

**Classic Poetry Series**

**John Liddell Kelly**

**- poems -**

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## **Heredity**

More than a fleshly immortality  
Is mine. Though I myself return again  
To dust, my qualities of heart and brain,  
Of soul and spirit, shall not cease to be.  
I view them growing, day by day, in thee,  
My first-begotten son; I trace them plain  
In you, my daughters; and I count it gain  
Myself renewed and multiplied to see.

But sadness mingles with my selfish joy,  
At thought of what you may be called to bear.  
Oh, passionate maid! Oh, glad, impulsive boy!  
Your father's sad experience you must share --  
Self-torture, the unfeeling world's annoy,  
Gross pleasure, fierce exultance, grim despair!

John Liddell Kelly

## **Immortality**

At twenty-five I cast my horoscope,  
And saw a future with all good things rife --  
A firm assurance of eternal life  
In worlds beyond, and in this world the hope  
Of deathless fame. But now my sun doth slope  
To setting, and the toil of sordid strife,  
The care of food and raiment, child and wife,  
Have dimmed and narrowed all my spirit's scope.

Eternal life -- a river gulphed in sands!  
Undying fame -- a rainbow lost in clouds!  
What hope of immortality remains  
But this: "Some soul that loves and understands  
Shall save thee from the darkness that enshrouds";  
And this: "Thy blood shall course in others' veins"?

John Liddell Kelly