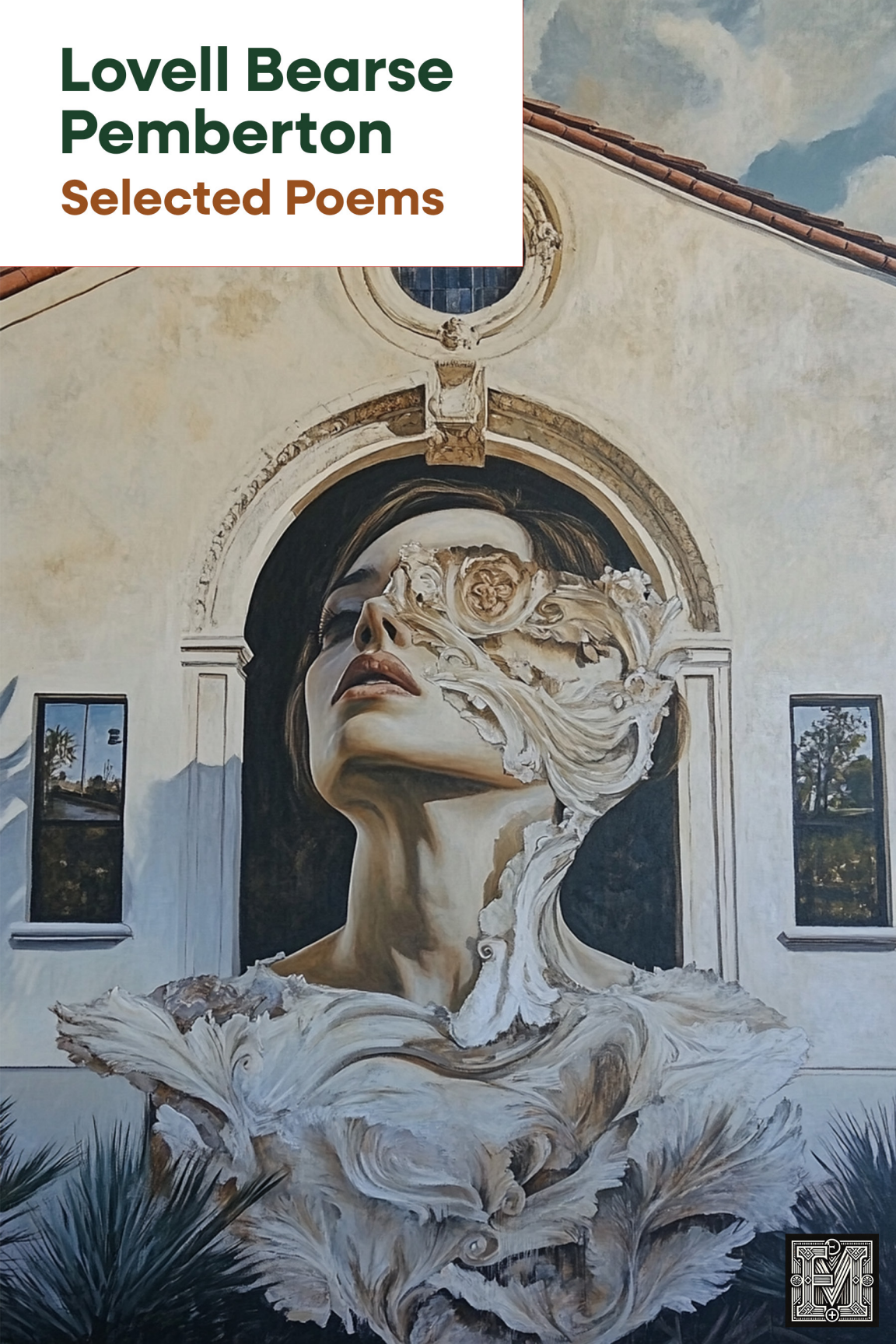


**Lovell Bearse**  
**Pemberton**  
**Selected Poems**



# Lovell Bearse Pemberton

November 25, 1866 [Clermont, Ohio] –

February 7, 1934 [Redondo Beach, California]

Pemberton was born in Clermont, Ohio, moving to Los Angeles in 1892. He married Jeanette Elizabeth Drummond in 1897 with whom he had a daughter, Lucille, in 1898. He eventually settled in Redondo Beach, where he became a successful architect. Jeanette died in 1912 at the age of 35. Pemberton later married Alice de Longpré, daughter of famed painter of flowers, Paul de Longpré, who had immigrated from France in 1890 and settled in Los Angeles in 1899. The Pemberton-designed Redondo Beach Public Library, built in 1930 in a style that mixed Mission Revival, Dutch colonial and classical elements, was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1981. An earlier building, the Diamond Apartments (1912) was added in 1992. In addition to poetry, Pemberton wrote a five-act tragedy named *Life and Death of Joan of Arc*, and two operas: *Mardi Gras* and *Nawab*.

*Sappho and Other Songs*. Los Angeles: The Times-Mirror and Binding House, 1895.

*Prometheus Unbound*. Franklin, Ohio: The Editor Publishing Company, 1896.

*The Dance at the Spring*. Boston: H. Vinal Ltd., 1929.

## Song: “Lesbian Damsel, Fare-thee-well.”

Much as my heart doth yearn for thee,  
And bitter tears bedim mine eye;  
'Tis not that thou art gone from me—  
But that thou wentest silently.  
At least there could as well  
From those fair lips have fell:  
“Lesbian damsel,  
Fare-thee-well!”

Could I have had one last embrace,  
Or ling'ring looked into thy eye,  
'Twere joy, at least, from thy dear face  
To read—tho' sad—my destiny.  
To still my troubled breast  
Thou mightst have said at least:—  
“Lesbian damsel.  
Fare-thee- well!”

My life has dwindled to a sigh,  
And better 'twere it had an end.  
God knows 'tis hard enough to die;  
But, oh! to die without a friend!  
And yet how sweet were death  
If thou couldst o'er me breathe:  
“Lesbian damsel,  
Fare-thee-well!”

# Song to the Plowboy

A song to the sturdy plowboy,

A song to his unsung worth!

He turns the sod, and sows the seed,

And tills the crops that nations feed!

His father is king; by right of birth,

He, too, is king of all the earth.

Proud emperor's thrones the plowman owns—

They cost him weary years.

The spoils of war his trophies are—

They cost him blood and tears.

I love the ragged plowboy.

I love his manly worth!

He feeds the rich, and clothes the great;

He owns the land, and rules the state.

By virtue rare, and right of birth,

We hail him king of all the earth.

He bears the work that millions shirk,

He fears no mortal's frown.

With laurel bough, then wreathes his brow—

A king should wear a crown!

A song to the humble plowboy,

With brawny arms so swarth!

True, unpretentious nobleman,

The world may mock thee, Censure scan,

And in thy ways find cause for mirth;

But Honor still deplores thy dearth—

And loud would raise her notes of praise

To blazon thy fair name:—

Whose hands disdain a guilty stain,

Whose thoughts dream not of fame.

I love the merry plowboy—

A blessing on his birth!

He cheers with song his lowly hearth,

And whistles Care from off the earth.  
At home, abroad, in peace or strife,  
He leads the same brave, honest life.  
Long life and joy to the poor plowboy,  
As he whistles o'er the farm.  
He grows our wealth; the world itself  
He moves with his brown arm.

# On Finding a Rosebud Covered With Snow

In this lone spot I did not think  
    To find a flower so fair—  
With robe of green and lips of pink—  
Whose tender beauty now must shrink,  
    And lose its fragrance rare.

Here 'mid the hind 'ring weeds and stone,  
    Thou hadst thy lowly birth.  
    When wintry winds kept dismal moan,  
Thou pushed thy way, unseen, unknown,  
    Up thro' the cheerless earth.

Till now, alas! ere thy full bloom,  
    Stern fate has cut thee down.  
Soft winds shall sigh above thy tomb,  
And gentle dews weep o'er thy doom  
    From yonder skies that frown.

But thy sweet lips shall ne'er unfold;  
    Thy beauty reach its prime.  
Thou ne'er wilt bless this hillside cold;  
Nor cheer the wayside wand'rer old  
    With hint of things divine.

Sad is thy fate, poor rosebud sweet,  
    By frosts unkindly chilled!  
Fair promise of a life complete,  
Fond hopes and plans,—ambitions fleet!  
    Lie broken now and stilled.

What holy purpose—passion pure—  
    Did thy fair form enclose?  
What dreams of life and love's rapture?  
What thoughts induced thy look demure,  
    Thou sweet and lovely rose?

Sad is thy lot and sad to me

    The thoughts thou dost recall—  
Of one who, young and fair, like thee,  
In sweet and virgin purity,  
    Did thus untimely fall.

O gushing tears, fill not my eyes;

    And, throbbing heart, keep still!  
Beneath some other, sunnier skies,  
My tender flowers both shall rise,  
    Where frosts shall never kill.

# From Prometheus Unbound

FROM ACT II

*DEMETER*

But will the change be soon?

*PROMETHEUS*

Sooner, perhaps,  
Than even dreams would dare to prophesy ;  
For daily now such mighty things are wrought,  
'Tis plain it is with no mere common means  
The Fates are working out their wondrous will.  
Today's the greatest day in history—  
It marks an onward, ne'er-overtaken step.

*DEMETER*

But tell us why thou hast to prophet turned,  
And what good reasons lead to these forecasts ?  
For faith, altho' of higher growth than reason,  
Doth still require this lower, baser stock  
To lean upon, for then it feels secure.

*PROMETHEUS*

Thou hast, O Earth, but a mere atom seen  
O' the plan by which creation doth proceed.  
This earth is merely to the realms of space  
A sheltered bay for few and shallow waves  
To drift and play in, while the Ocean great  
Rolls deep beyond. Ages on ages past,  
One grand, mysterious process was begun—  
Whose final work is not yet done. At first  
It stationed suns, then moulded planets dim  
And made them fair with useful plants and flowers;  
Wove out the lower forms of moving things,  
Then more and more complex and perfect types.  
Till all at last was consummate in Man—  
Or will be when the mighty task is done.



*DEMETER*

O bitter Truth !

I know thee now too well—thou art but gall !  
Cruel is Fate—this life not worth the toil !  
Ah, woe is me ! not merely that I am,  
But that I know I am a thing of time—  
A creature born to struggle and to die!

Where is the good of these aeons of toil,  
Of struggle, pain, and slow development—  
All for a perfect hour, fleecing and vain ?  
O Truth! what mockery has called thee sweet?  
Bitter thou art ; to me, wormwood and gall!

*DRYADES*

Alas ! whene'er we rise  
Upon the swell of joy,  
Our spirit sinks and dies  
E'en as the wave rolls by.

*PROMETHEUS*

Peace, peace, for shame ! Gods should not grieve like men-  
Altho' they be not far removed from them.  
The gloss and finish of this earthly life  
Will well be worth the toil when all is done.  
A glorious end will surely be attained—  
Else all creation were a failure vast  
And all this universe most incomplete.  
To hurl the discus further at a throw,  
Or shoot the arrow nearer to the mark,  
To feel the blood flow quick from exercise-  
All nerves the human hand to still reach forth  
To pluck Perfection's rare and vaunted flower.

*DEMETER*

Indeed, most glorious does all this seem ;  
But Where's the glory that can compensate

In any measure for a lack of living ?

*CHORUS*

Pray tell us more of that still distant date,  
When Man shall thrive in his perfected state.

*PROMETHEUS*

My words—altho' a God's—can not describe  
The more than heavenly transports of those times.  
None then would think these travail-burdened days  
Had not brought forth a most abundant fruit.  
The rank of tyranny will be forgot;  
War, famine, strife, and pinching poverty  
Will have become, like childish toys, outgrown—  
Diseases, dim traditions of the past,  
And all this flesh—now vile—insensibly  
Have lost its aches and pains, and grown to be  
At last a fair and holy temple, fit  
For pure, angelic spirits to reside.

*DEMETER*

Scarcely can I believe such wondrous things  
On this sad earth will ever be.

*PROMETHEUS*

I know  
The heart that ever hopes is called a fool—  
Fit only to be duped; but sure as noon  
Succeeds the morn, so will these things yet be;  
They are the leaves and flowers that grow forth  
In proper season on the Tree of Life.  
We now are blindly toiling at the roots,  
But ages hence will see above our heads  
The spreading branches and the ripened fruit.

*CHORUS*

O glorious day !  
Earth moves along

Upon its ever upward-tending way.  
With joyful song  
We bless each day  
That speeds it on its upward-tending way.

*PROMETHEUS*

'Tis true each day that dawns upon the earth  
Repeats no more the details of the last—  
It labors now with new and great events.

FROM ACT IV

THE MUSES

From Tempe's vale  
And Helicon's lone shrine  
Again we spring.  
Long used to wail,  
O'er cold neglect to pine,  
Once more we sing.

A nobler strain  
Of new and better themes  
Breathes from the Past.  
The highest vane  
Of human hopes and dreams  
Is reached at last.

Not Helen fair  
Nor old Eneas' name  
Now loads our tongue ;  
The deeds of war,  
The hero's single fame  
Has long been sung.

Not one brave heart  
Nor one fair woman's face  
Now stirs our wings ;

A higher art  
And more perfected grace  
Seeks grander things.

Too great is Earth,  
With all its human needs  
And hopes unfurled,  
To let the worth  
Of one man's faith and deeds  
Eclipse the world.

For centuries  
A silence we may keep  
Like that of death ;  
Then waking, rise  
To chant those dreams of sleep  
With waking breath.

This life of ours  
But inspirations are  
On which spring forth  
From heavenly bowers  
The thoughts and things too rare  
For worldly birth.

We pause, perchance,  
We sleep, but never die.  
Each new return  
Marks an advance—  
Higher the course we fly,  
Fiercer we burn.

No idle dream  
Now wakes our lyre again  
In tender call ;  
Henceforth our theme  
Will be not Man—but Men ;  
Not one—but all.

We hail the star  
That heralds better things  
And grander deeds ;  
Ancestry's scar,  
The envious, bitter stings  
And poisonous seeds,

That choke the earth  
And stint the heart of Man  
Must now give way.  
We sing the birth  
Of Freedom's generous plan—  
Of Manhood's sway.

# Uncut Leaves

1.

These well-thumbed leaves have oft been turned,  
By other hands as unconcerned,  
    And quite as casually;  
Striving to trick an empty hour,  
Flitting from bud to brighter flower—  
    Slaves of a wandering eye!

2.

Page after page I've idly scanned—  
Seeking—but not to understand;  
    Searching—but not to find.  
Blindly, along the beaten tread,  
By former aimless foot-prints led,  
    I, too, am doubly blind.

3.

Wrapped in a superficial dream,  
The soul drifts down Life's sheltered stream;  
    While fancy fondly weaves  
A tinsel web of nothingness  
That covers with its gaudy dress  
    What oft the spirit grieves.

4.

Thus lie unseen in some dim spot  
Those unobtrusive pearls of thought  
    The healing wound conceives;  
Inclosed—as in a tinted shell—  
Concealed from careless eyes they dwell  
    Between the uncut leaves.

5.

Could we but turn Life's volume thro';  
Its vague, uneven lines review—  
    While hope no more deceives—  
The choicest gems of thought and song;  
Our fondest themes, we'd find among  
    Alas!—the uncut leaves!

# Lines On Viewing a Church With Very Tall Spires

1.

Cloud-piercing spires that proudly rise,  
    Buttressed and pinnacled—with copings  
    And quoins, and sloped weatherings,  
And louvred gablets set cross-wise;  
Subtly receding in each stage—  
    The topmost spire still tapering more,  
    With gnarled crockets arised o'er,  
And barbarous stone foliage:  
Triumph of gloomy, Gothic art!  
    Offspring of that benighted Night  
    Of Ages, what canst thou delight—  
Except the sad and penitential heart?

2.

Grotesque, archaic monument;  
    That, from each dark and crannied nook,  
    Bespeaks the limited outlook  
Of times of turbulent content!  
Thou sorry beacon, whose sad beams  
    The ancient rocks and shoals proclaim.  
    The sloughs and deep desponds—the same  
That haunted the Crusader's dreams.  
Thy flick'ring light doth still denote  
    The self-same shrine and guiding star  
    That mankind welcomed from afar—  
When India's wise men conned their sacred rote.

3.

Reminder of the fabled fall  
    Of man—of all that complex scheme—  
    That man-wrought iridescent dream—

Whereby the creeds have promised all  
The balm of an immortal life:  
    A future heaven of joy and peace—  
    A strange, vicarious release  
From sorrow, suffering and strife:  
And by some simple, ceremonial rites,  
    Unthinking prayers and penitence;  
    By giving alms, or Peter's pence—  
To clothe misdeeds with heavenly delights.

4.

Poor Image, what supreme conceit  
    First privileged thy consciousness  
    To claim thyself the sole likeness  
Of that great Power that would complete  
The unperfection of this earthly life?  
    Presumptuous Man, that would not see  
    His short-lived personality  
Snuffed out in Nature 's ceaseless strife:  
An endless chain of melting links—  
    A moving shadow on the floor—  
    A tiny pebble on the shore  
That shortly into Being's ocean sinks!

5.

Man's scope and trend are not from chance,  
    Nor yet resolved by some star;  
    Tho' predetermined his acts are—  
The gifts of long inheritance!  
Each present thought comes from afar;  
    Each act and impulse of the soul  
    Was faintly written on his scroll  
At birth—he but engraves a deeper scar!  
Some come to serve; some to command:  
    No matter where each pegs his tent,  
    The day and night is ever spent  
Beneath the shadow of the Iron Hand!

6.

Each whimsey fling man's pride may sway,  
    And make him of some import feel:  
    But like the potter at the wheel,  
He can but take his lump of clay,  
And fashion it as best he may.  
    A perfect form his skill may wait—  
    A worthless shard may be its fate.  
The Oven of Life burns many kinds of clay—  
Each from the other different;  
    But clay will not to crystal blend,  
    And man proves nought more in the end  
Than Nature's most exalted element.

7.

In Nature's strict economy  
    There is no loss nor gain. The scales  
    Hang even, and the life that fails  
Gives place and room for other lives to be:  
The sum must ever be the same.  
    The endless change of life and force—  
    That ebbs and flows from Nature's source—  
Means nothing new but in the name.  
The flick'ring flame, the zephyr's breath  
    The fluttering leaf, the falling star—  
    The solemn brief cadences are  
In the eternal rhythm of life and death.

8.

Some things there be that mortal mind  
    Can know, and some it may believe,  
    Others we labor with, and grieve;  
But cannot solve. What lies behind  
These knowable phenomena is all  
    A deep and dark enigma still.  
    We cannot glimpse—strive how we will—  
The first, great Inner Principle.

The countless creeds—oft called divine—  
Are but the feeble renderings  
Of clumsy artists—human things  
That sketch mere features of the great Design.

9.

In the grey of early morn, the eye  
Sees darkly; things familiar  
Take on a strange, fantastic air  
That oft their real natures much belie.  
After the Night, the waking mind  
Peered vaguely thro' the first, dim rays—  
Exalted—deemed Creation's maze  
Was plotted solely for mankind,  
And reasoned that this vale of tears,  
With all its sore defects must have  
Some recompense beyond the grave—  
With boundless peace and joy, and endless years.

10.

In those dark days, we wonder not—  
So cheerless every prospect seemed—  
The seared and seamy conscience deemed  
Its earthly habitation but a blot—  
Its lusty flesh born for the scourge,  
And when a song his voice would raise—  
An incensed Deity to praise—  
The plaintive chant sunk to a dirge:  
His sinful soul was held in bond—  
With penance as the sole relief:  
Fated for sorrow, pain and grief—  
Mari's only hope lay in the great Beyond!

11.

Immortal fluid ! balm for woe!  
Fond dream of pious egotist!  
Eternal sunlight that has kissed

The precious . crystals of this pure soul snow—  
Too hasty and outspoken seems  
    Thy promises of bliss;  
    For heav'n an untold menace is,  
And sorts not with our mortal dreams:  
For life serene would prove a hell  
    To spirits differently inclined,  
    And grosser souls no joy could find;  
But chafe beneath that beatific spell.

12.

Myths are the food of early youth—  
    The sugared sweets of childhood days—  
    The nurse-maid's croon—the filmy haze  
That hangs a.bout the sober peaks of Truth.  
Of late this long-taught mystery—  
    Of fancy and illusion born—  
    By searching Reason has been· shorn  
Of its supposed divinity.  
The angry Father, in the souls—  
    That bear his image—breathes no more  
    His breath immortal as of yore—  
No man-like God our destinies controls!

13.

Full many a pious votary  
    The sacred score oft-times rewrote;  
    Struck out each separate, jarring note  
That sounded in Creation's harmony:  
Each twist and turn and subterfuge,  
    Each prop and bolster so applied  
    Made still another blotch to hide—  
Each patch produced a rent more huge.  
Doctrine on doctrine has been hurled  
    From pulpit, throne and cancell'ry  
    To complement and satisfy  
The so-called moral order of the world.

14.

The ripened fruit doth oft decay—  
    From lusty, well-hung branches fall;  
    The budding flower—fairest of all—  
Will oft-times droop and fade away.  
Yet all the crooks and ruts that groove  
    A rugged pathway up the hill  
    Would not imply that there was still  
A road beyond that runs more smooth.  
So he who strives to read the plan,  
    Interprets it in his conceit,  
    And then concludes some future sheet  
Must fill the higher destiny of man.

15.

Some sink, while others ford the stream,  
    And some dry-shod sail by them both:  
    Thus oft the hand of Bounty doth  
More open to the undeserving seem.  
The wicked prosper, and the good—  
    Tho' ne'er so good—strive how they will,  
Make shift to gain a livelihood.  
To even up these sore defects;  
    Dispense unsatisfied desires,  
    A pious wish the scheme inspires,  
And compensative justice interjects.

16.

Tho' all should speak—yet Truth comes not  
    In numbers. The thoughts the masses hold  
    Have oft in former times been told.  
We only know and teach what has been taught,  
And being taught, we straightway feel  
    These few and simple truths must be  
    Common to all humanity—  
For so do innate truths appeal.  
Yet do we find intelligence

So gross, and intellects refined  
Agreeing both that mortal mind  
Doth lose itself at death, and goes not hence.

17.

That simple, immaterial  
And indivisible entity—  
The human soul—is said to be  
The breath of Deity—being withal  
Of no known substance—hence must be  
Superior to mortality  
And incorruptible. Thus we  
Have builded on this fallacy  
For ages, and have oft admired  
The hollow super-structured—reared  
By lofty faith—until we feared  
Not even death, and thought the scheme inspired.

18.

The gilded idol at whose feet  
The pious kneel in reverent awe—  
The private word; the superior law  
Dispensed directly from the judgment seat—  
Such are the things men call revealed.  
Fair creature, Superstition's child!  
Daughter of Fancy undefiled!  
Thy glorious presence has concealed  
The thought of doubtful parentage.  
Expectants first thy message heard,  
And drinking in each honied word,  
Have fondly passed thee down from age to age.

19.

Thus doth the tiny roots creep in,  
And change the current of our thought;  
Thus by the rivettings are wrought  
The lofty structural frame where-in

The solid walls and stories are.  
When mortal mind shook off its swoon,  
Successive presentations soon—  
Glimmering like a distant star—  
Became the source of memory  
Which after ripened into reason;  
Then blossomed forth in proper season  
The flower of conscience—to crown life's finished tree.

20.

The clouds that sail across the blue,  
Viewed in the sunset's glow, take on—  
E'en like the swift chameleon—  
Each second a different form and hue.  
Today we set down things as true  
Beyond dispute; tomorrow's light  
Some newer aspects will invite—  
Each day new angles meet our view,  
And in the end, the mountain peak  
Seems further off than at the start.  
Truth is not bought at every mart;  
But we must search, and finding, still must seek.

21.

Not in the gloom of cloistered walls—  
Nor rising clouds of sweet incense;  
Not washed in tears of penitence;  
Not holy wars, nor fierce sectarian brawls:  
But underneath the open sky  
Where shines the sun and myriad stars—  
There Truth her sacred temple rears.  
In leafy woods, where seas roll high—  
On snowy hills, and rolling plain—  
By babbling stream, and moonlit bowers—  
In opening leaves, and budding flowers—  
'Tis there the goddess Truth doth live and reign!

22.

No lavish ceremonial show—  
Nor strictest dogma labored through—  
No oft-repeated creed will woo  
One syllable from Truth that man would know.  
Yon costly edifice of stone,  
With lofty towers that rise in pride—  
And in the clouds their finials hide—  
All these doth modest Truth disown.  
No narrow, shut-in, vaulted nave—  
With chanting choir, and organ's wail—  
Can dignify the dolorous tale  
That Truth doth triumph—but beyond the grave!

23.

A selfish creed fits man the best;  
But selfish to the right degree.  
Live first is Nature's first decree—  
Then to our fellow-man give all the rest.  
Thro every life should ever run  
The golden vein of charity.  
And over all should tolerance be  
Reflected like the noon-day sun:  
And when there flows compassion's tear—  
If tears, perchance, must needs be shed—  
Then let the heart be garnished  
With thoughts of love and sympathy sincere.

24.

To teach this simple, outdoor creed  
We need no paid interpreter  
To rouse the sleepy worshipper,  
Or show 'twas made to fit man's daily need.  
No complicated subtleties  
To reason out, and justify;  
No fetishes to deify;  
No dumb imploring of the skies,  
Nor senseless rituals to rehearse.

The law of Nature is not dim—  
Plainly is seen the struggle grim  
That still goes on throughout the universe.

25.

Sad tho' it seems, there is a joy  
In knowing that we see aright.  
The seeming darkness of the night  
Obscures the day's landscape—does not destroy.  
Our opened eyes plainly descry  
The struggle everywhere for life—  
That endless, universal strife  
That permeates the earth and sky:  
But all in manner dutiful  
There side by side with saving grace  
Throughout all time—in every place—  
We see the good, the true, the beautiful!

26.

Thus should we face the stubborn facts,  
And regulate our soul's desires.  
With daily courage that inspires  
Go bravely thro life's various scenes and acts,  
And play with zeal our different parts.  
To here and now do all we can  
To better self, and better man  
New dignity to life imparts.  
To feel that in our offspring's veins  
Runs on our immortality  
Gives life new meaning—and to die  
Is rest eternal from our toil and pains.

27.

Then take no thought but of today—  
Not in the past nor future grope.  
Cast from thy heart the doubtful hope  
Of better things to grow from death's decay.

Plant flowers through this vale of tears—  
    Weed out false superstition's weeds,  
    And sow instead Truth's fruitful seeds  
To nurture life's declining years.  
Let not this thought thy mind enslave—  
    That man has here a period brief  
    This frame to chasten, and with grief  
Torment—to merit bliss beyond the grave!

# Dust on the Mirror

In the Eastern clime they spend much time  
    In serious meditation;  
They look below this outward show  
    Of visible creation,  
Then read the plan as best they can—  
    ( And nothing could be clearer!),  
All things, they find, are just One Mind  
    Reflected like a mirror!

To us, youth's days run on like plays;  
    And life's brimfull of wonder,  
Till doubt slips up, upsets the cup,  
    And knocks our feet from under;  
This rant and rage that fills the stage—  
    (Could anything be queerer?)  
Can all this be Reality  
    Reflected from a mirror?

Should pain or sorrow chill each tomorrow  
    Or hunger add confusion,  
We only need to stop, and read,  
    To learn that all's illusion.  
What're rags and tatters? Nothing matters;—  
    (All eyes please step up nearer!),  
Look sharp, and find, we're simply blind  
    Reflections in a mirror!

In chill December, when life's dull ember  
    Relinquishes its spark;  
When the evening bell tolls out our knell,  
    And all for us is dark;  
May some kind friend stay to the end  
    To say to any hearer:—  
“A particle of dust has just  
    Been polished off the mirror!”

















































































































































