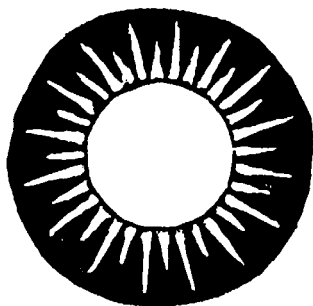


The
Land of Inner Light
An Essay in Prose and Verse

BEING A
*BRIEF TREATISE ON ADVANCED THOUGHT
IN ITS APPLICATION TO MODERN LIFE*

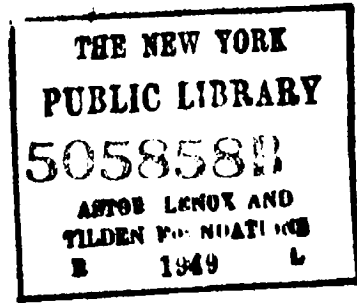
SUPPLEMENTED BY
*POEMS ILLUSTRATIVE OF PRINCIPLES IN
HARMONY WITH PROGRESSIVE IDEAS*

BY
CHARLES FREDERICK CRANE, M.D.



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C. F. Crane M.D.

TO

ALL THOSE WHO ARE DAILY STRIVING,
IN SPITE OF OBSTACLES, TO CREATE A
GREATER DEGREE OF HAPPINESS AND
TO DISPEL THE DARK CLOUDS OF LIFE
BY RADIATING GLEAMS OF SUNSHINE,
THIS BOOK IS SINCERELY AND RESPECT-
FULLY DEDICATED



Preface



THE only reason that this book is now being added to the vast ocean of literature already in existence is the fact that the principal poem contained herein, the one from which this little volume derives its name, is pre-eminently an inspired composition and contains a message upon which thoughtful men and women will do well to ponder. The physical senses are not the only channels through which the human mind may receive information. It is known that the material universe in which we live is interpenetrated by a mental universe, and that we are constantly surrounded by currents of thought. People frequently receive ideas from unknown sources, which they vainly believe to originate in their own minds. Many, if not all, of the great movements for the benefit of humanity, have probably had their origin in this way. The

PREFACE

descriptive matter that follows the verses of "The Land of Inner Light" explains in as clear a manner as possible the essential ideas contained in that poem, viewed from a standpoint that has been gained by many years of deep study and exhaustive research in many different fields of knowledge, and also through other and more direct means. The truth of the facts there stated is perfectly familiar to some persons at the present time, and will become more and more apparent to others as the race becomes older and the masses gain in wisdom. It pertains not to any special brand of religious belief, but rather to those broad underlying principles that are as applicable to one kind as to another, and the practical adaptation of these, so far as is possible, to the various departments and daily affairs of human life. In the presentation of a subject of this nature, the writer feels himself to be a most humble instrument, but since it is as refreshing to drink pure water from a battered tin cup as from a golden goblet, it is to be hoped that the information herein contained will be considered none the less valuable on that account.

PREFACE

As some of the other poems contain flashes of the higher knowledge or serve to point a moral, they also should prove valuable reading. The one designated as "The Slave of the Mill," especially, is a composition having a most lofty object in view, namely, to impress upon the minds of the public the existence of the great curse of child labor and the importance of eradicating this widespread public evil, or, at least ameliorating, as much as possible, the conditions under which it is carried on. It is gratifying to note that many efforts at reform in this matter have already been successfully accomplished, and that more will follow. In regard to the poems that remain, the author hopes that they will be found, at least, interesting and attractive.

That this book will be found so worthy of admiration as to forever preserve it as a gem of purest lustre, will always remain the most earnest wish of

THE AUTHOR.



Contents

PART I

	PAGE
THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT. (A combination of Poetry and Prose.)	13

PART II—OTHER POEMS

THE SLAVE OF THE MILL	35
THE SAGE AND THE LOTUS	40
THE HERO OF THE SWAMP	44
THE HEART OF GOLD	52
THE ANGELIC VISION	54
LOST OPPORTUNITIES	56
LIFE'S ILLUSIONS	58
FRIENDSHIP	63
THE LOVE-DREAM	64

*Many a man, who thinks he's smart
And calls his neighbor fool,
In future worlds will sadly sit
Upon the dunce's stool.*



PART I

The Land of Inner Light

There is a land that's known to few,
 Where rainbow hues tint ev'ry scene,
Where sweetest music thrills the soul,
 And Spirit dwells behind the screen;
A place where fragrance fills the air
 And all around is dazzling bright,
Where sin is not, and love abounds;
 'Tis called the Land of Inner Light.

A land not cursed by man-made laws,
 Nor filled with useless man-made jails,
But judged alone by God above,
 Whose boundless mercy never fails.
In that fair land, where all is peace,
 No mortal's hand is raised in strife.
'Tis there that might defends the right
 And love's the only law of life.

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

Within that land no man doth feast
 While others starve for want of bread;
The banquet board is spread for all
 And e'en the least of these are fed.
No tyrant's heel, or crushing yoke
 Grinds down the worker to the dust;
No power there holds men as slaves,
 Begrudging starving ones a crust.

That land contains no room for those
 Who close their eyes to others' pain,
Or disregard each other's rights,
 Or sell their souls for selfish gain.
There kindness lifts the fallen up
 And dries the mourner's bitter tears.
There stronger souls support the weak
 And cheer them onward through the years.

There no man thirsts for clinking coin
 Nor sighs, but for the wealth within;
No earthly treasure tempts his greed;
 He treads the way that's free from sin.
Therein no mortal seeks for fame,
 But works his best for common good,
All low ambitions cast aside,
 When standing where the Master stood.

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

No beastly lust, nor tainted thought,
Exist within that perfect land;
Its dwellers number only those
Who're pure of heart and clean of hand.
There health and strength eternal dwell,
With blooming youth and lovelit eye,
While shining angels guard the way
Of souls that are not born to die.

To those who scoff and those who doubt
This heav'nly land seems far away;
To those who're wise, its threshold lies
Deep down within their hearts to stay.
There wisdom flows in mighty floods,
With greater thoughts than those in books,
And they who seek find wondrous truths,
For all is clear where Spirit looks.

'Tis there that beings learn the words
That makes them true, upright, supreme,
And hear the message from above,
That life on earth is but a dream.
They learn that all the worlds are naught,
And all that is, remains but One,
The One that rules the universe
Whose Spirit shines through ev'ry sun.

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

It leads the faithless to the faith;
It gives the hopeless hope once more;
The meanest souls learn charity
When passing through this open door.
They feel the force that moves the spheres;
They see the guiding hand of Love
And grasp the need of sacrifice
If they would swell the throngs above.

Then loving hearts form living chains
And helpful hands support the right,
While living seeds are sent broadcast
And darkened souls behold the light;
Then e'en the highest love to serve
And all assist the heav'nly plan,
While mighty forces gather round
To aid the brotherhood of man.

The coming race is pressing on;
Its vanguard soon must heave in sight;
Its greatest souls are gath'ring round
The standard of the Inner Light.
Wilt thou, O laggard! stay behind,
A coward in the coming fray,
And, like the nations of the past,
Go down to moldering decay?

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

Rise up, O man! Know that thou art
A spark from out the Sacred Flame;
Go seek the Land of Inner Light
Whence thy immortal Spirit came.
List to the Voice that in thee dwells,
When all the outer world is still;
Whate'er that Voice shall bid thee do,
Know thou, 'tis God's most holy Will.

To obtain a clear idea of the meaning of the foregoing verses the words are not to be interpreted according to their literal signification, but exclusively in reference to the lofty ideal that is embodied in them. The word land is not intended to convey the idea of place, but state of consciousness. There are many degrees of consciousness. For instance, that of even the highest animals is limited to their immediate surroundings, and they may therefore be said with truth to live almost entirely in the material world, and the lower races and grades of human beings are but little higher than the animals in this respect. The man of average intelligence, however, obtains knowledge, not

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

only from his merely physical contact with material things, but also from many different intellectual sources of information, including the news conveyed to him from other portions of the globe, possesses a far broader consciousness than either the animal or the undeveloped human being, and may therefore properly be said to live in a greatly different sphere. But there is a far higher state of consciousness than is possessed by the man of average attainments; in fact, there is as broad a gulf between persons in possession of this higher consciousness and the average individual, as between the average man and the animal creation. All of the great teachers of humanity had this greater degree of consciousness, which enabled them to not only comprehend the affairs of this world, but also to receive, through sources of which the mass of human beings, even at the present time, have not the slightest conception, that grander knowledge concerning the affairs of the whole universe, including the position of man in nature, his origin, his gradual evolution, and his future destination, together with the natural laws governing this evolution and the best means of

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

hastening his progress. The gradual growth of consciousness can be traced through its various stages by first observing it in its most rudimentary form in certain plants such as the sensitive plant, then in some of the lower phases of animal existence, such as fishes, reptiles, etc., then in the birds and inferior animals, still higher in the family of apes, a little broader in the lower races of men, and more and more expanded as man becomes more and more a civilized being. It is a wonderful and beautiful story, this history of the transformation from low brutality to lofty thought and purpose. It is a change still going on and on toward higher and higher planes of perfection. All men possess physical consciousness, and also mental in varying degrees, but comparatively only a few, at the present stage of evolution, possess even the faintest reflection of that higher grade which resides exclusively in the spiritual part of man, and not in the physical or mental. It is, however, something to which all may aspire. To those who have attained to this degree of consciousness wider fields of knowledge are opened up than the ordinary person has any realization of. They

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

emerge from the semi-darkness of mere intellectual knowledge into the broad illumination of spiritual truth, and see everything from a more elevated standpoint than others do. They observe the lives of persons and of nations not simply as they are, but as they might be, and as they will be when mankind has advanced farther along the evolutionary path, and the expanding consciousness of the race as a whole has enabled it to bring order out of chaos, and harmony out of discord such as exists so largely in every department of human life at the present time. Although such highly developed individuals may walk the streets in company with other men, usually unknown and unappreciated, they live, practically speaking, in a greatly different world, one of boundless illumination radiating from the Spirit within, in truth a "Land of Inner Light."

Those who speak with authority tell us that some persons attain to this advanced stage of development far sooner than others, and some have attained it already. As the outer life of a man or a nation is but a reflection of the inner, it can readily be seen that when a majority of the people learn to read the advanced lessons

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

taught by the Spirit within them, the whole external life of the nation must change in accordance with the same, and then indeed will many of the ideas expressed in the poem become realities, and then at last will the word happiness mean something more than a mere empty sound. Then will mankind be governed by fewer and better laws. The Creator, in his wisdom, established only ten laws to govern the whole of humanity, but men, to suit their own purposes, have multiplied these by thousands, with the result that, along with the more beneficent enactments are to be found others that are both unjust and oppressive. With the increasing light, however, that is now dawning in the previously darkened minds of many persons, the solving of this great problem will undoubtedly be accomplished, sooner or later and in the wisest manner. It has been said with truth that every nation has as good a government as its people deserve to have, and therefore it would seem that the quickest way for any country to obtain better government or better laws would be for the masses of its citizens to live their lives in such a manner as to deserve the best only, and, by thus patterning

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

after their highest ideals, form harmonious parts of a superior nation, one in which charitable consideration for the welfare of all others will take the place of the selfish, brutish and practically insane strife that exists to so large an extent at the present day. With the increased inner illumination, however, comes a realization of the vast amount of absolutely needless misery in the world, together with the desire to do something to alleviate it. It has been proven that an immense amount of this suffering is due directly to the ignorance or selfishness of others, or frequently to both, bringing forcibly to mind the truth of the poet's saying: "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." Human beings have been given free will to choose between good and evil, but, instead of obeying the Divine injunction, given in the book of Genesis, to replenish the earth and subdue it, men have, from time immemorial, wasted their God-given energies in the insane effort to subdue each other. In the effulgency of the great Inner Light, however, even the most selfish individual sees clearly the fact that a man cannot injure others without at the same time injuring

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

himself. Political, social and industrial injustice have brought about revolutions in the past and will do so in the future, but with the great light that is being thrown upon such matters at the present time, those who hold positions of wealth and power in the community are coming to realize, more and more, that such wealth and power is given them merely as trustees, to be used for the benefit of their fellow-men, and not for their own selfish gratification alone, and the masses on their side are arriving at the conclusion that far more is to be accomplished by peaceable and rational evolution, than by violent and destructive revolution. With a recognition of the grand principle that what is for the best interest of all is ultimately for the best interest of each, a spirit of kindness and helpfulness will replace the old feeling of selfish antagonism, which is a relic of barbarism and more worthy of the dumb brute than of the man. The old methods of insane competition in business, social, industrial and political life is rapidly passing away, and is giving place to the idea of increased co-operation, peace and plenty in all departments of human existence. Nor is this such an impracticable idea

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

as some unprogressive individuals still appear to think. Hard-headed scientists inform us that the riches now in the hands of men is scarcely a drop in the bucket alongside of the undeveloped wealth of this globe, that is lying entirely unused, and which, if distributed, would enrich every living man, woman and child. They also tell us that a comparatively small portion of the surface of the earth, if intelligently cultivated, could produce more than sufficient to support all the inhabitants of this planet, not only in comfort, but in luxury. These scientists also know that in order to bring this about, it would not be necessary to employ the puny strength of men, as there are vast stores of energy now going almost entirely to waste, in the heat of the sun, the force of the waves, the magnetic currents in the earth, and also from other natural sources, some of which are as yet undiscovered, and it will not be long before some or all of these natural forces will be practically utilized for the benefit of mankind. When a comfortable living is thus assured all worthy persons, there will cease to be any reasonable cause for some men to seek power over others, except the noble ambition of using such

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

power for the greatest degree of usefulness for all. For centuries men have asked themselves the old biblical question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" and those who have crossed the threshold of the "Land of Inner Light" there find the answer written on the wall: "You are."

The grandest philosophy that has ever been known teaches that as men cultivate only such plants and animals as are productive of benefit, so the higher intelligent powers of the universe, working under the direction of the Almighty, cultivate and assist only those who are striving to follow the dictates of the light within, which is continually urging them toward the realization of the true brotherhood of man in all the daily affairs of life. But, it may be asked: "Why do not all men know of this great light that is shining within them?" The answer is simple. We all go, whether we know it or not, in that direction in which we are most strongly attracted, and as the great masses of mankind are more powerfully drawn toward the gratification of their material desires, their consciousness necessarily resides most largely in the physical portion of themselves, and as the principal characteristics

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

of matter, viewed from the higher standpoint, are darkness and separation, such individuals are naturally blind and selfish concerning all affairs of the broader life. It was for this reason that all of the inspired teachers, who have appeared from time to time among men, have so strongly advocated the importance of crushing out all such base desires, the purification of both the body and the mind, and the cultivation only of those inner qualities that pertain to increased spiritual life, the principal attributes of which are Light and Love, as they well knew that matter constantly changes, but that Spirit is eternal.

It is only through such enlightened individuals that the great spiritual powers, who are said to watch over humanity, can exert their influence. This statement does not refer in any way to what is generally known as "spiritualism." In addition to the doubt concerning the genuineness of messages received through mercenary "mediums," it is a fact that the information so imparted has generally been the very reverse of spiritual, and in many cases such as could only have emanated from individuals of a very low grade of

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

intelligence, or of debauched character. It is not through such as these, however, that the great Spiritual Powers of the universe communicate their knowledge to mankind, but in a way that is well-known by those who have been found worthy of being instructed in such matters. It is a recognized scientific fact that wireless telegraph stations are only capable of taking messages when the apparatus is properly attuned to receive certain electrical vibrations, and this general principle may be applied to persons in regard to their different capacities for receiving spiritual vibrations that originate from the more elevated sources, the ignorant and brutish masses in their present state of undevelopment being utterly incapable of receiving even the slightest amount of higher inspiration. There are, however, persons living who are capable of receiving inspiration of this kind, and such individuals have conveyed to them, not only suggestions concerning life and conduct that have the highest approval of the conscience, but are also taught many things of which the public in general knows nothing, and which could be learned in no other way, such as the grand truths concerning the

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

constitution of the universe, its emanation from the One great source, whose spiritual light, like the physical, is radiated from the centres of all the vast systems that exist in the heavens, a truth that has been testified to by the greatest teachers the world has ever known. Those who can grasp such facts become transformed into new persons, for they realize the true position of man in the universe and the noble destiny that lies before him.

Let us now consider the relation of the Inner Light to the races of men who have inhabited this planet. Those who have studied the history of the world, as well as those who have delved into its ancient literature, know that all the great races of mankind, like individuals, had their periods of birth, rise to power, decline and death, and also, that each had its own special characteristics. Great minds have long ago determined the position that the present race occupies in this great scheme of nature, and also its character. Its keynote is intellectual achievement, and the brilliant scientific discoveries already made by it will be still further surpassed by the marvellous advances to be accomplished by it in the future,

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

for this race, of which we form a part, has not as yet passed the zenith that precedes the period of decline. But there are many proofs to show that long before the death of an old race there occurs the beginning of a new, and the first evidences of this coming race are to be seen on every side, although but faintly as yet. Its principal characteristics, according to those who know, will be spiritual development and moral achievement. An increasingly large number of people are now casting away screen after screen that separates them from the light of the Spirit within, and, day by day, is manifested to a greater extent the progress that is being made in this direction, as shown particularly by the multiplication of philanthropic projects of all kinds. The outer life, as before mentioned, is but a reflection of the inner, and, as man grows in wisdom, so must his external life become nobler and better in every respect, especially in regard to his relations with his fellow-creatures. Sooner or later, he grasps the idea, that, as no chain can be stronger than its weakest link, so the helplessness and suffering of a part of the units of any social body, must inevitably result (if not rem-

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

edied) in the unhappiness and gradual destruction of the whole, a state of affairs strikingly referred to by Bulwer Lytton as "strife-rot" in his prophetic novel, "The Coming Race." When this idea has become universally recognized, the hard conditions of life, and consequent reign of widespread misery, such as exists so largely among all except comparatively a few of the most fortunate of us at the present day, must gradually come to an end. In that future age, the only kind of success which advanced humanity will consider worth striving for will be the establishment of the best means for securing to all worthy persons the greatest possible degree of health, prosperity, knowledge, freedom and happiness, and then will the best interests of every member of the community be promoted by wise co-operation between such as are physically, mentally and morally capable of such co-operation. This may seem like a Utopian dream to some of the readers of this book, impossible of realization, and thus it may appear to the ordinary person, but those who have had their field of mental vision infinitely extended by the brightness of that Inner Light not seen by any

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

physical eye, and have been enabled thereby to peer into the mystic regions of the far off future, know that these statements are based on absolute truth. Co-operative methods have already been successfully utilized in many different kinds of enterprises and organized movements, limited in their character, but it is the opinion of those who are most competent to judge, that any system of universal co-operation, to be applied indiscriminately to all classes of persons, such as advocated by the so-called socialism of the present day, must prove a failure on account of the very imperfect state of mental and moral development that exists so largely among the people at this period of time. This idea is evidently correct, if applied to the present generation, for the only instances, so far, of the successful application of co-operative principles to the affairs of entire communities, have been such as have been inspired by the purest of religious motives, which goes to prove that perfect agreement in all the various transactions of life can never be reached by those who are dominated by selfish desires alone, and that perfect harmony can only be established in the many departments of human

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

existence, between persons whose thoughts and actions are controlled solely by the loftier considerations of true friendship and brotherly love, attributes which can only be derived from but one source, namely, that of spiritual enlightenment.

The beginning of the great struggle for real civilization can be observed even now. Although human nature changes so slowly that the progress sometimes appears almost imperceptible, those who are striving for the practical uplift of humanity and doing all in their power to aid the forward movement of the race have not only the great law of evolution in their favor, but also, according to those who speak with authority, the powerful assistance of the higher mental and spiritual forces of the universe. Man, unaided, can accomplish but little. Man, when his capabilities become fully developed, his transcendent powers thoroughly aroused, his actions inspired from the higher sources, becomes a mighty force, whose ability to bring about far-reaching results is almost without limit. Persons of this kind, while attending to their duties in this inferior world, are, in reality, at the same time, true in-

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

habitants of the "Land of Inner Light." It is the Divine Spark, within, the truly immortal part of man, and which was according to the teachings of the wise, originally one with the Great Spirit of the universe, that is, throughout the ages, constantly seeking to throw off the bonds of matter and become reunited with the source from which it sprang, and with this destiny always in view, is ever urging humanity to loftier degrees of evolutionary development, and continually impelling men and women toward nobler paths of achievement. The founders of all great religions frequently referred to the Light of the Spirit, and distinctly stated that such was the Divine heritage of all who earnestly desired to enter within its influence. Unfortunately, many people, by keeping their minds continually concentrated upon their material wants alone, are still groping in darkness, and to them this whole subject must remain, at the present time, an unsolved mystery. Others, however, and their numbers are constantly increasing, as the result of resolutely directing their conscious attention upon the great source of life within, are beginning to perceive at least some small

THE LAND OF INNER LIGHT

gleams from the "Land of Inner Light," and are, as a result, manifesting a characteristic desire to sacrifice their own selfish concerns, for the sake of advancing the best interests of others. Such persons, by paying strict heed to the promptings of the "still small Voice" within them, are now living up to their higher aspirations with an intelligence, courage and perseverance which must inevitably lead to a nobler existence for the individual, a grander civilization for the race, and an exceedingly great reward in the life to come.





PART II.—OTHER POEMS

The Slave of the Mill

Within a busy, thriving town,
 With work for many hands,
While railroad trains rush to and fro,
 Close by a stream there stands
A large and stately cotton mill,
 The pride of country round;
Employment sure it gives to all
 Within its whistle's sound.

Its wheels go round from morn till night;
 The spindles gayly hum;
Industry's voice is very loud;
 Humanity's voice is dumb.
Within, a thousand spindles warp
 And twist, mid noise and strife,
Not only threads of cotton yarn,
 But threads of human life.

THE SLAVE OF THE MILL

Beside a whirring spindle stands
A little, puny form.
Can really that be human shape
There working in that swarm?
A baby still in years and size.
But with a look of age,
Who toils and strives, with painful speed,
To earn a meagre wage.

No happy laugh is ever heard;
The childish lips are dumb.
The world must have its cotton thread,
If children work till numb.
Who cares if tireless spindles warp
And twist, mid noise and strife,
Not only threads of cotton yarn,
But threads of human life?

The fingers warped and twisted are,
And wasted are the arms;
The tiny body's shrunken, too;
But sleep each feature calms.
At night the little being crawls
With painful footsteps home,
From endless task of weaving thread
From twisted cotton foam.

THE SLAVE OF THE MILL

Unceasing ever, day by day,
Keeps up the wearing strain.
How could the world get cotton thread
With rest for arm or brain?
Who cares if tireless spindles warp
And twist, mid noise and strife,
Not only threads of cotton yarn,
But threads of human life?

Upon the little hopeless face
There is a vacant stare,
For how could lengthened hours of toil
Leave time for knowledge there?
An empty little bench in school;
An empty little brain;
A nation's honor empty, too,
That bears this ugly stain.

Yet, week by week, and month by month,
The weary toil goes on,
For, don't the world need cotton thread?
For what are children born?
Who cares if tireless spindles warp
And twist, mid noise and strife,
Not only threads of cotton yarn,
But threads of human life?

THE SLAVE OF THE MILL

Each day is worse the hacking cough
And color of the cheek;
Each hour is added torture to
The back that is so weak.
No time for health, no time for play,
No time for church or God,
The aching heart were better off
If planted 'neath the sod.

And still the grinding work goes on
With unabated speed.
How could the world get cotton thread
Without this human greed?
Who cares if tireless spindles warp
And twist, mid noise and strife,
Not only threads of cotton yarn,
But threads of human life?

But time comes when the little form
In place no longer stands;
The world must get its cotton thread
Through use of other hands.
A little soul has passed away
To realm of angels' care,
Where all is joy and gladness;
There are no spindles there.

THE SLAVE OF THE MILL

And in that future Spirit state,
When balance sheets gone o'er,
The world must pay for broken threads
Of lives long gone before.
GOD cares if tireless spindles warp
And twist, mid noise and strife,
Yes, warp and twist, and snap apart
The threads of human life.





The Sage and the Lotus

A bearded sage, of modern time,
Whom shallow minds would brand uncouth,
In nature's storehouse loved to delve
In tireless search for hidden truth.

He learned of thriftiness from bees,
And freedom's song from happy birds.
The Lotus flower now he sought,
And to its wisdom framed these words:

“O sacred flower of the East!
And emblem of the life divine,
Thou blossom of the Orient,
What mem'ries round thy tendrils twine

Thy fragrant odor brings to mind
An Eden full of sweetness stored,
Where universal goodness reigned,
A blessed garden of the Lord.

THE SAGE AND THE LOTUS

Why called the flower of the wise,
Whose fame throughout the ages last?
Breathe thou into my inmost soul
The secrets of thy ancient past."

The flower trembled in the wind,
Then answered slowly with a sigh:
"For centuries, O worthy sage!
Mankind has passed the lotus by.

Around it nations rose and fell;
Men loved and hated, strove and fought;
They trod the lotus under foot,
And cared not for the truths it taught.

When sorely wounded to the core,
Or crushed beneath some heavy heel,
With broken stem and petals torn,
It wondrous sweetness would reveal.

Its beauty cheered the saddened eye;
Its odor soothed like sweet incense;
It freely gave its life for all
That they might eat at its expense.*

* The lotus is frequently eaten by the inhabitants of the countries in which it grows.

THE SAGE AND THE LOTUS

On lowly peasant and on king,
It favors would alike bestow,
And fragrance all around would shed.
In meanest hovel it might grow.

It is the purest of the pure,
Though rooted in the filth of earth.
Its flow'ry head still seeks the sun,
Whose warmth and power gave it birth.

Though growing oft mid waters foul,
With stem and branches here below,
It ever turns toward the light,
Its essence tries to heaven go

Know thou, O sage! This flower is
The emblem of the human soul,
Which up from gross corruption springs,
Then wafts its way to highest goal."

The man of learning pondered long.
Then, reverent, he bowed his head,
And thoughtful at the flower looked,
As earnestly these words he said:

THE SAGE AND THE LOTUS

“I know not whence thy wisdom springs,
Thou wonder of remotest age,
But could I change my place with thee,
I'd be the lotus, thou the sage.”





The Hero of the Swamp

Down on an old plantation south,
 Among the sugar-cane and corn,
Within a ruined shanty there,
 A half-breed human babe was born.

His mother was as black as coal,
 His father lowest grade of white.
The child possessed the traits of both,
 And so appeared a wretched sight.

His entrance on the stage of life
 Was never mentioned near or far.
His coming to this troubled world
 Was guided by no lucky star.

No neighbor sought that cabin door;
 No other person passed the spot;
No human being gave a hand
 To change its humble, lowly lot.

THE HERO OF THE SWAMP

E'en those who travelled near the place,
 To keep from treading on that ground,
Took special pains, while passing through,
 To make extensive circuit round.

So, shunned by all, by blacks, by whites,
 Its inmates held themselves aloof.
No stranger was admitted there
 Beneath its rotten, crumbling roof.

The babe grew up mid squalor vile,
 A child of nature's reeking soil.
The only life he knew about
 Was one of constant, beastly toil.

To read or write he never learned;
 He could not do the simplest sum.
He knew not love, and ne'er possessed
 Of friendship e'en the smallest crumb.

No wonder that he hated all,
 This lowly being of no race.
He grovelled at the world's approach
 And looked not in its hated face.

THE HERO OF THE SWAMP

As time rolled on, this trodden worm,
Not knowing whom of men to blame,
Cursed all mankind. Within his breast
There burned a sullen, hidden flame.

Of wealth, or fame, he never caught
Not e'en the very smallest gleam.
His life beside the Southern swamp
Flowed on and on, like sluggish stream.

His parents died in course of time,
And he was left still more alone,
A human brute without one grace
And with a wicked heart of stone.

No wife, nor kin, had he to cheer
Or soothe his lonely, wretched fate.
His evil mind was given up
To vengeful thoughts and bitter hate.

The people of the countryside
Regarded him with wholesome fear.
Not all the gold in all the world
Would tempt them to approach him near.

THE HERO OF THE SWAMP

He had the name of loving crime
 And planning black and evil deeds.
His better nature, like his land,
 Was overgrown with noxious weeds.

A mile away there lived a man
 Of family and honest wealth,
Whose daughter small the scoundrel planned
 To carry off by means of stealth.

One moonlight night, the child went out
 To take a pleasant, evening stroll.
No care had she, but gaily sang;
 No thought of wrong possessed her soul.

She walked along the moonlit path,
 Beneath the cloudless, starry sky,
And laughed and romped without a thought
 Of deadly peril so close by.

Upon one side stretched out the swamp,
 Most dark and dismal, wide and deep.
On other side there rose a hill
 Up from the path, abrupt and steep.

THE HERO OF THE SWAMP

Upon this hill, behind a rock,
The black, inhuman monster kneeled,
Prepared to spring and seize the girl;
It seemed as though her doom was sealed.

But, peering forth, he saw a sight
To make much braver blood run cold;
He saw what seemed to be a log
Rise slowly from the reeking mold.

The moonlight beams shone on its back,
And on its ugly, warty sides.
Without a sound, toward the shore,
A dreadful, long-jawed reptile glides.

The creature now has reached the bank
With but a single minute's pause,
And rushes at the frightened child
To seize her in its viselike jaws.

One moment more! The man stands still
And views with awe the fearful scene.
That dreadful moment works a change;
It throws from him life's evil screen.

THE HERO OF THE SWAMP

Beyond the swamp, beyond the world,
The future he appears to see.
To his rapt gaze, the heavens blaze,
He spies afar,—eternity.

He now forgets the taunts, the sneers,
The bitter hate that cursed his life.
A shame he never felt before
Now cuts him like a sharp-edged knife.

A mighty wave of high resolve
Sweeps o'er his burly, hardened frame.
The spirits of the mighty dead
Seem urging him to martyr's fame.

With warning shout, he quickly springs
To not destroy, but try to save.
His life seems naught. His duty calls.
Within him burns a courage brave.

Like lightning flash he grasps the girl
And helps her up a friendly tree,
Then tries at last to save himself.
Alas! Too late! 'Tis not to be.

THE HERO OF THE SWAMP

The alligator's open jaws
Now close up tight, with vicious snap;
Its teeth pierce through the victim's flesh
And hold him in a deadly trap.

The struggling man now fights for life,
But all his efforts are in vain;
The fearful grip will not relax.
The man shrieks out in fear and pain.

Now moves the reptile to the swamp,
And drags its prey within the mire.
All hope seems lost. The victim faints,
When,—Hark! The crash of rifle fire.

A shot rings out. The bullet speeds
And strikes its mark,—the reptile's brain.
The gunner leaps to water's edge
And drags the man to land again.

The rescued man is carried home,
And placed upon his humble bed.
Kind hands now dress his gaping wounds.
Strange thoughts are passing through his
head.

THE HERO OF THE SWAMP

His life is saved, but what of that?

Is life like his worth e'en a thought?

“Henceforth,” he cries, “no man shall say
This life of mine is all for naught.”

A Voice from high above responds,

As happens oft, since world began,

“Before thou wert, in truth, a beast,
But now thou art, indeed, a MAN.”





The Heart of Gold

On ocean beds are priceless pearls,
That ne'er have reached the light.
In mountain wilds are treasures rich,
That missed the miners' sight.
In cavern depths are rubies worth
The ransom of a queen.
In faithful hearts are purer gems
Than human eyes have seen.

In channels deep are clearer springs
Than streams that face the sun.
Beneath the soil are living roots
Whose forces there begun.
Within the earth, not on its crust,
Exists a power great.
In loving hearts are grander things
Than beauty or estate.

THE HEART OF GOLD

Then seek beneath the surface skin
The source of value true,
For nothing else can e'er compare
With heart that's all for you.
Its love is like the ocean wide,
Of wondrous depths untold.
Seek not for grace, or perfect face,
But prize the heart of gold.





The Angelic Vision

When daily toil is over and
 I lay me down to rest,
When nature's sweet restorer comes
 To soothe my troubled breast,
When through my tired, weary brain
 Strange thoughts and fancies teem,
A wondrous fairy vision comes
 To see me in my dream: —

A face so fair, as could compare
 With lilies' purest white;
A form divine, as stars that shine
 In canopy of night;
A smile so sweet, as one could meet
 In all the realms above;
A voice that speaks, in softest tones,
 A soul's undying love.

THE ANGELIC VISION

It seems to me, somehow, somewhere,
I've seen that face before.
In some past sphere, 'twas ever near
To bless, inspire, implore,
And something tells me with a voice
That's deep within my heart,
That time nor space, nor clime nor place,
Shall keep our souls apart.

Some day, the trump of doom shall sound;
Our mortal life is past,
And ending of the ages long
Brings joy and peace at last;
In bosom of the heavens, then,
Each soul must join its mate;
Together there, we'll both be drawn
By mighty force of Fate.





Lost Opportunities

A fragrant rose hung on a branch,
To tempt the passerby.
Said one, while going on his way:
“I’ll pluck it by and by.”
But when he passed that way again
Upon another morn,
The branch was bare, with nothing there;
The fragrant rose was gone.

A luscious peach hung from its stem,
To rouse the appetite.
The finder said: “When I return,
I’ll take a juicy bite.”
But passing back along that way
Next day at early dawn,
He sought in vain to find the fruit;
The luscious peach was gone.

LOST OPPORTUNITIES

A crystal spring flowed from a rock
To quench the toiler's thirst.
Said one: "Whene'er my work is done
I'll drink this water first."
But when the weary worker came,
All tired out and worn,
A drought had dried the water up;
The crystal spring was gone.

A charming face peered from its place,
To cheer the hearts of men.
Said one: "When fortune comes my way,
I'll woo and win it then."
In after years, with bitter tears,
And sad emotions torn,
He learned the one he sought was dead;
The charming face was gone.

A message great came from on high
To benefit mankind.
Said one: "When earthly pleasures pall,
I'll bear this truth in mind."
But when at last he would atone
For record most forlorn,
The Reaper grim had summoned him;
His life itself was gone.



Life's Illusions

(Behold!)

A trinket in a lighted window
 Sparks and flashes, glows and glitters,
And now a man stands gazing idly,
 Mindless of the time he fritters.

Electric bulbs are brilliant, glowing,
 Shooting shafts of dazzling light,
And still the man stays there admiring,
 Gazing at the trinket bright.

He hesitates, then mounts the step,
 Enters in the merchant's door,
And quickly o'er the counter passes
 Hard earned dollars, more and more.

See! Now he grasps his costly treasure,
 Wends his joyous journey home,
And plans to make a great sensation
 Ev'ry place where he may roam.

LIFE'S ILLUSIONS

The task is done. The statesman dreams
Of worldly fame and honor rare.
(But Ah!)

The critics tear his speech to rags.
The honor fades.

'Tis made of air.

A reigning belle, a woman proud,
And dainty as a china vase,
With features cast in classic mold
With soulful eyes and angel face.

A woman grand from worldly view,
Accomplished and of worthy name,
Who counts her suitors by the score
And plays to win the social game.

Her gowns are made in latest style
And fit with grace her Juno form.
Her sprightly wit, her birdlike voice,
Her charming ways, take all by storm.

The cup of bliss she tempting holds,
That men may worship at her shrine.
Her lips are quick to promise love
To those who for affection pine



Friendship

FALSE FRIENDSHIP

Prosperity has many friends.
Misfortune lives alone.
Not many care how poor you fare;
Most hearts seem made of stone.

TRUE FRIENDSHIP

This life is short and dull and dreary,
Happiness a dream,
And all that makes the world less weary,
Friendship's kindly gleam.
For only one true friend, however,
Thousands vainly yearn.
Secure one now by best endeavor,
Chance may ne'er return.



The Love-Dream

Just a little gleam of sunshine
In a dark and dreary life.
Just a little ray of heaven
Midst the battle and the strife.
Just a little fleeting pleasure
Granted by a kindly fate.
Just a little dream of rapture
Given mortals, e'en if late.

Better far than gold or diamonds,
Richest silks, or satins rare,
Better far than lands or houses
Are these "castles in the air."
Better far than tempting banquets,
Dainty foods, or flowing bowl,
Better far than fame or fortune
Is the love-dream of the soul.