Songs of the
Army of the Night
and
The Mass of Christ

By
Francis Adams

New and revised edition.

London
A. C. Fifield, 13 Clifford's Inn, E.C.
1910
Editor's Note

FRANCIS ADAMS'S book of revolutionary verse, the "Songs of the Army of the Night," originally published in Australia in 1887, was reproduced in London, with a few omissions, three years later. When Adams died, he left two revised copies of the "Songs," into which he had written the spirited "England in Egypt" and a few other poems; and from one of these copies was printed the posthumous volume of 1894. That book having been out of print for some years, a new edition has now been called for; and in preparing it I have ventured to follow its author's example and to omit a few poems (chiefly from the Australian section) which are no longer relevant. On the other hand I have inserted, at the place which he assigned to it, the remarkable poem entitled "The Mass of Christ," which for some reason was not previously included.

A few biographical facts and dates may serve to make some of the references in the "Songs of the Army of the Night" more intelligible. Francis Adams was Scotch by extraction, the son of Professor Leith Adams, a scientist and army surgeon. Born at Malta, where his father's regiment was stationed, on September 27th, 1862, he spent his childhood in England, New Brunswick, and Ireland. He was educated at Shrewsbury School (the "Colchester" described in his autobiographical novel, "A Child of the Age"), and after spending two or three years in Paris and London became an assistant master at Ventnor College in 1882. Two years later he married and went to Australia, where he busied himself in literary, educational, and political work, and was on the staff of the Sydney Bulletin. His wife having died in Australia, his second marriage took place there in 1887, and in the same year he went on a short voyage to China and Japan. In 1890 he returned to England, much broken in health, and his last two winters were spent in...
Francis Adams's literary labours were many-sided, and the list of his published works includes more than twelve volumes of poems, essays, fiction, and criticism, with a drama, "Tiberius," which appeared posthumously in 1894. It was as a critic that he won the most praise in his lifetime—and what it cost him to forsake literature for socialism may be gathered from the concluding poem in this book—but it is through these "Songs of the Army of the Night" that his name is best loved and will be longest remembered.

HENRY S. SALT.
Contents

Editor's Note ........................................ 5
Author's Preface .................................... 11
This Book ............................................. 14
Dedication ............................................. 15

Songs of the Army of the Night

Proem ................................................... 17

Part I.—England

Toil .................................................... 18
Axiom ................................................. 18
Drill ................................................... 19
Evening Hymn in the Hovels ...................... 20
In the Street: Lord Shaftesbury ................. 21
"Liberty" ............................................. 21
In the Edgware Road ................................ 23
To the Girls of the Unions ......................... 24
Hagar .................................................... 24
A Visitor in the Camp ............................... 25
Lord Leitrim ......................................... 26
Anarchism ............................................. 27
Belgravia by Night: "Move on!" .................... 27
"Jesus" ............................................... 28
Parallels for the Pious ................................ 29
Prayer .................................................. 29
To the "Christians" .................................. 30
"Defeat" .............................................. 30
To John Ruskin ...................................... 31
To the Emperor William I .......................... 33
Song of the Dispossessed: "To Jesus" ............ 34
Art ..................................................... 34

Part II.—Here and There

England in Egypt .................................... 62
In the Pit: "Chant of the Firemen" ............... 64
A Mahomedan Ship Fireman ....................... 65
To India ............................................. 65
To England ......................................... 66
Hong Kong Lyrics ..................................... 68
A Glimpse of China .................................. 71
To Japan ............................................. 74
Dai Buteu ............................................. 75
England .............................................. 75
The Fisherman ....................................... 76
A South-Sea Islander ............................... 76
New Guinea "Converts" ............................. 77
A Death at Sea ....................................... 78

Contents

The Peasants' Revolt .................................. 35
Analogy ............................................... 37
In Trafalgar Square .................................. 38
A Street Fight ....................................... 38
Greek Lyrics ......................................... 39
To a Workman, a would-be Suicide ............... 40
Dublin at Dawn ....................................... 41
The Caged Eagle ...................................... 42
Ireland ............................................... 43
To Charles Parnell ................................... 44
An "Assassin" ........................................ 44
"Holy Russia" ........................................ 45
Père-la-Chaise ....................................... 47
Aux Ternes ........................................... 47
The Truth ............................................. 49
London ............................................... 50
Post Mortem ......................................... 50
To the Sons of Labour ............................... 50
To an Artist ......................................... 52
One among so Many .................................. 53
The New Locksley Hall ............................. 54
Farewell to the Market: "Susannah and Mary-Jane" 59
Contents

Part III.—Australia

The Outcasts ........................................... 80
In the Sea Gardens: "The Man of the Nation" .... 80
Labour.—Capital.—Land ............................... 81
Australia .................................................. 82
Art .......................................................... 82
Henry George ........................................... 83
William Wallace ........................................ 85
The Australian Flag .................................... 85
To an Old Friend in England ......................... 86
To His Love ............................................. 86
Her Poem ................................................ 87
To Karl Marx ............................................ 88
Algernon Charles Swinburne .......................... 88
To my friend, Sydney Jephcott ....................... 89
"Father Abe": Song of the American Sons of Labour 90
"A Fool" .................................................. 92
The Mass of Christ ..................................... 95
From a Verandah: Armageddon ....................... 106
To Queen Victoria in England ....................... 106
Elsie: A Memory ....................................... 108
Why He Loves Her .................................... 109
To His Love ............................................ 110
To the Emperor William II ........................... 111
A Story .................................................. 111
At the West India Docks .............................. 114
Dirge ...................................................... 118
Fling out the Flag! ..................................... 119
Farewell to the Children ............................. 121
Epode ...................................................... 123

Author's Preface

A FEW words of preface seem necessary in sending out this little book. It is to be looked on as the product of the life of a social worker in England, on his Travels, and in Australia. The key-note of the First Part—"England"—is desperation, or, if any hope, then "desperate hope." A friend once reported to me a saying of Matthew Arnold's, that he did not believe in any man of intelligence taking a desperate view of the social problem in England. I am afraid that saying relegated me to the ranks of the fools, but I am content to remain there. I believe that never since 1381, which is the date of the Peasants' Revolt, has England presented such a spectacle of the happiness of the tens, of the misery of the millions. It is not by any means the artisan, or the general or the agricultural labourer, who is the only sufferer. All society groans under the slavery of stupendous toil and a pittance wage. The negro slavery of the Southern States of America was better than the white slavery of to-day all over the earth, but more particularly in Europe and in America. The vast edifice of our Civilization is built on the essential wrong of recompensing Labour, not according to the worth of its work, but according to the worth of its members in the market of unlimited competition, and that soon comes to mean the payment of what will hold body and soul together when in the enjoyment of health and strength. Landlordism shares with Capitalism the plunder of Labour. Why are rents high in Australia? Because here Labour is scarcer, its wages correspondingly higher, and therefore Landlordism steps in to filch from Labour its hard-won comforts, and once more reduce it to the necessities of existence. The American slavers had to spend more in housing and keeping any fixed number of their slaves in serviceable condition than Capitalism spends in wages. Capitalism and Landlordism, like good
Christian institutions, leave the living to keep alive their living, and the dead to bury their dead. This cannot continue for ever. At least all the intelligent portion of the community will grow to see the injustice and attempt to abolish it. But when will the great mass of unintelligent people who have won a large enough share of the plunder of their fellows to minister to their own comforts—when will these, also, awake and see? England will realize the desperation of her social problem when its desperation is shown her by fire and blood—then, and not till then! What shall teach her her sins to herself is what is even now teaching her her sins to Ireland.

I make no apology for several poems in the First Part which are fierce, which are even bloodthirsty. As I felt I wrote, and I will not lessen the truth of what inspired those feelings by eliminating or suppressing the record of them. Rather, let me ask you, whoever you be, to imagine what the cause was, from the effect in one who was (unhappily) born and bred into the dominant class, and whose chief care and joy in life was in the pursuit of a culture which draws back instinctively from the violent and the terrible. I will go further. I will arraign my country and my day, because their iniquity would not let me follow out the laws of my nature, which were for luminosity and quiet, for the wide and genial view, but made me “take arms against a sea of troubles,” hoping only too often “by opposing to end them.” No, we make no apology for bloody sweat and for tears of fire wrung out of us in the Gethsemane and on the Calvary of our country; we make no apology to those whom we have the right to curse.

In the Second Part—“Here and There,” the record of a short trip in the East—the sight of the sin which England has committed not only against herself, against Ireland, against Scotland, but against India, against China, against the sweetest and gentlest people in the earth, the Japanese—the sight of this, and of the signs of England’s doom, the punishment for the abuse of the greatest trust any modern nation has had given to her, inspires a hatred which only that punishment can appease.

In the Third Part—“Australia”—there is neither ferocity nor bloodthirstiness. Its key-note is hope, hope that dreads but does not despair.
III. Australia

The Outcasts
(Melbourne)

Here to the parks they come,
The scourings of the town,
Like weary wounded animals
Seeking where to lie them down.

Brothers, let us take together
An easeful period.
There is worse than to be as We are—
Cast out, not of Men but of God!

In the Sea-Gardens
(Sydney)

"The Man of the Nation"

Yonder the band is playing
And the fine Young People walk.
They are envying each other and talking
Their pretty empty talk.

There in the shade on the outskirts,
Stretched on the grass I see
A Man with a slouch hat smoking,
That is the Man for me!

Labour—Capital—Land

That is the Man of the Nation;
He works and much endures.
When all the rest is rotten,
He rises and cuts and cures.

He's the soldier of the Crimea,
Fighting to honour fools;
He's the grappler and strangler of Lee,
Lord of the terrible tools.

He's in all the conquered nations
That have won their own at last,
And in all that yet shall win it.
And the World by him goes past!

O strong aly World, this nameless
Still, much-enduring Man,
Is the Hand of God that shall clutch you
For all you have done or can!

Labour—Capital—Land

In that rich Archipelago of sea
With fiery hills, thick woods wherein the mias*
Browses along the trees, and god-like men
Leave monuments of speech too large for us,†
There are strange forest-trees. Far up, their roots
Spread from the central trunk, and settle down
Deep in the life-fed earth, seventy feet below.
In the past days here grew another tree,
On whose high fork the parasitic seed
Fell and sprang up, and finding life and strength
In the disease, decrepitude and death
Of that it fed on, utterly consumed it,
And stands the monument of Nature's crime!

---

* Orang-utan.
† The Buddhistic temple in Java, known as the temple of Borobodo.
So Labour with his parasites, the two
Great swollen Robbers, Land and Capital,
Stands to the gaze of men but as a heap
Of rotted dust whose only use must be
To rich the roots of the proud stem that killed it!*

Australia

I SEE a Land of desperate droughts and floods:
I see a land where Need keeps spreading round,
And all but giants perish in the stress:
I see a Land where more, and more, and more
The demons, Earth and Wealth, grow bloat and strong.

I see a Land that lies a helpless prey
To wealthy cliques and gamblers and their slaves,
The huckster politicians: a poor Land
That less and less can make her heart-wish law.

Yes, but I see a Land where some few brave
Raise clear eyes to the struggle that must come,
Reaching firm hands to draw the doubters in,
Preaching the gospel: "Drill and drill and drill!"

Yea, but I see a Land where best of all
The hope of Victory burns strong and bright!

Art

"YES, let Art go, if it must be
That with it men must starve—
If Music, Painting, Poetry
Spring from the wasted hearth!"

* This explanation of these curious arboreal growths is Mr. Alfred
Wallace's (Molay Archiplega, chapter v.), and in this matter also we may
perhaps be content to rely on that "innate genius for solving difficulties"
which Darwin has assigned to the illustrious naturalist whom Socialism is
proud to number among her sons.

Henry George

Yes, let Art go, till once again
Through fearless heads and hands
The toil of millions and the pain
Be passed from out the lands:

Till from the few their plunder falls
To those who've toiled and earned
But misery's hopeless intervals
From those who've robbed and spurned.

Yes, let Art go, without a fear,
Like Autumn flowers we burn,
For, with her reawakening year,
Be sure she will return!—

Return, but greater, nobler yet
Because her laurel crown
With dew and not with blood is wet,
And as our Queen sit down!

Henry George

(Melbourne)

I CAME to buy a book. It was a shop
Down in a narrow quiet street, and here
They kept, I knew, these socialistic books.

I entered. All was bare, but clean and neat.
The shelves were ranged with unsold wares; the counter
Held a few sheets and papers. Here and there
Hung prints and calendars. I rapped, and straight
A young girl came out through the inner door.
She had a clear and simple face;
I saw
She had no beauty, loveliness, nor charm,
But, as your eyes met those grey light-lit eyes
Like to a mountain spring so pure, you thought:
"He'd be a clever man who looked, and lied!"
Henry George

I asked her for the book. . . . We spoke a little.
Her words were as her face was, as her eyes.
Yes, she'd read many books like this of mine:
Also some poets, Shelley, Byron too,
And Tennyson, but "poets only dreamed!"
Thus, then, we talked, until by chance I spoke
A phrase and then a name. "Twas "Henry George."
Her face lit up. O it was beautiful,
Or never woman's face was! "Henry George?"
She said. And then a look, a flush, a smile,
Such as sprung up in Magdalen's cheek
When some voice uttered Jesus, made her angel.
She turned and pointed up the counter. I,
Loosing mine eyes from that ensainted face,
Looked also. "Twas a print, a common print,
The head and shoulders of a man. She said,
Quite in a whisper: "That's him, Henry George!"

Darling, that in this life of wrong and woe,
The lovely woman-soul within you brooded
And wept and loved and hated and pitied,
And knew not what its helplessness could do,
Its helplessness, its sheer bewilderment—
That then those eyes should fall, those angel eyes,
On one who'd brooded, wept, loved, hated, pitied,
Even as you had, but therefrom had sprung
A hope, a plan, a scheme to right this wrong,
And make this woe less hateful to the sun—
And that pure soul had found its Master thus
To listen to, remember, watch and love,
And trust the dawn that rose up through the dark:
O this was good
For me to see, as for some weary hopeless
Longer and toiler for "the Kingdom of Heaven"
To stand some lifeless twilight hour, and hear,
There in a dim-lit house of Lazarus,
Mary who said: "Thus, thus he looked, he spake,
The Master!"—So to hear her rapturous words,
And gaze upon her up-raised heavenly face!

The Australian Flag

William Wallace

(For the Ballarat statue of him)

This is Scotch William Wallace. It was He
Who in dark hours first raised his face to see:
Who watched the English tyrant Nobles spurn,
Steel-clad, with iron hoofs the Scottish Free:
Who armed and drilled the simple footman Kern,
Yea, bade in blood and rout the proud Knight learn
His Feudalism was dead, and Scotland stand
Dauntless to wait the day of Bannockburn!

O Wallace, peerless lover of thy land,
We need thee still, thy moulding brain and hand!
For us, thy poor, again proud tyrants spurn,
The robber Rich, a yet more hateful band!

The Australian Flag

Pure blue Flag of heaven
With your silver stars,
Not beside those Crosses' Blood-stained torture-bars:
Not beside the token
The foul sea-harlot gave,
Pure blue Flag of heaven,
Must you ever wave!

No, but young exultant,
Free from care and crime,
The soulless selfish England
Of this later time:
To His Love

No, but, faithful, noble
Rising from her grave,
Flag of light and liberty,
For ever must you wave!

To an old Friend in England

Was it for nothing in the years gone by,
O my love, O my friend,
You thrilled me with your noble words of faith?
Hope beyond life, and love, love beyond death?
Yet now I shudder, and yet you did not die,
O my friend, O my love!

Was it for nothing in the dear dead years,
O my love, O my friend,
I kissed you when you wrung my heart from me,
And gave my stubborn hand where trust might be?
Yet then I smiled, and see, these bitter tears,
O my friend, O my love!

No bitter words to say to you have I,
O my love, O my friend!
That faith, that hope, that love was mine, not yours!
And yet that kiss, that clasp endures, endures.
I have no bitter words to say. Good-bye,
O my friend, O my love!

To his Love

"Teach me, love, to be true;
Teach me, love, to love;
Teach me to be pure like you.
It will be more than enough!"

Her Poem

"Ah, and in days to come,
Give me, my son, too,
A son nobler than I,
A daughter true like you:

"A son to battle the wrong,
To seek and strive for the right;
A beautiful daughter of song,
To point us on to the light!"

"My baby girl, that was born and died
on the same day"

"With wild torn heart I see them still,
Wee unused clothes and empty cot.
Though glad my love has missed the ill
That falls to woman's lot.

"No tangled paths for her to tread
Throughout the coming changeful years;
No desperate weird to dream and dread;
No bitter lonely tears!

"No woman's piercing crown of thorns
Will press my aching baby's brow;
No starless nights, no sunless morns,
Will ever greet her now.

"The clothes that I had wrought with care
Through weary hours for love's sweet sake
Are laid aside, and with them there
A heart that seemed to break."
To Karl Marx

NOT for the thought that burns on keen and clear,
Heat that the heat has turned from red to white,
The passion of the lone remembering night
One with the patience day must see and hear—
Not for the shafts the lying foemen fear,
Shot from the soul's intense self-centring light—
But for the heart of love divine and bright,
We praise you, worker, thinker, poet, seer!

Man of the People—faithful in all parts,
The veins' last drop, the brain's last flickering dole,
You on whose forehead beams the aureole
That hope and "certain hope" alone imparts—
Us have you given your perfect heart and soul;
Wherefore receive as yours our souls and hearts.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

SHRIEKS out of smoke, a flame of dung-straw fire
That is not quenched but hath for only fruit
What withies and dies not in its rotten root
Two things made flesh, the visible desire
To match in filth the skunk, the ape in ire,†
Mouthing before the mirrors with wild foot
Beyond all feeble footprint of pursuit,
The perfect twanger of the Chinese lyre!
A heart with generous virtues run to seed
In vices making all a jumbled creed:
A soul that knows not love nor trust nor shame,
But cuts itself with knives to bawl and bleed—
If thou we've known of late, art still the same,
What need, O soul, to sign thee with thy name?

His attack on Carlyle, for instance, of which the prose part is the fouler, the verse part the more virulent.

To Sydney Jephcott

With a Copy of My "Poetical Works"

"TAKE with all my heart, friend, this,
The labour of my past,
Though the heart here hidden is
And the soul's eternities
Hold the present fast.

"Take it, still, with soul and heart,
Pledge of that dear day
When the shadows stir and start,
By the bright Sun burst apart—
Young Australia!"

* Poems and Ballads (1st series).  † Songs before Sunrise.
‡ The picturesque Italian gentlemen who struggled (some of them) so heroically for Italian Nationalism represent to-day a tyranny deeper and more dark than that of the Austrian foreigners, the tyranny of cats. The certainty of popularity was the bait held out by the rancorous respectability of the London Times, and poetical vanity swallowed it, making Mr. Swinburne also among the panders in his denunciation of Irish Nationalism.
"Father Abe"

"Father Abe"
(Song of the American Sons of Labour)

The Song

O we knew so well, dear Father,
When we answered to your call,
And the Southern Moloch stricken
Shook and tottered to his fall—

O we knew so well you loved us,
And our hearts beat back to yours
With the rapturous adoration
That through all the years endures!

Mothers, sisters bade us hasten
Sweethearts, wives with babe at breast;
For the Union, faith and freedom,
For our hero of the West!

And we wrung forth victory blood-stained
From the desperate hands of Crime,
And our Cause blazed out Man’s beacon
Through the endless future time!

And forgiven, forever we bade it
Cease, that envy, hatred, strife,
As he willed, our murdered Father
That had sealed his love with life!

O dear Father, was it thus, then?
Did we this but in a dream?
Is it real, this hideous present?
Does our suffering only seem?

Bend and listen, look and tell us!
Are these joyless toilers We?
Slaves more wretched, patient, piteous
Than the slaves we fought to free!

The Answer

Men and boys, O fathers, brothers,
Burst these fetters round you bound.
Women, sisters, wives and mothers,
Lift your faces from the ground!

O Democracy, O People,
East and West and North and South,
Rise together, one for ever,
Strike this Crime upon the mouth!

Bid them not, the men who loved you,
Those who fought for you and died,
Scorn you that you broke a small Crime,
Left a great Crime pass in pride!

England, France, the played-out countries,
Let them reek there in their stew,
Let their past rot out their present,
But the Future is with you!

O America, O first-born
Of the age that yet shall be
Where all men shall be as one man,
Noble, faithful, fearless, free!
A Fool

O America, O paramour
Of the foul slave-owner Pelf,
You who saved from slavery others,
Now from slavery save yourself!—

Save yourself, though, anguish-shaken,
You cry out and bow your head,
Crying "Why am I forsaken?"
Crying "It is finished!"

Save yourself, no God will save you;
Not one angel can he give!
They and He are dead and vanished,
And 'tis you, 'tis you must live!

Risen again, fire-tried, victorious,
From the grave of Crime down-hurled,
Peerless, pure, serene and glorious,
Wield the sceptre of the world!

"A Fool"

(Brisbane)

He asked me of my friend—"a clever man;
Such various talent, business, journalism;
A pen that might some day have sent out 'leaders'
From our greatest newspapers."—"Yes, all this,
All this," I said,—"And yet he will not rise!
He'll stay a 'comp,' a printer all his life!"

I said: "Just that, a workman all his life."
But, as my questioner was a business man,
One of the sons of Capital, a sage
Whose Practicality saw (I can suppose)
Quite to his nose-tip or even his finger-ends,
I vouchsafed explanation. "This young man,
My friend, was born and bred a workman. All
His heart and soul (and men have souls and hearts

"A Fool"

Other than those the doctor proses of,
The parson prates of, and both make their trade
Were centred in his comradeship and love.
His friends, his 'mates' were workmen, and the girl
He wooed, and made a happy wife and mother,
Had heart and soul like him in whence she sprung.
Observe now! When he came to think and read,
He saw (it seemed to him he saw) in what
Capitalists, Employers, men like you,
Think and call 'justice' in your inter-dealings,
Some slight mistakes (I fancy he'd say 'wrongs')
Whereby his order suffered. So he wonders:
"Cannot we change this?" And he tries and tries,
Knowing his fellows and adapting all
His effort in the channels that they know.
You understand? He's 'only an Unionist!'

Now for the second point. This man believes
That these mistakes—these wrongs (we'll pass the word)
Spring from a certain thing called 'competition'
Which you (and I) know is a God-given thing
Whereby the fittest get up to the top
(That's I—or you) and tread down all the others.
Well, this man sees how by this God-given thing
He has the chance to use his extra wits
And clamber up: he sees how others have—
(Like you—or me; my father's father's father
Was a market-gardener and, I trust, a good one).
He sees, moreover, how perpetually
Each of his fellows who has extra wits
Has used them as the fox fallen in the well
Used the confiding goat, and how the goats
More and more wallow there and stupify,
Robbed of the little wit the hapless crowd
Had in their general haplessness. Well, then
This man of mine (this is against all law,
Human, divine and natural, I admit)
Prefers to wallow there and not get out,
Except they all can! I've made quite a tale
About what is quite simple. Yet 'tis curious,
A Fool

As I see you hold. Now frankly tell me, will you,
What do you think of him?—"He is a fool!"
"He is a fool? There is no doubt of it!
But I am told that it was some such fool
Came once from Galilee, and ended on
A criminal's cross outside Jerusalem,—
And that this fool, he and his criminal's cross,
Broke up an Empire that seemed adamant,
And made a new world, which, renewed again,
Is Europe still.

He is a fool! And it was some such fool
Drudged up and down the earth these later years,
And wrote a Book the other fools bought up
In tens of thousands, calling it a Gospel.
And this fool too, and the fools that follow him,
Or hold with him, why, he and they shall all
End in the mad-house, or the gutter, where
They'll chew the husk of their mad dreams and die!"
"Well, what are their follies but dreams? They have done
nothing,
And never will!" . . .

"One moment! I have just a word to say.
How comes it, tell me, friend, six weeks ago
A 'comp.' was sent a-packing for a cause
His fellows thought unjust, and that same night
(Or, rather, the next morning) in comes one
To tell you (quite politely) that unless
That 'comp.' was setting at his frame they feared
One of our greatest newspapers would not go
That day a harbinger of light and leading
To gladden and instruct its thousands?
And, if I remember right, it did—and so did he,
That wretched 'comp.' set at his frame, and does!
How came it also that three months ago
Your brother, the shipowner, 'sacked' a man
Out of his ship, and bade him go to hell?
And in the evening up came two or three,
Discreetly asking him to state the cause?
And when he said he'd see them with the other,
The Mass of Christ

The pillars, vast as this whereby I stood,
Hedged all the place about and towered up high,
Up, and were lost within a billowy cloud
Of slow blue-wreathing smoke that fragrantly
Rose from below. And a great chaunt and cry
Of multitudinous voices, with sweet notes,
Mingled of music solemn, glad, serene,
Swayed all the air and gave its echoes throats.
And priests and singers various, with proud mien,
Filled all the choir—a strange and wondrous scene.

And men and women and children, in all hues
Of colour and fresh raiment, filled the nave;
And yet it seemed, this vast place did refuse
Room for the mighty army that did crave,
And only to the vanguard harbourage gave.

And, as I gazed and watched them while they knelt
(Their prayers I watched with the incense disappear),
And could not know my thoughts of it, I felt
A touch upon mine arm, and in mine ear
Some words, and turned my face to see and hear.

There was a man beside me. In that light,
Tho' dim, remote, and shadowy, I could see
His face swarthy yet pale, and eyes like night,
With a strange, far sadness, looking at me.
It seemed as if the buffets of some sea
Had beaten on him as he faced it long.
The salty foam, the spittle of its wrath
Had blurred the bruises of its fingers strong,
Striking him pitilessly from out its path,
Yet had he braved it as the willow hath.

He turned his look from me and where we stood,
His far strange look of sadness, and it seemed
This temple vast, this prayerful multitude,
These priests and singers celebrant who streamed
In gorgeous ranks towards the fane that gleamed,
And a slow horror grew upon us all—
On priests and people, and on us who gazed—
As that Great King, alive beneath the pall,
Heard his own death-service that moaned and praised:
So all we were fearful, expectant, dazed.

Then unknown murmurs round the High Priest rose
Of men in doubt;
And all the multitude
Swayed, as one seized in a keen travail's throes,
Where, on the last steps of the altar stood,
The Man—the altar steps all red like blood.

The singing ceased; the air grew clear and dead,
Save for the organ tones that sobbed and sighed.
In a hushed voice the High Priest gazing, said,
"Who are you?" and the Man straightway replied,
"I, I am Jesus whom they crucified!"

His voice was low yet every ear there heard,
And every eye was fixed upon him fast;
And, when he spake, the people all shuddered,
As a great corn-field at the south wind's blast,
And the Man paused, but spake again at last:

"I am the Galilean. I was born
Of Joseph and of Mary in Nazareth.
But God, our Father, left me not forlorn,
Outbreathed in my soul his sacred breath,
That I should be his prophet, and fear not death.

"I taught the Kingdom of Heaven; the poor,
The rich, the priests, did hear my cry
Of hate and retribution that lashed their rest.
Wherefore they caught and took and scourged me. I was crucified with the thieves on Calvary!"

---

The Emperor Charles V., mightiest of medieval kings, had the weird fancy to assist at a representation of his own death service.
I moved, I rose, I came close to, and saw;
And then I knew the place wherein I was;
Here in the city high, the ravening maw
Of all men's toil and kindly Nature's laws,
I stood, and felt the dreary winter's flaws.

And by me rose that lampless edifice
Of England's soul shrunk to a skeleton,
Whose dingy cross the grimy air doth pierce.
London, that hell of wastefulness and stone,
The piled bones of the sufferers dead and gone!

And, when I knew all this, and thought of it,
And thought of all the hateful hours and dread
That smirched my youth here, struck, and stabbed, and lit
The plundered shrine of trust and love that fled,
And left my soul stripped, bleeding worse than dead,

Wrath grew in me. For all around I knew
The accursed city worked on all the same,
For all the toiling sufferers. The idle few,
The vermin foul that from this dung-heap came,
Made of our agony their feast and game.

And when, with hands clenched tight, with eyes of fire,
Sombre and desperate, I moved on space,
Within my soul brooded a dark desire;
I reached the stream of those who sought this place,
And turned with them and saw a sudden face.

I knew it, as it was there, meeting mine—
I knew it with its strange sad gaze, the eyes
Night-like. Yet on it now no more did shine,
As 'twere that inner light of victories,
Won from the fiend that lives by the god that dies.

But very weary, as my waking was,
But stunned, it seemed, and as if cowed at last,
Were look and bearing of him: I felt the cause
Even as I looked. My wrath and thought were passed
I came and took his arm and held it fast.

And, as some fever-struck delirious man,
In some still pausing of his anguish-throes,
Forgetful of it all, how it began,
Rises from off his bed and dons his clothes,
And seeks (his footsteps seek) some place he knows;

And there he wanders voiceless, like a ghost,
His weariness confusing him, until
Worn-out, he helplessly perceives he's lost:
So was he here, this man, stricken and still—
Day, place, folk, all incomprehensible!

My hold aroused him. We looked face in face,
And in a little I could watch the wonder,
"Where he had seen me," in his great eyes, chase
The torpor and oblivion asunder.

Close by there was a porch, I drew him under.
There, after pause, I asked, "What do you here?"
He said: "I came, I think, to seek and see
Something which I much long for and yet fear.
I have passed over many a land and sea
I never knew: my Father guided me.

"I think," he said, "that I am come to find
Here, in this cold dark place, what in that blue
And sunny south but wounded all my mind.
But I am weary and cannot see things true,
There is a cloud around me. And with you?"

"Come, then," I said, "come then, if you must know
What that great saint hath done for us, who is
The second builder of your Church below.
Paul, that was Saul, the Prince of Charities!
He saw you once. Now see him once—in this!"

We went out side by side into the stream
Of folk that passed on upwards thro' the wall
(There was a gateway there), and in the beam
Of the dull light we stood and pillars tall,
And I said "Look," and he looked at it all.
The Mass of Christ

102 The Mass of Christ

Somewhat it was as he had seen before,
Yet darker, gloomier, though some hues were gay.
For all these people had, it seemed, full store
Of quiet ease, and loved the leisureed day;
They sang of joy, but little joy had they.

It was the function of the rich; of those
To whom contentment springs from booty's fill,
Gorged to a dull, religious, rank repose.
He raised his voice. He spake the words, "I will!"
There came a sound from some about, "Be still!"

Heedless, as one begrimed with blood and smoke,
The leader of a charge shattered in rout,
Strips off his tatters and bids the ranks re-yoke,
And leads them back to carry the redoubt,
So was he, strong once more, and resolute.

But, as he moved into the aisle, there rose
Men round him, grim and quiet, and a hand
Firmly upon each arm and wrist did close,
And held him like an engine at command.
He cried: "Loose me! You do not understand!"

"Loose me," he cried, "I, Jesus, come to tell——"
No answer made they, but without a word
Moved him away. Their office they knew well
With the impious outcasts who the good disturb
In their worship of their Queen and of their Lord.

'Twas finished ere we heard him. At the door
They thrust him out, and I, who followed him,
Knowing that he could enter it no more,
He sat down by the table listless. But
When bread was brought him, water, and red wine,
Slowly his white waste hand he stretched, and put
On to the bread and brake it; a divine
Smile touched his lips, and on his brow did shine.

They gathered round him with strange quiet glances,
These soldiers of the army Night hath tried,
One spake the question of their countenances—
"Who are you?" Then he whisperingly replied,
"I, I am Jesus, whom they crucified!"

At that a murmur rang among them all.
There was one man so white he seemed as dead,
Save for his eyes, and when he heard them call:
"Christ, it is Christ," he bent to him his head,
And the thin bitter lips hissed as they said:

"The name of Christ has been the sovereign curse,
The opium drug that kept us slaves to wrong.
Fooled with a dream, we bowed to worse and worse;
'In heaven,' we said, 'He will confound the strong.'
Oh hateful treason that has tricked too long!"

"Had we poor down-trod millions never dreamed
Your dream of that hereafter for our woe,
Had the great powers that rule, no Father seemed,
But Law relentless, long and long ago
We had risen and said, 'We will not suffer so.'
"O Christ, O you who found the drug of heaven,
To keep consoled an earth that grew to hell,
That else to cleanse and cure its sores had striven,
We curse that name!" A fierce hard silence fell,
And Jesus whispered, "Oh, and I as well!"

We entered. 'Twas a chamber bare and small,
With chairs and benches and a table. There
Some six or seven men sat: I knew them all.
I said, "Food, food and drink!" Some did repair
At once, without a word, to bring their fare.

He sat down by the table listless. But
When bread was brought him, water, and red wine,
Slowly his white waste hand he stretched, and put
On to the bread and brake it; a divine
Smile touched his lips, and on his brow did shine.

They gathered round him with strange quiet glances,
These soldiers of the army Night hath tried,
One spake the question of their countenances—
"Who are you?" Then he whisperingly replied,
"I, I am Jesus, whom they crucified!"

The Mass of Christ 103

We entered. 'Twas a chamber bare and small,
With chairs and benches and a table. There
Some six or seven men sat: I knew them all.
I said, "Food, food and drink!" Some did repair
At once, without a word, to bring their fare.

He sat down by the table listless. But
When bread was brought him, water, and red wine,
Slowly his white waste hand he stretched, and put
On to the bread and brake it; a divine
Smile touched his lips, and on his brow did shine.

They gathered round him with strange quiet glances,
These soldiers of the army Night hath tried,
One spake the question of their countenances—
"Who are you?" Then he whisperingly replied,
"I, I am Jesus, whom they crucified!

At that a murmur rang among them all.
There was one man so white he seemed as dead,
Save for his eyes, and when he heard them call:
"Christ, it is Christ," he bent to him his head,
And the thin bitter lips hissed as they said:

"The name of Christ has been the sovereign curse,
The opium drug that kept us slaves to wrong.
Fooled with a dream, we bowed to worse and worse;
'In heaven,' we said, 'He will confound the strong.'
Oh hateful treason that has tricked too long!"

"Had we poor down-trod millions never dreamed
Your dream of that hereafter for our woe,
Had the great powers that rule, no Father seemed,
But Law relentless, long and long ago
We had risen and said, 'We will not suffer so.'
"O Christ, O you who found the drug of heaven,
To keep consoled an earth that grew to hell,
That else to cleanse and cure its sores had striven,
We curse that name!" A fierce hard silence fell,
And Jesus whispered, "Oh, and I as well!"

We entered. 'Twas a chamber bare and small,
With chairs and benches and a table. There
Some six or seven men sat: I knew them all.
I said, "Food, food and drink!" Some did repair
At once, without a word, to bring their fare.

He sat down by the table listless. But
When bread was brought him, water, and red wine,
Slowly his white waste hand he stretched, and put
On to the bread and brake it; a divine
Smile touched his lips, and on his brow did shine.

They gathered round him with strange quiet glances,
These soldiers of the army Night hath tried,
One spake the question of their countenances—
"Who are you?" Then he whisperingly replied,
"I, I am Jesus, whom they crucified!"

At that a murmur rang among them all.
There was one man so white he seemed as dead,
Save for his eyes, and when he heard them call:
"Christ, it is Christ," he bent to him his head,
And the thin bitter lips hissed as they said:

"The name of Christ has been the sovereign curse,
The opium drug that kept us slaves to wrong.
Fooled with a dream, we bowed to worse and worse;
'In heaven,' we said, 'He will confound the strong.'
Oh hateful treason that has tricked too long!"

"Had we poor down-trod millions never dreamed
Your dream of that hereafter for our woe,
Had the great powers that rule, no Father seemed,
But Law relentless, long and long ago
We had risen and said, 'We will not suffer so.'
"O Christ, O you who found the drug of heaven,
To keep consoled an earth that grew to hell,
That else to cleanse and cure its sores had striven,
We curse that name!" A fierce hard silence fell,
And Jesus whispered, "Oh, and I as well!"
The Mass of Christ

He raised his face! See, on the Calvary hill,
Submitive with such pride, betrayed and taken,
Transfixed and crucified, the prey of ill,
Of a cup less bitter had he there partaken,
He then by God, as now by Man, forsaken!

"Vain, was it vain, all vain?" had mocked him then;
Now the triumphant gibe of hell had said,
"Not vain! a curse, a speechless curse to men!"
His great eyes gazed on it. He bowed his head,
Without a word, and shuddered. He was dead!

And when I saw this, with a low hoarse cry
I caught him to mine arms and to my breast,
And put my lips to his that breathed one sigh,
And kissed his eyes, and by his name addressed
My Friend, my Master, him whom I loved best.

"Jesus," I whispered, "Jesus, Jesus, speak!"
For it did seem that speech from him must break;
But suddenly I knew he would not speak,
Never, never again! My heart did shake;
My stricken brain burst; I shrieked and leaped awake.

Down in the woodlands, where the streamlet runs,
Close to the breezy river, by the dells,
Of ferns and flowers that shun the summer suns
But gather round the lizard-haunted wells,
And listen to the birds' sweet syllables—

Down in the woodlands, lying in the shade,
Among the rushes green that shook and gleamed,
I woke and lay, and of my dream dreams made,
Wondering if indeed I had but dreamed,
Or dreamed but now, so real that dream had seemed.

Then up above I saw the turquoise sky,
And, past the blowy tree-tops swung aloft,
Two pigeons dared the breeze ecstatically,
And happy frogs, couched in the verdure soft,
Piped to each other dreamily and oft.

And, as I looked across the flowery woods,
Across the grasses, sun and shade bedight,
Under the leaves' melodious interludes,
Flowing one way, the blessed birds' delight,
I saw her come, my love, clothed on with light!

Flowers she had, and in her hair and hands,
Singing and stooping, gathering them with words,
Whose music is past all speech understands,
But God is glad thereof, as of his birds;
I watched her, listening, till I heard the words
Leap from her lips of a bold battle-song,
The clarion clear that silences the strife.
She marched exultantly to it along,
No more a joyous girl, a sacred wife,
But a soldier of the Cause that's more than life!

O well I knew the song that she was singing,
But now she gave her music to my rhyme,
Her rapturous music thro' the wild woods ringing,
Asserting Truth and Trust, arraigning Crime,
And bidding Justice "bring the better time!"

O Love, sing on, sing on, O girl with light,
Shatter the silence of the hopeless hour;
O mock with song triumphant all the night,
O girl, O wife, O crowned with fruits and flowers,
Till day and dawn and victory are ours!

O Love, sing on, sing on, O girl with light,
Shatter the silence of the hopeless hour;
O mock with song triumphant all the night,
O girl, O wife, O crowned with fruits and flowers,
Till day and dawn and victory are ours!
To Queen Victoria in England

An Address on her Jubilee Year

MADAM, you have done well! Let others with praise unholy,
   Speech addressed to a woman who never breathed upon earth,
Daub you over with lies or deafen your ears with folly,
   I will praise you alone for your actual imminent worth.  
Madam, you have done well! Fifty years unforgotten
   Pass since we saw you first, a maiden simple and pure.  
Now when every robber, Landlord, Capitalist rotten,
   Hated oppressors, praise you—Madam, we are quite sure!

To Queen Victoria in England

Never once as a foe, open foe, to the popular power,
   As nobler kings and queens, have you faced us, fearless and bold:  
No, but in backstairs fashion, in the stealthy twilight hour,
   You have struggled and struck and stabbed, you have bartered and bought and sold!
Melbourne, the listless liar, the gentleman blood-beslavered,
   Disraeli, the faithless priest of a cynical faith outworn—
These were dear to your heart, these were the men you
   favoured, 
Those whom the People loved were fooled and flouted and torn!

Never in one true cause, for your people's sake and the light's sake,
   Did you strike one honest blow, did you speak one noble word:
No, but you took your place, for the sake of wrong and the night's sake,
   Ever with blear-eyed wealth, with the greasy respectable herd. 
Not as some robber king, with a resolute minister slave to you,*
   Did you swagger with force against us to satisfy your greed:  
No, but you hoarded and hid what your loyal people gave to you,
   Golden sweat of their toil, to keep you a queen indeed!

Pure at least was your bed? pure was your Court?—We know not.
   Were the white sepulchres pure? Gather men thorns of grapes? 
Your sons and your blameless Spouse's, certes, as Galahads
   show not. 
Round you gather a crowd of horrible hypocrite shapes!
Never, sure, did one woman produce in such sixes and dozens
   Such intellectual canaille as this that springs from you;  
Sons, daughters, grandchildren, with uncles, aunts and cousins,
   Not a man or a woman among them—a wretched crew!

* Charles I. and Strafford, e.g.
Elsie

Madam, you have done well! You have fed all these to rep-pletion—
You have put up a gilded calf beside a gilded cow,
And bidden men and women behold the forms of human com-
pletion—
Albert the Good, Victoria the Virtuous, for ever—and now!
But what to you were our bravest and best, man of science and
poet,
Struggling for Light and Truth, or the Women who would
be free?
 Carlyle, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Arnold? We know it—-
Tennyson slavers your hand; Burdett-Coutts fawns at your
knee!

Good, you were good, we say. You had no wit to be evil.
Your purity shines serene over virgins mangled and dead.
You wasted not our substance in splendour, in riot or revel—
You quietly sat in the shade and grew fat on our wealth
instead.
Madam, you have done well! To you, we say, has been given
A wit past the wit of women, a supercomputable worth.
Of you we can say, if not "of such are the Kingdom of
Heaven,"
Of such (alas for us!), of such are the Kingdom of Earth!

A Memory

LITTLE elfin maid,
Old, though scarce two years,
With your big dark hazel eyes
Tenderer than tears,
To His Love

I love her firm possession
Of instincts fair and true;
Her hatred of oppression
And all the wrong men do;
Her fiery, unflawed purity,
Her spirit's proud security,
Defying all futurity,
And fate and fortune too.

And O, my love, I love you
For where words faint and fall
Something in you above you,
Some mystery magical;
Some spell that's past concealing,
Some influence past revealing,
Some deeper depth than feeling
And life and death and all!

To His Love

(With his first book of "Song")

"MY Sweet, my Child, through all this night
Of dark and wind and rain,
Where thunder crashes, and the light
Sears the bewildered brain,

"It is your Face, your lips, your eyes
I see rise up; I hear
Your Voice that sobs and calls and cries,
Or shrills and mocks at fear.

"O this that's mine is yours as well,
For side by side our feet
Trod through these bitter brakes of hell.
Take it, my Child, my Sweet!"

A Story

To the Emperor William II.

LONDON, May 15, 1889.—"The promised interview with the Emperor William was granted to-day to the delegates from the coal-miners now on strike in Westphalia; but the audience lasted for only ten minutes. The men asked that the Emperor would inquire into the merits of their case and the hardships under which they suffered. His Majesty replied that he was already inquiring into the matter. He then warned the miners that he would employ all his great powers to repress socialistic agitation and intrigue. If the slightest resistance was shown he would shoot every man so offending. On the other hand, he promised to protect them if peaceable."—Cablegram.

SON of a Man and grandson of a Man,
Mannikin most miserable in thy shrunken shape
And peevish, shrivelled soul, is't thou wouldst ape
The thunder-bearer of Fate's blustering clan?
Know, then, that never, since the years began,
The terrible truth was surer of this word:
"Who takes the sword, shall perish by the sword!"
For mankind's nod makes mannikin and man.
Surely it was not shed too long ago,
That Emperor's blood that stained the northern snow,
O thou King Stork aspiring that art King Log,
Wild-boar that wouldst be, reeking there all hog,
To teach thy brutish brainlessness to know
Those who pulled down a Lion can shoot a Dog.

A Story

(For the Irish Delegates in Australia)

DO you want to hear a story,
With a nobler praise than "glory,"
Of a man who loved the right like heaven and loathed the wrong like hell?
Then, that story let me tell you
Once again, though it as well you
Know as I—the splendid story of the man they call Parnell!

By the wayside of the nations,
Lashed with whips and execrations,
Helpless, hopeless, bleeding, dying, she, the Maiden Nation, lay;
And the burthen of dishonour
Weighed so grievously upon her
That her very children hid their eyes and crept in shame away.

And there as she was lying
Helpless, hopeless, bleeding, dying,
All her high-born foes came round her, fleering, jeering, as they said:
"What is freedom fought and won for?
She is down! She's dead and done for!"
And her weeping children shuddered as they crouched and whispered: "Dead!"

Then suddenly up-starting,
All that throng before him parting,
See, a Man with firm step breaking through yon central knot that gives;
And, as by some dear lost sister,
He knelt down, and softly kissed her,
And he raised his pale, proud face, and cried: "She is not dead. She lives!

"O she lives, I say, and I here,
I am come to fight and die here
For the love my heart has for her like a slow consuming fire;
For the love of her low-lying,
For the hatred deep, undying
Of the robber lords who struck and stabbed and trod her in the mire!"

Then upon that cry bewildering,
Some of them, her hapless children—
In their hearts there leaped up hope like light when night gives birth to day;
And, as mocks and threats defied him,
One by one they came beside him,
Till they stood, a band of heroes, sombre, desperate, at bay!

And the battle that they fought there,
And the bitter truth they taught there
To the blinded Sister-Nation suffering grievously alway,
All the wrong and rapine past hers,
Of her lords and her task-masters,
Is not this the larger hope of all as night gives birth to day?

For the lords and liars are quaking
At the People's stern awaking
From their slumber of the ages; and the Peoples slowly rise,
And with hands locked tight together,
One in heart and soul for ever,
Watch the sun of Light and Liberty leap up into the skies!

That's the story, that's the story
With a nobler praise than "glory,"
Of the Man who loved the right like heaven and loathed the wrong like hell,
And with calm, proud exultation
Bade her stand at last a nation,
Ireland, Ireland that is one name with the name of Charles Parnell!
At the West India Docks

At the West India Docks

(A Memory of August, 1883)

[The spectacle of the life of the London Dock labourers is one of the most terrible examples of the logical outcome of the present social system. In the six great metropolitan docks over 100,000 men are employed, the great bulk of whom are married and have families. By the elaborate system of sub-contracts their wages have been driven down to 4d., 3d., and even 2d., for the few hours they are employed, making the average weekly earnings of a man amount to 7, 6, and even 5 shillings a week. Hundreds and hundreds of lives are lost or ruined every year by the perilous nature of the work, and absolutely without compensation. Yet so fierce is the competition that men are not unfrequently maimed or even killed in the desperate struggles at the gates for the tickets of employment, guaranteeing a "pay" which often does not amount to more than a few pence! The streets and houses inhabited by this unfortunate class are of the lowest kind—haunts of vice, disease and death, and the monopolistic companies are thus directly able to make profit of their wholesale demoralization by ruthlessly crushing out, through the contractors, all efforts at organization on the part of the men. To see these immense docks, the home of that more immense machine, British Commerce, crowded with huge and stately ships, steamers, and sailors the first in the world, and to watch with intelligent eyes by what means the colossal work of loading and unloading them is carried out—this is to face a sacrificial orgy of human life—childhood, youth, manhood, womanhood, and age, with everything that makes them beautiful and ennobling, and not merely a misery and a curse—far more appalling than any Juggernaut process of the human holocausts that were offered up to Phoenician Moloch.]

I STOOD in the ghastly gleaming night by the swollen, sullen flow Of the dreadful river that rolls her tides through the City of Wealth and Woe; And mine eyes were heavy with sleepless hours, and dry with desperate grief, And my brain was throbbing and aching, and mine anguish had no relief. For never a moment—not one—through all the dreary day, And thro' all the weary night forlorn, would the pitiless pulses stay Of the thundering great Machinery that such insistence had, As it crushed out human hearts and souls, that it slowly drove me mad.

At the West India Docks

And there, in the dank and fetid mist, as I, silent and tearless, stood, And the river's exhalations, sweating forth their muddy blood, Breathed fall on my face and poisoned me, like the slow, putrescent drain That carries away from the shambles the refuse of flesh and brain— There rose up slowly before me, in the dome of the city's light, A vast and shadowy Substance, with shafts and wheels of might, Tremendous, ruthless, fatal; and I knew the visible shape Of that thundering great Machinery from which there was no escape.

It stood there high in the heavens, fronting the face of God, And the spray it sprinkled had blasted the green and flowery sod All round where, through stony precincts, its Cyclopean pillars fell To its adamantine foundations that were fixed in the womb of hell. And the birds that, wild and whirling, and moth-like, flew to its glare Were struck by the flying wheel-spokes, and maimed and murdered there; And the dust that swept about its black panoply overhead, And the din of it seemed to shatter and scatter the sheeted dead.

But mine eyes were fixed on the people that sought this horrible den, And they mounted in thronged battalions, children and women and men, Right out from the low horizon, more far than eye could see, From the north and the south and the east and the west, they came perpetually— Some silent, some raving, some sobbing, some laughing, some cursing, some crying, Some alone, some with others, some struggling, some dragging the dead and the dying,
At the West India Docks

Up to the central Wheel enormous with its wild devouring breath
That winnowed the livid smoke-clouds and the sickening fume of death.

Then suddenly, as I watched it all, a keen wind blew amain,
And the air grew clearer and purer, and I could see it plain—
How under the central Wheel a black stone Altar stood,
And a great, gold Idol upon it was gleaming like fiery blood.
And there, in front of the Altar, was a huge, round lurid Pit,
And the thronged battalions were marching to the yawning mouth of it.
In the clangour of the Machinery and the Wheel's devouring breath
That winnowed the livid smoke-clouds and the sickening fume of death.

And once again, as I gazed there, and the keen wind still blew on,
I saw the shape of the Idol like a Queen turned carrion,
Yet crowned and more terrific thus for her human fleshly loss,
And with one clenched hand she brandished a lash, and the other held up a cross.
And all around the Altar were seated, joyous and free,
In garments richly-coloured and choice, a goodly company,
Eating and drinking and wantoning, like gods that scorned to know
Of the thundering great Machinery and the crowds and the Pit below.

Ah, Christ! the sights and the sounds there that every hour befell
Would wring the heart of the devils spinning ropes of sand in hell.
But not the insolent Revellers in their old lascivious ease—
Children, hollow-eye!, starving, consumed alive with disease;
Boys and men tortured to fiends and branded with shuddering fire;
Women and girls shrieking caught, and whored, and trampled to death in the mire;

Babyhood, youth, and manhood and womanhood that might have been,
Kneaded, a bloody pulp, to feed the gold-grinding murderous Machine!

And still, with aching eyeballs, I stared at that hateful sight,
At the long dense lines of the people and the shafts and wheels of might.
When slowly, slowly emerging, I saw a great Globe rise,
Blood-red on the dim horizon, and it swam up into the skies.
But whether indeed it were the sun or the moon, I could not say,
For I knew not now in my watching if it were night or day.
But when that great Globe steadied above the central Wheel,
The thronged battalions wavered and paused, and an awful silence fell.

Then (I know not how, but so it was) in a moment the flash of an eye—
A murmur ran and rose to a voice, and the voice to a terrible cry:
"Enough, enough! It has had enough! We will march no more till we drop
In the furnace Pit. 'Give us food! Give us rest! Though the accursed Machinery stop!'"
And then, with a shout of angry fear, the Revellers sprang to their feet,
And the call was for cannon and cavalry, for rifle and bayonet.
And One rose up, a leader of them, lifting a threatening rod,
And 'Stop the Machinery!' he yelled, "you might as well stop God!"

But the terrible thunder-cry replied: 'If this indeed must be,
It is you should be cast to the furnace Pit to feed the Machine—not we!'

And the central wheel enormous slowed down in groaning plight,
And all the serial movement ceased of the shafts and wheels of might,
And a superhuman clamour leaped madly to where overhead
The great Globe swung in the gathering gloom, portentous, huge, blood-red!
But my brain whirled round and my blinded eyes no more could see or know,
Till I struggling seemed to awake at last by the swollen sullen flow
Of the dreadful river that rolls her tides through the City of Wealth and Woe!

Dirge
(Brisbane)
“A little Soldier of the Army of the Night”

BURY him without a word!
No appeal to death;
Only the call of the bird
And the blind spring’s breath.

Nature slays ten, yet the one
Reaches but to a part
Of what’s to be done, to be sung.
Keep we a proud heart!

Let us not glose her waste
With lies and dreams;
Fawn on her wanton haste,
Say it but seems.

Comrades, with faces unstirred,
Scorning grief’s dole,
Though with him, with him lies interred
Our heart and soul.

Fling out the Flag
(For the Australian Labour Federation)

FLING out the Flag! Let her flap and rise in the rush of the eager air,
With the ring of the wild swan’s wings as she soars from the swamp and her reedy lair.
Fling out the Flag! And let friend and foe behold, for gain or loss,
The sign of our faith and the fight we fight, the Stars of the Southern Cross!
Oh! Blue’s for the sky that is fair for all, whoever, wherever he be,
And Silver’s the light that shines on all for hope and for liberty,
And that’s the desire that burns in our hearts, for ever quenchless and bright,
And that’s the sign of our flawless faith and the glorious fight we fight!

What is the wealthiest land on earth, if the millions suffer and cry,
And all but the happy selfish Few would fain curse God and die?
What are the glorious Arts, as they sit and sing on their jewelled thrones,
If their hands are wet with blood and their feet befouled with festering bones?
Fling out the Flag

What are the splendid Sciences, driving Nature with a bit of steel,
If only the Rich can mount the car and the Poor are dragged at the wheel?
Wealth is a curse, and Art a mock, and Science worse than a lie,
When they're but the gift of the greedy Thieves, the leeches that suck men dry!

Nay, brothers, nay! it is not for this—for a land of wealth and woe—
That we hoped and trusted all these years, that we toiled and struggled so!
It is not for a race of taskmasters and pitiful cringing slaves,
That our strength and skill raised up happy homes and dreamed of fearless graves.
It is not for a Cause that is less than for all, that is not for Truth but a lie,
That we raise our faces and grip our hands, and lift our voices high,
As we fling out the Flag that friend and foe may see, for gain or loss,
The sign of our faith and the fight we fight, the Stars of the Southern Cross!

As the sky above is fair for all, whoever, wherever he be,
As the blessed stars on all shed their light of hope and liberty:
So let the earth, this fertile earth, this well-loved Southern land,
Be fair to all, be free to all, from strand to shining strand!
Let boy and girl and woman and man in it at least be sure,
That all can earn their daily bread with hearts as proud as pure;
Let man and woman and girl and boy in it for ever be Heirs to the best this world can give, happy, fearless, free!
Farewell to the Children

Sometimes a little lad
   With a bright brave face I'll see,
   And a wistful yearning wonder
   Comes stealing over me.

For once I too had a Darling;
   I dreamed what he should do,
   And surely he'd have had, I thought,
   Just such a face as You.

And I, I dreamed to see him
   Noble and brave and strong,
   Loving the light, the lovely,
   Hating the dark, the wrong,

Loving the poor, the People,
   Ready to smile and give
   Blood and brain to their service,
   For them to die or live!

No matter, O little Darlings!
   Little Boys, you shall be
   My Citizens for faithful labour,
   My Soldiers for victory!

Little Girls, I charge you
   Be noble sweethearts, wives,
   Mothers—comrades the sweetest,
   Fountains of happy lives!

Farewell, O little Darlings!
   Far away—with strangers, too—
   He sleeps, the little Darling,
   I dreamed to see like you.

And I, O little Darlings,
   I have many miles to go,
   And where I too may stop and sleep,
   And when, I do not know.

But I charge you to remember
   The love, the trust I had,
   That you'd be noble, fearless, free,
   And make your country glad.

That you should toil together,
   Face whatever yet shall be,
   My citizens for faithful labour,
   My soldiers for victory.

I charge you to remember;
   I bless you with my hand,
   And I know the hour is coming
   When you shall understand:

When you shall understand too,
   Why, as I said farewell,
   Although my lips were smiling,
   The shining tears down fell.

BEYOND the Night, down o'er the labouring East,
I see light's harbinger of day released:
Upon the false gleam of the ante-dawn,
Lo, the fair heaven of sun-pursuing morn.

Beyond the lampless sleep and perishing death,
That hold my heart, I feel my New Life's breath,—
I see the face my Spirit-shape shall have
When this frail clay and dust have fled the grave.
Beyond the Night, the death of doubt, defeat,
Rise dawn and morn, and life with light doth meet,
For the great cause, too—sure as the Sun, you ray
Shoot up to strike the threatening clouds and say:
I come, and with me comes the victorious Day!

When I was young, the Muse I worshipped took me,
Fearless, a lonely heart, to look on men.
"Tis yours," said she, "to paint this show of them
Even as they are." Then smiling she forsook me.

Wherefore with passionate patience I withdrew,
With eyes from which all loves, hates, hopes and fears,
Joy's aureole and the blinding sheen of tears,
Were purged away. And what I saw I drew.

Then, as I worked remote, serene, alone,
A Child-girl came to me and touched my cheek;
And lo, her lips were pale, her limbs were weak,
Her eyes had thirst's desire and hunger's moan.

She said: "I am the Soul of this sad day
Where thousands toil and suffer hideous Crime,
Where units rob and mock the empty time
With revel and rank prayer and death's display."

I said: "O Child, how shall I leave my songs,
My songs and tales, the warp and subtle woof
Of this great work and web, in your behoof
To strive and passionately sing of wrongs?

"Child, is it nothing that I here fulfil
My heart and soul? that I may look and see
Where Homer bends, and Shakspere smiles on me,
And Goethe praises the unswerving will?"

She hung her head, and straight, without a word,
Passed from me. And I raised my conscious face
To where, in beauteous power in her place,
She stood, the Muse, my Muse, and watched and heard.

Her proud and marble brow was faintly flushed;
Upon her flawless lips and in her eyes
A mild light flickered as the young sunrise,
Glad, sacred, terrible, serene and hushed.

Then I cried out, and rose with pure wrath wild,
Desperate with hatred of Fate's slavery
And this cold cruel Demon. With that cry,
I left her and sought out the piteous Child.

"Darling, 'tis nothing that I shed and weep
These tears of fire that wither the heart,
These bloody rents that drain and sear and smart.
I love you, and you'll kiss me when I sleep!"

THE END