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I. Literary.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

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I.

Where Egypt's sacred river creeps
Along its plenteous plains;
Where rise its monumental heaps
And colonnaded fanes;
Where History, Art and Science scored
In sculptured wall their record old,
And in a myriad tombs were stored
Treasures of knowledge yet untold;
Where Power has reached its loftiest state
And millions cringed before the great;
A people known to God
The path of sorrow trod,
And in hard bondage wrought, and mourned their bitter fate.

II.

The silent stars look down—
Look down and give no sign;
Dumb is the oracle of On,
Dumb is Osiris' shrine;
And Memnon's sunrise song
To them no answer brings;
In vain for them his notes prolong,
In vain for them he sings;

In vain Jehovah's people cry—
 He makes them no reply;
 Will answer come?
 The earth is dumb,
 And dumb is all the sky.

III.

On far Arabia's lonely height
 A banished prince of Israel's stock,
 Who sole had stood for Israel's right,
 Tended an Arab chieftain's flock;
 Absorbed in meditation vast
 Upon the hopes that once had thrilled—
 The glories of the vanished past—
 The promises all unfulfilled—
 He saw—a bush with glory crowned!
 He heard—and trembled at the sound—
 The voice of God,
 “Be thou unshod;
 The place whereon thou stand'st is holy ground.”

IV.

Back to his people's woe—
 Back to the Pharaoh's wrath—
 Commanding, “Let my people go,”
 Treading the perilous path;
 Wakening to joyful birth
 The hosts of Israel,
 Braving the powers of earth,
 Braving the powers of hell—
 Braving the powers of earth and hell
 While judgments dire on Egypt fell;
 Jehovah's voice is heard,
 And hope again is stirred
 In all the hearts and hosts of Israel.

V.

“Forward!” the word is given,
 “Forward at God's command!
 Forward, ye men of heaven!
 Forward to the promised land!”

But Egypt's slumbering hosts, at last,
Aroused from bitter woe,
Assemble all their legions vast
To strike one crushing blow.
They find their prey upon the shore,
Mountains behind and sea before;
When lo! athwart the night
Is flung a flag of light,
And "Forward!" the word is given to Israel's hosts once more.

VI.

Safe through the cloven sea! .
Safe all the desert way!
A pillar of fire by night gave He,
A pillar of cloud by day;
Leading His people on
By paths He deemed the best;
Leading from darkness unto dawn,
From conflict into rest;
Until their feet by Jordan stand
And entering is at His command,
Jordan is passed,
And safe at last,
They reach the promised land.

VII.

The people chosen of the Lord
Are in the land the Lord has given;
They have His worship and His Word,
Sure this is rest and this is heaven!
But still the centuries roll,
And Israel, oft by foes oppressed,
Has borne upon His inmost soul,
"This is not yet your rest;"
The night is dark, the night is long,
And Israel's foes are fierce and strong,
And weary years
Of blood and tears
Make distant still the triumph song.

VIII.

The night is dark, the night is long;
 But there are voices in the night,
 With courage to rebuke the wrong,
 With knowledge to approve the right;
 Drawing from heights and depths sublime
 All that is right and wise and true,
 With understanding of the time
 To know what Israel ought to do;
 And when despair the people fills,
 Through the long night of Israel's ills,
 With vision clear
 The raptured seer
 Beholds the sunrise of the distant hills.

IX.

Afar from Egypt's silent flood
 And far from Israel's sacred sod,
 A people not of Israel's blood,
 But worshippers of Israel's God,
 Far down the centuries' brightening way
 In distant land, 'neath alien sky,
 Have gathered at the close of day
 To see a mighty century die.
 We gather while its hours are few
 Its praise and glory to review;
 Till midnight bell
 Shall sound its knell,
 And then with joy to greet the dawning of the new.

X.

Yet why rejoice? The past is all our own;
 The future—dim, uncertain, vast—
 Lies in a region all unknown,
 Beyond horizons no one ere has passed.
 And as we peer into those realms untrod,
 No fiery pillar lights our pilgrim way,
 To us appear no bush aflame with God,
 Nor prophet's voice proclaims the crowning day.

Nor need they. Pilgrims of the night
 Are thankful for the stars that bless their sight;
 But night is past,
 'Tis day at last;
 And in the light we walk as children of the light.

XI.

Then what hast thou—dim century untold,
 Upon whose brink we stand at midnight hour—
 What blessings for mankind wilt thou unfold,
 What scenes of glory and what deeds of power?
 We know not what a day may bring to birth;
 How dare we then a century forecast—
 How write before the destiny of Earth,
 Its complex currents and its issues vast?
 Vain were the task, did not God's gracious hand,
 By which the changing centuries are spanned,
 Before us write
 In words of light
 What in eternity His heart hath planned.

XII.

Like mariners by winds of ocean driven,
 Tossed on a sea we never sailed before,
 We take our reckoning from the Sun in heaven,
 And from our Chart we know the distant shore.
 As husbandmen, who in the waning year
 Prepare the ground and plow the furrow deep,
 Then sow the seed, and ere a blade appear
 Know from the seed what harvests they shall reap;
 So from the Seed—oft sown in tears—
 Of human hopes and human fears—
 What mind has thought
 And hand has wrought—
 We wait the harvest of the coming years.

XIII.

Broad lies our country in the eye of heaven,
 Washed upon either shore by ocean's tide,
 Rich with all gifts by nature's bounty given
 Of mountain, river, lake and valleys wide;

Strong in the strength of strenuous youth,
 Free with a blood-bought liberty,
 Stablished by men who knew the truth,
 And whom the truth made free;
 We turn to thee, for since thy course began
 Clearer emerges the Almighty Plan;
 In thee the earth
 Finds second birth;
 Thy fall would be a second fall of man.

XIV.

We see thee as the century rolls
 Waxing more rich, more strong, more great,
 'Till twice a hundred million souls
 Enjoy the blessings of thy state.
 The isles are waiting for thy law,
 Thy sons and daughters come from afar,
 The wondering world beholds with awe
 The progress of thy empire's star.
 Shine on, thou Star of Liberty,
 Commanding peoples to be free,
 Star of the west,
 Beloved and blest,
 Hope of the age that is to be!

XV.

But will thy star forever shine?
 Are there no clouds upon thy sky?
 Or, like old empires that once seemed divine,
 Art thou, too, only born to die?
 When shakes the land beneath the imperial tread
 Of armed hosts who guard thy wide domain,
 Hast never felt within thy heart the dread
 Lest by that host thy liberty be slain?
 Lest from it some imperial Cæsar rise
 With high ambition soaring to the skies,
 And in some hour
 Of passion's power
 Enthroned himself, although his country dies?

XVI.

Or will thy freedom suffer meaner loss,
 And die, perchance, more ignominious death,
 Expiring at the hand of party Boss
 Whose drawing halter stops thy vital breath?
 When public office is but party spoils,
 When public servants seek but public pelf,
 When none for honor, none for country toils,
 But each for party schemes, and all for self—
 When each inflated tyrant has his day,
 And thou of wrangling factions art the prey;
 Low will thy head be hung,
 In dust thine honor flung,
 Since vermin crawl and spawn where statesmen once held sway.

XVII.

Or wilt thou bow thy neck to bands of gold,
 And fetter thy fair limbs with golden chains,
 And see the mart of thy large honors sold
 For that which fill thy hands with sordid gains?
 When those who have the millions have the might
 And Senates listen for the chink of gold
 When money's voice outsounds the voice of right,
 Thy days are numbered and thy tale is told.
 What shall it profit if thou gain the whole
 Of this wide world, and for it lose thy soul?
 Her race was lost
 At bitter cost
 Who stopped to seize the gold and missed the goal.

XVIII.

Or looms there yet another threatening cloud
 That flashes lurid on the darkening sky,
 When Anarchy's deep mutterings thunder loud,
 And in the name of liberty bid freedom die?
 When liberty is but the right to rob,
 And freedom means that he may take who can,
 And government becomes the rule of Mob,
 That knows no law and fears not God nor man;

Then falls the fabric that our fathers built,
 Then has the patriot blood our fathers spilt
 Been shed for nought,
 And all they wrought
 Lies whelmed in ruin for their children's guilt.

XIX.

But why these fears? While still the sun doth shine
 The clouds may gather, but they cannot stay;
 Radiant with promise beams the bow divine,
 Darkness will end in never-ending day.
 We fear no foe when God is on the throne,
 And in our hearts the love of liberty;
 God's for the right, and He'll defend His own,
 In days to come as in the years gone by.
 No land need dread a Cæsar's shadow when
 Its history tells how twice a million men
 When war was o'er
 Laid down their power,
 And straightway men and chiefs were citizens again.

XX.

The Party Boss will have his day and pass—
 As passed of old tyrants of nobler name—
 When millions armed in freedom's holy name,
 Rise in their might their rightful powers to claim.
 The riches gathered in the hands of few,
 Shall by the few for all be held in trust,
 Awakening enterprises vast and new,
 That all may share rewards of labor just.
 While learning's vast and varied store
 Is opened by the rich to rich and poor;
 And in the light
 Of truth and right
 Freedom and law make peace forevermore.

XXI.

Filled with the vision of our country's peace
 We lift our eyes abroad to distant lands,
 And see, across the intervening seas,
 Nations of old held long in iron bands.

We listen for the sounds of ancient strife
 The groans and sighs provoked by ancient wrong,
 The greedy struggle of the race for life,
 The weakling's fall, the triumph of the strong.
 And lo! a scene of peace and plenty fair,
 The voice of song where once was heard despair;
 Out of the night,
 Into the light,
 The world moves on; 'tis daybreak everywhere.

XXII.

The nations bound by "links of steel and fire"
 Have learned the folly of their ancient feud,
 And feel the throb of unfulfilled desire
 For closer bonds of human brotherhood,
 Peoples enriched by Science and by Art,
 Crowned as the heir of all the centuries,
 Have felt at last the beatings of a Heart,
 And Conscience summoned to the high emprise;
 What they have learned of truth and right,
 What God has given of life and light,
 They must proclaim,
 In Jesus' name
 To nations wrapped in darkness of the night.

XXIII.

When walked on earth the incarnate Son of God,
 The Tempter showed Him from some mountain tall
 Earth's kingdoms with their glory spread abroad,
 And for a moment's worship offered all.
 What He as fief from Tempter justly spurns
 That conquers He through bitter pain and loss;
 And lifting high earth's diadem, he turns
 And says to each disciple, "Bear My Cross;
 Earth's kingdoms now in all their sorrow see,
 I die for them from sin to set them free;
 Go seek and save the lost,
 Redeemed at countless cost,
 All will I give thee, if thou follow Me."

XXIV.

Our Lord and Master, we thy voice have heard;
We claim Thy promise, we accept Thy cross;
Forth would we go, obedient to Thy word,
To win the world by sacrifice and loss.
Our faith is weak, but Thou canst make it strong.
Our flesh is strong, but Thou canst make it weak;
The praise and glory unto Thee belong,
Give us the victory that for Thee we seek.
"Christ for the world"—to heal its age-long pain,
"The world for Christ"—whose right it is to reign.
Give Him the praise,
Through endless days,
And Heaven and Earth repeat the great Amen!

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