Classic Poetry Series

Henry Van Dyke

- 117 poems -

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Henry Van Dyke (10 November 1852 – 10 April 1933)

Henry Jackson van Dyke was an American author, educator, and clergyman.

Biography

Henry van Dyke was born on November 11 , 1852 in Germantown, Pennsylvania in the United States. He graduated from Princeton University in 1873 and from Princeton Theological Seminary, 1877 and served as a professor of English literature at Princeton between 1899 and 1923. In 1908-09 Dr. van Dyke was an American lecturer at the University of Paris. By appointment of President Wilson he became Minister to the Netherlands and Luxembourg in 1913. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters and received many other honors. Van Dyke was an "ardent foe of the annexation of the Philippines, [and] told his congregation in 1898, 'If we enter the course of foreign conquest, the day is not far distant when we must spend in annual preparation for wars more than the $180,000,000 that we now spend every year in the education of our children for peace.'

He chaired the committee that wrote the first Presbyterian printed liturgy, The Book of Common Worship of 1906. Among his popular writings are the two Christmas stories, The Other Wise Man (1896) and The First Christmas Tree (1897). Various religious themes of his work are also expressed in his poetry, hymns and the essays collected in Little Rivers (1895) and Fisherman’s Luck (1899). He wrote the lyrics to the popular hymn, "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee" (1907), sung to the tune of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy". He compiled several short stories in The Blue Flower (1902), named after the key symbol of Romanticism introduced first by Novalis. He also contributed a chapter to the collaborative novel, The Whole Family (1908). Among his poems is "Katrina's Sundial", the inspiration for the song, "Time Is", by the group It's a Beautiful Day on their eponymous 1969 debut album. Furthermore, the lyrics of a song — entitled "Time", sung by Mark Masri — are mostly inspired by the following quote, written by Henry van Dyke: "Time is too slow for those who wait, too swift for those who fear, too long for those who grieve, too short for those who rejoice, but for those who love — time is eternity". A biography of Van Dyke, titled Henry Van Dyke: A Biography, was written by his son Tertius van Dyke and published in 1935.

Works:

The Other Wise Man (1896)
The First Christmas Tree (1897)
Little Rivers (1895)
Fisherman’s Luck (1899)
The Blue Flower (1902)

The Whole Family (1908 -Collaborator)

A Child in the Garden

When to the garden of untroubled thought
I came of late, and saw the open door,
And wished again to enter, and explore
The sweet, wild ways with stainless bloom inwrought,
And bowers of innocence with beauty fraught,
It seemed some purer voice must speak before
I dared to tread that garden loved of yore,
That Eden lost unknown and found unsought.

Then just within the gate I saw a child, --
A stranger-child, yet to my heart most dear;
He held his hands to me, and softly smiled
With eyes that knew no shade of sin or fear:
"Come in," he said, "and play awhile with me;"
"I am the little child you used to be."

Henry Van Dyke

A Health to Mark Twain

At his Birthday Feast

With memories old and wishes new
We crown our cups again,
And here's to you, and here's to you
With love that ne'er shall wane!
And may you keep, at sixty-seven,
The joy of earth, the hope of heaven,
And fame well-earned, and friendship true,
And peace that comforts every pain,
And faith that fights the battle through,
And all your heart's unbounded wealth,
And all your wit, and all your health,--
Yes, here's a hearty health to you,
And here's to you, and here's to you,
Long life to you, Mark Twain.

Henry Van Dyke

A Home Song

I read within a poet's book
A word that starred the page:
"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage!"

Yes, that is true; and something more
You'll find, where'er you roam,
That marble floors and gilded walls
Can never make a home.

But every house where Love abides,
And Friendship is a guest,
Is surely home, and home-sweet-home:
For there the heart can rest.

Henry Van Dyke

A Legend of Service

It pleased the Lord of Angels (praise His name!)
To hear, one day, report from those who came
With pitying sorrow, or exultant joy,
To tell of earthly tasks in His employ:
For some were sorry when they saw how slow
The stream of heavenly love on earth must flow;
And some were glad because their eyes had seen,
Along its banks, fresh flowers and living green.
So, at a certain hour, before the throne
The youngest angel, Asmiel, stood alone;
Nor glad, nor sad, but full of earnest thought,
And thus his tidings to the Master brought:
"Lord, in the city Lupon I have found
"Three servants of thy holy name, renowned
"Above their fellows. One is very wise,
"With thoughts that ever range above the skies;
"And one is gifted with the golden speech
"That makes men glad to hear when he will teach;
"And one, with no rare gift or grace endued,
"Has won the people's love by doing good.
"With three such saints Lupon is trebly blest;
"But, Lord, I fain would know, which loves Thee best?"

Then spake the Lord of Angels, to whose look
The hearts of all are like an open book:
"In every soul the secret thought I read,
"And well I know who loves me best indeed.
"But every life has pages vacant still,
"Whereon a man may write the thing he will;
"Therefore I read in silence, day by day,
"And wait for hearts untaught to learn my way.
"But thou shalt go to Lupon, to the three
"Who serve me there, and take this word from me:
"Tell each of them his Master bids him go
"Alone to Spiran's huts, across the snow;
"There he shall find a certain task for me:
"But what, I do not tell to them nor thee.
"Give thou the message, make my word the test,
"And crown for me the one who answers best."
Silent the angel stood, with folded hands,
To take the imprint of his Lord's commands;
Then drew one breath, obedient and elate,
And passed, the self-same hour, through Lupon's gate.

First to the Temple door he made his way;
And there, because it was an holy-day,
He saw the folk by thousands thronging, stirred
By ardent thirst to hear the preacher's word.
Then, while the echoes murmured Bernol's name,
Through aisles that hushed behind him, Bernol came;
Strung to the keenest pitch of conscious might,
With lips prepared and firm, and eyes alight.

One moment at the pulpit steps he knelt
In silent prayer, and on his shoulder felt
The angel's hand: --"The Master bids thee go
"Alone to Spiran's huts, across the snow,
"To serve Him there." Then Bernol's hidden face
Went white as death, and for about the space
Of ten slow heart-beats there was no reply;
Till Bernol looked around and whispered, "WHY?"
But answer to his question came there none;
The angel sighed, and with a sigh was gone.

Within the humble house where Malvin spent
His studious years, on holy things intent,
Sweet stillness reigned; and there the angel found
The saintly sage immersed in thought profound,
Weaving with patient toil and willing care
A web of wisdom, wonderful and fair:
A seamless robe for Truth's great bridal meet,
And needing but one thread to be complete.
Then Asmiel touched his hand, and broke the thread
Of fine-spun thought, and very gently said,
"The One of whom thou thinkest bids thee go
"Alone to Spiran's huts, across the snow,
"To serve Him there." With sorrow and surprise
Malvin looked up, reluctance in his eyes.
The broken thought, the strangeness of the call,
The perilous passage of the mountain-wall,
The solitary journey, and the length
Of ways unknown, too great for his frail strength,
Appalled him. With a doubtful brow
He scanned the doubtful task, and muttered "HOW?"
But Asmiel answered, as he turned to go,
With cold, disheartened voice, "I do not know."

Now as he went, with fading hope, to seek
The third and last to whom God bade him speak,
Scarce twenty steps away whom should he meet
But Fermor, hurrying cheerful down the street,
With ready heart that faced his work like play,
And joyed to find it greater every day!
The angel stopped him with uplifted hand,
And gave without delay his Lord's command:
"He whom thou servest here would have thee go
"Alone to Spiran's huts, across the snow,
"To serve Him there." Ere Asmiel breathed again
The eager answer leaped to meet him, "WHEN?"

The angel's face with inward joy grew bright,
And all his figure glowed with heavenly light;
He took the golden circlet from his brow
And gave the crown to Fermor, answering, "Now!
"For thou hast met the Master's bidden test,

"And I have found the man who loves Him best.
"Not thine, nor mine, to question or reply
"When He commands us, asking 'how?' or 'why?'
"He knows the cause; His ways are wise and just;
"Who serves the King must serve with perfect trust."

Henry Van Dyke

A Lover's Envy

I envy every flower that blows
Along the meadow where she goes,
And every bird that sings to her,
And every breeze that brings to her
The fragrance of the rose.

I envy every poet's rhyme
That moves her heart at eventime,
And every tree that wears for her
Its brightest bloom, and bears for her
The fruitage of its prime.

I envy every Southern night
That paves her path with moonbeams white,
And silvers all the leaves for her,
And in their shadow weaves for her
A dream of dear delight.

I envy none whose love requires
Of her a gift, a task that tires:
I only long to live to her,
I only ask to give to her
All that her heart desires.

Henry Van Dyke

A Mile With Me

O who will walk a mile with me
Along life's merry way?
A comrade blithe and full of glee,
Who dares to laugh out loud and free,
And let his frolic fancy play,
Like a happy child, through the flowers gay
That fill the field and fringe the way
Where he walks a mile with me.

And who will walk a mile with me
Along life's weary way?
A friend whose heart has eyes to see
The stars shine out o'er the darkening lea,
And the quiet rest at the end o' the day,--
A friend who knows, and dares to say,
The brave, sweet words that cheer the way
Where he walks a mile with me.

With such a comrade, such a friend,
I fain would walk till journeys end,
Through summer sunshine, winter rain,
And then?--Farewell, we shall meet again!

Henry Van Dyke

A Noon Song

There are songs for the morning and songs for the night,
For sunrise and sunset, the stars and the moon;
But who will give praise to the fulness of light,
And sing us a song of the glory of noon?
Oh, the high noon, the clear noon,
The noon with golden crest;
When the blue sky burns, and the great sun turns
With his face to the way of the west!

How swiftly he rose in the dawn of his strength;
How slowly he crept as the morning wore by;
Ah, steep was the climbing that led him at length
To the height of his throne in the wide summer sky.
Oh, the long toil, the slow toil,
The toil that may not rest,
Till the sun looks down from his journey's crown,
To the wonderful way of the west!

Then a quietness falls over meadow and hill,
The wings of the wind in the forest are furled,
The river runs softly, the birds are all still,
The workers are resting all over the world.
Oh, the good hour, the kind hour,
The hour that calms the breast!
Little inn half-way on the road of the day,
Where it follows the turn to the west!

There's a plentiful feast in the maple-tree shade,
The lilt of a song to an old-fashioned tune,
The talk of a friend, or the kiss of a maid,
To sweeten the cup that we drink to the noon.
Oh, the deep noon, the full noon,
Of all the day the best!
When the blue sky burns, and the great sun turns
To his home by the way of the west.

Henry Van Dyke

A Prayer for a Mother's Birthday

Lord Jesus, Thou hast known
A mother's love and tender care:
And Thou wilt hear, while for my own
Mother most dear I make this birthday prayer.

Protect her life, I pray,
Who gave the gift of life to me;
And may she know, from day to day,
The deepening glow of Life that comes from Thee.

As once upon her breast
Fearless and well content I lay,
So let her heart, on Thee at rest,
Feel fears depart and troubles fade away.

Her every wish fulfill;
And even if Thou must refuse
In anything, let Thy wise will
A comfort bring such as kind mothers use.

Ah, hold her by the hand,
As once her hand held mine;
And though she may not understand
Life's winding way, lead her in peace divine.

I cannot pay my debt
For all the love that she has given;
But Thou, love's Lord, wilt not forget
Her due reward,--bless her in earth and heaven.

Henry Van Dyke

A Rondeau of College Rhymes

Our college rhymes,--how light they seem,
Like little ghosts of love's young dream
That led our boyish hearts away
From lectures and from books, to stray
By flowery mead and flowing stream!

There's nothing here, in form or theme,
Of thought sublime or art supreme:
We would not have the critic weigh
Our college rhymes.

Yet if, perchance, a slender beam
Of feeling's glow or fancy's gleam
Still lingers in the lines we lay
At Alma Mater's feet today,
The touch of Nature may redeem
Our college rhymes.

Henry Van Dyke

A Scrap of Paper

"Will you go to war just for a scrap of paper?" -- Question
of the German Chancellor to the British Ambassador,
August 5, 1914.

A mocking question! Britain's answer came
Swift as the light and searching as the flame.

"Yes, for a scrap of paper we will fight
Till our last breath, and God defend the right!

"A scrap of paper where a name is set
Is strong as duty's pledge and honor's debt.

"A scrap of paper holds for man and wife
The sacrament of love, the bond of life.

"A scrap of paper may be Holy Writ
With God's eternal word to hallow it.

"A scrap of paper binds us both to stand
Defenders of a neutral neighbor land.

"By God, by faith, by honor, yes! We fight
To keep our name upon that paper white."

Henry Van Dyke

A Wayfaring Song

0 who will walk a mile with me
Along life's merry way?
A comrade blithe and full of glee,
Who dares to laugh out loud and free
And let his frolic fancy play,
Like a happy child, through the flowers gay
That fill the field and fringe the way
Where he walks a mile with me.
And who will walk a mile with me
Along life's weary way?
A friend whose heart has eyes to see
The stars shine out o'er the darkening lea,
And the quiet rest at the end o' the day-
A friend who knows, and dares to say,
The brave, sweet words that cheer the way
Where he walks a mile with me.
With such a comrade, such a friend,
I fain would walk till journey's end,
Through summer sunshine, winter rain,
And then? - Farewell, we shall meet again!

Henry Van Dyke

Ameria's Welcome Home

Oh, gallantly they fared forth in khaki and in blue,
America's crusading host of warriors bold and true;
They battled for the rights of man beside our brave Allies,
And now they're coming home to us with glory in their eyes.

Oh, it's home again, and home again, America for me!
Our hearts are turning home again and there we long to be,
In our beautiful big country beyond the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

Our boys have seen the Old World as none have seen before.
They know the grisly horror of the German gods of war:
The noble faith of Britain and the hero-heart of France,
The soul of Belgium's fortitude and Italy's romance.

They bore our country's great word across the rolling sea,
'America swears brotherhood with all the just and free.'
They wrote that word victorious on fields of mortal strife,
And many a valiant lad was proud to seal it with his life.

Oh, welcome home in Heaven's peace, dear spirits of the dead!
And welcome home ye living sons America hath bred!
The lords of war are beaten down, your glorious task is done;
You fought to make the whole world free, and the victory is won.

Now it's home again, and home again, our hearts are turning west,
Of all the lands beneath the sun America is best.
We're going home to our own folks, beyond the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

Henry Van Dyke

America

I love thine inland seas,
Thy groves of giant trees,
Thy rolling plains;
Thy rivers' mighty sweep,
Thy mystic canyons deep,
Thy mountains wild and steep,
All thy domains;

Thy silver Eastern strands,
Thy Golden Gate that stands
Wide to the West;
Thy flowery Southland fair,
Thy sweet and crystal air, --
O land beyond compare,
Thee I love best!

Additional verses for the
National Hymn,
March, 1906.

Henry Van Dyke

America for Me

'Tis fine to see the Old World and travel up and down
Among the famous palaces and cities of renown,
To admire the crumblyh castles and the statues and kings
But now I think I've had enough of antiquated things.

So it's home again, and home again, America for me!
My heart is turning home again and there I long to be,
In the land of youth and freedom, beyond the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

Oh, London is a man's town, there's power in the air;
And Paris is a woman's town, with flowers in her hair;
And it's sweet to dream in Venice, and it's great to study Rome;
But when it comes to living there is no place like home.

I like the German fir-woods in green battalions drilled;
I like the gardens of Versailles with flashing foutains filled;
But, oh, to take your had, my dear, and ramble for a day
In the friendly western woodland where Nature has her sway!

I know that Europe's wonderful, yet something seems to lack!
The Past is too much with her, and the people looking back.
But the glory of the Present is to make the Future free--
We love our land for what she is and what she is to be.

Oh, it's home again, and home again, America for me!
I want a ship that's westward bound to plough the rolling sea,
To the blessed Land of Room Enough, beyond the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

Henry Van Dyke

America's Prosperity

They tell me thou art rich, my country: gold
In glittering flood has poured into thy chest;
Thy flocks and herds increase, thy barns are pressed
With harvest, and thy stores can hardly hold
Their merchandise; unending trains are rolled
Along thy network rails of East and West;
Thy factories and forges never rest;
Thou art enriched in all things bought and sold!

But dost thou prosper? Better news I crave.
O dearest country, is it well with thee
Indeed, and is thy soul in health?
A nobler people, hearts more wisely brave,
And thoughts that lift men up and make them free,--
These are prosperity and vital wealth!

Henry Van Dyke

An American in Europe

'Tis fine to see the Old World, and travel up and down
Among the famous palaces and cities of renown,
To admire the crumbly castles and the statues of the kings, --
But now I think I've had enough of antiquated things.

So it's home again, and home again, America for me!
My heart is turning home again, and there I long to be,
In the land of youth and freedom beyond the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

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And Paris is a woman's town, with flowers in her hair;
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But, oh, to take your hand, my dear, and ramble for a day
In the friendly western woodland where Nature has her way!

I know that Europe's wonderful, yet something seems to lack:
The Past is too much with her, and the people looking back.
But the glory of the Present is to make the Future free, --
We love our land for what she is and what she is to be.

So it's home again, and home again, America for me!
I want a ship that's westward bound to plough the rolling sea,
To the blessed Land of Room Enough beyond the ocean bars,
Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

Henry Van Dyke

Arrival

Across a thousand miles of sea, a hundred leagues of land,
Along a path I had not traced and could not understand,
I travelled fast and far for this, -- to take thee by the hand.

A pilgrim knowing not the shrine where he would bend his knee,
A mariner without a dream of what his port would be,
So fared I with a seeking heart until I came to thee.

O cooler than a grove of palm in some heat-weary place,
O fairer than an isle of calm after the wild sea race,
The quiet room adorned with flowers where first I saw thy face!

Then furl the sail, let fall the oar, forget the paths of foam!
The Power that made me wander far at last has brought me home
To thee, dear haven of my heart, and I no more will roam.

Henry Van Dyke

Autumn in the Garden

When the frosty kiss of Autumn in the dark
Makes its mark
On the flowers, and the misty morning grieves
Over fallen leaves;
Then my olden garden, where the golden soil
Through the toil
Of a hundred years is mellow, rich, and deep,
Whispers in its sleep.

'Mid the crumpled beds of marigold and phlox,
Where the box
Borders with its glossy green the ancient walks,
There's a voice that talks
Of the human hopes that bloomed and withered here
Year by year,--
Dreams of joy, that brightened all the labouring hours,
Fading as the flowers.

Yet the whispered story does not deepen grief;
But relief
For the loneliness of sorrow seems to flow
From the Long-Ago,
When I think of other lives that learned, like mine,
To resign,
And remember that the sadness of the fall
Comes alike to all.

What regrets, what longings for the lost were theirs!
And what prayers
For the silent strength that nerves us to endure
Things we cannot cure!
Pacing up and down the garden where they paced,
I have traced
All their well-worn paths of patience, till I find
Comfort in my mind.

Faint and far away their ancient griefs appear:
Yet how near
Is the tender voice, the careworn, kindly face,
Of the human race!
Let us walk together in the garden, dearest heart,
Not apart!
They who know the sorrows other lives have known
Never walk alone.

Henry Van Dyke

Christ of Everywhere

"Christ of the Andes," Christ of Everywhere,
Great lover of the hills, the open air,
And patient lover of impatient men
Who blindly strive and sin and strive again, --
Thou Living Word, larger than any creed,
Thou Love Divine, uttered in human deed, --
Oh, teach the world, warring and wandering still,
Thy way of Peace, the foot path of Good Will!

Henry Van Dyke

Departure

Oh, why are you shining so bright, big Sun,
And why is the garden so gay?
Do you know that my days of delight are done,
Do you know I am going away?
If you covered your face with a cloud, I 'd dream
You were sorry for me in my pain,
And the heads of the flowers all bowed would seem
To be weeping with me in the rain.

But why is your head so low, sweet heart,
And why are your eyes overcast?
Are they clouded because you know we must part,
Do you think this embrace is our last?
Then kiss me again, and again, and again,
Look up as you bid me good-bye!
For your face is too dear for the stain of a tear,
And your smile is the sun in my sky.

Henry Van Dyke

Doors of Daring

The mountains that enfold the vale
With walls of granite, steep and high,
Invite the fearless foot to scale
Their stairway toward the sky.

The restless, deep, dividing sea
That flows and foams from shore to shore,
Calls to its sunburned chivalry,
"Push out, set sail, explore!"

And all the bars at which we fret,
That seem to prison and control,
Are but the doors of daring, set
Ajar before the soul.

Say not, "Too poor," but freely give;
Sigh not, "Too weak," but boldly try,
You never can begin to live
Until you dare to die.

Henry Van Dyke

Dulcis Memoria

Long, long ago I heard a little song,
(Ah, was it long ago, or yesterday?)
So lowly, slowly wound the tune along,
That far into my heart it found the way:
A melody consoling and endearing;
And still, in silent hours, I'm often hearing
The small, sweet song that does not die away.

Long, long ago I saw a little flower,--
(Ah, was it long ago, or yesterday?)
So fair of face and fragrant for an hour,
That something dear to me it seemed to say:
A thought of joy that blossomed into being
Without a word; and now I'm often seeing
The friendly flower that does not fade away.

Long, long ago we had a little child,--
(Ah, was it long ago, or yesterday?)
Into his mother's eyes and mine he smiled
Unconscious love; warm in our arms he lay.
An angel called! Dear heart, we could not hold him;
Yet secretly your arms and mine infold him--
Our little child who does not go away.

Long, long ago? Ah, memory, make it clear--
(It was not long ago, but yesterday,)
So little and so helpless and so dear
Let not the song be lost, the flower decay!
His voice, his waking eyes, his gentle sleeping:
The smallest things are safest in thy keeping.
Sweet memory, keep our child with us always.

Henry Van Dyke

Echoes From the Greek Mythology

I - STARLIGHT

With two bright eyes, my star, my love,
Thou lookest on the stars above:
Ah, would that I the heaven might be
With a million eyes to look on thee.

Plato.

II - ROSELEAF

A little while the rose,
And after that the thorn;
An hour of dewy morn,
And then the glamour goes.
Ah, love in beauty born,
A little while the rose!

Unknown.

III - PHOSPHOR -- HESPER

O morning star, farewell!
My love I now must leave;
The hours of day I slowly tell,
And turn to her with the twilight bell, --
O welcome, star of eve!

Meleager.

IV - SEASONS

Sweet in summer, cups of snow,
Cooling thirsty lips aglow;
Sweet to sailors winter-bound,
Spring arrives with garlands crowned;
Sweeter yet the hour that covers
With one cloak a pair of lovers,
Living lost in golden weather,
While they talk of love together.

Asclepiades.

V - THE VINE AND THE GOAT

Although you eat me to the root,
I yet shall bear enough of fruit
For wine to sprinkle your dim eyes,

When you are made a sacrifice.

Euenus.

VI - THE PROFESSOR

Seven pupils, in the class
Of Professor Callias,
Listen silent while he drawls, --
Three are benches, four are walls.

Unknown.

Henry Van Dyke

Edmund Clarence Stedman

Oh, quick to feel the lightest touch
Of beauty or of truth,
Rich in the thoughtfulness of age,
The hopefulness of youth,
The courage of the gentle heart,
The wisdom of the pure,
The strength of finely tempered souls
To labour and endure!

The blue of springtime in your eyes
Was never quenched by pain;
And winter brought your head the crown
Of snow without a stain.
The poet's mind, the prince's heart,
You kept until the end,
Nor ever faltered in your work,
Nor ever failed a friend.

Henry Van Dyke

Fire-Fly City

Like a long arrow through the dark the train is darting,
Bearing me far away, after a perfect day of love's delight:
Wakeful with all the sad-sweet memories of parting,
I lift the narrow window-shade and look out on the night.

Lonely the land unknown, and like a river flowing,
Forest and field and hill are gliding backward still athwart my dream;
Till in that country strange, and ever stranger growing,
A magic city full of lights begins to glow and gleam.

Wide through the landscape dim the lamps are lit in millions;
Long avenues unfold clear-shining lines of gold across the green;
Clusters and rings of light, and luminous pavilions, --
Oh, who will tell the city's name, and what these wonders mean?

Why do they beckon me, and what have they to show me?
Crowds in the blazing street, mirth where the feasters meet, kisses and wine:
Many to laugh with me, but never one to know me:
A cityful of stranger-hearts and none to beat with mine!

Look how the glittering lines are wavering and lifting, --
Softly the breeze of night, scatters the vision bright: and, passing fair,
Over the meadow-grass and through the forest drifting,
The Fire-Fly City of the Dark is lost in empty air!

Girl of the golden eyes, to you my heart is turning:
Sleep in your quiet room, while through the midnight gloom my train is whirled.
Clear in your dreams of me the light of love is burning, --
The only never failing light in all the phantom world.

Henry Van Dyke

Flood-Tide of Flowers

IN HOLLAND

The laggard winter ebbed so slow
With freezing rain and melting snow,
It seemed as if the earth would stay
Forever where the tide was low,
In sodden green and watery gray.

But now from depths beyond our sight,
The tide is turning in the night,
And floods of color long concealed
Come silent rising toward the light,
Through garden bare and empty field.

And first, along the sheltered nooks,
The crocus runs in little brooks
Of joyance, till by light made bold
They show the gladness of their looks
In shining pools of white and gold.

The tiny scilla, sapphire blue,
Is gently seeping in, to strew
The earth with heaven; and sudden rills
Of sunlit yellow, sweeping through,
Spread into lakes of daffodils.

The hyacinths, with fragrant heads,
Have overflowed their sandy beds,
And fill the earth with faint perfume,
The breath that Spring around her sheds.
And now the tulips break in bloom!

A sea, a rainbow-tinted sea,
A splendor and a mystery,
Floods o'er the fields of faded gray:
The roads are full of folks in glee,
For lo, -- to-day is Easter Day!

Henry Van Dyke

Four Things

Four things a man must learn to do
If he would make his record true:
To think without confusion clearly;
To love his fellow man sincerely;
To act from honest motives purely;
To trust in God and Heaven securely.

Henry Van Dyke

Francis Makemie

(Presbyter of Christ in Americas 1683-1708)

To thee, plain hero of a rugged race,
We bring the meed of praise too long delayed!
Thy fearless word and faithful work have made
For God's Republic firmer path and place
In this New World: thou hast proclaimed the grace
And power of Christ in many a forest glade,
Teaching the truth that leaves men unafraid
Of frowning tyranny or death's dark face.

Oh, who can tell how much we owe to thee,
Makemie, and to labour such as thine,
For all that makes America the shrine
Of faith untrammeled and of conscience free?
Stand here, grey stone, and consecrate the sod
Where rests this brave Scotch-Irish man of God!

Henry Van Dyke

God of the Open Air

I

Thou who hast made thy dwelling fair
With flowers beneath, above with starry lights,
And set thine altars everywhere,--
On mountain heights,
In woodlands dim with many a dream,
In valleys bright with springs,
And on the curving capes of every stream:
Thou who hast taken to thyself the wings
Of morning, to abide
Upon the secret places of the sea,
And on far islands, where the tide
Visits the beauty of untrodden shores,
Waiting for worshippers to come to thee
In thy great out-of-doors!
To thee I turn, to thee I make my prayer,
God of the open air.

II

Seeking for thee, the heart of man
Lonely and longing ran,
In that first, solitary hour,
When the mysterious power
To know and love the wonder of the morn
Was breathed within him, and his soul was born;
And thou didst meet thy child,
Not in some hidden shrine,
But in the freedom of the garden wild,
And take his hand in thine,--
There all day long in Paradise he walked,
And in the cool of evening with thee talked.

III

Lost, long ago, that garden bright and pure,
Lost, that calm day too perfect to endure,
And lost the childlike love that worshipped and was sure!
For men have dulled their eyes with sin,
And dimmed the light of heaven with doubt,
And built their temple walls to shut thee in,
And framed their iron creeds to shut thee out.
But not for thee the closing of the door,
O Spirit unconfined!
Thy ways are free
As is the wandering wind,
And thou hast wooed thy children, to restore
Their fellowship with thee,
In peace of soul and simpleness of mind.

IV

Joyful the heart that, when the flood rolled by,
Leaped up to see the rainbow in the sky;
And glad the pilgrim, in the lonely night,
For whom the hills of Haran, tier on tier,
Built up a secret stairway to the height
Where stars like angel eyes were shining clear.
From mountain-peaks, in many a land and age,
Disciples of the Persian seer
Have hailed the rising sun and worshipped thee;
And wayworn followers of the Indian sage
Have found the peace of God beneath a spreading tree.

But One, but One,--ah, child most dear,
And perfect image of the Love Unseen,--
Walked every day in pastures green,
And all his life the quiet waters by,
Reading their beauty with a tranquil eye.

To him the desert was a place prepared
For weary hearts to rest;
The hillside was a temple blest;
The grassy vale a banquet-room
Where he could feed and comfort many a guest.
With him the lily shared
The vital joy that breathes itself in bloom;
And every bird that sang beside the nest
Told of the love that broods o'er every living thing.
He watched the shepherd bring
His flock at sundown to the welcome fold,
The fisherman at daybreak fling
His net across the waters gray and cold,
And all day long the patient reaper swing
His curving sickle through the harvest-gold.
So through the world the foot-path way he trod,
Drawing the air of heaven in every breath;
And in the evening sacrifice of death
Beneath the open sky he gave his soul to God.
Him will I trust, and for my Master take;
Him will I follow; and for his dear sake,
God of the open air,
To thee I make my prayer.

V

>From the prison of anxious thought that greed has builded,
>From the fetters that envy has wrought and pride has gilded,
>From the noise of the crowded ways and the fierce confusion,

>From the folly that wastes its days in a world of illusion,
(Ah, but the life is lost that frets and languishes there!)
I would escape and be free in the joy of the open air.

By the breadth of the blue that shines in silence o'er me,
By the length of the mountain-lines that stretch before me,
By the height of the cloud that sails, with rest in motion,
Over the plains and the vales to the measureless ocean,
(Oh, how the sight of the things that are great enlarges the eyes!)
Lead me out of the narrow life, to the peace of the hills
and the skies.

While the tremulous leafy haze on the woodland is spreading,
And the bloom on the meadow betrays where May has been treading;
While the birds on the branches above, and the brooks flowing under,
Are singing together of love in a world full of wonder,
(Lo, in the marvel of Springtime, dreams are changed into truth!)
Quicken my heart, and restore the beautiful hopes of youth.

By the faith that the flowers show when they bloom unbidden,
By the calm of the river's flow to a goal that is hidden,
By the trust of the tree that clings to its deep foundation,
By the courage of wild birds' wings on the long migration,
(Wonderful secret of peace that abides in Nature's breast!)
Teach me how to confide, and live my life, and rest.

For the comforting warmth of the sun that my body embraces,
For the cool of the waters that run through the shadowy places,
For the balm of the breezes that brush my face with their fingers,
For the vesper-hymn of the thrush when the twilight lingers,
For the long breath, the deep breath, the breath
of a heart without care,--
I will give thanks and adore thee, God of the open air!

VI

These are the gifts I ask
Of thee, Spirit serene:
Strength for the daily task,
Courage to face the road,
Good cheer to help me bear the traveller's load,
And, for the hours of rest that come between,
An inward joy in all things heard and seen.
These are the sins I fain
Would have thee take away:
Malice, and cold disdain,
Hot anger, sullen hate,
Scorn of the lowly, envy of the great,
And discontent that casts a shadow gray
On all the brightness of the common day.

These are the things I prize
And hold of dearest worth:
Light of the sapphire skies,
Peace of the silent hills,
Shelter of forests, comfort of the grass,
Music of birds, murmur of little rills,
Shadow of clouds that swiftly pass,
And, after showers,
The smell of flowers
And of the good brown earth,--
And best of all, along the way, friendship and mirth.

So let me keep
These treasures of the humble heart
In true possession, owning them by love;
And when at last I can no longer move
Among them freely, but must part
From the green fields and from the waters clear,
Let me not creep
Into some darkened room and hide
From all that makes the world so bright and dear;
But throw the windows wide
To welcome in the light;
And while I clasp a well-beloved hand,
Let me once more have sight
Of the deep sky and the far-smiling land,--
Then gently fall on sleep,
And breathe my body back to Nature's care,
My spirit out to thee, God of the open air.

Henry Van Dyke

Gratitude

"Do you give thanks for this? -- or that?"
No, God be thanked
I am not grateful
In that cold, calculating way, with blessing ranked
As one, two, three, and four, -- that would be hateful.

I only know that every day brings good above"
My poor deserving;
I only feel that, in the road of Life, true Love
Is leading me along and never swerving.

Whatever gifts and mercies in my lot may fall,
I would not measure
As worth a certain price in praise, or great or small;
But take and use them all with simple pleasure.

For when we gladly eat our daily bread, we bless
The Hand that feeds us;
And when we tread the road of Life in cheerfulness,
Our very heart-beats praise the Love that leads us.

Henry Van Dyke

Hesper

Her eyes are like the evening air,
Her voice is like a rose,
Her lips are like a lovely song,
That ripples as it flows,
And she herself is sweeter than
The sweetest thing she knows.

A slender, haunting, twilight form
Of wonder and surprise,
She seemed a fairy or a child,
Till, deep within her eyes,
I saw the homeward-leading star
Of womanhood arise.

Henry Van Dyke

Hide and Seek

All the trees are sleeping, all the winds are still,
All the flocks of fleecy clouds have wandered past the hill;
Through the noonday silence, down the woods of June,
Hark, a little hunter's voice comes running with a tune.
"Hide and seek!
"When I speak,
"You must answer me:
"Call again,
"Merry men,
"Coo-ee, coo-ee, coo-ee!"

Now I hear his footsteps, rustling through the grass:
Hidden in my leafy nook, shall I let him pass?
Just a low, soft whistle,--quick the hunter turns,
Leaps upon me laughing, rolls me in the ferns.
"Hold him fast,
"Caught at last!
"Now you're it, you see.
"Hide your eye,
"Till I cry,
"Coo-ee, coo-ee, coo-ee!"

II

Long ago he left me, long and long ago:
Now I wander through the world and seek him high and low;
Hidden safe and happy, in some pleasant place,--
Ah, if I could hear his voice, I soon should find his face.
Far away,
Many a day,
Where can Barney be?
Answer, dear,
Don't you hear?
Coo-ee, coo-ee, coo-ee!

Birds that in the spring-time thrilled his heart with joy,
Flowers he loved to pick for me, mind me of my boy.
Surely he is waiting till my steps come nigh;
Love may hide itself awhile, but love can never die.
Heart, be glad,
The little lad
Will call some day to thee:
"Father dear,
"Heaven is here,
"Coo-ee, coo-ee, coo-ee!"

Henry Van Dyke

Homeward Bound

Home, for my heart still calls me;
Home, through the danger zone;
Home, whatever befalls me,
I will sail again to my own!

Wolves of the sea are hiding
Closely along the way,
Under the water biding
Their moment to rend and slay.

Black is the eagle that brands them,
Black are their hearts as the night,
Black is the hate that sends them
To murder but not to fight.

Flower of the German Culture,
Boast of the Kaiser's Marine,
Choose for your emblem the vulture,
Cowardly, cruel, obscene!

Forth from her sheltered haven
Our peaceful ship glides slow,
Noiseless in flight as a raven,
Gray as a hoodie crow.

She doubles and turns in her bearing,
Like a twisting plover she goes;
The way of her westward faring
Only the captain knows.

In a lonely bay concealing
She lingers for days, and slips
At dusk from her covert, stealing
Thro' channels feared by the ships.

Brave are the men, and steady,
Who guide her over the deep,--
British mariners, ready
To face the sea-wolf's leap.

Lord of the winds and waters,
Bring our ship to her mark,
Safe from this game of hide-and-seek
With murderers in the dark!

Henry Van Dyke

Hudson's Last Voyage

June 22, 1611

THE SHALLOP ON HUDSON BAY

One sail in sight upon the lonely sea
And only one, God knows! For never ship
But mine broke through the icy gates that guard
These waters, greater grown than any since
We left the shores of England. We were first,
My men, to battle in between the bergs
And floes to these wide waves. This gulf is mine;
I name it! and that flying sail is mine!
And there, hull-down below that flying sail,
The ship that staggers home is mine, mine, mine!
My ship Discoverie!
The sullen dogs
Of mutineers, the bitches' whelps that snatched
Their food and bit the hand that nourished them,
Have stolen her. You ingrate Henry Greene,
I picked you from the gutter of Houndsditch,
And paid your debts, and kept you in my house,
And brought you here to make a man of you!
You Robert Juet, ancient, crafty man,
Toothless and tremulous, how many times
Have I employed you as a master's mate
To give you bread? And you Abacuck Prickett,
You sailor-clerk, you salted puritan,
You knew the plot and silently agreed,
Salving your conscience with a pious lie!
Yes, all of you -- hounds, rebels, thieves! Bring back
My ship!
Too late, -- I rave, -- they cannot hear
My voice: and if they heard, a drunken laugh
Would be their answer; for their minds have caught
The fatal firmness of the fool's resolve,
That looks like courage but is only fear.
They'll blunder on, and lose my ship, and drown, --
Or blunder home to England and be hanged.
Their skeletons will rattle in the chains
Of some tall gibbet on the Channel cliffs,
While passing mariners look up and say:
"Those are the rotten bones of Hudson's men
"Who left their captain in the frozen North!"

O God of justice, why hast Thou ordained
Plans of the wise and actions of the brave
Dependent on the aid of fools and cowards?
Look, -- there she goes, -- her topsails in the sun
Gleam from the ragged ocean edge, and drop
Clean out of sight! So let the traitors go
Clean out of mind! We'll think of braver things!
Come closer in the boat, my friends. John King,

You take the tiller, keep her head nor'west.
You Philip Staffe, the only one who chose
Freely to share our little shallop's fate,
Rather than travel in the hell-bound ship, --
Too good an English seaman to desert
These crippled comrades, -- try to make them rest
More easy on the thwarts. And John, my son,
My little shipmate, come and lean your head
Against your father's knee. Do you recall
That April morn in Ethelburga's church,
Five years ago, when side by side we kneeled
To take the sacrament with all our men,
Before the Hopewell left St. Catherine's docks
On our first voyage? It was then I vowed
My sailor-soul and years to search the sea
Until we found the water-path that leads
From Europe into Asia.
I believe
That God has poured the ocean round His world,
Not to divide, but to unite the lands.
And all the English captains that have dared
In little ships to plough uncharted waves, --
Davis and Drake, Hawkins and Frobisher,
Raleigh and Gilbert, -- all the other names, --
Are written in the chivalry of God
As men who served His purpose. I would claim
A place among that knighthood of the sea;
And I have earned it, though my quest should fail!
For, mark me well, the honour of our life
Derives from this: to have a certain aim
Before us always, which our will must seek
Amid the peril of uncertain ways.
Then, though we miss the goal, our search is crowned
With courage, and we find along our path
A rich reward of unexpected things.
Press towards the aim: take fortune as it fares!

I know not why, but something in my heart
Has always whispered, "Westward seek your goal!"
Three times they sent me east, but still I turned
The bowsprit west, and felt among the floes
Of ruttling ice along the Gröneland coast,
And down the rugged shore of Newfoundland,
And past the rocky capes and wooded bays
Where Gosnold sailed, -- like one who feels his way
With outstretched hand across a darkened room, --
I groped among the inlets and the isles,
To find the passage to the Land of Spice.
I have not found it yet, -- but I have found
Things worth the finding!
Son, have you forgot
Those mellow autumn days, two years ago,

When first we sent our little ship Half-Moon, --
The flag of Holland floating at her peak, --
Across a sandy bar, and sounded in
Among the channels, to a goodly bay
Where all the navies of the world could ride?
A fertile island that the redmen called
Manhattan, lay above the bay: the land
Around was bountiful and friendly fair.
But never land was fair enough to hold
The seaman from the calling of the sea.
And so we bore to westward of the isle,
Along a mighty inlet, where the tide
Was troubled by a downward-flowing flood
That seemed to come from far away, -- perhaps
From some mysterious gulf of Tartary?

Inland we held our course; by palisades
Of naked rock where giants might have built
Their fortress; and by rolling hills adorned
With forests rich in timber for great ships;
Through narrows where the mountains shut us in
With frowning cliffs that seemed to bar the stream;
And then through open reaches where the banks
Sloped to the water gently, with their fields
Of corn and lentils smiling in the sun.
Ten days we voyaged through that placid land,
Until we came to shoals, and sent a boat
Upstream to find, -- what I already knew, --
We travelled on a river, not a strait.

But what a river! God has never poured
A stream more royal through a land more rich.
Even now I see it flowing in my dream,
While coming ages people it with men
Of manhood equal to the river's pride.
I see the wigwams of the redmen changed
To ample houses, and the tiny plots
Of maize and green tobacco broadened out
To prosperous farms, that spread o'er hill and dale
The many-coloured mantle of their crops;
I see the terraced vineyard on the slope
Where now the fox-grape loops its tangled vine;
And cattle feeding where the red deer roam;
And wild-bees gathered into busy hives,
To store the silver comb with golden sweet;
And all the promised land begins to flow
With milk and honey. Stately manors rise
Along the banks, and castles top the hills,
And little villages grow populous with trade,
Until the river runs as proudly as the Rhine, --
The thread that links a hundred towns and towers!
And looking deeper in my dream, I see

A mighty city covering the isle
They call Manhattan, equal in her state
To all the older capitals of earth, --
The gateway city of a golden world, --
A city girt with masts, and crowned with spires,
And swarming with a host of busy men,
While to her open door across the bay
The ships of all the nations flock like doves.
My name will be remembered there, for men
Will say, "This river and this isle were found
By Henry Hudson, on his way to seek
The Northwest Passage into Farthest Inde."

Yes! yes! I sought it then, I seek it still, --
My great adventure and my guiding star!
For look ye, friends, our voyage is not done;
We hold by hope as long as life endures!
Somewhere among these floating fields of ice,
Somewhere along this westward widening bay,
Somewhere beneath this luminous northern night,
The channel opens to the Orient, --
I know it, -- and some day a little ship
Will push her bowsprit in, and battle through!
And why not ours, -- to-morrow, -- who can tell?
The lucky chance awaits the fearless heart!
These are the longest days of all the year;
The world is round and God is everywhere,
And while our shallop floats we still can steer.
So point her up, John King, nor'west by north.
We 'l1 keep the honour of a certain aim
Amid the peril of uncertain ways,
And sail ahead, and leave the rest to God.

Henry Van Dyke

Hymn of Joy

To the music of Beethoven's ninth symphony

Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,
Praising Thee their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!

All Thy works with joy surround Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,
Centre of unbroken praise:
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Blooming meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain,
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living,
Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our Brother, --
All who live in love are Thine:
Teach us how to love each other,
Lift us to the Joy Divine.

Mortals join the mighty chorus,
Which the morning stars began;
Father-love is reigning o'er us,
Brother-love binds man to man.
Ever singing march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife;
Joyful music lifts us sunward
In the triumph song of life.

Henry Van Dyke

If All the Skies

If all the skies were sunshine,
Our faces would be fain
To feel once more upon them
The cooling splash of rain.

If all the world were music,
Our hearts would often long
For one sweet strain of silence,
To break the endless song.

If life were always merry,
Our souls would seek relief,
And rest from weary laughter
In the quiet arms of grief.

Henry Van Dyke

Indian Summer

A soft veil dims the tender skies,
And half conceals from pensive eyes
The bronzing tokens of the fall;
A calmness broods upon the hills,
And summer's parting dream distills
A charm of silence over all.

The stacks of corn, in brown array,
Stand waiting through the placid day,
Like tattered wigwams on the plain;
The tribes that find a shelter there
Are phantom peoples, forms of air,
And ghosts of vanished joy and pain.

At evening when the crimson crest
Of sunset passes down the West,
I hear the whispering host returning;
On far-off fields, by elm and oak,
I see the lights, I smell the smoke,--
The Camp-fires of the Past are burning.

Henry Van Dyke

Inscriptions for a Friend's House

THE HOUSE

The cornerstone in Truth is laid,
The guardian walls of Honour made,
The roof of Faith is built above,
The fire upon the hearth is Love:
Though rains descend and loud winds call,
This happy house shall never fall.

THE DOORSTEAD

The lintel low enough to keep out pomp and pride:
The threshold high enough to turn deceit aside:
The doorband strong enough from robbers to defend:
This door will open at a touch to welcome every friend.

THE HEARTHSTONE

When the logs are burning free,
Then the fire is full of glee:
When each heart gives out its best,
Then the talk is full of zest:
Light your fire and never fear,
Life was made for love and cheer.

THE SUN-DIAL

Time can never take
What Time did not give;
When my shadows have all passed,
You shall live.

Henry Van Dyke

Jeanne d'Arc

The land was broken in despair,
The princes quarrelled in the dark,
When clear and tranquil, through the troubled air
Of selfish minds and wills that did not dare,
Your star arose, Jeanne d'Arc.

O virgin breast with lilies white,
O sun-burned hand that bore the lance,
You taught the prayer that helps men to unite,
You brought the courage equal to the fight,
You gave a heart to France!

Your king was crowned, your country free,
At Rheims you had your soul's desire:
And then, at Rouen, maid of Domremy,
The black-robed judges gave your victory
The martyr's crown of fire.

And now again the times are ill,
And doubtful leaders miss the mark;
The people lack the single faith and will
To make them one, -- your country needs you still, --
Come back again, Jeanne d'Arc!

O woman-star, arise once more
And shine to bid your land advance:
The old heroic trust in God restore,
Renew the brave, unselfish hopes of yore,
And give a heart to France!

Henry Van Dyke

Jeanne d'Arc Returns

1914-1916

What hast thou done, O womanhood of France,
Mother and daughter, sister, sweetheart, wife,
What hast thou done, amid this fateful strife,
To prove the pride of thine inheritance
In this fair land of freedom and romance?
I hear thy voice with tears and courage rife,--
Smiling against the swords that seek thy life,--
Make answer in a noble utterance:
"I give France all I have, and all she asks.
Would it were more! Ah, let her ask and take:
My hands to nurse her wounded, do her tasks,--
My feet to run her errands through the dark,--
My heart to bleed in triumph for her sake,--
And all my soul to follow thee, Jeanne d'Arc!"

Henry Van Dyke

Jesus, Thou Divine Companion

Jesus, Thou divine Companion,
By Thy lowly human birth
Thou hast come to join the workers,
Burden bearers of the earth.
Thou, the Carpenter of Nazareth,
Toiling for Thy daily food,
By Thy patience and Thy courage,
Thou hast taught us toil is good.

They who tread the path of labor
Follow where Thy feet have trod;
They who work without complaining
Do the holy will of God.
Thou, the Peace that passeth knowledge,
Dwellest in the daily strife;
Thou, the Bread of heaven, broken
In the sacrament of life.

Every task, however simple,
Sets the soul that does it free;
Every deed of love and kindness
Done to man is done to Thee.
Jesus, Thou divine Companion,
Help us all to do our best;
Bless in our daily labor,
Lead us to the Sabbath rest.

Henry Van Dyke

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

Joyful, joyful we adore Thee, God of glory, Lord of love,
Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee, hail Thee as the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All Thy works with joy surround Thee, earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,
Stars and agnels sing around Thee, center of unbroken praise;
Field and forest, vale and moutain, flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting birds and flowing fountain call us to rejoice in Thee.

Thou art givind and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest.
Thou our Father, Christ our Brother, all who live in love are Thine;
Teach us how to love each other, lift us to the Joy Divine.

Mortals, join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began,
Father love is reigning o'er us, brother love binds man to man.
Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife;
Joyful music lifts us sunward, in the triumph song of life.

Henry Van Dyke

Katrina's Sun-Dial

Hours fly,
Flowers die:
New days,
New ways:
Pass by!
Love stays.

Henry Van Dyke

Keats

The melancholy gift Aurora gained
From Jove, that her sad lover should not see
The face of death, no goddess asked for thee,
My Keats! But when the crimson blood-drop stained
Thy pillow, thou didst read the fate ordained, --
Brief life, wild love, a flight of poesy!
And then, -- a shadow fell on Italy:
Thy star went down before its brightness waned,

Yet thou hast won the gift Tithonus missed:
Never to feel the pain of growing old,
Nor lose the blissful sight of beauty's truth,
But with the ardent lips that music kissed
To breathe thy song, and, ere thy heart grew cold,
Become the Poet of Immortal Youth.

Henry Van Dyke

Late Spring

I

Ah, who will tell me, in these leaden days,
Why the sweet Spring delays,
And where she hides, -- the dear desire
Of every heart that longs
For bloom, and fragrance, and the ruby fire
Of maple-buds along the misty hills,
And that immortal call which fills
The waiting wood with songs?
The snow-drops came so long ago,
It seemed that Spring was near!
But then returned the snow
With biting winds, and all the earth grew sere,
And sullen clouds drooped low
To veil the sadness of a hope deferred:
Then rain, rain, rain, incessant rain
Beat on the window-pane,
Through which I watched the solitary bird
That braved the tempest, buffeted and tossed,
With rumpled feathers, down the wind again.
Oh, were the seeds all lost
When winter laid the wild flowers in their tomb?
I searched their haunts in vain
For blue hepaticas, and trilliums white,
And trailing arbutus, the Spring's delight,
Starring the withered leaves with rosy bloom.
The woods were bare: and every night the frost
To all my longings spoke a silent nay,
And told me Spring was far and far away.
Even the robins were too cold to sing,
Except a broken and discouraged note, --
Only the tuneful sparrow, on whose throat
Music has put her triple finger-print,
Lifted his head and sang my heart a hint, --
"Wait, wait, wait! oh, wait a while for Spring!"

II

But now, Carina, what divine amends
For all delay! What sweetness treasured up,
What wine of joy that blends
A hundred flavours in a single cup,
Is poured into this perfect day!
For look, sweet heart, here are the early flowers,
That lingered on their way,
Thronging in haste to kiss the feet of May,
And mingled with the bloom of later hours, --
Anemonies and cinque-foils, violets blue
And white, and iris richly gleaming through
The grasses of the meadow, and a blaze
Of butter-cups and daisies in the field,

Filling the air with praise,
As if a silver chime of bells had pealed!
The frozen songs within the breast
Of silent birds that hid in leafless woods,
Melt into rippling floods
Of gladness unrepressed.
Now oriole and blue-bird, thrush and lark,
Warbler and wren and vireo,
Confuse their music; for the living spark
Of Love has touched the fuel of desire,
And every heart leaps up in singing fire.
It seems as if the land
Were breathing deep beneath the sun's caress,
Trembling with tenderness,
While all the woods expand,
In shimmering clouds of rose and gold and green,
To veil the joys too sacred to be seen.

III

Come, put your hand in mine,
True love, long sought and found at last,
And lead me deep into the Spring divine
That makes amends for all the wintry past.
For all the flowers and songs I feared to miss
Arrive with you;
And in the lingering pressure of your kiss
My dreams come true;
And in the promise of your generous eyes
I read the mystic sign
Of joy more perfect made
Because so long delayed,
And bliss enhanced by rapture of surprise.
Ah, think not early love alone is strong;
He loveth best whose heart has learned to wait:
Dear messenger of Spring that tarried long,
You're doubly dear because you come so late.

Henry Van Dyke

Liberty Enlightening the World

Thou warden of the western gate, above Manhatten Bay,
The fogs of doubt that hid thy face are driven clean away:
Thine eyes at last look far and clear, thou liftest high thy hand
To spread the light of liberty world-wide for every land.

No more thou dreamest of a peace reserved alone for thee,
While friends are fighting for thy cause beyond the guardian sea:
The battle that they wage is thine; thou fallest if they fall;
The swollen flood of Prussian pride will sweep unchecked o'er all.

O cruel is the conquer-lust in Hohenzollern brains;
The paths they plot to gain their goal are dark with shameful stains:
No faith they keep, no law revere, no god but naked Might; --
They are the foemen of mankind. Up, Liberty, and smite!

Britain, and France, and Italy, and Russia newly born,
Have waited for thee in the night. Oh, come as comes the morn.
Serene and strong and full of faith, America, arise,
With steady hope and mighty help to join th brave Allies.

O dearest country of my heart, home of the high desire,
Make clean thy soul for sacrifice on Freedom's altar-fire:
For thou must suffer, thou must fight, until the warlords cease,
And all the peoples lift their heads in liberty and peace.

Henry Van Dyke

Life

Let me but live my life from year to year,
With forward face and unreluctant soul;
Not hurrying to, nor turning from the goal;
Not mourning for the things that disappear
In the dim past, nor holding back in fear
From what the future veils; but with a whole
And happy heart, that pays its toll
To Youth and Age, and travels on with cheer.

So let the way wind up the hill or down,
O'er rough or smooth, the journey will be joy:
Still seeking what I sought when but a boy,
New friendship, high adventure, and a crown,
My heart will keep the courage of the quest,
And hope the road's last turn will be the best.

Henry Van Dyke

Light Between the Trees

Long, long, long the trail
Through the brooding forest-gloom,
Down the shadowy, lonely vale
Into silence, like a room
Where the light of life has fled,
And the jealous curtains close
Round the passionless repose
Of the silent dead.

Plod, plod, plod away,
Step by step in mouldering moss;
Thick branches bar the day
Over languid streams that cross
Softly, slowly, with a sound
In their aimless creeping
Like a smothered weeping,
Through the enchanted ground.

"Yield, yield, yield thy quest,"
Whispers through the woodland deep;
"Come to me and be at rest;
"I am slumber, I am sleep."
Then the weary feet would fail,
But the never-daunted will
Urges "Forward, forward still!
"Press along the trail!"

Breast, breast, breast the slope!
See, the path is growing steep.
Hark! a little song of hope
When the stream begins to leap.
Though the forest, far and wide,
Still shuts out the bending blue,
We shall finally win through,
Cross the long divide.

On, on, onward tramp!
Will the journey never end?
Over yonder lies the camp;
Welcome waits us there, my friend.
Can we reach it ere the night?
Upward, upward, never fear!
Look, the summit must be near;
See the line of light!

Red, red, red the shine
Of the splendour in the west,
Glowing through the ranks of pine,
Clear along the mountain-crest!
Long, long, long the trail
Out of sorrow's lonely vale;
But at last the traveller sees

Light between the trees!

Henry Van Dyke

Lights Out

"Lights out" along the land,
"Lights out" upon the sea.
The night must put her hiding hand
O'er peaceful towns where children sleep,
And peaceful ships that darkly creep
Across the waves, as if they were not free.

The dragons of the air,
The hell-hounds of the deep,
Lurking and prowling everywhere,
Go forth to seek their helpless prey,
Not knowing whom they maim or slay--
Mad harvesters, who care not what they reap.

Out with the tranquil lights,
Out with the lights that burn
For love and law and human rights!
Set back the clock a thousand years:
All they have gained now disappears,
And the dark ages suddenly return.

Kaiser who loosed wild death,
And terror in the night--
God grant you draw no quiet breath,
Until the madness you began
Is ended, and long-suffering man,
Set free from war lords, cries, "Let there be Light."

Henry Van Dyke

Longfellow

In a great land, a new land, a land full of labour
and riches and confusion,
Where there were many running to and fro, and
shouting, and striving together,
In the midst of the hurry and the troubled noise,
I heard the voice of one singing.

"What are you doing there, O man, singing
quietly amid all this tumult?
This is the time for new inventions, mighty
shoutings, and blowings of the trumpet."
But he answered, "I am only shepherding my
sheep with music."

So he went along his chosen way, keeping his
little flock around him;
And he paused to listen, now and then, beside
the antique fountains,
Where the faces of forgotten gods were refreshed
with musically falling waters;

Or he sat for a while at the blacksmith's door,
and heard the cling-clang of the anvils;
Or he rested beneath old steeples full of bells,
that showered their chimes upon him;
Or he walked along the border of the sea,
drinking in the long roar of the billows;

Or he sunned himself in the pine-scented ship-
yard, amid the tattoo of the mallets;
Or he leaned on the rail of the bridge, letting
his thoughts flow with the whispering river;
He hearkened also to ancient tales, and made
them young again with his singing.

Then a flaming arrow of death fell on his flock,
and pierced the heart of his dearest!
Silent the music now, as the shepherd entered
the mystical temple of sorrow:
Long he tarried in darkness there: but when he
came out he was singing.

And I saw the faces of men and women and
children silently turning toward him;
The youth setting out on the journey of life, and
the old man waiting beside the last mile-stone;
The toiler sweating beneath his load; and the
happy mother rocking her cradle;

The lonely sailor on far-off seas; and the grey-
minded scholar in his book-room;
The mill-hand bound to a clacking machine; and

the hunter in the forest;
And the solitary soul hiding friendless in the
wilderness of the city;

Many human faces, full of care and longing, were
drawn irresistibly toward him,
By the charm of something known to every heart,
yet very strange and lovely,
And at the sound of that singing wonderfully
all their faces were lightened.

"Why do you listen, O you people, to this old
and world-worn music?
This is not for you, in the splendour of a new
age, in the democratic triumph!
Listen to the clashing cymbals, the big drums, the
brazen trumpets of your poets."

But the people made no answer, following in
their hearts the simpler music:
For it seemed to them, noise-weary, nothing
could be better worth the hearing
Than the melodies which brought sweet order
into life's confusion.

So the shepherd sang his way along, until he
came unto a mountain:
And I know not surely whether it was called
Parnassus,
But he climbed it out of sight, and still I heard
the voice of one singing.

Henry Van Dyke

Love

Let me but love my love without disguise,
Nor wear a mask of fashion old or new,
Nor wait to speak till I can hear a clue,
Nor play a part to shine in others' eyes,
Nor bow my knees to what my heart denies;
But what I am, to that let me be true,
And let me worship where my love is due,
And so through love and worship let me rise.

For love is but the heart's immortal thirst
To be completely known and all forgiven,
Even as sinful souls that enter Heaven:
So take me, dear, and understand my worst,
And freely pardon it, because confessed,
And let me find in loving thee, my best.

Henry Van Dyke

Love in a Look

Let me but feel thy look's embrace,
Transparent, pure, and warm,
And I'll not ask to touch thy face,
Or fold thee with mine arm.
For in thine eyes a girl doth rise,
Arrayed in candid bliss,
And draws me to her with a charm
More close than any kiss.

A loving-cup of golden wine,
Songs of a silver brook,
And fragrant breaths of eglantine,
Are mingled in thy look.
More fair they are than any star,
Thy topaz eyes divine --
And deep within their trysting-nook
Thy spirit blends with mine.

Henry Van Dyke

Love's Nearness

I think of thee, when golden sunbeams shimmer
Across the sea;
And when the waves reflect the moon's pale glimmer,
I think of thee.

I see thy form, when down the distant highway
The dust-clouds rise;
In deepest night, above the mountain by-way,
I see thine eyes.

I hear thee when the ocean-tides returning
Loudly rejoice;
And on the lonely moor, in stillness yearning,
I hear thy voice.

I dwell with thee: though thou art far removed,
Yet art thou near.
The sun goes down, the stars shine out, ---
Beloved,
Ah, wert thou here!

Henry Van Dyke

Love's Reason

For that thy face is fair I love thee not;
Nor yet because the light of thy brown eyes
Hath gleams of wonder and of glad surprise,
Like woodland streams that cross a sunlit spot:
Nor for thy beauty, born without a blot,
Most perfect when it shines through no disguise
Pure as the star of Eve in Paradise, ---
For all these outward things I love thee not:

But for a something in thy form and face,
Thy looks and ways, of primal harmony;
A certain soothing charm, a vital grace
That breathes of the eternal womanly,
And makes me feel the warmth of Nature's breast,
When in her arms, and thine, I sink to rest.

Henry Van Dyke

Mare Liberum

You dare to say with perjured lips,
"We fight to make the ocean free"?
You, whose black trail of butchered ships
Bestrews the bed of every sea
Where German submarines have wrought
Their horrors! Have you never thought, --
What you call freedom, men call piracy!

Unnumbered ghosts that haunt the wave
Where you have murdered, cry you down;
And seamen whom you would not save,
Weave now in weed-grown depths a crown
Of shame for your imperious head, --
A dark memorial of the dead, --
Women and children whom you left to drown.

Nay, not till thieves are set to guard
The gold, and corsairs called to keep
O'er peaceful commerce watch and ward,
And wolves to herd the helpless sheep,
Shall men and women look to thee --
Thou ruthless Old Man of the Sea --
To safeguard law and freedom on the deep!

In nobler breeds we put our trust:
The nations in whose sacred lore
The "Ought" stands out above the "Must,"
And Honor rules in peace and war.
With these we hold in soul and heart,
With these we choose our lot and part,
Till Liberty is safe on sea and shore.

Henry Van Dyke

Master of Music

Glory of architect, glory of painter, and sculptor, and bard,
Living forever in temple and picture and statue and song, --
Look how the world with the lights that they lit is illumined and starred,
Brief was the flame of their life, but the lamps of their art burn long!

Where is the Master of Music, and how has he vanished away?
Where is the work that he wrought with his wonderful art in the air?
Gone, -- it is gone like the glow on the cloud at the close of the day!
The Master has finished his work, and the glory of music is -- where?

Once, at the wave of his wand, all the billows of musical sound
Followed his will, as the sea was ruled by the prophet of old:
Now that his hand is relaxed, and his rod has dropped to the ground,
Silent and dark are the shores where the marvellous harmonies rolled!

Nay, but not silent the hearts that were filled by that life-giving sea;
Deeper and purer forever the tides of their being will roll,
Grateful and joyful, O Master, because they have listened to thee, --
The glory of music endures in the depths of the human soul.

Henry Van Dyke

Might and Right

If Might made Right, life were a wild-beasts' cage;
If Right made Might, this were the golden age;
But now, until we win the long campaign,
Right must gain Might to conquer and to reign.

Henry Van Dyke

Milton

I

Lover of beauty, walking on the height
Of pure philosophy and tranquil song;
Born to behold the visions that belong
To those who dwell in melody and light;
Milton, thou spirit delicate and bright!
What drew thee down to join the Roundhead throng
Of iron-sided warriors, rude and strong,
Fighting for freedom in a world half night?

Lover of Liberty at heart wast thou,
Above all beauty bright, all music clear:
To thee she bared her bosom and her brow,
Breathing her virgin promise in thine ear,
And bound thee to her with a double vow, --
Exquisite Puritan, grave Cavalier!

II

The cause, the cause for which thy soul resigned
Her singing robes to battle on the plain,
Was won, O poet, and was lost again;
And lost the labour of thy lonely mind
On weary tasks of prose. What wilt thou find
To comfort thee for all the toil and pain?
What solace, now thy sacrifice is vain
And thou art left forsaken, poor, and blind?

Like organ-music comes the deep reply:
"The cause of truth looks lost, but shall be won.
For God hath given to mine inward eye
Vision of England soaring to the sun.
And granted me great peace before I die,
In thoughts of lowly duty bravely done."

III

O bend again above thine organ-board,
Thou blind old poet longing for repose!
Thy Master claims thy service not with those
Who only stand and wait for his reward.
He pours the heavenly gift of song restored
Into thy breast, and bids thee nobly close
A noble life, with poetry that flows
In mighty music of the major chord.

Where hast thou learned this deep, majestic strain,
Surpassing all thy youthful lyric grace,
To sing of Paradise? Ah, not in vain

The griefs that won at Dante's side thy place,
And made thee, Milton, by thy years of pain,
The loftiest poet of the Saxon race!

Henry Van Dyke

Mother Earth

Mother of all the high-strung poets and singers departed,
Mother of all the grass that weaves over their graves the glory of the field,
Mother of all the manifold forms of life, deep-bosomed, patient, impassive,
Silent brooder and nurse of lyrical joys and sorrows!
Out of thee, yea, surely out of the fertile depth below thy breast,
Issued in some strange way, thou lying motionless, voiceless,
All these songs of nature, rhythmical, passionate, yearning,
Coming in music from earth, but not unto earth returning.

Dust are the blood-red hearts that beat in time to these measures,
Thou hast taken them back to thyself, secretly, irresistibly
Drawing the crimson currents of life down, down, down
Deep into thy bosom again, as a river is lost in the sand.
But the souls of the singers have entered into the songs that revealed them, --
Passionate songs, immortal songs of joy and grief and love and longing:
Floating from heart to heart of thy children, they echo above thee:
Do they not utter thy heart, the voices of those that love thee?

Long hadst thou lain like a queen transformed by some old enchantment
Into an alien shape, mysterious, beautiful, speechless,
Knowing not who thou wert, till the touch of thy Lord and Lover
Working within thee awakened the man-child to breathe thy secret.
All of thy flowers and birds and forests and flowing waters
Are but enchanted forms to embody the life of the spirit;
Thou thyself, earth-mother, in mountain and meadow and ocean,
Holdest the poem of God, eternal thought and emotion.

Henry Van Dyke

Music

I

PRELUDE

Daughter of Psyche, pledge of that last night
When, pierced with pain and bitter-sweet delight,
She knew her Love and saw her Lord depart,
Then breathed her wonder and her woe forlorn
Into a single cry, and thou wast born?
Thou flower of rapture and thou fruit of grief;
Invisible enchantress of the heart;
Mistress of charms that bring relief
To sorrow, and to joy impart
A heavenly tone that keeps it undefiled,--
Thou art the child
Of Amor, and by right divine
A throne of love is thine,
Thou flower-folded, golden-girdled, star-crowned Queen,
Whose bridal beauty mortal eyes have never seen!

II

Thou art the Angel of the pool that sleeps,
While peace and joy lie hidden in its deeps,
Waiting thy touch to make the waters roll
In healing murmurs round the weary soul.
Ah, when wilt thou draw near,
Thou messenger of mercy robed in song?
My lonely heart has listened for thee long;
And now I seem to hear
Across the crowded market-place of life,
Thy measured foot-fall, ringing light and clear
Above the unmeaning noises and the unruly strife;
In quiet cadence, sweet and slow,
Serenely pacing to and fro,
Thy far-off steps are magical and dear.
Ah, turn this way, come close and speak to me!
>From this dull bed of languor set my spirit free,
And bid me rise, and let me walk awhile with thee

III

Where wilt thou lead me first?
In what still region
Of thy domain,
Whose provinces are legion,
Wilt thou restore me to myself again,
And quench my heart's long thirst?
I pray thee lay thy golden girdle down,
And put away thy starry crown:

For one dear restful hour
Assume a state more mild.
Clad only in thy blossom-broidered gown
That breathes familiar scent of many a flower,
Take the low path that leads thro' pastures green;
And though thou art a Queen,
Be Rosamund awhile, and in thy bower,
By tranquil love and simple joy beguiled,
Sing to my soul, as mother to her child.

IV

O lead me by the hand,
And let my heart have rest,
And bring me back to childhood land,
To find again the long-lost band
Of playmates blithe and blest.

Some quaint, old-fashioned air,
That all the children knew,
Shall run before us everywhere,
Like a little maid with flying hair,
To guide the merry crew.

Along the garden ways
We chase the light-foot tune,
And in and out the flowery maze,
With eager haste and fond delays,
In pleasant paths of June.

For us the fields are new,
For us the woods are rife
With fairy secrets, deep and true,
And heaven is but a tent of blue
Above the game of life.

The world is far away:
The fever and the fret,
And all that makes the heart grow gray,
Is out of sight and far away,
Dear Music, while I hear thee play
That olden, golden roundelay,
"Remember and forget!"

V

SLEEP SONG

Forget, forget!
The tide of life is turning;

The waves of light ebb slowly down the west:
Along the edge of dark some stars are burning
To guide thy spirit safely to an isle of rest.
A little rocking on the tranquil deep
Of song, to soothe thy yearning,
A little slumber and a little sleep,
And so, forget, forget!

Forget, forget,--
The day was long in pleasure;
Its echoes die away across the hill;
Now let thy heart beat time to their slow measure
That swells, and sinks, and faints, and falls, till all is still.
Then, like a weary child that loves to keep
Locked in its arms some treasure,
Thy soul in calm content shall fall asleep,
And so forget, forget.

Forget, forget,--
And if thou hast been weeping,
Let go the thoughts that bind thee to thy grief:
Lie still, and watch the singing angels, reaping
The golden harvest of thy sorrow, sheaf by sheaf;
Or count thy joys like flocks of snow-white sheep
That one by one come creeping
Into the quiet fold, until thou sleep,
And so forget, forget!

Forget, forget,--
Thou art a child and knowest
So little of thy life! But music tells
One secret of the world thro' which thou goest
To work with morning song, to rest with evening bells:
Life is in tune with harmony so deep
That when the notes are lowest
Thou still canst lay thee down in peace and sleep,
For God will not forget.

VI

HUNTING SONG

Out of the garden of playtime, out of the bower of rest,
Fain would I follow at daytime, music that calls to a quest.
Hark, how the galloping measure
Quickens the pulses of pleasure;
Gaily saluting the morn
With the long clear note of the hunting-horn
Echoing up from the valley,
Over the mountain side,--
Rally, you hunters, rally,

Rally, and ride!

Drink of the magical potion music has mixed with her wine,
Full of the madness of motion, joyful, exultant, divine!
Leave all your troubles behind you,
Ride where they never can find you,
Into the gladness of morn,
With the long, clear note of the hunting-horn,
Swiftly o'er hillock and hollow,
Sweeping along with the wind,--
Follow, you hunters, follow,
Follow and find!

What will you reach with your riding? What is the charm of the chase?
Just the delight and the striding swing of the jubilant pace.
Danger is sweet when you front her,--
In at the death, every hunter!
Now on the breeze the mort is borne
In the long, clear note of the hunting-horn,
Winding merrily, over and over,--
Come, come, come!
Home again, Ranger! home again, Rover!
Turn again, home!

VII

DANCE-MUSIC

Now let the sleep-tune blend with the play-tune,
Weaving the mystical spell of the dance;
Lighten the deep tune, soften the gay tune,
Mingle a tempo that turns in a trance.
Half of it sighing, half of it smiling,
Smoothly it swings, with a triplicate beat;
Calling, replying, yearning, beguiling,
Wooing the heart and bewitching the feet.
Every drop of blood
Rises with the flood,
Rocking on the waves of the strain;
Youth and beauty glide
Turning with the tide--
Music making one out of twain,
Bearing them away, and away, and away,
Like a tone and its terce--
Till the chord dissolves, and the dancers stay,
And reverse.

Violins leading, take up the measure,
Turn with the tune again,--clarinets clear
Answer their pleading,--harps full of pleasure
Sprinkle their silver like light on the mere.

Semiquaver notes,
Merry little motes,
Tangled in the haze
Of the lamp's golden rays,
Quiver everywhere
In the air,
Like a spray,--
Till the fuller stream of the might of the tune,
Gliding like a dream in the light of the moon,
Bears them all away, and away, and away,
Floating in the trance of the dance.

Then begins a measure stately,
Languid, slow, serene;
All the dancers move sedately,
Stepping leisurely and straitly,
With a courtly mien;
Crossing hands and changing places,
Bowing low between,
While the minuet inlaces
Waving arms and woven paces,--
Glittering damaskeen.
Where is she whose form is folden
In its royal sheen?
>From our longing eyes withholden
By her mystic girdle golden,
Beauty sought but never seen,
Music walks the maze, a queen.

VIII

THE SYMPHONY

Music, they do thee wrong who say thine art
Is only to enchant the sense.
For every timid motion of the heart,
And every passion too intense
To bear the chain of the imperfect word,
And every tremulous longing, stirred
By spirit winds that come we know not whence
And go we know not where,
And every inarticulate prayer
Beating about the depths of pain or bliss,
Like some bewildered bird
That seeks its nest but knows not where it is,
And every dream that haunts, with dim delight,
The drowsy hour between the day and night,
The wakeful hour between the night and day,--
Imprisoned, waits for thee,
Impatient, yearns for thee,
The queen who comes to set the captive free

Thou lendest wings to grief to fly away,
And wings to joy to reach a heavenly height;
And every dumb desire that Storms within the breast
Thou leadest forth to sob or sing itself to rest.

All these are thine, and therefore love is thine.
For love is joy and grief,
And trembling doubt, and certain-sure belief,
And fear, and hope, and longing unexpressed,
In pain most human, and in rapture brief
Almost divine.
Love would possess, yet deepens when denied;
And love would give, yet hungers to receive;
Love like a prince his triumph would achieve;
And like a miser in the dark his joys would hide.
Love is most bold:
He leads his dreams like armed men in line;
Yet when the siege is set, and he must speak,
Calling the fortress to resign
Its treasure, valiant love grows weak,
And hardly dares his purpose to unfold.
Less with his faltering lips than with his eyes
He claims the longed-for prize:
Love fain would tell it all, yet leaves the best untold.

But thou shalt speak for love. Yea, thou shalt teach
The mystery of measured tone,
The Pentecostal speech
That every listener heareth as his own.
For on thy head the cloven tongues of fire,--
Diminished chords that quiver with desire,
And major chords that glow with perfect peace,--
Have fallen from above;
And thou canst give release
In music to the burdened heart of love.

Sound with the 'cellos' pleading, passionate strain
The yearning theme, and let the flute reply
In placid melody, while violins complain,
And sob, and sigh,
With muted string;
Then let the oboe half-reluctant sing
Of bliss that trembles on the verge of pain,
While 'cellos plead and plead again,
With throbbing notes delayed, that would impart
To every urgent tone the beating of the heart.
So runs the andante, making plain
The hopes and fears of love without a word.

Then comes the adagio, with a yielding theme
Through which the violas flow soft as in a dream,
While horns and mild bassoons are heard

In tender tune, that seems to float
Like an enchanted boat
Upon the downward-gliding stream,
Toward the allegro's wide, bright sea
Of dancing, glittering, blending tone,
Where every instrument is sounding free,
And harps like wedding-chimes are rung, and trumpets blown
Around the barque of love
That sweeps, with smiling skies above,
A royal galley, many-oared,
Into the happy harbour of the perfect chord.

IX

IRIS

Light to the eye and Music to the ear,--
These are the builders of the bridge that springs
>From earths's dim shore of half-remembered things
To reach the spirit's home, the heavenly sphere
Where nothing silent is and nothing dark.
So when I see the rainbow's arc
Spanning the showery sky, far-off I hear
Music, and every colour sings:
And while the symphony builds up its round
Full sweep of architectural harmony
Above the tide of Time, far, far away I see
A bow of colour in the bow of sound.

Red as the dawn the trumpet rings,
Imperial purple from the trombone flows,
The mellow horn melts into evening rose.
Blue as the sky, the choir of strings
Darkens in double-bass to ocean's hue,
Rises in violins to noon-tide's blue,
With threads of quivering light shot through and through.
Green as the mantle that the summer flings
Around the world, the pastoral reeds in time
Embroider melodies of May and June.
Yellow as gold,
Yea, thrice-refined gold,
And purer than the treasures of the mine,
Floods of the human voice divine
Along the arch in choral song are rolled.
So bends the bow complete:
And radiant rapture flows
Across the bridge, so full, so strong, so sweet,
That the uplifted spirit hardly knows
Whether the Music-Light that glows
Within the arch of tones and colours seven
Is sunset-peace of earth, or sunrise-joy of Heaven.

X

SEA AND SHORE

Music, I yield to thee;
As swimmer to the sea
I give my Spirit to the flood of song:
Bear me upon thy breast
In rapture and at rest,
Bathe me in pure delight and make me strong;
From strife and struggle bring release,
And draw the waves of passion into tides of peace.

Remember'd songs, most dear,
In living songs I hear,
While blending voices gently swing and sway
In melodies of love,
Whose mighty currents move,
With singing near and singing far away;
Sweet in the glow of morning light,
And sweeter still across the starlit gulf of night.

Music, in thee we float,
And lose the lonely note
Of self in thy celestial-ordered strain,
Until at last we find
The life to love resigned
In harmony of joy restored again;
And songs that cheered our mortal days
Break on the coast of light in endless hymns of praise.

Henry Van Dyke

My April Lady

When down the stair at morning
The sunbeams round her float,
Sweet rivulets of laughter
Are bubbling in her throat;
The gladness of her greeting
Is gold without alloy;
And in the morning sunlight
I think her name is Joy.

When in the evening twilight
The quiet book-room lies,
We read the sad old ballads,
While from her hidden eyes
The tears are falling, falling,
That give her heart relief;
And in the evening twilight,
I think her name is Grief.

My little April lady,
Of sunshine and of showers,
She weaves the old spring magic,
And breaks my heart in flowers!
But when her moods are ended,
She nestles like a dove;
Then, by the pain and rapture,
I know her name is Love.

Henry Van Dyke

National Monuments

Count not the cost of honour to the dead!
The tribute that a mighty nation pays
To those who loved her well in former days
Means more than gratitude for glories fled;
For every noble man that she hath bred,
Lives in the bronze and marble that we raise,
Immortalized by art's immortal praise,
To lead our sons as he our fathers led.

These monuments of manhood strong and high
Do more than forts or battle-ships to keep
Our dear-bought liberty. They fortify
The heart of youth with valour wise and deep;
They build eternal bulwarks, and command
Eternal strength to guard our native land.

Henry Van Dyke

Nepenthe

Yes, it was like you to forget,
And cancel in the welcome of your smile
My deep arrears of debt,
And with the putting forth of both your hands
To sweep away the bars my folly set
Between us -- bitter thoughts, and harsh demands,
And reckless deeds that seemed untrue
To love, when all the while
My heart was aching through and through
For you, sweet heart, and only you.

Yet, as I turned to come to you again,
I thought there must be many a mile
Of sorrowful reproach to cross,
And many an hour of mutual pain
To bear, until I could make plain
That all my pride was but the fear of loss,
And all my doubt the shadow of despair
To win a heart so innocent and fair;
And even that which looked most ill
Was but the fever-fret and effort vain
To dull the thirst which you alone could still.

But as I turned the desert miles were crossed,
And when I came the weary hours were sped!
For there you stood beside the open door,
Glad, gracious, smiling as before,
And with bright eyes and tender hands outspread
Restored me to the Eden I had lost.
Never a word of cold reproof,
No sharp reproach, no glances that accuse
The culprit whom they hold aloof, --
Ah, 't is not thus that other women use
The power they have Won!
For there is none like you, belovèd, -- none
Secure enough to do what you have done.
Where did you learn this heavenly art, --
You sweetest and most wise of all that live, --
With silent welcome to impart
Assurance of the royal heart
That never questions where it would forgive?

None but a queen could pardon me like this!
My sovereign lady, let me lay
Within each rosy palm a loyal kiss
Of penitence, then close the fingers up,
Thus -- thus! Now give the cup
Of full nepenthe in your crimson mouth,
And come -- the garden blooms with bliss,
The wind is in the south,
The rose of love with dew is wet --
Dear, it was like you to forget!

Henry Van Dyke

New Year's Eve

I

The other night I had a dream, most clear
And comforting, complete
In every line, a crystal sphere,
And full of intimate and secret cheer.
Therefore I will repeat
That vision, dearest heart, to you,
As of a thing not feigned, but very true,
Yes, true as ever in my life befell;
And you, perhaps, can tell
Whether my dream was really sad or sweet.

II

The shadows flecked the elm-embowered street
I knew so well, long, long ago;
And on the pillared porch where Marguerite
Had sat with me, the moonlight lay like snow.
But she, my comrade and my friend of youth,
Most gaily wise,
Most innocently loved, --
She of the blue-grey eyes
That ever smiled and ever spoke the truth, --
From that familiar dwelling, where she moved
Like mirth incarnate in the years before,
Had gone into the hidden house of Death.
I thought the garden wore
White mourning for her blessed innocence,
And the syringa's breath
Came from the corner by the fence,
Where she had made her rustic seat,
With fragrance passionate, intense,
As if it breathed a sigh for Marguerite.
My heart was heavy with a sense
Of something good forever gone. I sought
Vainly for some consoling thought,
Some comfortable word that I could say
To the sad father, whom I visited again
For the first time since she had gone away.
The bell rang shrill and lonely, -- then
The door was opened, and I sent my name
To him, -- but ah! 't was Marguerite who came!

There in the dear old dusky room she stood
Beneath the lamp, just as she used to stand,
In tender mocking mood.
"You did not ask for me," she said,
"And so I will not let you take my hand;
"But I must hear what secret talk you planned
"With father. Come, my friend, be good,

"And tell me your affairs of state:
"Why you have stayed away and made me wait
"So long. Sit down beside me here, --
"And, do you know, it seemed a year
"Since we have talked together, -- why so late?"

Amazed, incredulous, confused with joy
I hardly dared to show,
And stammering like a boy,
I took the place she showed me at her side;
And then the talk flowed on with brimming tide
Through the still night,
While she with influence light
Controlled it, as the moon the flood.
She knew where I had been, what I had done,
What work was planned, and what begun;
My troubles, failures, fears she understood,
And touched them with a heart so kind,
That every care was melted from my mind,
And every hope grew bright,
And life seemed moving on to happy ends.
(Ah, what self-beggared fool was he
That said a woman cannot be
The very best of friends?)
Then there were memories of old times,
Recalled with many a gentle jest;
And at the last she brought the book of rhymes
We made together, trying to translate
The Songs of Heine (hers were always best).
"Now come," she said,
"To-night we will collaborate
"Again; I'll put you to the test.
"Here's one I never found the way to do, --
"The simplest are the hardest ones, you know, --
"I give this song to you."
And then she read:
Mein kind, wir waren Kinder,
Zei Kinder, jung und froh.

* * * * * * * * * *

But all the while a silent question stirred
Within me, though I dared not speak the word:
"Is it herself, and is she truly here,
"And was I dreaming when I heard
"That she was dead last year?
"Or was it true, and is she but a shade
"Who brings a fleeting joy to eye and ear,
"Cold though so kind, and will she gently fade
"When her sweet ghostly part is played
"And the light-curtain falls at dawn of day?"

But while my heart was troubled by this fear
So deeply that I could not speak it out,
Lest all my happiness should disappear,
I thought me of a cunning way
To hide the question and dissolve the doubt.
"Will you not give me now your hand,
"Dear Marguerite," I asked, "to touch and hold,
"That by this token I may understand
"You are the same true friend you were of old?"
She answered with a smile so bright and calm
It seemed as if I saw new stars arise
In the deep heaven of her eyes;
And smiling so, she laid her palm
In mine. Dear God, it was not cold
But warm with vital heat!
"You live!" I cried, "you live, dear Marguerite!"
Then I awoke; but strangely comforted,
Although I knew again that she was dead.

III

Yes, there's the dream! And was it sweet or sad?
Dear mistress of my waking and my sleep,
Present reward of all my heart's desire,
Watching with me beside the winter fire,
Interpret now this vision that I had.
But while you read the meaning, let me keep
The touch of you: for the Old Year with storm
Is passing through the midnight, and doth shake
The corners of the house, -- man oh! my heart would break
Unless both dreaming and awake
My hand could feel your hand was warm, warm, warm!

Henry Van Dyke

One World

"The worlds in which we live are two
The world 'I am' and the world 'I do.'"

The worlds in which we live at heart are one,
The world "I am," the fruit of "I have done";
And underneath these worlds of flower and fruit,
The world "I love,"--the only living root.

Henry Van Dyke

Pan Learns Music

Limber-limbed, lazy god, stretched on the rock,
Where is sweet Echo, and where is your flock?
What are you making here? "Listen," said Pan, --
"Out of a river-reed music for man!"

Henry Van Dyke

Patria

I would not even ask my heart to say
If I could love some other land as well
As thee, my country, had I felt the spell
Of Italy at birth, or learned to obey
The charm of France, or England's mighty sway.
I would not be so much an infidel
As once to dream, or fashion words to tell,
What land could hold my love from thee away.

For like a law of nature in my blood
I feel thy sweet and secret sovereignty,
And woven through my soul thy vital sign.
My life is but a wave, and thou the flood;
I am a leaf and thou the mother-tree;
Nor should I be at all, were I not thine.

Henry Van Dyke

Peace

I

IN EXCELSIS

Two dwellings, Peace, are thine.
One is the mountain-height,
Uplifted in the loneliness of light
Beyond the realm of shadows,--fine,
And far, and clear,--where advent of the night
Means only glorious nearness of the stars,
And dawn, unhindered, breaks above the bars
That long the lower world in twilight keep.
Thou sleepest not, and hast no need of sleep,
For all thy cares and fears have dropped away;
The night's fatigue, the fever-fret of day,
Are far below thee; and earth's weary wars,
In vain expense of passion, pass
Before thy sight like visions in a glass,
Or like the wrinkles of the storm that creep
Across the sea and leave no trace
Of trouble on that immemorial face,--
So brief appear the conflicts, and so slight
The wounds men give, the things for which they fight.

Here hangs a fortress on the distant steep,--
A lichen clinging to the rock:
There sails a fleet upon the deep,--
A wandering flock
Of snow-winged gulls: and yonder, in the plain,
A marble palace shines,--a grain
Of mica glittering in the rain.
Beneath thy feet the clouds are rolled
By voiceless winds: and far between
The rolling clouds new shores and peaks are seen,
In shimmering robes of green and gold,
And faint aerial hue
That silent fades into the silent blue.
Thou, from thy mountain-hold,
All day, in tranquil wisdom, looking down
On distant scenes of human toil and strife,
All night, with eyes aware of loftier life,
Uplooking to the sky, where stars are sown,
Dost watch the everlasting fields grow white
Unto the harvest of the sons of light,
And welcome to thy dwelling-place sublime
The few strong souls that dare to climb
The slippery crags and find thee on the height.

II

DE PROFUNDIS

But in the depth thou hast another home,
For hearts less daring, or more frail.
Thou dwellest also in the shadowy vale;
And pilgrim-souls that roam
With weary feet o'er hill and dale,
Bearing the burden and the heat
Of toilful days,
Turn from the dusty ways
To find thee in thy green and still retreat.
Here is no vision wide outspread
Before the lonely and exalted seat
Of all-embracing knowledge. Here, instead,
A little garden, and a sheltered nook,
With outlooks brief and sweet
Across the meadows, and along the brook,--
A little stream that little knows
Of the great sea towards which it gladly flows,--
A little field that bears a little wheat
To make a portion of earth's daily bread.
The vast cloud-armies overhead
Are marshalled, and the wild wind blows
Its trumpet, but thou canst not tell
Whence the storm comes nor where it goes.

Nor dost thou greatly care, since all is well;
Thy daily task is done,
And though a lowly one,
Thou gavest it of thy best,
And art content to rest
In patience till its slow reward is won.
Not far thou lookest, but thy sight is clear;
Not much thou knowest, but thy faith is dear;
For life is love, and love is always near.
Here friendship lights the fire, and every heart,
Sure of itself and sure of all the rest,
Dares to be true, and gladly takes its part
In open converse, bringing forth its best:
Here is Sweet music, melting every chain
Of lassitude and pain:
And here, at last, is sleep, the gift of gifts,
The tender nurse, who lifts
The soul grown weary of the waking world,
And lays it, with its thoughts all furled,
Its fears forgotten, and its passions still,
On the deep bosom of the Eternal Will.

Henry Van Dyke

Portrait and Reality

If on the closed curtain of my sight
My fancy paints thy portrait far away,
I see thee still the same, by night or day;
Crossing the crowded street, or moving bright
'Mid festal throngs, or reading by the light
Of shaded lamp some friendly poet's lay,
Or shepherding the children at their play,--
The same sweet self, and my unchanged delight.

But when I see thee near, I recognize
In every dear familiar way some strange
Perfection, and behold in April guise
The magic of thy beauty that doth range
Through many moods with infinite surprise,--
Never the same, and sweeter with each change.

Henry Van Dyke

Reliance

Not to the swift, the race:
Not to the strong, the fight:
Not to the righteous, perfect grace:
Not to the wise, the light.

But often faltering feet
Come surest to the goal;
And they who walk in darkness meet
The sunrise of the soul.

A thousand times by night
The Syrian hosts have died;
A thousand times the vanquished right
Hath risen, glorified.

The truth the wise men sought
Was spoken by a child;
The alabaster box was brought
In trembling hands defiled.

Not from my torch, the gleam,
But from the stars above:
Not from my heart, life's crystal stream,
But from the depths of Love.

Henry Van Dyke

Remarks About Kings

"God said I am tired of kings." -- EMERSON

God said, "I am tired of kings,"--
But that was a long while ago!
And meantime man said, "No,--
I like their looks in their robes and rings."
So he crowned a few more,
And they went on playing the game as before,
Fighting and spoiling things.

Man said, "I am tired of kings!
Sons of the robber-chiefs of yore,
They make me pay for their lust and their war;
I am the puppet, they pull the strings;
The blood of my heart is the wine they drink.
I will govern myself for awhile I think,
And see what that brings!"

Then God, who made the first remark,
Smiled in the dark.

Henry Van Dyke

Robert Browning

How blind the toil that burrows like the mole,
In winding graveyard pathways underground,
For Browning's lineage! What if men have found
Poor footmen or rich merchants on the roll
Of his forbears? Did they beget his soul?
Nay, for he came of ancestry renowned
Through all the world, -- the poets laurel-crowned
With wreaths from which the autumn takes no toll.

The blazons on his coat-of-arms are these:
The flaming sign of Shelley's heart on fire,
The golden globe of Shakespeare's human stage,
The staff and scrip of Chaucer's pilgrimage,
The rose of Dante's deep, divine desire,
The tragic mask of wise Euripides.

Henry Van Dyke

Sea-Gulls of Manhattan

Children of the elemental mother,
Born upon some lonely island shore
Where the wrinkled ripples run and whisper,
Where the crested billows plunge and roar;
Long-winged, tireless roamers and adventurers,
Fearless breasters of the wind and sea,
In the far-off solitary places
I have seen you floating wild and free!

Here the high-built cities rise around you;
Here the cliffs that tower east and west,
Honeycombed with human habitations,
Have no hiding for the sea-bird's nest:
Here the river flows begrimed and troubled;
Here the hurrying, panting vessels fume,
Restless, up and down the watery highway,
While a thousand chimneys vomit gloom.

Toil and tumult, confiict and confusion,
Clank and clamor of the vast machine
Human hands have built for human bondage --
Yet amid it all you float serene;
Circling, soaring, sailing, swooping lightly
Down to glean your harvest from the wave;
In your heritage of air and water,
You have kept the freedom Nature gave.

Even so the wild-woods of Manhattan
Saw your wheeling flocks of white and grey;
Even so you fluttered, followed, floated,
Round the Half-Moon creeping up the bay;
Even so your voices creaked and chattered,
Laughing shrilly o'er the tidal rips,
While your black and beady eyes were glistening
Round the sullen British prison-ships.

Children of the elemental mother,
Fearless floaters 'mid the double blue,
From the crowded boats that cross the ferries
Many a longing heart goes out to you.
Though the cities climb and close around us,
Something tells us that our souls are free,
While the sea-gulls fly above the harbor,
While the river flows to meet the sea!

Henry Van Dyke

Shelley

Knight-errant of the Never-ending Quest,
And Minstrel of the Unfulfilled Desire;
For ever tuning thy frail earthly lyre
To some unearthly music, and possessed
With painful passionate longing to invest
The golden dream of Love's immortal fire
In mortal robes of beautiful attire,
And fold perfection to thy throbbing breast!

What wonder, Shelley, if the restless wave
Should claim thee and the leaping flame consume
Thy drifted form on Viareggio's beach?
Fate to thy body gave a fitting grave,
And bade thy soul ride on with fiery plume,
Thy wild song ring in ocean's yearning speech!

Henry Van Dyke

Sicily, December 1908

O garden isle, beloved by Sun and Sea, --
Whose bluest billows kiss thy curving bays,
Whose amorous light enfolds thee in warm rays
That fill with fruit each dark-leaved orange-tree, --
What hidden hatred hath the Earth for thee?
Behold, again, in these dark, dreadful days,
She trembles with her wrath, and swiftly lays
Thy beauty waste in wreck and agony!

Is Nature, then, a strife of jealous powers,
And man the plaything of unconscious fate?
Not so, my troubled heart! God reigns above
And man is greatest in his darkest hours:
Walking amid the cities desolate,
The Son of God appears in human love.

Henry Van Dyke

Spring in the South

Now in the oak the sap of life is welling,
Tho' to the bough the rusty leafage clings;
Now on the elm the misty buds are swelling,
See how the pine-wood grows alive with wings;
Blue-jays fluttering, yodeling and crying,
Meadow-larks sailing low above the faded grass,
Red-birds whistling clear, silent robins flying,--
Who has waked the birds up? What has come to pass?

Last year's cotton-plants, desolately bowing,
Tremble in the March-wind, ragged and forlorn;
Red are the hill-sides of the early ploughing,
Gray are the lowlands, waiting for the corn.
Earth seems asleep still, but she's only feigning;
Deep in her bosom thrills a sweet unrest.
Look where the jasmine lavishly is raining
Jove's golden shower into Danae's breast!

Now on the plum the snowy bloom is sifted,
Now on the peach the glory of the rose,
Over the hills a tender haze is drifted,
Full to the brim the yellow river flows.
Dark cypress boughs with vivid jewels glisten,
Greener than emeralds shining in the sun.
Who has wrought the magic? Listen, sweetheart, listen!
The mocking-bird is singing Spring has begun.

Hark, in his song no tremor of misgiving!
All of his heart he pours into his lay,--
"Love, love, love, and pure delight of living:
Winter is forgotten: here's a happy day!"
Fair in your face I read the flowery presage,
Snowy on your brow and rosy on your mouth:
Sweet in your voice I hear the season's message,--
Love, love, love, and Spring in the South!

Henry Van Dyke

Stand Fast!

Stand fast, Great Britain!
Together England, Scotland, Ireland stand
One in the faith that makes a mighty land,
True to the bond you gave and will not break
And fearless in the fight for conscience' sake!
Against the Giant Robber clad in steel,
With blood of trampled Belgium on his heel,
Striding through France to strike you down at last,
Britain, stand fast !

Stand fast, brave land!
The Huns are thundering toward the citadel;
They prate of Culture but their path is Hell;
Their light is darkness, and the bloody sword
They wield and worship is their only Lord.
O land where reason stands secure on right,
O land where freedom is the source of light,
Against the mailed Barbarians' deadly blast,
Britain, stand fast!

Stand fast, dear land!
Thou island mother of a world-wide race,
Whose children speak thy tongue and love thy face,
Their hearts and hopes are with thee in the strife,
Their hands will break the sword that seeks thy life;
Fight on until the Teuton madness cease;
Fight bravely on, until the word of peace
Is spoken in the English tongue at last,
Britain, stand fast!

Henry Van Dyke

Stars and the Soul

To Charles A. Young, Astronomer

"Two things," the wise man said, "fill me with awe:
The starry heavens and the moral law."
Nay, add another wonder to thy roll, --
The living marvel of the human soul!

Born in the dust and cradled in the dark,
It feels the fire of an immortal spark,
And learns to read, with patient, searching eyes,
The splendid secret of the unconscious skies.

For God thought Light before He spoke the word;
The darkness understood not, though it heard:
But man looks up to where the planets swim,
And thinks God's thoughts of glory after Him.

What knows the star that guides the sailor's way,
Or lights the lover's bower with liquid ray,
Of toil and passion, danger and distress,
Brave hope, true love, and utter faithfulness?

But human hearts that suffer good and ill,
And hold to virtue with a loyal will,
Adorn the law that rules our mortal strife
With star-surpassing victories of life.

So take our thanks, dear reader of the skies,
Devout astronomer, most humbly wise,
For lessons brighter than the stars can give,
And inward light that helps us all to live.

The world has brought the laurel-leaves to crown
The star-discoverer's name with high renown;
Accept the flower of love we lay with these
For influence sweeter than the Pleiades!

Henry Van Dyke

Storm-Music

O Music hast thou only heard
The laughing river, the singing bird,
The murmuring wind in the poplar-trees,--
Nothing but Nature's melodies?
Nay, thou hearest all her tones,
As a Queen must hear!
Sounds of wrath and fear,
Mutterings, shouts, and moans,
Madness, tumult, and despair,
All she has that shakes the air
With voices fierce and wild!
Thou art a Queen and not a dreaming child,--
Put on thy crown and let us hear thee reign
Triumphant in a world of storm and strain!

Echo the long-drawn sighs
Of the mounting wind in the pines;
And the sobs of the mounting waves that rise
In the dark of the troubled deep
To break on the beach in fiery lines.
Echo the far-off roll of thunder,
Rumbling loud
And ever louder, under
The blue-black curtain of cloud,
Where the lightning serpents gleam.
Echo the moaning
Of the forest in its sleep
Like a giant groaning
In the torment of a dream.

Now an interval of quiet
For a moment holds the air
In the breathless hush
Of a silent prayer.

Then the sudden rush
Of the rain, and the riot
Of the shrieking, tearing gale
Breaks loose in the night,
With a fusillade of hail!
Hear the forest fight,
With its tossing arms that crack and clash
In the thunder's cannonade,
While the lightning's forked flash
Brings the old hero-trees to the ground with a crash!
Hear the breakers' deepening roar,
Driven like a herd of cattle
In the wild stampede of battle,
Trampling, trampling, trampling, to overwhelm the shore!

Is it the end of all?
Will the land crumble and fall?

Nay, for a voice replies
Out of the hidden skies,
"Thus far, O sea, shalt thou go,
So long, O wind, shalt thou blow:
Return to your bounds and cease,
And let the earth have peace!"

O Music, lead the way--
The stormy night is past,
Lift up our hearts to greet the day,
And the joy of things that last.

The dissonance and pain
That mortals must endure,
Are changed in thine immortal strain
To something great and pure.

True love will conquer strife,
And strength from conflict flows,
For discord is the thorn of life
And harmony the rose.

Henry Van Dyke

The Ancestral Dwelling

Dear to my heart are the ancestral dwellings of America,
Dearer than if they were haunted by ghosts of royal splendour;
These are the homes that were built by the brave beginners of a nation,
They are simple enough to be great, and full of a friendly dignity.

I love the old white farmhouses nestled in New England valleys,
Ample and long and low, with elm-trees feathering over them:
Borders of box in the yard, and lilacs, and old-fashioned Howers,
A fan-light above the door, and little square panes in the windows,
The wood-shed piled with maple and birch and hickory ready for winter,
The gambrel-roof with its garret crowded with household relics, --
All the tokens of prudent thrift and the spirit of self-reliance.

I love the look of the shingled houses that front the ocean;
Their backs are bowed, and their lichened sides are weather-beaten;
Soft in their colour as grey pearls, they are full of patience and courage.
They seem to grow out of the rocks, there is something indomitable about them:
Facing the briny wind in a lonely land they stand undaunted,
While the thin blue line of smoke from the square-built chimney rises,
Telling of shelter for man, with room for a hearth and a cradle.

I love the stately southern mansions with their tall white columns,
They look through avenues of trees, over fields where the cotton is growing;
I can see the flutter of white frocks along their shady porches,
Music and laughter float from the windows, the yards are full of hounds and horses.
They have all ridden away, yet the houses have not forgotten,
They are proud of their name and place, and their doors are always open,
For the thing they remember best is the pride of their ancient hospitality.

In the towns I love the discreet and tranquil Quaker dwellings,
With their demure brick faces and immaculate white-stone doorsteps;
And the gabled houses of the Dutch, with their high stoops and iron railings,
(I can see their little brass knobs shining in the morning sunlight);
And the solid houses of the descendants of the Puritans,
Fronting the street with their narrow doors and dormer-windows;
And the triple-galleried, many-pillared mansions of Charleston,
Standing sideways in their gardens full of roses and magnolias.

Yes, they are all dear to my heart, and in my eyes they are beautiful;
For under their roofs were nourished the thoughts that have made the nation;
The glory and strength of America came from her ancestral dwellings.

Henry Van Dyke

The Bells of Malines

AUGUST 17, 1914

The gabled roofs of old Malines
Are russet red and gray and green,
And o'er them in the sunset hour
Looms, dark and huge, St. Rombold's tower.
High in that rugged nest concealed,
The sweetest bells that ever pealed,
The deepest bells that ever rung,
The lightest bells that ever sung,
Are waiting for the master's hand
To fling their music o'er the land.

And shall they ring to-night, Malines?
In nineteen hundred and fourteen,
The frightful year, the year of woe,
When fire and blood and rapine flow
Across the land from lost Liege,
Storm-driven by the German rage?
The other carillons have ceased:
Fallen is Hasselt, fallen Diest,
From Ghent and Bruges no voices come,
Antwerp is silent, Brussels dumb!

But in thy belfry, O Malines,
The master of the bells unseen
Has climbed to where the keyboard stands,--
To-night his heart is in his hands!
Once more, before invasion's hell
Breaks round the tower he loves so well,
Once more he strikes the well-worn keys,
And sends aerial harmonies
Far-floating through the twilight dim
In patriot song and holy hymn.

O listen, burghers of Malines!
Soldier and workman, pale beguine,
And mother with a trembling flock
Of children clinging to thy frock,--
Look up and listen, listen all!
What tunes are these that gently fall
Around you like a benison?
"The Flemish Lion," "Brabanconne,"
"O brave Liege," and all the airs
That Belgium in her bosom bears.

Ring up, ye silvery octaves high,
Whose notes like circling swallows fly;
And ring, each old sonorous bell,--
" Jesu," "Maria," "Michael!"
Weave in and out, and high and low,
The magic music that you know,

And let it float and flutter down
To cheer the heart of the troubled town.
Ring out, "Salvator," lord of all,--
"Roland" in Ghent may hear thee call!

O brave bell-music of Malines,
In this dark hour how much you mean!
The dreadful night of blood and tears
Sweeps down on Belgium, but she hears
Deep in her heart the melody
Of songs she learned when she was free.
She will not falter, faint, nor fail,
But fight until her rights prevail
And all her ancient belfries ring
"The Flemish Lion," "God Save the King!"

Henry Van Dyke

The Black Birds

I

Once, only once, I saw it clear, --
That Eden every human heart has dreamed
A hundred times, but always far away!
Ah, well do I remember how it seemed,
Through the still atmosphere
Of that enchanted day,
To lie wide open to my weary feet:
A little land of love and joy and rest,
With meadows of soft green,
Rosy with cyclamen, and sweet
With delicate breath of violets unseen, --
And, tranquil 'mid the bloom
As if it waited for a coming guest,
A little house of peace and joy and love
Was nested like a snow-white dove

From the rough mountain where I stood,
Homesick for happiness,
Only a narrow valley and a darkling wood
To cross, and then the long distress
Of solitude would be forever past, --
I should be home at last.
But not too soon! oh, let me linger here
And feed my eyes, hungry with sorrow,
On all this loveliness, so near,
And mine to-morrow!

Then, from the wood, across the silvery blue,
A dark bird flew,
Silent, with sable wings.
Close in his wake another came, --
Fragments of midnight floating through
The sunset flame, --
Another and another, weaving rings
Of blackness on the primrose sky, --
Another, and another, look, a score,
A hundred, yes, a thousand rising heavily
From that accursed, dumb, and ancient wood, --
They boiled into the lucid air
Like smoke from some deep caldron of despair!
And more, and more, and ever more,
The numberless, ill-omened brood,
Flapping their ragged plumes,
Possessed the landscape and the evening light
With menaces and glooms.
Oh, dark, dark, dark they hovered o'er the place
Where once I saw the little house so white
Amid the flowers, covering every trace
Of beauty from my troubled sight, --
And suddenly it was night!

II

At break of day I crossed the wooded vale;
And while the morning made
A trembling light among the tree-tops pale,
I saw the sable birds on every limb,
Clinging together closely in the shade,
And croaking placidly their surly hymn.
But, oh, the little land of peace and love
That those night-loving wings had poised above, --
Where was it gone?
Lost, lost forevermore!
Only a cottage, dull and gray,
In the cold light of dawn,
With iron bars across the door:
Only a garden where the withering heads
Of flowers, presaging decay,
Hung over barren beds:
Only a desolate field that lay
Untilled beneath the desolate day, --
Where Eden seemed to bloom I found but these!
So, wondering, I passed along my way,
With anger in my heart, too deep for words,
Against that grove of evil-sheltering trees,
And the black magic of the croaking birds.

Henry Van Dyke

The Empty Quatrain

A flawless cup: how delicate and fine
The flowing curve of every jewelled line!
Look, turn it up or down, 't is perfect still,--
But holds no drop of life's heart-warming wine.

Henry Van Dyke

The Foolish Fir-Tree

A tale that the poet Rückert told
To German children, in days of old;
Disguised in a random, rollicking rhyme
Like a merry mummer of ancient time,
And sent, in its English dress, to please
The little folk of the Christmas trees.

A little fir grew in the midst of the wood
Contented and happy, as young trees should.
His body was straight and his boughs were clean;
And summer and winter the bountiful sheen
Of his needles bedecked him, from top to root,
In a beautiful, all-the-year, evergreen suit.

But a trouble came into his heart one day,
When he saw that the other trees were gay
In the wonderful raiment that summer weaves
Of manifold shapes and kinds of leaves:
He looked at his needles so stiff and small,
And thought that his dress was the poorest of all.
Then jealousy clouded the little tree's mind,
And he said to himself, "It was not very kind
"To give such an ugly old dress to a tree!
"If the fays of the forest would only ask me,
"I'd tell them how I should like to be dressed,—
"In a garment of gold, to bedazzle the rest!"
So he fell asleep, but his dreams were bad.
When he woke in the morning, his heart was glad;
For every leaf that his boughs could hold
Was made of the brightest beaten gold.
I tell you, children, the tree was proud;
He was something above the common crowd;
And he tinkled his leaves, as if he would say
To a pedlar who happened to pass that way,
"Just look at me! don't you think I am fine?
"And wouldn't you like such a dress as mine?"
"Oh, yes!" said the man, "and I really guess
I must fill my pack with your beautiful dress."
So he picked the golden leaves with care,
And left the little tree shivering there.

"Oh, why did I wish for golden leaves?"
The fir-tree said, "I forgot that thieves
"Would be sure to rob me in passing by.
"If the fairies would give me another try,
"I'd wish for something that cost much less,
"And be satisfied with glass for my dress!"
Then he fell asleep; and, just as before,
The fairies granted his wish once more.
When the night was gone, and the sun rose clear,
The tree was a crystal chandelier;
And it seemed, as he stood in the morning light,

That his branches were covered with jewels bright.
"Aha!" said the tree. "This is something great!"
And he held himself up, very proud and straight;
But a rude young wind through the forest dashed,
In a reckless temper, and quickly smashed
The delicate leaves. With a clashing sound
They broke into pieces and fell on the ground,
Like a silvery, shimmering shower of hail,
And the tree stood naked and bare to the gale.

Then his heart was sad; and he cried, "Alas
"For my beautiful leaves of shining glass!
"Perhaps I have made another mistake
"In choosing a dress so easy to break.
"If the fairies only would hear me again
"I'd ask them for something both pretty and plain:
"It wouldn't cost much to grant my request,—
"In leaves of green lettuce I'd like to be dressed!"
By this time the fairies were laughing, I know;
But they gave him his wish in a second; and so
With leaves of green lettuce, all tender and sweet,
The tree was arrayed, from his head to his feet.
"I knew it!" he cried, "I was sure I could find
"The sort of a suit that would be to my mind.
"There's none of the trees has a prettier dress,
"And none as attractive as I am, I guess."
But a goat, who was taking an afternoon walk,
By chance overheard the fir-tree's talk.
So he came up close for a nearer view;—
"My salad!" he bleated, "I think so too!
"You're the most attractive kind of a tree,
"And I want your leaves for my five-o'clock tea."
So he ate them all without saying grace,
And walked away with a grin on his face;
While the little tree stood in the twilight dim,
With never a leaf on a single limb.

Then he sighed and groaned; but his voice was weak—
He was so ashamed that he could not speak.
He knew at last that he had been a fool,
To think of breaking the forest rule,
And choosing a dress himself to please,
Because he envied the other trees.
But it couldn't be helped, it was now too late,
He must make up his mind to a leafless fate!
So he let himself sink in a slumber deep,
But he moaned and he tossed in his troubled sleep,
Till the morning touched him with joyful beam,
And he woke to find it was all a dream.
For there in his evergreen dress he stood,
A pointed fir in the midst of the wood!
His branches were sweet with the balsam smell,

His needles were green when the white snow fell.
And always contented and happy was he,—
The very best kind of a Christmas tree.

Henry Van Dyke

The Gentle Traveller

Through many a land your journey ran,
And showed the best the world can boast:
Now tell me, traveller, if you can,
The place that pleased you most."

She laid her hands upon my breast,
And murmured gently in my ear,
"The place I loved and liked the best
Was in your arms, my dear!"

Henry Van Dyke

The Glory of Ships

The glory of ships is an old, old song,
since the days when the sea-rovers ran
In their open boats through the roaring surf,
and the spread of the world began;
The glory of ships is a light on the sea,
and a star in the story of man.

When Homer sang of the galleys of Greece
that conquered the Trojan shore,
And Solomon lauded the barks of Tyre that
brought great wealth to his door,
'Twas little they knew, those ancient men,
what would come of the sail and the oar.

The Greek ships rescued the West from the East,
when they harried the Persians home;
And the Roman ships were the wings of strength
that bore up the empire, Rome;
And the ships of Spain found a wide new world,
far over the fields of foam.

Then the tribes of courage at last saw clear
that the ocean was not a bound,
But a broad highway, and a challenge to seek
for treasure as yet unfound;
So the fearless ships fared forth to the search,
in joy that the globe was round.

Their hulls were heightened, their sails spread out,
they grew with the growth of their quest;
They opened the secret doors of the East,
and the golden gates of the West;
And many a city of high renown
was proud of a ship on its crest.

The fleets of England and Holland and France
were at strife with each other and Spain;
And battle and storm sent a myriad ships
to sleep in the depths of the main;
But the seafaring spirit could never be drowned,
and it filled up the fleets again.

They greatened and grew, with the aid of steam,
to a wonderful, vast array,
That carries the thoughts and the traffic of men
into every harbor and bay;
And now in the world-wide work of the ships
'tis England that leads the way.

O well for the leading that follows the law
of a common right on the sea!
But ill for the leader who tries to hold

what belongs to mankind in fee!
The way of the ships is an open way,
and the ocean must ever be free!

Remember, O first of the maritime folk,
how the rise of your greatness began.
It will live if you safeguard the round-the-world road
from the shame of a selfish ban;
For the glory of ships is a light on the sea,
and a star in the story of man!

Henry Van Dyke

The Heavenly Hills of Holland

The heavenly hills of Holland,--
How wondrously they rise
Above the smooth green pastures
Into the azure skies!
With blue and purple hollows,
With peaks of dazzling snow,
Along the far horizon
The clouds are marching slow.

No mortal foot has trodden
The summits of that range,
Nor walked those mystic valleys
Whose colors ever change;
Yet we possess their beauty,
And visit them in dreams,
While the ruddy gold of sunset
From cliff and canyon gleams.

In days of cloudless weather
They melt into the light;
When fog and mist surround us
They're hidden from our sight;
But when returns a season
Clear shining after rain,
While the northwest wind is blowing,
We see the hills again.

The old Dutch painters loved them,
Their pictures show them clear,
Old Hobbema and Ruysdael,
Van Goyen and Vermeer.
Above the level landscape,
Rich polders, long-armed mills,
Canals and ancient cities,--
Float Holland's heavenly hills.

Henry Van Dyke

The Hermit Thrush

O wonderful! How liquid clear
The molten gold of that ethereal tone,
Floating and falling through the wood alone,
A hermit-hymn poured out for God to hear!
0 holy, holy, holy! Hyaline,
Long light, low light, glory of eventide!
Love far away, far up. -- up, -- love divine!
Little love, too, for ever, ever, near,
Warm love, earth love, tender love of mine,
In the leafy dark where you hide,
You are mine, -- mine, -- mine!

Ah, my belovèd, do you feel with me
The hidden virtue of that melody,
The rapture and the purity of love,
The heavenly joy that can not find the word?
Then, while we wait again to hear the bird,
Come very near to me, and do not move, --
Now, hermit of the woodland, fill anew
The cool, green cup of air with harmony,
And we will drink the wine of love with you.

Henry Van Dyke

The Message

Waking from tender sleep,
My neighbour's little child
Put out his baby hand to me,
Looked in my face, and smiled.

It seemed as if he came
Home from a happy land,
To tell me something that my heart
Would surely understand.

Somewhere, among bright dreams,
A child that once was mine
Had whispered wordless love to him,
And given him a sign.

Comfort of kindly speech,
And counsel of the wise,
Have helped me less than what I read
In those deep-smiling eyes.

Sleep sweetly, little friend,
And dream again of heaven:
With double love I kiss your hand,--
Your message has been given.

Henry Van Dyke

The Mocking-Bird

In mirth he mocks the other birds at noon,
Catching the lilt of every easy tune;
But when the day departs he sings of love,--
His own wild song beneath the listening moon.

Henry Van Dyke

The Name of France

Give us a name to fill the mind
With the shining thoughts that lead mankind,
The glory of learning, the joy of art, --
A name that tells of a splendid part
In the long, long toil and the strenuous fight
Of the human race to win its way
From the feudal darkness into the day
Of Freedom, Brotherhood, Equal Right, --
A name like a star, a name of light.
I give you France!

Give us a name to move the heart
With a warmer glow and a swifter flood, --
A name like the sound of a trumpet, clear,
And silver-sweet, and iron-strong,
That calls three million men to their feet,
Ready to march, and steady to meet
The foes who threaten that name with wrong, --
A name that rings like a battle-song.
I give you France!

Give us a name to move the heart
With the strength that noble griefs impart,
A name that speaks of the blood outpoured
To save minkind from the sway of the sword, --
A name that calls on the world to share
In the burden of sacrificial strife
Where the cause at stake is the world's free life
Andthe rule of the people everywhere, --
A name like a vow, a name like a prayer.
I give you France!

Henry Van Dyke

The Oxford Thrushes

FEBRUARY, 1917

I never thought again to hear
The Oxford thrushes singing clear,
Amid the February rain,
Their sweet, indomitable strain.

A wintry vapor lightly spreads
Among the trees, and round the beds
Where daffodil and jonquil sleep,
Only the snowdrop wakes to weep.

It is not springtime yet. Alas,
What dark, tempestuous days must pass,
Till England's trial by battle cease,
And summer comes again with peace.

The lofty halls, the tranquil towers,
Where Learning in untroubled hours
Held her high court, serene in fame,
Are lovely still, yet not the same.

The novices in fluttering gown
No longer fill the ancient town,
But fighting men in khaki drest--
And in the Schools the wounded rest.

Ah, far away, 'neath stranger skies
Full many a son of Oxford lies,
And whispers from his warrior grave,
"I died to keep the faith you gave."

The mother mourns, but does not fail,
Her courage and her love prevail
O'er sorrow, and her spirit hears
The promise of triumphant years.

Then sing, ye thrushes, in the rain
Your sweet indomitable strain.
Ye bring a word from God on high
And voices in our hearts reply.

Henry Van Dyke

The Price of Peace

Peace without Justice is a low estate,--
A coward cringing to an iron Fate!
But Peace through Justice is the great ideal,--
We'll pay the price of war to make it real.

Henry Van Dyke

The Proud Lady

When Stiivoren town was in its prime
And queened the Zuyder Zee,
Its ships went out to every clime
With costly merchantry.

A lady dwelt in that rich town,
The fairest in all the land;
She walked abroad in a velvet gown,
With many rings on her hand.

Her hair was bright as the beaten gold,
Her lips as coral red,
Her roving eyes were blue and bold,
And her heart with pride was fed.

For she was proud of her father's ships,
As she watched them gayly pass;
And pride looked out of her eyes and lips
When she saw herself in the glass.

"Now come," she said to the captains ten,
Who were ready to put to sea,
"Ye are all my men and my father's men,
And what will ye do for me?"

"Go north and south, go east and west,
And get me gifts," she said.
"And he who bringeth me home the best,
With that man will I wed."

So they all fared forth, and sought with care
In many a famous mart,
For satins and silks and jewels rare,
To win that lady's heart.

She looked at them all with never a thought,
And careless put them by;
"I am not fain of the things ye brought,
Enough of these have I."

The last that came was the head of the fleet,
His name was Jan Borel;
He bent his knee at the lady's feet,--
In truth he loved her well.

"I've brought thee home the best i' the world,
A shipful of Danzig corn!"
She stared at him long; her red lips curled,
Her blue eyes filled with scorn.

"Now out on thee, thou feckless kerl,
A loon thou art," she said.

"Am I a starving beggar girl?
Shall I ever lack for bread?"

"Go empty all thy sacks of grain
Into the nearest sea,
And never show thy face again
To make a mock of me."

Then Jan Borel, he hoisted sail,
And out to sea he bore;
He passed the Helder in a gale
And came again no more.

But the grains of corn went drifting down
Like devil-scattered seed,
To sow the harbor of the town
With a wicked growth of weed.

The roots were thick and the silt and sand
Were gathered day by day,
Till not a furlong out from land
A shoal had barred the way.

Then Stavoren town saw evil years,
No ships could out or in,
The boats lay rotting at the piers,
And the mouldy grain in the bin.

The grass-grown streets were all forlorn,
The town in ruin stood,
The lady's velvet gown was torn,
Her rings were sold for food.

Her father had perished long ago,
But the lady held her pride,
She walked with a scornful step and slow,
Till at last in her rags she died.

Yet still on the crumbling piers of the town,
When the midnight moon shines free,
woman walks in a velvet gown
And scatters corn in the sea.

Henry Van Dyke

The Red Flower

In the pleasant time of Pentecost,
By the little river Kyll,
I followed the angler's winding path
Or waded the stream at will,
And the friendly fertile German land
Lay round me green and still.

But all day long on the eastern bank
Of the river cool and clear,
Where the curving track of the double rails
Was hardly seen though near,
The endless trains of German troops
Went rolling down to Trier.

They packed the windows with bullet heads
And caps of hodden gray;
They laughed and sang and shouted loud
When the trains were brought to a stay;
They waved their hands and sang again
As they went on their iron way.

No shadow fell on the smiling land,
No cloud arose in the sky;
I could hear the river's quiet tune
When the trains had rattled by;
But my heart sank low with a heavy sense
Of trouble,--I knew not why.

Then came I into a certain field
Where the devil's paint-brush spread
'Mid the gray and green of the rolling hills
A flaring splotch of red,--
An evil omen, a bloody sign,
And a token of many dead.

I saw in a vision the field-gray horde
Break forth at the devil's hour,
And trample the earth into crimson mud
In the rage of the Will to Power,--
All this I dreamed in the valley of Kyll,
At the sign of the blood-red flower.

Henry Van Dyke

The Statue of Sherman by St. Gaudens

This is the soldier brave enough to tell
The glory-dazzled world that `war is hell':
Lover of peace, he looks beyond the strife,
And rides through hell to save his country's life.

Henry Van Dyke

The Sun-Dial at Wells College

The shadow by my finger cast
Divides the future from the past:
Before it, sleeps the unborn hour
In darkness, and beyond thy power:
Behind its unreturning line,
The vanished hour, no longer thine:
One hour alone is in thy hands,--
The NOW on which the shadow stands.

Henry Van Dyke

The Vain King

In robes of Tyrian blue the King was drest,
A jewelled collar shone upon his breast,
A giant ruby glittered in his crown -----
Lord of rich lands and many a splendid town.
In him the glories of an ancient line
Of sober kings, who ruled by right divine,
Were centred; and to him with loyal awe
The people looked for leadership and law.
Ten thousand knights, the safeguard of the land,
Lay like a single sword within his hand;
A hundred courts, with power of life and death,
Proclaimed decrees justice by his breath;
And all the sacred growths that men had known
Of order and of rule upheld his throne.

Proud was the King: yet not with such a heart
As fits a man to play a royal part.
Not his the pride that honours as a trust
The right to rule, the duty to be just:
Not his the dignity that bends to bear
The monarch's yoke, the master's load of care,
And labours like the peasant at his gate,
To serve the people and protect the State.
Another pride was his, and other joys:
To him the crown and sceptre were but toys,
With which he played at glory's idle game,
To please himself and win the wreaths of fame.
The throne his fathers held from age to age
Built for King Martin to diplay at will,
His mighty strength and universal skill.

No conscious child, that, spoiled with praising, tries
At every step to win admiring eyes, ----
No favourite mountebank, whose acting draws
From gaping crowds loud thunder of applause,
Was vainer than the King: his only thirst
Was to be hailed, in every race, the first.
When tournament was held, in knightly guise
The King would ride the lists and win the prize;
When music charmed the court, with golden lyre
The King would take the stage and lead the choir;
In hunting, his the lance to slay the boar;
In hawking, see his falcon highest soar;
In painting, he would wield the master's brush;
In high debate, -----"the King is speaking! Hush!"
Thus, with a restless heart, in every field
He sought renown, and found his subjects yield
As if he were a demi-god revealed.

But while he played the petty games of life

His kingdom fell a prey to inward strife;
Corruption through the court unheeded crept,
And on the seat of honour justice slept.
The strong trod down the weak; the helpless poor
Groaned under burdens grievous to endure.
The nation's wealth was spent in vain display,
And weakness wore the nation's heart away.

Yet think not Earth is blind to human woes ---
Man has more friends and helpers than he knows;
And when a patient people are oppressed,
The land that bore them feels it in her breast.
Spirits of field and flood, of heath and hill,
Are grieved and angry at the spreading ill;
The trees complain together in the night,
Voices of wrath are heard along the height,
And secret vows are sworn, by stream and strand,
To bring the tyrant low and liberate the land.

But little recked the pampered King of these;
He heard no voice but such as praise and please.
Flattered and fooled, victor in every sport,
One day he wandered idly with his court
Beside the river, seeking to devise
New ways to show his skill to wondering eyes.
There in the stream a patient fisher stood,
And cast his line across the rippling flood.
His silver spoil lay near him on the green:
"Such fish," the courtiers cried, "were never seen!"
"Three salmon larger than a cloth-yard shaft---
"This man must be the master of his craft!"
"An easy art!" the jealous King replied:
"Myself could learn it better, if I tried,
"And catch a hundred larger fish a week---
"Wilt thou accept the challenge, fellow? Speak!"
The fisher turned, came near, and bent his knee:
"'Tis not for kings to strive with such as me;
"Yet if the King commands it, I obey.
"But one condition of the strife I pray:
"The fisherman who brings the least to land
"Shall do whate'er the other may command."
Loud laughed the King: "A foolish fisher thou!
"For I shall win and rule thee then as now."

So to Prince John, a sober soul, sedate
And slow, King Martin left the helm of state,
While to the novel game with eager zest
He all his time and all his powers addrest.
Sure such a sight was never seen before!
For robed and crowned the monarch trod the shore;

His golden hooks were decked with feathers fine,
His jewelled reel ran out a silken line.
With kingly strokes he flogged the crystal stream,
Far-off the salmon saw his tackle gleam;
Careless of kings, they eyed with calm disdain
The gaudy lure, and Martin fished in vain.
On Friday, when the week was almost spent,
He scanned his empty creel with discontent,
Called for a net, and cast it far and wide,
And drew --- a thousand minnows from the tide!
Then came the fisher to conclude the match,
And at the monarch's feet spread out his catch ---
A hundred salmon, greater than before ---
"I win!" he cried: "the King must pay the score."
Then Martin, angry, threw his tackle down:
"Rather than lose this game I'd lose me crown!"

"Nay, thou has lost them both," the fisher said;
And as he spoke a wondrous light was shed
Around his form; he dropped his garments mean,
And in his place the River-god was seen.
"Thy vanity hast brought thee in my power,
"And thou shalt pay the forfeit at this hour:
"For thou hast shown thyself a royal fool,
"Too proud to angle, and too vain to rule.
"Eager to win in every trivial strife, ---
"Go! Thou shalt fish for minnows all thy life!"
Wrathful, the King the scornful sentence heard;
He strove to answer, but he only chirr-r-ed:
His Tyrian robe was changed to wings of blue,
His crown became a crest, --- away he flew!

And still, along the reaches of the stream,
The vain King-fisher flits, an azure gleam, ---
You see his ruby crest, you hear his jealous scream.

Henry Van Dyke

The Veery

THE MOONBEAMS over Arno's vale in silver flood were pouring,
When first I heard the nightingale a long-lost love deploring.
So passionate, so full of pain, it sounded strange and eerie;
I longed to hear a simpler strain,—the wood-notes of the veery.

The laverock sings a bonny lay above the Scottish heather;
It sprinkles down from far away like light and love together;
He drops the golden notes to greet his brooding mate, his dearie;
I only know one song more sweet,—the vespers of the veery.

In English gardens, green and bright and full of fruity treasure,
I heard the blackbird with delight repeat his merry measure:
The ballad was a pleasant one, the tune was loud and cheery,
And yet, with every setting sun, I listened for the veery.

But far away, and far away, the tawny thrush is singing;
New England woods, at close of day, with that clear chant are ringing:
And when my light of life is low, and heart and flesh are weary,
I fain would hear, before I go, the wood-notes of the veery.

Henry Van Dyke

The White Bees

I

LEGEND

Long ago Apollo called to Aristæus,
youngest of the shepherds,
Saying, "I will make you keeper of my bees."
Golden were the hives, and golden was the honey;
golden, too, the music,
Where the honey-makers hummed among the trees.

Happy Aristæus loitered in the garden, wandered
in the orchard,
Careless and contented, indolent and free;
Lightly took his labour, lightly took his pleasure,
till the fated moment
When across his pathway came Eurydice.

Then her eyes enkindled burning love within him;
drove him wild with longing,
For the perfect sweetness of her flower-like face;
Eagerly he followed, while she fled before him,
over mead and mountain,
On through field and forest, in a breathless race.

But the nymph, in flying, trod upon a serpent;
like a dream she vanished;
Pluto's chariot bore her down among the dead;
Lonely Aristæus, sadly home returning, found his
garden empty,
All the hives deserted, all the music fled.

Mournfully bewailing, -- "ah, my honey-makers,
where have you departed?" --
Far and wide he sought them, over sea and shore;
Foolish is the tale that says he ever found them,
brought them home in triumph,
Joys that once escape us fly for evermore.

Yet I dream that somewhere, clad in downy
whiteness, dwell the honey-makers,
In aerial gardens that no mortal sees:
And at times returning, lo, they flutter round us,
gathering mystic harvest,
So I weave the legend of the long-lost bees.

II

THE SWARMING OF THE BEES

I

WHO can tell the hiding of the white bees' nest?
Who can trace the guiding of their swift home flight?
Far would be his riding on a life-long quest:
Surely ere it ended would his beard grow white.

Never in the coming of the rose-red Spring,
Never in the passing of the wine-red Fall,
May you hear the humming of the white bee's wing
Murmur o'er the meadow, ere the night bells call.

Wait till winter hardens in the cold grey sky,
Wait till leaves are fallen and the brooks all freeze,
Then above the gardens where the dead flowers lie,
Swarm the merry millions of the wild white bees.

II

Out of the high-built airy hive,
Deep in the clouds that veil the sun,
Look how the first of the swarm arrive;
Timidly venturing, one by one,
Down through the tranquil air,
Wavering here and there,
Large, and lazy in flight, --
Caught by a lift of the breeze,
Tangled among the naked trees, --
Dropping then, without a sound,
Feather-white, feather-light,
To their rest on the ground.

III

Thus the swarming is begun.
Count the leaders, every one
Perfect as a perfect star
Till the slow descent is done.
Look beyond them, see how far
Down the vistas dim and grey,
Multitudes are on the way.
Now a sudden brightness
Dawns within the sombre day,
Over fields of whiteness;
And the sky is swiftly alive
With the flutter and the flight
Of the shimmering bees, that pour
From the hidden door of the hive
Till you can count no more.

IV

Now on the branches of hemlock and pine
Thickly they settle and cluster and swing,
Bending them low; and the trellised vine
And the dark elm-boughs are traced with a line
Of beauty wherever the white bees cling.
Now they are hiding the wrecks of the flowers,
Softly, softly, covering all,
Over the grave of the summer hours
Spreading a silver pall.
Now they are building the broad roof ledge,
Into a cornice smooth and fair,
Moulding the terrace, from edge to edge,
Into the sweep of a marble stair.
Wonderful workers, swift and dumb,
Numberless myriads, still they come,
Thronging ever faster, faster, faster!
Where is their queen? Who is their master?
The gardens are faded, the fields are frore,
How will they fare in a world so bleak?
Where is the hidden honey they seek?
What is the sweetness they toil to store
In the desolate day, where no blossoms gleam?
Forgetfulness and a dream!

V

But now the fretful wind awakes;
I hear him girding at the trees;
He strikes the bending boughs, and shakes
The quiet clusters of the bees
To powdery drift;
He tosses them away,
He drives them like spray;
He makes them veer and shift
Around his blustering path.
In clouds blindly whirling,
In rings madly swirling,
Full of crazy wrath,
So furious and fast they fly
They blur the earth and blot the sky
In wild, white mirk.
They fill the air with frozen wings
And tiny, angry, icy stings;
They blind the eyes, and choke the breath,
They dance a maddening dance of death
Around their work,
Sweeping the cover from the hill,
Heaping the hollows deeper still,
Effacing every line and mark,

And swarming, storming in the dark
Through the long night;
Until, at dawn, the wind lies down,
Weary of fight.
The last torn cloud, with trailing gown,
Passes the open gates of light;
And the white bees are lost in flight.

VI

Look how the landscape glitters wide and still,
Bright with a pure surprise!
The day begins with joy, and all past ill,
Buried in white oblivion, lies
Beneath the snowdrifts under crystal skies.
New hope, new love, new life, new cheer,
Flow in the sunrise beam,--
The gladness of Apollo when he sees,
Upon the bosom of the wintry year,
The honey-harvest of his wild white bees,
Forgetfulness and a dream!

III

LEGEND

LISTEN, my beloved, while the silver morning,
like a tranquil vision,
Fills the world around us and our hearts with peace;
Quiet is the close of Aristæus' legend, happy is
the ending --
Listen while I tell you how he found release.

Many months he wandered far away in sadness,
desolately thinking
Only of the vanished joys he could not find;
Till the great Apollo, pitying his shepherd, loosed
him from the burden
Of a dark, reluctant, backward-looking mind.

Then he saw around him all the changeful beauty
of the changing seasons,
In the world-wide regions where his journey lay;
Birds that sang to cheer him, flowers that bloomed
beside him, stars that shone to guide him, --
Traveller's joy was plenty all along the way!

Everywhere he journeyed strangers made him
welcome, listened while he taught them

Secret lore of field and forest he had learned:
How to train the vines and make the olives fruit-
ful; how to guard the sheepfolds;
How to stay the fever when the dog-star burned.

Friendliness and blessing followed in his foot-
steps; richer were the harvests,
Happier the dwellings, wheresoe'er he came;
Little children loved him, and he left behind him,
in the hour of parting,
Memories of kindness and a god-like name.

So he travelled onward, desolate no longer,
patient in his seeking,
Reaping all the wayside comfort of his quest;
Till at last in Thracia, high upon Mount Hæmus,
far from human dwelling,
Weary Aristæus laid him down to rest.

Then the honey-makers, clad in downy whiteness,
fluttered soft around him,
Wrapt him in a dreamful slumber pure and deep.
This is life, beloved: first a sheltered garden,
then a troubled journey,
Joy and pain of seeking, -- and at last we sleep!

Henry Van Dyke

The Wind of Sorrow

The fire of love was burning, yet so low
That in the dark we scarce could see its rays,
And in the light of perfect-placid days
Nothing but smouldering embers dull and slow.
Vainly, for love's delight, we sought to throw
New pleasures on the pyre to make it blaze:
In life's calm air and tranquil-prosperous ways
We missed the radiant heat of long ago.

Then in the night, a night of sad alarms,
Bitter with pain and black with fog of fears,
That drove us trembling to each other's arms --
Across the gulf of darkness and salt tears,
Into life's calm the wind of sorrow came,
And fanned the fire of love to clearest flame.

Henry Van Dyke

The Window

All night long, by a distant bell,
The passing hours were notched
On the dark, while her breathing rose and fell,
And the spark of life I watched
In her face was glowing or fading, -- who could tell? --
And the open window of the room,
With a flare of yellow light,
Was peering out into the gloom,
Like an eye that searched the night.

Oh, what do you see in the dark, little window, and why do you fear?
"I see that the garden is crowded with creeping forms of fear:
Little white ghosts in the locust-tree, that wave in the night-wind's breath,
And low in the leafy laurels the larking shadow of death."

Sweet, clear notes of a waking bird
Told of the passing away
Of the dark, -- and my darling may have heard;
For she smiled in her sleep, while the ray
Of the rising dawn spoke joy without a word,
Till the splendor born in the east outburned
The yellow lamplight, pale and thin,
And the open window slowly turned
To the eye of the morning, looking in.

Oh, what do you see in the room, little window, that makes you so bright?
"I see that a child is asleep on her pillow, soft and white,
With the rose of life on her tips, and the breath of life in her breast,
And the arms of God around her as she quietly takes her rest."

Henry Van Dyke

They Who Tread the Path of Labor

They who tread the path of labor follow where My feet have trod;
They who work without complaining, do the holy will of God;
Nevermore thou needest seek me; I am with thee everywhere;
Raise the stone, and thou shalt find Me, clease the wood and I am there.

Where the many toil together, there am I among My own;
Where the tired workman sleepeth, there am I with him alone:
I, the Peace that passeth knowledge, dwell amid the daily strife;
I, the Bread of Heav'n am broken in the sacrement of life.

Every task, however simple, sets the soul that does it free;
Every deed of love and mercy, done to man is done to Me.
Nevermore thou needest seek me; I am with thee everywhere;
Raise the stone, and thou shalt find Me; cleave the wood, and I am there.

Henry Van Dyke

Thomas Bailey Aldrich

I

BIRTHDAY VERSES

Dear Aldrich, now November's mellow days
Have brought another Festa round to you,
You can't refuse a loving-cup of praise
From friends the fleeting years have bound to you.

Here come your Marjorie Daw, your dear Bad Boy,
Prudence, and Judith the Bethulian,
And many more, to wish you birthday joy,
And sunny hours, and sky caerulean!

Your children all, they hurry to your den,
With wreaths of honour they have won for you,
To merry-make your threescore years and ten.
You, old? Why, life has just begun for you!

There's many a reader whom your silver songs
And crystal stories cheer in loneliness.
What though the newer writers come in throngs?
You're sure to keep your charm of only-ness.

You do your work with careful, loving touch, --
An artist to the very core of you, --
You know the magic spell of "not-too-much ":
We read, -- and wish that there was more of you.

And more there is: for while we love your books
Because their subtle skill is part of you;
We love you better, for our friendship looks
Behind them to the human heart of you.

November 24, 1906.

II

MEMORIAL SONNET

THIS is the house where little Aldrich read
The early pages of Life's wonder-book:
With boyish pleasure, in this ingle-nook
He watched the drift-wood fire of Fancy spread
Bright colours on the pictures, blue and red:
Boy-like he skipped the longer words, and took
His happy way, with searching, dreamful look
Among the deeper things more simply said.

Then, came his turn to write: and still the flame
Of Fancy played through all the tales he told,

And still he won the laurelled poet's fame
With simple words wrought into rhymes of gold.
Look, here's the face to which this house is frame, --
A man too wise to let his heart grow old!

Henry Van Dyke

Time Is

Time is
Too Slow for those who Wait,
Too Swift for those who Fear,
Too Long for those who Grieve,
Too Short for those who Rejoice;
But for those who Love,
Time is not.

Henry Van Dyke

To James Whitcomb Riley

On his "Book of Joyous Children"

Yours is a garden of old-fashioned flowers;
Joyous children delight to play there;
Weary men find rest in its bowers,
Watching the lingering light of day there.

Old-time tunes and young love's laughter
Ripple and run among the roses;
Memory's echoes, murmuring after,
Fill the dusk when the long day closes.

Simple songs with a cadence olden--
These you learned in the Forest of Arden:
Friendly flowers with hearts all golden--
These you borrowed from Eden's garden.

This is the reason why all men love you;
Truth to life is the charm of art:
Other poets may soar above you--
You keep close to the human heart.

Henry Van Dyke

To Julia Marlowe

Long had I loved this "Attic shape," the brede
Of marble maidens round this urn divine:
But when your golden voice began to read,
The empty urn was filled with Chian wine.

Henry Van Dyke

Twilight in the Alps

I love the hour that comes, with dusky hair
And dewy feet, along the Alpine dells
To lead the cattle forth. A thousand bells
Go chiming after her across the fair
And flowery uplands, while the rosy flare
Of sunset on the snowy mountain dwells,
And valleys darken, and the drowsy spells
Of peace are woven through the purple air.

Dear is the magic of this hour: she seems
To walk before the dark by falling rills,
And lend a sweeter song to hidden streams;
She opens all the doors of night, and fills
With moving bells the music of my dreams,
That wander far among the sleeping hills.

Henry Van Dyke

Two Schools

I put my heart to school
In the world, where men grow wise,
"Go out," I said, "and learn the rule;
Come back when you win a prize."

My heart came back again:
"Now where is the prize?" I cried. ----
"The rule was false, and the prize was pain,
And the teacher's name was Pride."

I put my heart to school
In the woods, where veeries sing,
And brooks run cool and clear;
In the fields, where wild flowers spring,
And the blue of heaven bends near.
"Go out," I said: "you are half a fool,
But perhaps they can teach you here."

"And why do you stay so long,
My heart, and where do you roam?"
The answer came with a laugh and a song, ---
"I find this school is home."

Henry Van Dyke

Undine

'T was far away and long ago,
When I was but a dreaming boy,
This fairy tale of love and woe
Entranced my heart with tearful joy;
And while with white Undine I wept,
Your spirit, -- ah, how strange it seems, --
Was cradled in some star, and slept,
Unconscious of her coming dreams.

Henry Van Dyke

Urbs Coronata

(Song for the City College of New York)

O youngest of the giant brood
Of cities far-renowned;
In wealth and power thou hast passed
Thy rivals at a bound;
And now thou art a queen, New York;
And how wilt thou be crowned?

"Weave me no palace-wreath of pride,"
The royal city said;
"Nor forge an iron fortress-wall
To frown upon my head;
But let me wear a diadem
Of Wisdom's towers instead."

And so upon her island height
She worked her will forsooth,
She set upon her rocky brow
A citadel of Truth,
A house of Light, a home of Thought,
A shrine of noble Youth.

Stand here, ye City College towers,
And look both up and down;
Remember all who wrought for you
Within the toiling town;
Remember all they thought for you,
And all the hopes they brought for you,
And be the City's Crown.

Henry Van Dyke

Victor Hugo

Heart of France for a hundred years,
Passionate, sensitive, proud, and strong,
Quick to throb with her hopes and fears,
Fierce to flame with her sense of wrong!
You, who hailed with a morning song
Dream-light gilding a throne of old:
You, who turned when the dream grew cold,
Singing still, to the light that shone
Pure from Liberty's ancient throne,
Over the human throng!
You, who dared in the dark eclipse,--
When the pygmy heir of a giant name
Dimmed the face of the land with shame,--
Speak the truth with indignant lips,
Call him little whom men called great,
Scoff at him, scorn him, deny him,
Point to the blood on his robe of state,
Fling back his bribes and defy him!

You, who fronted the waves of fate
As you faced the sea from your island home,
Exiled, yet with a soul elate,
Sending songs o'er the rolling foam,
Bidding the heart of man to wait
For the day when all should see
Floods of wrath from the frowning skies
Fall on an Empire founded in lies,
And France again be free!
You, who came in the Terrible Year
Swiftly back to your broken land,
Now to your heart a thousand times more dear,--
Prayed for her, sung to her, fought for her,
Patiently, fervently wrought for her,
Till once again,
After the storm of fear and pain,
High in the heavens the star of France stood clear!

You, who knew that a man must take
Good and ill with a steadfast soul,
Holding fast, while the billows roll
Over his head, to the things that make
Life worth living for great and small,--
Honour and pity and truth,
The heart and the hope of youth,
And the good God over all!
You, to whom work was rest,
Dauntless Toiler of the Sea,
Following ever the joyful quest
Of beauty on the shores of old Romance,
Bard of the poor of France,
And warrior-priest of world-wide charity!

You who loved little children best
Of all the poets that ever sung,
Great heart, golden heart,
Old, and yet ever young,
Minstrel of liberty,
Lover of all free, winged things,
Now at last you are free,--
Your soul has its wings!
Heart of France for a hundred years,
Floating far in the light that never fails you,
Over the turmoil of mortal hopes and fears
Victor, forever victor, the whole world hails you!

Henry Van Dyke

War-Music

Break off! Dance no more!
Danger is at the door.
Music is in arms.
To signal war's alarms.

Hark, a sudden trumpet calling
Over the hill!
Why are you calling, trumpet, calling?
What is your will?

Men, men, men !
Men who are ready to fight
For their country's life, and the right
Of a liberty-loving land to be
Free, free, free!
Free from a tyrant's chain,
Free from dishonor's stain,
Free to guard and maintain
All that her fathers fought for,
All that her sons have wrought for,
Resolute, brave, and free!

Call again, trumpet, call again,
Call up the men!
Do you hear the storm of cheers
Mingled with the women's tears
And the tramp, tramp, tramp of marching feet?
Do you hear the throbbing drum
As the hosts of battle come
Keeping time, time, time to its beat?
O Music give a song
To make their spirit strong
For the fury of the tempest they must meet.

The hoarse roar
Of the monster guns;
And the sharp bark
Of the lesser guns;
The whine of the shells,
The rifles' clatter
Where the bullets patter,
The rattle, rattle, rattle
Of the mitrailleuse in battle,
And the yells
Of the men who charge through hells
Where the poison gas descends,
And the bursting shrapnel rends
Limb from limb
In the dim
Chaos and clamor of the strife
Where no man thinks of his life
But only of fighting through,

Blindly fighting through, through!
'Tis done
At last!
The victory won,
The dissonance of warfare past!

O Music mourn the dead
Whose loyal blood was shed,
And sound the taps for every hero slain;
Then lead into the song
That made their spirit strong,
And tell the world they did not die in vain.

Thank God we can see, in the glory of morn,
The invincible flag that our fathers defended;
And our hearts can repeat what the heroes have sworn,
That war shall not end till the war-lust is ended.
Then the bloodthirsty sword shall no longer be lord
Of the nations oppressed by the conqueror's horde,
But the banners of freedom shall peacefully wave
O'er the world of the free and the lands of the brave.

Henry Van Dyke

Without Disguise

If I have erred in showing all my heart,
And lost your favour by a lack of pride;
If standing like a beggar at your side
With naked feet, I have forgot the art
Of those who bargain well in passion's mart,
And win the thing they want by what they hide;
Be mine the fault as mine the hope denied,
Be mine the lover's and the loser's part.

The sin, if sin it was, I do repent,
And take the penance on myself alone;
Yet after I have borne the punishment,
I shall not fear to stand before the throne
Of Love with open heart, and make this plea:
"At least I have not lied to her nor Thee!"

Henry Van Dyke

Wordsworth

Wordsworth, thy music like a river rolls
Among the mountains, and thy song is fed
By living springs far up the watershed;
No whirling flood nor parching drought controls
The crystal current: even on the shoals
It murmurs clear and sweet; and when its bed
Darkens below mysterious cliffs of dread,
Thy voice of peace grows deeper in our souls.

But thou in youth hast known the breaking stress
Of passion, and hast trod despair's dry ground
Beneath black thoughts that wither and destroy.
Ah, wanderer, led by human tenderness
Home to the heart of Nature, thou hast found
The hidden Fountain of Recovered Joy.

Henry Van Dyke

Work

Let me but do my work from day to day,
In field or forest, at the desk or loom,
In roaring market-place or tranquil room;
Let me but find it in my heart to say,
When vagrant wishes beckon me astray,
"This is my work; my blessing, not my doom;
"Of all who live, I am the one by whom
"This work can best be done in the right way."

Then shall I see it not too great, nor small,
To suit my spirit and to prove my powers;
Then shall I cheerful greet the labouring hours,
And cheerful turn, when the long shadows fall
At eventide, to play and love and rest,
Because I know for me my work is best.

Henry Van Dyke