blossom in the Vine
To glorify the earth:
His mind shall elevate the State,
Through individual zeal
And blend together small and great
In one grand common weal.

The better citizens can make
The better nation; for the hand
Is private that for public's sake
Pours riches on the land;

Some statesman's brain must plan for all
The goal all struggle for;
A patriot's lips alone can call
The loyal hearts to war.
A sacred duty, then, requires
Our personal effort where the sense
Of honor or respect inspires
Its own rich recompense,
Where greater units give more hopes
Of grandeur for the whole
As, in the larger telescopes,
Uncharted suns unroll.

Each one may break the iron bond,
Where servile custom means disgrace,
And try, at least, to climb beyond
The lowest of his race;
And since one soon becomes a part
Of what he hears and sees,
To contemplate the best of Art
Is growth by sure degrees.
The mind develops like a rose
That takes its color from the sky,
Its odor from each wind that blows
The wealth of perfume by;
Its size is from the depth of mold
Where it has been confined,
Its form is one or many fold—
According to its kind.

What we have been we now must feel,
And ever in the future will,
Unless when hearts grow hard as steel
Or living pulse grows still.
There is a harp within the soul
Which vibrates with our past
And rises from its own control
To rule ourselves at last;

Its register has many strings
With tones as softly low and sweet
As flutterings of angels' wings
And tread of angels' feet;
It whispers in the hush of night
And through the cares of day
Of what may be a deep delight
Or prove a curse for aye.

This harp of memory is ours
Although unstirred by living hand
And we may use or lose its powers
Unless we understand
That all the simplest thoughts and deeds
Return at its recall;
And though with shame our nature bleeds,
And though our idols fall,
So have we done a single wrong,
In folly of our early years,
By night and day, an endless song,
It echoes in our ears;
We cannot still it if we would—
It fills us with regret,
And sleep of death some count as good,
If only to forget.

But, if we ever do the right,
Each chord in ecstasy responds
And all the soul seems strangely light
And free from earthly bonds;
The harmony then ebbs and swells
Throughout our lives, like chime
Of those unseen and soothing bells
That ring at sunset time;
And, like the peasant in his field
Who turns his dim, expectant eyes
At curfew toll, where half concealed
The distant turrets rise,

We too, with faith, across the sky
Can see celestial spires
And list, from belfries up on high,
The chimes the soul admires.

May God forbid that these few years
Should be the source of any strain
To drown the eyes with bitter tears
Or choke the heart with pain!
Much rather may there come from them
Such music as can cheer
And charm us on, and not condemn
Nor bring us cause of fear;
Much rather may they seem as bright
Oases in the desert sands
Toward which one bends his longing sight
And stretches eager hands,
When he has journeyed from the springs
That in their shade are found
And feels the thirst of wanderings
Upon the sunburnt ground.

Howe'er it be, the past has gone,
The present moment barely stays,
The future speeding blindly on
Drives us on divers ways;
We seem like ships that tempest-tossed
Must scatter in the night,
When danger is that some are lost
Before the dawning light.
But does it please divine decree
That vessels run the risk of loss,
That on life's wildly raging sea
The wrecks of men should toss?
Ah no! If one in blindness takes
The course and sinks below
The foam, the fault is his—he stakes
Upon a losing throw.

Yet he, who estimates at first
What may be wholly lost at last,
Insuring it against the worst
Ere trusting to the mast,
Needs fear no chance in wind or tide,
Although the waves may rend
The deck and waste the hold beside,
He triumphs in the end.

O Haven in the Hills, farewell!
Our barks are laden now and stay
But for the evening wind to tell
The time to steal away.
But shall we see again this shore
Or shall we meet again
To talk our voyage of voyages o'er
When we are gray-haired men?

Perhaps some few, in years to fall,
May come to linger o'er the scene,
To leave a sigh within the hall,
A tear upon the green;
Some few may dream young dreams once more,
At twilight or at dawn,
Of something pleasant but of yore—
A something that is gone.

But let us be of better cheer,
Like mariners of olden time.
And reembark without a fear
Upon a sea sublime;
The floods of life flow at our feet,
Inspiring breezes rise,
To urge us on to more complete
Results of enterprise.

MAINE

When Winter throws its mantle down
And covers all with snow,
And every lake and crag reflects
The far celestial glow,
Then memory recalls thee,
With pride no age abates,
Thou art, O Maine! the gem in
The girdle of the States.

When Spring renews the apple bloom
Along the countryside
And flings its purple avalanche
Of petals far and wide,
Then, Maine, thou art the vision
That haunts one from his birth—
Thou art the odorous Eden
Of all the flowering earth.

And when the southern winds steal up,
Across the burning plain,
And fill the murky vault above
With lightning, wind and rain,
Amid all wild commotion
In cloud and wave and tree,
Thou art the northern outpost
Upon a summer sea.

When Autumn paints the foliage,
From height to vale below,
And mingles all the varied hues
That make the sky line glow,
O! Maine, enchanted country
That beckons on and on,
Thou art the blush of Heaven
Before the gates of dawn.

L'envoi

May passing seasons find thee, Maine,
Still fair and pure and grand,
And after countless years close-held
Within God's shielding hand:
May baby eyes and fingers,
In childhood, trace from thee
Those lessons of the earth-life
That shape great destiny.

The hour of glory has not struck,
Thy record is not told,
Not yet the angel scribes engross
Thy final acts of gold;
Though great the annals written,
Though bright thy history,
Thy past is but an earnest
Of that which is to be.

And Thou, Great Maker of us all,
Who moves beyond our ken,
Who looks beyond the bourn of time
And metes their lives to men,
Form in our wills the courage
And in our hearts the grace,
And in our souls the longing,
To lead and lift the race.

THE CABIN AT CASCO

Far-faring seamen
Coasted the cape lands
And threaded the channel
That led to a harbor
And islet surrounded
By beautiful landscapes.

On this far islet
In the lone harbor,
Rough-hewn from the forest
And fashioned from fir trees,
They builded a structure—
The cabin at Casco.

Vessels returning
Over the ocean,
Receded from vision
Beyond the horizon
And left there undaunted
This household of toilers.

Often came thither
Indian sachems,
Who lived on the mainland,
To truck with the planters
In furs of the beaver,
And otter and moose skins.

Wives from the homeland
Lived not at Casco;
No voices of children
Awakened the clearing,
But cries of the sea-gulls
And surge of the breakers.

Oft in the evening,
Dreaming of Yuletide,
They heard in the distance
From over the water
Faint chiming echoes
From belfries of Devon.

Summers and winters
Gazing to seaward,
They looked for their comrades
To follow them thither,
But vainly they waited
While none came to join them.

Barnstable sailors,
Fishing and trading,
Strayed into their clearing
And drank to their prospects,
But forthwith departed
At end of the season.

Then came a morning,
Never forgotten,
When incoming vessels
Brought word to recall them
Once more to their country
And arms of their loved ones.

Over the roof-tree,
Where they had sojourned
In far-away Casco,
To welcome the stranger,
They left their loved ensign,
The banner of England.

Time has passed onward.
Immigrants later

Reclaimed the lone harbor.
Where once stood a cabin
To-day stands a city—
The City of Portland.

But the fair islet
Still forms a bulwark,
A sentinel guarding
The river and haven,
Where gulls in the water
Still sport with the surges.

ISLE OF MONHEGAN

Lost amid wild northern gales,
Fleeting hulls and phantom sails,
Fluttering from yard and mast,
Vanish in the magic past.

Outlines of a Spanish ship
On its long swells rise and dip,
Landing, in the crimson dawn,
Chests of pirate cargazon.

Here the fishermen of France
Dream of pleasure and romance—
Of Yvonne and Juliettes—
While they mend their broken nets.

Safely anchored in its lee,
Three leagues off within the sea,
English mariners of yore
Scan the strange, uncharted shore.

On this bit of Occident,
Men of Plymouth pitch their tent;
In the cabins, roughly made,
Men of Bristol ply their trade.

Thrice abandoned, desolate,
Once the threshold of a state,
Scarred by storms and worn with tides,
Gray Monhegan still abides.



MONHEGAN CLIFFS

SONGS

MY MAINE

Maine! Maine! Ever my own
Beautiful Mecca of dreams,
Day after day, though far away,
You are still with me, it seems;
All that inspires me I owe to you—
Friendships and day-dreams, yet to come true,
Memories sweet, of hours I have known,
Make you forever my own.

Maine! Maine! Vision of faith,
Gleaming, unclouded, afar;
Just as of yore, so ever more
You are my sure, guiding star;
Day after day, though drifting apart,
Yours is the legend deep in my heart,
Yours is the love-song that will not die,
Though just an old lullaby.

Maine! Maine! Lakeside and hill,
Island and evergreen shore,
Ever I hold, dearer than gold,
All of your wonderful lore:
Stories of sons who blazoned their way
Up the far heights that greet the new day,
Scaling sheer summits and still sweeping on
Into the glorious dawn.

Maine! Maine! Odors of pine
Ever your vistas recall;
Ofttimes in sleep sounds of the deep
All of my senses enthrall;
Skies filled with crimson, azure and gold
Still form a background, just as of old,
And a far window, in memory,
Still holds a beacon for me.

IF TO-DAY WERE YESTERDAY

In my garden of the past
 Blooms a red, red rose,
Ever blowing, ever glowing
 As no other ever glows;
And the storms of the hereafter
 May invade that distant shore;
But the rose, a pledge from you, dear,
 Bides with me forevermore.

If to-day were yesterday,
 And its golden hours were mine,
I would give all else for aye,
 For one day of thine;
Other days may come and go,
 But the sweetest, lost erewhile,
Shares the magic afterglow
 Of your parting smile.

In the sanctum of my heart
 Dwells your love untold,
Ever nearer, ever dearer,
 As the fleeting years unfold;
And my vision is much clearer
 Than in days of long ago;
For in fancy I can see you,
 When the lights are dim and low.

If to-day were yesterday,
 And you knew that I was near,
Would you wait, or turn away,
 Would you leave me, dear,
In that garden of our past,
 Where just memories remain,
But our dearest dreams at last
 May come true again.

THE ROYAL OUTLAW

I have come to the close of a wonderful day,
With the star of my life going down;
I have gone my way; I have had my say
With the knaves of the realm and the Crown;
All my life I have passed in the thick of the fight,
And have ruled with a gantletted hand;
Now my trail is the sky with its veiled mystery—
For I die at the king's own command.

Not a man of them all in the King's musketeers
Could have hampered me out on the moor,
But the hope of years overcame my fears
And betrayed me at last at your door;
By the highway I lived; on the high road I'll die—
And of death I am all unafraid—
With a smile on my lips, while His Majesty sips
Just a toast at my queen's serenade.

I have fought for the poor by the donjon and wood;
I have won where my comrades have died;
I have always stood for the common good
In a role that the world would deride;
All these years I have kept faith with you in my heart,
All these years I had hoped you were true;
Now I seek that far bourn whence I may not return
And I leave a last message for you.

In the fast fading light of the even you might
List three volleys that echo above;
Then my star will set, but never forget
That the price of my life was your love;
When that moment has come and the roll of the drum
Shall announce that my forfeit is paid,
All the volleys you hear I shall no longer fear
For they are but your last serenade.

BUILDING THE FUTURE FOR YOU

I have read in some book of a far-away nook,
Where the songs of the sea never die,
And the dream of my heart, of which you are part,
Is to share it with you by and by;
And the wish is sincere that I hold for you, dear:
That your gray skies may always turn blue;
That you will not forget and may not regret
The dear future I'm building for you.

There are others who long for your smile and your song
That have far more to offer than I,
But the hope is sincere when I plan for you, dear,
The treasures that gold will not buy;
Yet the dream of my heart, of which you are part,
Is one that may never come true,
For in fancy I see what I fear may not be,
When I'm building my future with you.

SONS OF MAINE

We listen in for you, Great State,
For salvos of thy guns,
For stirring themes, to celebrate
The triumphs of thy sons.
The world's great work is what they seek,
The world marks what they do,
And as each hero scales the peak
New glory dawns for you.

They dream of crystal lakes and rills
And gleaming far-flung shore;
They prize thy verdant vales and hills
And miss them more and more;
They love the glamour of thy ways
Through city street and town,
And feel the thrill of olden days
Of valor and renown.

Thy sons are bred on northern wold
And hardy, brave and true;
They wait, like valiant knights of old,
To dare and die for you.
The world is wide, its paths are long,
And some are far away,
But ties of home, forever strong,
Will bring them back some day.

They know where greetings are sincere,
Where loyal friends abide;
They keep the faith year after year,
Whatever may betide;
No matter where their trails may lead
To distant East or West,
The sons of Maine will ever heed
The call to do their best.

JUST MAKE ME BELIEVE

It is idle to seek the old trails
Where once it was pleasant to roam;
It is folly to try to discern in the sky
Dream castles which cannot be home.
While the present is with us for better or worse,
And to-morrow will steal that away,
The stories of old are the pages of gold
That fade not forever and aye.

You remember the child that we loved,
Who answers no more to our call,
But, beyond all alarms, safely rests in the arms
That sometime must shelter us all;
You were ever the actor with wisdom profound,
And you now can deceive if you will,
In the pride of your art you may well play the part
And make me have faith in you still.

REFRAIN:

Come and tell me that story of old,
Just whisper its tender refrain,
Just repeat to me now your sweet oldentime vow
And let me renew mine again;
And, hereafter, it may be, I never shall know
That you mean not one word that you say,
But just tell it once more, with the fervor of yore,
And make me believe it to-day.

YOUR LAST REAL KISS IS MINE

There's an age in my life that is yours, dear,
One day of your days that is mine,
One hour that forever restores, dear,
The mem'ry of moments divine;
Just a message came out of the gloaming—
A message for you and not me—
And over the hills you went roaming
And over the far-away sea.

You had lived in many places
In those isles across the sea,
Oft you met familiar faces
And by chance with me;
Oldtime friends may all mistake you
As the days and years decline
But if Fortune should forsake you,
Let your last real kiss be mine.

In your eyes the dear lovelight was shining,
Your promise seemed tender and true,
And now as each day is declining
I wait for the sunrise and you;
I am hoping and longing, yes, praying,
That I may just meet you again,
No matter what others are saying,
My heart only knows one refrain.

You may wander on forever,
In those lands across the sea,
And your path in life may never
Bring you back to me;
Other arms may yet enfold you,
Other lips may cling to thine,
But my love alone can hold you—
And your last real kiss is mine.

