

Songs of the  
Army of the Night

and

The Mass of Christ

By

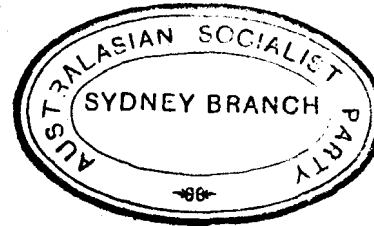
Francis Adams

*New and revised edition.*

London

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## 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

the Riviera and Egypt. He died, by his own hand, at Margate on September 4th, 1893.

Gifted with great natural vitality, both physical and mental, Adams found himself at an early age the victim of inherited consumption, and his short life was the incessant struggle of a proud and courageous spirit against poverty and disease. Thus it was that the sensitiveness of his intensely high-strung temperament, sharpened by suffering and disappointment, found such poignant expression in these keen fierce lyrics, on fire alike with love and with hate, which express the passionate sympathies and deep resentments of the modern revolutionary movement somewhat as Elliott's "Corn Law Rhymes" and Brough's "Songs of the Governing Classes" spoke the troubled spirit of their time. For Adams, unlike Morris, was not so much a convert to Socialism as a scion of Socialism, a veritable "Child of the Age" in the storm and stress of his career; and unequal as his "Songs" are, when judged by the usual literary standards—in parts so tender and melodious, and again, in other parts, harsh and formless to the verge of doggerel—few sympathetic readers can be unmoved by their passion and directness. They were intended—so he told me—to express what might be the feelings of a member of the working classes, as he found out the hollowness—to him, at any rate—of our modern culture and refinement; and to this purpose must be attributed the author's deliberate neglect of poetical canons. Faulty in technique though some of his verses might be, he knew exactly what he had to say and how he could say it with most effect—as in those trenchant and highly characteristic stanzas "To England."

But the "Songs" are not merely denunciatory; they have a closer, tenderer, and more personal aspect, as in the infinitely compassionate "One among so Many," surely one of the most moving poems in recent literature, which endears them to the heart of the reader as only a few choice books are ever endeared. In this respect Adams's writings are the exact counterpart of his character; for no memory of him dwells more abidingly in the minds of his friends than the occasions when he would eloquently dilate on the people's cause—his beautiful and expressive features, and large flashing eyes, lit up with the glow of a single-hearted enthusiasm.

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.

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## 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 relegates 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.

We know well enough that our plea for comprehension will too often be an idle one. None the less we make it, for the sake of those who are willing to attempt to realize the social problem and to seek within themselves what they can do for its solution. We have no care whatever as to what view they take of it. Let them be with us or against us, it matters not, if only they will make this effort, if only they will ponder it in their hearts. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of us are concerned in this problem. We are all of us true sons of Labour who have suffered the robbery of the wages of Competition.

Brothers all over the earth, Brothers and Sisters, you of that silent company whose speech is only in the unknown deeds of love, the unknown devotions, the unknown heroisms, it is to you we speak! Our heart is against your heart; you can feel it beat. Soul speaks to soul through lips whose utterance is a need. In your room alone, in your lonely walks, in the still hours of day and night we will be with you. We will speak with you, we will plead with you, for these piteous ones. In the evening trees you shall hear the sound of our weeping. Our sobs shall shake in the wind of wintry nights. We are the spirit of those piteous ones, the wronged, the oppressed, the robbed, the murdered, and we bid you open your warm heart, your light-lit soul to us! We will thrill you with the clarion of hate and defiance and despair in the tempest of land and sea. You shall listen to us there also. We will touch your eyes and lips with fire. No, we will never let you go, till you are ours and theirs! And you too, O Sufferers, you too shall stay with us, and shall have comfort. Look, we have suffered, we have agonized, we have longed to hasten the hour of rest. But beyond the darkness there is light, beyond the turbulence peace. "Courage and be true to one another." "*We bid you hope.*"

Sydney, Christmas, 1887.

### 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 81

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 sly 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.

Yea, 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 (*Malay Archipelago*, 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.

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!"



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 Magdalenè'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 !

William Wallace

(For the Ballarat statue of him)

**T**HIS 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

**P**URE 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 seraph, 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!”

## Her Poem

“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 dread 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 writhes 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 feebler 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.

Once on thy lips the golden-honeyed bees  
 Settling made sweet the heart that was not strong,  
 And sky and earth and sea swooned into song: \*  
 Once on thine eyes the light of agonies  
 Flashed through the soul and robbed the days of ease. †  
 But tunes turn stale when love turns babe, and long  
 The exiled gentlemen grow fat with wrong,  
 And peasants, workmen, beggars, what are these? ‡  
 O you who sang the Italian smoke above—  
 Mud-lark of Freedom, pipe of that vile band  
 Whose envy slays the tyrant, not the love  
 Of these poor souls none have the keeping of—  
 It is your hand—it is your pander hand  
 Smites the bruised mouth of pilloried Ireland!

## To Sydney Jephcott

(The friend my verse won for me)

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 *caste*. 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!

## "Father Abe"

Are these weak, worn girls and women  
Those whose mothers yet can tell  
How they kissed and clasped men god-like  
With fierce faces fronting hell?

Bend and listen, look and tell us!  
Is this silent waste, possessed  
By bloat thieves and their task-masters,  
Thy free, thy fair, thy fearless West?

Are these Eastern mobs of wage-slaves,  
Are these cringing debauchees,  
Sons of those who slung their rifles—  
Shook the old Flag to the breeze?

## 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 finishèd!"

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 stupefy,  
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,

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,

(Videlicet, in hell), they said they feared,  
 Unless the other came thence (if he was there),  
 And was upon his ship to-morrow morning,  
 It would not sail. It did not sail till noon,  
 And he sailed with it!  
 But this is all beside the point! Our 'comp.,'  
 Who sweats there, and who will not write you 'leaders'  
 Except to help a friend who's fallen ill,  
 Why, he, beyond a doubt he is—a fool!"

## The Mass of Christ

I

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, I whose songs were of my heart's blood made,  
 Found weary rest from wretchedness, it seemed,  
 And fell asleep, and as I slept, I dreamed.

II

I dreamed I stood beside a pillar vast  
 Close to a little open door behind,  
 Whence the small light there was stole in aghast,  
 And for a space this troubled all my mind,  
 To lose the sunlight and the sky and the wind.

For I could know, I felt, how all before,  
 Though high and wonderful and to be praised,  
 In heart and soul and mind oppressed me sore.  
 Nevertheless, I turned, and my face raised,  
 And on that pageant and its glory gazed.

96      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,

The Mass of Christ      97

Were to him as some vision is, untrue,  
 Tho' true we take it, undeceived the while,  
 But, since it was unknown to him all through,  
 And hid some meaning (it might be of guile),  
 He turned once more, and spake in gentle style.

"Nay, this," he said, "is not the Temple, nor  
 The children of Israel these, whom less sufficed  
 Of chaunt and ritual. They whom we abhor,  
 The Phœnicians, to their gods have sacrificed!"  
 I said, "Nay, sir, this is the Mass of Christ."

"The Mass of Christ?" he murmured. And I said  
 "This is the day on which He came below,  
 And this is Rome, and far up overhead  
 Soars the great dome that bids the wide world know  
 St. Peter still rules o'er his Church below!"

"The Christ?" he said, "and Peter, who are they?"  
 I answered, "Jesus was he in the days long past,  
 And Peter was his chief disciple." "Nay,"  
 He answered, "for of these the lot was cast  
 On poverty." I said, "That is all past!"

Then as I might, as for some stranger great  
 (Who saw all things under an unknown sun),  
 I told him of these things both soon and late,  
 Then, when I paused and turned, lo! he was gone,  
 Had left me, and I saw him passing on.

On, up the aisle, he passed, his long black hair  
 Upon his brown and common coat; his head  
 Raised, and his mien such aspect fixed did wear  
 As one may have whose spirit long is sped  
 (Though he still lives) among the mighty dead.

He paused not, neither swerved not, till he came  
 Unto the fane and steps. Nor there he learned  
 Awe, but went on, till rose a shrill acclaim,  
 And the High Priest from the great altar turned,  
 And raised the golden sign that blazed and burned.

98      The Mass of Christ

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,  
 But breathèd 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 oppressed  
 I loved. 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 mediæval kings, had the weird fancy to assist at a representation of his own death service.

The Mass of Christ      99

At that it seemed the very stones did quake,  
 And a great rumour grew and filled the place ;  
 The pillars, the roof, the dome above did shake,  
 And a fierce cry and arms surged up apace,  
 Like to a storm-cloud round that dark pale face.

And yet once more he spake, and we did hear :  
 "Who are you ? What is this you do ?" he said.  
 "I was the Christ. Who is this here  
 You worship ?" From that silence of the dead,  
 "Tear him in pieces," cried a voice and fled.

Howls, yells, and execrations, blazing eyes,  
 And threatening arms—it was unloosened hell !  
 And in the midst, seized, dragged along with cries  
 Of hate exultant, still I saw him well,  
 His strange sad face ; then sickened, swooned, and fell !

III

Slowly from out that trance did I arouse ;  
 Slowly, with pain, and all was weary and still,  
 Even as a dreamer dreams some sweet carouse,  
 And faints at touch of breath and lips that thrill,  
 And yet awakes and yet is dreaming still.

So I. And when my tired eyes look, mine ears,  
 Echoing those late noises, listen, and  
 I seek to know what 'fore me now appears,  
 For long I cannot know nor understand,  
 But lie as some wrecked sailor on the strand.

Then bit by bit I knew it—how I lay  
 On the hard stones, crouched by a pillar tall :  
 The wind blew bleak and raw ; the skies were grey ;  
 Up broad stone steps folk passed into the wall,  
 Both men and women : there was no sun at all.



100      The Mass of Christ

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 apace,  
 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.

The Mass of Christ      101

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.

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 leisured 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,  
 Led him away, his faltering steps, his slim  
 Frail form within mine arm; his eyes were dim.

Out and away from this I gently guided  
 Through wretched streets I knew. (Is not my blood  
 Upon their stones?). A few poor sots derided,  
 But we passed on unheeding, as we could,  
 Till by a little door we paused and stood.

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.'  
 O 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!"

He raised his face! See, on the Calvary hill,  
 Submissive 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.

iv

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, arraiguing Crime,  
 And bidding Justice "bring the better time!"

*O Love, sing on, sing on, O girl with light,  
 Shatter the silence of the hopeless hours;  
 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!*

## 106 To Queen Victoria in England

### From a Verandah

(Sydney)

#### "Armageddon"

O CITY lapped in sun and Sabbath rest,  
With happy face of plenteous ease possessed,  
Have you no doubts that whisper, dreams that moan  
Disquietude, to stir your slumbering breast?

Think you the sins of other climes are gone?  
The harlot's curse rings in your streets—the groan  
Of out-worn men, the stabbed and plundered slaves  
Of ever-growing Greed, these are your own!

O'er you shall sweep the fiery hell that craves  
For quenchment the bright blood of human waves:  
For you, if you repent not, shall atone  
For Greed's dark death-holes with War's swarming graves!

## 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 unforgetten  
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 107

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 bar-  
tered 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.

Madam, you have done well! You have fed all these to repletion—

You have put up a gilded calf beside a gilded cow,  
And bidden men and women behold the forms of human completion—

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!*

## Elsie

## A Memory

**L**ITTLE elfin maid,  
Old, though scarce two years,  
With your big dark hazel eyes  
Tenderer than tears,

## Why He Loves Her 109

And your rosebud mouth  
Lisping jocund things,  
Breaking brooding silence with  
Wistful questionings!

Like a flower you grew  
While life's bright sun shone.  
Does the greedy spendthrift earth  
Heed a flower is gone?

No; but Love's fond ken,  
That gropes through Death's dark ways,  
Almost seems to hear your Voice,  
Seems to see your Face!

## Why He Loves Her

**Y**OU ask me why I love her,  
As I love nought on earth?  
Why I'll put none above her  
For sorrow or for mirth?  
Though there be others fairer;  
In spirit, richer, rarer;  
With none will I compare her,  
Who is to me all worth!

I love her for her beauty,  
Her force, her fire, her youth,  
For kisses cold as duty  
Bespeak not love, but ruth.  
I love her for the treasure  
Of all the rapturous pleasure  
Her love gives without measure  
Of passion and of truth!

## 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 "Songs")

"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 !"

## 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, sneering, 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!

114 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 sailers 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 Phœnician 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—no; 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 115

And there, in the dank and fœtid mist, as I, silent and tearless,  
stood,  
And the river's exhalations, sweating forth their muddy blood,  
Breathed full 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,



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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-eyed, 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;

At the West India Docks 117

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 aerial movement ceased of the shafts and wheels of  
might,  
And a superhuman clamour leaped madly to where overhead

## Dirge

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”

**B**URY 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 119

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

## Fling out the Flag

*(For the Australian Labour Federation)*

**F**LING 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 quen-  
 chless 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?

120 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 of 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 121

*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 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.*

Farewell to the Children

**I**N the early summer morning  
I stand and watch them come,  
The Children to the School-house;  
They chatter and laugh and hum.

The little boys with satchels  
Slung round them, and the Girls  
Each with hers swinging in her hand;  
I love their sunny curls.

I love to see them playing,  
Romping and shouting with glee,  
The boys and girls together,  
Simple, fearless, free.

I love to see them marching  
In squads, in file, in line,  
Advancing and retreating,  
Tramping, keeping time.

122 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.

Epode

123

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.

Epode

**B**YOND 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, yon ray  
Shoots 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 Shakspeare 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 all the heart,  
These bloody sweats that drain and sear and smart.  
I love you, and you'll kiss me when I sleep!"*

THE END

*Muriel Steadman*