

John Liddell Kelly

- poems -

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John Liddell Kelly(19 February 1850-1926)

Born near Airdrie, Scotland, 19th February, 1850. John Liddell Kelly left school at the age of eleven and was self-educated afterwards. He married in 1870 and emigrated to New Zealand in 1880.

He worked as a Sub-editor for the Auckland Star and as editor for the Auckland Observer. Mr Kelly also has served as assistant editor for the Lyttelton Times and editor of the New Zealand Times.

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

The Christian Philosopher's A.B.C.

Alone and hopeless in a world of woe,
By friends deceived, and spurned by many a foe,
Can man exist, and think, and act, nor feel
Despondency o'er all his being steal?
E'en faith in God and His all-gracious plan
Fails when we lack man's sympathy for man.
'Give us,' we cry, 'friends faithful and sincere—
Happy our present, and our future clear ;
In peace, oh God, our cups with plenty fill,
Join earth to heaven, all sin and sorrow kill;
Kill want and woe, then we shall gladly own
Love rules the earth, and God doth reign alone—
Mercy His crown, and Righteousness His throne!'
Nay, speak not so, it ill becomes a clod
Of lowly earth to dictate to his God !
Put down rebellion in thee, and no more
Question those gifts God poureth from his store.
Remember whence thou art, and whither bent ;
Say not 'tis evil which the Lord hath sent
To serve His gracious ends. He shall hold sway
Until each soul shall love him and obey.
Virtue brings peace. Seek her and thou shall find
What arms 'gainst griefs the philosophic mind.
Xantippe might scold, yet Socrates pursued,
Year in, year out, his philosophic mood—
Zealous for God, and for the cause of good.

John Liddell Kelly