

Classic Poetry Series

Albert Smythe
- poems -

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Albert Smythe(27 December 1861 - 2 October 1947)

Albert Ernest Stafford Smythe was a Canadian poet and journalist.

Life

Smythe was born in Gracehill, County Antrin, Ireland, the son of Leonora Cary and Stafford Smythe. He worked as a journalist in Belfast, in Chicago, and in Toronto for the Globe, the World, and The Lamp.

In 1890 he married Mary Adelaide Constantine, whom he had met on a transatlantic voyage; the couple had one son. His wife died in 1906, and he remarried in 1912.

He published two volumes of poetry. He introduced theosophy into Canada, and was the first president of the Theosophical Society of Toronto. He died in Hamilton, Ontario.

Anastasis

What shall it profit a man
To gain the world—if he can—
And lose his soul, as they say
In their uninstructed way?

The whole of the world in gain;
The whole of your soul! Too vain
You judge yourself in the cost.
'Tis you—not your soul—is lost.

Your soul! If you only knew
You would reach to the heaven's blue,
To the heartmost centre sink,
Ere you severed the silver link,

To be lost in your petty lust
And scattered in cosmic dust.

For your soul is a Shining Star
Where the Throne and the Angels are.

And after a thousand years
With the salve of his bottled tears
Your soul shall gather again
From the dust of a world of pain

The frame of a slave set free—
The man that you ought to be,
The man you may be to-night
If you turn to the Valley of Light.

Albert Smythe

By Wave And War

Once again the ocean fulness,
Once again the daring leap,
All my limbs o'er-lapped in coolness,
All my joy upon the deep—
Arm that urges, wave that surges,
Foam that flies along the flood,
Over-strive and over-conquer
All the numbness and the nullness
In the languor of my blood,
And I dash among the breakers, and I overbear their rancour
Till I feel myself a man in might and mood.

Once again the field of glory,
Once again the battle-shout,

And my shield is hacked and gory,
And the foe is bold and stout;
There are rallies, there are sallies,
There is death in every blow,
But the mood of war grows godlike,
And the young men and the hoary
Charge with equal hearts aglow,
Till a thrust has pierced their fury—flung them headlong—lying clod-like
They are silent—but they triumph as they go!

Once again the soul's submergence
Under warring will and sense,
By the Law's almighty urgency
And the Sun's bright vehemence;
Plunging, diving, onward striving,
Through the shocks of change and chance—
Through the coils of flesh and passion,
Till the love-compelled convergence
Towards the Heart of all Romance,
To the Throne of Him who watches in the old victorious fashion
Comes a brother in humanity's advance.

Albert Smythe

November Sunshine

One figure flitting through my dreamland ways
Holds out dear hands and beckons me to go,
And all the world is sweeter for a phrase
That dimly whispers when the lights are low.
Once, leaping through the silences of snow,
Far up the heights, the sky all turned to haze,
A little rill, escaping, rippled so:
Adventured thus, my dreamland figure strays.

Belated on the spray that afternoon
The red, unripened bramble-berries hung,
Touched with November sunshine, fading soon—
A smile, untimely bright, in mockery flung;
A blackbird, all his summer anthems sung,
Fled with a scream; about our feet lay strewn
The leafy havoc; and my heart was wrung
To know, too late for life, life's only boon.

They pass, these uninterpretable years,
A weird, oracular host, abrupt and stern,
Interminably ranked. Time domineers,
Despoiling us of all the joys we earn;
And yet, Soul-shiningly, the mist-banks burn
With glory on the hither side of tears.
The out-world phantoms nevermore return;
The world within enfolds the years and spheres.

Albert Smythe

The Trysting Path

Dear little darkened way where we have climbed
How often and again,
Down to the still, star-shadowed haunt where chimed
Uncounted hours of peace beyond all pain!—
There have we lain
And to the leafy whispers of the wood-world rhymed
The music of our hearts' refrain:
Guard thy rare solitude, and may no sullen feet
The wedded paces of thy path profane!

And you—so dear that all things else are dear
That enter your desire—
All that you value, all that I revere
Transformed in our discourse (as in God's fire
The starry choir
With life renewed evolves fresh fitness for a higher sphere,)
With quick interpretations inspire,
Deep inner knowledge, and the need, confessed and sweet,
Of that Sun-power which holds the worlds entire.

Set in blue darkness, once, through wreathing boughs,
We saw the Lord's own star,
And breast to breast there sanctified our vows
Before that throne where all the glories are.
Not very far
From the bright Kingdom standing then, with radiant brows,
And love's long kiss that nought can mar,
You sealed our faith, and so, while lives unnumbered fleet,
As one, we seek th' Eternal Avatar.

Albert Smythe

The Way Of The Master

I know that the Master walked on earth,
For I've heard the tale of His human birth,
And all that He did would I have done
Had he been mortal and I God's Son.

I know that His heart was crushed and wrung,
For I've cherished that which has turned and stung;
And He could not help but love us all
Though some are held in an evil thrall.

And I know that His law was Brotherhood,
And His life was gentle and kind and good,
And all that the sad earth needs this hour
To bring men peace, is to use that power.

I have overtaken many a band
Of pilgrims following Faith's command,
And journeyed awhile where their prophet led,
Then, passing on, found the Path ahead,

With the Master's guide-marks, true and just,
And His foot-prints marked in the clay and dust,
But over-trodden, effaced and blurred,
By those who followed some lesser Word.

I may pass them all in the years, perchance,
And reach new realms of the soul's expanse,
And many may follow where I have gone—
But the Master still will be leading on.

For the best I know of His heart to-day,
When I've bettered that, will have sunk away
In the knowledge gained from my higher place
Of His endless love, of His boundless grace.

O comrade mine, we shall never part
In the living way of the loving heart,
Where the lust of gold and the wanton's guile
And the cup of the curse shall not defile,

For I know the Master walked on earth,
I have heard the tale of his human birth,
And all that He did would I have done
Had He been mortal and I God's Son.

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